

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Commercialization of NTFP has been associated with efforts to politically empower and economically advance some of the most disadvantaged sections of society—poor peasants, the landless, rural women and indigenous (or tribal) peoples. However, there is no adequate explanation of the commercial NTFP processes related to above efforts without theoretical perspective. As Neumann and Hirsch (2000) argued, much of the NTFP commercialization research appears to be conducted in a “theoretical vacuum”. This chapter thus presents a basic theoretical discussion with my concerns about the globalization and commercialization of NTFP. First, Studies of NTFP management in China, especially in Yunnan, are reviewed to provide a literature background of previous NTFP researches in Chinese context. Second, commodity chain approach to study NTFP management and marketing is formed, based upon the review of relevant theoretical debates, and the concepts of access and institutions.

2.1 Studies of NTFP Management in China

Studies of NTFP management in China were in fact conducted in association with the study of forestry management. Traditionally, NTFP were mainly for self-consumption or barter, and only small amounts might be sold. Even after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, NTFP were not extensively commercialized. Thus, in forestry management, timber production to meet the timber demands of development of industry, agriculture, and construction of national infrastructure were the most important focuses of all, during 1949-1957 (Su, 2001). As a result, there are few studies relevant to NTFP. Later, the Great Leap Forward policy also emphasized on timber production as a forestry management strategy, instead of treating forest as an ecosystem. At that period, NTFP were a sort of “invisible products”

in most foresters and scholars' perspectives, both in term of economic and ecological aspect. This result could partially be caused by Mao's "isolation" and "central planning" economic policy (Zhang and Zhu, 1999).

The initiation of studying NTFP indeed accompanied with the Deng's policy of "Reforming and Opening China" 1980s, since liberalizing the market provided more space for flexibly NTFP trading (He, 2000). The increasing value of commoditized NTFP attracted a great attention from foresters, scholars and economists. However, initially, as Shi (1992) argued, NTFP were regarded as "minor forest products" or "subordinate forest products" vis-à-vis timber. Due to that perspective, all the forestry polices were still concentrating on the "forest" (tree and wildlife). Hence, although the "invisible products" have been "discovered", NTFP were still treated as "minor forest products" in the forestry sector (Shi, 1992; Zhang and Zhu, 1999), which implies that NTFP were inferior in term of both economic and ecological value.

Thus, the studies of NTFP in the early period of "Reforming and Opening" were focused on exploring the new marketing opportunities in NTFP trading and economic development, and were conducted mainly by foresters, officials and economists. There was a little concern about the environmental issues related to NTFP research. Later, in the 1990s, as (He, 2000) identified, accompanied with valuable market of NTFP gradually discovering and expanding, as well as increasing concerns about environmental issues, some forestry scholars started to introduce the terms NTFP (Non-timber Forest Products; *feimucai linchanpin*) and NWFP (Non-wood Forest Products; *feimuzhi linchanpin*) in order to replace the terms "minor forest products" and "subordinate forest products". Owing to their efforts, the term NTFP became to be used academically in early 1990s, which enhanced the role of NTFP in forest management concerning.

Only in the last decades, NTFP became to be regarded as special and important forest products for local community, along with environmental problem occurred, particularly apparent deforestation, desertification and big flood on Yangtze River happened. In the mean time, deeply reforming economy and opening market increase the value of NTFP as well. Hence, as an alternative way of utilization of forest resource, a great deal of researches had been done relevant to NTFP utilization and development in the later of last decades.

Due to those contributions, researchers realized that in the era of environmental conservation, the subsistence values of NTFP are very important to local people living in mountainous forested areas, since they are often the only products that can provide the daily life needs (Xu et al., 2000; He, 2000; Wang et al.; 2001; Rijsoort and He 2001). Moreover, at the national and regional level, as Rijsoort and He (2001) highlighted, NTFP also play a significant role in export and industrialization of the country. In other words, development of NTFP can not only improve local people or forest-dwellers' standard of live, but also increase employment opportunities in rural and urban areas, through commoditization process. In some cases, scholars recognized that some kinds of NTFP trading are more valuable than timber production. As a result, according to He (2000), the term NTFP became to be used officially and popularly, which refer to "all renewable products produced in the forest or on any land with similar functions (excluding timber, fuel wood, charcoal, stone materials, water and tourism resources)". In the contrast, the terms, such as "minor forest products", "subordinate forest products", disappeared in most literatures.

In Yunnan, there are more considerable studies of NTFP than the whole nation, because of its rich natural resource. The conducted researches relevant to poverty alleviation programs, community development and resource management report the significance of NTFP in improving local people's standard of living, regional economic development, as well as forest conservation (Pei et al., 1996; Xu et al., 2000; He, 2000;

Wang et al., 2001; Xuan, 2001; Rijsoot and He, 2001). In particular, those studies emphasized upon the role of NTFP in local people's livelihood after logging ban implementation, Nature Reserve establishment as well as the fulfillment of other environmental conservation projects. In the meantime, those studies also found some environmental, social and economic problems related to NTFP utilization.

As Xuan (2001) argued, with economic success, incentives for over use of NTFP exist. She illustrated that overextraction of NTFP may also destroy the structure and function of forest, leading eventually to depletion of forest resources (see also Rijsoot and He, 2001). She observed that the occurrence of overextraction may be ascribed to unclear property relation of NTFP, especially in National Parks and Nature Reserves; and enormous economic value of some kind of NTFP is incentive exploitative competition in collection. Similarly, He (2001) pointed out that overextraction often takes place in the area in which NTFP are not well-managed or local institutional arrangement are weakened. In that case, instead of providing an alternative way to sustainable forest management, collection of NTFP might have heavy impact on biodiversity and sustainable forestry management as long as overuse happened. In another case, as Zhang et al. (2001) identified, due to market intervention, utilization of NTFP can also cause social problems (e.g. conflict, even violence for increasing exploiting NTFP). Therefore, without good management, commoditization of NTFP may lead to social and environmental unsustainability.

On the other hand, scholars also observed some problems relevant to economic aspect in the process of commercializing NTFP. Zhang et al. (2001) indicated that in some cases, because there are limited kinds of NTFP were commercialized, local people may extremely rely upon several species, which had been extensively commoditized, instead of diversifying NTFP trading and production. As a result, intensive harvest of those given species is inevitable. On the other side, remote villages often lack information, which also constrains their opportunities to diversify NTFP marketing, and

confines the bargaining power of local groups. In addition, involvement of various actors (middleman, export companies, transporters and so forth) in NTFP trading may also constrain the benefit and values added locally.

To sum up, the studies of NTFP in China, developed from concerns about their economic value and role, then broadened to social and ecological aspects. Meanwhile, along with the increasing depth of research, there was a corresponding development in terminology. However, both previous researches and more recent ones, in general, concentrated on the role of NTFP in local economic development and poverty alleviation. Although, in some cases, the scholars found that unclear tenure system, competitive harvest (e.g. Xuan, 2001; He, 2001), and restraint market channel (e.g. Zhang et al., 2001) may all cause unsustainability of NTFP utilization, in terms of social, environmental and economic aspects, those researches was limited. There were also few researchers reveal the complexity of NTFP management patterns at community level. In addition, in terms of marketing, those limited studies overemphasized upon local level, which cannot adequately disclose the whole NTFP trading in macro level. Especially, none of field-based research on NTFP has applied commodity chain analysis through local, regional, national, and global levels.

2.2 Commodity Chain Approach

Along with commercialization and commoditization agenda, to identify the potential opportunity and existing problem of economic system, the track of commodity flowing are given special attention by economists and social scientists. For investigating that track, commodity chain analysis thus is an approach to understand how, and through whom, a commodity is marketed from site of production to final consumption. In recent years, drawing upon commodity chain approach, anthropologists are interested in studying how these chains are organized, and the economic behaviors of market participants in order to analyze how and for whom such market conduits operate. It is

also a useful tool to understand who benefit, how they benefit, and how those patterns of benefit distribution might be changed.

2.2.1 Theoretical Debates on Commodity Chain Analysis

In early periods of economic study, economic anthropologists contributed a great deal to the understanding of the economic aspects of social relations (e.g. Scott's (1976) conception of "moral economy"), which were based upon the argument that the people's economy is submerged in his/her social relationships and economic system is run on non-economic considerations rather than pure economic rational choice (Fujimoto, 1983). In more recent economic research, however, has up till now been dominated by two main theoretical controversies, between the "formalists", who argue that the basic theoretical apparatus of neo-classical economics is applicable to all human societies; and "substantivists" who argue that, on the contrary, every society operates according to different systems of economic rationality which arise from each one's specific cultural bases (Clammer, 1993; Lubasz, 1992; Dilley, 1992).

Commodity chain as an economic system, in general, is defined as "a series of interlocked exchanges through which a commodity and its constituents pass from extraction or harvesting through production to end use" (Ribot, 1998). Study of commodity chain, therefore, associating with economic theoretical controversies between "formalist" and "substantivists" are inescapable. On the one side, rather than using the term "Commodity Chain", academic marketers, who prefer the term "Marketing Channels", rely on industrial organization theory and price-based mechanisms to explain articulation of buyers and sellers in this system (Achrol et al., 1983). For this point, as Tulley (2000) indicated, organizational theory holds that the structural form of the market (i.e. number and concentrations of firms, product differentiation) determines market conduct (the economic behavior of participants) leading to the eventual "performance" of the market. Thus, similar to neoclassical models of markets and "formalist" argument, economic actors from this perspective are

largely divorced from social or cultural contexts not directly involved in economic activity (Le Billon, 2000; Ribot, 1998; Tulley, 2000).

On the other side, however, anthropologists working in non-Western society have criticized such approaches. Instead, they pointed to various social and cultural context in which production and exchange is organized (Tulley, 2000). Contrary to the predictions of organizational theory, economic behavior is not easily predetermined by market structure. Instead, anthropologists argue that actors use an array of non-price-based mechanisms to create locally-adapted market institutions and construct culturally meaningful economic practices (Dilley, 1992; Tulley 2000).

Therefore, the definition made by Gereffi and Korzeniewicz (1994) is quite useful to understand the commodity chain from anthropological perspective. In their definition, commodity chains are composed of networks of actors “clustered around one commodity.....[and] situationally specific, socially constructed, and locally integrated, underscoring the social embeddedness of economic organization” (ibid.). From this perspective, commodity chains are not only regulated by economic rationality, but are both constrained and enabled by a vast array of social relations and culture (Ribot, 1998; Belcher, 1998; Le Billon, 2000). Thus, rather than making a dichotomy between economic rationality and cultural morality, this definition promotes a contextualized reconception for studying commodity chain from social, cultural and economic dimensions.

However, Le Billon (2000) argued that mainstream commodity chain analysis concentrates on identifying actors and the distribution of costs and benefits, and some touched a little cultural and social dimensions; but often neglects “...the most politically sensitive sites along commodity chains, preventing that concept from uniting, in a comprehensive politics, consumption, culture, labor, and the use of nature”. Thus, along with a given commodity chain, economic decisions are also political one, and the

possibilities of economic activity are often modified by the political context in a more formal sense. Those aspects are crucial characteristics of economic structure in non-Western society, especially socialist and the “Third World” countries in which political factors often play a major role in shaping economic structure.

More recently, the era of globalization, which had been regarded as “Neo-liberal regulationism”, also profoundly impact on local, regional and national economic structures (Hoogvelt, 1997). Through their configurations, the transnational cooperations, international agencies, international donors and so forth are continuously regulating and influencing one country’s economic activities and structures. In this sense, Watts’s (2000) works are significant. For him, commodity chain analysis should be conducted based upon what he called “globalized local sites” as the context for actors’ economic practice, which mean that the manner in which local, national and global interests and forces intersection around questions of the economic behaviors (ibid.).

In summary, both economists who are favor of economic rationality conceptions, and anthropologists who prefer cultural and social embeddedness conceptions might all lead to simplify the complicated actors’ economic behaviors in the global context along with commodity chain (Gudeman, 1992). In addition, political scientists’ perspective, which overemphasizes the role of politics, might also tend to misunderstand people’s economic activities. Therefore, as Le Billon (2000) highlighted, commodity chain is formed by not only economic rationality, social, cultural conciseness, but also government policy, international regulation.

For my concern about NTFP commodity chain study, instead of simply articulating with different factors to analyze economic behaviors, drawing upon contemporary economic anthropological approach, economic behavior along with commodity chain is contextualized in local social and cultural institution, which are effected by national and

global political context. In this case, I prefer Gudeman's (1992) "practice model", which poses to understand how social rules, cultural rules, morality as well as politics provides a context for all rational calculation under global influence. In other words, the "practice model" provides an approach to understand actors' day-to-day practice, which could indicate their responses to the market along with commodity chain. It is the interaction between "non-price-based" mechanisms (e.g. social, cultural and political factors) and "price-based" mechanisms (market or economic factors), which is the fundamental element to understand how actors' economic behaviors are conducted and economic decision are made. Thus, the commodity chain is embedded in the much wider networks of social actors and practices than those directly involved in production of a commodity. In turn, the commodity itself also shapes networks and institutions.

2.2.2 Conceptualizing "Access" along with Commodity Chain

The term access is frequently used by property and natural resource analysts and by other social scientist as well. For Macpherson (1978), property might characterized as "...a *right* in the sense of an enforceable claim to some use or benefit of something." An "enforceable claim" is one that is acknowledged and supported by society through either law, custom, or convention (Ribot and Peluso, in press). Property, in this sense, had been conceptualized as legitimated claim or right to gain benefit from things (either legal legitimacy or extra-legal legitimacy). Further, Ostrom and Schlager (1995) defined four formations of property rights in common-pool resources management. According to them, access refers to "the *rights* to enter a defined physical area and enjoy non-subtractive benefits" (ibid.). For New Political Ecology School, based on the notion of property, they also use the term access regards as the *rights* to resource. For instance, "conflict over access" means social contestation over resources use-rights; "complexity of access" stands for multiple coexisting and overlapping use-rights combine with formal and informal tenure to produce a complex web of dependencies (Agarwal, 1994; Bryant, 1992; Bryant and Bailey, 1997; Moore, 1994; Peluso 1992, 1995; Vandergeest 1996, 1997; Li, 1996; Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995; Peet and Watts, 1996; Neumann,

2000). Thus, the classical notion of property defined access as the *right* to the benefit from things, whether it is *de facto* rights or *de jure* rights (Ribot, 1998; Ribot and Peluso, in press).

Based upon that notion, current efforts of academics, development practitioners as well as NGOs are attempting to strengthen local access and control over resources, which expected that the benefit would be generated automatically to local groups through those strategies. Nevertheless, based on his studies of forest management in Senegal, Ribot (1995, 1998, 2000) argued that local groups control direct access to forest does not give them access to the benefit that flow from commerce consequentially. Thus, control of access to things may not confer control of benefit from them. He further highlights that property-oriented approach to local development are not sufficient, because property rights---or any other forms of direct resources control---do not confer benefits from forests or other resources on local populations unless the populations also have access to markets and other opportunities (Ribot, 2000). Therefore, a broader notion of access should be conceptualized in contemporary resource management research.

In their article “A Theory of Access: Taking Property out of Place”, Ribot and Peluso (in press) broaden the term access, which refer to “the *ability* to derive benefits from things”. This definition makes the concept of access broader than the classical notion of property, defined as “the *right* to the benefit from things”, by emphasizing the *ability* rather than the *rights* to benefits. According to their argument, access is about all possible means by which a person is enabled to benefit from things; property generally evokes the “socially acknowledged and supported” claims or rights—whether by law, custom or convention (ibid.). Someone may benefit, however, through unsanctioned or illicit practices, ideological and discursive manipulations, and indirect relations of production and exchange. Hence, the *ability* to benefit is broader than the *right*.

Notably, Ribot (1998) also elaborated that most of the benefit flowing from the resource derive from the resulting market control, rather than control of forests or resources. Direct control, and therefore even enforced ownership or property, does not automatically confer benefits. Thus, access, or the ability to benefit, is based on a broader set of factors. But, it should be noted that “access” does not replace the term “property”. Rather, it encompasses property, putting property (and other forms of rights) in their place among the whole array of mechanisms, structures and relations at work. In this sense, Uraivan¹ highlight that the concept “ability (access) to benefit” should be concerned that “human ability” is actually structured, and is not a freedom of action. She also point out “ability (access)” is a combined quality of actors’ capacity which is expressed under a specific institutional structure, as well as local regulation.

To framing “access” dynamically, Ribot and Peluso (in press) indicated that the dynamic aspect of this concept emerges when we break social action into access *control* and access *maintenance*. Access control is “the ability to mediate others’ access and exert power over others” (Weber, 1978; as cited from Ribot and Peluso in press). Control “...refers to the checking and direction of action, the function or power of directing and regulating free action” (Rangan, 1997). Maintenance of access, on the other hand, requires expending resources or powers to keep a particular sort of resource access open. Maintenance and control are thus complementary. They are constitutive of relations among actors vis-à-vis instances of resource appropriation management, or use (Ribot and Peluso, in press). In addition, the meanings and values of resources are contested, negotiated and constructed among those who control and those who maintain access.

In term of commodity chain analysis, Ribot (1998) illustrated that the term access should also be broaden as *ability* to benefit from thing, instead of right. In this sense, he developed “access mapping” approach, rather than put property in place which is just

¹ This argument source from author personal communication with Dr. Uraivan Tam-Kim-Yong.

one mechanism among many operation on access along the commodity chain. For him, “access mapping” along commodity chain is a method for exploring the *bundles of powers* behind control and maintenance of those terms, instead of bundles of rights as property characteristic (ibid.). The power is constituted by political economy and material entitlements as well as cultural relations (Ribot and Peluso in press). This “access mapping” approach outlined disaggregates these bundles of powers and the mechanisms supporting them into their constituent strands as they shape not only ownership of things, but the overall flow and distribution of benefits associated with the whole trajectory of those things (Ribot, 1998; Ribot and Peluso, in press). It is about the careful tracing out of the social and political-economic relations in which a chain of inter-related instances of benefit or profit are located. Similarly, Ribot and Peluso (in press) underlined that “mapping” dynamic processes and relationships of access---including property relations---without reifying them is a valuable tool in commodity chain analysis.

In sum, resource access is composed of direct physical access, market access, labor access, access to capital, access to social relations and access to knowledge (Ribot and Peluso, in press). These, in turn, are shaped by and help shape legal and extra-legal mechanisms and processes that are part and parcel of access and access control (ibid.). In this sense, formal property is only one mechanism among many by which control over the benefits from resources can be exercised.

In my case, for study NTFP commodity chain, thus, access analysis should expand the notion of access beyond the notion of property directly which is attached to place or things, putting them in the larger social and political-economic context as structure and mechanisms that shapes people’s ability to benefit. It also places the notion of property among the many other social means, processes and structures that shape the flow and distribution of benefit. Thus, Ribot’s (1998) “access mapping” sheds light on the limited role of property the embedded nature of market, and the role of extra-legal structures

and mechanisms in benefit distributions. To better understand those structures and mechanisms, the concept of institution will be explored.

2.2.3 Institutional Dynamics along with Commodity Chain

Institutions are generally defined as “complexes of norms and behaviors that persist over time by serving collectively valued purposes” (Langill, 1999). They are the arrangements or “rules of the game” which shape the behavior of internal local community members and external stakeholders who are involved in a given resource management, and include common understandings about how issues and problems are to be addressed and solved (ibid.).

When undertaking institutional analysis, it is important to distinguish between the terms “institution” and “organization”. According to Langill (ibid.), the former can be described as the long-standing rules and rights governing social and productive behavior; the latter are the “players” and structures, or groups of individuals bound together by some common purpose to achieve objectives. Institutions thus form the framework upon which organizations are based.

In term of natural resource management, Leach et al. (1997, 1999) indicated that institutions are “the mediators of people-environment relations” (see also Agrawal and Yadama, 1997; Agrawal and Gibson, 1999). Although both social-economic factors and political, cultural factors are influencing resource management, those influences are mediated by institutional arrangements. Moreover, Leach et al. (1999) also remind us to pay attention that there are at least two different forms of institutions, which shape human behavior. First is formal institution, which means the formal property rights, rules, regulations and so forth which are issued by government, legitimized by state, and in principle could be defended in courts of law. Second form is informal institutions, which means customary property rights, local rules and so forth, are legitimized by social norms and codes of behavior.

In empirical research, the distinction between formal and informal institutions is given special attention by practitioners. On the one hand, formal institutions may be thought of as rules that require exogenous enforcement by a third party organization. The rule of law is, an example, usually upheld by the state through such organizational means as law courts, prisons and so on. Informal institutions, on the other hand, may be endogenously enforced; they are upheld by mutual agreement among the social actors involved, or by relations of power and authority between them. Therefore, institutions of various kinds, ranging from the informal (e.g. social norms) to the formal (e.g. the rule of law), interlock to form a matrix within which people live their lives (Leach et al., 1997). In this sense, institutions thus can be seen as sets of formal and informal rules that shape interactions of humans with others and nature (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999).

Nevertheless, Oakerson (1992) argued that rule, whether formal or informal, as everyone is aware, do not guarantee the emergence of particular pattern of behaviors. Some of the work that defines institutions as rules also recognizes that such rules do not automatically determine people's behaviors (Ostrom, 1998). Between rules and observed behaviors lie the unobserved mental calculations of individuals how make choices. Therefore, most cases lead us to view institutions not as the rules themselves, but as regularized patterns of behavior between individuals and groups in society that emerge from underlying structures or sets of "*rules-in-use*" (Leach et.al., 1999). From this perspective, instead of existing as a fixed framework, "rule" are constantly made and re-made through people's practices.

As Ostrom (1998) argued, in a system governed by "rule of law", the general legal framework in use will have its source in actions taken in constitutional, legislative, and administrative settings, augmented by decisions taken by individuals. Its "rules-in-form" will be consistent with its "rules-in-use". In a system not governed by "rule of law", central laws may exist, and there may even be considerable enforcement effort,

but individuals will typically attempt to evade rather than obey the law (ibid.), which is what we considered as institutional dynamics.

Therefore, understanding of people's *day-to-day practices* as "*rule-in-use*" is helpful in exploring institutional dynamics. Day-to-day practice emphasize the way that different forms of protest and resistance challenge legal rules governing people's behaviors. The artificial dichotomy between formal and informal institution therefore inevitably led to ignorance of the overlapping and ambiguous institutions. As Agrawal and Gibson (1999) outlined, everyday performances of individuals possess the potential to reshape formal and informal institutions, and thus exploring people's *day-to-day practice* or "*rule-in-use*" can help to display a holistic picture of institutional arrangement. In addition, viewing institution as regularized *practice* of particular groups of people rather than any fixed set of rules are contributed to understanding institutions dynamically.

For commodity chain analysis in which diverse and multi-level institutions co-existed, both formal and informal, and often acting in combination shape the way in which differentiated actors access, control and maintenance of either market or resource. Moreover, institutions regulate marketing process as well as how the commodity chain is organized. The authority to make rules may confine people's ability to access, use, conserve, trade and process resources, and exclude others from carrying out these activities. Notably, it also includes the determinations of the ability to transfer these above rules in order to gain benefit from resources. Institutional arrangements affect people's behavior and incentives to coordinate, cooperate and contribute in the formulation, implementation and enforcement of management regimes as well as resources marketing (Pemeroy, 1996). People's day-to-day practice, in turn, reshapes the institution in order to meet their individual interest. Institutions along with commodity chain themselves thus are aggregates of specific practices and rules that on the one hand frame and guide actors' behaviors, but over time, on the other hand, are an

outcome of the actions of actors through their economic activities (Agrawal and Yadama, 1997).

In summary, institutions are combination of “rule of game” and “rule-in-use”. In the other words, institutions constrain social actor’s activities and facilitate others on the one hand, on the other hand, strategic actors may attempt to bypass the constraints of existing institutions, and create new institution that match their interests. But institutions remain the primary mechanisms available to mediate, soften, attenuate, structure, mold, accentuate, and facilitate particular outcomes and actions. Thus, linking social actors and structures should emphasize how structures, rules and norms emerge as products of people’s practices and actions, both intended and unintended (Leach et al., 1999). These structural forms subsequently shape people’s actions; not by strict determination but by providing flexible orientation points which may either constrain or enable what is possible (ibid.). While some routinized action serves to reproduce structures, rules and institutions, other actions have agency, serving to change the system and perhaps, in time, remake new rule.

For my case of NTFP commodity chain study, framing institutions dynamically are contributed to exploring how commodity is traded at different levels realistically under the macro, meso, and micro circumstances. These factors would point to the importance of diverse institutions operating at multiple-scale level, which influence who has access to, control over or maintenance of what resources, market opportunities, and arbitrate contested resource claim and marketing activities. Therefore, research should attempt to understand how different actor’s practices are embedded along with commodity chain in order understand institutional dynamics.

Summary

In this Chapter, the relevant literature was reviewed. First, by tracing the development of the terminology of NTFP, the evolution process of studying NTFP was explored. It indicated not only the changing attitudes of scholars on NTFP studies in different context, but also the changing focus of NTFP studies. Beside to it, in the more current, along with commercialization and globalization process of NTFP utilization, the present studies also address several issues related to NTFP studies, such as property rights, benefit-sharing and so on.

Second, to form commodity chain approach, the various definitions of commodity chain and the concepts of access and institution, which are linked to the commodity chain analysis, are reviewed. Theoretical debates on commodity chain analysis present how economists, anthropologists and political scientists employ this method with their respective academic emphasis. Instead of simplifying those trichotomies of rationality, cultural based and politics in commodity chain analysis, “practice model” to observe how actors’ economic activities are conducted in the context of both “price-based” and “non-price-based” mechanisms are advocated.

The concept of access in commodity chain analysis was broadened as ability, rather than as the rights in property notion. It could be helpful to understand why people benefit and how their benefit, through “mapping access” along with commodity chain. Those benefits may come from not only the access to resource as property notion of rights, but more broadly access to information, knowledge, market, authorities and so forth as the broader notion of access as ability. However, human ability (access) is not freedom, rather it is structured under certain mechanisms and institutions.

Therefore, the concept of institution reviewed to integrate into commodity chain analysis. Institution is the mediator of people-environment relationship, which is the

combination of “rule of game” and “rule-in-use”. In the other words, institutions constrain social actor’s activates and facilitate others on the one hand; and on the other hand, strategic actors may attempt to bypass the constraints of existing institutions, and create new institution to meet their interests. This is contributed to exploring how commodity are traded at different level realistically under the macro, meso, and micro circumstances, these factors would point to the importance of diverse institution operating at multiple-scale level, which influence who has access to, control over or maintained what resources, market opportunity, and arbitrate contested resource claim and marketing activities, particularly, how local institutions are readjusted in response to global influences.

To systematically synthesize those abstract concepts into an empirical study approach for fieldwork, the conceptual framework of this thesis will be presented in the coming chapter. Moreover, field methods will be developed based upon this conceptual framework.