

**CONTROLLING THE INFORMAL SECTOR: SOLID  
WASTE COLLECTION AND THE ADDIS ABABA  
CITY ADMINISTRATION, 2003-2005**



By

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**M.Phil. THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY,  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT,  
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## **Abstract**

*This study is about the intervention of the Addis Ababa City Government in regulating door-to-door solid waste collection activity, which was handled by the pre-existing informal solid waste collectors. The intervention was done by organizing and integrating government sponsored Micro and Small Scale Enterprises (MSSEs). Thus, the study examines how the pre-existing informal solid waste collecting actors were organized and functioning; the intentions of the intervention; the responses of the informal solid waste collecting actors and its implications on the existing interactions among various actors in the power matrix of solid waste collection.*

*The actor-oriented approach is adopted as a theoretical framework in order to address the problems at hand. The actor-oriented approach has an analytical power in examining how external interventions entered into the life worlds of actors, mediated, incorporated and often substantially transformed by the ongoing interactions that take place between the pre-existing actors and the newly intervening MSSEs. Moreover, it signifies how actors in the solid waste collection are involved in a series of 'battles' over resources, institutional legitimacy and control. Methodologically the actor-oriented approach presupposes in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of individuals. Accordingly, this study depends on qualitative techniques. The study focuses on three selected enterprises from the informal, private formal and MSSEs. Apart from this, the views of individuals from other similar enterprises were considered so as to get a more comprehensive picture of the problem.*

*Door-to-door solid waste collection as an employment sector has drawn the attention of the provisional city government since it's very set up in 2003. Consequently, the city government organized and integrated several MSSEs without due consideration of the pre-existing informal solid waste collectors who have accumulated experience and knowledge in the sector. This study also evidenced that the integration of the MSSEs is a more politicized intervention driven by merely boosting the employment figure and ensuring political control. The pre-existing informal solid waste collectors react to the government intervention in different ways; among others, conflicts, competition and cooperation against the MSSEs and rarely negotiations are worth mentioning. The rivalry interactions and intense competition between the pre-existing and newly integrated MSSEs adversely affected the revenues of the enterprises and the working environment as a whole. The MSSEs who are obviously operating based on loans from formal financial institutions are less likely to pay back their debt and simultaneously to finance the wages of the operators. So that the MSSEs are highly susceptible to disintegration and of course many do so. Consequently, the city government is trapped within the cycle of organizing and integrating many new MSSEs into the sector while others are getting dissolved. This calls for a more inclusive intervention with sound understanding of how the pre-existing informal solid waste collecting enterprises have been operating and keen identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system. Moreover, politicising such interventions for the sake of advancing other interests complicates the problem than do as part of the solution.*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1. Background .....	1
1.2. Existing Solid Waste Management Service in Addis Ababa: An Overview .....	3
1.3. Statement of the Problem.....	5
1.4. Objectives of the Study .....	6
1.5. Research Questions .....	7
1.6. Significance of the Study .....	7
1.7. Organization of the Paper .....	7
1.8. Working Definitions .....	8
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>II. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</b> .....	<b>9</b>
2.1. Structure –Actor Debate in Geography.....	9
2.2. Actor-Oriented Approach .....	11
2.2.1. Conception and Conspicuous Aspects of Actor-oriented Approach .....	11
2.2.2. Limitations in the Concepts of Actor-oriented Approach .....	14
2.2.3. Relevance of Actor-Oriented Approach to the Research Problem .....	15
2.2.4. Conclusion .....	17
2.3. Governance .....	17
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>III. METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>20</b>
3.1. The Nexus Between Theory and Methodology .....	20
3.2. Data Types and Sources.....	21
3.3. Methods of Data Collection .....	22
3.3.1. Qualitative Methods of Data Collection .....	22

3.3.1.1. Interview .....	22
3.3.1.2. Focus Group Discussion .....	26
3.3.1.3. Personal Observation .....	28
3.3.1.4. Photography .....	29
3.4. Data Analysis .....	30
3.5. Validity and Reliability .....	31
3.6. Limitations .....	33
<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>IV. THE STUDY AREA.....</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1. Physical Background .....	36
4.2. Socio-economic Conditions .....	38
4.3. Informal Urban Activities .....	39
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>V. REGULATING SOLID WASTE COLLECTION .....</b>	<b>48</b>
5.1. How the Informal Solid Waste Collectors were Organized and Functioning ..	48
5.1.1. Why and How do the Informal Solid Waste Collectors Engaged in the Business .....	48
5.1.2. The Way they are Organized Socially and Spatially .....	52
5.1.3. Collection System and Working Conditions .....	55
5.1.4. How the Informal Waste Collectors Reach their Customers and Attitudinal Challenges.....	59
5.1.5. How do they Fix the Service Charges .....	60
5.1.6. Sources of Capital .....	62
5.1.7. Why do the Waste Collectors Still Prefer Informality.....	65
5.2. Intentions of Regulating Solid Waste Collection.....	68
5.2.1. From the Government Point of View .....	68
5.2.2. From Private Formal Solid Waste Collectors Perspective.....	69
5.2.3. From Informal Waste Collectors Perspective .....	72
5.3. The Process of Formalization .....	73
5.3.1. Recruiting Waste Collectors .....	73
5.3.3. Was it based on Policy Guidelines?.....	77
5.3.4. Institutional Actors Involved in Formalization Process .....	78

5.4. How do the Pre-existing Solid Waste Collectors Responded to the Newly Integrated Actors.....	80
5.4.1. Conflicts and Sources of Conflicts .....	80
5.4.2. Competition .....	81
5.4.3. Cooperation.....	84
5.4.4. Negotiation.....	85
5.5. Implications of Regulating Solid Waste Collection.....	86
5.6. The Present Status of Regulating Solid Waste Collection.....	87
<b>CHAPTER SIX .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>VI. CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>101</b>

## **Abbreviations**

AACG	Addis Ababa City Government
AACGFEDB	Addis Ababa City Government Finance and Economy Development Bureau
ACORD	Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance Relief Everywhere
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CGASBPDA	City Government of Addis Ababa Sanitation, Beautification and Parks Development Agency
CSA	Central Statistics Authority
ENDA	Environmental Developing Action in the Third World
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
ESTC	Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISWA	International Solid Waste Association
MEDAC	Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation
MFI	Micro Financial Institutions
MOFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MOLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MSSEDA	Micro and Small Scale Enterprises Development Agency
MSWM	Municipal Solid Waste Management
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
NPO	National Population Office
NUPI	National Urban Planning Institute
ORAAMP	Office for the Revision of Addis Ababa Master Plan
SBPDA	Sanitation, Beautification and Park Development Agency
SWM	Solid Waste Management
UMAS	Urban Management Advisory Service
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlement
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



# CHAPTER ONE

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

Urban waste management has always stood as a great challenge for municipalities and urban governments. The problem is more pronounced in urban centres of developing countries where bureaucratic competence and institutional capacity of the municipalities is often very limited. It is unfortunate that the governance systems of those countries obviously hamper the active participation of other actors that would counterbalance the inadequacies in the municipal solid waste management. The waste challenge is further exacerbated by high rates of urban growth, unplanned urban development and sprawl, declining economies, inadequacy or complete absence of sound environmental policy and legislation frameworks (Arnold, 1995).

Currently, developing countries generally show a remarkable high rate of urbanization. According to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (UNCHS/ HABITAT), the rate of urbanization in Africa is estimated at 3.5 per cent per annum and this is the highest as compared to the averages of 0.5 and 2.6 per cent for developed and other developing regions, respectively. Nevertheless, the high rate of urbanization does not obviously commensurate with other socio-economic growth. Thus, urban centres in developing countries are confronted with various socio-economic and environmental problems. Urban waste problem, among others, appears to be a prominent environmental ill prevailed in the urban scene of developing nations (UNCHS, 2001).

Ethiopia, as a developing nation, could not be out of the above stated reality. Addis Ababa, the capital of the country, has been grappled with an increasingly growing urban waste management problem which mirrors to various socio-economic, demographic, political, institutional and legal factors. However, recently there were some encouraging efforts in addressing the waste problem as integral part of the ongoing municipal service reform. The provisional city government who was mandated to administer the city from January 2003 until September 2005 had launched an administrative decentralization immediately after embarked on power. Consequently, the city was divided into ten administrative units known as sub-cities

or locally identified as *kifle ketema* (See Appendix I and III). The sub-cities further divided into *kebeles*<sup>1</sup>. The outcomes of the reform included reorganizing of the existing institutions and the creation of new ones. Among others the Sanitation Beautification and Parks Development Agency (SBPDA) and Micro and Small Scale Enterprise Development Agency (MSSEDA) are cases in point. Furthermore, the reform resulted in the devolution of services, budget responsibility and administrative tasks to sub-city and *kebele* levels.

The structural reorganization process, like in the other service sectors, entailed the decentralization of waste management services. This, in turn, paved a way for a move from centralized to a relatively participatory waste management activity. This situation, therefore, allowed an increased participation of the private formal sector, community based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) than they used to be.

The provisional city government also identified unemployment as a major economic challenge. Thus emphasis was placed on creating jobs opportunities in five core areas: food processing; the textile and garment industry; metalwork, woodwork and furniture production; small constructions; and municipal facilities<sup>2</sup>. So that solid waste collection activity gained attention, as it is one of the municipal facilities. Consequently, the city administration intervened into the door-to-door primary solid waste collection through institutionalizing and integrating Micro and Small Scale Enterprises (MSSEs) into the waste collection system, which was originally exclusively run by informal waste collectors. Accordingly, this study is intended to map out the intentions of the government intervention, interactions between the actors and/or conflicts, and the resulting power relations between the informal solid waste collecting actors and the MSSEs.

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<sup>1</sup>*kebele is the lowest administrative unit in the Ethiopian government structure.*

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.citymayors.com/mayors/addis\\_mayor.html](http://www.citymayors.com/mayors/addis_mayor.html)

## **1.2. Existing Solid Waste Management Service in Addis Ababa: An Overview**

### *Solid waste management in timeline*

Up to 1994 solid waste management was the task of the Department of Environmental Health and Social Services of the municipality. The department was responsible for all solid waste management activities ranging from collection to disposal. From 1994 to 2003, the mandate was transferred to the Addis Ababa Health Bureau. Then, since January 2003, the mandate is shifted to the newly established Sanitation, Beautification and Parks Development Agency (SBPDA) with a decentralized power to sub-city level (CGASBPDA, 2003:6).

### *Waste generation*

The solid waste generation rate in the city is estimated at 0.252kg per capita per day and the total waste generated is about 2297m<sup>3</sup> (851 tones) per day. Households, street sweeping, commercial institutions, industries, hotels and hospitals are identified as the major generators of solid waste by source type. However, households are by and large the dominant sources, accounted for 71 per cent of the total waste generated (CGASBPDA, 2003; Tadesse, 2004).

### *Collection*

Reports reveal that the recent waste collection rate is about 65 per cent of the waste generated in the city. Moreover, about 10 per cent of the waste is believed to be recycled and composted. The rest 25 per cent of the uncollected waste ends up in unauthorized dumping areas such as ditches, sewers, valleys, river courses, streets and other open spaces (ORAAMP, 2002a; Tadesse, 2004).

There are three modes of collection systems that have been practiced by the city government: block collection system is a type of collection in which the households are expected to bring the waste they stored at predetermined route and time schedule of the municipal truck fleets. In practice, however, the collection hours are not regular as it depends on daily vehicle availability. Thus this service has not been dependable. The major users of this service are the households and they are not requested to pay collection fees. The provision of block collection system is declining and currently almost it is not functioning except in some areas where the private formal and informal enterprises and the MSSEs are not actively operating.

Door-to-door is another type of waste collection system delivered by the municipality. It is intended to serve large institutions. In this operation containers are placed in the organization's compound to be emptied based on service charges (Arnold, 1995:207). The third type of collection system is communal also known as container collection system. Households are responsible to deliver the waste to a nearby container.

The communal collection system is the most widely practiced waste collecting system. Of the total waste gathered, about 85 per cent is collected through this system (Tadesse, 2004). Despite its predominance, the communal collection system suffers from low frequency of monitoring and emptying containers, and inadequacy in the number and the spatial distribution of containers (See Appendix V). Studies have shown that a single container was shared by up to 14,900 people, which is more than seven folds the one recommended by NUPI, i.e. one container for 2000 people. This study also came up with the rough estimation of the catchment radius of a container assuming that containers are evenly distributed throughout the city. Accordingly, one container was estimated to serve as far as 1233 meters for densely developed part and up to 2285 meters for areas at the peripheries though the UNHCS recommends not to be exceeding 200 meters (Yami, 1999:327). Thus households are generally expected to cover quite long distances in order to access the municipal containers.

It is this gap that has made the door-to-door solid waste collection service delivered by the informal solid waste collectors indispensable. Until the recent introduction of the MSSEs, the gap between the households and the municipal containers was bridged mainly by the informal solid waste collectors. Thus the scope of the discussions in this study will focus on the interaction of actors within the context of this segment of solid waste management.

### *Composition and Disposal*

Research studies conducted on the composition of waste collected in the city shows that 60 per cent by weight and 90 per cent by volume are organic wastes. In fact this is the case, composting of such wastes and/or using them for other purposes like energy generation has not yet been adequately sought. This merely disposal-oriented approach of waste management system exerts a great pressure

on the only authorized dump site known as Repi landfill or widely known as “Koshe” (Solomon & McLeod, 2004).

This landfill has been in service since 1964 and located some 12.5 km away from the city centre. As the landfill site is the only in the city, it is not equally accessible to all quarters of the city. Consequently, it incurs additional financial and other outlay for vehicular fleet, which eventually impedes waste collection service. According to Yirgalem (2001) the site is incompatible with the surrounding land uses. This coupled with the poor site management always triggers conflicts with the adjoining land uses. This calls for a sound planning intervention in locating alternative dump sites as well as introduction of proper site management.

### **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

Solid waste management involves a wide range of actors that encompass households and CBOs, local and national governments, private formal and informal sectors, and external supporting agencies. Thus, an effective solid waste management system presupposes the concerted effort of these actors. Nevertheless, such cooperation seldom works in the waste management endeavour of the municipalities of developing countries. In Addis Ababa there are different actors that are directly involved in a wide range of solid waste management activity including the Sanitation, Beautification and Parks Development Agency (SBPDA), private formal and informal sectors, households, CBOs and NGOs. This study mainly focuses on the reactions and interactions of the informal solid waste collecting enterprises with respect to the introduction of government sponsored MSSEs.

The informal waste collecting actors are the pioneers in providing door-to-door solid waste pre-collection service in the city. They have the accumulated local knowledge and entrepreneurship due to their close engagement in the sector. This activity was less attractive to the government officials and easily left to be done by the informal enterprises until the appointment of the provisional government led by Mayor Arkebe Oqubay in 2003. It is since then that the government officials viewed the sector as one

of the employment generating fields. In line with this the government intervened into the sector by institutionalizing and integrating MSSEs.

Thus, this study intends to assess how the informal sector was functioning, the intentions of the intervention in regulating solid waste pre-collection, the reaction of the informal waste collectors and its implications, particularly on the power relations between the pre-existing informal actors and the MSSEs. It should, however, be noted that this intervention has to be understood in the time frame of the provisional city government. At present the mandate of the provisional city government is over. However, due to the disputed May 2005 election the opposition party who won over the city council boycotted to take the administration. Thus from March 2006 the city has been administered under a caretaker administration whose life span is expected to be one year. Although there is no clear policy directions amidst of the political turmoil, there is no doubt that solid waste management will remain on the top of the agenda.

#### **1.4. Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to uncover the overall impact of the government intervention in changing the role of actors in solid waste collection in Addis Ababa.

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To describe how the pre-existing informal waste collecting actors were organized and functioning;
- To assess the intentions of the city government to integrate a new actor;
- To appraise the responses of the pre-existing enterprises towards the newly integrated actors; and
- To assess the implications of integrating a new actor in the power relation between the pre-existing informal solid waste collecting actors and the MSSEs.

### **1.5. Research Questions**

This study is mainly designed to address the following research questions:

- How did the pre-existing informal waste collecting actors organized and functioning?
- Why and how the new waste collecting actors are integrated with the pre-existing solid waste collection system?
- How the pre-existing waste collecting actors are responded to the intervention?
- What are the implications of interventions in the existing power relations between the pre-existing and the newly integrated actors?

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

The informal solid waste collectors play a significant role in bridging the gap, in waste collection, between the households and the municipality (municipal containers). Nevertheless, little has been said and/or known about the informal waste collection sector in Addis Ababa. This study, therefore, will contribute for a better understanding of the characteristics of the informal solid waste collectors, and their capability and knowledgability in strategizing towards interventions. Thus it may serve as a springboard for further studies that will be conducted on the informal solid waste collection sector. Moreover, it informs policy makers about the unique aspects of the informal solid waste collectors while they formulate planned interventions.

### **1.7. Organization of the Paper**

This study is organized into six chapters. Chapter one gives an overview of the background of the problem, the existing solid waste management activity, research objective and questions, the importance of the study and the working definitions. Chapter two discusses with the theoretical and conceptual frameworks in which the study is embedded. The third chapter deals with the methods employed to generate and analysis data and limitations. Physical, socio-economic and administrative aspects of the study area are described in chapter four. Moreover, the characteristics of the informal urban economic activities are also reviewed in this chapter. Chapter five comprises the analysis part. It describes how the pre-existing informal waste collecting actors were organized and functioning. It also assesses the intentions of the

intervention and the responses of the pre-existing informal enterprises; and their implications on the power relation between the pre-existing informal solid waste collecting actors and the MSSEs. Finally, chapter six gives concluding remarks by outlining the salient aspects of the study.

### **1.8. Working Definitions**

- Micro and Small Scale Enterprises (MSSEs) is used to refer those solid waste collecting enterprises that are organized by the government sponsorship and are legally registered.
- Formal solid waste collecting enterprises encompass solid waste collecting enterprises organized under the private, MSSEs and cooperatives that are legally registered and licensed by fulfilling the pre-requisites set by the Micro and Small Scale Enterprises Development Agency (MSSEDA) or Cooperatives Organization and Promotion Office (COPO).
- Informal solid waste collecting enterprises are those enterprises established by individuals and/or a group of individuals which may or may not be issued with a certificate of competence from Sanitation Beautification and Parks Development Agency or other *kebele* officials but still they did not have any accredited license either from Micro and Small Scale Enterprises Development Agency or Cooperatives Organization and Promotion Office.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **II. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

No research in geography or otherwise takes place in a philosophical vacuum. Even if it is not explicitly articulated all research is guided by a set of beliefs. Thus, research is not atheoretical and cannot be separately seen from theory. Regarding this, Silverman substantiated that 'without theory, there is nothing such a research' (Silverman, 1994:1 cited in Kitchin & Tate, 2000:33).

Theory is taken to be a set of explanatory concepts that are useful for explaining a particular phenomena, situation or activity. To this end, theoretical frameworks are essential tools in defining and explaining a research problem at hand (Johnston et al., 2000). In this study the actor-oriented approach is adopted so as to address the research questions. For the purpose of scheming out the general picture, I attempt to review the theoretical background of the development of actor-oriented approach, which is grounded in the structure-actor debate in social sciences in general, and in geographical thought in particular. Emphasis is also placed on the underpinning tenets and concepts of actor oriented approach and its relevance to the problem I am going to address.

#### **2.1. Structure –Actor Debate in Geography**

Debates about the relative significance and respective roles of human agency and social organization or structures in determining the courses of societal change are as old as philosophy and science themselves (Chouinard, 1996:383). Nevertheless, the debate did not enjoy a very significant advance in conceptualizing and demonstrating the complex intertwines between structure, agency and societal change as they appeared in post-war literature.

The structure-actor quest also has a long standing position in geographical thoughts. Although it did not vividly assume its present form, the debate on structure and actor in geography traces back to the era of environmental determinism. In its inception the argument appeared in the form of nature/environment versus humanity quest, in which the former conceptualized as determining the activities of the latter (Holt-

Jensen, 1999). In this regard, Chouinard has outlined that geographers have been grappling with problems of structure and agency in various ways throughout the history of the discipline – the debate about environmental determinism is a case in point. But it has only been in recent years that geographers have drawn on critical social theory, that the role of structure and agency in social change has become a pivotal issue in debates about geographic inquiry (Chouinard, 1996:386).

The development of new Western Marxist traditions of inquiry in the 1960s and 1970s contributed for the further advancement of the concept on the link between structure and agency in social sciences. The new tradition was built on both humanistic and structuralist reinterpretations of the classical Marxist texts. Generally, the debates of the 1970s cast a new insight into Marxist geography in particular, and in social sciences as a whole in introducing more sophisticated Marxist conceptions that treat both human experiences and actions, and societal structure as mutual determinants of social outcome (Chouinard, 1996:389; Holt-Jensen, 1999:123).

In contrast with these advances, humanist geographers expressed their dissatisfaction and mount criticisms on the new Western Marxist (structural geography) conceptions as they are claimed to be inherently flawed by structural determinism and their impoverished notion of human agency (Duncan & Ley, 1982 cited in Chouinard, 1996; Johnston et al., 2000). The humanist critique and later on the rise of feminist research helped geographers to reshape their literatures to relatively inclusive views of social relations. Accordingly, social relations are understood as constituents of the structure of society. Thus, the role of structural forces in social change was interpreted from a non-deterministic angle. For that matter, emphasis was placed on how social structure limits rather than directly determines social action and experience (Unwin, 1992).

In the 1980s, many scholars regarded human geography as caught between the determinism of structural Marxism, which tries 'read off' the specifics of place from the general law of capitalism, and the voluntarism of most humanistic geography, in which events are conceived as the results from purely individual intention (Holt-Jensen, 1999:124). This tension in human geography provoked geographers to explore

an approach that will combine human agency within a structural perspective. This perspective had been attained in the work of the British sociologist Anthony Giddens. He propounded the structuration theory that appreciates structures as being both the outcome and the medium of human agency. Hence, he recognized that structures as being created and recreated through human agency (Unwin, 1992:172). One of the interesting aspects of the structuration theory is its explanation from a geographical vantage point. Unlike most forms of social theories it portrays time – space relations as constitutive features of social systems (Bird, 1993).

The structuration theory received a considerable attention not only in human geography but also in other disciplines of social sciences. In spite of this advance, several critiques emerged in the early 1990s that portrayed there was a pressing need for further conceptual and empirical work on the precise ways in which social structures shape human actions and on how people's practice help to perpetuate or challenge those structures (Chouinard,1996 ; Holt-Jensen, 1999; Johnston et al., 2000).

The actor-oriented approach, among others, appears to be a major departure from empirical and conceptual shortcomings of structuration theory. In this regard, Long, the proponent of the approach, has noted that his intention is to grapple conceptually with the flexibilities, ambiguities and socially constructed and self-transforming nature of social life, and to find conceptual frames for doing so, rather than promoting a full-fledged theory (Long, 2001: xii). In what follows, I will attempt to review the central ideas of the actor-oriented approach, and explore its practical importance in the context of this study.

## **2.2. Actor-Oriented Approach**

### **2.2.1. Conception and Conspicuous Aspects of Actor-oriented Approach**

Over the past two decades the structure - agency question has been at the heart of debates about critical social theory and methods in the social sciences. Consequently, many different and exciting conceptions of structure and agency are available for researchers to draw on (Chouinard, 1996:385). The actor-oriented approach is one of the strands that emerge as a reaction to the notion of structural determinism. Long

argues that the appearance of the actor-oriented approach is fuelled by the considerably growing interest towards resolving the theoretical and methodological shortcomings of existing structural and generic theories of development that espoused various forms of determinism, linearity and institutional hegemony (Long, 2001: 1).

The structural deterministic theories underplay the significance of the human agency by grounding their explanations merely on structure. In this regard, Long labelled his criticism that the structural theories are 'people-less' and pre-occupied by the condition, contexts and 'driving forces' of social life rather than with the self organized practices of those inhabiting, experiencing and transforming the contours and details of social landscape. He, thus, propounded an actor-oriented perspective as a means of getting away from what he called 'impasse' in development studies (Long, 2001).

Theory, concepts and practices of actor-oriented approach are philosophically embedded in a social constructionist view of change and continuity (ibid). Long emphasises that his version of constructionist perspective focuses upon the making and remaking of society through the ongoing self-transforming actions and perceptions of diverse and interlocked world of actors. Owing to this, unlike other strands of constructionist thinking an actor-oriented type of social constructionism encompasses not only every day social practice and language games, but also large-scale institutional frameworks, resource fields, networks of communication and support, collective ideologies, socio-political arenas of struggle, and the beliefs and cosmologies that may shape actors' improvisations, coping behaviours and planned social actions (Long, 2001: 4).

The actor-oriented approach is a more dynamic approach that stresses on the interplay and mutual determination of 'internal' and 'external' factors and relationships. It also acknowledges the central role played by human action and consciousness. These features leave much more room to undertake a different style of analysis that had never been attained by adopting structural/institutional analysis (Long & Long, 1992; Long, 2001).

One advantage of the actor approach lies on its viability of explaining differential responses to similar structural circumstances, even if the conditions appear relatively homogeneous. It is very difficult to get explanations in the old orthodox assumptions as to how different patterns of development evolved despite the presence of identical institutional/structural milieu (Long & Long, 1992). Thus this situation obliged us to resort to the actor-oriented approach that appreciates the human agency in the face of structural interventions.

The notion of agency is generally attributed to the individual actor with the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion. Accordingly, social actors are not depicted as simply disembodied social categories (based on class or some other classifying criteria) or passive recipients of intervention, but as active participants who process information, and strategise in their dealings with various local actors as well as with outside institutions and personnel (Long & Long, 1992:22-23). It should, however, be noted that the actor-oriented approach is not diametrically opposite to structural issues; rather it is cognisant about the conditions that it could constrain choice and strategy of actors.

The actor-oriented approach has also an upper hand in explaining the different patterns of social organizations that result from the interaction, negotiations and social struggles that occur between different actors. It has also a paramount importance in mapping out not only those actors that are discerned in a given 'face-to-face' encounters but also those who are absent (invisible hands) yet nevertheless influence the situation, affecting actions and outcomes (Sano, 2000; Long, 2001).

The other merit of the actor-oriented approach is its emphasis on the detailed analysis of the life worlds, struggles and exchanges within and between specific social groups. Hence, it outlines the composite and complex nature of social order through a systematic ethnographic understanding of the 'social life' of development projects – from conception to realization – as well as the response and lived experiences of the variously located and affected social actors (Long, 2001).

One of the fascinating aspects of actor-oriented approach is the way it looks into the issue of policy and planned development. Long substantiated that much policy analysis still seemed to adhere to a rather mechanical or systems model of the relationship between policy formulation, implementation and outcomes. This linear approach implying some kind of step-by-step process whereby policy was formulated, implemented and then followed by certain results, after which one could evaluate the process in order to establish how far original objectives had been achieved (Long, 2001:25).

Long argues that the separation of 'policy formulation', 'implementation' and 'outcomes' is a gross oversimplification of a much more complicated set of processes, which involve the reinterpretation or transformation of policy all the way to outcomes. He emphasized that this kind of linear approach fails to appreciate the fact that 'outcomes' often also result from factors which cannot be directly linked to the implementation of a particular development program. Moreover, issues of policy implementation should not be restricted to the study of top-down, planned interventions by governments, development agencies and private institutions, since local groups actively formulate and pursue their own 'projects of development', which may clash with the interests of central authorities (Kontinen, 2004.).

Recognizing the analytical power of the actor-oriented approach several writers are turned back to reconsider the essential nature and importance of 'human agency'. This meta-theoretical notion forms the pivotal ground in which discussions aimed at reconciling notions of structure and actor revolves (Arce, 2003).

### **2.2.2. Limitations in the Concepts of Actor-oriented Approach**

Despite its strengths the actor-oriented approach is not well articulated in the geographical ingredients of time and space concepts. In order to fill this gap, I introduced the spatial concepts from structuration theory in order to make sense of the actor-oriented approach to geographers.

Storper was conscious about the significance of time and space in influencing 'human agency'. Accordingly, he pointed out that the structural outcomes of social practices

are premised upon their time – space characteristics, since these time- and space-defined practices serve simultaneously as pattern of interaction, and through their impacts on human experience, as foundations for the motivation of future practices (Storper, 1985:408 cited in Bird, 1993:109).

### **2.2.3. Relevance of Actor-Oriented Approach to the Research Problem**

In this part, I will try to reflect the relevance of the actor-oriented approach to my study, by tracing how the concepts will serve as bases to understand and address the research questions that I intended to deal with.

In addressing the proposition as to how the informal waste collecting actors are organized and function; the actor-oriented approach gives explanations about the conditions under which various actors are self-organized and consolidated around a particular problem, the strategies they use, the rationale for their action, and their viability or effectiveness for solving specific social problems and their social outcomes (Long & Long, 1992:86).

Furthermore, the notion of social actor in actor- oriented approach encompasses those social entities that can be said to have agency that they possess the knowledgeability and capability to assess problematic situations and organise `appropriate´ responses. The actors may appear in the form of individual persons, informal groups or interpersonal networks, organisations, collective groupings, and `macro´ actors like national government and international organisations (Long & Long, 1992:86; Long, 2001:241). Thus applying the concepts of the actor-oriented approach to a wide-range of actors that are involved in solid waste management will allow to identify and understand the role of each actor and the coping strategies adopted by the actors, specifically the informal waste collectors, with respect to different problematic situations such as government interventions.

The actor-oriented approach offers a special focus on accounting social actors rather than ad hoc emphasis on institutional actors. For that matter, the actor-oriented approach gives a new style of analysis well beyond the traditional or institutional based analysis. It strives to explore how social actors (both `local´ and `external´ to particular arenas) are locked into a series of intertwined battles over resources, meanings and institutional legitimacy and control (Long, 2001; Arce, 2003). Such

notions and/or approaches benefit this study in analyzing how the informal waste collecting actors, as individual persons or as organized entities, struggle to sustain their role in the face of the dynamics of interactions and interventions among other actors involved in the broad field of solid waste management.

The actor-oriented approach grasps the idea that, although it may be true that important structural changes result from the impact of outside forces (due to encroachment by the state) it is theoretically unsatisfactory to base one's analysis on the concept of external determination. All forms of external intervention necessarily enter the existing 'life worlds' of the individuals and social groups affected, and in this way they are mediated and transformed by these same actors and structures (Long, 2001:13). The assessment of the effects of policy implementation, therefore, should not be restricted to the study of top-down, planned interventions by governments, development agencies and private institutions. Rather, it should be also interpreted from the perspective of other actors, since local groups actively formulate and pursue their own 'projects of development', which may clash with the interests of central authorities. This in turn guiding me not only to merely focus on considering the policy interventions, but also to understand from the perspective of as to how such interventions are interpreted and transformed by the informal waste collectors and eventually the way they respond to government actions.

Long also contests the way in which the effects of policy intervention are conventionally analysed. Therefore, he called for the deconstruction of the concept of intervention - so that it is seen for what it is – an ongoing, socially-constructed, negotiated, experiential and meaning-creating process, not simply the execution of an already-specified plan of action with expected behavioural outcomes (Long, 2001: 25).

He argues that one should also not assume a top-down process as is usually implied, since initiatives may come from 'below' as much as they do from 'above'. It is important, then, to focus upon intervention practices as shaped by the interaction among the various participants, rather than simply upon 'intervention models' (Long, 2001: 26). Thus, this way of examining intervention brings about the ideal typical representations of the policy interventions as it is processed by the informal waste collecting actors. Hence, the notion of intervention practices allows one to focus on



the emergent forms of interactions, procedures, practical strategies and types of discourse, cultural categories and sentiments present in the changing context of the roles of actors.

#### **2.2.4. Conclusion**

The actor-oriented approach offers a theoretical framework for examining how structural factors like a change in policy or in power relations in the actor matrix affect some actors, in my case informal waste collectors. Concomitantly, it also helps to map out and analyse the way in which the informal waste collectors responded and their strategies to define and defend their own positions within the wider field of power. Apart from this, the approach gives space for appreciating the unintended effects of policy changes and planned interventions.

The actor-oriented approach has not explicitly stated the impact of space and time on the actor's interactions and agency. Thus, I introduce this dimension by adopting from the structuration theory in order to find explanations about the spatial variations of actors agency. In this regard, Thrift has clearly stated that structuration process should be specified as they occur for particular individuals or groups in particular localities. Such a historically specific, contextual theory of human action should stress practical reasons and concrete interactions in time and space (Thrift 1983:35). Incorporating the concept of space and time allows me to analyse how the informal and formal solid waste collecting actors interact to maintain their geographical territory and the level of interaction over time.

### **2.3. Governance**

The concept of governance is complex and controversial. The World Bank defined governance as “the means in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resource for development” (Potter, 2000:8). On the other hand, UNDP defines governance as:

*The exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their*

*interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences* (UN-HABITAT, 2002:7).

Governance is not synonym to government. Governance as a concept recognizes that power exists inside and outside the formal authority and institutions of government. In many formulations, governance includes government, the private sector and civil society. Moreover, governance emphasizes “process.” It recognizes that decisions are made based on complex relationships between many actors with different priorities (Kobus, 2003).

According to UN-HABITAT (2002:8) good governance is the one that adopts the “enabling approach.” This approach is characterized by several strategies that encompasses: decentralization of responsibilities and resources to local authorities based on the principles of subsidiary and accountability; encouraging the participation of civil society, particularly women, in the design, implementation and monitoring of local priorities; using a wide-variety of partnerships, including with the private sector, to achieve common objectives; building capacity of all actors to contribute fully to decision-making and urban development processes; facilitating networking at all levels; and taking full advantage of modern information and communications technologies (*ICTs*) to support good urban governance and sustainable urban development.

Urban governance is the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, plan and manage the common affairs of the city. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action can be taken. It includes formal institutions as well as informal arrangements and the social capital of citizens (Baud & Post, 2002).

Urban governance is inextricably linked to the welfare of the citizenry. Good urban governance must enable women and men to access the benefits of urban citizenship. Good urban governance, based on the principle of urban citizenship, affirms that no man, woman or child can be denied access to the necessities of urban life, including adequate shelter, security of tenure, safe water, sanitation, a clean environment, health, education and nutrition, employment and public safety and mobility. Through

good urban governance, citizens are provided with the platform which will allow them to use their talents to the full, to improve their social and economic conditions (UN-HABITAT, 2002).

Devas distinguishes two strands in the thinking of urban development in the South. On one hand, studies on urban government and management tend to have the public management perspective that is preoccupied with a technocratic, top-down, and prescriptive orientation; and on the other hand, the people-centred view usually adopts a more bottom-up approach, actor (agency) oriented and empirically grounded. Generally, the former assumes that the state is in a position of control while the later conceives the state as a facilitator (Devas, 1999:2 in Baud & Post, 2002:9).

The urban management approach, which has been considered as a new thinking on urban development, was heavily influenced by the prevailing neo-liberal beliefs in a market-led development and a minimal role of the state. It is basically a question of how to use the capacities of the public sector at different levels, the business community, and civil society organization to bring about urban development. Thus, the government moves away from direct intervention, and concentrates on creating favourable conditions for other actors to undertake economic and social activities (Baud & Post, 2002).

Local municipal governments have a role in the set-up and operation of waste management systems. They are charged with monitoring the living conditions and public health. Within this framework, urban authorities have the mandate to execute the delivery and/or facilitating the provision of services, including sanitation and waste collection, transportation, and disposal, regulating or contracting with the private sector within their political and geographic jurisdiction. Effective implementation of these complicated tasks stipulates a more decentralized approach in which decisions could be made at the lowest possible level consistent with responsibilities and resources (Klundert and Lardinois, 1995; Kobus, 2003).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. The Nexus Between Theory and Methodology**

Methodology is a coherent set of rules and procedures which can be used to investigate a phenomenon or situation within a framework dictated by epistemological and ontological ideas (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). Research methods, on the other hand, comprise a set of tools to be used to gather and analyze data in order to answer specific questions and solve different scientific or practical problems (Mikkelsen, 1995).

Methods cannot be separated from theory, as preconceived concepts and suppositions guide the interpretations and the results of the study (Holt-Jensen, 1999:112). The research method we adopt, therefore, depicts our views on what qualifies as valuable knowledge and our perspective on the nature of reality. Quantitative methods are, in general supported by the positivist or scientific paradigm, which leads us to regard the world as made up of observable, measurable facts. In contrast, qualitative methods are generally supported by the interpretivist paradigm, which portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992:5 - 6).

In this regard Merriam outlined that qualitative research embedded in the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world. The world, or reality, is not fixed, single, agreed upon, or measurable phenomenon that it is assumed to be in positivist, quantitative research. Instead, there are multiple constructions and interpretations of reality that are in flux and that change over time (Merriam, 2002). Having this in mind, I selected the qualitative method to deal with the problem at hand.

The rationale for selecting qualitative methods as my research approach, among other things, lies on its special concern on as to how the world is viewed, experienced and constructed by social actors. The epistemological standpoint of actor-oriented approach acknowledges the existence of 'multiple social realities' that presuppose the

co-existence of different understandings and interpretations of experience, as opposed to the ontological realism of positivist science which conceptualize a 'real world' that is simply 'out there' to be discovered (Long & Long, 1992). Such multiple social realities and different subjective understanding and interpretations of experience that are inherent to actor-oriented approach can be fully captured and described by employing the qualitative methods.

The actor-oriented approach attempts to grasp the different patterns of social organizations that emerge as a result of the interactions, negotiations and social struggles that take place between several kinds of actors. In my context, informal waste collectors as part of the nest of actors involved in solid waste management have their own capacity of processing social experience and devising strategies to cope up with difficult situations. Moreover, they attempt to learn how to intervene in the flow of social events around them, and to a degree they monitor their own actions, observing how others react to their behaviour and taking notes of various contingent circumstances (Giddens, 1984 in Long, 2001:16). Methodologically, these complexities call for a detailed and multi-method focused qualitative understanding of everyday life and of the processes by which images, identities and social practices are shared, contested, negotiated, and sometimes rejected by the various actors involved (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

To sum up, the inherent openness of the qualitative inquiry enables to meet the theoretical presupposition of multiple, socially constructed realities that are complex and indivisible into discrete variables.

### **3.2. Data Types and Sources**

Primary and secondary data were collected in order to examine and understand the formalization intervention and its eventual impact on interactions of actors in solid waste collection. Primary data were generated through qualitative methods, mainly employing in-depth individual interview and focus group discussion. Besides this, personal observation and photography techniques were employed in order to supplement and solidify the information obtained through the interview and focus group discussions. The field work was conducted during June and July 2005.

On the other hand, secondary data were gathered from documents and archives, statistical reports and abstracts, published and unpublished materials and the internet. The prominent sources of secondary data were the different organs of The Addis Ababa City Government: Sanitation, Beautification and Parks Development Agency; Health Bureau; Bureau of Trade and Industry Development; Code Enforcement Service and Office for the Revision of Addis Ababa Master Plan (ORAAMP).

### **3.3. Methods of Data Collection**

The choice of research method is the reflection of the interplay of various factors including the aim of research, specific analysis goal and its associated research question, the preferred paradigm, the degree of research control, the level of investigator intervention, the available resources and time frame (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Appreciating this, qualitative methods are adopted as a research instrument for this study.

#### **3.3.1. Qualitative Methods of Data Collection**

Qualitative methods comprise of a wide range of techniques and/or tools of data collection. In this study only four of them namely: in-depth individual interview, focus group discussion, personal observation and photography are employed.

##### **3.3.1.1. Interview**

Qualitative interviews are rich sources of data on people's experience, opinions, aspirations and feelings. It is fundamentally a conversation that involves a face-to-face verbal interchange in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to draw information or expressions of opinions or belief from another person or persons (Denzin, 1989). Similarly, Kvale (1996) states that an interview conversation is a situation in which the researcher listens to what people themselves tell about their lived world, hears them express their views and opinions in their own words, learns about their views on their work situation and their dreams and hopes.

All research depends on collecting particular sorts of evidence through the prism of particular methods, each of which has its strengths and weaknesses. Thus, the

following major strengths and weaknesses of the interview technique were appreciated and understood before hand. The main strengths are:

- The interview technique allows a more thorough examination of experiences, feelings or opinions that closed questions could never hope to capture;
- The interview technique can generate a lot of information very quickly;
- It enables the researcher to cover a wide variety of topics; and
- New dimensions and unanticipated themes may be encountered during the interview.

On the other hand, the main weaknesses are:

- The interview is not a neutral tool, for the interviewer creates the reality of the interview situation. In this situation answers are given. Thus the interview produces situated understandings grounded in specific interactional episodes. The method is influenced by the personal characteristics of the interviewer, including race, class, ethnicity, and gender (Denzin & Lincoln,1998b);
- The interview method largely depends on interpersonal and listening skills of the interviewer; and
- Interviewees may not be willing to share their experiences, particularly about sensitive or personal topics. Consequently, interviews generate only information that interviewees are willing to tell us.

I used semi-structured interviews which offer the advantage of eliciting more comprehensive data along with maintaining a fairly conversational and situational interview (See Appendix IV). The additional advantage of this approach rests on its flexibility to entertain questions that will emerge from the immediate context of the interview. In this regard, Kvale (1996:34) has outlined that the qualitative research interview is focused on certain themes in the interviewee's life world. It is neither strictly structured with standardized questions, nor entirely "nondirective," but is focused on certain themes. It is then up to the subjects to bring forth the dimensions they find important within the focus area. The interviewer leads the subject toward certain themes, but not to certain opinions about these themes. Underpinning on this principle, the interview guide that outlined the core issues and topics to be covered was prepared in advance.

Since the main research technique is an individual in-depth interview, reaching and build trust with the interviewees was the first and the most difficult part of the fieldwork. In order to get into contact with both the informal and formal waste collectors, which are the focal persons to be interviewed, I had made reconnaissance in the streets during the time they were supposed to be available on duty. I learned that they are usually available in the mornings, and sites like municipal container collecting stations, where they ended up their duty, are ideal to meet them. This mechanism helped me to establish the first contact and to held appointment with solid waste collectors.

Apart from this, officials from the Addis Ababa City Government Sanitation, Beautification and Parks Development Agency had helped me in providing a pamphlet comprises of the list of enterprises organized under an umbrella organization identified by the name of Addis Ababa City Solid Waste Service Providing Enterprises Collaborative Association. The association embraces about twenty-five solid waste collecting enterprises; most of them are formal while some others are informal. This pamphlet was vital in providing information as to when an enterprise emerged, the types of services provided, the service areas (sub-cities) and contact addresses.

The process of establishing contacts and build trust with the initially encountered individual informants had paved a way to meet other informants and trace to their enterprises. It is worth mentioning that care had been taken in purposely selecting focal enterprises in general and informants within the enterprises in particular. The main consideration for selection involves; the number of years they engaged in the service (as it implies the degree of exposure), the type of enterprise they belong to, the position they occupy in the enterprise and to some degree the extent of the service area. Along with this, emphasis also placed on purposely selecting information-rich cases. As Patton (1990) noted that the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for the study in-depth.

During my fieldwork I conducted a total of twenty-three formal and informal interviews. The interviewees were purposely selected from the three case enterprises under consideration. The interview intended to encompass the staffs at different



positions in the enterprises including the solid waste collectors, heads and/or owners of waste collecting enterprises as well as associations. Apart from this, I interviewed officials in different hierarchy (i.e. at *Kebele*, Sub-city or City levels) of the Addis Ababa City Government Sanitation, Beautification and Parks Development Agency, Micro and Small Enterprises Development Agency and Addis Ababa City Government Code Enforcement Service. In order to avoid potential biases that may arise from the interviewees and map out the entire picture of the process of formalization, extensive interviews, both formal and/or informal, were held with individuals who are engaged in different enterprises other than the focal cases.

Before starting the actual interview, care also had been taken in settling other practical matters like selecting appropriate place and time for conducting the interview. By appropriate place refers to the location that is reasonably quiet, physically comfortable and respecting privacy. Similarly, appropriate time entail avoiding peak working hours and selecting a time when both the researcher and respondent feel like talking (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992:73). In line with this, Kvale(1996) described that the interviewer must establish an atmosphere in which the subject feels safe enough to talk freely about his or her experience.

The interviews were held in places and time preferred and set by the consensus between the researcher and interviewees. During the interview, the interviewees were briefly introduced about the aim and purpose of the study. Moreover, I explained that the information they provide is very crucial for my study and will be kept confidential. The interviewees were continuously encouraged in the entire course of the interview to freely elaborate their views and experiences on issues that were discussed. Attempt was also made to get consent whether they are comfortable if I was going to tape the conversation. In most cases I had got permissions but two informants had shown some discomfort in recording the interview so that I mainly resort to take notes. Tape recording had immensely helped me to concentrate on managing the topics and follow the dynamics of the interview.

During the interview my role was facilitating the discussion by probing the issues to be discussed based on the interview guide and begging for clarification on the new insights prompted from the interviewees during the discussions. I was also

simultaneously recording and taking field notes about the highlights of what is said and how it is said. In the given time, attempt was made to make the interviews as exhaustive as possible until similar pictures were obtained. Since most of the solid waste collectors are obviously busy in diverse income generating activities after they collect waste. Thus, I compensate them for their time and I do so in a manner not violating researcher - subjects power relation and research ethics as a whole.

Everyday after the interviews I listen to the taped interviews, review through the field notes, examining and identifying the potential gaps. There were cases where I came across with some conflicting views and inconsistencies by the same interviewee. These situations were critically questioned to the interview for further explanation and clarification by rearranged and run another interviewee. Some other issues that remained conflicting were kept and brought for focus group discussion.

#### **3.3.1.2. Focus Group Discussion**

Focus groups place the individual in a group context. In the individual interviews, the individual is usually free to express his or her opinions without challenge. In the group context, however, individual's opinions and beliefs can be questioned and/or amplified by others in the group (Limb & Dwyer, 2001:123). This technique is particularly useful for exploring people's knowledge and experiences and can be used to examine not only what people think but also how they think and why they think that way (Kitzinger, 1995).

Focus group discussions have an additional advantage over individual interview method with respect to enabling the researcher to explore how meanings and experiences are negotiated and contested between participants. It also provides efficient way of comparing the 'world views' of different sectors or groups of people. Therefore, focus group discussions are good way of testing the attitudes one group display towards another (Limb & Dwyer, 2001). In order to take this advantage, I ran two focus group discussions one for the formal and the other for informal enterprise. The main intentions of the focus group discussions were just to supplement the information obtained through the individual in-depth interview and to arrive at clear pictures about conflicting ideas encountered during individual in-depth interviews.

Furthermore, such discussions were taken as instrumental in cross-examining the results that are investigated through the individual interview.

A focus group is beyond getting a bunch of people together to talk. It is rather a special type of group in terms of purpose, size, composition, and procedures. Participants are selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic of the focus group (Krueger et al., 2000). To this end, the focus group members were recruited taking into account the basis of their occupational profile. Thus, the ranked individuals in the enterprises under consideration were intentionally excluded in order to avoid their likely adverse impacts on the response of the participants. Moreover, long experience within the enterprises was another consideration for recruiting the participants.

Focus groups are typically composed of five to ten people. The group must be small enough for everyone to have an opportunity to share insights and yet large enough to provide diversity of perceptions (Ibid). To this advantage, the discussion with the informal solid waste collectors involved seven individuals and similarly six individuals were participated in the discussion with the formal ones. All the invited participants joined the discussions.

The focus group discussions were run by me aided by an assistant. The assistant had a good understanding of the topics that were discussed as he has been working for a long time in the area. He mainly assisted me by sitting the participants in their designated location and/or number, operating the recording, arranging refreshments, taking notes and giving an oral summary by the end of the sessions. The discussion with the formal solid waste collectors was held in their office while the discussion with the informal one was conducted at the residence of an individual participant. The sessions were arranged to establish the right atmosphere for discussion as much as possible. Thus, emphasis had placed on welcoming, realizing sitting round in a circle and providing refreshments. The focus group discussions were conducted in the same atmosphere as people always gathered to attend to local coffee ceremony held by the neighbourhoods. It was well understood and appreciated that the potentiality of such circumstances to create a natural setting for hot discussion and debate.

Before the inauguration of the discussion, I briefed them about the aim of the discussion, some procedural conducts as to how the discussion should proceed and an overview of topics that we were going to discuss. The participants were encouraged to talk to each other rather than to address themselves to me. My role in the discussion was forwarding the issues to be discussed and encouraging the group to discuss the inconsistencies both between participants and within their own thinking.

The focus group discussions involved various challenging experiences. I was disturbed while one of the participants who live with HIV/AIDS burst in tears while she explained about the community outlook towards the waste collectors. It was really a hard moment. I was also trapped, amidst the discussion, by challenges that participants frequently come up with their personal issues in the discussion such as personal disagreements with the heads of the enterprise and complaints about unfair distribution of duties and monthly wage were amongst the others. It is undeniable that such matters may bring an insight into intra-personal relations within the enterprises; however, it is not directly relevant to the intended goals of the discussions. The sessions generally lasted from one and half an hour to two hours.

### **3.3.1.3. Personal Observation**

Qualitative observation involves watching and recording what people say and do. As it is impossible to record everything, this process is inevitably selective and relies heavily on the researcher to act as the research instrument and document the world he or she observes (Mays & Pope, 1995:183). The data collected through observations consist of detailed descriptions of people's activities, behaviours, actions, and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organizational processes that are part of observable human experience (Patton, 1990:10). The researcher's role may range from overt to covert; or it may assume the identity of observer, semi-participant and participant observer.

The advantage (strength) of conducting observation lies on its viability in providing information that the respondent may not talk about during an interview, may be because they are taken so much for granted that the respondent does not think they are important or interesting, or because something is sensitive and therefore difficult to discuss, or otherwise (Limb & Dwyer, 2001:44). Observation also allows to study

behaviour in its natural setting and it may uncover behaviours or routines of which the participants themselves may be unaware.

Mays & Pope (1995) argued that observation is very significant in overcoming the discrepancy between what people say and what they actually do. It avoids the biases inherent in the accounts people give of their actions caused by factors such as the wish to present themselves in a good light, differences in recall, selectivity, and the influences of the roles they occupy. In spite of these, the major limitation of a research particularly those that relies exclusively on observation by a single researcher is limited by definition to the perceptions and introspection of the investigator and by the possibility that the presence of the observer may, in some way that is hard to characterize, have influenced the behaviour and speech that was witnessed (Denzin, 1989:162).

The main purpose of observation was to cross-examine the data obtained through the individual in-depth interview and to capture additional information that might not be secured by other techniques. The observation was conducted on purposefully selected places and settings such as while they are in door-to-door collection, transporting and final disposing sites. I took both covert and overt non-participant observer role, which was designed to generate data about as to how the informal and formal waste collectors interact with the clients and each other while they are on duty, tendencies of territoriality; and where and how they dispose the collected wastes. However, I often took overt semi-participant position which further allowed me to strength my intimacy and build trust with the solid waste collector besides to eliciting data through observation. The semi-participatory observations were accompanied by informal interview. I took notes concerning what I observe immediately after each session.

#### **3.3.1.4. Photography**

Visual methods have recently gained central importance in the qualitative inquiry. Photography, among others, plays a significant role in enhancing the visual effect of what has been said; in fact its importance in disciplines like visual sociology is well beyond this. In this study, I tried to get pictures that portray some aspects of collecting, transporting and disposing wastes.

As photographing is obviously an intrusive to individuals' privacy; an attempt, therefore, was made to get the consent of the participants. Most of the time the waste collectors were not volunteer to be photographed, as some of them told me that they were suspicious about the photographs would be manipulated for any abuse. This may be attached to a widely held view that some peoples use the pictures of street children and different destitute people for unethical economic gains. Thus I could not able to get more illustrative pictures and some times I was obliged to take pictures from other similar enterprises (See Appendix V).

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

Data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence, to address the initial propositions of a study. Analysis begins by going back to the intent of the study. With this respect, Kruger emphasised that “throughout the analysis process, the researcher should remember the purpose of the study” (Krueger et al, 2000).

Qualitative research and the process of analysis in particular involve continuous reflexivity and self-scrutiny. Reflexivity involves “continual evaluation of subjective responses, inter-subjective dynamics, and the research process itself” (Finlay, 2002 in Pyett, 2003:1171). Thus, in the process of analysis, my initial interpretations were appraised through further examination and checking, including the evaluation of my own role in the construction of meaning.

Pyett underlined that in qualitative research it is important to consider working by returning again and again to the data to check; is the interpretation true to the data? Does this apply to other individuals in the study? He also emphasized the significance of accounting how might the knowledge, position, and experience of the researcher shaping the analysis? Such reflections may also include checking our method, our analysis, and our interpretation with the academic literature (Ibid).

The data generated through individual interview and focus group discussions had been transcribed and qualitatively analysed. Parallel with this, data obtained through both observation and photography was examined to concretize the findings. To sum

up, in analysing the data emphasis is placed on ensuring the logical link between the research methodology, the theoretical framework, the research problem and the results.

### **3.5. Validity and Reliability**

Validity concerns about the soundness, legitimacy and relevance of a research theory and its investigation (Kitchin & Tate, 2000:34). Kvale noted that validity is not only an issue of method but it is also encompasses theoretical questions about the nature of the phenomena investigated (Kvale, 1996). On the other hand, reliability refers to repeatability or consistency of a finding (Kitchin & Tate, 2000:34). Reliability is problematic in the social sciences simply because human behaviour is never static, nor is what many experience necessarily more reliable than what one person experiences. Replication of a qualitative study will not yield the same results, but this does not discredit the results of any particular study; there can be numerous interpretations of the same data. The more important question for qualitative researchers is whether the results are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 2002:27).

Descriptions of data gathering procedures should be sufficiently detailed to permit replication. Because analytic procedures are less standardised than in statistical hypothesis testing studies; thus, descriptions of qualitative analytical procedures need to be detailed (Stiles, 1999:100). With this understanding, I briefly reviewed the appropriateness of the method, research process and encounters.

#### *Is the problem appropriate for qualitative inquiry?*

The main purpose of this study is to explain how the informal waste collecting actors were organized and functioning; the intention and meaning of the city government intervention strategy and to assess the existing interactions between the informal and the newly emerged formal solid waste collecting actors. These research problems mainly require qualitative inquiry which is a tool to understand the meanings people have constructed about a particular phenomenon. This enables the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of the formalization process, individuals experiences and the over all situation of solid waste collection. In line with this, Merriam (2002) has

outlined that qualitative research focuses on understanding how people do things, and what meaning they give to their lives.

### *The research process and encounters*

As it was mentioned above my arrival in Addis was coincided with the political turmoil following the May 2005 election. After relative calm regained, I started to communicate with relatives working in environmental and sanitation related organizations. The initial question in my mind was as to how, when and where I could get the solid waste collectors. It was in the second day of my search that I could meet a young boy with modest size cart. Since this was my first encounter in the field I was a bit confused and thinking about how I could introduce myself and communicate with him in a manner acceptable to him. I followed him while he was heading towards a municipal solid waste container and in a mid-way I requested an excuse to let me to introduce my self. He was showing a mixed emotion of fear and welcoming, may be suspecting that I was an inspector from the *kebele*.

I briefly introduced myself and requested him if he is willing to cooperate in sharing his personal experience; and we held appointment. Unfortunately, in the appointment date though I appeared in the place much earlier than the time we set, he could not be shown up even two hours later. On the other day I had to go and wait for him around the container site and actually I was successful to get him. This was also a good opportunity to meet with waste collectors from different enterprises. When I asked him why he was not able to appear on the appointment day, he responded that he had got some casual job. At this juncture, I start to think about providing some compensation either in kind or in cash. But I was caught in dilemma as to how I could compensate in a way not spoiling the research ethics and power relation. Later on, while we decided to meet, I told him I would make some compensation for his time.

Another encounter was the blurred divide between the formal and the informal solid waste collecting enterprises. My initial impression about formal and informal sector divide was completely different from what I came across in the fieldwork. I used to think that the informal waste collectors did not have any recognition by a government body. As opposed to this, in the interviews I realized that some of the informal collectors have a kind of letter that appeals the inhabitants to cooperate them. For



clarification I consulted officials from Sanitation, Beautification and Parks Development Agency, and Micro and Small Enterprises Development Agency. Accordingly, I could understand that the informal solid waste collectors are those individuals and/or group of individuals who were not licensed by the Micro and Small Enterprises Development Agency but still they may have de facto recognition from *kebele* officials.

Sharing meals in the cafeterias was a good opportunity for winning the trust of the solid waste collectors besides to serving as a way of compensation. During meals we were talking about personal issues just beyond the study matters which enable me to grasp additional information and tighten my relation with them. Issues that would have some political concern were also discussed informally in such events.

Knowledge of the local language and being part of the cultural and psycho-social makeup of the society was an important advantage to the researcher. It was easy to act as insider and understand the people's way of explanation, emotion and their implications. I was also privileged in accessing and referring reports and other materials written in Amharic which is the working language of the study area.

#### *Recruitment*

Qualitative researchers seek a small detailed sample to produce a plausible and coherent explanation of the phenomenon under study. The results are not usually statistically generalizable, although the theory generated may be (Brown & Lloyd, 2001). With this understanding, I selected three case enterprises mainly believed to have longer work experiences after I exercised a thorough examination of different enterprises. Information reach cases were also selected from each enterprise. During the selection of informants, emphasis was also placed on to encompass members of the enterprise working at different positions. The same also true in the selection of the government officials.

### **3.6. Limitations**

As outlined above, this study relies on qualitative methods. Obviously such methods require ample time to get into contact and build relations as well as trust with the informants. In spite of this, I had a time constraint which was also partly attributed to

the political violence and unrest that prevailed during the fieldwork. I had also experienced that I could not access the government officials as I wish. I believe that this situation undermines the process of persistently discussing and getting their feedbacks when I encountered contradictory views and practices.

The heightened political tension in Addis Ababa in particular and in the country in general may also have an impact on this research as it likely refrain the informants and the households involved in the survey from openly expressing their views, opinions and lived experiences. On the reverse some people may exaggerate things out of their negative attitude towards the government. Particularly as the nature of the research topic had political elements such impediments may have a pronounced effect on the data gathered. Apart from this, this study focuses on the interactions of the informal and the formal MSSEs. Thus, the views of the households are not incorporated.

Despite the fact that the informants were adequately briefed about the intention of the research immediately before, during and after the sessions, some of them unconsciously reflected that they suspected I was a government official or at times as a donor or at other times as a politician with hidden agenda. For instance in the two focus group discussions and most interviews the informants were frequently reflected that they lack materials like gloves, appropriate clothes, medical service, carts ... in a hope of anticipating some kind of donation and/or aid. These kinds of perceptions may have their adverse effects on the data collected.

Lack of consistent and coherent official data and prior study in the area were by far one of the stumbling blocks of this study. Moreover, even in cases when the data were available, they were found to be old. The study which I found more proximate to the informal solid waste collectors was so far the one done by Bjerkli in 2005 on the informal plastic waste recovery system in Addis Ababa. In fact this is a completely different sub-sector of waste management with its remarkable characteristics. The recurrent formulation and reformulation of the administrative units of the city government was also another impediment to get a comparable data over the same political unit over time. Since the coming of the provisional city government in 2003 the jurisdictions of *kebele* administrative units were revised at least twice. Thus, I

heavily depend on people's impression and my own experience as dweller of the city rather than supporting my argument with statistical figures.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### IV. THE STUDY AREA

#### 4.1. Physical Background

##### *Location, Climate, Topography and Size*

Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, is located at the geographical centre of the country. Astronomically, it lies between 8° 55' and 9 ° 05' North latitude, and 38°40' and 38° 50' East longitude. Addis Ababa has a history of not more than 120 years. It was founded in 1886 by Emperor Menelik II and his wife Taitu. The foundation of the city like most Ethiopian urban centres was related to garrison. Owing to this legacy, the topography of the city has its own constraints on the development of physical infrastructures. Currently, the city is a diplomatic capital for Africa (AU and UNECA) and a seat of regional head quarters for various international organizations like UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR and FAO are a few to be mentioned.

Despite its tropical location the city experiences a mild Afro Alpine temperate and warm temperate climate. The average monthly temperature ranges between 10 °c in August and 25 °c in May. It also receives an average annual rainfall of 1200 mms with monthly variations between 8 mm in November and 278 mm in August with a marked bimodal distribution in a year. Major rains occur from mid June to September and accounts for 80 per cent of the total annual. The remaining rains occur mainly between February and June. The rains are characterized by heavy intensity (UN-HABITAT, 2000; ORAAMP, 2002b). There is a widely held view (an irony at its best) among the residents that the rains and/or rainy seasons in Addis Ababa are considered as a better partner to the inhabitants than the municipality sanitation service.

The jurisdiction of the Addis Ababa City Administration assumes an area of 540 km<sup>2</sup> of which 18 km<sup>2</sup> is accounted by rural areas. The topography of the city witnesses significant variations. The elevation within the city ranges between 2,000 and 2,800 meters above sea level. The city is also entrenched by several rivers and streams which generally originate from the mountain ranges of Entoto in the north and Wechacha in the northwest. All the rivers and streams in and

around Addis Ababa drain towards the southern plains to join Great and Little Akaki Rivers. Most of the rivers and streams in the city are serving as open waste dump sites and sewerage systems.

Various studies conducted on the Great and Little Akaki Rivers have clearly shown that these are the most polluted rivers in the country due to the different kinds of waste that are discharged into their system. While being the most polluted, the rivers still continue to be used for different purposes including irrigation and household utilities thereby leading to significant adverse health impacts. The biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) measurements carried on the Akaki River attested that the river is anaerobic for most of its parts. Assessment of the fauna also reveals the only species to be found are worms that can survive under low oxygen conditions. Apart from the low oxygen level, the elevated level of nitrite, some trace elements like lead, manganese and some toxic compounds observed in the Little Akaki River indicates that there is a threat to the ecosystem (ESTC, 2004: 3).

#### *Road Conditions*

It is important to review the road conditions as it has direct implications with the failure of municipal block collection system which in turn contributed for the inception and mushrooming of informal solid waste collecting actors. The rugged nature of the topography also complicated the solid waste management activity as it has a pronounced impact on the development of physical infrastructure and there by the urban structure of the city as a whole. By and large ascribed to the nature of the topography the city's present road network is far from adequate either in density or quality that consequently make some neighbourhoods inaccessible for waste collecting trucks. This has led to inefficiency of block collection system in the city (CGASBPDA, 2003:2).

Generally there are four major types of roads. These are asphalted, gravel, selected materials and earthen. Some studies reveal that the total length of roads with in the city was around 1300 kilometres in the year 2002. Of these, only about 29 per cent were asphalted. Most of the remaining roads were either gravel-surfaced or covered with mixes of gravel, stone and earth. Hence certain roads

that appear to be fit for vehicular traffic in one season may not be so in another season and could remain in that state for an indefinite length of time due to disrepair. According to a study conducted by PADCO (Planning and Development Co-operative International) in 1996, about 35 per cent of the residential areas of the city remained out of reach for motorized vehicles (Solomon & McLeod, 2004:14).

## **4.2. Socio-economic Conditions**

### *Demography*

According to the 1994 census, which is the only census data yet available, the population of Addis Ababa was 2.3 million. The official projected population for the year 2005 was around 2.9 million. However, most unofficial data claim a figure well over 3 million. The city shows a rapid population growth rate estimated at 3.8 per cent per year. This in turn resulting in a rise of approximately 5 per cent of urban waste generated (Tadesse, 2004). Migration accounts for a significant portion of the growth of the city. In light of the 1994 census about 46 per cent of the population were migrants (UN-HABITAT, 2000).

Some studies argue that the sanitation problem in the city also to some extent linked to the background of the dwellers (Bjerkli, 2005). The urban- urban and rural-urban migrations are the major causes for high population growth in Addis Ababa. According to CSA, about 49 per cent of the migrants to Addis Ababa originated from rural areas where the awareness of environmental sanitation is believed to be relatively low (CSA, 1999). This would have implications on the perception and attitudes of many urban dwellers towards waste management and environmental sanitation.

### *Employment*

The Central Statistics Authority defines that the economically active population encompasses all persons aged ten year and above who may be employed or not. A rapid population growth is paralleled by an increase of the economically active population. The labour force in the city has grown by 6 per cent between the 1984 and 1994 censuses. The steady labour force growth, however, was not commensurate with

a rapid economic growth. Consequently, unemployment is a very serious problem in the city and has increased at an alarming rate in recent years. In 1984 census, the unemployment rate was 10 per cent and in 1994 this figure sharply rose to 34 per cent. This is an increase of 24 per cent in the inter-census period. The National labour force Survey of the 1999 and current municipal documents<sup>3</sup> testify that unemployment rate is up to 42 per cent (UN-HABITAT, 2000; NPO, 2003).

There is also a significant gender disparity. The rate of unemployment was consistently higher for females than for their male counterparts in both the 1984 and 1994 censuses as well as the 1999 survey which constitutes 14, 41 and 47 per cents, respectively; whereas, it is 8, 30 and 27 per cents for males in that order. The city's employment problem goes beyond unemployment. About 61 per cent of the employment could be classified as 'informal' (AACG, 2003).

#### *Poverty*

The incidence of poverty showed that in 1997, 49.5 per cent of the population was below the food poverty line. Moreover about 51.4 per cent of the population fall below absolute poverty line which means that they cannot afford to buy the minimum basket of food and basic non-food items. Poverty has declined slightly from 1995 but the absolute number of people fall below the poverty line, however, increased during the period between 1995 and 1997 (AACG, 2003; UN-HABITAT, 2000:22).

### **4.3. Informal Urban Activities**

The informal sector is usually described as an economic activity that takes place outside the formal norms of economic transactions established by the state or formal business practices but still it may not be illegal by itself. In such a context, the word applies to small or micro-businesses run by an individual, group of individuals or family self-employment for the production and/or provision of legal goods and services. These establishments or activities do not have appropriate business permits, fail to report or pay tax liabilities, do not comply with government or labour regulations and work conditions (ORAAMP, 2002c; Tabak & Crichlow, 2000).

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.citymayors.com/mayors/addis\\_mayor.html](http://www.citymayors.com/mayors/addis_mayor.html)

Studies conducted on informal economic activities have shown that their rate of expansion is closely related to the pace of urbanisation. These studies also associate the flourishing of the informal sector in the developing countries with various socio-economic, political and legislative issues. According to Rahman a gap left by the formal economy due to a failure in provisions of services and/or goods, and the stumble block of legal barrier are identified as triggering factors. Other factors that drive many activities to remain informal are the high costs of registering a small business and the need to cut down operating costs (Rahman, 1996).

Sethuraman pointed out two main factors that contribute to the proliferation of the informal economy in urban centres of the developing countries. Firstly, the sluggish growth in rural areas as a trigger for intense migration. Secondly, the inability of the formal employment to keep pace with the influx of rural migrants into the city. Consequently, a large proportion of rural migrants will take up activities in the informal economy to sustain their livelihood (Sethuraman, 1985 cited in Rahman, 1996:3). Apart from this, there is also overwhelming evidence suggesting that urban poverty and informal employment are closely related (ILO, 1997).

Despite the controversies over the definitions and its origin, there is, however, a widely held consensus that the informal sector has now become the central part of economic activities particularly in the developing world. It plays a pivotal role in generating job opportunities. The informal economic activities are also economically crucial in such a way that they provide goods and/or services to consumers at affordable prices and needed proportion. Besides this, they play a crucial role as instrument of transition by effectively promoting the indigenous entrepreneurship skills and using indigenous resources (AACG, 2003; MOFED, 2002:125).

Moreover, the informal sector stimulates economic development through its diffusing capacity for more equitable income distribution, active competition, exploiting market riches, and enhancing productivity and technical change. To this end, it is therefore viewed as the vehicle of economic and social progress (ORAAMP, 2002c; ILO, 1997). Nevertheless, there is still a controversy on whether regulatory norms should



be enforced or other harsh measures to be taken in line with addressing the problems with the informal sector.

### *Urbanization and roots of informal activities*

Although Ethiopia is one of the most populous states in Africa it is also one of the least urbanized among African nations. According to the estimate of the Central Statistical Authority, the level of urbanization reached 17 per cent in 2002. This level is expected to reach nearly 30 per cent by the year 2020, as the urban areas are currently growing at around 6 per cent per year (MOFED, 2002:125).

This rapid urbanization is a major issue of concern as the process is taking place in Addis Ababa and other urban centres across the country. The effects of natural population growth and mounting rural-urban migration have been felt in terms of poor urban management, lack of infrastructure, and inadequate service delivery, all of which are typical of urban poverty. Drought and war have also contributed to the high population influx into the city, which in turn contributed to further deterioration of infrastructure and services. Apart from this, a slow economic growth and the low level of investments coupled with high population growth have resulted in high rates of unemployment (MOFED, 2002:125; ORAAMP, 2002c).

Some studies claim that high rate of urban unemployment in the formal sector is also rooted in the country's overall development strategy and economic policies. The Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) strategy favours more the agricultural sector. Consequently, the urban economy and its central role, on the other hand, had been relatively neglected. Nevertheless, this argument is questionable since had there been success in the rural development, in the first place, there would not have been rural-urban migration. Apart from this, some relate the prevailing high rate of unemployment to the economic policy being pursued. The free market principles presupposes the implementation of structural adjustment programs whose immediate effects are higher price of commodities and high unemployment are aggravating the poverty situation in the city (ORAAMP, 2002c).

The overall effects of all the above mentioned factors pushed most of the inhabitants in the city to engage in informal activities as source of income and employment. It is reported that there are about 700,000 registered unemployed people in the city. An equally large number of the inhabitants in their working age are believed to be formally jobless yet unregistered. At this juncture one can note the significance of the informal sector. Although there is no a comprehensive and full-fledged data on the informal sector in Addis Ababa, its share in total employment and as a source of livelihood is very large. Some studies indicated that the informal sector contributed about 61 per cent of total employment in the city (Ibid).

#### *Employment in the informal sector*

The informal sector, according to the Central Statistics Authority (CSA), refers to those home based or individual establishments or activities operated by the owner with or without very few employees. With in this framework of understanding Central Statistical Authority (CSA) and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) conducted a countrywide sample survey in 1996 (AACG, 2003; ORAAMP, 2002c). Although the data are a bit older it gives some insight into the overall situation of informal activities in the city.

According to the 1996 survey, Addis Ababa accounted for 23 per cent of the total work force that was engaged in the informal sector in the country. The survey also revealed that the total number of people employed in the informal sector in the city were around 166,000. This figure is quite doubtful to claim since it is very low as compared to the total population in a city said to have 60 per cent or more of the population is informally employed. The study also shows that women are the dominant groups in the sector that accounted for 55 per cent. This figure coincides with the gender disparity in unemployment rate (AACGFEDB, 2005; ORAAMP, 2002c).

### *Conspicuous features of the informal urban economic activities*

The overall study carried out by the Finance and Economic Bureau of the city government revealed that the informal sector is generally characterized by the following salient features:

- Most of them undertake their activities in lower capital;
- The operators usually carried out more than one job and are not often specialized in a single operation. They frequently shift from one to another according to the market situation, the demand and other production or market factors;
- Most operators generate very small income;
- They carry out their activities in available open spaces, inside or outside and/or near to their houses, and along roadsides (with or without temporary sheds); and
- They are characterized by in and outs from the activities they execute (ORAAMP, 2002c).

### *Attitude towards the informal sector*

A research carried out by GTZ/UMAS on the attitude of the community and the government officials, like *kebeles*, towards the informal urban businesses pertained both negative and positive outlooks. According to this study most *kebele* officials and those engaged in the formal sector have a negative stance towards them. The officials considered them as tax evading entities deserving to be discouraged. Similarly, those engaged in the formal sector perceived them as rivals and distorters of the performance of the formal business environment (GTZ/UMAS, 2000 cited in ORAAMP, 2002c).

On the contrary, most community leaders and households in the city have a positive out look towards the informal activities. They viewed the informal activities as a means of livelihood for a large segment of the population. The informal activities are also considered as allies to the urban poor in providing goods and services at affordable prices and desired quantity due to their inherent advantage of relatively small overhead costs of the operations (Ibid).

*Municipal reform, institutional arrangements and time context of the formalization interventions*

Since 1991 Ethiopia has embarked upon a federal structure. According to Proclamation No 7/1992 the country is divided into nine regional states and two city administrations. Addis Ababa is one of the city administrations that the federal constitution endorsed as a self-governing city, national capital and a seat for the Oromiya National Region State. This characterized the city with multiple identities which in turn complicates governance and urban management (MOFED, 2002:126). Before the year 2003, the organizational structure of the city government fuses both the legislative and executive responsibilities in the same body. The city charter was also recognizing three tiers of structure namely the central city administration, *weredas* and *kebeles* (See Appendix II) (Meheret, 1999).

Through time, the city management structure was proved to be inadequate to deal with future challenges. Moreover, there was a growing awareness that municipal administrations alone cannot meet the rising demands because of organizational and resource constraints. As a result, it became necessary to encourage the involvement of interested parties in undertaking socio-economic development activities. To this end, the government has launched an urban management sub-program in order to establish an appropriate framework for urban governance through the development of a legal framework for municipalities (MOFED, 2002:126).

As integral part of this endeavour, in the year 2003 the provisional City Government of Addis Ababa came up with a more empowered revised charter and a new vision that was inspired by the revision process of the Addis Ababa Master Plan. Although the vision envisaged by the revised master plan and held by the city government was targeted to be attained by the year 2010, the lifespan of the provisional government was limited till May 2005 national election (ORAAMP, 2002a).

The revised master plan has put forward the visions of the city by 2010. Accordingly, the vision statement assumes that Addis Ababa would be a safe and liveable city, an effective centre for national economic growth and Africa's diplomatic capital. The

city would ensure a safe and clean environment for a healthy and productive society with improved access to social services and physical infrastructures. Economically, it imagines the realization of a broad-based growth of investments and employment through realizing the development of a sound economic, infrastructure and labour-intensive industrial technologies. Moreover, it envisioned that the city to play a dynamic role in facilitating the national economic growth. In order to materialize these targets the revised master plan acknowledges the need for a combined and integrated effort of the public, the private stakeholders and the community as a whole (ORAAMP, 2002a).

In line with this, the provisional city government had launched comprehensive administrative reforms. The reforms encompassed the reorganization of the existed administration structure. This in turn led to the formation of new sub-city municipalities aiming at effecting and empowering the urban management system at grassroots. Consequently, the city is decentralized into ten sub-cities (See Appendix I and III).

Generally, the municipal reforms incorporate a wide array of issues, among others, it includes:

- Establishing a state-of-the-art of governance system that involves implementing the revised city charter and promoting fewer and more capable sub-cities and *kebeles*;
- Clearly defining the role of political and managerial bodies;
- Strengthening policy-formulating capacity in the council;
- Establishing a clear policy-management linkage and protect city management from undue interference of the policy formulating wing;
- Appointing council-elected, strong Mayor to lead the city politically and manage its security and outside relations. City manager and directors to lead the executive wing of the city government;
- Delegating (devolving) services, budget responsibility and administrative tasks to sub-city and *Kebele* levels and enhanced options for participation;

- Adopting cost recovery mechanisms for the provision of services and introduce competition in service delivery. Promote a paradigm shift from control to customer orientation; and
- Clarifying the mandate of federal government to oversee the city's affairs and provides a formal structure for coordination with the Oromiya Regional State so as to solve the urban management problem arise from the multiple identity of the city (ORAAMP, 2002a).

*Implications of the administrative restructuring on solid waste management*

The restructuring process had contributed for the establishment of various institutions under the auspices of the city government. Among others, the institutions that are in charge of dealing with different aspects of informal urban activities deserve here a mention. The prominent governmental institutions include the regional Micro and Small Scale Enterprises Development Agency (MSSEDA), and Cooperatives Organization and Promotion Office (COPO) which are run under the Trade and Industry Development Bureau, Code Enforcement Service and the Bureau of Social and Civil Affairs (See Appendix III).

The Micro and Small Scale Enterprises Development Agency (MSSEDA) is an arm of the city government whose responsibility is directly linked to the issue of informal waste collectors. The MSSEDA is established with the intention of creating job opportunities through formalizing and developing the existing and the newly emerging micro and small level operators. The overall mandate of the agency, among others, involves<sup>4</sup>:

- Establishing legal frameworks that promote institutional arrangements amenable to support the MSSEs;
- Enhancing the conditions of micro and small scale enterprises by establishing relationships with governmental institutions and NGOs in the city. Such arrangements are specially geared towards ensuring access to production and sales centres, financial and loan services, raw materials and machineries as well as infrastructures;

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.addisababacity.gov.et/State.htm#XII>

- Preparing trainings that will enhance their entrepreneurship, management and other skills in collaboration with different governmental institutions, NGOs and other development Agencies.
- Conducting studies on micro- and small-scale business projects that could enable unemployed youth and women to be productive. It also supervises the implementation and their effectiveness; and
- Put in order the conditions by which the small and micro-enterprises unite to create share companies.

The municipal reform had the following direct repercussions on solid waste management:

- Institutionalizing an agency in charge of monitoring and facilitating the solid waste management activity;
- Decentralizing waste collection to sub-city level, and encouraging private sector involvement; launching a continuous awareness-raising campaign on waste management, especially on waste reduction and recycling; and coordinating actions of different environmental groups through appropriate partnership model; and
- Intensifying city-wide efforts in community based sanitation and the involvement of private operators (ORAAMP, 2002a).

Despite such intensive reforms which actually brought some encouraging results in improving the bureaucratic system, still the legacy of the old bureaucracy remained in the city governance system. Bjerkli (2005) identified politicised governance, lack of coordination among different government organs, unstable civil service and high tendency of upward accountability as a barrier of sound urban governance in Addis Ababa.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **V. REGULATING SOLID WASTE COLLECTION**

#### **5.1. How the Informal Solid Waste Collectors were Organized and Functioning**

##### **5.1.1. Why and How do the Informal Solid Waste Collectors Engaged in the Business**

The informal solid waste collection in Addis Ababa is believed to have a long existence. Some argue that in its rudimentary form it existed prior to and parallel with the municipal solid waste collection albeit no documents and/or oral evidences I encountered so far testifies as to when and where they exactly emerged. But most of the formal, informal waste collectors and government officials convinced that the appearance of an organized and more vivid accomplishment of the informal sector in the scene of solid waste management is a recent phenomenon of only not more than a decade old.

It is noted in the earlier chapter that poverty and unemployment are prevailing in Addis Ababa. When we look into the backgrounds of the individuals engaged in informal solid waste collection, they are among the ones who are not able to join the formal employment sector. Generally, it can be said that poverty and unemployment are the prominent driving factors as far as most, if not all, of the interviewees are concerned. Nevertheless there are exceptions with those operators attracted by the promising business returns.

Baud & Post (2002:198) argued that the urban poor are among the vulnerable groups. Thus, people actively seek to overcome their vulnerable position by engaging in various kinds of action, either individually or collectively and informal activities are a case in point. Similarly, Klundert and Lardinois (1995) outlined that the informal activities in waste collecting and recycling are often driven by poverty, and are initiated personally and spontaneously; and sometimes haphazardly in the struggle for survival. Here it is worth mentioning some of the lived experiences of the informal solid waste collectors since such accounts would reflect the initial trigger of most, if not all, of the solid waste collectors.



Abush is a twenty-nine year old. He runs an informal solid waste collecting enterprise as owner-operator; he explained that he migrated to Addis Ababa after dropping out from primary school. He came from the Oromiya Regional State in a hope that he would have a better life in the city. At first he was living on the streets and randomly engaged in activities like itinerant porter, assistant carpenter and other casual works for his subsistence. Parallel with this, he was intermittently working on transporting the wastes from the restaurants to municipal containers on request of the owners. Initially he delivered the service in exchange for meals. However, later on, this was turned to wages.

He recognized that he could make a good deal of money and motivated by the success of one of his colleagues who works for a solid waste collecting enterprise in Bole area (believed to be a quarter of high income residents). It was also a good opportunity for him that no enterprise was delivering this service in his street-dwelling neighbourhood. He along with his colleagues joined the informal solid waste collection sector by forming their own enterprise. In fact, later on, the others left the enterprise to form their own enterprise or to engage in other businesses.

Another excerpt comes from the forty-two years old Sinke. Some five years ago she was engaged in begging for her subsistence in one of the churchyards in Addis Ababa. She was ashamed of being a beggar despite her good physical and mental conditions. At this turning point she and her accompanies, living in plastic covered shelters along the road-sides, heard some of the successful stories of peoples in similar socio-economic condition that were involved in solid waste collection. She and her accompanies sought that this was a good opportunity to come out of what she called “a miserable living condition.” To this end, they joined one of the informal enterprises run by a former street dweller.

Unlike the above experiences in which unemployment and poverty are ascribed as the driving factors, there are some individual who joined the informal solid waste collection after being aware of the profitability of the sector while working in a government office linked to sanitation service. Here it is worth considering the

experience of Genet. She is a college diploma graduate in the field related to sanitary and was working as a sanitary inspector for a *wereda*<sup>5</sup> health office.

She was well acquainted with the economic gains if she is going to institutionalize a waste collecting enterprise from her day-to-day on duty lessons. Apart from this deep seated interest, her closer superior at the office encouraged her to coordinate poor women's around solid waste collection. She took this advantage to materialize her long awaiting dream. Thus, some five years ago she managed to organize an enterprise by the name of `Set' Integrated Sanitary Service Enterprise.

In addition there were also cases in which the government itself took the initiative to organize some of the existing informal waste collecting enterprises. These enterprises were initially organized as MSSEs but through time the government may interrupt different supports that were given to them formerly. Thus, these enterprises will start to function in their own right without the government supervision. This situation makes the formal-informal divide quite often to be blurred and complicated in the city. Consequently, there are a lot of informal enterprises that are operating in a gloomy zone straddling between the two sectors.

#### *Other factors contributing to the proliferation of the informal waste collection*

The solid waste management activity with the full range of services has been solely handled by the city government until the recent initiatives to privatize some components of the activity. It had been evidenced earlier in 1.2 that this approach did not involve other private actors. Consequently, the municipal centred solid waste management could not able to properly address the overall needs for solid waste collection.

This unmet demand in the formal solid waste collection couple with the skyrocketing needs, as obvious to other sectors, geared towards the emergence of the existing informal waste collectors. Some of the interviewees attested that they entered into the informal solid waste collection prompted by the demand from the households and small commercial institutions which could not be met by the service provided by the

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<sup>5</sup> *Wereda* refers to an administrative unit synonym to a district

city government alone. Most of the informants expressed that the growth of the informal waste collection sector is attributed to the missing transport link between households and the sparsely located municipal containers.

The informal solid waste collection sector had also received a strong stimulus from the move of the government to withdraw from the pre-collection service in particular and the solid waste management activity in general. As the result of this, block collections by the municipal truck fleets was almost abandoned and containers were placed in locations more convenient for the informal house-to-house waste collectors at the expense of the households. This was based on the de facto informal arrangement between the informal waste collectors and the municipality. This agreement also presupposes that the government may re-launch the block collection service as far as the informal solid waste collectors are failed to provide appropriate sanitation service with in the neighbourhood they are supposed to collect.

Government officials explained that they adopted this 'oral' arrangement just for the sake of two reasons. In the first place, the officials recognized that it is possible to reduce the cost of waste collection operation by abandoning the block collection service and emphasizing only transporting the containers to the final dump site. Secondly, the officials learned that the informal waste collectors were capable to collect more waste than the municipal trucks could do. In the third place it was viewed as a kind of creating job opportunities to the individuals engaged in the sector. Most of the informal waste collectors also explained that these mutual relations that existed prior to the introduction of the government sponsored MSSEs, provided a safe heaven for the boom of organized informal solid waste collecting enterprises.

Still many other informal solid waste collectors are motivated by the nature of the business. Unlike its formal counterparts the informal waste collecting activity allows easy entry into the business. Engaging in the informal sector helps the enterprises to avoid the lengthy and complicated bureaucratic hassles and legalization expenses. Thus, the informal waste collectors need only to invest their time and labour with a relatively small capital outlay.

The working hour arrangement could be cited as one of the pulling factors to the business since the waste collectors will have an opportunity to engage in other various activities and generate additional income. Quite often collection is done early in the morning so that the collectors may spend the rest of their day on other extra-income generating activities. Women interviewees, as one of the major groups in the sector, also confirm that the working time schedule is more compatible with their gender roles in domestic chores. This typical characteristic of the sector draw more women to the sector as most of them are also housewives.

This complies with the findings of other research on the informal sector. The ILO (1997) outlined that the very flexible nature of the labour market in the informal sector attracted the attention of more people. Many, particularly women, prefer this sector because it offers flexibility, for instance they can combine household responsibilities with income earning opportunities by choosing their own hours and place of work as well as the activities.

### **5.1.2. The Way they are Organized Socially and Spatially**

Studies conducted on the informal waste collection and recycling reveals that there is a tendency to associate the waste workers to a certain ethnic, religious or social groups. Klundert & Lardinois (1995:8) pointed out that waste work is done by religious or ethnic minorities that are looking for a way to generate subsistence income in an urban context. Unlike this, the informal solid waste collectors in Addis Ababa are not ascribed to a certain ethnic and religious groups rather they are basically unemployed urban poor or sometimes individuals that have a reasonably good amount of income.

This remains the case, quite often the individuals who organize themselves into an informal waste collecting enterprise have similar social backgrounds for instance unemployed youths in a neighbourhood, street dwellers, individuals who know each other while they were working for municipal waste collection and poor women who vends local drinks are a few to be mentioned. Some private informal waste collectors also deliberately avoid working with and/or employing their closer relatives for fear that such ties may spoil the working relations.

The interviews with the informal solid waste collectors have also shown that they had some prior socio-economic link with the neighbourhood they are working for. For instance Abush and his associates told me that they are familiar with the dwellers of the locality they are currently serving before they engaged in the activity. While they were street dwellers, they were serving the community as porters of goods and doing other casual works. The community also used to lend alms and other assistances while they were living on the streets.

Kibret, who is an owner-operator of an informal solid waste collecting enterprise, is on the other realm grown up in the locality that his enterprise is operating. He marked that the community has contributed a lot from the inception to the present status of his enterprise being he is part of that community. As a member of the community, he has got a lot of opportunities that others would not attain. The community he is serving considers his success in the business as exemplary to other unemployed youths. Consequently, he is backed by the community. He told me that his strong ties with the community had helped him to recover his clients after they were taken by the government sponsored MSSEs.

Generally, the informal waste collectors, unlike most of the formal waste collectors, have shown a general tendency of working in their immediate and/or familiar neighbourhood. This situation privileged them to be more accepted and appears to be competitive within their community rather than any other enterprise viewed as outsider and intruder.

The informal waste collectors are knowledgeable in exploiting their social networks to cope up with struggles faced from various actors. They employ their social relations as collateral for any potential loss or any damage of their clients' property while rendering the service. Getahun described the significance of his social relation for his enterprises that:

*“Our duty pre-requisites to enter into premises of different clients which may have portable and other non-portable properties...thus clients need a warranty for the safety of their property... our warranty is our social network with the community in general and our clients in particular.”*

The informal waste collectors are also well-informed about the adverse consequences of the quality of the service they deliver and the way they handle their clients. Abush explained that he used to present warm greetings and try to appear as a close relative to his clients. He also recognizes the potentiality of the spread of negative images against his enterprise so that he always advises the individual employees to show good conduct and respect to their clients. Abush described that his enterprise is in an advantageous position than the MSSEs and larger private formal enterprises as he has the opportunity to closely monitor and solve complains of the clients. Thus, the informal solid waste collectors are very cautious about what they do and sometimes prefer to appear as guilty adopting the well versed motto of hoteliers that says “customers are always right.”

The social networks of the informal enterprises also serve as an alternative to the legal benefit and protection that they might get from formal institutions. Here it is worth mentioning Getahun`s encounter as a case in point. One of his clients had refused to pay a service fee which was accumulated for a couple of months despite his lengthy efforts to get back the money. As his enterprise is informal so that he recognized that he could not bring the issue to the concerned governmental office. Thus, he resorted to settle the matter through the way disputes are resolved locally through the mediation of renowned people and other publicly significant individuals. Accordingly, he selected and sent such figurative persons among his clients so as to claim the service fees. He was successful in getting his money back and he affirmed that the informal waste collecting enterprises often employ this mechanism in such cases.

Another striking aspect of the informal solid waste collectors is that they are capable of exploiting the social network as a good medium of advertising and marketing their service to the community. They lobby new clients through neighbours and relatives to sign a contract with their enterprise. Adanu, being a member of the community, managed to draw several clients from her neighbourhood by actively campaigning to sign contracts with the enterprise she is working for.

There is also a tendency of intertwined and extended socio-economic collaboration between the owners and the employees of the private informal enterprises. Abush, an owner-operator of a private informal waste collecting enterprise, noted that he prioritizes his employees to assist him in other jobs so as to help them to earn additional benefits. This appears to be a sort of subsidizing and privileging his employees in realizing more stable employment and tightening other symbiotic relations for mutual benefit.

### **5.1.3. Collection System and Working Conditions**

#### *Collection*

The earlier forms of informal solid waste collection were often operated by unorganized individuals, whose main source of income was attached to other activities like daily labourer, shoe shiner and begging. Collection of waste was carried out in accordance with the spontaneous needs of households and small commercial institutions. Thus collections were done without any fixed schedule and the service was delivered by itinerant individuals. The interviews with the informal waste collectors also show that there was no any concern and awareness from the side of the service users as to where and how the collected wastes were disposed of. This decision was up to the waste collectors. Consequently, the waste collectors usually prefer to dump waste in a nearby open spaces and rivers rather than transporting it to the municipal containers. Generally, the pre-existing informal waste collection activity was often haphazardly carried out by individuals on their own initiative.

Another feature of the informal waste collectors prior to the coming of the government sponsored MSSEs was the ability to work freely without any adverse administrative interference. The only threat to them was the deployment of municipal trucks for block collection along with the barely functioning container collection system. The interviews in the informal sector indicated that they were operating by adjusting their schedule of collection to fit with the days vehicular fleets are not on duty. Besides this they also unofficially negotiate with the drivers of the municipal waste collecting trucks not to operate waste collection in their service areas.

The informants from the informal sector described that when they commenced the service the main mode of transport was human porter but later on some of them

started to employ home-made carts. In some cases, however, the informal waste collectors began their service with carts where business persons in the community and NGOs provided some material assistance. Legesse described that his enterprise was initially established as a pilot project sponsored by a local NGO known as Plan-Ethiopia. Thus in such cases the informal waste collectors operate with carts rather than human porter. Nevertheless, human porter still continued to be the main means of transporting waste in some informal and newly established formal waste collecting enterprises.

#### *Employment Stability*

The other typical characteristic of the early periods of the pre-existing informal solid waste collection activity was the high turnover of employees. Abush explained that when he started waste collection some five years ago, the total number of members in his enterprise was twenty-eight but that a year after the enterprise remained only with four members. The main problem he mentioned is that the community did not perceive solid waste as a critical problem and thereby the community was not in a position of establishing a permanent contract with the waste collectors. The community, therefore, uses various means to dispose of waste ranging from employing municipal truck block collection to dumping wastes in unauthorized areas. This in turn has adverse consequences on the income and stability of employment.

Some informants from the informal waste collectors pointed out that in occasions where the municipal trucks were on duty, the households were refusing their service saying “we already disposed our waste on the municipal truck... so we do not need your service for the time being ... and we will not pay.” Owing to this, their income was largely erratic and at times they were left with meagre revenue. As the result most of the members were desperately left the job except some who sought the future opportunity.

The in-depth individual interviews and the focus group discussions has also revealed that the job is heavy and has a high likely of risking disease as it has been carried out without and/or inadequate safety equipments. In contrast with this, the income accrued did not correspond with the very nature of the adverse consequences of the job. Others also cited that negative attitude of the community and the negative self-



perception of waste collectors towards the job as another factor of employment instability prevailed in the early periods of the recently emerged informal waste collectors.

The incidence of employment instability in the sector is also partly explained by the background of the waste collectors. As it was mentioned above almost all of the informal waste collectors are unemployed urban poor. Some of them come from the street. These individuals are often subject to various addictions in relation to the nature of their dwelling. Hence, they seek a means of quick gain of money to quench their addiction. Nevertheless, sometimes these individuals take a refuge in waste collection either to cope up with the adversary conditions they faced or seeking a better life. Thus after they engaged in solid waste collection they found it hard to get the money that equate with the one they could earn in begging or by any other means. Consequently, they return back to the activity that they can generate much more money with little or no effort. For those people waste collection, therefore, serves as a fallback and backdoor exit at times of hardship.

#### *Territoriality of Operation*

Before the introduction of the formal solid waste collectors particularly those organized under the umbrella of MSSEs; both the private formal and informal sectors had an opportunity to operate anywhere in the city without any geographical restriction. There was no well defined territoriality of solid waste collection; rather each enterprise has its own clients situated intermingling with others in the same locality. Thus, two adjoining housing units could have different clients of waste collecting enterprises. This kind of intermingled territoriality has remained as a dominant feature particularly among the informal and private formal solid waste collectors.

Government officials believe that this kind of territoriality retained by most of the existing informal solid waste collecting enterprises is a legacy of the tendency to selectively contract with the households and other businesses that could afford relatively high service charges. On the other hand, waste collectors in the formal sector attributed the emergence of such territoriality to lack of commitment of concerned government organs in devising a sound intervention in the delineation of

service areas. The informal waste collectors also partly share the view held by the government officials' but for a different reason.

The informal solid waste collectors associate the haphazard development of solid waste collection area with the willingness of the households. Some households are willing to be served while others are not. Apart from this, there is no any adequate government enforcement that makes all the households to sign contracts to a particular enterprise working in a certain locality. Thus, different households enter into contracts at different times with different waste collecting enterprises. As the result of this the clients of one enterprise are randomly located intermingled with the other enterprises.

The absence of a well defined service area appears to be one of the controversial issues and remained a source of conflict among different actors engaged in solid waste collection. Besides this, it constrains inspection and monitoring of the performance of solid waste collection since there is no single enterprise to be held accountable. In addition, this condition involves extra expenses, as each enterprise have to deploy their crews to the sparsely and haphazardly located clients. Similarly, most of the informants indicated that the absence of a well delineated territory also poses problems in collecting service charges. There are cases in which members of one enterprise may ask service fees from other clients.

### *Collection Fees*

In their early forms of informal waste collecting enterprises, waste collection was done mainly based on the request of households and small commercial institutions. To this end, payments were made for each piece of service the users received rather than based on monthly arrangements. The enterprises usually collect the service fees without any kind of receipt. The revenue they earn most of the times was shared among the members of the enterprise on daily basis. This marks the distinction with most of the existing informal waste collectors that have a signed and/or implicit contract. Thus collection of waste is carried out based on arbitrarily pre-specified dates and the payment arrangement is made on monthly basis. Hence the revenues are shared among the members of an enterprise as monthly wages. The wages may vary depend on the monthly performance of the enterprise. This in turn makes the informal

waste collectors more competitive in the strive to maximize their income as their monthly revenue have a visible repercussion on each and every pocket of the members.

#### **5.1.4. How the Informal Waste Collectors Reach their Customers and Attitudinal Challenges**

The informal solid waste collecting enterprises devise different strategies in their attempt to reach new clients. Incorporating new customers to the service of solid waste collection is a formidable task that bears a lot of efforts. As the informal waste collectors are the pioneers in the activity, they have paid ultimate price ranging from changing their own attitude to altering the outlooks of the community.

Almost all the interviewees in this study unequivocally agreed that waste collection was formerly seen as a job that “unworthy.” Some also bitterly explained about the attitude of the community when they engaged in the sector in the very conception of the recently organized form of informal waste collection. By comparing with the present “minor” attitudinal changes the waste collectors described that “the general population treat us [waste collectors] as part of the rubbish we are working with.” An official from the SBPDA also acknowledges the pivotal role played by the informal solid waste collectors in putting the sector to its present status in which the collectors increasingly perceive that “waste as a gold mine.”

Interviewees from both the formal and informal sector attested that they faced several criticisms by their close relatives and the community being they are involved in the sector. Mulugeta, a shareholder in a private formal enterprise, marked that his family members and relatives were disappointed when he first decided to engage in solid waste collection saying that “ how a respected elderly person like you is going to work on rubbish ... in spite of the presence of quite a lot of investment opportunities.” Ansha and Adanu encountered similar condemnation from some of their neighbours that expressed their displeasure in a way that “you had better to look after your children rather than engaged in a worthless job that did not deserve them.”

Thus the first challenge that faced the informal solid waste collectors was to shape their own attitude by accepting waste collection as a respected field of employment by overcoming the tacitly established negative impression towards waste, waste

collectors and the job itself. Apart from this, the informal waste collectors pointed out that the community was not widely accustomed with a paid-up waste collection service. Thus the largest segment of the community chiefly married with the opinion that it is not worthy for them to spend a fraction of their income for the sake of removing the waste habitually saying “why should I pay for rubbish!” Moreover, some people assume and reflect that they do not generate any household waste. These people always claim that “we have only a residue of onion peels and sometimes *cheffe*<sup>6</sup> that could be thrown out ...” so that they often decline to sign a contract for a paid-up service.

The informal solid waste collectors as a pioneer have to confront and overcome all these negative attitudes in order to convince and establish contracts with clients. Thus they employ different techniques to market their service. House-to-house campaign is perhaps a widely used mechanism in which the enterprises recruit their clients. As stated by Kibiret, convincing the new clients often demand frequent visits and negotiations taking each and every available opportunity. After repeated dealings his enterprise will take another step which mainly emphasise on delivering a free service for some terms. According to him, after such efforts the households are usually expected to either sign the contracts as a consequence of implicit psychological compulsion or will remain as potential clients.

The contribution of households who are served for free is also central in convincing and establishing contracts with new clients. Getahun`s experience witnesses that there are situations in which his clients bargain with him on a reduction of the service charges, they in return will come up with new clients to his enterprise. Some informal waste collecting enterprises also reached their clients by dispatching forms to be filled by the residents willing to enter into contracts but this is very rare.

#### **5.1.5. How do they Fix the Service Charges**

The informal waste collectors usually arrange service fees based on compromises made between the enterprises and the clients. The collection fees are often negotiated

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<sup>6</sup> *Cheffe* is a type of grass traditionally used to cover the floors as a decoration obviously in holydays and some other occasions. It is also often used by poor households to cover up their earthen floors.

and fixed prior to the very start of the delivery of the service and adjusted through the course of the service.

### *The role of “local knowledge”*

There are various ways in which the solid waste collectors assess the affording capacity of newly registered clients. They are knowledgeable from their experience according to Kibret “a household that generate much waste gives a clue that the client has a more affording capacity.”

However, this may not sometimes sound as some poor households could generate more wastes than households assumed to be in a relatively better economic position. In such cases they also take into consideration the composition of the waste. Accordingly they designate a household as poor if the waste is mainly composed of *cheffe* and ashes. If a household generates more varied wastes with some recyclable items, they regarded as a well to pay; hence they request relatively high charges regardless of the amount it generated.

There are also other different mechanisms used by the informal solid waste collectors to screen out the affording capacity of their clients. Kibret pointed out that they have detail information even to the extent of as to how much income a household would generate per month and the imaginary amount disposed out of it. Such kinds of information are usually obtained from the neighbours, mainly from households freely served due to their supposed position of not capable of affording the service charges. Thus in reciprocity these households serve the enterprise by feeding such information.

They used also the physical condition of the house of the clients in combination with the amounts of waste they generate in order to asses the affording capacity of the clients. In most cases payments are not fixed on the basis of the amount of waste collected from a certain client rather more weight is given to the affording capacity of their client since most of the lower income clients are price sensitive.

Payments are sometimes exempted in cases when the households are considered as poor. Although these households appear to be served without charges they are expected to assist the enterprise in different ways as trade-offs. Abush indicated that

those households served for free are in return benefiting his enterprise by promoting the service in their immediate neighbours so that the enterprise managed to get contracts with new clients. They are also important in feeding information regarding the affording capacity of each and every individual household. They played a paramount role as a sanitation watchdog as they are actively engaged in identifying households who are suspected for illegal dumping.

According to Getahun, the households who receive free waste collection service from his enterprise play an immense role, perhaps more than the service charges they are supposed to pay. Among other things, he reminds an encounter which he called “an act that abused the endeavour of his enterprise.” He explained that his enterprise was caught in a puzzle in which they collect extraordinarily much more waste from one of their clients. It is at this time that one of the households served without collection charges provide information about the mystery. Accordingly, he can identify that several households within the housing unit employ the service under the guise of a single contractor. Generally, this is the strategy in which the informal enterprises used to recover their service charge from those households who are considered to be exempted from collection fees.

#### **5.1.6. Sources of Capital**

The informal solid waste collectors that I interviewed derive their initial capital from a wide range of sources. Unlike most other informal urban activities, the informal solid waste collection activity does not require much capital at its very start. At this stage it can be said that the capital requirement seems almost nil as it may suffice to have some sacks in order to hold and carry the waste. This is affordable for almost to all of the newly engaged individuals and/or groups of individuals. It has been also experienced that as their service is getting momentum carts and/or wheel barrows of different size are required. It is at this time that they need external sources to finance and equip themselves. The sources of capital are diverse, as it is indicated by the interviewees' experience.

The informal waste collectors have gradually developed a strategy by turning from sharing their revenue on daily basis to monthly paid wages in which part of it goes to saving. Thus, savings consisted of a larger proportion of the capital formation for

most of the informal solid waste collecting enterprises. In my interview with Getahun, he used to save part of his wage when working for a private informal waste collecting enterprise. This savings had helped him later on to form his own enterprise. Gradually as the demand for carts and wheel barrows increased, he sought other alternative sources of capital besides his own savings. He borrowed from his relatives in order to buy his first cart. There are experiences from the individuals I interviewed that some of their colleagues in the informal sector obtain their capital by selling jewellery from their family. Relatives and friends are, therefore, constitutes as major alternative sources of capital for the informal solid waste collecting enterprises.

The informal waste collectors also have their own subsidiary way of financing the running costs. In this regard, Getahun noted that his enterprise reinvests all the revenues collected from the sales of recyclables as a fallback alternative and safety nets for unforeseen expenses like maintenance cost and complement the purchase of equipments mainly carts.

The informal waste collecting enterprises deposit their savings either in the formal and/or informal financial institutions. Thus, they usually practiced a dual financial system by simultaneously opening personal saving accounts in conventional banks and/or in raising money in the local informal financial institutions known as *Iqub*. *Iqub* is a local communal type of saving arrangement in which each individual raised a fixed amount of money weekly or monthly. Thus the lump sum of money raised from the members will be granted to every member turn- by-turn often based on a lottery method but at times by prioritizing the urgent need of the members. The basic advantage of *Iqub* is that the members can collectively achieve reasonably high lump sum of money that could improve their economic positions than an individual's independent saving could do.

Moreover, *Iqubs* also provide credit services to their members at the lowest interest rates, without a complicated bureaucracy and demand for collaterals. These qualities of the *Iqubs* make them a viable source of credit facilities for informal enterprises. Nevertheless, access to credit facilities from the formal financial institutions is absolutely out of the reach of all informal waste collecting enterprises. First and foremost, the informal enterprises do not have a licence which is one of the legal

requirements of the formal financial institutions. In the second place the informal enterprises do not have acceptable collaterals to the banks that make them not eligible to get credit service. For instance, the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia presupposes the following collateral requirements in order to get loan from the bank: buildings or houses which is and/or should be constructed within the city's limits; motor vehicles which includes trucks, tankers, trailers, combiners, public transport, buses and automobiles; and bank guarantee are a few to be mentioned.<sup>7</sup>

There are also formal financial institutions like Micro Financial Institutions (MFIs) that are supposed to deliver credit services to MSSEs at soft interest rates. Despite the fact that these financial institutions are waiving the usual requirement of the conventional banks for collateral in fixed asset form, they are still out of the reach of the informal enterprises. The problem is that the credit delivery modality of the MFIs is embedded on cooperatives and group guarantee. However, the group-based credit delivery modality does not fit the requirements of the private informal enterprises that want to take individual loans. Thus, the informal financial institutions have a greater role in financing the informal waste collecting enterprises than the formal financial institutions. In this regard, Zewde et al (2002:12) outlined that the scope and magnitude of traditional or informal finance in Ethiopia remains significant despite the introduction of MFIs in the country. This is mainly due to the inflexible nature of the lending policies and bureaucratic control of the MFIs.

The informal solid waste collecting enterprises also derive their capital from material and financial assistance extended from goodwill people. Genet marked that when she and her accompanies established their enterprise the business community accommodated all the necessary expenses in a spirit of encouraging the self-reliance move of the members. Some other informal enterprises are established as part of a pilot project in order to evaluate the feasibility of employment opportunity. Consequently, they enjoyed material and financial support from NGOs and other sponsors.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.combanketh.com/>



Finally in light of my interviewees, there is no a meaningful economic collaboration within the domain of informal enterprises, and between informal and other enterprises. What is noted is that there is a very limited cooperation among the informal enterprises manifested only in terms of borrowing carts in cases of the cart of ones enterprise is out of service.

#### **5.1.7. Why do the Waste Collectors Still Prefer Informality**

Studies have pointed out that in different countries especially in developing nations heavy tax burden, bribes, and bureaucratic hassles drive many producers and service providers to resort to an informal sector. Producers in the informal sector avoid much of this burden, but they must produce with less assistance from public services than is available to producers in the formal sector. These public services may include the protection of property rights by the police and the courts as well as public utilities (Azuma & Grossman, 2002:1).

Norman argued that the size of the informal sector is positively correlated with tax burdens, labour market restrictions and inefficient government institutions. Moreover, he identified that the costs of bureaucracy and corruption, rather than official taxes, are the key factor for the existence of the informal sector (Norman, 1996 in Azuma & Grossman, 2002:1).

Although the contribution of the above cited factors is undeniable, there are still other causes that appear to be dominant for informality in my study. Most of the informants from the informal sector noted that the officially presupposed capital requirements are a barrier for enterprises to get registered. As stated on the guideline for MSSEs engaged in solid waste collection and transportation, the enterprises are expected to fulfil the necessary equipments and occupational safety rules (AACG, 2004:13). This is quite difficult to meet at the present state of the informal enterprises.

The parameters for registration are generally well beyond the capacity of most enterprises. Moreover, the government try to force the private informal enterprises to be organized under the auspice of MSSEDA rather than assisting them as independent entities. This is against the will of most of the enterprises that prefer to operate as a

private or a form of independent association. To this end, they prefer to remain as informal.

Some of the informal operators also indicated that they preferred informality out of fear of taxation. They believe that their revenue is too low to bear the cost of regulations. Hence, if they pay taxes from their meagre revenue, their capital and, as a consequence, their performance will be diminished. Moreover, registration for tax seems not a viable option for some other informants as the sector appears to them as unstable. Thus, the cost of registration coupled with the perceived irregular and erratic nature of the business discouraged them to get licensed in the sector.

In line with this, studies have estimated that full compliance with all regulations could mean closure of business. For instance in Latin America the cost of remaining legal varied between 17 and 70 per cent of annual profits of the unit. In Bujumbura (Burundi) it was estimated that the revenue of micro-enterprises would be reduced by 48 per cent if all regulations are strictly enforced (Nas & Jaffe, 2004:346).

From the perspective of SBPDA, most of the solid waste collectors are not willing to be regulated so as to evade tax although there is a tax exemption incentive for new enterprises as stated on regulation No 13/2004:

*Those engage in sanitary service shall be exempted, for a limited period of time from any profit tax and custom duties imposed by the city government, on input imported in accordance with the directive issued by the concerned bodies (AACG, 2004:289).*

Nevertheless, there is a counter argument among most of the informal solid waste collectors that this regulation favours those who are in better capital platform rather than enterprises at their starting stage. Another cause for the informality of enterprises is stemming from inadequate and/or absence of any benefit in return to being regulated. In addition to this, the government monitoring system is not efficient and they still have room for working informally. Thus the informal waste collectors perceived that it was not the right time for formalizing their enterprise. However they underlined the significance of formalization in the future. This is mainly embedded on

two assumptions about the futurity. Firstly, they perceive that in the future there is no a likely conducive environment to work without licence as they do currently. Secondly, in the future their enterprise will be in a better position in terms of capital and manpower so that the potential benefit accrued from being registered will appear to be immense for instance to take part in bids to contract with institutions.

There are also some informants that conceive becoming formalized as equivalent to risking ones enterprise. They suspect that the enterprises will be subjected to massive competition thereby will be out of business by the much more favoured government sponsored MSSEs. Thus, they perceive that it is difficult to compete with the MSSEs which are organized and backed by the government in financial, legal, tax and other terms. The voice of the MSSEs is loud enough to be heard by officials in cases when conflicts are occurring with informal and even private formal waste collecting enterprises. With this respect, I noted regulations that articulate clearly favouring MSSEs which are established based on cooperatives, than the private formal and informal sectors. Regulation No 13/2004, for instance, states that “The government may facilitate condition particularly for cooperatives, engaged in sanitary service, for obtaining long term loan that enables them to expand and strengthen the service”(AACG, 2004:289).

The informal sector also serves as a safe heaven for the enterprises to build their capacity until they appear to be competent. Nevertheless, in some cases though an enterprise is capable enough to bear the cost of regulation, there are tendencies to resort to the informal sector and remain small due to the existence of profitable opportunities. Getahun explained that he prefers if some one delivers him a cart than a car in which he is capable to run effectively at its present enterprise level. In line with this, a study conducted by ILO reveals that some enterprises enter to the informal sector voluntarily because there are profitable opportunities emanated from being small. These units are in an advantageous position to exploit the market niches waiting to be exploited by offering tailored services which large enterprises may not find attractive (ILO, 1997:3).

## **5.2. Intentions of Regulating Solid Waste Collection**

### **5.2.1. From the Government Point of View**

In light of the government officials, the need for regulating solid waste collection arises from achieving two goals. In the first place, it is intended to ensure more efficient and cost effective solid waste collection by decentralizing and enhancing the participation of the private sector and the MSSEs. Thus they will gradually handle the services which were delivered by the city government. In the second place, it is designed to generate employment opportunities thereby to mitigate the increasingly growing unemployment in the city.

Although the above mentioned tenets are the main driving factors, there are also other immediate developments that lead the city government SBPDA to reorient its service provision. According to an expert from SBPDA, the process of regulating solid waste collection activity is stimulated by the growing concern of the city administration that it would not be possible to efficiently handle solid waste management task in its own right. Moreover, the lessons obtained from other developing countries and own experience gave more impetus to the government to reconsider its firmly established stand as the only service provider. This in turn paved a way for the gradual withdrawal of the city government from the pre-collection system at its first step and eventually from the entire solid waste collection activity by appointing the MSSEs and private solid waste collecting enterprises.

In line with this, several studies argue for participatory service delivery for its efficiency and ultimate impact on minimizing cost. Meheret (1999:20) stated that it has now become a foregone conclusion that municipal bureaucracies are neither the sole nor the most efficient instruments of service delivery. As a result, alternative means of service delivery, which include contracting, privatization and joint management of municipal services, have become popular. These measures can help the financial and budgetary situation of the municipality. Apart from cost considerations, these alternative means are preferred because they have been found more efficient, flexible and less bureaucratic than large municipal departments.

Recognizing the gains of participatory service delivery, the city government introduced regulations that are supposed to promote the involvement of the private sector. In accordance with this, the city government proposed a regulation identified as “Waste Management Collection and Disposal Regulations” which is also known as Regulations No 13/2004. The regulation acknowledged the involvement of the private sector in solid waste management activity. The regulation is the first in its kind in introducing the participation of the private sector in waste management activity. It outlines that “service provided by the government in the collection, transportation and disposing of solid waste may, through different participatory or transferring methods, be given to private investors.”

The city government claims that the intervention in the solid waste collection by institutionalizing the MSSEs is part of the grand project of regulating solid waste management. According to the officials, the pre-collection service offered by the pre-existing informal enterprises is scattered and less effective in realizing clean and ‘beautiful’ city. Besides this, the informal solid waste collection sector is difficult to supervise and to provide the necessary assistances. All these situations call for an organized and regulated solid waste collection in which the MSSEs are taken as spearheading entities.

### **5.2.2. From Private Formal Solid Waste Collectors Perspective**

The formal private solid waste collecting enterprises recognize the significance and accept the very principle of regulating solid waste collection. Nevertheless, they disagree with the way the city government actually intervened. According to most formal solid waste collectors, the existing city government intervention in regulating and institutionalizing the MSSEs is better explained as a political exercise. Hence, they regarded it as an attempt of the city government to control the solid waste collection sector under the pretext of formalization. Informants from the formal enterprises put forward different justifications by inferring from what their enterprises experienced in the course of their service provision.

Most of the interviewees from the private formal sector viewed that the main intention of formalizing solid waste collection has nothing to do with enhancing the efficiency of solid waste collection and creating job opportunities. If the city government had

these intentions, it would not treat the formal private sector as distinct from their government sponsored MSSEs counterparts. They feel that the government intentionally marginalized them from the solid waste collection activity though they are one of the major actors and employers in the sector. They believe that the biased intervention in the sector, in turn, has more adverse effects than ensuring the city government intentions.

The private formal solid waste collectors also counter argue that the city government organize and deployed the MSSEs in areas that are already served by the private formal enterprises despite the existence of so many areas that need to be served. The private formal solid waste collectors identify two ultimate impacts of such interventions. In one hand, such actions lead different enterprises in solid waste collection to be preoccupied with conflicts than focusing on the service. On the other hand, the intervention could not enhance the efficiency as it is not embedded on incorporating new service areas.

The private formal solid waste collectors believe that the process of regulating solid waste collection is an operation architected against them instead of promoting their service provision. In line with this, Berhanu noted one of the challenges faced under the disguise of formalization. He pointed out that the *kebele* officials wrote letters that systematically discredited his enterprise on one hand, and asking each and every client to collaborate with the one organized under MSSEs on the other. The letters were usually sweetened by “colourful phrases like help the unemployed youths in your locality.” Besides, the *kebele* officials are often covertly backed the local inhabitants that are organized under MSSEs to force out from their neighbourhood and *kebele*. As the result of such pressures they withdraw from some *kebeles* by leaving behind their clients and in some case their employees’ too. Thus these conditions halted the private formal sector from extending its service to other localities.

For Berihanu such kind of intervention did not serve the intended objectives of enhancing efficiency and alleviating unemployment. What the city government is performing is that it institutionalized new enterprises under its auspice while simultaneously evicting the other actors. Likewise it creates a “new job” opportunities

for those organized under the MSSEs while others in the private formal sector are displaced from their job. It is a kind of ‘zero-sum game’ in which total amount won is equal to the amount lost.

Another vantage point of argument of the formal waste collecting enterprise is that the institutionalization of the MSSEs was not confined to the promotion of the efficiency of solid waste collection rather its focus was merely to boost the employment statistical figures or “fake” employment at its best. In this regard, Mulugeta narrates that the government has a city wide plan to deploy about ten-thousand unemployed people in the solid waste collection sector. Accordingly, each *kebele* has its own targeted quota and each *kebele* officials also held accountable for the number of people it organized under MSSEs. Failure to meet the planned quota has a consequence on the promotion of the *kebele* officials.

To this end, each *kebele* officials tend to strive to meet and/or maximize this quota without due consideration of the way they are equipped, the number of people should be deployed in a *kebele* and their sustainability. He also mentioned that “the worst aspect” of this intervention also extends up to negotiating the employees of the private sector to be organized under MSSEs with “intangible hopes.” Thus most of the MSSEs are not organized in the way they can deliver the intended service and lacks sustainability. Moreover, there is no a concerted effort in realizing a fair distribution of enterprises across different *kebeles*, so that some *kebeles* are overstocked with solid waste collecting enterprises while others suffers from shortfall of the service. These acts, for him, contradict with the government self-claimed justifications of regulating solid waste collection.

Under my observations and interviews with the members of MSSEs, particularly to those that are recently institutionalized enterprises, I could realize that they were engaged in the service without the necessary assistance from MSSEDA. Members of an enterprise known as Addis Development Beautification and Sanitation Service explain that they were organized some eight months ago based on the promise and the hope that the city government will deliver the necessary equipments and financial aid. During my fieldwork they were employing human porters to transport waste from households to the containers. Although an NGO delivered one cart, they find it too

heavy to operate as the entire members are women and most of them are in their late forties. This indicates how far the individuals organized under the MSSEs are ill-equipped and poorly recruited.

### **5.2.3. From Informal Waste Collectors Perspective**

The informal waste collectors, like the formal solid waste collectors, perceive that the institutionalization of MSSEs in particular and the intervention of regulating solid waste collection in general are designed mainly to serve political purposes. They never agree with the official rationale of enhancing efficiency of solid waste collection and addressing unemployment. Kibret and Genet firmly believe that the city government is trying to satisfy mere colourful statistical reports as to how many job opportunities are created. Thus, the city government may use such reports for media consumption and convincing the city dwellers and donor agencies about the “progress” achieved.

They believe that the formalization process does not take into consideration the role and consensus of different actors involved in solid waste collection. The government organized mostly elderly women’s who are not fit to the labour demanding job and deploy them without adequate training as well as material support. The informal solid waste collectors, therefore, questioned the intention of the government by raising different issues from their experiences. In the first place, they were not consulted while the MSSES organized and intervened. Secondly, the MSSEDA should have adequately equipped the MSSEs if its intention was to enhance efficiency. Thirdly, the government should have deployed the newly organized MSSEs in areas that were not occupied; instead of this, they dispossess the holdings of other waste collectors. For them this is not a good way of intervention as it does not take into consideration a wide array of interests held by different actors.

The informal waste collectors meet two pillar institutions in their domain of solid waste collection. The institutions involve the Sanitation Beautification and Parks Development Agency (SBPDA), and the Micro and Small Scale Enterprises Development Agency (MSSEDA). The later is recognized as an institution that works against the informal and formal private enterprises as it favours only the enterprises



that are established under its auspice. On the other hand, they feel that the Addis Ababa Sanitation, Beautification and Parks Development Agency is real partner.

Genet expressed the relation between the informal sector and the MSSEDA by referring to a classical Ethiopian proverb. Accordingly, she loudly and bitterly spoke that “we [to refer the informal and actually the formal private waste collectors] are treated as illegitimate sons while the ones organized under MSSEs are as first sons.” The same term with similar emotion had been uttered in an interview with a shareholder of a private formal enterprise. She also argued that if the intention of the city government was really to promote efficiency and employment, the government should give equal attention as an integral part of solid waste collection.

Similarly, Kibret also questioned “What do you feel if a place you have invested a lot of efforts is transferred to another enterprise holdings that never put any effort?” Some other informants go far beyond this argument. They refute the officially claimed intentions of formalizing solid waste collection rather they perceived it as an attempt of the city government to create job opportunities for its loyal political supporters.

To sum up, the government intervention in organizing and integrating MSSEs was mainly driven by a political motive of boosting employment figures and to ensure more political control.

### **5.3. The Process of Formalization**

#### **5.3.1. Recruiting Waste Collectors**

The way individuals recruited and organized under MSSEs is one of the controversial issues in the process of regulating solid waste collection. According to the officials working at sub-city and *kebele* level, the waste collectors are recruited based on a call made by each *kebele* to people supposed to be unemployed, poor, and willing to work in solid waste collection. The calls are made usually by posting an announcement at *kebele* offices. Thus people wishing to engage in solid waste collection will be registered and organized.

The official criteria pertinent to recruiting members in order to establish a solid waste collecting cooperative association indicates that the applicant shall be above the age of fourteen, not organized in a similar association, capable to be organized under MSSEDA and willing to work in cooperation with others. Apart from this, some informants pointed out that they are selected based on a lottery method in cases when the applicants were outnumbering the demand.

Most informants from different enterprises claim that the recruitment of solid waste collectors is sometimes related to pursuing political interests. Among others here are some of the experiences that the informants tried to justify their claim. The informal waste collectors believed that some of the members of the MSSEs are recruited based on their political affiliation to the government and/or being those with close ties with the *kebele* officials. Similarly, an informant from MSSEs demonstrated that there are instances in which the *kebele* officials intervene in the enterprises internal matters. He remembers cases in which the *kebele* officials ordered his enterprise to incorporate demobilized soldiers. Some other informants from the informal and private formal sectors told me that the solid waste collectors organized under MSSEs are expected to provide other services to their respective *kebeles*. This includes services like dispatching letters and disseminating messages from *kebele* administrative organs to residents. There are still other informants who argue that as vacancies are posted only in *kebele* compounds so that individuals who are close to *kebele* officials will have a high likely to access the information.

Interviews conducted with the experts from MSSEDA revealed that despite the increasingly growing importance of the waste collection sector, only a few people were organized under MSSEs as compared to those engaged in other activities that are organized by the MSSEDA. The experts also underlined that the solid waste collecting MSSEs were the most unstable enterprises in the employment sector. Accordingly, the claim that political loyalty is considered as a criterion at recruiting stage appears to be invisible.

Despite the recruitment stage was not directly dictated by political view of the candidates in favour of the government or otherwise, the organization of the MSSEs was generally prioritized to achieve two major political purposes. The first emphasis

of the city government was to merely boost the statistics of the new employment opportunities created. This, however, involves displacing of similar number of people from the informal and private formal sector. In this regard Kibret mentioned that in the government controlled media he often heard and/or read that “the city government was initially planned to generate this...amount of employment opportunities in solid waste collection...in the budget year but it achieved more than what was intended....” In fact he knows what happened and/or happening on his and other enterprises. Apart from the media consumption, the figures might be used to show the success of poverty reduction program.

The second motivation of the intervention was to ensure political control. Unlike the recruitment stage, there is a visible tendency of the government to employ the already organized MSSEs for advancing political purposes. In line with this, I read an article from Amharic weekly newspaper that states “Individuals organized under the MSSEs are requested by the government to fill up a party membership form” Moged (2005:7). Some of the informants from MSSEs also affirm that they are requested to take party membership. In line with this Bjerkli (2005) outlined that the city administrative structure is “highly politicized.” Thus, most of the officials are appointed due to their political alliance to the ruling party.

### **5.3.2. How they are Integrated (Dismantling or otherwise)**

It is difficult to trace out a specific trajectory as to how the MSSEs are integrated into the solid waste collection activity since experiences of different enterprises have shown a wide range of variations among *kebeles* and sub-cities. Accordingly, the implementation of the integration of the MSSEs to the waste collection system was done in a haphazard way. Generally, there are three approaches exercised by *kebele* and sub-city MSSEDA officials. This includes dismantling of the pre-existing solid waste collecting enterprises just by dispossessing the entire or part of their service area. These interventions are noted in situations where the government organized and deployed the MSSEs in the areas that were already occupied and served by pre-existing informal or private formal enterprises.

Secondly, the government officials still adopt another mechanism in which the newly organized MSSEs integrated with the pre-existing enterprises without any kind of

dismantling intervention. Lastly, there are situations in which the government officials resort to organize the MSSEs only selecting areas that are not occupied by any other enterprise. These variations among the *kebeles* and sub-cities are mainly attributed to initiative of *kebele* officials to adjust to the local context and the agency of the informal solid waste collecting actors.

In exercising the dismantling of the pre-existing enterprises, the officials employed various overt and covert actions. One of the overt actions encompasses writing letters to each household telling them to terminate their contract with the pre-existing enterprise and to join the newly institutionalized MSSEs. For fear of the likely consequences of their refusal to the letters backed by *kebeles* stamps, the households terminate the existed contracts and enter into a new contract. This in turn, caused the eviction of pre-existing enterprises from their established service area.

There are cases in which the pre-existing enterprises, be it formal or informal, are directly ordered to leave the whole or part of their service area for the newly established MSSEs. Mulugeta noted that due to an intense pressure faced from the *kebele* officials, his enterprise was expelled from its service areas in Arada Sub-city loosing the six-hundred fifty clients for the benefit of government sponsored MSSEs. Kibret and Genet, both from the informal sector, explained that they are ordered to opt for either to apportion part of their service area to the MSSEs or to leave the whole clients.

Reducing the service prices than the ones set by the pre-existing enterprise is also one of the strategies used by government officials to confiscate the clients of the pre-existing enterprises. In this regard, Kibret's enterprise is a case in point; his enterprise lost some two-hundred clients due to a campaign orchestrated by the *kebele* officials along with the MSSEs in promising to deliver the service at lower fees. Genet described that one may wonder why the *kebele* officials focus to organize and deploy MSSEs in areas that are already occupied by other enterprises. But the mystery lies on the fact that the MSSEs are not acquainted with the modus operandi of establishing and handling of new clients. Thus, they prefer to take the advantage of the already established business environment through the agency of pre-existing enterprises.

The MSSEs are in some instances integrated to solid waste collection without dissolving the pre-existing solid waste collecting enterprise/s. Legesse, who is a partner in a cooperative enterprise, explained that before his enterprise has gained its present status it was operating informally, sharing a *kebele* along with a MSSEs. Later on the *kebele* officials urged them to opt either to be merged with the MSSEs or to leave a significant portion of their clients to them. Consequently, they preferred to merge with the MSSEs and establish an enterprise registered by the name *Godana Sanitation and Beautification Service Cooperative*. Some other experiences of the pre-existing solid waste collecting enterprises still witness a different encounter from what was mentioned above. Mulugeta experienced that when members of a newly organized MSSE tried to overtake his clients, the *kebeles* officials intervene in the matter and ordered them to operate in new places that are not so far occupied and served by any enterprise/s.

### **5.3.3. Was it based on Policy Guidelines?**

The significance of the informal solid waste collection activity that was operated by the individuals and group of individuals was not an issue of concern to the city government until quite recently. For that matter solid waste collection was thought as a sector open to all who have an interest to engage in it. Accordingly, the *kebele* officials randomly delivered a sort of letter asking the community to collaborate with those who wish to engage in solid waste collection. This was done spontaneously in the absence of any guideline and/or policy framework. After the coming of the provisional city government in the year 2003, waste collection has gradually attracted the attentions of the officials as one of the untapped employment generating sector.

The Micro and Small Scale Development Agency (MSSEDA) which is institutionalized under the provisional government and in charge of promoting MSSEs, among other institutions, was attracted by the dynamics of employment opportunities in solid waste collection. Thus, stemming from its inherent commitment in creating employment opportunity, the MSSEDA on its own initiative started to organize and integrate waste collectors under MSSEs as it did in other sectors like petty-trading. However, this was done in the context of solid waste collection without formulation of the corresponding regulation and/or guidelines. Thus integrating the

MSSEs into the pre-collection activity was done without articulated policy and/or regulatory framework pertinent to solid waste management.

The first policy on waste management was formulated in the year 2004, which is almost a year after the intervention by MSSEDA was put into effect. This policy acknowledges and elaborates the roles of the private sector in solid waste management which was not reflected in any other preceding regulations and proclamations. The prior regulations such as the 1994 hygiene and sanitation regulation of the city administration and the public health proclamation of the year 2000 by the Federal Government of Ethiopia were generally blind to the involvement and roles of the private sector and other parties in the solid waste management.

After the introduction of the solid waste management policy, the city government declared a “waste management collection and disposal regulation” in the year 2004. This regulation details the manner of providing private sanitary service and the responsibilities of private organizations, micro and small-scale enterprises engaged in sanitary service. Despite the efforts of formulating policy and regulations, it could not resolve the territorial conflicts among different actors that are involved in pre-collection of waste. This in turn urged the SBPDA to prepare a directive on “the delineation of service areas and service provision” in the year 2005. This directive was on the way to be implemented during my fieldwork.

To sum up, the policy and/or regulations relevant to solid waste management were not formulated in advance to address the likely problems encountered in regulating solid waste collection. They are rather by themselves the outputs of the endeavour to cope up with the challenges in integrating the MSSEs. Thus, the integration of the MSSEs was done in an order of putting the cart before the horse.

#### **5.3.4. Institutional Actors Involved in Formalization Process**

##### *Visible Actors*

There are several institutional actors involved in the process of regulating solid waste collection. Some of the actors have a visible role while others are hidden ones. The visible actors include various governmental and non governmental institutions. Among others the prominent governmental institutions include the Sanitation,

Beautification and Parks Development Agency, Micro and Small Scale Business Enterprises Development Agency and Code Enforcement Service of the City Government of Addis Ababa. These actors are involved in the formalization process by issuing certificates of competencies, by supervise and provision support for interested parties to participate in solid waste management, and by drafting policies, regulations and directives.

The non governmental institutions that take part in the formalization of solid waste collection encompass CARE-Ethiopia, ACORD, Plan Ethiopia, GTZ and ENDA-Ethiopia. These institutions intervened in the process of regulating solid waste management due to their commitment in promoting local initiatives to fight poverty, preserve or improve the environment, support urban popular economy, arranging training and introducing income-generation, saving and credit schemes.

#### *Invisible Actors*

Poverty alleviation has gained a central importance in a recent development discourse. In line with this, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund launched the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative to create a framework for all creditors, including multilateral creditors, to provide debt relief to the world's poorest and most heavily indebted countries, and thereby reduce the constraint on economic growth and poverty reduction imposed by the debt build-up in these countries<sup>8</sup>.

Developing countries should fulfil some preconditions so as to be considered for debt service relief under Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. In order to meet one of the criteria, Ethiopia drafted its poverty reduction program some four years ago. The program maps out urban poverty and unemployment as integral part of issues to be addressed. To this end, strategic actions are propounded for effective impact of the development program. This involves designing and implementing extensively employment generation public works, exploring and promoting self-employment schemes such as Self-Employment and Enterprise Development Systems (SEEDS) in cooperation with NGOs and CBOs; and promoting activities that are usually done by urban authorities and yet undermined by the community (such as

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/>

house –to-house solid waste collection and recycling) to be handled by unemployed citizens (MOFED, 2002: 127). The World Bank and the IMF are, therefore, invisible actors. Long noted that these are actors who are absent in the ‘face-to-face’ encounters yet nevertheless influence the situation, affecting actions and outcomes (Long, 2001).

#### **5.4. How do the Pre-existing Solid Waste Collectors Responded to the Newly Integrated Actors**

The pre-existing solid waste collectors particularly the informal solid waste collectors responded in different ways towards the government intervention in introducing the MSSEs. Consequently, the interactions between the pre-existing and the newly integrated solid waste collecting actors would take various forms. Here are some of conspicuous aspects of these interactions:

##### **5.4.1. Conflicts and Sources of Conflicts**

Conflicts and hostilities are perhaps the dominant type of relationships that has existed between the pre-existing and the newly integrated actors in solid waste collection. This was actually a daily incidence particularly in the early periods of the intervention. Generally, it can be said that almost all the pre-existing solid waste collectors, either from the private formal or informal sector, have a negative outlook to the newly integrated MSSEs.

Kibret’s outlook towards the solid waste collecting MSSEs seems a bit dramatized. He labelled them as “agents of destruction.” For him the MSSEs are not really organized to deliver a solid waste collection service rather they are groups of individuals that are driven by “self-ego” and short term gains. He argued that the introduction of the government sponsored MSSEs has undermined the waste collection service. Since they are obsessed with pursuing short term gains, the MSSEs are primarily engaged in how they could make the pre-existing enterprises out of the business. To this end they reduced the service fees spontaneously below the lowest possible minimum and employed any other “dirty tricks” which eventually displaced the pre-existing enterprise. The “very sad thing” is that after they displaced other enterprises, the MSSEs usually failed to deliver their service at the given price. Thus



they often leave the area after a short lived service. The real picture of the problem emerges hereafter, in which no enterprise will penetrate this service area since the community is not ready to accept newly adjusted collection rates. According to Kibret, it is better to seek clients in unoccupied areas than strive to renegotiating and convincing households in such places.

Mulugeta, from the formal sector, described the MSSEs as “headaches” to their job since they bid in lowering down the collection fees. His enterprise reduced the price even to the level lower than the feasible just for the sake of not losing their clients. The overall effect of what he referred as “unfair bidding” has weakened all the enterprises as it diminishes the revenue that they could collect.

Conflicts sometimes may be serious and trigger clashes and hostilities. This may involve harassing and attacking the members of a certain enterprise and at worst it might cause deaths. An informant from the informal sector explained that harsh conflicts are at times used as an instrument to receive the attention of the *kebele* officials. According to this informant his enterprise managed to protect part of its service area after a hostile clash with the members of a MSSE who tried to takeover the entire holdings.

#### **5.4.2. Competition**

The relationship between the pre-existing actors and the newly integrated actors is characterized by competition. They battle for economic space and to overcome from their problematic situation. Long noted that actors devise ways of coping life even under the most extreme form of coercion (Long & Long, 1992). There are various competition strategies adopted by the pre-existing actors in response to the government intervention. I will discuss some of the dimensions of competition adopted by the actors.

##### *Enhancing the quality of the service*

Most pre-existing actors, particularly the informal sector, emphasize on enhancing the quality of the service as the key competition instrument. This may includes increasing the frequency of collection days and showing good conduct and respect to their clients. Most informants from the informal sector indicated that MSSEs usually

collect waste only once or at times twice a week. On the other hand, the informal waste collectors provide services three or more times per week.

The informal waste collectors have a more flexible time table better adapted to their client's. They provide additional services in case of special occasions such as weddings, holidays, mourning and other social events producing higher wastes than the usual. Studies on the informal sector testify that the advantages of the informal sector lie in its extreme flexibility to quickly and appropriately react to changing framework conditions (Nas & Jaffe, 2004:350). Some informants also described that they launch a sanitation campaign once or twice every month in collaboration with their clients. The main intention of this campaign is to clean the neighbourhoods; in fact for the waste collectors it also serves as a bridge to strengthen their ties with the community.

#### *Reducing collection fees*

Reducing service charges is one of the widely used competition strategy. This may be applied to either attract new clients or keeping the existing ones from being taken away by other enterprises. Getahun explained that when the clients are going to terminate their contract, he discusses the reason for termination. Accordingly, he makes the necessary adjustments in terms of collection fee and if any.

In some cases the informal enterprises may go far beyond reducing the collection fees. Abush described that his enterprise was losing several of his clients because a MSSE dealt with his clients providing the service with a lower price. Then he launched what he called “a counter attack” by giving free service. Thus he could manage to recover most of his former clients.

Some informal waste collectors are aware of the significance of ordering payment arrangement among the clients. They believe that the clients feel more trust if payments are arranged after services than pre-paid system. This may be because of suspicion that informal enterprises would fail to deliver the service after being paid in advance. Thus, such payment arrangements serve as a warranty for the contract. Another way of attracting and/or retaining clients involves suspending the monthly collection fees in cases the clients failed to pay. In this respect the informal

enterprises are much more flexible than their formal counterparts whose bureaucratic system seldom allowed them to afford such engagements.

*Rendering supplementary service/s without additional charge*

The pre-existing solid waste collectors also responded to the government intervention by delivering different supplementary services to the clients in particular and the community in general. Informal waste collecting enterprises are involved in the social events of their clients. In cases of mourning of their clients they participate in cleaning the area and installing tents along with *Idir*<sup>9</sup> members which is a traditional way of giving moral and some material support for the bereaved. This kind of involvement has a positive impact in strengthening cohesion with the community and on the way it helps them to advertise their service.

The experience of an informal enterprise called *Set yetekenaje ye tsidat ageliglot* loosely mean Women Integrated Sanitation Service is a bit different from most enterprises. All members of this enterprise are women and some of the members' are living with HIV/AIDS. Thus the members are closely working with the community in enhancing awareness and bringing attitudinal change towards HIV/AIDS mainly taking opportunities of social gatherings. This initially caused some negative impact on the enterprise due to unfounded fears among some of the clients for potential transmission. However, it gradually enhanced the acceptability of the enterprise among the community.

The informal waste collecting enterprises also offer services like guarding the neighbourhoods and acting as messengers. They pay electric and water service bills by going to the respective offices on behalf of the clients. Some of them also provide seedlings of different edible and non-edible trees. There are some others, who are gardening the compound of their clients. These services are offered without additional payments.

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<sup>9</sup> *Idir is an association established among neighbors or workers to raise funds that will be used during emergencies, such as death within these groups and their families.*

### *Social network*

As described earlier in the territorial behaviour of the informal solid waste collectors, they tend to proliferate in their immediate neighbourhood. Consequently, they have a close social network with their clients. This meant quite a lot of things for the informal actors; it is their warranty and marketing system. Moreover, it is a tool for defending their service area and clients. Thus this situation makes difficult the penetration of new enterprise into such service areas.

### *Diversifying means of income*

One of the coping and competing strategies adopted by the informal solid waste collectors is diversifying their means of income. They complement their income by selling recyclable materials that they sort out from the waste they collect. Solomon, an employee in a private informal enterprise, declared that he earns a considerable amount of money by selling out recyclable materials. Similarly, Getahun covers the maintenance cost of the carts through the income generated from the sales of recyclables.

### *Propagating Negative Propaganda*

The informal solid waste collectors deliberately discredit the services of other supposedly rivalry enterprise/s by demonstrating that they are inefficient and incompetent. Sometimes they also misinform and disseminate fabricated stories that undermine the quality and credibility of the service delivered by other enterprises.

### **5.4.3. Cooperation**

The informal sector has shown a sort of cooperation in order to defend themselves in a vulnerable situation. They have networks in which they gather information, discuss on any current development and strategize about how they react to any government intervention. Although mostly the government officials do not invite them in meetings they however attend by infiltrating individuals into such meetings. In cases when this is not possible they gather information from the formal enterprises who are involved in the meetings. The informal waste collectors often meet and exchange information in places like low cost cafeterias and individual houses. I have got the opportunity to attain one of the low cost cafeterias which is frequently visited by the informal waste collectors.

There is also a case in which the informal waste collecting enterprises formed an association along with the private formal sector. The association known as Addis Ababa City Solid Waste Service Providing Enterprises Collaborative Association comprises about thirty enterprises. Among other things one of the aims of the association is to resolve the problems that faced by the member enterprises. The chair person of the association told me that they were able to bring their complaints up to the city mayor office on the behalf of the member enterprises.

#### **5.4.4. Negotiation**

There are cases where the informal waste collectors are going to resolve the disputes arising with other waste collecting actors and within themselves through bilateral and/or multilateral discussions and negotiations. Some informal waste collectors explained that they able to settle their matters without the intervention of the concerned government body/organ or any third party.

The informal waste collectors also entered into bilateral agreement with other formal and informal actors not to interfere in another holding without the consent of the other party. Getahun, an owner-operator of a private informal enterprise, had faced a stiff competition from a group of formally organized youths that were operating adjacent to his service area. At first the two enterprises competed to expand their respective territories just by lowering down the service charges. However, later on, the two enterprises recognize that the competition had severely damaged their revenue. Thus they discussed and decided not to encroach into each others territories.

There are also other cases where the informal solid waste collecting enterprises resolved their problem through negotiation. Addis Alem explained that her enterprise had clients that were scattered in a stronghold of another informal enterprise operating in the same locality and vice versa. Both enterprises recognized that deploying workers on such scanty located clients is not viable for collection so that they exchanged their clients in those localities after a discussion held between the two parties.

## 5.5. Implications of Regulating Solid Waste Collection

### *Impact of the intervention on actors' power matrix*

The actor oriented approach is an important instrument in providing explanations as to how different patterns evolved despite the presence of identical structural circumstances (Long & Long, 1992). Such a perspective requires a theory of agency based upon the capacity of actors to process their, and learn from others', experiences and to act upon them. Agency implies a certain knowledgeable ability, whereby experiences and desires are reflexively accorded meanings and purposes, and the capability to command relevant skills, access resources of various kinds, and engage in particular organising practices (Long, 2002).

There are three predominant patterns of actors relations developed in response to the intervention of the city government in integrating MSSEs. The first and widely evolved pattern of interaction is that the MSSEs are expanding at the expense of the disadvantageous position of the pre-existing formal and informal enterprises. Thus, most of the informal and formal private waste collectors are engulfed by the MSSEs. The second pattern of actors' relation reveals that both the pre-existing and the newly integrated actors are functioning in parallel without one interven to the other.

The third pattern portrays that the pre-existing actors are revitalized since most of the MSSEs are dissolved shortly after they entered into the business. An expert from the MSSEDA indicated the difficulties they faced that "had all the enterprises they organized in the waste collection were successful, the waste collection sector would be currently the most saturated field of employment." Similarly, an informant from the informal sector vowed that "we would not be in the business as one looks to the number of enterprises that the *kebele* official hatches every day."

### *Unintended Effects*

One of the advantages of the actor oriented approach is its capability of creating room to understand the unintended results vis-à-vis the planned intentions. In line with this in the interviews with the government officials, I could identify the following unforeseen effects of the intervention:

- The government officials never expected the intense conflicts rising among different actors;
- The existing level of income of the individual waste collectors is very low and deteriorating mainly because of the fierce competition;
- There was a belief that more than ten-thousand individuals will be deployed to cover the whole city but this seems far from what attained;
- The awareness and the engagement of the community in solid waste collection has significantly increased;
- With the participation of different enterprises much more waste is able to be collected that surpass the amount assumed to be collected. This in turn often posed a great challenge on the city government capacity of transporting the collected waste to the landfill sites (see Annex V Pictures of uncollected waste).
- The initial intention of the intervention was to create job opportunities in the sphere of solid waste collection for the street dwellers, unemployed women and youths. However, currently it draws the attention of the private investors.
- Most of the enterprises particularly those organized under MSSEs remained weaker than it was anticipated be it in terms of financial, material capacity and employment stability.

## **5.6. The Present Status of Regulating Solid Waste Collection**

### *Issuing new directive*

During my fieldwork the government intervention in organizing solid waste collecting MSSEs was halted due to intense conflicts among different actors and the political turmoil prevailed after the disputed May 2005 election. The conflicts between the pre-existing and newly introduced waste collectors are mainly triggered by the overlap of the service areas, battle for expanding service areas and institutional legitimacy. Since 2005 the city government prepared a directive related to delineating service areas and service delivery. As stated on the directive the main intentions of the proclamation are:

- To ensure the presence of an appropriate number of waste collecting enterprises in accordance with the existing *kebele* administrative units;
- To resolve the boundary conflicts among and between the MSSEs and other solid waste collecting actors;

- To facilitate the withdrawal of the city government from the entire pre-collection activity and leave the sector to MSSEs and others from the private sector;
- To identify and support the enterprises engaged in pre-collection activity; and
- To delimit the service zone for effective waste collection (CGASBPDA, 2005).

Almost all private formal and informal waste collectors as well as the MSSEs recognize the significance of zoning the service areas. They believe that if such intervention is executed based on the consultation of all the parties involved in solid waste collection, it will avoid conflicts and confrontations among actors. Delineating the service area also makes easy to monitor the performance of each and every enterprise. Moreover, it develops a sense of accountability among each enterprise for the sanitation condition of their respective service area.

In spite of this, the pre-existing private formal and informal enterprises have doubts about the way it is implemented. First of all, as they perceive that the government officials are biased against them, they have a fear that the officials may prioritize the MSSEs and that they would get displaced from their established holdings. Secondly, they fear that they might not be comprehensive consultancy and consent regarding their special concerns. According to Kibret, the clients of his enterprise consist of both residential houses and commercial institutions. He did not like to loose particularly the thirty commercial institutions from which he earns as equivalent to the revenue collected from two hundred residential houses.

It is “unfortunate” to him that both clients are located in different quarters of the city. As the new zoning directive state that “the enterprise that has more clients in a certain neighbourhood will be prioritized to handle the waste collection task of the immediate surroundings.” According to this procedure he is quite sure that he will loose his thirty commercial institutions. This in turn has a “devastative” economic consequence on his enterprise. Another issue that deserve a special attention, according to Mulugeta, is that it should be understood the unique characteristics of places while delineating service areas. In his view areas that are closer to rivers, for instance, show a high tendency to use the river as open dump site mainly during rainy seasons. Thus, it is



not economically viable to work in such areas without adequate government supervision. Generally, the informal solid waste collectors viewed the new directive in a mixed feeling of hope of getting their own service area and threatened by the fear of being expelled from their current holdings.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **VI. CONCLUSIONS**

The central aim of this study was to examine the way in which the informal solid waste collecting actors were organized and functioning in Addis Ababa; the intentions of the city government intervention; the responses of the pre-existing informal solid waste collecting actors and its implications on the actors power relations. The actor-oriented approach is employed as a theoretical framework to address the research problems at hand. The actor-oriented approach is selected because of its advantage in analysing how particular groups or individuals attempt to create space for themselves in order to carry out their own `projects` that may run parallel to, or perhaps challenge, government programmes or the interest of other intervening parties (Long & Long, 1992:34)

According to Long (2001) applying actor-oriented approach to state intervention demonstrates that all forms of external intervention necessarily enter the life worlds of individuals or groups affected. Thus externally originated factors are, therefore, mediated, incorporated and often substantially transformed by the ongoing interactions that take place between the local actors and intervening agent, in my case the pre-existing informal actors and the newly integrated government sponsored MSSEs, respectively.

The actor-oriented approach is, therefore, a more dynamic approach that stresses on the interplay and mutual determination of `internal` and `external` factors and relationships. It also acknowledges the central role played by human agency. These features leave much more room to undertake a different style of analysis that had never been attained by adopting structural/institutional analysis (Long & Long, 1992; Long, 2001). Thus, actor-oriented approach is important to visualize how particular interventions become modified or even completely transformed by different actors.

The actor-oriented approach, as opposed to a positivist view, conceptualises knowledge as involving ways of constructing and ordering the world, and not as a simple accumulation of facts or as being unified by some underlying cultural logic, hegemonic order or system of classification. Knowledge emerges out of a complex

interplay of social, cognitive, cultural, institutional and situational elements (Long and Long 1992: 212-213). To this end, methodologically the actor-oriented approach calls for qualitative understanding of experiences of various actors that are involved in solid waste collection. For that matter, this study depends on qualitative methods that involve interviews, focus group discussions, personal observation and photography techniques.

The study was conducted by taking three case enterprises in Addis Ababa which are supposed to encompass the informal, the formal private and the MSSEs. But for the sake of capturing more views and enhancing the reliability of the collected data, other enterprises from different parts of the city are also considered.

Lastly, I would like to outline the salient findings of this study. It has been understood that the more organized informal solid waste collection is a recent phenomena although informal waste collection at its various rudimentary form is believed to exist perhaps as old as the establishment of the city itself. The study also identified that poverty and unemployment are the major factors that leads individuals to be engaged into the informal waste collecting sector. There are also other pulling and triggering factors including the profitability of the sector, the inadequacy of the municipal solid waste collection system which left a gap to be filled by the informal sector and the adaptability of working hours to other income generating activities or domestic chores in the case of women's.

The early forms of the informal waste collection were carried out depending on the on- and off- service of the municipal block collection. Thus waste collection was often operated by itinerant individuals who derived their income mainly from other casual works such as shoe shining, transporting goods and begging. This gradually developed into a more organized waste collection that employed and have been employing human porter and home-made carts for transporting waste from households to the municipal containers. I could note that informal solid waste collectors who organized themselves into an enterprise have some communal social ties such as unemployed youths in a neighbourhood, women who vend local drinks and street dwellers who spend street life altogether are a few to be mentioned.

Another interesting aspect of informal solid waste collecting enterprises was that they proliferate and operate in social and geographical spaces that are familiar with the informal waste collectors. This provides the operators an additional advantage in strengthening their agency in the struggle to access and retain their clients. Here we can visualize the significance of social and geographical space on actors agency since agency implies a certain knowledgeable ability, whereby experiences and desires are reflexively accorded meanings and purposes, and the capability to command relevant skills, access resources of various kinds, and engage in particular organising practices (Long, 2002:3). Thus we can infer that informal solid waste collecting actors operating in their immediate geographical and social space have more chance to play the game in favour of them.

The actor-oriented approach is not explicit about the impact of space on human agency. It rather stressed on appreciating the notion that Long identified as “boxing in space and time” in the analysis of intervention. This is to indicate and argue against the conventional intervention impact assessment. In accordance with this, Long underlines the impact of an intervention is not confined to a specific ‘space’ and functions delimited by official policies and plans (Long, 2001:32). Nevertheless, Storper is aware of the significance of time and space in ‘human agency’. He pointed out that the structural outcomes of social practices are premised upon their time – space characteristics, since these time- and space- defined practices serve simultaneously as pattern of interaction and, through their impacts on human experience, as foundations for the motivation of future practices (Storper, 1985:408 cited in Bird, 1993:109). Thus, at this juncture I shared the position held by Storper.

This study recognizes that formalizing solid waste collection in principle was not a problem by itself. However, it argues against the way it is implemented without due consideration of the pre-existing system. The intervention in the solid waste collection system, though, laminated by the intentions of creating employment and enhancing the efficiency of solid waste collection. Nevertheless, in practice the regulating process is dictated by political motives of boosting merely employment figures and to ensure more political control. This coincides with what Bjerkli mentioned that the city government of Addis Ababa is “highly politicized” (Bjerkli, 2005:89). Consequently, the intervention was not materialized in a manner of enhancing the knowledgeable ability of

the pre-existing informal solid waste collecting actors. Instead of this the government integrate a new actor (the MSSEs) in a way of dismantling the pre-existing enterprises which eventually result in the disruption of the existing system. According to UN-HABITAT (2002:8) good governance is the one that adopts the “enabling approach.”

The informal waste collecting actors struggle to sustain their role in the face of the dynamics of interactions and competition among various actors involved in the broad field of solid waste management. Long (2001) stated that actors are locked into a series of intertwined battles over resources, meanings and institutional legitimacy, and control. In line with this, the study identified the different strategies that the pre-existing actors’ employed to access and control over resources, meanings and institutional legitimacy. This involves conflicts, competition, cooperation and negotiation. Furthermore, I realized that the informal solid waste collecting actors possess the knowledgeability and capability to assess problematic situations, devise ways of coping with life and organise ‘appropriate’ responses even under the most extreme forms of coercion (Long & Long, 1992). Thus government interventions should be implemented not in a way of disrupting the existing system; rather it should be designed in a manner of enhancing the existing local knowledge.

The study also evidenced that the analysis of planned interventions should not be restricted from the perspective of top-down approach. It should be also viewed from bottom-up vantage point since local groups actively formulate and pursue their own ‘projects of development’, which may clash with the interests of central authorities (Kontinen, 2004). This in turn results in heterogeneity within a single structure. With this understanding, I could identify three patterns of matrices of actors evolved as the result of the mutual interactions of the government intervention in integrating MSSEs and the pre-existing actors. The first pattern is a situation in which the MSSEs are effectively displaced the pre-existing informal and formal solid waste collecting enterprises. In the second place, it has been noted that both the pre-existing actors and the MSSEs co-exist with minor conflicts. Thirdly, there are also situations in which the pre-existing informal solid waste collectors revitalized as some of the MSSEs are dissolved out after a short lived service. Generally, the development of these patterns could be explained by the interplay of the agency of the pre-existing solid waste

collecting actors and the initiative of local administrative officials to adapt to the local context.

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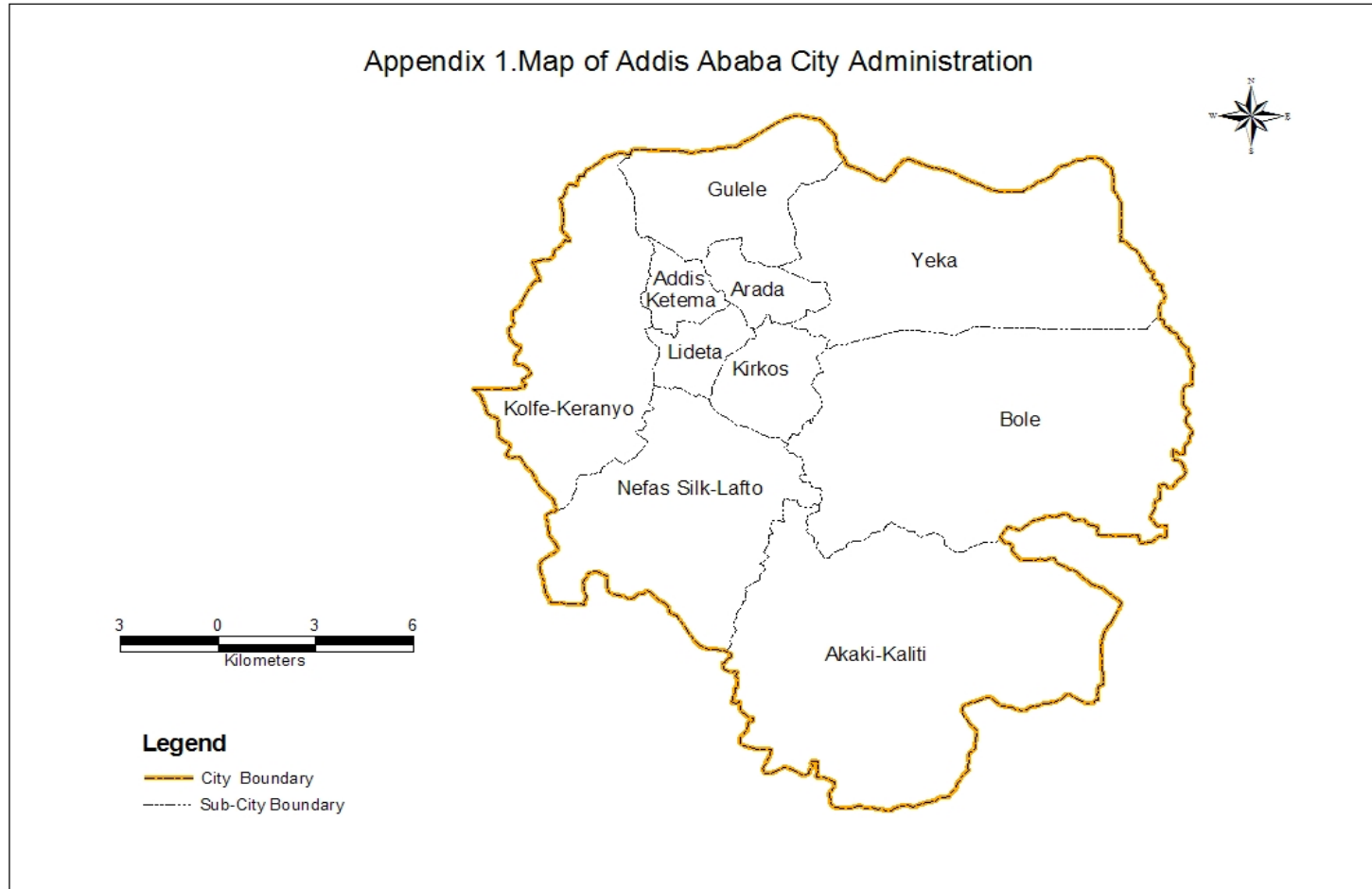
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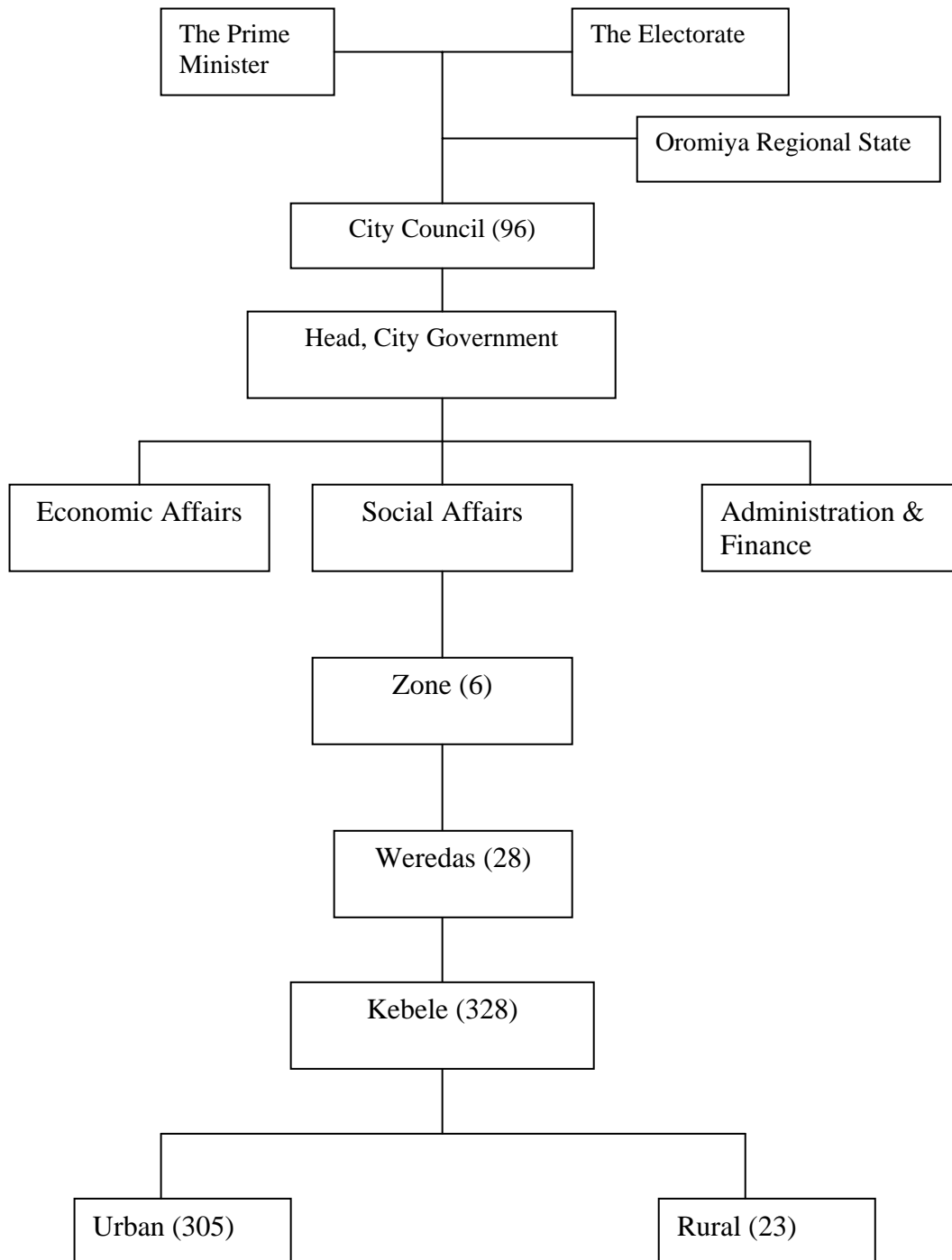
## *APPENDICES*

# APPENDIX I

Appendix 1. Map of Addis Ababa City Administration

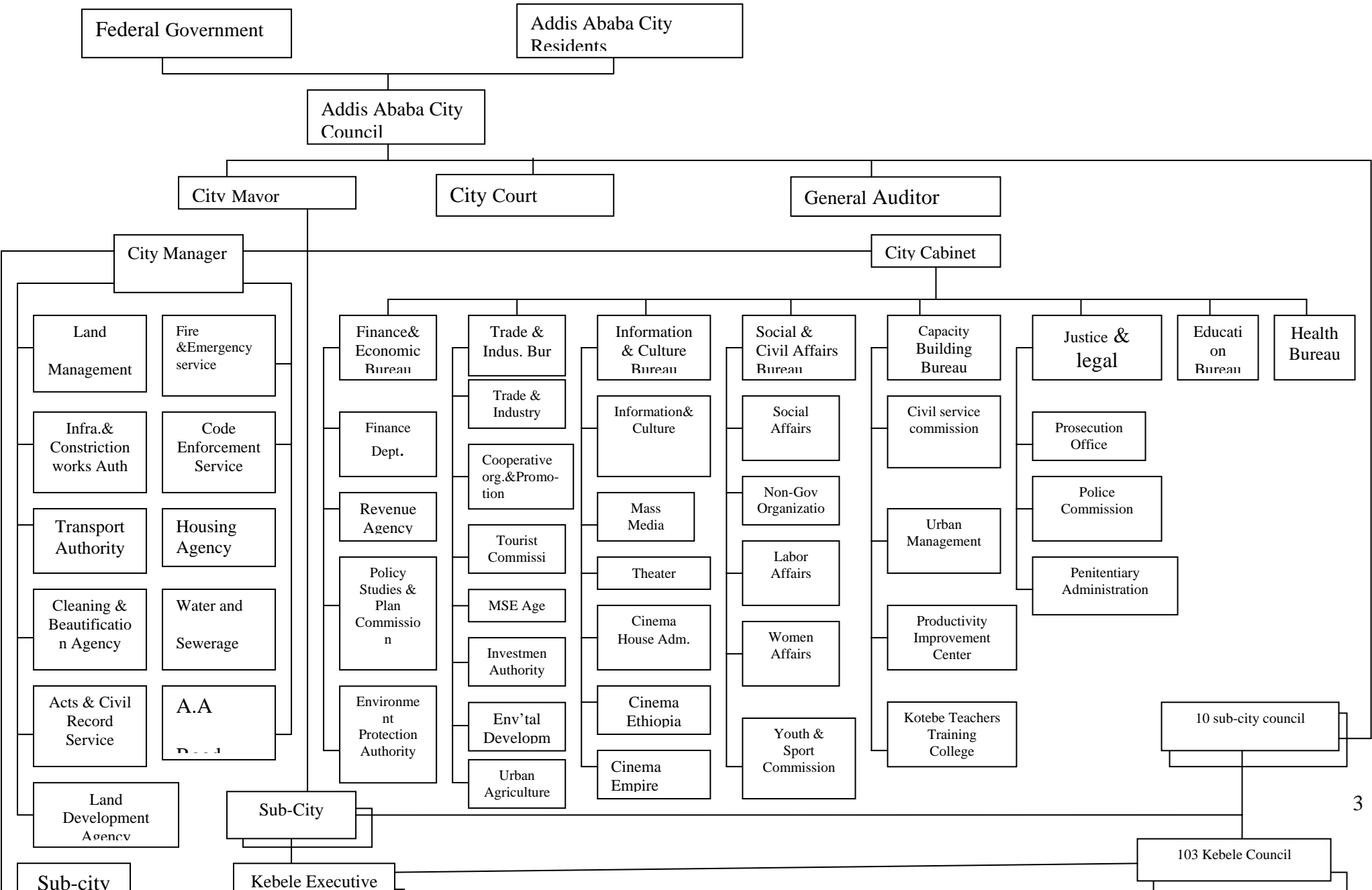


## APPENDIX II



*Organizational Structure of the City Government of Addis Ababa Prior to 2003 (Adopted from Meheret, 1999:5)*

**APPENDIX III ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE OF CITY ADMINISTRATION SINCE 2003**





**APPENDIX IV**  
**IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**4.1. INFORMAL (SELF- ENGAGED) SOLID WASTE COLLECTORS**

*I. PERSONAL INFORMATION*

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Educational background
4. Organization
5. Position
6. Service year

*II. LIVED EXPERIENCE*

1. What did you do before you engage in solid waste collection?
2. How did you start solid waste collection?
3. Why do you engage in solid waste collection system? What is your motivation?
4. Have you received any training on solid waste collection?
5. For how long have you engaged in solid waste collection?
6. What are the positive and the negative aspects of solid waste collection?
7. Do you intend to stay in this job? Why do you do (think) so? Have you other objectives (options)?

*III. INTERVENTION AND AGENCY*

1. What was the situation of waste collection before the coming of the new government based waste collectors? Would you compare it with the existing situation?
  - Working condition?
  - Collection system?
  - How it was organized socially and geographically?
2. What do you think about the reason why the government started new form solid waste collection?
3. Did the city government negotiate with the self –engaged waste collectors before introducing the government based solid waste collectors?

4. How do you feel about the newly government introduced actors in the collection system? (What is the meaning of the coming of the new government based waste collectors?)
5. How do you view the coming of new government based waste collectors in the waste management? Do you see them as a threat or partner?
6. Have you a permanent waste collecting ward? How do you delineate and maintain your territoriality? Have you faced any conflict? What are the sources of the conflict and how do you resolve it?
7. How do the present process of waste collection system emerge (evolve)?
8. Do you consider the government as a facilitator or impediment for your activity?
9. Have you received any kind of incentive from the government? If so, what kind of supports/incentives (legal, economic and otherwise) have you received?
10. Have you done anything to get institutional legitimacy? If so, what kind of efforts have you made?
11. How do you operate after the coming of government organized waste collectors?
12. Do you have any contact and/or relationship with the government based waste collectors? If so, what kind of relationship does exist? (*Have you a competitive, conflict or a cooperative relationship with the government based waste collectors? On what aspects do you compete and/or cooperate with the government based waste collectors?*)
13. Do you want to stay in the self organized waste collection activity? Why do so?
14. Do the employment situation is stable? Why is it so?
15. How do you sustain\compete with the government based waste collectors (*E.g: lowering the collection fee, increasing the frequency of collection, rendering subsidiary/additional services, tendency to occupy lower income areas*)?
16. What mechanisms do you use so as to compete with other solid waste collectors? What are the mechanisms that you devise to do so? Do you provide additional services in order to attract/sustain clients? What supplementary services do you provide?
17. What will you do if the government based solid waste collectors intrude into your waste collection ward?
18. Do the employment situation is more stable (low turn over rates)?

#### IV. ORGANIZATION AND INTERFACE

1. Have you any umbrella organization? What is the name of the organization? How this organization is formed and function (budget, staff, legal status....)?
2. Have you a network and organization (formally or informally) that coordinates waste collection? Who organized it? And what kind of roles does it have? How does it function (contribution from members...)?
3. Have you faced any challenge from the government and/or the government based solid waste collectors? If so, what are those challenges?
4. Have there been conflicts with other collectors (formal and/or informal)? What are the sources of the conflicts and how these disputes have been solved?
5. Have you been affected by the introduction of government based waste collectors? How and why is it so?
6. What are the actual and potential threats to your activity?
7. What are the actual and potential benefits in place?
8. What kind of relationship do you have with the local government (e.g. beautification, sanitation and parks development agency, sub-city, *kebele*)?
9. How do you establish relationship/contact with the households (customers)?

#### V. GENERAL

1. Do you think that the waste collection service offered by the self engaged waste collectors is more preferable by the clients? Why and how is it so?
2. What makes your type of collection system better?
3. How did and by whom the waste collection wards distributed to you? How big is it (number of clients)? Have you faced any territorial conflict with the formal, informal waste collectors and/or any other organization? How do you resolve it?
4. How much do you charge? How do you arrange the payments? Do you work on monthly salary basis or earn based on the number of clients from which wastes are collected?
5. How often do you collect wastes from your customers? Is it on regular basis or otherwise (per request of the clients)? How many customers do you serve?
6. Where do you dispose the wastes you have collected? Who transport the waste to the final dump site? Do you pay for such services?
7. Do both the formal and informal sectors are working together or one is replacing one another?

8. Who are the actors involved directly and/or indirectly (invisibly) behind the government intervention?
9. Is there any recent development (change) which is different from what has been done?

## **4.2. FORMAL SOLID WASTE COLLECTORS**

### *I. PERSONAL INFORMATION*

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Educational background
4. Organization
5. Position
6. Service year

### *II. LIVED EXPERIENCES*

1. What did you do before you engaged in solid waste collection?
2. How did you start waste collection?
3. Have you received any training on solid waste collection?
4. What is your initiation (motivation)?
5. How long do you do waste collection?
6. Do you like your job? Why do you think so?
7. Do you continue in this job? Why do you do so?
8. Do the employment situation is more stable (low turn over rates)?

### *III. ORGANIZATION AND INTERFACE*

1. Have you any organization that coordinates waste collection? What is the name of the organization? How this organization is formed and function (budget, staff, legal status....)? What kind of benefits do you receive from the organization?
2. Who organize and coordinate the formal solid waste collectors?
3. How and by whom did you recruit for solid waste collection (youth association, officials, friends...)?
4. How did you get authorization?

5. Who are the actors involved directly and/or indirectly (invisibly) behind the government intervention?
6. How do you organized in the structural hierarchy of the administrative chain of the city administration?
7. Do you have any linkage with the informal solid waste collection? What kind of linkage, networks and relationship do you have with the informal solid waste collectors?
8. Do you have a conflict with the informal solid waste collectors over? On what aspect do you enter into dispute (E.g: resources, meaning and institutional legitimacy)? How do you resolve such disputes?
9. Who was serving your current waste collection ward? How did you obtain (secure) the ward?
10. Was there any reaction from the informal solid waste collectors, clients and if any due to your emergence?
11. How did and by whom the waste collection wards distributed to you? How big is it (number of clients)? Have you faced any territorial conflict with the informal, formal waste collectors and/or any other organization? How do you resolve it?
12. How do you see the informal waste collectors? Do you believe that they are threats or partner? Why and how do so? In what aspects they do so?
13. How did you get into contact with the clients (letter from administrative bodies, they had been told by the officials...)?
14. Do both the formal and informal sectors are working together? Or does one replace the other?

#### *IV. GENERAL*

1. Do you think that the waste collection service offered by you is more preferable by the households? How and why is it so?
2. What makes the formal waste collectors more preferable than the informal waste collection?
3. What mechanisms do you use so as to compete with other solid waste collectors? What are the mechanisms that you devise to do so? Do you provide additional services in order to attract/sustain the competitions? What are the supplementary services?
4. What are the actual and potential threats to your activity?

5. What are the actual and potential benefits in place?
6. How much do you charge? How do you arrange the payments? Do you think that the payment you request is fair? Why is it so?
7. Are you working on monthly salary basis or as per the number of clients you gave service?
8. Where do you dispose the waste that you have collected? Who transport the waste to the final dump site? Do you pay for such services?
9. How often do you collect waste from the clients? Is it based on permanent schedule or is it on per request of the clients?
10. Do both actors are working side-by-side? Or does one eliminate the other?

### **4.3. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

#### *I. PERSONAL INFORMATION*

1. Organization
2. Position
3. Service year

#### *II. GENERAL*

1. Who are the major actors involved in solid waste collection (public, private formal and informal, NGOs...)?
2. When and how do you introduce the formal solid waste collectors (Small enterprises)? What was the intention (reason) for organizing (reorganizing) a new solid waste collectors?
3. What was the situation of waste collection before the government intervention?
4. How the new waste collectors are integrated into the solid waste management?
5. How the waste collectors are recruited?
6. Is there any policy, proclamation and/or guideline for organizing and introducing the formal solid waste collectors?
7. Has the situation of the informal solid waste collectors been considered in the reorganization process? How and why is it so?
8. How various formal and informal waste collecting actors organize themselves around the problem of solid waste management?

9. Who are involved behind the intervention of the reorganization process (NGOs, International organizations...)? Which institutions helped in the designing and implementation of the policy intervention? If so, in what way they are involved? (World Bank, IMF, UNEP, PRSP...)
10. What is the effect of the introduction of the formal waste collectors (intervention) on the efficiency of solid waste collection? How and why is it so? (*From the perspective of attaining the intended goals and objectives*)
11. Does the introduction of the formal sector create employment opportunity (Please mention figures...)? To what extent the employees are stable in their job (turn over)? Why and how is it so?
12. How the formal and informal waste collectors are integrated into the administrative organization hierarchy of the city government (Sub-city and *Kebele*) in general and the Sanitation, beatification and parks development agency in particular?
13. What problems were encountered during the introduction of the formal waste collectors (E.g.: with informal, clients, other actors...)
14. To what extent the existing policy environment is enabling the actors (particularly informal and formal waste collecting actors) performance? How and in what aspects it does so?
15. What is the role of the agency in solid waste collection? What kind of assistance do you offer for solid waste collectors (formal, informal...)?
16. What can be done to improve the waste collection service (efficiency, job opportunity....)?
17. Do the informal and formal solid waste collectors work side- by- side or is it one replacing (engulfing) the other? How and why it does so?
18. Is the process of the reform will continue or will there be any new development?
19. Is there any new development?

**APPEDIX V**  
**PHOTO ALBUM**



*Plate.1. Employees from private formal solid waste collecting enterprise picking waste from one of their client's backyard. They have a direct contact with the waste since they did not have safety equipments and dressings.*



*Plate.2. Waste collectors from private formal enterprise while conducting house-to-house collections. This collector is perhaps the one I had ever met with proper safety equipments.*





*Plate.3. Waste collection also involves cross-examination of their clients list from a ledger*



*Plate.4. Waste collectors heading towards a near by municipal container*



*Plate.5. Members of an informal enterprise engaged in street sweepings. This may be a typical example for the blurred divide between the formal and informal sector*



*Plate.6. An employee of a private informal sanitation service after emptying his cart.*



*Plate.7. Waste collected by enterprises waiting at temporary station to be re-collected and transported by the municipal trucks to the final destination.*



*Plate.8. Containers are not often emptied on time which litters their immediate surroundings*



Plate.9.Containers are not obviously monitored and collected



Plate.10. The carts used for solid waste collection



*Plate.11. Members of Godana Sanitation Service Cooperative after a focus group discussion held in their office*