

Transformational adaptation in Ethiopia? Local vulnerability knowledge and development decisions in the Afar region

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Key message:

*Let's nuance the narratives,
deal with the reality on the ground,
and find opportunities for transformative change.*



- Why Ethiopia?
 - Impacts of climate change
 - Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy (CRGE)
- Why Afar region?
 - Somali & Afar region hardest hit by climate change
 - Droughts & floods
- Which interventions?
 - Development: Resettlement program
 - Humanitarian: Emergency Food Aid + Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP)

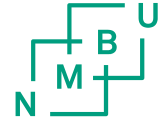
– indeed an unintended consequence of the dam has been dramatic flooding threatening livestock, grazing, farmland and posses-



Figure 1/ Map of Afar Region

Source: Eriksen & Marin (2011) *Pastoral Pathways*

- Zone 1: Dubti district
 - 2013: Aerolav locality (sugarcane, PSNP and resettlement)
 - 2014: Sardo sub-district (3 localities, no sugarcane, PSNP, resettlement, DR)
- cross-checks in Eli Dar district and neighbouring localities
- MSc students: Ane Botterli & Siri Eggset



Keeley, J. & Scoones, I. (2000) Knowledge, power and politics: The environmental policy-making process in Ethiopia. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 38(1): 89-120.

- 3 discourses:

- Green Revolution Discourse
- Environmental Rehabilitation Discourse
- Participatory Natural Resource Management Discourse (emerging in 2000)

→ All based on neo-Malthusian narratives → focus on agriculture

→ Pastoralism regarded as backward & to be abandoned

→ Focus on 'resettlement'

Climate Resilient Green Economy (2011)

- Aim: to reach middle-income status by 2025
 - new model of development that incorporates economic development and growth, mitigation of greenhouse gases, and adaptation to climate change
 - Aim in rural areas: to improve crop and livestock production practices for higher food security and farmer income
 - increasing the amount of agricultural land under irrigation
 - reducing the size of herds
- ➔ In Afar region: Resettlement



Resettlement program



Productive Safety Net Program

- Since 2005: direct food aid & food for work
- In Afar: since 2009

IN THE HIGHLANDS:

- Since 2011: Household Asset Building Programme (HABP)
 - Since 2014: Climate-Smart Initiative (CSI):
 - PSNP
 - HABP: Household Asset Building Programme
- Aim: strengthen the resilience of PSNP and HABP beneficiaries to climate change impacts

- Anthropologists: romantic view on pastoral way of life
 - Political ecologists: Vulnerability is mainly political
- ➔ Strong claim for return to pastoralism, supported by data on efficient use of natural resources in arid areas



But...

- Climate change is causing droughts & floods
- Past development decisions have led to extreme (irreversible?) degradation of natural resources
 - E.g.: *Prosopis*, salinization of the soil, diversion of Awash river
- Youngsters prefer to live close to towns and prefer diversified livelihoods over pure pastoralism



1. Vulnerability contextually including multiple stressors

- Related to sugarcane plantation:
 - Livelihood diversification (+)
 - But more labour for women (-)
 - Focus on low-skilled labour (-)
 - Loss of dry season pasture (-)
- Related to resettlement:
 - Access to development (+)
 - But services not yet fully provided (-)
 - Loss of migration as adaptation strategy (-)
- Related to food aid:
 - Resource sharing mechanisms (+ and -)
 - Short term relief (feed aid might provide long-term relief)



2. Differing values and interests that affect adaptation outcomes

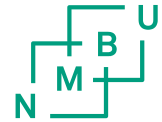
- Elders vs. youngsters
 - Irrigation agriculture
 - Sugarcane plantation
- Officials vs. local community
 - Food aid distribution
 - Settlement and services provided
- The state vs. local community
 - Land tenure: plantation vs. pasture
 - Migration vs. settlement
 - Afar sultanate vs. Ethiopian state



3. Incorporating local knowledge into adaptation responses

- Migration as adaptation response
 - Enough forage & water?
- Forced mating of camels
 - possible with shifting rains?
- Digging wells in group
 - water for irrigation
 - water availability near to plantation?
- Clan leaders to distribute food aid
 - Shift in resource sharing or in corruption?





4. Potential feedbacks between local and global processes

- National (global?) focus on agriculture
 - pastoralists settled and irrigation agriculture
- Land tenure: land leases for plantations
 - dry season pasture turned into plantations
- Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy
 - is abandoning pastoralism «climate resilient» ???

5. Empower vulnerable groups

- Who are the most vulnerable?
 - Women
 - Children
 - Those who lost their herds
 - Those who settled
 - Education is key
 - Participation is key
 - Certain local institutions are key
- Examples of good practices by APDA



Opportunities?

- Settlements with adequate services as hubs for diversified livelihoods.
- How do we create space for contestation?
 - Education is key, empowerment is key
 - Do we need «power experts» at all levels?
- (Do we need a new discourse?)
- Can the dissipating divide between the humanitarian sphere and the development sphere (of which climate change adaptation is part) create opportunities for transformation?

Thank you!

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