Where in the world is there pro-poor forest policy and tenure reform?

MARY HOBLEY

RIGHTS + RESOURCES

The Rights and Resources Initiative is a global coalition to advance forest tenure, policy and market reforms. Formed by international institutions, local NGO's, and community organizations, RRI aims to assist communities and governments to reduce rural poverty, strengthen forest governance, conserve and restore forest ecosystems, and achieve sustainable, forest-based economic growth.

More than 2 billion people depend on forests resources for their livelihoods, including around half of the 1.6 billion who survive on less than $2 a day. The lack of clear rights to own and use land and trade in forest products has driven millions of forest dwellers to poverty, and has encouraged widespread illegal logging and forest loss. Progress on global goals of poverty alleviation, mitigating climate change and diminishing violent conflict requires strengthening local rights and governance.

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PREFACE

Many countries are now recognizing community ownership and devolving forest responsibilities to local jurisdictions. This transition in ownership is both a response to rights-based movements to increase local ownership and access to forest resources and a strategic policy shift responding to the widespread failure of governments to avoid deforestation, control illegal activities or generate the desired equity of benefits under systems of state forest ownership and control. This transition varies from one country to another based on the biophysical, economic, social or historical reality. Yet there is much that one country and citizenry can learn from the experience of others regarding policy choices and the pace or strategy of reform.

The Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) was created in response to these challenges. At the initial stages of the creation of the Rights and Resources Initiative, the Partner institutions commissioned a position paper, funded by the Ford Foundation, to identify key threats and opportunities for pro-poor forest policy and tenure reform across the developing world. This paper is intended to provide a more considered perspective on the pro-poor potential of the on-going reforms, disaggregating the actors defined as poor and examining the available evidence on the pro-poor impacts of the reforms underway for different categories of poor. Secondly, it examines the reform process in those countries where policy-makers struggling with decisions, summarizing the issues and challenges to provide them a broader and comparative understanding of the challenges ahead.

The author of the position paper was assigned three tasks:

(a) To analyse the threats and opportunities to increasing pro-poor tenure and policy, reforms in the global forest sector over the next decade;

(b) To examine the drivers of change in the different international, national and local arenas; and

(c) With a view to the broader literature on poverty and poverty alleviation, to critically examine the extent to which changing ownership and access patterns are bringing greater livelihood security to the rural poor.

Drawing upon a broad set of poverty reduction and forests and poverty literature, the author identifies a number of reasons why forest tenure reforms can fail to deliver if not carefully designed and implemented to be pro-poor:

- Tenure reform alone has not necessarily yielded pro-poor benefits without complementary reforms of systems which control access and government oversight of the process;
- Use of "community" as a short-hand for the poor can limit critical analysis of local power relationships, miss problems of elite capture at the local level, and an exclusion of poor and minorities in some "customary" institutions;
- Tenure reform has often been incomplete and highly restricted with the state retaining control over high value forests and decision-making, limiting the benefits;
- Sectoral reform has not been accompanied by needed wider structural transformations, and policy change at the sectoral level has often not lead to pro-poor outcomes;
- Since not all rural poor are forest dependent, forests may not be a solution to poverty—too often reforms begin with the forests rather than with poverty alleviation as the primary goal; and
- Capacity building of the poor and their organizations is fundamental and cannot be substituted by NGO or government intermediaries, however important their roles.

We hope this analysis will be of use to government officials, advocates and researchers alike who are engaged in advancing pro-poor reforms.

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The presumptions and assumptions, errors and misinterpretations remain solely my responsibility.

Acronyms

ACICAFOC	Indigenous and Campesino Coordinating Association for Central American Community Agroforestry
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CFE	Community Forest Enterprise
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
CSAG	Civil Society Advisory Group (ITTO)
DFID	Department for International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users of Nepal
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITTO	International Timber Trade Organisation
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
JFM	Joint Forest Management
NFP	National Forest Programme
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forestry Training Centre
RRI	Rights and Resources Initiative
TILCEPA	Theme on Indigenous and Local Communities, Equity, and Protected Areas
UNOFOC	National Union of Community Forest Organisations (Mexico)
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests

Part 1 Understanding pro-poor policy

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Rights and Resources Initiative with an analysis of the opportunities and threats to increasing pro-poor tenure and policy reforms in the global forest sector over the next decade. The analysis examines the international, national and local arenas and the drivers of change at these different levels. It questions the extent to which there is already pro-poor policy in place. It examines critically the nature of poverty as a basis from which to assess the extent to which changing ownership and access patterns are bringing greater livelihood security to the rural poor. It uses poverty as the starting point for looking at forest policy rather than looking at forestry and seeing how it can be made to accommodate a more pro-poor approach.

The paper first considers what is meant by pro-poor forest policy and how to assess whether it is in place. The remainder of this first section is devoted to unpacking the assumptions underpinning much of the support to 'pro-poor' forestry. The second part develops an approach to pro-poor forestry. It analyses the critical factors that shape the potential for pro-poor policy including an analysis of the nature and understanding of poverty to ensure clarity in debate about who are the poor and thus what the differential effects on them are of forest policy and tenure change. It builds on notions of vulnerability, insecurity and well-being1.. It examines the nature of the state and its structures, civil and political society and some of the over-arching trends that enable or disable pro-poor policy. The third part of the paper uses the analysis developed in part two to provide a rough guide to different country contexts and to use this as a basis for recommendations for identifying places and arenas in which to work.

1.2 What is meant by 'pro-poor' policy?

The title of the paper asks a deliberatively provocative question – where in the world is there pro-poor forest policy and tenure reform since the first task facing anyone is to look carefully at what is meant by pro-poor.

One of the conceptual difficulties of this work is defining what is meant by pro-poor policy, I have used the ODI definition of pro-poor as the basis for this assessment:

> 'The aim of pro-poor policies is to improve the assets and capabilities of the poor. These may include, for example, policies that lead to broad-based economic growth, safety nets to ensure the poor are not harmed by economic reforms and shifts in budget allocations so that publicly provided services are specifically targeted to the needs of the poor. Promoting an enabling political and policy environment as well as ensuring the voices of the poor are heard in policy discussions are also key aspects of this agenda' (ODI, CSPP http://www.odi.org.uk/CSPP/Terms.html)

This definition of pro-poor policy does indicate some of the characteristics that should identify whether a policy is pro-poor or not. What it does not do is explain what is meant by 'poor'.. This, as discussed later, is a major issue in terms of ensuring that pro-poor outcomes are achieved, as lumped within the term 'poor' are a host of highly differentiated people with different capabilities and abilities to access and benefit from services and opportunities to have a voice. The second problem is the targeting of identified groups and finally understanding the barriers involved in 'moving from policy to implementation and an assessment of the drivers and actors necessary to bring about pro-poor outcomes on the ground (Bird and Pratt, 2004).

1 'Well-being is used to describe all elements of how an individual experiences the world and their capacities to interact and includes the degree of access to material income or consumption, levels of education and health, vulnerability and exposure to risk, opportunity to be heard and ability to exercise power, particularly over decisions relating to securing livelihoods' (World Bank, 2001:15)

Other studies have demonstrated that assessing the effectiveness of pro-poor policies is historically and culturally contingent. Thus for example Indonesia prior to the financial collapse was vaunted as a success in terms of poverty reduction (not however, pro-poor forestry) but since then the fragility of the changes have been demonstrated, leading to a major rethinking around the nature of poverty and policies to effect sustained change. This highlights the importance of being cautious about apparently dramatic gains that are vulnerable to major shocks such as economic down-turns, and to an assessment of likely effectiveness that takes a long view rather than focused on short-term change. Similarly the definition of what constitutes poverty and pro-poor action is to a certain extent specific to cultures and professional disciplines. Definitions of 'the poor' may vary between and within communities of donor and domestic actors; and analysts may interpret achievements in a given context in different ways depending upon whether they implicitly or explicitly understand poverty in terms of per capita expenditure or human development outcomes (Conway, Rosser and Luttrell, 2004:2). This was certainly the case in Indonesia where money-metric measures of poverty dominated and the discourse around poverty was highly limited. Since the financial collapse the nature of poverty is being re-evaluated to include a more multi-dimensional assessment (Suryahadi and Sumarto, 2001). This requires different policy directions and significantly different on-the-ground approaches to poverty. Following Conway, Rosser, and Luttrell (2004: 2), I use a similar approach to assessing the nature of 'pro-poorness':

- Pro-poor policy is defined by outcomes rather than intent (although I also consider the reasons why there is a difference)
- Assessment of 'pro-poorness' takes into consideration other measures of poverty rather than just money-metric
- Any assessment of pro-poorness incorporates a judgement on the robustness of the gains and includes an assessment of policy sequencing as a means to predict future potential for robust change.

1.3 The forms of 'pro-poor' forestry

For the past 30 years there has been much focus on changing relationships between people and forests. For many countries, over the last century, state control of forestry has been the dominant institutional structure. Yet by the 1980s, there was extensive experience of government failure in the forest sector with widespread evidence of dysfunctional institutions and deteriorating forest-based livelihoods. The state was failing in many areas but the forest sector in particular was highlighted as a sector 'notorious as a locus of corruption, vested interests, rent-seeking behaviour and lack of transparency in the allocation of resource rights' (Blaser and Douglas, 2000). The perceived failure of the state has led to a revisiting of the basic questions about government, what its role should be, and how best it should fulfil this role. The 1978 8th World Forestry Congress heralded this shift in policy with the declaration that forests are for local community development. An important statement from this Congress directed and challenged governments to adopt a wide understanding of the role of forestry within rural development and in particular the need for a change in attitude towards rural people:

> It means encouraging self-reliance, mutual aid and cooperation. It means recognising people as the motive force of development, not simply as the passive object of development. (quoted in Westoby,1985: 320)

This statement followed a decade of thinking, practice and challenge within international forestry spearheaded by Jack Westoby at FAO who in the late 1960s had famously stated:

> 'Forestry is as much about people as it is about trees'. (Westoby, 1968:121)

This statement and the subsequent international debates spawned nearly three decades of large donor-funded programmes for change in the forest sector. In an attempt to redefine the relationships between people and forests, forestry aid programmes have tended to focus on five main areas (Box 1 gives some

more detailed examples) with the intention of providing direct and indirect benefits to the rural populace (Arnold, 2001:5).

1. reform of the forest sector to change the institutional relationships and incentives that govern access to and allocation of rights to forests
2. increasing local participation in forest management to increase flow of benefits (community forestry, joint forest management, collaborative forest management etc.)
3. recognition and titling of indigenous territories
4. support to tree growing on farms
5. developing trade and income-producing opportunities in forest products

Box 1 Examples of potentially pro-poor approaches to forestry

- Over-arching forest sector reform programmes (including Uganda, Ghana, Guyana, South Africa)
- Titling of indigenous territories Latin America and Philippines
- Collectively managed community forests in Latin America – from extractive reserves to social forestry, to ejidos (Brazil, Guatemala, Mexico)
- Recognition of community rights in Africa (Gambia, Tanzania)
- Devolution of state and collectively-owned forests to individual households (China, Vietnam)
- JFM, collaborative management, communities with greater control over degraded resources to rehabilitate (India, Nepal, Cambodia)
- Decentralisation of some decision-making over forests (Indonesia – opening political spaces for local communities)
- Some ethnic minority control over forests through peace negotiations (Myanmar, Philippines, Northeast India)
- Outgrower schemes – where large-scale plantations have become politically untenable (Indonesia, South Africa)
- Co-management in protected areas

Source: Kaimowitz pers.comm.

What these examples highlight is the wide variety of ways in which forests and trees contribute to the livelihoods of the rural poor from those whose livelihoods are based within forest systems to those who live mainly within an agricultural landscape and derive their tree products mainly from their own farms. Access to markets, credit, infrastructure, labour and livelihood diversification opportunities will all also vary across these landscapes. The effects of forest policy and tenure reform on livelihoods thus also vary according to the different social, physical and economic conditions, adding to the complexity of developing policies that are socially, economically and ecologically targeted. In particular it is directly affected by the nature of land policy and land rights and arguably there is little point in trying to reform forest policy without equal and joined-up reform of land policy and legislation.

The first of these areas – forest sector reform – provides the major framework in which more pro-poor forestry can be developed. These reforms were intended to have profound consequences changing the institutional framework for the whole sector. The forestry profession was singled out for change as the main interlocutor between the state and the people. The challenge was laid down to transform the ways in which forestry organisations function and relate to people who live in and close to forests and depend on tree and forest resources for their livelihoods. Much of this change focused on technocratic interventions, restructuring, down-sizing, removing outside the public sector; much less emphasis was placed on internal

transformation through attention to changing systems and structures, dealing with power relationships, and empowering individuals as adults to work in different ways.

As a result of these reform programmes forestry has moved from being a state-centric programme to one in which local people have a varying role from complete territorial control (e.g. ancestral domains) to partial role as managers of degraded land (much of JFM in India). Policy across the world can be seen to be shifting from pro-state to pro-local and increasingly pro-indigenous, with estimates of some 22% of developing countries' forests under community forest administration or ownership (White and Martin, 2002:7; Barry, Campbell, Fahn, Mallee, and Pradhan, 2003) and estimates of community conservation showing there is as much under community management as under conservation in public protected areas (Molnar,Scherr and White, 2004:10). However, this does not imply a linear sequencing of policy change with one policy replacing another and moving towards an ideal of local control of forest resources rather it reflects a contested policy arena, where different policy paradigms operate (Silva et al, 2002). The dominant policy positioning espoused by many development agencies illustrates a belief that increasing democratic opportunity for control over resources will lead to more pro-poor outcomes. This paper considers whether policy can be considered to be pro-poor too and the degree to which there is structural change on the ground.

1.4 The assumptions

Before we move to an assessment of the drivers and barriers of pro-poor policy, first we consider the set of assumptions that appear to guide much of the work underpinning pro-poor forest policy reforms. In crude terms they can be described as follows:

- Poor people live in and near forests
- Targeting forest areas therefore is pro-poor
- Poor people's livelihoods are dependent on forests
- Securing their livelihoods through access and tenure reform is pro-poor
- Community level action is more pro-poor than state-managed processes

Leading from this set of assumptions a simple equation can be drawn:

> *If forests are devolved to the local-level with community tenure and decision-making power over use of forests including commercialisation – it will be pro-poor.*

This paper challenges this equation and looks at the causal reasons. Why has so much forest policy change not actually been pro-poor? There are several dimensions to the answer to this question that the next part of this paper addresses.

- The unproblematic use of 'community' as short-hand for the poor
- The unproblematic use of customary as a more 'pro-poor' approach than working through the state
- The assumption that engagement through civil society will lead to more pro-poor outcomes than those facilitated through the state
- The absence of power analyses and assessment of policy impacts in terms of local power relationships
- The absence of gender analysis (and its implications) despite serious analytical work around this issue in the 1980s
- The unclear but presumed equation between poverty and forest dependence
- Unclear effects of different property regimes on the poor e.g. community private property versus public property with community access rights (or privileges) versus individual property. Currently

there is a lack of evidence as to which of these tenure arrangements might be more pro-poor and under what circumstances – we still do not know[2]

- The assumption of uniform political regimes and their emergence towards some form of democratic decision-making without engagement with the actual nature of the regime and assessing the potential for building new institutional and political frameworks for the forest sector
- Commercialisation brought to the right level and within a supportive regulatory framework will increase opportunity for the poor irrespective of the differential capabilities and opportunities to access resources possessed by the poor

An initial and crude assessment of apparently pro-poor policies leaves us with several conclusions:

- There are two dimensions of change at work – ownership and control. This varies from country to country leading to a public-private continuum with different levels of authority to decide and exclude at the local-level but little evidence or understanding of the differential effects of tenure change on poor people
- Policy change does not necessarily lead to pro-poor outcomes in the absence of wider structural transformation
- Tenure reform does not necessarily lead to pro-poor outcomes where there is a lack of structural transformation and reform leads to privileges (to be extinguished at will by the state) as opposed to rights that can be upheld through a judicial process or that ensure social legitimacy at the local level that can be sustained by poor people.
- Tenure reform is often highly restricted with the state retaining control over high value forests and decision-making
- The focus on participation in forestry does not necessarily lead to pro-poor outcomes
- The presumption that apparently democratic processes of decision-making lead to pro-poor outcomes is not supported by the evidence
- Institutional reform and organisational change has been partially successful and invariably has led to limited change in terms of a more pro-poor organisational orientation
- In most cases the policy reform started with forests and not with poverty and an agenda of reducing the role of the state rather than reducing poverty. Thus policy is rarely informed by an understanding of how poverty is constructed and maintained.

The rest of the paper is devoted to unpacking these assumptions and conclusions from within a pro-poor approach to forestry and looking in some detail at the reasons for them.

Part 2 A pro-poor approach to forestry

2.1 Introduction

In this section we develop an analytical framework through which to understand the drivers and barriers for change in different country contexts. It is structured around a way of approaching contemporary forestry issues from a pro-poor perspective rather than a forestry perspective with a poverty focus. The approach, inspired by Sen, is based on a more differentiated view of poverty (and wealth):

> "A small peasant and a landless labourer may both be poor, but their fortunes are not tied together…we have to view them not as members of the huge army of 'the poor', but as members

[2] The ongoing study by FAO is a good starting-point and should begin to provide some evidence around the pro-poor nature of different property regimes (Reeb pers.comm.)

of particular classes, belonging to particular occupational groups, having different endowments, being governed by rather different entitlement relations. The **category** of the **poor** is not merely inadequate for evaluative exercises and a nuisance for causal analysis, it can also have distorting effects on policy matters" (Sen 1981:21 my emphasis).

It is intended as a tool to assist in developing understandings of local processes of differentiation and of the local effects (or potential effects) of changes in forest policy and administration for the poor, as part of the process of identifying entry-points for pro-poor change in and through forest policy and administration. It is not exhaustive and suggested entry-points will by no means be applicable in all contexts. Barriers operate at several levels – through the policy environment (enabling or otherwise), through the presence or absence of responsive service provision and through poor people's capabilities to exercise voice and capacity to control and access decisions and resources (Figure 1). In this latter element the role of political and civil society is critical as is the role of the elites within these societies (Hossain and Moore, 2002).

Figure 2 illustrates the multiple arenas in which pro-poor policy reform is developed, implemented, negotiated and ultimately experienced by poor people. The discussion in the following sections will look in detail at the different levels contained in these diagrams and include discussion of barriers to pro-poor policy as well as opportunities. The diagram includes both direct and indirect entry-points.

Some of the major trends that potentially affect the connectivity of people's livelihoods with forests are also discussed, since understanding the possible trajectories of these changes will help in the discussion of opportunities for tactical engagement. These include: rapid rural-urban change, de-agrarianisation and increasing commodification.

The major levels of analysis which are dealt with in the following sections are:

1. the nature of poverty and vulnerability
2. the nature of the state and thus civil society
3. the particular features of the forest sector in terms of the enabling policy environment, responsiveness and opportunity for voice (Figure 1)

Figure 1 The governance framework for pro-poor forest policy

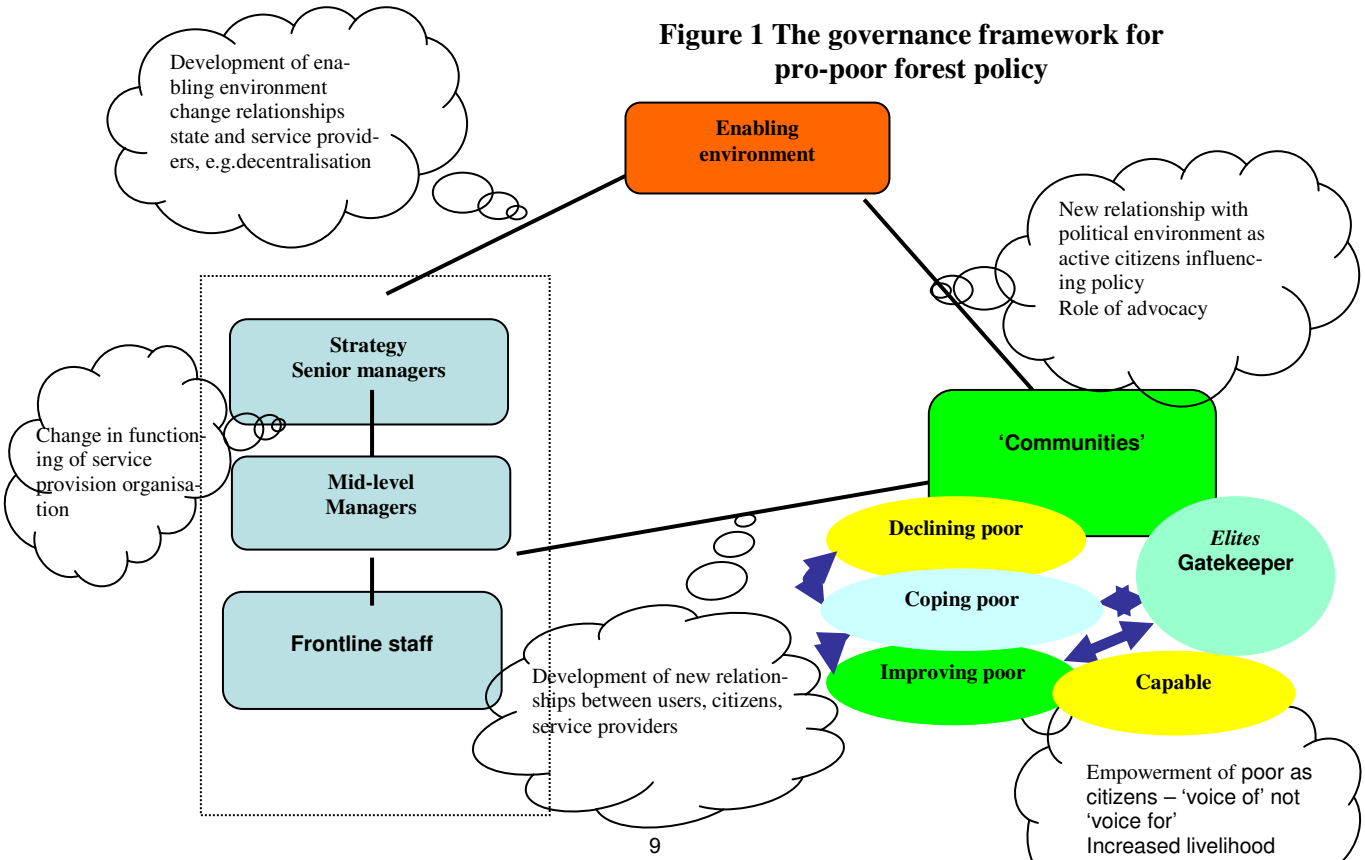
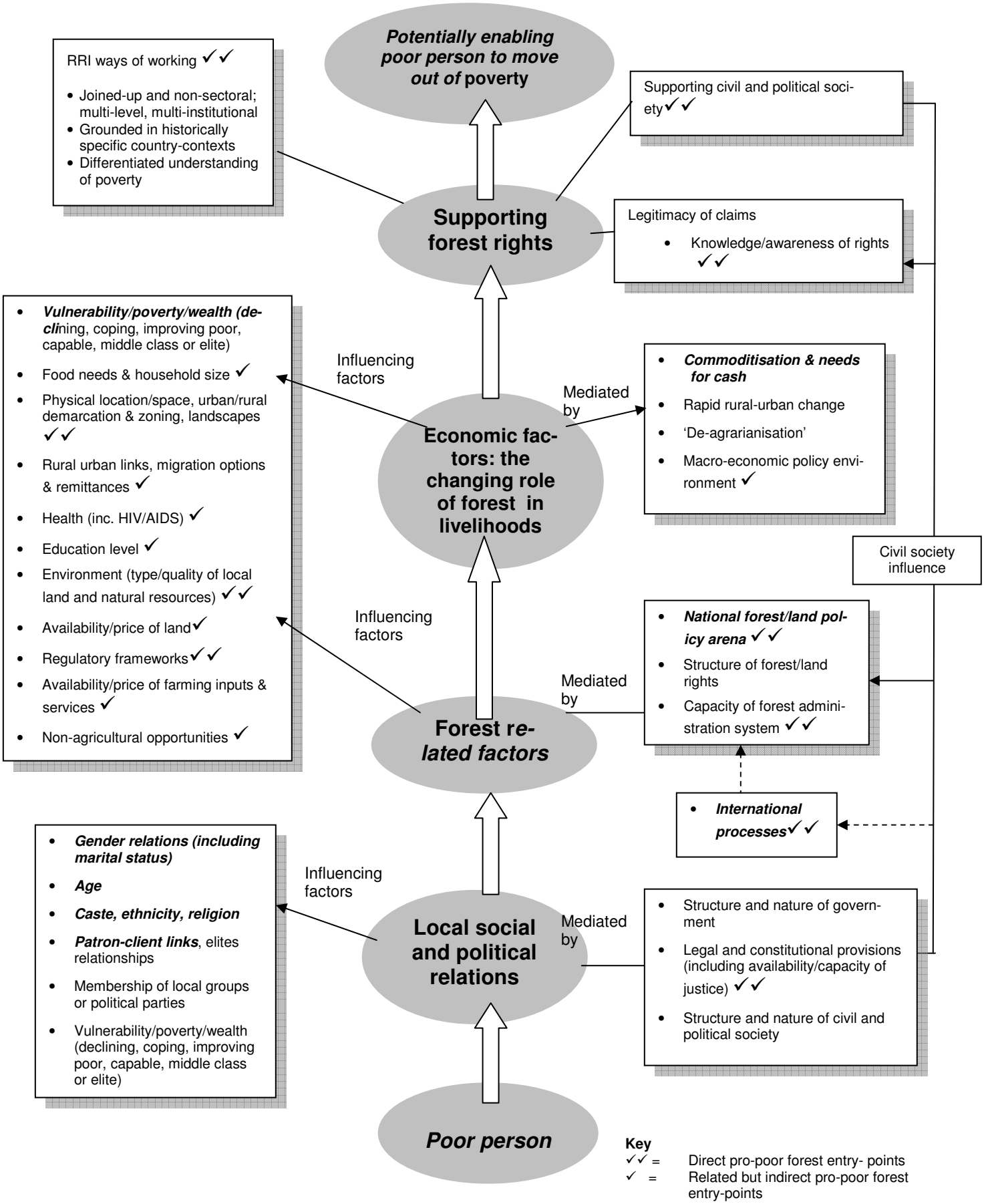


Figure 2A Pro-Poor Approach to Forestry



Source: adapted from Daley and Hobley 2005

2.2 Who are the poor?

One of the major issues about any 'pro-poor' forest policy is the problem of identifying and targeting the poor. The main contention of this paper is that this is rarely done; the reasons being both pragmatic (it is very difficult) and also political (it is not usually desired by elites). Crude categorisations of 'the poor' as discussed below are used for policy purposes leading to spatial identification but cannot and do not deal with the local issues of differentiation within groups. Importantly, the issue of 'voice' of the poor and their capabilities to exercise voice are rarely discussed in a way that leads to transformation on the ground. The presumption that simply providing opportunities for poor people to express their voice (through public meetings, participatory exercises) denies the reality of power relations operating at the local-level which often silence people. It also obscures the other means through which participation traditionally happens through political organisations, mass associations etc, any interventions should be focused on improving the ability of people to exercise voice in these established organisations, rather than developing new groups that are intended to bypass them. We return to this debate when we look at the role of civil society and the approach taken to community in much forest policy.

Challenging forest dependence

Forest dependence is often used as a short-hand for poverty, the assumption being that those who live in remote rural areas tend to be more disadvantaged and thus since forests mostly occur in such areas, people living in or next to these forests are therefore disadvantaged and dependent (Kumar, 2004)3.. Although recent research in Indonesia contests this, where comparisons of well-being between villages with high and low levels of forest resource indicates that those with good forests have better levels of well-being than those without (Dewi et al 2005:1431). Although villages may be forest dependent it doesn't necessarily mean that they are the poorest, it does mean however that there are limited other livelihood opportunities to change the level of their poverty, as Dewi et al (2005:1431) state 'a good forest endowment allows people to live well at or near the subsistence level. The worst-off villages are those with poor resource endowments and limited alternative income-earning opportunities'.

Thus forest dependence is an unhelpful term, its use obscures issues of power, access and control and tends to depoliticise and 'de-genderise' the relationship between individuals and forest resources. The use of the term has led to policy blankets that lump and ignore differential effects and led to an assumption of an even equation between forest dependence and poverty. The couching of the forest dependence argument is often framed in terms of forests as safety-nets for the extreme poor or stepping-stones for those who are already capable, there is a third way in which forest dependence can be thought of – and this is as a slippery-slope. Attention only to forest resource relationships can trap people in highly insecure and unremunerative livelihoods (Arnold, 2001; Angelsen and Wunder, 2003; Sunderlin et al, 2005), and prevent policy from targeting those areas of low resource endowment and poor income-earning opportunities which may suffer more extreme forms of poverty with high levels of livelihood insecurity. The importance of getting the policy narrative 'right' is that it has profound effects across international agencies, national governments and funding regimes, just as Sheil and Wunder (2002) demonstrated in the case of forest valuation.

An emerging more nuanced approach to poverty

There appear to be three levels of understanding of poverty that are beginning to appear in forest policy debates either implicitly or explicitly. The first two are gaining some ground in the literature (Wunder, 2001; Sunderlin et al, 2005) with some indication that they are beginning to be used to inform policy dialogues (Swinkels & Turk, 2004; Snel, 2004)

1. Spatially vulnerable (forest dependence argument)
    - remote rural areas and chronic poverty (Bird & Shepherd, 2003:591)

[3] Kumar (2004) provides a critique in India of the JFM programme and its lack of attention to issues of differentiation leading to discrimination against the poor in terms of forest management regimes and outcomes

2. Temporal vulnerability (safety net argument)
    - seasonal & within life-cycle (Arnold, 2001; Sunderlin et al, 2005)

3. Structural vulnerability (transformative argument)
    - social, economic and political exclusion (Wood, 2003)
    - little or no voice (Cornwall, 2002)

Recent arguments (see Indonesia) have focused around issues of chronic poverty in remote rural areas and have directed policy debate towards the spatially vulnerable, arguing that those in remote forested areas have little other than forests on which to build their livelihoods. In such areas, chronic dependence means that changes in policy that affects forest usage have more profound effects on livelihoods than in those areas where there is a diversity of livelihood opportunity. Across all areas there are those who suffer temporal vulnerabilities for whom forests and tree products may provide seasonal and/or life-cycle safety nets. The third level of vulnerability is suffered either by particular groups in society, often indigenous groups, excluded groups (because of caste or ethnicity) or within communities because of gender, caste or life-cycle positioning. The effects of forest policy change on these groups are again different from others in the same community who are not socially or economically excluded. This is well demonstrated in Vietnam where experience of poverty mapping shows that a poor region has highly differentiated groups within it, where the ethnic minority groups are more disadvantaged than the Kinh people living in the same region (Swinkels & Turk, 2004:5). For some all three levels of vulnerability are in operation at the same time. Structural vulnerability is the most profoundly difficult to change through policy processes and is particularly resistant to change through technocratic solutions without due political process.

Opportunities for understanding poverty

As we go on to discuss, the implications of this are that for a fully developed pro-poor policy process to be put in place attention and action on all three forms of vulnerability needs to be established. Looking at public expenditure and poverty targeting at the different levels of government around these levels of spatial, temporal and structural vulnerabilities can demonstrate the differentiated links between poverty and forests but more particularly to help direct public expenditures to groups of people whose livelihoods are particularly disadvantaged and insecure. This would necessitate a move away from forestry as a sole focus to a livelihood focus for policy and expenditure decision-making.

2.3 The vulnerability/poverty/wealth continuum

This section focuses on the structural issues that maintain people in poverty in order to move beyond the discussions that tend to homogenise the poor or allocate them to broad groupings that does not help in understanding the structural causes to their poverty.

Underlying the approach is a conceptualisation of poverty that has been developed within DFID India (Loughhead et al. 2000) and further elaborated by Brocklesby (2004) and Hobley (2005). This conceptualisation assumes 1) that there is a continuum of vulnerability, poverty and wealth along which different people move at different points in time and life-cycle, and 2) that local social and political relations are important in access to natural resources (albeit that their importance varies according to the local reach and extent of processes of commoditisation (Peters 2004; Woodhouse, 2002)), and that these relations are influenced by people's capabilities for social action (as related to their position on the vulnerability/poverty/wealth continuum).

At one end of the vulnerability/poverty/wealth continuum are the chronically poor, among whom we might find the elderly, orphans (perhaps only transitory), widows in patrilineal societies, people with disability, and people with long term illness and morbidity. In the absence of other help, these people have to rely on responsible and accountable governments, yet they are not well placed to bring about such responsibility in government and have to rely on the agency of others, who are more capable of social action, to this end (Wood & Salway 2000). The chronically poor are thus clearly distinct from other poor

people with greater social and political connections, greater opportunities and abilities to earn cash incomes (and perhaps also greater assets), and therefore with greater overall ability to pursue access to forest resources and forest land claims and gain access to the land needed for their livelihoods. In view of this, we identify three broad 'types' of poor people in this paper:

- **Declining Poor** – people who experience multiple vulnerabilities simultaneously (e.g. poor health, homelessness, very limited cash incomes (often reliant on charity), indebtedness, social exclusion (often exacerbated by breakdowns in family, kinship or community-based support systems)). Beset by high levels of insecurity and with very limited capacity to pursue forest claims and gain access to and make effective use of forest resources and land.

- **Coping Poor** – people who are just about able to meet their basic needs but whose livelihoods are in a precariously-balanced equilibrium. Seasonal fluctuations regularly experienced (e.g. temporary food shortages); absence of buffers also a source of vulnerability (e.g. accessible markets, good crop storage facilities, safe housing, affordable services (financial, health-care etc.)). Usually insecure and risk-averse, often reliant on powerful patrons for support. Limited capacity to pursue forest claims and gain access to and make effective use of forest resources and land.

- **Improving Poor** – people with greater social and political connections, and greater skills, education levels and assets, enabling them to pursue economic opportunities, access and benefit from development services and take positive actions to improve their situation (e.g. invest in preventative healthcare, educate their children). More secure and less risk-averse, sometimes reliant on patrons but with wider networks to draw on too. Greater capacity to pursue forest claims and gain access to and make effective use of forest resources and land.

In addition there will in most contexts be people who are more capable: with sufficient assets to protect themselves against risk they are highly unlikely to fall into poverty (except in cases of major catastrophe such as the recent Asian tsunami; or the financial crises of East Asia). Moving upwards in terms of wealth there will then be people who are part of emergent middle classes and people who can be described as (varying types of) elites. This sort of typology is of course very crude, but if applied in specific social, economic and political country-contexts it may contribute to a more nuanced pro-poor approach to engaging with forest policy change. Table 1 illustrates this point by presenting some implicit and explicit policy choices and their differential effects on poor people. This table crudely illustrates the effects of policy processes and illustrates the importance of understanding the effects at the local-level. It also underlines the importance of looking outside the forest sector to policy change affecting land-use. Perhaps one of the most important contributions could be to the building of a coherent land reform process that considers land whether it is under forests, agriculture or other forms of land use. There are particular moments of opportunity when such support could be vital e.g. when a new land policy is being drafted or when a national forest programme is being initiated; both providing opportunities to build a more informed policy dialogue around land as the basic resource which supports a diversity of livelihoods under a diversity of tenure regimes.

Dealing with insecurity

Looking at these three types in the poverty grouping what separates them is their different capabilities to cope with insecurity and risk and thus their resilience to vulnerability. What also defines these groupings is their levels of insecurity and thus their different levels of interest in asset security and tenure. For the declining poor, we see high levels of insecurity and inability to control even the short-term future. Their time preferences are therefore for any form of support that gives immediate relief from insecurity (as Geoff Wood describes it as the Faustian Bargain, 2003). For the improving poor, we see higher levels of security and an ability to be able to take a longer-term view on building different forms of livelihood assets and engage in activities around social action (Box 3 describes some of the different ways in which this can be used in a forest policy setting).

Table 1: Differential effects of forest change on poor people

Process	Product	Impacts on people		
		Extreme poor	Coping poor	Improving poor
Deforestation	Conversion of forests to agriculture	Lose access to forest resources will not obtain land for agriculture as generally do not have the power to acquire the land; maybe labourers for others but generally too marginalised	Lose access to safety net functions of forest resources; may become labourers for others on converted forest land	Lose access to safety net functions of forest resources; may acquire land under clearance because have better access to influence local decision-making
Degradation	Foods Variety to diets, palatability, meet seasonal dietary shortfalls, snack foods, emergency foods during flood, famine, war etc,	Diminishing access to foods, fuels and medicines make the livelihoods of this group of people even more insecure and more vulnerable to hazards. In areas of high forest cover this group in particular are highly forest resource dependent and most particularly affected by changes in access or reduction in quality of forest. This range of products needs little or no capital investment and is therefore more readily accessible to the extreme poor	The importance of this range of products to the coping poor is two fold: 1) as a safety net and 2) as an income earner contributing to household economies. For women, these are often the only source of income that they are allowed to access and so although a small proportion of overall household income they are of high gender significance.	With a more diverse livelihood portfolio with more assets and opportunities for diversifying this group is not so vulnerable to changes in forest condition. This group are more able to access alternatives to the forest products. Although their need for the safety net functions of the forest remains and without it these households could become more vulnerable and less resilient to shocks.
	Fuels Firewood, charcoal growing importance for urban as well as rural energy needs			
	Medicines range of traditional plant medicines essential to those in remote rural areas distant from other medical services			

	Timber	Reduced access to timber usually has little impact on this group because they have little power to control access to high value resources. Benefits of timber are mostly captured by the elites often in urban centres and not local	This group as for the extreme poor are unlikely to benefit in any direct way from the economic benefits of timber harvesting. Although because of their better social networks and levels of well-being they may have more opportunity to be labourers for timber contractors	With greater ability to take risk and invest in some relatively low cost technology such as chain saws, this group can access some limited benefits from timber harvesting. Being better socially networked they are more likely to be engaged as timber harvesters
	Environmental services	Across all groups the environmental functions of forests are important for maintaining water supplies, inputs to agricultural productivity through improving soil fertility; and providing the range of biodiversity necessary to maintain a robust local ecosystem		
		Degradation of environmental services is again most acutely felt by those who have no other options		For this group their more diverse portfolio and higher levels of risk-taking capacity means that they are more resilient to minor changes in environmental services

2.4 Local social and political relations

The first step of the pro-poor approach to forests calls for an understanding of the local social and political relations that mediate poor people's capacity to pursue forest claims and gain access to and make effective use of forest land and its products. In the first instance forest rights are influenced by basic factors such as gender relations (including marital status), age, caste, ethnicity and religion, which are often a given. Patron-client links, relationships with elites more broadly, and membership of local groups of political parties also have an important influence.

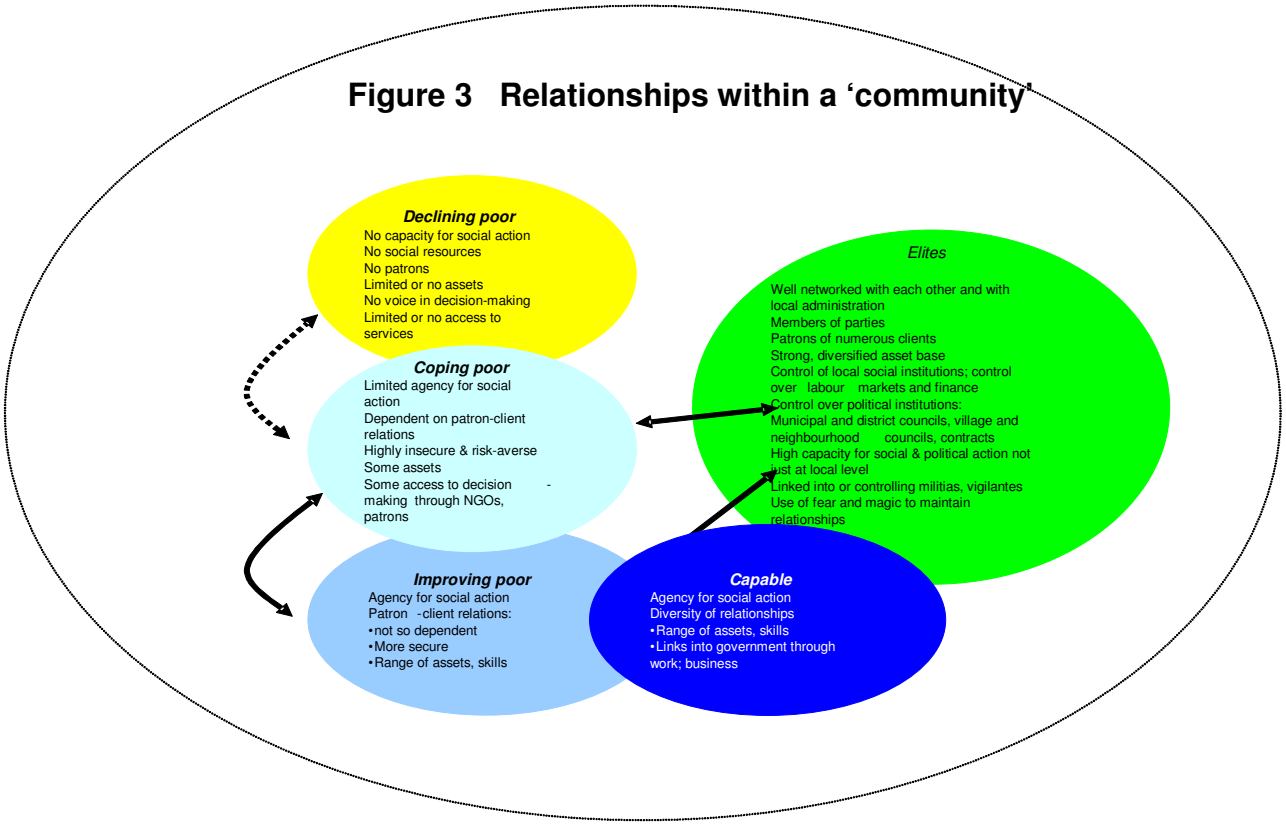
The local social and political relations are critically affected by the nature and structure of the state and the capabilities of the forest administration systems, and the relationship between the nature of the state and the development of civil society. In this section then we consider the effects of the nature of the state on the conditions for forest access

Role of the elites

A major part of understanding the dynamics of vulnerability and poverty are the relationships that maintain people in poverty or encourage opportunities for them to move out. As a fundamental part of this story the role of elites, their connections both with poor people and with others who control the flow of access to forest resources becomes a critical element of understanding. Figure 3 provides a highly stylised view of a 'community', illustrating the diversity of relationships and the nature of poverty. As Arnold states much of the literature that unquestioningly accepts and promotes community-based resource management in the name of the poor is blind to the reality of 'communities that are internally differentiated by wealth, power, class, gender and ethnic identity.' (Arnold, 2001:7). The naivety of the policy process presumes that such highly contested social, political and economic spaces can and will produce outcomes that are pro-poor. Evidence demonstrates that this is far from the case (Edmunds and Wollenberg, 2003; Woodhouse, 2003)

As can be seen from this diagram, simply creating new spaces for poor people to participate in will not necessarily bring about greater popular participation in decision-making or equity in resource distribution.

Figure 3 Relationships within a 'community'



When considering how to build the voices of those who are excluded in planning and decision-making, it is important to examine how these sit within existing relations of patronage and power, and to what extent there is any room for changing the rules to allow different groups to be involved in decision-making. Understanding the role of the local elites is of central importance. This analysis needs also to consider the links of the local elites with national and in some cases transnational elites. Even in those countries where the political system has attempted to provide equality, the power imbalances between people, in this case functionaries of the party in Vietnam and the poor, affect access to resources (see Box 2).

Box 2 The use of public meetings to silence voices

The village meeting and public fora are promoted as an effective means of information dissemination and consultation allowing villagers to participate in decision-making. As Thi Thu Trang (2002:10) writes 'during a hamlet meeting for instance, a person wanted to complain about the forest land allocation policy, but was told by local cadres that such issues have already been discussed in the village meeting that took place earlier, and could therefore not be brought up again.' People feel less at ease to express themselves in the larger commune meetings. Unequal power relations between the cadres and villagers remain a barrier and village meetings often exclude the poor who are trapped in the unequal power structure of the village. Others point out that accountability structures may focus on accountability to elites rather than to the 'poor' and that often village leaders feel more accountable to the leading group and the party in the village than to the poorer members (Jorgenssen, 2001:25).

Just as there is no homogenous grouping of 'the poor', so it is with the term 'local elites'.. This group can be broken down into several categories based on the nature of their relationships with the poor:

- patron-client elites;
- neutral elite (may include the 'capable) possibly few in number but important in beginning to build a more informed and supportive voice for the poor); and
- pro-poor elites (the expectation is that these are very few in number but crucial in terms of building their capacity as 'pro-poor' proxies).

Evidence from studies indicates that power is exerted by the local elites through several mechanisms for example:

- the resources that can be captured (for example social safety net programmes and labour markets, land and resource allocation processes);
- links to the local government – particularly to the executive and holders of project monies; links to the dominant ruling party (e.g. political cadres in China and Vietnam)
- links to contractors, concessionaires, transnational elites
- the position the individual holds in customary systems (the ability to control access to justice and the types of decisions handed out); and
- control over 'muscle' which can be used to intimidate and control forest land access; the use of magic to maintain people in relationships of dependence (often seen in warlord areas to control natural resource exploitation)

What is important to understand is the nature of the relationships that link these different categories together and the ways in which to intervene to enable people to move out of these categories and reduce their levels of vulnerability. This requires thinking that focuses on the relationships between the poor and between the poor, the capable and elites (Figure 3). Box 3 provides some ways in which these different groupings can be harnessed to provide more pro-poor outcomes. It illustrates the difficulties associated with this level of targeted intervention but also shows the importance of recognising and working with the different groups to harness the capabilities of each to advocate or provide entry to more pro-poor outcomes.

This level of understanding and its development within both NGOs and the public sector is a necessary part of effective policy implementation but it does need to take cognisance of the major barriers that often remain in place preventing any serious level of change on the ground including the growing role of transnational elites.

One element of the discussion of changing contexts is the nature of alliances and networks between the elites at different levels. With growing globalisation, this elite now also includes transnational alliances. Forests are now the subject of global commodification processes, finance seeks out opportunities and is now competing at the local level to gain access to forest land and its products. Stories abound of usurpation of local rights in favour of inward investment for concessions for agricultural production, timber, game parks, natural resource extraction, tourism, hunting reserves, mineral exploitation (Hardin 2002, Peters, 2004). Forests are often the locus for this competition providing the last banks of land available with unprotectable rights. These alliances link through the elite networks in-country to the local-level elites. The growing speculation in forest land is driving out the local users with insecure and unprotected rights, and also driving up forest land values. The forms of change have certain geographical specificities: peri-urban areas are particularly subject to these forms of speculative investment. However, with the growing demands for nature-based tourism even previously apparently remote rural areas are now the subject of land speculation (Ratnakiri Province in Cambodia provides one-such example). The connections between urban and rural settings are not just the flow of labour and goods but as importantly include these political connections and alliances that allow privileged access to certain opportunities at the costs of other people's access.

These emerging transnational alliances also illustrate a major point that focusing on the nation-state and pro-poor forest policy alone is insufficient to ensure the emergence from poverty of many rural people.

The implications of this analysis are several-fold:

1. the importance of understanding poverty in a dynamic and differentiated way and thus the provision of different forms of support for those moving out of poverty to those stuck or declining
2. the importance of understanding both formal and informal relations – particularly the complexity of power relations which affects people's capacity to obtain access to resources and constrain others' access and the high risks attached to the poor challenging these political spaces in person or through their proxies.
3. the essential linkages that need to be built in policy dialogues between sectoral policies and those that aim to provide social protection to the poorer groups; and for forestry the difficulties of building pro-poor policies if they do not link into the broader livelihood constraints faced by the rural poor including issues of access to justice

Box 3 'Pro-poor policy' differentiates: controllers of the resource, stepping stones, safety nets or slippery slopes

Elites

- Gatekeepers to networks, resources, decision-making
- Work with to open space for other voices in decision-making
- Contest through advocacy, social movements, supporting democratic processes

Capable:

- Work with as intermediaries to build entry to decision-making, and help articulate voice for others, important not to focus solely on these people, rather than building voice of those who are excluded
- Ensure their access to forest resources and decision-making does not prevent access by other groups by building livelihood security of other groupings

Improving:

- some security to act in solidarity with others
- able to develop capability to build their own voice
- Together with capable most likely to access new forest-based opportunities and use as stepping-stone out of poverty

Coping:

- less likely to be able to use their own voices to challenge power structures
- more likely to be reliant on others to be proxies for their voices (advocacy)
- supporting access to forest-based livelihood opportunities through a combination of social action, protection of access to safety net functions short-term, social protection and investment in human capital – possible slippery slope trapped in low level productive activities highly exposed to market changes, inimical local relations, extra-sectoral policy change

Declining:

- no capability for social action
- close to destitution
- *in need of social protection measures and advocacy locally and outside, protection of safety net functions of forests – slippery slope without development of physical and human assets to provide a level of coping and resilience to small-scale shock*

The need, therefore, is for analysis and action that is not solely based on issues of empowerment and social action.. Of equal importance is the way service providers, state and non-state currently respond to demand, their capacity to alter the nature of that response in future, and developing local government to achieve responsive and democratic interactions with its constituents.

Structure and nature of government

Looking for answers as to whether forest policies are pro-poor or not or indeed whether there is potential to foster pro-poor policy making cannot necessarily be found within the forest sector itself. In this section, we consider the more fundamental drivers of policy change and look at how they determine action within the forest sector. Attributes of the state and its ability to maintain pro-poor policy processes and implementation are key elements of determining the potential for change in forest policies.

The first element of the analysis involves an understanding of the character of the state, as this affects 'the scope for building the political capabilities of the poor '(Moore, 2001:326) and their ability to access and control livelihood opportunities. Importantly too it determines the scope and nature of donor relationships and possible entry-points. For a strategic assessment of where the best potential lies, this analysis is a critical starting point. The presumption that good governance (achieved through democratic transfor-

mation) leads to pro-poor outcomes has been a strong driver of reform in the forest sector over recent years. However, as this section shows this is not necessarily the case.

Broadly and crudely we can divide the world into the following forms (drawing on the work of Manor (1999:2; and DFID 2005 on Fragile States) who describes three ideal nation-state types based on their capacity to perform key tasks (e.g. revenue raising), their degree of centralisation and the manner in which they seek to make their influence penetrate downward into society. The other face of the nature of the state is the nature of civil society and the role it can play in support of transformation or the maintenance of existing structures. For the forest sector, civil society has been considered to be a critical player in advocating for and implementing more pro-poor forestry. Thus understanding the nature of the state also helps us to understand the state of civil society and its capacity to support pro-poor outcomes. The characterisation presented below focuses on the capacity of the state to respond to its citizens and perform the accepted services of the state. The table also categorises around the nature of government and its degree of centralisation. Thus those governments characterised as accommodative are generally those that encourage bottom-up processes and foster civil society. The nature of civil society is that which is permitted by the political regime and the approach a government adopts towards organised interests in civil society (Reuben, n.d). Table 2 presents a rough guide to the nature of the state and the environment it provides for the growth of civil society. To this I add also the development of political society as a distinct process to be assessed as part of developing an enabling environment for pro-poor policy change.

Governments demonstrating the characteristics described in columns 1 and 3 generally do not provide a conducive environment for civil society and often seek to repress it, making it more difficult to support the development of policies that encourage devolution of forest lands to local people. It should be noted that governments shift between these ideal types, Indonesia for example under Suharto was most akin to states in column 3. However since the fall of Suharto it has shifted into a regime more like those described in column 1 with some elements of accommodation that has allowed civil society to begin to develop. Although such tables can reduce complexity to an absurd degree they do help in the analysis of where support can be most effectively placed. This is returned to in Part 3 where a rapid assessment of

Table 2 Nature of political regimes as a function of capacity and responsiveness

(1) Low capacity/centralised	(2) Medium to high capacity/ accommodative	(3) High capacity/centralised
Low or very low state capacity, inability to perform many key tasks, except through the use of coercive power	Medium or high state capacity; some or much emphasis on downward accountability and responsiveness	High or very high state capacity; with strong top-down emphasis
Often a high degree of centralisation; but since little institution-building has occurred, power tends to be personalised; little penetration of lower levels	Less centralisation; an awareness that decentralisation improves regime legitimacy and developmental outcomes; substantial building of institutions (some autonomous); medium-to-strong capacity to penetrate to lower levels	High degree of centralisation, with substantial institution-building; but institutions mainly geared to top-down control and penetration of all levels, including local; power sometimes personalised
Aspiration to control, but achieved only to a limited extent	Aspirations to yield some control, in order to gain legitimacy and improve developmental outcomes; middling to high achievement	Aspiration to control all levels and power centres (except the private sector) and control is widely achieved
Few (or virtually no) roots in society due to state incapacity, serious organisational	Middling or deep penetration of society via sharing of powers and funds, and via responsiveness to	Deep downward penetration by government and strong party organisation gives solid roots in

weakness of ruling party, and unwillingness to be responsive	social groups; party organisations moderate-to-strong	society; but their purpose is to coopt and control
Suspicion and hostility towards independent power centres within government – towards autonomous institutions	Some or much encouragement to independent power centres within government – autonomous institutions and elected lower-level bodies	Suspicion and hostility towards independent power centres within government and towards autonomous institutions
Little clarity in definition and perception of development and poverty	Define development and poverty in broad terms including need for empowerment; seek to tackle all aspects of poverty	Define development and poverty – for the most part – economistically; stress economistic solutions
Little legitimacy in the eyes of the populace	Legitimacy based on openness and responsiveness, plus economic and developmental performance, including growth	Legitimacy based on economic and development performance – mostly economistically defined – with emphasis on growth
Country examples: Bangladesh, Laos, Zimbabwe, Cambodia	India (not all states); Philippines; Botswana	China , Vietnam
Source: Manor,1999; Moore, 2001:326; Torres and Anderson, 2004:19		

One other form of political regime at the extreme that can be identified:

4. Low or no capacity, no discernible or weak forms of central government - crisis states – characterised by conflict, weak central states, high levels of warlordism, gangsterism, incorporation of national elites into transnational alliances based on sales of resources such as diamonds, timber, narcotics (Congo, Somalia)

Warlordism and privatised violence is discussed here as a particular barrier to pro-poor policy development pertinent to the forest sector. It is a growing phenomenon and has particular implications for forest policy. The growth of warlords is intimately related to the overall growth of private, non-state actors in the security sector in Africa in particular; and is an important part of our analysis of potential threats for pro-poor policy change. Warlordism works through networks of patronage and exploitation often through extra-state channels of local and transnational relationships and engages 'in what could be termed a post-Cold war form of 'predatory capitalism' by specializing in the extraction of mineral and oil resources from troubled and failed-states" (Jackson, 2005) Forests provide a resource that allows political actors to construct alternative quasi-governance structures outside the decaying state controlling geographical areas rich in minerals and natural resources to build an economic basis for their form of governance; and providing benefits to those who support their leadership. Nation-state policy processes become redundant compared to those operated by these actors at a lower geographical level, although often highly linked into international networks – illustrating the quote by Mark Duffield (cited in Lyons, 2002) that armed groups 'act locally but think globally'.. The growing experience of privatised violence is exemplified in Indonesia where high levels of perceived injustice are driving local-level conflicts around land allocation and access to forests (Huber et al, 2004). Here, it is gangs of both indigenous and transmigrant settlers who are contesting claims to land and forests and forcing into greater marginalisation those who are already struggling. Issues of distributive justice rank high in the emergence of conflict over resources and in particular the effectiveness of resource policies. Those policies that do not deal with previous resource injustice run the risk of fomenting conflicts at the local-level which invariably lead to non pro-poor outcomes often increasing levels of livelihood insecurity for poorer people (Moser and Rodgers, 2004). Conversely in conditions of governmental breakdown local institutions could provide a basis from which to reconstruct society - emerging evidence from Nepal suggests that forest user groups could become the focus for political and social transformation and act as peace-brokers at the local level, if the growing internal inequalities are managed (Pokharel et al, 2005).

For those states emerging from these positions where timber has been used as a resource to fund conflict, many of the structures set up to perpetuate these systems continue into the post-conflict situation and pervade the institutional structures set up to manage the resources (FAO, 2005). Cambodia provides a particular example of this where political patronage continues to dominate the forest sector and systems of institutionalised extortion provide major barriers to the pro-poor development of the sector (Conway et al, 2004; Le Billon, 2000; Davis, 2005), leaving the sector particularly immune to the technocratic reform processes funded by donors. Indeed the reform process has solidified and built on these patronage systems rather than challenging through changing the institutional framework and looking for innovative ways to link forest resources into the nascent decentralisation process.

Opportunities for engaging with warlordism

There could be opportunities to influence the broader trade and corporate policies for example through working with banks who have adopted the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) Equator Principles focusing on improved social and environmental lending but to build a deeper understanding within the banking world of the effects of financing on poverty reduction. This could include support to initiatives already underway to develop sector specific guidelines which focus beyond issues such as illegal logging to considerations of poverty and livelihood effects and approaches to local stakeholder consultation that take due care to address issues of exclusion by poorer groups. In particular to meet the criticism in a recent review of the Equator Principles concerning implementation of social impact assessments to include meaningful consultation with local communities (Watchman, 2005:17; Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer 2005: 20,22).

As is clear from the previous discussions historic and current analysis of change can provide predictions for the direction of future change but as experience shows crisis can change these predictions virtually overnight; there is no smooth transition from one stage to another (Carothers, 2002). Democracy itself is no guarantor of pro-poor outcomes, and indeed some of the most impressive achievements in poverty reduction have been gained in the most highly steered economies such as Vietnam (see Box 4). This again makes prediction of the conditions necessary for pro-poor outcomes difficult to assess without careful attention to the sequencing of policy reforms. Just as the wider political environment is not amenable to recipe books for change, so too is it the case within sectors. Forestry cannot be made to be pro-poor without attention to these wider political issues, which is rooted in an analysis of the nature of the state, and the political regime as the basis from which to support change.

Box 4 The managed transition: Vietnam

The dramatic poverty reduction seen over the 1990s was primarily driven by a sequencing of development policies. A socialist phase provided basic services which created a solid foundation of human development (a healthy and educated population), while decollectivisation was managed in such a way as to distribute land assets in a broadly egalitarian manner. When liberalisation policies were then introduced, the resulting economic growth was both rapid and broad-based, and lifted a great many households out of poverty over a short perio*d*. The economic growth that began in the late 1980s played out in an economy in which the initial distribution within society of key assets – most notably the physical asset of land, but also human capabilities such as education and health care – was remarkably equal. The result was that, unusually, a rising tide *did* by and large lift all boats. While some groups benefited more than others, almost all benefited, and most benefited to a significant degree. Inequalities widened but remain in international terms low.

Over time, however, it is likely that differences will become more pronounced, as further economic growth results in assets and power becoming concentrated along various dimensions, at various levels. Indeed, it would be surprising if this did not occur. There is a real danger that as poverty rates amongst the majority *Kinh* fall, poverty becomes primarily associated with ethnic minority groups, especially those in the mountainous regions. At the same time, the shift from a planned to a mixed economy has eroded the coverage and effectiveness of state-provided education, health care and social protection services.

Source : Shanks et al, 2004: 69

Beneath this set of crude distinctions lie different forms of formal and informal internal governance structures where the relationships between the central state and local government become an important part of the understanding about how resources are accessed, allocated and used. Part of this discussion focuses on the nature of decentralisation and the effects this has on natural resource administration. This is where diversity overtakes our ability to simplify and generalise and where country-specific analytical frameworks are required.

Challenging the pro-poor nature of devolution and incomplete decentralisation

A common theme of current thinking about forest policy is the emphasis on decentralised forest systems. This is part of a much broader shift in favour of political and bureaucratic decentralisation, seen in donor circles as a means both to improve the allocative efficiency of developing country governments and to build politically engaged citizenries (Manor 2002).

There is an underlying assumption that devolution of control of forest management to the local-level will lead to a more democratic process of resource allocation. The presumption that local-level participation in resource management is purely a positive phenomenon that ipso facto will lead to poverty reduction is one that needs to be challenged. We need to look analytically at participation and ask on what basis poor people participate since there is considerable evidence that local and community level institutions are as likely or more likely to exploit and manipulate the chronic poor as are more centralised institutions (Bird Hulme, Moore and Shepherd,n.d.).

The devolution strategy has been pursued often in isolation of the wider decentralisation processes underway in government. One of the key questions this raises is the level to which decision-making and allocatory authority should be devolved and which level is more likely to lead to pro-poor outcomes. The parallel development of devolved resource management and political decentralisation is already leading to problems as noted in Nepal (Bhattacharya and Basnyat, 2005:154). Ribot (2001, 2004) called for a process of integration rather than parallel development where careful development of local government as the locus of natural resource allocation could begin to build more representative and accountable interfaces.

Clearly without systematic attention to the development of effective local government and representative political parties responding to their constituents rather than the central party, the danger of corruption through local government and through resource-based groups remains high. In addition to the difficulties of developing effective political decentralisation is the nature of the relationship between central and local government and the tussle over valuable resources and their control.

Conway, Rosser, and Luttrell (2004:12) in a synthesis of a four country study noted the difficulties caused by the proliferation of local sectoral institutions and their distance from local government structures: 'one of the key difficulties may be determining the relationships between these new local democratic structures and existing sector-specific representative bodies such as village forest management groups which have been created over the years in largely ad hoc attempts to increase the inclusiveness and accountability of local level natural resource management and service delivery. It can be quite hard to manage the consolidation of functioning sector-specific representative bodies under a general-purpose democratic local government without creating opportunities for local corruption'.

One of the major problems identified in many decentralisation processes is that the central state retains the allocatory powers and revenues over the more valuable forest areas (e.g. Cambodia), or indeed takes it back in the case of Uganda where reserves previously under the control of local government were reallocated to central government and Nepal where government is attempting to charge taxes on forest products from community forests (Dempsey, 2002; Springate-Baginski & Blaikie, 2003). This coupled with inadequate attention to developing the effective capacity to manage forests resources at the local level leads to the often experienced failure of local government control of resources (Uganda being a good example of this where incomplete institutionalisation has led to district governments without effective local government forest services and indeed reserves that can produce only limited revenues). In Indonesia, the incomplete and contested state of decentralisation continues to create conflict between the allocatory and revenue control rights of local and central government most clearly seen in contests over local policy changes which challenge central government policies (Ribot, 2004) or the central state fails to complete decentralisation such as in Mali (Ribot, 2004) leaving local governments with the legal power but not the geographical domains to control.

There have been a series of critiques of both decentralisation practices and its effects on forest access as well as devolutionary practices (Ribot, 2004). The empirical proof of the benefits of devolution to poor people is lacking and the experience thus far questions the extent of benefits (see Box 5 which provides some of the conclusions from a series of studies conducted by Edmunds and Wollenberg, 2003). Undoubtedly community forestry and its like have changed the benefit structure in the sense that more stays at the local-level what is not so clear is how much penetrates down to the poorer members of communities. Recent work from Nepal, where the community forestry and leasehold approaches have been practised for two decades points to growing inequalities with poor people's access to forest resources reduced and rights unrecognised by others (Pokharel et al 2005: 31-32 provide a trenchant critique of the failure of community forestry to reach the poorest; Malla, 2000; Karmacharya et al, 2003; Nurse and Malla, 2005).

However, as the case made by Ribot (2004) states it is too soon to decide whether political decentralisation of resource management is more or less pro-poor. In many cases full political decentralisation has not occurred and even where it has the immature state of political society and the capability of people to effectively represent themselves or claim their rights leaves a power vacuum at the local-level ably filled by the elites. In many cases what is being discussed under the name decentralisation is actually privatisation of the resources to named groups, such as customary authorities, user groups within a particular village or other forms of bounded and exclusive interest groups. As Woodhouse (2003) comments such privatisation and its effects on the poor needs to be given careful consideration, and should not be considered in the same breath as decentralisation, which in theory retains some degree of state authority over the resource with another axis outside the 'community' to ensure fair distribution. It also should not be confused with co-management practices which are a devolved arrangement between central public sector forestry organisations and their local staff with local forest users outside the purview of local government.

However, even with effective political decentralisation the nature of forests makes it likely that they will be exploited for profit and most likely by those who are in positions of power rather than those in positions of livelihood need. What is clear is that there is still much to understand about decentralisation and the relationships shown in Figure 4 Part 3. In particular the role of the central government is a critical element in developing more pro-poor outcomes from decentralisation (Tendler, 1997; Crook and Sverrisson, 2001; Ribot, 2004).

Box 5 The effects of devolution in forestry

- **Limited transfer of authority with limited pro-poor effects** devolution appears to be transferring little or no authority to local forest users and is having, at best, no significant positive impact on the livelihoods of the poor
- **Lack of local accountability** local institutions set up under devolution have often been accountable to forest departments and other government offices, rather than to local people with the possibilities of genuine co-management being quite limited
- **Disadvantaging the marginalised** not proportionately benefited women, ethnic minorities or the very poor (i.e. those groups who are generally politically disadvantaged who were often unaware of the implications of policy reform or unable to affect policy implementation to protect their interests)
- **Small income improvements** gains in income have been relatively small for most people and often overshadowed by negative trade-offs in resource access and control
- **Undermining local institutions** pre-existing local institutions have been undermined by their lack of legal standing and clear property rights relative to institutions that are newly created or sponsored by government
- **Trade taken over by elites** policies that expanded opportunities for locals to sell forest products directly, poor and minority men and women often lost their place in the trade to elites within and outside of the local community
- **Regulatory frameworks as major barriers** states impose excessively burdensome regulatory frameworks making it difficult (time and financial costs) for poor to enter markets
- **Increased state penetration – territorially and in terms of decision-making** state retained control over management decision-making (India); and had through JFM arrangements extended its control into local areas; building alliances with local elites to control decision-making

What emerges from this discussion is the importance of looking at how to decrease the negative effects of sectoral committees on democratic decentralisation by (Manor 2004:209):

4. integrate user committees with locally elected councils increasing the potential for downward accountability to voters rather than the continued upward accountability of user committees to the bureaucrats who control the particular resource sector; enabling the often considerable financial resources of user committees to be placed within the elected councils' framework
5. build integration of users into the higher level political systems improving access to information that flows through a political rather than bureaucratic system
6. deal with issues of local-level sectoral fragmentation where projects focused on particular sectors lead to isolation of development initiatives, proliferation of separate sectorally-based committees and often unintended consequences on livelihoods, enhancing the coordination roles of local councils and their ability to build more effective relationships with bureaucrats

Comparative studies analysing the effectiveness of decentralisation processes in terms of pro-poor outcomes reveal the importance of the nature of central-local relations (Crook and Sverrisson, 2001:48) where the most successful cases had 'central governments ideologically committed to pro-poor policies but critically prepared to engage with local politics to challenge local elite resistance and to ensure implementation. In the least successful cases central government used funding to consolidate alliances with

local elites based on the availability of patronage opportunities'.. These processes profoundly affect the ability of policy to deliver pro-poor outcomes, as evidenced from many countries including Cambodia (Independent Forest Sector Review, 2004), Bangladesh (Bode (2002) in a detailed study of local power relations and capture of development resources; Khan 2001 in a critique of social forestry which reinforces rather than challenges the existing patronage structures; Porro and Stone, 2005 on Brazil).

Opportunities in decentralisation and devolution

As the 'pro-poor approach' to forestry illustrates, there is a need to engage in different arenas, one of which is the decentralised government arena. Entry-points clearly differ according to the stage of decentralisation and imply a sequencing of approaches according to the political regime:

1. From where forest resource management has been fully decentralised to democratic local government
2. To where forest resource management decision-making and actual management remains part of central government working through centralised structures

Where there is an active process of political decentralisation in place„work with local governments around poverty planning and expenditure can build evidence of forest-related poverty integrated into a livelihood-based analysis as a means to initiate greater accountability between local government and its citizens living in forest areas. One key area for work here (which is discussed in more detail later) is the distribution of forest revenues between the central and local governments and the implications this has in terms of pro-poor outcomes and incentives for maintenance of forests by local governments.

Pilot work to integrate sectoral institutional structures into elected local councils provides another important opportunity; these pilots can helo to look at issues of voice and increasing livelihood security through decentralised planning and budgeting systems. Linked to this is support to elected local representatives at the lowest level (village, commune etc) up to district and provinces to build a) a greater understanding of the nature of poverty, vulnerability and use of forest resources and b) support to NGOs working to increase civic engagement and more representative constituency-based politics

Community and customary as the panacea

Despite growing evidence and significant work focused on understanding differentiation (Hobley, 1987; Peters 1996, 2004; Ribot, 2001; Woodhouse, 2003; Manor, 2004), the tendency to posit community and customary systems as the panacea to pro-poor forestry continues. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is the origins of the community-based natural resource movement which did not emerge from a pro-poor agenda but from a strong anti-statist position (Silva et al, 2002; Li, 2002). There was a strong presumption that devolution of management to the local must be better both in social and ecological terms to that of management under state control. The early social forestry literature in India and the movement emerging from it, posits community as a relatively unproblematic solution to the poor management and anti-social record of the forest departments. This period dominated by populist movements saw 'everything local and indigenous as good and everything of the state as bad' (Ribot, 2001:7). The widespread and apparently uncritical use of community today and in the past led one early commentator to describe it as 'the aerosol word of the 1970s because of the hopeful way it is sprayed over deteriorating institutions' (Jones 1977 cited in Bryson and Mowbray, 1981). Assumptions about homogeneity need to be replaced with greater recognition of conflicting interests within communities. 'This means that those working with communities need to recognise when community interventions become part of the legitimating process which ultimately supports existing social relations' (Bryson and Mowbray, 1981).

The community development model followed a highly managerial approach prevalent across the rural development landscape, focused on organising groups of individuals for ease of access for input supply or management of a particular interest. This managerial approach supplanted a more politically nuanced approach based on understanding relationships between individuals and their capabilities to be effective within groups. The results from this in conditions of weak empowerment of the poor are overwhelmingly

ones of elite capture (see Box 6 for an example from Cameroon). It was also based on the notion of an autonomous 'community' which in West Africa is a particularly problematic concept (Amanor, 2003:18, as it is too in Southeast Asia see Li, 2002) with social networks that cut across urban-rural spaces based on migration and patron-client connections.

Box 6 New social stratification, new social elite: capture of community forestry in Cameroon

'..it is the well-connected elites who can mobilise networks of people to pose as community groups. The initiators of community groups are often non-residential elites who use their social connections, information, and experience to process community forestry applications…..Many of these applications are submitted by political leaders, such as mayors and deputies, who have traditions of acting on behalf of timber companies in whose fortunes they often have a stake. Timber corporations have sponsored the formation of community forest groups, using them as a front for illegal logging activities, and rapidly logging out the community forest with little if any benefit to the village.'

Source: Amanor, 2003:17; Oyono, 2004a:30; 2004b:101

The large amounts of money being disbursed through community based development initiatives outside normal political structures are leading to corruption of local institutional development where local leaders become increasingly accountable to donor agencies rather than to those they represent (Platteau & Gaspart, 2003:40). Over the years there has been growing attention to issues of inclusion but generally the attempts to build inclusive processes have been clumsy and ineffective – insisting that presence equates to ability to influence outcomes, which as the evidence shows is not necessarily the case (Hobley, 1996, Manor, 2004). Many of these groups are far from representative. Even in countries such as Nepal where community forestry has been underway for over two decades there is widespread acceptance of the problems of capture of decision-making and benefits by local elites (Kanel, 2004:12; Allison et al, 2004: 178) but still limited practical answers to solving these problems. As Peters (1996) pointed out effectively when decision-making authority over valuable resources is devolved to non-representative groups 'participatory approaches facilitate private monopolies'. The very act of making groups exclusive, membership based immediately implies that there are those who are excluded often on grounds of gender or class, and usually the poorest within the population. Even where they are not excluded their ability to be effective members is highly circumscribed by their social relationships and the prevailing social and cultural structural inequalities (Agarwal, 2000: 52; Monterroso, 2002; Box 7). Experience in Brazil of community based timber projects shows that a failure to address gender issues has resulted 'in men having almost exclusive access to and control over the management and selling of timber' (Porro and Stone, 2005).

Box 7 Co-opting public spaces for participation the importance of gender

'User committee selection processes are not secret. Voters' preferences are visible to all – including powerful local figures on whom some voters are dependent and/or whom some voters have reason to fear. This can easily inhibit voters from poor and vulnerable groups from expressing their genuine preferences. Moreover people from such groups often tend to avoid attending public meetings in the first place' (Manor 2004)

'I dare not speak out in case people laugh at me' (middle-aged woman in public meeting in Dorset village, UK)

'There are women on the committee; there is one woman from every household. Whether women are called to the meetings or not depends on the amount of work at home. They are called to the meeting if their participation is urgent…Calling all the women to the meeting just hampers the progress with the agenda because discussion is not substantial…it is true that women are the real users of the forest but our women have not yet participated in the meetings. They don't know much, they can't give solid opinions. Let me tell you one thing, I am a man, I attend the meeting. If I am prepared to make the female members of my family act according to what I say, why should they attend the meeting?'
(Nepali male villager cited in Hobley, 1996:148).

Attempts to empower women through separate self-help groups do not appear to have aided their capacity to engage in mixed settings (Rai & Buchy, 2004). Research by Agarwal (2000) indicates that they have sharpened gender segregation in collective functioning. Although separate groups maybe an initial precondition they are not sufficient, and require significant external facilitatory investment to build women's confidence and men's acceptance of women's role in decision-making. This is not simply a case of fairness between genders but rather has efficiency implications for resource management and livelihoods, particularly where male decisions have major effects on female livelihoods (Arnold, 2001).

The local-level structural issues are reproduced at the meso- and macro-levels, and in many ways present even more difficult barriers to change. This is well demonstrated in some of the federations such as the Federation of Community Forestry Users of Nepal (FECOFUN) which requires 50% participation by women, according to its constitution, but has had difficulty implementing this (Agarwal, 2000: 53). To date there has been little work that looks at the gendered effects of forest-based federations, although there has been some work looking at the poverty and representational aspects of FECOFUN with the finding that 'the impact, at the local level, particularly on poor and marginalised users, has yet to materialise' with no representation of the poorer forest users within the governance structures of FECOFUN (Timsina, 2003:70-71).

Perhaps what these lessons point to is the difficulty of transforming structural barriers to decision-making and resources simply through one sectoral process. In societies where political participation of women and poorer people is low, it is highly questionable whether building participation through sectoral groups can be effective or sustained without attention to wider political participation through political parties, local government etc, and through attention to wider livelihood security issues and issues of dependence on patrons and elites.

Just as community is a highly problematic term, so too is the push towards reasserting customary systems. In an era of fast increasing inequality customary systems are not immured to these changes. There is now a dominant, widely-held view that the ambiguity and fluidity of many 'customary' land tenure practices are positive features that enable continuing forest and land access for the poor and do not necessarily produce insecurity or increase inequality. Simply ignoring or downplaying processes of differentiation and local politics and power relations does not make them go away:

> "When competition for land intensifies, the inclusive flexibility offered by customary rights can quickly become an uncharted terrain on which the least powerful are vulnerable to exclusion as a result of the manipulation of ambiguity by the powerful" (Woodhouse 2003:1715).

Allocating decision-making power to 'communities', customary systems and authorities has particularly serious implications for women's land and resource access rights and those of the poor (e.g. Tsikata 2003 on Tanzania; Whitehead & Tsikata 2003 on Sub-Saharan Africa; Guggenheim n.d, Campbell, 2002:116; Huber et al, 2004 see Box 8 on Indonesia; Agarwal on community groups in South Asia, 2000; Gautam, 2004; Malla et al, 2003 for Nepal; Amanor 2003 West Africa). This is because customary systems of land allocation and dispute settlement tend to be dominated by elites, and usually men (e.g. Tsikata 2003; Whitehead & Tsikata 2003:79, 98; Dempsey, 2002).

Feminists and women lawyers have taken the lead in making a case for the role of central (national) governments in maintaining and protecting the rights of women and the chronically poor through constitutional and legal provisions that proscribe discrimination, and particularly discrimination that takes place under 'customary' law; it is thus argued that there is an important role for central governments as providers of policy that protects the rights of the poor (Tsikata 2003; Whitehead & Tsikata 2003; cf. Tendler 1997:145; Bracking 2003:28; Woodhouse 2003:1718).

Box 8 *Adat* as the social panacea?

'…*adat* law is unwritten, known only by (male) elders and not readily appreciated by the younger generation. It tends to be a conservative way to solve personal rather than social problems, and works principally through charisma and decision-making of the leader alone. Social problems require broad participation in decision making for lasting solutions. *Adat* leaders, and therefore decision-makers, tend to be exclusively men, thereby excluding voice and aspirations of women in decision-making. (Huber et al, 2004:30)

Box 9 illustrates some of these recent critiques of community-based natural resource management. They bear repeating here as they provide some clear guidance for the future and an illustration of why a more power-based and differentiated analysis of community and poverty is required.

Box 9 Why community-based management is not necessarily pro-poor

1. ***Naïve understanding of community*** The implausibility of expecting that policies seeking poverty alleviation through community participation will be driven by communitarian values of social solidarity, that is, a different set of rules from those of the market which are expected to prevail elsewhere.
2. ***Customary authorities – guardians of the elites*** Implementation of programmes designed to formalise village jurisdictions to improve resource management, such as *Gestion de Terroir* in the Sahel, quickly made evident that customary authority of the village resided in the heads of lineages of cultivators, who regarded rights of pastoralists or immigrant farmers as entirely subordinate to their own, so that community based management excluded participation by such stakeholders in decision-making
3. ***Incapacity of state institutions*** Empirical evidence from case studies suggests that state agencies' intervention in many parts of rural Africa may be ineffective or absent, so that natural resource allocation decisions are largely governed by customary authority. What such cases demonstrate is that land users holding customary rights to land are capable of achieving rapid changes in land use and increased productivity in response to market opportunities. As with intensification of resource use elsewhere, however, these changes tend to be accompanied by a growing differentiation between winners and losers, and little evidence of security for the poor.
4. ***Differentiated communities*** The heterogeneity of most communities signifies divergent and possibly conflicting interests of different community members in the use of a resource, offering as much chance of conflict as consensus in resource management at the level of a 'community'.
5. ***Commons require exclusion*** The presumption of excludability for well-managed community forests drives therefore winners and losers – usually exclusion is practised around those holding secondary or derived rights, often women, pastoralists, incomers or 'strangers', seasonal NTFP collectors.

Source: Hobley (1996: 146-153); Woodhouse (2002:15)

Leading on into a discussion of the nature of devolution and decentralisation, another major critique of the community forestry movement lies in issues of state penetration into community spaces (Agrawal 2001; Hobley 1996: Sarin 2005; Contreras 2003:127). This includes increasing the opportunities to extend patronage into the local levels through the use of financial resources by lower-level forest service staff and also their opportunities to extract rents (Baumann et al, 2003:31). Agarwal, researching the van panchayats, or village forests, of Kumaon, observes that joint forest management has allowed the state to 'outline the ways in which resources can be used, define who is empowered to use these resources and to extend their control further and more intensively into given territories'; Sarin et al (2003), in a recent critique, also point out that JFM has legitimised state control in arenas where previously resource management and allocation decisions had resided at the local-level. Perhaps the counter-balance to this autonomy view of the local could be the view that positions the state as the protector of poorer people's rights of access to resources. In the absence of a poverty and power-based analysis of these long existent systems it is hard to assess under what circumstances state penetration is pro-poor and necessary or otherwise strengthening of centre-local alliances of patronage and control.

Opportunities to become more rigorous in defining community

There is a need to analyse more completely the differentiated nature of poverty and thereby inform policy and practice both within international agencies supporting community-based development as well as national governments being encouraged to develop such approaches.

Given the increasing interest in the use of alliances, caucuses, or federations this is an area that would benefit from such analysis and the mechanisms for building more effective representation of those groups in society whose voice is normally excluded from such spaces.

The other part of this is to link work around decentralisation, the role of the centre as protector of the interests of the poor to a more nuanced and differentiated understanding of community, the nature of political representation and the power relationships that prevent access to decision-making and resource control. This is discussed further in the opportunities section on civil society.

The nature of civil society

Much of forest policy in recent decades has focused on the provision of services through NGOs, in an attempt to reduce the role of the state in forest management and to devolve management to the local level. NGOs have been an important part of this process acting as facilitators of community-based management as well as advocators and formers of group-based management systems at the local level; and advocators of change in international processes particularly for the recognition of local forest rights (Humphreys, 2004). There tends to be a set of assumptions that NGOs and indeed civil society as a whole is more likely to be pro-poor than the state.

The shift to support of NGOs (written as short-hand for civil society by many) in the 1980s and 1990s arose out of an ideological suspicion of the state and paralleled the strong push towards community management of forest resources and the seeking for alternative forms of institutional relationships between the state and its citizens; including partial removal of the state such as through joint and collaborative forest management arrangements. Much has been claimed for the pro-poor nature of such interventions but there is still much to be challenged about the substance of these claims. Carothers (1999) provides a useful summary of the critique and assumptions underpinning the strong civil-society centred approach to pro-poor forestry (Box 10).

There are several areas in which support to civil society apparently brings gains including influencing policy-making (depending on the interest group providing the influencing); improving service delivery and in the case of forestry often being the main facilitators of new linkages to the market or into new forms of forest management practice; monitoring and holding to account the public sector service providers (in India the NGOs in particular have provided a strong challenging voice to some of the more contentious actions of state forest departments – including in Madhya Pradesh (Sarin et al, 2003). Building the voices of the poor through networks and alliances – with some notable examples including FECOFUN in Nepal and ACICAFOC in Central America (although as has already been discussed the question of representation looms large in these federations too). Providing advocacy on behalf of particular interests including biodiversity as well as those of tribal groups, ethnically marginalised groups, the poor etc; and building constructive state/society engagement mechanisms (examples of multi-stakeholder forums across the world illustrate this latter point). Although these elements of action are all important and have to a varying degree provided some level of change, there are now some significant questions to be addressed as to whether, what and how civil society should be encouraged and supported.

Box 10 Contesting civil society

A critique by Carothers (1999) highlights several key issues that affect the role of civil society in the forest sector:

- *'NGOs are at the heart of civil society'* – much energy and resources has been focused on developing the role of advocacy organisations to proclaim on behalf of a variety of public interest causes associated with forestry. The burgeoning of these groups (see Indonesia citation) is often at the expense of more 'traditional' associational and political life and tends to be dominated by elite run groups that have limited ties to the citizens they purport to represent
- *'Civil society is warm and fuzzy'* – the idea that civil society inherently represents the public good is wrong because the public domain is highly contested, often they are single interest groups, rarely interested in balancing different views of the public good. This is particularly the case between those NGOs arguing for biodiversity interests in the forest sector versus those concerned with improving the livelihoods of those who live within forest areas.
- *'Strong civil society ensures democracy'* – although often important it only holds true where there are strong political institutions, weak political institutions can become subverted by strong civil society (a potential problem emerging in Indonesia which may undermine attempts to build a more just allocation of natural resources). '..a proliferation of interest groups in mature democracies could choke the workings of representative institutions and systematically distort policy outcomes in favour of the rich and well-connected'
- 'Democracy ensures a strong civil society' – the evidence does not support this - 'political parties and elections are what ensure a pluralism of political choices'. Countries with weaker civil society do not necessarily have less effective and inclusive decision-making processes or less pro-poor in their outcomes. In India the strengthening political society is beginning to build a more informed debate about environmental choice and livelihood effects.

There are two essentially different views of civil society - the corporatist view that sees civil society as a third sector (situated between the state and the private sectors) to be managed downwards to user committees (usually sectorally focused such as village forest committees), through practices such as community driven development which tends to bypass and depoliticise development. In this view civil society is seen as an autonomous sphere from the state and something that can be developed irrespective of the nature and capacity of the state itself (Manor, 2002).

The second view is a more political one which sees civil society as an intrinsic part of the political process of the state and focuses on building political representation and accountability, political mobilisation and thus a more direct connection between citizens and the state. This second view is well captured with a quote from a recent publication from the Centre for the Future State (2005:46):

> "Civil society should not be considered as an autonomous sphere which should be strengthened to put pressure on the state, but as a collection of interest groups that are themselves reliant on having effective state institutions in place, and which form and reform in response to state action – and inaction. In turn, the ability to aggregate interests and to channel them through **representative** institutions is an essential ingredient in creating state capacity to respond. This points to thinking much more politically about the dynamics between state and society"

The problems of the corporatist approach are that it ignores the nature of the state and its role as guarantor of civil society and does not recognise the importance of the three-way dynamic between an active central government, local government and civil society (Tendler, 1997). Tendler's work, supported by a review of decentralisation practice in several countries by Crook and Sverrisson (2001) shows that pro-poor outcomes are heavily dependent on the effectiveness of this three-way relationship where the role of the central state as protector of the poor is crucial. In the 'corporatist' approach civil society is seen as a

parallel and even alternative track to support to governmental systems. Thus creating parallel systems for asserting claims which can delegitimise the political system and often-times cannot be sustained into the longer term (Putzel, 2004:2). The corporatist approach is associated with an unproblematised view of community.

Opportunities in the role of civil society

For pro-poor outcomes, political analysis is an essential pre-requisite to any country intervention. The notion that increasing participation of the poor through community groups, village forest committees etc, needs to be challenged and rethought. The starting-point should be where poor people experience politics in their own associational and political life, rather than building new institutions that are sectorally focused. The development of capabilities to participate more effectively in these existing associations will probably have more effect on the nature of forest outcomes than setting up village forest committees that become the site of elite capture or marginalisation from the political decision-making process. Evidence shows that political parties remain very important channels for poor people and are their preferred method of problem solving (Centre for the Future State, 2005:22). Evidence also shows that maintaining voice, particularly for the poor is unrealistic beyond the short-term. The problems highlighted previously show that poor people have limited time, opportunity or are prepared to risk sustained participation in decision-making processes that are captured by the elites, or require them to challenge elites positions. From our own experience in our own communities, it is difficult for poorer people to maintain a high level of mobilisation even for issues that may profoundly affect their livelihoods. Starting with those interventions that focus on securing people's livelihoods and allow them to move beyond sometimes coercive relationships based on patronage but which provide immediate security to those where they have a degree of independence from patronage systems will help to develop a more effective capability to participate in decision-making processes (Wood, 2003). This does then point to considering the role of forestry as part of the economic development of livelihoods.

In some countries direct support to civil society may be less effective in supporting forest rights for the poor than providing support to forest administration system capacity-building, so as to improve government responsiveness to diverse voices. Similarly, supporting effective research-based local policy analysis and providing a platform to local and national politicians can be part of supporting a more pro-poor political society and a more rounded debate about forestry and its role within poverty alleviation. In other countries, different elements of civil society can be directly supported to take on these roles themselves.

What is clear from the analysis is that attention to civil society without equal attention to the central state as well as local government will not lead to pro-poor outcomes. The state is the guarantor for associational life and so the vitality of the state is critical to whether poor people can have a greater say in sectoral outcomes. Without the development of political society support to civil society will weaken long-term possibilities for positive political organisation and poverty reduction. The tendency of donors supporting change within the forest sector to move outside the state to civil society runs the risk of strengthening upward accountabilities to donors as opposed to accountability to citizens; civil society as a part of this package bypasses political society and creates new webs of accountabilities.

This also leads to an examination of what constitutes effective voice for pro-poor forest policy. Experience demonstrates that organisations of the poor at or within the community rarely gain any political voice and indeed rapidly become silenced. Where empowerment can be seen (and a good test of where change is happening or potentially could happen) is where 1) the poor are organised politically and 2) the extent to which local organisations are integrated at higher levels with effective mechanisms for representation and accountability downwards (Moore, 2001:325).

Support to advocacy-based organisations has its place but these NGOs often have shallow roots within their own societies, being largely artefacts of external funding and INGO initiation. In most cases they are staffed by middle-class educated individuals drawn from the social and political elites who do not necessarily have a good grasp of the problems faced by poor people. Such NGOs do not necessarily represent the views of the poor and marginalised but an interpretation of their views. This cannot replace the direct development of poor people's own capabilities to present their own voices. This directs attention to per-

haps more outlier and radical organisations such as mass associations of the landless poor and some trade unions. Although again issues of elite capture are important to consider. Longer-term experience from states in India such as Kerala and West Bengal do indicate the importance of social mobilisation as a precursor to developing a more politically competent and pro-poor policy environment (Harriss, 2001, 2002; Crook and Sverrisson, 2001). In both cases, however, the duration of change has been several decades rather than the quick fix demanded by donor programmes

It also underlines the importance of building real connections between the citizenry and the state through strengthening political parties as an important element. This points towards work with parliamentary processes, to supporting new entrants into the political party scene (particularly those with an understanding of the importance of forestry to poor people's livelihoods); changing the rules and incentives that shape the current party structures, and fostering strong connections between parties and civil society groups rather than encouraging civil society to remain separate from the party political process (Carothers, 2002:19; Putzel, 2004).

2.5 Forest/Land-Related Factors: The nature of the sector

Moving from the broader defining parameters we now move to the forest sector itself and look at the barriers operating within. The forest sector has particular characteristics that suggest it is more likely to be anti-poor and thus significantly more difficult to shift its outcomes than perhaps one of the social sectors. Forests represent a major source of potential income both in terms of the products they contain and the land they cover. They are thus the locus for competition between multiple interests as well as multiple policies and paradigms for development, particularly between economic growth, conservation of biodiversity, and livelihood development of the poor (see Figure 5 for an example from Cambodia). 'In trying to reconcile these, the interests of non-poor groups (local elites, commercial interests, state forest enterprises, politicians and ministry and military officials) often win out over the poor, either during the implementation of rules or during their subsequent implementation ' (Conway et al, 2004).

> 'Given the potentially high value of the resource in question, significant rent-seeking opportunities exist for those involved in the networks of personalities who control forest resources. These often militate against pro-poor reform. Where the state is weak, the economy small and undiversified, and civil and political society disorganised and intimidated (as in Cambodia) formal forest policy manifestly fails to impose discipline upon rent-seeking practices. Where the state is more institutionalised, the policy process in the forest sector is likely to be more 'civic' but not necessarily significantly pro-poor (e.g. Uganda). Professional foresters are often resistant to the idea of community forestry or joint forest management policies which might give forest-dwelling poor groups a voice in forest management (many examples from India). Where such principles make it into law or policy, they are often successfully resisted or subverted for their own benefit by the forest bureaucracy during implementation (often with support from commercial elites or sub-national governments).'

This quote from a four country study (India, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia by Conway et al, 2004) looking at the barriers to pro-poor policy across several sectors including forestry summarises the major barriers facing development of pro-poor policy. They operate at the level of the enabling policy environment, between central and local government, within bureaucracies and their incentives for responsiveness and at the demand end within local populations and their differential capabilities to exercise voice and claim their rights.

We go on now to look at the effects of these barriers within the forest sector itself. This part of the analysis calls for an understanding of the background (and historical) country-context of forest policy and administration; it covers two main areas – the structure of forest rights and the national forest policy arena – although in practice the two are of course closely connected and the effects this has on the delivery of forest administration at the local-level and the opportunities it provides for poor people.

Structure of forest rights

The structure of forest rights in most Latin American, African and Asian countries today is in large part a result of the colonial histories. In South and South-east Asia land rights were generally recognised in all non-forest areas; however, the rights of indigenous peoples who have long cultivated forest lands remain generally unrecognised. This has resulted in increasingly widespread problems over the alienation of land used by indigenous or tribal groups (Gazdar & Quan 2004:24; e.g. NGO Forum on Cambodia 2004). Increasing pressures for the recognition of collective indigenous/tribal rights (and, in India, for the rights of scheduled tribes) are contested by entrenched landlord classes. Landlords are usually enmeshed in land-based patron-client relationships with large numbers of tenant farmers and share-croppers, for whom channels of access to land are often relatively rigid. Meanwhile, newer elites with good political connections and growing economic power are increasingly exerting control over access to land and natural resources across South and South-east Asia (Putzel 1992; Borras 2005; Gazdar & Quan 2004).

The structure of forest rights is heavily affected by the structure of land rights more broadly and the degree of emphasis placed on protected areas and conservation interests. Classification of land around its productive use has been an important part of land management practice in South Asia during and beyond the colonial period. Allocation and reservation of land for forestry removed large areas of land and resource from the use of local people. User rights became privileges to be removed at will by the state. However, the control of the state over both boundaries and resource is one contested at the margins through squatting, continued resource extraction and recognition by the state that it cannot control these boundary incursions. In India, regularisation of illegal occupation of state land is a part of the political bargain that prevents a policy of regular land redistribution but permits formalisation of ad-hoc redistribution taken by small-scale incursions mainly into forest lands. However, in those states emerging from conflict and characterised by sets of predatory relationships the state and its functionaries use their allocative powers to access and control land and natural resource assets. In Cambodia major questions still remain about the role of the state in allocation of forest concessions and the personal gain acquired by both bureaucrats and senior politicians from this less than transparent process (see Global Witness website for a series of reports 2004-5).

Channels of access to land across Sub-Saharan Africa are generally less rigid than in Asia. Most African countries retain the complex systems of 'dual' or 'multiple' tenure established during the colonial period: local ('customary') systems of land tenure tend to govern access to large areas of land (often ultimately owned by the state), while land designated as forest or game reserves, and large farms all tend to be governed by formal legal systems based on European concepts of proprietary ownership (Colson 1971:196; McAuslan 2000:76-7); leading to clashes between different forms of legal systems and legitimacy. Private landlords and hence Asian-style land-based patron-client relationships are generally less common in Africa. Instead, the existence of multiple tenure systems offers a variety of means of access to land, and a variety of "legal spheres" within which to pursue land claims and resolve land-related disputes, although this too is a source of continuing tensions and plays a particularly key role with respect to community management of forest resources (Merry 1982:71; Mackenzie 1989, 1990, 1993).

The national forest policy arena

Here there are several elements that provide barriers to change including the nature of the political regime, as has already been discussed. This is overlaid with often contradictory donor policy narratives market-based less government; technocratic planning more government; social forestry with communities as controllers suspicious of government and markets; where the conservation paradigm cuts across all three approaches with advocates of each developmental approach (Silva et al, 2002). These approaches can be more or less influential depending on the nature of the interlocutor and the responsiveness of the state to external influence. These different and competing paradigms can then used by domestic actors to justify different policy positions. The interplay between key domestic actors dependent on their relative power will then affect the actual outcome of the policy debates. Ministries will use policy processes and international development instruments to provide legitimacy to particular approaches. Classically there is often unresolved territorial dispute between ministries with conservation mandates, forestry for commer-

cial exploitation and land, with the latter ministry being concerned with gaining increased access to apparently unproductive land often held by forest departments.

Into the bureaucratic and political turf battles NGOs, particularly international NGOs, can have profound effects. Environmental and developmental NGOs often have competing agendas again fighting over similar areas of territory for different purposes. The more recent manifestations of the reservation of land and its enclosure have come through the power of the environmental movement. In many countries, significant pressure has been put on governments to reserve land for conservation purposes, displacing people who live in these areas or restricting their access to the resources they have been accustomed to use. The external pressures for this are articulated through large flows of aid to support conservation and in some countries now an increasingly articulate middle-class fighting for the conservation of natural resources at the apparent expense of the local livelihoods of people dependent on these resources. Thailand provides a particularly compelling example of this – where for over 10 years there has been an attempt to introduce a community forestry bill that would allow indigenous groups, in particular, to control and manage areas of forest. This has been resisted by a powerful and articulate urban environmental lobby that argues that community forestry will propel degradation of the conservation values of these resources (Johnson & Forsyth, 2002; Colchester et al, 2004:34). These two world views appear irreconcilable and increasingly call into question the basis of the moral decisions made about development.

Attempts to address these competing views through approaches such as community-based natural resource management bring with them similar problems as already discussed for community or participatory forestry approaches. Many of these programmes have led to increased conflicts within and between groups as to who should be included or excluded from access to the group and its attendant benefits.. It has intensified competition over claims to both the land and the resources contained and it can be argued has led to greater exclusion as spatial resource boundaries have been formalised through these projects (Peters, 2004; Woodhouse, 2003). However, this does not mean to suggest that such approaches cannot be developed in a way that deals with issues of exclusion. Recent work by Molnar, Scherr and White (2004) demonstrate the range of formal and informal institutional arrangements rural people engage in for the effective conservation of forests; including innovative community concession arrangements in Guatemala surrounding the Maya biosphere reserve (Tschinkel and Nittler, 2000) and similarly a community concession to local Amerindian groups in Guyana adjacent to the Iwokrama forest combining conservation functions with production and cultural protection. Although these and other cases point to the potential for combining conservation and local productive benefits, neither have included an assessment of the extent to which they are pro-poor and indeed who within the local communities involved actually accesses the benefits. Perhaps some of the difficulty with this line of argument is that protagonists would argue there is a first-line of argument to be won which is over the rights of local people to be recognised as legitimate managers, conservers and owners of forest resources. However, this line of argument, although important in a conservation world that tends to be polarised against the legitimate role of local people in conservation should not obscure the need to work towards policies and programmes that ensure the pro-poor outcomes of community conservation.

The role of business and its links into political and executive decision-making is also another critical element in the outcome of the policy process. The effectiveness of advocacy or direct voice by indigenous people's movements, farmers etc on the policy process is often heavily determined by the power of the other sets of policy actors.

Competing policy frameworks are then reinforced with often contradictory legal frameworks operating within sectoral silos. This is most particularly the case for decentralisation of forest resources to local government, where some of the clearest contradictions are seen (see Larsen, 2004 for a comprehensive critique). These contradictions lead to ambiguity and continued opportunity for negotiated outcomes between tiers of government. Where there is ambiguity there is greater scope for corruption and less opportunity to develop accountable relationships. The chances of pro-poor policy being delivered on the ground are much reduced. Perhaps the most profound of the contradictory frameworks are found in land and forest policies, with little or no read-across between them and no concerted attempt to understand the effects of policy change on livelihoods.

An important finding from recent studies in India (Singh & Sinha, 2004) and analysis of land policy development in Uganda (McAuslan, 2003) is the poorly developed role of parliamentary processes in debate around forestry and land policy and the implications for poor constituents. The legislative decision-making process, although often co-opted or bypassed both by the executive and external agencies, is still a fundamentally critical part of the political process, and the locus for representation and accountability. They are often well-targeted by those with different developmental agendas and influenced by the technocrats, local patronage systems, conservationist lobbies. What does appear to be poorly developed is the more nuanced understanding required for developing pro-poor forest and land policy outcomes.

Policy and legislative frameworks are of little value to poor people without complementary attention to justice systems. These can include a variety of mechanisms including for example public interest litigation. In India the emergence in the 1970s of public interest litigation heralded an important change in the openness of the judiciary to actions brought by members of the public on behalf of those who had suffered a legal wrong or injury under the constitution or other law. Although such actions can be expensive, in India there have been several rulings to remove the costs and so allow access to this form of justice by NGOs and poorer communities. This has helped to build a more conducive environment to changing the rules of the game concerning issues that negatively affect people's livelihoods, including forest encroachment and tribal rights. However, it has also been used to the detriment of poor people's livelihoods particularly in the fight between urban environmentalists values of protecting biodiversity and the rural users of forests (Shackleton et al, 2002:3). 'Examples of public interest litigation and judicial activism can be found in Africa (Uganda, Tanzania), Asia (Pakistan, Philippines, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India) and Latin America (Argentina, Chile, Peru) (Razzaque, 2005:182); providing a positive indicator of states demonstrating the potential for pro-poor outcomes. This may possibly be an area for development in terms of supporting and mentoring lawyers and judges showing an interest in public interest litigation (Ellsworth & White, 2003:18).

Opportunities to engage at the national policy arena

There are some interesting policy and legislative reforms underway which could provide entry-points to building a more nuanced debate about poverty and forestry. The recent advances in India with the draft Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill does provide some optimism that issues of tribal land and forest resource rights may be resolved; although politically there are still substantial hurdles to be overcome (Sarin, 2005). It does illustrate another major and growing dilemma for those supporting pro-poor forest policy and that is the conflict with conservation objectives, particularly as espoused by the urban middle classes. This is exemplified in India by the current often vitriolic debates as well as in Thailand by the now infamous debates over the community forestry bill. The understanding of poverty as a condition somehow the responsibility of the individual poses a major problem to any government trying to build a more pro-poor approach. This points to the strong need to build an informed understanding amongst the predominantly urban middle classes of the nature of poverty; it remains a critical element of any pro-poor policy process and one that could be supported through a range of tactics including a) dialogues with key policy-makers, informers, state and non-state ; b) work with the media to develop a more informed understanding of poverty-forestry linkages to reach the middle classes; and c) support to rigorous research to unpack the effects of policy processes on poor people.

Although forestry has an important role to play in some livelihoods, perhaps the more critical area outside the forest sector is land and the effects of land policy and implementation on the livelihoods of people, rather than forest. The major areas of contention remain around geographical control of land areas and not just the resources on them, the International Land Coalition has argued.

Policy to implementation issues of responsiveness

In many cases from around the world, the policy changes in place appear to be pro-poor. However, the negotiated outcomes at the local level negotiated through bureaucracies, politicians, brokers lead to a great distance between policy intent and policy outcome. In this section we consider the barriers to re-

sponsiveness in operation within forest services. The incentives framing responsiveness provide a key to the behaviour of state forest services and their ability to deliver pro-poor forest policy. The nature of the bureaucracy and its responsiveness is clearly dependent on the overall development of the state, and therefore the opportunities to influence and affect change are conditioned by the nature of the regime.

Forest reforms have been undertaken during a period of increased withdrawal of the state and liberalisation of economies. In those countries characterised by weak governments, markets are overwhelmingly stronger than states, making it difficult for states (even if they had the capacity) to impose regulatory functions over resource allocations and exploitation (Putzel, 2004:8). The ability of central government to control and regulate the provision of services through local government or through centralised forest services is difficult; a regime of enforcement equally leads to a regime of rent-seeking where rule-breaking is met with the extraction of rent by the enforcer. Many countries provide examples of this with Cambodia providing some extreme institutionalised examples of rent-seeking along the chain. For many this state of affairs is beneficial and much is done to protect the rent-seeking process. Implementing a policy that encourages greater citizen participation in forest management may become a threat to this rent-seeking process and thus lead to the less than whole-hearted implementation of policy.

Thus there are major macro-economic drivers for non-responsiveness to the poor. Equally there are internal factors that determine the extent of responsiveness. There are some recurring patterns that can be identified within bureaucracies that do produce major barriers to change (drawing on Johnson and Start, 2001; Hobley and Bird, 2001; Hobley and Shields, 2000):

- *Bureaucratic politics* is particularly prevalent in the forest sector and between forestry, biodiversity and land. This often results in major turf battles with strong incentives to maintain territorial and allocatory controls particularly over concessions. High levels of bureaucratic secrecy limit the flow of information both within the organisation and between the organisation and the citizenry. This leads to high levels of mistrust as well as impeding decision-making within the organisation and responsiveness to local conditions.
- The *bureaucratic culture* is another important barrier and particularly for forest departments developed in a tradition of custodial responsibility for the management and exploitation of resources on behalf of the state. This does not fit easily with a transfer to policy processes focused on people and their access to resources particularly those traditionally lambasted by the forest services as the perpetrators of practices inimical to the forests. Systems and structures tend to be those that reinforce an old way of doing and understanding things rather than the radically different approach necessary to deliver pro-poor outcomes.
- *Poor are not clients* - in reality forest organisations rarely take their lead from the poor. This is partly because they are unsure of who their customers are: are they the public or governments that fund them, the companies they let concessions to, their staff, the donor, or the people in the village whose livelihood is the real issue? For staff within the organisation, it is possible that at different levels they consider themselves to have different clients. For those at the front-line their clients are often the politicians looking for local votes, for middle management concerns about promotion make their eyes turn internally to their bosses, rewarding risk-averse behaviour. For senior management, the treasury, high-level politicians all place pressures for certain forms of action. The real client waiting for effective service delivery has little voice and certainly no political clout – their needs therefore remain unheard.
- Use of *bureaucratic processes* – forestry provides many examples of the use of regulatory frameworks and overly burdensome processes to discourage the development of community-based management systems. In many cases the burden of management planning falling on local people is far more burdensome than that imposed on industrial concessionaires. Arbitrariness of decision-making is another element used by forest services where local people have no recourse to challenge decisions, such as the one made in Cameroon to withdraw a community forest because the local people wanted to market timber independent of the forest service who they considered to be corrupt. Under the arbitrary rules of community forestry this was interpreted to be poor management (Oyono, 2004b:101). Attention to the regulatory environment and creating level playing conditions for local people and large business is clearly an important area of work that has al-

ready been well documented by Scherr et al (2004). Suffice to say that excessive regulatory frameworks in place in many countries with multiple demands for fees for transport of timber along the market-chain, prohibition of particular species, requirements for detailed management planning, criminalizing certain aspects of local forest use all produce significant barriers to the effective use of forest resources by poorer people, and leave ample space for extraction of fees, and oppressive and coercive behaviours by forest officials which tend to fall heavily on poorer people (see Davis, 2005:162 for comments on Cambodia; see Box 11 on Brazilian farmer's view on forestry).

Box 11 Why bother with forestry: a Brazilian farmer's view

'…it is much better to develop pasture than forest activities. In raising cattle the whole decision of what to do with the cattle is my own business; i.e. I did not request any permission from any governmental agency. If, on the other hand, I develop forestry activities I need to overcome an excessive bureaucracy allied to the risk of changing rules at anytime, which generates a lot of problems to me, including the possibility of my forest enterprise becoming non-viable'

Source: Sebastiao Kengen pers. comm citing Margulis, 2003

China provides an useful example of the opposite effects where regulatory systems have become less burdensome around certain fruit and nut tree-crops encouraging an enormous expansion of planted production and believed to contribute to rural poverty reduction (Ruiz-Peréz et al, 2005:308) but at the expense of timber-production which continues to have a high regulatory burden (of some nine separate taxes and charges with additional provincial mandated charges and a raft of unofficial charges (Guangping Miao & West, 2005:292).

Another major area of investigation concerns the division of revenues from timber and non-timber products between central government, decentralized local governments and local users/managers of resources and the effects this has in terms of distributional issues.

This is a fundamental issue when looking at pro-poor outcomes and potential for using redistributory taxation mechanisms to link forest exploitation to poverty reduction in particular areas. This leads straight into discussions of targeting particularly areas of spatial vulnerability and retention of forest revenues in these areas versus retention by the state for national-level redistribution. Into this debate come questions of subsidiarity, revenue autonomy, equity between areas and the levels at which revenues should be retained: are there more pro-poor outcomes if the central state retains revenue for national-level redistribution versus district/municipality or sub-district retention versus retention at the very local-level – village, commune etc. Box 12 provides an example of the tensions between levels from Cameroon. Clearly this debate has different outcomes according to the nature of the political regime, the development of decentralization and fiscal transfers between the centre and local, the effectiveness of the budget and public expenditure framework at the local-level, and the accountability mechanisms in place between local government and its citizens.

Box 12 Abuse of taxation system to prevent pro-poor outcomes in Cameroon

Forestry taxation was intended to promote local development within communities. Subsequently an order was issued by government removing the 10% direct allocation to villages to be managed by local government at regional level in consultation with villagers. Large amounts of money from forestry fees intended to fund these rural micro-projects are most frequently misappropriated by regional-level authorities, with the active complicity of village-level committee members.

Source: drawn from Oyono, 2004b:103

- *Street-level policy making*: ultimately it is the interface between the bureaucracy and people at which policy actually is interpreted and implemented. Whether this policy is pro-poor or not will be highly dependent on the local context of the street-level bureaucrat his or her relationships and linkages with the elites and their incentives to target the poor as opposed to providing easy access to resources for the wealthier.

Successive studies have highlighted the need for internal change within forest organisations, to address these different barriers (Hobley and Shields, 2001) with many programmes focused on reform of forest services from India to Guyana to Uganda. In the absence of a serious review of these programmes, we can speculate as to the reasons why success appears to be limited in terms of delivering more pro-poor outcomes:

1. lack of attention to the external political context, the nature of patronage systems and the difficulties of replacing these systems in the absence of well-resourced and capable governments; the alliances of central-local elites, retention of elite client base (particularly where timber concessions retained by the central bureaucracies) reinforce a pro-elite responsiveness
2. a failure to attend to the nature of incentives driving internal decisions and behaviours and the long-time frame required to affect long-term change in the incentive structures
3. reform processes focused on removing technocratic barriers, developing new skills and competencies but generally at the front-line and senior management rather than focusing on middle managers leading to blockages and resistance
4. poorly integrated reform processes into wider political change, particularly political decentralisation
5. poor integration of forestry into wider poverty and livelihood policy processes and aid instruments (including PRSPs)

Moving outside the bureaucracy the tendency has been to ignore the wider civil and political society that are critical elements of the responsiveness process. In the absence of accountable mechanisms with weakly developed civil society, often divided between different interests and co-opted, the pressure to be responsive is dilute and often ineffective.

Opportunities to increase responsiveness

Issues of organisational change remain a fundamental barrier to progress. However, a recent evaluation of a FAO project supporting the mentoring of middle managers in three forest departments (Uganda, Guyana and Ghana) does indicate that there are some interesting approaches to organisational change that could be supported. The FAO project worked using peer-supported processes based on adult-centred learning approaches and demonstrated some significant effects in terms of changing practice and behav-

iours (Gilmour & Sarfo-Mensah, 2005; Box 13). Limited financing but appropriate technical support were key elements of the success.

The regulatory environment clearly plays a major role in determining the outcomes of forest policy and is a major element determining the responsiveness of the sector to poor people. Evidence from across the world highlights the major barriers to entry for poorer people caused by the heavy official and unofficial regulatory burden from taxes, management planning, fees etc. The second element to this is the issue of revenue sharing between levels and spheres of government. This is another important area for investigation in terms of its effects on pro-poor outcomes. The question should focus on where the most pro-poor outcomes can be delivered. Is the very local (commune, village etc) a site of elite capture that is too difficult to transform in the short-term; is the role of the central state in ensuring pro-poor outcomes essential in terms of revenue redistribution or is it the sub-national level that can ensure the most effective redistribution of revenue and benefits from forests to poorer people?

The elements of the wider causes of failure to change bureaucratic response are dealt with in the relevant sections where opportunities are discussed.

Box 13 Features of the FAO Forest Mentoring Project

- ***Middle managers*** of state forestry institutions (District/Division Forestry Officers) were the primary focus
- ***In-situ mentoring and e-learning*** used to build capacity for participatory working approaches
- ***Out of the ghetto*** *- participatory working practices mainstreamed out of community/collaborative forestry*
- ***IT skills*** *focus on empowering middle managers to use IT as a tool for learning*
- ***South-South experience exchange*** – peer to peer learning within facilitated events
- **Building bridges** between forestry education and the users – forestry organisations

Source: Gilmour & Sarfo-Mensah, 2005

Barriers to voice, representation and accountability

Voice is a recent and important addition to the debate around building pro-poor policy outcomes. It is, as everything else, a highly politicized process and dependent on both the capability of the individual to exercise voice in decision-making arenas, as well as on the incentives for those engaged in the decision-making process to heed the voice. As has already been discussed voice and the ability to exercise it is an important part of an individual's overall capabilities, and is highly dependent on their social, economic and political position. I am not going to reiterate the arguments already made but summarise some of the problems of recent approaches to forest management and the effects this has had on poor people's voices:

- The predominant focus on setting-up parallel structures to local government – accountable to the 'parent' organisation, open to bureaucratic influence has had negative effects on elected multi-purpose councils which even if working imperfectly are the arena for representation and accountability between government and its citizens
- The instrumental and often single-interest focus of local forest institutions means that they are often exclusive of poor people or certainly non-responsive to the particular livelihood require-

ments of poorer groups. Focusing on interest groups easily leads to exclusion particularly those who are non-resident, occasional or seasonal users

- External initiation of groups often catalysed through donor-funded programmes increase the tendency to make them donor artefacts with project-bound life spans; for the poor this makes them high risk in terms of investment of time with limited expectations of returns
- The tendency of NGOs to appropriate the voice of the poor rather than facilitating the poor to develop their own voices leads to a level of false representation and gets in the way of direct citizen to government interaction.

The more recent interest in multi-stakeholder forums raises another set of problems of inclusion, representation and voice. A number of critiques describe a series of concerns which need to be addressed before these processes solidify a particular set of power relations that become inimical to the poor accessing or influencing decision-making processes:

- although opening up new political space builds opportunity for new voices these voices are not necessarily those that represent the poor within society spaces are arenas of uneven power and uneven voice, simply bringing poor people directly to the table does not mean that they are able to have an effective and influential voice
- increasing the visibility of some groups (particularly the poor or women) can lead to increased levels of personal insecurity as by their presence they are considered to be challenging existing power structures
- the interests of the dominant parties in the multi-stakeholder arrangement tend to dominate
- those who are excluded from the process by choice or design relinquish their rights to be heard
- questions of representation and constituency of included stakeholder remain unaddressed

From the perspective of the poor, the emergence of political space is an opportunity to move from political exclusion to one of inclusion. However, it is not 'sufficient for a political system to introduce institutions designed to offer opportunities for political participation if the poor are not in a position to use it' (Webster and Pedersen, 2002:11). The barriers to inclusion are structural and not easily addressed. High levels of livelihood insecurity amongst poor people make it difficult for them to contest decisions of patrons or those who maintain access to livelihood resources. Exercising voice by the poor is often a dangerous or certainly risky endeavour. Often what appear to be predatory relationships is the only thing that provides the short-term security poor people need, thus any threat to these relationships for unclear benefits is not a risk worth taking.

Opportunities to address barriers to voice

Being proactive about developing the voice of poor people is not simply about providing opportunities for their voices to be heard but it is much more about providing security to poor people to exercise their voice. This links us into a discussion of livelihood security and developing other opportunities for poor people to strengthen their livelihood base. This may be possible for some more capable poor through forest and tree-based activities, but for the extreme poor, it is more likely that action outside the forest will deliver more lasting changes in livelihood security, including access to education, health services and social protection. All of which clearly fall outside the sectoral remit of the Partnership but which can be catalyzed through the promotion of a more articulated understanding of poverty and livelihoods within a forest context. It also takes us straight back into the discussion about the role of political society and looking for ways in which to enhance and develop this where it is possible (clearly again judgment on this depends on the nature of the political regime and the space it creates for developing accountable and representative political processes).

The previous discussion indicates that what is missing is an analysis that provides understanding across the whole governance framework. Instead of which policy change and donor interventions tend to select out parts of the governance framework for change. But as has been seen, building an enabling environment alone does not change responsiveness of service provision. Focusing on responsiveness without

change to voice and livelihood security does not necessarily bring access to the poor; and giving a voice to the few does not change access of the many to resources.

A nuanced and country-specific understanding of poverty needs to be linked to activities of support and change in all dimensions of the governance framework. Without this, there will be piecemeal change that does not pass the test of sustained change over the long-term. At worst there will be a solidification of those structures that maintain people in poverty or indeed end up by making the chronically poor even more vulnerable.

2.6 Economic factors: the changing role of forests in livelihoods

The next step in our pro-poor approach to forestry calls for an understanding of the changing role of forests and trees in livelihoods. While this must be separately assessed in each different social, economic and political country-contexts, as there is huge variation depending on the nature of the resource, the distance from markets, the development of agriculture, the availability of other livelihood opportunities etc. some broader processes of change can nevertheless be identified here. Commoditisation, liberalisation and globalisation, for example, all form part of the shifting background against which people negotiate and renegotiate their relations both with each other and with natural resources. Globalisation and liberalisation affect the nature of people's relationships around resources; there is now growing evidence of land-based inequalities arising from such changes, particularly a growing trend towards the individualisation of the commons (Woodhouse, 2003; Arnold, 2001). Commoditisation pressures bring increased needs for cash, shifting people away from a subsistence economy to one more integrated into the cash economy. The effects of this for poor people must be assessed within specific contexts of rapid rural-urban change and 'de-agrarianisation', since poor people's interests in forest-based livelihoods are highly conditioned by the availability of other employment and income-earning opportunities. Currently there is little rigorous assessment of how the other factors in our pro-poor approach affect the ability of poor people to access economic opportunities through forests, in particular issues of social differentiation (Vedeld et al, 2004: 65; Box 14).

Box 14 Differentiated effects of forests on livelihoods: experience from China

In a recent study in China looking at the role of bamboo in livelihoods the results show the importance of understanding differential effects; and supports the general proposition that bamboo and forestry activities in general, play a differentiated role in farmers' livelihood strategies according to the developmental context and opportunities offered by these activities. Under fast-expanding forestry conditions and with limited alternative economic opportunities, the richest farmers will benefit proportionally more from forestry resources. With stagnant forestry conditions, rich farmers will look elsewhere for the few opportunities available, and it is the poor farmers who will benefit proportionally more from forest resources. With a healthy and mature forestry sector and a wide range of opportunities, middle-income farmers are the ones who benefit proportionally more from forest resources, falling between those who 'need not' (rich farmers with access to better options) and those who 'cannot' (poor farmers, too poor to maximise the opportunity'.

Source: Ruiz-Perez et al, 2005:311-312

Rural-urban change

Rural urban change is clearly a factor in affecting the likely outcomes of forest policy. Firstly it is important to understand the spatial, social, economic and political connectivity of urban and rural areas; change works on a continuum along which it is not always easy to allocate people to 'rural', 'urban' or 'peri-urban' categories (Jones 2004). At one spatial extreme are remote rural areas, at the other extreme are mega-

cities, with their own peripheral (and often marginalised) areas (Moser & Rodgers 2004:5). Along this continuum the use of forest and tree resources varies (Arnold, 2001). Rural-urban connections include the flow of labour and goods, as well as the social and political relationships and alliances that can allow privileged access to forests and forest land and livelihood opportunities for some but not for others. Connections between remote rural areas and urban centres are often made through elites using their connections to gain access to forest resources. As access improves the ability of those with connections to control resources also improves, particularly where change is leading to more dynamic economies. Livelihood opportunities themselves are influenced by overall economic dynamism, with differing effects for the poor: in 'booming' areas increasing competition and rising land prices may exclude the very poor from access to land and increase the pressure to enclose forest lands, whereas in 'stagnating' areas they may lack the resources and markets needed to make effective use of land and forests (Woodhouse 2002:7). In China, in areas where forestry is stagnating it tends to be the low income households that have the greatest dependence on forest-based livelihoods i.e. those who are capable to access other opportunities will not bother with the low returns from forests; whereas in areas with a buoyant forest economy it is the wealthier households that take advantage of forest-based incomes.

'De-agrarianisation'

There is currently much evidence emerging of processes of 'de-agrarianisation' in Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. Barrett et al. 2001; Bryceson 2002a, 2002b; also (on Tanzania) Ponte 2000, 2001; Ellis & Mdoe 2003), and of wealthier households in South-east Asia increasingly choosing to move out of natural resource-based livelihood activities (e.g. Rigg 2005; also (on Vietnam) ADB 2004). In China, there is clear evidence of the use of forests as a spring-board from which to accumulate and move out of agrarian activities (Ruiz-Peréz et al 2005:314). As an area develops, more dynamic sectors take over as the spearhead of an area's modernisation, the preferred options for moving up the income ladder are off-farm. Evidence from Vietnam indicates that forest land is becoming a base of capital accumulation for households that have access to political power (Sunderlin et al, 2005:22). Forests and forestry provide an attractive way for farmers to increase their income for those who are entrepreneurs and ultimately either specialise in forest production or use the asset accumulation to release themselves from dependence on natural resource based livelihoods.

Internal and international migration

The growing importance of both internal and international migration also challenges some past assumptions about the continued important role of land and natural resources in livelihoods and in driving change for the rural, urban and peri-urban poor (Ellis 2003; Ellis & Harris 2004:15; Rigg 2005:10). Remittances are becoming more important to cash incomes than agriculture in parts of India, for example and amongst the poorest groups where those escaping poverty rarely achieve it through use of local resources but through connections to urban areas (Deshingkar & Grimm 2004; Wilson, 2004:72; Krishna, 2004). In parts of Indonesia migration is becoming an important option for the more capable poor with the skill-base and networks to access the opportunities (Hugo, 2001). In Nepal "human capital…has shown a…high degree of mobility and adaptability" in the context of two decades of relative agricultural stagnation. As younger men migrate for work we see an "increasing feminisation of rural life" (Blaikie et al. 2002:1268). In some cases, however, remittances may be insufficient for the women left behind to purchase replacement farm labour (Deshingkar & Grimm 2004:27) and it is not clear what effects there are in terms of women's participation and access to community forests when they become the de facto household head.

A recent West African study illustrates other connections between migration, remittances and land: it found 30-50 per cent of active Senegalese men to be absent from their villages, with international remittances estimated to account for 30-70 per cent of their household budgets (Eurostat 2001, cited in Cotula & Toulmin 2004:33). In Senegal remittances were sometimes used by urban elites to gain control over rural land; when sent back to family members in rural areas they were also used to invest directly in

agricultural production, enabling wage labourers to be hired and in other cases investments to be made in trees (Ouedraogo 2003, cited in Cotula & Toulmin 2004:48), as a means to secure tenure over the land and reduce the amount of labour required to maintain the land.

The potential for pro-poor income-based forestry

Thus the interest in developing income-based livelihoods from forests and trees needs to be assessed within a broader framework of understanding livelihood opportunities. Growth and poverty have recently become key focuses in forestry with increasing attention being paid to ways in which to commercialise forest production for pro-poor benefits (Scherr et al, 2004). The increasing demands for socially responsible forestry by investors and consumers are driving a top-end change in corporate behaviours. At the local-level changes include supporting community-based commercial logging, trade in NTFPs, state asset transfer through allocation of plantations to communities. There are a series of important questions to be asked about the distribution of the benefits of growth and who amongst the poor are able to access the opportunities offered through commercialisation 'in contexts where the benefits of growth are unequally shared then the chronic poor are the most likely to see no benefits or find that their livelihoods are weakened' (Hulme and Shepherd, 2003). Indeed whether development efforts supporting commercialisation of forestry products including NTFPs actually does anything to help poor people move out of poverty needs more thorough assessment (Angelsen & Wunder, 2003:34; Vedeld et al, 2004). In a recent worldwide survey conducted for the World Bank, in 2004, it was concluded that it is unlikely that incomes from the forests can be the principal means of poverty reduction in the short-term; and only in a few cases do forestry-related activities provide, on their own, a pathway out of poverty (Vedeld et al, 2004: 66). This is also reflected in work in China and Mexico, where niche specialisation by the wealthier with a certain degree of vertical integration even in conditions of stagnation can provide significant benefits (Ruiz-Peréz et al, 2005:314; Barry, Campbell, Fahn, Mallee and Pradhan, 2003:12).

In another recent wide-ranging review Belcher et al (2005) demonstrate the pro-poor limitations of NTFP commercialisation, mirroring the earlier findings of Arnold (2001). They show how for the extremely poor reliant on open-access NTFP resources the markets are highly controlled often leaving producers in poverty traps. At the other specialised end of the market substantial incomes can be made for producer households but these are not the poor, indeed the researchers characterise this end of the market as 'anti-poor' requiring high entry-level assets including education, market access, infrastructure and secure property rights. 'It is simplistic, and often wrong, to assume that because an NTFP is important to the poor, efforts to develop it will help the poor' (Belcher et al, 2005:1446). Again pointing to the need to think about the differentiated effects of policy change, rather than assuming a blanket good for all.

Much work recently has focused on looking for ways to build commercial forestry activities through state asset transfers that provide benefits to the poor. Studies carried out by IIED (Garforth and Mayers, 2005) provide a critical analysis of the devolution of state plantation assets to communities. This wide-ranging study provides some interesting guidance as to the pro-poor nature of these transfers, highlighting the potential problems of elite capture without careful attention to building the capacity of poorer groups to be able to bargain for their rights (Garforth et al 2005:9). There is unfortunately no disaggregated assessment of the within community distribution of benefits, so it is difficult to ascertain the overall pro-poor nature of these policy decisions.

In an interesting juxtaposition to the transfer of state assets, the community forest enterprises (CFE) of Mexico provide an example of how common pool resources can be managed as a commercial enterprise. The historical antecedents of these tenure regimes are an important contributory factor to their apparent success today. Antinori and Bray (2003:8) caution about wholesale application of the Mexico experience elsewhere without careful consideration of the pre-conditions – the importance of land tenure reform, strong social organisation, an experienced and skilled forest labour-force and market integration over a long time period. Attempts to introduce the CFE model without attention to these preconditions inevitably leads to failure (examples from indigenous communities in the Amazon). But the experience demonstrates how communities can run commercial enterprises and use the money to reinvest in local development activities, with the more vertically integrated CFEs diversifying into other productive activi-

ties that provide employment opportunities for women. But even here after decades of development Antinori and Bray (2005:1536) observe that the effectiveness of CFEs 'depend on the community's overall governance structure and may not be strong enough if local elites dominate the political sphere'.. Again frustratingly there does not appear to be any empirical evidence documenting the within community distribution of benefits, despite the fact that elite capture continues to be a major issue raised by many commentators ('there is a real risk that community elites will take over the tenure reform process and increase the level of internal community inequality (Scherr, White and Kaimowitz, 2004:11) and points to the urgent need for research into these distributional issues using a differentiated understanding of poverty.

Other elements required for pro-poor commercial forestry also need to be assessed within this framework, namely tenure reform and protection of more marginal groups of their land and resource access rights; access to the capital inputs particularly micro-finance; development of the necessary human capital and of course attention to the barriers contained and maintained within many countries' regulatory frameworks. Much recent work on access to micro-finance has demonstrated how the chronically poor remain excluded. The nature of micro-finance requires a compliant, dependent and exclusive group that cannot countenance entry by chronically poor who would be considered high risk members (Thornton et al, 2000: Matin n.d.). This is an important issue to address when considering how to support the entry of the chronically poor into small-scale enterprise development. In recent entrepreneurial based pilots in Nepal, it was found that assumptions of the poorest being collectors of forest products were wrong, as they have neither the capacity to enter the trading system nor the social connections or skills (Nurse et al, 2004:256).

Attention also needs to be given to the finding from Sub-Saharan Africa that 'many of the poor have a preference for formal wage labour over self-employment as micro-entrepreneurs' (Woodhouse, 2002:13) where the levels of exposure to risk are often unacceptably high for those with limited assets to protect them. One key element of this is the necessity to develop human capital necessary to access employment opportunities within small-scale forest enterprises or other labour opportunities.

Finally it is unclear that the benefits thus far being generated can be accessed by the extreme poor and whether indeed what is being meant by 'the poor' in these situations are those who already have reasonable levels of assets and capability to engage with the development process.

Opportunities for changing role of forests in livelihoods

There is much evidence still to be collected on the links between income, poverty and forests and in particular in the broader sense of 'environmental income' as defined by the Vedeld et al (2004) study. What continues to be missing is a joined up analysis that considers the effects of the various elements of the pro-poor approach outlined thus far in this paper; in particular a more differentiated approach to understanding the barriers and opportunities to people on different parts of the poverty/vulnerability/wealth continuum. Without this level of analysis policy debate will continue to be steered along paths of assumption that ignore social differentiation as a matter of policy importance.

A recent review of several case-studies of payments for environmental services (PES) in Latin America could not provide definitive evidence on the pro-poor outcomes of the payments, it is too soon and the data have not been collected in a way to differentiate sufficiently between people at the local-level (Grieg-Gran et al, 2005). Clearly this is another important area of investigation, as there is growing interest in the potential of PES and its effects (Molnar, Scherr and White, 2004:34).

2.7 International arena

The final arena that we consider is the international. The nature of international processes and the effects they have in terms of pro-poor outcomes is still highly contested and therefore although it is shown in

Figure 2 as having some influence on the national arena, it is dealt with slightly separately here to reflect the uncertainty concerning the effects of international processes.

Box 15 International processes

- International processes
  United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)
  Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
  Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT)
  Millennium Development Goals

- Internationally supported regional processes
  Asia Forest Partnership
  Congo Basin Forest Partnership
  Regional Forestry Commissions

- Internationally supported national processes
  Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)
  National Forest Programme (NFP)

This section considers the major international processes concerned with forestry and looks at the generic issues surrounding these activities and the potential entry-points. Box 15 provides a list of the major processes that could be engaged with. These are not looked at in detail but rather the over-riding issues are considered concerning international processes and their effectiveness at advancing the agenda of the poor.

The first question to address is whether international processes can be pro-poor. Currently the dominance of the neo-liberal discourse makes the discussion of redistributive policies and structural transformation difficult (Johnson and Start, 2001; Eyben, 2005). This is exemplified through the experience of the World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development which had made proposals that strongly reflected NGO concerns with an emphasis on public interest, recognition of the links between poverty and forest degradation, rights of communities. However, the overall impact of the Commission has been negligible; its discourse on the public value of forests has clashed with the entrenched discourse of global neoliberalism 'it failed to resonate with those governments pursuing neoliberal trade policies, which emphasise the primacy of individual values over collective values, of private business values over public values, and of trade and the global market over environmental conservation' (Humphreys, 2004:62). The Poverty-Environment-Partnership in a recent report to the World Summit (2005:7) highlight the problems of global governance structures that work to maintain the interests of wealthier and more powerful nations and describe the lack of power of the multilateral environment agreements 'to influence the international trade and investment regimes and often lack adequate funding to support equitable participation by developing countries'.

The policy environment is framed and limited by the nature of this dominant policy discourse. This is evident not just in the forest sector but also in social sectors and the international processes around the women's movement when moments for transformational change advocated during the Beijing Conference on Women were eclipsed by later technocratic and poverty reducing frameworks laid out in the World Summit on Social Development at Copenhagen (Eyben 2005). Despite the growing evidence of class-based inequalities particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (Peters, 2004), change is framed in words of access, opportunity and choice with limited attention to the nature of barriers facing poor people that prevents them from being able to exercise choice.

From a rapid assessment of the major forest-related processes, there is no evidence of any poverty focus to them the major gaps continue to be a lack of attention to rural livelihoods and forests. There are however, some gains in the sense that there is now a wider discourse around forestry with in particular an acceptance of community forestry and indigenous rights (Colchester et al, 2003:8; Molnar, Scherr and White, 2004: 27). This is a major success in terms of changing discourse and declaratory proposals with some more major advances on the ground in terms of recognizing indigenous claims but less clear-cut change in terms of recognition of the importance of local control of resources. However, the debate still remains naively (or perhaps complicitly) quiet on issues of power that maintain unequal structures, and

totally silent on issues of gender relationships and access to resources. This is a wider problem where 'gender specialists were struggling to pursue the theme of gender equality separate from the burgeoning poverty agenda' (Goetz, 1998; Jackson, 1998 cited in Eyben, 2005).

This does lead us to the next level of question which concerns the efficacy of the international as an arena in which policy change can be promoted. The recent failure of the UNFF to reach agreement about its future does raise serious questions about the effectiveness of the international arena in terms of decision-making. This failure was further emphasized by the recent disappointing UN World Summit where it was not evident that there were any effective outcomes in terms of global agreement around poverty reduction. This last round of UNFF and the World Summit underlines a continued complaint about these types of forums which are seen ' to represent a collective need on behalf of states that they should be doing something, while confining itself largely to issuing statements and declarations urging the need for action, while failing to take or oversee any meaningful action' (Humphreys, 2003:322 underlined by the UN Secretary General's despairing complaint of 'posturing by world leaders' at the World Summit).

Where there has been progress is where inter-sessional events have been organized focused on a tractable number of issues with a clear process for engaging multiple groups in their development and outcome. The Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration provides one example which may deliver outcomes at the national-level as a result of its processes of engagement. It is clear that without these types of grounded activities international processes cannot effect serious structural changes at the national level.

Some more demonstrable progress has been made within the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) where the CBD has included in its Programme of Work on Protected Areas a specific section on 'Governance, Equity, Participation and Benefit Sharing'.. This requests signatory governments to recognize Community Conservation Areas and has a series of targets directing governments towards recognition of indigenous and local rights, through inclusive, participatory arrangements for conservation (TILCEPA, 2004). This success within the major global conservation instrument is an important outcome from the work of IUCN members supported by TILCEPA (a partnership of IUCN CEESP-WCPA joint Theme (Working Group) on Indigenous and Local Communities, Equity, and Protected Areas (TILCEPA)). Since this Convention is binding on signatory governments there is more national-level leverage. However, the challenge remains the implementation of the agreed Programme of Work which provides national-level opportunities to support innovation at the national policy level arena, to build dialogue based on evidence and experimentation from the local-level but around a framework that builds from a basis of poverty understanding rather than presumption of community, indigenous and local necessarily being pro-poor.

Some interest is now being generated in the potential of regional processes as the focus for change. Regional Forestry Commissions already existent but active to varying degrees could provide an opportunity and entry-point to build informed understanding around the nature of pro-poor policy development. However, they run the risk of being a closed arena for policy change with limited influence on the broader global processes and national processes that deeply affect the nature of the forest sector. The regional level is however, a more tractable and attractive arena in which to build action (Colchester, et al 2003:14). Already there are several initiatives being developed around regional forest sector action (Martin, 2004, with mixed results. It does appear that major transformational change to be sustained must develop within a nation and although some triggers such as removal of trade barriers can help to start such change, they do not and cannot replace the levels of political change necessary within a nation.

There are some serious concerns about the apparent contradictions and effects of international processes and their ability to place pressure on national governments to force change at the local level without the capacity to ensure that there are not negative outcomes in terms of local livelihoods. A particular example of the problems this type of pressure can cause is illustrated by the FLEGT in Indonesia, where an international process clashes with on-the-ground changes. Box 16 illustrates the issue and shows how international pressure to deal with illegal logging legitimized action by the national government to challenge local-level changes in Papua province by communities. This is a complicated case reflecting the struggle for autonomy between Papua and the Indonesian government, as well as the major power imbalances between local communities and state agencies.

Box 16 Resource control and poverty in Papua, Indonesia – conflicting national and international processes

Papua's natural resources generate important revenues for Indonesia: oil and mineral exploration and extraction are continuing and new investments are anticipated in large-scale timber plantations to meet demand from the international wood-processing industry. However, Papuans do not have secure rights to land and have seen few of the benefits from natural resource exploitation; they stand to be made worse off through lack of the information and legal certainty needed to hold both government and extractive industries to account.

To help prevent this, a DFID-funded project has been supporting provincial forest authorities and local communities in mapping and agreeing customary forest land areas. However, the Indonesian military and local police run a highly-organised trade in illegal logs and it is difficult for people to protect their boundaries against such 'state-organised' activities. In these cases, whole communities are vulnerable to the predations of these companies, with limited benefits flowing to a very few within the communities who broker the deals to allow access to their community concessions. Effects on livelihoods are profound but the ability to counteract these levels of organised crime are beyond the capabilities of citizens at the local level. Continued high levels of impunity, poor justice and accountability systems reinforce the futility of local action. In one recently publicised case, as a result of a FLEG supported investigation which highlighted the extent of the illegal logging activities, the retribution fell on these self-same communities, as they are the easy target for government response rather than those members of the military, police and forestry who manage the interface to the organised trade in illegal logs.

Source: Wells 2005; EIA/Telapak 2005.

Access to international processes: voice and representation questions

A final element of the discussion about the role of international processes in pro-poor change focuses on issues of access and representation. As we have already discussed the question of whose voices are represented in these types of forums becomes an important element of the assessment of their capacity to deliver pro-poor outcomes. The criticisms about international processes are now well-rehearsed but do provide an illustration of why these are difficult arenas in which to build meaningful pro-poor change. Participation in international processes requires high levels of endogenous resources and competent personnel. Those that attend are usually drawn from the bureaucratic and political elite often distant from the experience of poverty and holding views of the poor based on notions of the deserving poor. Where there is presence the proliferation of multilateral environmental agreements is putting large amounts of human and financial pressure on developing countries. Although they may have a seat at the table there are uneven power relationships operating which effectively lead to processes of disenfranchisement (Fisher and Green, 2004:694). The breadth and depth of information to be assimilated and the assessment of determining the analytical implications of convention have led in the past to the willy-nilly signing of conventions and treaties without thought to their national integration or appropriation. A pro-poor framework for assessing the effects of these agreements is certainly not in place. Trade-offs are frequently made in order to access resources through compliance regardless of the potential long-term consequences of the agreements in country (Fisher and Green, 2004).

The barriers to civil society participation are even greater than those for the state representatives. There are serious procedural and organizational barriers where the UN Charter only officially recognizes NGOs through an accreditation process that can be onerous for smaller groups, grassroots organizations and less formally constituted civil society organizations such as social movements, coalitions and transnational ad-

[4] Disenfranchisement is 'being deprived of the capability to participate and to influence agenda-setting and decision-making in international regimes for sustainable development' (p.69)

vocacy networks. Since endogenous resources often have limited capacity, access to information and the ability to track, process, assimilate and analyse evidence, it tends to be professionalized civil society that gains entries to the debate and helps to frame them. Considering the nature of political regimes for some countries, the location of an organization and its ability to influence are heavily constrained by the national political context and the possible constraining effects on civil society voice. In those states where civil society is not freely able to organize or express a voice it is less likely that they will be permitted to access international negotiations that may have major effects at the national and local-level. The capability and freedom to have a voice thus become critical elements of how debates and agendas are framed. Thus there are problems of access, transnational NGOs tend to be able to move with ease in these arenas with major questions of representation still to be addressed, where their ease of access to influence can obscure other voices from less participatory and inclusive regimes who cannot access or influence agendas.

However international NGOs can also use this greater level of credibility and access to decision-makers to open out spaces for civil society that would otherwise remain closed. The work of IUCN supporting ITTO to develop a Civil Society Advisory Group with the same rights as the ITTO Trade Advisory Group is another example of international non-governmental advocacy and action beginning to change the basis for dialogue and influence within international organizations.

Although the previous sections have painted a rather gloomy picture, there have however, been some limited successes which do indicate that there is a potential entry-point at the global level. However, what is clear from all of these 'successes' is that they are fragile, require effort in many different arenas and over a long time-frame. Some of the more obvious successes surround the sustained campaign for recognition of indigenous rights and territorial claims (Colchester et al 2003). The processes by which these achievements have been made are instructive and much still needs to be done to understand the effectiveness of NGOs at influencing these agreements (Betsill and Corell, 2003). In a recent review of the effectiveness of NGOs in influencing international forest negotiations Humphreys (2004) provides some useful guidance (Box 17). He shows that over the last 30 years NGOs have been successful at changing the nature of the discourse and moving it from a narrow technical and economic issue to one that embraces ecological understanding, human rights and democratic processes. However, Humphreys adds a final caution that much of the new language that has been introduced into these negotiations around participation and multi-stakeholder processes is easily co-opted and manipulated particularly as both these concepts fit well with the roll-back of the state, rather than as fundamental elements to building more deliberative and inclusive democracies. As with all agreements, it is in the implementation that evaluation of success can be determined. Thus far, implementation on the ground of agreed proposals has been limited and weak (Humphreys, 2004).

The use of international agreements does allow the opening up of national political space and use of instruments for national-level engagement. Two such instruments that are particularly pertinent to this discussion are the Poverty Reduction Strategies and the National Forest Programmes.

Box 17 Effective processes for influence

- ***Presence at the beginning*** – once the agenda has been set it is difficult to influence it later; where NGOs have been effective is where they have been present at the beginning of a process and helped to influence the agenda
- ***Need to operate in multiple arenas***: NGOs have been more successful in influencing forest negotiations when a concept has already been agreed in more powerful conventions, such as the acceptance of traditional knowledge in the Convention on Biological Diversity which provided the precedent for acceptance in the Forest Principles.
- ***Introduction of new approaches***: notions of multi-stakeholder processes have been incorporated into international agreements, approaches borrowed from other parts of the UN system
- ***Language of recommendations***: greater success is achieved where recommendations are framed in the language of neo-liberalism as a way to gain more widespread acceptance
- ***Long time-frame*** effective use of evidence and advocacy led to recognition of community forestry in the IPF-IFF but it took some 20 years to achieve this

Source: Humphreys (2004)

Internationally supported national instruments

The national arena is a realistic level at which influence can be affected. Opening national political space for debates and building a more informed policy dialogue should be a key area of activity. Currently there are two main instruments for national-level engagement that provide openings-- the PRSP and the NFP--although both sets of instruments are criticised for being externally imposed with little local ownership and even less debate within the political process of the country.

Recently there has been significant interest in influencing the PRSP processes in country to ensure there is inclusion of forests and forest lands as a critical source of livelihood particularly for the poor (Oksanen and Mersmann, 2003; Bird and Dickson, 2005; Hudson, 2005). Since this is the major framework driving investment, it apparently makes sense to try to build a more articulated understanding of the role of forestry in rural livelihoods. For donors and international actors more broadly, such international instruments provide a platform for legitimate engagement in national-level policy debates. Although clearly it is important to build an informed understanding about the nature of poverty and dependence on forest resources there are also a series of cautions to be sounded about the use of the PRSP process. Prior to pushing for greater sectoral inclusion, thought should be given to the role of PRSPs within countries. PRSPs tend to be another instrument of bypass where debate happens outside normal channels of governance and representation, often with limited domestic ownership and circumscribed participation (Craig and Porter, 2002; Centre for the Future State, 2005; Bretton Woods Project, 2003; Brown, 2004). In a trenchant critique of the Tanzanian PRSP, Gould and Ojanen (2003) criticise the PRSP for its bypassing of 'representative democratic structures (imperfect as they might be), but structures of clientilism are left intact. In what becomes in effect a 'fast-track democracy', legitimacy of policies is being sought through the establishment of direct channels of communications with NGOs used as brokers to bring 'the poor' directly into the policy arena' (Gould and Ojanen, 2003).

So that forestry not be caught in this same set of problems the better approach would be to strengthen debate within political systems of the poverty facets of the forest sector, and thereby build a more informed knowledge base to support PRS processes as well as building a more informed political process. Engagement with Ministries of Finance and Trade are a critical element of building better understanding of the role of forests and forest lands in poverty reduction, as both ministries have the power to change policy in ways that changes the claims to forest resources. The PRS process provides an entry-point for this engagement.

National Forest Programmes provide another entry-point and platform for building a more informed sectoral understanding around poverty5. Although they provide new spaces for national-level engagement experience with them has so far been uneven. The effectiveness of the NFPs has been highly dependent on the nature of technical support, the positioning within the administration and wider levels of buy-in to the processes and critically the development of a meaningful interface between NFPs and other instruments such as PRSPs. The lack of good policy evidence around the forest poverty relationship has meant it has been difficult for the NFP to argue for budgetary allocations through medium-term expenditure frameworks, and generally have failed to get adequate financing.

The danger of working solely within a sector means that broader and higher-level instruments remain ignorant of the debates and changes within the sector and run the risk of putting into place policy and legislation that runs counter to the changes in the forest sector. In addition the interface between sectorally-driven programmes and major political processes such as decentralisation appear to be poorly articulated. However, as long as such processes are on-going in country they do provide another opportunity for supporting informed dialogue based on 1) good research and evidence around the nature of poverty and forestry; 2) an opportunity to support pilots to demonstrate new ways of working (particularly around non-sectoral approaches such as using rural livelihoods and vulnerability as the way of framing the planning rather than a forest livelihood focus) and 3) an opportunity to build the capability of civil society to advocate effectively around an informed understanding of poverty. Although experience from Cambodia where an NFP process is underway cautions against serious investment in such processes where there is limited ownership by the government and trust in the process by civil society. Uganda provides another set of cautions where a carefully facilitated NFP process led to a an effective pro-poor sectoral plan with little buy-in by the key ministry of finance and even less interest by donors who continued to support their pet elements of the sector outside the overall framework provided by the NFP. What is clear from both these instruments is that they are blunt instruments for changing the internal incentives within service provider organisations and rarely effect the levels of bureaucratic change necessary to put in place more pro-poor forestry.

On balance however, these processes do provide opportunities to build an engaged and informed understanding about forests and poverty. With limited resources but well targeted there could be some useful outcomes.

Role of federations, networks in international arenas

The final part of this assessment focuses on the effectiveness of less formalized movements and associations of civil society in affecting change at the international level. We have already considered some of the tentative evidence emerging from the national-level which shows it is unclear as to whether federations and networks actually are pro-poor but the evidence is limited. However, it is clear that as with all membership based organizations there is exclusion in practice. The question is whether this exclusion is heavily focused on the poor and whether as a result the agendas that are generated are not those of the poor? As with sectoral user committees there is already an emerging issue about sectoral (or interest group focused) federations and networks. Colchester et al (2003) in a review of international networks make the strong point that a narrow focus on community forestry limits the options of local people and creates artificial barriers between these networks and other social movements either national or international, particularly those focused on land advocacy. This is a particularly important point to consider when much of the concerns at the base of community forestry are to do with land security and rights rather than to do with forests per se.

The lessons from this review are instructive:

- The dangers of networks substituting their voices for those of local people

[5] As of early 2004 the FAO supported NFP facility is operating in 36 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to support national forest planning processes in a variety of ways with 100 countries already with completed NFPs www.fao.org/forestry/site/23427/en

- Limitations of the changes gained at international level to affect change at the national level
- Networks heavily dependent on donors for funding become more accountable to them rather than to their members; only two networks ACICAFOC (Central America) and UNOFOC (Mexico) charge a fee to their members increasing sense of ownership and accountability
- The unease of supporting social movements that may be in radical opposition to the state and global structures

The indigenous people's movement is interesting as it reflects the opposite experience of most of the above points. Central to its success of gaining recognition of indigenous rights in major conventions and in-country, has been its stance on issues of representation and voice and its insistence on rights of self-determination, not allowing others to substitute their voices for those of indigenous people (Colchester et al 2003:24). These issues of voice and representation remain a major challenge for any created network, alliance or indeed social movement. It is unclear to the author that without serious attention to the development of political society within a country that these issues will be readily addressed through international organizations trying to promote voice and representation of the poor through apparently more inclusive processes. This will continue to deliver artificial and unsustainable outcomes. Interestingly, the stronger representational networks have emerged from countries and regions where there is a higher degree of development of political society in place (viz. Central and Latin America) with higher overall levels of literacy and human development.

Opportunities for international engagement

As the previous sections have highlighted there are no obvious reasons for investing large amounts of resources financial or intellectual into the existing international processes. It is not clear that they are having any major effect. The major criticisms of these international negotiations remain a particular challenge for redirecting agendas to ones that are explicitly pro-poor. The representational deficit is difficult to overcome at the international level, leading to questions of legitimacy of those who advocate pro-poor agendas with weak links into the local-level. Where there is more point in engaging is where these processes are linked to national instruments and processes of change, as discussed for the PRSP and NFP and the implementation of the Programme of Work on 'Governance, Equity, Participation and Benefit Sharing' emerging from the 7th Conference of Parties of the Convention of Biological Diversity (TILCEPA, 2004). As has already been stated, the importance of linking these processes to an understanding of poverty, vulnerability and livelihoods is a critical element of ensuring the pro-poor outcomes of 'community-based' endeavours.

Perhaps then it is time to look beyond the usual suspects and consider other arenas to influence. These could include the Bretton Woods institutions and engaging directly in debates about the nature of the poverty instruments and their effectiveness, including discussion about community-driven development, sectoral based community interventions and the role of political society.

The recently launched High Level Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor is another potential forum for influence. Labelled by some the 'De Soto' Commission and thus associated with his contested views of the nature of land and dead capital there is some concern about the possible direction of outcomes from this Commission. However, it may also provide an opportunity to build a more politically nuanced understanding of poverty, power and property rights for land and natural resources.

Another means of building a more informed debate is to work with local government associations. In most countries different levels of local government are well networked and meet on a regular basis to discuss policy and implementational issues. At an international level the United Cities and Local Governments would be a good place to start dialogues about decentralization and natural resources.

As has already been mentioned the oft-neglected political arena is one that is very important to engage with. National parliamentarians as well as local representatives form an important body of influence. The

Parliamentary Network on the World Bank, an independent non-partisan membership association of parliamentarians interested in development issues could provide another entry-point to this arena at the international level; it draws its membership from across the world. It also has two regional chapters which could be another entry point (India and East Africa).

For forestry, pro-poor benefits flow from a number of elements including access to labour and employment opportunities. The ILO with its support to labour movements could become a natural ally in working towards more pro-poor policy environments at the national-level.

Working with the corporate sector to build a more informed understanding about the nature of the relationships between forests and poverty can be effective. This is clearly another area that does have major local effects. Decisions on how concessions are to be managed and the relationships with local people can have positive or devastatingly negative consequences. The recent experience with out-grower schemes and small-holder plantations does indicate that there is room for innovation in terms of corporate business relationships at the local-level (bearing in mind however, these tend to benefit the more capable poor). Recent initiatives by Bill Clinton to harness the philanthropic investment interests of big business provides another interesting area to investigate; potentially an opportunity to build a more informed understanding around philanthropic venture capital.

Another area of activity already highlighted is working with international banking and finance particularly through the Equator group. CIFOR's work on financial institutions demonstrates the power of influencing the international banking sector which provides the finance for many of the more anti-poor forest developments.

Perhaps more controversially and a difficult arena in which to operate some of the more universal and deeply rooted faith-based institutions could also be engaged with, for example the Catholic Church which in many countries is highly influential at all levels; and following the experience of the Asia Foundation in Indonesia building programmes of work with Muslim NGOs and mass-based organizations within country as a means to develop a more informed understanding of poverty, livelihoods and forestry at the local-level.

Finally the role of federations and associations at the international level needs some careful attention. There are three major strands to this enquiry: 1) an answer to the question of the effectiveness of such federations in terms of shifting policy agendas to the benefit of the poor rather than pro-local; 2) the question of representation and mechanisms to build this; and finally 3) the effects of federations within nations in terms of crowding-out nascent political structures and the longer-term effects this might have.

2.8 Concluding comments

Returning to the title question of this paper: where in the world is there pro-poor forest policy and tenure reform, the first answer is nowhere, in the sense that simply being pro-local, pro-community, pro-indigenous, pro-customary does not necessarily equate to being pro-poor. Policy and practice has largely ignored the highly differentiated and unequal structures within rural communities and ignored the rapidly increasing levels of inequality now being documented across the world, including in areas that were previously considered to be less unequal (such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Peters 2004). The discussion also shows how complex the policy response needs to be; it is not amenable to single agency solutions and requires levels of inter-agency operation and implementation that are not immediately obtainable in many countries (Bird and Pratt, 2004). Not only are the effects of policy socially differentiated, determined by the nature of the political regime but they are also spatially differentiated – depending on the levels of remoteness (i.e interconnectedness to markets, other employment opportunities) and on the nature and quality of the resource and its position within the livelihoods of rural people i.e. people living in forests, compared to those in forest-agriculture mosaic landscapes to those where trees are found predominantly within an agricultural landscape. Leading to a policy foundation based on an understanding of spatial, temporal and structural vulnerabilities.

The major problem with trying to reduce the political framework within which forests are situated to linear dimensions is that each of these critical factors is affected by the other factors. Thus a destitute person within a crisis state, where there is limited urbanisation and opportunities, with a repressed or co-opted civil society, has far more difficult barriers to overcome in terms of moving out of poverty, than a destitute person sitting within a state with a functioning central and local government, an active civil society able to advocate, kinship or state-based social protection that provide some limited security. Within these different contexts the role forests have to play is profoundly different. In the most extreme case, forests and forest land is probably one of the only assets that can provide some short-term security, whereas in the more favourable case, asset transfers from the state may provide more secure options for the destitute. In a crisis state, however, it is often forest land and the natural resources it carries that becomes the focus of violence and contest. As can be seen from this framework, the key conditions affecting forests mean that the nature of support to forest related activities has to be highly contextualised. Since forests and the access to their products and land is inherently political, the relationship between forests and poor people is based on power and their political and social relationships. Achieving transformation in these relationships is a political process and not technocratic.

Returning to the initial definition of pro-poor we can highlight the key elements of a pro-poor forestry policy and tenure reform process and outcomes:

> 'The aim of pro-poor policies is to improve the assets and capabilities of the poor. These may include, for example, policies that lead to broad-based economic growth, safety nets to ensure the poor are not harmed by economic reforms and shifts in budget allocations so that publicly provided services are specifically targeted to the needs of the poor. Promoting an enabling political and policy environment as well as ensuring the voices of the poor are heard in policy discussions are also key aspects of this agenda' (ODI, CSPP)

Attention to all these elements is necessary to ensure sustained change for poor people. Much of the work done so far has paid attention to one or two of these elements but has not attempted to work on all parts of the big picture (Figure 1) at the same time.

However, it is important to be able to state clearly that forestry has a limited capacity to be pro-poor in the sense of reaching the extreme poor. Its major beneficial effects will continue to be felt by those who are already improving and able to take advantage of both improved access to markets and to decision-making arenas as well as for those who are already in positions of wealth. It is perhaps naïve to expect forestry to address the vulnerabilities and livelihood insecurities of the declining and coping poor, other than through their function as safety nets particularly in times of seasonal and life-cycle distress. Policy decisions that support conversion of forest lands into agriculture may provide these extremely poor groups with more livelihood security than leaving them with only the safety-net functions of forests and an inability to build a more secure livelihood. Other forms of intervention are more likely to change the livelihood insecurities of these groups particularly around development of their human capital. This points to a need for supporting more nuanced policy debates around a differentiated understanding of poverty which links forestry interventions into more articulated policy programmes focused around reducing livelihood insecurity. The lumping of poor people into one category or defining them as forest dependent has obscured policy impacts on different groups and fails to ensure that a more articulated policy dialogue is put in place that leads to policy approaches based on rural development rather than sectoral development. Having said this, what is clear is that there remains significant potential to change de facto forest policy from being anti-poor to being pro-poor through the different forms and levels of engagement suggested in this paper but that gains from a pro-poor policy decision can be consolidated or lost in implementation; it is necessary therefore to develop a capacity to understand and influence these stages in policy process.

What this analysis has shown is that there have been really significant changes in the ways in which forests are managed. Opportunities have been created for benefits to remain at the local-level rather than waiting for them to be redistributed through often inequitable and inefficient state distribution systems through public expenditure. The major challenge now is how to shift the benefit systems to ensure that they really do become sustained in their outcomes and pro-poor in the sense of reaching the poorer members within

the 'local', the 'community', the 'customary' and the 'indigenous' group. The approach outlined here is one way to begin to understand these links and to look for entry-points that begin to deal with the structural issues of poverty and help to move policy dialogue and action away from aggregate understandings of poverty that often merely help to reinforce existing structural inequalities.

Part 3 Identifying moments of opportunity

> 'Timing can be extremely important when change in the political environment and its potential for generating policies that favour the poor are considered in the medium-to long-term' (Conway et al, 2004:12).

3.1 Introduction

Political crises present both risks and opportunities. In Indonesia, political crisis has provided a critical opening in which to change political institutions and increase the voice of the poor; it is to be expected that this opportunity to embed more pro-poor incentives in the political system will begin to close as the state begins to attract investment once again. The advent of new laws also provides another opportunity to support the implementation, as in Vietnam with the passing of the new forestry law and the opportunities now for community-level involvement in forest management and India with the Draft Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill. Selection of countries in which to work is therefore a question of balancing opportunism with some form of analytical basis for the choice. Table 3 in section 3.3 provides a set of suggestions that fall somewhere in between these two positions, and are based on a number of criteria including:

- The nature of the political regime and its potential 'pro-poorness' and the space it provides for civil society
- The degree of decentralisation and the opportunities for building different forms of local engagement
- The state of policy and law in the forest sector
- The presence of social movements (where the author has been able to find evidence)

The types of arenas in which opportunities for engagement can be identified are shown in Figure 4. This, all underpinned by analyses that follow the approach described in Figure 2. The different arenas include village (or the most local unit of social cohesion), local government, national government (executive and legislature); international; political parties; the business sector at local, national and international levels, and the non-state actors including NGOs and social movements operating in the different arenas. The first part of this section summarises some of the generic entry-points.

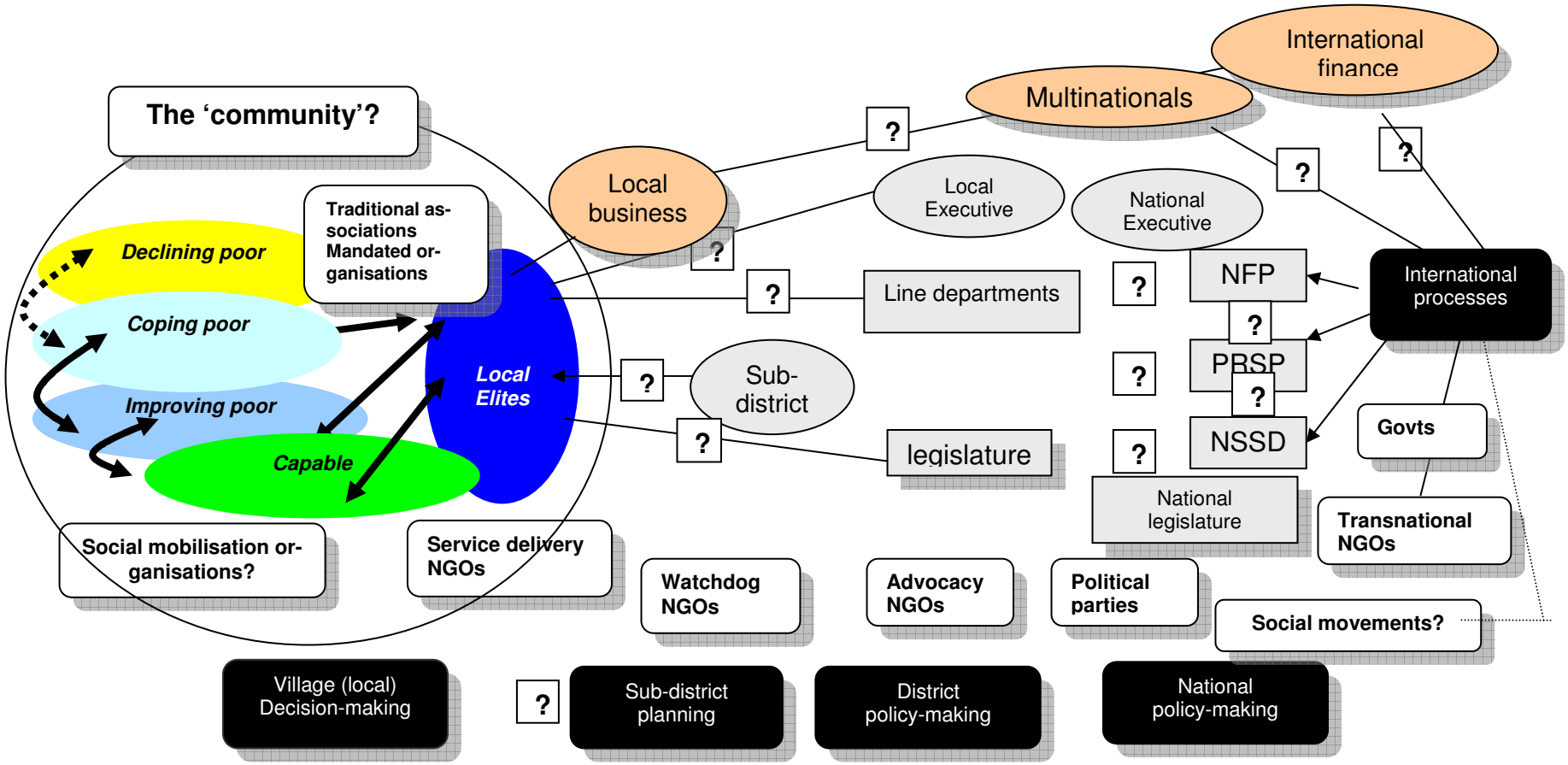


Figure 4 Actors and arenas for influence

An example from Cambodia highlights the difficulty of finding entry-points that will lead to long-term change, in a country that can be described as a post-conflict state with weak state institutions comprehensively subverted to serve elite-centred patronage systems, particularly seen within the forest sector.

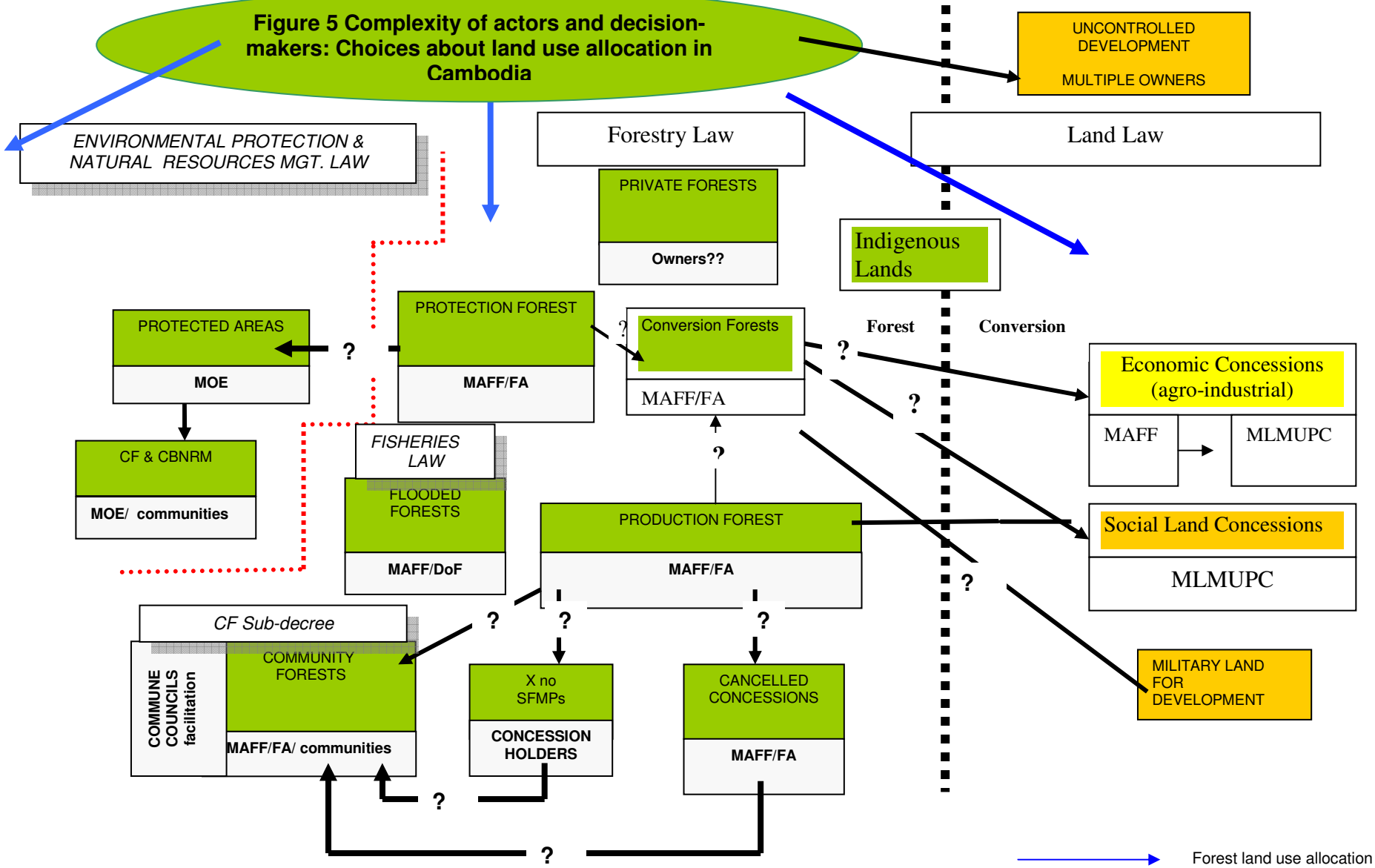
There are several elements of the Cambodian regime that make it anti-poor (drawn from Conway et al (2004) and work during the Independent Forest Sector Review):

1. Nature of political leadership based on personal accumulation and networks of patronage
2. Patron-client networks that cross-cut formal institutions are the norm making the links between policy-making and implementation difficult to understand and easily subverted (see Figure 5 the policy arena for forest land)
3. Sectors responsible for managing high value natural resources are subject to intense political competition in which the poor are less likely to benefit
4. In the absence of functioning judicial and oversight systems the access to fair justice is not available. Resource injustice in Cambodia is the norm with no recourse for the poor.
5. Actions of donors over the last decade have been to respond to the weak state by prioritising the development of civil society. This has risked retarding the development of the state and political society and in forestry certainly has not led to demonstrably pro-poor gains in an environment characterised by rent-seeking and exploitation of forest resources at the expense of local livelihoods
6. Donors in a belief that decentralisation increases local accountability and transparency have pushed for the strengthening of local government. However, in the absence of transformation of the broader political systems the experience so far has indicated that there are now more opportunities for subverting access to resources
7. In forestry community participation has been heralded as the way to ensure more pro-poor outcomes. However, where a political system is run on systems of patronage, it is unlikely to succeed without complementary top-down institutional reforms, which as yet have not happened
8. Decentralisation has the potential to create spaces within which the poor can obtain more influence over state actions – but the potential is far from guaranteed

Cambodia is clearly a country where support is required to change the nature of the political system in order to build a more pro-poor policy environment. In a state where there is serious and continued resource injustice having major impacts on the livelihoods of poor people and in particular on indigenous groups, there is a strong argument to be made to look for entry-points, despite the fact that this is perhaps one of the most difficult environments within which to affect change.

Some suggested entry-points are discussed in Table 3.

Figure 5 Complexity of actors and decision-makers: Choices about land use allocation in Cambodia



MOE – Ministry of Environment
MAFF – Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
FA – Forest Administration
MLMUPC – Ministry of Land Management Urban Planning & Construction
SFMP – Strategic Forest Management Plans
DoF – Department of Fisheries
CF/CBNRM – Community forestry & community-based natural resource management

Forest land use allocation choices: protection, production or conversion

? Management allocation choices – communities, concessionaires, FA

3.2 Generic opportunities

As Figure 4 illustrates there are still many unknowns about the influence of different processes on policy outcomes. Before launching into any more it would perhaps be sensible to research some of these links. The following sections present some of these generic areas for work, opportunities at a more general level have also been identified throughout the text and are not repeated in detail here but a summary for each level is presented.

Global

Although there is a growing body of work to build evidence of the conditions under which forestry can be pro-poor; there is still little research that has focused on a structural understanding of poverty and the opportunities forestry offers for movement out of poverty or at least maintenance of position.

- Research is required into the nature of differentiated poverty changes including for example assessment of the changes in forests under commercial-community production, payment for environmental services. This could complement the work underway by FAO looking at the poverty effects of different forms of tenure regime, and the work by ODI using country case-studies to examine poverty effects. Although this research should be focused on a number of countries its use is not just national but international in terms of drawing out evidence to inform international processes and actors. The need to get the policy narrative right at the international level is just as critical as at the national. Here building a more nuanced understanding of poverty, forestry, livelihood linkages amongst international agencies should be a critical focus.
- Local drivers of change studies to be used to inform international forums, national policy processes and to feed into global debates about PRSP and forest sectoral planning processes such as the NFP processes

Drawing in new audiences and actors

- The importance of developing political society has been stressed throughout the paper and points to engagement with parliamentary groupings, local government associations at the international level.
- Role of federations – clearly federated voice can be a powerful tool in policy influence. However, as already discussed the question of whose voice is of critical importance, as are the processes by which to develop the voices of people who have limited capability to have their own voices at the local-level, let alone national or international.
- The role of the private sector is already well highlighted in literature and practice and continues to be an important player in the delivery of pro-poor outcomes. Opportunities exist to work with the financiers of business as well as business itself to develop a more pro-poor understanding of the effects of business operation. The recent review of the Equator Principles Group is one such opportunity.

National

- Careful thought needs to be given to engagement in states of low capacity and low responsiveness to poor people. It may be attractive to support civil society as a way of 'getting things done' but if this leads to the undermining of the state and political society then in the long-term it is not going to lead to more pro-poor outcomes. In such cases, it may be more appropriate to focus on the central state and developing its capabilities to

perform more effectively (particularly around issues of justice) and on the development of political society to engage on issues of poverty and livelihoods. Particular care needs to be paid to setting up separate sectorally-based local institutions that compete with nascent political structures

- PRSPs as the evidence has shown have been remarkably silent on the role of forests in poverty alleviation. The need to build evidence to inform national debates is a key part of ensuring a better articulation of forestry within the PRSP. This should be based however, on a poverty, vulnerability, livelihood assessment rather than coming from a purely sectoral stand-point. Participatory Poverty Assessments provide another important point for engagement to build assessments around differentiated understandings of poverty within broader livelihood frameworks that include natural resources.
- National Forest Programmes provide a useful entry-point to building dialogue and understanding around the nature of pro-poor forest policy but alone continue to be seen as a sectoral plan with limited relevance to the broader governmental planning and budget allocation frameworks.
- Building informed dialogues with national legislatures around poverty-forestry linkages based on evidence-based research. It is important to get the policy narrative right for a particular country. This includes building an understanding of the nature of poverty as well as the factors that reproduce livelihood insecurity. Getting it wrong or not questioning the myriad assumptions that underpin policy processes can lead to serious effects on poor people.
- Engaging the elites (Hossain and Moore, 2002) is an important part of developing a different policy environment for pro-poor forestry. As has been seen in many middle-income countries, it is the urban elites pushing for environmental conservation who prevent policy change that could provide greater livelihood security for those living in forest areas. The role of the media is clearly critical to this process, as is good policy evidence to provide the basis for informed debate.

Sub-national

- Sub-national poverty planning processes provide another important forum for engagement and in particular as fiscal decentralisation continues then these sub-national levels of government become more important in terms of targeting public expenditure to areas of spatial vulnerability.
- Action-research on local drivers of change to build credible evidence of pro-poor barriers and opportunities at local-level to support pilot interventions working with teams of academics, NGOs and interested government staff. Box 18 indicates the possible scope of such studies
- Responsiveness – support to line agencies middle managers, working with mentoring approaches developed by FAO, for example
- Work to build evidence of the barriers produced by over-regulation – including the high levels of technical entry for local-people to produce management plans. High levels of formal and informal fees; and the nature of the centre-local fiscal mechanisms and revenue redistribution from forestry

Local

- There has been increasing hesitation within donor agencies to support experimentation through pilots at the local-level. In the case of building new approaches to pro-poor forestry, particularly in countries where the governments are suspicious of approaches that may challenge patronage systems, pilots if developed carefully with governments can provide a bounded testing-ground for new approaches that would otherwise not be allowed (supporting alliances of government staff, academics in experiential policy-based

research).

- The private sector has important roles to play in changing policy processes, and is of critical importance at the local-level in terms of building opportunities for alternative sources of livelihood. Just as with civil society, private sector too needs to be disaggregated and engaged in the testing of new approaches to build more vertically integrated enterprises
- Mapping of civil society at the start of any initiative is a useful way of beginning to identify both the civil and uncivil elements that provide opportunity and barriers to more pro-poor policy outcomes; and a basis for identification and engagement with particular partners. This could be part of a local drivers of change study (see Box 18).
- Support to social movements needs to be considered with care. Encouraging
- mobilisation in some cases can lead to retribution, violence, jailing and in extreme cases death.
- Working with state-incorporated civil society as found in China and Vietnam for example provides an opportunity to reach the grass-roots, as well as a basis of legitimacy for voice within state policy systems

Box 18 Local drivers of change

'A focus on local drivers of change is a focus on relationships at the sub-national level and entails a location-specific analysis of who the actors are; what the relationships between individuals, groups and institutions are; what the existing relationships are between the powerful and powerless; how these relationships are reproduced and how vulnerability and exclusion are maintained in a given locality' (Brocklesby, et al: 2005:3).

The need for a local drivers study:

- Understanding of power relations and change drivers at the national level does not lead to understanding power at local levels. Whilst there may be relationships between local level power elites and national elites, power at the local level is highly complex and linked to context in ways that both include elites and operate without them
- Local level power relations can only be understood through continual engagement and involvement
- Actors at the middle level (district, village) provide the link between national policy and community level implementation, are most likely to see the imperative of working for positive change, yet usually they are the least supported in work to achieve this change.
- The local is the point at which poor people experience the state and the point they can engage to change it.

The purpose of this work is not to produce a 'study' of the local drivers of change but rather to identify the 'moments of opportunity' which can drive change (Brocklesby et al 2005).

[6] Based on an approach described in Conway et al (2004:6) and Torres and Anderson (2004:19)

Figure 6 Trajectories of change in pro-poor outcomes

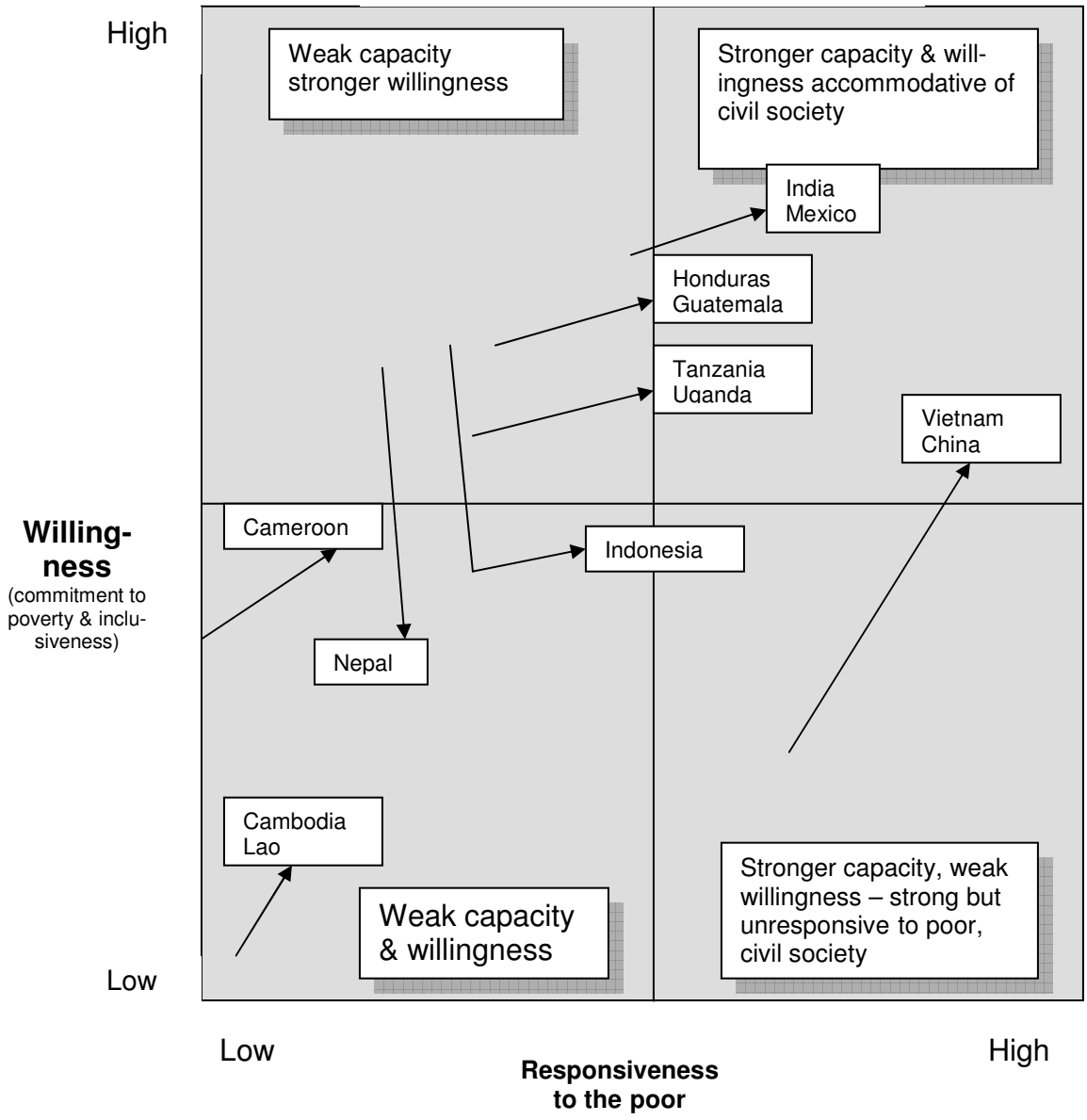


Table 3 Assessing country-specific opportunities & threats for pro-poor forestry outcomes

Country	Country (Manor) classification	Policy environment Policies, laws, rights	Opportunities Political decentralisation Public interest litigation Social movements	Threats	Commentary	Sources of information
South-east Asia						
China	High capacity/ centralised Limited accommodation of civil society, political & fiscal decentralisation but with strong central control to influence local resource use	Contract Responsibility System – effectively privatisation of agriculture & forest lands on long leases; 1998 Forest Law The Organic Law on The Villagers' Committee provided for direct election of Village Committees to oversee village-level natural resource management; Township authority to manage natural resources with deconcentra-	Importance of forests in remote rural areas as suppliers of cash (up to 70-80% of income); high levels of collective ownership Political decentralisation in place;	Fiscal decentralisation increased incentives for local authorities to log timber for revenue; Effects of the logging ban – particularly on fuelwood and wood for non-commercial use in collective forests; Insufficient attention to building the necessary structures to support decentralised management Growing rural inequalities based on access to forest land with an emerging rich class controlling forest land and wasteland to be converted to forestry; questions about the effects of the Sloping Land Conversion Programme and growing inequalities amongst poor farmers Lack of clarity on property rights for collective forests; expropriation of collective forests for	Already strong connections with China, useful to capitalise on this and to build some more analysis looking at the poverty effects of different policy decisions in different forest areas, remote, less remote counties etc. linked into a broader analysis of livelihood opportunities and the access to these by poorer and wealthier households	IFR special edition on China particularly Ruiz-Peréz et al Zhigang Xu et al, 2005 Guangping Miao & West, 2005 Edmunds & Wollenberg 2003 Dupar & Badenoch

		tion of forestry staff to township & a law for increasing independence in township financing Natural Forest Protection Programme and the logging ban		protected areas		
Vietnam	High capacity centralised, Limited accommodation of civil society Administrative decentralisation	New Law on Forest Protection and Development 2004 potential for pro-poor outcomes. Co-management arrangements	Regional focus on forests and poverty in upland areas of the ethnic minorities Strong commitment to poverty targeting – good entry-point for more nuanced discussion about poverty and forestry Spatial and structural vulnerability - ethnic minority groups particularly poor and dependent on forest land for their livelihoods. Province level experiments in place with decentralised budget development Recent protests in Cen-	Uneven implementation within and between provinces of new laws for land allocation and forest management; Slow reform of State Forest Enterprises; slow implementation of benefit-sharing arrangements limiting incentives to local people	High potential and a good moment to support the development of a more pro-poor approach to forestry. A major issue here is working with provincial and district authorities on public expenditure targeting Working with Party-affiliated corporatist social groups provide an opportunity to reach grass-roots level and because they have legiti-	Conway et al, 2004 Sunderlin & Hunh Thu Ba, 2005 Shanks & O'Reilly, 2005

			tral Highlands led to rapid policy change in land policies specifically for ethnic minorities		macy and voice within state policy systems Subject of research programme by ODI investigating the pro-poor nature of participatory forest management	
Thailand	High capacity, accommodative of civil society Political decentralisation	No national-level community forestry policy framework Support from FAO NFP facility to update national forest policy and programme Tambon elected local governments with natural resource protection and development mandates to the sub-district level Constitution enshrine rights of local people and organisations to manage their own natural resources	Strong social movement – regional community forestry network Potential of Tambons to develop more proactive forest management role;	Strong environmental movement opposed to increasing access to forests by local people Unclear relationships between Royal Forest Department and tambon authorities – deconcentrated RFD structures and not decentralised	Not a high priority	Dupar & Badenoch, 2002; Johnson & Forsyth, 2002

Philip-pines	Medium to high capacity, accommodative of civil society Political decentralisation – contested responsiveness, local elites still powerful	Long history of community forestry Indigenous People's Property Rights Act Local Government Code transferred responsibility for local forest management to local government	Successful use of public interest litigation to support indigenous rights Important role of civil society in expanding & deepening community-based forest mgt.	Constitutional blocks that limit land-use to leasehold and exclude ownership of forest lands		Nurse and Malla, 2005 Contreras, A.P. 2003 Crook & Sverrisson, 2001
Indonesia	Weak capacity and willingness transitioning to stronger willingness Partial political decentralisation – contest between state and sub-national	Decentralisation law 22 compromise with lack of clarity over rules at each level; no tax base reliant on central transfers Basic Forest Law 1999	End of New Order improved access to forest resources High-level debates about nature of poverty – looking for more multi-dimensional understandings; District poverty planning – opportunity to build a more nuanced understanding about forestry, poverty and livelihoods Rapidly developing civil society	Basic Agrarian Law still to be reformed; Decentralisation created a power vacuum occupied by local elites controlling access to forests; districts able to create legal instruments at odds with higher regulation; sectoral laws inherited from previous era in conflict with regional autonomy rules Continued high-levels of illegal logging; pressure on forest lands for agricultural concessions Ministry of Forests uncertain relations with deconcentrated staff; assertion of power over districts in contesting local-level policy development Civil society weak in terms of	Important moment – parts of government open to new policy dialogues; WB/DFID design of new decentralised service facility – to include support to civil society, livelihoods etc	McCarthy presentation at ODI 2002; Colfer & Resosudarmo, 2002; Conway et al, 2004; Rosser et al 2004; Hobley 2005;

				representation, NGO sector highly variable in capacity to deliver		
Lao	Centralised planning system, low capacity, low responsiveness. Low accommodation of civil society Administrative decentralisation	1996 Forestry Law allows devolution of state-owned forests to local communities for management according to state-approved management plans, no political decentralisation mainly deconcentration of central functions to lower levels No legal recognition of customary rights Policy framework recognises validity of community management of forest resources	Forestry law provides an opening for development of village forests to be harvested through use of contractors with revenue-sharing between government, contractor and village Forestry Law provides a framework for NTFP sub-sector to enable rural families to satisfy their 'family economic necessity' including collection of NTFPs for sale.	Government has reclaimed forests previously under these pilot arrangements. The revenue-sharing arrangements left little with the villages although it did allow for payment of village wage labour Highly centralised and controlled regime operating through the party system; active discouragement of alternative channels for civil society interaction Implementation of the Land and Forest Allocation Programme in combination with a policy of stablising shifting cultivation has been identified as a primary source of new poverty creation and food insecurity in rural areas	Difficult to enter on ticket of pro-poor change through village forests but could use support to legal trade in forest products as an entry-point that fits with Lao PDR government's growth agenda Long-term prospects of change but an important country in which to work because of high numbers of people living in forest areas with currently limited other livelihood opportunities	Andy Inglis IUCN pers.comm. Bruce & Mearns, 2002 Katsigris et al, 2005 Dupar & Badenoch 2002 Nurse and Malla, 2005
Cambodia	Centralised planning system, low capacity, low responsiveness.	New policy statement, new law, incomplete NFP process Community for-	Multi-donor independent forest review (2003) – not followed-up but does provide a basis to reopen dialogue and de-	Patronage-based system of government, lack of judicial accountability makes it difficult to change the rules of the game around forest allocation and cor-	Post-conflict country where timber has been used as a conflict resource. Impor-	Independent Forest Sector Review 2004 Dupar & Badenoch, 2002

	Some accommodation of civil society whilst supported by donors Partial political decentralisation – patronage system still in place	estry sub-decree Land Law recognises indigenous collective rights Commitment to political decentralisation with elected communes	bate about the role of forestry. Elected communes an important entry-point for developing new approaches to forest management (rather than remaining caught in the community forestry silo) – already involved in natural resource boundary mapping	ruption. Community forestry follows Nepal/India model of rehabilitation of degraded lands Little interest in discussing commune-management of high value forests or changing nature of the concession system Unclear and conflictual relationships between major resource ministries – land, agriculture and environment Highly insecure land rights Threat from the agricultural economic concession system High levels of tenure insecurity Conflictual relationships with advocacy NGOs and government Conservation NGOs in conflict with human rights and development NGOs; In-migration of lowland groups into upland indigenous areas (state and provincial encouraged) No recourse to justice for poor people	tant opportunity to support new dialogue around the role of forestry within decentralised structures to follow on from Independent Forest Sector Review to include discussion on the role of communes in forest management and other levels of local government; the implementation of the Land law and the provision for collective land rights to indigenous groups. RECOFTC have already started some regional discussions and exchange on community-based forestry;	Global Witness reports Conway et al, 2004
South Asia						
India	High capacity/ responsive/ ac-	JFM Government Orders but	Political decentralisation is highly developed in	The structural barriers to moving out of poverty remain high	Dialogue already established at the	Farrington et al, 2005

	commodative of civil society Political decentralisation but only deconcentration of forests	Forest Act not revised Draft Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill 2005 in process	some states but forests remain a state-centre subject with limited devolution to local people. Public interest litigation has been successful at challenging the forest sector and has been used particularly by environmental NGOs Highly developed and effective NGOs Social movements highly developed in some states (mass tribal organisations in Madhya Pradesh; peasant movements Kerala, West Bengal); 'uncivil' movements – naxalites in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkand movement	particularly for scheduled tribes and castes; strong environmental lobby contesting rights of tribals to own and use forests for livelihoods Rapid livelihood diversification away from agriculture base – question-marks about the longer-term role of forests in livelihoods; JFM mainly focused still on plantations and protection-oriented; green felling bans in many states – preventing income sharing arrangements; restrictions on NTFP harvests for sale; disputes over land use in customary areas particularly over grazing. Pressure to tightly conserve areas and remove people's rights of use	national-level. State-level entry-points through extant livelihood, decentralisation programmes e.g. DFID in MP and AP; DFID support to HP forestry – interesting opportunity to strengthen policy debates around poverty and livelihoods particularly with Draft Scheduled Tribes Bill; restrictive regulatory frameworks and effects on use of forests as entry-point for pro-poor growth	Sarin, 2005 Nurse & Malla, 2005
Nepal	State without control over territory, low capacity, low responsiveness	Empowering forest law. Devolving some management responsibility – government retained tenure Co-management in the Terai	Federation of Forest Users Forest User Groups still allowed to function under the Maoists Some FUGs providing wider developmental benefits and social security to poorer community	Major breakdown in political regime – suspension of government Widespread Maoist violence Evidence of the poorest people becoming worse off in ¾ of the FUGs;	Subject of research programme by ODI investigating the pro-poor nature of participatory forest management	Nurse and Malla, 2005 Pokharel, 2002 Pokharel et al, 2005 ODI, 2005

		strong government control Leasehold forestry targeted at the poor	members Potential for FUGs to become centres for political and social transformation in situation of governmental breakdown – peace-brokers			
Latin America						
Mexico	High capacity/ responsive through party patronage system accommodative of civil society Partial political decentralisation	Forestry Law 1997 provisions for community forestry Agrarian reform put ejidos and indigenous community system in place	Nearly 70% of Mexico's forests are under community or indigenous control Establishment of community forest enterprises – more successful are vertically integrated as a result of pre-existing activities of forest industry Income sources funding local development and social welfare in more integrated and prosperous CFEs	Changes in constitution have undermined tenure rights of indigenous people where changes from comunidades to ejidos can be done by community leaders without consultation; Migration of young for alternative livelihoods, frustration at inability to have a voice in decision-making; elite capture leading to 'covert privatisation of ejidos' in some cases;	Little appears to be known about benefit distribution and asset-building at the household level. Since Mexico is often cited as being of critical demonstration importance it would appear that these more differentiated analyses are urgently required to build an evidence base around the conditions for pro-poor community forestry enterprises	Ellsworth & White, 2004 Barry, Campbell, Fahn, Mallee and Pradhan, 2003 Bray, 2003 Antinori and Bray, 2004 Crook & Sverrisson, 2001

Honduras	Medium capacity, responsiveness accommodative of civil society Partial political decentralisation Central govt with allocative rights	Forestry Law 1972 (new Forestry Bill) Law for Modernisation and Development of the Agricultural Sector 1992 returned the forest to the landowners – private and municipal	Municipal governments became owners of forests located on municipal lands, ejidos (some 28% of the country's forests) with management plan approval by COHDEFOR; Strong local-level organisations, *patronatos,* civic patron boards through which citizens defend interests active in the forestry arena; women's groups also active	Many municipal govts. still to take advantage of competency over forests. Lack of information, technical advice are major barriers with limited support from COHDEFOR Weak understanding of linkages between use of forests and poverty reduction in the municipality; fiscal incentives for forestry remain low except from ejidal forests, if the forest is national 1% of value of exploitation goes to municipality, if sale is through auction then 10%	Strong interest in developing municipal forests from an array of local-level organisations and associations of municipal authorities (e.g. Pro Veda communal movement)	Larios, 2003
Nicaragua	Medium capacity, responsiveness accommodative of civil society Partial political decentralisation Central govt with allocative rights	Unclear policy framework for decentralisation Municipalities Law grants municipal governments sweeping responsibility to develop, conserve and control use of natural resources; also have right to opinion over	Municipal Association key player in challenging and influencing natural resource policy; communities protesting against logging activities pressured municipalities to respond; indigenous groups put legal demarcation of indigenous territories onto political agenda	Contradiction between national development framework (National Development Plan) and decentralisation programme, recognises limited role of local governments and local people; forestry is part of a national neoliberal agenda Powers given by decree taken away – plan for decentralisation taken away with change of forestry director Central Government retains right under the Constitution to make key decisions over natural resource exploitation – central govt	Strength of municipalities and ability to bargain with central government, the capability of communities to organise an effective protest provide some interesting opportunities to look at the scope for community-based management systems and	Larson, 2004

		contracts and 25% of income from Tax Office from contracts		enters into contracts for forestry despite right of municipalities to dissent and has not released timber revenues to municipalities Resistance by INAFOR central forest authority to reform and transfer of powers and income	the role of social movements in influencing policy agendas and outcomes	
Guatemala	Low to medium capacity responsiveness accommodative of civil society	1996 Forestry law permitting municipal forest resource management; legal categories of ejidal and communal forests; Partial decentralisation of natural resource management	Municipal authorities often cede resource management of ejidos forests to communities through co-management or devolved management; cases of municipal authorities adapting to traditional systems Innovative financial mechanisms PINFOR for financing reforestation by independent producers or organised groups Generous revenue sharing with municipal authorities; Examples of women's movements effective in reforestation (AMEDIK); Maya Biosphere Reserve and community concessions opposition to women's involvement but active engagement of	Rapidly advancing agricultural frontier and a lack of non-agricultural employment opportunities; municipal lands under forests often released for agriculture; Problems of reinvesting in decentralised technical assistance, forest revenues usually used to support debt repayments; High levels of municipal indebtedness Unclear delegation of authority to the municipal authorities Uncertain property rights make it difficult for communities and municipalities to demonstrate legal ownership and to access state financing; State deconcentration undermining traditional resource management practices	The local interpretation and apparent flexibility in response to forest/agriculture needs producing some interesting outcomes in terms of wider policy evidence in the region; experience of GTZ BOSCOM in developing decentralised competence in forestry could provide useful guidance to local governments elsewhere; unclear evidence around pro-poor nature of reforms with debate focused on levels of decen-	Ferroukhi and Echeverría, 2003 Monterroso, 2002 Finger-Stich, 2003

			community association ACOFOP, a federation of 16 community organisations; examples of community concessions with FSC forest certification		tralisation and not focused on within or between community access to resources, gendered effects including participation in federations etc	
Guyana	Medium capacity Increasing responsiveness Accommodative of civil society Partial political decentralisation Central govt with allocative rights – minimal deconcentration still centralised	New policy, law and sector reform in place Increased openness to the role of local people in forest management – concessions, employment	Guyana Forestry Commission part of the FAO supported mentoring project. Experimenting with community concessions with the North Rupununi District Development Board and Iwokrama; established associations of small-loggers using chainsaws	Political environment heavily contested; critical issues of Amerindian land and resource rights; partial decentralisation; central control over forests still retained	Support to policy dialogue and development of community concessions; poverty analysis; forest revenue allocations between central and local government	

Bolivia	Medium to high capacity, responsive, accommodative of civil society Partial political decentralisation Central govt with allocative rights	Significant policy reforms Popular Participation Law 1994 – transferred responsibilities to municipalities and focused on transferring resources to previously ignored rural areas Forest and Agrarian laws 1996 reformed Recognition of indigenous territories and their exclusive rights to use forest resources	Municipal authorities with limited forest decentralisation responsible for monitoring forest management and illegal activities, and for promoting forest management by users National government defines standards and allocates forests Creation of municipal forest reserves and allocation to small-scale loggers; delimiting reserves as community concessions (up to 20%of public forest area in jurisdiction)	Central state still reserves right to allocate concessions; and retains control over long & bureaucratic process of titling for municipal reserves & indigenous territories, and for changes by small farmers to land use; central political parties retain political patronage at local level; Evidence of strengthening of local elites as a result of decentralisation building alliances to prevent indigenous claims Small-scale loggers discriminated against because of prohibition of chain-saws and high-levels of management required; Difficult process to delimit municipal reserves with competing and overlapping land claims; community groups lack managerial and financial capacities necessary to develop effective forest operations; inadequate systems for technical assistance to communities	An opportunity to a) open dialogue on pro-poor forestry and the barriers to it – exchange of experience with small-scale loggers in Guyana using chainsaws b) selection of municipalities with which to work to develop municipal reserves	Pacheco 2004; Ellsworth & White, 2004
Africa						
Ghana	Medium capacity, limited responsiveness to poor, accommodative of	1994 Forestry and Wildlife Policy established collaborative	End of a donor-supported sector reform process; FAO mentoring project supported the Forest Department with some	Contest between Forest Commission and chiefs over land allocation; timber recognised as the property of the chief –farmers have no rights to sell trees on	Major contradictions and resistance to change - limited effects of collabo-	Amanor, 2003; Brown, 2002 Crook & Sverrisson, 2001

	civil society Partial political decentralisation, in contest with chiefs Central govt with allocative rights	forest management under a separate unit Chiefs with customary power over land allocation Forest sector reform undertaken Decentralised local government – district assemblies but forest service remains centralised	positive outcomes. Major structural barriers still in place – interesting political environment with the competing roles of traditional authorities, District Assemblies and powerful natural resource sector refusing to decentralise	their land, receive no rent or royalty; timber royalties divided between paramount chiefs, local chiefs & district councils; Centralised off-reserve forest management to forest service; difficult access by farmers to trees on their farmland; punitive response to use of chainsaws – but most timber Area Councils authority to draw up development plans to be ratified by communities – not supported by forest service Retention of high value resources by central state whereas savanna resources recommended to be decentralised to District Assemblies	rative forest management, unclear poverty outcomes.	
Cameroon	Low capacity, low responsiveness, accommodative of civil society regional representatives act with impunity, high levels of patronage Partial political decentralisation	Progressive forestry law 1994 but community forests can only be established in a limited set of areas determined by the forest service	Allowed socially marginalised groups Baka pygmies to manage a forest ecosystem; some forestry fees channelled to socio-economic development in villages Law provides for community concessions logged by communities or let to concessionaires	Forest law had limited local ownership and no institutional structure to support implementation. Incomplete decentralisation processes. Instrumental and bureaucratically controlled forest committees, hijacked by elites. Many cases fees either don't reach villages or misused Marginalisation of traditional and local authorities created a 'panarchy' coexistence of many centres of power – leading to a conflict of	Important in the region as an example for other countries in the Congo Basin of other ways of managing forests, despite the problems there have been; important questions of revenue-sharing issues of forest management and flow of	Brown, 2002 Oyono, 2004 a& b Amanor, 2003

	Central govt with allocative rights, forest service resists decentralisation			authority; frustration with limited benefits from community forests leading to communities signing logging contracts with large companies to access forest wealth immediately; increasing evidence of administrative and political elites acquiring community forests as a quick way to access revenue	benefits and incentives to capture benefits now need to be addressed. Demonstrating high levels of recentralising forces in opposition to spirit of forestry law	
Uganda	Medium capacity, responsiveness, accommodative of civil society Political decentralisation Central govt recentralised local government resources, limited resources provided to decentralised local government forest services	New policy, new law, National Forest Programme in place, political decentralisation in place Strong commitment to poverty reduction budgeting	Political decentralisation in place poorly linked into natural resource management Public interest litigation practised Some progress on building forestry into poverty reduction strategies Experimentation with collaborative forestry arrangements Proportion of off-reserve forest land is up to 70% of the total forest land – potential to produce high levels of local benefit	Incomplete institutional reform threatening the stability of the sector – two elements to be firmly institutionalised 1) the regulatory and policy overseer within the Ministry of Water Lands & Environment and 2) the district forest services High risk that the National Forest Authority expands its mandate into the decentralised structures High value forests retained by the central state; question marks over financial viability of local forests under local government control	District-level support to establishment of district forest services. An opportunity to support development of decentralised forest services within a politically decentralised system Limited funds available to support the effective completion of the reform process – essential to guarantee the pro-poor outcomes of the sector	Based on author's observations of reform process over last 4 years

Tanzania	Medium capacity, responsiveness, accommodative of civil society Political decentralisation to village but limited in implementation	National Forest Policy (1998), Forest Act 2002 make community-based forest management a main focus; Village Land Act vests the village with the authority to demarcate and allocate land National Forest Programme providing framework for delivery of participatory forest management across Tanzania	Unique historical context of villagisation and provision of land law which provides for identification & registration of common properties prior to adjudication of individual entitlements – facilitating declaration of community forests – controlled and owned; provision for full market compensation for expropriation of commons has changed relations with state forest authorities – major incentive to retain forests under community and not retake under state control	Highly donor driven approaches – most of the examples are as a result of project-initiated activities; Lack of financial resources and technical capacity to scale-up from these discrete activities (less than 1% of forest and woodland areas in Tanzania)	Institutional base for community forestry embedded within progressive land legislation provides an interesting basis from which to examine the pro-poor nature of on-going activities; already evidence of elite capture and external elite moving in to claim land using connections within the village (subject of an ODI research programme)	Alden Wily, 2001 Alden Wily 2002 Alden Wily, 2004 ODI 2005 presentation on Tanzania Daley, 2005

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