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AN INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH TO PASTORAL DEVELOPMENT: AN EXAMPLE FROM ETHIOPIA

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Introduction

Pastoral development projects in Africa have done little to increase livestock productivity, or to improve the standard of living or food security of pastoral peoples. Several of the reasons for this consistently poor record of project interventions have been pinpointed by Goldschmidt (1981:53):

- i that they take no account of the knowledge of indigenous populations
- ii that they are unaware and unconcerned with the goals and needs of pastoral people
- iii that they ignore indigenous social organisation

In an attempt to develop a new approach to pastoral development based on the active participation of pastoralists, several non-governmental agencies have experimented in recent years with the organisation of pastoral associations based on indigenous institutions. One of the largest of such projects, and important especially in view of its potential influence on the future direction of World Bank support for the pastoral sector, is the Ethiopian/World Bank funded Pilot Project in the southern rangelands of Ethiopia (see map). The project is intended to test a low cost, participatory approach to pastoral development among Boran pastoralists.¹

An outline of Boran society is presented first, followed by a discussion of the history, performance and future development of pastoralist cooperatives in the southern rangelands, and the lessons of Pilot Project experience for other pastoral areas. In this paper, I argue that an understanding of Boran society and, in particular, resource management and territorial organisation, is crucial to the design and effective organisation of pastoralist cooperatives in the southern rangelands.

¹ The Project is funded for 5 years (1988-93). The Project area is approximately 33,849 sq km, and the population, according to the 1984 National Census is 153,806, of which the vast majority are Boran pastoralists. Pastoralism is the dominant economic activity in the area. According to a ground survey carried out by the Project in early 1988 there are over a million cattle, some 450,000 small stock and nearly 80,000 camels in the area.

Boran Society

Social organisation

The ancestral home of Boran was probably in the Highlands of Bale. It was from this heartland, largely because of population pressure, that they moved

Map 1: Extent of Livestock Development Project (World Bank), Southern Rangelands of Ethiopia

down into their present day homelands in what is now Borana region. According to Boran, God sent down the *Kaallu*, their spiritual leader, who taught Boran how to sacrifice animals and instructed them in the 'Peace of Boran' (*Nagaiya Borana*). There are today five *Kaallu.Gada*

Gada is a generation system in which every eight years a new set of men becomes responsible for maintaining the 'Peace of the Boran' through prayer and sacrifice. The complexities of Gada are described elsewhere (see Legesse 1973). It is sufficient to note that Gada consists of a series of elaborate rules and rituals, and that a number of Gada officials are appointed each 8 years who act as respected case settlers, law makers and ritual leaders.

Clan

Interwoven with the *Kaallu* and with the *Gada* is the clan system. Clan membership is traced through men, and it is assumed that, at some time, each clan had a common ancestor. Clans are not corporate property owning groups nor do clansmen necessarily live together. However, clansmen are expected to help each other in times of hardship and to settle their disputes amicably at clan meetings. Clan leaders have no special powers or authority, they are merely respected elders who have an ability to speak well in public. Clan elders in general have considerable moral authority to settle disputes, and to impose fines on wrongdoers and even to seize property.

Clanship may form the basis of neighbourhood and work teams but it usually does not, for the set of claims contained within clanship are too broad and general. Certainly it provides a useful network of dispersed support relationships for individuals.

Household

The basic unit of Boran social structure is the family unit of a man, his wife/wives and their children, with the family livestock. Each woman when she marries acquires the right to her own house and forms a new household unit with her husband. While married women are the domestic managers of their own houses they are subordinate to men, who are the household heads and who represent their households to the outside world. As the head of an independent household which may also include other kin or even non-kin, a man is called *aba warra*, the father of the household. He is the manager of the household herds and flocks.

Territorial organisation

The primary unit of organisation is the household. Households are grouped into villages, and villages into village clusters or neighbourhoods, which may in turn form a larger grazing encampment.

Village

Villages (*olla*) may contain anything from a few houses to over 30 houses. People can move both into and out of a village, but generally there is a core of people who tend to stay together over a long period of time. Village members will cooperate together in the herding and watering of animals, in the sharing of goods and services, and in the settlement of disputes. This unity of economic, social and ritual purpose which a village is expected to show is recognised by outsiders, who refer to it by the name of the senior man of the village.

This senior man, known as 'father of the village', is the protector of the village interests and its representative to the outside world. He is the person most closely identified with the village, from whom strangers seek hospitality and from whom newcomers first request permission to join. His position however is ultimately dependent on the support of the other village elders and if they disagree with his decisions then they always have the option to join another village.

Villages are mobile, but the degree of this mobility varies from area to area. Boran generally do not like to have to shift their villages and even when they do shift them they generally only move a short distance. It is quite common therefore to find villages near major deep wells which have been at the same site for over eight years. When regular seasonal movements are dictated by the distribution of grazing and water, villages tend to return to the same site every season.

Neighbourhood

Boran commonly refer to the locality in which they live by reference to an outstanding natural feature of that area. The general term for locality is *ardha*. So when talking of the area in which they live, Boran will say *ardha* X, X referring to the place name. Within any one *ardha* there will generally be several villages, all of which are said to belong to that *ardha*. These villages will come together to discuss issues relating to the *ardha* in an *ardha* council or *kora* meeting.

Localities are built up into wider territorial units called *deda* which in turn form *maddas*. Both these terms are derived from words used to describe physical features: *deda*, which means an area of common grazing regularly used by a group of villages, is derived from the word meaning bush or plain, and *madda* comes from the same word, meaning permanent water. Both terms relate to concepts of Boran grazing and resource management, and it is from these that

they derive their importance as a means of grouping Boran. However, it is important in understanding these not to over-emphasise their rigidity. While they both cover defined areas of land with fixed boundaries there is free movement across them (see Figure 1 for summary of typical organisational structure).

Figure 1: Boran Territorial Organisation

Well area Madda

Grazing area Deda Deda

Locality Ardha Ardha Ardha Ardha

Madda

The *maddas* have only been mapped since the early 1980s, but they have been used by the government for some time as the basis for administration and tax collection.

Within the Boran grazing management system, *madda* is essentially an area of grazing which is defined in terms of right of access and responsibility for the upkeep of particular wells. Within the *madda* area, herdowners will be expected to obey the regulations and rules established by the *madda* council relating to the use and maintenance of the *madda* wells.

The boundaries of the *madda* are well known, but have little significance except in times of crisis. It is at these times that herdowners who come from outside may, unless they can show good reason, be denied access to *madda* wells.

Most Boran live and water their animals in one *madda*. However, when grazing is scarce within the *madda*, all stockowners have the right to use grazing in other areas and will normally be allowed to use wells in those areas if they seek permission. Because of the nature of grazing management strategies, in particular the division of the herd into village based and satellite based stock camps, satellite camps will often exploit grazing and water outside the home *madda*.

Deda

Deda are grazing areas which are customarily used by a group of villages. Decisions will be taken jointly by these villages regarding use of the *deda*, especially on which areas are to be reserved in the wet season for use in the dry.

Council meetings called to discuss grazing management are commonly coordinated by the senior man of one of the villages in the *deda*.

Use of the *deda* is not restricted to those villages living within its boundaries, but decisions made by the *deda* council are binding on all users. Essentially the *deda* is a grazing management unit *not* a social unit.

Leadership

Boran are extremely egalitarian in ethos and will go to great lengths to achieve consensus. Essentially Boran rule by assembly, and different leaders have different competencies in different types of assembly. Two kinds of assembly can be distinguished: i - local assemblies based on membership of a locality; ii - ascriptive assemblies based on membership of a clan and/or *gada* system.

In the locality the main assemblies are those of the village, *ardha* and the *deda*. All resident household heads can participate and air their views. However, wealth and *gada* office bring influence, while age, experience and an ability to speak in public are respected. Decisions are by consensus and reference is constantly made to Boran customary law. If a consensus decision is impossible and/or one of the parties does not accept the decision, then the case can be passed to a clan assembly, or to higher *gada* officials. The ultimate assembly of appeal is the assembly of all Boran held every eight years.

Cooperative structure in Ethiopia

Since the 1975 Proclamation to Provide for the Nationalisation of Rural Lands, rural producers in Ethiopia have been organised into peasant associations (PAs). Peasant associations are responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the implementation of government decrees in the rural areas. All adult household heads are members of the peasant association in which they reside, and are entitled to nominate members for election and vote in the elections for various peasant association committees. Elections are normally held every two years.

Peasant associations are further empowered by government to form service cooperatives (SCs). Service cooperatives are combinations of two or more peasant associations for the provision of basic economic services, such as production inputs, credit, consumer goods, and marketing services. Once a peasant association becomes a member of a service cooperative, individual members of that association should pay a small registration and contribution fee in order to capitalise the service cooperative. Legal recognition of the service cooperative is delayed until the cooperative has attained certain standards of

bookkeeping and accountancy laid down by the Ministry of Agriculture.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, by the end of June 1987 there were some 4,159 service cooperatives in Ethiopia, comprising a total of 18,200 peasant associations and 4.5 million households, of which the vast majority were in the Highlands. On average, peasant associations contained 247 household heads and service cooperatives 1,082 household heads. Only 36% or 1,514 service cooperatives had legal identity.

Nomadic areas

The 1975 Proclamation was largely directed at the redistribution of land in Highland areas. As far as the Lowlands were concerned, few details were provided as to the proper basis for the formation of peasant or pastoralist associations.

The Proclamation stated:

- i that nomads shall have possessory rights over the lands they customarily graze or farm
- ii all obligations to pay dues to traditional chiefs are abolished
- iii 'Nomadic people shall form associations to effectively carry out this Proclamation in a manner suitable for development purposes. The main function of the association shall be to induce the nomads to cooperate in the use of grazing and water rights.'

The Government retained the responsibility to improve grazing areas, dig wells and settle nomadic people for farming purposes.

Since the 1975 Proclamation there has been no formal decree concerning the appropriate basis for the formation of associations in nomadic areas. The Third Livestock Development Project (TLDP) of the Ministry of Agriculture has, however, recently issued guidelines which recognise some of the peculiar characteristics of pastoral societies, in particular:

- i that pastoralists move seasonally
- ii that most pastoralists have a common home range which they normally exploit

- iii that the size of the home range varies from place to place
- iv that the home range may be the most appropriate basis for the organisation of associations
- v that in forming associations consideration must be given to livestock movements in response to the availability of water and range carrying capacity
- vi that in certain circumstances a pastoralist association can perform the activities of a service cooperative

To date these guidelines have no official mandate.

Cooperative Organisation in the Southern Rangelands

History

Boran have been organised into peasant associations since the *Zemecha* or students' campaign of 1975/6. The *Zemecha* students used the preexisting *madda* based administrative system to form the new peasant associations. So the contours of the previous system were carried through to the new system, with the exception that the people were empowered to choose their own candidates for office in the various PA committees. There was also a deliberate effort by the student campaigners to move away from a clan system of administration to one based on locality.

Membership of the new PAs was based on residence at the time of the campaign. As a result many Boran who were visiting or temporarily resident in a *madda* at the time became members of PAs to which they normally would never have belonged. Once registered, people carried their registration with them wherever they went, and continued to pay taxes to their PA of registration rather than PA of residence.

In 1982, eight years after the *Zemecha*, there was a partial reorganisation and reestablishment of PAs, in which some boundary changes were made. However, the principle of one *madda* for one PA remained.

Extant PAs and SCs

The information available on PAs and SCs in the Project area is both incomplete and out of date. Little effort appears to be made to update information from year to year, and the lists of PA and SC membership are those recorded when they were originally established or reestablished.

According to information obtained from the former Ministry of Agriculture Regional Office, there are a total of 112 PAs and 17 SCs in the Project area. Total membership of PAs is 37,476 and of SCs 9,087. The average membership of PAs and SCs is therefore 335 and 534 respectively. The average number of PAs for each SC is 3.6 and the range from 2 to 6. The majority of SCs were established in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Women are underrepresented in the figures for PA and SC membership; only some 8% of the total membership of SCs, for example, are women. The reasons are: i - Boran tend to regard a woman's eldest son, even if only young, as the

household head, and register the household in his rather than his mother's name; ii - women in general are excluded from involvement in what are considered by Boran as non-domestic affairs; and, iii - lack of any government extension effort explicitly directed at increasing womens' participation in these institutions.

Peasant associations

The level of services provided by PAs and SCs to their members are generally poor. While all Boran generally know to which PA they belong, membership of a PA brings few benefits. In the more remote areas, PA membership is only activated by the administration from time to time to collect tax, buy cattle, raise capital for a school or clinic, and to recruit personnel for national service. Apart from this, membership is largely dormant, and daily life is carried on with little reference to the PA.

The PA has little influence or say in resource and herd management. Management of grazing, livestock and water continue to be carried out according to traditional rules and regulations. Disputes when they arise are rarely taken to the PA judicial committee, but are nearly always resolved through the traditional Boran local, clan and *gada* assemblies. Generally, it is as if there are two independent but parallel systems of administration and decision making, with very little overlap between the two. Even the personnel involved in the management of the two systems tend to be quite separate, with the PA drawing its committee members from younger men who often have some knowledge of the outside world but who have little traditional authority.

Service cooperatives

Service cooperatives are more popular because they provide access to goods at controlled prices. Indeed Boran often refer to a service cooperative using the Amharic word for shop and have little awareness that SCs may provide other kinds of services.

Service cooperative coverage of the area is largely restricted to the higher potential areas nearer to the main towns. There are however several pastoralist based cooperatives in the Lowlands, which have been established by the local Ministry of Agriculture. These cooperatives generally have a small shop selling such items as sugar, razor blades, matches, soap, spaghetti and cloth, which are obtainable from the Ethiopian Domestic Distribution Corporation (EDDC) store. However, very often goods which are in demand, such as sugar, tea and cloth, are not available or are restricted by quota. Generally, those entitled to use the shop are issued with a small exercise book in which items of purchase under quota, such as sugar, are written down and purchases restricted to a set number of kilos a week.

The major problems for service cooperative shops are: i - poor availability of popular goods from the EDDC; ii - quotas on sugar; iii - the frequent linking by

the EDDC of purchases of high demand with low demand goods; iv - leakage of goods onto the black market where substantial profits can be made; v - the high cost of transport to distant areas; vi - the poorly instituted controls on the management of the shops by the SC members (generally, SC members have to pay for a shopkeeper from outside the area, who rarely has the interests of the SC at heart); and, vii - the limited capital to buy goods in bulk which means more frequent transport and other costs.

Other than provision of a shop, pastoral service cooperatives have limited functions. There is no concept of the service cooperative performing a range of services, *eg* livestock marketing, water and range development. Once they are established they are left largely to their own devices with no follow up or extension activities carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture. As a result money which is collected from the members is frequently misappropriated and members soon lose their initial enthusiasm for the entire project.

Pilot Project

According to the Fourth Livestock Development Project Staff Appraisal Report prepared by the World Bank (1987), an important objective of the Pilot Project is 'to test a number of innovations ... which would lead to more effective strategies for improving pastoral system productivity'. Two of these innovations were to be directed at 'increasing and strengthening extension efforts with pastoralist groups' and 'establishing pastoralist based SCs'. These SCs were intended to be the main vehicle for testing the Pilot Project's new low cost, participatory approach to pastoral development.

To date, the Project has organised three new service cooperatives. The new cooperatives are Hobok-Eldima, Sarite-Orbati, and Dubuluk-Higo. Basic information on the three service cooperatives is presented in Table 1 and in the notes below.

Table 1: Project Service Cooperatives

Service Cooperative No. of PAs Members

Male Female Total

Hobok-ElDima	2	375	1	376
Sarite-Orbati	2	703	33	736
Dubuluk-Higo	3	459	75	534

Hobok-Eldima Hobok-Eldima is in the extreme south west of the Project area. The SC which was established in December 1988 covers an area of 2,000 sq km comprising two PAs. Prior to the project there was one PA which was split into two along traditional lines on the recommendation of the Pilot Project Cooperative Section. The two PAs were then organised into one service cooperative. The total population of the area is 2,334 divided into 78 villages and 667 houses. Of the total population of household heads, only some 68% are members of the SC and the two local PAs. The remainder are registered in other PAs and are not eligible for services offered by the SC.

Sarite-Orbati Sarite-Orbati SC was established in April 1989, and covers an area of 1,800 sq km comprising two PAs. Sarite PA was formerly combined with another PA. On the recommendations of the Pilot Project the old SC was split into two, with Sarite PA combining with Orbati to form a new SC. The total population of the area is 3,772 divided into 85 villages and 1,078 houses. Of the total population of household heads 82% are members of the SC and the two local PAs. The remaining 18% are ineligible under existing rules to become members of the SC.

Dubuluk-Higo Dubuluk SC was established in May 1989. It covers approximately 1,500 sq km comprising three PAs. Two of the three PAs were formerly organised as one, but were split after recommendations from the Cooperative Section of the Pilot Project. The two new PAs were then combined with the third to form an SC. The total population of the SC is 5,593 divided into 132 villages and 1,598 houses. Of the total population of household heads only 49% are members of the SC and the three PAs.

SC services

It is intended to transform Project organised SCs into development institutions providing a range of services to SC members. These services are intended to be based on priorities established by the SC itself and to be written up into a development plan prepared by the Project and SC together. The main components of the plans cover: marketing, range management and infrastructure, animal production and health, and cooperative training. Each SC is intended to have extension agents paid for by the Project who will act as the extension arm

of the Project at the SC level and whose job it is to follow up the development plan.

Project approach

The Pilot Project has established a method of procedure in the organisation of SCs. This procedure is based on the following activities:

- Stage 1: Research Initial fieldwork is carried out in the intended target area to establish: i traditional Boran grazing areas; ii total population and geographical distribution; iii inventory and use of permanent and impermanent water points; iv distances to water; v livestock and human movements; vi livestock population; vii marketing arrangements; viii development activities; and, ix local opinion on the most appropriate basis for SC organisation.
- Stage 2: Proposal After the initial research and fieldwork has been carried out, a proposal is prepared on the most appropriate basis for the organisation of the SC. Attached to the proposal is information relating to the SC database on livestock and human population, number and location of water points, etc.
- Stage 3: Discussion Proposal recommendations are discussed with Project management and the local Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) office.
- Stage 4: Implementation If the MoA approve the recommendations, the proposal is implemented.

Implementation contains several sub-activities:

- i Reorganisation of the PAs This may require the organisation of a new PA or the reestablishment of the old PA and the holding of new elections.
- ii *Training of PA Committee members* After the election of the committee, members they will be trained in their responsibilities and duties.
- iii *Orientation of PA members* PA members will undergo a brief orientation on the functions and organisation of SCs.
- iv *Election of SC committee members* After orientation, elections are held to elect SC committee members.
- v *Training of SC committee members* SC committee members will be trained in their duties and responsibilities.
- vi Payment of registration and contribution fees Once the SC committees

have been elected and a registration and contribution fee decided and set, fees are collected and an SC bank account opened.

Experience to date

Project experience in the organisation and performance of cooperatives is similar to the MoA experience (see above). The main lessons which emerge are:

- i The PAs and SCs formed are not representative of broad based pastoralist opinion: a) traditional and influential elders are often excluded from positions of leadership, and b) women are almost entirely excluded from the SCs in that they comprise only 6% of the 4 Project SCs.
- ii Generally, the level of popular participation in the SCs is poor. Meetings are held irregularly and even when they are held few people attend. The main reasons for this are: a) widespread disillusionment with the promised benefits of SC membership since the SC shops are often empty because of poor availability of goods at the EDDC; b) the structure of the SCs which is alien to the Boran way of doing things and soon becomes dominated by an elite of men who are used to dealing with outside organisations but who do not necessarily have any traditional authority; and c) the fact that SCs are regarded as largely government institutions.
- iii The SCs are too closely tied to the PAs on which they are based. Many Boran are not members of the PA in which they live. Indeed, in some PAs one-quarter to one-half of long term residents (over 3 years) in the PA do not belong to it, and have no right to either contribute to or benefit from the SC of which it is a part. This has serious implications if one of the main objectives behind the organisation of pastoralist based SCs is to encourage responsibility for the management of SC resources. In this case membership should be based on residence rather than PA registration.
- iv The low density of population in the area combined with the large size of grazing areas makes the MoA requirement of two or more PAs to one SC difficult to justify. The result is: a) an area often too large to be manageable; and b) a widely dispersed population with little contact between neighbouring areas/PAs.
- v Poor extension and follow up directed not just at the SC executive committee but at the wider SC membership means that SC members rarely have a very clear idea of the potential benefits of SC membership *other than* access to the SC shop.

vi - Lack of educated, literate members means that SCs are often forced to employ outsiders, especially as shopkeepers, purchasers, and financial managers, which lays the SCs open to financial abuse and corruption.

Future

On the basis of Project experience and recommendations, the government has accepted the need to adopt on a trial basis a new approach to the organisation of service cooperatives in the Project area. The main features of this new approach are:

Organisation

- i Service Cooperatives to be more closely based on traditional Boran resource management units (*madda*).
- ii One or more *maddas* to form one service cooperative depending on the outcome of initial research and fieldwork carried out by the Pilot Project.
- iii Membership of a service cooperative to be based on residence in a *madda* area *not* PA membership.
- iv Movement to be at will according to the exigencies of pastoral life, but access to SC services to be based on a minimum residence period of two years.
- v Management of the SC to be based on the concept of traditional area (*ardha*) assemblies, which would elect representatives to sit on SC General Assembly (assembly of all SC members who have paid registration and contribution fees).
- vi The SC General Assembly to nominate and elect SC committee members.
- vii The SC General Assembly to meet every year to review the progress of the SC and performance of SC committee members.
- viii Boran traditional leaders, especially village representatives, to be fully involved in SC management through the *ardha* assembly of village representatives.

According to this new approach, the service cooperative would be constituted

by local neighbourhood areas (*ardha*) which would come together to form the SC (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Recommended SC Organisation

Area		Madda/SC			
Locality	Ardha	Ardha	Ardha	Ardha	
Village	Olla Olla	Olla Olla	Olla Olla	Olla Olla	

In this way the SC would be directly based on traditional Boran management units, which would help to: a) increase Boran sense of identity with the SC; and b) increase management accountability to SC members through traditional assemblies.

Extension

To date extension agents have been based two to a SC, one for each PA. This has proved inadequate to cover what are often very scattered villages, and it is now clear that the extension system needs to be more closely tied to manageable population units. Effectively this will mean placing extension agents at the *ardha* or *deda* (incorporating several neighbouring *ardha*) level so that each SC would have several extension agents posted to it. The exact number will depend on the distribution and population of the *ardha* and village.

Training

Extension agents will require training in the new approach and especially training on how to deal with local community based area assemblies. This training in community based extension techniques would be carried out at the Project.

Service cooperative services

As a first step to extend the range of services offered by the SC, an SC based development plan would be prepared by the Pilot Project in collaboration with SC members. It is important that members' enthusiasm for SC services be encouraged by: a) defined access to EDDC goods when available; b) the freedom to buy goods from non-EDDC outlets when EDDC goods were unavailable; c) an agreed and confirmed line of credit from the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank to SCs for SC development activities.

The above approach is based on the principle of involving traditional management units in the organisation and management of service cooperatives. It is suggested that Boran are likely to participate more fully in these institutions only if they perceive them to be related to traditional units and structures.

Conclusion

The success of the Pilot Project and similar initiatives depends *not* on the provision of quick technical fixes, but on the organisation of pastoralists to better represent their interests to the state and to set their own agenda for development. Inevitably, the success of this approach will depend on the strength of extension in the Project, for without the understanding by Boran of both the approach and objectives of the Project little will be achieved.

The main lessons which have emerged to date from the Pilot Project for other similar projects in pastoral areas in Africa are:

- i the need to research indigenous social organisation and resource management practice
- ii the need to recognise the important role of traditional organisational structures and management procedures in pastoral development
- iii the need for an effective training and extension strategy directed at both

- pastoralists and government staff concerning Project objectives and community participation
- iv the need for flexibility in order to test different approaches which appear to be successful in the field

v - the need to be realistic about Project targets. If it is to be done properly and to be sustainable, participatory development takes time, patience, commitment and resources

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