

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL DEBATE

#### 2.1 Dimensions of Decentralization

Decentralization is not a new phenomenon in developing countries, but its emergence has differentiated over time and place. According to Agrawal and Ostrom (2001), since political leaders, international donors, and local people and their leaders have begun to see decentralization as a means to achieve political-economic and policy objectives, decentralization has been an important objective of state policy. Studying decentralization in developing countries, the World Bank has reported “Of seventy five developing countries and transitional countries with populations greater than five million, all but twelve claim to be embarked on some form of transfer of political power to local units of governments” (Agrawal and Ribot, 1999)

Decentralization is a term that is difficult to clearly define. It is divided into many forms and looked at through various respects by scholars. According to Agrawal and Ribot (1999) and Ribot (2002a) decentralization is any act in which central government formally cedes power to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy. Meinzen-Dick and Knox (2001) define decentralization as transferring both decision-making authority and payment responsibility to lower levels of government. Similarly, Cheema and Rondinelli (1983) define that decentralization is the transfer of planning, decision-making, or administrative authority from the central government to its field organizations, local administrative units, semi-autonomous and parastatal organizations, local governments, or non-governmental organizations. Although decentralization is defined by many scholars, most definitions refer to the giving of powers and rights from central government to actors at lower levels. Decentralization has been implemented under various forms. Its forms include political, administrative, fiscal, and market decentralization. Political, administrative, fiscal and market

decentralization can also appear in different forms and combinations across countries, within countries and even within sectors.

In the context of natural resource management, decentralization mainly has taken place under two forms: political and administrative decentralization. According to Ribot (2002a), deconcentration or administrative decentralization involves the transfer of power to local branches of central state, such as prefects, administrators or local technical line-ministry agents. These upwardly accountable bodies are local administrative extensions of the central state. In contrast, political or democratic decentralization occurs when powers and resources are transferred to authorities representative of, and downwardly accountable to local populations. Democratic decentralization aims to increase popular participation in local decision-making. These two definitions are used by many scholars to analyze decentralization in most developing countries.

Part of the reason why so many different terms (forms) are used to describe decentralization is that decentralization can take place along many dimensions, towards multiple levels, and for several types of tasks (Agrawal and Ostrom, 2001). Scholars have viewed the study of decentralization from multiple dimensions. Agrawal and Ribot (1999) look at decentralization from three main factors: actors, powers, and accountability. In their conceptualization, the political and administrative domains of decentralization are characterized by the mix of these three underlying analytical dimensions. Djogo and Syaf (2003) analyze the decentralization process by linking authority and power relations to the accountability of forest resource governance. A conceptual framework is developed by Meinzen-Dick and Knox (2001) that considers potential roles, incentives and capacity issues for each actor in the certain context; and also considers the relationships among these institutions in terms of decision-making, service provision, resource flows, and accountability. There are no clear prescriptions, but it is useful to consider who makes what types of decisions, what services each provides, who pays whom for the different services, and how and to whom each institution is accountable. Additionally, Agrawal and Ostrom (2001a,b) analyze decentralization through examination of its politics and property rights. They focus on the politics of decentralization to identify the actors most likely

to initiate decentralization activities. Considering property rights under decentralization, the rights and capacities that are transferred to actors at lower levels of political organization can be examined.

This study tries to analyze forest decentralization through multiple dimensions by incorporating analytical frameworks of the aforementioned scholars such as Agrawal, Ribot, Ostrom, Knox, Meinzen-Dick, and so on. Since there is no factor that stands alone, decentralization is seen through the interaction of these factors at multiple scales. This study also examines how these dimensions play out in local politics under forest decentralization.

### **2.1.1 Social Actors Involved in Decentralization**

Decentralization has been initiated by the states (national governments) and has involved many social actors. Thus, it can be recognized that social actors play a key role in the decentralization process. With this point of view, I first need to understand what a social actor is, then who is involved in decentralization.

Unlike other general works in the field of development studies, Long (1992, 1996) looks at development intervention and social changes from an actor perspective by using an actor-oriented approach. This approach is opposed to the structural approach. According to Long, the actor-oriented approach starts with an interest in explanation of differential responses to similar structural circumstances, even if the conditions appear relatively homogeneous. Consequently, one assumes that the differential patterns that arise are in part the joint creation of the actors themselves. Social actors, however, are not simply seen as disembodied social categories (based on class or some classificatory criteria) or passive recipients of intervention, but active participants who process information and strategize in their dealing with various local actors as well as with outside institutions and personnel. He defines:

Social actors are all those entities that can be said to have agency in that they possess the knowledgeability and capacity to assess problematic situation and organize “appropriate” responses. Social actors appear in a variety of forms: individual persons, informal groups or interpersonal networks, organizations, collective groupings, and what are sometime called “macro” actors (e.g. a particular national government, church, or international organization). But care must always be taken to avoid reification; that is, one should not assume that

organization or collectives such as social movements act in unison or with one voice. In fact, “collective” and “organizational” endeavours are better depicted in terms of “coalitions of actors”, “interlocking actor projects” and “the interplay of discourse”

(Long, 1996: 241)

Long (1992) also argues that, the concept of actor is a social construction rather than simply a synonym for the individual, and notions of agency differ in their cultural constitutions. Therefore, he has applied an actor-oriented approach to the field of development research. The actor-oriented approach requires a full analysis of the ways in which different social actors manage and interpret new factors in their life. Two crucial aspects of this approach are an understanding of the processes by which knowledge is negotiated and jointly created through various types of social encounters, and an understanding of the power dynamics involved.

Additionally, in the field of political ecology, the actor-oriented approach is related to an understanding of social actors in political and ecological processes. By emphasizing the role and interaction of social actors in environmental conflict in the Third World, Bryant and Bailey (1997) have taken this approach to their work:

It seems to us that there are two things that are at the heart of any meaningful understanding of politics: (1) an appreciation that politics is about the interaction of actors over environmental (or other) resources; (2) a recognition that even weak actors possess some power to act in the pursuit of their interests. The former point suggests that politics is a process in which actors are the very stuff of politics. This point has not always been clearly acknowledged by political ecologists, especially those whose work in the past has been prone to economic reductionism. The second point elaborates this suggestion by signaling our belief that Third World political ecology must continue its movement away from 1980s structuralism and towards a full appreciation of the role of agency in human affairs

(Bryant and Bailey, 1997: 25)

Who is involved in the decentralization processes? Analyzing decentralization in Southeast Asia and West Africa, Agrawal and Ribot (1999) point out that social actors in the local arena who use powers over public resources may include appointed or elected officials, NGOs, chiefs, powerful individuals, or corporate bodies such as communities, cooperatives, and committees. They also argue that social actors may also be differentiated from each other by their beliefs and objectives, or if collective rather than individual, by the internal structure of their organization, their

membership, funding sources and the law to which they are subject. Similarly, reviewing the issues of decentralization in Africa, Ribot (2002b) argues that various social actors including elected bodies, customary authorities, administrative appointees, local representatives of technical services and ministers, community groups, 'development' committees and NGOs, are receiving powers in rural Africa in the name of decentralization. Meanwhile, Meinzen-Dick and Knox (2001) divide social actors who are involved in decentralizations into user groups, government agencies, local government, and the private sector (businesses and NGOs). Although social actors are divided into different kinds of actors by many different scholars, these different actors have different types of power, and are embedded in the different accountability relations. These relations depend on the historical, social, and political constitution of power of each actor, which may be based on ideology, wealth, heredity, election, appointment, or other factors. In addition, it is likely that the same types of powers devolved to different social actors will lead to variable outcomes. Therefore, without an understanding of the powers of various actors, the domains in which they exercise their powers, and to whom and how they are accountable, it is impossible to learn the extent to which meaningful decentralization has taken place. In other words, the nature of decentralization depends significantly upon who gets to exercise power, and the accountability relations to which they are subject (Agrawal and Ribot, 1999).

There is no social actor that operates in isolation, all of them are important actors on the institutional landscape of decentralization. Social actors are positioned at different levels of social actions. Indeed, since decentralization changes how social actors at different levels of political authority exercise their power, they must be located at different levels of action. Relationships between social actors are not only of a vertical dimension, but also horizontal dimension. For example, transfers of authority to lower levels of government represent vertical subsidiarity, while transfers to non-governmental institutions (user groups or private firms) represents a horizontal dimension of subsidiarity (Meinzen-Dick and Knox, 2001).

Together with looking at the interactions between/among three factors, actors, powers and accountability relations, we have to analyze why and how each social

actor involve in decentralization through looking at their potential roles, incentives/motivations and capacities. Because decentralization in natural resource management can offer incentives for management, give necessary authorization and control over resources, reinforce collective action and assign rights to users. (Meinzen-Dick and Knox, 2001). Studying decentralization and devolution of forest management in Dak Lak, Vietnam, Nghi (2002, 2003) pointed out that, each social actor has involved in the decentralization process according to various motivations. The SFEs were assigned to implement the FLA process and received the budget for it, so they carried out the FLA as annual assignment. Moreover, the SFEs are eager to allocate natural forest to local people/communities, because this area is mainly poor or degraded forest, from which they can only make limited profit. The FLA policy therefore, could also be a chance for some SFEs to shift responsibility for protection of poor and degraded forests to local people. Those forest areas cannot be harvested in the coming five or ten years. In areas with fertile basaltic soils, which are suitable to plant cash crop like coffee and pepper, they try to keep their land and are resistant to allocate it, in order to do business with cash crop plantations. Meanwhile, the motivation of the local people to be involved in the FLA implementation process, is to have an official right to use the forest and forestland as well as the related benefits, and to pass forest and forestland to their children. In addition, forest recipients can be allowed to use 5-10% of allocated forestland for agricultural production to meet food needs (short-term living requirement). He also argues that other state agencies such as the NREO and the FPU were not actively involved in the FLA process because they did not get any benefit from the FLA policy. They participated in the FLA process due to mandates assigned by the local government.

### **2.1.2 Change in Power Relations as Transfers of “Bundles of Powers”**

What is power? Seeing power from the political ecology perspective, Bryant and Bailey, (1997) argue that power is relation, which refers to the ability of an actor to control their own interaction with the environment and the interaction of other actors with the environment. Looking at power from sociological perspective, Weber (1948) has defined power as “the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their

own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action” (Weber, 1948a; cited in Nash, 2000:1). Defined this way, power could be a dimension of any social relation and politics that need not be seen as a highly specialized activity, exercised only in relation to a specific institution. In fact, however, Weber saw state as the most powerful actor in modern society since it has gained the legitimate monopoly of force over a given territory (Nash, 2000). In Foucault’s work, he defines that “power is not a thing that is held and used by individuals or groups. Rather, it is both a complex flow and set of relations between different groups and areas of society, which changes with circumstances and the time. Foucault also argued that power is not solely negative (working to repress or control people), but it is also highly productive. Power produces resistance to itself; it produces what we are and what we can do; and it produces how we see ourselves and the world” (Danaher, Schirato, and Webb, 2002: xiv).

Power relations are very complex, in which “the ability of an actor to control or resist other actors is never permanent or fixed but always in flux” (Bryant and Bailey, 1997:46). In terms of natural resource management, the different actors bring to bear different power capabilities in struggles over access to natural resources (Bryant, 1997), in which state is seen as a powerful actor that “took politics to involve striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state” (Weber, 1948a; cited in Nash, 2000:10). Therefore, the state always takes control of natural resources and other actors. For instance, studying policy on forest conservation in Thailand, Anan (1998) argues that the state pays much attention to strengthening state forest property through expansion of national parks at the expense of local participation in forest conservation. The forest conservation policy has only been applied for some groups, especially ethnic minorities in the highlands and poor villagers in the lowlands. Meanwhile, the rich and the business class receive much support from the government. It is ironic that the government, on one hand, is allocating forestland under the land reform program to the rich but, on the other hand, is taking cultivated land away from the poor by relocating highland villagers out of the national parks, and while denying forestland access to the poor for subsistence farming, the government encourages business interests to exploit the same resources.

Power relations are also embedded in relationships among social actors, in which one actor can exert control over the environment of other actors in many ways. According to Bryant and Bailey (1997), those ways include first, that an actor can attempt to control the access of other actors to diverse environmental resources such as land, forests, water, minerals, and so on; Second, an actor may control the environment of others in so far as they can influence or determine the location of the sites at which industrial pollution is generated and released into the environment; Third, an actor can also exert control over the environment of others through control over the social prioritization of environmental projects; Finally, an actor may exert control over the environment of other actors through indirect discursive means.

Power relations are shown in different social relations at different times. In Foucault's work, he pointed out that, after the Renaissance, the notion of power being held by or identified with a single person or group such as the King/Queen or Church (and authorized by God) is replaced by bio-power (Danaher, Schirato, and Webb, 2002). According to Rabinow (1984), during the Classical period, together with rapid development of various disciplines such as universities, workshops in the field of political practices and economic observation, the problems of birth rate, longevity, public health, housing, and migration have emerged. Thus, an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations marked the beginning of an era of bio-power. Bio-power was an indispensable element in the development of capitalism (Rabinow, 1984), which can be understood as technologies that were developed with the coming of human sciences, and which were used for analyzing, controlling, regulating and defining the human body and its behaviour (Danaher, Schirato, and Webb, 2002).

Concerning transfers of power from central government to actors at lower levels in the decentralization process, it is important to consider which kinds of powers are transferred. Agrawal and Ribot (1999) distinguish four broad powers of decision-making as being crucial to understanding decentralization. These powers are (1) the power to create rules or modify old ones, (2) the power to make decisions about how a particular resource or opportunity is to be used, (3) the power to implement and ensure compliance to the new or altered rules, and (4) the power to

adjudicate disputes that arise in the effort to create rules and ensure compliance. In which, the powers to create new rules is usually held in some domain of decision-making over which governments seek to decentralize control, and in relation to some group of actors. Power to make decisions in some domain of action that influence others increases the autonomy of the actor who gains these powers. Such power enhances the discretionary authority of local bodies, and directly affects the use of resources. Implementation and ensuring compliance to decisions and rules implies the power to execute and to monitor whether actors are carrying out the roles they are supposed to perform. The power of adjudication is significant whenever new rules are created, or there is a change in the type of decisions made by particular actors. Such changes also signify a modification in the power of these actors. They also argue that these four types of power correspond to three more familiar categories: legislative (creation of rules), executive (making, implementing, and enforcing of decisions), and judicial (adjudication of disputes).

Decentralization requires both power transfers and accountable representation. However, there is a big difference between which powers could and should be devolved, and which are devolved. Some scholars have observed that in many cases of decentralization programs concerning natural resource management, very little significant power is actually transferred, while in others the powers that are decentralized are concentrated in the hands of a small local elite (Conyers, 2000; cited in Agrawal and Ribot, 1999). A case of community forestry in Nepal is an example, where Dehal (2003) points out that community forestry has been taken as an innovative approach towards devolution of power and responsibilities of forest management from national government to the local communities with an aim of sustainable forest management. However, the devolution policy in forestry suffers from serious critical setbacks and limitations, linked with poor system of governance and weak institutional mechanisms. Dehal (2003) suggests many causes leading to those problems: (1) the transfer of authority from center to the local level is deformed; (2) poor people's voice and their interests are ignored; (3) devolved power has been captured by local elites; (4) autonomy of forest user groups as an institution is not ensured; and (5) the attitude of government officials is still conventional with little interest to transfer power and authority to the local community. For instance, District

Forest Office staff directly influence the preparation of the constitution and management plan, use of funds, collection of taxes, and control over the sale of surplus timber and NTFPs from community forests. Furthermore, because of its commercial potential, the government is unwilling to hand over the national forest of Terai to the local communities. They have rather focused on handing over of the degraded forest area along the mid-hills in Nepal.

In addition, Ribot (2002a,b) argues that while it is important to employ principles to determine which powers belong at which level, it is also very important to examine the politics of transfer and to understand when and why transfers do and do not happen. In other words, the principles of power distribution need to be used to identify appropriate and sufficient powers for transfers. Such principles could be developed to guide the division of decision-making, rule-making, implementation, enforcement, and dispute-resolution powers among levels of government and among institutions at each level. Principles of power allocation could be seen as one of elements that determine whether decentralization is effective. “This is where the interrelationship between planning and implementation...becomes so important, because decentralization is only really effective if it includes decentralization of the power to make decisions, allocate the resources needed to implement these decision and actually execute them” (Conyers 1990; cited in Ribot, 2002b).

### **2.1.3 Relations of Accountability**

According to Jain (2001), accountability has been defined as being an obligation to give a reckoning or explanation for one's action (Oxford American Dictionary, 1980). Stufflebeam defines accountability as the ability to account for past actions in relationship to the decisions which precipitated the actions, the wisdom of those decisions, the extent to which they were adequately and efficiently implemented, and the value of their effects (Stufflebeam, 1971, cited in Jain, 2001). Accountability has sometimes also been used as a synonym for responsibility (Jain, 2001) or accountability is a measure of responsibility (Lonsdale, 1986, cited in Agrawal and Ribot, 1999). Accountability is also about the mechanisms through which countervailing powers are exercised by those subject to actors holding

decentralized power. Accountability in this sense is not in a position of exteriority to power, but depends on the exercise of a counter power to balance arbitrary action (Agrawal and Ribot, 1999).

Therkildsen (2001) has used the concept of state accountability to society to look at accountability of public sector reform in eight countries in East and Southern Africa. For him, it is important to distinguish between political accountability and managerial accountability. Political accountability is about those with authority answering for their actions to the citizens, whether directly or indirectly. The latter is about those with delegated authority answering for carrying out agreed tasks according to agreed criteria of performance.

In the context of decentralization, Agrawal and Ribot (1999) have divided accountability relations into two key forms: upward accountability and downward accountability. Both forms are relational. Hence, to understand its nature, it is necessary to attend to the actors between whom relations of accountability exist. They have also argued that if powers are decentralized to actors who are not accountable to their constituents, or who are accountable only to themselves or superior authorities within the structure of the government, then decentralization is not likely to accomplish its stated aims. It is only when constituents come to exercise accountability as a countervailing power that decentralization is likely to be effective. Since both secure powers and accountable representation go hand in hand in the decentralization process, transferring power without accountable representation is dangerous, but establishing accountable representation without powers is empty (Ribot, 2002a). However, downward accountability is structurally and functionally different from upward accountability and downward accountability creates counterbalances; for example, it gives local people the power to demand service from those who have been given powers to make decisions on their behalf. It also crystallizes a social contract between representatives and those they represent. In upward accountability, those who must account for their actions are subject to pressure from the forces above, that is, the politico-administrative machine (Oyono, 2004).

Generally, the extent of accountability to different actors varies according to the capacity of each actor to demand an explanation for the decisions made by organizations (Jain, 2001). The scope of powers and form of accountability largely depend on the form of decentralization, while the nature of local actors' accountability depends on the powers they received (Dupar and et al., 2002). For instance, administrative decentralization (deconcentration) refers to the transfers of powers from central government to its appointees at the local level. Typically, in this form, local actors are accountable only to themselves or their superiors, not to their constituents. Meanwhile, political or democratic decentralization refers to the transfers of powers from central government to local authorities that are downwardly accountable to constituents, often through elections.

Accountability mechanisms are required as instruments in shaping or controlling the process for bringing about positive outcomes, and they are a combination of electoral, financial, economic, social, environmental, internal and external accountability (Ribot 2002a). Vertical and horizontal relations among branches of government can also shape the relation of accountability between local government actors and their constituencies. In which, vertical accountability is expressed through regular, free and fair elections. It is linked to the division of power among different levels of government. Horizontal accountability refers to the separation of powers (executive, legislative, and judiciary) and checks and balances to prevent abuse. Similarly, the relations between customary authorities and their administrative superiors can shape their downward accountability. However, downward accountability of those who receive powers from the central state on behalf of a constituency is the primary dimension of decentralization since it can broaden the participation of local populations and enhance the responsiveness of empowered actors (Agrawal and Ribot, 1999).

#### **2.1.4 Change in Property Relations as Transfers of “Bundles of Rights”**

In our daily life, property plays an important role as the link between economic, political and legitimacy dimensions. The definition of property is not simple, because when people have different expectations they tend to see facts

differently (Macpherson, 1978). Although the concept of property has been used differently and has changed over time, it has been defined from four main points of views that are property as things, property as rights (power relations), property as social relations, and property as everyday practice.

Many forms of property relations have come and gone in human history. Talking about property relations, Hann (1998) argue that, although most anthropologists take for granted that people's attitudes towards objects and the ways they emphasize the cultural diversity and historical contingency of property relations, it is helpful to retain some core definition. He agrees with Hoebel that "property is not a thing, but a network of social relations that governs the conduct of people with respect to the use and disposition of things" (Hoebel, 1966; cited in Hann, 1988), and with Davis that property relation can only exist between people, thus "the study of property rules in general, and of land tenure in particular, is the study of relationships between people" (Davis, 1973a; cited in Hann, 1988).

Macpherson (1978) has seen property in the lens of power relations by arguing that "philosophers, jurists, and political and social theorists have always treated property as a right, not a thing: a right in the sense of an enforceable claim to some use or benefit of something". According to him, the concept of property is historically and logically a concept of rights as enforceable claims. Meanwhile, looking at property, Ribot and Peluso's theory of access expands beyond the "bundle of rights" to the "bundle of powers" approach. Ribot and Peluso (2003) define access as 'the ability to derive benefits from things' (including material objects, persons, institutions, and symbols). Access, following this definition is more akin to a "bundle of powers" than that of property's view of a "bundle of rights". Since the access is bundles and webs of powers, it links two concepts, access control and access maintenance. Access control is defined as the ability to mediate others' access. Maintenance of access requires expending resources or power to keep a particular sort of resource access open (Rangan 1997; Berry, 1997; cited at Ribot and Peluso, 2003). Both access control and access maintenance are constitutive of relations among social actors in relation to resource appropriation, management and use. The meanings and

values of resource are often contested among those who control and those who maintain access.

In local practice, rights of resource access take place as legal access and illegal access. Both could be used to gain benefits. Therefore, Ribot and Peluso (2003) have used categories of access such as access to technology, capital, markets, labor, knowledge, authority, identity, and social relations to illustrate the kinds of power relations, which can affect rights-based mechanisms of access. From the above discussion, the property relations are power relations, and social relations between people, not relations between people and things as Hann (1998) wrote in the book *Property Relations* “the essential nature of property is to be found in social relations rather than in any inherent attributes of the thing or object that we call property” (Hoebel, 1966; cited in Hann, 1998), and “property is the name given to a legally (because socially) endorsed constellation of power over things and resources. Property is not a thing at all, but a socially approved-power relationship in respect to socially valued assets” (Gray, 1994; cited in Hann, 1998).

Additionally, some scholars have paid more attention to property as practice in natural resource management. In fact, changes in population density, technology, political power, and so forth lead to changes in the assignment of property rights and in the institutional arrangements related to these rights (Feder and Feeny, 1991). Therefore, property rights “are a set of everyday practice as well as social relationships and rules” (Vandergeest, 1997). According to Vandergeest (1997), in everyday practice, property regimes are formed by the complex relations of political, legal, economic, cultural, gender, kin relations, and so on, which are ambiguous, negotiated, and change over time.

Property rights play a central role not only in natural resource management, but also in the decentralization process. Property rights involve a relationship between the rights holder, others, and an institution to back up the claim. Hence, state recognition of users’ rights increases tenure security and creates greater incentives for users to participate in management and invest in resources. Devolving rights to resource users also bridges the gap between customary and statutory rights,

heightening tenure security, and harmonizing relations between governments and local resource users (Meinzen-Dick and Knox, 2001).

Decentralization reforms imply changes in property rights over resources in which local users gain rights and capacities to make operational rules. Therefore, decentralization is likely to be implemented more successfully when local users mobilize to support it and when they gain at least proprietary rights (Agrawal and Ostrom, 2001). The crux of making decentralization policy that transfers property rights over resources to local users and strengthens tenure security, is that such transfers are not always through ownership rights, but also access, management, withdrawal, and other types of rights. Seeing decentralization through property relations, thus, Meinzen-Dick and Knox (2001) and Agrawal and Ostrom (2001) do not refer to property rights as the simple concept of "ownership" that is defined by state law, but refer to it as "bundles of rights", which can be derived from state, customary, religious law, or other normative frameworks. They argue that "ownership" is often taken as having complete control and rights over a resource. If we consider only state-defined ownership of many natural resources, we often find that the state claims ownership and is unwilling to give that up. But if we look at "bundles of rights", it is easier to identify specific rights that can be or are already held by users, either individually or collectively. In fact, decentralization and devolution in some countries has been the tendency to shift the responsibility for protecting forest resources to local communities without granting the rights to use those resources in a major way for their own benefits, even where local use is allowed. For example, studying forest decentralization in Asia and the Pacific, Fisher (1999) pointed out that a tribal community in the Philippines was given the responsibility to protect a watershed area, but no rights to use the resources within it. The case of protected areas in India is another example. In these areas, people are given the responsibility to protect resources, but are not given access to them.

In their analytical framework of decentralization, Meinzen-Dick, Knox, Agrawal and Ostrom have followed the classification of types of property rights, which has been developed by Schlager and Ostrom (1992) to analyze transfers of rights from central government to actors at lower levels. Schlager and Ostrom (1992)

identify five rights that are most relevant for the use of common-pool resources, including access, withdrawal, management, exclusion, and alienation. In addition, Agrawal and Ostrom (2001) argue that instead of focusing on one right, it is more useful to define five classes of property rights holders such as owner, proprietor, authorized claimant, authorized user, and authorized entrant. In this view, individuals or groups may hold well-defined property rights that include a combination of the rights defined above.

The transfers of “bundles of rights” will change the social relations, power relations and accountability relations between/among actors concerning decentralization. These changes can be examined by applying Schlager and Ostrom’s conceptual analysis of de jure and de facto property rights (1992). In this manner, de jure property right concerns the rights of access, withdrawal, management, exclusion and transfers that are enforced by the state (central government) with lawful recognition by formal and legal instrumentality. With rights de jure, the right-holder can presume in an administrative or judicial setting (law, court...) if their rights are challenged. De facto rights refer to empirical practice in cases that are not recognized by the state as legitimate in which rights are defined and enforced by resource users themselves. In some situations, de facto rights may be realized as the recognition of the courts of law if being challenged but they are less secure than de jure rights (Schlager and Ostrom 1992).

In fact, gaps between legal rights and rights in practice often exist under decentralization. According to Thanh (2003), the FLA policy in Dak Lak has not yet brought expected results, because potential insecurity of forest tenure has occurred due to the mismatch between the state and local rules. The lack of supportive environment for rights enforcement and potential conflicts can be seen through three emerging issues. First, at the outset of the program, the government presumed that FLA policies will be supplemented by the local rules through handing over property rights to the local users. Consequently, forest recipients will play the roles of forest guards against violators. However, in fact, this is a difficult task because the local rules did not favor the state rules. For instance, according to the local rules, clearing forest for upland fields is permitted both for villager A (indigenous villagers of

surveyed village) and villager B (indigenous villagers of neighboring village). Exclusion of their relatives from upland field development is impossible. Relations between villager A and villager B regarding the forests cannot be simply solved by the legislation. This is not only creating inequity but also heightens potential for conflicts. Second, an enabling environment to enforce rights, which is necessary for any new forest tenure system established, is lacking. The recipients cannot exclude non-recipients due to a lack of legal environment to back up the rights because there is not any positive support from the local authorities. Enforcement plays an important role in forest tenure security, yet it cannot automatically be generated by the certificates themselves. Third, conflicts within villages and between villages and the state continue to exist and this indicates possibilities for forest tenure insecurity. According to reflections by the local villagers, conflicts on logging, upland field expansion and complex forestry procedures are of most concern for the local users.

It is useful to explore these gaps to evaluate whether decentralization can lead to better natural resource management. Based on the Leach, Mearns, and Scoones's environmental entitlements framework (1997), legal rights can be seen as "endowments" and rights in practice seen as "entitlements". Endowments are the rights and resources that social actors have in principle, while the entitlements derived from them are what social actors actually get in practice (Gasper, 1993; cited in Leach, Mearns, and Scoones, 1997). In this manner, we have to use an environmental entitlements framework to analyze how different social actors gain access to and control over resources in the context of decentralization. The environmental entitlement framework describes the interactions between social actors and the environment through embedded property rights regimes. In these interactions, both social actors and the environment influence and are influenced by each other. This framework gives attention to both the way people transfer their endowments into entitlements (entitlement mapping) as well as how these endowments are acquired (endowment mapping), in which the mapping of entitlements from endowments for each social actor is also influenced by sets of rules and regulations at different levels. In turn, entitlements enhance social actors' capacities, which are what social actors can do or be with their entitlements (Leach, Mearns, and Scoones, 1997). This framework also links both the macro and the micro levels of concern. It situates "a

disaggregated/micro analysis of the distinctive positions and vulnerabilities of particular social actors in relation to the macro structural conditions of a prevalent political economy” (Jenkins, 1997; cited in Leach, Mearns, and Scoones, 1997).

## **2.2 Scale of Decentralization**

Various ideas about space and scale have been influential in recent important debates in social science. Although scale has long been considered one of geography’s core concepts, until the 1980s it had largely been a taken-for-granted concept used for imposing organizational order on the world (Herod, 2003). While ideas of space remain important debating points, ideas of scale emerged in the 1990s to challenge dominant understandings of social and political processes in general, and debate about scale and its implications within political geography in particular (Howitt, 2001).

Examining the concept of scale, Howitt (2000) points out that it is useful to consider at least three interacting facets as constituting scale, these being size, level and relation. According to him, for geographers, scale has been a matter of long debate. Early discussion focused on issues of scale as size, which is a consideration of appropriate map scales for particular forms of analysis and presentation, and how to transfer conclusions drawn from analysis at one geographical scale to other scales or within a different spatial frame at the same scale. For instance, Haggett's approach to scale as size (1975) suggests that concepts of scale imply a hierarchy of "orders of magnitude", with "the geographer's world" limited to a range of objects of study 104 to 109 cm (Howitt, 2000). However, Carlstein and Thrift (1978) use the terms size and scale virtually interchangeably, but note that in terms of scale issues, the notion of size has temporal, spatial and social aspects. Similarly, Parkes and Thrift (1978) imply that scale is not simply interchangeable with size. Therefore they suggest to "conceive society as a series of levels which act as mediators in the realization of place" (Howitt, 2000). Concerning the second aspect of the concept of space, Howitt (2000) argues that the idea of scale as level is often conflated with scale as size, with a common implication of nested hierarchical ordering of space. Scale as level often reflects acceptance of an "indisputable hierarchy of scales - global, national, regional,

and local - in which processes, outcomes and responses can be categorized as originating at distinct and discrete levels" (McGuirk, 1997; cited in Howitt, 2000). By adding the idea of scale as level to the idea of scale as size, it becomes clear that up-scaling from 'local' to 'national' or 'international' implies not just larger areas, but a domain in which more complexity is encompassed by specified relations in society, space and time. The concept of scale as relation is more appropriate in social research than concepts of scale as size and level because when dealing with complex national geographies, we need to consider a number of relations between geopolitics, territory, structure, culture, history, economy, environment, society, and so on (Howitt, 2000).

In addition, discussing the ontological status of the global and the local, Herod (2003) argued that geographers had frequently used scales such as the "regional" or the "national" as frames for their research projects. They had spent very little time theorizing the nature of scale itself when looking at particular issues from a "regional scale" or a "national scale". According to him, idealists and materialists look at scale from different aspects. Idealists look at scale from geographical ranges. For them, "global" is usually defined by the geologically given limits of the Earth, whereas the "local" is seen as a spatial resolution useful for comprehending processes and practices. With this point of view, scale is viewed only from a geographical aspect, and scale can be divided into various ranges: global, regional, national, and local. Meanwhile, for materialists, scales are not simply geographical ranges, but scales are socially produced through processes of struggle and compromise. In other words, the scale had to be actively created through economic and political processes. In this view, scales are created by the practice of various social actors in both cases of global and local scale, because all social actors start as inherently local actors and subsequently become regional, national and global actors (Herod, 2003). Herod and Wright (2002) and Herod (2003) also point out that, popularly there are five different metaphors that can help us conceptualize scale in quite different ways. These are a ladder, concentric cycles, Matryoshka (nesting) dolls, earthworm burrows and tree roots (see figure 2.1).

The first of these exemplifies scale as a hierarchical ladder, where one climbs up the scalar hierarchy from the local through the regional and national to the global

or down from the global through the national and regional to the local. In such a metaphor, the various scales are considered as the rungs on the ladder and there is a strict progression between them. In using the ladder metaphor, the global is as the highest rung on the ladder that is seen to be “above” the local and other scales. At the same time, each scale is seen to be distinct from every other scale.

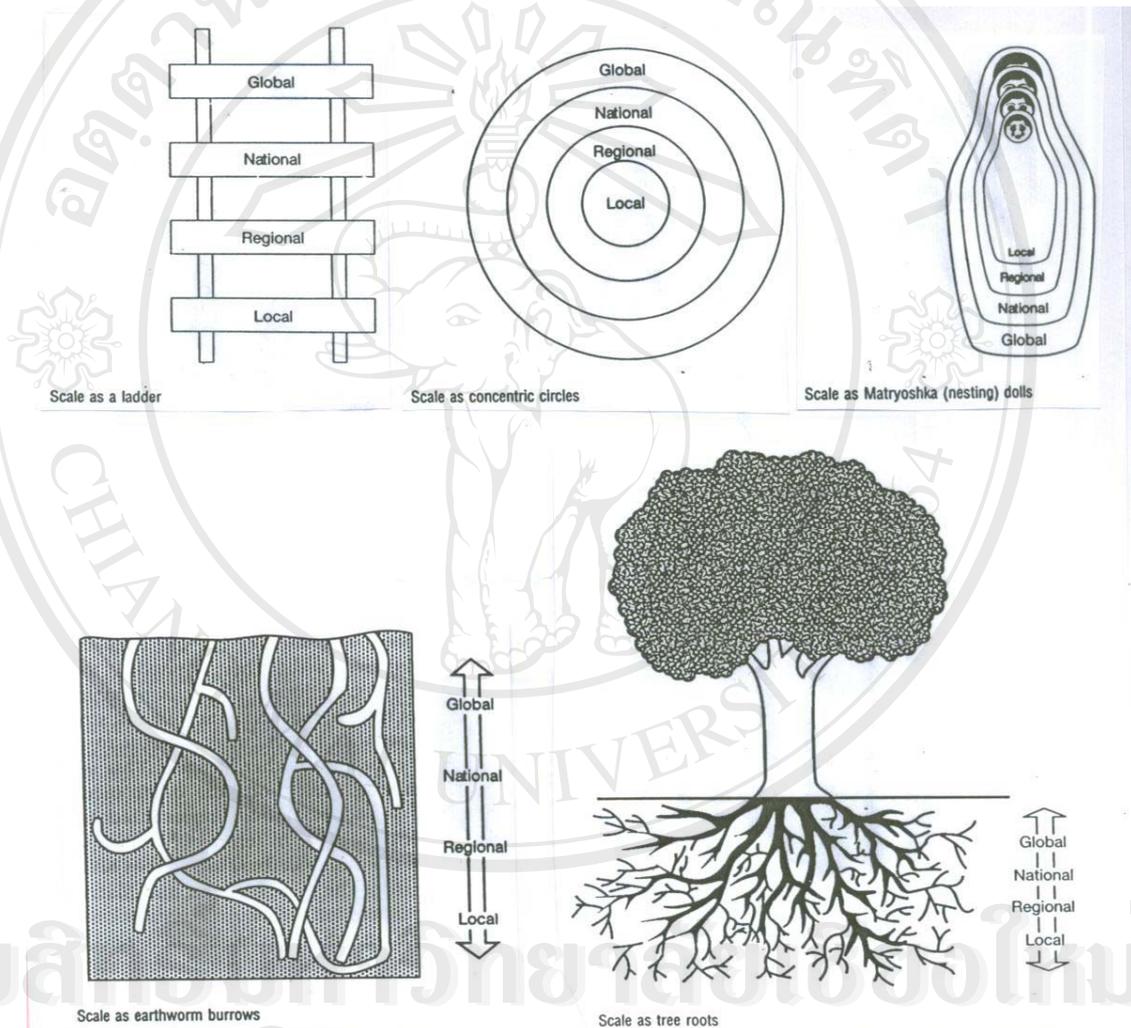


Figure 2.1 Metaphors of Scale

(Source: Herod, 2003)

The second metaphor is concentric circles, which could be used to describe the scale as a tool for bounding space at different geographical resolutions. In this manner, scales are seen as a series of concentric circles. Thus, in this second metaphor

the local is conceived as a relatively small circle, with the regional as a larger circle encompassing it, while the national and the global scales are still larger circles encompassing the local and the regional. In comparison with the ladder metaphor, in some ways the concentric circles metaphor has similarities in that scales are still seen as being quite separate entities. Yet there are also some distinct differences. While in the ladder metaphor the global was seen as being “above” other scales, this is not the case with the concentric circles metaphor. Instead, the global is seen to encompass all other scales, but is not necessarily seen as being “above” them.

Scales are also seen as being part of a “nested hierarchy”, which can similarly be thought of as Russian Matryoshka (“nesting”) dolls. In this metaphor, each doll/scale is separate and distinct, and can be considered on its own. However, the part is only complete with each doll/scale nesting together (sitting inside). These dolls/scales fit together in one and only one way since a larger doll/scale simply will not fit inside a smaller one. Looking at scale in this way, there is no scale that is “above” any other in the vertical sense, which is suggested in the ladder metaphor. There is a nested hierarchy of scales, in which each scale fits neatly together to provide a coherent whole.

A more appropriate metaphor for the spatiality of scale is network, which is popularized by Bruno Latour. He asserts that the world needs to be understood as being networked together, as being “fibrous, thread-like, wiry, stringy, ropy, capillary” (Latour, 1996; cited in Herod and Wright, 2002, and Herod, 2003). Given Latour’s metaphor, Herod and Wright (2002) and Herod (2003) argue that we might think of scale as more akin to a set of earthworm burrow or tree roots, in which the roots or tunnels overlap, and are intertwined through different strata of soil. In two such metaphors, one scale is not separate from another, but they are connected together in a single whole. Moreover, although it is possible to recognize that different scales-layers of roots or tunnels clearly exist, it is difficult to determine precisely where one scale ends and another begins, unlike the case of the ladder’s rungs or concentric circles or the Matryoshka dolls. However, using the above metaphors to talk about the scaled relationships between places, these metaphors do

not represent empirically different situations, and no one is necessarily a better representative of the world than another (Herod, 2003).

As mentioned above, generally speaking, decentralization is referred to as transfers of powers or rights from central government to actors at lower levels. Concerning power matters, Ribot (2002a) argues that geographic scale affects the distribution of power. Therefore, it is useful to find out which scale is most appropriate for which kinds of decisions. In practice, matching jurisdictions with ecological formations cannot always be accomplished, because forests may not fall within single, local, political or administrative jurisdiction. He suggests that one approach to multiple geographic scales is to encourage the formation of local government federations and networks so that upstream and downstream constituents can work together for mutual benefits, because the formation of federations and networks may be an effective approach to keeping governance local while attending to multiscale problems.

Additionally, in the vertical sense of decentralization, central government is the highest level. Therefore, it is possible to use the ladder metaphor talking about scales of decentralization, in which central government is seen as the highest rung on the ladder or “above” the other scales. Scales of decentralization also need to be looked at using the tree roots metaphor, because each actor not only relates to other actors at the same level, but also at the different levels. For instance, in the context of Vietnam, the relationship between government agency and local government at the same level is an administrative relation (horizontal relation), while relationship between government agencies at different levels is a professional relation (vertical relation). In brief, scales of decentralization can be seen as relations. They include the vertical and horizontal dimensions. Thus, we have to analyze decentralization at multiple scales by combining the above metaphors. Seeing scales of decentralization under a mix of ladder and tree roots metaphors is an example.

### **2.3 Everyday Local Politics**

What is politics? “Politics” is a broad term but it is a part of daily life. Studying American politics, Coleman (1982) argues that, politics is conflict over the rules and

resources which shape human action in ordered communities. Community in his definition may mean the nation, social classes, the workplace, the city, the neighborhood, the classroom, or the ethnic or racial group. Emphasizing the meaning of politics, he pointed out some points that related to politics. First, politics is the sphere in which ordinary human beings often express themselves. Second, politics seeks to encourage reciprocal states of awareness about the need to make adjustments in the rules. Third, politics is radical, impinging on the rules, which bind the community and orient it for action in the world. A fourth point is that the Constitution is a hidden actor, working and controlling the processes by which political outcomes are decided. In this manner, Coleman looked at politics through the idea of American constitutionalism.

According to Moore (1993, 1996), the neglect of local politics may create a misleadingly monolithic mode of the state, conceiving it as an actor with unified intentionally, internally consistent in its agenda, and structurally and automatically opposed to local interest. However, much of the political ecology literature continues to employ macro-structural frameworks with accounts that often miss local differentiation among resource users, particularly those revolving around critical productive inequalities mediated by class, gender, ethnicity, and age. Therefore, Moore (1996) analyzes politics by incorporating place, space, and environment into cultural and social theory in terms of natural resource management. He argues that an understanding of the mutual constitution of micro-politics, symbolic practices, and structural forces could be possible to unravel how competing claims to natural resources are articulated through cultural idioms in the charged contests of local politics. In Moore's analytical framework, micro-politics are as cultural politics, in which the state is not outside cultural politics, but rather a constellation of practices and institutions constituted through struggles over meanings of rights, legitimacy, and authority. For example, studying land conflicts in Zimbabwe, Moore (1993) focuses on the micro-politics of peasant struggles over access to productive resources, and the symbolic contestation that constitutes those struggles. He has pointed out that the state is not monolithic, but rather is made up of socially situated actors whose implementation of state policies can be influenced by appeals to symbolic cultural meanings.

Kerkvliet (1990) analyzes politics by looking for politics in everyday life rather than only in the exceptional situations, and studying a broader range of political life than has been done to date. Kerkvliet has defined that politics consists of the debates, conflicts, decisions, and cooperation among individuals, groups, and organizations regarding the control, allocation, and use of resources and the values and ideas underlying those activities. This definition closely corresponds to Leftwich's conception.

“Politics comprises all the activities of cooperation and conflict, within and between societies, whereby the human species goes about organizing the use, production, and distribution of human, natural and other resources in the course of the production and reproduction of its biological and social life”

(Adrian Leftwich, 1984; cited in Kerkvliet, 1990:11)

Kerkvliet analyzes everyday politics through class and status relations. Status refers to a standard of living. People are in a different status groups according to distribution of food and material goods that money can buy. Class refers to a household's relationship to means of production and labor. People are in different class according to how they make a living. Kerkvliet's study in the Philippines shows that a central dynamic of everyday politics is people trying to make claims on each other and on a range of resources according to their relationships to those superordinate or subordinate to themselves, and in terms of their interests and values. His study has also pointed out that there were three themes related to class and status in everyday politics. The first theme is persisting, virtually daily struggle among people in different socioeconomic positions. The second theme is the efforts of people of lower class and status to maintain ties to and alliances with those of higher class and status, and to some extent, vice versa. The last theme is entwined in the first and second. Underlying much of the everyday politics of class and status relationships are a number of values, in which people in different class and status ranks base their claims on resources. He also argues that antagonism among people along class and status lines is an important issue in everyday politics. Thus, there are two broad patterns of interaction among subordinate and superordinate people: networks that join them and antagonisms between them (Kerkvliet, 1990).

In the decentralization process, devolved powers and rights have important effects on resource management. Therefore, although the support of some central state

political actors may be essential for long-term success, it is important to examine how local-level politics articulates with decentralization reforms (Agrawal and Ostrom, 2001). In this sense, local-level politics can be seen as “micro-politics of resource struggles” in Moore’s study, which are animated by local history, mediated by cultural idioms, and gendered through the different practices men and women have pursued in defense of local livelihoods (Moore, 1996). In addition, actors are involved in decentralization with different roles, motivations, and capacities, because there is a difference of class and status. However, relationships among those actors are a network that includes both vertical and horizontal dimensions. Therefore, we can apply the Kerkvliet’s everyday politics approach to examine how decentralization plays out in local politics by looking at how villagers/users live, how social actors explain their participation, particularly how they involve with what roles, incentives, capacities and how social actors talk about themselves and their relationships to other actors who are subordinate and superordinate in terms of the power, rights, and responsibilities they hold.

#### **2.4 Summary**

In summary, this chapter has reviewed the theoretical basis for this study. It first has seen forest decentralization through multiple dimensions and scales of given concepts of social actors, power, accountability, property relations and scale. Secondly, it has examined influences of forest decentralization on a grassroots level by based on concept of everyday local politics.

The concept of social actors assumes that social actors involved in forest decentralization could be divided into four groups: (1) local government, (2) government agencies, (3) user groups, and (4) NGOs, private sector, and so on. This concept helps us understand social actors involved in forest decentralization with their roles, incentives, and capacities.

The concept of power is applied to analyze transfers of power from central government to social actors at lower levels in the decentralization process. Such

powers could be distinguished as four kinds of power including powers of decision-making; rule-making; implementation and enforcement; and dispute-resolution.

The concept of accountability helps us explore accountability relations among social actors involved in decentralization through two forms: upward and downward accountability.

The concept of property relations is used to analyze transfers of “bundles of rights” under decentralization, in which focus is on rights of access, withdrawal, management, exclusion, and alienation. This concept also helps us analyze gaps between legal rights and rights in practice.

The concept of scale helps us analyze the vertical and horizontal relationship among social actors involved in decentralization in terms of power, accountability and property relations.

The last concept, everyday local politics, is applied to explore local forest politics of forest decentralization by analyzing changes in social relations, property rights and rights of forest, governance structure, and gender issues.