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We Are Still Strangers: How Institutional Differences Impact Participatory Development Success

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Abstract

This thesis questions why participatory development programs fail. This thesis argues that institutional differences - divergent established and organized norms or rules that govern groups of people - persist within and disrupt the relationship between development actors and participants. Therefore, the greater the degree of institutional differences held between development actors and local participants, the greater the likelihood that the participatory development program will fail to fully empower it's participants. This prediction is tested in case study analyses of two participatory development projects in Ethiopia: Participatory Forest Management (PFM) pilot projects implemented in the Bonga and Chilimo forests by Farm Africa, a U.K. based development organization, and the Pastoral Community Development Project (PCDP), run by the country's Ministry of Federal Affairs (MoFA). This thesis finds that the PFM pilot projects failed to fully empower forest-dependent communities as the result of large institutional differences between Farm Africa and the communities in question. On the other hand, small institutional differences between the MoFA and pastoral communities lead to the successful empowerment of pastoralists at the conclusion of the PCDP. These findings demonstrate that institutional differences between development actors and local participants are ultimately a contributing causal factor to participatory development failure.

1. Introduction

Participatory development was theorized in the 1960s and 1970s as a new approach to international development work. The approach was first introduced in recognition of the knowledge, skills, and resources locals in developing communities held and could contribute to predominantly Western-led development projects (Chambers 1994a; Chambers 1994b). Robert Chambers, a pioneer in the field, was a firm believer that because of their insight and know-how, locals should be actively involved, and eventually in control over, the design, implementation, and evaluation of development programs (Chambers 1994a).

It wasn't until the 1990s that participatory development methods were widely adopted by big-name development organizations, such as the World Bank. Decades of projects and billions of dollars in aid abroad had yielded little results. By 1990, low-income regions still exhibited extremely high poverty rates with relatively high population growth rates (Easterly 2007; World

Bank DataBank 1990). Switching to 'participatory' processes, provided development organizations with a renewed chance at changing these trends, as well as a publicity boost to their now 'inclusive' operations. Development work shifted from solely striving to meet basic needs (income growth, literacy rates, etc.) to broader goals of empowerment. This meant positioning developing communities as autonomous decision makers, as well as participants, in their own projects.

The widespread implementation of such approaches coincided with an extreme reduction in poverty and birth rates in low income countries throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Between 1990 and 2013, poverty rates dropped by 56% in East Asia and the Pacific, by 30% in South Asia, and by 13% in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank 2017). And yet, in light of these gains and the common incorporation of participatory development mandates and practices by development actors, global poverty rates remain significant. In 2017, 45.6% of the low-income country populations still lived on less than $1.90 USD a day (World Bank DataBank 2017). On closer inspection, reports produced by the World Bank reveal new problems resulting from participatory approaches, such as increased inequality and the elite capture of goods and services (Mansuri and Rao 2013). So while participatory development changed the way the world thinks about, presents, and practices development, there are still many shortfalls to its theory and execution. By consequence, poverty, social inequality, and political marginalization continue to plague many developing communities.

In light of these realities, this thesis explores why participatory development programs are unsuccessful and in doing so attempts to determine what differentiates successful and unsuccessful participatory development programs. This thesis is not the first to dive into these questions. Many development scholars, practitioners, and organizations have critiqued participatory development methods, calling out their poor operationalization in the field, their failure to tackle structural impediments to empowerment, their misinterpretation as ‘blind faith’ initiatives, their misuse as publicity stunts, and their failure to reconcile cultural differences. However, a severely under-tested critique is whether or not participatory development projects are able to conciliate institutional differences - divergent established and organized norms or rules that govern groups of people - that may exist between development actor and participant.

Countless historical and anthropological works shed light on contrasting institutions that govern various societies. For example, Paul Bohannan’s (1955) study of exchange systems in Northern Nigeria among the Tiv community notes that there are multiple spheres of exchange (subsistence goods, wealth goods, and prestige goods) that are not interconvertible. The Tiv’s economic institutions greatly contrasts those of America, under which cash (modern currencies) act as a unicentric holder of value, allowing for all goods and services to be interconvertible. If an American development organization had launched a participatory project in 1955 in Northern Nigeria, American development practitioners, who operated under monetized transactions, would have worked with Eastern New Guineans or Nigerians, who operated under non-monetized transactions. Knowing these institutional differences existed, would the project have succeeded? Do projects today, in which institutional differences exist, have a lower or greater chance of success than projects in which no institutional differences exist?

This thesis argues that participatory development programs fail to reconcile institutional differences on a value level between development actors. This argument is based on the assumption that institutions are not only operating rules and norms that govern societies, but also inherent values or beliefs that dictate a person’s behavior in relation to others (Dolfsma and Verbug 2016; Hodgson 2006). Participatory methods, such as community forums, group consultations, or local surveys, are ineffective in flushing out such values. As a result, development actors and participants do not discuss or rectify the differences that may exist between their respective institutional values. Based on this theory, this thesis stipulates that the greater the degree of institutional differences between two development actors, the lower the probability of program success, measured in the context of participatory development as community empowerment.

To test the proposed argument, this thesis analyzes institutional differences in regards to property rights regimes in two participatory development case studies in Ethiopia. The first case study focuses on the Participatory Forest Management (PFM) pilot projects run in the Chilimo and Bonga forests of Ethiopia in 1995 by Farm Africa. This case study represents the 'most likely' case to observe different property rights regimes between the two actors - Farm Africa, a U.K.-based NGO, and the forest-dependent communities in Ethiopia, who live in a state that was never formally colonized, and thus had low historic exposure to Western economic institutions. This paper expects that institutional differences between the two parties prevented Farm Africa from fully empowering the forest-dependent communities in question. The second case study looks at the Ethiopia Pastoral Community Development Project (PCDP), which was implemented by the Ethiopian Ministry of Federal Affairs (MoFA) from 2003-2018. This case represents the 'least likely' case to observe different property rights regimes between the two actors - the Ethiopian MoFA and Ethiopian pastoral communities, both of which developed their institutions in similar political, economic, and social environments. This paper predicts that the lack of institutional differences between the two parties helped the MoFA empower the pastoral communities in question. The results of the two case studies satisfy both of these predictions.

This thesis hopes that the results from these analyses will help improve current participatory development practices.[1] This paper strives to amplify anthropologic calls to recognize and understand the operation of and values attached to non-Western economic institutions, such as property rights regimes, particularly in the context of international development programs. It is only through the acknowledgment and incorporation of such institutional values that participatory approaches can effectively address local needs and empower local communities.

Moving forward, this thesis is divided into eight sections. Section II reviews previous literature that attempt to answer why participatory development programs are unsuccessful. Sections III and IV outline the distinct theoretical framework and methods implored in this thesis, regarding institutional differences, to answer the same question. Section V introduces the case studies and institutional differences that are apparent in each, while section VI and VII analyze and present results for case studies one and two respectively. Finally, section VIII provides concluding remarks on the findings of this thesis and recommendations for future participatory development programs.

2. Literature Review

As a discipline that prides itself on self-criticism and constant evolution, participatory development boasts a substantial legacy of literary critiques. Within this literature there are four primary camps of critique: operational, structural, definitional and relational.

The first camp, operational, denotes criticisms of how participatory development is

[1] This thesis will not attempt to comment on or discuss the ethical debates surrounding participatory development, or the international development apparatus in general. This thesis acknowledges the theoretical and potential practical benefits to participatory development, and hopes to contribute to the improvement of current development practices.

actually exercised in the field. These criticisms call attention to areas in which participatory development, when put in practice, falls short of its idealized, theoretical form. These critiques can also be seen as cosmetic, since they aim to tweak or enhance pre-existing methods, rather than re-envision whole participatory development approaches. Finally, this camp reflects a "first look" by development scholars and practitioners at participatory development in practice.

Robert Chambers provides some of the most prominent critiques on the facilitation of these methods. When participatory development approaches first became widespread, Chambers (1994b, p. 1441) warned of the "instant fashion" of participatory development that could lead to rushed practices, standardized methods, and routinized applications. The normalization of participatory development operations, in many cases, rids the approach of its complexity and creativity (Chambers 1994b, pp. 1441-1442). The performances of development practitioners have come under similar scrutiny, with concerns that they are unable to set aside their personal biases towards local knowledge and conditions (Chambers 1994a, p. 1266). This has led to the appropriation of local knowledge by development practitioners (Chambers 1994a, p. 1266; Mohan 2001, pp. 153-168). Finally, Chambers (1994a, p. 1266) worried that participatory development approaches would not reach the vulnerable populations they were intended to empower, most notably women, children, and the poor. The failure to incorporate vulnerable groups in participatory frameworks and the subsequent elite-capture of benefits greatly impedes the success of participatory development (Chambers 1994a, p. 1266).

Many development organizations echo these operational critiques to improve upon their own applications of participatory development methods. A prominent criticism from this vein is the inability of participatory programs to adapt to diverse local contexts, despite this being a trademark of participatory development approaches (Mansuri and Rao 2013). Organization reports similarly call on participatory programs to be better prepared for lengthy timelines and unpredictable project trajectories (Mansuri and Rao 2013).

While many of these critiques have been instrumental in fine-tuning the implementation of participatory approaches, some argue that error exists at a deeper, structural level within the discipline. This is where structural critiques step into the literature. Differing greatly from the operational camp, structural critics question the theory behind participatory development. They often seek to re-envision participatory approaches to be more political and revolutionary (Nelson and Wright 1995, pp. 2-10).

A prominent critique within this camp is that participatory development approaches do not affect substantial change. While individuals or communities may experience improved material conditions through participatory programs, they are not actually empowered (Gaventa 2004, pp. 25-39; Williams 2004, pp. 92-104). Within this same vein, participation in of itself does not equate to empowerment (Williams 2004, p. 98). Individuals and communities still have little choice in and ability to change the long-term trajectories of their personal and communal well-being (Nelson and Wright 2005, pp. 2-10; Gaventa 2004, pp. 25-39; Williams 2004, pp. 92-104). The larger political, economic and social structures that first created and have since maintained conditions of disempowerment and underdevelopment are still intact (Nelson and Wright 1995, pp. 2-10; Kothari 2001, pp. 139-152). According to this critique, participatory development programs not only affect little change, they also actively "disempower locals by prohibiting them from challenging and confronting...structures that disadvantage them" (Kothari 2001, pp. 139-152).

To intervene in, disrupt, and change these predominating structures, participatory development must be re-centered as a political and revolutionary undertaking (Kothari 2001, pp.

139-152; Williams 2004, pp. 92-104). Traditional local and national hierarchies of power must first be explored to understand where power derives from, how it is exercised, and what its impact is, in order to effectively challenge it (Nelson and Wright 1995, pp. 2-10; Chambers 1995, pp. 30-42; Kothari 2001, pp. 139-152). Power must also be reimagined at micro levels and in decentralized environments, to thwart unconventional, but equally disempowering, power hierarchies (Kothari 2001, pp. 139-152). Likewise, within participatory development methods themselves, power structures must be deconstructed so that decisions in participatory forums are not manipulated by elites or majority groups (Cooke 2001, pp. 102-121). Once these modes of power are brought to light, then participatory development approaches can begin to break down and rebuild them. Participatory practices can help insert historically marginalized individuals and groups into governance structures, as well as increase the legitimacy and reception of citizen's voices in politics (Gaventa 2004, pp. 25-39; Williams 2004, pp. 92-104).

As with the structural camp, definitional critiques challenge the theory behind participatory approaches; however, these critiques do so through the reinterpretation and extension of core terms within the discipline. For example, participation is intended to denote processes that consult and involve individuals in their own development. Critics, however, argue that the term "participation" is now used solely to legitimize the work of international development organizations and to secure future funding (Mosse 2001, pp. 16-34; Hildyard et al. 2001, p. 59). "Participation" has therefore devolved from a development approach to a common commodity (Mosse 2001, pp. 16-34). Other scholars argue that "participation" is used as "an act of [blind] faith" - as long as participatory methods are exercised, locals will benefit and the development project will be successful (Cleaver 2001, pp. 36-55). In both cases, scholars call for development organizations and practitioners to return to the revolutionary definition of participation as a process towards local empowerment and democratization (Mosse 2001, pp. 16-34; Cleaver 2001, pp. 36-55).

The concepts of "empowerment" and "community" are also widely questioned within the literature. In terms of "empowerment", criticisms stem from the fact that symbolic empowerment often replaces transformative or structural empowerment in participatory practices (Hildyard et al. 2001, pp. 56-71). Individuals participate in project meetings and are consulted throughout the project process, however, outside of the project, the political, economic, and social positions of these individuals remain largely unchanged (Hildyard et al. 2001, pp. 56-71; Cleaver 2001, pp. 36-55). This dilemma introduces further questions of how to define and measure empowerment (Hildyard et al. 2001, pp. 56-71). Another debate within this literature is who should be empowered through participatory methods - all individuals that participate or specific, targeted groups that often represent the most vulnerable in society (Cleaver 2001, p. 37)?

"Community" is a term loosely used throughout development literature to denote "natural social entities" that are homogenous (Cleaver 2001, p. 44). It is assumed that communities are easily identifiable and neatly bounded geographically, socially and administratively (Cleaver 2001, p. 45). However, this is rarely the case in reality. Particularly within post-colonial states, communities are diverse, loosely structured and abstractedly governed areas. Reducing them to analogous units, prevents participatory development approaches from understanding and engaging with the complex histories and institutions that make up developing communities (Cleaver 2001, pp. 36-55). Many scholars call for rescaling participatory practices beyond the traditional scope of the locality, as well as reinventing public spaces for participation (Cornwall 2004, pp. 75-91).

The final camp of critiques in participatory development literature narrows in on the dynamics between international development organizations and local communities. Relational critiques try to understand what goes wrong in these relationships. One of the most prominent arguments in this camp is that cultural differences between international development actors and developing communities impede productive collaboration and participatory processes (Hailey 2001, pp. 88-100). For example, Southeast Asian societies are governed by “group relations”, including “kinship ties, personal relationships, and connections” (Hailey 2001, pp. 88-100). These collective networks, however, would seem “alien” to Western-based development organizations and practitioners, who contrastingly value individualism (Hailey 2001, pp. 88-100). Western-based development programs in Southeast Asian communities, would consequently suffer from cultural dissonance between the two actors and their differing social values.

Another critique within this camp is that international development organizations impart their own internal social and power hierarchies onto local communities when implementing their programs (Hildyard et al. 2001, pp. 56-68). This criticism necessitates a revaluation of how the internal workings and cultures of international development organizations may “discourage the receptivity, flexibility, patience, open-mindedness, non-defensiveness, humour, curiosity and respect” that is expected to occur within and through participatory development practices (Hildyard et al. 2001 p. 56-68).

This thesis intervenes within the relational camp of critiques to extend pre-existing cultural difference arguments brought forward by Hailey (2001) and Hildyard et al. (2001). This thesis explores institutional differences, a type of cultural difference, that exist between international participatory development actors and the local communities they operate in, and the impact these differences have on participatory programs. Institutions, in the context of this thesis, are defined as the established and organized norms or rules that govern groups of people (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012).

Throughout development literature, scholars have hinted at institutional differences that exist between Western and non-Western societies. Frances Cleaver's scholarly work stresses the necessary recognition and inclusion of informal, as well as formal institutions in participatory development frameworks and programs (Cleaver 2001, pp. 36-53). She notices that there is a "tendency in development literature to recognize the importance of social and informal institutions, but nevertheless to concentrate on the analysis of formal institutions" (Cleaver 2001, p. 40). This concentration on formal systems, such as contracts and property rights, she argues reaffirms a "blindness to historical and social contexts," causing participatory development practitioners and methods to "overlook the numerous communal activities that occur through daily interactions and socially embedded arrangements" (Cleaver 2001, pp. 40-53).

Examples of international development's "blindness" to local contexts that Cleaver warns of are abundant in anthropological works. James Ferguson, in his 1994 book *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*, explores development programs in Lesotho, implemented by British development agencies during the 1970s and 1980s. He demonstrates that these development initiatives assumed that the economy of Lesotho was an "aboriginal economy", based on subsistence farming, and constituent of a "peasant society", isolated from modern markets (Ferguson 1994). These conditions necessitated the introduction of formal, modern institutions, such as formal currencies and private property rights (Ferguson 1994). These assumptions and subsequent actions, however, ignored the informal, yet rather developed and complex, economic and social institutions that existed in Lesotho, such as the country's labor migration and remittance relationship with South Africa and rural livestock markets (Ferguson 1994). The disconnect between British development initiatives and local realities in Lesotho resulted in the failure of the development programs and the rise of unintended effects on the country's economy (Ferguson 1994).

While Cleaver and Ferguson's works recognize the importance of informal institutions in developing countries and communities, and the consequences that come from ignoring these institutions in development work, no substantial evaluation exists on whether or not the existence of institutional differences, between development actors and developing communities, is a contributing causal factor to participatory development failure. This thesis sets out to provide one such evaluation in the hopes of further informing and improving on international participatory development practices. The other camps of critique listed above will serve as alternative explanations to this study.

3. Theoretical Framework

As previously stated, this thesis analyzes the institutional differences that often exist between international participatory development actors and the local communities they operate in, to determine if and how these differences impact the success of participatory programs. Borrowing from Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson's (2012) work, this thesis defines institutions as the established and organized norms or rules that govern groups of people (pp. 42-43). Institutions can be legally, as well as socially and culturally formed and cemented over time, proving to be rather sticky (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012, pp. 36-38). Examples of institutions include economic institutions - property rights regimes and laws securing freedoms to exchange and to contract - and political institutions - written constitutions and electoral systems (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012, pp. 42, 75).

Economic institutions, in general, are considered key determinants of development (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012). As organizing structures, they help “create order and reduce uncertainty in exchange,” “reduc[ing] transaction and production costs,” safeguarding individual or private profits, and thereby incentivizing economic trade and productivity within a society or states (Acemoglu and Johnson 2003; North 1990; North 1991, pp. 97-98). The specific economic institution that will be studied in this thesis are property rights. Property rights are defined as allowing an individual or group ownership over an object, land, or resource (Baye 2018). These rights can encourage investment in physical and human capital, and therefore lead to greater productivity and economic growth (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001). They are therefore crucial tools and determinants for development (Acemoglu and Johnson 2003; Acemoglu and Robinson 2012).

Institutions, including property rights, are non-homogenous and vary greatly across states and societies. As an example, Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) distinguish between inclusive institutions, which encourage public participation and allow freedom of choice in economic activities, and exclusive institutions, which contrastingly “extract incomes and wealth from one subset of society to benefit a different subset,” to explain uneven global development (pp. 74-76). Many other works differentiate institutions based on their degree of formality, denoting the realm in which the institutions were formed and are exercised in (public versus private). This leads to the distinction between formal institutions - political constraints on behavior, centrally enforced by the law - and informal institutions - “private constraints stemming from norms, culture, and customs that emerge spontaneously...not designed or enforced by the government” (Williamson 2009, p. 327). A final example of the different classifications of institutions involves contracting and property rights institutions - “institutions that [secure] private contracts” and institutions that “constrain government and elite appropriation” (Acemoglu and Johnson 2003, p. 1). This distinction further clarifies two distinct ways in which institutions impact individual behaviors and economic relationships. These three example categorizations of institutions demark what this thesis terms as ‘institutional differences’ - divergent established and organized norms or rules that govern groups of people - at an operational level, meaning they are differentiated based on how they operate within a state or society.

In the context of property rights, this paper highlights three distinct types of property rights regimes: private, communal, and state-owned. By definition, institutional differences at an operational level exist between these three regimes based on who is afforded direct control over property - select individuals or groups, non-exclusive communities, and the government. This thesis, however, will further delineate these property rights regimes by the rights each regime affords/does not afford to individuals and communities (Schlager and Olstrom 1992). These rights include: the right to access (to enter a property), the right of withdrawal (to use or remove a resource from a property), the right to management (“to regulate internal use” of a property), the right to exclusion (“to determine who [has] access” to a property), and the right to alienation (“to sell or lease” a property) (Schlager and Olstrom 1992, pp. 250-251). The greater the number of these rights (afforded/not afforded) two parties hold in common, the lower the operational institutional differences between the two regime types. On the other hand, the lower the number of property rights two parties hold in common, the greater the operational institutional differences between the two regime types.

Acknowledging these institutional differences, development programs create unique spaces in which development actors bring in or carry over institutions (systems of property governance) into developing states or communities where local institutions already exist. This provides the opportunity for different institutions (property rights regimes) to meet, resulting in the operation, and hopeful rectification, of operational institutional differences (private/communal/government property rights regimes). Participatory development programs in particular, are lauded for their design and ability to reconcile these institutional differences that may exist between development actors and participants.

This thesis argues, however, that participatory development programs fail to rectify institutional differences at a value level, meaning that institutions are not only operational tools that organize and govern societies, but innate values that individuals, communities, and even societies internalize, habituate, and therefore act on (Dolfsma and Verbug 2016; Hodgson 2006). As Hodgson (2006) writes, "...institutions are simultaneously both objective structures 'out there' and subjective springs of human agency 'in the human head' (p. 8). In fact, the operational institutions that more outwardly structure states and societies can be seen as the product of individual agencies and behaviors that are socialized over time (Hodgson 2006). For example, in the U.S., a private property rights regime was adopted from English common law and legally protected as a governing economic institution in the 13th century under the Magna Carta (Ely 2007). Since the operationalization of private property rights in 1215, however, the belief that private ownership of property is a "natural right" has been disseminated and internalized throughout the past 806 years (Ely 2007, p. 17). By consequence, private property rights are now held by Americans as a governing value, equated to a man's right to liberty or freedom. This paper therefore assumes that if institutional differences exist at the operational level within a relationship, they also exist, and thus govern, at a value level.

Therefore in the context of participatory development programs, international development actors (organizations and their staff) also bring in or carry over governing values, not just governing systems, as they work with local individuals, communities, and governments in the developing world, who already hold their own governing values. Assuming that international development actors and their local co-participants take their governing values (institutional values) as given, participatory workshops, meetings, and other collaborative forums remain unsuccessful in reconciling value-based institutional differences across states and societies. Ultimately, degrees of tension and disconnect persist between development actors and their local co-participants, preventing successful collaboration between the two parties despite the intention of participatory frameworks to allow foreigners and locals to share information, knowledge, and resources.

Having established institutional differences at the value level, this thesis pulls in theory from organizational effectiveness literature to identify three ways differences in values (property rights) can adversely impact relationships between international development organizations and the local communities they operate in, and consequently hinder the success of participatory development programs. First, the mere existence of different institutional values between the two parties implies that their relationship is built upon fundamental misunderstandings, in this case regarding how to govern their states or societies (Morris et al. 1998, pp. 730, 741). Since the institution in question is property rights, these misunderstandings will most likely center around who is or should be afforded what property rights. The thesis expects these misunderstandings to uniquely impact participatory development programs at both the initial program design level, where development organizations and local communities set their agendas, and at the implementation level, where development practitioners and locals set about achieving their program goals. At the program design level, the goals of the two parties may not align - different individuals are afforded different property rights (Jehn et al. 1999, p. 745). At the implementation level, misunderstandings can result in the rise of disagreements or even conflicts between foreign practitioners and locals over what authority property rights are redistributed through (Jehn et al. 1999, p. 745). Ultimately, these results would demonstrate that different governing values between international development organizations and the local communities they operate in will stifle cooperation in participatory forums and practices.

Second, institutional differences that are laid into development actor-participant relations may significantly impact the ability of foreign development practitioners and program designers to effectively and accurately operate in participatory programs. This is based on the assumption that when development practitioners go to work in a community in a foreign state, they are entering an unfamiliar institutional environment - a space in which individuals hold different values from their own about how their societies are governed. In the case of this thesis, foreign practitioners will be unaccustomed to the distinct property rights locals value. At the program design level, institutional differences may cause program designers to be less accurate in accounting for how their plans will impact the local communities they are operating in. At the implementation level, development practitioners will not be as attuned to how their actions address local needs and impact local community members when operating in an unfamiliar institutional environment. Inaccuracies at both of these levels can result in shortfalls in program goals (both short-term and long-term), as well as unintended program side-effects, which can positively or negatively impact the local community in question.

Third, in arenas, such as community meetings, where value-based institutional differences between foreign practitioners and local community members most directly interact, there is an increased chance that local voices will be indirectly silenced. If disagreements arise due to different governing values (property rights), it is easier for foreign practitioners to supersede the ideas of locals, than to work out messy and time-intensive entanglements. Foreign practitioners have the ability and agency to override locals in these scenarios because of the historic and present hierarchies that have been constructed and exist between developed (Western) and developing (non-Western) states (Hildyard et al. 2001, pp. 56-68). This sidelining of local voices in participatory development programs can result in the failure to meet local needs, marking an ultimate development defeat.

Assuming that value-based institutional differences are sticky and noting these various ways in which these institutional differences can adversely impact participatory programs, this thesis further contends that the degree of value-based institutional differences held between international development actors and local participants stands to greatly impact the probability of success of the programs. The greater the degree of value-based institutional differences held between the two parties, the more pronounced the above challenges will be in a participatory development program. Therefore, the greater the degree of value-based institutional differences held between international development actors and local participants, the greater the likelihood that the participatory development program will fail. The lower the degree of value-based institutional differences held between international actors and local participants, the lower the probability that the program will fail. Institutional differences between development actors and local participants, is ultimately a contributing causal factor to participatory development failure. In the following sections, this thesis sets out to operationalize and test the theories above, with the hope of further informing and improving on international participatory development practices.

4. Methods

4.1. Case Study Selections

The two case studies in which these mechanisms will be analyzed through both operated in Ethiopia. A single country of study was chosen for the case studies to control for country level factors that may also impact the success of participatory development programs. Such factors include state regime type, national levels of development, and geography or climate. Ethiopia, more specifically, was chosen because it is one of only two African states to have never been formally colonized by a Western power. It has consequently been able to develop its own economic institutions, relatively separate from Western or colonial influences (Bedasso 2017, p. 194). The country also has a rich history of participatory development work, both internationally and locally led. The case studies in question, which are outlined in detail below, have substantial academic, journalistic and professional work written about them, including organizational reports, news articles, and scholarly evaluations. As a result, there is a wide breadth of material to use for this paper's analysis. Within Ethiopia, the case studies center on two particular regional states in the country - the Oromia region and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' (SNNP) region. A regional state level of analysis is used in this study because property rights vary in Ethiopia based on regional state laws.

4.2. *Independent and Dependent Variables*

Focusing on the economic institution of property rights, the independent variable in this study is the degree of similarity of property rights regimes between the development actor in question and the local communities that the program operated in. The degrees can be measured on a 3-step scale, using the five rights identified by Schlager and Olstrom (1992) - the right to access, the right of withdrawal, the right to management, the right to exclusion, and the right to alienation. To create this scale, I first identify if the property rights regimes that govern the development organization and local community in question afford or do not afford individuals the five rights listed above.

Based on these results, I then determine if there are any matches between the five right categories of the two parties. If both of the regimes do afford the same right to individuals or groups under it, this is considered a match. Likewise, if both of the regimes do not afford the same right to individuals or groups, this is considered a match. These results are finally adopted onto a 3-step scale: 0 represents no similarities (no matches) between the two parties in their property rights regiments; 1 represents small similarities (1-2 matches) between the two parties in their property rights regiments; 2 represents large similarities (3-4 matches) between the two parties in their property rights regiments; and finally, 3 represents completely similar property rights regiments (5 matches) between the two parties.[2]

The dependent variable that stands to be impacted by these differences in property right regimes, is the relative "success" of the participatory development program. The relative success of a participatory program is defined in this thesis as the program's ability to empower local

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[2] For the example provided, the degree of similarity between the two property rights regimes would equal the value of 2, since there are 3 matches between the two regimes. This indicates small value-based institutional differences.

populations (Nelson and Wright 1995, pp. 2-5). Empowerment is defined as the opportunity and ability to make choices and gain positive results from these choices (Alsop and Heinsohn 2005; Narayan 2005). To measure empowerment, this thesis utilizes the World Bank's (2005; 2013) framework of three degrees of empowerment at the community level: (1) the existence of a choice for an community, (2) the ability for the community to act on their choice, and (3) whether or not the community is able to achieve their desired result through that choice. The first degree is the first step towards full empowerment for a community. Full empowerment is achieved when all three degrees are met.

The degree of empowerment that a participatory development program or project may achieve is dependent on two factors: a community's available agency - "actor's ability to make meaningful choices" - and a community's opportunity structures - the formal and informal institutions that govern a community's life and surrounding environment. For example, if a community has a high level of agency - is able to freely envision and make communal decisions - and favorable opportunity structures - assets that allow the community to act and capitalize on their decision - then the community is more likely to achieve a third degree of empowerment, which is equal to full empowerment. Varying levels of agency and opportunity structures help determine the degree of empowerment for a participatory program.

Considering these variables, and according to the theoretical framework proposed in the previous section, the lower the degree of property rights differences between the development actor and the developing community it is operating within, the greater the probability that individuals in the developing community achieve higher degrees of empowerment through the program.

4.3. *Hypotheses*

The first case study on PFM is assumed to represent the ‘most likely’ case study for observing stark property rights law and regiment differences - differences between Farm Africa, an international (Western) development organization, and the forest-dependent communities of the Chilimo and Bonga forests, which lie within the Oromia and SNNP regional states. For the theoretical framework of this thesis to hold, I should observe the following:

- Farm Africa and the forest-dependent communities near the Bonga and Chilimo forests shared 0 or 1-2 property rights matches, resulting in a degree of similarity value of 0 or 1. The two parties, therefore, had no value-based institutional similarities or large value-based institutional differences.
- The development goals of Farm Africa and the local communities near the Bonga and Chilimo forests, related to who is afforded what property rights, were misaligned.
- There were recorded disagreements and/or conflicts between Farm Africa practitioners and local community members regarding what authority property rights are redistributed through.
- The program fell short of achieving all of its originally mandated goals (short-term and/or long-term).
- Unintended program side-effects, that either positively or negatively impacted the local communities in question, were observed after the completion of the program.
- At the conclusion of Farm Africa’s work, the participatory development program failed to meet many local needs.

Such results lead to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis (1): Participatory development programs in which the development actor and the participating community share no similar institutions or exhibit large institutional differences will achieve a low degree of empowerment (1 or 2) for participating community members.

This thesis predicts that the differences in property rights valued by Farm Africa and its staff and forest-dependent community members adversely impacted the success of the PFM programs. In the context of this development project, a degree of empowerment of 1 represents a case in which Forest User Groups (FUGs)- "[groups of] individuals who live in and around the forests, and who organize themselves to manage the forests collectively through formal agreement with the forest department" - are successfully formed, giving individuals greater choice in how to manage forest resources; a degree of empowerment of 2 represents a situation in which the successful formation of FUGs allows locals to pursue more sustainable and economic opportunities for managing their forest resources; lastly, a degree of empowerment of 3 (full empowerment) represents a scenario in which the successful formation and implementation of FUGs, not only provides community members with increased opportunities and the ability to pursue them, it also tangibly helps preserve forest resources and provides locals with sustainable livelihoods (Tadesse et al. 2017, p. 165).

The second case study looking at the PCDP represents a 'least likely' case of observing institutional differences. Despite variation in property rights regimes on a national level, and distinctly between federal laws and regional customs, it is assumed that the differences in property rights laws and regiments practiced and valued by the Ethiopian MoFA and the pastoral communities in the Oromia and SNNP regional states were small. According to the theory proposed in the previous section, this paper expects to find the following:

- The MoFA and the pastoral communities in question shared 3-4 or 5 property rights matches, resulting in a degree of similarity value of 2 or 3. The two parties, therefore, had either small value-based institutional differences or no value-based institutional differences.
- The development goals of MoFA and the pastoral communities in question, related to who is afforded what property rights, were aligned.
- There were no or few recorded disagreements and/or conflicts between MoFA practitioners and local community members regarding what authority property rights are redistributed through.
- The program achieved all of its originally mandated goals (short-term and/or long-term).

- No unintended program side-effects were observed after the completion of the program.
- At the conclusion of the MoFA's work, the participatory development program met most, if not all local needs.

These results lead to the second hypothesis of this study:

Hypothesis (2): Participatory development programs in which the development actor and the participating community share completely similar institutions or exhibit small institutional differences will achieve a high degree of empowerment (3) for participating community members.

This thesis predicts that institutional similarities contributed to greater degrees of local empowerment at the end of the PCDP. In the context of this development project, a degree of empowerment of 1 represents the case in which individuals at the *kebele* or *woreda* level may participate and receive support from the project's participatory planning procedures, MSTs, financial investments of CIFs, and strengthened public-service delivery infrastructure, giving them greater choices for economic opportunities; a degree of empowerment of 2 represents a situation in which community members are actively participating and receiving support from each of the four sub-components of the project, providing them with greater economic opportunities and the ability to pursue these new avenues; lastly, a degree of empowerment of 3 (full empowerment) represents a scenario in which locals in the *kebeles* or *woredas* of the Oromia and SNNP regions, through their involvement in and support from each of the four sub-components of the project, were provided greater economic opportunities, had the ability to seize these opportunities, and observably improved their livelihoods as a result.

4.4. Data

Historical and anthropological accounts, as well as formal laws are used to identify the rights afforded by the property rights regimes in question and to determine the degrees of similarity between the property rights regimes in the two case studies. Organizational reports from the two development actors in question are used to determine how the two participatory development projects were implemented. Organization, third-party, and scholarly evaluations of the projects are used to assess the overall success of the projects, as well as to explore how institutional differences between the development actors and local communities impacted the success of the projects.

4.5. Alternate Explanations

There are three potential alternative explanations for participatory development success or failure in the two case studies. First, if the participatory programs were rushed, they would not have addressed all of the goals or needs stipulated by local community members, resulting in lower degrees of empowerment for community members. The rushing of program processes can be observed by inspecting program deadlines and by measuring the ratio of local goals or needs met by the program. Any deadlines shortened or a low ratio of local goals or needs met by the program would indicate rushed program efforts.

Second, pre-dominating power structures in the Oromia and SNNP regions may have limited the degree of empowerment achievable through the two programs. The existence of such structures and the failure of the programs to challenge these structures, could have resulted in the empowerment of only select groups or local elites from the *kebeles* or *woredas* in question. This can be tested through two mechanisms: whether or not the elite captured program resources (program funding and decision making tools) during its operation and whether or not the elite captured program benefits (better public service delivery and improved livelihoods) after the program's completion.

Lastly, whether or not the development actors in question (Farm Africa and the MOFA) imparted their own power status and internal social hierarchies on local community members, may have substantially impacted the degrees of empowerment achieved through the programs. If either Farm Africa or the MOFA projected their authority over *kebele* or *woreda* populations in the Oromia and SNNP regions, or indirectly support the creation of local social hierarchies, then the majority of locals would not have been empowered, and local inequalities will have been exacerbated. The insertion and creation of such power dynamics can be perceived if Farm Africa or MOFA representatives dominated program planning, implementation, and monitoring decisions, if there were discrepancies between local plans and goals (gathered from local surveys) and the programs' plans and goals, and if levels of inequality or social marginalization rose after the programs.

It is not the goal of this paper to weaken or dispel these factors, but rather to shed light on an underexplored constraint to participatory programs that operate in tandem with them. Uncovering and articulating a link between program empowerment and institutional similarities or differences of development actors and participants achieves this goal. If these links cannot be made, or the reverse trends noted in the two case studies above are observed, then institutional differences will not have as notable of a role in constraining participatory development success as this thesis predicts, giving more weight to the alternative explanations listed above.

5. Property Rights Regimes

5.1. *Development Actor 1 - The Ethiopian Ministry of Federal Affairs*

The MoFA focuses on the economic and social development of the country's more vulnerable, and consequently rural, regions (MoFA, n.d.). As a branch of Ethiopia's national government, this paper assumes that the MoFA and its staff operate under the same economic institutions (property rights regimes) that govern Ethiopian law and society. Therefore, the MoFA and its staff hold the rights afforded by these regimes as values - inherent beliefs as to how property should be allocated and governed. Based on this assumption, it is important to understand the historical and current context of property rights in Ethiopia at a state level.

Before 1974, no one property rights regime governed the country. In northern Ethiopia, various informal private property rights systems developed, concentrating land into the hands of the ruling few (Adenew and Abdi 2005, p. 5; Bedasso 2017, p. 205). The southern regions of Ethiopia, meanwhile, were predominantly governed under clan-based, communal landholding systems (Abdulahi 2007, p. 85). These systems were upended in 1974 when a military coup was launched, establishing a new communist state - the Derg regime. Land was radically nationalized and redistributed to farmers and peasant households (Adenew and Abdi 2005, p. 5). Individuals left or newly found with land were prohibited from renting, managing, or inheriting land directly, without the involvement or consent of the state (Bedasso 2017, p. 205).

The Derg regime fell in 1991, issuing a new democratic and market-oriented government; however, the Derg's land policy remained in place. To this day, the sale, exchange and mortgaging of property is prohibited under Ethiopian law (Ali et al. 2011). The country's 1995 constitution engrains the nationalization of land in Ethiopian law, stating that, "The right to ownership of...land, as well as of all natural resources is exclusively vested in the state and the peoples of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia..." (Ethiopia's Constitution 1995, p. 16).

In 1997, the Federal Rural Land Administration Proclamation was enacted, giving the regional state governments in Ethiopia the authority to implement their own land rights policies, in accordance with the 1995 Constitution (Adenew and Abdi 2005, p. 6; Crewett and Korf 2008, p. 207). The regional states of Oromia and SNNP drafted land policies in 2002 and 2003 respectively. In both Oromia and SNNP, registration, title certification, and limited rental provisions for land are allowed, rendering Ethiopian property rights laws closer to Western notions of 'private property rights' and providing relatively greater land tenure security for the region's residents than the 1995 Constitution alone (Adenew and Abdi 2005, p. 6; Crewett and Korf 2008, p. 209; Proclamation No.110/2007). However, the state is still allowed to seize or repossess land for important public works or irrigation projects, reminding residents that all land ultimately belongs to the state (Crewett and Korf 2008, p. 209; Proclamation No.110/2007).

5.2. Development Actor 2 - Farm Africa

Farm Africa is a niche U.K. based development organization that was created in 1985 to address famine in Ethiopia (Farm Africa, n.d.a). The organization has since expanded to work in other Central and East African countries, helping farmers with agricultural, sustainability, and business practices so that African pastoralists can "grow more, sell more, and sell for more" (Farm Africa, 2016). Throughout its various programs, Farm Africa employs participatory development approaches to help empower some of Africa's most vulnerable populations (Farm Africa, 2016). As a U.K.-based organization, this paper assumes that Farm Africa and the majority of its staff members operate under the same property rights regimes that govern British law and society. Farm Africa and its staff also hold the rights afforded by these regimes as values. Based on this assumption, it is important to understand the historical and current context of property rights in the U.K.

In brief, English land law before the 16th century was, as an extension of Roman law, very diverse, involving both private and communal property rights systems. In more centralized regions of England, exclusionary land rights were most commonly afforded to feudal lords or other nobility, who would then allocate land to those they ruled over (Shammas 1987, pp. 146-147). In contrast, in more rural regions of England, common property law allowed for pastoralists to share grazing lands and for farmers to seasonally share cultivation fields (Baack 1979, p. 66). In the 16th century population growth and the expansion of British markets overseas, led to an increase in the value of land (Baack 1979, p. 66). Landlords were thus incentivized to strengthen land enclosures and expand their rights over such enclosures to maximize their profits from products grown on the land and their rents reaped from tenants who worked the land (Clark and Clark 2001, p. 1033). These trends were accelerated in the 18th and 19th centuries with the advent of England's Industrial Revolution (Clark and Clark 2001, p. 1033). To this day, highly exclusionary, private property rights operate throughout the country.

5.3. Forest Dependent and Pastoral Communities in Oromia and SNNP

While the Oromia and SNNP regional states fall under the formal laws of the central Ethiopian government and their regional governments, there is evidence that communal forms of land governance, outside of the state and unique to various sub-regional communities, historically developed and remain in operation. This paper, therefore, assumes that the pastoral and forest-dependent communities of the two regional states operate de jure under the same property rights regimes set in the country's 1995 Constitution and their respective regional state land policies, but de facto under the historic property rights regimes that historically and informally governed their territories under. Therefore, community members throughout the regional states hold the rights afforded by these de facto regimes as values. Based on this assumption, it is important to understand the historical and current context of informal property rights in Oromia and SNNP.

Documented earliest in the 19th century, property rights in these regions were predominantly held under communal landholding systems designed to benefit and protect pastoral communities who depend on communal land and resources to sustain the seasonal grazing patterns of their livestock (Abdulahi 2007, p. 85, 89-90). They ensured that pastoralists had the freedom to travel to new sources of water or grazing lands, while still allowing for ecological re-growth and adhering to social rules that regulate clan-based grazing routes (Abdulahi 2007, p. 89). In the case of many pastoral and forest-dependent communities in Ethiopia, land, including natural resources, were managed by informal indigenous institutions, such as elder councils (Abdulahi 2007, p. 92).

The nationalization of all land in 1974 and the renewal of this policy in 1995, under the country's constitution, disrupted traditional forms of land governance in the regions. Pastoral and other communal lands were redistributed to either the state for government projects or to peasant individuals and households for cultivation and irrigation (Geyebe 2016, p. 6). The advent of regional state land policies in the early 2000s returned limited property rights back to local communities in recognition of their communal land rights, however, the state reserved the right to repossess these lands for development purposes.

Despite changes to state and regional property rights law, it is well recorded that traditional means of land governance still persist outside of the purview of the state in Oromia, with pastoral lands and forests valued as communal property (Kenee et al. 2020). Few works provide such records of current informal land governance systems in the SNNP region. However, pastoral and resource-dependent communities in other, more documented regions, such as in the

Somali and Afar regions, have preserved and continue to operate under their historic property rights systems (Abdulahi 2007). Therefore, this thesis assumes that traditional property rights systems have also persisted in the SNNP regional state.

5.4. Analysis

According to the above records, the property right regimes for the three development actors in question are characterized as follows: the Ministry of Federal Affairs affords communities the right to access, the right to withdrawal, and the right to management, but not the right to exclusion nor the right to alienation; Farm Africa affords communities all five rights; and both the forest dependent and pastoral communities in question only afford communities the right to access and the right to withdrawal.

This thesis predicted that Farm Africa and the local communities in question shared 0 or 1-2 property rights matches, resulting in a degree of similarity value of 0 or 1, and the existence of either no value-based institutional similarities or large value-based institutional differences between the two parties. Based on the above results, this prediction holds. Farm Africa and the forest-dependent communities in the Oromia and SNNP regional states, share 2 property rights matches, receiving a degree of similarity of 1 and exhibiting large value-based institutional differences.

This thesis also predicted that the MoFA and the local communities in question shared 3-4 or 5 property rights matches, resulting in a degree of similarity of 2 or 3 and the existence of either small value-based institutional differences or no value-based institutional differences. Based on the above results, this was also found to be true. The MoFA and the pastoral communities in the Oromia and SNNP regional states, shared 4 property rights matches, receiving a degree of similarity of 2 and exhibiting small value-based institutional differences.

Based on these preliminary results, the thesis' two hypotheses should hold.

6. Case Study 1: Participatory Forest Management in Ethiopia

6.1. *Project Background and Implementation*

PFM is a form of natural resource governance, in which community members, in collaboration with government entities, legally establish their rights to forest resources and take on the responsibilities to sustainably manage these resources themselves (Campbell et al. 2008, p. 1005; Farm Africa n.d., p. 3). PFM was first introduced in the 1990s in Ethiopia to combat the country's rapid deforestation rates, which presented a large ecological problem for the country and stood to further impoverish rural communities who were dependent on forest resources to sustain their livelihoods (Campbell et al. 2008, p. 1004). Previous centralized and top-down forest preservation efforts failed to recognize the access rights of forest users (members of forest-dependent communities) to forest resources, and thus their ability to protect and manage forest resources (Gobeze et al. 2009, p. 348). PFM was consequently designed to center the people who live closest to forests and depend the most upon the forests' survival (Campbell 2008, p. 1004).

The centerpieces of PFM were FUGs. These groups were designed to delineate forest management and property rights from the state, into the hands of forest-dependent community members. FUGs were formed by Farm Africa using information gained through the organization's own exploratory surveys and group consultations with community members (Farm Africa 2007; Gobeze et al. 2009). Once established, FUGs were informally incorporated into a diverse array of relationships - partnering with Farm Africa, operating directly under branches of the *woreda* and regional state governments, and operating in tandem with other indigenous institutions (Ayana, Vandenabeele, and Arts 2015; Ameha, Larson, and Lemenih 2004). Internally, FUGs also included diverse subgroups from the local communities, such as “elders, women, minority groups, and traditional and religious leaders” (Ayana, Vandenabeele, and Arts 2015, p. 9). It is these members that come together, under the recommendation and assistance of Farm Africa, to democratically elect an executive committee. The committee then represents the FUG in conversations and future negotiations with external governing bodies and makes internal governing decisions for the group (Ameha, Larson, and Lemenih 2004).

While informally indoctrinated into local communities, FUGs, according to PFM principles, needed legal recognition to derive full rights over the use and management of forest resources (Ameha, Larson, and Lemenih 2004; Farm Africa 2007). To gain such rights, FUGs were registered as ‘cooperatives’ at the woreda level, giving them formal group recognition (Ameha, Larson, and Lemenih 2004). After this, Farm Africa worked with the FUG committees and Ethiopian government representatives to draft two legally binding documents, the Forest Management Agreement (FMA) and a Forest Management Plan (FMP) (Farm Africa 2007). The FMA was a contract between the FUG committee and woreda and/or regional and federal government representatives that specified each parties’ rights, responsibilities and rules regarding forest use and management (Ayana, Vandenabeele, and Arts 2015; Farm Africa 2007; Kassa et al. 2009). The FMP delineated forest management activities, such as forest protection, utilization, development, and monitoring, among the same signatory parties (Farm Africa 2007; Gobeze et al. 2009).

Once these documents were signed, the FUGs, with Farm Africa’s support, worked to act on their responsibilities and implement their forest management activities stipulated under the FMA and FMP. Internal bylaws were proposed and passed by the FUG committees to govern day-to-day operations (Ayana, Vandenabeele, and Arts 2015; Gobeze et al. 2009). Farm Africa supported FUGs by investing in skill development and training for community members to build local capacity for forest management (Farm Africa 2007; Gobeze et al. 2009).

6.2. Project Analysis

While Farm Africa's development goals are clearly presented in their PFM field guides, there is no formal documentation of the forest-dependent communities' goals. No direct comparison can be made between the two to see if they misaligned, however, Farm Africa's efforts drastically changed the property rights regimes that were initially in place in the Chilimo and Bonga forest areas. In formalizing FUGs and legally establishing their land rights, Farm Africa effectively created a private property rights regime, affording the forest-dependent communities management, exclusionary and alienation rights over forest resources. These rights were previously undefined under the region's historic, communal resource management systems. This meant that Farm Africa's end goal of quasi-privatizing forest land and resources directly contradicted the local communities' operating institutions, and subsequent institutional values. Assuming that the communities near the Chilimo and Bonga forests did not want to substantially transform such institutions, Farm Africa's goal did not align with local interests.

No disagreements or conflicts between Farm Africa and the forest communities were recorded in any Farm Africa or independent review reports, nor in any scholarly assessments of the PFM pilot projects. This may indicate that the two development actors agreed on all project implementation steps and procedures, and so the institutional differences between them did not result in competing decisions or interests. This is, however, unlikely considering that Farm Africa's quasi-privatization of forest land and resources disrupted local property rights operations and values. Alternatively, a lack of recorded disagreements or conflicts may be evident of the submission of local input to the authority of Farm Africa practitioners. In most development projects, there is an uneven balance of power between Western-led development organizations and non-Western communities rooted in historic colonialism and imperialism, and sustained by modern economic and political inequalities. In the case of the PFM pilot projects, a review conducted by Ayana, Vandenabeele, and Arts (2015) notes that Farm Africa was "privileged [over community members] with access to donor funds and information about the PFM arrangement," including the FMA (p. 13). The Ethiopian government also held ultimate veto power in FMP and FMA 'negotiations', so local communities were left with "take it or leave it" options (Ayana, Vandenabeele, and Arts 2015, p. 13). These findings suggest that Farm Africa practitioners knowingly or unknowingly acted on pre-existing power imbalances, and superimposed their ideas, plans, and actions over those of local community members, thus reinforcing Western-non-Western power hierarchies (Hildyard et al. 2001, pp. 56-68).

While conflicts between the two development parties were not recorded, it was found that internal conflict among community members intensified as a result of the PFM projects (Ayana, Vandenabeele, and Arts 2015). Community members struggled to distinguish between their traditional property right practices and the ones introduced by Farm Africa. As Ayana, Vandenabeele, and Arts (2015) point out, community members used the term "ownership" intermittently to describe their traditional, communal forest user rights, as well as their new legal rights to forest resources (pp. 10-11). This led to disagreements over who had access to resources - general community members or FUG members - and who was entitled to give out such rights - local elder councils or FUG cooperative committees (Ayana, Vandenabeele, and Arts 2015, pp. 10-11). Tension was also created within communities because FUGs and their cooperatives gave exclusive forest rights to only their members, leaving out more vulnerable sub-sects of the surrounding forest-dependent communities (Kassa et al. 2009; Tekalign, Kaba, Zerihun 2015). So despite a lack of recorded conflict between Farm Africa and the local communities in question, discord was aroused within communities as a result of competing property rights and the launch of exclusionary property rights.

In terms of achieving their originally mandated goals, projects in both Chilimo and Bonga did make significant strides in conserving forest areas, creating alternative livelihood opportunities for community members, and transferring forest resource use and management rights from the state to the forest-dependent communities. Nearly a decade after the implementation of the projects, Farm Africa reported that the Chilimo forest area increased by 9% between 1995 and 2003, marking a substantial improvement from the previous decade, in which forest area decreased by 18% (Farm Africa 2012). Households near the Bonga forest were 40% less dependent on forest resources after the implementation of the PFM project thanks to newly founded tree nurseries, livestock husbandry programs, and the provision of micro-credit to FUGs by Farm Africa (Ayana, Vandenabeele, and Arts 2015; Gobeze et al. 2009). With respect to forest resource use, sustainable practices, such as wild coffee and honey production, gained in popularity in comparison to the production of firewood and charcoal (Gobeze et al. 2009). More generally, the PFM projects reduced food insecurity in local communities, increased sustainable forest resource and agricultural production, and improved community income levels (Gobeze et al. 2009). Through the successful drafting, negotiation, and signing of FMAs and FMPs, local communities had full ownership rights, including the rights to use, withdraw, manage, exclude, and alienate, over forest land and resources (Farm Africa 2015).

Despite these accomplishments, this thesis still finds the results of Farm Africa's pilot projects lacking. While forest regeneration occurred in the Chilimo forest, signs of forest destruction (new, large, timber species tree stumps) were documented in the Bonga forest (Tekalign, Kaba, and Zerihun 2015). Similarly, while new income sources, such as honey production, gained traction, surveyed households near the Bonga forest responded that firewood and charcoal remained notable sources of income (Tekalign, Kaba, and Zerihun 2015, p. 360). The majority of these respondents also remarked that there were no differences in their well-being from before the PFM project to after its implementation (Tekalign, Kaba, and Zerihun 2015, p. 360). Finally, while FMAs and FMPs established shared forest conservation responsibilities and roles between the state and local communities, FUGs were still unable to secure legal support from state authorities to persecute forest encroachers, and thus enforce forest use rules (Ameha, Larson, and Lemenih 2004; Gobeze et al. 2009). State and regional administrations also failed to provide sufficient resources to FUGs and effectively monitor FUG practices in the years following the completion of the PFM projects (Gobeze et al. 2009). The government's shortcomings in the aftermath of the projects puts the long-run effectiveness and sustainability of PFM practices into question.

A considerable unintended side-effect also resulted from the projects, negatively impacting the local communities in question. Multiple studies found that FUG cooperatives were exclusive. Instead of centering marginalized populations, such as women, the elderly, and persons living in extreme poverty, these sub-groups were largely left out of the cooperatives (Kassa et al. 2009; Tekalign, Kaba, and Zerihun 2015). While cooperative bylaws afforded members quasi- private property rights to forest land and resources, non-members expressed feelings of dispossession (Kassa et al. 2009, pp. 1007, 1009). They were not afforded the same use and management rights over forest resources, and by consequence did not reap the same income and livelihood benefits as cooperative members (Ameha, Larson, and Lemenih 2004;

Kassa et al. 2009). Women, the elderly, and the poor who made it into the cooperatives were then sidelined in decision-making processes (Kassa et al. 2009, p. 1010). This demonstrates that Farm Africa program designers were inaccurate in their predictions of how FUGs and the property rights afforded to them would impact forest resource distribution and access. Farm Africa's efforts ultimately reinforced pre-existing social inequalities within the forest communities, making it increasingly difficult for vulnerable groups to achieve full empowerment.

At their conclusion, Farm Africa's PFM projects came short of meeting many local needs. A whole sub-set of the local populations in question was not included in the projects and so missed out on their benefits. Non-cooperative community members were not included in FUG conservation efforts, their income opportunities did not improve, and they did not attain legal use and management rights over forest land and resources (Kassa et al. 2009; Ameha, Larson, and Lemenih 2004). Surveys conducted after the completion of the PFM project in Chilimo also demonstrated that 26% of cooperative members and non-members were not satisfied with the "functionality of [their] forest management committee[s]" (SS 2017). Likewise, 34% of respondents were unsatisfied with how inclusive forest management decision making processes were (SS 2017). 18% of respondents were also left unsatisfied with the level of participation afforded to them in forest conservation efforts, while 14% of respondents did not feel like their well-being had improved as a result of the project (SS 2017). In the end, notable proportions of the participating forest communities felt that their needs were not met by Farm Africa and the PFM pilot projects.

All of these results satisfy the hypothesis that large institutional differences between Farm Africa and the Chilimo and Bonga forest communities resulted in a lower degree of empowerment for the communities involved. In this case, FUGs were successfully formed, however, only individuals within FUG cooperatives were given greater choice in and greater sustainable and economic opportunities for managing forest resources. As a result, the formation and implementation of FUGs, provides only select community members with increased opportunities and the ability to pursue them. Within FUG cooperatives, members were limited in their autonomy over property right allocations in negotiating the FMA and FMP, by the Ethiopian government and Farm Africa practitioners. Consequently, the PFM pilot projects fell short in their goals of preserving forest areas and in meeting the sustainable livelihood needs of local communities. Farm Africa's work thus achieved a degree of empowerment of 2.

While this paper's first hypothesis proved true, alternative explanations as to why Farm Africa's work failed to fully empower local communities were also at play in this case study. Relating to the structural camp of critique, Farm Africa did not challenge the pre-existing power imbalance between the forest-dependent communities and the Ethiopian regional and federal governments. Within the FMA and FMP negotiation process, it was found that the government had veto powers over community input (Ayana, Vandenabeele, and Arts 2015, p. 13). Furthermore, after signing the agreements and plans, the government was inconsistent in acting on their roles and responsibilities. The government was lenient in enforcing illegal forest use activity, leaving FUG cooperatives with little authority to protect their forest land and resources (Ameha, Larson, and Lemenih 2004; Gobeze et al. 2009). Based on these findings, the FMAs and FMPs initiated by Farm Africa symbolically shifted power over land use and management into the hands of local communities, without actually challenging the government's dominant position over forest communities (Ayana, Vandenabeele, and Arts 2015).

Drawing from operational critiques, Farm Africa practitioners failed to uphold participatory development principles. When re-demarcating forest boundaries, practitioners did so without the full consent of the forest communities (Ayana, Vandenabeele, and Arts 2015, p.). This meant that the forest bounds articulated in the FMAs and FMPs were determined by Farm Africa, and not the communities that would be impacted by where the bounds fell. This begs the question of whether other project steps were also unilaterally-led. Practitioners allowed for elite capture within the projects, as women, the elderly, and the extreme poor were excluded from cooperative decisions and from cooperative membership (Ameha, Larson, and Lemenih 2004; Kassa et al. 2009; Tekalign, Kaba, and Zerihun 2015).

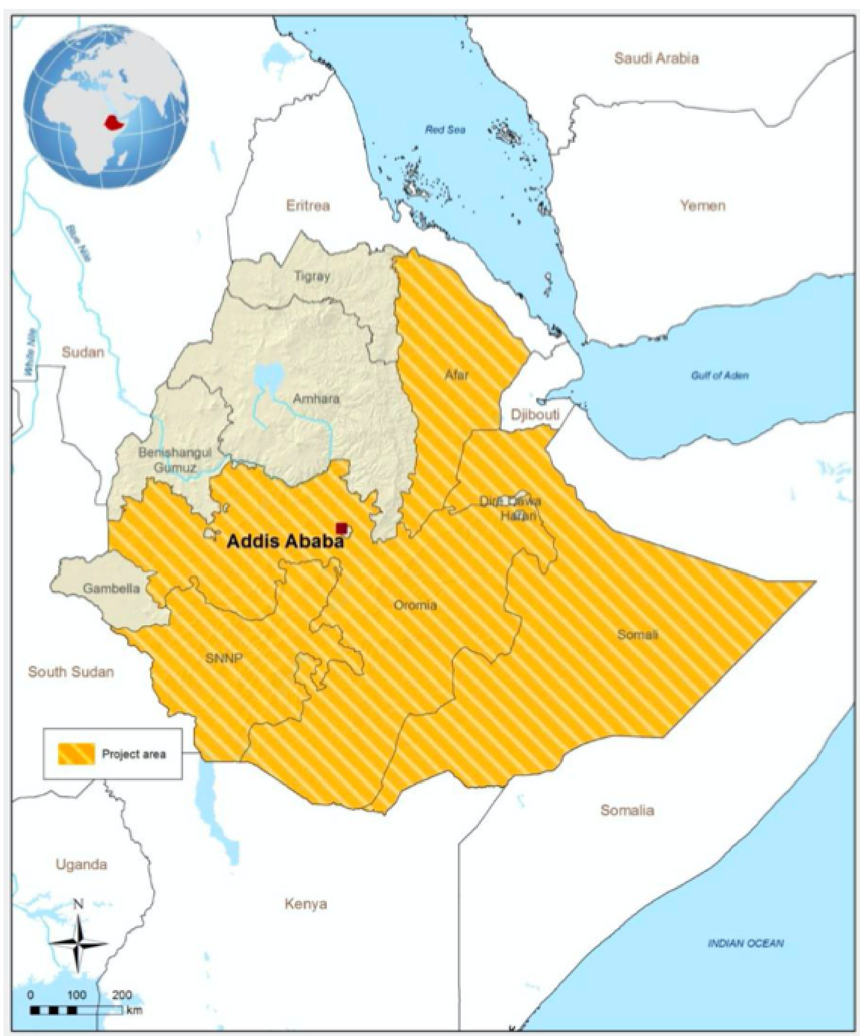
7. Case Study 2: Pastoral Community Development in Ethiopia

7.1. *Project Background and Implementation*

The PCDP was "designed to empower communities and enable the decentralized regional administration to better manage local development through community-based development planning linked to a community investment fund" (IFAD, n.d.a). At the time of its conception, pastoral lands encompassed 61% of the country's total land area, supporting nearly 7 million people and their 11 million livestock, of which they depended directly on for subsistence and income (IFAD 2003, p. 3; World Bank 2016, p. 3). These lands, lives, and livelihoods, however, were, and remain under, intense strain from rapid population growth and climate change (Gebeye 2016, p. 8; Mohamed 2019, p. 8).

Past policies under the Derg and current Ethiopian governments exacerbated, rather than aided, these trends as they strove to develop the country's agricultural sector (Gebeye 2016; Davies and Bennett 2005). Ethiopia's government previously prioritized settlement strategies for pastoral development, which subjected traditionally mobile pastoral communities to stationary lifestyles (Geyebe 2016). These policies drastically dislocated pastoralists from their long-established customs and cultures (Geyebe 2016). They also ignored the reality that "as an economic activity, pastoralism is an animal production system which takes advantage of characteristic instability of rangeland environments" (Republic of Kenya 2012 in Geyebe 2016, p. 3). Thus, within pastoralist practices lie the very solutions to sustainable economic development in the era of climate change. The PCDP marked a strong departure from previous pastoral development strategies, centering pastoral communities and their priorities in the sustainable development of their livelihoods (World Bank 2016).

The PCDP was launched across 15 years in three phases in the pastoral regions of the Oromia, SNNP, Afar and Somali regional states (IFAD, n.d.a; IFAD 2003, p. 4).



This case study pays close attention to the sustainable livelihoods enhancement component of this project, which was implemented across the 3 phases of the PCDP to: (i) establish participatory planning procedures, (ii) setting up mobile support teams (MSTs) for capacity-building, (iii) create Community Investment Funds and "finance strategic infrastructure investments and strengthen public-service delivery" (IFAD 2003, pp. 4-5; IFAD 2013).

Participatory planning procedures, such as community forums and consultations, were developed through an initial "participatory analysis of local institutional capacity and...socio-economic structures" to ensure projects implemented by local pastoralists "reflect[ed] their development priorities" (IFAD 2003, p. 5, 8). These procedures were practiced predominantly at the *kebele* and *woreda* levels, involving the participation of traditional organizations, such as elder's councils, as well as local women's and youth groups (IFAD 2003). As the PCDP progressed into its second and third phases, these participatory methods were extended to project implementation, monitoring, and evaluation efforts (IFAD 2009; IFAD 2013). The ultimate goal was to provide community members in local *kebeles* with the resources, skills, and experience to design, implement, and manage future micro projects independently (IFAD 2013).

Once participatory planning procedures were implemented, and projects were decided on by pastoral communities, MSTs, consisting of local experts, were initially created to "facilitate situation analysis and help communities prepare their...projects" (IFAD 2003, p. 3, 5). Together, pastoral communities and MSTs created community action plans (CAPs), which defined community project objectives, activities, and budgets (IFAD 2003). MSTs, in the last phase of the program, assisted with "independent process monitoring,... outcome/impact evaluations at project mid-term and end, and annual thematic studies" (IFAD 2013, p. 5).

To fund these projects, CIFs were established at the *woreda* level, under Woreda Development Committees (WDCs). The WDCS consisted of “woreda administration, civil society and the private sector” representatives who appraised funding requests and submitted recommendations regarding the funds to the *woreda* administration (IFAD 2003). The projects financed under CIFs required a minimum 20% community cash or in-kind contribution, after which, the communities could implement the projects directly with the help of other government funds and external aid (IFAD 2003). Introduced in PCDP II and built on in PCDP III, rural savings and credit cooperatives (RUSACCOs) acted as an extension of CIFs. These grassroots financial institutions provided pastoral community members financial services, such as investment advising, and income-generating opportunities (Environmental Resource Management 2003; IFAD 2009; IFAD 2013).

7.2. *Project Analysis*

While there were no direct articulations of the pastoral communities’ goals, this thesis found that PCDP goals were cognizant and supportive of the unique property rights regimes that governed pastoral lands. The three-phased project acknowledged that pastoral ways of life were “the most effective and efficient way[s] of using and managing natural resources in the drylands” and therefore sought to preserve traditional pastoral livelihoods (IFAD 2016). By consequence, the PCDP sought out to increase public participation in project decisions, support livestock health and production, and reduce drought vulnerability - efforts that would enable pastoralists to grow and profit off of their herds and continue their seasonal grazing patterns (Davies and Bennett 2007; IFAD 2009; IFAD 2013; IFAD 2016). The PCDP also made a “concerted effort...to avoid private land acquisitions by locating the majority of sub-projects on communal lands” (World Bank 2020). In the case of voluntary land acquisitions, the project secured full consent from the affected communities and appropriately compensated those impacted - courtesies the government rarely afforded pastoralists in the past (World Bank 2020). The PCDP further recognized that pastoral livelihoods were very mobile, and so project plans were designed to cater to communities on the move, i.e. the construction of dispersed water posts and the servicing of mobile health and veterinary care posts (IFAD 2016; World Bank 2020). These aims respected the rights to development of Ethiopian pastoralists, consecrated in the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and Ethiopia's 1995 constitution (Gebeye 2016).

Two elements of the PCDP did contradict these results. First, widespread irrigation schemes completed under community sub-projects promoted land cultivation (IFAD 2019). These schemes redirected water resources from grazing lands and converted rangelands to crop plots. Second, the PCDP's target of diversifying pastoral livelihoods may have undermined pastoralism in the long-run. Pastoralism may take a back seat to pastoral-agro or agro-practices as pastoralists adopt farming techniques to cope with drought and other environmental risks to herding (Davies and Bennett 2007). However, overall, the MoFA's efforts were attuned to pastoral desires to preserve their long-standing property rights regimes.

The PCDP's approach thus marked a significant deviation from historic government policies. In the past, the government's urbanization, agriculture, and settlement campaigns pushed pastoralists out of their rangelands and deprived them of the natural resources needed to sustain their traditional livelihoods (Gebeye 2016). For these reasons, the relationship between the Ethiopian government and pastoral communities was marked by distrust (Davies and Bennett 2007). While the PCDP was not designed to radically change the relationship between the two actors, it did re-center pastoral livelihoods in the development of pastoral regions. It is possible, however, that the project's repositioning was not enough to change the long-term dynamics between the Ethiopian government and pastoral communities. At the project's conclusion the World Bank conceded that the government still operated on a long-term strategy of permanent settlement for pastoral communities (World Bank 2020). So while the PCDP's goals supported property rights regimes of the pastoral communities in question, the Ethiopian government may not continue such an approach in future pastoral projects or policies.

No disagreements or conflicts between the MoFA and pastoral communities were documented, as predicted. This supports the theory that institutional differences enhance project collaboration. However, the IFAD, upon review of the program, noted that the PCDP's Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) improperly documented issues that arose throughout the project (IFAD 2019). The lack of recorded conflict could therefore be accounted for by either institutional similarities between the two parties or the GRM's administrative errors. It should also be noted that while conflict between the two development parties remained undisclosed, conflict among beneficiary communities and external actors was cited. One of IFAD's final evaluations state that, "The project areas were susceptible to conflicts related to resources, marriage, cattle raiding practices, historical enmity, and vengeance. The conflicts were likely to deter mobility and everyday activities, thus endangering the development outcomes" (IFAD 2019, p. 37).

Throughout its three phases, the PCDP achieved and exceeded many of its goals. In terms of its total reach, the project set out to benefit 4,500,000 people. After its completion the project reached 6,253,734 individuals in pastoral communities, with 48% of beneficiaries being female (IFAD 2019; World Bank 2020). Through its participatory planning procedures and development of CAPs, and with the support of MSTs, the PCDP assisted in the construction and operationalization of 3,353 community subprojects (World Bank 2020). These included 1,362 education subprojects (schools), 880 water supply subprojects (water points and irrigation systems), 496 human health posts, and 321 animal health posts (IFAD 2019; World Bank 2020). While the sheer number of sub-projects implemented surpassed the MoFA's initial target by 279%, 434,504 more children than expected were enrolled in schools and 526,632 more individuals received better access to water than originally planned (IFAD 2019; World Bank 2020). 1,457,714 project participants achieved better access to health, nutrition, and reproductive health services, which is 16.6% more people than predicted (IFAD 2019; World Bank 2020).

In regards to CIFs, community contributions exceeded expectations, funding over 5,800 sub-projects (World Bank 2019). 857 RUSACCOs were set up, surpassing the target by 18.63% and hosting 15.3% of kebele households as members - 5% more than the program mark (World Bank 2020). These new financial services helped improve saving habits and ultimately raise incomes for participants (World Bank 2020; World Bank 2014). Following these results, it is no surprise that several external assessments of the PCDP praised the MoFA, and the Ethiopian government more broadly, for their commitment to the project's goals and to the needs of Ethiopian pastoralists (IFAD 2019).

Despite these great gains, the project did come just short of several operational and end goals. First, while the PCDP strived to have 50% of woredas follow participatory planning procedures in creating their woreda level development plans, only 20% did (World Bank 2019). This calls into question adoption rates of participatory methods more generally throughout pastoral kebeles and woredas during the project. Second, within MSTs and WDCs, high turnover rates were cited as "chronic problem[s]," lowering MST and WDC capacity to assist pastoralists in implementing their micro projects (World Bank 2014). These and other operational dysfunctions prevented the project from fully meeting the water resource needs of pastoral communities, as well as from providing adequate, alternative livelihood opportunities for pastoralists (IFAD 2018; World Bank 2020).

In regards to CIFs and RUSACCOs, many pastoral households could not afford to pay minimum contributions or entry fees (IFAD 2018). As a result, community contributions and membership levels were stymied below their potential (IFAD 2018). Many pastoralists were unable to take advantage of the financial services and resources made available through the PCDP. Meanwhile, close to a third of RUSACCOs members reported shortages of loanable funds, and small loan sizes as substantial problems with the savings cooperatives. Close to a sixth of members also found that short loan repayment periods, delays in getting loans, and collateral requirements within RUSACCOs made it difficult for pastoralists to consistently save (IFAD 2018). So while the PCDP largely delivered on its initial aims, there were several small operational failures that prevented the PCDP from fulfilling all of its preliminary objectives.

In line with expectations, there were few unintended side-effects observed after the PCDP's completion. A positive byproduct of the program was the stimulation of local, private sector businesses. Many local construction companies, such as brick-making firms, built and serviced the PCDP's sub-projects (World Bank 2020). Looking ahead, the project may also have adverse health effects on the local communities and local environment (IFAD 2016). An IFAD report notes health risks posed by a potential lack of appropriate sanitation or up-keep at the PCDP's newly constructed schools, health posts, and water points (IFAD 2016). Because pastoral lands were already under the stress of dry climate conditions, the construction of new facilities and use of water resources for irrigation sub-projects could advance land degradation and drought susceptibility in the future (IFAD 2019). However, no evaluations thus far have recorded any negative environmental changes resulting from the MoFA's PCDP. It is therefore likely that institutional similarities allowed for program designers to more accurately predict how their plans would impact local conditions. However, the PCDP was completed in 2019, making it possible that the program resulted in more side-effects that have yet to be observed.

Lastly, according to independent evaluations, the project was very successful in meeting the needs of its target population. Once the PCDP was completed, 94% of female household heads and 95% of male household heads felt that the public services provided by the three-phased project satisfied their priority needs (IFAD 2018; World Bank 2019). The sub-projects pursued under the PCDP also addressed the top five priority needs of pastoral households, which included "primary education, water, health, veterinary services and financial services" (IFAD 2018, p. 11). The MoFA and supporting government actors were particularly attentive to the inclusion of vulnerable populations - women, the elderly, and those living in extreme poverty. For example, when selecting communities to implement sub-projects in, *woreda* (district) administrations made sure that risk factors, such as poverty levels and food security vulnerability, were considered and acted upon (World Bank 2014). An IFAD report also documented that "efforts were made to ensure gender equity in all project and subproject activities" (IFAD 2019, p. 21). This helped result in a nearly equal distribution of PCDP beneficiaries - 48% women and 52% men (IFAD 2019). The project also strove to increase school enrollment rates for girls, improve pre- and post-natal care for women at health posts, and involve women in RUSACCOs (IFAD 2019).

High approval ratings and inclusivity under the PCDP can be seen, in part, due to the MoFA and supporting government actors' care in involving pastoralists in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the program (IFAD 2019). In turn, participating kebeles contributed over $29 million USD in cash and in-kind contributions to elements of the PCDP

(IFAD 2019). Local communities were awarded greater say in development processes, and earned themselves greater ownership over their own development. Institutional differences also played a role here. Since the MoFA and the pastoral communities in question shared only small institutional differences, and no disagreements between the two parties were recorded, it is highly likely that the MoFA more easily recognized and was willing to act on community needs. For example, the construction of water posts throughout pastoral lands recognized the women's desires to shorten their water collection routes, as well as acknowledged that pastoral livelihoods were very mobile, and required water points along their grazing routes (IFAD 2019).

With all of this being said, the sustainability of such benefits is questionable. Once more, no data exists on how the project has or will impact the environment, and thus traditional pastoral livelihoods (IFAD 2019). If current PCDP projects are found to be unsustainable, the projects could devastate rather than fulfill pastoral needs. Several of the operating institutions within the PCDP, such as the RUSACCOs, may also fail to be long-lasting. IFAD assessments commented that government policies were "not in a position to provide adequate extension support to the RUSACCOs beyond the life of the project," including personnel training and system development (IFAD 2019, p. 30). What is more concerning, is that historic government policies (involuntary settlement and land acquisition) towards pastoral communities will resume following the project. Noting that traditional pastoral livelihoods are key to the continued preservation of Ethiopian rangelands, IFAD evaluations stressed the importance of safeguarding pastoralists' mobility (IFAD 2016; World Bank 2016). In line with the structural camp of development critiques, it is possible that the PCDP did not change the trajectory of government policy towards pastoral populations in Ethiopia.

All of these results satisfy the hypothesis that small institutional differences between the MoFA and pastoral communities resulted in a higher degree of empowerment for the communities involved. In this case, pastoralists, including commonly marginalized sub-groups, such as women, the elderly, and the extreme poor, participated in, received support from, and achieved ownership over from the project. Participatory planning procedures, MSTs, and financial investments of CIFs and RUSACCOs afforded the communities in question greater choices for economic opportunities and the material and financial resources to pursue these new avenues. As a result, the PCDP observably improved the livelihoods of many pastoral communities, while respecting and preserving their traditional property rights regimes. The program thus achieved a degree of empowerment of 3.

8. Conclusion

Having investigated the effect institutional differences have on the success of participatory development programs, this thesis found that the greater the degree of institutional differences between development actor and participant, the greater the likelihood the program fails to fully empower participating populations. In the first case study exploring the introduction of PFM pilot projects in the Chilimo and Bonga forests, Farm Africa, a U.K. based NGO, and forest-dependent communities in Ethiopia shared only 2 property rights values. This resulted in large institutional differences between the two. Because of these differences, Farm Africa radically shifted local land governance systems, conflict among participants rose, Farm Africa fell short of completing their mandated goals, vulnerable populations were unintentionally marginalized throughout the projects, and the pilot projects failed to meet all local needs. Contrastingly, in studying the MoFA's PCDP, the MoFA and pastoral communities in Ethiopia shared 4 property rights values. This meant that there were only small institutional differences between the two. As a result, the PCDP respected and protected pastoral livelihoods, there was no recorded conflict between the two parties or among participants, the project exceeded most of its goals, few unintentional side-effects arose, and the three-phased project the majority of local needs. These results confirm that institutional differences have a notable impact on the success of participatory development work.

These findings are not meant to discourage participatory development work between actors that operate under and value different institutions. Rather, this thesis hopes to highlight the work predominantly Western development actors must do to better understand non-Western institutions. While considerable anthropological works highlight alternative ‘gift’ economies, spheres of exchange, and communal property rights regimes, many of these insights are left out of development considerations. Moving forward, pre-project analyses of local institutions that center on the ways in which they are valued in local communities, institutional sensitization campaigns for development practitioners, and the inclusion of anthropologists on development teams may help reduce institutional differences between development actors and participants.

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