The Role of Local Institutions in Adaptive Processes to Climate Variability:

The cases of southern Ethiopia and southern Mali

Todd A. Crane
Wageningen University

May 13, 2013 Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars





- "Adaptation to climate is inevitably local . . ."
- Local Social Institutions
 - "a) they structure impacts and vulnerability,
 - b) they mediate between individual and collective responses to climate impacts and thereby shape outcomes of adaptation, and
 - c) they act as the means of delivery of external resources to facilitate adaptation, and thus govern access to such resources."

Agrawal 2008:2

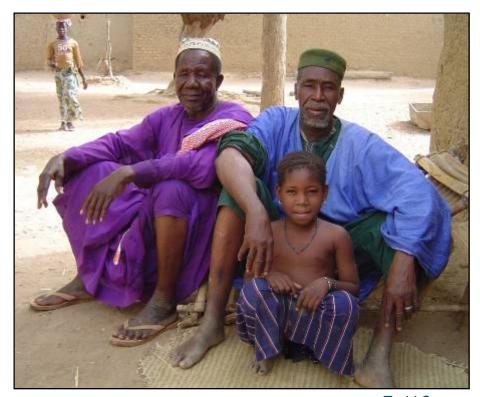


- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation research call on institutions and climate adaptation
- Oxfam America
 - Development NGOs want to engage in adaptation efforts
 - Creatively
 - Respectfully
 - Effectively
 - What is there to know about local adaptive dynamics?

- Research approaches
 - 1 International research coordinator
 - 2 National research consultants, and teams
 - 2 Wageningen MSc students
 - Long term Oxfam sites
 - Southern Ethiopia
 - Borana pastoral zone
 - On-going drought and famine
 - Southeastern Mali
 - Cotton belt
 - Old/recent integration of cotton
 - Spring to summer 2011

- Research questions
 - 1. What role do local social institutions have in longterm adaptation to environmental change?
 - 2. How have extra-local actors interacted with local social institutions in development and adaptation efforts?
 - 3. How is the production and use of weather and climate information organized?

- Institutions (?)
 - Formal organization
 - Village councils
 - Trade associations
 - Informal custom
 - Land tenure practices
 - Gender division of labor
- Local (?)
 - Legitimacy
 - Accountability



Todd Crane

Research approaches

- Shared frameworks
 - Research questions
 - Social mechanisms of change
 - Local perspectives and dynamics
 - Qualitative methods

Mixed methods

- Life histories
- Household surveys
- Case studies
- Key informant interviews
- Focus groups

Findings

- Production strategies
- Land and water governance
- Social support systems
- Households, gender and adaptive capacity
- Weather and climate information

- Production strategies
 - Ethiopia
 - Borena cattle herding → camel and goat herding
 - Mali
 - Dual seed system



Adele Arendse

- Land and water governance
 - Ethiopia
 - Customary local institutions
 - State ("modern") local institutions
 - Mali
 - Land tenure
 - Decentralization



Adele Arendse

- Social support systems
 - Ethiopia
 - Buusa gonnofa
 - Mali
 - Reciprocity, kinship and gifting
 - Market integration



Adele Arendse

- Households, gender and adaptive capacity
 - Ethiopia
 - Shifting workload
 - Mali
 - Land access



Adele Arendse

- Weather and climate information
 - Low access to and trust in scientific climatology
 - Active local practice of forecast
 - Mundane observation
 - Arcane specialization



Todd Crane

Recommendations

- Adaptive capacities,
 adaptive technologies
- Start with local practices, institutions, dynamics
- Engage both customary and state institutions
- Integrate with markets selectively
- Increasing women's access to educational, political and financial opportunities aids adaptive capacity
- Diversify livelihoods, inc. urban/foreign migration
- Synergize local/scientific climate info production



Discussion points

- ↑ Adaptive capacities, ↓ adaptive technologies
- Start with local practices, institutions, dynamics

Works Cited

- Agrawal, A., (2008) The role of local institutions in adaptation to climate change. World Bank, Washington DC, p. 65.
- Crane, T.A., (2013) Adaptive processes to climate change and variability in community-based social institutions in southern Ethiopia and southern Mali. Oxfam America, Washington DC.

Questions?

© Wageningen UR



