

# **Collective action and Informal Institutions: The case of Agropastoralists of Eastern Ethiopia**

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# Introduction

- Poverty (3.11 TLU/hh, and 0.42 TLU/Capita)
- resource scarcity (water) and conflicts
- Marginalization and little government attention due to low level of awareness
- Therefore, Information needs on local institutional and resource management practices
- CA for Water harvesting (state initiated) and water-well management (traditional)

## Aim of the paper

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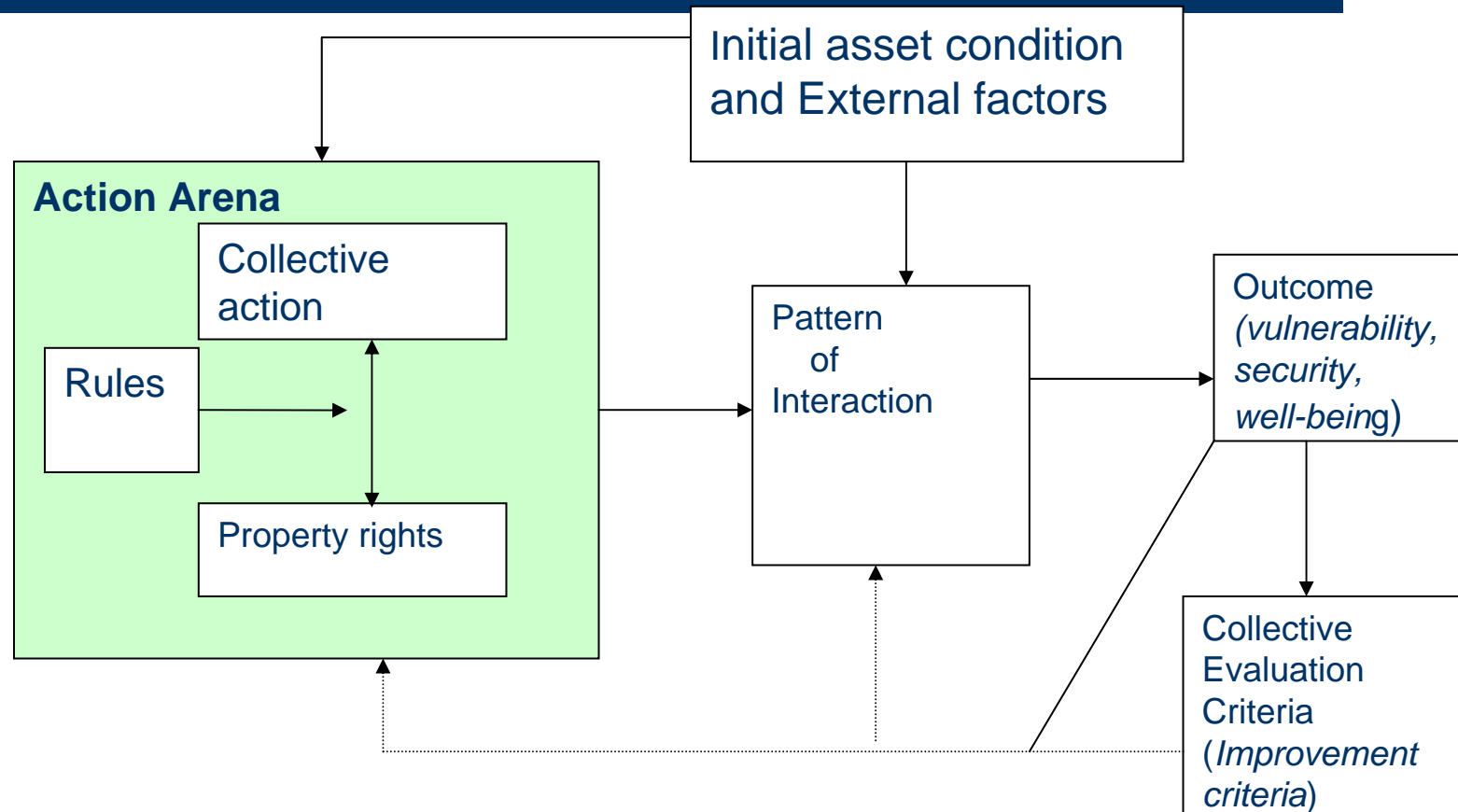
To identify collective action institutions and challenges in water harvesting and water well maintenance among Mieso agropastoralists of Eastern Ethiopia.

# Concepts

## Determinants of CA (initiation and continuity)

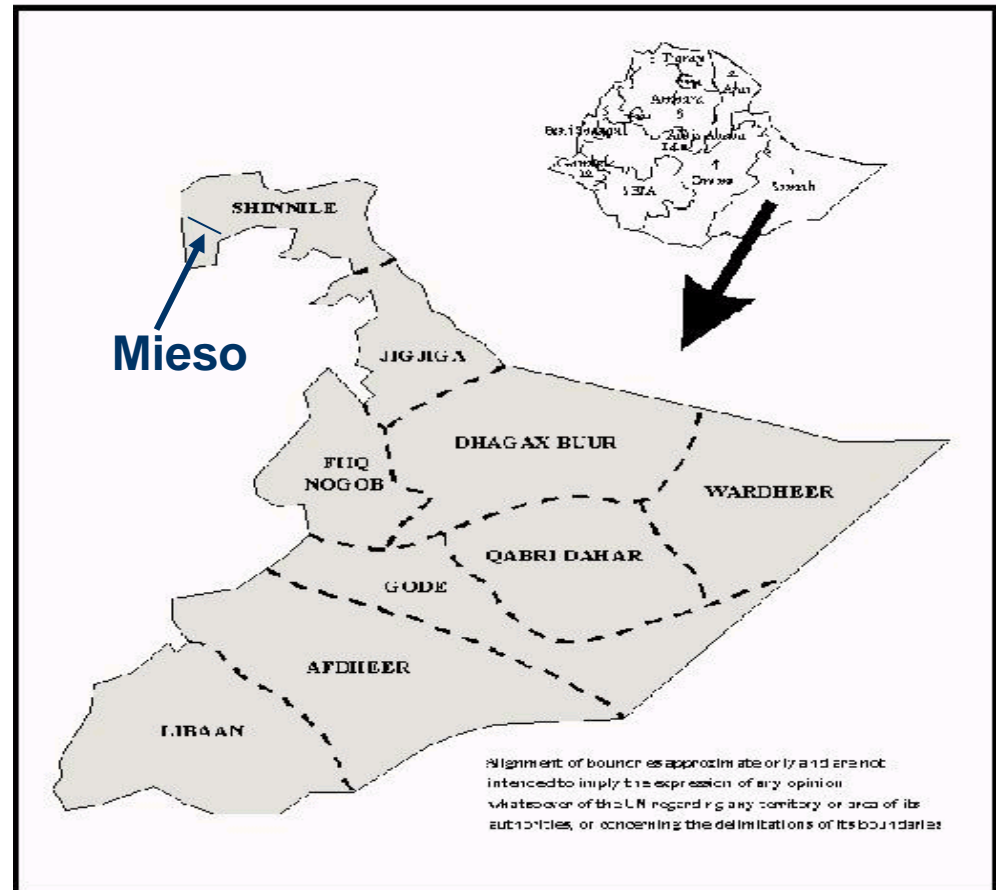
- Group size,
- Homogeneity ,
- Action resources
- Others' success or failure
- Knowledge of technology
- Leaders' influence
- Security of rights to benefit from outcome

# Framework for Analysis



# The Study Site

## Region 5 (Somali) Administrative Zones



# Methods

- Variety of methods
  - observation,
  - discussions,
  - Household interviews.
- Data Collected on
  - Dynamics or variability of institutions
  - disparity in institutional incentives
- Analysis (narrative-qualitative)

# Sources of collective action

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Internal (WW)</b>	<b>External (WH)</b>
1. Coordinators	Clan leaders and elders	Village chief and extension agents
2. Origin of institutions	Cultural norms and religion	Regional or district administration
3. Sustainability of action	Relatively sustainable	May change when policy or regime changes
4. Sanctioning	Group influence	Continuous Monitoring
5. Enforcement	Temporary exclusion from access	Self-enforcing or use of fines and jails



## Sources of collective action...

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Water Well</b>	<b>Water Harvesting</b>
6. Production	Communal	Communal
7. Appropriation	Jointly	Private
8. Institutions	Highly inconsistent	Reciprocity
9. Variation in Benefits	Seasonal	Individual management capacity

# Participation, membership and incentives

## Water harvesting

- Disparity in **incentives** does not limit involvement of asset poor members
- In another instance, when members contribution of asset reduces the number of poor each year, the number of non-member poor households joining the group is increasing.
- Therefore, there is substitution of physical asset by **social capital** to maintain participation of the poor

# Participation, membership and incentives...

## Incentives for water harvesting:

- expectation of benefits (99%),
- fear of fines (21%)
- members' encouragement (76%)
- intimacy (88%).

## Impediments:

- Poor techniques, and inadequate extension service,
- random grouping of members,
- insufficient rainfall
- conflict threats,

# Resource size and Unstable Membership

## Water well

Management of large wells deteriorate due to:

- poor cooperation of members
- loss of herd during drought shocks
- lack of fairness in the exploitation rules

Groups managing small wells:

- management activities need less labor
- access rules vary based on nature of participation and wealth

Challenges

- Identifying free-riders due to lack of strict monitoring
- Establishing exclusion mechanism and high policing cost
- Falling water table reduces the incentive to manage

# Conclusion

- Sources of collective action is less important than other variables such as resource size, membership structure and rule enforcement strategy.
- differences in asset possession, which is theoretically presumed to constrain involvement, do not affect poor households' participation in collective action

# Conclusion...

- substitutability of social capital for physical asset is possible only for certain collective activities such as water harvesting
- Those intervening agency facilitating collective action needs to identify group action for which substitutability of one asset for the other will encourage and maintain involvement of poor community members