Chained to Development? Livelihoods and global value chains in the coffee-producing Toraja region of Indonesia

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Chained to Development? Livelihoods and global value chains in the coffee-producing Toraja Region of Indonesia

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Abstract
A popular rural development strategy in recent years has been through the adoption of what has been widely called a 'value-chain approach', where improved linkages between small producers in underdeveloped rural communities and 'lead firms' constitute the foundations for development interventions. Whilst we argue that the global value chain framework can deliver insights into the broad structural processes shaping livelihood possibilities, the adoption of value chains as a development strategy tends to disregard the complexity of smallholder livelihoods that shape poverty alleviation pathways in different contexts. The relationships between global value chains, development interventions, and rural livelihoods will be explored in this article through a case study of smallholder coffee farming in the Toraja region of Indonesia. In this particular region, it is argued that value chain interventions in the coffee sector are unlikely to significantly contribute to improved rural welfare. The livelihood framework, therefore, provides an important corrective for the sometimes excessive optimism presented by advocates of a value chain approach to rural development.

Keywords
Livelihoods, Global Value Chains, Migration, Coffee, Toraja, Indonesia

Value Chains as a new approach to development interventions

In the first decade of the current century, global value chain (GVC) analysis emerged as an influential conceptual framework for understanding the operations of industry systems across world geography, thereby providing insights on the opportunities and constraints presented to different people and places in the global economy. In particular, the work of Gary Gereffi (1994; 2014; and Gereffi et al., 2001, 2005) has been influential in shaping a research agenda over the last two decades that addresses the relationship between firm-driven governance within value chains and development outcomes for particular countries, regions and individuals. More recently, the lexicon of value chains has also been widely applied by development practitioners as a model, or at least a conceptual toolkit, for rural development interventions. 'Value chains' are now firmly established as a core discourse within the development community, including within major international organizations such as the World Bank (Cattaneo et al., 2010a), UNCTAD (2013), World Trade Organization (Elms and Low, 2013), and the OECD (OECD-WTO-UNCTAD, 2013). Neilson's (2014) analysis of 27 'value chain' policy papers published by international development agencies demonstrates the particularly rapid uptake of value chain terminology by these agencies since around 2005.

According to many of these development policy positions, enhanced integration with global markets is seen to be a key ingredient for achieving broader rural development in underdeveloped regions, where value chains are seen to provide a conduit for transferring skills, knowledge and resources from lead firms towards local firms and households. Value chain interventions have thus been embraced by international donors and, albeit to a slightly lesser extent, national governments. At first glance, this pro-market application of value chain thinking seems at odds with the origins of the GVC conceptual framework, which owes a strong intellectual debt to the preceding field of critical political economy known as 'global commodity chain', or GCC, analysis (Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1986, Gereffi et al. 1994). Indeed, it is somewhat surprising that the approach should ultimately achieve such mainstream policy traction, when at once stage it was associated (inter alia, by Cramer, 1999) with a structuralist development economics that used the chain metaphor to explain the systemic exploitation of the global 'periphery' by the capitalist 'core'. Indeed, a key set of insights generated by both GCC and GVC analysis has been the importance of chain 'governance' structures in dictating upgrading possibilities for developing country actors, where chain governance refers to the parameters usually set down by powerful lead firms under which other actors in the chain must conform. These studies have tended to conclude rather pessimistically that marginalised actors in the chain – such as the rural poor – are on the wrong end of considerable power inequalities within the chain. Riisgard et al. (2010), for example, criticise the 'win-win managerial solutions' posed by some development agencies which ignore the 'asymmetrical power relations' that characterise many global value chains. This current article highlights some of contradictions inherent in the programmatic adoption of GVCs through a case-study of the relationships between global value chains, development interventions and rural livelihoods in the coffee-growing Toraja region of eastern Indonesia.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. The next section will provide a brief background on how the livelihoods conceptual framework has engaged with larger structuralist understandings of global development. We then present the global value chain for Sulawesi coffee, followed by empirical field research on livelihood strategies, trajectories and aspirations in coffee-growing villages of North Toraja. We then asses and analyse recent attempts by various agencies to promote and apply a value chain approach to development in Sulawesi through reflecting on our field observations regarding livelihoods. This analysis, we argue, has important implications for the efficacy of the broader paradigm of value chains for development, which are discussed by way of conclusion.

Intersections of Livelihoods and Global Value Chains: A review of current thinking

The *sustainable livelihood approach* has been used to describe a variety of research, policy and project work, evolving from an increasing emphasis on people-centred development. Rather than being overtly prescriptive, it has been positioned as a 'way of thinking' which focuses on people's capabilities rather than their perceived needs, with a recognition that people have the agency to strategically choose within a restricted range of livelihood activities (Bebbington, 1999). A livelihoods approach is not limited to a focus on income but also encompasses the social institutions, gender relations and property rights required to sustain and improve upon a given standard of living (Ellis, 1998). The sustainable livelihoods approach to development has been presented as a useful 'way of thinking' because the concept of livelihood serves to anchor development analysis in the day-to-day reality and aspirations of poor people (Carney, 2002). The approach focuses attention beyond merely economic returns to the breadth of productive activities in which people are engaged. In this way, it seems to more effectively capture the diversity and complexity of people's life-worlds, especially those of the poor, and simultaneously challenges some macro-level assumptions about how 'development' occurs and for whom.

Livelihoods have been employed to provide an effective means for understanding the context in which households make decisions and develop livelihood strategies, thus determining the trajectories of household level development. It is these conditions, including the resources households have access to, and the political, historical, and institutional context in which they are embedded, which affect their level of engagement with broader economic structures (Haan and Zoomers 2005; Scoones 2009). Put another way, and applied to the context for this case-study, the capacity of a household to be integrated with the global value chain of a particular commodity, and the effect that this might have on their lives, requires a heightened understanding of the economic and social priorities that mould livelihood-based decision-making.

Several versions of a diagrammatic representation of the sustainable livelihoods framework have been produced to guide research and policy analysis, including two closely-related frameworks that were first published in 1998 (Carney, 1998; Scoones, 1998), as part of a broader process initiated by DFID (as recounted by Solesbury, 2003). These frameworks tend to emphasise the maintenance or development of livelihood assets, or 'capitals' (human, physical, financial, social and natural), as being the foundations for sustainable livelihoods over time, with an objective being to ameliorate their depletion. The use of 'capitals' dovetailed with the popularisation of the 'Five Capitals Model' by organisations such as the *Forum for the Future,* and its recent adaptation by the World Bank as part of its green growth agenda (World Bank, 2012). While the focus of the framework has consistently remained at the household level, the DFID schematic framework does attempt to address broader structural constraints on livelihoods through the 'Transforming Structures and Processes' element. Adequate incorporation of these macro-scale constraints has, however, been significant weakness of the livelihoods framework, as argued by Scoones (2009, p. 187):

> "One of the persistent failings of livelihoods approaches has been the failure to address wider, global processes and their impingement on livelihood concerns at the local level."

Furthermore, Clark & Carney (2008) argue reflectively that, in this regard, the DFID schematic framework was "trying to cram too much into one box". Despite this identified need for livelihoods perspectives to engage, in a more sophisticated manner, with broader structural processes through a closer analysis of the political economy of livelihood opportunities, this has generally remained elusive. It would involve bringing politics more firmly into the framework to analyse the way in which institutional dynamics shape access to, and exclusion from, various assets and resources (Haan and Zoomers, 2005). This is particularly important in relation to the introduction of specific development interventions in target communities, where a complex political landscape frequently reshapes the outcomes of development efforts in unexpected ways. Tania Murray Li's (2007) *The Will To Improve* and James Ferguson's (1990) *Politics Machine*, for example, provide political explanations of the processes through which development problems are framed, solutions proposed and projects are then implemented in practice, and highlight the pervasiveness of these political frames within which livelihoods are ultimately limited.

We argue that the global value chain (GVC) approach provides an alternative axis through which broader institutional structures and political processes can be examined to assess their influence on livelihood strategies at the household level. The key insight of the GVC approach has been to explain the ability of lead firms to effectively govern an entire chain through various acts of coordination, usually without assuming direct ownership of the various nodes within their supply chain. The conceptualisation of corporate power within the GVC literature, and its ability to enlist states, second-tier firms and even civil society organisations to reshape the institutional settings of the chain, provides a meso-level lens through which international political economy can be prioritised analytically. Therefore, it appears to present a tangible axis through which broader global processes can be seen to impinge upon the livelihood strategies available to individual households. Several recent attempts have been presented in the literature to integrate these otherwise divergent conceptual frameworks.

The framework presented by Bolwig et al. (2010) attempts to integrate the 'vertical' aspects of value chains (most notably governance structures) with 'horizontal' aspects (especially poverty, gender and the environment). Livelihoods thinking appears as only one element within this horizontal plane, although it is not otherwise prioritised analytically. Challies and Murray (2011) explicitly integrate GVC analysis with sustainable rural livelihoods analyses to explore the local impacts of agri-food globalization through their case study of smallholder raspberry growers in Chile, while Schure et al (2013) assesses livelihood implications resulting from the formalisation of the charcoal supply chain in Central and West African countries. These studies identify the development implications of value chain restructuring and the resulting outlook for smallholders given the local terms of participation in the chain, thereby demonstrating the utility of chain governance structures towards understanding livelihood constraints.

Stoian et al. (2012) argue for an asset-based approach to designing, implementing and monitoring value chain initiatives, which they contend will help overcome the apparent failings of value chain approaches to understand the realities and needs of the poor. In doing so, they highlight some of the inherent assumptions of value chain interventions, such as household access to sufficient resources to enable value chain participation, the apparent absence of trade-offs when using resources, and an ability and willingness to assume higher risks when reinvesting capital and labour. Similarly, Donovan & Poole (2012) analyse the poverty implications of value chain development interventions for the development of a taro value chain in Nicaragua by assessing household level changes in five livelihood assets. The results indicate great variation in poverty impacts based on production technologies and that, in general, impacts were limited due to households' low levels of pre-existing asset endowments, alongside unsupportive conditions in the market and institutional contexts. According to these authors, the depth of analysis into livelihood capitals and household assets and accumulation is central to discovering the complexities which help to form more specific policy responses. Waroux & Lambin (2013) use a livelihoods approach to contextualise the role of specialty niche commodity marketing along the value chain for Argan oil in Morocco on poverty alleviation. Despite its high value, Argan oil played a relatively minor role in household budgets and asset accumulation in comparison with non-farm work and remittances. The study raised key questions about the relevance of market based tools of governance, the benefits of certification schemes and the effects of consumer influences on livelihoods and land use in places of production.

These various studies reflect the increasing interest to address the perceived weaknesses in both the livelihood framework (to incorporate broader structural processes) and the global value chains approach (to address poverty alleviation at the household level) through an integrated conceptual framework. This article will respond to, and draw upon, this general literature by applying such an integrated framework to help explain the apparent failures of value chain interventions in the Toraja case-study. In doing so, we will also introduce the political motivations of development actors as explaining their commitment to an approach that is apparently unlikely to affect poverty alleviation in the case-study district.

Research Methods

The research findings presented in this article were generated through a combination of household surveys and interviews with various coffee industry stakeholders across South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Household livelihood surveys were conducted in 2009 with 134 coffee-farming respondents in North Toraja District, 65 respondents in Tana Toraja District and 197 respondents in Enrekang District. Survey respondents were selected in randomly during village visits within the three most important coffee-growing sub-districts in each district based on official production data obtained from the District-level Estate Crop Development Agency (*Dinas Perkebunan*). In-depth semi-structured interviews were then conducted with 32 coffee-farming households in North Toraja as a part of a two-month period of intensive 'participant-observation' in 2012. The surveys obtained information related to agricultural and non-agricultural household income sources, on-farm coffee management practices, product marketing, institutional support structures, future aspirations and motivations for livelihood choices.

The primary survey data was supplemented with interviews with North Toraja producer organizations (farmer groups and cooperatives), local NGO's, international development agencies, village coffee collectors, regional traders, processors and exporters in Indonesia, along with importers and roasters in Australia. This field research was used to establish the role of coffee production within broader livelihood strategies and its relationship with poverty alleviation pathways and broader processes of economic development, as perceived and presented by the coffee-growing households themselves. A content analysis of the websites of 125 commercial coffee companies selling Sulawesi coffee was conducted in 2014 to supplement stakeholder interviews with regards to global value chain dynamics. These websites were identified by a Google search using the search terms ‘Toraja coffee’, ‘Kalosi coffee’ (Kalosi is the main coffee trading town in Enrekang) and ‘Sulawesi coffee’, and then included in the English-language database if they appeared within the first 100 search results for each term.

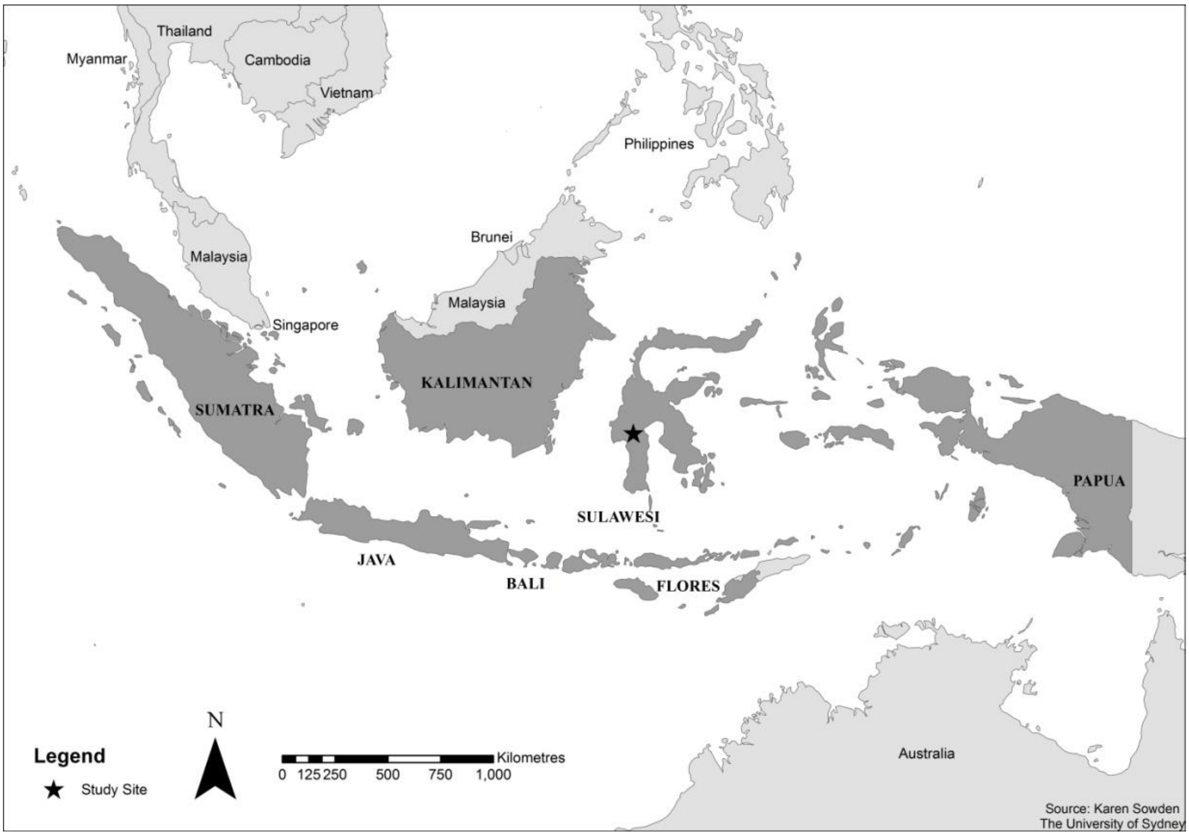

Figure 1. Location of the Toraja coffee-growing region on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi

The Global Value Chain for Sulawesi Coffee

Indonesia has been a leading global coffee producer for centuries and, according to the International Coffee Organisation (ICO, 2013), it is now the world’s third largest coffee-producing country. While the country is primarily known as a bulk producer of lower-quality Robusta coffee, the diversity of growing environments across the archipelago also produces internationally-renowned Arabica coffees for the specialty market. This specialty market is growing rapidly. In the USA, specialty coffee is now estimated to represent 50% of the US coffee market by value share (SCAA, 2012). This has increased from an estimated 30% market share by value in 1999 (SCAA, 1999). A tightening of the supply of higher quality coffees is further suggested by the widening differential between Robusta and Arabica in recent years. This is associated with greater upstream engagement by international coffee companies (Neilson, 2008), and is providing new market opportunities for quality-oriented smallholder farmers in Indonesia, and elsewhere in the tropical world.

Linked with growth in the specialty coffee sector has been a trend for roasters, both large and small, to develop ‘direct-trade’[1] relationships along the value chain with coffee farmers. There are many

[1] This term is somewhat misleading as, in practice, many roasters will actually continue to depend on specialist commodity traders to manage the logistics of international trade, but may develop relationships with

attractions for roasters to do this: to assert greater influence over quality control at origin; to improve long-term supply prospects; to derive an advantage in a competitive market by projecting superior origin knowledge and social responsibility to consumers; and to save costs by attempting to 'cut out the broker'. These trends have been widely debated in the industry, but they are commonly believed to offer new economic opportunities for coffee growers in producing countries associated with a restructured value chain. For example, one Australian coffee roaster explains their direct trade programs as follows:

> "Our 'Crop to Cup' approach embraces traceability and provides a guarantee of a higher price direct to the farmer. Thus enabling a strong basis for sustainable farming and the finances to achieve a better quality of life on the farms." (Di Bella Coffee, 2012)

Sulawesi coffee is an important origin within this international specialty coffee market and is grown in the two Toraja districts (Tana Toraja and North Toraja), Enrekang, Mamasa, and to a lesser extent in the districts around Mt. Bawakaraeng further to the south (such as Gowa, Sinjai, and Bantaeng). An English-language internet search identified at least 98 roasters and retailers, and 19 international importers, offering Sulawesi coffee within their range. 66% of these specialty roasters (admittedly skewed towards English-language speaking countries due to the constraints of the search method) were located in the USA, with a smaller number found in Australia, Indonesia, the UK and elsewhere. This broadly reflects observations drawn from official Indonesian trade data, which identifies the USA and Japan as the two most important export destinations for Sulawesi coffee (Table 1). According to the internet data, 48 percent of commercial coffee companies identify the coffee as 'Toraja' coffee, 38 percent as 'Kalosi' coffee and 14 percent as 'Kalosi Toraja', thus highlighting the strategic marketing appeal of the Toraja-growing districts within Sulawesi. The median retail price for roasted Sulawesi coffees on these commercial websites was also consistently higher than other Indonesian specialty origins, such as Bali, Flores, Java and Sumatra. It should be noted that this reputation for quality goes back for at least one hundred years when it was sold as a 'fancy coffee' known as 'Boengie coffee' (Paerels, 1927; Ukers, 1922; Veth, 1883).

	2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
USA	46%	39%	42%	48%	20%
Japan	29%	30%	23%	21%	46%
Other Destinations	24%	31%	35%	31%	35%

Table 1. Export Destinations for Sulawesi Coffee (Share of total export volume)
Source: BPS (2013)

Coffee roasters in key markets coordinate supply chains back into Sulawesi to ensure access to smallholder-grown coffee in Toraja and Enrekang. Competition amongst buyers can be intense, particularly in the preferred growing District of North Toraja, which due to a combination of physical geography and careful post-harvest handling is generally considered to produce the highest quality coffee on the island (Neilson, 2007). There are two major foreign coffee investments in Toraja. Key Coffee of Japan has a vertically-integrated operation through its subsidiary *Toarco Jaya*, which owns a plantation and a mill that purchases coffee from smallholder farmers. The *Toarco Toraja* trademark has held a strong market presence in Japan since the 1980s. The US-based Cooperative Business

producers through origin visits and support enhanced traceability along the chain. 'Relationship coffee' is probably a more accurate term.

International (CBI) has a controlling stake in another large mill, and is a key supplier to the Starbucks Corporation. Up until about 2009, Starbucks offered 'Sulawesi' coffee as a core origin within their stores worldwide. While this is no longer the case, Sulawesi coffee continues to be a key ingredient within some of their house blends, such as 'Caffe Verona' or 'Pike Place' Roast, and it is sometimes offered as a 'Seasonal Favourite'. Coffee from the Sapan and Minanga valleys of North Toraja has also been sold at premium prices by Starbucks in the past as the 'Kopi Kampung' Black Apron Special. Other specialty roasters in the USA, Australia, Western Europe and Jakarta adopt a non-equity based mode of coordination along the supply chain, operating in partnership with local agents and exporters to source high quality coffee.

Torajan coffee farmers generally afford great attention to quality control during picking and post-harvest processing, preparing partly-dried parchment coffee for sale. Local village traders then either collect this fresh parchment coffee from the farmer's house, or wait at highland markets, to pool together sufficient volumes to transport directly to one of the mills. Most farmers are therefore linked to local mills relatively directly through a single collector or middlemen - known locally as *tengkulak*– and without the extended trading networks that sometimes characterise rural market chains in Indonesia. At the farm-level, volumes are relatively small and sold at frequent intervals, such that it is relatively light work that can be performed by the elderly and by children. While the vast majority of production from North Toraja is sold to one of the two aforementioned large mills, less significant volumes may be sold to smaller hulling operations near Rantepao or in Enrekang. The two large mills conduct a quality assessment prior to purchase, and then hull, dry, clean, sort and bag the green beans for export from the container port of Ujung Pandang eight hours away.

Figure 2 shows the trends in coffee export volumes and values from Ujung Pandang (2001-2010). While total values increased substantially in line with movements in global coffee prices, volumes did not increase accordingly - as might otherwise be predicted if prices were to stimulate production investments. Export volumes averaged between 2000 and 4000 tons annually during the last decade, which accounts for only about 1% of Indonesia's total coffee exports. Coffee, it should be noted, is also not critical to the regional economy and ranks 12th in terms of provincial export earnings - well below nickel, cocoa and shrimp (BPS, 2012).

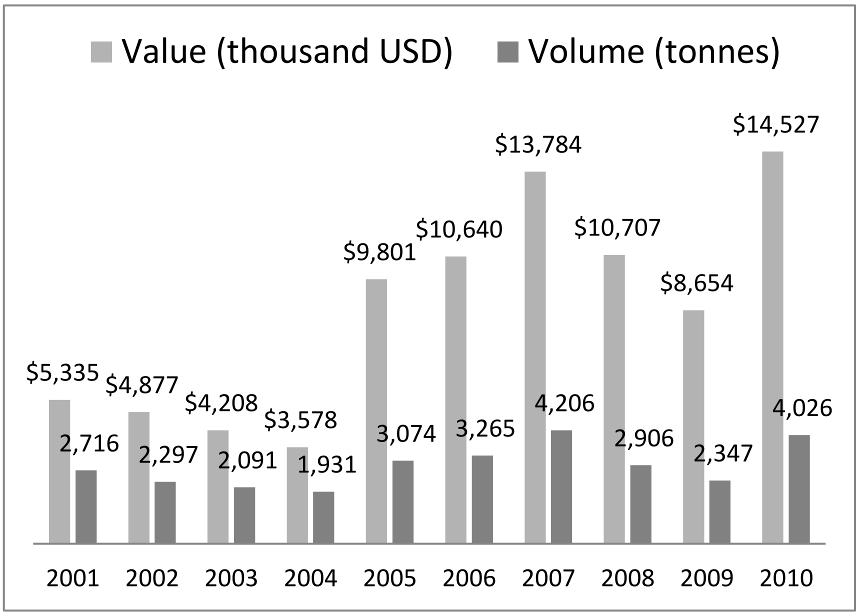

Figure 2 Recorded Exports of Arabica Coffee from Ujung Pandang Port (2001-2010)

Source: BPS (2012)

Livelihoods in the Torajan Economy

The Toraja districts provide an insightful case study for examining the relationships between a global value chain, development interventions and rural livelihoods. The region constitutes a largely homogenous ethnic region, which is well known for its strong cultural identity and for elaborate ceremonial customs and funeral rituals. In the late 19th century, coffee performed a pivotal role in transforming the fundamentally subsistence-based Torajan economy towards enhanced global integration through trade (Bigalke, 2005). The first comprehensive report of the coffee industry in Toraja was prepared by Paerels (1927), who emphasised the emancipatory effects of coffee cultivation in this highly feudal society, claiming that "coffee makes the poor man rich and the rich man poor". He identified coffee as the first and most important export product from the region, and presents a portrait of remarkably dedicated coffee farmers, investing in slope terracing, collecting humus from forests, capping off coffee trees, and actively engaged in manure composting. The introduction of coffee led to the development of what Waterson (2009) has recently referred to as three interpenetrating economic domains in Toraja, where subsistence production (principally rice, pigs and buffalo) interacts with both an external cash economy and the traditional ceremonial economy.

Despite the increasing importance of the cash economy over time, however, it would be a mistake to assume that the traditional ceremonial and subsistence economies are becoming obsolete. Instead, we observe a dynamic co-evolution of the three interconnected domains, which collectively constitute an important facet of contemporary Torajan livelihoods and identity. Torajan ceremonies are sometimes criticised, by both Torajans and outsiders, for their decadence and wastefulness: larger funerals may last for more than a week and can involve the ritual slaughter of more than a hundred buffalo, and many more pigs, while also requiring large amounts of construction material, seating, infrastructure such as roads and water supply, the provision of food, drinks, cigarettes, and new clothes for funeral 'committees', services such as video production and transport, and all with substantial demands on manual labour. The direct costs to the family are difficult to estimate due to the complexity of reciprocal debt relationships amongst extended social networks, but the larger funerals would easily trigger a circulation of many hundreds of thousands of dollars. The indirect and induced employment created by this circulation of money is highly significant for local livelihoods. Local businesses are afforded a regular demand for their services and individuals are able to proffer their labour directly to ceremonial hosts, who compensate them both in cash and in-kind through meals, drinks and cigarettes, and meat, all for relatively little labour time. This situation is ensured through cultural pressures for hosts to publicly demonstrate both their affluence and generosity.

There is also a surprising resilience within the subsistence economy, which (in addition to rice and pigs) should be thought to encompass construction materials – particularly bamboo and timber trees - as well as food items such as cassava, banana, sweet potatoes, fodder crops, palm sugar, and vegetables. Certainly, the physical landscape of rural Toraja is dominated by evidence of this subsistence domain. Labour is also, at least partly, contained within a non-commoditised subsistence realm in the sense that the vestiges of feudalistic bonded-labour institutions (determined by ancestry and birth) are still prevalent. Self-sufficiency in rice production is highly prized at the household level, particularly by the nobility, and 83% of coffee-growing household respondents in North Toraja reported growing at least some rice. Torajan rice production is stored in elaborate rice barns symbolising cultural priorities and social status, and is rarely commoditised. This resilience of the subsistence economy is due to its links to the ceremonial economy, and its importance as cultural markers of social status. 92% of coffee farmers were involved in pig-farming, which in addition to its importance to the ceremonial economy, was also the single most important source of cash income reported by coffee-growing households in the survey. At the district level, however, considerable amounts of rice and buffaloes are still imported into Toraja due to inherent production constraints and high local demand.

While demand for high-quality Toraja coffee is strong, we estimate that annual production in the two Toraja districts averages less than 1,500 tonnes, and yields are very low by global standards (our survey data suggests these are as low as 150kg/ha of processed green beans equivalent). This suggests relatively little attention is afforded to the crop by most rural households. Coffee is indeed only one of a number of important agricultural products and subsistence crops grown in the districts (Table 2).

	Production (tonnes)	
Crop	**Enrekang**	**Tana Toraja and North Toraja**
Corn	77,255	9,854
Rice	59,125	151,634
Fresh vegetables	49,749	5,721
Sweet potatoes	5,514	11,434
Cassava	4,392	11,161
Arabica Coffee[2]	5,174	4,439
Cocoa	3,917	3,709

Table 2 Estimates of crop production in the coffee districts of South Sulawesi (2009 data)

Source: BPS Sulsel 2010

Official estimates (BPS, 2012) are that 50,000 households are involved in coffee growing across the three districts of Tana Toraja, North Toraja and Enrekang. At a household level, coffee is a single component within complex livelihood strategies: it principally provides petty cash income in remote villages where it is sold at local markets to purchase basic consumables in a barter-like arrangement. Our survey of coffee-growing households suggested that coffee was not, on average, the most important income source for respondent households. It was secondary to pigs and various off-farm sources. Interview respondents indicated that coffee was formerly their household's top priority, but that its importance had declined to the point where production volumes were estimated at just over 10 % of past levels. All respondent's coffee plots across North Toraja were inherited (none reported purchasing a coffee farm), and less than 5 percent even ventured to estimate how much the commercial value of a coffee farm might be. This lack of a commercial market for coffee farms was in contrast to Enrekang, where farm exchange was found to be relatively common.

[2] While it is not specified, this appears to be calculated as litres of parchment coffee. A realistic estimate in green bean kilogram equivalents would be to divide these estimates by 3.

The most commonly stated reason for declining investment in coffee-growing by households across Toraja was that prices were too low. This is somewhat surprising when nominal coffee prices have more than tripled over the last ten years, and that prices for semi-processed, half-dried parchment coffee at a local buying station are consistently higher than the ICO indicator price for Arabica beans in New York (Figure 3). It appears that good systems of quality control, the presence of large companies operating local purchasing programs in Toraja, and the strong international demand for this specialty product, guarantees these relatively high prices. It is not until we examine local livelihoods and household priorities that this perception of low prices, and ultimately the lack of investment in farm production, can be properly explained.

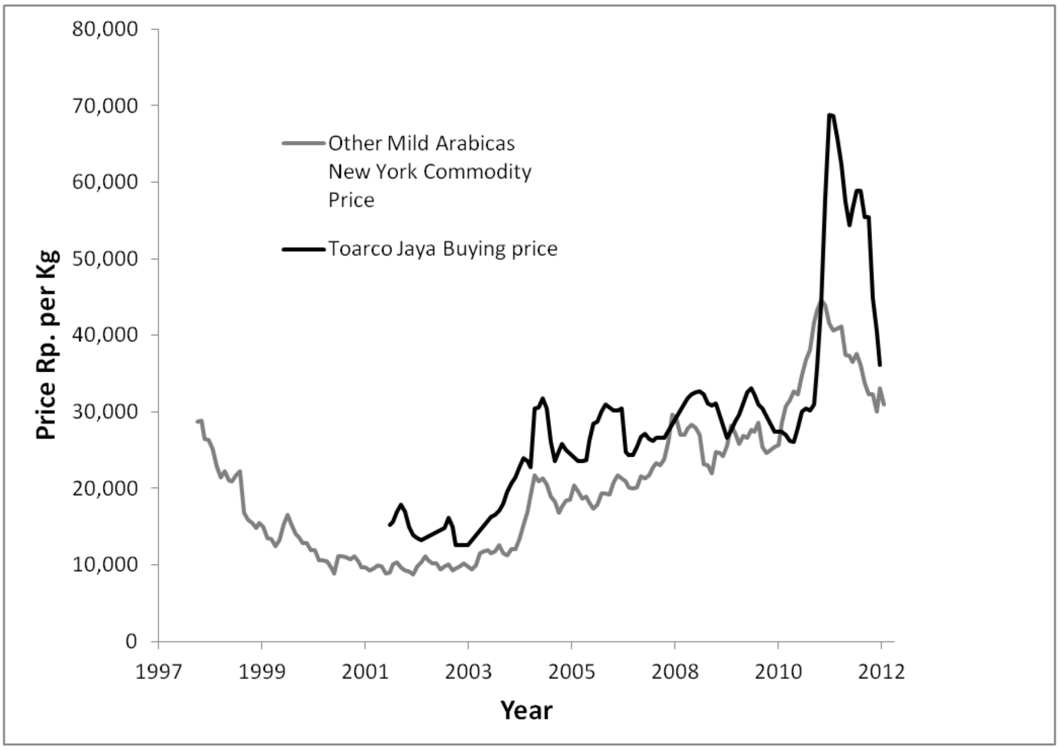

Figure 3. Toraja coffee prices compared to the ICO's 'Other Mild Arabicas' Indicator price in New York (converted into Rupiah/kg equivalent)

The coffee economy interacts with the Torajan ceremonial cycle in complex and unexpected ways. As already suggested, buffalo are central to Torajan funeral ceremonies. According to Thompson (2000, p.4), "buffaloes dead and alive mediate all exchange, social, symbolic and economic in Toraja". This highlights their importance in both reflecting and determining social status, in constructing cultural identity, and in affecting household finances as financial capital is converted into social capital through sacrificial ceremonial displays. Increasing access to cash income saw the buffalo market evolve from standard agricultural equivalences (such as in relation to rice fields) to a rapidly inflating cash value (Figure 4). The capacity for households to participate in ceremonial displays, especially buffalo sacrifice, is no longer linked to (or restricted by) land ownership and access to physical and human resources within the traditional subsistence economy. However, increases in the coffee price, whilst apparently high, is not keeping pace with inflation in the ceremonial economy. The quantity of coffee required to purchase a highly prized albino buffalo has also increased seven-fold the last twelve years, resulting in the observation by smallholders that the value of coffee has declined. In 2002, an albino buffalo cost 40 Million Rupiah, or the equivalent of

9,816 litres of coffee at prevailing prices. In 2012, the same buffalo sold for 350 Million Rupiah, requiring an extraordinary 27,237 litres of coffee to be sold at 2012 prices (while the average coffee farmer in Toraja produces less than 1,000 litres of coffee per year). The inability of coffee income to facilitate ceremonial participation is thus highlighted and, as a consequence, the majority of households have adapted their livelihood strategies away from coffee to facilitate ceremonial participation.

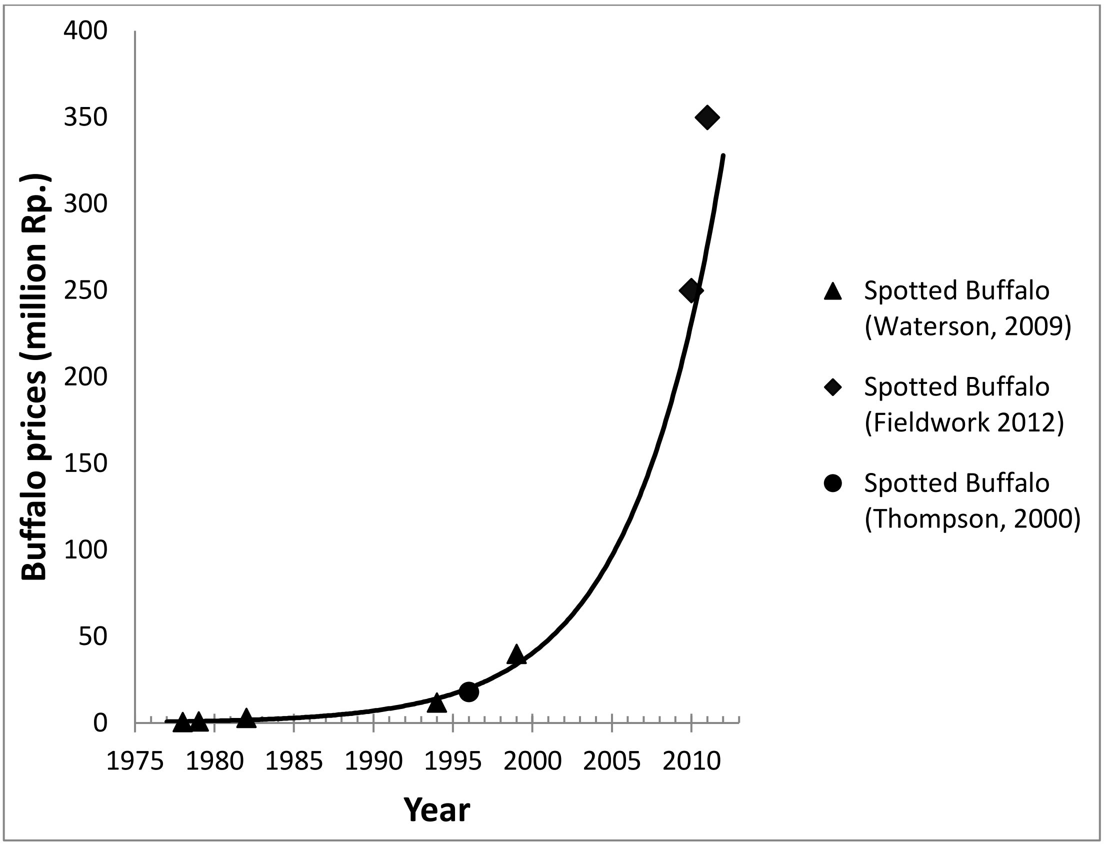

Figure 4 the value of buffalo in the Torajan market

Where do coffee-growing households gain access to the financial resources required for ceremonial participation? In North Toraja, household livelihood surveys indicated a considerable livelihood dependence on remittances, and a lesser dependence on petty trade and transport, and work as civil servants. Numerous new public service positions and political opportunities have emerged in North Toraja during the last decade driven by political trends occurring at the national-level. The 1999 regional autonomy laws across Indonesia substantially increased the discretionary budget of local districts, leading directly to the 2010 division of the erstwhile Tana Toraja district into two separate districts (Tana Toraja and North Toraja), and have also coincided with major democratic reforms with popular elections now held for various levels of government. Despite ongoing attempts to reform governance structures and to embrace anti-corruption initiatives, political and bureaucratic power in Indonesia still affords an attractive, and highly lucrative, avenue for wealth accumulation, and this appears to be contributing to the increased access to financial resources for ceremonial participation.

Remittances were even more important. Dependence on remittances, it should be noted, was greatest in North Toraja, where funeral ceremonies are locally renowned for their greater extravagance than in either Tana Toraja or Enrekang (the latter being a Muslim-majority district where elaborate funerals are not performed). The more affluent households in North Toraja had invariably invested a portion of past coffee-derived income into education, effectively diverting income from one value chain to another. As a result, remittances from émigré Torajans are now able to make significant contributions to ceremonial participation, and to a much lesser extent, to support basic household needs. From the detailed livelihood interviews conducted with 32 coffee-growing households in 2012, it was found that each household had an average of three regular remittance senders, with some having access to as many as ten family members who actively transferred money, especially when it was required for ceremonies. This suggests a far greater dependence on remittances than that suggested in our earlier household surveys. A study by Jong (2008) suggested that remittances constituted as much as 80% of the region's income. We attempted to quantify this regional contribution by extrapolating local Bank BNI and Western Union data, which 86% of respondents identified as being most commonly used to receive remittances (the remaining 14% identified cash). Data provided by the financial institutions showed a clear trend towards significantly higher withdrawals than deposits in personal accounts in Toraja, and for higher incoming regional transfers than outflows. This bank data suggests that the total value of net transfers (excluding cash) was the equivalent of 70% of the gross regional domestic product - estimated at 126 million USD in 2009 (BPS, 2010), and so broadly agrees with Jong's estimate. Remittances, however, are routinely excluded from any analyses of, and discussions about, the regional economy and development discourse more broadly.

The increasing importance of remittances is having significant impacts on primary production in Toraja, which appears to be declining due to labour shortages and wage inflation (exacerbated by high labour demand within the ceremonial economy). In 2012, manual labour costs for agricultural work in North Toraja were reported at equivalent to 6.5 USD/day, considerably higher than wages in neighbouring districts and higher that the formal minimum wage for South Sulawesi, which was set at 109 USD/month. As a result, the recruitment of wage labour is rarely profitable for the coffee harvest, and the rice harvest relies on share-cropping at increasingly advantageous conditions for labour. Emigration has also transformed village demographics, with households commonly consisting of the elderly along with their grandchildren. This, it seems is conducive to the processing of small volumes of high-quality coffee as noted previously.

Households generally refrain from using remittances for daily living needs by maintaining a relatively high degree of food self-sufficiency (especially rice and vegetables). Coffee income is used to complement subsistence production through purchasing basic items like cooking oil, sugar, salt, detergents, and soap. In contrast, ceremonial obligations were the most widely reported use of remittance money, following by education. No respondents reported a willingness to invest additional income in improving coffee yields, and the use of inputs was significantly lower in Toraja than in Enrekang. Put simply, households no longer see coffee as the pathway towards long term prosperity. The few households that are actively investing in productivity improvements are those who have hit upon hard times. For example, there have been two notable events triggering an expansion of coffee farming into previously forested areas (as opposed to intensification on existing plots) across Northern Toraja. These were the Asian Financial Crisis in 1998, when many Torajans working in the large urban centres of Indonesia returned to the security of the kampung following rising urban unemployment, and in 2002, when Malaysia expelled many hundreds of thousands of 'illegal' Indonesian workers, including a large number of Torajans in Sabah and Sarawak. Coffee is thus seen as an income source of last resort, as a way to meet basic needs and as an important social safety net, but certainly not adequate to facilitate a pathway out of poverty, let alone ceremonial participation. The coffee economy of the Torajan household therefore conforms with the classical formulation of resource allocation, as presented by Chayanov (see Harrison, 1975; 1977), whereby peasant households will increase resource allocation up to the point of meeting basic needs generated internally by the household. Household efforts to accumulate wealth and to facilitate ceremonial participation, however, will be focused off-farm. This unwillingness to prioritise coffee-based livelihoods has significant implications for the likelihood of success of value chain interventions in Toraja.

Value Chains and the Politicisation of Rural Development in Toraja

Donor strategies for rural development in Indonesia frequently feature strong value chain elements with a specific focus on achieving growth through improved productivity, supporting better and more equitable access to markets and supporting value-adding activities (AusAID, 2008; USAID, 2013; VECO, 2013). Within this model, there is an implicit assumption that by increasing rural production and providing better access to markets, household incomes will rise along with living standards. In line with this general strategy, several rural development projects[3] have been initiated across Toraja in recent years, many of which focus specifically on coffee development. In some ways, coffee is an obvious commodity choice given the strong reputation of the region's coffee, and the existence of few other tradeable commodities produced locally. This is also consistent with the new value chain opportunities increasingly available as a result of recent trends in the international specialty coffee sector and the relatively privileged position that Torajan coffee maintains within this sector. It is, however, also highly problematic in light of the preferred livelihood strategies discussed above and the specific role played by coffee within these broader strategies.

In a process referred to by Li (2007) as 'rendering technical', the development problems for coffee-growing households in Toraja are commonly identified and analysed by experts as being related to two key areas: i) poor market access; and ii) low productivity caused by poor knowledge of improved agricultural techniques. Value chain development solutions are then suggested to remedy these constraints. As argued elsewhere (by inter alia Li, 2007, and Ferguson, 1990), the ways in which development problems, and subsequent solutions for improvement, are perceived and articulated are inherently political processes. *Orang pintar*, or 'clever people' in Toraja engage with processes of discursive formation to identify problems that lead to particular types of interventions, which in turn enable the mobilisation of resources to overcome those problems already identified. Interestingly, unlike the case of Lesotho presented by Ferguson (1990), Torajan people appear to play an active role in constructing and communicating these discourses, rather than being excluded from them by external actors.

[3] The names of organisations and individuals involved in these initiatives will be kept anonymous, although the quotes used in this section were actual statements made during field interviews in Toraja. Recent activities include local government programs to promote coffee replanting through the distribution of coffee seedlings, provision of coffee processing equipment for producer organisations (cooperatives), and providing operating capital for producer organisations to engage in collective marketing. Local rural-development NGOs have also been supported by various international donors to improve farmer organisation, farm productivity, and coffee marketing, but still at a reasonably modest scale. A number of international coffee companies have also engaged in small-scale 'farmer development' initiatives, where coffee is marketed abroad as contributing directly to the improved livelihoods of Toraja coffee farmers.

Discourses utilized by local NGO actors aimed at attracting development funding from international donors rely on creating perceptions of smallholder farmers as worthwhile and willing recipients of development assistance. According to one local NGO, farmers have a *"lack of skills to grow coffee well, to increase quantity and to improve quality and soil sustainability"*. This then results in specific recommendations for farmer training and value chain upgrading programmes. These constraints, it is argued, can then be overcome through expert knowledge provided by consultants and NGOs. Framing the development problem as a lack of expert knowledge is clearly missing the point. While it is possible that agricultural knowledge may have been lost since the time of Paerels in the 1920s, interviews with farm households suggest that tacit knowledge about coffee farming has in fact been transmitted through the generations, but that the current generation has made a strategic decision against on-farm investments. In contrast, local government officials tend to position coffee farmers as primarily lacking physical resources rather than knowledge, and suggest instead providing agricultural supplies (fertilisers and seedlings) and farm machinery and processing equipment for functional upgrading. These physical supports, it seems, are subsequently more amenable to the roll-out of government 'proyek', which are well-suited to opportunities for contractor corruption and the general 'patronage politics' of contemporary Indonesia (Aspinall, 2013). The decline in primary production in the region, combined with a lack of recognition of remittances in government reporting, does however provide a good platform for constructing discourses suggesting the need for development funding of coffee. One government official in the department of estate crops, tasked with coffee development in the region, was adamant that coffee development programs should receive an increased share of the regional development budget (implying, of course, that his own department would be best positioned to provide this support). After all, he exclaims: "*Coffee is our number one commodity"*.

Discourses about poorly performing markets are also pervasive. These are then translated by development actors to interact with prevailing ideas of value chain thinking to attract donor support to '*improve sustainable agriculture value chains*' and '*improve access to markets*' for reportedly '*isolated'* farmers. Local discourses exploited in his process include rather tactless stereotypes of the 'greedy Japanese' and the 'corrupt middleman', which are actively promoted by local political leaders at both the village and district level. Middlemen are an easy scapegoat, and are frequently blamed for the decline in coffee production due to the supposedly low prices they pay to farmers, which reportedly make it unprofitable to grow coffee. According to one government official, *"we need the government to protect farmers from middlemen",* because (so it is argued) without the middlemen *"farmers would be getting 30,000 Rupiah per litre"*. While the promise of prices three times higher than the prevailing world price is certainly alluring to farmers, it is clearly unrealistic and ultimately ignorant of conditions in the global coffee market. Such claims, however, have led to proposals to set up government buying stations and have resulted in funding support for village cooperatives to "*replace the middleman*"[4]. While such interventions in the value chain have consistently been spectacular business failures, they have resulted in a significant flow of resources to local elites involved in their implementation through patronage networks. While collective

[4] Similar discourses around 'corrupt middlemen' and 'exploitation by foreign coffee companies' were also embraced in 2012 by local elites to promote the establishment of a Geographical Indication (GI) for Torajan coffee, and were a key part of the case for the GI established in Enrekang in 2013.

marketing interventions appeal to the sensitivities of both donor agencies and local governments, in the Toraja context they have repeatedly resulted in additional administrative costs, inefficiencies and financial logjams along the supply chain, poor quality controls, and where the end-result is an inability to pay farmers a competitive price for their coffee. As already highlighted, the coffee supply chain in Toraja is well established and functions relatively efficiently with farmers receiving high prices for their coffee by international standards, and also receiving approximately 75% of prevailing export prices in Ujung Pandang. Farmers currently sell parchment coffee either directly to the mills, or to local collectors who sell to the mills, such that a relatively directly link into the international specialty coffee industry already exists. It is difficult to envisage how this supply chain can be assisted to more advantageous to farmers in the short term. Despite this, discussion of the development and improvement of the coffee supply chain pervades the discourses of development actors in Toraja.

Therefore, it is not only coffee buyers who clearly have an interest in supporting Torajan coffee farmers to increase agricultural production – although some companies certainly do attempt to promote coffee cultivation through farmer training, the provision of equipment for maintaining quality and through the distribution of seedlings. Development agents are also enrolled in this effort, although not necessarily as a result of pressure from the companies. These attempts to influence household decision-making rarely respect the livelihood aspirations of rural households, or as the director of one local NGO argued, *"We have to build the confidence of farmer to respect their coffee ... we must make them want to grow coffee."* It is not clear, however, why this is considered to be so important. Development interventions appear to be actively attempting to persuade households to abandon diverse livelihood profiles in favour of intensive investment in coffee, and thereby offering unwanted financial advice to households without apparent consideration to either the sustainability or resilience of their livelihoods. When considering prevailing livelihood strategies in Toraja, it would seem that social investments in health and education, and even support for the upskilling of migrant workers would seem to be more aligned with recent development trajectories, and would offer far greater improvements for rural lives in North Toraja.

Conclusions

The implicit assumption behind many value chain interventions for rural development is that the identified commodity offers the best possible opportunity for livelihood improvement on offer to target households. This article, however, has emphasised how, in practice, commodity identification is frequently dictated by either the needs of lead firms to improve supply or by prevailing developmental politics. Across several different study sites in Eastern Indonesia, coffee constitutes one element within a complex, and highly varied strategy that farmers employ to secure their livelihoods. The way coffee is inserted within varied livelihood strategies will inevitably determine the effectiveness of any initiatives to upgrade farmers through the value chain. Broader processes of economic and political development, that have made emigration viable, have reshaped livelihood strategies in the region over the last few decades, as households re-evaluate and adapt new strategies. Just as households must adapt to changing conditions, it would seem that so too should development agencies. Whilst value chains provide a useful analytical tool for exploring new development opportunities, and possibly as a framework for intervention in some circumstances, this requires a holistic perspective of local livelihood opportunities and strategies. Value chain interventions need to be responsive to the constant evolution of livelihood profiles and the changing conditions in which these strategies are embedded.

In this article, we have emphasised the potential analytical value of incorporating a livelihoods perspective into developmental applications of value chain approaches to rural development. We are, therefore, in general agreement with Stoain et al. (2012), who argue that value chain development interventions in rural communities require additional conceptual frameworks and interventions. We, however, have emphasised the centrality of cultural norms and social expectations in delineating realistic investments in different livelihood strategies and the possibility that different value chains may contribute highly specific needs within a broader livelihood portfolio. A key finding from this particular coffee-informed case-study is that distinct livelihood strategies affect both the willingness of farmers to participate in value chain upgrading as well as their potential to gain tangible benefits from enhanced value chain integration. While we remain sceptical of the livelihood benefits of a coffee-focused set of value chain interventions in this particular case-study, we remain open to the possible benefits of analogous interventions elsewhere where sufficient analytical attention is provided to local livelihood trajectories. Moreover, we are generally supportive of attempts to incorporate value chain governance structures, as a tangible reflection of a broader political economy, within a more holistic future for the livelihood framework.

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