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**Institutional Translation Gone Wrong:  
The Case of *Villages For Africa* in Rural Tanzania**

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## Institutional Translation Gone Wrong: The Case of *Villages For Africa* in Rural Tanzania

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## INSTITUTIONAL TRANSLATION GONE WRONG: THE CASE OF *VILLAGES FOR AFRICA* IN RURAL TANZANIA

### ABSTRACT

8 Why do ideas that have been successfully moved across highly different contexts subsequently  
9 fail? To answer this question, we use longitudinal data on the Dutch organization *Villages for*  
10 *Africa* that introduced ‘macro-credit’ loans to rural Tanzanians that would enable them to  
11 establish their own village enterprises. Only two years after the seemingly successful  
12 implementation of the idea, it collapsed. Our findings allow us to make two key contributions.  
13 First, we provide a process model of high-distance translation that shows how proponents can  
14 strategically introduce an idea across highly different contexts by ‘culturally detaching’ it from  
15 its institutional origins, leading to the idea being ‘culturally assimilated’ into the recipient  
16 context. But, although cultural detachment and cultural assimilation indicate the successful  
17 translation of an idea, the means of doing so can later prompt its rejection. We call this the  
18 *reactance effect* of translations across highly different contexts. Second, we showcase the role of  
19 history for translation theory more generally. History – particularly the historical relationship  
20 between the socio-cultural categories of the *mzungu* (Swahili: “foreigner”) and the villagers –  
21 influenced the way in which the macro-credit idea could be introduced to villagers *and* played a  
22 key role in its subsequent rejection.  
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27 I mean, we can’t disappear. If we disappear anytime soon, then we’re just like everybody else, right? And  
28 we leave behind capital and the benefits of the capital, but then they’ll going to wait until the next group  
29 comes in and says: “we want to help you”. It could be a church, it could be an NGO, it could be the  
30 government with some funding... Persistence and patience...if we stop trying, it’s over, and we’re gone.  
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32 – *VFA Managing Director about Macro-credit Project in rural Tanzania, 2014, Interview no.5*  
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35 In 2014 the United Nations gave a prestigious award to the Dutch organization *Villages for Africa*  
36 (*VFA*) for successfully introducing into Tanzania the concept of ‘macro-credits’, i.e. the provision  
37 of loans to groups of villagers which, combined with training, helped them establish and run locally  
38 owned enterprises. *VFA* had overcome deeply rooted suspicions of the *mzungu* (Swahili:  
39 “foreigner”) and instilled a sense of pride in the villagers for being able to run the enterprises  
40 independently. This early success elated the members of *VFA* and prompted them to consider how  
41 to up-scale the idea and help eradicate poverty in East Africa in a dignified and sustainable way.  
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3 memories and accusations of colonial and post-colonial exploitation. The collision was so intense  
4 that, to this day, many villagers refuse to work with the *mzungu* ever again.  
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8 The failure of *VFA*'s macro-credit idea is a relatively common yet under theorized outcome  
9 of attempts to move ideas across highly different socio-cultural contexts, particularly between  
10 Western countries and the developing world (e.g., Bourguignon & Sundberg, 2007; Doucouliagos  
11 & Paldam, 2009). Through our study of *VFA*'s failure, we seek to generate insights beyond our  
12 case by situating it in the literature on 'institutional translation', which has provided important  
13 insights into the transposition of ideas between contexts (for a review, see Wedlin & Sahlin, 2017).  
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22 Existing studies of translation have examined the 'editing rules' (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996) by  
23 which recipients make sense of ideas moving across and within industries (e.g., Czarniawska &  
24 Joerges, 1996) and have examined how proponents can convey ideas so as to make them relevant  
25 to a wider number of firms (e.g., Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002). Recently, Lawrence  
26 (2017) suggested that, for translation theory to move forward, it is important to distinguish types  
27 of translation contexts in order to identify their distinctive strategies and processes. Translation  
28 across high institutional distance, such as the macro-credit project, is an example of a distinctive  
29 and important translation context that has received only modest attention to date (Tracey, Dalpiaz,  
30 & Phillips, 2018). We know little about how institutional distance – the extent to which socio-  
31 cultural worlds differ – affects the proponent's ability to introduce an idea, and the recipient's  
32 ability to make sense of it (Kostova, 1999). A further blind spot of translation theory is the study  
33 of failure. Even though, as Mair, Wolf and Seelos (2016) emphasize, the 'stabilization' of ideas  
34 post-adoption cannot be taken for granted, we know very little about why ideas transported from  
35 one context to another subsequently collapse.  
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3 Our longitudinal analysis of *VFA*'s macro-credit idea addresses these blind spots in translation  
4 theory and provides two key contributions. Our primary contribution is a process model of high-  
5 distance translation failure that gives explicit attention to the pre- *and* post- adoption phases of  
6 translation. Paradoxically, we uncover that success in the pre-adoption phase can have a  
7 profoundly negative effect on the long-term retention of an idea post-adoption. Our core thesis is  
8 that the movement of an idea across high institutional distance requires strategies that 'cultural  
9 detach' the idea from its institutional origins. However, ideas cannot be interpreted in a vacuum –  
10 hence the transported idea will be interpreted in terms of the norms and understandings of the  
11 recipient context. Cultural detachment, in other words, is followed by 'cultural assimilation' – that  
12 is, the automatic application of local meanings. We identify the strategies by which cultural  
13 detachment occurs and the mechanisms by which cultural assimilation unfolds. While this dual  
14 nature of the pre- and post-adoption processes and their interplay are initially indicators of success  
15 for ideas moving across high institutional distance, they also heighten the risk that, under certain  
16 conditions, the idea will later be rejected – resulting in subsequent failure. We call this risk of  
17 emotional arousal and rejection the *reactance effect* of high-distance translation.  
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37 A counter-intuitive implication of these findings is that in order to convey an idea across high  
38 institutional distance, proponents need to communicate *their own* cultural norms and values rather  
39 than focusing exclusively upon adapting the idea to the cultural language of the recipient context.  
40 However, this requires a rare sense of critical self-reflexivity, which is difficult to exercise as we  
41 tend to perceive our own norms as highly 'normal' or 'standard', and thus largely undisputed.  
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49 Our second contribution is to translation theory more broadly. Our study exposes an important  
50 and previously neglected influence upon the translation and sustained success or failure of adopted  
51 ideas – namely, the role of history. We show not only how history shapes the present-day  
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3 relationship between a proponent and recipient, and how this in turn influences how ideas can be  
4 introduced to a recipient; but, also, how history may impede the sustainability of ideas over the  
5 long term by invoking intense emotions that can disrupt carefully prepared initiatives.  
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## 9 10 **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

11 The movement of ideas and practices across and between organizations is a long-standing concern  
12 of institutional theory (Deepphouse et al., 2017). As the study of diffusion developed, the early  
13 emphasis upon isomorphic convergence was nuanced by recognition that organizations vary in  
14 their responses to socio-cultural prescriptions, and that the movement of ideas typically involves  
15 at least some measure of institutional ‘translation’ (e.g., Ansari, Fiss, Zajac, 2010; Gondo & Amis,  
16 2013; Wedlin & Sahlin, 2017). Contrary to approaches that portray ideas as moving intact, studies  
17 of institutional translation pay attention to how recipients make sense of ideas and wittingly or  
18 otherwise align them with the socio-cultural norms of their context. Given our concern with the  
19 movement of ideas between two very different social contexts, we show below how the literature  
20 on institutional translation framed our approach and highlight underdeveloped questions within  
21 this literature to which our empirical study provides insights.  
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### 37 **Institutional Translation**

38 The translation perspective starts from the premise that, for ideas to diffuse, they have to be  
39 understood by recipients – which turns attention to how recipients translate ideas in order to make  
40 sense of them both before, and as, they are adopted (Wedlin & Sahlin, 2017). As Boxenbaum and  
41 Battilana (2005: 356) put it: “translation occurs when actors adapt a foreign practice to their own  
42 institutional context, modifying it or combining it with local practices.”  
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50 Translation processes can have important implications. They have been shown to affect and  
51 alter how organizations see themselves, the practices through which they perform their  
52 responsibilities, and outcomes such as innovation and regulatory compliance (e.g., Ansari,  
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3 Reinecke & Spaan, 2014; Czarniawska & Sévon, 1996; Nicolini, 2010; Pallas, Fredriksson &  
4 Wedlin, 2016; Wright & Nyberg, 2017). Translation processes have also been shown to influence  
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6 institutional change at the levels of the organizational field and community (e.g., Gond &  
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8 Boxenbaum, 2013; Lawrence, 2017). In short, to understand the movement of ideas and their  
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10 consequences for organizational and field-level change, translation matters.  
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15 Translation studies have taken two primary forms. The earliest and most fully developed looks  
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17 at how organizations make sense of ideas and the ‘editing rules’ used during their adoption (Sahlin-  
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19 Andersson, 1996). Early examples examined the translation of ideas across industry sectors (e.g.,  
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21 Boxenbaum, 2006; Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Waldorff & Greenwood, 2011; Zbaracki, 1998).  
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23 Later studies cover the movement of ideas between MNCs and their subsidiaries (e.g., Ansari et  
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25 al., 2014; Saka, 2004). The second, more recent form of translation analysis examines how  
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27 proponents – ‘carriers’ (Jepperson, 1991) – convey ideas in order to make them acceptable to wider  
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29 numbers of organizations. Various carriers have been explored, notably associations (e.g.,  
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31 Greenwood et al., 2002), consultants and clients (Morris & Lancaster, 2006), and the media (e.g.,  
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33 Lamin & Zaheer, 2013; Pallas et al., 2016). Greenwood et al. (2002), for example, looked at how  
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35 professional associations make ideas appear relevant to wider numbers of firms by making the  
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37 ideas more abstract, and by providing them with an underlying legitimating rationale.  
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43 Together, these lines of research confirm the central theme of institutional translation – that  
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45 ideas undergo interpretation and reformulation as they move across contexts and that their  
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47 consequences for organizational and institutional change can be significant. But an implicit  
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49 assumption of much translation work is that each organization translates ideas idiosyncratically –  
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51 i.e., “that every translation leads to the emergence of new and unique local versions”  
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53 (Wæraas & Sataøen, 2014: 242; although see Røvik, 2007). Further, translation studies largely  
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3 ignore the particular circumstances under which translations occur – even though those  
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5 circumstances might be expected to affect the translation process. Lawrence (2017: 1787), for  
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7 example, found that translation in high stakes contexts is characterized by “profound moral  
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9 challenges” and is associated with particular patterns of translation behavior. The important point  
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11 we take from Lawrence (2017) is the need to distinguish between different types of translation  
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13 contexts in order to identify and understand their distinctive translation processes.  
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### 16 17 **Translation across High Institutional Distance**

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19 Situations of high institutional distance, we contend, constitute a particular type of translation  
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21 context – possibly the most complex – and one that, as Tracey et al. (2018) point out, has received  
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23 modest attention to date. Institutional distance, as it is commonly defined, refers to the extent to  
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25 which the worlds of the proponent and the recipient differ (Boxenbaum & Battilana, 2005; Djelic,  
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27 1998; Gaur & Lu, 2007); or, more formally, the “extent of the similarity or dissimilarity between  
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29 the regulatory, cognitive, and normative institutions of two countries” (Kostova, 1999: 153).  
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33 Kostova’s definition has resonated with international business scholars seeking to uncover  
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35 how ideas move between multinational corporations and their subsidiaries (e.g., Kostova, Roth, &  
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37 Dacin, 2008; Li, Yang, & Yue, 2007; Roth & Kostova, 2003; Xu & Shenkar, 2002). These studies  
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39 provide important insights into which overseas markets are receptive to products and/or services  
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41 – and why. Ghemawat’s (2001, 2007) CAGE framework, for example, identifies a range of factors  
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43 for managers to consider prior to foreign market entry, including cultural, administrative,  
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45 geographic, and economic obstacles. However, there is no concern for translation.  
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49 Organization theorists, in contrast, have focused upon processes of translation and, in doing  
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51 so, raised questions about the completeness of Kostova’s definition. Phillips, Tracey, and Karra  
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53 (2009; see also Tracey et al., 2018), for example, note that countries vary in the relative  
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55 ‘entrenchment’ of their norms and understandings because some institutional arrangements are  
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3 embedded and reinforced by mature institutional infrastructures whereas others are less so and  
4 more open to change (Hinings, Logue, & Zietsma, 2017). Entrenchment increases distance. The  
5 importance of entrenchment is shown by Tracey et. al., (2018), who report how H-Farm, an  
6 organizational form that first emerged in Silicon Valley, could be successfully introduced into the  
7 Italian context only by adapting – translating it – to meet deeply entrenched expectations of how  
8 such organizations should be managed. Similarly, Zilber (2006) shows how the narrative of the  
9 ‘high tech’ industry in Israel was constructed upon the taken for granted “building blocks of Israeli  
10 culture” (p. 294). Both studies show how recipients *pull* an idea into their local context.

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22 Kostova’s definition of distance is also incomplete because of its lack of consideration of the  
23 relationships between proponents and recipients. In existing studies, the portrayal of institutional  
24 distance is of two worlds independent of the other. Yet, it seems reasonable to anticipate that  
25 previous interactions connecting those worlds may harden or ameliorate that distance. Distance,  
26 in this sense, is not defined simply by differences between the socio-cultural characteristics of two  
27 worlds, but also by the perceptions held of those from the other world. In suggesting that the history  
28 of relationships between proponents and recipients matters, we are not referring to the relationships  
29 between a particular proponent (in our case, *VFA*) and a particular recipient (the villages) but to  
30 the relationship between the socio-cultural categories to which they are perceived to belong. In our  
31 case, *VFA* was perceived as belonging to the category of the *mzungu* (Swahili: “foreigner”), which,  
32 in Phillips et al.’s (2009) language, further ‘entrenched’ the distance between them and the  
33 villagers because of negative previous experiences with that category.

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49 A final concern with the translation perspective and one that has particular resonance given  
50 the nature of our case is the relative lack of attention that has been given to the later stages of the  
51 translation process, which remain largely unexplored. More typical is a focus upon the early  
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3 presentation and adoption of ideas even though ideas “evolve during the implementation process,  
4 requiring custom adaptation, domestication, and reconfiguration in order to make them meaningful”  
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6 (Ansari et al., 2010: 67). The continued acceptance of translated ideas, however, cannot be  
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8 assumed (Mair et al., 2016; Wright & Nyberg, 2017). In other words, whether translated ideas  
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10 deemed a success at the point of adoption will remain a success cannot be taken for granted.  
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15 Given the above, our interest is to understand: *Why might ideas that have been successfully*  
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17 *moved across high institutional distance fail to persist over time?* As such, we seek to advance  
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19 translation theory through an explicit analysis of a distinctive and understudied translation context  
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21 – translation across high institutional distance – and by giving especial attention to the history of  
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23 relationships between the proponent and recipient and to understanding delayed translation failure.  
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## 26 METHODS

### 27 Empirical Context

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29 *Villages For Africa (VFA)* was conceived in Tanzania in 2008 by Willem Mark [pseudonym for a  
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31 European impact investor]. Tanzania was chosen because it is one of the world’s poorest countries,  
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33 especially its rural areas – which host 70% of the population (*World Bank*, 2016).  
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37 “Tanganyika”, as it was formerly called, was part of German East Africa (1880s-1919) until  
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39 it became a British mandate (1920-1947). The country gained independence in 1961 and united  
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41 with Zanzibar in 1964 to form “Tanzania”. In an attempt to decrease lingering reliance on  
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43 European powers, President Nyerere (in office: 1964-1985) introduced *Ujamaa* (‘familyhood’) as  
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45 the basis of the country’s socio-economic policies (Tsuruta, 2006). One of the *Ujamaa* campaigns,  
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47 Operation *Vijiji*, compulsorily resettled people into designated villages in order to collectivize local  
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49 economic activity (Lawi, 2007). As Tsuruta (2006:113) summarizes: “In an *ujamaa* village,  
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51 individuals were expected to work together for the sake of village community as a whole, whereas  
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53 the traditional allegiance of rural residents was basically confined within the limits of extended  
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3 family.” Nyerere’s policies helped raise literacy rates and strengthened national identity (Legum  
4 & Mmari, 1995) but economic development did not follow.  
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8 Willem Mark developed *VFA* following a conversation with Muhammad Yunus, who won  
9 the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for revolutionizing the micro-finance industry. Studies had found  
10 that micro-credits help the poor gain better access to capital, but may also create substantial risks  
11 for borrowers and make them vulnerable to theft and abuse by opportunistic lenders (e.g., see  
12 Duggan, 2016). Micro-credits have also been associated with “hundreds of suicides” (*Business*  
13 *Insider*, 2012) arising from the social shaming of borrowers who fail to repay their “deadly debt”  
14 (*The Guardian*, 2011) at annualized interest rates as high as 100% (Banerjee & Jackson, 2016).  
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24 In response, *VFA* was established to provide *macro-credit* loans not to individuals but to an  
25 entire village for them to start business enterprises that would reduce their dependence upon  
26 external aid. The overarching purpose was to “help villagers help themselves” by fostering “local  
27 ownership” (*VFA*, 2013: 2), a purpose consistent with the recent emphasis in development studies  
28 (e.g., Andrews, 2013; Evans, 2004). The aim, in other words, was to train recipients how to start  
29 and manage businesses and thereby foster regional socio-economic development. Macro-loans  
30 would be repaid at an average effective 2-3% rate of interest<sup>1</sup>, which would then be reinvested in a  
31 new region, scaling up the macro-credit model. Willem Mark’s aim resonated with the Tanzanian  
32 vision “that places communities at the core of national development in determining *their own*  
33 priorities and managing the local development process” (Kamei, 2016: 10, emphasis added).  
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47 *VFA* introduced the macro-credit model into four villages. The enterprises that the villages  
48 established included pig farms, bull herds, beehives, a fencing business, brick-making, vegetable  
49 farms, and sunflower fields. The early success of this first cluster attracted significant attention,  
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56 <sup>1</sup> Officially, 12% rate of interest. But given an inflation rate of 9-10%, the average effective rate was 2-3%.  
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3 including the winning of the UN award in 2014. A year later, Willem Mark initiated two additional  
4 clusters of village enterprises. However, because – from the perspective of *VFA* – the first cluster  
5 of villages failed to honor loan repayments, *VFA* abandoned its operation in 2016.  
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### 8 9 10 **Research Design**

11 We studied the macro-credit project from its inception in 2008 to its collapse in 2016 and  
12 followed the aftermath until the beginning of 2020. We focused on the first four villages that *VFA*  
13 established: Villages A, B, C, and D. Because we were sensitive to the cultural distance in our case,  
14 we invited the third author – who is from the Manyara region and deeply knowledgeable about the  
15 initiative, which he observed from the very beginning – to help us understand these cultural  
16 differences and to share authorship. The first and third author spent extended periods in the field,  
17 whilst the second author played the role of ‘outsider’ in the data analysis and the development of  
18 our findings (Bartunek & Louis, 1996; Langley, 2013).  
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### 30 **Data Collection Process**

31 Our research involved three rounds of data collection designed to ‘follow events forward’ and  
32 ‘trace them backwards’ (Langley & Tsoukas, 2010). The *first round* (late-2013 until mid-2014)  
33 involved familiarizing ourselves with the empirical context by consulting texts on the history of  
34 Tanzania (e.g., Cornelius, 2015; Iliffe, 1979; & Mwakikagile, 2016). We were attentive to the  
35 imperial history and to more recent development initiatives in Manyara. In addition, we accessed  
36 internal *VFA* documents and conducted five pilot interviews with Willem Mark and his European  
37 team in order to understand *VFA*’s approach and vision.  
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48 The *second round* involved more formal data collection. The first author conducted 18 days  
49 of fieldwork in Manyara between July and September of 2014. The third author followed *VFA*’s  
50 developments initially as an early local employee of *VFA*’s *Village Enterprise Incubator (VEI)*,  
51 and from 2016 as a co-author. He interviewed villagers and *VEI* members and observed  
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3 relationships between *VFA* and villagers. A *third round* of data collection, from January 2016 until  
4  
5 January 2020, sought to understand the aftermath of the unanticipated collapse that occurred in  
6  
7 2016. Follow-up interviews were conducted with *VFA* and *VEI*, villagers, and regional politicians.  
8  
9

### 10 **Data Sources**

11 We accessed three sources of data: observations, interviews, and documentary material  
12 (summarized in Table 1). The range of data sources was crucial because of the cross-cultural  
13  
14 aspects of our case, and, more importantly, because it allowed us to observe and capture the  
15  
16 perceptions and feelings of *VFA* and the rural communities.  
17  
18  
19

20 -----Insert Table 1 about here-----  
21  
22

23 **Observation.** We had unrestricted access to on-site observation of the everyday activities of  
24  
25 *VFA* and the rural communities. During fieldwork in 2014, the first author shared offices with *VFA*  
26  
27 and *VEI* employees for approximately 10 hours per working day, attended and participated in  
28  
29 discussions, listened in on calls, and joined social interactions during work breaks. Attending both  
30  
31 work and informal social interactions allowed her to observe work practices and interactions *in situ*  
32  
33 and to clarify their rationales soon after. She recorded her impressions in a personal diary and in a  
34  
35 field diary. The third author interacted daily with villagers and members of *VEI* and participated in  
36  
37 regular videoconferences with *VFA*. These digital meetings were recorded with *Zoom* and  
38  
39 *QuickTime* (from as early as 2013) and made available to us via *Dropbox*.  
40  
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43

44 **Interviews and meetings.** We conducted 109 interviews. The first author conducted 5 pilot  
45  
46 interviews prior to fieldwork and 32 during fieldwork. The third author conducted 38 interviews  
47  
48 after the first author had left the field in 2014. Later, in order to refine our analysis, he conducted  
49  
50 an additional 34 follow-up interviews (mainly with former village enterprise members).  
51  
52 Interviewees included 17 *VFA* members, 20 *VEI* members, 47 village enterprise members, 20  
53  
54 village residents, 3 investors in the macro-credit project, and 2 regional politicians. Interviews with  
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3 villagers were conducted in Swahili and later translated into English. For interviews conducted via  
4 Skype, and where the Internet connection was poor, we used a written chat or email to ask questions.  
5  
6 We recorded and transcribed 61 interviews. For the others, notes were taken in real time and typed  
7  
8 within 24 hours. We asked informants to reflect on their daily business activities, cross-cultural  
9  
10 differences, and their struggles and strategies to address them. Interviews lasted between 12  
11  
12 minutes and 3 hours and averaged 41 minutes. Formal interviews were complemented by daily  
13  
14 informal conversations with villagers and *VFA* members – mainly conducted by the third author.  
15  
16 We also participated in 10 meetings that involved *VFA* and members of the village enterprises  
17  
18 where the first and third authors could raise follow-up questions that had emerged during fieldwork.  
19  
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23

24 ***Books, documents, and video materials.*** We collected 1186 pages of written material. We  
25  
26 began with books and articles on Tanzania's history and its legal and socio-political system in order  
27  
28 to clarify our understanding of (a) differences between the institutions of Western society and those  
29  
30 of Tanzania; and (b) the historical role of foreigners in our research context. This was particularly  
31  
32 important in order for us to correctly interpret and give meaning to concepts such as '*mzungu*'  
33  
34 (Swahili: "foreigner") and '*ujamaa*' (Swahili: "familyhood"). For example, reflecting upon his  
35  
36 work as a *mzungu* in East Africa, Spitzer (2014: 1), writes:  
37  
38  
39

40 A common term for a European or "white" person in East Africa is "*mzungu*" (plural *wazungu*) [...]  
41 Historically, it became a synonym for light-skinned foreigners who seem to have the common feature  
42 of travelling a lot [...] it is certainly linked to both historical and contemporary relations between "North"  
43 and "South", between colonialists and those who were colonized, between Europeans and Africans.  
44

45 An interview-excerpt by our informants (see p.17-18) adds texture to this understanding of the  
46  
47 *mzungu*. The concept of *ujamaa* was another critical concept in our context. Consistent with our  
48  
49 informants' understanding of the term, its meaning is described by Tsuruta (2006: 112):  
50  
51

52 The original meaning of *ujamaa* (to be *jamaa*) is family ties/relationships, or it could also be translated  
53 as familyhood. Nationalist leaders of independent Tanzania intended to build socialism as the  
54 extension of traditional communal values inherent in rural extended families, which they found  
55 'socialistic.' Therefore, the term *ujamaa* does not escape "the connotations and associations of bonds  
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3 of kinship, tribal hospitality, and the welfare obligations of the extended family," (Reeves, 1979: 73)  
4 even when it is used simply to mean 'modern socialism'.

5  
6 We had privileged access to an extensive volume of documents provided by *VFA* and the  
7  
8 village enterprises (e.g., accounting books), and to the private diary and public blog of one of  
9  
10 *VFA*'s directors in which he expressed very personal thoughts about his Tanzanian experience. We  
11  
12 also collected five self-written "vignettes" (Reay et al., 2019: 8) that narrate in-depth personal  
13  
14 experiences of relevant events (e.g., village celebrations and meetings). Vignettes are typically re-  
15  
16 constructed descriptive accounts written by the authors themselves (e.g., Abdallah, 2017; Anteby  
17  
18 & Molnar, 2012), sometimes supplemented with short raw data excerpts to illustrate a particular  
19  
20 concept or idea (e.g., Mantere & Vaara, 2008). Building on Jarzabowski and Lê (2017), however,  
21  
22 we were keen to preserve the original voices, feelings, and modes of expression of our Tanzanian  
23  
24 informants and thus asked *them* to write the vignettes.  
25  
26  
27  
28

29 We had access to agendas of meetings and video calls conducted prior to when we began data  
30  
31 collection in 2013. Thereafter, the first author was cc'd in e-mail conversations between the *VFA*  
32  
33 members, and the third author was part of e-mail exchanges between *VFA* and *VEI*. We accessed  
34  
35 67 minutes of video materials of *VFA* presenting its ideas to public audiences and investors, and of  
36  
37 local TV stations reporting on the village enterprises. Visual data allowed us to compare how each  
38  
39 side talked about the other without the other being present.  
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42

### 43 **Data Analysis**

44  
45 Analyzing the data was an iterative process, moving between data, our emerging analysis, and  
46  
47 existing literature (Eisenhardt, 1989; Langley, 2007; Locke, Golden-Biddle, & Feldman, 2008)  
48  
49 through three analytical steps (cf. Lawrence, 2017).  
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3       ***Step 1: Developing a case description.*** We developed a rich case description, which allowed  
4  
5 us to synthesize the various sources of data and construct an empirical narrative around key events  
6  
7 (Langley, 1999). Two key insights emerged that guided our subsequent analysis.  
8  
9

10       First, our initial interviews revealed the importance of history in our case. Villagers frequently  
11  
12 spoke about postcolonial encounters with the *mzungu* and made references to colonial times. Their  
13  
14 imagery and beliefs about the *mzungu* thus were ‘historically embedded’ (Vaara & Lamberg, 2016).  
15  
16 Our subsequent engagement with the literature on history (e.g., Godfrey, 2016; Kipping & Üsdiken,  
17  
18 2014; Mills et al., 2016; Wadhvani et al., 2018) heightened our awareness that existing research  
19  
20 typically adopts either a ‘realist’ or a ‘constructionist’ approach. The ‘realist approach’ is the  
21  
22 “reconstruct[ion] of past events by using historical sources” (Vaara & Lamberg, 2016: 637). In  
23  
24 contrast, the constructionist view portrays history as an “asset” (Rowlinson et al., 2014) or  
25  
26 “strategic resource” (Godfrey et al., 2016) that can be manipulated “for a wide variety of creative  
27  
28 uses” (Wadhvani et al., 2018: 1664). The constructionist view is closely connected to research on  
29  
30 ‘collective memory’, i.e., the continuous reconstruction of shared historical narratives (Halbwachs,  
31  
32 1992; see also, Funkenstein, 1989; Kansteiner, 2002). These readings on history and memory  
33  
34 helped our analysis of events and informed our Discussion section.  
35  
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40       Second, our case description provided the opportunity to divide our empirical data into  
41  
42 analytically relevant phases<sup>2</sup>. This analysis suggested contextual conditions and three subsequent  
43  
44 phases. The *contextual conditions* describe the ambivalent perceptions of the *mzungu* prior to  
45  
46 *VFA*’s entry into the region in 2008. The first phase, which we label *pre-adoption translation*,  
47  
48 describes *VFA*’s introduction of the macro-credit idea to several village members and ends with  
49  
50 the formal establishment of the first village enterprises, i.e., adoption of the idea. The activities  
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54  
55 <sup>2</sup> The village enterprises progressed through the phases over different years. Thus, the phases overlap from an  
56  
57 empirical/temporal standpoint but are distinct analytically – which is why we refrained from imposing timestamps.  
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3 observed in this phase were deliberate strategies, i.e., intentional steps taken by *VFA* to convince  
4 villagers to adopt the idea. The second phase, *post-adoption translation*, covers the ongoing  
5 implementing of the idea by the villagers and ends with a sense of local ownership. The activities  
6 observed in this phase were non-strategic and much more implicit than in the first phase. The third  
7 phase describes a *collision and its aftermath* beginning with an intense confrontation between *VFA*  
8 and the villagers, culminating with *VFA*'s abandonment of the macro-credit idea in 2016, and the  
9 reinforcement of the villagers' negative perceptions of the *mzungu*.

19 ***Step 2: Deriving core constructs.*** We used NVivo to code the raw data and generate tentative  
20 constructs for the conditions in place before *VFA* entered Manyara (*contextual conditions*), the  
21 strategies by which *VFA* conveyed the macro-credit idea and that led to its adoption (*pre-adoption*  
22 *translation*), the processes that contributed to the stabilization (*post-adoption translation*) and the  
23 subsequent collapse of the idea and its consequences (*collision and its aftermath*).

31 For the *contextual conditions*, two constructs emerged: 'historical suspicions' and 'hope and  
32 admiration towards *wazungu*.' Four constructs were discerned in the *pre-adoption phase* ('using  
33 surrogates', 'political co-optation', 'localized customization', and 'ceremonial affirmation'), three  
34 in the *post-adoption phase* ('inclusive-exclusivity', 'emotive celebration', 'materialization of  
35 social norms') and two for the *collision* (in-group shaming', and 'historically anchored  
36 vilification'). In order to better understand the two forms of translation in our case (i.e., the  
37 strategic pre-adoption form versus the more non-reflective form in the post-adoption phase), we  
38 then aggregated these constructs into overarching theoretical dimensions.

49 In the pre-adoption phase, we aggregated 'using surrogates' and 'political co-optation' into  
50 'concealing foreignness'; and 'localized customization' and 'ceremonial affirmation' into  
51 'adaptive conveyance.' In the post-adoption phase, 'inclusive-exclusivity', 'materialization of  
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3 social norms' and 'emotive celebration' were aggregated into 'cultural assimilation'. In the third  
4  
5 phase, we aggregated 'in-group shaming' and 'historically anchored vilification' into 'collision'.  
6

7  
8 Tables 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d provide illustrative data for each of the constructs that we identified.  
9

10 -----Insert Tables 2a-d about here-----  
11

12 **Step 3: Developing a process model.** Connecting the constructs and overarching  
13  
14 dimensions generated a model of high-distance translation failure. In deriving the model, we  
15  
16 moved between our data and the literatures on translation and organization theory in order to  
17  
18 determine differences and similarities between our case and existing studies (cf., Langley, 1999,  
19  
20 2007). Doing so helped us interpret the broader meanings of the pre- and post- adoption phases.  
21  
22 In the pre-adoption phase, we noticed that 'concealing foreignness' and 'adaptive conveyance'  
23  
24 were deliberate strategies that, taken together, really were acts of *cultural detachment*, whereby  
25  
26 *VFA* disconnected the macro-credit idea from their own cultural world in order to motivate  
27  
28 villagers to adopt it. The post-adoption phase is captured by our construct of *cultural assimilation*,  
29  
30 whereby the villagers connected the idea to *their* local norms. As such, the pre-adoption phase and  
31  
32 post-adoption phase describe dual forms of translations – one very strategically constructed and  
33  
34 the other not so. We introduce the model at the beginning of the Findings section.  
35  
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### 40 **Ensuring Robustness**

41  
42 Langley (1999: 707) points out that there will “always be an uncodifiable step that relies on  
43  
44 the insight and imagination of the researcher.” The imaginative leap from data to constructs and  
45  
46 then to theory is thus not easy to show. Hence, we took four steps to strengthen the robustness of  
47  
48 our interpretation. Our first step concerned the composition of authorship. Two authors (one of  
49  
50 whom is from the local context) were familiar with Tanzanian culture whereas the third had greater  
51  
52 distance, thus providing the advantage of “intimacy with local settings and the potential for  
53  
54 distancing” (Langley et al., 2013: 6, see also, Anteby, 2013; Bartunek & Louis, 1996; Langley &  
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3 Royer, 2006). To reduce the initial wariness of villagers the first author was introduced by the third  
4 author as a researcher and someone who wanted to learn from them, thereby distancing her from  
5  
6 *VFA* as much as possible. She also engaged in frequent informal interactions with the villagers, to  
7  
8 the point where most villagers spoke relatively unprompted about their experiences.  
9  
10

11  
12 Second, we used multiple sources of data that allowed for triangulation and interviewed a  
13 comprehensive set of actors in order to minimize the chance of bias that might arise from a single  
14 perspective (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Third, ‘following events forward’ and ‘tracing  
15 backwards’ (Langley & Tsoukas, 2010) through use of a combination of real-time and secondary  
16 data reduced the risk of retrospective rationalization (Eisenhardt, 1989). Finally, we shared our  
17 findings with informants during the stages of data collection and analysis in order to fact-check  
18 our data and justify our interpretation. These conversations also helped refine our research design,  
19 including the selection of interviewees and additional documentary materials.  
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### 30 31 **FINDINGS**

32 Our findings reveal the strategies and processes involved in the failed longitudinal  
33 transposition of ideas across high institutional distance. The constructs presented in our model  
34 emerged inductively from our data. However, for clarity we briefly introduce the model “as a  
35 preview” for our theoretical analysis (Patvardhan, Gioia, & Hamilton, 2015: 411). The model is  
36 summarized in Figure 2.  
37  
38  
39  
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42

43 -----Insert Figure 2 about here-----  
44  
45

46 Our model begins with the suspicions facing *VFA* as it entered rural Manyara. These  
47 suspicions were overcome by *VFA* in two ways: first, by *concealing the foreign origin* of the  
48 macro-credit idea by using local surrogates and village elites to introduce it; and, second, by using  
49 examples and expressions from the local context (*adaptive conveyance*) in order to advance how  
50 a village community could successfully run business enterprises. Emphasis on the local context  
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3 resulted in the idea being *culturally assimilated* into the world of the villagers and their taking  
4  
5 ‘ownership’ of it. Both *VFA* and the villagers soon believed that the goal of the macro-credit  
6  
7 initiative – ‘local ownership’ – was being successfully achieved, but neither realized that the term  
8  
9 meant different things to the other. For *VFA*, it meant that villagers could profitably and  
10  
11 independently operate the village enterprises. For the villagers, it meant that there was a widely  
12  
13 shared acceptance of the enterprises throughout the village, and recognition of the contributions  
14  
15 that the enterprises would make to the social purposes of the village. This difference came to the  
16  
17 fore when *VFA* sought repayment of the loans – which prompted a violent *collision* that forced  
18  
19 *VFA* to abandon the macro-credit idea in Tanzania.  
20  
21  
22

### 23 24 **Contextual Conditions: Historical Suspicions**

25 Prior to *VFA*’s arrival in rural Manyara, *VFA* was aware that villagers perceived the *mzungu*  
26  
27 as wealthy, well educated, and admirable but untrustworthy. This attitude of suspicious distrust is  
28  
29 well illustrated by a long excerpt from one of our interviews:  
30  
31

32 **Village member:** ...we consider all white men are *wazungu* or *mzungu*, whether from Australia,  
33 America, or Europe. Chinese and Koreans are also white, but they are differentiated by their eyes. For  
34 them, we say: “small eyes” ...  
35

36 **Interviewer:** Okay. So, if you use the term *mzungu* – what does that actually mean to you?  
37

38 **Village member:** When talking with *mzungu* for the first time, I think there is a hidden truth about  
39 the agenda... so we talk in the community first to decide whether they say the truth or not. So people  
40 ask: ‘are you really aware and sure that the *wazungu* you are working with, are they doing what they  
41 are telling us here?’ Colonialism was the same way – and it cannot happen again – that *wazungu* do  
42 something crucial for *their* country, and when it’s done they will leave.  
43

44 Also, I think that most of the *wazungu* don’t trust us...  
45

46 **Interviewer:** Why do you think that is? Where does this sentiment come from?  
47

48 **Village member:** I think this is because every party – *wazungu* and Africans – have lots of negative  
49 things to say and experiences from their past history. When these people meet for the first time, they  
50 tend to take time to verify the truth. It’s only after they spend some time together that new beliefs  
51 about each other form which are different from the past.  
52

53 **Interviewer:** And how do you feel about *wazungu* now?  
54

55 **Village member:** ...Personally, I still have to take precautions when we meet. First, I also think that  
56 *wazungu* are superior to me. Then I ask: Does he mean what he is saying? What did he want to know  
57  
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3 from me? What is his hidden agenda? Can we work together? Does he or she feel superior to me? All  
4 these questions will run through my mind. Then I have to decide if I can be with him or if I have to  
5 withdraw.... (Rural Villager, Interview no.41)  
6

7  
8 The same sentiment was reflected in stories told about past interventions by the *mzungu*,  
9  
10 including one of a development organization that set up a water pump, ran out of money and  
11  
12 vanished without teaching the villagers how to service the pump. This story surfaced in at least  
13  
14 five conversations between villagers and the first author. Another story was of an attempt by  
15  
16 foreigners to build butcheries for the cows of the Maasai, even though, for the Maasai, cattle are  
17  
18 equivalent to their children and the idea of killing them is absurd:  
19  
20

21  
22 To the Maasai, cows are everything – cows are their life. If you have a big number of cows, you are  
23  
24 so proud of them. But the only thing the Westerners saw is: if there are so many cows, let us establish  
25  
26 butcheries...So they started to build very modern butcheries here – but none of the Maasai sent their  
27  
28 cows there. So they failed. *They should have consulted the community before they implemented their*  
29  
30 *ideas.* (Village A, Interview no.27, emphasis added)

31  
32 The appeal that outsiders should ‘consult the community’ was frequently made, and  
33  
34 sometimes emotionally linked to Tanzania’s colonial times – as in the story of armed protests  
35  
36 against the allocation to foreign investors of 45 acres of land that had been under the traditional  
37  
38 occupancy of over 40 families. Village elders, in particular, made such connections, reminding  
39  
40 other villagers of the past and that many developing organizations come to ‘repair’ but then leave  
41  
42 again without any signs of improvement – noting that history continues to repeat itself.

### 43 **Phase 1 – Pre-adoption Translation by the Proponent**

#### 44 **Concealing Foreignness**

45  
46 Willem Mark had learned over the previous decade of these deeply held suspicions. He  
47  
48 believed that his health clinic initiative in rural Babati, the capital of Manyara, had been  
49  
50 unsuccessful because of his own failure to overcome historical suspicions, dryly described by one  
51  
52 *VFA* member as “reverse racism” (Field Diary I). Therefore, in order to get villagers to listen to  
53  
54 the macro-credit idea and avoid the idea being associated with a “bunch of *wazungu*” (*VEI*,  
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3 Interview no.11), he *used surrogates* and engaged in the *political co-optation* of villager elders.  
4  
5 Doing so successfully concealed the foreignness of the idea being introduced.  
6  
7

8 ***Using surrogates.*** No members of *VFA* interacted personally with the villagers. Instead, a  
9  
10 surrogate organization – the Village Enterprise Incubator (*VEI*) – composed of four university-  
11  
12 educated Tanzanians, each from a different ethnic group, engaged with the villagers on *VFA*'s  
13  
14 behalf thus concealing the *mzungu* involvement. The Managing Director, from the Iraqw<sup>3</sup>, had an  
15  
16 MBA from a Tanzanian university and several years of work experience in Europe and sub-  
17  
18 Saharan Africa. The Financial Accountant was from the Mديو<sup>4</sup>, and the female Community  
19  
20 Coordinator from the Sukuma<sup>5</sup>. The Community Relations Officer, the son of an illiterate local  
21  
22 farmer from the Nyaturu<sup>6</sup>, was very aware of his role:  
23  
24  
25

26 I was born and grew up in the village with my extended family with no safe water, no electricity, poor  
27  
28 infrastructure...so I found myself to be very familiar with the life of the villagers, it was easy for me  
29  
30 to understand the culture, and social events... public markets, worships, local treatments of other  
31  
32 villages...I was the very right person for the position as interactions with the villagers was a major  
33  
34 concern. (*VEI*, Interview no.97)

35 It was clear from our observations that all four members of *VEI* were culturally accepted and  
36  
37 respected and seen as locals, not foreigners. That each member of *VEI* came from a different ethnic  
38  
39 group signaled that no group would be favored. Later, many villagers were puzzled as to who or  
40  
41 what was '*VFA*'. While they knew that the macro-credit idea came from the *wazungu*, they  
42  
43 interacted mainly with *VEI* members and it is they who became their point of reference.  
44  
45

46 ***Political co-optation.*** In order to further remove any signs of foreign involvement and cast  
47  
48 the macro-credit idea in a local light, *VEI* members opened contact with villagers of local influence  
49  
50 – especially the villager elders. As one *VEI* member explained:  
51  
52

53 <sup>3</sup> Cushitic-speaking ethnic group inhabiting the Asrusha and Manyara regions of north-central Tanzania.

54 <sup>4</sup> Chidigo-speaking group (also: Digo) based between Mombasa (southern Kenya) and Tanga (northern Tanzania).

55 <sup>5</sup> Bantu-ethnic group in north-western Tanzania (16% of Tanzanian population) who speak Sukuma.

56 <sup>6</sup> Bantu Kinyaturu-speaking ethnic group (part of the Turu) inhabiting north-central Tanzania. Historically farmers.  
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3 **VEI member:** The village elders play a very important role – they are the gatekeepers in the  
4 community, and we need to get them on our side... even for us [referring to *VEI*] this is important  
5 because we are often younger than the villagers.  
6

7 **VFA member:** Is this a problem?  
8

9 **VEI member:** Yes. When you are younger, they would only listen to you when you are a priest or a  
10 pastor... the elders are the ones with the wisdom. (*VFA-VEI Discussion*)  
11

12 *VEI* courted the elders and gently persuaded them to help “educate the community members  
13 about the opportunity that is at hand” (*VEI, Strategy Document*). The elders did so at village  
14 meetings where they explained how the macro-credit idea would serve the village community, thus  
15 reinforcing the ‘local’ fit of the idea.  
16  
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21 The success of using surrogates and co-opting elders to overcome suspicions of the *mzungu* by  
22 concealing the institutional origins of the macro-credit idea was reflected in that 20 villages applied  
23 to be included in the *VFA* project. *VFA* next turned to carefully and adaptively conveying the  
24 macro-credit idea in a manner that would motivate villagers to implement it.  
25  
26  
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29

### 30 **Adaptive Conveyance** 31

32 Before accessing initial loans of between \$9,000 and \$15,000<sup>7</sup>, each of the four villages – A,  
33 B, C and D – selected to participate in the project had to establish a management team and a board  
34 of directors that included at least one village elder and one woman, and the management teams  
35 had to attend training sessions. The training sessions explained how to establish and run a business,  
36 using terms understandable to the villagers, i.e., through *localized customization*. The awarding of  
37 plaques at the end of the training *ceremonially affirmed* the accomplishments of the participants,  
38 motivating them to apply what they had learned.  
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48 ***Localized customization.*** Meticulous attention was given to the preparation and delivery of  
49 the training sessions, which focused on the technical details of the macro-credit idea and continued  
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55 <sup>7</sup> For the purpose of contextualization: 70% of the Tanzanian population lives with less than \$2/day. Tanzania’s  
56 GDP per capita income in 2012 was \$1,654; the global average is \$13,599 (*Tanzania UNDP Report, 2014*).  
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3 even after the village enterprises had been formally established. We observed hour-long  
4  
5 discussions between *VFA* and *VEI* over the specific wording and language that would be used in  
6  
7 teaching the principles of bookkeeping, or of how to market goods such as honey, pigs, or bulls.  
8  
9 Training would be provided in Swahili and other native languages, and use local examples that  
10  
11 would resonate with the villagers and build on *their* abilities and understandings:  
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14  
15 It's the combination of how we know how it works here and then how it works in Africa. And this  
16  
17 constant tension between how we can use what we are used to and fit it into the local context... we  
18  
19 may have to suggest some things and then they can come back and say 'No, that's not going to work  
20  
21 here. It's Africa, you know.' And then we sit down, and we try to figure out an alternative game plan  
22  
23 B... [trainings should be] all adjusted for the level that's appropriate. (*VEI-VFA*, Discussion)

24  
25 Care was also taken to avoid any suggestion that ideas were being imposed: "We are injecting  
26  
27 a lot of 'us' ... [and] I'm sure they're also a bit frustrated... We really have to make sure that we  
28  
29 are not being offensive or having unrealistic expectations..." (*VEI-VFA*, Discussion). *VEI* also  
30  
31 carefully avoided raising memories of previous failures, including "the old, failed concepts and  
32  
33 philosophies of Nyerere" (*VFA* Managing Director, Blog). One example of how they did so was  
34  
35 by allowing the management teams and directors to select the name for their enterprise, which to  
36  
37 the villagers was an important symbolic departure from the more imposed Nyerere approach.

38  
39 ***Ceremonial affirmation.*** At the completion of the training sessions, participants publicly  
40  
41 received plaques of achievement followed by the formal transfer of ownership shares. The shares  
42  
43 had no economic value but were deliberate symbolic signals of *VEI's* confidence in the ability of  
44  
45 the villagers to run – 'own' – the businesses that they were about to establish:

46  
47 We needed to instill *a sense of ownership*. The management teams and boards of directors needed to  
48  
49 feel appreciated, looked up to in their communities. They should be proud of *their* company... so we  
50  
51 needed to acknowledge them with certificates that they can hang on their walls. (*VFA* Meeting)

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53 In the ceremonies, held outside the village government office, *VEI* proudly stressed the  
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55 capabilities of those that had participated in the training program, and emphasized that they were  
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3 ready to start businesses that would contribute to the wellbeing of their village communities and  
4  
5 the future of their children. The can-do attitude and the pride of the trainees grew noticeably:  
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8 The first time I was elected to be the treasurer, I asked ‘How can I be elected without me having any  
9 education? Any kind of knowledge about financials?’ So [VEI] told me that I shouldn’t be afraid: ‘You  
10 will know along the way.’ I was given training as a treasurer and now I am comfortable with the  
11 financial assessments. As a pastor, I now also train other pastors about what I learned from [VEI]. *This*  
12 *is a big thing for me.* (Village A, Interview no.27, emphasis reflects him proudly smiling)  
13

14 In effect, the ceremonies were a culminating expression of the confidence felt by the villagers  
15 that they not only understood the practices of running a business, but that *they* could do it!  
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### 18 **Outcome 1: Acritical Adoption**

19 Each village quickly accepted the terms of the macro-credit loans. Formal contracts, crafted  
20 in Swahili, were signed – committing villages to invest one-third of profits in a chosen social need,  
21 another third for repayment of the loan, and the remainder into re-investment in the enterprise.  
22 *VFA* members were well aware of the difficulty of legally enforcing the contracts – “they (the  
23 contracts) were weak, so it was much more symbolic to have them sign these papers...” (*VFA*,  
24 Discussion) – and that they would have to rely on informal trust. There was thus no attempt to  
25 impose a regular repayment schedule. Instead, the villages were given up to 18 months to repay  
26 the macro-loans at no interest, after which an average effective interest rate of 2-3% would apply.  
27 Further, each village was given discretion to run its enterprises as *they* envisioned – reflecting  
28 Willem’s overarching mission of fostering a sense of ‘local ownership’.  
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43 At the end of *Phase 1*, *VFA* and the four management teams believed that they had a shared  
44 understanding of how the macro-credit project would proceed. There was neither conflict nor  
45 negotiations over the terms of the loan. On the contrary, the following was typical: “Our business  
46 is fattening bulls... we received a loan from the investor to buy 50 bulls for \$10,000... Our contract  
47 is for the next 6 months, then we will sell the bulls and repay the investor” (Video archives, Village  
48 D). Hence, *VFA* thought the macro-credit project had been successfully introduced and proudly  
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3 told *VEI* that: “Everything is moving...people from Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Guatemala,  
4 Ecuador...every time we explain to them what *you* guys are doing, people get excited and they  
5 want to know how they can take it into their area...I love this process” (*VEI-VFA*, Discussion).  
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## 10 **Phase 2 - Post-Adoption Translation by the Recipient**

### 11 **Cultural Assimilation**

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14 To Willem’s delight, once established the village enterprises quickly exhibited entrepreneurial  
15 initiative. Village B and D diversified into sesame seeds and vegetables; Village C expanded  
16 beyond pig farming to include honey production and cucumber farming. Three of the villages – B,  
17 C, and D – reported profits in their first year. The fourth, Village A, which did not, was the only  
18 village that chose not to go into agricultural farming, and, by setting up the enterprise *outside* the  
19 village, was finding it more difficult to garner community support.  
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28 Nevertheless, at the end of the first year the overall performance of the four villages was seen  
29 by *VFA* as a visible indicator that the vision of providing “the power and the means to take care of  
30 themselves” was being realized (*VEI*, Strategy Document). Therefore, the villagers were quietly  
31 allowed to operate without much outside help. For the villagers, on the other hand, local ownership  
32 had *not yet* been fully achieved: for them, local ownership meant widespread acceptance of the  
33 enterprise as serving social needs and thus of being an integral part of the village: “the social need  
34 is the primary goal and the reason for our activities...if there is no social need, there is no need for  
35 business” (Village A, Interview no.20). In other words, only by achieving social goals would local  
36 ownership be accomplished. Thus, what *VFA* did not grasp was that, as the macro-credit idea  
37 became culturally assimilated into the local context, the sense of local ownership would have  
38 implications that would adversely affect the macro-credit project. Three prominent mechanisms of  
39 cultural assimilation were a sense of *inclusive-exclusivity* by the village communities, *the*  
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3 *materialization of social norms, and emotive celebrations.* These mechanisms pulled villagers  
4 together and heightened the sense of ‘ownership’ as they understood the term.  
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8 ***Inclusive-exclusivity.*** Inclusive-exclusivity is a widely shared (in our case, throughout the  
9 village) pride in being part of something that is desired by others who are excluded from  
10 participating. To promote the sense of shared inclusion, three of the management teams located  
11 their offices in the centre of the village so that villagers could walk by them and express their  
12 curiosity. The idea and arrangements of having an office and a management team were novel and  
13 puzzling, but also intriguing. Villagers learned by wandering past the offices and observing what  
14 went on inside them. And, as they did so, they began to express interest in being more involved:  
15 “...people started asking ‘Why are you buying materials from Babati, not from me?’ ‘Why are you  
16 not hiring my trucks to carry your materials?’ Things like that – they want to be involved” (Village  
17 C, Interview no.25). Even members of Village A, whose office was located outside the village,  
18 recalled such encounters:  
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33 Sometimes, villagers pass by and they see that we are working and producing goods. Then they will  
34 try to come inside and ask if they can work here...to see what we are doing. Then they say: ‘You’re  
35 gaining a lot here, so let me see and gain as much as you gain’... (Village A, Interview no.20)  
36

37 The management teams responded by engaging more and more villagers – for example, by  
38 hiring ‘pig men’ who would watch after the pigs at night, and ‘construction workers’ who would  
39 cut the fences. In this way, the enterprises became increasingly part of the workings of the villages  
40 rather than something introduced from outside: acceptance of the macro-credit idea was growing.  
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46 Growing acceptance was also helped by the interest and jealousy shown by those excluded  
47 from the project. There was an increasing daily flow of admiring visitors from neighboring villages  
48 – to the extent that Villages A, B, C, and D felt as though they had become pilgrimage destinations,  
49 which was an impression that was reinforced when a local TV station showcased them as pioneers  
50 and highlighted how the enterprises were addressing community needs. This feeling of being  
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3 special was further fostered by the attention of regional politicians who demanded bribes,  
4 threatening defamation of those that refused to comply. Interestingly, while this posed financial  
5 challenges to the village enterprises, to several villagers these demands were also signs of success.  
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8 Being ‘in’ was to be part of an exclusive group that was part of something special.  
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12 ***Materialization of social norms.*** All four villages experienced the growing fame, but it was  
13 noticeably pronounced in Villages B and C, which were able to materially display how the  
14 enterprises were reflecting communal norms. By materialization we mean a visual statement that  
15 expresses community norms. In Village C, for example, where a third of profits were used for  
16 renovation of the village school, villagers could literally see the benefits:  
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24 ...we [contributed to the community] a healthy profit which went into the social need... six classrooms  
25 in two primary school buildings...a big percentage of the community [...] love the Village Company  
26 because they *see* the social need which has been implemented... (Village C, Interview no.26)  
27

28 Village B, similarly, benefited as villagers came to see the renovated teacher’s house:  
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30  
31 We spent almost 4 million on implementing the social needs of our community (we put doors,  
32 windows, fixed toilets, floor and wall painting). This was remarkable work. And we used it as a  
33 reference point for our community members: ‘look what we can make and do with our Village  
34 Company.’ (Village B, Interview no.57)  
35

36 The importance of the visual showing was indicated by the noticeably lower interest in non-  
37 visual benefits. Village B, for example, not only funded the reconstruction of the teacher’s  
38 accommodation but also paid the ‘social tax’ levied by the regional government. But far fewer  
39 references were made to this benefit – it was the visible benefits that excited attention. Village D,  
40 which used profits to provide health insurance for 490 households (ca. 1470 villagers), had a  
41 similar experience. Announcement of the benefit attracted some attention within the village itself  
42 but little from neighboring villages. In other words, while Villages B and C solved a clear social  
43 problem and had implemented a visible solution, the benefits of health insurance were less evident  
44 to the villagers. The visual tangibility of the benefits mattered.  
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3 ***Emotive celebrations.*** Each of the three profitable villages celebrated the social benefits as  
4 they were announced. The opening of the newly renovated school and of the newly constructed  
5 teacher house in Villages B and C prompted joyous festivities. These celebrations were organized  
6 by the management teams and were noisy, lengthy and highly public events. Villagers  
7 enthusiastically engaged in colorful singing, eating, and dancing (see Figure 1).  
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14 -----Insert Figure 1 about here-----  
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16 To capture the importance of the celebration as seen by those who participated, we asked a  
17 *VEI* member to describe the celebration of the teacher's house in Village B:  
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21 You have to imagine the celebration like this: village enterprise members worked really hard ... and  
22 they were so proud to benefit their community. When they invested in the social need it was a great  
23 burden taken off their shoulders. They had met the expectations of their community.  
24

25 Now think about the celebration as a day where the management team could show their community  
26 that they did something good for their neighbors. In Village B, the head mistress of the school was  
27 living on the street and now she had a house to stay and live. That's amazing!  
28

29 The celebration was announced by the village enterprise one week before, and everybody in the  
30 community was aware about the meeting, as well as neighboring villages.  
31

32 The evening before the celebration, a villager had two pieces of iron and moved around the whole  
33 village hitting them together very hard and loudly – ‘Announcement! Announcement! Announcement!  
34 The [Village B] is reminding you, the community, about our celebration tomorrow... - informing  
35 everyone about the day, time, venue, participants, and type of entertainment, and requesting all  
36 community members to attend...  
37

38 The celebration first started with a meeting at 10am. When everyone arrived, people clapped hands  
39 and stood up. The meeting took place under a big tree where the tables for the guests were decorated.  
40 The community members waited until the village enterprise members sat down, to sit down themselves.  
41 Some had to sit on the grass because the chairs couldn't accommodate everyone!  
42

43 ...The village chairman opened the meeting with a call to religious leaders to pray. Everyone  
44 appreciated the great efforts done by the village enterprise leaders and promised to support it in the  
45 future. There was food and drinks (rice with beans, water, and few Coca-Cola sodas)...  
46

47 The meeting was about 2km away from the school where [Village B] had built the teacher house,  
48 which allowed classes to continue in the school. After the meeting, all community members were  
49 walking and dancing to the school... This is a deeply hearted appreciation and is done very rarely.  
50

51 Dancing groups around 12 men and women of different ages were welcomed, and they...blew whistles  
52 while they bent down and were dancing. They sang lyrics of a song which appreciated the village  
53 enterprise and their leaders for helping in education, for their help with the village social tax...  
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3 Finally, the pupils were out from their classes and the village community could walk into the teacher  
4 house, and assess the work done by the village enterprise leaders, and give credit to them. The teacher  
5 was there too: 'I lived on the street, in a ghetto... in the raining season, security was not good, and I  
6 was too far from school. I am an old head mistress. Now I want to thank [Village B]! I only walk two  
7 minutes to the school, and I also have a toilet that is working. I am so joyful that I can be here for my  
8 pupils!' People were chanting and whistling with joy. (Vignette, written by a *VFI* member)  
9

10 In other words, the celebrations displayed the rising optimism and communal acceptance of the  
11 enterprises. In Village D, in contrast, celebration of the primary social benefit – health insurance  
12 cards – was much more muted. Events were organized at which village members were to formally  
13 receive their insurance cards, but few villagers attended, and the celebrations resembled more the  
14 quieter ceremonies of the pre-adoption phase than the joyous celebrations occurring in Villages B  
15 and C. Moreover, the flow of visitors from outside was modest.  
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## 24 **Outcome 2: Local Ownership**

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26 *VFA* was pleased with the independence displayed by the villagers and especially that three  
27 of the villages had generated sufficient profits to expand their businesses and invest in social needs.  
28 Even the fourth village was covering its operating costs. Though *VFA* started to feel somewhat left  
29 out as villagers took the enterprises into their own hands, nevertheless they were content:  
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35 ***VFA member 1:*** Look, a couple of months ago, would you have thought they would themselves think  
36 of these new business activities, and actually make profits? I mean, I'd be even happier if they would  
37 tell us about it. So, we could see and follow their progress...But then, I think we should be grateful  
38 for that they are thinking for themselves now.  
39

40 Let us appreciate their independence. It's what we've been wanting the whole time. Right?  
41

42 ***VFA member 2:*** It's amazing if you compare where we stood initially and where we are at now. It's  
43 never easy to step back. But let's allow ourselves to go ahead and re-focus. We *want* them to feel  
44 accountable. So, let's be happy with our progress and march on... (*VFA Discussion*, emphasis added)  
45

46 *VFA*, in other words, saw the villagers as exemplifying Willem's mission of local ownership.  
47 For the villagers, too, local ownership had been accomplished. But for them, this meant something  
48 different. In the three profitable villages there was an open sense that the enterprises were  
49 recognized by their respective communities. Especially in Villages B and C, more and more  
50 villagers were proudly referring to 'our model'. As one management team member put it: "they  
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3 are recognizing that what we are doing is good for them. So, they see it's not just about money for  
4 ourselves" (Village C, Interview no.25). Similarly, in Village B "the community will always  
5 remember our village company because of the social need that was implemented...we were very  
6 successful" (Interview no.57). Even Village D, albeit to a lesser extent, shared this sentiment: "the  
7 community was happy when we told them about the health insurance...I can conclude that our  
8 model was good – and successful" (Interview no.89).

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17 'Ownership', in other words, for the villagers was communal *and* arose from their belief that  
18 it was *they* who had figured out how to make the village enterprises work for their communities.  
19 In their minds, it was not *VEI* but *themselves* who had successfully implemented and developed  
20 the macro-credit idea in a way that worked locally. Thus both *VFA* and the villagers felt that local  
21 ownership – as they understood it – had been achieved. Hence, what followed was unexpected.

### 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 **Phase 3 – Collision and its Aftermath**

29  
30 For *VFA*, the moment seemed appropriate to scale up the macro-credit idea so that they could  
31 one day, "stand on Mt. Kilimanjaro and see hundreds of village enterprises functioning" (*VFA*-  
32 *VEI*, Discussion). Scaling up would mean advising the four villages how to further increase their  
33 profit margins; and, the repayment of the loans so that *VFA* could re-invest them in other regions.  
34 But when *VEI* and then *VFA* entered the villages, the response was contrary to what was expected.  
35 There was *in-group shaming* of *VEI*, and *historically anchored vilification* of *VFA*.

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44 ***In-group shaming.*** Members of *VEI* were uncomfortable when asked by *VFA* to approach  
45 the villages and request repayment. They were well aware that the now highly developed sense of  
46 local ownership would make it difficult for villagers to accept advice on how to expand their  
47 businesses. They warned: "First you make them the 'owners' of their own destiny and they do it –  
48 they run the enterprises... You can't just go back now and tell them that you have new ideas." (*VEI*,  
49 Interview no.43). They were particularly nervous about requesting repayment because such  
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3 behavior would be seen as a cultural violation – especially by those *VEI* members who had to enter  
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5 villages from the same ethnic group. But *VFA* insisted that *VEI* do so.  
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7  
8 As *VEI* expected, when they entered the villages to offer advice, they were jokingly rebuffed:  
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10 “the management team and the board told us that we *VEI* members were here because of them, not  
11  
12 the other way around. They’re right.... it’s their thing now.” (*VEI*, Interview no.43). The request  
13  
14 for repayment was even more firmly dismissed because villagers expected *VEI* to respect the  
15  
16 *ujamaa* norm that ‘family’ members do not ask for the return of something borrowed:  
17

18  
19 In Tanzania, people are accepting of others ‘borrowing’ what they have in excess (food, clothing,  
20  
21 shelter, money, etc.) without a necessary plan to repay. So having an abundance of anything...  
22  
23 effectively invites ‘family’ – which is somewhat loosely defined and extends beyond Western concepts  
24  
25 of family – to take what they need. So a brother may borrow another brother’s excess savings to pay  
26  
27 for a celebration, or a trip, or food, etc, ... and never repay it. (Managing Director, *VFA*, Personal Diary  
28  
29 – written after the macro-credit project was abandoned)

30  
31 Villagers were surprised when *VEI* members, whom they regarded as part of the community,  
32  
33 asked for repayment and scolded them for doing so. The scolding intensified when villagers  
34  
35 learned that *VEI* members were associated with the *mzungu*. As a *VEI* member recalled:  
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38 I knew it was going to be a huge challenge when I had to ask for repayments...Community members  
39  
40 were asking me questions like: ‘...Do you love the *mzungu* company more than us?’ and they said  
41  
42 things like ‘we are all the same here. Look at our young children here at home...If you put me in  
43  
44 trouble, how will they feel?’ They expected me to know...serving that community was a priority.

45  
46 They also frequently mentioned that the *mzungu* company will go but that I would remain as their son.  
47  
48 They asked me: ‘Are you married? Maybe one day you will come to marry my daughter...but the  
49  
50 *mzungu* will go.’ Clearly reminding me of my own role in this community.

51  
52 Most borrowers were elder to me, and in Tanzania, a younger person cannot be angry with the elders,  
53  
54 that is considered misbehavior in our culture. When I asked for repayment, they became very angry  
55  
56 with me, they said things like ‘you went to school here so that you can help *us*. But now, you are  
57  
58 putting us in trouble because of the *mzungu*!!’ Some of them accused me of wanting to take a bribe.

59  
60 I was disappointed, but I never stopped trying to get the repayments. I felt proud to be part of the  
macro-credit model. No repayment would put the model in a hard situation - I knew that. But people  
here cannot take a hard decision towards each other... because they will know that they will hurt their  
fellow family member (Vignette, written by a *VEI* member)

*VEI*, in other words, was expected to know and respect that serving social needs was a priority  
and that the interests of *VEI*’s village community should surely be more important than those of

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2  
3 the *mzungu*. Acknowledging their contractual agreements, the villagers reassured *VEI* that  
4 repayment would be made once local needs had been addressed. But from the perspective of *VFA*,  
5 the refusal of the villages to fully repay was evidence of “cheating” and they decided to enter the  
6 villages themselves (*VFA*, Discussion). Before doing so, they carefully thought through how best  
7 to word the request for repayment and rehearsed doing so. Given the earlier success when  
8 introducing the macro-credit idea, it was hoped that a similarly cautious approach would be  
9 successful. But this time, it was the *mzungu* who faced the villagers.

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19 ***Historically anchored vilification.*** As *VFA* members entered the villages and requested  
20 repayment, they were angrily vilified, especially in Village B and C. Explicitly referencing  
21 colonial times, villagers were furious. In one meeting an outraged villager shouted (to applause):  
22 “There is *no colonialism* here anymore. Why are you harassing me? Why are you even here, *you*  
23 *mzungu*?... We are not here to write *your* story” (emphasis in the original). In Village C, where  
24 *VFA* put forward more efficient ways by which to obtain water for farming activities, *and*, at the  
25 same time, raised the timing of repayment, villagers furiously retorted: “So you are coming here  
26 to look for us...and you are trying to give the (water) business to [someone outside the village].  
27 We don’t want you here. We want you to leave!” A sense of the emotions is given in the following  
28 vignette, written by one of the villagers in Village B who witnessed a similar incident:  
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42 The *mzungu* caused deep anger. Because when he came to the meeting, he felt superior to us and didn’t  
43 really listen. Like, they were different or better somehow. I think many village members were angry  
44 because *they felt that the mzungu is oppressing them like a colonist*. That causes deep frustration. The  
45 villagers said that they didn’t want the *mzungu* here.

46  
47 ‘Because you have money, does that mean you can’t listen to us? Yes we have no money, we have no  
48 education, we are villagers and we don’t know a lot of things, but if we leave that aside we can work  
49 together, but you have to listen to us!’ , one of the villagers shouted standing up in the meeting.

50  
51 After that happened, the *mzungu* then preferred to come with his lawyer. When the community saw  
52 that, they were becoming even more angry. They said: ‘now you are coming to our village to jail us.’  
53 People were scared that if the lawyer is here, police will be here soon. So, they were not willing to talk  
54 anymore. ‘Tell the *mzungu* to let the lawyer go outside,’ they said. Like a boycott.  
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3 We said that we wouldn't talk to the *mzungu* until the lawyer leaves the meeting. 'This is not an  
4 amicable situation. Why is this a court matter? If he doesn't leave, there will be no more meeting.'  
5 Instead, we said we would only meet him in court then. So, the lawyer left. He stepped outside, and  
6 stayed in the car outside, and the meeting continued.  
7

8 Then everybody started to explain why we didn't repay yet. We were upset and really angry. 'You are  
9 oppressing us and come here as you wish. *It's always the same with you!* We have to work together.  
10 Not you telling us to do something whenever you want.'... so these are bad emotions.  
11

12 As far as the villagers were concerned, *VFA* had violated their agreement and the request for  
13 repayment confirmed that *wazungu* were disrespectful and exploitative (Interviews no.45-70). The  
14 worsening relations were reflected in discussions between *VFA* and *VEI* where the language was  
15 no longer of "we" but of "us versus them". It was also reflected in the tense exchanges *VFA* held  
16 with the village elders and management teams. Both sides were increasingly aggrieved – the  
17 villagers because they felt that they were being wrongly accused of cheating and were once again  
18 being exploited; and *VFA* because they felt themselves to be victims of cheating. The anger carried  
19 over to *VEI*. Once they were openly associated with the *mzungu* they, too, were subjected to  
20 expressions of anger – to the point of physical violence in one of the villages.  
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### 33 **Outcome 3: Anger and Reluctance to Re-Engage**

34 Overall, *VFA* recovered less than 50% of its loans. Village D repaid its \$10,000 loan in full  
35 (but deeply resented being asked to do so). Villages B and C each repaid around 40%, and Village  
36 A less than 30%. The failure to repay and the open hostility towards doing so convinced *VFA* to  
37 abandon the macro-credit project. For Willem, this was a major disappointment. In an email  
38 addressed to *VFA* members, he wrote: "I have never been more disillusioned in my life." *VFA*'s  
39 managing director expressed a similar sentiment in his personal diary:  
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48 Failure. A failure to execute. A failure to learn. A failure to simply let be. I know no more humbling  
49 gesture a person can make than to put oneself out there for others to challenge. And I have put  
50 myself out there...

51 I have failed.

52 Failed my friends. Failed my family. Failed myself.  
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3 But mostly, failed to make the impact I promised my friend (referring to Willem Mark) I would  
4 make when I signed on to this particular part of my journey.  
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6 So here I sit. Frustrated. Angry. Disappointed.  
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8 For the villagers, the abandonment and the way that it was done was another bitter example  
9  
10 of how the *mzungu* could not be trusted. The anger was such that three years later, in a follow-up  
11 interview, a former board member scathingly rebuked the third author:  
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14 Next time... do not come back with your ideas, then start implementing them, and then leave us. Just  
15 because we are villagers does not mean that we are not knowledgeable. And – *don't ever make us your*  
16 *laboratory test animals ever again.* (Village B, Interview no.67 – italics indicate sharply raised voice)  
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19 All four villages are still highly reluctant to re-engage with *wazungu*. In our follow-up  
20 interviews, villagers talk about a loss of trust and the painful realization and disappointment that  
21 the *mzungu*, again, had not listened to them properly. Even Village D, which repaid its loan in full,  
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27 adamantly refuses any further connection with *VEI* and foreigners and their innovative ideas:

28 You left us as if we are the thieves... I'm not willing to talk to [*VEI* members] or [anyone related to  
29 *VEI*] about the village enterprises anymore. (Interview no.80)  
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31 For the four local members of *VEI*, the withdrawal was especially painful – to the point that they  
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34 still feel ashamed to enter these villages to this day.  
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## 36 DISCUSSION

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38 Despite their importance and prevalence, processes of translation across high institutional  
39 distance have received only modest attention and the study of failure has been virtually ignored.  
40 Hence, we set out to explore why ideas that are successfully moved across high institutional  
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60 While the pre-adoption phase is characterized by strategies that culturally detach the idea from its  
institutional origins and thereby allow the proponent to successfully introduce it to another context,  
the post-adoption phase is characterized by the intuitive cultural assimilation of an idea into the  
recipient context. The pre- and post-adoption phases thus represent two different forms of

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3 translation. The explanation for the subsequent and disruptive failure lies in the combination of  
4 this dual translation. Together, the strategies of cultural detachment and the mechanisms of cultural  
5 assimilation enable the successful translation of an idea across high institutional distance.  
6 Paradoxically, however, the means of doing so can later prompt its emotional rejection. We call  
7 this this the *reactance effect* of high-distance translation. Our primary contribution is the  
8 abstraction of the above findings into a process model of high-distance translation failure.  
9

10 Our second contribution speaks to the translation literature more generally. Our findings bring  
11 to the fore how previous relationships, which have been neglected in studies of translation,  
12 influence the ways by which an idea can be moved and translated. Specifically, our case shows the  
13 importance of relationships between the *socio-cultural categories* of proponents and recipients.  
14 Further, our findings suggest a more significant way by which historical relationships matter for  
15 translation processes – namely, by invoking emotions that may lead to violent disruptions.  
16

### 17 **High-Distance Translation Failure and the Reactance Effect**

18 The process model derived from our case study is depicted in Figure 2. While the violent  
19 collision towards the end of the model is striking, we begin by detailing the pre-adoption phase  
20 because, as pointed out above, the unexpected failure arises from the combination of pre- and post-  
21 adoption processes that define high distance translation. In so doing, we specify the nature of high-  
22 distance translations as a particular type of translation context (cf., Lawrence, 2017) that requires  
23 strategies of translation different from those of other contexts.  
24

25 *Pre-adoption translation by cultural detachment.* Moving ideas across high institutional  
26 distance is difficult for several reasons. The more obvious one is that it may be difficult for  
27 recipients to grasp the meaning of an idea because of its novelty – as, for example, in our case  
28 ‘bookkeeping’ and ‘management teams’ were little understood. Ideas may also be perceived as  
29 threatening social and political arrangements (e.g., Mair et al., 2016). Relatedly, receptivity may  
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3 be compromised by previous experiences involving the proponents and recipients. To overcome  
4 these challenges, the idea has to be culturally detached from its institutional origins, which  
5 involves *concealing the foreignness* of the idea and its *adaptive conveyance*.  
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10 *Concealing foreignness* is the involvement of people whom recipients trust and the masking  
11 of those that they do not in order to downplay the foreign origins of an idea. In contexts of high  
12 institutional distance, this might be essential, simply to get recipients to listen to the idea (as  
13 implied by Claus & Tracey, in-press). *VFA* mastered this challenge by ‘using surrogates’ and  
14 ‘political co-optation’. Political co-optation has been observed elsewhere (Selznick, 1949; see also,  
15 Mair et al., 2016; McKague, Zietsma, & Oliver, 2015; Venkataram, Vermeulen, Raaijmakers, &  
16 Mair, 2016) but may not, by itself, prompt the intended recipient to consider an idea, especially if  
17 relationships between the proponent and recipients are ones of suspicion. More is needed – such  
18 as using surrogates to avoid the rejection of an idea before it can even be communicated.  
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30 *Adaptive conveyance* is the presentation of an idea using the cultural language of the recipients.  
31 As our case shows, the presentation of an idea not only has to be comprehensible, which can be  
32 achieved through ‘localized customization’ of illustrations and materials; it also has to be  
33 motivating and persuasive – i.e., seen as doable. Put differently, presenting the ‘nuts and bolts’ of  
34 an idea (Tracey et al., 2018) may explain an idea – but understanding is distinct from the  
35 motivation to act. Across high institutional distance where novelty can induce caution, something  
36 is needed to stimulate adoption, achieved in our case by ‘ceremonial affirmation’.  
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47 An important implication of the above is that *culturally detaching* an idea from its institutional  
48 origins eases its adoption but strips the idea of its original context – in Geertz’s terms (1973),  
49 translation and understanding of the idea is ‘thin’. But, ‘thin’ translations mean that the idea will  
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3 be understood in terms of the recipient's cultural context. That is, the idea is then culturally  
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5 assimilated – which can have negative implications in the post-adoption phase.  
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8 ***Post-adoption translation: cultural assimilation.*** The cultural detachment of an idea makes  
9  
10 its attachment to local norms inevitable. Ideas cannot be understood in a vacuum (Delmestri &  
11  
12 Greenwood, 2016) – hence, recipients will apply local meanings to it. Cultural detachment, in  
13  
14 other words, is followed by *culturally assimilation* – i.e., the acritical application of local meanings.  
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17 Our case displays three mutually reinforcing mechanisms by which cultural assimilation  
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19 occurs: the 'materialization of social norms', the sense of 'inclusive-exclusivity', and 'emotive  
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21 celebration'. Materialization is the presentation of "the local meaning of a concept in concrete  
22  
23 terms" (Lawrence (2017: 1782; see also, Boxenbaum et al., 2018). In contexts of high institutional  
24  
25 distance, where recipients have low familiarity with a new idea, material expressions of an idea  
26  
27 enhance both understanding *and acceptance* of the idea by visibly connecting it to local norms. In  
28  
29 our case, 'seeing' the schools showcased the implemented idea and clarified its cultural worth.  
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31 Visual connection of an imported idea with the social norms of the recipient community, in other  
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33 words, alleviates apprehensions that the idea is alien to that culture and thus allows its inclusion.  
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37 Materialization is given added momentum by a second mechanism – a sense of inclusive-  
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39 exclusivity. 'Inclusive-exclusivity' is the fostering of a shared yet restricted 'ownership' of a  
40  
41 'valued' idea. It is *inclusive* in that it is shared by community insiders, and it is *exclusive* in that it  
42  
43 is praised and desired by outsiders who are denied inclusion – noticeably observed in our case as  
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45 villagers showed pride at receiving attention from local TV, and of being a 'pilgrimage destination'  
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47 for neighboring villages. This sense of being part of something valuable heightens a sense of social  
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49 identity and enhances pride in, and commitment to, the idea (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Glynn, 2017).  
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3 A third mechanism – ‘emotive celebration’ – amplifies further acceptance of an idea *but also*  
4 adds the important contribution of moral reinforcement. The role of rituals and ceremonies has  
5 been raised elsewhere (e.g., Anand & Watson, 2004; Rao & Dutta, 2012; Ruebottom & Auster,  
6 2017), but the post-adoption celebrations in Villages B and C were distinctive in that they were  
7 held in public spaces, applauded ‘communal’ not individual benefits, and wittingly incited the  
8 emotions of collective pride. Moreover, the format of the celebrations was the same as used for  
9 other important events such as the welcoming of visiting dignitaries – thus enhancing the symbolic  
10 significance of the celebration. The format gave credence to the social object being celebrated and  
11 aroused emotional energy that bestowed a sense of collective *ownership*.  
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24 The three mechanisms reinforce each other. Inclusive-inclusivity generates pride, which is  
25 enhanced by materialization, which in turn prompts, and is amplified by, emotive celebrations;  
26 this cycle of reinforcement is then reciprocated as celebrations generate collective excitement, thus  
27 increasing the sense of inclusive-exclusivity. Through this cycling of reciprocal processes a newly  
28 introduced idea becomes stabilized and emotionally institutionalized within the local context – i.e.,  
29 ‘locally owned’. Hence, at the surface level, cultural assimilation appears to signal the successful  
30 translation of an idea across high institutional distance. But, as shown in Figure 2, it can be  
31 followed by implosive failure – which prompts our central question: *What causes a successfully*  
32 *transported idea to suddenly collapse into failure?*  
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44 ***From success to failure: the reactance effect.*** Our thesis is that failure arises because cultural  
45 detachment followed by cultural assimilation invokes a sense of local ownership and ‘hubris’  
46 (Cappellaro, Tracey, & Greenwood, 2019). The success of cultural detachment combined with the  
47 success of cultural assimilation means that recipients see the adopted idea and its outcomes as  
48 ‘theirs’. Attempts by outsiders to revoke or change the assimilated idea will thus be angrily resisted.  
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3 Double success, in other words, paradoxically risks subsequent failure. We coin this risk of the  
4 emotional rejection of an adopted idea the *reactance effect* of high-distance translation.  
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8 'Reactance' describes the unpleasant emotional arousal to persons, rules, or regulations that  
9 threaten specific behavioral freedoms (Brehm, 1966). It was first termed by psychologist Jack  
10 Brehm to conceptualize the resistance that people display when they feel that someone is taking  
11 away their choices or limiting the range of alternatives that they had previously enjoyed (Miron &  
12 Brehm, 2006). Once the resistance is triggered, people tend to strengthen a view or attitude that is  
13 contrary to the view or attitude held by the person who is perceived to be 'taking away' their  
14 choices, which further increases people's resistance to opposition. Our case is an institutional  
15 variant of this effect: villagers, by means of cultural assimilation, entrenched the idea in the local  
16 context and in so doing invoked a nascent emotional resistance to perceived violations of their  
17 discretion – especially if those violations contradicted their social norms.  
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31 The paradox in our case is that Willem was very sensitive to prevailing cultural norms and  
32 wanted villagers to take ownership of his idea. His cultural sensitivity, however, also meant that  
33 the villagers never learned the more implicit norms, values, and meanings underpinning the  
34 Western understanding of terms such as 'local ownership', 'entrepreneurship', and 'contracts.'  
35 The same words used by the villagers and *VFA* embodied very different meanings but *neither side*  
36 became aware of the differences. In consequence, cultural assimilation developed unchecked –  
37 heightening the sense of local ownership. This lack of understanding on both sides would be  
38 immaterial, unless, as in our case, the two sides had reason to re-connect.  
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49 The counter-intuitive implication that follows is that in order to avoid the reactance effect,  
50 proponents need to appropriately moderate the process of cultural assimilation by communicating  
51 *their own* socio-cultural assumptions and meanings whilst expressing (translating) them through the  
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3 cultural language of the recipients. This requirement – a core challenge for achieving long-term  
4 stabilization in contexts of high distance translation – has been underappreciated in the existing  
5 literature, which has emphasized instead the need for a thorough cultural understanding *of the*  
6 *recipient's* context. The translation challenge is typically depicted as understanding “what is  
7 important to people from different nations” (Erdman, 2017: 13; see also, Beugelsdijk, Kostova &  
8 Roth, 2017). The same emphasis – of understanding the recipient’s context – runs through the  
9 various cultural frameworks developed for business leaders (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; see also, Erez,  
10 2011). However, as our case highlights, grasping the *others’* world distracts from understanding and  
11 conveying *one’s own* world. But, conveying ideas across contexts requires understanding of one’s  
12 own world, not simply that of the other, in order that a more informed translation can occur. Doing  
13 so, however, is difficult because recognizing one’s own cultural assumptions requires a  
14 sophisticated capability of critical self-reflexivity – i.e., of ‘immanent sensemaking’ (Sandberg &  
15 Tsoukas, 2015). The challenge is that our own norms, values, and beliefs tend to be unthinkingly  
16 accepted as ‘normal’ – hence they remain invisible and unquestioned *to us*.

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Even if understanding of one’s own culture is achieved, the potential of the reactance effect being triggered remains high because any reduction of the degree of cultural detachment increases the risk of resistance during the pre-adoption phase – especially if doing so undermines the ability of proponents to gain the right to be heard. Our case implies, in other words, that the greater the institutional distance, the greater the need for cultural detachment – but with the consequence that the risk of reactance and failure is heightened.

The reactance effect, of course, remains latent until triggered. Something has to spike the emotional resistance of villagers. In the case of *VFA*, it was the physical re-appearance of the *mzungu*, which reminded villagers of past failures and elicited feelings of anger. Various other

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3 triggers are possible in situations of high distance. It could be treating actors within the recipient  
4 context in ways contrary to social norms – such as not appropriately displaying respect for the  
5 position of elders or the role of women (e.g., de la Chaux, Haugh & Greenwood, 2018); or the use  
6 of language that demeans or fails to respect social structures (e.g., Adut, 2008; Forster, 1924); or  
7 breaches of local customs – such as the wearing of certain clothes, inappropriate seating  
8 arrangements in public events (e.g., Dacin et al., 2010); or being associated with deviant social  
9 behaviors or social classes (e.g., Adut, 2008; Hampel & Tracey, 2017). The common theme is that  
10 triggers are violations of prevailing social arrangements.  
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### 22 **History, Relationships and Emotions**

23 The role of history surfaced throughout our findings in two ways. It shaped the relationship  
24 between the proponent and recipients involved in the translation process; and, more importantly,  
25 it was a decisive factor in precipitating the violent collision that concluded that process. From our  
26 case, therefore, we draw two key insights: the importance of including historical relationships in  
27 translation accounts – especially relationships between the socio-cultural categories involved; and  
28 the significance of emotions in constraining reflective applications of the past.  
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37 ***Socio-cultural categories and the process of translation.*** Previous work has  
38 underappreciated the effect of the historical relationships between those promoting an idea and  
39 those receiving it. This neglect might arise from the priority given to how recipients ‘edit’ an idea  
40 into their context, but examining the ‘pushing’ of an idea into a foreign context foregrounds the  
41 relationship between the socio-cultural categories of the proponents and recipients involved (in  
42 our case, Tanzanian villagers and the *mzungu*). As our case shows, recollections and/or knowledge  
43 of previous interactions between the socio-cultural categories of proponents and recipients provide  
44 the context within which the translation process takes place. And, as such, those memories and  
45 knowledge define and limit how proponents might approach recipients, and how recipients might  
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3 respond and translate a foreign idea. In our case, the suspicions of the Tanzanian villagers  
4 (suspicions that arose from previous interventions by Westerners that had been unsuccessful)  
5 forced *VFA* to conceal its presence in the villages and adapt the delivery of the macro-credit idea  
6 in a culturally sensitive way. If the previous relationships had been amicable or even neutral, these  
7 strategies might not have been necessary (and the subsequent failure less likely).  
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10 Giving attention to the socio-cultural categories involved in a translation relationship,  
11 however, goes deeper than simply comparing the backgrounds of proponents and recipients. It also  
12 requires giving attention to cultural associations *of the idea*. To draw on an example beyond our  
13 case, Cuba Emprende, a social enterprise in Havana, has long sought – unsuccessfully – to  
14 introduce into Cuba concepts such as ‘entrepreneurship ecosystems’ and ‘capitalism’. Even though  
15 Cuba Emprende is a Cuban organization, these terms are associated with ‘the U.S’ and thus  
16 rejected (Claus & Ravasi, 2020). It follows, we suggest, that accounts of translation should give  
17 attention not only to the relationship between the socio-cultural categories of the proponents and  
18 the recipients, but also to the socio-cultural categories associated with the actual idea.  
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35 ***Emotions and historical relationships.*** Previous exchanges, in our case between the villagers  
36 and the *mzungu*, also mattered in a violent way and fundamentally interfered with the stabilization  
37 of the macro-credit idea. They disrupted the carefully presented initiative and invoked outbursts  
38 of emotional anger. As such, our findings provide a depiction of history that contrasts with  
39 portrayals within organization theory of history as a resource that can be ‘used’ (for an exemplary  
40 review, see Wadhvani et al., 2018) and, in doing so, the findings connect to recent studies that  
41 seek to qualify the constructionist approach to history. We did not set out to build theory about  
42 this aspect but suggest that our findings are vital for a nuanced understanding of high-distance  
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3 translations; and, further, that they have implications for studies on the role of history in  
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5 organizational studies more generally.  
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8 Recently, scholars have started to qualify the constructionist view of history by highlighting  
9  
10 limitations to the ‘pliability’ of history. Sasaki, Kotlar, Ravasi, and Vaara (2020: 619), for example,  
11  
12 show that ‘uses’ of historical recollections by Japanese family firms have to be reconciled “with  
13  
14 the legacy of an illustrious, revered past” that is not easily amenable to retrospective manipulation.  
15  
16 Similarly, Sasaki, Ravasi, and Micelotta (2019: 803) show that the commitment of firms to  
17  
18 maintain good relationships with local communities may “entrap” them in the constitution of  
19  
20 historical trajectories, despite the changing ambition of their leaders. An even more demanding  
21  
22 critique is offered by Ravasi, Rindova, and Stigliani (2019) who show that the ‘uses’ of history are  
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24 embedded in mnemonic practices partly carried out *outside* an organization and which are thus an  
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26 additional constraining factor upon a firm’s ability to mold historical recollections.  
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31 Our observation from the macro-credit case is consistent with this position and takes it further  
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33 by exemplifying how emotions may not just constrain but prohibit the ‘use’ of history. Towards  
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35 the end of our case, there was *no* conscious reflection. Instead, there was an emotional triggering  
36  
37 of historical recollections of the *mzungu* that came as a surprise to both *VFA* and the villagers.  
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41 In the language of Toubiana and Zietsma (2017), our case shows that recollections of past  
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43 events contain ‘emotional registers’ – deeply held norms of the appropriate emotions associated  
44  
45 with particular remembrances. Emotional registers colour how past events are remembered and  
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47 recalled. As our case shows, they may drown the reflective and calm reconstruction of the past by  
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49 sparking sudden and intense behaviors that may impede and even destroy carefully fostered  
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51 relationships within just moments (as between *VEI* and the villagers).  
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3 Our portrayal of history is analogous to studies that examine the conditions that can occur in  
4 people who have experienced a traumatic event and where the recollection evokes intense feelings  
5 long after the actual traumatic event (*APA*, 2020). These studies show that it is the emotional  
6 recollections attached to cognitive accounts of the past that are responsible for *automatically*  
7 activating associated feelings of despair (Boals, Rubin, Klein, 2008). As such, emotions prohibit  
8 careful reflection of the traumatic event and constrain the way in which a recollection of a past  
9 event can be therapeutically amended, forgotten, or otherwise formed into a more positive memory  
10 (Boals et al., 2008). Further, intense emotions are highly durable – even as the cognitive account  
11 of a past experience fades (Boals & Rubin, 2011; Brewin & Holmes, 2003; Stein, Trabasso, &  
12 Albro, 2001). In our case, the experience is not an individual one as in studies on post-traumatic  
13 stress, but a shared social consciousness of traumatic events in their history (Olick & Robbins,  
14 1998). Villagers, in our case, could barely recall any detail about colonial times, but the emotions  
15 anchored in the historical narrative of those times strikingly persisted. The implication is that  
16 ‘history’ – if attached to strong emotions – is not a resource but a possible liability.  
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35 Studies of post-traumatic stress imply that even if *VFA* had anticipated the emotional nature  
36 of colonial and post-colonial history, it would have been extremely difficult to do something about  
37 it. This might be particularly true for past events associated with *negative* emotions, which are  
38 known to affect the availability and persistence of recollections of the past (e.g., Kensinger, 2007;  
39 Miron-Shatz, Stone, & Kahneman, 2009). In our case, colonial and post-colonial times did not  
40 represent a ‘revered past’ but one of scorned disdain.  
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### 49 **Boundary Conditions and Future Research**

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51 There are many empirical settings by which one could deepen our understanding of the  
52 connection between history and emotions. Organizations of the reconciliation movement in  
53 Canada, for example, have struggled for decades to reconcile the highly emotional, “tragic past [of  
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3 Indigenous peoples]...with a desire and need to move forward with respect, strength and dignity”  
4 (*charityvillage*, 2016). Similar examples are the rise of fascist organizations in Spain (e.g., Schatz,  
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6 2001) and the interplay of migration flows and the rise of right-wing parties in Germany (*ifo*, 2017).  
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10 It is always difficult to generalize from a single case study, and particularly one of failure.  
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12 Future research is needed to challenge and apply the insights offered here. Are the strategies and  
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14 processes identified characteristic of all high-distance translation contexts? And, are they unique  
15  
16 to those contexts? Comparisons with other translation contexts – including those across low  
17  
18 institutional distance – might be necessary and revealing. Socio-cultural distance, moreover, is  
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20 also found *within* countries, as indicated by internal wars, conflicts, and profound ideological  
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22 differences (e.g., Sadeh & Zilber, 2019). For example, the term ‘distance’ is relevant to developed  
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24 countries such as the U.S. and the U.K. where racial and social class differences can be acute.  
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26 Countries that have serious religious divides might also have societal arrangements characterized  
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28 by high institutional distance. Learning how ideas can be conveyed across such divides holds  
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30 theoretical promise but may also have important policy implications.  
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35 A final nudge from our study is the importance of adopting a longer-term perspective.  
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37 Translation studies are not alone in organization theory in the tendency to analyze snapshots (as  
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39 pointed out by Hardy & Maguire, 2017). The need to respect the longer term is underlined by our  
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41 case study. In paying more attention to the longitudinal processes of translations, it would be  
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43 particularly interesting to examine translation processes that might occur if ideas of the original  
44  
45 proponent are reciprocally translated back into their context of origin (Battilana, Anteby, & Sengul,  
46  
47 2010). The re-importation of culturally adapted ideas could be a source of “reverse innovation”  
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49 (e.g., Govindarajan & Trimble, 2012). Examining the early movement, cultural assimilation, and  
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51 subsequent re-translation of an idea would help complete the cycle of institutional translation.  
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TABLE 1 Data Sources

Observation*		Interviews & Meetings		Books, Documents, & Videos	
Site	Hrs.	Interviewee	No. #	Key Documents and Visuals	pp/min
Villages For Africa (VFA) HQ France	3	VFA members	17	VFA Internal docs (incl. e-mails)	138pp
Village Enterprise Incubator (VEI)	100	VEI members <sup>8</sup>	20	VFA Personal diary & blog entries	87
Village enterprises (VE)	18	VE members (MT & BOD)	47	VEI Strategy documents	13
Group meetings	20	Village residents	20	VEs Internal docs (incl. vignettes)	39
incl. Video conferences (remote)	3	Regional politicians	2	Books (2) <sup>9</sup> , academic articles (15) <sup>10</sup>	234
incl. VFA/VEI/VE meetings	8	Social impact investors	3	on Tanzania's (pre-) colonial history	
incl. VFA trainings of VEI	9			Books (5) <sup>11</sup> , academic articles (24) <sup>12</sup> on politics, legal system, & economy in post-colonial Tanzania	675
*Note: Only includes formal observation hours by first author; does not include hours spent in the context by third author [local resident].		Active participation in group meetings	10		
		incl. Video conferences	2		
		incl. VFA/VEI/VE (on site)	8	Videos produced by VFA & recorded TV reports (about VEs)	67min
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>Interviews</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>Books &amp; Documents</b>	<b>1186pp</b>
<b>Observation Hours</b>	<b>141+</b>	<b>Active Meetings</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Visuals/Video Footage</b>	<b>67min</b>

<sup>8</sup> Local representatives of VFA in Tanzania. Nine of these interviews were conducted with the third author in his role as a former VEI member.

<sup>9</sup> Iliffe (1979) and Cornelius (2015)

<sup>10</sup> For example, articles by Meredith Turshen (1977), Marilyn Little (1991), Marjorie J. Mbilinyi (1972), and Tadasu Tsuruta (2006)

<sup>11</sup> Aminzade (2013), Kamei (2016), Lal (2015), Legum & Mmari (1995), Mwakikagile (2016)

<sup>12</sup> For example, articles by Yusufu Qwaray Lawi (1999, 2007), John S. Saul (1974), Priya Lal (2010, 2012), and Ronald Aminzade (2003)

TABLE 2.a *Contextual Conditions: Core Constructs and Illustrative Data*

Core Constructs	Summary of Constructs	Illustrative Data
<b>Historical Suspicions</b>	Villagers (unprompted) remind of past disappointments with the <i>mzungu</i> and their social interventions	<p>“We have this experience with most [foreign] organizations: they do trainings, but they leave. Or they give grants for water pumps and others to help farmers...” (Village resident, Video archives)</p> <p>„...and I heard this consistently from other folks that one of the problems with the big NGOs and even the churches...is oftentimes you have some sort of executives... fly in from the outside periodically to monitor things, get their data, get the photo ops....then fly back out... (VFA, Interview no. 95)</p>
<b>Hope and Admiration</b>	Villagers express hope and admiration when they talk about the initial proposition of the <i>mzungu</i>	<p>“This model is very different from all the NGOs. NGOs come here, implement something, and then move out; while then, the project no longer exists because it is not implemented by anybody anymore. But according to this model, you are given capital, and then through that capital, you have to create your own development. This is a much better model than that of NGOs.” (Village A, Interview no. 27)</p> <p>Observational Data: Villagers are impressed and incredibly excited to meet a <i>mzungu</i>, often with the hope to be listened to and understood. [We] are often followed back to our place, accompanied by laughing children and talkative residents. (Field Diary)</p>



TABLE 2.b Phase 1 – Pre-adoption Translation: Core Constructs and Illustrative Data

Theoretical Dimension	Core Constructs	Summary of Constructs	Illustrative Data
<p><b>Concealing Foreignness</b></p> <p><i>by proponent</i></p>	<p><b>Using Surrogates</b></p>	<p><i>VFA</i> hires local representatives to become the ‘local anchor points’ for villagers and to minimize the presence of <i>wazungu</i> in the villages</p>	<p><i>VEI</i> is established to minimize the presence of <i>wazungu</i> in the villages. <i>VEI</i> consists of “village members from the region that can connect to the members of the targeted villages with their cultural and local background.” (<i>VEI</i>, Strategy Document)</p> <p>“You are the stable part... you’ve been around for a while; you guys know what you’re doing... we want to establish a model based on <i>your</i> hard work... this is the role you’re playing.” (<i>VFA</i> member to <i>VEI</i> member, Discussion No.1)</p>
	<p><b>Political Co-Optation</b></p>	<p><i>VFA</i> uses <i>VEI</i> members to connect to village elites that help convince villagers of the value of the macro-credit idea</p>	<p>“[Involving the village elders] is a perfect way of sharing new norms, and new traditions. More powerful certainly than policy statements, handbooks, and very likely laws – laws that may or may not apply, or at least effectively ‘reach’ these communities. When told by respected community members, and reinforced through ongoing assessment and dialog, then the new norms that align the interest of the investors with the desires of the Village Enterprises have a good chance of being embraced.” (Personal Blog, <i>VFA</i> Managing Director (<i>MD</i>))</p>

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<p><b>Adaptive Conveyance</b> <i>by proponent</i></p>	<p><b>Localized Customization</b></p>	<p><i>VFA</i> pays particular attention to communicating the macro-credit idea in a culturally meaningful and locally accessible way</p>	<p>“We continued to march forward...launching a new training curriculum – heavily dependent on oral tradition (i.e. cases) and highly interactive... Again, I emphasize the need for the people in the villages to set the priorities for their communities and their future...their ideas (not ours).” (Personal Diary, <i>VFA MD</i>)</p> <p>“...I really want to understand... so that we’re picking the right words and those words are being translated appropriately and that we’re doing the things that will help <i>them</i>... (<i>VFA</i> member to <i>VEI</i> member, Discussion no.3)</p>
	<p><b>Ceremonial Affirmation</b></p>	<p><i>VFA</i> uses ceremonies to recognize villagers’ progress in trainings, downplay their perceived dependence on outside help, and affirm their independence and worth</p>	<p>Referring to a training certificate ceremony, the <i>VFA</i> managing director explains: “This is about us getting them energized... they need to feel privileged and excited. That’s what we need to step away at some point.” (<i>VFA</i> members, Discussion, Field Diary)</p> <p>“...probably the Number 1 thing, above all else, is the community. All the good things that are happening, the community says, ‘that’s <i>our</i> village company’. And [when] we have some kind of ceremony...we need to do that so that people are like ‘Man, this is awesome, I love it’...they feel great about it because it’s something that <i>has</i> impact and they can see the future too.” (<i>VFA</i> member to <i>VEI</i> member, Discussion no.3)</p>

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TABLE 2.c Phase 2 - Post-adoption Translation: Core Constructs and Illustrative Data

Theoretical Dimension	Core Constructs	Summary of Constructs	Illustrative Data
<p><b>Cultural Assimilation</b></p> <p><i>by recipient</i></p>	<p><b>Reinforcing a Sense of Inclusive-Exclusivity</b></p>	<p>Villagers that are part of the macro-credit model begin to feel special for being part of it and acquire fame in the region</p>	<p>In a TV interview that was conducted by a local producer, a village resident proudly explains: “[VEI is going] to build capacity and is ethical when giving out money. They build individual abilities within our community [...] we are requesting other organizations in the Manyara region to follow this trend of [VEI]. It is a very new and nice system which never happened before – where we get money as a group to do our business, make profits, and reinvest in community development.” (Village resident, Video archives)</p>
	<p><b>Materialization of Social Norms</b></p>	<p>Villages begin to materialize their social benefits by using their profits to meet social needs in their villages (e.g. a village school) – producing a visual statement of community norms.</p>	<p>Observational Data: Village B uses its profits to build a house for the main teacher of their village school who could often not attend classes in the rainy season as she had to travel from a different region every day.</p> <p>Village B also invests in alleviating village members’ yearly ‘social tax.’</p> <p>Village C uses its profits to renovate their classrooms in the village school. Village D invests in health care coverage for their community members. (Field Diary &amp; Internal Documents by VIA and VEI)</p> <p>“Seeing is believing in these villages. If they don’t see the direct link between the profit</p>

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			<p>that has been made after six month and that it's put into the social need, they just don't believe it." (<i>VFA</i> member, Discussion no.2)</p> <p>"...if the village company could make a huge profit, we could implement a huge social need, and the community would start to understand and cooperate...villagers need to <i>see</i> the impact of the company." (Village A, Interview no. 27)</p>
	<p><b>Emotive Celebration</b></p>	<p>Villagers celebrate the materialization of social norms and their collective accomplishments with colorful festivities</p>	<p>"Celebration helped us share with the community our success of the Village Company, and it was like an opportunity to teach others about the model - how it works, and the benefit of it to them as the community. Also, celebrating was like a relief for us, after a long time of working with the Village Company...On this day we ate, drank...we had traditional dances and were being congratulated by the community. It gave us popularity in the community..." (<i>VEI</i> member re-citing a conversation with member of Village C, Interview no.97)</p> <p>Please see Figure 1 for a visualization and our Findings Section for a vignette of this construct.</p>

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TABLE 2.d Phase 3 – Collision and its Aftermath: Core Constructs and Illustrative Data

Theoretical Dimension	Core Constructs	Summary of Constructs	Illustrative Data
<b>Collision</b>	<b>In-group Shaming</b>	<i>VEI</i> members who are from the region are shamed by other village members for being associated with <i>wazungu</i>	<p>“Some people in the community, they’re saying ‘look, you are a Tanzanian... ‘why are you running away suddenly like this?’ ... so, everybody is sad... some community members even accused me of what we call <i>takasa pesa</i> (‘money laundering’) in Swahili – so they thought I was asking a bribe or illegal cash.... everybody [is] frustrated...” (<i>VEI</i>, Interview no.73)</p> <p>In informal conversations, <i>VEI</i> members talk about feeling “ashamed” and not being able to return to some of the villages to this day. (Field Diary)</p>
	<b>Historically anchored Vilification</b>	<i>VFA</i> members who appear in the villages are met with intense anger and feelings of betrayal and exploitation that are anchored in past experiences with <i>wazungu</i>	<p>“There is <i>no colonialism</i> here anymore. Why are you harassing me? Why are you even here, you <i>mzungu</i>? We are not here to write <i>your</i> story.” (<i>VEI</i> Interview about a meeting between <i>VEI</i> and <i>VFA</i>, emphasis in the original)</p> <p>“You come here to test your model with us, now you get it is not working, then you decide to close. <i>You made us laboratory animals!</i>” (Village B, Interview no. 67)</p> <p>Please also see our Findings Section for a vignette of this construct.</p>

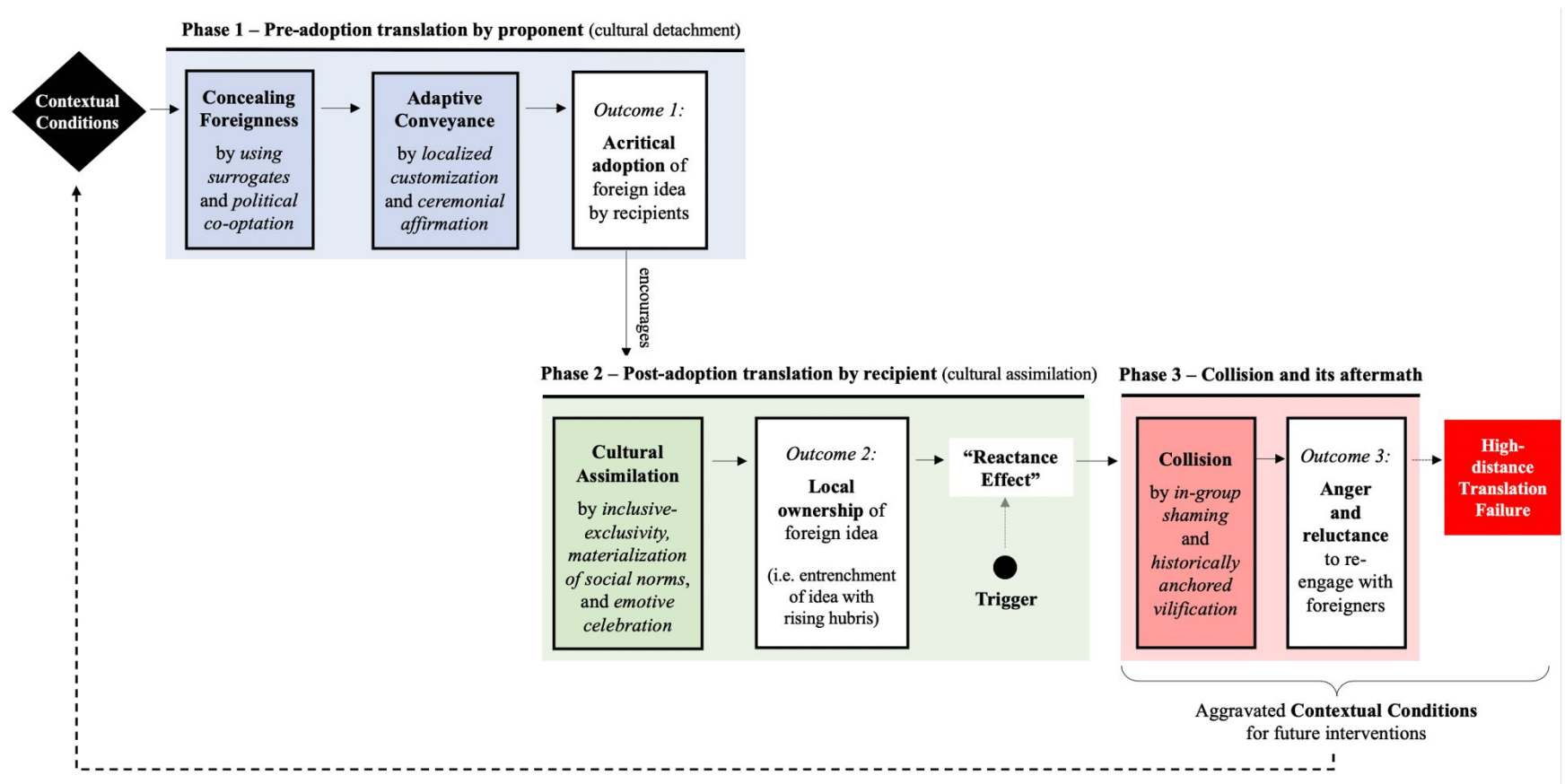
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3 **FIGURE 1 Village Celebrations of Material Social Benefits**  
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Source: Third Author's archive [a village celebrates its accomplishments]

FIGURE 2 Process Model of High-Distance Translation Failure



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