

NGO relations in development work

A study about people's perceptions of NGO-government relations,
NGO-NGO relations and NGO-locals relations in Ethiopia



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Preface

As a development geographer, I believe that NGO relations is an important field of research for gaining better insight about facilitating and hindering factors in development work, and for the better use of different actor's knowledge and resources. My main motivation for writing this thesis is my interests in the NGO field, the voluntary sector, and its position in development work. This is the second work I have done on NGO relations, and thus, this master's thesis can be seen as a continuation of my interest in the NGO field.

Firstly, I would like to give a great thanks to all my informants both in Norway and Ethiopia. How grateful I am for the local people of Ethiopia who gave me a warm welcome to an amazing culture, and the NGO workers for their interest in my work. Thank you all for your willingness to participate in my project, you are the most essential part of this work.

I give special thanks for the great guidance provided by my academic supervisor, Odd Inge Steen, who have never doubted my ability to realize my plans and ambitions.

I am forever thankful for the support and great motivation I have received from my peers. A special thanks to Marikken Wulf Wathne, Astrid Maria Cabrera, Kari Elida Eriksen, Anne Katrine Wenaas Ribe, Thomas Ingebrigtsen and Bård Emil Danielsen. You are all inspirational people, and have made my time as a student unforgettable.

To my mother and father, Zosima and Jan Kåre, it is your hard work that has put me where I am today. And to my aunt and uncle, Edle og Terje, I thank you for advising me to enter the university. All four of you have my sincere gratitude for your eternal belief in me.

But the greatest of all thanks goes to my loving husband, Remi Andre Mikkelsen. Your love, your patient advice and your faith in me is more important than anything else.

Bergen, 15th of May 2017.

Abstract

Research on relations between development NGOs and actors like government and locals are meaningful for good utilization of knowledge and resources in development work. The legitimacy of NGOs is said to be based on a universal mandate to help people get a better life. However, this study aims at proving that research on NGO relations on an individual level is a meaningful way of gaining understanding about these relations. This study explores the perceptions on NGO relations through informants both inside and outside the NGO world in Ethiopia, through the overarching research question: *Which perceptions exist of NGO relations in Ethiopia?*

NGO relations is a difficult term to measure. However, drawing inspiration from humanistic geography and the philosophy of phenomenology, the study uses semi-structured interviews and field conversations to explore people's perceptions, experiences, opinions and feelings on NGO relations, as a means to contribute to greater insight on the theme. Increasing validity of the study, questionnaires and some standardized questions during interviews have been used to indicate the scope of the perceptions. The theoretical framework includes a literature review on the topics of NGO relations and role today. The study draws upon data collected during a two-month long field work in the research areas of Northern Amhara, Eastern Oromia and Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. In total, the study uses data collected from 122 participants.

As phenomenological data and the theme analysis is subjective, my ability to generalize is limited. However, the findings within NGO-Government relations show a trend of NGO restrictions believed to be caused by political factors, in line with the theoretical framework and literature review. NGO workers perceive the Government both as an obstacle for development and as a necessary evil in a region characterized by unrest, and experience a "silent cooperation" with the government, through different strategies. The findings within NGO-NGO relations are divided. The NGO networks are perceived as expensive and ineffective, causing NGO leaders in the study to avoid memberships. Northern NGOs' relations to Southern NGOs are characterized by increasing trust and independency, in contrast to literature on relations between Northern and Southern NGOs. The findings within NGO-locals relations shows a "love/hate" relationship. On the one hand, the informants were satisfied with NGO work and expressed needs for NGO expansion. On the other hand, many believed NGO presence was an unwanted influence both culturally and politically. Hopefully, the study provides useful knowledge about people's perceptions, experiences and opinions, and contributes with new insights to the NGO debate.

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Abbreviations:

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
NNGO	Northern Non-Governmental Organization
SNGO	Southern Non-Governmental Organization
EF	Focus Group Discussion conducted in Eastern Oromia
NF	Focus Group Discussion conducted in Northern Amhara
NS	Questionnaire in Northern Amhara
ES	Questionnaire in Eastern Oromia
NS#	Questionnaire respondent from Northern Amhara
ES#	Questionnaire informant from Eastern Amhara

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PART I: INTRODUCTIONS

This is the first of four parts in which this thesis is structured. Here, I will make introductions to the main themes of my research project, creating a background for the rest of the thesis. It contains four chapters, and will introduce NGO relations, the aim of the research, objectives and research questions, research details and lastly, a brief review of Ethiopia's historical and political developments.

1. Introducing the NGO relations

The aim of this thesis is to shed light on NGO relations today. In this chapter, the themes of NGOs, their relations and their importance today will be introduced. I will briefly present NGOs as institutions taking part in the interconnectedness of the world, their global and political context. Thereon, I will argue for the importance of studying such themes today. This contextual information will provide an important background for the subsequent chapters.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played an increasingly significant role in the development work during the past few decades (Ossewaarde, Nijhof, & Heyse, 2008). NGOs work in various scales (international, national, local) and within a variety of orientations (welfare, development, education, networking and research (Vakil, 1997).

Development assistance has increasingly been channeled through NGOs, who in recent years has been trusted immensely by the world community and development policies (DeMars & Dijkzeul, 2015). One reason for this might be NGOs unique way of including different actors in different parts of the world, thus creating relations on different scales and locations (Arts, 2004). NGOs have contributed to the construction of multi-level governance practices as well

as to a re-articulation of scale, by thinking globally, acting locally and conceptualize local issues into global ones (ibid.).

Martens argues that NGOs are “formal, professionalized, independent societal organizations whose primary aim is to promote common goals at the national or the international level”, where “common goals” are further defined as “the promotion of public goods, from which their members profit and/or the public gains” (Martens, 2002). In a previous study on NGO relations, I have explored NGO relations in the Philippines. I will reuse the term “development NGOs”, referring to “NGOs who work on various scales for the purpose of promoting education, rights and/or health improvements for resource deprived groups” (Landøy, 2013).

It is the main aim of this thesis is to explore, describe and analyze some perceptions on NGO relations in Ethiopia. In order to do so, I have divided the thesis into four main parts that will take the reader through chapters containing introductions of themes and context, the theoretical concepts framing the project, the research methodology adopted, and the field study findings from Ethiopia, which will be analyzed and discussed in the latter part of the thesis.

The development idea as it is understood today, was born after World War II, in a US initiated attempt to help rebuild a devastated Europe. In this period, the “development aid” was focused on natural causes of poverty, and much of the work that was done was focused on food-relief, water and sanitation (Moyo, 2009). The importance of organization in developmental work has increasingly gained resonance. In the Report on Human Development of 1994, the UN Development Program (UNDP) underlined the importance of *organizations* in sustainable development was underlined in the Report of Human Development of 1994. This report focused on civil society and in the importance of both institutions and organizations for people’s freedom of choice and opportunities. This can be seen as a symbol of the growing awareness that poverty and development issues were structural rather than merely occurring due to humanitarian and natural crisis. This was an idea that was beginning to gain validity among NGOs (Eade, 2000). There was more reason to work with the civil society, human rights and policy advocacy, a realization that many international NGOs (INGOs) did in the 1960s and 1970s (ibid.), leading to a shift toward other NGO activities.

Since this shift, there has been a considerate change in NGO shape and activity. Previously, NGO work was almost synonymous to humanitarian work. Some scholars argued that in Africa,

NGOs were more suited to do humanitarian work than the governments. The NGOs were seen as both having more experience and resources necessary for dealing with the issues than the African governments (Bratton, 1989). The fact that NGOs were giving the impression of a universal mandate could have influenced this belief. This a crucial part of “NGOing”, as will be further discussed in chapter 6 (DeMars & Dijkzeul, 2015). The rapid increase of foreign NGOs in development countries and the acceptance of their presence by governments and local communities can possibly be explained by this narrative where NGOs were seen as more equipped to handle humanitarian crisis and development issues than the governments of developing countries.



Figure 1.1: Ethiopian in Northern Amhara.

Photo: Marie Louise Landøy

As the focus of the NGOs shifted from addressing 'nature' to addressing more structural causes for development issues, NGOs increasingly engaged in policy work and activities supporting the civil society, and less with humanitarian work (Pearce, 2000). Thus, the main focus of NGOs has shifted from mainly doing relief work and development work within the areas of health and education – to policy work

including children's, women's, and workers' rights and the building of democracy. One can argue that NGOs are no longer simply an extension of government work (Weisbrod, 1997; Young, 2000). Rather, their role and purpose have changed. In addition to this, there has been an increase of southern based NGOs (Pearce, 2000). Hence, one can argue that the NGO landscape has changed – in regards to its focus, its actors and its relations.

Within a state's border, such types of policy advocacy are powerful instruments that can influence the national policy. The changes of direction and focus for development NGOs give reason to believe that the relations between development NGOs, local communities and the government has also changed. This raises interesting questions, like: What characterizes the

relations between development NGOs and governments today? Is the policy focus in development NGOs challenging their relation to governments? How do development NGOs relate to each other? How are their relations to local communities now that they are doing “more” than just humanitarian work? These are some of the questions this thesis seeks to explore.

Turning our attention to the geographical focus of this thesis, Ethiopia is an interesting country when it comes to development NGOs. The research areas where the data have been collected, are Eastern Oromia, Northern Amhara and Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian legislation divides NGOs into two main categories: ‘Charities’ and ‘Societies’. The new Charities and Societies Proclamation of 2009 has provided a new legal framework for NGOs in Ethiopia, especially affecting INGOs opportunities to continue in the direction of policy work. Even though NGOs (both national and international) have increased their activity the last decades, they are still weak in their impact in the socio-economic development of the country as a whole (Digie, 2013:40).

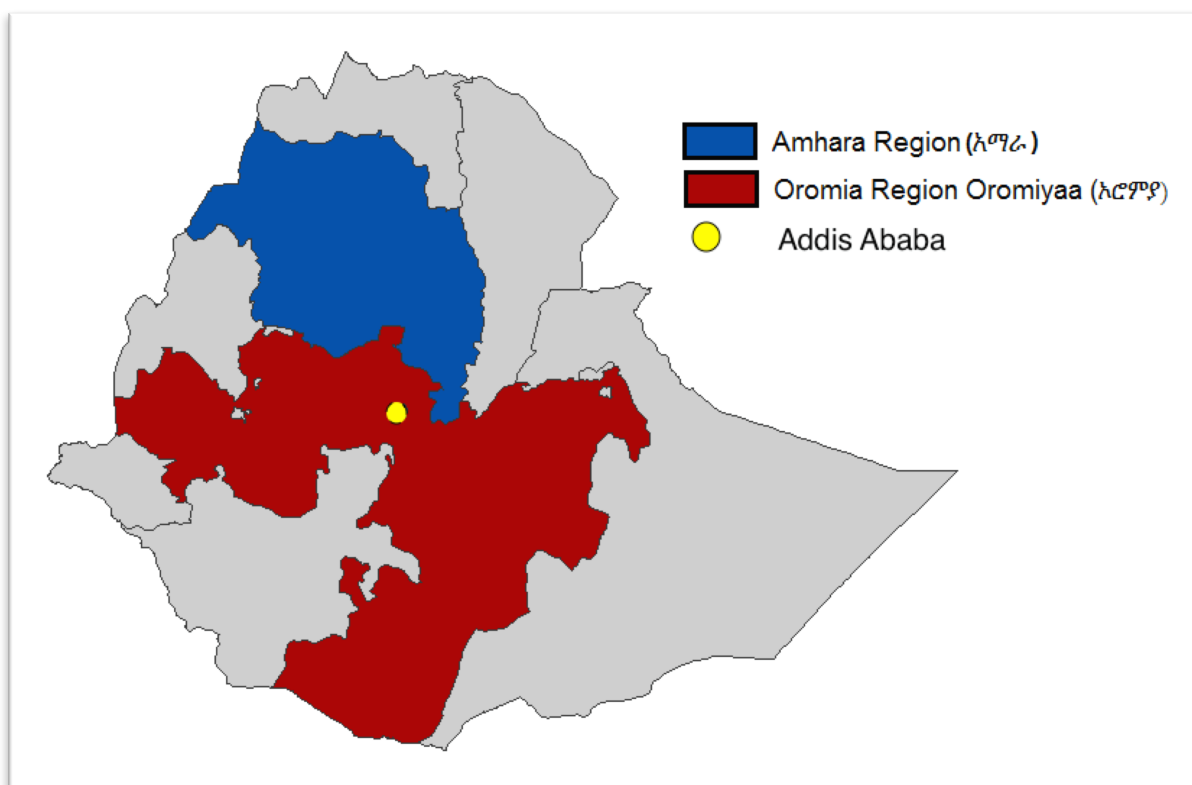


Figure 1.2: Map of research areas in Ethiopia. Map: Kari Elida Eriksen.

When it comes to the theoretical framework, this study is inspired by humanistic geography. Viewing NGO relations as a phenomenon provides a theoretical framework including people’s

perceptions, experiences, feelings and opinions. This study argues that NGO relations as a phenomenon is best described by the people who experience them on a daily basis. An insight into the lived experiences of NGO workers can provide useful understandings of NGOs relations to the government, and insight into the experiences of locals can provide insight to the NGO-locals relations. This research project aspires to explore the relations between NGOs, the Ethiopian government and members of local communities using examples from a field work in Ethiopia.

The study does not aspire to explain the nature of NGO relations, but to describe them. It is important to note that many aspects will affect several of these relations. The findings in this research project between different relations are not comprehensive and that the study does not aspire to cover all aspects of the NGOs relations. For instance, the NGO role during the Ethiopian war with today's Eritrea, is seen to have affected NGOs relations to both national government and the local community (Duffield & Prendergast, 1994). This type of historical links along with other factors influencing the relations, could thus have been included in the study. However, due to time limitations and the aim of the study, I have chosen to focus on the NGO relations as they are perceived today.

The relations chosen for the purpose of this study are as follows: Firstly, the project will seek to study NGO workers' perceptions of the NGO-government relations. Secondly, NGO workers perceptions of NGO-NGO relations are studied, touching upon relations between NNGOs, between Northern NGOs (NNGOs) and Southern NGOs (SNGOs), and NGO networks. The third type of relation is that between the NGOs and the local community.

To understand the perceptions that the locals have of NGOs, I have contacted local Ethiopians, students, workers, unemployed, farmers and families with the aim of exploring the "word on the street". To understand the perceptions that NGO workers have of the relations between different NGOs and between NGOs and the government, I have reached out to NGO workers, leaders and volunteers. Within the group of locals, I have contacted students, unemployed and people of different occupations. How do locals perceive INGOs work and presence in Ethiopia? Which strategies are used by NGOs to continue development work? How do NGO workers experience working with development work in Ethiopia? These were questions of high relevance in conducting the fieldwork.

These themes are similar to those who came up under the literature review on NGOs. For instance, (Pearce, 2000) Pearce mentions several major themes in the current debate on NGOs, whereas two of them are related to “*NGO–NGO relationships*”, and issues connected to “NGOs and the state”. However, it is my opinion that empirical studies aiming at describing NGO relations can benefit from including the aspect of the locals, or at least attempt to include the thoughts and perceptions of people in the South outside of the NGO world. In this regard, this study can be seen as an important contribution to the literature on NGO relations.

2. Aim, Objectives and Research Questions

Based on the themes addressed in the previous chapter, one aim and several objectives has been constructed for the purpose of this project. The aim should be understood as the ambition of what the project aspires to achieve. The objectives will be presented as the specific steps the project will take to achieve this aim. This chapter will introduce this aims and the objectives, which are the foundations to the construction of this thesis.

The aim of this study is to describe perceptions on NGO relations in Ethiopia. This aim consists of two parts: The first part explores the NGO workers' perceptions and experiences the NGO workers have of NGO-government and NGO-NGO relations. Their daily interaction with NGOs is here seen as giving them insight to the cooperation and communications with the government, as well as valuable insight to the interaction between these two actors. "NGO workers" include NGO leaders, employees and volunteers. I will refer to them as "people inside the NGO world" or "NGO workers". These same participants are included in the exploration of the perceptions of NGO-NGO relations. People inside the NGO world have been expected to provide valuable information about the relations as they are seen, experienced and perceived by them. The second part explores relations between NGOs and Locals relations. This part focuses on locals' perceptions and experiences presented by the locals. The term "local" in this thesis signifies people outside the NGO world. These are therefore members of the local communities not working in NGOs; students, workers, farmers, etc. Jointly, their contribution will be used to describe some of the perceptions that exist on NGO relations in Ethiopia.

To be able to achieve the aim of describing perceptions on NGO relations, the objective is to explore the perceptions of people inside and outside of the NGO world. More specifically, the objectives are:

- Explore which perceptions NGO workers have on NGO-government relations and NGO-NGO relations
- Explore which perceptions locals have on NGO – Locals relations.

These objectives have several functions. An important function is to contribute to improved relations between different actors in Ethiopia by shedding light on the perceptions of the people who experience these relations each day. NGO relations is an important research field as it can explain some of the facilitating factors as well as the obstacles to development work. By exploring the NGO-relations as they are perceived by the development actors, some of these factors can be identified.

Another function is to provide a humanistic and holistic approach to the NGO relations. Focusing on the perceptions of people that experience NGO relations first hand, the project thus puts the *human* in center. By being holistic, approach has tried to include different relations that might interrelate and influence each other.

A third function is that this study can make it possible to say something about the challenges experienced by participants concerning changing or adapting to these relations. However, the project does not in any way aspire to adopt a complete insight about their challenges. A mere glimpse of the complex issues is the objective of this project. More explicitly, it explores and maps the relations that exist between these three actors, on different scales and in different places, and based on how the participants perceive them.

In summary, this project's aim is to describe some perceptions by exploring the relations between NGOs, government and local communities and on how the research participants themselves perceive and characterize these relations. The project is inspired by humanistic geography where the relations are being analyzed through how they are perceived by the actors in the situation. Further, the aim and objectives raise some research questions that will be sought answered in the analysis of the empirical findings:

Overarching research question:

Which perceptions exist of NGO relations in Ethiopia?

Sub research questions:

- (RQ1) How do NGO workers perceive the NGO–government relations?*
- (RQ2) How do NGO workers perceive the NGO–NGO relations?*
- (RQ3) How do locals perceive the NGO–Locals relations?*

The research questions allow me to primarily focus on the descriptions of NGO relations to different actors. Furthermore, it narrows my scope to the perceptions of the participants, and excludes other factors that may influence the relations.

3. Research details

Now that the main themes and aim of the project has been described, I will make some brief introductions to the research details, research philosophy and methodology.

3.1 Research Philosophy

As mentioned above, this research project is inspired by humanistic geography. It can be of great value to look at this subject with a humanistic approach, and try to grasp the humanistic side of the NGO relations, as people are in the center of doing, and benefiting from, NGO activities. It is the human that makes the decisions, execute the work and experience the positive or negative outcome of NGO relations. I would argue that a comprehensive and humanistic approach to the NGO relations is much needed. To fully understand a phenomenon, the humanist aspect will create a different type of knowledge than more quantitative research – such as standardized schemas and measures.

That being said, NGO relations is a highly complex phenomenon, and thus the studying of it requires some form of statistics, context, location and analysis. These are methods that are relevant to be able to use the information for other purposes. The broadness, area, location, history and policies around the phenomenon that are discussed is valuable information for a geographical research project like this. This systematization can be seen in contrast to the humanistic approach to research. However, such methods have been included to gain a better overview of the topic.

3.2 Research Methodology

This is a mixed methods project that collects data in three different research sites in Ethiopia; Addis Ababa, Northern Amhara and Eastern Oromia. 19 semi-structured interviews have been conducted, of which 14 were with NGO workers and five were with locals. Although conversations with locals and informants has constantly been happening during this project, I want to include 10 of these as especially valuable field conversations, five of these have involved resource people in Norway prior to the fieldwork Ethiopia. The remaining five occurred during my stay in the research areas. Furthermore, two focus group have been conducted, including a total of 12 locals. The first of these was conducted in Eastern Oromia

(EF) and the second in Northern Amhara (NF). In addition to this, two questionnaires were conducted. These questionnaires were distributed to locals whom had been sampled randomly. The questionnaire conducted in Eastern Oromia (ES) had 39 respondents, while the questionnaire from Northern Amhara (NS) had 37 respondents. The study is thus based on data from in total 122 informants assigned to 19 interviews, 10 field conversations, two focus groups and two surveys. In addition, my methods include the use of a field diary.

The sampling methods employed have been purposive sampling, and to some degree snowball sampling for the interviews. For the surveys, the random sampling method has been employed. The data is transcribed and coded inductively. NGO policy documents are also reviewed and the research data is supplemented by an analysis of primary and secondary literature. The scope of the project is limited to seven NGOs and three research areas.

3.3 Significance of the project

This project is an investigation of a research field that has received little attention in the last decades. One of the purposes of this research is thus to explore whether issues that were relevant in the past, still holds their relevance today. The project is meant to contribute to the understanding of how people involved in development work perceive each other.

The study can contribute to add good and relevant questions to the NGO debate. In addition, it can contribute to put focus on the humanistic perspective on NGO issues. The study can also provide data that other studies and researchers can draw upon as for comparison or other purposes.

The research does not attempt to draw general conclusions from the findings of this specific case. It does not claim to have full insight in all the nuances of NGO relations, nor being representative for all NGO workers or locals in Ethiopia. However, the data can be used as a comparison for researchers writing on the same topic, either qualitative or quantitative, in an Ethiopian context or another field area. The time and resources available for a master's thesis is limited, and therefore a part of the data has been excluded.

4. Ethiopia's Developments

"History can be well written only in a free country".

(Voltaire, cited in Aldington, 1927)

In the previous chapters, I have introduced the background, aims and details of this research project, explaining how it attempts to provide a better understanding of the relations between different development actors in Ethiopia. This chapter will briefly introduce historical and political context of Ethiopia, which are important to gain an adequate meaningful understanding of the NGO relations in this country, as research question 1, 2 and 3 aspires to do.

I will begin by giving a short presentation of Ethiopia's modern history. Then, a brief elaboration on the general political situation in Ethiopia today will be provided. Lastly, I will describe some aspects of the political situation that the NGOs have to adhere to, however, this is not an overview but a couple of factors that are relevant for the study. I believe that the historical context will influence the NGO relations in the same way they affect the present political, economic, and social situation in Ethiopia.

4.1 Brief historical review

The state history of Ethiopia is dated back over 2000 years, and is related to the history of the kingdom of Aksum. For the purpose of this project and taking in to account the limitations of space, it is more relevant to start the historical context in the early 20th century. This marks the start of the modern Ethiopia. Ethiopia's boundaries as they exist today were created under emperor Menelik 2nd who reigned from 1889 to 1913 (Haile, 1986). He led the expansion to include the regions of Oromo, Gurage and Wolayata amongst others, beyond the central and southern highlands (ibid.). In this process, there was a lot of resistance, and it is known as a bloody expansion which left many dead. In the process, Orthodox Christianity became the state religion and Amharic the main language in all of the conquered areas. The lands were given to Amharic landlords to gain control, giving this period the name "the Amharisation of Ethiopia" (Fissha, 2010). During the reign of Haile Selassie, Amharization was seen as a key to modernization. This process was supported by the Italians, and in return, Italy gained influence in the country. But what started as support, ended in conflict. The Italians tried to gain control

in Ethiopia, but Ethiopia was able to defend its country. The conflict led to a severe famine which killed one third of the country's population.

After World War 2, the state was centralized (Fissha, 2010). Without regional autonomy, the process of Amharization reached the former Italian colony of Eritrea. Here, and in other regions in Ethiopia, the process ended in various uprisings. A student movement demanded land reform, representative government and ethnic self-determination (Fissha, 2010).

A pseudo-socialist military junta called the 'Derg', hijacked the student movement and overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie. The Derg advocated for the right to self-determination for all nationalities and languages (ibid.). Over 50 000 teachers and students were sent to the different regions in order to teach the people to read and write in their own language in a project known as "Zemecha". The power remained in military hands, and the centralized state adopted a *laissez faire* position towards ethnic differences (ibid.). The war over Eritrea intensified, and regional resistance towards the government grew. Among the strongest ethnic movements in addition to the Eritrean Liberation movement, were the Tigray peoples liberation front (TPLF) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). Under this military rule, the 1985 famine brought international attention to Ethiopia, resulting in huge response to support millions of famine victims (IDMC, 2007).

The Derg government executed two huge "developmental" programs during the 1980s, with the support of donor governments. A large-scale resettlement program was conducted. NGOs and other aid agencies was restricted at times to help with the process (IDMC, 2007). Some 600.000 people were moved, with the outcome of tens of thousands of them dying in or after the move. The second program was called a "villagisation" policy, later described as resembling forced labor camps (IDMC, 2007).

The ethnic movements overthrew the Derg regime in 1991. The TPLF led a coalition of regional liberation fronts, later known as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) (Habtu, 2004). They recognized the right for all ethnic groups to administer their own territories and participate in the government on an equal basis. People got the right to use their mother tongues (Fissha, 2010; Habtu, 2004). However, conflicts arose as the OLF and other nationality movements refused to participate under the EPRDF because it consisted of a

majority of Tigrai (Aalen, 2002). However, despite the boycott of the major opponents, the EPRDF gained 96,6% of the vote in the 1992 elections.

4.2 The current political situation

There are great dangers in the current politicization of ethnicity (see Somalia) and religion (see the Sudan) which cannot be ignored by external development actors (Bevan & Pankhurst, 2007:28).

This brief review of the current political situation will include some of the issues that are believed to influence the NGO sector in Ethiopia. Today, each region decides the structure of the regional government. Economically, the regions of Afar, Somali and Gambela are considered inferior, in terms of the regions' economy, socio-economic levels of the citizens, conflict level, infrastructure and lack of political independence. They are also the receivers of the highest share of government subsidies (Habtu, 2004).

The district and local authorities are mainly associated with the EPRDF. However, in the elections of May and November 2005. The situation changed when opposition parties increased their representation in local government and in the national parliament, where they went from having 12 to 172 seats (IDMC, 2007). The elections were characterized by violent government suppression of protests against alleged vote-rigging by the EPRDF, leading to several donors moving their funding away from direct budgetary support to central government, and instead fund NGOs and local governments bodies directly (IDMC, 2007).

There are several differing opinions about the system in Ethiopia. Those in favor often emphasize that Ethiopia finally recognizes the different ethnic groups and acts as a unifying force and prevents conflicts. This is also essentially the readings of the government (Habtu, 2004). Others are in favor, but criticize the political control of the TPLF-EPRDF, in contrast of the promise of ethnic autonomy (Abbink, 2006; Aalen, 2002). The system of ethnic federalism and channeling power according to ethnicity is unique in the world (IDMC, 2007)

The ethnical differences are being declared by many to be the cause of the majority of the problems in Africa, especially those of violent conflict. Ethnicity has become the parameter for

political division in Ethiopia, and the reason for this lies largely in the country’s history and the way ethnic groups have struggled for self-determination. Because of the increasing migration within the country, the principle of ethnically-distinct zones is hard to maintain (IDMC, 2007)

In the current political situation in Ethiopia, one can see tendencies of growing political unrest. There have been some demonstrations, and since November 2015 it is believed that over 200 people have been killed by the government for being part of the opposition (Foltyn, 2016). One demonstrator claimed that government officials dressed as civilians are patrolling the streets to find people who participated in the demonstrations (ibid.). Some of the injured people did not return to school, in fear of being recognized: “If one is recognized, one is thrown in jail”, one said (Foltyn, 2016). Reports shows that the demonstrations are violent, and two of the journalists who covered the protests were arrested. The state has failed to give their own estimates to how many people have been killed or injured, simultaneously, they reject numbers from the media (ibid.).

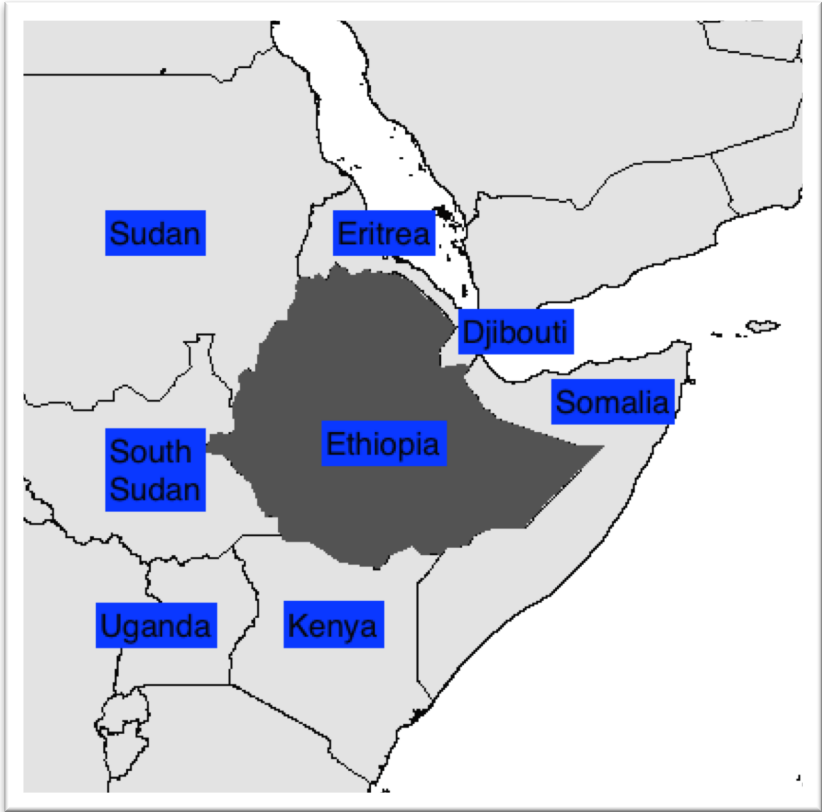


Figure 4.1: Map of Ethiopia and its surrounding countries.
Map: Kari Elida Eriksen.

The region surrounding Ethiopia, known as the Horn of Africa, has been characterized by political unrest for a long time, and for ten years, the situation has been characterized as a crisis (Toggia, Lauderdale, & Zegeye, 2002). The situation in the region includes unrest in many ways. Violation of human rights, famine and droughts, populations displacements, marginalized social groups including ethnic minorities are amongst the different aspects that scholars today argue is manifesting the

crisis of Horn of Africa (Toggia et al., 2002). Although this political situation of the region is not a focus of the thesis, it is worth mentioning as it is influencing the developmental context of Ethiopia, as well as the national security strategy of the country. According to Mohammed, some scholars argue that Ethiopia's role in the current crisis of the Horn of Africa is to prevent the establishment of a Taliban-style state in Somalia that potentially could provide a home base to al-Qaida (Mohammed, 2007). Others argue that the war in Somalia is a continuation of the conflict between the highland Christian Abyssinians and lowland Somali Muslims, or that the crisis is mostly influenced by Ethiopia's desire for a sea access (Mohammed, 2007). Mohammed calls for a realization that Ethiopia's role is much more complicated than this. The crisis is influenced by several factors, and one of the most important are Ethiopia's struggle for securing national security and regional stability by both force and diplomacy (Mohammed, 2007).

The region has suffered from terrorism and there have been numerous terrorists from the radical Islamic movement group al-Shabaab, who operate mainly in Somalia, but is said to have influence in Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia (Hansen 2015, Maru 2014). However, Islam in the northeast Africa is seen to have a peaceful nature, and that there is tolerance between Christianity and Islam in this area (Mohammed, 2007).

Thus, all these elements can influence on the NGO-sector in Ethiopia. The 2005 elections causing donors to favor NGOs over direct government funding, the ethnic diversity (whether argued for well handled by the state or viewed upon as causing conflict), the legal framework for NGOs, as well as the national and regional unrest can be signs of a growing uncertainty for the safeness of the NGO sector in terms of future work.

The NGOs in Ethiopia, in terms of formal civil society and legal organizations, is a new phenomenon in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has had a long tradition of informal community-based and self-help organizations operating at a local level, but civil society as it is known today was slow to emerge under the rule Ethiopian Empire regime (1137-1974) (ICNL, 2017). Civil society was also restricted under the military rule of the Derg (1974-1991). The first modern civil society organizations (faith-based) didn't emerge until the 1930s. Welfare organizations like the Red Cross started operating in the 1950s and after the famines of 1973 and 1984, NGOs with humanitarian focus emerged. After the Derg period, NGO numbers grew substantially.

No matter the opinion on the political situation in Ethiopia, it seems likely to believe that some of the research participants could be hesitant to discuss matters on government and NGOs. Since the changed funding strategies of donors after the 2005 elections, NGOs and NGO-government relations can be seen as delicate matters. Naturally, disagreeing with government policies is a theme than can come up when discussing perceptions and opinions on NGO and government related issues. Being a critic of the government is something that could generate great fear if it was common knowledge that this was dangerous - even if some were to believe the danger to be an unverified account. The current political situation is likely to influence the willingness of the research participants to elaborate on their viewpoints, and on their relations to the government. This is something that have influenced greatly the methodology of the project and how I have conducted the study, in terms of ethical issues, anonymity and security for my informants.

PART II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

During PART I, the reader has hopefully been successfully introduced to the projects purpose, aims and objects, as well as the political and historical background of Ethiopia. The aim of PART II is to shed some light on the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study, elaborating on a literature review of the themes as well as an outlining of the theoretical stance of humanistic geography. Chapter 5) “The NGO Debate” will elaborate on the literature review, which provides the study with its thematic framework. Here, relevant literature on the themes of NGO legitimacy, NGO-government relations, NGO-NGO relations and NGO-locals relations will be explored, including both international theories and literature on both African and Ethiopian contexts. Chapter 6) “A humanistic approach” contains the theoretical contribution of humanistic geography, from which the study draws its inspiration.

5. The NGO Debate

This chapter aims at describing some important aspects within the NGO debate. The selected literature will touch upon important themes for the study, firstly reporting on NGO legitimacy, NGO-government relations, NGO-NGO relations and lastly NGO-locals relations. In this second section of the chapter, the thesis will further elaborate on the Charities and Society Proclamation of 2009, as mentioned in the introduction. This is an important research area of NGOs situation in Ethiopia. As the project touches upon a variety of issues, it is not possible to review all relevant literature. The chapter thus aims at reviewing the most relevant sources for this study.

The context of the thesis is the NGO landscape in Ethiopia, but as there is little literature on the specific subject of NGO relations in Ethiopia today, writings from similar contexts are here included. Literature from both international and local level will be explored in this chapter, which will be used as comparison and the illumination of the Ethiopian context.

The NGO debate is highly complex, and is characterized by many differing and strong perspectives. These arguments are largely and freely discussed in interviews with my informants during the field work, and thus debate is highly influential and has great meaning for the entire thesis. Thus, this chapter introduces some of the themes that appear in the wider NGO debate as they are relevant in this research project.

According to Pearce, the NGO debate today consists of, among others themes: NGOs and Neoliberalism, the roles and relationships between INGO (Northern) and Southern NGOs. NGOs and the state, and theory, praxis and NGOs (Pearce, 2000). Based on this, one can thus argue that the following themes are of high relevance for the contemporary debate on NGOs.

5.1 NGO Legitimacy

The debate surrounding NGO legitimacy is meaningful to include in order to answer the research questions on NGO relations to government and locals (RQ1 and RQ3). These relations are affected by the level of legitimacy the NGOs enjoy in the society. There are some scholars arguing for the NGO legitimacy, both in an African context and internationally, being rooted in their unique collaborating qualities and ability to respond to humanitarian crises (Bratton, 1989; DeMars & Dijkzeul, 2015). However, we have seen an increase in NGO critiques as the entire foreign aid industry and some of its negative effects have been subject to research. In Ethiopia, we have seen some examples of what can be seen a decrease in legitimacy, especially in light of the NGOs increasing role within policy advocacy.

It is my understanding that NGOs have been legitimized due to their alleged will and purpose to “make the world a better place”. Who can argue with such an argument? The focus on NGO efficiency and massive support that followed World War II resulted in an extreme increase in the number of NGOs and government funding of these (Moyo, 2009). According to Bratton, one of the main NGO thinkers of the 1980s, NGOs in the African context were seen as being more equipped to handling humanitarian crises and development issues than the African governments (Bratton, 1989). NGOs located in African countries received massive trust, and the foreign aid resources were increasingly distributed through them (Moyo, 2009).

According to DeMars and Dijkzeul, there are two main practices of “NGOing”. The first is claiming a universal normative mandate (i.e. to fight poverty) (DeMars & Dijkzeul, 2015). Here,

NGOs are private actors claiming to serve a universal public purpose. The second practice is the unique capacity of NGOs in partnering with societal and political actors in several countries. These two practices are vital for the process of NGOing (DeMars & Dijkzeul, 2015), and will assure them legitimacy and support.

However, in the 1980s and 1990s, NGOs were under a lot of criticism. The World Bank also received a lot of criticism, as they demanded the elimination of government subsidies of countries were to lend money, causing prices to rise in development countries. Still, many scholars criticize the foreign aid industry, and Moyo has no mercy in her contribution “Dead Aid” (Moyo, 2009). According to Moyo, foreign aid can support corruption, and often, the existence of international development NGOs are not always as needed for the recipient as many believe (ibid.). Further, Moyo points out that while many studies show that aid leads to corruption, western governments continue to give aid to poor countries. She discusses the motivations related to economics, politics and moral. Moyo also explains the continuation of the aid industry by pointing out that there is a pressure to lend because of the large number of NGOs world wide (ibid.). The livelihoods of those employed in NGOs and benefitting from NGO activity depends on aid. Moyo’s criticism of foreign aid encompasses several other types of foreign aid other than merely NGO work, but it can still be connected to the legitimacy of NGOs as these organisations manages a large of the foreign aid recourses.

Pearce argues that due to of competition over resources and the apparent inadequacy of responses to global poverty, the world of NGOs and official donors is characterized by mistrust (Pearce, 2000). Even though NGO work has had a lot of notable achievements, these have not been continuous nor equally distributed. These arguments concern the actual activity of NGOs creating less legitimacy for NGOs. Pearce also focuses on the conceptual challenges and lack of consensus in the NGO debate as reasons for NGOs receiving less legitimacy. She calls for a rethinking of “development”, and points out that many scholars both in the North and South argue for an end of ‘development’ as an idea: “We need to ask searching questions about ‘development’ as both an idea and an ideal, as well as about what NGOs might contribute to it” (Pearce, 2000).

Exploring the debate on NGO legitimacy, the neoliberal aspect is also valid to include in this study: Some argue that NGOs have taken advantage of the situation occurring in the South

when many countries received loans from international aid agencies. As Southern governments had to cut back on public expenses in order to reach the necessary requirements for loans and support from the International Monetary Foundation (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), and therefore reduce public services, Whaites claims that NGOs have then taken an exploiting role:

International NGOs have contributed significantly to situations of strong civil societies and weak states through gap filling by taking advantage of the shrinkage of government services that result from structural adjustment programs (Whaites, 2000:134)

Others argue that the pressure from donors and trustees push NGOs to behave according to certain agendas (Wallace, 2009). Little alternative voices, values and thinking are coming forward as NGOs follow a dominant aid agenda. Wallace also argues that NNGOs are increasing their hold on SNGOs, and mentions three processes keeping the SNGOs from achieving the argued goal of independence and contribution to a strong civil society. 1. SNGOs competing with NNGOs for funding. 2. NNGOs are passing on the strict conditions of their own funding. And 3., some NNGO workers feel they are balancing between the needs of SNGOs and populations and the demands of northern donors (Wallace, 2009). With this in mind, one can argue that NNGOs and SNGOs should rethink their relations to the donors and governments as to find out how they are actually making decisions in accordance with the main development NGO purpose.

As we have seen, some criticism to the NGO legitimacy have been made in the recent decades. In the Ethiopian context, this development is interesting and especially it serves to highlight the first research question (RQ1): *“How do NGO workers perceive the NGO-government relations?”*. Have NGOs lost their legitimacy in the eyes of the Ethiopian government? If so, how does this affect the NGO-government relations?

The above literature could also serve to highlight the second research question (RQ2): *“How do NGO workers perceive the NGO-NGO relations?”*, especially in regard to Wallace’s argument on the relation between NNGOs and SNGOs.

In the light of the diminishing trust in NGOs, it is relevant to mention that NGOs in several countries get their activity limited. Empirical examples from Russia and Bolivia show us how the work of development NGOs can be limited in an increasing rate by government legislation. According to Demars and Dinkzeul there is a “paradoxal crisis of trust” (DeMars & Dijkzeul, 2015). NGOs have largely been trusted institutions, compared to governments and corporations, but in the last decade or so, they have suffered from loss of legitimacy and accountability. This has resulted in some states limiting NGO activities.

Clark (2000) stated that the NGO sector is struggling for definition and operating spaces in Ethiopia, and that the historical centralization of the country has left many state officials to see the civil society actors as potential political opponents. According to Amnesty, NGOs played an important role during the election in 2005. However, the crisis that followed the election has made the political situation for NGOs hard (Amnesty, 2008)..

5.2 NGO–government Relations

“The final shape of NGO-government relations is a function of decisions made by government as well as NGOs – something that too many scholars ignore”.

(Najam, 2000:382)

Najam argues that in the search for a theory-building contribution to understanding the NGO-government relation, literature tend to either fall into one of two categories: The comparative advantage of the third sector or into the category of the state being a threat to NGOs autonomy (see for instance Weisbrod, 1988; Bratton, 1989). As the relations are affected by actions from both parties, I have chosen to briefly present the model of Young (2000) as a theoretical contribution to how one can categorize NGO-government relations. According to Young, one can divide the different NGO-government relations in to three main categories (2000), being the following:

1. NGOs operate independently as *supplements* to government
2. NGOS work as work as *complements* to government in a partnership relationship
3. NGOs are engaged in an *adversarial* relationship of mutual accountability with government

This short presentation raises questions on whether the relation between NGOs and government is supplementary, complementary or adversarial. However, this is an economic theory, and we shall add to this section on arguments about the NGO-government relations.

Other arguments of the NGO-government relation include a group of “pro-government” arguments. Whaites argues that a weak government can be the victim of the most powerful social groups in the society, and that an effective government is just as essential to development and anti-poverty aims as a strong civil society (Whaites, 2000). Thus, NGOs should have the aim of securing a strong government in the center of their work. As NGOs could be seen to provide the main deliverance of services and good, one risks the outcome of people not trusting their governments ability to attend to the citizens’ needs. Using a case study from an African context, Collier suggests that NGOs in Zambia should strengthen the idea of public goods and service delivery, so that people don't merely expect this from NGOs, but also from their governments (Collier, 2000). A similar argument is made by a study of NGOs in Uganda. Here, Cannon suggests that NGOs could contribute to a strengthening of local institutions. Through more collaboration between NGO leaders and government personnel, the former can help influence the government (Cannon, 2000).

Whaites’ argument of a strong government being essential to development is meaningful to the later debate of the findings in this project. Firstly, Whaites argues that securing a strong government should be in the center of NGO work. Thus, if this is not in the center of NGO work, some would argue that the NGOs could be a threat to the establishment of a strong government. Drawing this to the Ethiopian context, one might ask: Could NGO activities in Ethiopia cause the population not to trust their government? Could the NGO role in Ethiopia have caused the people to see toward an NGO rather than their government for aid and help?

Whether one chooses to see it as restricting the NGOs or empowering the state, the Proclamation on Charities and Societies (CSP) has certainly changed the situation for NGOs in the country. In an Ethiopian context, it is possible to identify visible efforts made to ensure a strong government by restricting NGOs and their ability to work with policy advocacy.

The political situation for NGOs in Ethiopia is highly influenced by the new regulatory framework for NGOs in Ethiopia. The CSP is a federal law published on February 13th in 2009,

establishing a new legal framework for the registration and monitoring of specific categories of NGOs. According to the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) is this Ethiopia's first comprehensive law governing the registration and regulation of NGOs (ICNL, 2017)

Some elements of the CSP can limit and affect the possibilities of NGO activities. Among the new rules for NGOs entering Ethiopia, is the CSP article 68 which requires all NGOs to register. Foreign organizations must obtain a letter from the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign affairs. Further, article 69 allows the Agency, the implementing organ, to deny registration for any of these two causes: 1) the proposed charity or society is likely to be used for unlawful purposes or for purposes prejudicial to public peace, welfare or good order in Ethiopia, or 2) the name of the charity or society is in the opinion of the Agency contrary to public morality or illegal (Denu & Zewdie, 2013; ICNL, 2017).

The NGOs are registered as either Charities or Societies. Charities are defined as institutions working with charity and provides public goods, and Societies are defined as associations or persons working voluntary and nonprofit working on the interests of their members. Both fall under the term NGOs. There are three different legal groups for the NGOs, namely *Ethiopian Charities or Societies*, *Ethiopian Resident Charities and Societies* or *Foreign Charities*. To be defined as an *Ethiopian* NGO, the organization must have been formed under the laws of Ethiopia and all their members must be Ethiopians. The income must be generated from Ethiopia and be entirely controlled by Ethiopians. In this category, you cannot receive more than 10 % of the income from foreign sources. If the NGO receive more than 10 % of their funding from foreign courses, it will no longer be defined as an *Ethiopian* NGO, but as a *resident* NGO, regardless of the nationality of its members. If the members include foreigners, foreigners control the NGO, it was formed under the laws of foreign countries or the NGO receive funds from foreign sources, it will be defined as a *Foreign* NGO. It is the last two legal groups that can experience some barriers to their NGO activity.

Some of the restrictions are likely to directly affect the development NGOs working with people's rights. If an NGO receives more than 10 % funding from foreign sources, it cannot participate in human rights and advocacy activities (Denu & Zewdie, 2013). The CSP article 14j-n restricts activities on human and democratic rights or promotion of equality of nationalities, gender or religion. The article also restricts the promotion of the rights of disabled

or children, promotion of conflict resolution or reconciliation, or the “the promotion of the efficiency of the justice and law enforcement services to Ethiopian Charities and Societies” (ICNL, 2017).

The 30/70 rule limits how much of your budget you can be used on administration, compared to expenditures on project activities. As of 2009, you are no longer allowed to spend more than 30 % of your budget on administration cost (Denu & Zewdie, 2013). One of the much-discussed topic today is which elements should be defined as administration costs, and thereby possibly limited.

In accordance with this Proclamation, every NGO must re-register every third year. The documents and aims of the NGO will be checked, and if anything is not in accordance with the rules, the NGO will lose their license. According to ICNL, 158 NGOs were closed in 2014, where 133 of them were involuntary closed for failing project implementation due to lack of funds (ICNL, 2017).

The law is criticized for restricting development NGOs, and especially by ICNL for violating international standards relating to the freedom of association (ICNL, 2017). Mr. Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, commented this on the CSP:

“The enforcement of these provisions has a devastating impact on individuals’ ability to form and operate associations effectively, and has been the subject of serious alarm expressed by several United Nations treaty bodies. (...) The government should revise the 2009 CSP law due to its lack of compliance with international norms and standards related to freedom of association, notably with respect to access to funding. (Kiai, 2013).

The ICNL has stated that the restriction on the NGOs that receive more than 10 % funding from foreign sources hinders them in engaging in essentially all human rights and advocacy activities, and that one may risk “starving NGOs of resources, and thus essentially extinguishing their right to expression” (ICNL, 2017).

This “NGO restriction” is not unique. NGOs operating in India has also experiences a rough couple of years, where an increasing number of NGOs fail to renew their licenses to operate. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, licenses are revoked because of “failure to meet legal requirement (Doshi, 2016). In February 2016, India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi allegedly claimed that: “NGOs were acting as fronts for foreign lobby organizations or terrorist groups conspiring to destabilize India and defame him” (ibid.). In 2014, an Intelligence Bureau report accused foreign funded NGOs of serving as tools for foreign policy interests of western governments and of negatively impact in India’s GDP growth by 2-3 % because the foreign-funded NGOs are active in anti-nuclear, anti-coal and anti-GMO protests (TNN, 2014). The Indian government argued that the projects that the NGOs were campaigning against were integral for economic growth, and following this, the NGOs were accused of reducing India’s GDP and being anti-development (Doane, 2016). “Accusing development NGOs of being anti-development is somewhat of a paradox – but it’s a growing global trend”, Doshi argues (Doshi, 2016).

This example from India shows us that government restrictions on foreign NGOs is not unique for the Ethiopian context. There are multiple examples of this, as Doshi insinuates when calling it a “growing global trend”. Countries such as China and Russia are undergoing the same trends (DeMars & Dijkzeul, 2015; Sherwood, 2015). India, Egypt, Uganda, Cambodia, Israel, Ecuador, and Hungary are also mentioned (Sherwood, 2015). A recent master’s thesis at the University of Bergen focuses on Bolivia’s implementation of new restrictions and regulations for NGOs and civil society, mentioning that an increasing number of states are following the same pattern (Vik, 2016). Chanakya claims there is a “politics of Denial” that explains this. The governments do no longer want to admit that they have the need of foreign aid (2011). As an example of the relation between NGO and a State when it comes to this, Chanakya writes the following about the situation for NGOs in India:

As [India’s] politicians know, official recognition and support of these (NGOs) would be an admission of the state’s inadequacy in addressing the country’s development needs. Despite India counting among its inhabitants half the world’s illiterate population, soaring numbers of infants without access to standard immunization programs and the highest number of undernourished people in the world, this is not an admission most Indian politicians are willing to make. While it is readily evident that

the state cannot meet these needs, allowing NGOs to proliferate would give the issues more unfavorable publicity (Chanakya, 2011)

These empirical examples above, both from Ethiopia and from other countries are relevant for RQ1, concerning the NGO-government relations. The recent development could indicate that there is a growing loss in NGO legitimacy which might influence the NGO-government relations in Ethiopia.

5.3 NGO–NGO Relations

As the NGO sector has been transformed, so has the relations between NGOs themselves. The emergence of SNGOs of the 1960s and 1970s frequently stemmed from previous social movements which had been founded in opposition to the state (Mawdsley, Townsend, & Porter, 2005). Before that, the relations between NNGOs and SNGOs were highly personal: Some SNGOs were supported by funding and technical assistance by humanitarian or ideological NNGOs. In these relations, finances and procedures were more informally regulated (Mawdsley et al., 2005). During 1980s and 1990s, there was a growing interest of funding the third sector, something which led to the “funding explosion” in the 1990. One of the outcomes was the new generation of SNGOs (ibid.). The scope of NGOs changed, as we have pointed out earlier, and the NGO sector moved from relief and disaster response, to service delivery, and to advocacy and policy analysis.

There is an ongoing debate about the expansion of the NGO sector. A “new support industry” has arisen around capacity building and training to improve the organizational development of southern NGOs. Some argue that this have robbed NGOs of their radical origins and autonomy (ibid.). Others argue that the outcome is that SNGOs are now more efficient and more capable of influencing governments and global institutions to make positive changes (Mawdsley et al., 2005). However, putting this debate aside, there are concerns that as NNGOs have taken the role of financially and technically supporting their SNGO partners, rather than implementing projects themselves. Reports of indicators and targets are central to monitoring and accountability, however these require a lot of both time and money. A solution offered by Mawdsley is having Northern personnel to visit the SNGOs?

NGO networks receive some criticism as it is claimed that the networks give the impression that all the NGO members share the same aims and values. However, NGOs are believed to not have the same values than other parties, actors, partners, or stakeholders even if they are members of the same network (DeMars & Dijkzeul, 2015)

International relations (IR) theories are criticized for not being able to grasp the complexity of the relations between Northern NGOs and their Southern partner NGOs. According to DeMars and Dijkzeul (2015), the discourse of partnership is in itself problematic. During the rise of Southern NGOs in the 1990, the power relations changed into an asymmetric one, where conflict and politics were playing important roles. The idea of partnership was increasingly seen to misrepresent the power of Northern NGOs as funders of Southern ones (Manji, 2000). Some argue that Northern NGOs have considerable power over Southern NGOs, and in some cases, mostly function as their funders. As we have already stated, some argue the new role of Northern NGOs of providing technical, organizational support as well as funding and trainings, are making the southern NGOs more dependent on their northern partners. According to Manji, NNGOs were reluctant to change their relations to Southern NGOs during this period.

As official donors also began to fund Southern NGOs directly, so the institutional identities of the latter grew less dependent on Northern NGOs. They began to set their own agendas and to develop research, policy, and advocacy capacities. In the late 1990s, Firoze Manji argued that British international NGOs (or BINGOs, as he calls them) had failed to accept this shift. Their arguments against the direct funding of Southern NGOs reflected their continuing paternalism, and they voiced criticisms that applied to themselves as much as to Southern NGOs (for example, their lack of accountability, their tendency to be driven by donors' agendas and to respond to the chance of funding rather than to need). In effect, they were responding to a basic fear for their own future" (Pearce, 2000:25).

Both Mawdsley's criticism of the NGO role of Northern NGOs, DeMaris & Dijkzeul's argument about network members' heterogeneity and the changing relations between Northern and Southern NGOs, are all meaningful for RQ2, NGO-NGO relations. It rises several questions. What characterizes the NGO-NGO relations in Ethiopia? How do people inside the NGO world perceive and experience the relations between NGOs, both in terms of networks and in the relations between NNGOs and SNGOs? Is Mawdsley's argument valid in the NGO

landscape in Ethiopia? Have Northern NGOs in Ethiopia failed to accept the shift to local SNGOs?

5.4 NGO – Local communities

There are few theories and arguments to be found when it comes to the relations between NGOs and members of local communities in Ethiopia. However, some empirical studies have been found, and these will be explored here.

An evaluation of the level of satisfaction in Uganda showed how satisfied the clients were with the NGO activities (Barr & Fafchamps, 2006). Firstly, the findings indicated less satisfaction when the NGOs were located in wealthy communities and in remote areas. Secondly, the findings indicated higher satisfaction when NGOs used a participatory approach, either by having an NGO permanently present in the client-community, or community involvement in NGO decision making.

Holloway argues that NGOs have sacrificed their legitimacy by participating in implementing the social-net programs required by donors (R Holloway, 1999 in Pearce, 2000).

While people inside the NGO world still think of themselves as occupying the moral high ground, the reality now is that few people in the South outside the NGO world think of NGOs like this - the word on the street in the South is that NGOs are charlatans racking up large salaries, many Pajeros, and many air-conditioned offices (Richard Holloway, 1999)

In the areas of Amhara and Oromia, the NGOs are only a vital part of the livelihood of locals in drought prone areas (Bevan & Pankhurst, 2007). Other than that, households and kin are the essential parts of locals livelihood and security, called “informal security regimes”. These regimes are found, amongst other regions, in Oromia and Amhara, and they vary in ethnic composition and the degree of relation to the government. For the locals in this areas, farming is the key activity, usually without signs of industrialization (ibid.).

6. A humanistic approach

In the previous chapter, we have seen some of the aspects related to the wider NGO debate today. In this chapter I will present the contribution from humanistic geography, arguing that a humanistic approach is useful in illuminating the research questions of this study.

6.1 Humanistic Geography

Humanistic geography has been important when it comes to the theoretical influence on this research project. Within humanistic geography, scholars like for instance Anne Buttimer and Yi-Fu Tuan are important scholars with writings emphasizing on the notion “sense of place” (Cresswell, 2012), however, this is not what this thesis is primarily interested in the humanistic geography tradition. Rather, is it the focus on people’s perceptions, thoughts and experiences in the description of phenomena in the society. This focus is the humanistic geography’s contribution to the study’s aim of illuminating the phenomena “NGO relations”.

Humanism in its broadest sense can be traced back to the classical learning during the Renaissance, in the re-centering of humanity within science with the emphasis on the power of human reason. The more recent history, however, describes humanistic geography as, among other things, a reaction on spatial science that emerged in the 1970. Many scholars have been important for the humanistic thought in the discipline of geography. For instance, Yi-Fu Tuan is claimed to be the first to coin the term “humanistic geography”, and contributed with the notion of “sense of place” (Holloway & Hubbard, 2001) which focuses on how people perceive place. In addition, Tuan defined the core of geography to be the “study of earth as the home of people”, where the focus lies on how people make the earth into a home.

A claim that lies in the heart of human geography is the human is responsible for himself and his own actions. Humans are willful agents and do not act as puppets of mysterious forces. They have intelligence, imagination and consciousness and any truly human geography need to include these rather than excluding them as worryingly unpredictable nuisances (Cresswell, 2012:107).

Above all, humanistic geography is a theoretical perspective that has revived earlier geographic traditions which treated human values and intentionality more seriously (David Ley, 1985). The theory emphasizes the importance of the subjective and the emotive side of geography. Thus, in the center of humanism are the main values that the human should be in the center of research. The main assumption of humanistic geography is that the human is affected by its beliefs, faiths, fears, feelings and values (Cresswell, 2012:104). Many of the lessons from humanism have become taken for granted. However, in many ways it has become part of the bedrock of the disciplinary common sense (David Ley, 1985) It also legitimated the use of qualitative research methods that sought to uncover the views of subjects, such as participant observation and case studies (Cresswell, 2012).

Humanistic geography values the knowledge obtained through people's experiences and perceptions explained in their own words. Interviewing can give information on the underlying causes of some perceptions, and can give valuable information about how the people experience their daily lives. Humanism forces researchers to acknowledge both the subjectivity of the observer and the subjectivity of the observed. In order to confront the assumptions and biases, one must question them, and insert the researcher into the research process. One must clarify the ethics and morals of the observer, making clear the positionality in the research process. This has been important in the acceptance of a range of qualitative methods.

According to Cresswell, one of the principal inspirations for humanistic geography was the more recent philosophy of phenomenology (Cresswell, 2012:111). Many philosophical writings on the question of the meaning of life became popular as many of the humanistic geographers were undertaking their postgraduate education. The simple answer was through intentional human activity. Phenomenology was central to the work of humanistic geographers, a philosophy concerned with discovering that what things *really are*, studying the essence of things through "trancendal reduction" (the mental process of stripping away all unnecessary to discover the essence of a phenomenon) and the focus on human consciousness (where one can locate how people are "being in the world" (Cresswell, 2012:112). The concept of phenomenology is defined as the study and description of human experience (Seamon, 2010).

When one looks at phenomenology from an existential perspective, it can be defined as an examination, description and interpretation of phenomena (Seamon, 2010). By phenomena one

mean anything that humans can experience: a situation, event, process, living thing, or object that a human being can touch, see, feel, sense, know, recognize or encounter is a potential focus for phenomenological study (ibid.). The phenomenon is to be described in its own terms. This means it is to be described as it is. The point is to discover and explain the underlying, lived structures and the relationships shared by many particular lived instances of the phenomenon (ibid.).

Putting human in the center means accepting that there is not one true truth out there, waiting to be found, rather, the truth is different to each person. The truth is affected by you - the human – and your positionality. Age, beliefs, income, gender, education, nationality, it all affects how you as a person view the world around you (Tuan, 1976).

Having a humanistic approach to a research subject means taking departure in the humans involved and study how they describe the world around them (Tuan, 1976). To understand how people behave, it is not enough to look at their context, but at how they describe their context: How do they experience their surroundings? What are their perceptions towards the people around them?

Humanistic geography provides theoretical tools for describing NGO relations in Ethiopia. The focus on people perceptions and experiences is why it seemed natural to be inspired by humanistic geography in this study. The parts of humanistic geography that interests me are agency, experience and perceptions, as well as the humanistic insistence on the locatedness of knowledge in human consciousness.

In this project, the aim will be to explore peoples' perceptions and experiences. This project seeks to discover how the participants describe their relations to one another. How do they experience and perceive NGO relations? What experiences do they have with cooperating with one another? What factors do they see as determining for the relations? In asking such questions it is of great importance to consider the biases that each of the informant carries with themselves. It is therefore also crucial to involve personal motivation, experiences and viewpoints in the gathering of information. Focusing on the details of the lived and experienced world of the local community, the research project aims to find information and knowledge that

is not accessible by the rational logics of spatial science, nor through a mere explanation of the situation. What we seek, is understanding.

This research project aspires to highlight the issues of the people by using their words, focusing on their experience of the relations between NGOs and other actors, and how they perceive themselves in these relations.

The most important consideration in humanistic research, and thus in this research project, is to emphasize and attempt to grasp the human experience of the world. By including this focus in the design, humanism as a philosophy of science has influenced this paper to focus on the ideas, values, dreams, feelings and perceptions of the individuals locating in the research areas. The scientific legitimacy has been argued through terms of usefulness, agency, human values, socially robustness and uncertainty.

In addition to the previous themes, I wanted to include some of the aspects that humanistic geography is criticized for lacking, namely including the importance of context.

In retrieving man from virtual oblivion in positivist science, humanists have tended to celebrate the restoration perhaps too much. As a result values, meanings, consciousness, creativity, and reflection may well have been overstated, while context, constraint and social stratification have been underdeveloped (David Ley, 1985:252).

Ley argues that action is a product of a set of inner and outer contexts, and that the conscious intentionality of a person or a group may not always suffice as explanation for those actions. In this lies a concern that humanistic work can go toward voluntarism and idealism. Thus, Ley argues that one should not forget the contexts, both antecedents and effects.

I want to argue that a humanistic approach can be used to shed light on the research questions. A humanistic research approach can serve the purpose of deeper understanding of the research questions. Humanistic geography can be used to better understand NGO relations by taking departure in humans' experiences and perceptions, and by putting the human and the experienced world in center of research.

According to (D. Ley, 1985) humanistic geography have revived earlier geographic traditions which treated human valued and intentionality more seriously. This has made the humanistic approach an important contribution to geography, and legitimized the use of different methods in order to explore people's perceptions, experiences and feelings of phenomena in the society (Cresswell, 2012).

By using a humanistic approach, I have been allowed theoretically and methodically to put humans in the center when researching the phenomenon of relations. Geography is the study of the *lived world*, and humanistic geographers believe that it is the people who live the world who can best explain the phenomena that happens here. Through concepts like phenomenology and perceptions, we have seen the relations as they are experienced by the people who live the relations every day. By the means of interviews, conversations and focus group discussions, deeper and unique information have been collected.

Humanistic geography has been criticized for being too focused on a self-contained individual knowing subjects and lacking any sense of politics (Cresswell, 2012:208). Humanistic geography has a complete lack of attention for more obvious pressing concerns such as poverty and colonialism (Cresswell, 2012:262). Humanistic geography has been critiqued for not paying attention to systematic and structural arrangements of oppression, exploitation and domination (ibid.). However, I have as mentioned earlier included in the introduction section some contextual information in order to expand on the humanistic approach.

As geographers, we are privileged in the use of methods, as we can in a larger degree chose out methods according to the phenomena that we which to study. This has allowed me, as a development geographer, to do mixed methods. By combining humanistic geography methods with more structural methods of structured interviews and surveys, I have been able to collect a larger amount of data. Also, the surveys and structural parts of interviews have used with a humanistic approach, as the same concepts of perceptions, experiences and feelings have been asked to be described, even in these methods.

Focusing on understanding and describing in depth the participants' perceptions, have limited my ability to reach out to a larger area and make further generalizations with larger security. To make generalizations the humanistic methods are insufficient. However, using humanistic

geography and mixed methods, I have been able to describe and understand people's perceptions of NGO relations, and to find indications of geographical differences.

During my research project, I have experienced some limitations. The sensitiveness of the political issues has hindered many local Ethiopian NGOs to talk to me. Approaching NGOs in Eastern Oromia was difficult, and only one NGO agreed to talk to me. Some of the NGOs changed their mind of an interview when they were informed of the topic of relations to the government. In addition, some international NGOs were hesitant in sharing information due to my topic.

PART III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The first step in answering my research questions on people's perceptions on NGO relations, was to explain the theoretical background for related issues. In the previous chapters constituting PART II, I elaborated on humanistic geography as well as previous literature on the themes of NGO relations. PART III elaborates on the research methodology used for this research project through three chapters. Chapter 7 "A mixed research approach" which will take us through the three phases of the project and the methods used in each of them. Chapter 8 "Ethical issues", that will elaborate on confidentiality, language and positionality; and chapter 9, "Validity and reliability" which will explain how to ensure those very terms.

7. A mixed research approach

Human geography understands society as a result of interrelations between human behaviors, culture, institutions and nature. In many ways, human geographers work across theories and discourses, to a larger extent than other social scientists, who often have an expected set of methods and perspectives to use (Holt-Jensen, 1999). It is the task of geography to consider the interactions between phenomena that happens across different disciplines where the scientists are focusing on their own field (ibid.). Thus, by working across different perspectives, human geographers have the opportunity to choose and mix different methods and theories.

This chapter will present the research methodology I adopted for the purpose of achieving the two objectives of this study, namely to: *explore which perceptions NGO workers have on NGO–government relations and NGO–NGO relations*, and furthermore to; *explore which perceptions locals have on NGO – Locals relations*.

Choosing research methodology starts by looking at the object of investigation (Holt-Jensen, 1999), (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However, in order to answer my research questions, different research methods were employed: interviews, focus group discussions, field conversations and surveys. My mixed methods approach had two main purposes. 1. I attempted

to maximize my understanding of the research subject by approaching it in different ways and using several methods and theories (Longhurst, 2013). 2. As the research questions involves different actors' perceptions (NGO workers and locals), different methods to each research question was found relevant, as will be further elaborated in the research process phases.

The study focuses on data collected during a two-month long fieldwork in Ethiopia in the time-period of May, June and July 2016. The fieldwork consists of several stays in different areas, with the aim of collecting data on different aspects of the NGO relation phenomena in the areas. The study does not aspire to obtain the same thorough understanding as the complex and advanced fieldworks on doctorate level. Rather, the fieldwork has consulted as many and as varied actors as possible within the limits of time and resources.

Much research NGOs involved in international development has been case-study-based, with questions about the broader geographies of NGO intervention rarely asked (Bebbington, 2004) Even though there has been an increase in research on civil society, Desalegn (2008) argues that the quality of these are low and that they mainly focus on the unhappy relation with the government. However, this study aims to contribute to a holistic study with both focus on the human and taking the context into account.

7.1 The research process phases

Looking at the data collection, three phases can be identified in which different goals were achieved. The presentation of these phases contributes to better structure and systemizing of a complex data set, and simplifies the data collection process. Each phase has a specific purpose. However, the phases are not a direct presentation of the actual data collection process, as the conduction of methods were overlapping in some time periods, and I sometimes had to go back to a field area to get more information.

Phase I: Getting to know the field and some preliminary findings

The purpose of Phase I was to get to know the field area and local practises, create a network, and collect some preliminary perceptions of NGO relations. It served as collecting preliminary information on the RQ3: "*How do locals perceive NGO-locals relations?*", by including the

data collection methods of field conversations, focus group and a pilot questionnaire with locals. Furthermore, phase I served in gathering preliminary information on RQ1: “*How do NGO workers perceive the NGO-government relations?*”, by including a pilot interview with an NGO worker. The data collection in this phase is presented systematically in table 7.1, and a more detailed presentation including themes what were discussed is included in Appendix 9. All the methods used in phase I were conducted in English.

Informant	Research Method	Informant	Time	Research site
C1	Field Conversation	Former researcher on Ethiopian issues	April 2016	Oslo, Norway
C2	Field Conversation	NGO director	April 2016	Oslo, Norway
C3	Field Conversation	Researcher	April 2016	Bergen, Norway
C4	Field Conversation	Researcher	April 2016	Bergen, Norway
C5	Field Conversation	Researcher	April 2016	Bergen, Norway
C6	Field Conversation	Local	May 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
C7	Field Conversation	Local	May 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
C8	Field Conversation	Local	May 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
C9	Field Conversation	Local	May 2016	East Oromia, Ethiopia
C10	Field Conversation	Local	May 2016	East Oromia, Ethiopia
EF1 – EF6	Focus Group Discussion	Local (6 persons) students, private workers, unemployed	May 2016	East Oromia, Ethiopia
NF1 – NF6	Focus Group Discussion	Local (6 persons) government workers, students, unemployed	May 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
	Pilot Survey	Local farmers, students, unemployed	May 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
N1	Pilot Interview	NGO adviser	May 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Table 7.1: Overview of Informants and Methods in phase I

Arriving in Addis Ababa, my first task was to get to know the city and the metropolitan area. I had to learn the transportation system, some basic words and other practicalities, like obtaining an Ethiopian sim card. I visited several hostels in order to locate the best area from where to work, and my choice landed on Piazza. This was not a touristy area, and definitely not the safest place in Addis Ababa, but it contained a lower to middle class population and in my view, tons of local knowledge about the usual struggles for an urban Ethiopian citizen.

Although field conversation is not a *research method* per se, I want to argue that information that comes across during conversation can be valuable, and in my fieldwork, it was priceless. It was not always easy inviting people to interviews, and conversations were more accessible. There were two main challenges related to inviting people to an interview. Firstly, as we have seen, political issues have been a delicate matter in Ethiopia. With recent claims of violent suppression of opposition, it could be a challenge to talk freely about certain government issues. Secondly, according to my informants both in and outside of Ethiopia, the NGO sector has been



Figure 7.1: Learning local practices includes learning how to make Ethiopian coffee. Here, in the home of one of my informants.

while in Ethiopia. In coherence with the information from my initial conversations prior to the travel, I was greatly advised against travelling to the regions of Gambela close to the South-Sudanese border, north Tigray region close to the Eritrean border and south of Oromia, close to the Somali border. In retrospect, I was only to break one of these advises, as I traveled close to the Somali border to collect some data on locals' perceptions. Ironically, it was in Addis Ababa, and not in any of the above-mentioned areas, that I would be attempted robbed and thrown out of a bus.

accused for supporting the opposition. Thus, closely related to the first challenge, using terms like “NGO”, “Government” or “State” was enough to make people suspicious of who I was and what I wanted. The conversations I had in the streets, people’s homes and coffee shops all gave valuable information as they were informal and providing the informants with a safe setting. I always informed them that I was writing a master’s thesis in Norway about the subjects we were discussing, and asked them if I could include their anonymized opinions in my study.

For safety reasons, being a lone research traveler, my first conversations with the locals were on the topics of *where to* and *where not to* travel, as well as *what to* and *what not to* do

On my third day in Ethiopia, I got on a bus to a city in East Oromia. Here, I conversed with several locals. The themes of the conversations were their contact with NGOs, government institutions and their perceptions on the presence of development NGOs in Ethiopia. On one of the last days in this area, I held a focus group discussion with six locals that during the initial conversations had agreed to participate.

Focus group is a group interview, where the participants are questioned simultaneously by the researcher (Bloor & Wood, 2006), and the aim is to understand individual peoples' experience (Longhurst, 2013). Focus groups are often used by researchers with the aim of orienting themselves in a new field (Longhurst, 2013). As I could not find existing data about locals' perceptions on NGOs in Ethiopia, focus group was chosen to be part of the study.

The research sampling refers to how informants were selected for a study (Bloor & Wood, 2006). There exist many different sampling techniques, but they can be broadly divided into random and purpose sampling. The importance of the participant selection did not lie in their experience, age, gender or other attributes. Therefore, I did not select the participants thereafter, but chose a random sampling. The participants were a mix of different ages, occupations, government employees and unemployed. The only important attributes were that they were not NGO workers, and open to discuss their perceptions of NGOs in Ethiopia. To some extent, the recruiting process resembled snowball method, as the participants introduced me to several other possible participants. Snowball sampling identifies participants of interest through people involved in similar situations (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2010).

A focus group is commonly defined as a group of people talking about a particular topic set by the researcher, and takes place in an *informal setting* (Longhurst, 2013). The focus group discussion took place in one of the participants' house, in a discrete building outside the city center. Although the setting should be neutral, it is equally important that the setting is informal and that the participants feel comfortable (Longhurst, 2013). Here, they expressed that they felt safe to share their opinions outside hearing range for uninvited people. Surrounded by bags of chat, shisha pipe smoke and a lot of Ethiopian coffee, I felt included in something that seemed like an informal daily discussion on political matters.

An important characteristic of focus groups is the interaction between the participants, and how they respond and comment on the contribution of others (Dunn, 2010). I explained who I was

and the themes I was researching, mentioning the topics of perceptions on NGO presence in Ethiopia. I was prepared with a list of subjects for them to discuss, and some few questions designed to elicit descriptive and thoughtful information. Having set the topics of discussion, the participants discussed their opinions and perceptions on NGOs from many different angles amongst themselves. The questions and themes were not discussed in order, but rather, I allowed the discussions to unfold in a conversational matter, giving the participants an opportunity to explore issues they felt were important (Dunn, 2010). As Mullings similarly points out, I constructed myself as an *outsider* with only limited insight in the Ethiopian political matters in order to present myself in the least threatening way (Mullings, 1999). This was important as I wanted them to share as much as possible on the delicate themes of government and NGO relations.

The focus group showed to be very valuable, and I believe many aspects would never have been revealed for my study if it weren't for the good discussions created in the context of a friendly discussion. My role was merely to introduce some topics; however, the main aim was to see which issues would be addressed when discussing international NGOs (INGOs).

My second move was to travel north. I used the same methods of networking and recruiting participants in this area. I found my key informants conversing in small coffee shops, and "snowballed" to find other participants. A second focus group was held with locals encountered during initial conversations, who were willing to participate. Also this discussion took place in one of the informants house, providing a comfortable zone for the participants who were all friends and told me that meeting for political discussions here was a weekly ritual. The participants included different occupations.

During a hike in the mountains, I encountered a family that made their living from farming and the support of an international conservation NGO. I decided to pre-test my questionnaire here. Pre-testing is vital, as it can identify problems and help improving the questions. The whole family, plus three neighbors agreed on answering my survey. One of the informants who spoke English translated for those who did not speak English. When returning to Addis Ababa, some changes were made based on the feed-back I got from the pre-testing.

Terminating phase I, I travelled back to Addis Ababa and conducted a pilot semi-structured interview with an NGO worker. The informant was recruited through acquaintances, and the interview was agreed upon prior to the field work. Meeting in the informant's house provided a comfortable setting both for me and for the participant.

During these trips, I gathered data that informed the rest of my field work. The field conversations and focus groups gave me preliminary information on RQ3: "*How do locals perceive NGO-locals relations?*", whereas the pilot interview was helpful in orienting myself in NGO relations to state and other NGOs. All responses further led to some changes to the survey questionnaire and added questions to the interview schedules both for NGO workers and locals. One example was the issue about government workers receiving training from NGOs. In both focus groups this was mentioned as a reason for mistrust, as the participants claimed it was the same workers who got the opportunity for training, time after time. According to the informants, this was because the NGOs let the institutions themselves decide the participants for trainings. This resulted in questions related to process of trainings as an influencing factor between NGOs and the government.

Phase II: Exploring varieties of perceptions

The purpose of phase II was to explore further the perceptions of NGO relations that existed among NGO workers and locals. This subchapter has three aims: explain the proceedings of the research project in the second phase; present the data collection method semi-structured interview will be presented; and lastly, how semi structured interview was used with the aim of obtaining in-depth information.

I first contacted directors, employees and volunteers from national and foreign NGOs. Some of them were contacted by email, and some provided further information to other NGO workers who might be interested to participate. As it turned out, all the NGOs fell under the category of resident NGOs, as they received more than 10% of their funding from abroad. These became my key informants, as they had experience with and relations to both donor governments, the Ethiopian government, other NGOs and local communities. I experienced a low turn down rate, with only two approached that did not result in an interview. Secondly, I went back to Northern Amhara and Eastern Oromia, this time with interview appointments with NGO workers and locals, and with the help of research assistants who were chosen for their local knowledge. In

total, 19 semi-structured interviews were held, 14 of them with NGO workers (directors, employees, volunteers) and five of them with locals. There were three reasons for having fewer interviews with locals. Firstly, it was harder to get locals to agree on doing interview because of the themes of NGO and government. Secondly, I was prepared to use the interviews to inform the survey, and further collect data from locals through the survey. And thirdly, I found the informality of a focus group discussion as the best way to gather information about locals' opinions and perceptions.

Inform.	Research Method	Informant	Time	Research Site
N2	Semi-structured Interview	Former NGO director	June 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N3	Semi-structured Interview	NGO employee	June 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N4	Semi-structured Interview	NGO director	June 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
N5	Semi-structured Interview	NGO director	June 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
N6	Semi-structured Interview	NGO director	July 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N7	Semi-structured Interview	NGO director	July 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N8	Semi-structured Interview	NGO director	July 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N9	Semi-structured Interview	NGO employee	July 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N10	Semi-structured Interview	NGO employee	July 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N11	Semi-structured Interview	NGO employee	July 2016	Eastern Amhara, Ethiopia
F1	Semi-structured Interview	NGO volunteer	May 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
F2	Semi-structured Interview	NGO volunteer	June 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
F3	Semi-structured Interview	NGO volunteer	July 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
L1	Semi-structured Interview	Local unemployed	July 2016	Eastern Oromia, Ethiopia
L2	Semi-structured Interview	Local private worker	June, 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
L3	Semi-structured Interview	Local school director	June, 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
L4	Semi-structured Interview	Local student	July 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
L5	Semi-structured Interview	Local student	July 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Table 7.2: Overview of informants and methods in phase II.

The same argument for focus groups exists also for semi-structured interviews, in that they have the purpose of understanding how people experience phenomena in their lives. Being informal and conversational forms of methods are also attributes in common with focus groups (Longhurst, 2013). Interviewing is a powerful tool to produce knowledge about the human situation, through giving people an opportunity to express themselves (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

By using interview, knowledge about people's perceptions and experiences could be produced. A main difference from focus groups, however, is that the semi-structured interview relies on the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. After all, an interview is a method in which there is a spoken exchange of information (Dunn, 2010). There are mainly three categories of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Longhurst, 2013). I chose semi-structured interview as it gives some flexibility as to which themes to focus on, while keeping an influence of the direction of the interview.

All interviews were prepared in accordance to where and who I was meeting. Other than these adaptations, all interviews were conducted using the same interview schedule, *to ensure* reliability (Bryman, 2008). The interviews were carefully planned and prepared in detail, as interviewing as a method requires (Dunn, 2010). The interviews combined open-ended, in-depth questions for detailed information, as well as a set of standardized questions in order to facilitate comparison across interviews. The standardized part will be explained in Phase III.

I started each interview by thanking the informants for being able and willing to participate, and giving them a short explanation of the study and its aim and purpose. I also informed them about the study's confidentiality, that they could refuse to answer questions they were not comfortable answering and that they could terminate the interview at any point.

It was important for me to keep the interview as a conversation, and not look at the schedule other than to make sure I had gone through all themes and asked all questions. As "warm up" questions, I asked questions related to their workplace and opinions about the Ethiopian developments in the past years. Then, the informants were asked questions about their perceptions of NGO-government relations and NGO-NGO relations. I explained the theme I wanted to discuss, and added a little bit of "air" before proceeding to the actual questions of the theme. For instance, I said: "*The next theme I would like to know more about is the cooperation and relations between NGOs and the government*". This way, the informant had some room to freely discuss aspects of the theme that came to mind then presented with the theme. If the respondent didn't try to add information at this point, I continued with a question as if that was the plan all along, for instance: "*Does the organization set its policy decisions by themselves or in a dialogue with the government?*".

The questions were formulated with the aim to grasp the informant's experiences and for them to tell these experiences in their own words. The topics were their experiences with NGO-NGO relations, NGO-government relations and NGO-locals relations. Additional topic for the NGO workers, volunteers and the Ethiopian people were their own motivations and ambitions in their work. The in-depth interviews took place in Northern Amhara, Eastern Oromia and in Addis Ababa.

For the interviews where we did not speak a common language, or where an Ethiopian did not speak English, there was translation from and to English. Some of the interviews were recorded with the consent of the informant that it was to be deleted within 24 hours. Hence, transcribing always took place the same day as the interview.

I used three different interpreters. One was interpreting in Northern Amhara, and the second in Eastern Oromia. Both functioned as my research assistants when I was travelling in those parts of the country. Most of the interpretation work was done in relation to the survey responses, where one of the questions (Q7), was an open-ended question. To ensure that the perceptions expressed in the survey were not biased by the choice of interpreter, both survey translations were tested by a third interpreter, an Ethiopian student assisting me in Addis Ababa. All interpreters spoke English well, although only the student had experience with research. The two other interpreters were chosen for their great local knowledge and network. The aim and objective of the research project was discussed with the interpreters in advance.

Interviewing is a time consuming method (Dunn, 2010) . It demands a lot of preparations, negotiating "research deals" and in my case requiring interpreters. After hours and weeks and months of transcribing, coding and analyzing, it is still safe to say that it was worth it.

In Eastern Oromia, it was much harder to find informants in the NGO sector. This was due to little time, and some lack of planning. As I had no difficulties finding informants in Addis Ababa or in Northern Amhara, I mistakenly thought it would be the same in Eastern Oromia as well.

Phase III: Standardized questions and questionnaire

What I identify as Phase III had focus on the systematic collection of standardized topics. In this subchapter, I will present the data collection methods of structured questions during interview and the use of survey questionnaire.

The structured questions were focused on gathering information on NGO details and factors that might influence the NGO relations. I posed these questions to the NGO workers during the first part of the interviews. Examples of the themes of the questions are frequency of rapports, communications and meetings with the State and NGO network membership.

Questionnaire	Informants	Number of respondents	Research Site
NS	NS1 – NS37	37	Northern Amhara
ES	ES1 – ES39	39	Eastern Oromia

Table 7.3: Overview of Questionnaire in Phase III

In addition, a questionnaire was conducted for locals in the two different field areas of Northern Amhara and Eastern Oromia. Firstly, I wanted to look for some minor indications to the extent of the perceptions discovered in interviews with locals in Phase II. Secondly, I wanted to explore some of the differences in perceptions from one place to another. The information gathered in phase I and II largely informed the survey design and content. I do not suggest that the surveys are in any way representative for the two areas, nor a representation of the perceptions that exist in Ethiopia, however they can indicate a geographical difference in some of the questions, and do confirm that some of the perceptions on NGOs are shared by more than just a few people.



Figure 7.2: Two informants answering the questionnaire.

A structured interview follows a predetermined and standardized list of questions. I used this method as the first part of the semi-structured interview with my NGO informants. This resulted in slightly longer interviews, which was not ideal. However, the result was some interesting findings. The primary questions were descriptive and focused on opinion. Thus, the information I sought was details on the NGO, the workers and the NGO work,

and further the informants impressions, feelings and assertions (Dunn, 2010).

The most important reasons for using questionnaires in this project are also some of their most valued strengths: cost and time efficient, giving respondents time and privacy, and being suitable for combining with other methods (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2000). The cost and time efficiency allowed me to collect in total 79 responses in eight days including travel time between two different areas, thus enabling research over a geographically dispersed population. The questionnaire gave the respondents more time and privacy to respond on sensitive matters like their preference on receiving aid from either government institutions or NGOs, or their feelings related to the NGO presence in Ethiopia.

Questionnaires involving the collection of qualitative and quantitative data, are called *mixed method questionnaires* (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2000:192). Having a mixed method questionnaire allowed me to gather complex data, and included one open-ended and several closed-ended questions. The close-ended questions sought quantitative information about the respondents' attributes like age and occupation. The respondents were also asked to scale their opinion on

the NGO presence in Ethiopia from 1 to 6. The open-ended question invited the respondents to further elaborate on their opinions and feelings related to NGO presence in Ethiopia. In accordance with the aim for qualitative research, this question gave me an understanding of the respondents' experiences and perceptions in their own words. As McGuirk and O'Neill explains it: "open-ended questions (...) can reveal, to a greater depth than closed-questions, peoples experiences, understandings and interpretations of, as well as their reactions to, social processes and circumstances" (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2000:199)

In quantitative research, questionnaires are often used to generate claims about a population based on data from a carefully selected smaller sample of that population (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2000). However, as it is not my aim to make general claims about a whole population, I have used non-probability sampling (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2000). For the purpose of this project, anyone who agreed to complete the questionnaire were included in the sample.

Early in the questionnaire design process came the question of questionnaire distribution. The time and cost efficient online distribution however would not have been useful in my case, as I had little opportunities to get such an email list. In addition, it was beneficial to reach out to people who did not have email accounts, nor access to internet. Neither was it possible for me to conduct face-to-face questionnaires, as they are costly and would not have been possible within the time and resource limitations of this project. Rather, the questionnaire distribution was something in between. The questionnaires were printed out and pens were bought. My research assistant and I walked the streets and entered coffee shops, asking random locals if they were interested in answering a questionnaire. This was not completely risk-free. However, I had local research assistants who knew where to go, and where not to go. Their competence and their local knowledge enabled me to carry out the field work somewhat safely. This underlines the importance of Phase I, where I had the opportunity to create a network and relations to locals in order to find people who could help me during my fieldwork.

The questionnaire participants received the same information as the interview participants, that all responses would be anonymized and that they could refuse to answer any question, or change their mind about participating.

The research sites were three different parts in Ethiopia: Northern Amhara, Eastern Oromia and the capital, Addis Ababa. The first three weeks of my field study, I travelled to the three sites

to make networks, find interpreters and research assistants, and locations to live and work. During those weeks, I made initial field conversations, conducted some of the interviews and one of the focus group discussion.

7.2 Challenges and Experiences during fieldwork

In this sub-chapter, the aim is to explain working in the field, what experiences I've made and what challenges came up. I will discuss opportunities and limitations.

Prior to the field work, I realized that there would be challenges attached to it. I was aware that in order to be able to go through with the project, I had to do most of the motivation and encouraging that was needed by myself as no arrangements were premade by anyone but myself. My preparations were crucial and prepared me mentally and theoretically to the field work. The importance of Phase I of the research process lies in the fact that I had never earlier been in Ethiopia, and that the only knowledge I had from the African continent at all, was brief trips to South-Africa and Morocco. However, my two-month field study experience in the Philippines for my bachelor thesis in 2012 made me confident that I could overcome the obstacles of doing field work in an unfamiliar context. In addition, the themes of my previous field study also comprehend the themes of NGO relations, and gave me some experience within NGO research. Thus, this field study can be seen as a continuation of my work in the NGO field.

There were several things I had to take into account, such as my informants security and a more difficult access to information than expected. I was also more dependent on personal relationships that had to be created and followed up regularly.

The general approach and willingness to give information was a barrier. Prior to travelling, I found little literature on the field of NGO relations in Ethiopia. Secondly, I was aware that it could be difficult to get in touch with the government and get access government documents. Thirdly, I realized that many local people possibly were reluctant to comment on the NGO-government relationship, as this was politically delicate theme. What I was not prepared for, however, was that even organizations would vary greatly in their willingness to provide information.

I started my field work in Norway, where I had conversations with key informants about Ethiopia's development, NGO work and the political situation in Ethiopia. Through these conversations, I hoped to get some insight into how I could best prepare for field work. For example, some warned against going through with the field work as they saw it as “disrespectful” towards the Ethiopian government. Others felt that it was an important effort to illuminate the views of NGO workers and local perceptions on the NGO situation today, but stressed that keeping a low profile and not appearing to be critical of the government was crucial.



Figure 7.3: My research assistant and I in the quest of questionnaire participants

There were little premade arrangements made by others or myself prior to my fieldwork. I consider this to be caused by little information available rather than a lack of preparations, as my attempt to get informants through preparation in prior to travelling did not work, as my informants was reluctant to give information about their informants. Thus, I was at the mercy of my own efforts and did not know anyone in Ethiopia on arrival, except for a vague appointment for an interview through an acquaintance. These were factors that I already was aware of.

My first main strategy was simple: I traveled around the country and talked to the people I met. Walking the streets of this city on my fourth day in Ethiopia and admiring the city's architecture, I made efforts to come in contact with locals. This included chatting with random locals in the busy merchant streets. In the beginning, I was reluctant to present myself as a researcher of NGO-government themes, as I knew from my preparations that I should keep a low profile. After some days, I met a local woman, who, when I finally said that I was a student, replied that she had been working with some researchers in this area earlier.

We continued our conversations, but after a while, it was clear that she did not want to discuss further topics of my research. However, she introduced me to her boyfriend, a local man. He was both willing and able to tell me in good English about his experiences and opinions and became the first gate-keeper in field work. Further in the first phase, I visited some cities in the Northern Amhara. Also here, I made several acquaintances which later became my key informants by conversing in local cafes and restaurants.

Throughout my field work there was a certain fear of being "discovered" by the authorities. This was not a fear on my part, but on the account of the information given to me by my informants that could be perceived as government critical. Some informants believed that criticisms were often regarded as oppositional and were severely punished by authorities. Others believed the authorities had "spies" or informants among the local population with the purpose of reporting government-critical voices in the society. More specifically, I was told that every fifth Ethiopian was a government informant. There were disagreements on these claims. A clear distinction between those who believed in this and those who did not, was whether they were comfortable talking about themes in public places or not. As a consequence, I could often only talk about certain themes in the safety of the informants' houses. This suggested that the people I talked to were of the opinion that the authorities could react to what we were talking about, which also generated some worry. However, I was committed to the project and determined that the perceptions of locals was essential in gaining understanding of NGO relations.

As the general description of my fieldwork is focused on NGO-government relationships, many of the topics that came up in conversations, interviews and focus groups could be seen as government critical by many. I must stress that it was never my intention to write a socially critical thesis about Ethiopia, but rather to give voice to different people's opinions and perceptions. And when I realized that many opinions could actually be perceived as critical of the government, this was something I had to pay particular attention to.

I made the decision never to introduce myself as a researcher or present my working areas unless I talked to potential informants. I had to balance an identity as both an interested traveler and a researcher - a dilemma that could often be challenging. Did I mislead the people by limiting the information about who I was and what I did? How and when should I change my

"role" as I realized that the person I was talking to could be a potential informant? Would my change of role lead to the fact that the informant would no longer equally willing to provide information? Would they then feel forced to participate? The dilemma was largely based on enabling an open and honest meeting with new people and at the same time protect the voices that had already entrusted to me. By being open about who I was at any time I would increase the chance of the authorities contacting me, which could put my informants at risk (according to themselves).

I somewhat solved this by first introduce myself as a traveler in most contexts and did not go into my topic of research. Then, I briefly mentioned the topics, and carefully read their reactions. If they were willing to discuss them further, I would ask them if they would be interesting in participating in a study, or if they would allow me to include their opinions in the thesis as long as they were anonymized. But I never took advantage of the people by letting them talk further about certain themes while believing I was someone other than who I was.

I took a lot of other considerations in relation to the safety of my informants. I did not list names or contact information of my informants elsewhere than in my field diary, where it was coded so that it would not be possible to see the information at first glance. In the field diary I only wrote in Norwegian. I transcribed interviews within 24 hours to be able to delete recordings immediately, as was the agreement with my informants. All digital documents and work were not stored locally on the computer, but rather stored separately on a password-protected memory stick. Both the memory stick, data and field diary were hidden out of sight when I did not stay in my rented rooms, and were rarely brought out into the streets. Even though these precautions to no extent appear to be absolutely certain, it was the measures I had the opportunity to do.

When it comes to my own safety, there was a big difference between city and the countryside. During the field work I traveled a lot by bus and was in both rural and urban areas - some travels could last for 14-16 hours. Before departure I was warned to travel near the border areas and I received the same advice from locals in Ethiopia, as I mentioned in the description of phase I. Although I traveled in quite remote areas, I experienced the cities as the most dangerous.

In my opinion, my focus on the individual level and use of gate keepers was the determining factor for the field work to be successful. As expected, getting access to information on government level was difficult. However, it turned out that in some cases it was not easy to gain access to the organizations as well, as several of the organizations were relatively restrictive. My strategy was therefore to get in touch with and consult my key informants. It was important for me to create a network and connect with local people. I became familiar with these so-called gate-keepers through the first phase of fieldwork traveling to the east and north of the country, as well as in the capital.

In many ways, I changed strategy along the way. I was originally open to include information from both organizational, state and personal level, but quickly realized that the strategy had to focus on perceptions at the personal level. The process of creating a network and personal relationships has been useful in this context, but not easy.

I would like to point out that what I'm primarily concerned with in this work is not to document how *well* NGOs and government cooperate in development work or who is *in charge*. However, I am primarily concerned with the perceptions of those who are involved in the system. This is the study's link to humanistic geography. A structural approach would rather go about researching the NGO landscape's administrative and economical relationship to the state sector. My prior knowledge of the subject and the somewhat challenging information access gave me information that such an approach would not be beneficial for me.

Although the fieldwork consisted of hard and dedicated work, I know that I have also had some luck. Much of the reason why it became a successful fieldwork was that the people I met were willing and able to share their experiences with me. Contact with competent key informants and the research assistants' local knowledge was very important in the acquisition of other informants and data.

7.3 Data Analysis

Some of the interviews were audio-recorded, if the participant consented. The agreement was that the record was to be deleted within 24 hours. Honoring the agreement, I transcribed all interviews the same day as they took place, something that was very helpful for the rest of the

data analysis after the field work. Having transcribing the data, the entire interview was written down word by word, except names or other details that could identify the informant. Then, I performed a thematic content analysis on all transcribed interviews without regard to the theory (see McGuirk & O'Neill, 2000). This analysis is carried out by first reading through all text and code each paragraph with specific term or short phrase, to keep the process inductive. Coding is a process of identifying and organizing themes in qualitative data (Cope, 2010), and helps reduce data by putting them into smaller “packages”. These codes were then collected and similar concepts were removed. This list resulted in a three pages long list containing the main themes or points of all the interviews. This was then categorized in to seven main themes, where three were collected for continuing use in the thesis as they were the most relevant for answering the research questions. These three main themes, (NGO-government relations, NGO-NGO relations and NGO-locals relations) were then re-coded through another thematic content analysis. Again, some of the themes were excluded from this thesis, as they were not directly relevant for answering the research questions. The main themes discovered that are relevant, constitutes chapter 10 of this thesis.

For the focus groups, I took notes during the conversation. The same day as the focus group took place, I wrote down interesting aspects that was relevant to the study. According to (Longhurst, 2013), taking these notes is in a sense a form of data analysis. Then the different findings were coded together with the perceptions found in the interviews.

When it comes to the questionnaire, the responses to the closed-ended questions were provided in an easily quantified format (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2000). However, the open-ended question sought qualitative questions. The power of qualitative data lies in its revelation of a respondent's understanding and interpretation of the social world, and these data, in turn, are interpreted by the researcher to reveal the understandings of structures and processes that shape respondents thought and action. McGuirk suggests that it is best to avoid classifying qualitative responses into simple descriptive categories as to report them quantitatively, for example, that 49% had positive opinions about their neighborhood. However, classifying qualitative responses in to descriptive categories allows me to simplify and compare data. As the aim was to see if the perceptions in the interviews existed elsewhere, this was a useful method for me.

However, I do realize that one cannot generalize the findings, and that this way will lose the nuance and complexity of the original text. Therefore, I have emphasized transparency in the categorization, and added the full list of responses in appendix 9, so the reader can access this valuable information. For the purpose of this project, it was useful to categorize them, to complement the semi-structured interviews, as the interviews will contribute to the understanding of the peoples' interpretations and behavior in relation to them.

8. Ethical issues

8.1 Confidentiality and Anonymity

All the participants were assured that they could not be linked to the information, or identified in any way. The participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the research at any point without giving any explanation.

As the theme of the study is considered a delicate one, both by the informants and other key informants, the question confidentiality and anonymity became important. As mentioned, some security measures were included in the research process. I knew that some informants would be reluctant to talk about the themes of the study. Some of those who willingly participated explained the risk further during the fieldwork. Being viewed as government critical, or oppositional, was not viewed as safe for many of the informants.

Therefore, an ethical issue that has been important in the study, is whether the data collected and the need for research on the topic can it legitimize the risk that the informants took? Is the need for research on this theme important enough in relation to the allegedly risk the informants have taken?

This has been a difficult topic. The topic of NGO and NGO relations is an important one. It is believed that the work on these relations can contribute to a better understanding of the perceptions involved in development work. Thus, the data is of great importance. Firstly, it can voice the people, the human side of NGO relations. In addition, it can illuminate some of the hindering or facilitating factors of development work. However, it was also important not to take any chances concerning the security of the informants.

Another ethical issue that can be mentioned is whether the sensitivity of the themes has affected the type of data gathered in the study. Regarding this, some important questions arose. Did the need for anonymity and the sensitiveness of the topics affect my access to data? Did I “miss” some data because of it? Did the sensitivity of the topic hinder some of the informants to say what they actually thought, or hinder other informants to come forward and participate?

Considering the sensitivity of the topics, it possible that some informants have limited their responses. It is also possible that some potential informants have failed to participate, hence limited my data access. However, in taking precautions and making the informants feel safe in terms of anonymity in the study, many informants expressed that they felt safe to participate.

8.2 Positionality

How we are positioned in relation to various contexts of power affect the way we understand the world. This includes gender, age, class, job status, etc.

An ethical issue that came forward in relation to my positionality as a researcher, what that of which role I should take. This issue was also related to the sensitivity of the research themes. Some of the data collected could be seen as government critical. Many informants only wanted to participate and share their opinions when they were in their homes, or in small local cafes.

I made the decision not to introduce myself as a researcher unless I was talking to potential informants. For instance, during the fieldwork I met locals in the mountainous areas of Northern Amhara. I was perceived to be a traveler. After a few minutes of conversing, I briefly mentioned the topics of which I was writing a study and then read their reactions. If they showed interest and engagement in the themes, I asked if they would be willing to participate by answering the questionnaire or share their opinions. I did not pursue the topics if they did not show interest.

Was the people mislead by not getting all information about who I was instantly? Or was the precaution I made in benefit for the informants as the people who had already confided in me expected a level of discreteness in my conduction of research? During the field, I found that it was best to not draw to much attention to myself as the information I was given could be seen as government critical and I did not want to contribute to putting any informant in a situation after I had left the field.

9. Reliability and Validity

The term "relations" is hard to define in NGO research, as some scholars focus on the cooperation, level of satisfaction or economical dependency when it comes to NGO relations. Therefore, it has been a challenge in this study to choose which indicators to look for to be able to "measure" relations. However, in order to execute the project in a systematic and manageable way, I made some efforts in order to operationalize the study in a way that can ensure a level of reliability and validity.

9.1 Reliability

Reliability is linked to the how we measure or code our data (Perri & Bellamy, 2011). If the coding system is reliable, the system has stable, consistent coding throughout the research. In practice, it means that coding the same data twice, should give the same outcome. It is possible to test the reliability the coding system, both by *recoding*, or doing an "internal consistency" method. This implies gathering additional data using the same design (ibid.)

In my research, it was not easy to recode due to time limitations. However, in the questionnaires I aimed at ensuring the internal consistency by gathering data on the people's perceptions on NGO presence both through a close-ended question and an open-ended question in order to see if the responses were consistent. I experience that the responses were consistent and that therefore the data on this theme was reliable. In addition, the open-ended question in the questionnaire, were written in Amharic or Oromo. After my research assistants in each of the research sites had translated the responses, I hired student to translate the findings a second time in order to see if the translations were reliable.

Further, I have tried to be as explicit as possible about the research conduction to ensure reliability. The "measurement" of the variables, "relation", was kept the same way for all informants by asking as similar questions as possible.

9.2 Validity

Internal validity refers to whether the results correspond to the informants own understanding (Bryman, 2008), and to which extent we can show our findings in the dataset (Perri & Bellamy, 2011). According to Bryman, there are two ways ensuring internal validity; “respondent validation” referring to repeating a statement so that the informant can confirm it; and using different methods and sources through triangulation. In this study, respondent validation often took place, and the use of different methods enhance validity.

External validity, or transferability (see Bryman, 2008) refers to the possibility of generalization of the findings. In qualitative research, it is more common to reach an in-depth understanding of a case, rather than developing a “truth”.

Construct validity refers to whether the codes used to operationalize a concept really capture what we want to capture (Perri & Bellamy, 2011). “Relation” is not straightforward concept that is easy to measure, and prior to the fieldwork I knew this could be a potential challenge in my work. As I couldn't find specific theories on the perceptions of NGO relations, I asked for cooperation, frequency of meetings, opinions and attitudes during interviews. In the questionnaire, aiming at exploring locals' perceptions of NGOs, I coded the responses to the open-ended in categories like “a mistrust towards NGO financial management” or the “preference of no NGOs in Ethiopia”. To a large extent, the different methods were used to answer different research questions, and have a specific set of coding. However, ensuring validity has been a challenge in this project, as relation is a complex term with many dimensions.

The validity of my research design is ensured through respondent validation. This means that I have repeated certain statements for my informants during interviews and conversation so they could confirm. For my questionnaires open-ended question, I ensured validity through translating the responses twice by two different interpreters. In addition, there has been a triangulation of methods, combining semi-structured interviews in order to gather deeper information, with a survey questionnaire that helped show some extent and scope of differing perceptions. However, as phenomenological data and the theme analysis is subjective, my ability to generalize is limited.

PART IV: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this fourth and final part of the thesis I will present and discuss the findings of the research project. Chapter 10, “Findings”, contains the main findings of the study, presented as unbiased as possible with the words of the participants. Leaving the “facts” behind, chapter 12, “Discussion”, will present the findings as I interpret them in relation to theory and context, and I will answer the research questions. Then follows chapter 13, “Final notes and Recommendations”.

10. Findings

This chapter will provide a summary of the findings. The findings will be organized according to themes and aims to draw out the key issues that the participants discussed. The aim is to be faithful to the participants and be aware of the biases being brought to the inevitable editing which is needed. There is an ethical issue about misrepresenting, distorting or deleting findings which have been provided in good faith by participants.

Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are based in a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. Phenomenological studies make detailed comments about individual situations which do not lend themselves to direct generalization in the same way which is sometimes claimed for survey research. As the study is inspired by humanistic geography and phenomenology as mentioned in PART 3 *Theoretical Framework*, the purpose of the following findings chapter is to illuminate the specific, to identify the phenomena of NGO relations through how they are perceived by the actors, my informants. In the human (science) sphere this normally translated into gathering “deep” information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participant observation, and representing it from the perspective of the research participants.

This part of the thesis does involve some interpretation and analysis in deciding what to select and how to express and order it, but it's main role is to describe rather than explain.

10.1 Perceptions of NGO-government relations

In accordance with RQ1: “*How do NGO workers perceive NGO-government relations?*” I have coded the data set and identified some main themes. The NGO workers’ perceptions on NGO-government relations are coded from the collected data from interviews and conversations with NGO-workers. To better present these findings, I have identified three main themes: A) Negative perceptions of the government; B) government as a necessary evil and C) A degree of support and acceptance of government restrictions.

Infor- mant	Research Method	Informant	Time	Research Site
C1	Field Conversation	Former researcher on Ethiopian issues	April 2016	Oslo, Norway
C2	Field Conversation	NGO director	April 2016	Oslo, Norway
C3	Field Conversation	Researcher	April 2016	Bergen, Norway
C4	Field Conversation	Researcher	April 2016	Bergen, Norway
C5	Field Conversation	Researcher	April 2016	Bergen, Norway
N1	Semi-structured Interview	NGO employee	May 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N2	Semi-structured Interview	Former NGO director	June 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N3	Semi-structured Interview	NGO employee	June 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N4	Semi-structured Interview	NGO director	June 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
N5	Semi-structured Interview	NGO director	June 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
N6	Semi-structured Interview	NGO director	July 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N7	Semi-structured Interview	NGO director	July 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N8	Semi-structured Interview	NGO director	July 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N9	Semi-structured Interview	NGO employee	July 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N10	Semi-structured Interview	NGO employee	July 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
N11	Semi-structured Interview	NGO employee	July 2016	Eastern Amhara, Ethiopia
F1	Semi-structured Interview	NGO volunteer	May 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
F2	Semi-structured Interview	NGO volunteer	June 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
F3	Semi-structured Interview	NGO volunteer	July 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia

Table 10.1: Overview of Informants - understanding NGO-government relations

These themes are collective and exemplified by informants listed in table 10.1 during field conversations and interviews. Not all the informants are mentioned in the text, as the examples in the text are a means of exemplifying the identified perceptions. Thus, table 10.1 contains all informants providing inputs and information for the understanding of NGO workers perceptions of NGO-government relations.

A) Negative perceptions of the government

One of the overarching themes of the data was how the participants express concern over the State of Ethiopia limiting NGOs freedom of action in many ways. This is exemplified by several factors, the mandatory reports, the government supervision, the Proclamation of Charities and Societies and the result of less training possibilities.

The government is perceived something negative, hindering the development work. This is due to the immense bureaucracy attached to the relationship between the government and the NGOs. For informant N1, the paperwork and the small chances of getting your new projects or ideas approved, makes the effort not worth it. The employees are confused by all the laws there is a moral that “those who won’t try, wont fail”.

They will rather turn our ideas and applications down, even though my opinion is that they should be glad. For our local employees, the government becomes an excuse not to engage, because we know they will refuse our applications either way. Many NGOs share this opinion. Why should we bother to engage and expand? It’s so complicated and hard. And the pay won’t change. [...] The initiative is ruined by refusals (N1).

In addition to the struggle of getting projects approved, N1 criticizes the amount of mandatory reports NGOs should submit to the government. There are several annual reports to be submitted every year by the NGO, but the projects within the NGOs are also expected to submit reports, often at a higher frequency. N1 argues that the projects should spend their time on other things than the time-consuming report writing. In addition, N1 elaborates on the experience on trainings with NGOs, and states that there were efforts to cancel them. The reason was that in order to get the government employees to attend the trainings become expensive. When the invitations to state employees was tried to be cancelled, the co-workers of N1 would allegedly

argue that cancelling the training would mean the end of all relations to the State, and “put them out in the cold” (N1).

No longer being able to do the work that you want to do, is one of the biggest challenges to the relationship between the NGO and the government for informant N2. He points at the CSP and the changes that came with it when implemented in 2009. The proclamation prohibits certain areas of work for NGOs. Most of the types of advocacy are reserved for the government to do. Secondly, N2 points at all the NGOs who were organized to do advocacy, and who had to revise everything in order to fit the governments new legal framework. In the end, some NGOs might find themselves not being able to work with what they stand for.

This law [CPS] determines what you can and cannot do. If you do not conform, you will have a problem. There is an agency supervising the charities and societies government. This agency gives the licenses, receives the reports about the finances and activities. It renews the licenses, or deny your license if you are found wrong (N2).

Just as N2, informant N6 points at the CSP when asked to elaborate on personal perceptions on relations to the government. The INGO that N6 represents, is working with policy advocacy in all their programs, except in Ethiopia. Even though their vision is to make strategical differences at a higher political level in the fight against poverty, N6 explains that they could not follow their principals, what they stand for, thus agreeing with N2. Further, N6 shares the view of the Agency as unsympathetic and without flexibility. The 30/70 rule restricts the NGO, and denies them to share knowledge as they are used to in other countries. As a lot of time is being spent on finding out what they can or cannot do, N6 feels that they do not use their time right, but rather waste their time and energy on things that does not promote development.

We would have more dynamic projects without [CSP]. We have different experts on different things. They could teach each other. That is very difficult here. All training falls under the administration costs. We want to build competence, but that is very difficult (N6).

Further, N6 states that the government wants control first and foremost, and that he appreciates good government control. As a possible positive outcome of government control, N6 mentions

that one can avoid that some NGOs use all their resources on administration and workshops. However, it is the extent and degree of control the Government is exercising that N6 finds limiting for the NGOs development work. In addition to the above, N6 also put emphasis on the difference in their relationship to government institutions depending on the scale in question. As the relationship to the federal state is described as tense and problematic, the departments and local authorities enjoy more respect.

The Agency shows no flexibility. They are full of shit. But in the field, we encounter more flexible people and we have better collaborations (N6).

N6 states that the relationship on the local level is characterized with a lot of communication and cooperation. The interaction is daily, and local authorities provide follow ups and monitoring. However, N6 suspects that the lack of system and structure in development work contra humanitarian work, the high turnover rate in local administration (where they have the best cooperation) and the politicized use of administration positions are all obstacles to the Ethiopian development.

There are political positions on region and zone level. All people are politically appointed. There is a strict control on everything, but no one will say anything. All media including newspapers are controlled. From the regional parliament and all the way to Kebele level are people appointed politically. Those are not always the best people for the job. We need local people, but the high turnover rate strips us from the local competence (N6).

Similar to N6 and his remarks on limitations caused by the CSP on trainings and policy work, informant N7 highlights the control exercised by the government as excessive and limiting. N7 claims that it is impossible for the NGO today to work on the topic of “gender”, women or youth, and appreciates that the purpose is for people to organize and themselves define their needs and goals. Elaborating on this, N7 also states that the government views policy work as potential platform for opposition, and that the CSP is used as a means to limit the influence from countries disagreeing with Ethiopian politics.

The treat towards the government is not on a local level, but rather on a national level. [...] Some people are NGO leaders during the day and politicians during the night. Either you do NGOing the right way, or you can potentially start an opposition (N7).

As N7, informant N8 assumes that the government perceives NGOs as political threats, and highlights the previous themes of restriction, bureaucracy and limitations as hinders to good NGO-government relations as well. This is exemplified with the recent denial of 14 NGOs re-registering (renewing of licenses). However, N8 claims that the government does not actually want a good relation to the NGOs. They don't want the NGOs to come together and have good relations with each other either (but if they do, the government wants to be present). Rather, N8 claims that NGOs in general represent to the government a symbol of developing struggle that it does not want to be associated with. This is for instance related to the drought that was currently happening in Ethiopia in 2016.

The drought is one of the things that the government does not want talk about because they want to be seen as a modern, business oriented State. [A large NGO] can say something about the drought, because of the size of the NGO. But even they must be strategic when they do so (N8).

N8 explained that to be seen like a modern state and not a developing country the government preferred to tone down the humanitarian crises, for instance the drought of 2016.

B) A degree of support and acceptance of government restrictions

As we have seen, several of the informants have argued that the relations between NGOs and the government are tense, and show a critical attitude towards the government and its ways of controlling, supervising and thus being an obstacle to their development work. However, there is a common theme among the informants' responses that Ethiopia is on good course as far as the societal and economic development is concerned. Several of the participants express a trust and some kind of support toward the Ethiopian government, as education, health and food production are mentioned as complex solutions to a complex poverty issue. Issues like foreign political and economic influence, terrorism and cultural influence are topics that came up.

When asked about the thoughts about on government motivations for the CSP and the strict approach concerning resident NGOs, informant N2 explains that the basic argument are the same across countries that adopt a similar approach: to try to take politics out from local development. N2 argues that no government wants such a huge foreign influence working on political matters:

If you are a local, and get your money from locals, then you can enter politics. You can do whatever you want. If you are Ethiopian, then the development and the politics are open for you. If you are influenced by foreign capital, then the limitations come (N2).

N2 points out that Kenya and many other countries have started the same process, and that Ethiopia is functioning as a “leader” as to how to deal with modern issues of foreign influence. When asked to elaborate on this, N2 states that during the ratification of the proclamation, media was openly discussing how NGOs had supported political parties in opposition. This was the root of the proclamation and the strengthened restrictions for NGOs with foreign financial support, according to N2. Further, N2 points at the issue of terrorism in several of Ethiopia’s neighboring countries.

As the terrorism appear, so does the laws appear. [...] When foreign aid is used for political issues, the law appears. [...] The law is getting stricter because we are also fighting other evils, like terrorism. It has not started in Ethiopia, but that is because we are fighting it at the bay, before it enters our country, steals our home. We are fighting it in Somalia, where our soldiers now are fighting Al Shabaab. Ethiopia is trying to keep that at bay before it comes in here as well. In supporting Somalia, we are defending our country. Otherwise also Ethiopia would have been a mess. We are a regional contributor to peace, not only in Somalia, but also in Kenya, Southern Sudan, which is now a mess (N2).

N2 summarizes that because of the regional unbalance, the government must stay strong against foreign influences. Additional arguments supporting parts of the government policies, comes from informant N6, who expresses a constant struggle to explain to donor countries why they are still operating in Ethiopia. N6 tells that the governments violations towards its citizens and the denial of several NGOs to work on human rights, makes it hard to defend why the NGO

chose to stay and continue their work. According to N6, the NGO is criticized for working in a country that gives them such limited freedom of action, within a control regime reminding of a dictatorship and some even conclude that by being present, the NGO is accused of actually supporting the governments ways. However, N6 explains that despite criticism, they still have an important role to play.

As a development NGO, you need to help in any way you can, even if you have to sacrifice some things. If the framework is difficult, we compromise. Some accuse us for supporting a repressive regime. But they don't understand our mandate (N6).

Later, N6 offers some explanation as to why he does not agree with the critique, and says no resident NGOs in Ethiopia are in the position to “threaten” to leave the country if the government do not change their ways. For that, there are too many NGOs, donors and other aid actors involved in development work who would easily take their place.

Informant N1 also offers explanations and support to the restricting actions of the State in some cases. Even though describing a controlling and dominant government that makes the NGO activities more complex than in other countries, N1 explains a conflict under the surface of Ethiopia contained by a strong military force – and political control. According to N1, a conflict between the Oromos and the Tigrai lies and waits, and surfaces when anything political happens. Elaborating, N1 tells a story of a land that is kept in peace because of the strong military control. Although N1 focuses on the negative effects of this control, there is also a sense of understanding to the statements.

The Proclamation that makes development work so hard here, no matter the politics around it, fits in the pattern of a state who wants to keep a country peaceful, by pushing down the conflicts that arises. This is because the day something serious happens here, Ethiopia will burn. Civil war will break out, and all our efforts will be lost (N1).

Despite the conflict that “lies under the surface” (N1), the Ethiopian government manages to keep the country peaceful by strictly enforcing laws and restrictions on political action. N1 elaborates further on this matter by saying that the government is certain that there will be no sanctions on the international NGOs (INGOs) and the bilateral aid as the world community is

too pleased that Ethiopia is peaceful. Similar to informant N2, N1 points at the neighboring countries characterized by war: Somalia; Sudan and Eritrea; and concludes that no Ethiopian or Resident NGO will criticize the state because they are so scared that Ethiopia will fall in to the same situation as the rest of the Horn of Africa. According to N1, Ethiopia is the safest place in the region when it comes to war and terror and the only “hope” left in the region when it comes to development work.

Losing Ethiopia would mean that the entire Horn of Africa is “failed state” and civil war. [...] At one embassy meeting, the ambassador told us that even though Ethiopia is a dictatorship, he would not openly criticize election fraud, protester killings or the suppression of the people (N1).

N1 describes how Addis Ababa is the foundation for all the development work in the region, that several NGOs operating in Somalia are based here, as well as many bilateral offices and UN organizations, and that they all turn a blind eye. According to N1, the state of Ethiopia can implement all the laws they want, request the tax they find suitable and do as they please – the NGOs know that protesting “will be (their) home ticket” (N1). And the strictness of the state is explained by the fact that the alternative would be civil war and unrest.

N1 also states that they could easily leave Ethiopia in protest, but that this does not happen because they know how much work is needed and all the good that they do. Exemplifying, N1 points at the many natives that are not being acknowledged do not stand a chance in the system here: Even if they were to be acknowledged, they have too little education to make use of the rights, and even less demand them.

This statement can be compared to informant N8, who states that the silliest thing an NGO could do is lay down demands for the government, as “the government run the show politically in this country” (N8). However, N8 points out that even though it is hard for NGOs to influence policy changes in Ethiopia, the small changes that they do succeed in implementing are long lasting. Things go slowly in Ethiopia, but N8 focuses on the fact that at least it is possible to move forward. N8 compares his policy work attempts in Ethiopia to another African country, and states that working here is slower, harder and that the bureaucracy drives him crazy – but the changes are sincere and long lasting.

C) Strategies for continuing development work

In relation to the critiques of the NGO-government relation, I asked the NGO employees to describe their thoughts around the continued efforts and the future of development work in Ethiopia. This question resulted in the explanation of different methods and collaborations that the NGO employees state that they see themselves as forced to use, as to give their NGOs a future in the country.

Informant N1 explains that several strategies that are used to continue development work. According to N1, working through the religious institutions gives them more freedom of action, as churches and other religious organizations are not included in the Proclamation. However, N1 points out that there is a big difference between the development work that NGOs want to do, and the development work that religious organizations want to do. Some of them are very conservative, and don't work for all types of rights. N1 adds that many of them don't accept gay people, nor include recipients from other religions than the one they represent.

For instance, work through religious organizations are often focused on translations of the bible. To do so, they first work on developing a written language for minority languages. If you ask me, this is the best empowerment tool there is. But we cannot call it empowerment (N1).

Further, N1 points at the possibility to change the term that is used for an activity. As work on “Do No Harm” or Reconciliation is not allowed other terms are used as a consequence. For an invitation to a trainer from a foreign country, the title was something completely different from the actual topic. The alternative would be to not to do any work.

You don't call empowerment for empowerment. You don't call rights for rights (N1).

Informant N7 uses a similar argument, and points out that since the government sees policy work as potential for the political opposition to organize, they have to use other terms to complete their activity. “Violence against women” becomes “Harm against women”. However, N7 describes another strategy for NGOs to continue their development work. Women who are victims of violence are sent to safe shelters offered by NGOs, as they need to send them to a safe place with help and information. According to N7, they are not prevented to teach human

rights in these shelters, as they fill a “gap”, and serve a purpose that the government needs. And as the women will have more support in testifying, it is easier to get the offenders convicted, and consequently this will lower the statistics. N7 defines this strategy as “soft advocacy”, or using a joint interest adjusted to the governments need and preference.

N7 also mentions work on “Women and Children/Youth affairs” which is no longer allowed. Here, a strategy is mentioned where State employees are invited to speak about the themes. As they are invited and controls the content of the seminar, they will not shut it down, according to N7.

As well as agreeing on the strategy of calling the activity by a right (wrong) name, informant N8 focuses on the need for NGOs to stay creative despite the limitations that the government represents. By mentioning several policies that were first implemented by NGOs, N8 demonstrates the power of being “smart” when interacting with the government:

You need to know what you’re talking about, have the right attitude, say the right things, know the right people. Then you ask for a small space where you can be creative and try something they don't really agree on. After demonstrating the results, you might be allowed to continue and even implement the project in other areas (N8).

10.2 Perceptions of NGO-NGO relations: Divided attitudes

The second relation in question in this project, are the NGO-NGO relations. The perceptions on NGO-NGO relations are diverse, and I will introduce the most frequent and collective themes.

To ease the understanding of informant N1s responses, I will call the NGO where N1 is employed as NGO-A. To N1s knowledge, NGO-A have only one collaboration with another NGO in Ethiopia (NGO-B), and describes that relations between them are “good”. When asked to elaborate on “good relations”, N1 tells about cooperation and exchange of experiences in the field because both NGOs work towards the same goal, as well as trained workers from NGO-B get transferred to NGO-A if their knowledge is needed. However, N1 explains that even though it is helpful to work with NGO-B, the collaborations between them are unstructured,

chaotic and not formalized. Further, N1 describes a closer relation between NGO-A and their donor NGO localized in a foreign country (NGO-C). According to N1, this NGO-C has an equally close relation to NGO-B. As a result, the communication and collaborations are complex, as N1 plays a double role in the communication both with NGO-A and NGO-C, but has no clear framework to work within when it comes to NGO-B. In addition, N1 explains that there is a sort of joint collaboration of several NGOs in the area, including NGO-C and –B, but not NGO-A;

I sit in a committee for a project, not as a function of my work in [NGO-A], but because I know the area and the topic interest me. The project is financed by [NGO-C] because they have the money, then implemented by [NGO-B] as they have the competence, but the “owner” of the project is [a religious organization] as they are licensed by the State. The different actors don't really know about each other (N1).

Thus, the picture that N1 is painting is that on the one hand the relations between the NGOs are useful, but on the other hand the relations are characterized by different actors playing different roles without a lot of knowledge about each other.

Informant N2 is very clear in his view that NGO-NGO cooperation in terms of networks is very successful in Ethiopia today. Explaining that the NGO landscape earlier was characterized by competition, N2 describes it today as a cooperative, phase-based and including cooperation. N2 also describes how the CSP was a contributor the development of better networks.

The Proclamation does not allow the churches or the mosques to do development work, they have to stick with their religion. If you want to continue development work, you must establish a legal organization which the state can supervise. [...] Now, these development “wings” have come together to establish networks [...] across religions (N2).

N2 states that in addition to good relations to their supporting partner abroad, they are part of several networks. When asked about the networks’ purposes, N2 explains that the networks can facilitate and channel projects to the NGOs. And if they facilitate a project, they will get a

percentage of that project. This percentage, as well as the membership fees, finance the secretariat, activities, international communications, trips and trainings.

Without doubting their effectiveness, he points out that the networks' biggest challenge are the membership fees and the project based contributions. Apart from some few exceptions, most of the NGOs pay a *membership fee*. N2 states that in some cases, this is discouraging for local NGOs. As the membership fee can be quite expensive, and sometimes asked for in dollars, not all smaller NGOs can afford to join these memberships.

But some membership fees are discouraging their smaller members, and it is making them lose members. I mean, the membership in principle, has to be a nominal payment for an expression of commitment to the network. Not contribute to big sums to raise sums for the network, as such. [...] This is an issue to reconsider for networks and forums, in order to attract many local organizations (N2).

When asked to elaborate, N2 explains that even though some NGOs get smaller fees, they are still too high, and that this deprives the networks from local knowledge provided by smaller Ethiopian NGOs. N2 adds that some networks ask for *project based contributions*, a fee that offers a lot of problems some networks. This fee is a small percentage of all projects within an NGO, thus, it is also asked by projects that the network did not facilitate. As a result, N1 explain that the NGOs give some of the money provided by other donors to their network.

There is a quarrel about this. Because the project belongs to their member, they want to take a percentage of this. This is a challenge and a discussion. And there is a possibility that the Ethiopian NGOs will pull out. If I get a project from China, and I tell the Chinese that I will give 4 % of this and give it to [a network], I would have a problem! (N2).

Informant N6 explains how all their partners are Ethiopian Resident NGOs, and that they enjoy great trust and frequent meetings with them. N6, who works for a Northern NGO, describes their relation to their partner NGO to be of mutual respect. The meetings with the partners are more frequent at the implementation phase, and as the project is implemented the relation is based on respect with a clear framework. Further, N6 admits that they don't prioritize their membership to the one network where they are members, as their experience shows little

effectiveness. N6 compares the development collaborations to humanitarian collaborations, stating that the latter is a lot more organized.

Informant N7 shows a more positive attitude towards the membership to the same network and explains how the network has a representative in the Agency giving them an opportunity to influence them from within. However, also N7 explains that they don't prioritize the membership, and points out that the main goal, working for a Northern NGO, is for the partner NGOs to enter memberships. Other memberships are also not considered, as the membership fees are expensive and the 30/70 regulation gives them reason to carefully consider their administrative expenses.

There are many networks that could be of interest. But for us, it is more important that our partner organizations are members of networks. They are the ones who will stay when we leave. Most of our partners are members of networks, and have collaborations that we don't have all the details about (N7).

Elaborating further on the relation to partner NGOs, N7 expresses concerns for the trainings that they hold for their partners, pointing out that the increasing difficulty of maintaining administrations costs under 30 % of total budget is forcing them to limit the amount of training that they do. However, N7 explains that as a result, they have “allowed (their) partners to use their 30 % to trainings”. In addition, N7 states that the NGO have changed their earlier focus on result based planning and reporting from partners, towards the direction of coaching and follow-ups. Even though there still are some trainings, there are more follow-ups on economy, visits and feed-backs. N7 defines this as a shift towards capacity building and organizational development, rather than training. Hence, dialogue becomes a more vital part of the collaborations, strengthening the relation.

Later, N7 describes another, informal network with a few other NGOs, who meets once a month. According to N7 this is the first network they are a part of which works so closely. However, the projects in focus are of a humanitarian kind, and not necessarily long term development.

Informant N8 states that the government is limiting the possibilities for the NGOs to have good relations among themselves, as, according to N8, it is not in the governments interest or wish

that the development NGOs have good relations. Therefore, the NGOs must collaborate quietly, and make their own networks.

10.3 Perceptions of NGO-locals relations

As the two previous sub chapters elaborated on the perceptions of NGO workers in resident and foreign NGOs, it is now time to move on to the perceptions explained by locals. As stated before, the data collected on the topic of NGO–Locals relations have been collected through two anonymous questionnaires, two focus discussions, several field conversations and one interview with members of the local communities in Northern Amhara and Eastern Oromia.

Infor- mant	Research Method	Informant detail	Time	Research Site
L1	Semi-structured Interview	Local unemployed	July 2016	Eastern Oromia, Ethiopia
L2	Semi-structured Interview	Local worker	June, 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
L3	Semi-structured Interview	Gov.school director	June, 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
L4	Semi-structured Interview	Local student	July 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
L5	Semi-structured Interview	Local student	July 2016	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
EF1	Focus Group Discussion (EF)	Local worker	May 2016	Eastern Oromia, Ethiopia
EF2	Focus Group Discussion (EF)	Local worker	May 2016	Eastern Oromia, Ethiopia
EF3	Focus Group Discussion (EF)	Local unemployed	May 2016	Eastern Oromia, Ethiopia
EF4	Focus Group Discussion (EF)	Local student	May 2016	Eastern Oromia, Ethiopia
EF5	Focus Group Discussion (EF)	Local worker	May 2016	Eastern Oromia, Ethiopia
EF6	Focus Group Discussion (EF)	Local student	May 2016	Eastern Oromia, Ethiopia
NF1	Focus Group Discussion (NF)	Local worker	June, 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
NF2	Focus Group Discussion (NF)	Local worker	June, 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
NF3	Focus Group Discussion (NF)	Local Gov. worker	June, 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
NF4	Focus Group Discussion (NF)	Local worker	June, 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
NF5	Focus Group Discussion (NF)	Local worker	June, 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
NF6	Focus Group Discussion (NF)	Local student	June, 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia
ES1 to ES39	Questionnaire in Eastern Oromia (ES)	Random sample	July 2016	Eastern Oromia, Ethiopia
NS1 to NS37	Questionnaire in Northern Amhara (NS)	Random sample	June 2016	Northern Amhara, Ethiopia

Table 10.2: Overview of Informants - understanding NGO-locals relations

The reason for the two different locations was because it was the projects aim to grasp different perceptions from different people in different places. All participants were locals, not working with NGOs.

After the coding of data, some main collective themes of the perceptions among the participants were identified. To better present the findings, the themes are categorized into three categories: a) Western Imperialism, b) “NGOs out of politics”, and c) More, bigger and better NGOs.

The coding of data included collecting responses of the open-ended question Q7 in the questionnaire on “*personal opinion on the INGO presence in Ethiopia*” and finding main themes amongst the responses. The themes that were identified can be seen in table 10.1.

A) Critical attitudes of international NGOs

The first identified main category of perceptions among locals is a criticism of the influence that NGOs have on the Ethiopian culture. Firstly, this perception was clearly stated in the focus discussion in Eastern Oromia (EF). One of the participants, informant EF1, stated that Ethiopia did not need foreign NGOs. According to EF1, the people of Ethiopia are going to create their own development, and all they need is the opportunity. Agreeing, and further elaborating, informant EF2 stated that the NGOs came to this region with projects that lasted only for some months, and that these projects did not offer them any development. Therefore, they were not needed at all:

We see the NGOs coming here. They dig a well, take a picture, invite the politicians, and then they leave. Since none of us have knowledge to use the well correctly, and we don't know how to fix it if it is broken, and there is no time frame of when to use it. Then everybody use it. All the time. Day and night. So, it becomes broken. There are many wells like that, around here, broken, and no one needs that (EF2).

This participant showed frustration and mistrust on NGOs. On further elaboration, informant EF3 and EF4 explained their opinions. According to EF3, many NGOs don't come for the development of the region, but rather talk with politicians, use NGO cars for private matters, and spend the NGO money on private pleasure. EF4 focused on the reason he thought the NGOs

actually came here. In his opinion, and in what seemed to be the other participants' agreement, the NGOs came to push their own "Western agendas":

The western NGO are not doing something different than before. They want to bring the western ideas, the western culture. We don't need that here. We have our own culture. This is a modern imperialism. That is what they are trying to do. Take for example gay people. That is not our culture. They don't respect our culture (EF4).

The participants seemed to agree that they could not see how NGOs were needed or wanted in Ethiopia. Rather, they expressed a feeling of mistrust and dissatisfaction with not only NGO practices, but also their very existence and cultural influence on their country.

Secondly, an interview with a local informant (L1) conducted in the same area, showed similar perceptions. L1 did not express great enthusiasm when discussing the presence of NGOs in Ethiopia. L1 focused on the NGOs being too free with the spreading of western cultures, and that they did not respect the culture in Ethiopia. In addition, L1 could not see how the NGOs were here to do good, as they only hired Tigray people and not other Ethiopians.

[The NGOs] are always in line with the Tigray people, and therefore with the government. You can see it in the faces of the government people, the same thing as the NGO employees. The mark, a scar, above their eyes. A mark of the Tigray tribe (L1).

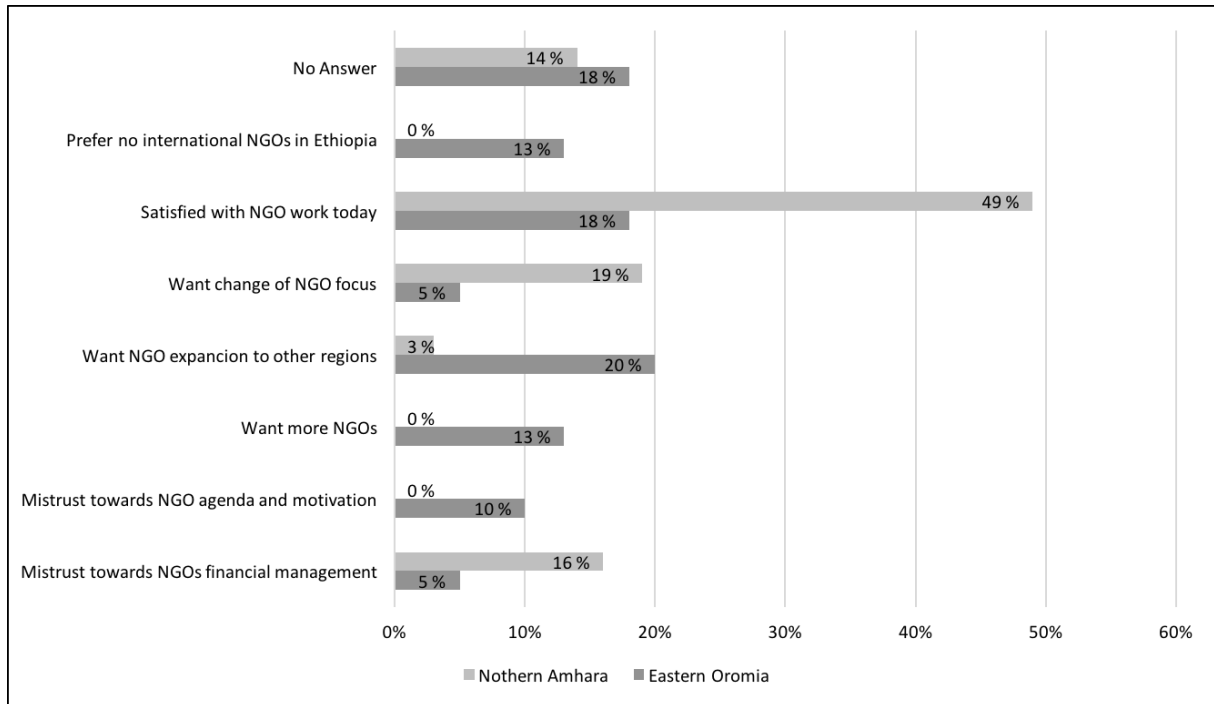


Figure 10.1: Questionnaire Q7, Categorized (1-8) written statements on perceptions on NGOs

Thirdly, the idea of unwanted western presence is demonstrated through the Eastern Oromia survey (ES). The open-ended question, Q7, reads as follows: “Please describe shortly how you feel about the international NGO presence in Ethiopia, and explain why”, (see Appendix 2). To this question, 10 % of the written responses fall under category 2: “Mistrust towards INGO agenda and motivation” (figure 10.1). Thus, these respondents wrote statements that some way or another questions the NGO legitimacy, as such. Further, 13 % of the respondents wrote statements that fall under category 7: “Prefer no INGOs in Ethiopia”, a category that speaks for itself. To compare, in the Northern Amhara questionnaire none of the respondents had statements that fell under category 2 or 7. The citation below is taken from respondent 25 (ES25) answering the open-ended question, Q7. ES25 can be seen to express a sort of traditionalistic view, where he / she does not wish foreign cultural influence.

They are coming to our country saying they are here to help but the real reason that they are here is to exploit our religion and culture and exposing us to bad culture and lifestyle. We don't need any of you help (ES25).

ES26 does not explain why, but clearly states his/her opinion of their existence in Ethiopia:

We don't need them (ES26).

Respondent ES29 express suspiciousness towards foreign NGOs and their purposes in Ethiopia:

Most of the time international organizations come here with a hidden agenda (ES29).

The last citation I want to highlight is not as clear as the previous ones, but it can be thought to express a feeling of preference to local development as in contrast to INGO:

It is beneficial if we work for our country ourselves (NS36).

B) “NGOs out of politics!”

The second identified category is a critical attitude towards politicized NGOs. The locals describe a perceived relation between NGOs and government employees. The findings also show a mistrust on the level of NGOs financial management.

I will start by demonstrating the indications of this perception in categories of the written statements to Q7 (see figure 10.1). 16 % of the respondents on ES fall under category 1: “*Mistrust towards NGO Financial Management*”. Further, 5 % of the respondents on NS (Northern Amhara survey) fell under the same category. This means that these respondents wrote statements questioning the NGOs monetary use, or in another way indicated that the NGOs do not use their money correctly. In the statements, it is clear that for some of the respondents the money seems to be going in a political direction, here exemplified by the written statements of informants from both surveys:

I don't have that much knowledge about NGOs, but I know some NGOs are working here in Ethiopia. Some people say these NGOs are not helping the ones in need they work with investors and government officials (ES1).

We need some NGOs free of politics (ES32).

The way they work is government centered and it doesn't go well with their mission (ES35).

Aid is important for the country, but it should be direct. We should be a part of it (NS10).

NGOs are very important. But in countries like Ethiopia the individuals are getting more benefits than the people in need (NS34).

The presence of NGOs in Ethiopia is very good but the money sent to NGOs is not fully used to help the people. The reason why the funds are not utilized is because of meetings and conferences, there is so much money getting wasted (NS35).

Most of the NGOs in Ethiopia don't use the budget for its purpose. You see them using of funds for personal benefits (NS36).

Not all the citations are clear that they think the NGOs are politicized. However, in further discussion in interviews and field conversations with some of these respondents, it was evident that more often than not it was government employees who were the “individuals” benefiting from NGO money.

Apart from the perception of politicized NGOs being demonstrated in the questionnaire data, this was also evident during the focus group in Northern Amhara (NF). One of the participants (NF1) stated that the government control contributed to corrupt NGOs: the situation of politicized NGOs was worse now that the NGOs were under stricter government control.

The biggest issue is that it is the government who control the NGOs. When the government are in control, they get even more corrupt. This is because earlier, the NGOs were doing reports within the organization. Now, they report to the State. So now, the state knows everything they do (NF1).

When asked to elaborate, NF2 takes the word and explains that the governments wish for controlling the NGOs came in 2005 when the Ethiopian workers started to get organized.

NF3 conveys that one of the main issues of the NGOs, is that they hire family, politicians or people with a lot of documents. The latter is, according to NF3, tantamount so someone with a lot of money.

If the NGOs require a lot of papers, like school documents or documented work experience, they are just going to find a rich person who bought the necessary papers. It is all about knowing the right people. However, what they should rather do, is hire someone based on their opinions and social knowledge (NF3).

As the discussion moved over to NGO practices, another perception of NGOs being politicized came up, as NF4 stated out that NGOs allow for the same State employee (NN) to attend all their trainings. As the trainings include traveling and lasts between 1 to 7 days, NF4 drew a picture of NN no longer working more than a few days before heading out to yet another training. Thus, the workplace nor NN benefits from the training. In addition, NF4 stated that people in training are paid the lost wages and a sustenance allowance that was “equivalent to a European budget” (NF4):

[NN] does not even work anymore. Only attend trainings. And at the trainings, he is thinking about which next training he will attend, and how much he will earn there (NF4).

C) “More, Bigger and Better NGOs”

The last perception identified in the NGO-local relations, was an expressed desire for more NGOs, bigger NGOs covering larger areas and several regions and NGOs focusing on other topics. There is a basic satisfaction of the NGO work today among the respondents, but also a wish for more, bigger and better NGOs. These perceptions were demonstrated through the responses in NS and ES, more precisely the written statements on Q7 (see figure 10.1) and the responses to Q5, Q6 and Q8 (figure 10.2, 10.3 and 10.4).

Firstly, some indications that locals are satisfied with NGO work today exist. Looking back at figure 10.2 (Q7: *feelings about the presence of international NGOs in Ethiopia*), 49% of the respondents in NS and 18% in ES wrote statements that fall into the category of “satisfied with NGO work today”. Are examples of this:

Since Ethiopia is a developing country I agree with the international support and what the NGOs are doing (NS4).

I don't know their names, but they are all important (NS12).

Secondly, some respondents could be seen to want more NGOs in Ethiopia. 13 % of the respondents from the questionnaire in Eastern Oromia (ES) wrote statements that fall into the category of “want more NGOs” (figure 10.1). However, there are no responses amongst the statements from Northern Amhara (NS) that fall into the same category. Examples of the ES’ statements are respondents ES10 and ES27:

So many good things have been done but it’s not enough. I suggest that there’s need to be more NGOs and support (ES10).

The government cannot tackle the problems we are facing on education and drought alone. That's why we need international organization (ES27).

Thirdly, other factors indicate that locals want “bigger” NGOs by expanding. The category of “want NGO expansion to other regions” also receives higher numbers in ES, where 20% wrote statements that fall into this category. Only 3% of the statements from NS fall into the same category. Respondents ES39 and NS22 exemplifies the statements falling into this category:

It is very good that there are international organization in Ethiopia It will be nice if they expand their capacity and work in all regions (ES39).

I know international NGOs are here for a good cause. But their outreach is very small [...] (NS22).

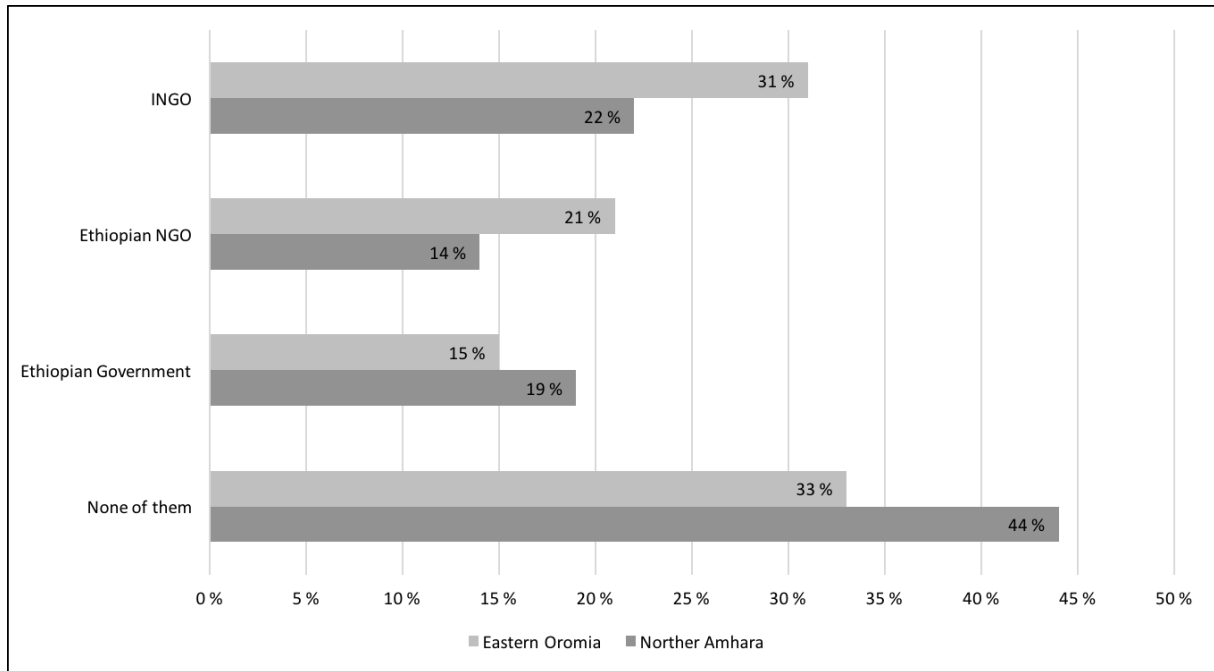


Figure 10.2: Questionnaire Q5, “Preferred contact”.

Fourthly, the responses to Q5 on *preferred contact* could indicate that the respondents are satisfied with NGO work today. The questionnaire’s fifth question reads as follows: “*In case you need help / aid for any reason, who would you prefer to contact?*”. The question had four response alternatives: “*INGO*”, “*Ethiopian NGO*”, “*Ethiopian Government*” and “*none on them*”. In figure 10.2, we see that a large percentage of respondents both in ES and NS responded that they preferred to contact an NGO if they had the need for help / aid. In ES, 31 % stated that they would contact an INGO, and 21 % an Ethiopian NGO. In total, 52 % would contact an NGO, compared to 15 % who would contact a state institution. In NS, the percentage of respondents choosing INGO and Ethiopian NGO, is 22% and 14% respectively, thus in total 36 %, while 19 % would contact a state institution.

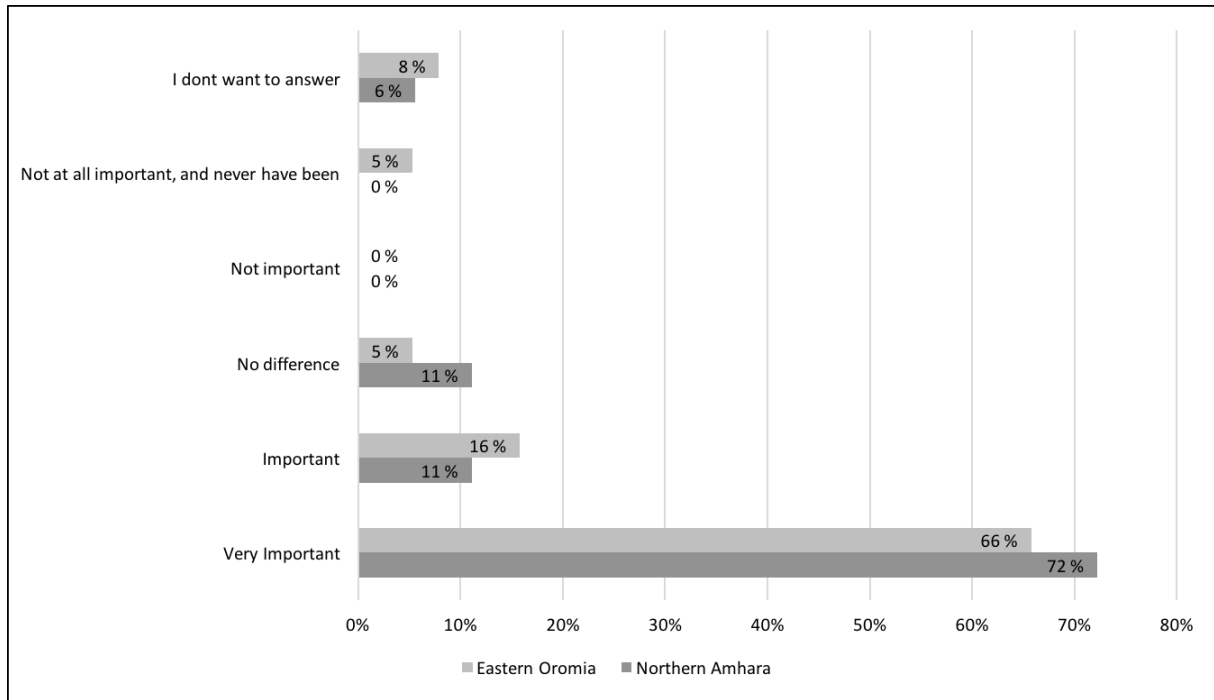


Figure 10.3: Questionnaire Q6, “Feelings about INGO presence”

Figure 10.3 for Q6 could potentially show a satisfaction towards NGOs in Ethiopia among the respondents. The sixth question of the questionnaire reads as follows: “How do you feel about the presence of International NGOs in Ethiopia? A high percentage answered “very important”, more precisely 66 % in ES and 72 % in NS. Adding the respondents who responded “important”, the number rises to 82 % and 83 % in ES and NS. Only 5% of the respondents answered that INGOs were not important, whereas 5% (ES) and 11% (NS) were indifferent.

Fifthly, some indications that locals want “better” NGOs can be found in that they want NGOs to change their focus. This could be indicated through the written responses on Q7 on *feelings about the presence of international NGOs in Ethiopia* (figure 10.1). 19% of the respondents in NS wrote statements that fall into the category of “want change of NGO focus”:

We would be happy if education, health, human rights, agriculture and clean drinking water expanded in every region (NS5).

We need them to work more on education, health and human rights (NS6).

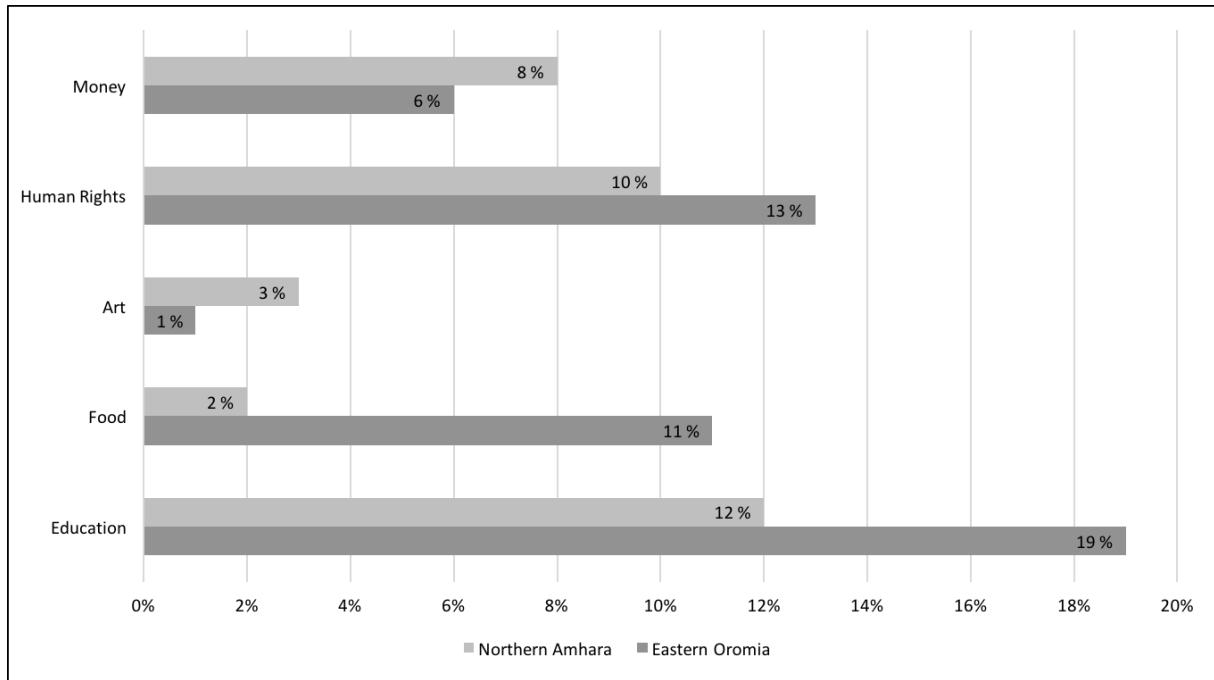


Figure 10.4: Questionnaire Q8, “Personal opinions change in NGO focus”.

Figure 10.4 represents the responses to Q8 which reads as follows: “Which types of work do you personally want the NGOs to work more with?” The participants could select multiple answers, all listed in figure 10.4. In ES, the most frequent activities that the respondents want the NGOs to work more with, are “Education” and “Human Rights” with 19% and 13% of the responses. Next comes “Food” and “Money” with 11% and 8%. Also in NS, the most frequent answers are education and human rights with 12% and 10%, before money follows with 8%. The responses on this questions shows the areas that the respondents want NGOs to work more with.

11. Discussion

This discussion will elaborate further on the findings of particular relevance for the research questions of this thesis. As previously stated, the aim of the study was to describe perception on NGO relations in Ethiopia. The aim was further divided in to two parts: 1. Explore the NGO workers' perceptions and experiences the NGO workers have of NGO-government and NGO-NGO relation, and 2. Explores relations between NGOs and locals. Thus, this discussion chapter seeks to elaborate on the findings and relate them to introductions to the theme of Ethiopia and NGOs role today, in addition to the theoretical framework on the NGO-debate.

11.1 How do people inside the NGO world perceive the NGO-government relations?

I will start by discussing the results and findings related to the first research question: “*How do NGO workers perceive the NGO–government relations?*”. Findings within this theme arrives from informants working with NGOs either as leaders, employees or voluntaries. The perceptions of NGO-government relations that people inside the NGO world were describing, were analyzed and divided in to three main categories:

- A) Negative perceptions of the government
- B) A degree of support and acceptance of the government
- C) Strategies for continuing development work

The first main finding within the NGO-government relations, was that some NGO workers had negative perceptions of the government. Many of the NGO workers experienced that the government is restricting NGOs activities through supervising, an excessive amount of mandatory reports and the strict regulatory framework of the CSP, resulting in less dynamic projects, less training for SNGOs, and less opportunities to work on policy advocacy, which is normally included in the NGOs original ideology.

These perceptions of the government show a large degree of mistrust. Some NGO workers feel that the government is restricting their development work in a larger extent than other countries, in which case the government is not perceived as a partner nor a facilitator for development, but rather an obstacle. As the amount of time and resources used on paperwork and bureaucracy

increases, some informants argue that less time and recourses can be used for development activity, and that the legal framework can be seen as a hindering to the continuation of the development work. This complies with often used category in NGO-government relations literature, often characterizing the relation to be affected by the state as a restriction for the NGOs.

However, the second main finding within the NGO-government work was that many informants expressed a degree of support and acceptance of the government policies, even though they were restricting. Many informants claimed that Ethiopia is avoiding unrest, terrorism and civil war, in addition to achieving economic development, and further argued that this is due to the strict and military force governing of the country. Even if the government is limiting development work, this strong governmental control is seen by the informants as to keep Ethiopia peaceful. In addition, the informants argued that the NGOs previously supported political parties and that the strict government is avoiding foreign aid being used for political issues. Many see Ethiopia as the Horn of Africa's "last hope", meaning that it is the only country that still functions as a peaceful area to base their development work for the region. In result, NGO workers feel they cannot stand up against the government, as they risk eviction and getting replaced by other NGOs and donors.

Accepting the strict regime of the Ethiopian government can be seen as a sort of "*risk aversion*". As the government is struggling with the regions unbalance, it is viewed upon as taking the necessary means as to keep the country safe. As weaker government could lead to a larger degree of unrest in the country than what is the case today, one can see it as if this strict control is accepted by the informants. In some ways, one can say that the view of the government is a "*necessary evil*". The state is limiting, but without it the country could end up in the same situation as the surrounding countries in the region.

The third main finding within the NGO-government perceptions is that the relation is characterized by strategies to continue the development. One example of the strategies is to do work where government activity is inadequate. Here, the activity on human rights information is accepted by the government, as this will in turn help the national statistics on the theme.

The findings show that the relations between NGOs and the government can be characterized a *silent cooperation*. By this is meant that the NGOs seem to fill the gaps where the Ethiopian authorities' activities are inadequate. Some informants show some kind of *submissiveness* different ways. Firstly, none of the NGO workers would criticize the government outside the interview. Secondly, NGOs are paying government employees for participating in training and invite them to seminars, even though this is expensive and considered unnecessary for the purpose of the NGO activity. Thirdly, many informants avoid certain concepts that could be related to policy work. In return, the government lets NGOs continue some work that normally is forbidden through the regulatory framework, if the work fills gaps in public service and therefore also benefits the government institutions.

Also according to the literature reviewed, Ethiopia is seen to battle against unrest in the region. These findings fit the framework drawn in the introduction to the historical and political context in Ethiopia, as well as theoretical framework. As we have seen in the literature review the NGO legitimacy and trust has in fact diminished both in terms of the conceptual debate and in terms of activities seen as discontinuous and not equally distributed (Moyo, 2009; Pearce, 2000).

Assuming that the restrictions and supervision that the NGO workers feel are rooted in a government mistrust of NGOs, this complies to the writings about a diminishing NGO legitimacy in Southern governments (DeMars & Dijkzeul, 2015; Sherwood, 2015). This could also be linked to Whaites notion of NGOs taking advantage of the shrinking government service delivery to strengthen civil societies in the South. The loss of legitimacy and trust has resulted in some states limiting the practices and activities of NGOs in other countries (DeMars & Dijkzeul, 2015), and these findings might indicate that it is happening in Ethiopia as well.

As seen in the brief review on the current political situation (chapter 4.2.), there are several political aspects affecting the NGO-government relations. After the elections of May and November in 2005 the government were accused of violently suppressing protesters. As this lead to donors changing the way they support Ethiopia by funding NGOs and local authorities directly, this might have affected the NGO-government relations. For instance, the increase in direct funds might have given the state incentives for controlling the aid in other ways, as through the PCS. The 30/70 rule of the PCS gives the government control of how much resources are being used for administrative and activity expenses. The PCS is criticized both

by international actors (ICNL, 2017) and by my informants as a restricting factor for development NGOs in their work on human rights and policy advocacy.

Furthermore, the findings show that the current political situation characterized by growing unrest also have had an influence on the NGO-government relations. As it is believed that over 200 people have been killed by the government since November 2015, it is strange to think that the NGOs does not speak up for this case. However, the current political situation can provide an explanation to this. As IDMC claims, ethnicity can be a cause of conflict in the African continent (IDMC, 2007). The silent conflict “lying under the surface”, as explained by informant N1 to be between the Oromo and Tigray groups, could possibly by this kind of ethnic conflict. This could be the cause to why the government does not want the NGOs to enter politics. If it is believed that NGOs can use their resources politically and organize the political opposition, as is insinuated by many informants, government restriction on NGOs could prevent this. Put in context to the theoretical contribution of Whaites, NGOs could facilitate a strong social movement to evolve if a strong government is not in the focus of their work, allowing a powerful social group to damage the state (Whaites, 2000). On the other hand, it is worth asking the question: Is the violence and suppressions described by the informants worth the peace and strong government they allegedly gain?

When it comes to Young’s theoretical contribution to the division of NGO relations, these characteristics of the NGO-government relations can be seen as adversarial. This is because the NGO workers feel, with some exceptions, that they have been greatly restricted in types of development work where the government does inadequate work. The NGOs struggle to continue their work within human rights and policy advocacy, despite of the restrictions. On the other hand, this could also describe a complementary relationship, and the NGOs do work where the government for some reason does not. Even though the government officially does not allow this work, they do extent allow it to some extent.

11.2 How do people inside the NGO world perceive the NGO–NGO relations?

I will now discuss the results and findings related to RQ2: “*How do NGO workers perceive the NGO-NGO relations?*”. The perceptions in this theme are described by NGO workers. The findings are characterized by divided perceptions of NGO-NGO relations. However, for the

facilitation of the discussion on the findings, I have categorized the NGO-NGO relations in to three parts:

1. NGO networks
2. NNGO-SNGO relations
3. NNGO-NNGO relations

Networks are described by a few informants as successful and less competitive than earlier, and to have a better functioning and role than in previous years. One consequence of the PCS law of 2009, the religious NGOs had to divide their religious work from the development work. This had in turn resulted in several developments “wings” now collaborating across religions in larger development networks. On the other hand, most of the informants described the development networks as ineffective and expensive gatherings that they did not prioritize. Several reasons were explained. For instance, the informants argued that the government disliked NGO networks and gatherings, which resulted in NGOs having to organize their own, smaller and discrete networks. Some of the informants saw this as a government restriction and mistrust in NGOs in general, as mentioned earlier. According to my informants, the government sees this as an opportunity for the opposition to rise. Some said this was the case before the law was implemented. Others said that even now, some NGO leaders by day were functioning as political actors by night. Thus, the NGO networks are criticized, but not with the same arguments as DeMars and Dijkzeul, who argues that the main problem about NGO networks is that the networks give the impression that all NGOs share same values and aims.

These differing views could be explained by the fact that there is a difference between humanitarian and development networks, as the development work is seen as limited and “unwanted” by many informants. As mentioned, development NGOs today are increasingly working within policy advocacy. If the NGOs are seen as an opportunity for political voices to rise, both internally in the country and by the influence from foreign countries, the same reflections surrounding the NGO-government findings can correspond here: limiting the NGOs ability to do policy work is seen as a means to keep Ethiopia peaceful. It could be that in fear of a strong opposition or social group to rise, the networking of development NGOs is restricted.

When it comes to relations between two NNGOs, there were also differing opinions. Collaborations between two or several Northern NGOs were described as complex and informal in nature. For instance, one informant explained that on the one hand the relations between their NNGO and another NNGO were characterized by collaboration, exchange of experiences and the exchange of trained workers if needed (see 10.2). On the other hand, the relations were further described to contain different actors playing different roles without a lot of knowledge about each other. This can be seen as a strategy not to be identified as a collaboration, especially in light of the fact that many informants described that the government did not want development NGOs to organize.

The second main finding is the characterization of on NNGO-SNGO relations as based on trainings, follow-ups and mutual respect. The informants described relations as mostly constituted by trainings and capacity building. However, the relations to their partners were described as based on mutual trust and that the partners are at liberty to do as they please.

These findings fit the framework drawn in introduction and theoretical framework only to some extent. According to the literature, the NNGO-SNGO relations are described as problematic on many levels. What was earlier personal relations, has changed in to an increase of independent SNGOs (Mawdsley et al., 2005). The relations between NNGOs and their SNGOs are characterized by NGOs not wanting to accept their diminishing influence on their partners (Manji, 2000). This was not among the findings in this study. The informants showed interest in the increasing independency of the SNGOs, by explaining that the development work was dependent on SNGOs when the NNGOs terminate their projects. However, what can be found in the findings is that the NNGOs are functioning as a support system for the SNGOs, as Mawdsley have argued. An interesting question to pose is how this “support industry” affects the power relations between SNGOs and NNGOS.

11.3 How do people outside the NGO world perceive the NGO–Locals relations?

This third part will discuss the results and findings related to RQ3: “*How do locals perceive the NGO-locals relations?*”. This question aspires to describe how locals perceive their relations to NGOs.

The findings demonstrate a contrast-filled “love/hate” relationship, where two groups of the informants show great mistrust and skepticism towards NGOs, and one group see them as necessary, to the point where they express the need of more NGOs in Ethiopia. The first main finding within the theme of locals’ perceptions on NGO-locals relations is a negative and mistrusting view on NGOs. Some locals describe NGOs as unwanted extensions of western culture, as seen in 10.3. Their work in the region was by some informants described as ineffective, exemplified with wells that brake after a couple of months.

The participants demonstrate frustration and mistrust towards NGOs. This can be seen interpreted as the NGOs lacking legitimacy among the locals. The NGO mandate of helping and making the lives of locals better is not a view that many of the informant share.

This finding fit the statement made by Holloway, where NGOs have sacrifices their legitimacy by international aid agendas, and the word on the street in the South is that NGO workers benefit too much of NGO money (Holloway, 1999).

This finding complies with the literature review showing an increasing mistrust in NGOs. However, as this mistrust is becoming an obstacle for development work, it ca be seen as to have a reinforcing affect. As the development workers does no longer perceive the development work to be easy to do in Ethiopia, it is possible that this will only strengthen the mistrust experienced in the country.

The second main finding within the theme of NGO-locals relations, is that locals expressed a desire for NGOs to step out of politics. It is similar to the previous perception of mistrust and dissatisfaction, but is more related to a perceived relation between NGOs and government employees as well as their spending, rather than the spreading of a Western culture. One informant stated the government control contributed to corrupt NGOs (10.3.C).

These findings demonstrate that the some of the informants suspect the NGOs of corruption and that the situation of politicized NGOs worsened when the NGOs became under stricter government control. However, when the critiques are pointed at the relationship between NGOs and the government, the critique can be seen as an extension of a mistrust toward the government. Rather than the locals criticizing the NGOs in themselves, they focused on the fact

that the NGOs are linked to the government. The locals thus see the cooperation between NGO-government as problematic. These findings can be seen as informants opposing to the relations between NGOs and the government, as they don't trust the government in the first place.

In light of the theoretical framework, it is not possible to compare the results of Barr and Fafchamps study on “client-community” satisfaction based on the data set that is acquired for this project. However, these findings fit the contribution by Wallace (2009), that NGOs are seen to be pushed to behave in accordance to certain agendas. However, this link that the locals have made between NGOs and authorities are contradictory to the theoretical aspect of Collier (2000), who argues that stronger links between NGOs and the government could benefit the society.

The third main finding within the NGO-local relation theme, were a set of positive remarks on the presence of NGOs. These informants described NGOs as their only solution for service delivery, aid, money, education, health and security. They were hoping for more, bigger and better NGOs, as they want NGOs to increase in number, to expand their regional areas and expand orientations to human rights and education. The findings show that many of the informant would rather contact an NGO than government institutions when in need for help. In light of the theoretical contribution of Collier (2000) these findings can demonstrate that some informants see the NGOs as their only source of aid. This could mean that NGOs have to some extent gained their confidence in relation to service delivery., and they don't mention the government as needed.

There are also some indications to a geographical difference between the survey respondents within this theme. The percentage of respondents describing *satisfaction* with NGO work today, was 18% / 49% respectively in Northern Amhara (NS) / Eastern Oromia (ES). Secondly, the percentage of respondents describing a *mistrust of NGO agenda and motivations*, was 0% / 10% in NS / ES respectively. Thirdly, the percentage of respondents describing a preference to *no INGO presence in Ethiopia*, was 0% / 13% in NS / ES. Even if there are too few respondents to make a generalization, these findings could indicate a geographical difference and are interesting for further research.

12. Conclusive remarks

The study has taken departure in the context of Ethiopia and focuses on NGO relations. NGO-Government relations, NGO-NGO relations and NGO-locals relations are examined. The research project has been inspired by humanistic geography and used semi-structured interviews and field conversations as methods to explore people's perceptions, attitudes and experiences on NGO relations. In order to explore the scope of perceptions, survey questionnaire have been executed in two different areas. The research sites of the project are Northern Amhara, Southern Oromia and Addis Ababa. In total, the research project draws on data collected from 122 participants.

Main findings on perceptions of NGO-government relations are *government as an obstacle to development*, *government as a necessary evil* and *Silent cooperation with the government*. As the government is restricting policy work and increasing supervision, the NGO workers experience being reduced in opportunities and wasting time on activities that don't promote development. In the context of a region in unrest and an ethically rooted conflict "under the surface", the government is seen as a necessary evil in order to keep Ethiopia peaceful. In addition, there is a belief among the NGO workers that they will be forced to leave the country if they are found to be government critical. This in turn prevents NGOs from confronting the government on matters like oppression and political control. The last main finding is that the NGOs and government have "silent" cooperation. Here, NGO activity on development issues can continue through the use of different strategies, like paying state officials to participate, doing work that fills a gap that the government cannot provide for its citizens and using creative terminology that don't provoke government restrictions.

Main findings on perceptions of NGO-NGO relations are divided. Networks are perceived as expensive and ineffective with membership fees and project based contributions that are too high or unacceptable for other reasons. The perception of NGO networks being ineffective is also shared by many, as is the belief that the government does not wish development NGOs to be part of larger networks, in contrast to humanitarian NGOs. Networks are also perceived to demand high membership fees that are discouraging for local and smaller NGO, depriving the

networks from local knowledge. The Northern NGOs' relations to Southern NGOs are characterized by increasing trust and independency.

To understand the relations between NGOs and locals, I have reached out to local Ethiopians, students, workers, unemployed, farmers and families. The goal has been to explore the “word on the street” and their perceptions of NGOs. The findings within NGO-locals relations shows a love/hate relationship, where the informants either were satisfied with NGO work and saw it as beneficial to have more international NGOs present in Ethiopia, while others believed NGO presence was an unwanted influence both culturally and politically. The study also finds that humanistic geography can be a useful approach in understanding NGO relations by exploring on an individual level in order to gain knowledge about people's perceptions, experiences and feelings when it comes to NGO relations, and has been shown useful also when dealing with delicate themes.

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14. Appendices

Appendix 1: Key Indicators Ethiopia

Population	96,633,458 (June 2014 estimate)
Capital	Addis Ababa
Type of government	Federal Republic
Life Expectancy at Birth	55.8 years
Literacy Rate	42.7%
Religious Groups	Ethiopian Orthodox Christian 40%, Sunni Muslim 45-50%, Protestant 5%, remainder indigenous beliefs.
Ethnic Groups	Orthodox 43.5%, Muslim 33.9%, Protestant 18.6%, traditional 2.6%, Catholic 0.7%, other 0.7% Oromo 34.5%, Amara 26.9%, Somalie 6.2%, Tigraway 6.1%, Sidama 4%, Guragie 2.5%, Welaita 2.3%, Hadiya 1.7%, Affar 1.7%, Gamo 1.5%, Gedeo 1.3%, other 11.3%
GDP per capita	\$1,000 (2010 est.)
UN Human Development Index	174 (2016) Ranking scale: 1 (best) – 169 (worst)
World Bank Rule of Law Index	38.9 (2015 Ranking scale: 100 (best) - 0 (worst)

(ICNL, 2017)

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Information before handout:

- Participation is voluntary and it is allowed to refuse to answer the questionnaire or certain questions.
- It is allowed to withdraw anytime without excuse.
- The information is confidential, and the informant will not be recognizable in the thesis.

Research sites: Northern Amhara and Southern Oromia.

Master Student in Development Studies

Thesis about international NGOs role in development in Ethiopia

Please fill out the survey as accurately as you can.

This survey is completely anonymous. For questions, please contact XXX

1) Based on the below, what is your age group?

- 10-20 20 – 30 30 – 40 40 – 50 50 - 60

2) What is your profession?

- Health Public/government Education Student
- Student Agriculture Other No profession

3) How often do you interact with an international NGO for:

- a. Social purposes: Once or more a week Once or more a month
 Once or more a year Never
- b. Economical purposes Once or more a week Once or more a month
 Once or more a year Never
- c. Cultural purposes Once or more a week Once or more a month
 Once or more a year Never

4) How often do you interact with a state institution for:

- a. Social purposes: Once or more a week Once or more a month
 Once or more a year Never
- b. Economical purposes Once or more a week Once or more a month
 Once or more a year Never
- c. Cultural purposes Once or more a week Once or more a month
 Once or more a year Never

5) In case you needed help / aid for any reason, who would you prefer to contact:

- International NGO Ethiopian NGO Ethiopian government None of the above

6) How do you feel about the presence of international NGOs in Ethiopia?

Very important	Important	No difference	Not important	Not at all important, and never have been	I don't want to answer
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7) Please describe shortly who you feel about the international NGO presence in Ethiopia, and explain why:

8) Which types of work do you personally want NGOs to work more with?

Education	Food	Art	Human Rights	Money / work
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Thank you for your collaboration and help.

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule for NGO workers

Introduction:

Thank you for seeing me and participating in my study by giving me an interview. I am thankful for all information and opinions that you are willing to give, as it will enable me to shed more light on my research questions.

Information to interview object:

- The study will be done between 14.05.16 and 31.05.17 as a part of the field study of Marie Louise Landøy, for the purpose of producing a masters thesis at the University of Bergen, Norway.
- The study has been reported to the Norwegian ombudsman for protection of privacy in research (Personvernombudet for forskning).
- Participation is voluntary and it is allowed to refuse to answer the questionnaire or certain questions. It is allowed to withdraw anytime without excuse.
- No one will ever know who you are, except for the student herself. The information is confidential, and the informant will not be recognizable in the thesis. Names of informants will be stored securely, and be anonymized and coded when used in electronic documents.
- It is possible to contact the researcher anytime after the research (contact details are given)
- Short explanation of the study, its purpose and objectives.
- Anticipated length of interview is 1 – 1.5 hours
- Voice records are deleted within 24 hours, is switched on after accept and after names are stated.

A) On Ethiopia

This theme is about Ethiopia's aid history, and about the interview objects perceptions and opinions about the changes within this theme.

- Q. 1. Which development fields in Ethiopia require the most attention today?
(Example of area: Education, health, human rights)
- Q. 2. In your view, what are the most important changes in the needs and focuses of the development work in Ethiopia the last 30 years?
- Q. 3. In the 1970s the international NGOs started to engage in aid in Ethiopia because of the droughts and hunger in the 70s and the 80s. What has changes in Ethiopia's need for aid since then, and in your opinion, in which ways has the aid actually changed?

B) The Organization

The goal about this theme is to map out the organization and describe its local embeddedness.

- Q. 4. How many people work in this NGO?
- Q. 5. How many of the staff is Norwegian / Ethiopian / other nationalities?
- Q. 6. Does the NGO use volunteers?

If yes:

- a. Are the volunteers mostly Ethiopian or foreign?
 - b. How many volunteers did you have in total in 2015?
 - c. How long is the average stay for a volunteer?
- Q. 7. Has the organization's focus changed in the last 30 years?
- If yes:*
- a. Are there any reasons for the change of focus?

C) Networks and cooperation

The goal about this theme is to map the NGO-NGO cooperation, NGO-state cooperation and NGO-local cooperation

- Q. 8. Which cooperation forums is this organization attached to?
 - Q. 9. Does the organization have any NGO partners?
- If yes:*
- a. How does this organization work together with the partner organizations?
 - b. How many times during a year do you meet with your partners?
 - c. How many times during a year do you provide training for the employees of your partners?
- Q. 10. Does the organization set its policy decisions by themselves or in a dialogue with the state?
 - Q. 11. In which ways does the organization cooperate with the Ethiopian Government in its projects?
 - Q. 12. Does the organization get any financial support / recourses of any kind from the government?
 - Q. 13. Does the organizations partners get any financial support / recourses of any kind from the government?
 - Q. 14. Does the organization provide any training for government employees?
 - Q. 15. Does the organization use government employees to speak in their trainings?
 - Q. 16. How often does the organization or your partners interact with the Ethiopian government officials in any level (national, zone, region etc.)

D) NGO-worker

This theme is about persons who work in development work, their life history and how it affects the motivations and work today.

- Q. 17. For how long have you been working within the field of development?
- Q. 18. What motivated you to work within development work?

- Q. 19. In which way have your life history and your personal experiences affected your decision to work within development?
- Q. 20. Which expectations did you have when you started this work, and has anything been different from what you expected?
- Q. 21. What made you decide to work in this particular organization?

Termination:

- Thank you so much for your time and cooperation
- I repeat that all information will be handled confidentially and that you will not be recognizable in the thesis.

Appendix 4: Interview Schedule for NGO volunteers

Introduction:

Thank you for seeing me and participating in my study by giving me an interview. I am thankful for all information and opinions that you are willing to give, as it will enable me to shed more light on my research questions.

Information to interview object:

- The study will be done between 14.05.16 and 31.05.17 as a part of the field study of Marie Louise Landøy, for the purpose of producing a masters thesis at the University of Bergen, Norway.
- The study has been reported to the Norwegian ombudsman for protection of privacy in research (Personvernombudet for forskning).
- Participation is voluntary and it is allowed to refuse to answer the questionnaire or certain questions. It is allowed to withdraw anytime without excuse.
- No one will ever know who you are, except for the student herself. The information is confidential, and the informant will not be recognizable in the thesis. Names of informants will be stored securely, and be anonymized and coded when used in electronic documents.
- It is possible to contact the researcher anytime after the research (contact details are given)
- Short explanation of the study, its purpose and objectives.
- Anticipated length of interview is 1 – 1.5 hours
- Voice records are deleted within 24 hours, is switched on after accept and after names are stated.

A) The Organization

The goal about this theme is to map out the organization and describe its local embeddedness.

Q. 22. How many people work in this NGO?

Q. 23. How many of the staff is Norwegian / Ethiopian / other nationalities?

Questions on volunteers:

- a. Are the volunteers mostly Ethiopian or foreign?
- b. How many other volunteers work in this organisation?
- c. How long is the average stay for a volunteer?

B) Networks and cooperation

The goal about this theme is to map the NGO-NGO cooperation, NGO-state cooperation and NGO-local cooperation. Volunteers answer as well as they can, depending on how long they've worked there.

- Q. 24. Which cooperation forums is this organization attached to?
- Q. 25. Does the organization have any NGO partners?
If yes:
- a. How does this organization work together with the partner organizations?
 - b. How many times during a year do you meet with your partners?
 - c. How many times during a year do you provide training for the employees of your partners?
- Q. 26. Does the organization set its policy decisions by themselves or in a dialogue with the state?
- Q. 27. In which ways does the organization cooperate with the Ethiopian Government in its projects?
- Q. 28. Does the organization get any financial support / recourses of any kind from the government?
- Q. 29. Does the organizations partners get any financial support / recourses of any kind from the government?
- Q. 30. Does the organization provide any training for government employees?
- Q. 31. Does the organization use government employees to speak in their trainings?
- Q. 32. How often does the organization or your partners interact with the Ethiopian government officials in any level (national, zone, region etc.)

D: NGO-worker

This theme is about persons who work in development work, their life history and how it affects the motivations and work today.

- Q. 33. Have you done volunteering before within the field of development?
- Q. 34. What motivated you to volunteer within development work?
- Q. 35. In which way have your life history and your personal experiences affected your decision to volunteer within development?
- Q. 36. Which expectations did you have when you started volunteering, and has anything been different from what you expected?
- Q. 37. What made you decide to volunteer in this particular organization?

Termination:

- Thank you so much for your time and cooperation
- I repeat that all information will be handled confidentially and that you will not be recognizable in the thesis.

Appendix 5: Interview Schedule for locals (unstructured interview)

Introduction:

Thank you for seeing me and participating in my study by giving me an interview. I am thankful for all information and opinions that you are willing to give, as it will enable me to shed more light on my research questions.

Information to interview object:

- The study will be done between 14.05.16 and 31.05.17 as a part of the field study of Marie Louise Landøy, for the purpose of producing a masters thesis at the University of Bergen, Norway.
- The study has been reported to the Norwegian ombudsman for protection of privacy in research (Personvernombudet for forskning).
- Participation is voluntary and it is allowed to refuse to answer the questionnaire or certain questions. It is allowed to withdraw anytime without excuse.
- No one will ever know who you are, except for the student herself. The information is confidential, and the informant will not be recognizable in the thesis. Names of informants will be stored securely, and be anonymized and coded when used in electronic documents.
- It is possible to contact the researcher anytime after the research (contact details are given)
- Short explanation of the study, its purpose and objectives.
- Anticipated length of interview is 1 – 1.5 hours

Discussion themes:

A) Meaning of NGO

- What is an NGO in your opinion?
- What, in your opinion, is the purpose of NGOs in Ethiopia?

B) Experiences with NGO

- Have you had contact with NGOs, and how?
- Would you personally contact an Ethiopian NGO (including those who are categorized as *resident NGOs*, but who identify themselves as Ethiopian), an international NGO or a government institution if you were in need for help or assistance in any way?

C) Perceptions on NGOs

- What can NGOs do better, in your opinion, and why?
- Do you want more or less NGOs in Ethiopia, and why?
- How do NGOs meet / how don't they meet your expectations of NGOs?
- What is your personal opinion on NGOs, and why?

Appendix 6: Schedule for Focus Group Discussions

Introduction:

Thank you for seeing me and participating in my study by giving me an interview. I am thankful for all information and opinions that you are willing to give, as it will enable me to shed more light on my research questions.

Information to participants:

- The study will be done between 14.05.16 and 31.05.17 as a part of the field study of Marie Louise Landøy, for the purpose of producing a masters thesis at the University of Bergen, Norway.
- The study has been reported to the Norwegian ombudsman for protection of privacy in research (Personvernombudet for forskning).
- Participation is voluntary and it is allowed to refuse to answer the questionnaire or certain questions. It is allowed to withdraw anytime without excuse.
- No one will ever know who any of you are, except for the student herself. The information is confidential, and the informant will not be recognizable in the thesis. Names of participants will be stored securely, and be anonymized and coded when used in electronic documents.
- It is possible to contact the researcher anytime after the research (contact details are given)
- Short explanation of the study, its purpose and objectives.
- Anticipated length of focus group discussion is 1 – 1.5 hours

Discussion themes:

A) Meaning of NGO

- What is an NGO in your opinion?
- What, in your opinion, is the purpose of NGOs in Ethiopia?

B) Experiences with NGO

- Have you had contact with NGOs, and how?
- Would you personally contact an Ethiopian NGO (including those who are categorized as *resident NGOs*, but who identify themselves as Ethiopian), an international NGO or a government institution if you were in need for help or assistance in any way?

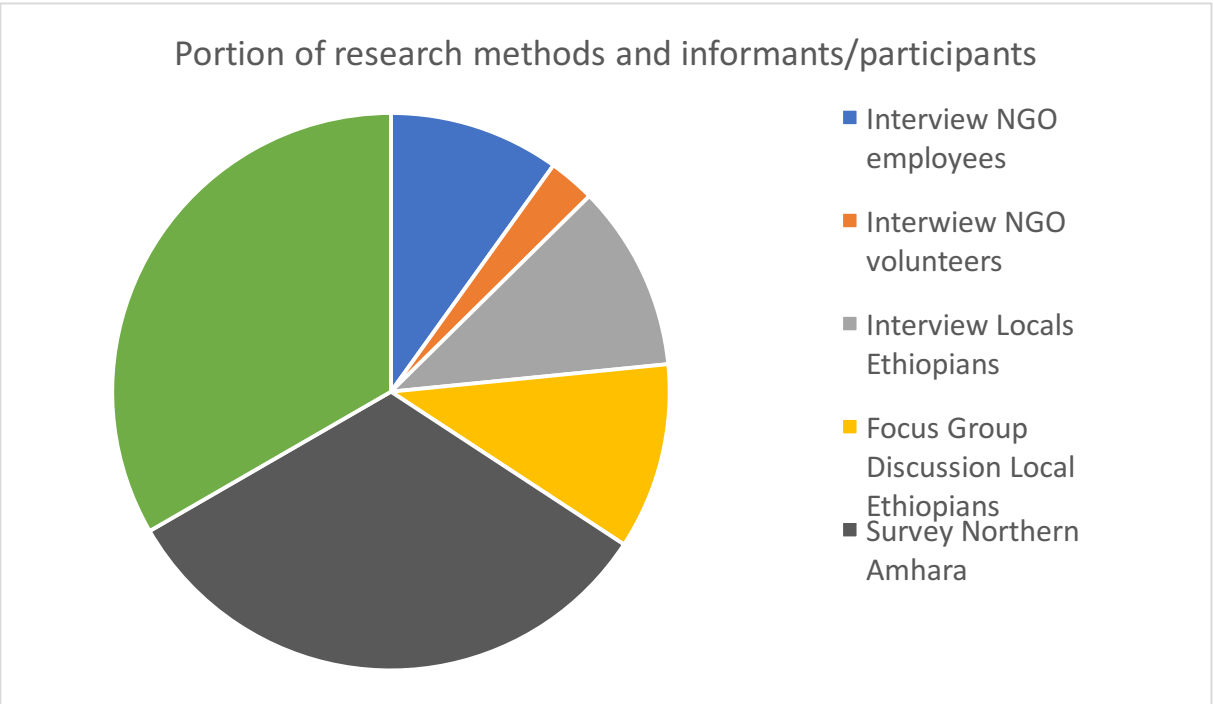
C) Perceptions on NGOs

- What can NGOs do better, in your opinion, and why?
- Do you want more or less NGOs in Ethiopia, and why?
- How do NGOs meet / how don't they meet your expectations of NGOs?
- What is your personal opinion on NGOs, and why?

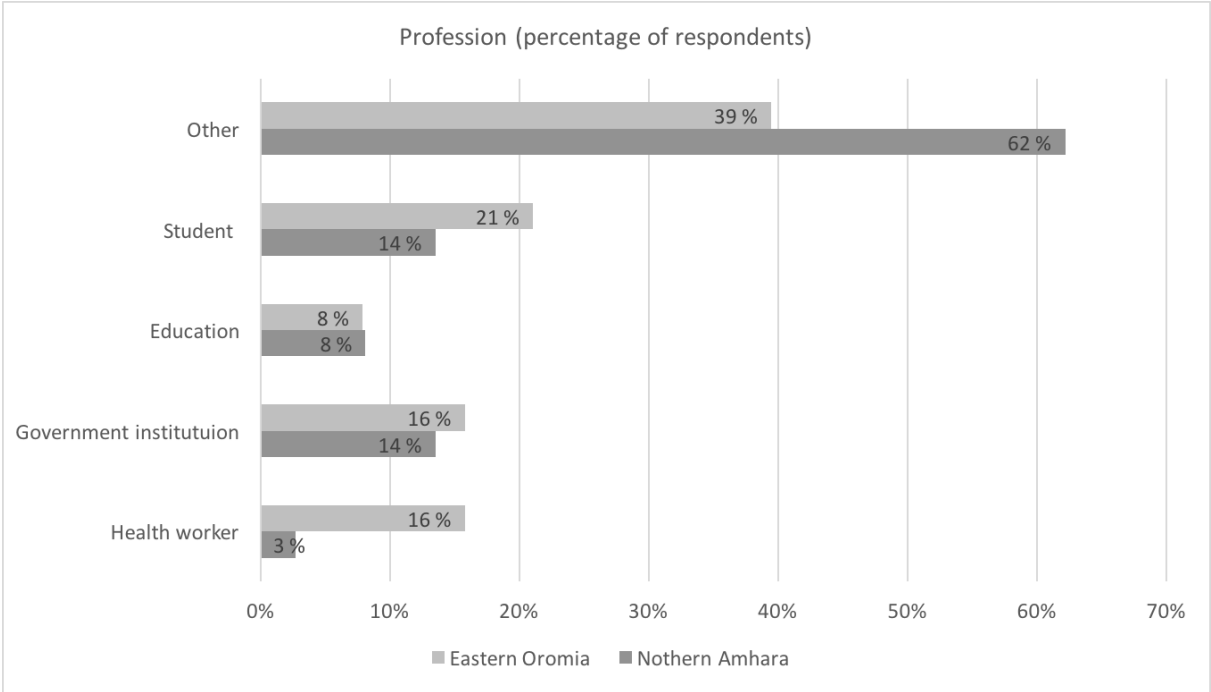
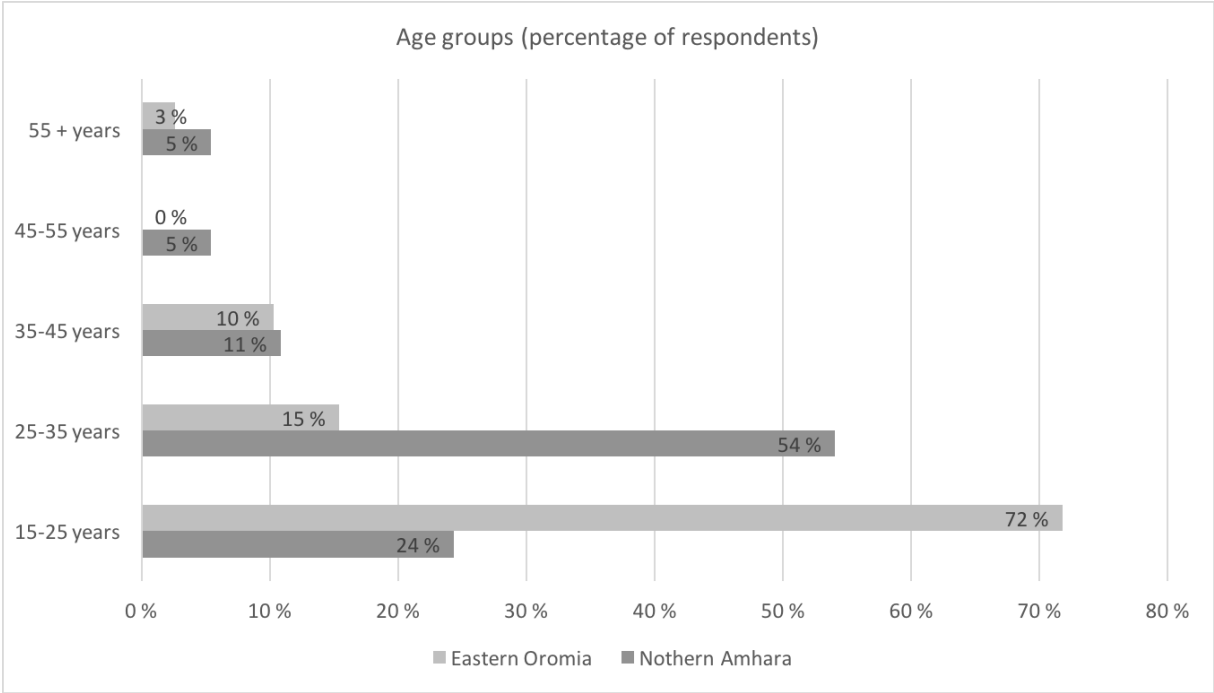
Appendix 7: Statistics of informants / participants

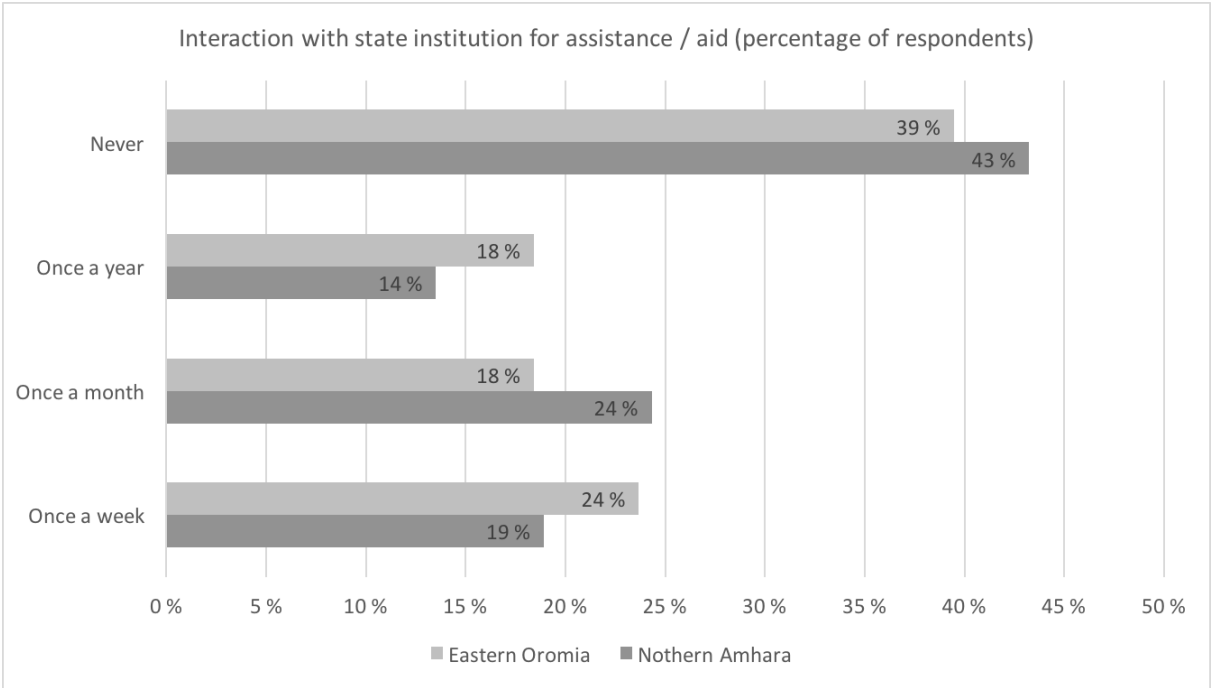
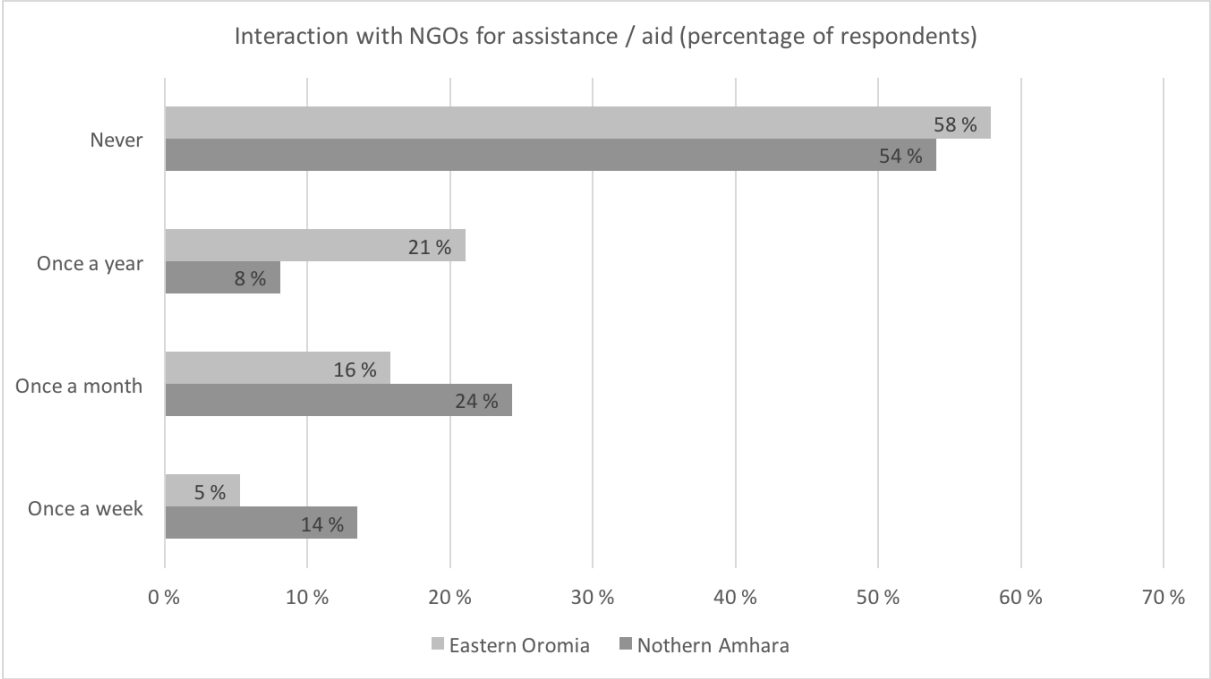
In total, data from the following informant was used in the study.

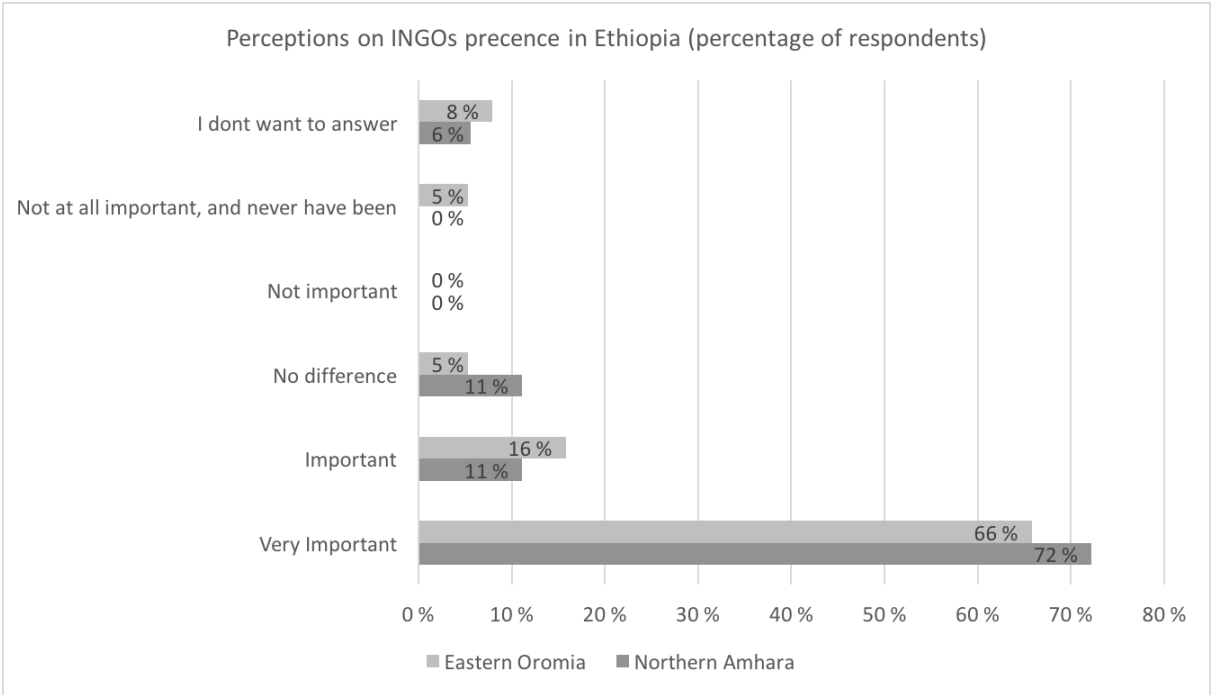
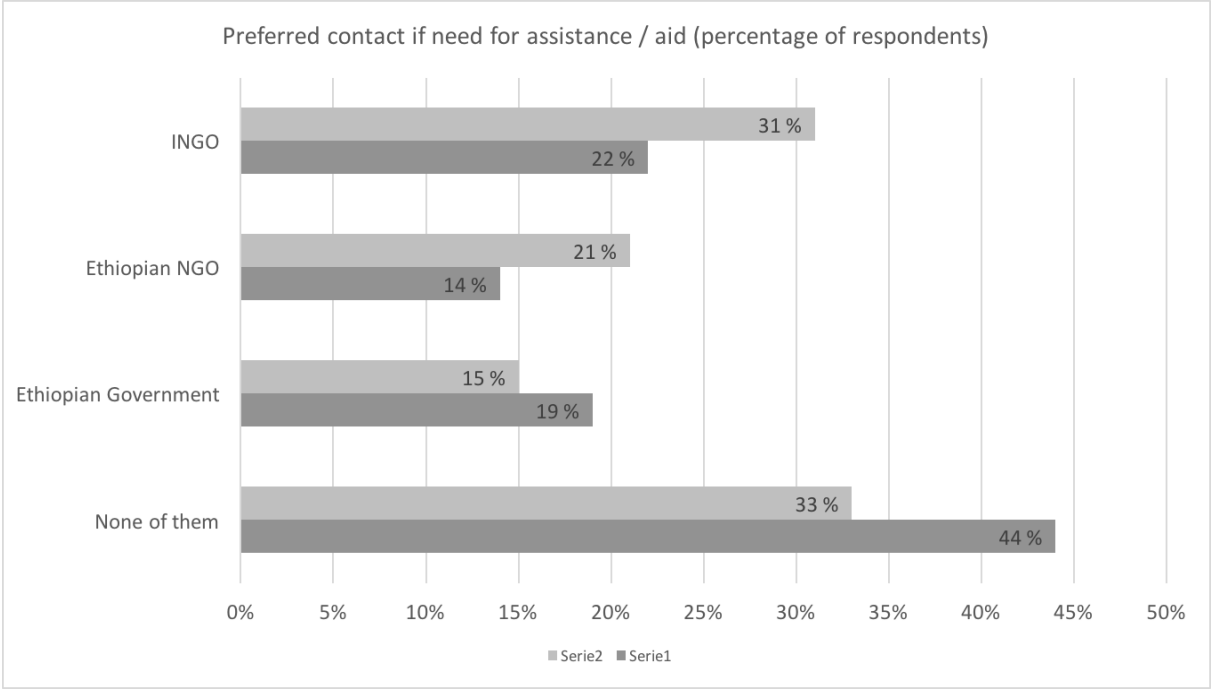
Category	Number of informants
Interview NGO employees	11
Interview NGO volunteers	3
Interview Locals Ethiopians	12
Focus Group Discussion Local Ethiopians	12
Survey Northern Amhara	36
Survey Eastern Oromia	37
Total	111



Appendix 8: Questionnaire Responses, close-ended questions (Question 1-6 +8)







Appendix 9: Survey responses for open-ended question (Question 7)

Question 7 in the survey is an open ended question:

“Please describe shortly who you feel about the international NGO presence in Ethiopia, and explain why”

Through a thematic content analysis, seven themes were identified. To ensure transparency, under follows the complete set of responses to questions 7 and the designated themes.

List of themes:

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
<i>Mistrust towards NGO financial management</i>	MF
<i>Mistrust towards NGO agenda and motivation</i>	MA
<i>Want more NGOs</i>	WM
<i>Want NGO expansion to other regions</i>	WE
<i>Want a change in NGO focus</i>	WC
<i>Satisfied with NGO work today</i>	S
<i>Prefer no international NGOs in Ethiopia</i>	N

QUESTION 7 SURVEY RESPONSES FOR NORTHERN AMHARA (NS):

R.No. *:	Survey responses	Theme
NS1	There are no projects in our country.	Blank
NS2	What international organizations are doing about health and education is very good. It is very essential for the country’s growth.	S
NS3	They need to work on health and education as well as agriculture.	WC
NS4	Since Ethiopia is a developing country I agree with the international support and what NGOs are doing.	S
NS5	We will be happy if Education, Health, Human rights, Agriculture and clean drinking water projects expanded in every region.	WC
NS6	We need them to work more on education, health and human rights.	WC
NS7	They should work more on education. This means we need Educated and open minded man power to develop our country.	WC
NS8	I will be happy if we have organizations working on health (Like Red Cross) and agriculture.	WC

NS9	They are doing a very good job. Norwegian Save the children is an example for work they are doing on health and education.	S
NS10	Aid is important for the country but it should be direct. We need to be a part of it.	MF
NS11	It will be good if they work on workers' right, children's right, animals' right, education and health.	WC
NS12	I don't know their names but they are all important.	S
NS13	They are good. For example UNICEF is doing well on education.	S
NS14	UNICEF is a good organization. It is doing a lot on education and health.	S
NS15	It is very good.	S
NS16	It looks good.	S
NS17	They give support on health and education. Austrian project and UNICEF are examples.	S
NS18	They are good for education, health and orphans.	S
NS19	I don't know much but most of them are very important like Save the children.	S
NS20	For job opportunities	S
NS21	For example save the children supports so many students (...) Also there are German NGOs creating job opportunities for the youth.	S
NS22	I know international organizations are here for a good cause. But their outreach is very small so we need more of them. For example I like what Save the children (...)	WE
NS23	Most of their work is very good.	MF
NS24	I like the idea of international organizations working on education quality. Because good quality education is the base for this country's growth (...)	WC
NS25	All	S
NS26	–	Blank
NS27	I like Save the children because they are working on health, education Etc..	S
NS28	–	Blank
NS29	–	Blank
NS30	It is good that Plan organization works on girls.	S
NS31	I don't know much about their names but they are doing a very good job.	S
NS32	Carter Center is doing well.	S
NS33	–	Blank
NS34	NGOs are very important. But in the countries like Ethiopia the individuals are getting benefited than helping the ones in need.	MF
NS35	The presence of NGOs in the developing country like Ethiopia is very good but the money sent to NGOs is not fully used to help the people. The reason why the funds are not utilized is because of meetings and conferences there is so much money getting wasted. We need NGOs to work on every sector.	MF
NS36	Most of the NGOs in Ethiopia don't use the budget for its purpose. You see the using the funds for personal benefits.	MF

NS37	International organizations are good. But disagree with the locals working there. They don't do their job properly. We need NGOs to work on every sector.	MF
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**Respondent number*

QUESTION 7 SURVEY RESPONSES FOR EASTERN OROMIA (ES):

R.No. *:	Survey responses	Theme
ES1	Some people say these NGOs are not helping the ones in need they work with investors and government officials.	MF
ES2	We need more of them.	WM
ES3	They have to expand their capacity.	WE
ES4	–	Blank
ES5	International organizations are very important to Ethiopia.	S
ES6	I think these different kinds of supports by NGOs are very good. They should be continued	S
ES7	There are so many people getting helped by these organizations. I hope there more nice things will be done by them. We need to be grateful.	S
ES8	We need more NGOs.	WM
ES9	What they are doing now is good but it's not enough. They need to do more.	WE
ES10	So many good things have been done but it's not enough. I suggest there need to be more NGOs and support.	WM
ES11	Ethiopian Red Cross Association is doing so much work in our area.	S
ES12	We don't have any NGO in XXX. I will be happy if some of them start working here.	WM
ES13	–	Blank
ES14	If some NGOs start working on loan systems it will help to reduce unemployment.	WC
ES15	The wheat support should stop In fact I suggest giving the farmers equipments it will increase their productivity	WC
ES16	There are no job opportunities for young people in XXX by NGOs and governmental organizations.	WE

ES17	We need international organizations to expand their capacities and work on every region of the country.	WE
ES18	–	Blank
ES19	I need them to help me continue my education.	WM
ES20	–	Blank
ES21	–	Blank
ES22	We need them to expand their capacities and work in different regions.	WE
ES23	–	Blank
ES24	It is hard to give a comment on this since there are no international organizations working on the youth in XXX.	WE
ES25	They are coming to our country saying they are here to help but the real reason they are here is to exploit our religion and culture and exposing us to bad culture/life style	MA
ES25	We don't need any of your Help (In the choice below)	N
ES26	We don't need them.	N
ES27	The government cannot tackle the problems we are facing on education and drought alone. That's why we need international organizations.	S
ES28	It shouldn't be what we should do for Ethiopia. It should be what we should do with Ethiopia.	N
ES29	Most of the time international organizations come here with hidden agenda. But we can't deny there are some with pure humanity.	MA
ES30	We didn't see anything so far. You need to think about the youth.	WE
ES31	The help is very important.	S
ES32	We need some NGOs free of politics.	MA
ES33	I don't know anything about them.	N
ES34	We need Ethiopian NGOs to get best results for our nation by our nation.	S
ES35	The way they work is government centered and it doesn't go well with their mission.	MA
ES36	It is beneficial if we work for our country ourselves.	MF
ES37	I don't have any opinion.	N
ES38	I don't have that much knowledge about international organizations.	Blank

ES39	It is very good that there are International organizations in Ethiopia. It will be nice if they expand their capacity and work on region.	WE
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**Respondent number*