la Kooliga'

Gender relations in access to and control over natural resources in rural Ghana

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Introduction

From January to June 2004, I conducted my final research for Development studies at the Radboud University of Nijmegen. I did this in Kasuliyili, a village in the Northern Region of Ghana, West Africa. Why Africa, and why specifically Ghana? It all really began in 1981, when my parents were sent to Kpandai, a village also situated in the Northern Region, as missionaries. My father taught agriculture there for eighteen months and during this time I was born. They left again in 1982 and I never consciously experienced life in Ghana. However, Ghana was somehow always special to me and I had a deep longing to go back one day to see the place where I was born. In 1999, I was finally given the opportunity and Ghana stole my heart. So it was easy for me to choose a setting for this final research. I simply followed my heart.

Although Ghana is one of the most stable countries of West Africa, both economically and politically, it still knows many forms of poverty. Especially in the North of Ghana many people struggle to survive because of poverty. The people are often directly dependent on the natural resources in their area for survival. In the periods when they are unable, for whatever reason, to use these resources, it is difficult to provide their families with the basic needs. The problems concerning the natural resources are not a local, or even necessarily a current problem. The African continent has suffered for a long time due to environmental problems. African soil has always been fragile, at least in the last few thousand years. It often lacks fertility due to the leaching of nutrients over long periods. Africa is therefore in many cases more vulnerable to human activity than other continents in terms of deforestation, desertification, and soil erosion (Nyangøoro, 1996:198).

Changes in the environment do not necessarily cause deterioration; people always find ways to deal with new situations. Nevertheless, the continent has seen a drastic change in its environment during the 20th century. These changes have caused many problems that seem to have contributed to the deterioration of the peopleøs livelihood (Nyangøoro, 1996:196). The West African environment is a controversial subject. Since the droughts in the Sahel between 1968 and 1973, West Africa in particular has been an archetype of environmental degradation, particularly liable to loss of forest, soil erosion, and desertification. But what is actually happening to the West African environment is not so clear or as certain as is often thought. The only problem of which there is no doubt is the decline in rainfall. Other problems are often local and the causes are diverse (Blench, 1999:1-13).

In Ghana there is a noticeable change in the environment, especially in the rural north. People are often directly influenced by the condition of the natural resources in their region, and thus the state of these natural resources is a cause for much worry. The dry season causes problems all over Ghana, but especially in this savannah belt. There is a single rainy season from May to October, followed by a prolonged dry season. The people suffer from fuel shortages throughout the year and water shortages during the dry season. Other problems are caused by land shortage, loss of vegetation, soil deterioration, and a general degradation of the land (Awumbila & Momsen, 1995:341).

h in Kasuliyili in the Northern Region[1]. It may have ose Kpandai as my research village, because I was already familiar with the village. Kpandai lies in the far southeast of the Northern Region, bordering on the Volta Region. At the time that my parents were there, it was a very deprived area. It was cut off from much development due to the lack of, for example, adequate infrastructure. This was actually my initial plan, but I was given the opportunity, via a Ghanaian friend living in the Netherlands, to go to a different area, further north than Kpandai. It was more likely that the people here struggle more with the available resources. It seemed more viable for me to gain a deeper insight into the causes and perhaps possible solutions here, so Kasuliyili it was.

The Tolon-Kumbungu district, in which Kasuliyili lies, is one of the most deprived areas of Ghana (BCDP, 2000). The district lies in the Guinea Savannah zone with the voltaic characteristics, clayley and loamy soils. The lands are flat and generally undulating. The people living in the Tolon-Kumbungu district are faced with severe natural resource problems. This has a big influence on the quality of the population's livelihood. One of the biggest problems is the water situation, especially during and, most importantly, at the end of the dry season. The main sources of drinking water in the district are streams and dams, with a few boreholes in a number of communities. Between sixty and seventy per cent therefore have no access to safe drinking water during the dry season (District Assembly, 1999).

Access to and control over water, (fire) wood and land

As the environmental situation is worrying at times, it is important that people have the possibilities to make the most of the available natural resources and can meet their primary needs. Especially the access to the natural resources water, (fire) wood, and land are important, as these secure peoples' livelihoods. Without potable water, firewood, and fertile land, the people cannot survive. These natural resources lay at the base of every human existence. In many development countries, these natural resources are often scarce. In the western world, we often take for granted water for drinking and bathing, energy for cooking and heating, and food for our daily provision. Yet, many people go through a daily struggle to provide their families with these basic needs. Many people live with the fear of going without. Every human being needs potable water to survive. Wood, especially ÷good' firewood, is often a struggle to collect. Land can provide people with their ÷daily bread' But when the land can only be worked during a certain part of the year, or is too infertile to produce a big enough yield, many people are faced with a hunger gap. In Kasuliyili too these three natural resources cause many worries, especially the availability of potable water has been an alarming problem these last years.

Even when these natural resources are present, but especially when they are scarce, many people still cannot use what is available to their advantage. They are unable to turn the natural resources into capabilities; they cannot make optimal use of available resources and thereby meet their needs. As Sen (1981:1,45) already observed in the eighties, people going without food is not only the result of scarcity, but even more so a result of people not being able to or allowed to use the resources. When there

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[1] See map 4.3, 4.4

ople have the possibilities to use what is there in the access to and control of these natural resources is therefore extremely important. Whether an actor has access to and control over specific natural resources is dependent on whom the actor is, as this is socially differentiated. Two people with different places in a community will have different possibilities for gaining access to and control over natural resources. Women have a different relationship with the natural resources than men do, as they fulfil different roles involving different practices with the environment. Even though women are confronted daily with the condition of the natural resources, due to their position in society as ÷women ø, they are often less able to gain access to and control over that which is available.

According to Leach, Mearns, and Scoones (1999:234,240), institutions within a community play an important part in the organisation of the access to and control of natural resources. *÷Both ownership over environmental goods and services, as well as the ways these resources are put into use and the extent to which they are beneficial to social actors, are not a natural given. They are mediated by a set of institutions.ø* This can mean both formal institutions within, for example, the constitutional laws, as well as informal institutions such as moral values and religious beliefs. By taking these into consideration, they believe that when analysing how people can make effective use of environmental goods and services, there can be a better understanding of how to contribute to people øs well being. Institutions and the relationships among these institutions greatly influence which social actors gain access to and control over resources and the manner in which this happens.

In turn, those who have access to and control over natural resources influence the decisions on which uses these resources are put to and the ways these resources are managed. Subsequently, they gradually help to modify and shape the landscape over time. These last two aspects were important factors for me choosing this specific area of study for my research. If people are able to gain access and control over environmental goods and services, this means that they also have more power to do what they need or want with the available resources, and consequently are capable of having a greater influence on the management of the natural resources.

Relevance of research

As mentioned above, many women often get the worst end of it when it comes to access to and control over natural resources. Women øs roles in natural resource management are often emphasised in the literature. In the early seventies, a growing interest emerged in the relationship between women and nature. Since the mid-seventies, women øs movements have tried to put this issue on the international agenda. More and more people began to realise that the world øs energy is diminishing and that women, in their role as, for example, collectors of wood, are important. Since then there has been much discussion on the relationship between women and nature, and consequently on the relationship that women have with their local environment. Gender is a variable in environmental analysis, because men and women occupy different spaces, have different tasks, and have different responsibilities and needs (Rhebergen, 1998:4). The importance of making this distinction within projects is often emphasised. But women often do not participate in projects and if they do, what they contribute is generally

ree planting project, women may plant trees, but the
trees before they have reached maturity.

The idea for my research has been inspired by the question why so many
environmental projects have failed to be sustainable, especially projects that count on
the participation of women. In this research I do not look at why they failed, but more at
the power relations that play a role in possible achievements. If interventions are to
support the claims of those otherwise excluded - as many women find themselves - and
are to shape environmental improvements that stand to benefit more than a powerful
minority, the social differences in natural resource management need to be taken into
consideration. The most important aspect here in this social differentiation are the
differences between actorsø ability to gain access to and control over environmental
goods and services. An actor with access to and control over these resources is more
capable of influencing the way in which the resources are used and managed, and thus
more able to influence the environmental situation. Natural resource scarcity can cause
constraints in peopleøs lives, but whether or not people can do anything about this
depends on their legitimate control over resources. When people have legitimate
control, their participation in the improvement of these commodities can be seen as an
outcome of negotiations among social actors. Whether or not people have legitimate
access to and control over local resources is embedded in a complex social context. The
social relations within this context are regulated through complex procedures of power
relations. It is therefore necessary to understand how these processes work and how
they are related to gender.

To find out which roles men and women can actually play in natural resource
management, it is important to first find out which resources they have access to and
also control over. The former is my research objective and the latter my research
question. By looking at the gender relations that influence these processes and the
institutions and the relationships between the institutions, I hope to be able to identify
the important factors in the processes of gaining access to and control over the natural
resources land, water and (fire) wood.

Research question

For my research I decided to look into the organisation of the access to and control over
natural resources. I wanted to find out if the institutions mentioned really are so
important and, if so, in what way. But I believe that not only the institutions, but also
the social context in which these institutions are embedded are important when trying to
understand how the access to and control over natural resources is organised. This
social context, with all its social differences, can be understood by looking at the gender
relations and the power that works through these. Not only do differences between men
and women then become evident, but also differences between people from different
social classes, religions etc. Finally, if women are to play a part in actually improving
the environmental situation, it is important to know what the views and expectations of
the women themselves are.

In what way is the access to and control over natural resources and services and the benefits derived from these gendered?

The theoretical objective of my research is to contribute to the discussion on how the access to and control over natural resources takes place. My social objective is to give extra insight into the bottlenecks concerning the possibilities of men and women contributing effectively to natural resource management. I do this by presenting the crucial differences in the access to and control over environmental goods and services between men and women and the power that works through this. This insight can help target external interventions more effectively.

As mentioned above, whether a person has access to and control over natural resources and how they have gained this is socially differentiated. Different actors have different interests in natural resources, as their values and resource priorities differ. Different people have different possibilities. These different possibilities are caused by the various power relations that people are in and the position they have within them. The interests are often conflicting, which consequently means that the beneficiaries have different ways of gaining access to and control over natural resources through these power relations. To find out how these power relations work, I subsequently look into which priorities men and women have, what their social-political positions are - as their position determines the power they have to obtain what they want - and indirectly also into the institutions through which the access and control is mediated.

Outline thesis

This thesis can be divided into two parts, a theoretical and an empirical part. I start this thesis by introducing the theories which I used during this research. I look into theories on gender and on access to and control over natural resources. I use a framework on the three-dimensional analysis of gender. This framework helps to identify power relations. When looking at the access and control, I introduce Sen∅s entitlement approach to understand control. To be able to operationalise my research question, I use a Gender Assessment Study (GAS). I first discuss what this is and then how I used it in my research by presenting the sub questions of my research. The third chapter deals with the methods I used in this research and why I chose them. I also present the problems I encountered and reflect on the influence that I believe these have had on my research results, accounting for the credibility of my research.

Next comes the empirical part of my thesis, starting with a description of my research village in the context chapter. In this fourth chapter, I describe the geographical context in which Kasuliyili lies, the people of Kasuliyili, and the social system in which they live. In this chapter I also discuss in short the situation concerning the traditional authority -momentarily in a state of chaos - which influences the social situation in nearly the whole Northern Region, thus also in Kasuliyili.

Chapter five is on the gender division of labour. In this chapter, I describe the activities of the men and women in Kasuliyili and the relationship that these activities have with the local natural resources. As the two seasons cause such different situations concerning the natural resource use activities of the people, I have divided the latter into

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nd activities during the wet season. In chapter six I
n of women in Kasuliyili in comparison to men in
order to find out what women's possibilities actually are. I analyse the image of women
in the society, their position in decision-making, which networks they have and how
they use them and what women's capabilities are to organise themselves. An analysis
of this shows which gender relations are prevalent and what influence they have on the
different access and control of the men and women.

I conclude my thesis by answering my central question: linking my empirical
data back to the theories with which I started my research. I also give some
recommendations for future organisations wanting to start up an environmental
management project with the involvement of women.

In this theoretical framework I present the theories on which my research is based. To find out how the access to and control over natural resources is gendered, I look into theories on gender and on access and control. I first discuss which interpretations of the theories I work with in my research and subsequently I operationalise the theories, making the research question researchable through the theories presented. I show how exactly I use the theories in my research. This takes form through two sub questions, each sub-question divided into four separate questions. The sub questions are answered in my empirical chapters and linked in the conclusion. The conclusion deals with the analysis of my research question.

As mentioned in the introduction, the access to and control over natural resources is socially differentiated. One way to understand this social differentiation is by analysing it through gender relations. There are various discussions on what gender is and how gender relations should be analysed. One aspect that is agreed on is that gender relations are relations of power. How to look at this power, however, is a much-disputed matter. In this chapter I look into the different discussions on what power is, how it works, and specifically how it works through gender relations. By distinguishing three dimensions in gender, an analytical tool is created through which the power in gender relations can be understood. The different dimensions are discussed elaborately, but I also emphasise that they are only of use when looked at in interaction with each other.

As gender relations are relations of power, the access to and control over natural resources can differ for men and women, but also between different men and between different women. I look into what access is and how it can be gained. To understand what control actually entails, I introduce the environmental entitlement framework. This framework focuses on how differences occur between people in the processes of gaining access to and control over natural resources. The entitlement framework can contribute to my understanding of control over natural resources through its emphasis on legitimacy and effectiveness.

By using a Gender Assessment Study (GAS) I operationalise my theories. The GAS has designed a four-dimensional profile, of which I have used two to form my sub-questions. I explain what the GAS actually entails and subsequently how I decided to use this study.

2.1 Gender and power

My central question focuses on how the access to and control over natural resources is gendered. I have chosen to look at gender instead of sex. In the following section I explain what the difference is between the two and why I chose to work with gender. To understand how gender relations work, these need to be placed in a context of power. Therefore, I subsequently introduce ideas on what power is, how it works, and finally how it works within gender relations. Power is a disputed concept. It has been the subject of much debate across the social sciences (Rowlands, 1997:9). In the section on

n power, making a distinction between sovereign and
ing what access and control involve in the following
section, the role of power within these terms becomes obvious.

2.1.1 Sex and gender

The concept of gender was introduced to show that besides a biological difference between men and women, there is also a social difference between the two sexes. Sex refers to biological categories (nature), while gender refers to the social differences (culture). The concept gender does not necessarily make a link between the sexes and their specific characteristics; it is not necessarily seen as a natural link. (Tonkens, 1998:42; Scott, 1991:16). Inequality between men and women can be seen from a social-cultural, instead of a merely biological, perspective (Brouns, 1995:31). All over the world, the categories –manø and –womanø are used. The interpretations of these categories differ per culture, but both categories are linked to specific expectations worldwide (Harding, 1987:17). These expectations can be analysed as socio-cultural patterns, instead of being naturally or biologically determined. In each society, men and women have different roles. Due to the different expectations and roles, we live as –menø and –womenø, we act as –menø and –womenø, and we observe the world around us through the eyes of –menø and –womenø (Brouns, 1995:32). This is decisive for our identity.

There is much discussion on the use of the term gender. Peopleøs identity is primarily shaped through history and culture instead of being merely biologically determined, but it is not always easy to distinguish this in practice. Sex and gender are closely related, and they influence each other. This is one of the reasons why some researchers opt not to work with this specific distinction (Moore, 1994:82). After considering this criticism, I still think that it is useful to make this distinction.

Gender creates possibilities that the concept sex does not. Within most societies it is impossible to speak of women as a group with common interests. Sex makes a clear distinction between men and women, as opposing each other. It does not have the ability to show the diversity among women, it can merely show an essentialist assumption that women as a group are suppressed. –Genderø emphasises that women are not a homogeneous group. Different groups of women have different needs and interests, and these can be conflicting. The use of gender stresses an entire system of relationships that may include sex, but is not determined by it. Gender, thus, emphasises the idea of equality and difference (Scott 1991:16). The term gender is also useful because it covers the social roles of both men and women. The interests and/or needs of men and women are based on these social roles and the power that works through them. Finally, it is important to speak of –*gender* and developmentø, because development influences both sexes differently (Mosse, 1994:7). Within my research I use Scottøs definition of gender: –*Gender is based on an integral connection between two propositions: gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power*ø (Scott, 1991:26). These power relations between the sexes within a given society become evident when the needs, interests, and problems of both men and women are examined (Willemse, 1991:14-16).

Gender is never absent, but neither can it ever be studied in isolation. It is always interrelated with other social aspects that can also create inequality, such as class and

s through a holistic framework is needed to be able to
ng women. Womenøs lives should be seen as a holistic
process, encompassing all aspects of their lives (Kabeer, 1994: 65).

2.1.2 Power

The power that works within these social relationships of which gender is an elementary
element can be distinguished into two kinds op power, sovereign and disciplinary
power. Foucault has contributed greatly by drawing attention to this distinction. He
defines sovereign power as power that is equal to the classical understanding of power -
it concerns power *over* people. If one person gains power, it is usually at the expense of
someone else. This has been the dominant understanding of power for a long time.
Disciplinary power is the power of all things that are ÷normalø to us in the world around
us. This kind of power makes people unquestionably accept what is portrayed as the
truth (Davids & Van Driel, 1999:413). Disciplinary power cannot be possessed, but
exists only when exercised. It can be found within the different discourses, in which
subjective ÷truthsø are created (Brouns, 1993:96,97). A discourse is *÷a network of
spoken or written laws that collectively form an object, creating õtruthsö and
õuntruthsöø* (Brouns, 1995:69). So, ÷truthsø are made within the different discourses.
Processes of power create these ÷truthsø Filling in the categorisation of ÷manø and
÷womanø is therefore unnatural. The categorisation is created within power relations,
finding its own meaning in each different historical and local context (Brouns, 1993:96-
98). Most discourses work simply because people agree on them. The meaning given to
the different truths are taken for granted, as if they are natural and pre-given. Discourses
influence how people mentally, physically, and emotionally experience the world
around them. Disciplinary power can be discovered when cases of deviation are
examined. I think that it is important to use this distinction when attempting to analyse
how gender and power relations work. It shows that power is a concept of processes
(Rowlands, 1997:12).

Another differentiation that is applied to the concept of power is based on power
being what an individual can do. This distinction divides power into four different
types. Firstly, it mentions the power over, which is equivalent to Foucaultøs sovereign
power. The three other types are the power to, the power with and the power from
within. Power can be seen as both the source of oppression, when it is abused, and the
source of emancipation, when it is used. ÷Power toø concerns generative or productive
power that creates new possibilities and actions without domination. People feel that
they have power when they solve a problem, understand how something works, or learn
a new skill. ÷Power withø refers to power that arises when people come together in a
group. The whole group feels stronger than people individually do when they try and
solve a problem together. Finally there is also ÷power from withinø, this is the *÷spiritual
strength and uniqueness that resides in each of us and makes us truly human. Its basis is
the self-acceptance and self-respect, which extend, in turn, to respect for and
acceptance of others as equals.ø* (Willemse, 1994: 233). This power can be what
enables an individual to take up certain roles, or to go against the flow of certain ideas,
even when there is a strong opposition. This extra distinction of power is interesting for
understanding the social political position of women, which influences whether women
do or do not have access to and control over natural resources.

overeign power and disciplinary power and a division can be that what an individual does with it are useful. The former helps analyse how people function in a world in which actor and structure are consistently linked, that is, where people are influence by, and in their turn influence the structure in which they live. I elaborate on this below. The latter is useful for showing what kind of sense of agency a person can have in this structured world.

2.1.3 How does power work?

An important aspect within the discourse on disciplinary power is the interaction between actor and structure. Foucault's idea of power is based on a positive reference to power. Power is no longer considered a possession, but as being something productive. Foucault speaks of men and women being subject in two positions, namely as the subjected and as creators. Subjected by the structure in which they live, but at the same time actors within this structure, having agency to change things. Although Foucault recognises the possibilities actors have within their structure, he believes that the structure eventually has more power over the actors. According to him, men and women are not different in relation to the structure, but are made so within the structure. The possibilities that men and women can have within the structure differ considerably, and therefore their positions differ to one another too (Brouns, 1993: 100).

Giddens presents the idea that agency and structure are constantly in interaction (Brouns, 1993:112). His emphasis lies on the actions and interactions of human subjects and thus does not focus on structure as something static, but as a dynamic category made up of collective human conduct. As Giddens (in Sztompka, 1993:197) states: *to study the structuration of a social system is to study the ways in which that system, via the application of generative rules and resources, and in the context of unintended outcomes, is produced and reproduced in interaction*. He goes on to explain that these rules and outcomes that actors use are reshaped by the process of using them: *the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices that constitute those systems*. Individuals might be subjected to power mechanisms, but at the same time they are its creators. Actors are limited in all their actions by the dominant discourse, but every actor has a will of their own and the possibility to follow this will. The actors and the discourses of the previous generations combined have formed the discourses of today. Looking at it from this perspective, both structure and actors can exercise power (Brouns, 1993:100). How this power is exercised is extremely complex.

The effect of the power executed by the dominant discourse can be found in the abovementioned 'truths' that have created certain aspects of masculinity and femininity; aspects that force men and women into certain positions (of oppression) (Davids & Van Driel, 1999:413). Discursive practices constrain people's room to move by setting boundaries around people's values, roles, and interpretations (Villarreal, 1994:67). Villareal speaks of the 'room to manoeuvre' that people have, i.e. their negotiating space. However, discourses in themselves need constant activation of actors; they need actors to use and rework the discourses. Thus, meaning and subjectivity are always in process, constantly changing.

According to Giddens, in the interaction between individuals, power never completely belongs to one individual. There is a mutual dependence (Brouns, 1993:112). The negotiation that takes place in the interaction of this power, which

never solely the will of merely one of these actors. …res of the other actors into consideration to be able to reach his or her own goal(s). From this point of view, a final outcome is *less* than the will of one person. On the other hand the final outcome is also *more* than the will of one person. The complexity of power relations is often hidden in the mainly unintended and unforeseen consequences. Set goals always have more consequences than initially intended (Villarreal, 1994:204). All acting parties possess at least some kind of power within the interaction. An actor in an oppressed position does not merely subject to the dominant power; he or she can also exercise power within this interaction. As noted above, disciplinary power cannot be possessed by one specific person. It merely exists in the interaction between people.

Power relations are recreated in this interaction. They need to be located in a dynamic process of ÷wieldingø and ÷yieldingø and can only exist when others recognise them as such. The wants of the power wielder can be influenced and shaped by those in ÷subordinated positionsø. To yield power means a subjective identification with the norm; the other is regarded as being powerful (Villarreal, 1994:8). From this point of view, women are not merely victims of oppression, but have an active role in their own subordination. It is a process of interpretations. This implies that women are, for example, not necessarily oppressed, but that their oppression is socially constructed (Davids & Van Driel, 1999:413).

2.1.4 A framework for analysing gender relations ó a three dimensional look at gender

As discourses change, interpretations of gender can also change. When interpretations of gender change, a womanøs room to manoeuvre can be enlarged. To be able to understand the room to manoeuvre, in which power is exercised, it is necessary to investigate the different aspects of gender. This can be accomplished by dividing gender into several dimensions. By introducing various dimensions, it also becomes clear that this ÷room to manoeuvreø can differ for different men and women. The use of various dimensions, however, needs to be relevant. This means that it needs to show the interaction between peopleøs (men and women) behaviour and characters and the context in which they live; the interaction between actors and structure. The first dimension concerns people, the second the context, and the third again concerns people. The relationship between the different dimensions becomes visible when looking at this interaction between actors and structure (Tonkens, 1998:48,49). Actors constantly need to be aware of their position and to negotiate it in regard to these dimensions. In this figurative negotiation lies the scope individuals have to be able to influence and wield power (Davids & Van Driel, 1999:415). These dimensions can be seen as the boundaries of men and womenøs room to manoeuvre. So by looking at these dimensions we can obtain insight into the amount of room to manoeuvre different men and women have.

There is much discussion on what the dimensions are and how they should be understood. Hardingøs theoretical framework on this subject has been very influential. Her model seemed to me the most logic, but I do not agree with all her interpretations. By using her model I distinguish three dimensions, the symbolic, the institutional, and the individual. Within the symbolic dimension a norm is created with ideologies, values, and views of how men and women should behave. The power of that which is taken for

...ens, 1998:44). It is a dimension of symbols, ...ect world, and stereotypes (Davids & Van Driel, 1999:415). Examples are Eve and Mary as symbols of women in the western Christian tradition. Harding (1986 in Tonkens, 1998:44) speaks of assigning ‗dualistic gender metaphors to observable dichotomies that often actually have little to do with sex‗. Often these metaphors symbolise contradictions, such as the virgin and the whore, but also categories between men and women, such as intellectual and emotional. Central issues in this dimension are, thus, the symbols of gender that are important within a certain culture, the representations for these symbols, and how and in which contexts they are invoked (Scott, 1991:26). Each symbol or stereotype is connected to a certain undertone, giving it a specific meaning in a society.

Within the second dimension, the institutional or organisational dimension, the symbolic dimension is put into practice in the form of laws, organisations, and institutions (Davids & Van Driel, 1999:415). These are structures in daily social practices through which gender is constructed. Examples are kinship systems and the sexual division of labour (Van Eerdewijk, 1998: 28). These structures can be divided into formal and informal structures, formal and informal institutions. I look into what they actually entail in the following section.

An individual gives meaning to his or her own identity within the third dimension, the individual dimension. Within this dimension, the differences between how gender relations ‗should be‗ and how they actually are is shown. The way that men and women fulfil their subject position, within this dimension, is related to the room to manoeuvre that they have. What is their position and what possibilities does this give them for deviating from the norm. An important aspect of this dimension is thus the earlier mentioned agency. Men and women are actors who make decisions on how to shape their lives in relation to gender. Analysing at this dimension can help show differences between women.

The individual dimension is important, as it shows how women act differently within the context of the symbolic dimension and the institutional dimension, i.e. how they manipulate and rework the context in their own way. And through these deviations, representations of gender can be changed, influencing the room to manoeuvre that men and women have. Often women adjust themselves and their behaviours to the traditional roles and expectations that go along with these roles, simply to survive in the community in which they live. Thus, they adapt to the expectations and structures in order to survive; giving into norms and values, which may not necessarily be to their advantage, merely to get what they strive for; yielding to power in order to eventually be able to wield a certain degree of power themselves. From this perspective, the interaction of the gender dimensions is identical to the disciplinary context in which the actor has agency (Davids & Van Driel, 1999:415).

2.1.5 The institutional dimension

Many different areas of study are interested in institutions. According to the school of new institutional economics, institutions are seen as the rules that guide behaviour. Following North (1990:3-5), if institutions are the rules of the game in society, then organisations can be seen as the players, or groups of individuals bound together by some common purpose. However, many institutions are not manifested in an organisation, such as money, markets, and marriage. Institutions should not be seen as

r as *regularised patterns of behaviour between* *that emanate from underlying structures or sets of* *rules in use*ø (Leach et al., 1999:226). These rules are constantly made and remade through the practices of social actors. They are dynamic, changing over time just as social actors do. Institutions need people to ÷investø in them if they are to be maintained. An institution only has meaning because people give it meaning. In time, if social actors change their practices within the individual dimension, institutional change may occur. Looking at the interaction between the three dimensions thus helps to understand this change. If social actors are dissatisfied, they can stride to modify and re-shape these institutions and thus contribute to the well-being of the people, as mentioned above (Leach et al. 1999:234). But just as social action produces rules, it is also regulated by rules. Meaning that these ÷unrulyø practices, which go against the existing rules, are in turn bound by various sets of informal rules. What certain actors do, living under one set of institutional arrangements, may leave a legacy that influences the natural resources available to become endowments for actors in a next generation (Leach et al., 1999:239).

Leach et al. (1999:226) distinguish formal from informal institutions. It is important to make this distinction, as otherwise the risk is big that only the formal institutions, the most obvious ones, are examined. Formal institutions can be seen as ÷*rules that require exogenous enforcement by a third-party organization*ø. They imply standardisation, which means the rules are applied in the same way in different cases, and statutarisation, which implies that rules are documented in a law. Formal institutions are, for example, legal frameworks, macro economic policies or political regimes. Informal institutions, however, ÷*may be endogenously enforced; they are* *upheld by mutual agreements among social actors involved, or by relations of power* *and authority between the actors*ø (Leach et al., 1999:226). Examples of informal institutions are traditions, customs, and religious beliefs. Especially due to the embedded character of these informal institutions, the above-mentioned institutional change may be a slow and path-dependent process, even if formal institutions change quickly. Peopleøs deviating action therefore takes a long time to actually change things in the two other dimensions.

Different actors have different possibilities due to their different social positions. Institutions can shape and reproduce relations of unequal power and authority. Power relations and the different meanings that various institutions carry for different actors are essential (Leach et al., 1999:238). People rely on different institutions to support their claims to environmental goods and services. Different actors also have different possibilities for deviating from the norm. Therefore, it is important to understand how this institutional dimension interacts with the other two dimensions, as this framework is grounded in a theory of power. To understand how the practices of the different actors are embedded and at the same time help shape institutions, power needs to be looked at from an actor-structure approach, in which agency and structure are constantly in interaction. If certain institutions can be identified as supporting the interest of certain social actors, or as contributing to ÷desiredø environmental changes, they can be targeted by policy strategies of institution building or support.

When looking at the access to and control over natural resources it is therefore important to take into consideration that society is divided and crosscut by social difference. As a community is built up of multiple identities, the people often have diverse and sometimes conflicting values and resource priorities, and do not always have shared interests. Often these conflicting values are struggled and bargained over. In this bargaining, power relations are prevalent, subsequently causing different social actors to have different degrees of access to and control over natural resources. Furthermore, communities should not be analysed as being static, rule-bound entities. The different people in a community each actively monitor, interpret, and shape the world around them. While certain daily activity serves to reproduce structures, rules, and institutions, other action has agency, that is, the ability to change things. It serves to change the system and perhaps, in time, create new rules (Leach et al., 1997:10-12; 1999:230).

2.2.1 Access

Before exploring how access and control takes place, it is important to understand what they actually entail. In this section I look into access and in the following I deal with control. According to Ribot (1998 in Nemurundwe, 2003:41) access can be defined as the freedom or ability to obtain or make use of natural resources. Theoretically, it is an individual or a certain household that gains access, but the access is gained in a context of community institutions and relations. Ostrom (1992 in Nemurundwe, 2003:41,42) defines access as a right to enter a defined physical area and enjoy non-subtractable benefits. This right implies an acknowledged claim that society supports through law, custom, and convention. Ability, however, is dependent upon a person's capacity to extract benefits. Access to natural resources evolves over time and is influenced by the character of the resources, their availability, and the types of uses. Crow and Joy (2004:4,5) identify five different types of access to water. They talk of ‑modes of access' The five modes of access to water are: private ownership of land endowed with safe water sources, common property access (access via communal rights), open access (unregulated access), state-backed provision (local or national projects), and market access (purchase of water).

As local communities are dynamic and internally differentiated, power relations are important. People have different priorities and natural resource claims and they have different power to get what they want (Leach et al., 1999:227). However, resource availability and access are also often interconnected. Conflicts over access often intensify when the resources in question become scarce.

Whether people can or cannot take care of themselves or increase their assets depends on this access to resources and their ability to control and use resources effectively. Since pre-colonial times, whether or not Africans could gain access to land, labour, and capital for agricultural production depended on both purchasing powers as well as on the membership and status in various social institutions. This status and one's social identity depended on a combination of ascribed and achieved qualifications (Berry, 1989: 41-43).

Access to resources still depends on social status or membership in a group, but also on the positions that people fulfil in the community, implying different roles and

with different social identities have different access. ...ining and controlling natural resources through their multiple, interrelated identities (Crow & Roy, 2004:9). Thus, studying social relations are a way to understand the access to and control over natural resources by men and women. But as Kabeer (1994:54-57) emphasises, it is important to not merely look at the differences between men and women, but also at the differences between men and women from different class, ethnic, caste, and religious backgrounds; not seeing merely one of these aspects as the determining principle of an individual's identity or social position. Not all women have equal access to natural resources. *Class and caste; land owning versus the landless; tenant and owner; life cycle stage; where there is polygyny, the marriage order; where a female heads a household or part of a joint headed household, or male-headed; and household composition ó all are sources of variance which may be greater than their common interest as women* (Meinzen-Dick et al., 1997 in Crow & Joy, 2004:8). These aspects are important factors in determining the difference between women's rights and responsibilities under the same official and/or customary laws (Edmunds & Rocheleau, 1997:1356). A person's income and wealth is also still of influence, as it is important to strengthen social relations which in turn effect the terms on which people gain access to resources (Berry, 1989: 46).

Edmunds and Rocheleau (1997:1355-1358) introduce four dimensions through which access can be studied. Although their focus is on trees, it can be elaborated to other natural resources. They acknowledge that their list is not exhaustive, but it does make clear that it is necessary to look beyond women's lack of formal rights of access. The first dimension focuses on the separation of women and men's activity and authority in space. This will change the focus to *de facto* rights based on customary norms and everyday practices. It will thus uncover and help recognise the rural landscapes in which women influence relatively more control over natural resources management decisions and from which they are more likely to derive personal benefits.

However, these spaces are not always easy to identify. The second dimension they identify focuses on relationships. Women's rights generally depend on a relationship to the individual or group exercising *ownership* rights of disposal and exclusion as well as practical control. In places where the customary law is still dominant, women can gain access through calling on their male leaders. The third dimension regards the function of the natural resources. This function influences the interpretation and enforcement of gendered property rights over resources. Certain responsibilities thus give a person user rights to resources to be able to fulfil their tasks. Finally, the variability of access over time is the fourth dimension they mention. Sometimes resources are only used by certain people in certain periods, for example the rainy season. In the other periods, other people might have access to these resources. I believe that the distinction of these dimensions is useful as it not only shows that, both formal and informal, relationships are important, but also that the activities of the people and the relationship that these people have with their natural resources influence the access they have.

An emphasis is made on distinguishing intersections and connections between different *levels and spheres of society* and between individuals and institutions, detecting the power that works through these relations in making a difference in the access to and control over natural resources. The priorities of the people themselves and the relationship they have with their natural resources are also emphasised.

al entitlement approach

ntrol over natural resources is through the extended environmental entitlement framework. The ‑entitlement approachø was introduced by Amartya Sen. He wanted to explain why people starve when there is a surplus of food. He indicated that this phenomenon is a result of a collapse in peopleøs means of command over food. Sen wanted to examine how different people transform their endowments, which he defines as *‑a personøs initial ownershipø*, into entitlements, described as *‑the set of alternative commodity bundles that a person can command in a society using the totality of rights and opportunities that he or she facesø*, in order to improve their well-being or capabilities (Sen, 1981:46; 1984:497; Leach et al., 1999:232). His emphasis was on the centrality of power and on enforceable rights. His arguments were not necessarily new, but their manner and timing attracted a lot of attention; they provide a way to look at the distribution of benefits within a society, and so they raise, or can be connected to, many other issues (Gasper, 1993:5,28). He did not intend to make an all-encompassing entitlement theory, as he recognises that the range is enormous and too complex to be captured in one theory. Senøs entitlement framework has been widely applied and modified. In most cases, it is not used for the analysis of famine or hunger, but instead to describe issues such as patterns of distribution, social power, and environmental impact (Gasper, 1993: 10-16).

Leach, Mearns, and Scoones (1999) developed an alternative to Senøs entitlement approach, namely the environmental entitlement approach. According to them, Senøs framework is useful, but too restrictive. Leach et al. focus on how people gain both their endowments and their entitlements, instead of focusing solely on the transformation to entitlements. Sen does not look beyond the market place for ways of gaining access to and control over resources either. Leach et al. also broaden their focus to other natural resources than food alone. Finally, they elaborate the ‑rightø over natural resources. Sen presented a fixed set of rights, mainly derived from formal laws, whereas Leach et al. include a variety of dynamic rules, codes, customs, and behaviour.

To make up for these shortcomings they introduce an ‑extended environmental entitlement frameworkø This entitlement approach answers the questions of how endowments and entitlements arise and how this is socially differentiated. They define endowments as *‑the rights and resources that social actors haveø* and entitlements as *‑legitimate effective command over alternative commodity bundlesø* (Following Gaspers 1993). Environmental entitlements refer to *‑alternative sets of utilities derived from environmental goods and services over which social actors have legitimate effective command and which are instrumental in achieving well-beingø* Utilities can include direct uses in the form of commodities, such as food, water, or fuel; the market value of such resources, or the rights to them and the utilities derived from environmental services, such as pollution sinks or properties of the hydrological cycle. Entitlements enhance peopleøs capabilities. In other words, what people achieve or become with their entitlements. An example of this is firewood: command over fuel (entitlement) derived from rights over trees (endowment) gives warmth or the ability to cook (capability), and so contributes to well-being (Leach et al. 199:233).

The definition of environmental entitlements emphasises both the legitimacy and the effectiveness of command. These are the two aspects that I have used to identify control. ‑Legitimateø refers to both command sanctioned by statutory law and by customary law. This means that command should be authorised by constitutional laws, customary rights, social norms, and all other patterns of behaviour. ‑Effective

actually able to use the resources over which they are two issues that show that this cannot always be taken for granted. Firstly, resource claims are often in conflict with each other. Due to existing power relations, some actorsø claims are likely to overrule those of others. Secondly, certain social actors may not be able to mobilize certain endowments that are necessary in order to make effective use of others (Leach, Mearns & Scoones, 1999:233). For example, if women do have access to land and to work on it, but do not have the money to buy fertilizers or pesticides, they do not have actual control over their land. My method for examining control is thus focused on environmental entitlements. As resource priorities are diverse and often conflicting, and thus struggled over, entitlements can be seen as an outcome of negotiations among social actors, involving power relationships and debate over meaning (Leach et al., 1999:235).

Within the environmental entitlement approach, two processes are examined: laying bare the processes of people gaining endowments and entitlements. I concern myself here with the latter, which takes place by analysing how endowments are transformed into utilities, thus examining who has actual control over which resources and how these are used to provide a set of utilities. During this process, institutions play an important role, influencing, directly or indirectly, which social actors do and which do not have control over local resources. The access and control that men and women have regarding natural resources influence the uses to which resources are put and how they are managed, gradually changing the landscape around them.

Certain resource use practices, result in ecological outcomes that are harmful for others, while other resource uses are more mutually compatible. It is necessary to first make conflicts and complementarities explicit in a research before exploring any co-management options for natural resource management. Thus, an understanding of social differentiation and the institutions that underlie them is essential for understanding the access to and control over natural resources (Leach et al. 1997:226, 227).

2.3 The operationalisation

In the introduction, I mention that I use a Gender Assessment Study (GAS) to operationalise my research question through the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework on which my research is based consists of gender and access and control. They come together in a framework of power. How the access to and control over natural resources is gendered is, therefore, a question of power. In this research I look at the different forms of power, these being the power between actor and structure and the power that increases a sense of agency in the actors, focusing on gender relations. The GAS serves as a handle for operationalising these theories.

2.3.1 The Gender Assessment study (GAS)[2]

The GAS is a planning instrument made to assist development planners and policy makers to include gender issues in the planning of mainstream projects. The GAS has been developed to judge whether a project idea or proposal is in line with the women and development objective and to give recommendations for improvement (7). My

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[2] All the information in this section is taken from: DGIS (1994). *Gender Assessment Study: a guide for Policy and Staff*. Den Haag: Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken.

ess to and control over natural resources and services is gendered. By using a GAS, I have operationalised this research question. It has given me a guideline for looking into different gender aspects that influence the differences in access to and control over natural resources between men and women in a context of power.

The GAS consists of three components: analysis of the target group, of the implementing institutions, and of the project ideas or proposals. For my operationalisation, I only use the first component, an analysis of the target group. I explain how this is done in the following section. The objective of the analysis of the target group, according to the GAS, is to gain insight into gender relations in the communities and in the opinions of especially the women regarding the project intervention in question. I involve no specific projects in my research. I use the GAS to find out how the gender relations in Kasuliyili are and what influence these have on the access and control concerning natural resources. The target group is the people of Kasuliyili, and in specific the women of Kasuliyili. Following the above-discussed theories, it is important that the women are not seen as one homogenous group within this analysis, as women from different age groups and social classes have different possibilities in gaining access to and control over natural resources. By using the three dimensional framework to analyse gender, I show that women do not all have the same possibilities or the same opinions, meaning that their access and control can differ.

The GAS works with four profiles, namely the position of women in terms of the gender division of labour, gender related access to and control over resources, the socio-political dimension of the position of women, and the influencing factors. According to the GAS, it is necessary to consider these four profiles in order to be able to understand the gender relations in a community. Within each profile, men and women/boys and girls are compared. I have included the influencing factors in my context chapter. The second profile, namely that of the gender-related access to and control over resources, is dealt with within the other two remaining profiles. As the stories of the men and women are told, the access and control they have over the different resources such as labour, capital, and farming equipment becomes apparent. The influence of the access to and control over resources are therefore a part of the analysis of both the gender division of labour and of the socio-political positions of women.

2.3.2 The sub questions
This research is based on the central question:

In what way is the access to and control over natural resources and services and the benefits derived from these gendered?

To discover how the access to and control over natural resources is gendered, I look into the positions that different men and women fulfil in the society and what their possibilities to manoeuvre are within these positions. This gives insight in whether they have access and control, how they gained this, and how they can possibly gain it in the future. By analysing this through the above-mentioned three-dimensional framework of gender, the power relations become clear. Using the GAS profiles has led to two sub-questions through which I discover these positions and possibilities attached to them.

ositions that they fulfil in the society, laying bare the ...d women want and that they have:

1. What is the gender division of labour?

a.   What are the productive activities of men and women?
b.   What are the reproductive activities of men and women?
c.   What are the community activities of men and women?
d.   In how far are all these activities natural resource use activities?

The division of labour categories was introduced by Moser (1989:1801) to draw attention to the great variety of demands on women's time in low-income households in development countries. She speaks of the TRF – the ='triple role formulation'. The productive activities are those activities in which goods and services are produced that are eventually meant for consumption and trade. Reproductive activities involve the care and maintenance of the household, for example, activities such as collecting firewood and water, preparing food, and bearing and caring for the children. Finally, the community activities are those activities in which people collectively organise social events and services. Organising celebrations and ceremonies and communal labour groups are examples of people coming together with a collective purpose (DGIS, 1994:21). The focus here is on all activities, but I emphasise those activities that are in relation with the natural resources.

When looking at the gender division of labour, I concentrate on both what the women ='should be' doing and what they actually do. The emphasis here lies on the latter, as the former is discussed more elaborately within the following sub question. I examine what women actually do by looking into three dimensions of the division of labour that Kabeer has introduced, namely what is produced, who produces it and how it is produced. This is important, as it makes clear what the different purposes of the activities are, through which different activities the goals are reached, and finally the hierarchies of authority, power, and values that these different labour processes embody. Especially this latter is important in revealing the social differentiation of the access to natural resources (Kabeer, 1994: 276). All labour activities can be analysed in terms of relationships that carry quite different meanings of authority, control, recognition, and payment for the different actors involved. By finally analysing all the activities through the three dimensions of gender, I am able to understand these processes of power, which explain how the access and control is gendered. Especially the differences between the women become clear.

The sexual division of labour is especially important in order to discover the access to natural resources, as the different relationships with the natural resources are discovered, these being people's responsibilities and thus, often conflicting, priorities. The different spaces of men and women's activities and authority, the functions of the natural resources, and the time space uses of the natural resources are shown. This also illustrates the differences between the various women. Moreover, by looking at these different activities and especially by analysing the choices that are made, much can also be revealed over the control over natural resources.

on the possibilities of women to be able to gain access
es:

2. What is women's socio-political position in society, and more specific in natural resource related issues?

a. What image does society have of women and what is women's self image?
b. What is women's position in decision making in
    -      the household
    -      the community
c. What networks does a woman have in comparison to a man and what are their capacities to organise themselves?

Individuals - men and women - can have different resources priorities and different values. These are often conflicting and pervade social life and can be struggled and bargained over. How this bargaining actually occurs can be learnt by asking the above-mentioned sub question. Looking at the social political position of women reveals struggles and bargaining processes of power, which can subsequently be analysed. This is essential for understanding how the access to and control over natural resources is gendered. The different kinds of power can be analysed with the different categories of power: power over, power to, power with, and power within. However, these different kinds of power are not easily separated, as they are in constant interaction. The constant interaction between actors and structures also becomes clear as the different questions within the sub question are answered. I have looked at the agency that women may have to strive for what they want.

Images
Within the first question I look at the image that society has of women and subsequently how women see themselves. 'Society' is the people of Kasuliyili and thus their general view of women is discussed in this section. The emphasis is on the relationship that women are expected to have with the local natural resources, but by looking at the other symbolic views of women, power relations can also be discovered. The second part of this first question focuses on how women look at their ability to articulate, their self-confidence, their work, knowledge, skills, their dreams for now and for the future, etc. It shows diversity, laying bare the inner strength of women, the power they feel from within to be able to reach their goals. Comparing and analysing their general image and their self-images provides important information on the symbolic dimension and its value in the community, but also on the individual dimension, as different women value the symbols differently and work with and around them differently.

Decision-making power
By looking at women's position in decision making in comparison to men's in both the household and the community, the possibilities that women have, through wielding and yielding power, for reaching their goals can be analysed.
       Gender power within the household is very difficult to understand, due to its embeddedness in the intimate arena of the family. Quoting Connell (1987 in Kabeer,

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are relationships so extended in time, so intensive in [w]eaving economics, emotion, power and resistance. Thus, it is not easy to examine how the decision-making processes in the household actually take place. This process should be seen in relation to a web of rights and obligations (Moore, 1988 in Kabeer 1994: 95).

The household has been studies in different ways. Two different approaches have played an important role in analysing household bargaining. The first approach views households as units of altruistic decision-making and the second as a site in which bargaining and conflict takes place. I work with the latter, as this definition provides room for inequities between individual members, and thus shows a greater diversity in decision-making behaviour. The power working in these bargaining processes needs to be analysed as both a product of structure and as an outcome of individual inequalities in power, privilege, and resources. By focusing on the earlier explored gender divisions of labour, on resources, and on responsibilities among household members, the existing power relations in the household become clear.

An important question is why and in which form conflicts arise between household members. *Detailed examination of intra-household relations suggest that, since women and men are differently positioned in relation to the division of resources and responsibilities within the household, they are likely to have different, and often conflicting, priorities in production, distribution or both. However, inasmuch as households can be seen as risk-mitigating mechanisms, it also suggests that the actual management of this conflict, the extent to which it is suppressed or overt, will reflect the structure of risk faced by different members should household co-operation break down* (Kabeer, 1994:127). In sub-Saharan Africa, men and women often have separate but interdependent responsibilities in production, and separate but interdependent obligations to their families. Conflict is often expressed openly, rather than secretly, and arises out of difference in the individual priorities and interest that household members pursue (Kabeer, 1994:130).

I therefore look into the bargaining processes and the bargaining positions of the different men and women within the household. I emphasise a difference between monogamous and polygynous households. Within the community, I especially look into the status and membership of the household or individuals of the household, which give different men and women different possibilities, and consequently different access and control.

Networks and group forming
The possibilities that women have to both make networks and gain membership in groups show how women interact with others and what they can accomplish by doing this. Within the different theories, these relations that people have with each other and with the institutions is emphasised. Especially when looking at control, through the extended environmental entitlement framework, the importance of networks and group forming is obvious. The legitimacy and effectiveness is often secured through social relations. These relations can range from the family arena to the institutions in the village. An example is how women have more difficulty in building up a strong relationship/network with the chief and the elderly men in the village, and therefore they may have fewer possibilities for gaining control over certain natural resources.

analysing the interaction of the three dimensions of within the chapter.

2.4 Concluding remarks

Discussing the operationalisation through a GAS has shown how the above-discussed theories are used within my research. It has become apparent that the three-dimensional gender analysis framework has a central position in my research. Through this framework, the different kinds of power are revealed. At the end of my thesis I look back on this theoretical approach to power relations, linking them with the empirical data found in the chapters four to six. The analysis made here shows how the access to and control over natural resources is gendered.

The institutions are not mentioned explicitly in the two sub questions, but they do fulfil an important part in the answering of these sub questions, as they are partly what determine the room to manoeuvre that the men and women have in being able to gain access and control. In chapter four they will be introduced, as the institutions are part of the context of a village. The relationship they hold with the people is discovered in chapters five and six.

In chapter five I look into the gender division of labour, discovering the responsibilities of the men and women, their activities and their priorities concerning natural resources. This relationship that men and women have with their natural resources is especially interesting for discovering the access to these resources. In chapter six there is more emphasis on the control over these natural resources to which men and women gain access. Control is important for the access to be able to be used optimal. The socio-political position of women is important in being able to gain control, and this is different for the different women.

In the next chapter, chapter three, I discuss the methods I used to examine how the access to and control over natural resources and services and the benefits derived from them is gendered. Subsequently, I shortly describe the situation in which I conducted my research and the influences I believe these may have had on my results. Finally, I also discuss my view on the validity of my research. By discussing all these issues, a clear picture is given of how the sub questions have been put into practice and finally how they lead to the empirical data that I evaluate in chapters four to six.

This chapter shows how I put my research question into practice in Kasuliyili. It begins with a general outline of my research methods, which I specify in the discussion on the different methods used for the various sub questions. As interviewing is one of my main methods I elaborate on my interviews, discussing who I interviewed, how and under which criteria my respondents were chosen. I conclude the chapter by discussing problems and limitations during the research. I first describe how I experienced doing a research in a rural community in Ghana and then discuss the problems I encountered which should be taken into account when weighing the credibility of my research. I believe that despite my problems and limitations, my research is trustworthy and reliable, and therefore useful. I am able to reflect on the problems and limitations and consider them when drawing my conclusions.

In this research I used a triangulation of research methods. My main research method was interviewing. I conducted fifty-eight interviews with fifty-five different people. In appendix A a list of these respondents can be found[3]. Other methods I used, which are dealt with within this chapter, are observation, participatory observation, informants, informal conversations, interaction with organisations, and documented materials.

### 3.1 Kasuliyili... more than just an exotic name

Before leaving for Ghana, I decided to conduct my research in a village. In the majority of the cases, the people in the villages are more directly dependent on, and thus more directly involved with, the conditions of the natural resources. When I arrived in Tamale, the capital of the Northern Region, I was given a choice between four villages. These were the four villages in which my contact person was active with her project, the Baptist Child Development Project (BCDP)[4]. In all four villages, the majority of the people are subsistent farmers. Most of them are dependent on the local natural resources

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[3] Within my thesis I use this list to refer to specific respondents. I will refer to them by using numbers, e.g. (I:23) refers to the respondent found under number 23 on the list in Appendix A. 'I' stands for interview. When the respondent's details are relevant for the context I will also add these in the text. In the other cases I merely refer to the list. In this list a number of basic details concerning the respondent can be found. Information collected from informants will be referred to as 'Inf.' The list of informants can also be found in Appendix A.

[4] The Baptist Child Development Project (BCDP) is an organisation in Tamale that started up in 1999. The project is situated in Kasuliyili and three other neighbouring villages. The BCDP is trying to expand to four new villages. Its primary focus is on the schooling and health situation for the children. It has set up a sponsorship programme in which people in Canada (via the Christian Children's fund of Canada) sponsor a specific child. The children are selected randomly. The project is directly linked to the First Baptist Church in Tamale. They operate with a Christian philosophy. The project has also set up a Micro Economic (credits) Development programme for women (MED). The BCDP has sponsored other development projects in the village, such as the construction and rehabilitation of the dam. The BCDP is the only NGO *active* in the village at the moment, but others have previously worked here. I have no exact information on these other organisations.

order each other. After Wantugu, Kasuliyili was the approximately 150 compounds and 2,531 inhabitants (Asedam, et al., 1999:52). At the time of my arrival, the people in Kasuliyili were struggling with their water situation. There was a hut available for me here to stay in without inconveniencing anyone.

I decided to stay in the village itself, instead of travelling there from Tamale all the time. This would give me an opportunity to get to know people and gain a deeper understanding of how their lives are organised. One of my main research methods was thus participatory observation. I tried to integrate into my host family as much as possible. We slept together in the yard, swept the yard in the morning, fetched water together, went to the market, visited people, participated in funerals and weddings; too much to mention really. As I actually lived with these people, I could, to a certain degree, experience their joys, their sorrows, their worries, and their anger. I had the opportunity to see what was going on in the village from the view of the people of Kasuliyili. Sometimes I would just go along to certain activities, merely observing instead of participating. For example, I would walk down to the dam, from which the people of Kasuliyili fetch their water, to observe how the women go about this, that is, to observe their interaction with their water facilities. I had heard of certain rules that were applied to the use of the dam and wanted to see how the women worked with these rules.
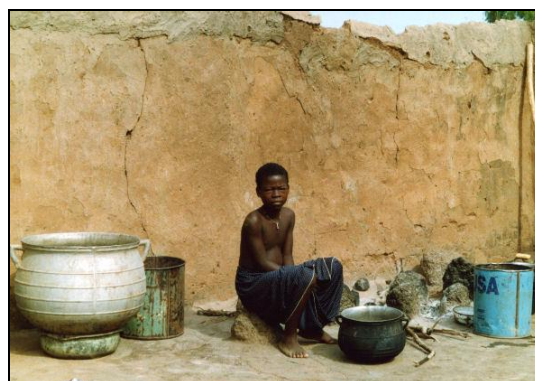
Living in a Ghanaian community

Making friends in the community, or in the surrounding communities, helped me to understand my surroundings better. During long bike rides or trips to Tamale to pick up my photos or to visit people, many subjects would be dealt with. Especially my conversations with Jamira, an unmarried twenty-year old woman living in Wantugu, two villages away from Kasuliyili, helped me realize certain things that I would otherwise not have understood. She, for example, helped me to understand how the young women look at the future, what their dreams are, and how they try to realise their dreams. As I was not interviewing her, but merely conversing in an informal setting, I was able to comment on what she said, which helped us to understand each other better. We would also talk about women's interaction with the local natural resources and discuss the workload and the problems. We would often compare our lives and talk about what the different aspects in them mean for us. This gave me more insight on what the (natural resource use) activities actually mean for her and thus for many others too.

venty-four year old man, also explained many things ound information. We would talk about subjects concerning my research, often discussing the family structure of the local tribe and what it means or could mean to both men and women. We would also discuss personal matters, such as the struggles he endured with his father or the relationship between his mother and his father. Conversations like these gave me so much more background information. I was therefore better able to interpret the answers that people gave me during interviews, that is, what their answers actually meant in their context. I would sometimes find out during these conversations that I had been interpreting things incorrectly. A simple example is about animals. In the beginning, I asked people whether they owned animals and they would only ever mention the goats and the sheep. In a conversation with Wimbedu I found out that I had to ask specifically about poultry and cattle if I wanted to know about all the animals they owned. This was quite an eye-opener.

These two people were also very honest to me on my appearance, always telling me when I was acting strange, strange in their eyes that is. For example, at a certain point one of them condoled me on the recent death in my family; I had been wearing a necklace with a black stone on it, which to them means that someone in my family had just died. Sometimes I would ask them a question or make a remark and they would just laugh at me. For example, we were discussing women's position in the household and I mentioned that I believed that men and women were equal and that under no circumstance should a man hit his wife. My viewpoint was quite funny in their eyes. Other times I was shocked by certain things that they told me, which they talked about without any hint of embarrassment. For example the way they elaborately told me all the rituals that a Muslim has to undertake, before, during and after sex and what the reasons for these rituals are. Because of these things, I had much more reflection on who I was in this rural community and how the local people see me, but also on who they are and what their frame of reference is. This also helped me with my interviewing, as I learnt more and more about what I could and could not ask, how I should and should not behave.

3.1.1 Interviews

Within my research I used a triangulation of research methods. My main method was interviewing. In the period that I was in Kasuliyili, I did fifty-eight interviews with fifty-five people[5], thirty-six women and nineteen men. I interviewed forty-eight people on their own situation and seven people on their knowledge as experts on certain subjects[6]. During the interviews I used several Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques. In six interviews I did an activity mapping, in fourteen interviews I made a farm mapping, and in eleven interviews a venn diagram, showing the networks that the respondents use for accomplishing things. What these PRA methods entail and why I used them is explained in section 3.1.2. As most of my respondents spoke Dagbani, I had an interpreter to assist me during the interviews.

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[5] See appendix A. Here I have included more exact details on my respondents, looking at sex, age, and the PRA techniques I used in the interviews.
[6] In most of these interviews personal data was also looked at and sometimes I would ask about their own views or experiences.

d I selected the respondents together. It was good to li, as he knew all the people. I would generally tell Majeed what kind of person I wanted to interview and he would select a specific person. For example, I would instruct Majeed to select a woman from a lower social class. If the person we had selected were not at home, he would quickly think of someone else who was suitable. This often meant that we would end up in one of the neighbouring houses. My own criteria for selection were based on my wish to obtain a representative picture of the community. I therefore tried to make sure that I chose a wide variety of people. The most important criterion was that I wanted to interview both men and women. Furthermore, I made sure that I interviewed both young and old people, people from different social classes, high positioned people, and people with a low position in the community.

These were my main criteria, but sometimes I would make a more specific choice, for example, for a first, second, or third wife or someone from a specific area of the village. Moreover, I made sure that I varied on the most important criteria concerning the subject in question. Below I explain how I did this exactly when gathering information for the sub questions. Sometimes I would choose certain individuals that I wanted to interview. I tried to interview all the representatives of the main formal institutions, for example, the Chief and the *Wulana*[7] from the Chieføs Palace, the *Magajia*[8] who is the womenøs leader of the village, the Head Imam of the Mosque, and the leader of the Church. Sometimes Majeed would suggest interviewing a certain person, either because the person would be able to tell me a lot or because this was a way of showing respect. Before moving to the village, I went to show respect to the Chief and to explain to him what I was planning to do in the village. Everyone in the village soon knew who I was and what I had come to do. During my interviews, I would always explain again, just to avoid any misunderstandings, who I was and what I was doing there[9].

I conducted most of my interviews using a semi-structured interview guide. Before an interview, I would make a topic list, and sometimes I would also have specific questions prepared. In most of my interviews I would ask my respondents questions on various subjects, but sometimes I would limit this to certain questions concerning one subject or part of a sub question. For example, I did an interview with both a man and two women purely on what they thought a woman should be like, on differences between the women in the community, and on having or not having co-wives. I used an interview schedule, but the interview would not always go as expected and we would sometimes get off track. If this happened, I would generally try to get the interview back on track. However, I also always tried to give my respondents the opportunity to tell me about their interests, both with regard to the subjects we were talking about as well as regarding other subjects. By doing this I think I have a more complete picture of what they actually consider important, in stead having them comment on what I thought that they consider important.

The majority of my respondents were illiterate, so consequently all my interviews were face-to-face. Because of this, there was a lot of interaction. During my

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[7] This is a certain leadershipøs position in the village. In chapter 4.4 this is explained more elaborately.
[8] Idem
[9] I must admit that I think that some people probably still wonder what I was doing there. The concept of a young unmarried woman leaving her parents and coming all the way to Ghana often went beyond their comprehension.

ld would often join the respondent in answering the [...] discussing the subjects. For example, during one interview the women sitting with my respondent discussed what they thought should be done about the firewood situation. This also happened during other interviews on, for example, the subject of the position of the woman in society and in the household. My interpreter, Majeed Fuseini, would translate all of this as well, giving me additional information. I would always make notes during the interviews. I tried using a tape recorder during three interviews, but I could not see a surplus value in its use. Working with an interpreter gave me enough time to write everything down.

Besides my observations, interviews, and the PRA techniques used during my interviews, I collected specific information concerning my research questions through three informants. These three informants were my interpreter Majeed; Amos, who owned the hut I was living in; and Pastor Jonathan from the Kunguri Baptist Church. Kunguri is a neighbouring village of Kasuliyili. I would ask them about things that I had heard during an interview and had not understood, or wanted more background information about. I did not really have a choice in these informants, as they were nearly the only people in the area who could speak English adequately enough to have a long conversation with. I also asked Amos to make a map of Kasuliyili for me, with all the things on it that he thought were important for the village.

3.1.2 A search for the answersí   to my sub questions

3.1.2.1 The gender division of labour

To gather information concerning my first sub-question, how the gender division of labour takes place in Kasuliyili, I used three main methods. First of all, by living in the community I saw the daily activities of the men and women. As I woke up with my host family and participated in many of their daily activities, finally ending the day together with music and laughter in the yard, I could observe most of the daily activities myself. Living close to a family, I learnt what the activities actually mean to the people and how they feel about them. But as I was only there for part of the year, I could not observe all the activities with my own eyes. That is why I also used two PRA techniques, namely activity mapping and farm mapping. I made six activity mappings with two men and four women. Both men were around their forties, both with one wife. One had an important position in the community and the other did not. The group of women was more diverse. Three had co-wives and one did not. One had a husband with a very important position. The ages varied from forty to fifty. At the start of fourteen of my interviews I made farm-mappings with the respondents, with six men and eight women. I would first draw Kasuliyili with the roads heading to the different villages. Subsequently, I would ask the respondents to point out where their plot of land was. We would talk about the size of it and the crops that were grown on it. This would lead to questions on who actually owns it, who has access to it, how this access is gained, and also how control over it is gained. Talking about the products would lead to questions on what was done with these products and who reaped the benefits of them. Issues such as the division of labour on the farms and why someone can or cannot delegate others to farm their land would follow. I would use the mapping as a guide during the first part of the interview. I have included an example here:
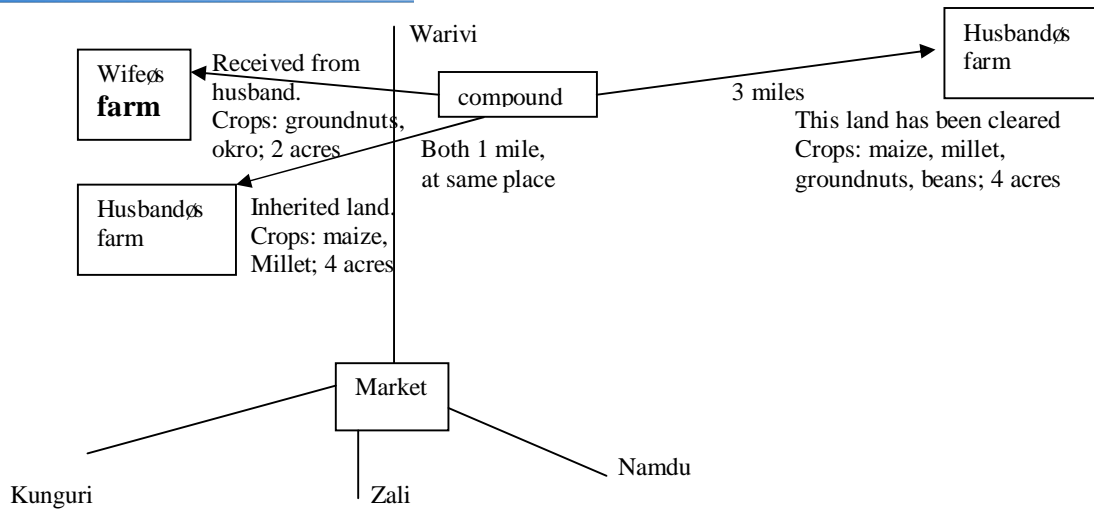
Doing these mappings gave me the opportunity to find out about activities that I missed in my observations and activities that took place during the rainy season, as I would not be there in this season. They also made it possible for me to identify differences between the different men and women in activities, the burden of the activities and the time put into them. In the activity mappings, I structured the daily activities for men and women and more particularly their resource use activities. For each respondent I did an activity mapping for the dry season and one for the rainy season. I would ask the order in which the activities were conducted and the time spent on them. I include two of these elaborate activity mappings in my research to make clear what the natural resource use activities actually mean for an individual man and woman. Finally, I was also allowed to look into activity mappings from the BCDP in Kasuliyili and the neighbouring Kunguri and Wantugu held in October and November 2003. These were less specific than my own. They were made during group discussions.

### 3.1.2.2 The socio-political position of women

Interviewing was my main method for examining the socio-political position of women in the community. As mentioned earlier, I spoke with one man and two women on representations and stereotypes concerning women. But during other interviews, views of the ÷ideal womanø were also dealt with. In total, during the interviews I questioned four men and nine women about their ideal picture of a woman and of a perfect wife. This group of respondents includes both Muslim and Christian men and women, men with co-wives and with only one wife, and younger and older respondents. Sometimes I would ask people directly about their opinion, but other times my respondents would broach the subject themselves. An example of the latter is when I was questioning a male respondent on the land that he had given his wife. He started telling me about what he thought that women should do and what they should be like. The reflections of my interpreter, before and after interviews, on the information gathered also helped me to learn more about the communityøs image of women. After one particular interview, for example, he told me that no one in Kasuliyili understands why the respondent, who is a ÷dirtyø woman, is loved more by her husband than her co-wife, who is very clean and

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is, I gained more insight into what ─clean and dirty╫

To find out more on women╫s participation in the decision-making process in both the household and the community, I asked questions on current situations, such as the division of land and the tasks in the household, and how they had developed into what they are today. Questions concerning this subject were asked in just about every interview, although constantly concerning different areas of life. I would also ask questions about how they get what they want, and thus try to find out how the negotiation process actually takes place. I also learnt more about both the (self)-image of women and the decision making power of women, by participatory observation. For example, by seeing in which way my landlord╫s wife got the money she needed for a funeral she was to attend. Or by seeing how my interpreter╫s wife tried to get money from her husband and comparing this to what he would tell me about it afterwards.

To discover the networks that women have or can have, I interviewed five men and nine women on their own contacts. Again, this group included both Muslims and Christians, people living in monogamous household and people living in polygynous households, and older and younger respondents. I also made sure that I discussed this subject with people from different social classes in the community, as I felt that this would have various essential implications. I would ask questions on whom they interacted with and which contacts gave them which possibilities. I also used another PRA technique for doing this, namely making venn-diagrams with respondents. I would ask the women which channels they would go through to get development ideas that they might have on the community agenda. Then I would question them on how they would subsequently ensure the idea was put into practice. I also made venn-diagrams with men concerning these same issues to compare the results. In total I made eleven venn-diagrams, with four men and seven women, with respondents from the above-mentioned group. The most important criterion in picking the respondents for the venn-diagrams was status. I wanted to find out what the difference was between men and women in how they get things done via their networks and also how this differs between men and women with different social statuses. Considering the illiteracy of most of my respondents, it was easier to make venn-diagrams together than have them draw maps. I would make little drawings from the information they gave me. I would point at certain items and ask them how they could get from one point to another. This would also enable us to discuss the different network lines separately. The use of venn-diagrams helped to discover the different networks that were used by the different respondents. Here is an example of a venn diagram:
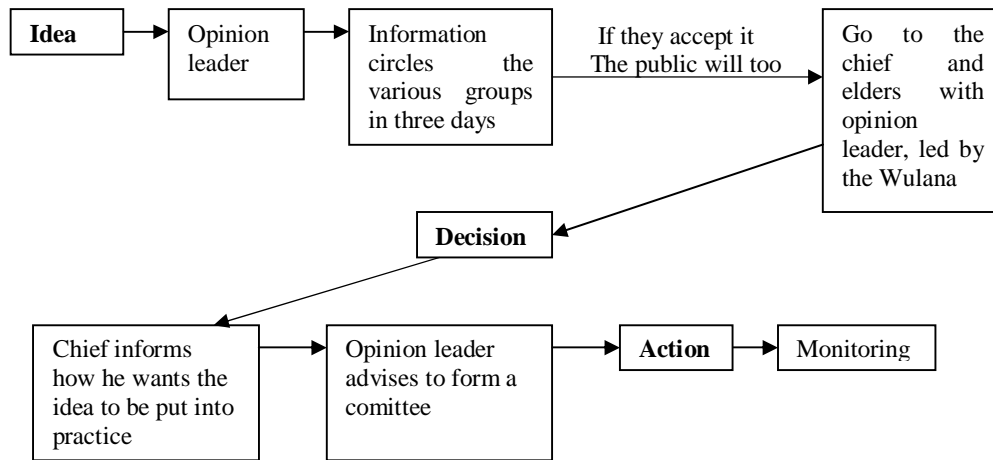
Finally, in nearly all of my interviews I asked my respondents, directly or indirectly, what kind of groups they were involved in, official and unofficial, to get a better understanding of the women's ability to organise themselves. I asked twelve women about leadership and about the ability of the women to keep their groups running. These were women from important families, women from averagely important families, but also a female head of a household. The questions during these interviews were regarding what groups the women were involved in and how and why they had gotten involved in them. I questioned them about their ideas of good leadership and if they themselves would want to take up a leadership's position. I talked with the women about their neighbourhood groups and about how women always travel together.

3.1.3 Additional information

Besides these specific methods that I used to find the answers to my research questions, I also used various other ways to collect background information on my subjects, to get a broader picture of Kasuliyili. I attended two workshops at the local clinic, three workshops by the earlier mentioned BCDP with the micro-credit women, and three training sessions for the local assistants of the BCDP. During these different sessions my main focus was on the needs of the people in Kasuliyili and the surrounding communities that were, directly or indirectly, discussed. By listening to which subjects were discussed, I learnt more about what the people consider important, or at least relevant enough to discuss in a community meeting. These meeting especially helped me learn more about the community.

I also participated in a polio vaccination given by the local clinic[10]. The vaccinating took three days and I was located in Gundaa, a village about fifteen kilometres northwest of Kasuliyili. Mohammed, the community worker in Gundaa, and I worked together in administering the polio vaccination drops. During the three days

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[10] The local clinic in Gundaa had asked me to help during the national polio vaccination days. Two to four people from each village were delegated to help. Pairs of two were assigned a village or area in a village in which we were to visit all the households and instil two drops of polio vaccination to all the children under the age of five. Mohammed and I were assigned to his village, Gundaa.

on-stop. He taught me more about the people of this important. We talked a lot about the water and wood situation in the area. As in Kasuliyili, the women in Gundaa were also struggling for access to clean dinking water. However, the women in his village did not have to walk as far to collect firewood, which made the weight of this specific job lighter.

Besides doing research in Kasuliyili, I also tried to gather information elsewhere. My main reason for doing this was to get a broader picture of the area, but also to learn more on the history of Kasuliyili and to look for specific socio-demographic figures on the area or even on Kasuliyili. A lot of the information that I collected is incorporated in my context chapter. Foremost, I want to mention the conversations that I had with the people working at the BCDP. If I was in town during the week, I would often go and visit their office and I would observe their activities, meet people, and discuss subjects such as the power abuse in Kasuliyili or the way that the people deal with the natural resource degradation. Of my respondents, one man and eleven women are involved in the MED program. Sixteen of my respondents have children in the sponsorship program. Thomas Abukari, the project's correspondent, would sometimes come to visit me in Kasuliyili. He would tell me about agricultural aspects of the village, as he originally was an agricultural teacher. This helped me to understand more about the way the people deal with their natural resources and why certain activities are important. He was involved in the construction of the dam in the village, as the BCDP had donated money for this. So he was able to tell me a lot about that too.

Another source of information for my research was documented material. Although I never found any documented information specifically on Kasuliyili, I did find information on the area in which Kasuliyili lies. For example, at the BCDP I found a household survey that had been conducted in the whole of the Tolon-Kumbungu district by UNICEF, which gave me statistics on, for example, demographic characteristics of households, education, habitat, water and sanitation, household food security, and management of land and environment. I include part of this in my context chapter. I was also able to look into records from workshops, on, for example, gender roles, that had been given by the MED department of the BCDP in Kasuliyili. This gave me additional information on how women view themselves and the way that the women see the roles of men and women. I collected data on the water and sanitation in the district at the District Assembly. At church in Tamale, I met the director of the Northern Region Rural Integrated Program (NORRIP), who gave me their regional development strategy for the Northern Region. I used some of this information for my context chapter. My interpreter also gave me a book on social studies that is used in the local high school. I copied the chapters on procreation, which gave me more information on the stereotypes and images that exist of men and women. I collected the rest of my documented data at the Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies (TICCS)[11]. Most of the information that I used from their documentation centre can be found in my context chapter.

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[11] The Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies (TICCS) is a resource centre located in the Northern Region's capital Tamale. At TICCS courses are given on cultural and development issues. They work together with the University of Development Studies in Tamale (UDS) in giving master courses. TICCS also has a big library with much information on cultural and development issues in the Northern Region of Ghana.

of information on my bus trips between Tamale and visits I made throughout the Northern Region. Information that gave me a broader understanding of the area, making me more able to understand the things I heard concerning my research and to interpret them ‑correctlyǁ, making my research results more reliable. For example, the more I began to understand of the community, the more I understood the place that the institutions have in the community and what they actually mean for the specific people. In the STC bus[12] to Kasuliyili, I met many different people, many telling me things useful for my research. I met teachers, pastors, district assembly workers, nurses, market women, etc. On one occasion, a conversation concerning the stereotypes of men and women even led to a group discussion. On another occasion, on a trip back to Tamale, I had been stranded in Tolon, but was able to hitch a ride with someone. This someone turned out to be the District Assembly Executive of the Tolon-Kumbungu district. The informal conversation I had with him on my way back to Tamale was on what could be done about the water situation in Kasuliyili and what future plans involved. We also talked about the political situation and its influence on development.

I travelled to Tamale to be able to enjoy a little luxury, such as electricity, meaning a ceiling fan. I stayed with the micro-credit organizer of the BCDP, Grace Wuni, and her family. I often discussed the alarming situations in Kasuliyili with her, such as the child mortality and the water situation. She would tell me of changes that had occurred over the years that the BCDP had been working there. As she had been involved in trainings on gender in Tamale and different workshops concerning gender in Kasuliyili, we would often discuss the difference between men and women in Kasuliyili and what her findings were on how the women saw their roles and responsibilities.

3.2 Problems and limitations

Having had no previous research experience, let alone on my own in a development country, has limited me as a researcher. I had been to Ghana before, even to the same region, but going for a scientific research was something totally new for me. Had I had more experience, this would probably have gone much smoother. I had to find my way in how to interview people in the community, which questions I needed to ask, and which techniques I could use. Coming back I have realised that there are questions I should have asked, but did not think to ask there; that there is data that I should have looked for, but did not; and that I should have personalised my questions more than I did. I guess lack of experience always causes limitations for a learner-researcher. Sometimes my concerns about these limitations probably created more of a problem than the limitation itself. In this section I discuss my experience in doing research in a rural Ghanaian community, subsequently I discuss the problems I encountered and how I believe they influenced the reliability of my research results. At the end of the chapter I conclude that although I encountered several problems and limitations, I still believe that my research results as a whole are reliable and that their validity is high enough to be able to draw a reliable conclusion.

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[12] The STC (State Transport Corporation) bus is the government regular service bus that drives between Tamale and Kasuliyili twice a day. This scheduled service was established at the end of 2003. I would travel on this bus approximately every other week, to and from Kasuliyili.

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ays the most ideal for conducting a research. The temperature was very high at times, sometimes even reaching forty-eight degree centigrade in the shade. I noticed that I would sometimes be in a hurry to finish off an interview to get home and lay under the mango tree outside my compound. Other times I would not be able to concentrate as well due to the weather; I would be concentrated more on my hand-held fan, than on my respondent. I also had to get used to the circumstances in Kasuliyili, as there was no electricity or running water. No electricity meant that there was no opportunity to use a computer. Not being able to work my results out on a computer frustrated me at times and I left the analyses until I had the opportunity to go to Tamale. And even here there was often no electricity or the electricity would go on and off all the time. No electricity also meant no light. Working under the light of an oil lamp was more constraining on my eyes than I had imagined. The timeframe also limited me in my research. It took me at least a month to find a place to stay, arrange an interpreter and get settled down in Kasuliyili. This left me with four months. My interpreter was not always available. In the evenings he would often be available, but I found interviewing with only an oil lamp not very workable. Other times he would not show up at the agreed time or he would just not show up at all.

Sometimes it was difficult for my respondents to answer my questions. Firstly, I guess this was because they are not used to being asked questions face-to-face, especially not by an outsider. Especially the women seemed to have difficulty formulating answers. Sometimes the questions were about things they normally did not really think about, or not specifically anyway. Sometimes it seemed that they were not used to forming an own opinion. The women would often get shy and laugh. Sometimes they did not want to answer, as they felt embarrassed, for example, to admit that they did not really own the land they were working on but that they had temporarily requested it from someone. They would tell my interpreter that they felt embarrassed. After a while I made a deal with my interpreter that he should not translate questions that would cause embarrassment, but should instead tell me, so that I could formulate the question differently or ask different questions. I also noticed that people were embarrassed when they did not know ˗theø answer. I would try to explain that there was no ˗rightø answer and that if they did not know something it did not matter. Another difficulty was the illiteracy of my respondents; I had not expected the illiteracy to be as high as it was. Of the 37 interviews I did with women, one could read and write. Among the 21 men, 11 were literate. People had often never seen a map, let alone were they able to read one. But I found a different way to use the mappings, namely by holding the pencil myself and asking them to guide me.

3.2.2 Problems that could consequently limit the reliability of my research data

One of my main limitations was the language barrier. My Dagbani never really got much further than the level of a daily conversation. This influenced my research results, in the first place as it limited my understanding of daily situations. I would often pick up parts of conversations, but would have to fill the other parts in myself. I saw things, but could not always ask what they meant or why people were doing them. It also caused obstacles in building relationships in Kasuliyili. Most of the people who did speak English were either young or from elsewhere and just visiting their relatives. If I had been able to speak Dagbani, I am sure that I would have not only gotten more, and more

d also have understood the community as a whole
ot speaking the language well enough is that it meant
that I had to work with an interpreter. Although this has many advantages, it also has a
downside.

Working with an interpreter means being dependent on someone else for
obtaining answers to questions. I did not have much choice in choosing an interpreter,
as Majeed was really the only person in Kasuliyili at that time who spoke sufficient
English and had time to help me out. Another option would have been to get someone
from outside the village. I only actually thought of this second option near the end of
my research, when I had made friends in Tamale. My interpreter was a man. This could
have had some influence on the answers of respondents, for example, when I asked the
women which disadvantages they had as women-farmers. Or when I asked them about
their hopes for the future. Majeed, however, was a well-liked man in the village, so I do
not think his sex had too much influence. In my view, most of the women seemed
extremely at ease in his company.

Another disadvantage of working with an interpreter is that information does get
lost in translation; the information passing through the interpreter is subject to double
interpretation. The same can happen during an interview with a translator as in the
children's game Chinese whisper: the children whisper a sentence to each other and at
the end of the row the sentence is often almost unrecognisable. Some words or fraises
might be difficult to translate or may not exist in both languages. The word
÷disadvantageø, for example, cannot be directly translated into Dagbani, as they do not
have a word for this. My interpreter would have to explain what I meant by using his
own examples. To prevent loss of information, I would discuss the interview
beforehand with Majeed, telling him what I expected of the interview, what I hoped to
discover. After the interview we would also often discuss the outcome of the interview.
It also was difficult to know in how far my interpreter mixed the respondents
information with his own insights. Sometimes my interpreter would tell me that they
were not giving the ÷right answerø When I explained to him that there was no ÷right
answerø, he said that he understood, but it kept happening. When a respondent gave a
very short answer and my interpreter a long one, or the other way around, I would
question him about it.

Not only the interpretation of Majeed could have had an influence on the
reliability of my data, my own ideas will also have had an influence. Sometimes I
wanted, or at least expected, certain answers. On a few occasions I found myself
pushing for a certain answer, as I believed I already knew what was happening.
Thinking that if the women would say something different from what I expected, they
would be hiding something or that they might not have understood my question
properly. Obviously, I would change my approach when I noticed I was doing this, but
how often must I have not noticed it? How much information did I not hear, because I
myself did not (want to) believe that my respondent was giving a ÷correctø answer?
What lay behind an answer that in my eyes could be seen as dishonest? In how many
cases did I recognise this? Other times I would see things that were contrary to what I
heard. For example, one woman told me that the water in her household was always
filtered with a filter. But when her daughters came into the yard and emptied the buckets
into the water container, leaving the filter hanging on the line, I was confused. How was
I to interpret her answer? What lay behind her answer?

have been influenced by whom the people associated : I am white and a woman could have had a certain influence on the answers given. The respondents also knew that I was living in Emmanuel Sumaniøs household. This could have brought up associations with the church or with a specific political party. In Kasuliyili the dam has been broken and the reconstruction of it has been a much-disputed matter. Many people in the church, also those in my household, played an important role in the reconstruction of the broken dam. Respondents may therefore have restrained from telling me what they really thought of the water situation and of the power relations involved, as it is a highly disputed matter. I deal with this is chapter six. But as Majeed, my interpreter, was a Muslim and a follower of the opposite political party, this tendency may have been balanced out. I cannot really know how this actually influenced the given answers. People also associated me with the BCDP, as this organisation had arranged a place for me to stay. None of my respondents ever uttered a negative word concerning the project. I do not know how this influenced my results, but as I was often aware of the associations made, I was sometimes able to see where this could have made a difference. I did try to represent myself as independent as possible. My attempts might not have always been as successful as I would have hoped, but I believe that many of the people felt free enough with me to give honest answers to my questions.

My interpreter did have a certain influence on who was interviewed. This could have had an effect on how representative my results are. In the beginning I noticed that I was interviewing the most respectable people in the village. After interviewing one of the richest and most respected men of Kasuliyili (money brings respect), I commented on this to Majeed. He said he understood and for the next interview I found myself in the one of the poorest household, a household without yard walls, with only one proper room, and with a respondent who lived on charity. During my research, I thought I was getting an increasingly representative selection of respondents, until near the end when I noticed that most of my respondents were followers of the same political party. I am not sure if this has any influence on the reliability of my data, but it could have had an effect on certain topics. On the other hand, I think that I have been able to take all this into consideration when interpreting my research data.

3.3 Concluding remarks

It is difficult to know what consequences these limitations have had on my results. Just being there in the village influenced my research setting. I am also aware that by making certain choices I influenced my results without knowing. But this is unpreventable, as, of course, it is a human doing the research and the analyses. It is impossible to avoid a researcher having an influence on the results. Even if I had done my research in a country and culture I was more familiar with and under more luxurious circumstances, I would still have had limitations and problems. In general, the more experienced a researcher is, the more they will be aware of the limitations of certain choices or circumstances. I am a researcher in training, but I believe that my results are trustworthy and can be generalised. I do still feel that there is so much that I do not know about my subject. The more I learnt about the village, the more I realized that there was so much that I did not know or did not understand, especially when it comes

too will always be the case; there is always more to

Although the above might sound somewhat negative, I still believe that my research results are reliable and trustworthy, and therefore useful. In the section on the methods I used, I explained elaborately why I chose to use certain methods and how I used them. I believe that by using these methods I have been able to get a trustworthy answer to my research question. But I do feel that I need to mention my doubts as I also consider them when discussing my empirical data and during the analyses. I believe that I have a reasonably good reflection on what I have done and the consequences that it has had. I also keep them in mind when drawing conclusions.

In the next chapter I describe the village in which this research took place. This village turn out to be well applicable for my research, as the struggle with the natural resources was a part of the people's daily life.

Before looking into how the access to and control over natural resources is actually organised, I give a sketch of the context in which these processes take place. To understand what the people do, what their responsibilities, priorities, and possibilities are, which institutions play a part in the access to and control over natural resources, and to understand the women's dreams for the future, I need to explain some aspects about the place in which they live. Therefore, I first discuss the current state of West-Africa, and more specifically Ghana and the Northern Region of Ghana, in which my research village is located. This gives a better understanding of the activities in which the people are involved for their survival, which are examined in the next chapter. I subsequently go on to look at the social aspects. I start by giving a short sketch of the context in which the people live with whom I conducted my research: how many people live here, what their religion is, and how the schooling, medical situation, and the infrastructure are arranged. I then explain who the people are, what the general household looks like and how the family is structured. This is especially important to be able to understand the socio-political position of the women, which is discussed in chapter six. Subsequently, I describe the main formal institutions in the village that influence people's possibilities. I discuss how they are related to the local resources in Kasuliyili. In this same section, I also discuss in short the dispute that is currently raging in the Northern Region. This dispute has an influence on the relationships between the people and it is important for understanding the network relations influencing people's agency. It is also important background information for looking at the current community activities, as it has a big influence on the community. I conclude the chapter with an analysis of the current state of the natural resources to which the men and women have or try to gain access to and control over.

4.1 Kasuliyili in global and national context

To conduct my research, I needed a specific setting. This specific place was Kasuliyili. In the previous chapter I explained why I chose this village. To get a clearer picture of the context in which Kasuliyili lies, it is helpful to describe the geographical setting. In this first section, I give such an introduction on Kasuliyili; first of all its setting in West Africa and more particular Ghana. Then I specify to the Northern Region, followed by the Tolon-Kumbungu district in which the village lies, and finally my research village Kasuliyili.

4.1.1 West Africa

Kasuliyili is located in Sub-Saharan Africa. Most Africans are involved in some form of agriculture or pastoralism. Products harvested or extracted from nature drive most of the other income activities. The Africans are thus much more dependent on the condition of the nature than people living in industrialised countries and are therefore more vulnerable to natural resource scarcity and natural disasters (Gordon & Gordon, 1999,

also apparent in the western part of Sub-Saharan ntroduction, the West African environment is a controversial subject. The changes in the environment are often regarded as deterioration. But environmental change is more than natural depletion or solely degradation, as interpretations of environment should not be based on assumptions of balance and system regulation (Leach et al., 1999:230-2). How then should the environment be interpreted? Is it deteriorating or has it always been changing and do the people simply need to find new ways to deal with the changes, as they have done over the centuries? It is difficult to look at the dynamics throughout history, as there are not many long-term figures available on changes in this region. There is one issue, however, of which there is no doubt, namely that the rainfall is in decline. Other aspects of the environment are changing too and causing problems for the local inhabitants, but these problems are often local and the causes are diverse. Most farming in West Africa is small, with little external input.

4.1.2 Ghana

Ghana lies in West Africa, between Cote d'Ivoire and Togo, with Burkina Faso bordering to the north and the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean to the south[13]. Accra is the state's capital. The total surface of Ghana is comparable to the size of Great Britain; 239,460 square kilometres, of which 8,520 square kilometres is water. Less than twenty per cent of the land is arable. Most of this land can be found in the south. The climate is tropical; it is warm and comparatively dry along the southeast coast, hot and humid in the southwest, and hot and dry in the north (CIA, internet 2005).

Ghana is dealing with several environmental problems. Frequent droughts in the north are severely affecting agricultural activities. The savannah here suffers from many of the same environmental problems as similar areas in Sub-Saharan Africa, but the problems are generally not as alarming. It therefore does not attract as much international attention. But Ghana has environmental problems that cannot be neglected, as quoted from Dankelman & Davidson (Nsiah-Gyabaah, 1994:8); *÷Ghana's environment is suffering from the effects of dramatic changes, its forests have been degraded into savannah, and the savannah areas are fast turning into deserts. The invasion of desert through over-cultivation and forest clearing has been worsened by extreme changes in climate in West Africa since the recent severe persistent droughts. Vegetation has become so impoverished, that it is difficult for the forests to recuperate even with the onset of rains. At the current rate of deforestation, about two-thirds of the country will soon experience severe wood shortages and serious environmental resource degradation. The most affected areas are the Northern and Coastal grasslands'.*

But here again should be noted that people often interpret vegetation changes in a linear way, which also influences the way that landscapes are understood. Many theories, such as the conventional, equilibrium interpretation of succession theory, regard forest as a later succession-form of grasslands. This means that a forest changing into grasslands is interpreted as deterioration. But in many situations forests and savannah are merely alternative states of vegetation influenced by social and ecological factors. The one is not necessarily a better stage than the other (Leach et al., 1999:231).

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[13] See map 4.1 & 4.2

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The poverty profile of Ghana is largely rural and agricultural. The majority of the farmers practice subsistence farming (Bayorbor et. al., 1999:3). The level of poverty is therefore dependent on the region's natural resource conditions. Both the incidence and the severity of poverty are greater in the rural savannah than in any other parts of Ghana. As Seini & Tsikata found (2004:13): *Most of the poor (seventy per cent) and the extreme poor (fifty-nine per cent) were to be found in the rural savannah (North) in 1998/99, while less poverty was found in the rural forest (South) ó where thirty-eight per cent were poor and twenty-one per cent extremely poor*. The literacy, health facilities, and access to basic services in the northern regions noticeably lag behind the southern regions in development (Seini &Tsikata, 2004:10-13).

The north of Ghana is thus the poorest part of the country (Bayorbor et. al., 1999:3). This is due to a combination of the effects of harsh agro-climatic conditions, low output per capita, limited options beyond small scale farming, less urbanisation, and less service provision (Baden et al., 1994:ii, iii). The north is divided into three regions, the Northern, the Upper East and the Upper West region. Kasuliyili lies in the Northern Region, of which Tamale is the capital[14]. This region is a mainly rural area and the majority of the people are illiterate. In the whole of the north, the literacy in 1997 in the urban areas was fifty-two per cent and in the rural areas 12.2 per cent (Seini &Tsikata, 2004:10). Subsistence farming is the main occupation here. The region suffers from fuel shortages all year round and water shortages especially during the dry season. Especially due to this dry season, there is much need for development of the natural resources. Because no crops are grown during the dry season, many people are encountered with a so-called hunger gap at the end of the dry season (TKDA, 1999). The hunger-gap is the lean time when the stored food runs out before the harvest has ripened again; the seasonal gap between nutritional requirements and available food. It is thus caused by an inadequate yield during the previous harvest. In the Tolon-Kumbungu district this is a familiar occurrence.

The Tolon-Kumbungu district shares boundaries with the Tamale Municipality and the Savelugu/Nonton District to the East, the West Mamprusi District to the North and the West Gonja District to the South and the West[15]. The administrative offices of the district are located at Tolon, approximately thirty-four kilometres from Tamale. It is an area of about 2,389 square kilometres and has a population of approximately 122,550 people (Statoids, 2002), of which forty-two per cent are children. The Tolon-Kumbungu has 17 main communities and 220 small communities. As one of the most deprived districts of the Northern Region, it has also become one of the more underdeveloped areas. This has to do with, for instance, the bad infrastructure throughout the district. Women often form a disproportional part of the poor, especially in the North, where a sharp distinction exists between the income-earning roles of men and women (BCDP, 2000). Since 2000, the year that President Kufuor was elected, the emphasis of development work has been more focused on the *poorest people of Ghana*. This has turned the heads of many NGOs towards this, formerly neglected, district (I:15)[16].

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[14] See map 4.3
[15] See map 4.4
[16] As mentioned in note 3, this refers to interview 15. Others interviews will be indicated in the same way. Information on the respondents can be found in appendix A.

...ge in the Tolon-Kumbungu district. Like the majority ...he people of Kasuliyili struggle with the condition of their available natural resources. They live in circumstances in which there is no electricity and where water and wood cannot be taken for granted. In the following sections I sketch a picture of the village, describing the people and the circumstances in which they find themselves.

4.2 The socio-demographic features of Kasuliyili[17]

As mentioned in the introduction of chapter three, Kasuliyili is a relatively big village of 2,531 people, of which over half are children. There are approximately 150 compounds. The surrounding villages are smaller, with fewer facilities. Only Wantugu, which lies two villages further, six kilometres from Kasuliyili, is larger. The division between men and women is disproportionate, with significantly more women than men[18] [19]. Over ninety per cent of the people living in the Tolon-Kumbungu district are from the Dagbamba tribe. But because this is difficult for other tribes to pronounce, they are often called Dagombas. The Dagombas speak Dagbani, which is one of the seventy-nine spoken languages in Ghana. In Kasuliyili the percentage is even higher, with everyone belonging to Dagomba tribe, except for the temporarily settled *Fulani*[20]. Although there are few immigrants, a large number of the youth migrate to the south in search of jobs, some only temporarily, for certain seasons, and others permanently (Inf:3). The main group that leave temporarily are the young men. They leave in full busloads heading for the south to find work on farms and earn money. Many also go away to attend high school elsewhere. Some of the young girls also leave for the south to work as transporters, the so-called *kayayoos*[21]. The people live with their extended family, with an average of eighteen people per household. Polygyny is practised in about half of these households. A man is the head of the household, as the system of inheritance and succession to clan titles is patrilineal.

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[17] In appendix B I have included a part of the results of a Household Baseline Survey in the Tolon-Kumbungu district in 1999 held by the District Monitoring and Evaluation Team in cooperation with Unicef, the Northern Regional Nutrition Officer, and the Department of Community Nutrition of the University for Development Studies (UDS) in Nyankpala. I use this as a statistical backup of this section. It should be noted that the region includes both towns and villages.

[18] I was not able to obtain exact data on how many men and how many women live in Kasuliyili.

[19] A possibly explanation for this imbalance could be that over half of the men have more than one wife; the life expectancy of women is higher than that of men; more men than women migrate to the south; and more young men are educated and move to the city. Especially the two latter are plausible. In Appendix B we see that all male children under the age of eighteen staying elsewhere for schooling is 48.1 per cent for the whole district.

[20] The Fulani of West Africa are the largest nomadic group in the world. The Fulani actually contain a large number of people from diverse groups who were conquered and became a part of the Fulani through the spread of Islam. The original Fulani, however, are of North African or Middle Eastern origin. They are mainly nomadic herders and traders, with cattle being their most important asset. In Kasuliyili they are often spotted with their temporary settlements on the outskirts of the village, or selling their products, e.g. cattle milk, in the market place.

[21] Kayayoos are Ghanaian working girls. The 'kaya business', commercial head load carrying by girls and women, is a petty form of trading. Their main activity is carrying the market-womenøs goods from the markets to the bus stations. A majority of the kayayoos come from the North. As Appendix B shows, in the whole district 27.2 per cent of females under eighteen are kayoyoos. Most of these kayayoos, though, come from the towns.

worships Allah; approximately sixty per cent of the There is also a big group that combines Islam with their traditional beliefs[22]. They say their prayers, but Allah is not the only god that they worship. The Islam is a relatively new religion in Kasuliyili, as the first Muslim settled here about seventy years ago. Since then the number of followers has grown rapidly (I:45). The village has one big mosque. On Friday the head Imam comes here to lead the prayers for the whole village and to teach from the Koran. As most of the followers are illiterate, they cannot read the Koran themselves. All over the village, small mosques can be found, where many say their daily prayers. There is also a small group of people who are strictly bound to their traditional beliefs, but as many have (also) found a ‗new religion‗, the number of followers has declined. Some fifty years ago, the majority of Kasuliyilians were followers of the traditional belief; nowadays the number has declined to approximately two hundred ‗strict‗ worshippers. Finally, there are also about one hundred Christians in Kasuliyili. There is a small church at the edge of the village, the Kasuliyili Baptist Church, which was built some ten years back.

The village has two primary schools, one public and one Islamic. There is also a Junior Secondary School (JSS). This is equivalent to the first three years of high school. The schools have both paid and voluntary teachers, but most of the time there is a shortage of teachers. Consequently, classes are often left unattended, with the pupils running their own classes. The nearest Senior Secondary School (SSS) is in Tolon, which is approximately eighteen kilometres from Kasuliyili. The higher the level, the less the number of pupils, resulting in a full kindergarten and a nearly empty grade six. Many children are taken from school when they are needed in the house. Especially girls are often unable to complete their primary education. Education is also too expensive for many people, as school children are expected to buy, for example, books and uniforms. Since the coming of the BCDP in the village, who pays the voluntary teachers, the attendance of classes has increased (Inf:3). Another, Islamic, organisation has set up a special Islamic primary school, which has also helped increase the amount of pupils[23]. It is only in the last ten years that many people have really started to recognise the importance of education.

The nearest clinic is in Wantugu. But there is no qualified doctor here. The nearest doctor is in Tamale. There are, like in many parts of rural Ghana, high rates of infant and child mortality. In some periods the death rate is higher than in others[24]. During part of my stay, in March, a couple of children would die weekly. Malaria, diarrhoea, and malnutrition are among the most prevalent causes. These diseases could be prevented with the right medication, information, and medical facilities, such as impregnated mosquito nets. Sometimes children die because their parents do not understand the necessity of immunization. Besides the official health facilities, there are also other forms of medical care. There are, for example, traditional healers active in the area. And most of the women still give birth with the help of a traditional midwife. These traditional midwives have often received free special education from the clinic.

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[22] Within the traditional religion there is a belief in a universal God, but also in separate gods for specific issues. Because of this it is not contradictory to worship both Allah and the traditional gods.

[23] I have no further information on this organisation.

[24] There are no specific statistics available on child mortality in the North. In Ghana as a whole, the infant mortality is 62 per 1,000. The under five-mortality rate is 105 per 1,000 births (2004, World Health Report, WHO). As the North is significantly underdeveloped in comparison with the South, these numbers will be higher for the North.

Kasuliyili and Tamale is quite poor. During the dry airly easily over the main road, but with the first rains some parts of this road become difficult to pass. There is an STC bus service that comes from Tamale twice a day. There are also private lorries going via Wantugu several times a day. On market days, these lorries run more frequently.

4.3 Traditions in Kasuliyili

In the previous section I introduced the village, to create a picture of where the people's daily lives take place. This influences their opportunities. In this section I discuss the people of Kasuliyili, my research population. The relations within and between households influence the opportunities and possibilities that men and women have, thus influencing how the access to and control over natural resources is gendered. This is where it all starts. These relationships are discussed more elaborately in chapter six, where the social-political dimension of the position of women in comparison to men is explored. Here I look into the types of marriages that exist in Kasuliyili, as one's marital status influences one's possibilities. For example, the type of marriage that a woman is in influences the time she has, the love and help she gets from her husband, and also the decision-making power that she has in a household. I also look into the stability of the residence of the women in a household, as this is important in making ownership more secure. Finally I have also included a few paragraphs on children to show the differences between the upbringing of boys and girls. This makes clear how the differences in possibilities for men and women originate. It also shows how important the labour of the young girls is to the women.

4.3.1 The household

The people of Kasuliyili generally live in compounds with three to ten round and square huts. The houses are built with mud, as the majority of the people cannot afford cement. These houses are roofed with thatch. Some people can afford iron plates. The people live with their extended family, with an average of eighteen people in a household. Each man above the age of twelve has his own square hut. The children stay with their mother in her round hut. As mentioned above, a man, generally the eldest man, is the head of the household, as the system of inheritance and succession to clan titles is patrilineal. Households mostly consist of the head of the household, his wife or wives, and his unmarried daughters. His sons will also live here with their wife or wives and children, as the living situation is based on virilocality. In most cases adopted children add to the household number.

It is a typical Dagomba tradition for a woman to adopt a niece when she is old enough to help in the household (Inf:2). Sometimes when the household becomes too big, a second compound is built in which a part of the family settles itself. When a man divorces his wife (or the other way round), the women will leave the household and go back to her parent's house. If she is past menopause she will stay here, but if she can still bear children she will remarry. Thus, the men will often stay in the same village, sometimes even the same household their entire life and women will leave their family house and often also their "hometown".

…ily situation has consequences for the relationships …ve extensive reciprocal duties, obligations, and responsibilities to relations outside the nuclear family. There seems to be a very close tie between members of the extended family. People see each other as brothers and sisters with one blood or kinship group, even when the blood ties are not close. Sometimes certain relatives have certain relationships, for example, a boy will 'play'[25] his cousins on his father's side. As people are dependent on each other, relationships are very important. The members of the family that live together often work together, but even family that lives elsewhere will often visit. If someone is in a crisis, people from other households will give support, for example, by giving money or by sending one of their members, often a young girl, to help. This means that people who have less will be taken care of, but it also means that it is difficult for a certain household to expand. If they have savings and other family members know of it, these relatives will often appeal to them for a share. There is a small change occurring in this system. As people move away, the ties often become less intense, although the ability to appeal to a family member, wherever they may live, remains.

4.3.2 Marriage

Marriages in Kasuliyili can be either monogamous or polygynous. It is a Dagomba tradition to have several wives, but not everyone will be able to afford this. According to the tradition, a man can take as many wives as he wants, as long as he can afford them. 'A real Dagomba cannot have one wife and like it'[26] one man told me (I:33). The Islam, which has risen quickly in the community, also preaches that having more wives is a good thing, as long as a man can take good care of his wives. According to the Islam, the maximum is four wives. The Christians however do not practice polygyny unless they were already in a polygynous marriage before they converted. It is also typical that the more educated the young people become, the less wives they have. As one young and educated man told me, 'we are young men and we want to be able to develop ourselves. That is why we do not want to marry more than one wife. You will have to shoulder too many burdens' (I:42). Looking at my respondents, it becomes clear that both monogamous and polygynous marriages are common:

Table 4.1
Monogamy and polygyny in Kasuliyili

Co-Wives				One Wife		Female headed household	
Male respondents		Female respondents		Male respondents	Female respondents	Male respondents	Female respondents
9		25		8	11	-	2
2 c-w[27]	**3 c-w**	**2 c-w**	**3 c-w**				
4	5	13	12				

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[25] This means that they will constantly be making jokes with and teasing the other. A person will not do this with the cousins from his mother's side. The specific relatives have specific relations.

[26] According to an old Dagomba tradition, after death every one will have a specific position in the new society. When a man dies his position is partly determined by certain rituals that his first son from his first wife and his first daughter from his second wife are to perform. Having more than one wife is thus needed to be able to obtain this position.

[27] C-w stands for co-wives

[...] ny fifty-five respondents nine men and twenty-five [...] age. Of these nine men, four have two co-wives and five have three co-wives. Of the twenty-five women living in a polygynous household, thirteen have one co-wife and twelve have two co-wives. Although less of my respondents are in a monogamous marriage, still there are eight men with only one spouse and eleven women with no co-wives. The remaining two female respondents both live in a female-headed household. They no longer have a husband.

In all of Kasuliyili a bit less than half of the men currently have one wife and the others have either two or three[28]. Only two men in Kasuliyili have more than three wives. Considering this, my respondents form a representative group concerning marital status. In total there are three female-headed households in Kasuliyili; these are not common. These women do originally come from Kasuliyili and their families still live there too.

Marriage provides a person with adult status. A man who marries is socially accepted in the community and can therefore participate fully in all social functions and make meaningful contributions and give advice, for example, for weddings and other ceremonies. This is because society considers a married person to be mature. The girls are often between sixteen and twenty-two when they get married, the men between twenty and twenty-five, in some cases even older. In the city a man and a woman meet each other and court, but in the villages this is nearly always arranged. It is arranged by the girløs father and the boy himself, or by both fathers. The boy, or his parents, pays a bride price. Because of this, according to many of my respondents, the husband ÷ownsø his wife. He is to take care of her and she is to obey him.

Polygyny means that women have co-wives. The relationship between co-wives varies, but the polygynous households are often known for their disunity. One woman compared the relationship between co-wives with cow dung: *÷If a cow defecates his dung and the sun rises for the first time after this, the dung seems to be dry. But when you insert your hand in it, it will be very wet underneath. Co-wives are like cow dung; from the outside the situation seems to be pleasant, but in the household there is always jealousy and quarrellingø* (I:43). Each woman takes care of her own children, creating a competition for resources between the wives; what a husband gives to one wife he often cannot give to the other (I:19). It has not always been like this though: *÷Co-wives used to do more together, such as collecting the firewood; the women would put their wood on one pileø* The co-wives take care of the husband together. Each wife has a specific role in the household (I:20). Although customs require otherwise, a husband can never treat his wives the same. There will always be favouritism, creating more disunity in the household.

There are certain circumstances in which a woman will leave her husband, and thus the compound. First of all, the Dagombas have a tradition that a woman leaves her husband for two or three years after the birth of her first two children. She will go back to her parentsø home and stay there for a few years, after which she will return to her husband, creating a time space between the first born children (Inf:1). If one of the partners decides that he or she wants a divorce, the wife will take her belongings and go back to her parents. She will generally return to her parentsø home, but things can go differently as the three cases of female-headed households in Kasuliyili show. These women divorced their husbands. All three of them returned to their hometown, but each

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[28] I do not have exact details on monogamy and polygyny in Kasuliyili.

und (I:23). Finally a woman may leave her husbandøs
...re she has reached menopause. She will return to her
parentsø home and try to remarry. If she has passed menopause, she will stay with her
children to be taken care of by them (Inf:1). As mentioned above, a womanøs life is not
as stable as that of a man with regard to her residence. In chapter six I discuss how this
has an influence on the control over natural resources, as networks are more difficult to
obtain for women, land ownership is more insecure and participation in natural resource
management projects cannot always be continuous.

4.3.3 Children

Children are very important in the Dagomba culture. If a woman is not able to give birth
to a child, she is seen as an incomplete woman. In general, having a son is more desired
than a daughter. The effort that you invest in your son remains in your family, but your
daughter will go elsewhere with her skills and knowledge. A son is also important with
regard to the inheritance. If a man only has daughters, the inheritance can be a problem.
He will not want his daughters to inherit the land, because it will not stay in the family.
The tasks of the boys and girls in the household differ. The difference between men and
women in the society is thus determined at a very young age.

More and more the children are sent to school. People are starting to realise the
benefits of education for their family. However the attendance in the higher classes is
still low[29]. Many of my respondents acknowledge the importance of education, but
often still keep their girls at home. In the household I was staying, the twelve-year-old
girl was often kept home to help out with the household tasks, especially when the
women went for firewood. When there was a funeral in the family, the household would
send this girl to help in the household in which the death had occurred. This is often
outside the village, meaning that this girl would be gone for many days and thus miss a
lot of schooling. When someone dies, the body is buried immediately and the first (after
three days) and second (after forty days) funerals rights are performed, but the third
funeral rights are performed when there is more time, often in the following dry season.
That is why there are more funerals during this season; consequently it is during this
period that girls get behind on their schoolwork. This especially disadvantages the girls,
as this is also the period in which most of the classes are given. Three of my male
respondents admitted that they do not really see the use of sending their girls to school
as they will eventually marry and leave the household anyway. Boys are sent to school
more often.

4.4 Leadership in Kasuliyili

The previous section deals with the traditions of the Dagombas concerning their family
and household situation. In the coming chapters it becomes clear that these traditions
have an important role in influencing how the access to and control over the local
natural resources is gendered. But there are also important formal institutions that have

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[29] No exact details on school enrolments in Kasuliyili are available. Everyone is allowed to attend school
as long as they have a uniform and a book. On some days there are up to fifty pupils in the lower classes
of the public primary school. In grade six the average is six pupils. Approximately 350 children attend
one of the two primary schools.

al formal institutions are briefly mentioned; religion, [...] tutions that have an influence on the access to and control over natural resources. Other important institutions are the women's groups, organisations working in Kasuliyili, and the local authority/government. While the others are dealt with as their influence becomes apparent, I discuss the latter in this section. The local authority and the power that it can exercise are important for the access and control processes of the men and women. The chief is the 'boss' of the village and has a big say in (development) processes in the village. I first explore what this authority entails and from where it has derived its authorization. I briefly look into the relationship that the authority has with the government and what consequences this has on the possibilities of the people. As mentioned above, there is a crisis in the Dagbon, the homeland of the Dagombas. There has been a war, and although it has now settled down, it has not yet been solved. This conflict has taken its toll on the relationships between the people of Kasuliyili. It also has had consequences on the way this authorization is used, which in turn has its own consequences for how the institution of the local authority influences the access to and control over natural resources for men and women.

4.4.1 The local authority

Ghana's political regime can be characterised as a 'presidential-parliamentary democracy'. In December 2004, President Kufuor of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) was re-elected. In the Dagomba communities, two systems of rule coexist, namely the legal District Assembly (DA), which is under the authority of the President, and the Traditional Authority System. The current situation of the local government system was implemented in 1988. The system was changed into a decentralised system, to give the people a bigger say in what happens within the government. This happened by subdividing the country into 110 local (district) assemblies. The representative of the government in the community is the Assembly man. He is the spokesman for the community. He is to stimulate the implementation of development in Kasuliyili, but he is also to report the developments in the village to the Assembly. The chief and the Assemblyman are in constant contact. They work together. Although the people know that officially the government has the overall power, they respect the traditional chief as their leader. Therefore, if the government wants to do something in the community he will always first go to the chief, show respect, and ask permission[30].

4.4.2 The traditional authority

The history of Kasuliyili goes a long way back. Every Dagban village used to be headed by the so-called *Tendanas*, which are something like local priests or fortune-tellers, and thus not by the chiefs. The *Tendanas* had means of communicating with the gods and this gave them the authority to be head of the village. They traditionally allocated the

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[30] However, chiefs are loosing power. Especially as more people are enjoying education and therefore often becoming more educated that their own, often illiterate, chief. Some of the young people today say that they do not have to follow the laws of their chief. If their parents were to beat them for disobeying the chief's laws then they can go to the government and file a complaint. This, and other changes, reduces the respect, and thus the power, of the chiefs. Many people realise that the chiefs' power will diminish over the coming years, but due to tradition he will never fully loose his position as leader of the village.

ent introduced 'chieftaincy' to organize the northern ... s a war in which the appointed chiefs started killing the *Tendanas* and taking over their power. They decided that from that time on chiefs would be *enskinned* to rule the villages. They talk of *enskinning*, as the chief is seated on cow or goatskins. At the time of these wars, Kasuliyili was still very small. It got its name from the new chief who was called *Kasulilanaa*. 'Kasuli' means 'we are not angry with the people'. 'Lana' is for leader. The chief of Kasuliyili had not killed the local *Tendana*, as his role was small. The *Tendana* gave way for the new chief. Gradually, the chief started gathering more elders around him to help him with decisions. These elders are important, as they are the counsellors of the chief. They have an influence on the decisions that are to be made. In Kasuliyili the chief has eleven elders (I:15). The *Tendana* is still consulted for advice on certain issues, as his contact with the gods is strong[31].

The regent and his elders

Each tribe is divided according to a hierarchical 'kingdom'. Nowadays, a paramount chief, followed by divisional chiefs, sub-chiefs, and village chiefs, head the Dagbon. The chief's position is inherited through royal ancestral lineage, whereby each chief descends from the founder of the kingdom. In principle, a man is chosen as chief, but there is one female chief in the Dagbon. The chief of Kasuliyili is very powerful. He was personally *enskinned* by the Paramount Chief *Yaa naa* in Yendi[32], chief of all of the Dagombas. Literally translated, *Yaa Naa* means 'Chief of Absolute Power'. The *Kasulilanaa enskins* the other chiefs in the area. Everyone pays respect to the chief. Questions cannot be directly aimed at a chief, but have to first go through his linguist, the *Wulana*. The *Wulana* is the first of the eleven elders. He is the traditional linguist[33]. He therefore also fulfils an important and powerful position in the community. The position of the first three elders is inherited and the community chooses the other eight.

At the moment however, there is no sitting chief in Kasuliyili. The last *Kasulilanaa* died three years ago. And as there is no Paramount Chief at present, due to the Yendi skin crisis on which I elaborate below, a new *Kasulilanaa* cannot be

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[31] The current and the previous chief combine(d) Islam with traditional belief.

[32] Yendi is a city approximately 100 kilometres to the east of Tamale. The paramount chief is seated here. This is where the previous paramount chief was killed and that is why the crisis is also called the Yendi skin crisis.

[33] The Wulana is the traditional linguist. If people wish to consult the Chief, they are to address their questions to the Wulana, who then passes them on to the Chief and subsequently returns the Chief's reply (even if all three people are present).

mer chief's son, Abdullai Abukari, is acting as regent. a regent to reign for a short period, before the next chief is *enskinned*. But this time the regent has been sitting longer than usual (Inf:1). Even though his position is only temporary, his saying in decisions for the village is final (I:15; Inf:1).

Although the chief and his elders are the leaders of the whole of the community, there is a separate leader for the women, the *Magajia*[34]. She is the voice of the women and is in close contact with the chief and his elders. She organises all the activities in the community in which all the women have a specific role. The village of Kasuliyili appointed the present *Magajia*, after the previous *Magajia* stepped down due to her old age and inability to fulfil her position. She actually plays a significant cultural role in shaping the attitudes and beliefs of the women in the community and helps implement social change. An example of this is the workshops she held on tree planting. Initially, many women did not want to be involved in tree planting, as they believed that they would die if they planted new trees. She helped them to understand that planting new trees was good as trees give fresh air (I:43). Another example is her initiative in arranging a hand plough for the women as a group[35]. Her role is important for women in gaining control over certain natural resources. In chapter six the role of the *Magajia* is further explored. I consider her as the leader of an institution, but also as an individual, with the many chances she has created for herself in comparison to other women in the community.

As the chief of Kasuliyili owns the whole of the community and many of the surrounding communities too, he has the full authority over all the natural resources. He owns all the lands, all of the trees, and he has the last say in the situation of the dam. If people want to use certain resources, they will approach the chief and ask permission. Often this is merely a formality; someone will give the chief *kolanuts*[36] and receive what is requested. But sometimes certain people will have colliding purposes for a natural resource. The chief helps to solve these disputes. He can also give something to someone, which actually belongs to someone else. For example, people who had land near the former river in Kasuliyili had to give it back when the dam was to be constructed by the government. The wood from the trees in the tree-planting project have been used by men for certain purposes, because they consulted with the chief and were able to convince him that they had the right to use the wood. Initially, the women of Kasuliyili were the only ones with user rights to these trees. In chapter six I look further into the power relations involved in this.

4.4.3 The Dagbon chieftaincy dispute

The Dagbon chieftaincy dispute, commonly known as the Yendi Skin Crisis, is noticeable over the whole of the Dagbon. The conflict has a complex history. In 2002 the *Yaa Naa* was killed in his hometown Yendi. The dispute between two families, the Abudulai family and the Andani family, over the succession of the *Yaa Naa* goes back to 1948. Ever since then, every succession that has taken place has led to problems

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[34] Traditionally, she is the Queen mother of the Muslim women. But in Kasuliyili she is the leader of all the women. The Magajia is the highest-ranking woman in the community.

[35] Unfortunately this project failed. I examine why it failed in chapter six.

[36] Kolanuts are nuts with an important symbolic meaning. They are used to show respect. People also eat them. They give energy.

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fter the government became involved in the eighties, The continuing crisis eventually led to the murder of *Yaa Naa* Yakubu Andani II on March 27, 2002. Since then there has been much tension between people who follow the Abudu gate[37] and people who follow the Andani gate, which has even resulted in a strict curfew over the whole of the Dagbon. The question remains from which gate the new paramount chief is to be *enskinned*. Until this is resolved there can be no real peace (Tskikata & Seini, 2004; Peterson & Dam, 2003:132-133; Inf:1; Inf:3).

Although Yendi is far from Kasuliyili and the people have no form of communication besides mouth-to-mouth contact, the dispute has still had a great influence in the village. Since the Yendi skin crisis there is disunity in the community; former friends following different gates now find it difficult to seek each otherøs help. People supporting the same gate seem to stick together now. It is a delicate subject. It is an issue that the people feel very strongly about. In chapter six, I explore how this crisis has, directly and indirectly, influenced the development of the natural resources in Kasuliyili. I also look into the influence of the traditional authority in Kasuliyili, when discussing the decision-making possesses in the community.

4.5 Natural resources in Kasuliyili

In this thesis the emphasis is on the access to and control over natural resources and services and the benefits derived from them. Before looking at the access to and control over natural resources, we first need to look at which natural resources there actually are. In this section I discuss the conditions of the natural resources in Kasuliyili. In the introduction of this chapter I explain why I have decided to focus on the natural resources land, water, and (fire)wood; these natural resources are essential for peopleøs survival in a rural setting when they have no alternatives. The condition of the natural resources is directly dependent on the season. In this area there are two seasons: the rainy season and the dry season. The rainy season starts in June and ends in October. It is accompanied by warm, humid winds from the coastal area. The dry season starts in November and brings with it the Hamattan. The Hamattan is the northeast trade wind of the Guinea coast. It blows off the Sahara desert (NORRIP, 1982:3.02).

4.5.1 The dam

The people of Kasuliyili used to fetch their water at the small river that ran on the far east side of the village. The women would come and fetch their water here, but especially during the dry season there would not be sufficient water and they would have to go far to find water. Sometimes they would walk all the way to Botanga, the irrigation system some twenty kilometres from Kasuliyili. In 1993 a solution for this problem was found. A project known as the Integrated Village Water Project (IVWP[38]) constructed a dam where the river ran, the river itself has since dried up. Eight wells were built next to the dam, from which the women are to fetch the water. The water is filtered in pipes that lead to these wells. The water of this dam was good and the women

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[37] ÷Gateø is the name they give to the different family lines within the traditional chief-family. In the Dagomba chief family there are two lines of inheritance.

[38] The IVWP is an organisation focussed on the provision of potable water and sanitation facilities.

water. But five years ago the rainy season was very ... ly and persistent. The dam was not able to hold the overflow and it broke, letting the water flow freely. Since then, the quantity and the quality of the water has not been the same.

The dam and the wells

There was not much water left in the dam. Fetching it was a difficult task. Women would have to pull the full buckets out of the deep wells. This water started to run out quickly. More and more, the women started to walk into the dam to fetch water. They would often stand in the water; if they had diseases these would contaminate the water and cause diseases all over the village. Especially guinea and other worms were a big problem. There is a special animal pool next to the dam, but as the fence around the dam has broken the animals walk into the dam and contribute to the spoiling of the water. The constructors of the dam came to see what they could do about the break down. A small hole was made to release the pressure on the original waterhole in order to prevent the water from completely breaking the banks. After this new hole was made, some people decided that they wanted the hole fixed. The funds were made available and the dam was reconstructed. But the job was done poorly and with the first heavy rains the reconstructed bank collapsed and the damage was even greater than it was before the previous reconstruction.

The situation at the moment is a very sad one. During the dry season it is impossible to get clean drinking water. The dam hardly functions, as most of the water runs away. The water is of a very bad quality[39]. It is often contaminated, making the people sick.

4.5.2 Deforestation

Years ago, Kasuliyili was surrounded by woodland. Thirty years ago a Ghanaian company came and cleared many acres to make way for rice fields[40]. These fields no longer function as such, but the people still feel the consequences of the clearing (I:30). Worrying about the availability of firewood is not specific of this generation. Amina Sumani (I:20), a women well in her fifties, told me how the women used to worry about

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[39] As found in Appendix B, in the dry season only 32.5 per cent of the people in the whole district have access to safe drinking water; in the rainy season this is 40 per cent.
[40] I could not find anyone who could remember the exact details of this company. Everyone spoke of "three big men from Tamale"

future generations would manage themselves, as the years. The situation is getting more worrying. Many trees have also died due to the change of the weather. They have dried up. The inhabitants of Kasuliyili have cut other trees. As the population is growing fast, more and more wood is needed.

There are two kinds of firewood. The first can be found near to the village. There are only shrubs here. This wood is for instant use; it is not long lasting. If the women were to fetch all their wood here it would soon run out. That is why they walk many miles to get the everlasting firewood. This wood is cut from large trees and the logs are often big. The women walk up to two or three hours carrying these logs home. There are three places where this everlasting wood can be found. Where the women go, depends on which side of the village they live. The quality of the wood is often poor, due to bush fires. This not only spoils the wood, it also affects the possibility of the trees growing back once they have been cut down.

4.5.3 Land deterioration

As the majority of the people of Kasuliyili are subsistence farmers, land is very important. The quality of the plots of land varies widely. The most fertile is the land between the different compounds, the so-called compound farms. Even though this land has been used for many generations, the yield here is very high. The land just outside the village is often of a bad quality. It has been cultivated for many years, but it misses the natural fertiliser that the compound farms get from animal manure and human faeces. Some people decide to clear new land. This land lies far from the village. It is a lot of work to clear the land, but the quality is very good, as it has not been worked before.

But the general quality of the land has declined. The land used to get most families through the year, but now many have to purchase food to add to their supply. The few families whose yield is sufficient to provide for the family are those that are able to buy chemical fertiliser (I:47). The people used to work on the same plots of land, with merely hand farming equipment. Their total yield might have been less, but their yield per acre was more than what is produced nowadays. Because of an increase in population, fallow periods are less common. Some cannot afford to leave plots to rest, as the yield of the remaining land would not be sufficient; others do not have fallow periods, as people will come and request to use their land. Sometimes several generations will have been working on the same plot of land and the land will be exhausted. As there is much poverty, many people cannot afford fertiliser. Due to this, the land becomes even more exhausted. Previously, the people would leave their millet and maize stems on the land, as this prevents erosion and returns organic matter to the soil. But as wood is becoming scarcer, it is becoming more common for women to use these stems as firewood.

The rain does not come as frequent as it used to. Previously, there would be four rainy seasons in this area, now there is only one (I:47). This has also had a big influence on the fertility of the land. Weeds used not to be such a big problem, but these days they seem to dominate. Another big problem is soil erosion. This has especially increased since tractors have been used to plough the lands; they plough in the most practical way,

beneficent for the land[41]. Bush fires are also a major

4.6 Concluding remarks

This chapter introduces the setting in which the possibilities are created for the men and women of Kasuliyili. The high poverty level in the area and the direct dependence on the local resources show how important access to and control over natural resources is. Especially within the informal institution discussed here, that is, the customary laws within the household, differences become apparent; not only differences between men and women, but also differences among women.

In each of the sections in this chapter, I mention how all the aspects dealt with here serve as background information for the coming two chapters. The geographical and socio-demographic features, formal and informal institutions, the state of the natural resources themselves, and finally gender within all of these aspects influence the access to and control over natural resources, and thus they comprise a basis on which my research questions can be answered.

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[41] The best way is to cross-plough by the waterways; this prevents erosion.

In the previous chapter I described the context of Kasuliyili. Subsequently the region, the main family traditions, formal institutions and their relationship with the natural resources, and the current condition of the water, wood, and land in Kasuliyili were dealt with. In this chapter I discuss how the people gain access to these natural resources. To find out how this access takes place I look at the activities, and in specific the natural resource use activities, in which the inhabitants of Kasuliyili are involved, focusing on how these activities are gendered. The relationships that men and women have with their local environment through their activities show the different priorities. Whether a person wants or needs access to certain natural resources depends on this relationship. The access to resources is thus founded in relationships of power. When the priorities of people or groups of people collide, the power relations influence who finally gets legitimate effective command over the resources. The priorities themselves are also a reflection of prevalent power relations. In the next chapter, the way in which people can get control over resources is dealt with more elaborately.

To understand to which resources men and women need and want access and why and how they get this, I look into relationships between men and women and their local environment. First I study the daily activities of a male and a female inhabitant of Kasuliyili, Mohammed and Azara, giving an idea of how the lives of men and women are organised in Kasuliyili and what this entails. Subsequently, I divide their activities into productive, reproductive, and community activities. This gives insight into the reasons as to why men and women choose specific activities.

I conclude the chapter by analysing how the access to natural resources is gendered and which power relations are involved, by analysing the different dimensions of gender that have become apparent while studying the gender division of labour. Subsequently, I look at what the symbolic dimension of gender is, specifically the norms related to this, the structure of the gender division of labour and how the individual cases differ from the standard and from each other. This also gives insight in the control over natural resources. What the women can accomplish, for example, via their activities, is examined in the next chapter.

5.1 Natural resource use activities

In Kasuliyili, the daily lives of men and women are formed by their different responsibilities. Men and women are expected to fulfil certain roles in the productive, household, and community scene. These responsibilities differ between men and women, but what the responsibilities actually entail for the individual men and women also differs. This leads to different relationships that men and women have with their local environment and the way they get access to the natural resources. I start this section by introducing an outline of the daily activities. To find out what these responsibilities actually entail for the daily lives of the men and women, what a time schedule looks like in real life, I subsequently use two case studies. I look at both a case study on the daily activities of a man and a case study on the daily activities of a

analyse the activities in which this man and woman
ivities in productive, reproductive, and community
activities.

5.1.1 Activities in the dry and the rainy season

In Kasuliyili the basic needs cannot be taken for granted. Especially the constant deterioration of the natural resources in the area makes it more difficult for men and women to be able to provide sufficiently for their families. To get a general idea of the daily responsibilities of men and women, I present an overview of the activities that they are involved in. The relationship that the inhabitants of Kasuliyili have with their local environment changes strongly as the seasons change[42].

Table 5.1

Activities in the dry season for men and women

Time	Women/girl	Men/boy
5 am	Sets fire	Sleeps/ goes to pray
	Sweeps compound	Opens for fowls and animals
	Prepares breakfast	Has breakfast
	Baths children	Greets/visits neighbours
8 am	Prepares children for school	Builds/fixes house
	Has breakfast	
	Goes to fetch water at the dam	Cracks groundnuts
	Goes to collect firewood	
	Prepares lunch	Engages in income generating activities
	Has lunch	Has lunch
	Grinding/pounding of foodstuff and ingredients	
	Goes to fetch water	Rests and relaxes
	Washes the clothes	
	Goes to the market	Goes to the market
	Engages in income generating Activities	
6 pm	Prepares dinner	
	Baths children	Dinner
	Dinner	Rests and relaxes
	Washes bowls	
9 pm	Engages in an Income generating activity/attends a meeting	Attends a meeting
10/11 pm	Retires to bed	Retires to bed

Table 5.2

Activities in the rainy season for men and women

Time	Women/girl	Men/boy
4/5 am	Sets fire/goes to fetch water at the natural wells	Sleeps/ goes to pray

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[42] The data for these two diagrams are a combination of information gathered during my interviews, observations made during my research and data from a four day gender and development workshop organised for MED groups at the Baptist Child Development Project, October 2003. The workshop's objectives were to identify roles, activities, and tasks of men and women in their communities and to raise awareness of men and women's workloads.

Time		
		Opens fowls and animals
	Baths children	Greets/visits neighbours
7 am	Goes to fetch water at the dam	Eats breakfast and goes off to the farm
	Grinds/pounds foodstuff and ingredients	Works on farm
	Prepares lunch	
	Washing of clothes	
	Sets off for the farm with food to join husband	
	Works on farm and searches for firewood	
4 pm	Sets off home	
6 pm	Fetches water from natural wells	Sets off home
	Boils water for husband to bath	
	Prepares dinner	Drives in fowls and animals
	Baths children	Has dinner
	Has dinner	Rests and relaxes
9 pm	Washes bowls	Sleeps
10/12 pm	Engages in an income generating activity/retires to bed	

The difference in available time between men and women during the dry season is striking. Women's days seem absolutely packed. For women there seem to be less difference between the seasons, this is in sharp contrast with the difference in seasons for men. Another noticeable fact is how men have calculated more social time into their schedules. They name the greeting and meeting of friends as part of their activities.

Many of the activities that are mentioned in the table are not daily activities, but for example take place every other day or once a week. A time-sum can therefore not be made, the table is both over-complete and under-complete. In this chapter we gain insight in all of these activities. How often the activities actually take place, how much time they consume, and what responsibilities they are linked to becomes clear in the following two cases in which a time use activity mapping has been made for a man and a woman.

5.1.2 Mohammed and Azara[43] [44]

5.1.2.1 "When the very first rain has come, I will go to clear my farm"[45]

Mohammed Alassah Afa Ajura is a hardworking man and a serious Muslim. He is 43 years old. He is one of the imams of the village. He has one wife and together they have seven children. Mohammed is a man who is rarely caught resting. During the dry season he gets up around four o'clock. By five he is finished with the Islamic rituals, which also include the calling of prayers. He then goes home and has his porridge, which his wife has prepared for him. During the day, Mohammed is busy with his *zenna*-mat business. He weaves leftover stems from the millet, *ca*, into *zenna*-mats to sell. In the

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[43] It seemed difficult for the respondents to give exact information about the coming season (the rainy season). I was not there to verify the given time schedules.

[44] I have used the real names of these respondents, as no real sensitive information is used. In the rest of this thesis I do not mention any names, keeping my respondents anonymous.

[45] Interview 5, see Appendix A

re used to bind the mats together. If he has enough *ca*
the mats. Many people just leave the *ca* on the land.
Mohammed considers this a waste. If he does not have enough *ca* at his house he goes
to his farm to collect some. He goes on his bicycle and binds the *ca* on the back.
Mohammed goes to his farm about three times a week to collect the millet stems. He
sells his mats either at home or he takes them to the Tamale market.

Mohammed also sells firewood. He rides approximately ten to twelve kilometres
to collect his firewood. This is not at the same place as where the women go for ¬their¬
firewood, which is closer. His firewood is for commercial use, but sometimes when his
wife is struggling he helps her by giving her some of his firewood. If he goes early in
the morning to collect the firewood he is usually back around nine a.m. He sells some of
the firewood at the market, but most is sold from home. Especially the people from the
chop bars[46] often come to his house for firewood. This way he has found an alternative
way of making money. All this keeps him busy for the day. During the dry season, he
also repairs his house where needed. To do this, he first collects the mud at his farm or
near the house and goes to the dam on his bicycle to get water, normally fetching from
the animal pool next to the wells[47]. At the end of a day, six p.m., he says his last
prayers, *Ishia*, and has his dinner. After dinner he either meets with his friends or he
stays at home to teach some of the children Arabic from the Koran (for about half an
hour). Then he will go to bed.

During the rainy season Mohammed will be busy with serious farming. He is at
the farm from early morning to early evening. He even says his prayers on the farm.
Before the first rain comes, Mohammed goes to his farm to remove all the remaining
millet stems. In the early rainy season, when the very first rain has come, he goes to
clear his farm. He gathers all the rubbish together and burns it, so that his land will be
fresh to start on. He starts with the moulding of yam hills. Mohammed has about seven
acres of land and three acres of rice fields, although he has momentarily lent the latter to
family. It takes him about forty minutes on the bicycle to get to his field. This does not
only have to do with the distance, but also with the condition of the paths during the
rainy season. Mohammed has various crops. One third of his land is for yams. On three
acres he practices mixed cropping (groundnuts, maize, and millet; groundnuts are sown
as cash crops and the last two are strictly staple crops). He practices shifting cultivation,
so that his land will remain fertile and productive. He has one acre of beans (as he heard
that they were very nutritious) and one or two acres of cotton (both beans and cotton are
very good for improving the fertility of the soil).

When everything is sown (in the order of: yam ó maize/millet/groundnut ó
cotton ó beans), he starts with the weeding. He does this constantly over the whole field.
When he gets to the end of his fields, it is time to start at the beginning again. Gradually
he starts with the harvesting. The first harvest starts sixty-five days after they have sown
the beans. He has help with all of the farm activities, either from people from the village
or from his wife and children. Sometimes he will hire labourers. Mohammed¬s wife
only takes food to him when she has planned to go to the farm herself. When she does
not come, he prepares his own meals on the farm. The meal will be cooking while he is
working. Mohammed also keeps hens, guinea fowls, and goats. He started with one goat
for breeding. He is continually breading and selling the goats. After returning from the

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[46] A chop bar is a local restaurant.
[47] see map 4.6

e energy to do anything but to simply bath, have his
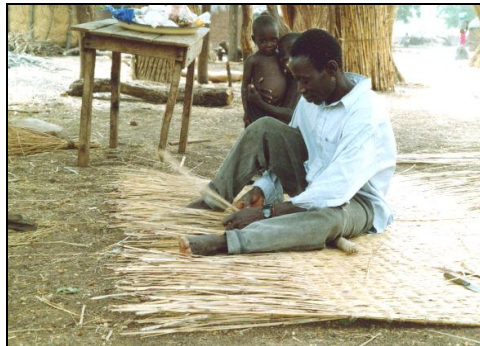
Mohammed weaving a zenna mat

5.1.2.1 'To collect the everlasting type of wood I walk six kilometres' [48]

Azara Mohammed is also a serious Muslim. She thinks she is approximately 45. Her husband practices polygyny. He has two wives. Azara is his first wife. She has given birth to ten children. All, except for the first-born (a boy) and one of the girls, attend(ed) school. The two who did not attend school were kept home at the time, as they were needed for helping out with the different activities. At this moment she takes care of five children in her household, three of her own and two adopted children. The other children have grown up and left the house. During the dry season, Azara wakes at four a.m. to boil water. She then says her *Asolat*, which is the Morning Prayer. She sweeps the compound, wakes the children, and baths them. She uses the boiled water for bathing and boils more water for the porridge. She will give the children their porridge and then help them to brush their teeth and get ready for school. When the children have left for school, around eight a.m., she goes for water. Her co-wife and daughter-in-law accompany her. In the mornings, they normally go three times. When they get back she starts preparing lunch. At noon, the children come home from school for lunch. She will rest shortly and then say her *Suhuri*, the afternoon prayer. After this she does some small work in the compound, such as the cracking of the groundnuts or preparing the products she sells at her MED-store or at the market. In the afternoon, she goes for water twice, together with her daughter and daughter-in-law.

Around two p.m. she goes to fetch firewood. At the beginning of the dry season the distance is about two kilometres. She can only get small wood here, which is wood taken from shrubs. This wood cannot be kept long. To collect the everlasting type of wood, she walks over an hour, approximately six kilometres. Azara does this about three times a week. She does not use it all immediately, but saves the big (everlasting) pieces of wood for the rainy season. During the rainy season it is difficult to fetch wood, seeing there is little time, more rivers block the way, and the paths are harder to walk on. If you do not collect sufficient firewood at the beginning of the dry season, you will have to walk far to be able to get enough to last you throughout the rainy season. '*Some people are lazy and they end up having to go further*' she says. Azara goes together with other women, but each woman collects for her own pile. If she does not have to go to the 'far place', she gets back around five p.m. and starts sweeping the compound. Azara

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[48] Interview 3

ay. It depends on the other activities she has on that
is market day she will not always go. On market day
she is busy preparing her products and selling them at the market.

Her son's wife helps her prepare dinner. She says her evening prayers, *Magrib*,
boils water and baths the children. Then she has her dinner, says her last prayers, and if
it was her turn to cook, she also washes the dishes. Otherwise she goes to bed. If at any
time the clothes need to be washed, she will go for water one extra time in the morning.
The children's clothes need to be washed every three or four days. The older people do
not wash their clothes as often, dependent on the availability of water and the available
time. Azara will often do a big wash every two weeks, when there is enough time. Small
things can be washed in between. As all the washing is done by hand, it is a highly time
consuming activity.

During the rainy season Azara wakes up very early. She will have started with
her activities when the first prayer call comes. She boils water, baths her children,
prepares porridge, and gets the children into their uniforms. When they have left for
school, she has her breakfast and sweeps the yard, which can be an absolute mess if
there has been a storm during the night. During the early rainy season she picks
sheanuts[49] on her husband's farm, which lies a kilometre behind the house. Every two
weeks, when she has collected enough sheanuts (some fourteen *tahli*, big bowls, full of
sheanuts), she processes them. The sheanuts start to blossom at the end of the dry
season, but the real sheanut-season only lasts about one month. During the beginning of
the dry season she also processes *dawa-dawa*[50]. But as the people do not own the *dawa-
dawa* trees and they are dependent on merely the leftover, this is not as big a job. The
dawa dawa is thus used for consumption only.

Azara and her co-wife take the cooking and the picking of the sheanuts in turns,
they swap tasks every two days. She goes for water and if it is her turn she will cook.
During the rainy season it is easier to get water, as the natural wells in the village are
often full. However, she still has to go to the dam, as the water in the natural wells
cannot be used as drinking water. These wells are too near to where the people and the
animals go to the toilet and the water can be polluted with faeces. After collecting the
water and cooking lunch, she rests a little, says her prayers, and has her lunch. After this
she heads off to help her husband. She helps with the sowing and the harvesting. It is
especially important that she helps with the maize, as this is the general food. Everyone
helps each other with the harvesting of this crop. Her husband has eight acres of land.
Azara also earns something extra by helping with the harvesting of the groundnuts. She
goes round with neighbouring women asking where their help is needed. They earn a
certain share of what they harvest. What that exact share is depends on whether the
women helped with the sowing or not. If a woman has helped with the sowing, she
divides the harvest in four, giving three-forth to the owner of the land, keeping the rest
for herself. If she has not helped with the sowing of the groundnuts, she only takes one
fifth of what she harvests. When Azara harvests on her own husband's farm she can
take half of what she harvests. Azara also has her own plot of land. It is near her
husband's plot. It is only about one acre, but she would not have enough money to work

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[49] The Sheanut tree, also called Vitelaria Paradoxa, is a species highly valued for the oil obtained from its
seeds. This shea oil is obtained as a -by product' of shea butter.
[50] The fruits of the *dawa dawa* tree, also knows as Parkia Biglobosa, are fully matured in April and May.
The women will use long sticks with a crook at the end of it to harvest the seedpods. The yellow powder
in the pod is the economically important part of the tree. It can be consumed raw or made into porridge.

t to her four years ago. Often her husband will work
rers to do the weeding. Weeding is very difficult for a
woman, as it is hard work and she is not used to doing it. On her way back from the
farm she picks small shrubs and leaves, *ajojo*, for the soup. These leaves grow
everywhere in the wild and they are free for everyone to pick. She will use them to
make a nutritious soup. When she gets back she sweeps, makes a fire and prepares
dinner. She then baths the children, says her prayers, washes the dishes, and goes to
bed. She gets to bed between eleven-thirty p.m. and midnight[51].

5.2 Productive, reproductive and community activities

The cases of Mohammed and Azara give a glimpse of what the activities, in which men
and women in Kasuliyili are involved, mean for their daily lives. Every individual deals
differently with the responsibilities they have. In this section I look deeper into the
different activities of the men and women, using my interview data, the six activity
mappings I made and observations. I do this by dividing all the activities of Mohammed
and Azara into subsequently, productive, reproductive, and community activities. How
the men and women gain access to the natural resources for and through these activities
is explored.

5.2.1 The productive activities

During the dry season no farming can take place. Like Mohammed and Azara, many of
the men and women are involved in small-scale businesses and industries during this
period to ensure they get themselves through the year. Besides the *zenna* mats, which
Mohammed makes, the men of Kasuliyili are involved in various small cottage
industries. The following table gives an overview of the activities in which my male
respondents are involved.

Table 5.3
Extra income generating activities of men[52 53]

Extra income generating activities of men	How many?
Zenna mats	5
Poultry farming	6
Animal farming[54]	7
Petrol	1
Tailor	3
Bicycle repairs	1

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[51] I have recorded what the respondents have told me. My respondent may experience this time to be later
than what it actually is. Most of the respondents are not used to telling time. Moreover, in this case my
respondent is talking about the rainy season, and as mentioned in note 43, it was in many cases difficult
for the respondents to give detailed descriptions of this period. In my own household, my landlord's wife
went to bed between ten and eleven and rose again at five.

[52] In 15 of the interviews with male respondents I collected information on their extra income generating
activities. Many are involved in several activities.

[53] I did not always directly ask about the income generating activities, sometimes they were just
mentioned when talking about other subjects. I can therefore not guarantee that the table is complete.

[54] The most common livestock were sheep and goats, but some respondents also had cows and pigs.

	1
	1
Selling wood	1
Hunter	1
Basket weaving	1
Wood crafts	1
Fisherman	1
No extra income generating activities	0

Other activities that I observed men to be involved in during the dry season are rope weaving, smithery or butchery, and cotton spinning. Many of these activities only take up, for example, a few hours a day, but others are full time jobs. The hunter whom I interviewed, for example, would spend most of the dry season going out hunting at night (I: 36). When men are not busy with their extra income generating activities, they can be found sitting with neighbours and friends, cracking groundnuts, playing games, or simply resting under a tree.

Azara was involved in sheanut processing from the sheanuts from her husband's farm at the end of the dry season/ beginning of the rainy season. She also processed *dawa dawa*. These trees, the *dawa dawa* and the sheanut trees, can be found on the ÷private' farms, but the owners of these plots do not necessarily own them. The *dawa dawa* trees were given to a special sub-chief many years ago, *the Dohinaa*. He now owns the trees and the fruits on the trees. Their economical value was recognised long ago. After this chief has harvested all the trees, the women will go around looking for leftovers. Everyone is permitted to do this on all the different farms. The value of the sheanut tree on the other hand has only started to been recognised over the past fifteen years. It has become the territory of women. Through the function of the tree, namely as economical product, the women have acquired access to the tree. The *dawa dawa* is processed and consumed.

The wives of the landowners own the sheanut trees and their products (I:7). Processing these sheanuts is a very common income generating activity for the women of Kasuliyili. Of the thirty-six women I interviewed, all of them were involved in the processing of sheanuts. Thirty-five women were able to pick the sheanuts from the farms of their husbands or their own farm. One woman, from a female-headed household who did not own land, was able to collect leftovers on other people's farms. Table 5.4 shows other activities in which my female respondents were involved to earn an income during the dry season.

Table 5.4
Extra income generating activities of women[55]

Extra income generating activities of women	How many?
Sheanut processing	36
Groundnutoil extraction	28
Small store/ petty trading	21
Working at a chop bar	3
Making and selling coolie coolie[56]	4
Owning cattle	3[57]

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[55] I talked to all thirty-six women about their extra income generating activities. With some more elaborate than others. This may have meant that I was not able to discover all the extra income generating activities that each woman is involved in.

[56] *Coolie coolie* is a typical Northern Ghanaian biscuit. It is made from groundnuts and fried in oil.

that are primarily dominated by women. Especially er part of the activities of the women, since more women are making use of the local *susu-clubs* or are involved in the micro credit programmes. It gives them money to be able to invest. *Susu-clubs* are offices that lend money to groups, which they have to pay back monthly with interest. The market plays an important role in these secondary activities. During market day, every sixth day, people are able to sell their products or offer their services. Of the thirty-six women I interviewed, eleven were MED-women[58] and nineteen were in involved in a *susu*-club. The two women from the female-headed households that I interviewed were among the six women who were not involved in any club. To get involved in one of the clubs a woman has to have a certain binding with either her neighbours or, for example, the church or mosque. Both of these women had not been living in Kasuliyili for long and had not yet built up strong relationships with other women or organisations. Both said to find it difficult to become accepted in the community, as they did not have a man at the head of their household.

Coolie coolie is a more common trade. It is actually even a good way for women to start out, as the required investment is not too big. Even one of the women from the female-headed households has been able to start a coolie coolie business. Only women who are doing well financially, however, can run a chop bar or own cattle. These businesses require large investments. They are investments for the future. The typical thing about the six women who have either one of the two businesses is that they seem to be very strong and independent women, extremely focussed on doing well and not having to suffer for the rest of their lives. However, other than this I could not find any specific aspect that makes them different from any other woman in the village.

Agriculture in the Northern Region has been a major source of food supply in Ghana, as it occupies a total area of seventy thousand square kilometres; this is 29.5 per cent of the whole country. The region could even meet the national food grain requirement if the conditions were better (Danqua: 1996:73). In Kasuliyili too, the majority of the people are engaged in agriculture. The man is obligated to provide the family with millet and maize, which are the basic ingredients for the main meals; *coco* is porridge they eat in the morning and *zham*[59] is the meal that is taken in both the afternoon and the evening. The men can fulfil this main responsibility by farming. There are therefore no households in the village that do not farm. Mohammed explained to me how, during the rainy season, his whole day is dedicated to his farm. All of my male respondents had their own plot of land to farm on. Traditionally it has always been the men who farm. Most of the farmers combine subsistence with cash crop farming. The main crops grown are maize, millet, groundnut, yam, cotton, cowpea, pigeon pea, bean, and soya bean.

The woman is responsible for providing the household with the sugar to go with the morning tea and millet-porridge and the ingredients for the soup, which give taste and vitamins to the *zahm*. Although men are still the primary farmers, more and more women own their own plot to be able to fulfil their responsibilities without having to bother their husbands. As mentioned above, Azara has taken up farming her own plot

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[57] It is not common to tell other people that you own cattle if you are a woman. It is possible that more of the women own cattle, but that they just did not tell me.

[58] One of male respondents was also involved in the MED group.

[59] *Zahm* is also known as *Tuo Zafi,* which means ÷very hotø. The closest comparison I could make would be with mashed potatoes, only stickier and heavier.

it from her husband, who willingly gave it to her. In
en in Kasuliyili also started farming. The first woman
in Kasuliyili received her own plot and started growing ingredients for the soup about
twenty years ago[60]. Only this last decade, and especially the last five years, have more
women had the opportunity to really take up farming, due to the money lending clubs
they have become involved in. Formerly most women did not have the money to farm.
Due to their responsibilities, the most common crops that women grow are groundnuts,
okro, and pepper. In general, they are meant for household consumption, but women
also sell part of the groundnuts they harvest to be able to buy the other ingredients for
the soup that they do not have on their farm.

There are official laws on landowning in Ghana. In Kasuliyili no one can do
anything without the permission of the chief and his elders. Anyone who wants to visit
or settle here will first have to go to them. The same goes for farmland. If someone
wants to clear new land, he or she has to go to the chief with *kola* and make a request
for this. In general, the chief always grants permission. But in most cases this has
already been done years ago and the sons have inherited the land from their father. The
man inherits land. If there is nothing to inherit or if it is not enough for a man, he can
also make a new request at the chief's palace and clear new land. In most cases, the
women will get land from their husbands. He will either give it to her or she will request
it from him. In some cases women can inherit land, for example if they marry within the
village and have no brothers. The women who are not able to get a plot of their own
through their husband or inheritance, often request it from family or an acquaintance.
The following table shows how many of my female respondents have their own plot.

Table 5.5
Women owning land[61]

In what way do women farm a plot?	How many?
Women who inherited a plot of land	3
Women who were given a plot of land by their husband	27
Women who cleared their own plot of land	1
Women who have requested a plot of land	7
Women who do not have a plot of land to work on	2

The majority of the women were given a plot by their husband. Except for one
woman, those that did not receive land, did not receive it because there was not enough
to spare. All of these women, except for three, are in a polygynous family situation.
Two of these three are from a female-headed household and one is an only wife. The
husband of the woman who forms the exception has objections of principle to giving his
wife land. He wants her to be there for the children, as this is her foremost task.

Women are starting to grow other crops than merely soup ingredients. Slowly,
some women have started sowing cash crops such as rice or cotton (I:53). Two of my
female respondents farm cotton and five women have their own rice fields. Both of
these cash crops are very difficult to manage in all stages of farming them, which
discourages most women to farm these specific crops. The women who do have more
than groundnuts and okro are often older women with strong personalities. One
exception of this is one of the above-mentioned female household heads. Although this

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[60] Every respondent that I questioned on this subject gave me a different time span.
[61] The total adds up to 40. It only concerns 36 women. Some women already had received land from their
husband, but requested or inherited more.

she has chosen to farm cotton. This means receiving which she is able to use for her other crops. She can apply these to her maize, as it will otherwise not grow well on the marginal land that she has requested. She has to farm maize, as she has no husband to do this for her.

When a woman is given land by her husband, this is often ÷oldø land, which lies close to the homestead and has often been in use for several generations. Besides this, a woman is dependent on her husband for having her land included in shifting cultivation. Her land is therefore often marginal, often producing a discouraging yield. Four men did emphasise that they had given their wife/wives good land, as they would not want their wives to be discouraged. However, most of the women I questioned on their crop choices (fifteen of the eighteen women) mentioned that one of the reasons for choosing groundnuts was that this crop can grow well on less fertile land. If women had the money to hire a tractor and the labour, clearing land would be a good option for them.

Menøs activities on the farm include ploughing, sowing, weeding, harvesting, and finally transporting. Traditionally, the women are to help with the sowing and the harvesting on their husbandøs farm (I:47). The division of the labour on the farms is becoming less gender specific, as women are also starting to weed and take up ploughing. But some of the men still help their wife/wives out when it becomes too much, as women are generally not as experienced at farming and the weeding can be very heavy. This was also the case in Azaraøs situation. I have discovered that whether or not a woman has access to the agricultural services of her husband has two causes.

Table 5.6
Womenøs access to their husbandøs agricultural services[62][63]

Respondent[64]	Husband has more than one wife	Husband has an important position in the community	Husband helps with his labour[65]
14	Yes	Yes	No
17	Yes	No	Very rarely
24	Yes	Yes	No
25	Yes	Yes	No
27	No	No	Yes (if needed)
28	No	No	Yes (sometimes)
38	No	No	Yes (a little)
41	No	No	Yes
42	No	No	Yes
46	Yes	No	Yes
47	Yes	Yes	Yes
48	Yes	No	No
51	No	Yes	Yes
58	No	No	Yes

[62] I included all interviews with both men and women in which I have questioned my respondents on this specific subject.

[63] I chose these two variables, as they appeared to be relevant during several conversations. It is not an exhaustive list, but it includes the two factors that I identified to be linked to the help given by the husband.

[64] The numbers of the respondents correspond with the respondents found in Appendix A.

[65] These data are completely based on the answers given by the women. I was not able to observe it myself, as I did not see much farming. Judging the conversations, I do not think that they felt they had to give a certain answer.

n this table is that between having co-wives and ... . Only in two cases does a man wedded to several wives help his wives out on their farm. Looking into the background of these both cases, it turns out to concern help through a communal labour group[66] in which the husband is involved. All men with only one wife help their wife out on the farm, although in what way and to what extent differs per case. Finding a link between the position of the husband and the help he will give is not as easily made. Two of the five men in a high position help their women out with their labour, but one of these men also only haves one wife. Although the difference is not significant, I still conclude that, in general, if a man holds a high position in the community, he will not as readily help his wife on the land due to this position; it would not be culturally accepted. The three women whose husband would not help them on the farm especially emphasised that the reason for this was that he had an important position in the community. Although this table only includes fourteen women, the results correspond with what I informally talked about in the neighbourhood in which I lived. Only in three cases did I hear of co-wives helping each other out on the farm. The difficulty to farm and the amount of labour that needs to be hired by the women thus varies between the different cases, dependent on being in a polygynous household and on the position of one's husband.

After the first rains come, the men hurry to reserve a tractor and a tractor driver that can come and plough their farm. Men have priority over the tractor, as they are the main farmers. Women will wait until all men have ploughed their land before it is their land's turn. Some men own a tractor or hand plough. Of the seven men I interviewed that owned their own tractor or hand plough, five would first plough their wife's land before going to work on other people's land. The two men who did not plough their wife's/wives' land did not seem to have a very cordial relationship with her/them. If a woman's husband has a tractor or hand plough and the relationship between husband and wife is good, she will have more assurance that her land will be ploughed on time.

In 2004 the first rain came in the first week of April. This was said to be average. From the beginning of May all of the men, like Mohammed, will get up very early and go to their farms. They do not return again until late. This goes on until the harvesting period in September and October. Other agricultural activities include the above-mentioned fishing, livestock, and poultry breeding (table 5.3). These are jobs solely meant for men. A woman can own livestock, but she is to leave the breeding and care of the animals over to the men. ‗Every woman really should farm, because there is no other real serious business that we women can be involved in, such as animal rearing' as women (33, second of two co-wives) noted (I:19).

As can be concluded from the above, there is an obvious difference in labour division between men and women within the productive atmosphere. Although men dominate this sector, women are starting to find their place here too. More and more, women own land and have small businesses. The coming of the loan services has given women these opportunities. But farming is still difficult for women, and due to money shortages and lack of experience, many have to leave parts of their land unused. The relationship between a woman and her husband is important in the help in the form of labour that she does or does not get from her husband. Many men with only one wife seem to have a more cordial relationship with their wives and are often even accused of

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[66] A communal labour group is a farming group in which men rotationally work on each other's farms. Men sometimes secretly include their wife's plot; in other cases it is simply accepted by the group to include the women's plots.

ing her too much. These men will nearly always help ... ...man sharing a husband do not get as much help, as it is often too much for a man to help all of his wives and he cannot favour just one. Women with co-wives therefore often have to spend more money on hiring labourers to work the land. These labourers often do not do as good as a job either, as it does not concern their own farm. Co-wives do not seem to help each other out on their farms.

The direct dependency on the natural resources for providing for one's family is evident. Not only the condition of the land is important for farming, but also during most of the extra income generating activities, the natural resources are directly used. Within the productive sphere, both men and women are also involved in activities that do not stand in direct contact with the condition of the natural resources. These activities are slowly expanding, which means that more people no longer have to completely exhaust the natural resources, but also that more people can afford to invest properly in the natural resources to ensure a better quality. Examples are being able to buy fertilizer and introducing fallow periods.

5.2.2 The reproductive activities

While men are mainly responsible for the productive tasks, women have the primary responsibility for the reproductive tasks. As we saw in the case of Azara, this involves household chores such as cleaning, cooking, washing, and fetching water and wood. The young girls will help in all the household activities, except for the collecting of wood, as the weight of the bunch of wood is too heavy for them to carry. The women sweep the yards and the rooms daily. When there are several wives they will keep their own part of the compound clean and take turns in cleaning their husband's room. Sweeping the yard takes approximately twenty minutes every morning and evening. It takes them another half an hour to keep the rooms tidy. The men provide the above-mentioned main ingredients for the meals and the women are to prepare this. When there are more wives, they will take it in turns to cook for the whole household, giving the other wife or wives a break. Women with no co-wives rarely have a break in cooking. As the products they cook with are raw, it can take up to two hours before a meal is prepared properly. The women try to cook enough in the evening to have sufficient leftovers for the afternoon meal the next day.

Another important task of the women is to go down to the wells at the dam and fetch water. Depending on the size of the household and the number of girls and women in the household that join her to fetch water, the women may go up to five times a day. The containers, with which the water is fetched, vary between twenty and thirty litres. The distance a woman has to walk depends on the distance from the house to the dam. Azara for example had to walk quite far, as she lived on the opposite side of the village. Other women only have to walk five or ten minutes to get to the dam. Everyone in the village is allowed to use the water from the dam and no fees are charged. All the people of Kasuliyili contributed a small amount when the dam was built. As long as the women use the wells as they are meant to and keep to the rules set up by the chief, they can use the dam as much as they like. There are eight wells next to the dam, from which the women can fetch their water, but at least half of them are usually locked. This prevents them from all becoming dirty. When the wells are dirty, they are locked so that they can be cleaned and the others are then opened. Consequently, the women have to wait in line to get their water from the wells. At times the water is far down in the well, and

...ry work (I:8/9). I observed that many women take the ... into the dam to fetch the water. As the gates around the dam have been broken, it is not difficult to get inside the dam to fetch water. This of course effects the functioning of the dam and quality of the water. Consequently this also has an impact on the health of the people who drink the water.

During the rainy season, the water in the wells is not very deep, so it is not as hard to get the water. During this season, many of the women also fetch their water from the natural wells that have been dug all over the village. There are also natural wells on the farms from which the women fetch their water. This means that they do not have to walk as far to get their water, and especially for women like Azara who live so far from the dam, it saves a lot of time. They can also catch some of the rainwater as it falls. As mentioned earlier, the water from the natural wells in the village cannot be used as direct drinking water. In stead, this water is used for cooking, boiling the rice and the sheanuts, and for washing dishes, themselves, and their clothes. Some women fetch water to wash their clothes, others take the clothes to the dam, wash them there and lay them out to dry on the banks.

The women are also responsible for fetching the firewood that is used for cooking and bathing. They also use the firewood in the small-scale business activities in which they are involved, such as the processing of sheanuts. The women collect firewood because it is their responsibility. There are three places where the women can fetch good wood. All the trees belong to the chief, but the women are free to go and cut from them. Everyone knows from which trees they may cut and from which they may not, as each tree has its own purpose. As the sheanut and the *dawa dawa* trees are economical trees they are not to be cut from (I:2). The fruits from the *ga*-tree are free for everyone, but people believe that if you take wood from this tree the dwarves will come and bring harm. The *neem*[67] trees are meant for roofing and shade. The *Sinsawega* tree is also for building. The soap trees are owned by specific people and are not to be used by just anyone. Women can thus not simply cut from just any tree. There are rules for wood access.

The bundles of wood that the women collect
can weigh up to fifty kilograms

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[67] The neem tree is an imported tree from India. It has the capability to flourish in arid areas. It is a hardy, fast-growing evergreen and can become up to twenty metres in height. Its resistance to termites makes the neem tree a useful construction material.

walk up to six kilometres to find the everlasting type oups to fetch wood. It takes them about six hours to fetch the wood, as one woman (38, first of two co-wives) told me: 'I will leave when the STC bus arrives in the morning, and arrive just before it returns in the afternoon' (I:14). Meaning that she would leave at eight a.m. and arrive home between one and two p.m.. The women take a special knife with them with which they can fairly easily cut off the branches. The loads that the women carry during the long trips home reach up to fifty kilograms. This job is therefore named by many women as the most tiring of all of their activities. 'Fetching the wood is the activity that makes women age too quickly.' (I:20). Even the men talk about this activity with much respect. Mohammed sometimes goes to fetch wood for his wife on his bicycle, but as mentioned before this is not usual. Whether a man fetches wood for his wife is also strongly linked to the amount of wives he has.

Table 5.7
Men collecting firewood[68]

Men with one wife who collect firewood	4
Men with one wife who do not collect firewood	14
Men practising polygyny who collect firewood	0
Men practising polygyny who do not collect firewood	30

There are some occasions on which every man will go and collect wood for his wife. The first is when she is highly pregnant. The second time is just after she has given birth. The wife will be staying with her parents, for a short or long period, depending on which child it is[69]. The husband will gather all his friends together; they will all go and collect firewood on their bicycles. They will enter the wife's parents' village in a big group, making a lot of racket. They bring the wife wood to last her at least until she is again strong enough to fetch wood herself. As the table shows, there are a few households in Kasuliyili in which the husband helps his wife on more occasions with the collecting of wood. When Mohammed sees that his wife is struggling, he rides to his farm and fetches wood on the back of his bicycle. This only happens in households in which the man has one wife. And even in these households it is not common. These results also correspond with observations I made.

During the dry season, the women will go as often as possible to collect enough wood to last them through the rainy season. Sometimes this will be everyday and sometimes this will be three times a week. During the rainy season it is difficult to collect wood, as most of the paths have turned into rivers. Sometimes households will go to their fields to collect the stems of millet and maize to use as firewood (I:11).

The women also have the main responsibility in raising the children. A woman spends more time with her children then her husband does. As women give birth and know the pains of delivery, nursing etc., they will want to ensure that their children get what they need. They take care of them; watch out for them. The father's role is not as direct. He is to provide the children with food and pay for their healthcare (I:44/48). The woman works for herself, but even more so for her family. She shares her profits with her children; with these profits she will invest in their future (I:19). This role never

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[68] I have included information gathered from both male and female respondents on this subject.
[69] As I explained in chapter four, if it concerns the first two children, she will stay at her parents' place for two to three years after the birth of each child.

es her husband and moves to a different household, in behind in the household of her husband, she will take care of them (I:44). When the boys turn twelve the husband starts taking a direct part in the upbringing. The boys then start working on the farm, according to a traditional time schedule. As the boys work side by side with their father, the tie between them strengthens. The mother keeps her daughters under her wings and helps them to become hard-working women, well-prepared for marriage.

How much the husband actually helps out in all the reproductive activities is also dependent on the position the husband has in the community. If a man is well regarded or if he is, for instance, an elder, he cannot really be seen doing household chores for his wife. When a man helps his wife out, people often start talking, saying that the wife is dominant. This is not a desired reputation. But, as we also saw in Mohammed's case, the man does have some responsibilities that involve reproductive tasks. The main activity is the building and repairing of the homestead. These activities take place during the dry season, when the men have time to spare. Sometimes they also have to repair the huts during the rainy season, if the storms manage to destroy (parts of) the compound. Another responsibility of the men is, the abovementioned, healthcare. It is his responsibility to ensure that anyone from his household can go to the clinic when this is needed. But seven of the eight women I questioned on this matter added that they themselves often help out with these costs if their husband is in a financial crisis.

The reproductive tasks take up most of women's time in both the dry and the rainy season. In each season, different activities are more time consuming. Again, a significant difference can be noticed between the workload of women with co-wives and women without. The latter do not have as much help in the household. The only help they have comes from the young girls living in the household or their possible daughters in law. When women have co-wives, they have days off, as many tasks are shared, such as cooking and cleaning the husband's rooms. Women with no co-wives often do get more direct help from their husband, which can lend them a hand in times of crisis. This is a more irregular help, but on the other hand it can make women feel more supported, and subsequently feel more able to fulfil their responsibilities. The activities of the young girls are very important for the women, as they can contribute in those areas in which the women are struggling to get their work done.

The condition of the natural resources is important for women to be able to fulfil their reproductive responsibilities. But on the other hand, the way that the women actually go about their reproductive tasks influences the conditions of the natural resources. Every woman can use the dam and the woods as often as they like, but there are certain rules concerning the use. When women do not keep to these rules, this can cause a direct deterioration of these resources.

5.2.3 The community activities

Like in many communities in Ghana, in Kasuliyili too, the community activities are mostly left to the men. The chief of Kasuliyili has always been a man and his eleven elders are all male. Traditionally the public domain is a man's domain. In community meetings men have a prominent place. Also within religion, which is an important aspect of life in Kasuliyili, men occupy the most important and influential positions. All leaders are men and men lead the religious services. A woman can never have a high position within the Islam; a woman could, for example, never call the prayer for men.

to the background, as the head-imam said: "*A woman ... p of men*"(I: 45) .

In traditional ceremonies and celebrations, the men and women have specific tasks. The men will be sitting outside the homestead in which the event is taking place. Their main responsibility is slaughtering the animals that are to be eaten; often these "animals" will be chickens. This is the cheapest kind of meet available. For special occasions, a guinea fowl[70] or a goat will be slaughtered. Men are also responsible for burying the body, marrying the couple, naming the child, or whatever the most important aspect of the ceremony in the event in question. The women stay inside the homestead, making sure that all the guests are clean and fed; taking care of the reproductive activities that need to be done. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the *Yanaa* was killed in 2002. Out of respect for the chief, the ceremonies and celebrations are to be kept moderate. There is, for example, to be no dancing. This will endure until the chief is buried and the problems are solved. During these dances and other traditional activities that take place during ceremonies, both the men and the women, and the boys and the girls, have specific roles. Each role has its own specific meaning and contribution to the ceremony (I:53). Most of the ceremonies and celebrations take place during the dry season, when there is more time. At this moment, even the ceremonies that are celebrated have a negative undertone, as people support opposite gates and feel differently about how the celebrations should be carried out (I:43).

Although the chief actually owns all the land, woods, and community areas, it is the responsibility of the community to keep them well maintained. For example, the people are to make sure that nobody burns the land. Some of the hunters are known to do this to chase out the animals. Everyone is also meant to keep an eye out for women who cut from "forbidden trees". If someone sees that a rule has been broken this should be reported at the chief's palace. Concerning the maintenance of the dam, the activities are gender specific. The men are responsible for the cleaning of the pipes that lead from the dam to the wells and the women are to keep the wells clean. There is a man who is assigned by the chief to make sure that this is done when needed, but the two women I spoke with on this subject told me that it did not happen very often. As women are the water fetchers, they are to abide by the rules that will guarantee that the dam keeps functioning as it is supposed to. If they keep to these rules, the water should be drinkable. The rules are lined up in box 5.1. A big responsibility thus lies with the women. It is also the responsibility of the women to keep the village clean. They are to organise a big clean up if this is needed (I:8/9).

When a development activity is organised that is to benefit the whole village, everyone in the village is to be involved. The men and women have specific tasks to fulfil. Just like with ceremonies, the women will take the responsibility for the "reproductive" tasks. For example, when the dam was constructed, the leading women suggested that the women provide the workers with food and a place to sleep. The men were to help with the construction itself. The *Wulana* will call the men and announce what is to be done. The Magajia organises the women.

Men are often the voices in the community, taking the main leadership positions in both the community itself and in the religious life. But as women work close to the natural resources, they have an important role in managing the resources with which

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[70] Giving someone the meat of a guinea fowl or its eggs is a token of respect.

and making sure that others do the same. By breaking ...oration of the conditions of the local resources.

Box 5.1
Rules for the dam

The rules that I was able to identify are:

- When the dam looks dirty, the pipes will be locked and the women are to clean the wells with their brooms.
- The water is not to be drunk directly from the dam; it first has to be filtered.
- No one is meant to step into the water as this can contaminate it.
- The women are not to put the ‑head support clothø on the top of the well. If it would be to fall into the water, it could spoil the water.
- During the rainy season, when the wells are full, the women are not to use their own containers to fetch water. It could pull them down. This is dangerous and would also spoil the water.
- When the well is dirty, the men are to be organised to remove and wash the pipes.
- The women are not to wash their clothes too close to the river.

5.3 The gender division of labour

In general, I can conclude that the women are predominantly active in the reproductive activities and the men in the productive, each with their specific symbolic meaning. By and large, the productive scene is seen as the most important, the most irreplaceable. The productive atmosphere is given the priority above the reproductive: food is seen as less replaceable than firewood. This has its expected consequences for the power relations. An example of these consequences is the land that men are permitted to clear for their crops, even if this concerns cash crops; every single man and woman I spoke to on this subject emphasised that a man is always allowed to clear land where the women collect their firewood, because the firewood can be bought if necessary. The crops on the other hand cannot be replaced, according to one of my respondents (I:28, only wife, aged 42). On the other hand, in both formal and informal conversations with men I found that men had a deep respect for the strength that women have. They recognise womenøs hard labour and how essential it is for the survival of their community. During the dry season people often joked about women working hard while the men sit and rest, but they also add that men cannot help the women in their tasks as this is ‑womenøs workø (Inf:1).

Women are expected to provide potable water, whether it is available or not, even if they have to walk twenty kilometres there and back to get it. Several elderly women spoke reminiscently about the times they had walked all the way to Botanga to fetch water. It is not that women are the only ones that fetch water, but the stereotype idea is that of women as water fetches.

The stereotype of women as dominating the reproductive scene is corroborated in the way in which men and women can gain access to resources through the institutions. The water and wood is gained through communal access rights. Both men and women need water and wood for their activities, but there seems to be an unwritten rule that the water in the dam and the wood in the closest forests are assigned to the women. They need these for their main tasks, so they are given priority to them. As mentioned above, the women cannot just cut from any tree. There are unwritten, but very important, rules for this in the community. The men fetch their water in the animal pool next to the dam and for their wood they ride far. They would not want to be seen

is would be embarrassing. There is therefore no real ... d women concerning water and wood. Among the women, however, there is a certain form of rivalry. The later a woman starts going to fetch her firewood, the further she will have to walk and the heavier this will be. The women talk of these women as being lazy. If a woman breaks the customary rules concerning the dam or the forests, she will be punished, but the community will never deny her access. But I must add that I never actually heard of woman having been punished. It is more a symbolic threat. The women in the surrounding villages have their own places to collect wood and fetch water, but if they would want to come to Kasuliyili they would be permitted.

Men still symbolise the typical farmer. The household would never suffer because a woman is out farming instead of performing her reproductive tasks. This would not be accepted. But as has become evident in this chapter, things are changing. More and more, women are taking up farming. Only two of my female respondents did not farm on their ¬own¬ farm. But the customary institutions have not yet changed as radically. Women are still dependent on their husband for land and, if not their husband, then some other male family member or relative. The access to farming equipment via other customary laws has also not yet changed. A clear example of this is the abovementioned access to tractors. As men are still seen as the primary farmers, they are always given priority to the use of tractors. Another example is the choice that women have in choosing their own crops. A woman is responsible for the soup ingredients; she therefore has to farm certain crops. But even if this were not the case, she still would not have much choice. The lands that the women are generally assigned are marginal and groundnuts is the best crop to grow on less fertile land. Other crops need more nutrition. The existing customary laws thus hinder the women in gaining control over their land.

But what do these ideas and symbols, that take form in mainly unofficial laws, actually mean for the access of the individual women? Although farming is not women¬s main activity, many emphasise how farming has made them feel stronger and more independent. So, for the individual women, farming is important. Women gain access to water and wood via their reproductive activities, but they also use both to be able to keep their extra income generating activities running.

The workloads of the different activities in which the resources are involved also differ for the different women. In general, the women without co-wives seem to have more cordial relationships with their husbands. They not only feel stronger due to their better negotiating position, but they often also get more help from their husbands. Foe example, only women in monogamous marriages get help from their husband in the collecting of wood. And the men who help their wives out on the farm are also nearly always from monogamous marriages. On the other hand, the women who are constantly able to share their responsibilities in the household are often less burdened. For example, as women with co-wives share the responsibilities of cooking and of taking care of their husband, they each need relatively less wood. This makes the task of collecting wood a little lighter for them. Having many daughters also helps lighten the burden. The workload for fetching water also differs with the distance of the dam. Fetching water is much less time consuming for the women who live close to the dam. The fetching varies from a five-minute walk to over half an hour for the women living on the far west side of the village.

The main purpose of this chapter is to lay the activities of the men and women bare and to see which activity are colliding or conflicting. I also wanted to explore the difference in the workload between the different women. I look into these differ through the three dimensions of gender. All this has made clear what the access to the natural resources entails and partly how it is gendered. In the following chapter this is further explored by focusing more on the agency that women have. The interactions between the genders here again give a better understanding of the power relations involved.

Having access is not always beneficial for the women. Control over the resources is needed to actually be able to turn the access into capabilities. If the women can fetch the water, but the water is not potable, their access does not contribute to their capabilities. The women are the ones who use the dam the most and they will therefore have the most control over the general condition of the dam. Through their daily use they can keep an eye on its condition and alarm someone if cleaning is needed. But if the dam is to be repaired or reconstructed, it is more often the men who have an actual say. In this way, they thus have little power to improve the quality of the water. The women do not seem to have control over the wood either, as sometimes the land use of men drives their wood collecting area further back. Often the women can also do near to nothing about the hunters burning the lands with the firewood on it. The hunter I talked to said that they never burn the land, but reality shows otherwise.

As the women do not have the possibilities to choose their own crops and have access to farming techniques and farming equipment, such as respectively shifting cultivation and tractors or fertilizer, they cannot ensure that their access to the land obtained via their husband will benefit them, as the yield might not turn out to be very good. Women have to stay on marginal lands, which are close to the village, as their main responsibilities lie in the household and they need to be close to the compound. This land has been used for many generations and is of less quality. Often they cannot make specific choices, but have to conform to the general idea.

Although things are changing, such as women starting to farm, it will take a long time before things really change. Certain institutions could help speed up the changes, such as the *susu*-clubs, but others prevent it from changing, such as the tradition with the tractors.

In this chapter I examine the different activities in which men and women are involved, how and why they are involved, and what this involvement means for them. Often activities are embedded in the tradition and people no longer think about why or how they do these things. Often, when women are involved in projects for natural resource management, they keep to the traditional reproductive tasks. But this does not necessarily mean that the activities they participate in are what they would have chosen for themselves. The degree to which women are able to be involved as they themselves want is examined in the next chapter. The socio-political position of women gives a deeper insight into the interaction between the different dimensions and the consequences this has for the way that the access to and control over natural resources is gendered. It gives more insight into the agency that the different women have.

In this chapter I look into the agency that the women have in being able to gain control over the resources to which they have access. I examine this by analysing the socio-political position of women through the three-dimensional gender framework in which the various power relations are identified. The socio-political position of women can be understood by looking at the (self)image of women, their decision-making position in the household and the community, and the networks and groups in which they are involved. Using these aspects I have made a division of sections for this chapter. I start by studying the image of women; both the image created in society and the image that women create for themselves. The symbolic dimension is apparent in the former. In the symbolic dimension, men and women are expected to live up to specific norms. There are certain expectations for women concerning the use and management of natural resources. As we saw in the previous chapter, the gender division is actually an institutional outcome of the symbolic dimension; the use of certain resources is determined by the expectations of women to fulfil certain responsibilities. In this section I examine what the gender ideology entails. In the image that women create for themselves, the focus lies on the individual dimension. Here I explore how the different women interpret this ideology. Taking the ‒image of society on womenø into consideration, women form their own truths and find ways to live within the dominant discourse, while at the same time following their dreams. Who do women want to be and what are their personal ideals?

This gender ideology is also important in their decision-making position in the household and the community. In the section that follows, I look into these decision-making processes; first exploring the intra-household negotiation that takes place for the allocation of resources and, subsequently, exploring the participation of women in decision making processes in the community. Power relations between actors, but also the power between actors and institutions that influence the control over natural resources are laid bare.

Finally, I look into the differences in networks and group forming possibilities. Networks are essential to make claims legitimate and they also strengthen the position of women, increasing oneøs chances in gaining control over the used resources. Group forming can be analysed in the same way. The possibilities of creating networks and forming groups are different for the different women living in the same structured world. It is thus founded in power relations. Networks and groups can function as informal institutions, helping a man or woman to gain legitimate and effective command over the local natural resources.

6.1 The perfect picture of a woman and the consequences for ‒herø natural resources

In this section I explore the symbolic ideals of women, which directly or indirectly have an influence on the control over natural resources. I look into the values and views of how women are expected to be, in which stereotypes and symbols are important aspects.

women is important in determining the boundaries that ... The boundaries are taken for granted and herein often lies an overlooked power.

Even though changes do occur, there are certain norms that are very much alive in the community today. Changes often take decades to actually gain ground. In the first section I discuss the way the community of Kasuliyili considers and values women and what this means for the relationship that women can have with their natural resources. Following this, I look into the way women see and value themselves. I do this by subsequently evaluating womenøs opinions on issues such as their work and contribution to the household, self-confidence in what they do for themselves and in public, their knowledge and what they can do with it, and their aspirations for the future, all in relation to their natural resources.

6.1.1 Representations, stereotypes, and symbols of women in Kasuliyili

According to the Dagomba tradition, it is most important for a woman to be hardworking and hygienic. If a woman does not possess one of these two characteristics, she is not considered a good woman to start with (I:3). A woman who is not hardworking cannot take care of her husband and her family. Moreover, being clean is necessary for bringing peace to the marital home (I:49). According to three of my respondents[71], a woman who is clean and hardworking will be more loved by her husband and by the people around her. Three of my interviews were merely focused on this subject and both the two women and the man I interviewed had this feature at the top of their list. People talk about woman when they are lazy or unhygienic and will show her disrespect. *Even if a woman is poor she should keep herself and her clothes clean*ø one female respondent (35, second of two co-wives) told me (I:48). There always seemed to be a heavy emphasis on being ÷cleanø A clean woman is a sign for the outside world that the house is well managed. If a woman cannot even keep herself clean, what will become of the household? A man will want the outside world to see that his wife is a good woman. Cleanness is a representation of the state of the household.

Carrying the water and wood home is a very heavy task; only if a woman is hard-working and not lazy she will be able to fulfil these responsibilities and be able to keep fulfilling them. In four interviews, men emphasised that it is a good thing to marry a woman who was once adopted, as everyone knows that she will not have been spoiled and will know what hard work is. Other important characteristics are being low-tempered, patient, and forgiving. For the Islamic women especially, it is also very important to be dressed well within, but especially outside, the homestead. She should also not wander about. If an occasion calls for to be walking about, a woman is to make sure that she goes covered in a good dress. This is important for herself, but even more so for her reputation.

There are also set ideas about what kind of wife a woman should be. Respect is central to these ideas. A woman should be respectful towards both her husband and other people, for example, when her husband has visitors. Being respectful also means being ÷*courteous, obedient, and supportive and admire, as well as look up to her*

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[71] The information for this section was mainly gathered in three interviews that focused on this subject. Other information was gained during other interviews, during informal conversations, and through observations.

wife should be respectful in both her deeds and in her ey him, but she should also do things for her husband without him asking for it (I:48). A woman should also pay her husband sexual services when it pleases him. When expenditures are to be made, she needs to consult him. A woman cannot ask her husband for help on the farm. *Asking for help from your husband would be disrespectful; you would be looking down on your husband, especially if he is a big man. You can ask for financial help, but not for his labour on the farm. People would think this was a big disgrace. He can choose to come and work on your land if he sees that your weeds are suffocating the land.* (I:19). A man wants to be seen as the head of the household. If the behaviour of a woman makes people believe that she dominates her husband, he will be shamed. A woman's behavior is always meant to confirm to the outside world that her husband has the authority over the household.

Women should respect their husband's choice for a new wife. When I asked the women personally if they liked having co-wives, they would always say that it was nice and that it was good to share the burdens. However, when I subsequently questioned the same women about other households and polygyny or about polygyny in general, they would say that it was difficult to live in a polygynous household. That there was much fighting and disunity. The fact that they initially say otherwise shows how they wish to show their respect for their husband to the outside world.

In the previous chapter, the roles and responsibilities of men and women, their productive, reproductive, and community tasks, are discussed. It is important that both the men and the women fulfil these responsibilities to keep the household alive and running. As farming is traditionally the responsibility of the man, it is important that the wife never lets her farming get in the way of her reproductive tasks. The stereotype idea is that the woman is to fulfil the reproductive tasks for the household and that the husband is to bring in an income, making sure that the family is fed. These assigned tasks are meant to be given priority. One man (55, two wives) even admitted that he would never have given land to his wives if they had not requested it, as *traditionally it is not the women's place to be farming. It is the men's responsibility to take care of his family.* (I:18). If a woman is too much involved in other activities or she is travelling too much, she will fall behind with her main responsibilities. This is actually one of the things that men with only one wife complain about. When there are more women in a household, it is not such of a disaster if one of the wives is forced to travel. In this regard, a woman living in a polygynous household has more possibilities. She can go away, for example, to the market in Tamale, and not have to be worried that her husband is not taken care of. If he needs something he can call one of his other wives.

A woman should not have a prominent place in the community. It is important that she always keeps to the background. A woman should always keep quiet in the company of a group, and especially in a group with more than three men. When the community needs to make a decision on a development issue for the advantage of the village, the woman are not to have a decisive role. When the problems being discussed are small, she can participate in the decision-making process. She can also give her opinion, as long as she understands that she is to let others (men) actually make the decision. Even if a women is to contribute, this will only be small as she *does not want to cause a problem* (I:49).

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[72] This is taken from a schoolbook. It is what the children in the second class of JSS are taught.

...woman should stay in the background is concerning her ...er own too much. If she does have a lot, she should hide it from other people. As one woman (40, only wife), who owns ten acres of land outside the village, one and a half acres with groundnuts and okro, a goat, two sheep, and two cows[73], told me: *as a woman, your friends will often not even know that you own a lot. This is due to spiritual reasons. In the Dagbani culture men and women are not equal. If I tell other people that I have many possessions, people will start seeing me as a big person and consequently I will gather enemies around me. They can even kill a person spiritually if the jealousy gets out of hand. The enemies can be other women, but they can also be family or men.*(I:38). It is not good for people to know that a woman is well off, as jealousy can lead to accusations, which can be destructive for a women's reputation.

Finally women are not meant to travel freely. A man does not like his wife to travel too much. He will want to know when she is planning to leave and when she will return. Some men believe that their wives will be flirting with other men. But even if the woman herself is faithful, she could be vulnerable to the magic of other men and could therefore still be seduced (I:35). She needs permission for travelling and when she arrives back she is to make her husband aware of her return (I:45). The use of magic in this situation is a typical example in which traditional beliefs, which are constantly reproduced by the people, make the women submissive to her husband.

The woman is thus represented as clean, hardworking, respectful, courteous, faithful, not attracting too much attention to herself, and always under the direct control of her husband. The first five virtues constrain women, as these add extra weight to their activities. Especially the last two aspects can constrain a woman from gaining control over natural resources. An example of this is the fact that women do not keep their cattle at their house when they own cattle. They leave it with their father or brother. Although the woman is entitled to all the profits that are made through the cow, the caretaker is entitled to the manure, which is good for the land. When the caretaker is in a financial crisis he is allowed to sell the cow and use the profit to solve his problems (I:38). Due to this custom, which is a consequence of the fact that women *should not* have too many possessions, the women's control is not always effective as she cannot make the most of her ownership and other people's claims can dominate her claim. Another example is the access to tractors, mentioned in the previous chapter. Although women have started to farm, the ideas about women and farming have stayed the same; men still believe that they are entitled to use the tractor first. However, because women are under direct control of their husband, and thus are not expected to be roaming about, they are also constrained in going out to look for a tractor in the first place. This influences the extent to which they can put their land to good use. They consequently might not be able to make the land produce enough to improve their capabilities.

6.1.2 Accumulating wealth is not so bad after all – the individual view of women

Even though a woman *should not* have too many possessions, women find it important for themselves and their friends to do well in their work and to prosper. The image that they have of themselves, therefore, is not necessarily consistent, and is sometimes perhaps even contradictory, with what they would stereotype as a perfect woman. All

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[73] In Kasuliyili, this is a lot for a woman. The average of land that a woman will have is 1,5 acres of land. Only five of my female respondents own rice fields. Three women own cattle.

ut owning land and prospering with their businesses ... ble to contribute directly to the household. In both my interviews, and a few informal conversations with women, I learnt that many women strive for a situation in which husband and wife support each other, instead of the woman being merely dependent on her husband.

When a woman is able to work on her own plot of land, she can become less independent of her husband, as she no longer has to ask him for money every time she is in need of something. Women emphasised that if a woman does not have a plot of her own, she will suffer for sure. The costs of a woman without land will be the same as that of the other women, but her possibilities to be able to get what she needs will be more limited (I:19). The two women I questioned about this, who both did not own land, seemed embarrassed about it (I:13). One women (32, only wife) who has not received land from her husband said: *I can never tell my friends that my husband has not given me a plot of land, as they will think that there is no love between us.ø* (I:39). Farming has really become a booster in the ego of women, as women have found a way to become less dependent on their husbands. However, being less dependent does not mean that they no longer respect their husbands. Respect is very important for most women. As one woman (40, second of two co-wives) who had first been denied land, but had received it later after all told me: *it is more important for me to respect my husband, than to go against his wishes and burden him or go and request land elsewhere. He had his reasons for not giving me land. I am to respect this.ø* (I:17). Only one woman (40, second of three co-wives) said that she did not feel she had to give her husband respect. She did whatever pleased her; *God decides which wife my husband will love most anywayø* she commented (I:37).

Looking into many of the households, and in specific into the huts of the women, and at the personal hygiene of the women, shows that there are big differences in the importance that the different women actually attach to hygiene. Noticeable is that, in general, women with many possessions and women living in small households have cleaner rooms and a cleaner compound. These women therefore have a greater chance in gaining more land from their husbands.

The women I talked to on differences between men and women, both young and old, in both monogamous and polygynous marriages, realise that, as they are women, their lives have different boundaries than the lives of men. They realise that in some ways this constrains them. It can be a burden for them to have to live up to the expectations. Often women would say that their husband owned them, as he had paid a bride price for them, so they had to be obedient. Even a friend of mine from Wantugu, a young unmarried girl, who seemed to be very emancipated in comparison to most of the women, said that she very firmly believed that women needed to be beaten when they had been disobedient, as women do not always know what they do. *Women are like childrenø* another woman (45, only wife) commented on this subject (I:35).

Not all women are engaged in farming, especially as it can be quite physically heavy. As we saw in the previous chapter, more and more women are also taking up businesses as an alternative way of getting an income. They highly value these businesses, as this too is a way for them to be able to contribute to the household. Through these small businesses, women can earn quite a good income. It is good if a woman is doing well, but she also has to be careful. The reputation that a woman has in society also gives her a certain amount of possibilities. These can be limited by a dent in her reputation. If people actually start calling a woman a witch, the consequences can be

out of the community. This is one of the possible ... ecome "too" rich. On the other hand, it is not bad for a woman to become rich, as her husband will respect her more if she shows him that she is able to do good business. He will take her more seriously. So it is a good thing, as long as she does not show the outside world how much she has (I:44). All of the women seemed to want to do well on their own. Some women seemed more ambitious than others.

Women are not expected to take up a leadership position; they are not to become too prominent in the community. This really does constrain women. Many woman said to have ideas for the development of the problems related to their natural resources. Two (aged 29 and 40) had even tried to become actively involved in putting one of their ideas into practice, but no one would listen to them. "If the community is to be swept, the leaders will have to come up with a programme, a programme in which everyone will unite and clean up the village. If any ordinary woman says this no one will pay any attention to her." (I:34). Another woman told me how she had complained about certain men fishing where they were not allowed to fish, but no one would listen to her "because I am a woman" (I: 46). So women do see their own opinions as valuable for the community, but they also realise that often they are not listened to. Only a few of the women are strong enough, or come from a prominent enough family, for their opinion to really be listened to. Being from a prominent family seems to give women more of an opportunity to have a voice in the community. Even the women, who were doing very well for themselves and because of this also had a good relationship with their husbands, often still did not dare to speak up in public. Three female respondents which I interviewed from well-regarded households knew how to make their opinion known. On the other hand, I also spoke to two women from important families in the community who rather kept quiet.

All women want to improve their position for the future. As mentioned before, of the thirty-five women I interviewed, thirty are involved in some kind of micro-credit loan bank programme that gives them the opportunity to learn a business or expand their farming. Some women are more ambitious in this than others. The women who are most independent of their husband are usually the ones that do best in their businesses from the start. I also spoke with four women about their hopes and dreams for the future of their daughters. Besides growing up to become hard-working and decent women, they hope that they would become educated and learn a skill through which they can ensure a higher quality of life than they themselves have (had). The women are especially worried about the natural resources and the poverty due to the deterioration of the local resources. As long as their children stay closely dependent on the natural resources, they have little chance of escaping the dreads of poverty.

There are a number of women in Kasuliyili that form an exception, as they themselves head the household, and, therefore, do not have to live up to a husband's expectations. Three households in Kasuliyili are headed by women. The way that these women value their farming is, for example, different; in contrast with the other women, they actually depend on what the land brings them for the survival of the household. It is more difficult for these women to gain access over land and even more so control, because they do not have a husband. I interviewed two of the three women. They expressed that they would rather have a husband. That talked about how hard life is without a husband.

and norms to which women are expected to keep to.
norms; they do not even consider deviating from them.
But concerning some issues, women search for ways to get what they want, helping them to gain more control over the resources, either by using these norms or going against them. Whether a woman can go against the norms seems to depend on status, family, or a woman's accomplishments, and the relationship that a woman has with her husband. In the following section I study these relationships and the negotiating possibilities connected to them in more depth.

6.2 Women's position in decision-making

In the previous section I looked into the (self) image of women. This already shows a discrepancy between the norm and women's own dreams and expectations. In the following two sections, I look further into how these images are actually put into practice and which role institutions have in this. Do things actually happen as they are prescribed? What are women's possibilities to enlarge their room to manoeuvre and how does this differ between men and women and for the different women? How are the relations actually organised and what is the actual position that women have in them? What is the agency that women have? I start with the decision-making processes in the household; how do men and women decide on matters such as the gender division of labour and the division of resources? Then I go on to discuss the decision-making processes in the community. The access to and control over natural resources is influenced by the negotiation and conflict that takes place between potential beneficiaries or users of certain environmental goods and services. These negotiations and conflicts, and the power relations that are involved, give more insight into how the organisation of the access to and control over natural resources and services is gendered, as diversity is laid bare. In both the household and the community decision-making arena, extra attention is given to the role of the structure versus the role of the actors involved.

6.2.1 Decision making processes in the household

In principle, the husband is the head of the household; what he says goes. In the previous section this is also discussed; the man is the head of the household and his wife or wives are to respect what he says; they are to obey him. However, this is not necessarily how it actually happens. Households are not altruistic entities. As there are different people living in a household, there are different opinions in a household. These opinions are also discussed within the household. Traditionally it is the elder in the household who is to be consulted when decisions are made. Often, though, when it does not concern the whole household, the negotiation takes place between a man and his wife or wives. Men and women negotiate over their wishes.

When there is love in the household, there is more room for negotiation. A woman who is loved by her husband will have more freedom to speak her mind and more chance of actually being listened to. In most cases, women in a monogamous marriage have more negotiation power than their counterparts sharing a husband. A woman has certain ways in which she can make sure that her husband will love her. As one woman (34, second wife of two co-wives) put it: *When there is a new wife the*

one more, but if she does not show him respect and ... oose her position of ―most loved‖ to one of the other wives who are hardworking and take better care of themselves.‖ (I:31). This woman was the ―most-loved‖ of the two co-wives herself, having a successful rice business. Her co-wife had only just been able to set up a small *coolie coolie* business. Another woman (40, second of three co-wives) even told me that ―*if a woman is clean she will have so much love from her husband, even is she is disobedient at times her husband will love her for her beauty*.‖ (I:44).

On the other hand this same woman also emphasised that the ―last‖ wife has a better chance to be the most loved, as she keeps close to him through her tasks. The ―last‖ wife has extra responsibilities in taking care of the husband. Therefore, in a certain way the ―last‖ wife will generally have a stronger secret negotiation position. In conversations that the other wives do not know anything about, she can persuade her husband to do certain things for her. However, the husband cannot openly show favouritism towards her. The first wife is seen as the ―boss‖ and the others are meant to follow her. A third wife is, for example, in no position to request land from her husband if her co-wives are not interested in having a plot of their own (I:44). This woman will then have to wait until her husband asks her if she is interested in a plot of land (I:35). She can never openly request before the first wife does. Often the first wife will receive gifts and is to share them.

In a monogamous household is it important for the wife to work hard, be clean, and obey and respect her husband, as she will then be able to move freely. Often the husband will give in to the requests of his wife. He does not want her to be burdened too much. In these households, the idea that husband and wife are ―one‖ is more common. As they fight together to survive, the benefits are shared too. In a polygynous household, this is not so much the case. Due to division among the co-wives, they are often fighting against each other to get what they want. Love division thus influences a woman‖s decision-making power.

―*In a household with only one wife, the husband is more free to give. You can just go to your husband and make requests, there are no wishes of other wives to take into consideration.*‖ a women commented (40, only wife) (I:38). This woman receives much help from her husband in many activities. However, men from monogamous household have to be careful not to be made fun of for having a dominant wife. ―*If you treat your wife well, people will start insulting you, telling you that your wife is dominant*‖ commented one woman (40, only wife) who also received much help from her husband through their cordial relationship (I:27). A man with several wives will often choose not to give in to separate requests from his wives, as he might not have enough to give them all the same. We saw an illustration of this in chapter 5.2.1 on women receiving land from their husband (p. 62). However, in some cases, when there is unity between the co-wives, they can unite and go to their husband together to make requests. When they are together, there is a bigger chance that their husband cannot refuse them. But only three of the thirteen women with whom I talked about this subject during the interviews said that there was not all that much quarrelling within their polygynous household. It is also important to take into consideration who these women are though; two of them have become the most-loved wife through their strong blooming businesses. This could possibly give a different view on the situation. They are also quite dominant women. The third one is a young girl (29, third of three co-wives). I discuss her case below.

…ong belief that when someone suffers for something …is also has consequences for the profits that a woman earns from her land. What a woman has earned is hers to keep. Many women will use profits for the family benefit and thus not specifically for personal gain. This is according to the expectations. However, all the women I spoke to on this subject always added that if their husband were in a state of financial crisis, they would help them out with their profits.

Each woman collects for her own pile of wood

There are other things that help determine in what way the women participate in the negotiation process. Women who are married to a man with status in the community often have to show more respect than women with a husband who is not as prominent in the community. We already saw this in the previous chapter, where a woman seldom requests her husband's labour on her land if her husband had a high status in the community. The same goes for the negotiation over having the children help. If a woman wants her sons to help her on the farm, she can request this from her husband. In general I found that the higher the status of the husband, the more careful the woman had to be in requesting this extra labour.

If a woman has more means to be independent of her husband, she will have a stronger position in the negotiation. Financial independence is a way in which a woman can earn this stronger position. Not only because she is not as dependent on her husband for survival and therefore has a stronger position to bargain from, but also because her husband will have more respect for her being a hard working woman and may consequently give her more freedom (I:29). A woman's negotiation position is also stronger when her husband is more dependent on her. If she is bringing in a big part of the income, he will be more willing to let her go her own way.

When a woman does not get what she wants from her husband, when she looses in the negotiation, she can come to terms with it and leave it for what it is. She hopes that he will be happy with her respecting his decision, possibly giving her more negotiation power for the future. But a woman can go against her husband's will with the possible consequences of loosing more love or even being divorced, as going against his will is a display of disrespect. On her terms, a woman can divorce a husband if she thinks that she is being treated unfairly (I:23). But this position is not strong, as when a woman divorces her husband she will loose her home and her land and her rights in that family, unless she is past menopause (I:17,19). Her parents will not be happy either, as they will have to find a new husband for her.

In the following examples I introduce six women. The women are all young, between 25 and 40, but differ from each other with regard to their bargaining positions. I look into how women try to obtain what they want and how the women have made their specific choices.

One of my female respondents (40, only wife) is a princess, as her father was a sub-chief in a place some fifteen kilometres from Kasuliyili (I:38). She inherited a large plot of land from her father, ten acres, and this plot of land brings in a lot of the income for the family. She has more land than her husband. To work the land, she has to travel to her fatherøs village and sometimes she stays there for a few days. Her husband cannot really say anything to her about this, as the household is dependent on the income of this land. If he would not let his wife travel freely, the land could not be used optimally for the benefit of the family. This women has much more control over her land than other women, as she has not received it via her husband. Her land is no one elseøs business but her own.

In my own household (I:58), the situation was completely different and the negotiating position for my landlordøs wife (23, only wife) was not very good. She has to consult him on the smallest things. She shows him respect, but sometimes she also throws a bit of a fit to get what she wants. If her husband will not give it to her, or is not able to give it to her she will go around and see if she can get it from someone else. Her husband does not mind this. The young woman mentioned earlier, in the previous section (32, only wife), who has not received land from her husband, has a different negotiation position yet (I:39). She is completely dependent on her husband. She really does want land, but she has an attitude of total respect towards her husband, hoping that one day he will decide to give her land after all. She believes that this is the best way to get what she wants. õIf a woman is dominant, her husband will come to dislike herø. The fourth woman (29, third of three co-wives) lives in the aforementioned household in which the co-wives do not quarrel much, but instead help each other out (I:46). First, their husband would not give them any land. Then they all went and asked him together. He gave in and they each received a plot of land. The husband is happy with the peace in the household. If this õlastø wife wants something she can also secretly ask her husband for it. She (shyly) admits that this is the advantage of being the õlastø wife.

The fifth woman I introduce (I:37) stands in strong contrast with the others (40, second of three co-wives). When the third wife had not yet arrived, she received much love from her husband and found herself in such a position that she could do what she wanted without her husbandøs permission. The extremely independent position could also have had something to do with the fact that her husband had taken her from the city and she was used to being more independent, as women there are. When her husband took a third wife, she refused to give up this beneficial position. Her negotiation position is still very strong; she does as she pleases and does not consult her husband. However, as she has lost the extra love, the third wife was given a better piece of land than she was. Now she is striving to get her business so well running, so that she can stop with farming altogether, and become even more independent of her husband.

Finally, I wish to mention one of the females that heads a household (55, divorced) (I: 23). This woman is originally from Bawku, which is further to the northeast, near the border with Burkina Faso. She had lived here with her children and her husband. They did not own any land themselves, but instead her husband would

*tually decided to divorce him as I was not able to ...*ø she explains. As she was past menopause, she went back to her parentsø village. Her parentsø compound was already very full, so she chose to settle on her own. She now lives in Kasuliyili with two of her daughters and two adopted girls. She is completely independent of a husband and can make her own choices without having to negotiate. However, choosing to leave her husband has also brought many restrains. She finds it difficult to become accepted in the community. Life without a husband is quite tough, and she is dependent on other men to help her with the tasks a husband usually does, such as repairing the roofs. Luckily she has been involved in the sponsor child project of the BCDP. This institution provides her with at least some form of income, making her les dependent on the charity of men and women in the village.

What makes these women different? In this section it becomes evident that the negotiating positions are different for the different women. The status of oneøs husband, the financial independency, living in a monogamous or polygynous family, and if living in a polygynous family the difference between first, second, and third wife all determine oneøs negotiation position. Looking at this we see how the power of structure and actor are intertwined. To a certain degree, women choose their own ways for trying to gain a better bargaining position.

Some are already independent and have a better chance of getting what they want. Some are very dependent on their husband and show respect to gain a better bargaining position. Others again, try not to rely on this bargaining position at all, wanting to be independent and no longer letting their husbands determine what they can and cannot do, as the last two cases illustrate. These two women have left the expectations of the society behind them and have stepped out of the set boundaries. Many people consequently think they are strange. The first of the two is not as extreme and her behaviour is still accepted by the society. No longer being the ÷lastø wife, women are supposed to accept the consequences, but she does not. However, the second one, the female who heads her own household, is considered by the community to be out of the ordinary. She is seen as an outsider. The other four women keep within their room to manoeuvre and try to enlarge it, without going against the norms. The woman mentioned above who had inherited land from her father receives enough respect to go her own way, getting away with things that would generally not be acceptable for other women. The three remaining women keep to the norms, each in their own way. They carefully try to gain more room to manoeuvre by bundling together, going elsewhere, or by showing respect. The women weigh the consequences of being too radical.

Structural changes in the community are changing things for the decision-making power of women. The coming of new religions in the community has changed things for the women. The traditional religions do not allow women much space. However, the new religions, Islam and Christianity, preach a new truth, namely more respect for women. The two religions teach that God loves everyone equally and therefore man and woman are equal. They teach that men should have respect for women and thus listen to them (I:45). As more and more of the young girls are going to school or receiving training skills, they are becoming more confident to speak their minds. They are not only more used to communicating freely with boys, as the school classes are mixed, but they are also more confident in speaking in itself, as they are

generation of girls is slowly arising that dare to speak ... want.

A different negotiating position in the household means different chances for access to natural resources, for control over natural resources, and the benefits derived from them, but also for other resources that can help gain greater control. These latter include resources such as money and labour.

6.2.3
Women's participation in decision making in the community

Women have an active place in the negotiation process in the household, although the exact possibilities differ for the different women. In this next section I look at women's participation in decision-making processes in the community. In general, as we see in chapter five, men occupy the most prominent seats in the community. However, things are changing and women are claiming a place in the community life. As the majority of the women in Kasuliyili have started owning farms and small-scale businesses, they have become more involved in this community life. Because of these new activities they participate more in the market. The market is an important social place in the community. The closest market, *Katinda*[74], used to be a fifteen-kilometre walk away. Now there is also a market in Kasuliyili. Most of the women in Kasuliyili sell their products here. The twenty-six women I interviewed that would possibly have something to sell at the market did actually do so. They are also increasingly letting their voices be heard. Women are gaining more experience in talking in public. Not only at the earlier mentioned schools where the coming generation of young girls is learning to be more outgoing, but even more so in the religious services and projects that the women of today are involved in. The experience they are gaining here makes them feel more game to speak their minds. At church the women are asked how they interpret the bible stories or what they think of a sermon. This way they learn to articulate their opinion in a mixed group. I was often surprised how bold the women seemed in church. Although the Muslim women did not have this opportunity, there is no obvious difference in the degree of boldness between Christian and non-Christian women in their daily lives. Of the five Christian women I interviewed, only one seemed game to be vocal in community public wife. The striking thing about this one woman is that in the household she was very submissive to the will of her husband.

Most of the women generally still have a timid attitude though. In the first place, this has to do with expectations that people have of women. As dealt with earlier, a woman is not expected to take a prominent place in the community. However, it also has to do with the fact that woman are often not aware of the issues on the community agenda. When they do not know what is happening, most women will not take initiatives to become involved. In the following table I compare data. The fourth column is regarding an irrigation system that is planned to be constructed in Kasuliyili. The government has initiated it and have also arranged the funding for it. It has, however not yet been publicly announced to the whole village.

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[74] Katinda literally means 'nowhere market'. This market is not situated in any village. It is about three kilometres from Tolon.

Respondent	Age	Husband high status in the community?	Aware of issues on the community agenda?[75]	Actively involved in community development in general?
9	55	No	No	No
19	33	No	No	No
20	50	No	Yes, well informed	Is trying with friends
23	55	No husband	No	No
24	37	No	Yes, heard of it	No
26	55	No husband	No	No
32	25	No	No	No
35	45	Yes, high regarded husband	Yes, heard of it	No
37	40	No	Yes, heard of it	Tried to be with a group of women, but was refused
39	32	Yes, high regarded husband	No	No
40	46	No	No	No
43	47	No, but she herself does (*Magajia*)	Yes, well informed	Yes
44	40	No	No	No
46	29	No	No	Tried to be/ no one listened
48	35	No	No	No
49	31	Yes (wife of a Muslim leader)	Yes, well informed	No
50	52	Yes (wife of a Muslim leader)	Yes, well informed	No
54	55	No	Yes, heard of it	No
55	65	Yes (prominent family)	Yes, well informed	No
58	23	No	No	No

Of the twenty women[76] I asked about this subject, four said that they had vaguely heard about it and five actually had information concerning the irrigation. Of these last five women, one was the *Magajia*. She and three other women were of an older age; the one that was still quite young (thirty-one) has a husband with a high status in the community. All the women who had ÷just recently heardø about the idea were all above the forty. I noticed that, in general, most of the elderly (read: above the fifty) women seemed to be better informed about community issues. And as they are often better informed, they also seem to be more enthusiastic and to feel more secure to become involved in the projects focused on managing the natural resources in their community. The fact that elderly women are often better informed may have to do with the idea of respect for elderly people in general. As men get older they become more respected in the community and will more often be in close contact with the leaders of the community. This consequently means that, as they communicate with their wives, their wives will also be better informed. An example of how elderly women were able to contribute significantly to a community development process was during the construction of the dam. Three women were actively involved in the decision-making

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[75] This is regarding the coming government initiated and funded irrigation system.
[76] As in table 5.6 the numbers of the respondents correspond with the respondents found in Appendix A. My main criteria concerning this question were that I interviewed women of different age groups and different social statuses.

above the fifty and the third woman was the *Magajia*. important role in the construction[77].

While women with husbands in high positions in the community have to be careful and respect their husband when negotiating within the household, in the community they seem to have a relatively better position. Often it is these women who initiate collective activities and actually find support. As the above table shows, two of my female respondents did try to get actively involved in the planning of development activity, but they did not receive the same support. In stead, they were just ignored.

The aforementioned fear that women have of speaking in public and the jealousy that other men can feel towards women with too much public involvement also constrains women. However, there are exceptions. Some women dare to be more dominant in public. These are often women whose position is more stabilised through the position of their family in the community. Women from these families are often also able to do things that go against the general norms without loosing their good reputation or being made out to be a witch. Many women were hesitant to start farming until it became more common. The first women to start working on her own farm came from an important and influential family in the community. People did laugh at her, but there was not too much gossip about her. Eventually she was successful and although for many years it was not a common thing to do, others respected her for her farming.

The most prominent female voice in the community is that of the *Magajia*. She is involved in the community leaders meetings and when there is an appeal for women to help out in the community, she is to organise this. As her relationship with the *Wulana* is good, high-regarded men in the community respect her opinion. The *Magajia* feels confident in participating in decisions made for the community and she knows that the community will listen to her. However, she is an exception. Not many women will be taken so seriously. Age and family position appear to be leading factors in this difference. I did not meet any women who are highly respected and active in community decision-making processes, who do not also fulfil at least one of these conditions.

So there is a difference between women in being able to participate in the community decision-making. In the household, there appear to be more possibilities for enlarging the negotiating position. In the community it is not as easy to have your voice heard. It is important for the women to have a say in the community in order to be able to gain control over the natural resources on which they are dependent. As the younger women are the managers of tomorrow, it is important that they gain a better negotiation position and that their room to move within the community is enlarged. If they cannot gain it individually, as they are not listened to, maybe they can gain it when coming together. The advantages of this, but also the constraints are explored in the next section.

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[77] The *Magajia* suggested that the size of the dam should be twice the size of what was initially planned, as the village from which the design was copied was half the size of Kasuliyili. One of the other woman suggested that the sand for the banks of the dam be dug from a specific place on the other side of the village. This manmade hole would fill with water and could then be used for washing the clothes of the dead people. This was done in order to avoid diseases in the water in the dam.

oups

The possibility for men and women to have networks differs as they fulfil different spaces in the community. The various women also have different possibilities. The more someone is involved in the life outside their household, the more networks they can build up. Networks are important for men and women to be able to gain access to and control over natural resources and services and the benefits derived from them. Getting things they need or want done can be accomplished through people you know, through having strong and trustworthy networks. Networks are also important in order to feel confident enough to pursue an idea or dream. Through networks, groups are formed. It is important for women to organise themselves in groups in order to be able to gain access to and control over natural resources and services. When people organise themselves, they have a higher possibility of obtaining this access and control. Generally, women are not very strong on their own, so it is important that they come together and form groups; together they stand stronger. Not only this, but when women come together they also feel stronger individually and thus feel better able to actually do something. When women feel stronger, they will dare to speak their minds and are more confident about being important enough to pursue their ideas for either themselves or the community. It is difficult to get things done on one's own. An individual cannot appeal for funds or go to an organisation for help. An institution or organisation will only listen if it is a group appealing.

The social differentiation between the men and women and between the different women in being able to build networks and participate in groups is explored in the following section.

6.3.1 Women's networks

The most important network that women are involved in is that of the extended family members. In chapter 4.3.1 I explain the importance of family; the family ties among the Dagombas are very important. Family members are dependent on each other for survival. When a household lands in a financial crisis, the extended family members come to their aid. These ties are constantly strengthened during ceremonies, such as funerals and births, in which the family helps each other out. The position of one's family can also give a person more possibilities. As concluded in the previous section, when a person's family is highly regarded in the community, they can have more contact with higher authority and thus have more possibility for their voice to be heard or for getting things done.

Besides the family, the neighbours also form an important web of networks. As men stay in the same place most of their lives, these networks often become very strong. Most are formed at childhood. However, for women it is different. When a woman marries, she often leaves her neighbourhood to settle into her husband's household. There she will have to form new groups. If she divorces or her husband dies before she has reached menopause, she will have to move again. All of this makes it more difficult for women, in comparison to men, to build up strong networks. As mentioned above, neighbours help each other out in times of crisis or if there is a birth or death in the family. On such an occasion, all the neighbours will come together to collect money and delegate people to go to the burial. This enlightens the burden of the grieving family. Both men and women form these groups.

women from the female-headed household did not
Both have not being living in Kasuliyili for very long
and as they are both of age (past menopause) they cannot simply join an already
existing group of friends. These groups were formed many years ago. These two women
were the only two among my respondents that were not involved in a neighbourhood
group. Three of my female respondents had been divorced and had remarried in
Kasuliyili. All three women have children by their new husband. They have each been
able to integrate in neighbourhood groups. The husband of one of these women went
blind three years ago. She did admit that life has become tougher since there has been
no actual male head of the household, and that as her household has become very poor
she has become less and less involved in the neighbourhood group. In contrast with this,
she emphasises her involvement in the church group. Here she finds much support, both
financially and emotionally. As she still has a husband, her case differs from the women
without a husband.
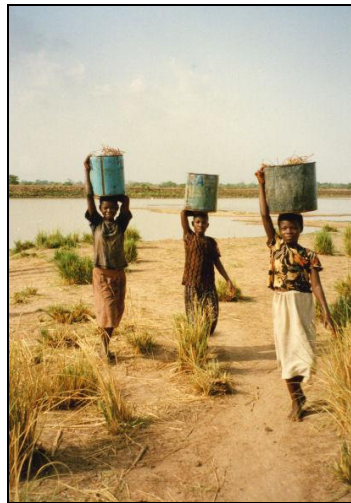
Many groups are formed at childhood

Religious groups form an important network for many people in Kasuliyili. The
church is an important network for the Christian men and women. Especially as the
church is strongly related to the BCDP, the members benefit from this network. One
woman (55, only wife) provides a good example of this. She is involved in the church
group in Kasuliyili. When the BCDP came to Kasuliyili, they selected a large group of
about 100 women to be involved in the MED programme. She is among those chosen to
become part of this group. She herself says: *being part of the church has given me new
opportunities. They picked me for the MED programme, because I am a member of the
church. My husband is not a well-known man in the community. If I had not been a
church member, I would have never been picked to be involved.*(I:54). The members of
the church stick together in times of crisis, whether they are men or women everyone
will come to help. A man told me the story of his wife who is also a church member:
*When she fell sick some few years back, the church members came together to harvest
her crops* When there is a death in the family, the church members can rely on their
neighbours, relatives, and the church members (I:47). In box 6.1 I include the story of
how the dam was reconstructed, as it illustrates how networks, and in this case networks

gaining control over natural resources. At the same
rce became a victim of the political dispute.

As women are rarely prominent figures in the community, their contact with influential people in the community is limited. If someone has influential friends or acquaintances, they will feel more equipped to be able to get things done. If a woman does not have contact with powerful people, she will not have as much faith in accomplishing her goal as when she does have these contacts. In general, men will have more of these contacts.

Box 6.1
Networks in the reconstruction of the dam

Due to heavy persistent rains one of the banks of the dam broke. It was fixed by the IVWP by making a small hole in the bank to prevent the dam from completely breaking. The project told the village that they were to leave it as it was and that they would come back to fix the hole. But there was a group of people that came together and decided that they wanted the hole to be fixed sooner, so that the dam would be full of water. This small group went to the *Wulana* and asked his advice. The *Wulana* advised against it. If a group of people receive negative advice from the *Wulana*, they will usually drop it. But the idea had been suggested just after the death of the *Yaa naa*. The atmosphere in the village was tense, and the group who supported the ó let us call it ó A gate felt as if they had been fooled. They thought that the *Wulana* had advised against their idea just to get back at them. The *Wulana* is a supporter of the ólet us call it ó B gate. The holes in the dam became a sensitive subject in the village. The people supporting the A gate followed the small group who wanted to reconstruct the dam themselves. The people supporting the B-gate wanted to wait. The A gate consisted of many church members. These church members appealed to the BCDP for money to reconstruct the dam. As the contacts between the BDCP and the Baptist church are strong, the BCDP gave them the money. The village itself also had money saved at the District Assembly. When the *Wulana* went to get advice there, the District Executive said that he should let the majority choose. The majority was for the direct reconstruction so the *Wulana* gave them the village money too. Some say that the people supporting the A gate only went through with the reconstruction, as they wanted to show the others that they would not concede. The dam was reconstructed and when the heavy rains came again, one of the banks collapsed completely.

### 6.3.2   Encouragements and constraints in forming networks

In Kasuliyili, when it is time to rest, men will always be relaxing outside with other men. Women on the other hand find their rest place within the compound. During market day the women come together and can expand their networks (I:55). The walks that women make together during their different activities are very important for all of the women that I talked to on this subject. They are not only able to encourage each other in the activity itself, but they also have time to talk about their problems at home and advise each other. This also applies to the women involved in a *susu*-club. Every market day, the women from the *susu*-clubs come together in the evenings to discuss their loans. The four women I spoke to about these clubs emphasised that these evenings were very important to them. During these meetings they would discuss home situations and search together for solutions to problems. ―*It is also just encouraging to hear that other women are struggling with the same problems*ø one women (35, second of two wives) told me (I:48). Women are strengthened within, which will help them to go home and feel more secure in being able to accomplish their goals. These informal networks are thus very important for women.

It is difficult for the women to make contacts in Tamale, as their travelling is restricted. They cannot just travel there and meet up with people. If someone wants to get help from an organisation, a written appeal needs to be drawn up. First of all, it is very difficult to find an organisation without being able to read and secondly the women

ple to write their appeal. Even the *Magajia* asked me [...] and she is the most knowledgeable woman that I met in Kasuliyili concerning these kinds of issues (I:30).

Women use networks for if they wish to put an idea for development into practice. Diagram 6.1 shows an example of how women do this. This is one of the venn-diagrams that I made with one of my female respondents (55, only wife). Neither her husband nor she herself has a prominent place in the community. I asked her through which channels she would go if she wanted her idea to really take form in the community.

Diagram 6.1
Getting an idea to be put into practice
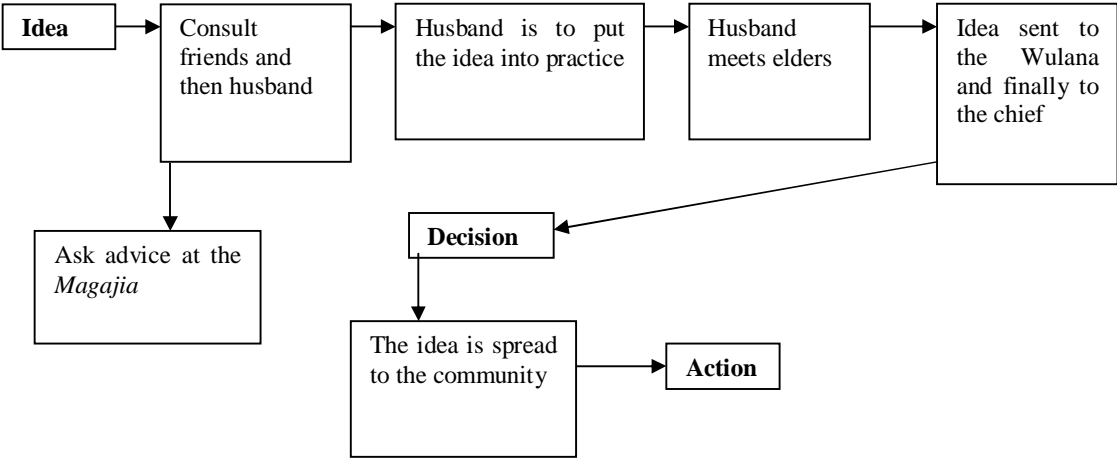
She would first consult her friends to see if they think it is a good enough idea. This would give her the feeling of extra power within, as the encouragement of her friends makes her feel more confident that her idea is a good one. In the negotiation with her husband, this would also makes her feel more confident. Next, she would go to her husband and see if he is able and willing to help her put her idea into practice. Her husband would go to meet with the elders of the village. They would send the idea to the *Wulana* -as he is so wiseø. The *Wulana* would take it to the palace where subsequently a decision is made. From here on the idea would be spread throughout the community and action could be taken (I:54). She herself would also go and meet with the *Magajia*, so that more women would hear of the idea.

Although networks can help men to get a tractor on time, this is not so for the women, as the tradition of access to tractors is more dominant than networks. An example in which networks can help a woman to gain more control is through the contact she has with her trader. Some women have a specific trader. It is important that they can trust their trader. He should have -truth in the mouthø When a woman knows she can trust her trader, she is sure that she will get her moneyøs worth for her product. But often, when people are poor, they will not be able to wait for their trader and will have to sell their products -at the farmøs gate[78]ø (Inf:1) and are thus less secured of

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[78] This means that the products are sold almost immediately after been harvested.

products[79]. Although most of the women's crops are [...] generally a part of it is sold to earn some money to be able to buy the other soup-ingredients that they do not have on their farm. The more a woman can afford to keep her products for longer, the more control she will gain over how high her profits are. Here again, the relationship with one's husband is important. If a husband helps his wife out with certain ingredients, she might not feel forced to sell her products so soon.

Networks are also very important for those women who do not have a husband, do not have a husband with extra land, or do not have a husband who will give them land. These women are dependent on trust relationships outside their extended family to acquire land. They will often require land from a more distant family member or a friend of the family who owns land. The arrangement is made orally and thus based on mutual trust relationships. The woman is to keep her land in good condition and the man has to live up to his guarantee of setting aside land for the woman every year.

Table 6.2
Land owning and land requesting

	Total	Included in shifting cultivation[80]	Woman trust that they can use the land for a long time
Women who have received land from husband	27	21	27
Women who have requested land elsewhere	7[81]	1	2

The woman requesting land is often in a weak position, as she is in no real position to be asking for a specific plot of land or for a swap of land, consequently meaning that she will often be working on marginal land. As the table shows, only one woman had received the promise from someone other than her husband that her land would be swapped when it became exhausted, in contrast with the twenty-one out of twenty-seven for the women who received their land from their husband. This is a significant difference. In general, a woman who has received her land from her husband has a much stronger negotiating position. All the women who had been given land by their husband emphasised that they really believed that this was their land and that their husband would never take it back. It would not even be culturally accepted. Of the women requesting land, only one believed that the agreement made was very strong and that she could rely on this land for as long as she wanted. This woman had requested this land in order to have extra land, as she already owned land. The majority of the other women in this group were from poorer households.

6.4.1 Constraints for the different women to form groups

When a group is formed, there needs to be a strong leader to keep everything up and running. An important difference between men and women in their ability to organise

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[79] As products become scarcer, their value increases. Therefore, the later a person can afford to sell their products, the more money they can ask for them.

[80] I have included all women who said that they have been included in shifting cultivation and would also be included when their land became exhausted. Most had been given this promise by their husband.

[81] Four women requested land because they did not receive any from their husbands and three requested land because they wanted more than their husband had given them.

more difficult to take up a leadership's position. Many have been thinking about coming together and doing something about certain situations. But actually, all but two of them mention that it is the *Magajia* who is to call all the women to come together. Without her help, they do not see that they can do anything (I:20). The two women who mentioned doing something without the *Magajia* also noticed that they were not listened to. The *Magajia* has been sick the last two years and has only just arrived back in Kasuliyili. During the period that she was sick, the women have not met together once to work on a problem.

A good leader is not only needed to get things started, but also to keep a project going. As women often do not want or dare to take up this position, the group is dependent on the present leader of the group. If something was to happen, they do not necessarily have anyone to fill the vacant position. A good example is when the women came together three years ago to appeal to an organisation for funds to buy a plough and two bullocks. This would help the women to gain more control over the productivity of the land, as they would be able to plough on time. The *Magajia* took the leadership position and the project was started. During the training of the project, one of the bullocks broke its leg. Just after this happened, the *Magajia* became very sick and temporarily moved to Tamale. After she left, the project fell apart as no one appealed for another bullock. The remaining bullock was sold to be able to pay off the loan. If the *Magajia* had been there, a solution would have been looked for (I:30). A leader is also needed to protect the products of the groups. Ten years ago, the women set up a tree-planting project in Kasuliyili. But as no one really claimed responsibility for the protection of the trees, the trees were cut prematurely by men from the village for the building of houses (I:30). They went to the chief and requested permission to be able to use the wood. The capability of the woman to form groups that will have lasting authority is thus limited by the lack of the majority of the women's capability to fulfil a leadership position. A leader needs to be able to command respect from the community leaders, as they have the ultimate control over the resources in the village. The *Magajia* is one of the few women capable of doing this. The moment she left, the women lost control over the tree-planting project. They still have access to the trees, but there is not much left to collect.

Another difficulty that women face in forming groups that have the actual ability to accomplish something is that women have many more different responsibilities than men. Communal labour is a good example of this. Communal labour is a way to have control over one's land by working together. Most men are involved in a communal labour group, which is possible because men are nearly only involved in farming during the rainy season. Women, on the other hand, have many other responsibilities. A woman could never be farming on other women's land everyday, due to these other responsibilities. It might, for example, be her turn to cook or she might have other chores to do in the household that take a lot of time. But as we see in chapter five, the daily activities have a different meaning for the different women too. The main difference was noted between women with and women without co-wives. For a woman without co-wives it would be even more difficult to be involved in a communal labour group, as she has the responsibility of cooking and washing the dishes everyday. Communal labour would help the women tremendously, as many women said that farming was not only difficult as they did not have much experience with it, but also as they had to work alone during this activity. They are not used to this, as in most of the other activities in which the women are involved they work together.

activities of the men give the men more possibilities
[...] ming is possible in this period. They often have small businesses, but they also spend much time in groups discussing their problems, giving them more time and possibilities to organise themselves. Another difference is that men often live in the same community their whole life, whereas women move around more. It is more difficult for women to form groups, as they have to move and (temporarily) leave a place when changes occur; changes such as marriage, giving birth, death, and divorce. During the dry season, women also have to travel long and far to attend funerals. All this constrains women from being able to organise themselves and keep the group going. Women coming from the same village as their husband often have a less hectic life with regard to this aspect, as they only have to move around within the village. But of the thirty-four married female respondents, only three married within their own home village. Thus, this is not very common.

The attitude of prominent figures towards women also influences women ability to form groups. A good example is the *Wulana*. The present *Wulana* is relatively young (58) in compared to previous *Wulanas* and sees himself as someone who is open for everyone, man or woman, young or old. ˉ*The previous Wulana wanted respect and made others to fear him. He would not open his door for new ideas, as he was afraid to loose respect. It was very difficult for people who were not highly regarded in the community to go to him with their ideas.*ø the present *Wulana* told me (I:53). He sees many possibilities for woman in the development of Kasuliyili and tries to be open to their ideas. This makes a big difference for the women. It is good for a group to have the *Wulana* supporting what you are doing. ˉ*But things could easily change back to the old situation if the next Wulana decides he wants the same respect again. This would not be good as you need to open your doors to invite development into the village.*ø the *Wulana* warned (I:53). This shows the influence of the formal institution. This is also important for womenøs access to and especially their control over natural resources. When the leaders of a village are not happy with womenøs participation in areas that were previously strictly open for men, women will consequently meet with resistance in trying to get what they want.

The Yendi skin crisis has influenced the group forming in Kasuliyili. This influences both men and women. Groups that were formed years ago are not as strong, because the members now support different sides of this chieftaincy affair. Women often follow their husbandøs choice in the gate they support, meaning sometimes that they find themselves on the opposite side from their friends or even their own parents.

Networks and membership in groups are important for women, as it gives them the inner strength to fight for what is theirs and pursue what they want. When the women go together to fetch wood or water, go to the market, or when they travel far to attend funerals or other ceremonies, when they work at their stands or when they come together for the *susu* clubs, they have the opportunity to discuss their problems and ideas together. It is during these times that women can share what they need to and can become stronger women, as they can search for answers to problems in life together. This, in its turn, influences the negotiating position in which women find themselves, although for some women it means more than for other women.

Leaders are very import in the sustainability of a group. Women often lack the will or the ability to take up this leadershipøs position. The institutions influence this. As

...gs in the community change. We saw earlier that the ...s made in the community. In this chapter the role of the *Magajia* and the *Wulana* are discussed. These people have a big influence on the discourses of everyday life. What the leaders regard as normal, influences the general discourse in the community. When the *Wulana* starts taking the women seriously, the view of the community is effected, but also the view of the women on themselves.

6.5 Concluding remarks

The socio-political position of women is different to that of men and this contributes to a difference between men and women, and between the various women, in being able to gain access to and control over natural resources. Power, that is, power exercised in various ways, is central to this difference. As men and women and the different women are influenced differently by the existing structure, their agency is different. However, it sometimes seems that some women just have more agency than others, more will power to fight for what they want.

In this chapter we see the interaction between the three dimensions of gender, the symbolic, the institutional and the individual dimensions. This shows the individual differences in which women have agency. I start this chapter examining the image that the community has of ‑the perfect womanø The most important features identified were being hardworking and being able to manage the house well, respecting oneøs husband and being submissive to him. The husband is to treat all his wives equally. Favouritism is not accepted. In the community, a woman is to keep quiet and not awaken jealousy in men or other women. A woman should be careful in her behaviour, watching out for her good reputation. Looking into the decision-making power of women and their ability to have networks and join groups has also given insight into this first dimension of gender.

These symbols and representations take form in the various institutions in which the men and women live. In the household there is room for debate. But each member has a different bargaining position. For example, women have a weaker negotiating position to start with, as women are dependent on men for their land due to the tradition. The tradition creates differences between women; for example, within a polygynous household the different wives have a different position from which they can negotiate their wishes. The first wife is the boss and the other women are to respect her and follow her decisions. However, everyone knows that in practice it is generally the ‑lastø wife that will get the most love from a husband and thus secretly the best negotiating position. In the community, women often have less ability than men in laying or maintaining networks and forming groups, due to, for example, the fact that they have less time to spare and due to the instability of their presence in one place. In this chapter the interaction between the first two dimensions becomes clear. Not only are institutions formed by the symbolic dimension, the institutions themselves also change the symbolic dimension. The *Wulana*, for example, was able to bring a shift in thinking and the religions, too, are shaping new ideas. The discourse around the position of women is changing. New institutions are also changing the setting. New micro-credit organisations have given women the possibility to start their own businesses and thus become less dependent on their husbands.

Women from different households, with different backgrounds, have different possibilities in participating in decision-making processes, both in the household and in

possibilities to lay networks. Within the society, a room she has to go against the rules, to do things that are normally not expected of a woman. Women abide by society's rules in their own way. If they go far beyond these rules, they will not get what they want, but finding their own way to move within the boundaries they have, they are able to expand their boundaries. Some women take the risk, work hard, and often gain more land or a better functioning business. These women expand their boundaries by being different. However, they do need, for instance, money to be able to gets things running. Whether or not they obtain this is linked to either their relationship with their husband or the possibility of being involved in a money-lending group.

Within the household, in general, the women do not try to get what they want by exercising power over their husband. If they were to do this, their husband could punish them and this might even lead to divorce. The way that most of the women negotiate is by being respectful to their husband and at the same time making their wishes clear. Especially in monogamous families where there is no competition between women, this seems to be the most effective way. Women from polygynous families have to fight harder to gain support from their husbands. The opportunities for individuals to lay networks and form groups differ much between men and women, but also between the individual women. If someone has a rich family member, knows a trader, or is acquainted with the leader of a project, there are more possibilities for the access rights to be turned into entitlements. Through strong networks there is, for example, a bigger chance that the command over land is authorised by the social norm, i.e. is made legitimate. It is more accepted for some people to deviate from the standard. Whether someone can take effective control over their access is also linked to networks and membership in groups, as this makes one's position of having overruling power over the resources more likely. Being involved in a group, for example, a money-lending group, can provide a woman with the assets to be able to make the control effective; having money for fertilizer helps women to get a good yield from their land.

All in all, the socio-political position of women determines their access to and control over natural resources and services and the benefits derived from them. Within the same structure there are differences for women to get what they want, differences in how they wish to get it and the possibilities they have to get it. The agency of a woman is dependent on the structure and on a woman's specific situation, but also on the ways in which a woman can exercise power over, power to, power with, and power within. Especially the latter seems to make a difference. Women reproduce prevailing power structures through their interaction, but as women do new things the prevailing ideas and the customary institutions change.

In the introduction I explain how the idea for my research has been inspired by the question why so many environmental projects fail to be sustainable. Through an understanding of power relations in gaining access and control, I hoped to discover several bottlenecks of women's participation in projects and of their management-control within this participation.

I start my thesis by introducing a number of theories. Subsequently, I present theories on gender, power, power in gender relations, access, and control, bringing these together in the analytical framework of the three dimensions of gender and finally operationalising them in a Gender Assessment Study. The latter is the guide for the arrangement of my thesis, as I base my sub questions on it. In this conclusion I first look back onto these theories, I link them to the data that I collected and that I analyse in the separate chapters. Together these form the answer to my research question. At the end of this conclusion I add some recommendations for organisations with plans for future projects based on natural resource management, particularly projects based in a rural setting in West Africa.

Power relations working through the three dimensions of gender

My research question is: *In what way is the access to and control over natural resources and services and the benefits derived from these gendered?* In my theoretical framework, the emphasis is on the power working through gender relations. In Kasuliyili the access to and control over resources is embedded in power relations in which symbols, stereotypes, and representations; institutions; and the choices of the individual men and women are in constant interaction. The position that the different women have in the individual dimension within this interaction determines their agency; being actors in this structure, being able to change things. It is difficult to separate the dimensions due to the constant interaction, however, to comprehend them fully we also need to look at them individually. This is done below.

The symbols, stereotypes, and representations
In both chapters five and six, the meaning of the symbols and representations, the norms connected to them, and consequently the boundaries that they set for men and women are explored. The reproductive domain is strongly related to women. Women's reproductive activities are to have top priority above all their other activities. Never is the condition of a household allowed to suffer due to a woman's activities in the productive or community domain. This representation with its attached norms is the basis for the other expectations that women have. Women's main domain is within the household; being hardworking and clean are linked to the current state of the household; a woman is not to roam about outside the compound; when she is resting she will rest in her room; only within this room is the true amount of her possessions allowed to be visible. The primary domain of men, on the other hand, is outside the compound, mainly involving productive activities. The symbols and representations thus influence

The outdoor activities in which women are involved ...ctivities. This applies to both their economic and community activities. The accepted idea concerning community activities is that the community as a whole is responsible for taking care of the communityøs environmental goods. The desirable goal is to collectively build on the community. Within the community men and women are given specific tasks. While women keep to washing, cleaning, housing, feeding, and other such reproductive activities on the one hand, menøs attention is more directed to outwardly focused activities on the other. But also the fact that the productive scene, analogue to men, is considered more valuable than the reproductive scene, analogue to women, gives men more authority in the community.

The reproductive representations of women are what actually give them communal access rights to water and wood, as they find form and meaning in the institution of the gender division of labour. Those women that do not take their access right, and thus their maintenance obligations, seriously - thus breaking the set rules - are looked down on. When discussing the reproductive activities in section 5.2.2. it becomes clear that although everyone denied ever having broken the rules concerning these natural resources, the land is still burned and the dam still walked into. This damages the natural resources and thus the capabilities into which the individuals can transform their natural resources. The fact that women are not seen as ÷farmersø prevents them from having direct access to land.

The symbols, stereotypes, and representations do seem to be changing, as they interact with the other two dimensions, and consequently also the access to and control over resources. An important change is taking place in this strict division between scenes, causing permanent changes in the gender division of labour. One of the examples in this thesis that illustrates this shift is the increasing number of women taking up extra income generating activities due to the new clubs. Some women are doing so well that, to a certain degree, they have become more independent of their husband. This is slowly influencing the representations. This is illustrated, for example, by the fact that men and women have starting to speak more respectfully of the women who are successful in their businesses. Slowly this might change tradition and make the changes more definite. Sometimes stereotypes and institutions stay behind while the individuals try to create new spaces, that is, in some way or another try to break down the boundaries.

Through the empirical data within this thesis, the influence of symbols, stereotypes, and representations has become evident. Specific positions and specific voices are needed if individuals are to gain control over their local resources in both the household and in the community. These positions and voices have specific room to manoeuvre. Only if they have these will their claim be considered legitimate or will they be allowed to make their claims in the first place. This symbolic dimension can generally never be put into practice in real life, considering that the expectations that women are to live up to are attainable for ÷superø women only. However, they do still influence the ideas on what the different peopleøs places in the community should be and which expectation and possibilities are connected to these places, thus influencing how the access and control is gendered. An example of this can be found in section 6.1.1. in which the images of society on women are discussed. Women are expected to show respect and obedience to their husband under all conditions. Throughout chapter six and more specifically in section 6.2.1, however, it is shown that the household is a bargaining domain and women have room to manoeuvre, which enables them to

and then, speaking their own minds. But on the other e expanding of the set boundaries.

It has also become evident that the symbols, stereotypes, and representations cannot be understood without the other two dimensions, which determine to which extent they are put to practice, i.e. how big their actual influence is and how this influence takes form. If certain institutions open up possibilities for women, the existing representations of women can loose meaning. This is illustrated in section 6.2.2., where an explanation is given of how the religious institutions are giving women new possibilities, such as learning to speak in public. These new religious institutions are also bringing a message of respect for women. This is, among other things, slowly changing the ideas of how women are meant to act in public. The concept of women represented as being ÷without a public voiceø is slowly loosing ground. A clear example of an individual influencing the representation of women would be the first woman who started farming her own farm in Kasuliyili. After she had set the example it took a long time before the majority followed her, but nowadays there are only a few women without land. This has certainly challenged the stereotype of women being merely good at chores within the household.

As we have seen within the interaction with both the institutional and the individual dimension, the power working through the dominant ideas is revealed. The extent to which these images actually determine the room to manoeuvre that the various women have becomes apparent when looking at their agency, which I discuss below.

The institutions

As mentioned at the end of my theoretical framework, the institutions are not explicitly mentioned as part of the sub questions, but their influence has become clear within the empirical chapters. The symbolic dimension takes form in various institutions. I identify several institutions to be most influential in gendering the access to and control over natural resources. The gender division of labour as institution can clearly be seen as an institutional outcome of the symbolic dimension. Through this institution men and women gain access to resources. The responsibilities that men and women have in helping the household to survive legitimise the access. For example, women are seen as the water fetchers. It is thus their responsibility to fetch water. This responsibility gives them free access to the use of the dam, as illustrated in section 5.3. The responsibilities also determine men and womenøs priorities. The priorities they have are thus a reflection of power relations, as personal choices are heavily determined by the gender division of labour and thus by the representations of men and women. Women, for example, do no have a choice as to whether they wish to collect wood or not. They are simply to do it. They consider it nothing but logical. The women see it as the most normal thing in the world that the men lie under the tree resting while they make long walks to the forest carrying back heavy loads of firewood. This is made clear in section 5.2.2 on the reproductive activities of men and women.

The fact that more women have been able to get land off their husbands reflects how they are enlarging their room to manoeuvre. They do not merely do what is prescribed ; they search for ways to become more independent, which gives them the feeling of being strong. Women taking up productive activities in the market place is also a clear illustration of power relations reflected in the activity choices that the men and women make. In certain areas, women are renegotiating the gender division of

our less gendered. On the other hand, the fact that the
does not necessarily mean that the access and control
over the various resources automatically also becomes less gendered. Women may have
small businesses or they may farm certain crops for the soups they prepare, but they do
not have equal access to the resources needed to be able to fulfil these tasks that they
have taken upon themselves as well as they may have wanted. For example, men are
still seen as the primary farmers and are therefore always given priority to the use of
tractors. The women are often forced to plough late due to this. The women cannot gain
control over the land and consequently this can affect the quality or amount of the yield.

Other traditions are identified as being important institutions in the
determination of the access and control. Traditions of male inheritance and virilocality
are clear examples of this; they are important factors determining the access and control
for women, as they deny direct access and make the access uncertain, respectively. A
woman needs her husband (or another man) in order to gain access to land, as is
explained in section 5.2.1. As each husband is different, this institution gives the
different women different possibilities. The tradition of monogamy and polygyny, and
the roles wives have within these different forms of marriage, are also a custom that is
influential for access and control. Living traditions create the boundaries of people's
lives. How these differ exactly is discussed below when dealing with agency of the
individual women.

Traditions and local customs are thus important institutions through which men
and women can or cannot gain access and control. This emphasises the importance of
actually making the distinction between formal and informal institutions. In Kasuliyili it
is mainly the informal institutions through which people can get what they want or
need, as shall be illustrated within the following examples. Informal institutions are
often more difficult to change and mould than formal institutions; in most cases the
change is slower, more gradual.

Concerning authority, it is also the informal power positions that prevail in
Kasuliyili. In section 4.4 and also throughout chapters five and six it becomes clear that
although the government officially has the command over the village, it is the
traditional authority whose direct power is evident. The leaders of the traditional
authority have a big influence on the possibilities in people's lives. As the chief is the
leader of the community, he owns all the resources in the community. He can give or
prevent people from having access to and control over resources. His attitude towards
women can make a big difference. The leaders can influence a change in the social
norms, either to the advantage or disadvantage of (certain) women, that is, they can
create new possibilities for them or limit them.

The political arena can influence the effect that this institution has and the
purport of its authority. This is also the case in the situation of the Yendi-crisis. In
Kasuliyili the death of the *Yaa naa* has caused much disruption in the relations between
people. The situation of the dam, which is dealt with in section 6.3.1 on women's
networks, shows an example of this. It has also caused insecurity in certain leadership
positions in the village. And as the chief knows that his stay is only temporary, his
intentions are not necessarily the same as what a permanent chief's intentions might be.
Unfortunately, as most women do not have a big say in the community, their
dependence on the authority is quite large. The tree-planting project, discussed in
section 6.4.1 on the constraints that women face in forming groups, is a good example

...tage of his temporary position, whereas the women ... to fight it.

The family as an institution is very important. Not only the power relations in the negotiations within the household, but also the position of the family in society is very important for the extent to which this institution can help women to gain access and, more importantly, control; see section 6.2.3. Other institutions which I identify to be important in determining the access and control are the informal networks and the groups in which men and women are involved. Within certain groups, such as religious groups, projects, and schools, women can collect new knowledge or learn new skills. This can give them the power to take more effective control over the resources. Even more informal groups, such as the groups formed at childhood or in the neighbourhood, can also be relied upon for both knowledge and support.

The agency that the different actors can have within the individual dimensions is in constant interaction with the dominant structure. This illustrates how institutions are not static, but in stead are produced and reproduced and can thus be altered. Unequal power relations caused by institutions are thus shaped and reproduced by their own actors. What is interesting here is the relationship between actors and the structure in which they live. The individual actors constantly have to determine their position in relation to the dominant structures, as it is through these institutions that the men and women gain access and control, each in his or her own way. The institutions have a different meaning for everyone. Certain institutions help make claims legitimate, others can help make the control effective for the individual. Whether someone can or cannot use the institutions is again partly determined by the dominating structures, forcing people into certain positions in which they have certain possibilities. The structures thus organize people's lives. However, the way in which this is done and how the people, in turn, give meaning to the structures, thus creating new spaces for themselves, is different for the different men and women. This reveals relations of power.

Women's agency

The first two dimensions of gender are so obviously different for men and women that it is apparent that their access to and control over natural resources varies. But there is more than just a division between men and women. Stereotypes do not give much room for differences among women. However, women do differ from each other, as difference in status, religion, financial state, age, and marital status crosscut gender, creating differences in access and control between women. This difference is found in the exploration of the individual dimension of gender. The symbols, stereotypes, representations, and the formal and informal institutions create the arena in which individual women actually gain this access and control. Not only do actors need to determine their position in relation to each other, but also in relation to the discourse. Each woman attaches different values to the symbols, stereotypes, and representations. The meaning of the informal institutions varies for the different households. Even within households this differs. It has, therefore, become clear that individuals do not have the same possibilities to gain access and control. By studying the agency, i.e. one's ability to change things, contrasts are shown. I use agency to study the power relations that differ for the different women: Why are some able to gain access or gain control and others not? How can individuals interact differently from each other within the other two dimensions, influencing and being influenced differently?

cal framework, by making a division of power this ... s can be discovered. This is the division between the power over, the power to, the power with, and the power within. These different forms of power are identified in this thesis. Only rarely will a woman use power over others to obtain what she wants. It seems that using power over could make a woman loose her position, as she would then be stepping outside the boundaries of her room to manoeuvre. In the most extreme case, a woman may even face divorce or may end up being labelled as a witch. Among my respondent I actually only heard of two women exercising power over. This was the case in both the female headed households. I discuss one of these women in section 6.2.2. This respondent made a choice against the will of her husband. She, however, does regret this decision now, as she notices how tough life is without a husband. The other three kinds of power are more applicable to the situation in Kasuliyili.

Power to generate or produce things, creating new possibilities and actions, is more interesting to study in the case of Kasuliyili, as these entail no question of domination. In the first place, there is a big difference in gaining access and control between women with much knowledge about their activities or activities falling outside their responsibilities and women without. In Kasuliyili, it is often the elderly women who have the most knowledge of the village's current affairs. This often enables them more than others to take part in decision making in the village, equipping them with power to gain control over resources. Most of the elderly women feel more equipped to make changes in their situation, they feel more confident in talking to important men or about talking in public, as can be seen in section 6.2.3 on women's participation in decision making processes in the community. This can be linked to the knowledge that they have obtained through life experience, but also to the high respect that a woman's husband receives as an elder inhabitant. On the other hand, the women in their early twenties are also becoming more knowledgeable, as they enjoy more education. However, they have to be careful not to step out of line. Knowledge is important for women to make their control legitimate; when other claims are made they need to have enough knowledge to stand up for their rights.

The women involved in the MED group learn skills through the workshops provided here. This makes them more equipped to gain control over their benefits. Women who are not involved do not enjoy this privilege. Women can sell their products wherever they like, but they often do not really have a choice and they sell them at the farm's gate for a lower price. Those who are forced to do this have little control over the benefits. If a woman's relationship with her husband is good, this can be prevented. Her husband can possibly support her financially or physically, saving costs on labour. If a husband encourages his wife by giving her more land, her power to produce will also increase. Involvement in groups is also important. Involvement in a money-lending group gives a woman the power to gain effective control over her land, as she will, for example, have money for buying fertiliser or for hiring more labourers to help out on her farm. Whether women are or are not involved in one of these groups is identified as being linked to their integration in the village or into their neighbourhood; one's religion can also be a deciding factor here, as we can see in section 6.3.1.

At first glance, women do not often seem to gain power by being in a group with others. Women do occasionally come together and work towards improvement for the community. But it seems that they do not feel inspired to come together and actually organise themselves. Rather, the women wait for the *Magajia* to call them all together.

ivity together, they are not necessarily stimulated to … purposes. Even within the household there seems to be no general tendency to come together and help each other in their struggles. Disunity is often more prevailing.

On further consideration, the women do work together during their activities. Even though the individual benefits of the activities are not shared, it is apparent that working together has additional value. In the groups the women are involved in, they discuss their problems and as they recognise situations in each other's lives they feel that they do not stand alone in life's difficulties. Certain women have more networks, more possibilities, and more time even to become actively involved in a group. This, indirectly, helps them to feel stronger and gives them more knowledge to make their control over the natural resources and benefits derived from them more effective and legitimate.

The power that the women find within themselves also differs in the individual cases. Women need to feel competent enough if they are to take up leadership positions that can enhance the access and control of women in general, a group of women, or individual women. But it is also important if they simply want to enlarge their own room to manoeuvre, increasing their possibilities for control. Whether women have the spiritual strength to see themselves and all people around them as equals is individually determined. This is related to the individual's interaction with the other two dimensions of gender; the influence of representation and on which and with which institutions each women can lay her claim. Between the different women, there seems to be a big difference in sense of power from within. Some women are insecure and feel that they cannot accomplish much. In both the household and in the community, the differences between these women are quite clear. Women from prominent families seem to have more inner strength to enlarge their room to manoeuvre, as we see in section 6.1.2. The women without husbands often feel unworthy and lack inner strength to fight for their needs by enlarging their room to manoeuvre. But even between these women without husbands there is a difference. One of them has a sponsor child and no longer feels completely left to her own devices. This has given her inner strength to start farming again and even start up a small business (see section 5.2.1 on coolie coolie makers and the last profile sketched in section 6.2.2.). The other remains completely dependent on charity.

Women with a cordial relationship with their husband, mostly found in monogamous marriages, feel supported by their husband. This encourages them in their activities. Many women emphasised how they long for a relationship with their husband in which there is mutual dependence, the one helping the other and vice versa. The atmosphere in the household is a basis for women to gain inner strength. As mentioned above, when one woman started farming, others gradually followed, making the division of labour a little less gender specific. This in turn influences the representations of women, as women are gradually starting to be represented as the farmers of the soup ingredients. Farming has given women more power. It has made them feel more independent, given them inner strength.

Important differences that have been found to really make a difference in the access and control are the time available for the different women (as only-wives often have less time and thus less ability to gain access), having co-wives or being an only wife (this is very important in determining the relationship with one's husband), the social status of one's husband (for women with a husband in a high position this often

the household, but in the community they are more
the ages of the different women, and the village of
origin (do they come from Kasuliyili or not).

The more power that women have in the interaction with others and the more
power they have to determine their own room to manoeuvre within the dominant
discourse, the better they are able to balance out the wielding and yielding of power to
be able to get what they want. It seems that the less a woman has going for her, the
more she will (have to) choose for submissively yielding to power and through this
gradually gain what she wants. Others are able to balance it out more in a less passive
way and by doing so enlarge their room to manoeuvre, consequently having a better
chance to gain access and actual control over their natural resources and the benefits
derived from them.

Discourse

The above reveals the relations between the three dimensions. By looking at the agency
in the third dimension of gender, the difference between individual men and women in
being able to gain access to and control over natural resources becomes visible, as the
power relations are identified. The difference is determined by the room to manoeuvre
that individuals have in relation to the prevailing gender discourse. The access to and
control over natural resources is, thus, gendered through the unequal chances that men
and women have within this discourse. Action by individual men and women can
reproduce the structure in which they live, but it can also change it, subsequently
causing changes in the possibilities for access and control. But, again, this possibility
differs according to the above-mentioned features. Numerous examples of this can be
found within my empirical chapters.

Recommendations for future projects

This thesis stresses the importance of laying the gender differences and the power
relations involved in the access to and control over natural resources bare. If
organisations are to involve women in their natural resource improvement and
management projects, they really should take the prevailing power relations into
account. If this is not done, projects will fail to become sustainable; how can women
manage resources to which they do not have access or control? How can women
influence management if the control they have is not legitimate and effective? Many
women in Kasuliyili have already been involved in projects concerned with the
improvement or management of the local resources. Unfortunately, the women were not
able to stay in charge of these projects due to a lack of legitimate or effective control. I
would, first of all, recommend a project to make use of a GAS in the area or village in
which the project is to be established. Within my research, the GAS has proven
successful in helping to identify the important gender and power relations, in which the
different dimensions become vivid as they are in constant interaction with each other.

As long as women are restrained from symbolically becoming more than
housewives and mothers, they will be constantly constrained to have actual control over
the management of projects. The symbolic dimension can only really change in
interaction with the institutional dimension. If the informal institutions do not change

dimension will be to no avail for the access to and ... for women. But symbols and representations, and informal institutions cannot be changed from without. This needs to be done through the men and women themselves. This can only happen at the individual dimension, where the dominant institutions are constantly shaped and reproduced, which in turn keeps the symbols and representations alive. Women need to have the skills and knowledge to be able to change things, they need to be encouraged by their direct environment and they need to have the feeling that they deserve to have or become what they long for.

Women's time schedules are already pretty much filled up, with little spare time to rest. The fact that the account they give of their day is often longer than it could possibly be, says much for how they experience their day. The fact that women very often do not have much time to wash their clothes confirms this. If projects want women to be involved, they have to find a way for women to be able to interweave their already existing activities with the activities in the project. If this is not done the control will not be effective, as they will either be unable to work on it properly or their other work will suffer due to it. They will become more tired and then a project will have even less chance of survival. A suggestion is to help women manage things on their own farms or during their activities. An example would be to have women plant trees on their own and on their husband's farms that can be used as firewood. This would prevent hunters from burning it, giving the women more control over the firewood. The women would no longer have to walk as far to collect wood and the shade that the trees provide would benefit certain products on their land. This could also prevent the local authority from taking control over these trees. Everyone respects each other's individual lands and although the chief does have the ultimate authority over private plots too, the chance that he would take advantage of it, as previously happened, is small. A disadvantage of this though would be that ploughing with a tractor could become more difficult. However, this problem can be avoided by planting the trees in clusters.

Although women are not the primary farmers, focussing on women's involvement in the improvement of land use practices would be quite effective; they are often the ones working on the marginal lands, as their access is dependent on their husband. This would at the same time increase their control over the land. They would not have to worry as much about their land further deteriorating when they are not included in shifting cultivation and cannot apply fallow periods. If the lands are of better quality, the women will also have more control over the choice of crops that they farm on their plots, as the land will be sufficiently fertile to bring a good enough yield for more than groundnuts only. When they are doing well, their relationship with their husband often also improves, giving them more room to manoeuvre within the household.

But all these ideas are to no avail if women are not involved in some form of education, as we identified knowledge to be an important factor in helping women to make their control legitimate. In chapter six it was evident that the elderly women dared to be more actively involved in the decision-making process, as they often felt that they knew what they were talking about. Radios could possibly be a solution, but many women do not own one and neither do these women have control over the use of their husband's radio. Organisations often require of women that they have a certain degree of knowledge, not only in managing the project, but also in understanding the concept of the project. This can, for example, be important if there is superstition about certain resources. In the previous tree-planting project, the women did not want to participate at

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...uld die (see section 4.4.2). Through a workshop they...

Knowledge is also needed for women to actually be actively involved in the projects, and not merely passive participants. They will be better able to form their own thoughts about it and feel confident enough to be creative and mould the projects more to their needs and possibilities. This will increase the likelihood of the project becoming sustainable. Only if the women are encouraged to think about the solutions for their problems will they ever feel they have the ability to take up a leadership position or at least take one over if it is needed for the sustainability of the project.

Workshops should be organised in the village. Not only because women are not allowed to travel at will, but more even so due to the above-mentioned time shortage. Through the GAS, the times that the women are possibly available for education can be identified. For example, informing about the productive activities of the women made it clear that many women were involved in the *susu*-club meetings on market evenings. It would therefore not be very useful to organise informal education on these evenings. The *susu*-clubs give more insight in how education should be organised. The women are organised together with other women from the same neighbourhood and thus they know each other well, which makes working together easier and the group stronger. A division in areas is advisable for projects. If education is given in the evenings, which will be after the meal has been cooked and past sundown, it is also advisable to divide the group. After dark, many women will not dare to walk further than their neighbourhood. Some men will not even allow their wives to walk further. Locating education in the areas also saves time for women, which makes taking classes more encouraging.

Another way in which the work of women will be more likely to be sustainable is by asking the women to contribute financially. There will be a bigger chance that they will be more interested in keeping the project up and running. They will believe in the project and consider it more as their own. This could also influence the control, as it will be more likely that one, or a group, of the women will kick up a fuss if others take advantage of their improvement or management project.

I particularly emphasise how women can be involved, but what about the men? Although differences between men and women have been stressed and the household has been dealt with as a negotiation scene, men and women do live together and together they want the best for their household. They all want to prosper individually, but they want their household as a whole, and even the community, to prosper too. Life is interwoven, so why not interweave activities where possible. It is, however, necessary to ensure that women have and keep enough space to speak their minds. The project would need to be set up as a ‒women's project‖, but including an emphasis on the need for men's help. Women cannot do it on their own. Possibly, the leader position of the project could include both a man and a woman. This would need to be a man who believes that the project and the benefits derived from the project are in the first place owned by the women involved in the project. Open communication in the village about the project is also important. If all men have contributed to a project, this might stop individual men from taking advantage of these women's projects. If women decide to contribute to the village-savings to improve a certain aspect of the community, few men will restrain from following their example. The men are proud and would not want men in other villages to hear about them not helping. Men could also reserve specific times

the women in their activities, but leaving the main

It is clear that it would take time for both men and women to be satisfied with the cooperation, but neither could the women as a group working together be taken for granted. Within this thesis the differences between women, which cause a gendered access and control, is stressed. How then can a project expect women to be equally involved and be able to have an equal say in the project with such a big diversity of participants? The importance of workshops becomes evident here again. In workshops women discuss problems; in discussions the women can talk about solutions in informal ways. Dividing the group into little groups also prevents the more powerful women having a more decisive say in matters. But there is not only a difference in dominance. Not all women have equal amounts of spare time or the same amount of money to spare. This can make the participation unequal or even prevent certain women from participating. It is important that everyone reaps equal benefits, as long as they do their best to be involved. It is therefore important that the women actively work together. This will not only create a social control that prevents women from taking advantage of the situation, but it will also encourage them to stay involved in the project, as they can individually find strength as they work together.

Concluding remarks

This brings me to the end of my thesis. The access to and control over natural resources and services and the benefits derived from them are different for men and women and between men and women. The main differences were found in the available time, the marital status, the status of the household, the relationships within the household, the ages, and the village of origin. Organisations need to take the power relations in gender into consideration when planning their projects. Then maybe one day when I go to a similar village to Kasuliyili and ask a passing woman fetching water ‒Na kooligaø (How are you enjoying the fetching of the water?), she will be able to say ‒naaø (all is fine), her answer being more than a customary greeting.
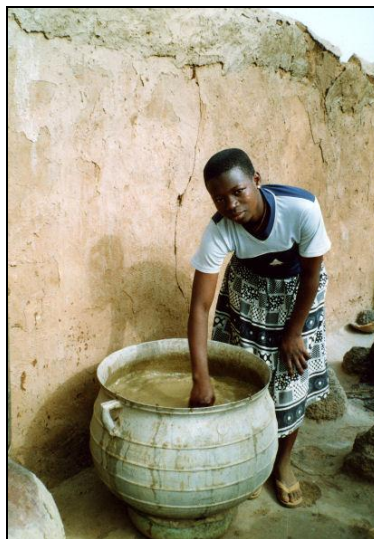
‒Purifyingø the water

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Respondents and informants[82]

Table A.1
Respondents

Respondent	Date	M/F	Age[83]	PRA used in interviews
1	11-02-2004	F	40	Activity mapping
2	12-02-2004	F	50	Activity mapping
3	16-02-2004	F	45	Activity mapping
4	16-02-2004	F	40	Activity mapping
5	16-02-2004	M	40	Activity mapping
6	17-02-2004	M	43	Activity mapping
7	18-02-2004	M	27	-
8	19-02-2004	F	36	-
9	19-02-2004	F	55	-
10	28-02-2004	M	40	Farm mapping
11	28-02-2004	F	40	-
12	28-02-2004	F	34	-
13	29-02-2004	F	26	-
14	29-02-2004	F	38	-
15	29-02-2004	M	58	-
16	01-03-2004	M	42	Farm mapping
17	01-03-2004	F	40	-
18	01-03-2004	M	55	Farm mapping
19	08-03-2004	F	33	Farm mapping
20	08-03-2004	F	50	-
21	09-03-2004	M	41	-
22	09-03-2004	M	49	Farm mapping
23	09-03-2004	F	55	Farm mapping
24	10-03-2004	F	37	Farm mapping
25	17-03-2004	M	53	Farm mapping
26	17-03-2004	F	55	-
27	17-03-2004	F	40	Farm mapping
28	18-03-2004	F	42	Farm mapping
29	18-03-2004	F	45	-
30	18-03-2004	F	47	-
31	22-03-2004	F	34	Farm mapping
32	22-03-2004	F	25	-
33	22-03-2004	M	37	-
34	23-03-2004	F	43	-
35	31-03-2004	F	45	Farm mapping
36	31-03-2004	M	33	-

[82] Many of the ages of the respondents are round numbers. This has to do with respondents often not knowing their exact date of birth and guessing it.

			40	-
			40	-
39	01-04-2004	F	32	-
40	01-04-2004	F	46	-
41	02-04-2004	M	41	-
42	02-04-2004	M	32	-
43	06-04-2004	F	47	-
44	07-04-2004	F	40	Venn-diagram
45	07-04-2004	M	-	-
46	07-04-2004	F	29	Venn-diagram
47	14-04-2004	M	56	Farm mapping & venn-diagram
48	14-04-2004	F	35	Farm mapping & venn-diagram
49	15-04-2004	F	31	Venn-diagram
50	15-04-2004	F	52	Venn-diagram
51	15-04-2004	M	35	-
52	16-04-2004	M	40	Venn-diagram
53	16-04-2004	M	58	Venn-diagram
54	17-04-2004	F	55	Venn-diagram
55	17-04-2004	F	65	-
56	21-04-2004	M	42	Venn-diagram
57	22-04-2004	M	-	-
58	22-04-2004[84]	F	23	Venn-diagram

58 Interviews
19 Men
36 Women

6 Activity mappings
14 Farm mappings
11 Venn-diagrams

Table A.2
Informants

Informants	M/W	Age	Place of residence
1	M	27	Kasuliyili
2	M	23	Kasuliyili
3	M	38	Kunguri

[84] I conducted my last interview at the end of April. After I came back from a week's break, in May, the preparing of the lands had started. Not only did my respondents not seem to have much time to spare, but my interpreter was also busy preparing his land and studying for his teaching exams. I therefore decided to stop interviewing and merely participate in the community, interacting with the people and learning things from informal conversations. During this last month I also visited the District Assembly for material and the TICCS several times.

Appendix B

Household Baseline Survey Tolon-Kumbungu District 1999

The 1999 Household Baseline Survey (Asedam, et al., 1999) is a district representative survey of 600 households in 30 clusters. The survey, conducted by the District Monitoring and Evaluation Unity of the Tolon-Kumbungu District Assembly, was funded by UNICEF-Ghana and completed by May 1999. The primary objective of the survey was to generate data concerning feeding practices, diseases, water and sanitation, household food security, education, health, and income generation. These data provide a basis upon which a situation analysis in the district can be carried out in order to identify problems and to formulate possible actions to improve district development. Below I have included the results that give background information of the Tolon-Kumbungu district that is relevant for my research.

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of households

Indicator	Tolon-Kumbungu
Number of households interviewed	600
Percentage of female headed households	1.8
Number of household members in the survey	3796
Percentage (number) of children under five	16.7 (634)
Percentage of children under fifteen	47.7
Average household size	6.5
Percentage of households with children below 18 years staying elsewhere	23.8
Percentage of females (males) of children below 18 years staying elsewhere	74.7 (25.3)
Percentage of females under 18 years staying elsewhere and who are doing housework	52.3
Percentage of females under 18 years staying elsewhere and who are in school	10.6
Percentage of all females under 18 years staying elsewhere who are *kayayoo*	27.2
Percentage of all male children under 18 years staying elsewhere who are in school	48.1

Table 2
Education

Indicators	Tolon-Kumbungu
Total percentage of children 5-18 years old that have never been to school	53.4
Total percentage of boys that have never been to school	46
Total percentage of girls that have never been to school	64.5
Total gross primary school enrolment	44.9
Boys gross primary school enrolment	50.8
Girls gross primary school enrolment	36.6
Total school drop out	16.7
School drop out for boys	15.2
School drop out for girls	22.5

Indicators	Tolon-Kumbungu
Percentage of population having access to safe sanitary excreta disposal facilities	3.5
Percentage of households using soak-aways for waste water	3.8
Percentage of population having access to safe drinking water in the dry season (within 500 metres)	32.5 (29.7)
Percentage of population having access to safe drinking water in the rainy season (within 500 metres)	40 (37.4)

Table 4
Household Food Security

Indicators	Tolon-Kumbungu
Percentage of households farming	98.2
Percentage of households owning animals	77.5
Percentage of households that did not produce enough food last year	58.4
Percentage of households expecting food shortages this year	75
Percentage of households with dry season farming	3
Percentage of households which has no other income beside farming	67.1
Percentage of households which has access to credit	9.5
Percentage of households with chronically inadequate food production	49.5
Percentage of households low resilience (expecting a food shortage, and not producing any cash crop, no access to credit, no keeping any animals, and no dry season farming)	11.7
Percentage of households with inadequate food stored combined with low resilience	7.7

Table 5
Management of land and environment

Indicators	Tolon-Kumbungu
Percentage of households using firewood for cooking	99.5
Percentage of households cutting trees	57.2
Percentage of households planting trees	41.1
Percentage of households experiencing soil erosion	72
Percentage of households using chemical fertiliser	64.5
Percentage of households using organic manure	76
Percentage of households using fire to clear a new farm plot	43

Table 6
Characteristics of mothers with children under 18 years

Indicators	Tolon-Kumbungu
Number of mothers interviewed	750
Percentage of mothers married	96.4
Percentage of mothers married in a polygynous marriage	42.7
Percentage of mothers who ever went to school	7.3
Percentage of mothers who have attended literacy classes	9.5
Percentage of mothers who have extra income generating activities	40.3
Percentage of mothers with access to credit	10.7
Percentage of mothers with an own farm	41.6
Percentage of mothers having animals	8.3
Percentage of vulnerable mothers (no schooling, farm, animals, income, cash crops or credit)	34.1