

Propositions

Attached to the thesis

Negotiating Tradition, Power and Fragility in Afghanistan: Institutional Innovation and Change in Value Chain Development

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1. Market development programmes tend to overlook the fundamental importance of the dynamic/evolving institutional context, and its influence on social relations, trust and cooperation. This risks perpetuating and exacerbating social exclusion, and reinforcing local power dynamics, particularly in fragile environments.
2. In addition to influencing institutional processes, agents may be influenced by pre-existing institutions, which provide both 'resources and constraints' in shaping how we think, behave and construct our lives.
3. In traditional societies, informal institutions need greater attention. In particular, religion should be considered a resource – not just a barrier - to societal development, particularly if religious leaders can be involved in bringing in more equitable values and norms.
4. In supporting the functioning of efficient value chains, it is vital to appreciate prevailing socio-cultural institutions, as well as political structures, that influence the roles of chain and non-chain actors in institutional development, and the resulting scope of actor participation, cooperation and interaction.
5. Self Help Groups can be successful at precipitating women's micro 'businesses' in Afghanistan, boosting women's social and economic development. Despite their modest economic impact at the household level, the experience can promote attitude change towards female involvement in community life, social exchange beyond the confines of the family, and enhanced community networks.
6. The process of institutional development requires multiple actor negotiation in a mix of top down design and grassroots evolutionary processes. External actors such as NGOs can be instrumental in both institutional design, and in guiding their ongoing experimentation, but may be limited by their own capacity and motivations, and by local actors and conditions. *(Thesis)*
7. In fragile, developing environments, higher-level enterprise institutions – internal routines, chain rules and collective action institutions - are nested in lower-level, dynamic social institutions. As such, the development of rules may be driven by both 'social motivations', as well as 'economic motivations'. *(Thesis)*
8. In traditional societies, progressive aspects of local culture (*e.g.* proverbs) and more favourable interpretations of religious texts can facilitate the introduction of new ideas on women's roles, and open up conservative attitudes regarding their mobility, permitting women's culturally acceptable engagement in enterprise. *(Thesis)*
9. In informal and fragile environments, dominant entrepreneurs play a critical role in generating patterns of institutions, influencing local economic development: 'Trailblazers' may permit more democratic institutions in open, evolving value chains, particularly if supported by amenable actors/conditions; whilst

'Gatekeepers' foster more exclusive institutions in less equitable value chains.
(*Thesis*)

10. Transforming norms, and constructing institutions in enterprise can precipitate new individual/community attitudes and preferences, or 'cognitive' institutions. This can trigger the development of socio-economic institutions beyond the business, promoting more balanced community development. (*Thesis*)
11. Learn from yesterday, live for today, and hope for tomorrow. The important thing is to not stop questioning!