

Representation, Citizenship and the Public Domain: Framing the Local Democracy effects of Institutional Choice and Recognition

A Local Democracy Research Concept Paper

Rough Draft

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Note: This article is being submitted to this panel in place of the original article submitted to IASCP due to the untimely death of my colleague Semou Ndiaye in Senegal with whom I was conducting the field work on Senegal's Charcoal Commodity Chain. In my presentation at IASCP I will use this concept paper to interrogate the concept of authority and to discuss the relation between authority and property.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	iii
I. Introduction: Choice, Recognition and Local Democracy	1
II. Politics of Institutional Choice: Why Choose Different Institutions	7
III. Politics of Recognition: Outcomes of Institutional Choice	11
Representation	13
Citizenship.....	15
Public Domain	20
IV. Research Approach.....	22
Research Questions and Methods	23
Research Questions	23
Research Methods.....	25
Annex A: The Case of Re-emergence of Customary Authority in Africa	27
Annex B: The Case Studies	32
Bibliography	34

Abstract

This article frames the analysis of the democratizing effects of 'democratic decentralization' reforms and projects. Many developing countries have launched decentralization reforms to establish and democratize local government for the purpose of improving service delivery, local development and management and to ensure a shift from a simple "needs-based" towards a "rights-based" approach to natural resource management, whereby the local communities themselves have a voice in managing local resources. Rather than empowering local government in the name of democracy itself, however, governments, international development agencies and other organizations are transferring power to a wide range of local institutions including private bodies, customary authorities and NGOs. Recognition of these other local institutions means that fledgling local governments are receiving few public powers and face competition for legitimacy. Despite a long history of attempts at integrated rural development, initial studies show that this new trend, with its plurality of approaches and local interlocutors, can result in fragmented forms of authority and of belonging, dampening long-run prospects for local democratic consolidation. We do not yet know under what conditions current patterns of local institutional choice result in fragmentation or consolidation. This article (when it is done) will draw on comparative data from natural resource decentralization cases around the world to explore the effects of institutional choice on the formation and consolidation of democratic local government. The article will focus on how to analyze the effects of institutional choices by governments, international development agencies and other organizations on three dimensions of democracy: 1) representation, 2) citizenship, and 3) the public domain. This preliminary draft establishes the theoretical basis for a framework for the analysis of the democracy effects of choice and recognition.

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I. Introduction: Choice, Recognition and Local Democracy

Research on democratic decentralization around the world indicates that the mix of institutions being created and supported in the name of democratic decentralization is undermining the formation and consolidation of democratic local government (Ribot 2004; Ribot and Larson 2005). This paper develops a framework for analyzing the effects of the institutional choices made by governments, international development agencies and other international organizations on three dimensions of local democracy: 1) representation, 2) citizenship, and 3) the public domain.¹

Are current choices supporting the establishment of these three critical dimensions of local democracy? Findings from recent research casts some doubts. Representative forms of local government are receiving little support (Larson and Ribot 2005). Multiplication of forms of belonging and the strengthening of lineage- and interest-based forms of belonging over residency-based citizenship are fragmenting the local arena into competing and conflicting identity and interest groups (Namara and Nsabagasani 2003; Mansuri and Rao 2003; Manor 2005; Ntsebeza 2006; Bazaara 2006). The public domain, which is in principle the domain of democratic public decision making, is being enclosed and diminished via various forms of privatization and de-secularization of public powers (Ribot 2004). The framework presented in this article is designed to illuminate the effects of the emerging mix of local institutions on these three dimensions of local democratization processes and on efficiency and equity outcomes of specific local interventions such as natural resource management and service delivery.

The vast majority of developing nations have launched decentralization reforms over the past two decades (Crook and Manor 1998; World Bank 2000; Ndegwa 2002).² Theorists define decentralization as the transfer of powers from central government to lower levels *within* government's political-administrative hierarchy (see Mawhood 1983; Conyers 1983; Manor 1999). Reforms are called administrative decentralization or deconcentration when powers are transferred to local administrative staff of central government, including district officers, prefects or to any line-ministry staff such as local forestry or health service offices. They are called democratic or political decentralization when the transfer is to democratically elected local government. Most developing countries claim to be undertaking democratic decentralization. The stated aim of their reforms is to establish and democratize local government for purposes of democratization itself and for improving service delivery, local development and management.³

¹ I use the term public domain in distinction to what Fung (2003) calls the public sphere. Fung is interested in public interaction. I am interested in the powers (resources and domains of decision making) with respect to which the public can interact and over which public decisions are taken.

² See Ndegwa 2002; World Bank 2000; and Dillinger 1994:8 cited in Crook and Manor 1998.

³ Under the rubric of decentralization, all but twelve of the seventy-five developing and transitional countries with populations over five million claim to be transferring political powers to local units of government (World Bank 2000; Dillinger 1994:8, cited in Crook and Manor 1998). In a World

Decentralization reforms—whether administrative or democratic—are theorized to result in efficiency and equity gains through two mechanisms: proximity and representation of local populations in decision making (Mawhood 1983; Manor 1999).⁴ Under these reforms, decision makers are supposed to be better able to decipher and respond to local needs because they are physically close to the people and are mandated to work on behalf of the whole population (as in administrative decentralizations), or are systematically accountable⁵ to the whole population (as in democratic decentralizations). Democratic decentralization is considered the stronger form of decentralization because the accountability of decision makers to the population is more systematic, via electoral representation. The general logic of decentralization is inclusive and public. It is predicated on proximity and democratic processes reducing transaction costs, producing better accountability of decision makers to the population, enabling them to better integrate across local needs and to match decisions and resources to local needs and aspirations (Agrawal and Ribot 1999).⁶

What are the political, economic and cultural conditions under which the expected positive outcomes of democratic decentralization materialize? The liberal democratic vision and the theories that predict that elected local authorities will improve representation and bring a kind of ‘democratic dividend’—positive efficiency, equity and development outcomes—must, of course, be placed in a larger political economy. Under what conditions are elected or even appointed local authorities accountable to local people, and when are they upwardly accountable to the state? When do they represent local people—that is when are they responsive and accountable to them—and when are they self serving or acting in the service of local or central elites? In short, the democratic

Bank survey of thirty African countries, all claimed to be decentralizing (Ndegwa 2002). Across Africa the stated objective of virtually all decentralization reforms is to strengthen democratic governance and service provision (Oyugi 2000:16). At least sixty countries claim to be undertaking some form of decentralization of natural resource management (Agrawal 2001).

⁴ It is important to avoid romanticizing the “local” (Hart 2001:653). This concept paper focuses on local development and local institutions, but not as a contrast to global, nor as an attack against the central state nor of government. Rather, one of the concerns of this project is to bring attention to the naïve populist notions behind much rural development and civil society approaches. Like Evans (1997), this project is querying how government can be brought back in as part of the landscape of representation and inclusion.

⁵ Accountability can be defined as counter power (Agrawal and Ribot 1999). It is about the ability to sanction (see Manin, Przeworski and Stokes 1999). An institution is considered accountable to those who can sanction it. It is therefore important to describe the multiple mechanisms by which local people can sanction and hold to account each institution in question (see Annex C in Ribot 2004 for a non-exhaustive list of accountability mechanisms). These may range from magic or violence to public reporting or elections. The idea is to characterize the primary relations of accountability of local institutions who are receiving powers—both accountability upward to those transferring the powers and downward to the population or to a segment of the population. We are, however, most interested in downward accountability and in characterizing the degree to which these local institutions represent the population as a whole, or some specific segment of that population.

⁶ See Ribot 2004 for a more detailed discussion of definitions and the logic of decentralization.

dividend cannot be taken for granted even when government creates and empowers elected local authorities. Predicted improvements follow from a complex set of assumptions, whose veracity is a political and historically contingent empirical matter. Nevertheless, electoral arrangements for producing accountability and responsiveness of local authorities is often argued to be among the best options (Schumpeter 1943; Crook and Manor 1998; Crook and Sverrisson 2001; Ribot 1999; Agrawal and Ribot 1999). Whether or not sufficient in itself, electoral accountability is certainly consistent with the public logic and theory of democratic decentralization.

Democratic decentralization, or the establishment of elected local authorities is not the only intervention that is believed to lead to improved outcomes. Decentralization should be contrasted with interventions based on forms of privatization (private or civil) and of participation. Privatization works on an exclusive logic of competition and self interest, the World Bank's 'social funds' are predicated on market competition among private providers. Civil-society approaches are supposed to produce multiple voices (of non-market private interest groups) calling for accountability of elected or appointed government decision makers. Both approaches differ from decentralization in that they transfer funds to private bodies.

Participatory approaches differ from decentralization in that they usually do not involve *transfers* of powers, but rather provide for *inclusion* of local people in decisions made or orchestrated by outside entities. Following a long history of participatory approaches to rural development that have come and gone and have been spatially limited, democratic decentralization emerged as a potentially sustainable and scaleable form of inclusion (Ribot 2002). While many participatory approaches have been promoted on similar efficiency and equity grounds, decentralization has been sold as a form of participation that is territorially generalized and institutionalized through law within the existing structures of government (Ribot 2004). As such, it has the potential advantage of being a form of sustainable and scaled-up democratic local governance.⁷

While well-structured elected local government may appear to be a good bet for sustainably improving local public sector accountability, rather than empowering democratic local government, central governments, international development agencies and other organizations are transferring power to a wide range of local institutions including private bodies, customary authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—all in the name of democratic decentralization. Many of these 'decentralization' transfers fit under different development intervention styles, such as privatization, participatory or empowerment approaches, NGO and civil society support, social funds, and community driven development (Ribot

⁷ I generally avoid the term 'governance', however, it is getting harder to avoid as this term gains wider circulation. For the purposes of this article, I define governance as the manner in which power is exercised.

2004; Pritchett and Woolcock 2004).⁸ Each approach empowers different kinds of local institutions or authorities, with potentially different democratic and distributional outcomes. Because of support for and the proliferation of local institutional forms, fledgling democratic local governments are receiving few public resources or powers and they are in competition with a plethora of new local institutions. Little formalized democratic decentralization is taking place and democratic local government is not being given the opportunity to represent or to engage local people in public affairs (Manor 1998; Crook and Manor 1998; Ribot 2004).

The failure to empower democratic local governments can be seen clearly in recent research in countries claiming to undertake democratic decentralization of natural resources. In these countries few public powers over natural resources are being transferred to existing and new democratic local governments (Mansuri and Rao 2003; Ribot 2002, 2004; Ribot and Larson 2005).⁹ Instead, governments, international agencies and international NGOs are choosing to transfer these powers over natural resources management and use to a wide array of other local institutions. They are empowering chiefs, headmen and other customary leaders across Africa, in Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe, as well as in Guatemala and certain projects within Indonesia, in some cases threatening reform efforts (see Annex A for discussion of the re-emergence of customary authorities).¹⁰ Almost everywhere, governments, donors and international NGOs work with a mix of

⁸ In thirty World Bank “community driven development” (CDD) project appraisal documents, it is difficult to determine how community is defined (by profession, self selection, ethnic group, residence-based citizenship), nor how—that is through what mechanism—community “drives” or is represented in development decisions. Most Bank staff on these projects do not know how communities are represented. (this is based on interviews done by the author with nine task team leaders at the World Bank in 2004). Defining community is part of the way in which outside projects shape and reshape local identities.

⁹ WRI’s recent fifteen-country comparative decentralization research project showed that despite the democratizing discourse associated with natural resource decentralizations and decentralization writ large, few decentralizations appear to be transferring significant powers to democratic local bodies (Ribot 2004; Ribot and Larson 2005).

¹⁰ See Ntsebeza 1999; Manor 2000; Jeter 2000:A1; Kassibo 2003; Ribot 2004. In the past few years, customary authorities, with help of their allies in government, are re-emerging as a political force against local democratization in South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe (Ntsebeza 1999; Manor 2000; Jeter 2000:A1). Muhereza (2003) has pointed out that ‘decentralized’ control over forests (taking the form of effective privatization) in Uganda may contribute to the strengthening of Kingdoms at the expense of the democratically elected Local Council system. Kassibo (2003) has argued that traditional authorities are also re-emerging in reaction to the establishment of local democracy in Mali. Chiefs in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger are also often evoked by members of central government as a threat to or a reason not to decentralize or establish democratic local institutions. Government authorities argue that supporting new democratic institutions will lead to conflict with customary authorities. Because chiefs are threatened by transfer of control over land allocation to democratic institutions and the more general undermining of their authority by alternative representative local institutions, they and their allies in central government—who may also lose their rural power base through local democratization—pose a serious threat to decentralizations. For Guatemala and Indonesia, see Larson 2005; Li 2001. See Annex A for more discussion of customary authority.

NGOs and committees,¹¹ local offices of line ministries, and private corporations or individuals. Meanwhile, elected local authorities are often frustrated by a lack of power as they languish on the sidelines while other local institutions are recognized and empowered by central governments and international institutions to take the initiative and make decisions in rural development. The result is a proliferation of local institutional forms and a fragmentation or diffusion of public powers among this new mix of local institutions (Ribot 1999, 2004; Namara and Nsabagasani 2003; Ribot and Larson 2005; Manor 2005).

In addition, the diffusion of powers among diverse local authorities appears to be undermining the development of democratic local government. Despite the promises of democratic decentralization and despite widespread programs to increase local people's participation in decision making and to promote local democracy, recent years are witnessing a spectacular comeback of less-inclusive authorities such as customary chiefs, and a re-emergence of claims to autochthony and authenticity that are narrowing forms of belonging rather than expanding citizenship (Geschiere and Boone 2003). Further, despite four decades of attempts at integrated forms of rural development, development-new-style,¹² with its plurality of approaches and local institutional interlocutors, seems to be resulting in competing and conflicting fragmented forms of authority and of belonging, dampening the long-run prospects for local democratic consolidation. The atomized marketplace of institutions appears to be shattering rather than integrating the public domain (Namara and Nsabagasani 2003; Ribot 2004).¹³

To understand the phenomenon we are observing, researchers need to break the problem in two: the reasons behind local 'institutional choices'¹⁴ and the

¹¹ Manor 2005; Namara and Nsabagasani 2002; Ribot 2004.

¹² See Geschiere and Boone, 2003.

¹³ Fragmentation has advantages and disadvantages. Producing multiple alternative voices to voice citizen concerns can be a positive part of democratization. Three dimensions appear important. First, what is the effect of the distribution of voice among different interest groups and authorities? What are the effects of the unequal distribution of power among these groups? Second, how representative are these authorities. Do they speak for their constituents, or are they merely elite capturing the parole? Third, what are the differences between such a plurality of voices in the presence or absence of strong democratic local government? How do the relations among these groups and democratic local government effect their representativity and their ability to influence broad representation. See discussion of pluralism below.

¹⁴ I want to distinguish here my use of the term 'institutional choice' from that of Ostrom (1999:193). Ostrom uses the term to refer to the choices by local individuals among available alternatives (based on costs and benefits)—she is interested in how these choices lead to institutional formation. I use the term to refer to the choices made by governments and international organizations that impose the 'available alternatives' on local individuals—thus constraining their options. The two usages are not inconsistent. I, however, would argue that the choice of the institutions (for Ostrom institutions are basically rules) is not by the individual nor is it by any 'aggregation rule' by which individual choices result in larger scale change. I do not think that institutions are merely organically emerging solutions to collective action problems. In this concept paper, I am trying to bring attention to institutions as they are created or cultivated by powerful interests. Arun Agrawal (pers. comm.) rightly points out that even choices made at institutional and governmental levels are ultimately made by individuals, and therefore these

effects of ‘recognizing’¹⁵ different local institutions on local democracy. I use the term ‘choice’ to attribute agency and therefore responsibility to government and international organizations for the decisions they make. Governments and international organizations choose local institutions by transferring powers to them, conducting joint activities or soliciting their input. Through their institutional choices, they are transforming the local institutional landscape. I use the concept of ‘recognition’ to interrogate the effects that the choice of local institutions has on representation, legitimacy, membership, belonging, citizenship and the public domain. These are effects of being ‘recognized’ via the choices made by intervening agencies.

The analysis takes place where the politics of choice and the politics of recognition intersect. Why are different institutional choices are being made, and what are the effects of these choices on democracy and development? Understanding why the choices are being made helps to link the effects of those choices back to policy. Understanding the effects helps to identify approaches most likely to strengthen local democracy while serving the needs of local people in the context of broader environmental and developmental objectives. The framework aims to analyze local democratic consolidation and to provide a means for developing institutional-choice recommendations to foster local democracy and strengthen the infrastructure for sustainable public participation in development.

The framework outlined in this article is ‘top down’ on purpose. The objective is to understand the role of *policy*—among other factors—in shaping the local institutional landscape. Decentralization *is* often a top-down affair that in itself, particularly where there are no strong local social movements, and even where there are, can provide the infrastructure for popular engagement and expression (Ribot 2004). As Gaventa (2002) puts it, decentralization can open the spaces to initiate a more active citizen engagement by promoting inclusive participation. It can open the space for new kinds of local agency. So, the focus of research should be on the effects of policy. The object is not to exclude local institutional categories nor to downplay local agency in the articulation between outside intervention and local institutions. Local institutions define and choose themselves and impose themselves on outside actors (Boone 2003; Bierschenk 2005). But they do so facing constraints and enabling conditions. Research done with this approach should bring attention to the structure and effects of those constraints and conditions.

choices could still fit within Ostrom’s framework. Nevertheless, as Sikor (forthcoming) points out, Ostrom’s framework de-emphasizes the effects of larger political economic context on the formation of institutions. This research project chooses to explore the effects of institutional choice within a larger political economic context.

¹⁵ I take the term ‘recognition’ from Taylor 1994; Kymlicka 2002; and Fraser 2000. See discussion further down in this concept paper.

A group of researchers are currently testing this approach via sixteen comparative place-based ethnographies of institutional choice and recognition in natural resource decentralization reforms in Africa Asia and Latin America (see Annex B). The natural resource lens is a powerful optic into the dynamics of decentralization and local democracy. Natural resources are important for a multitude of public and private actors. They are a source of subsistence and income for the rural world and of income and wealth for central governments and national elites (see Ribot 2002, 2004; Anderson 2002). As such, natural resources are a point of conflict and cooperation between central and local authorities and among local interests, mobilizing a wide range of interested parties when natural resource powers are transferred from central to local authorities. Nevertheless, the natural resource lens does not mean that the studies do not look at other sectors. The expected success of decentralization is, at least partly, predicated on the ability of local authorities to integrate across and coordinate among sectors in their decision making. The cases are in countries where democratic decentralization and natural resource decentralization reforms are well underway. Nevertheless, the relation among different sectors is being taken into account in the case studies, since the studies are ultimately interested in democratic decentralization writ large.¹⁶

Sections II and III develop the basic concepts of choice and recognition, and lay out criteria with which to examine their effects. Section IV proposes an approach to this.

II. Politics of Institutional Choice: Why Choose Different Institutions

Robert Bates (1981) argued that governments choose among policy options based on political utility. For example, although subsidies and taxes may have equal effects in a welfare economics analysis, governments consistently choose subsidies because they can be allocated along political patronage lines. They choose to create allocative and rent-seeking opportunities that will help them to consolidate their own political and economic power. This sub-portion of the research framework focus on the question: on the basis of what explicit and implicit logics do governments and international organizations choose their local interlocutors? While this question is significant, it will have a secondary importance to the questions posed in the next section under ‘the Politics of Recognition’.

Although democratization, poverty alleviation, development, service delivery and natural resource management are stated objectives of laws and projects, policy

¹⁶ It is important to ask how single sectors—such as natural resources—policies, behavior and choices shape the larger project of integrative representative decision making. As will be seen later in the discussions, natural resource sector choices can fragment or help consolidate democratic decentralization writ large. Certainly the same is true of other sectors and these phenomena must be explored.

makers and project designers choose local institutions based only partly on these stated aims. They are also making choices to consolidate their political base through patronage or allocation of goods in exchange for political and economic allegiance. While they may be making choices for political or economic gains, the justifications of their choices are embedded in decision makers' political positions, ideological positions and theoretical orientations on rural development.¹⁷ Understanding the politics of choice—why decision makers choose the institutions they choose—requires an understanding of both stated and unstated objectives, the understandings of causality informing decision makers' choices, and their awareness of the effects of these choices.

Policy makers and development professionals have a mix of objectives when choosing or creating local institutions as their interlocutors. When they choose or create local institutions to empower, work with or to implement their policies and projects, these objectives can work at cross purposes. Some local institutions are chosen to get specific work done or to legitimate activities that national or international decision makers would like to accomplish.¹⁸ These instrumental objectives may be inconsistent with the procedural objectives of democratization. While democratization is often a stated objective of governments and donors, the instrumental objectives frequently override democratization objectives by using local institutions for outside objectives rather than fostering them as a means of locally rooted action. For representative institutions to form and take root, procedural concerns must precede instrumental concerns.

But, even where democratization is a clear objective, different ideologies and theories of causality inform decision makers' vision of the democratization process—which procedures and institutions are privileged may differ from one decision maker's vision to the next. The choices being made are informed by ideas about causality. While it may seem obvious that under a democratic decentralization effort one would support elected local government, for many

¹⁷ In contrast to Bates (1981), in the current world, national governments are not the only policy makers. International bi- and multi-lateral donors as well as large international NGOs intervene in policy making (via conditionalities and other political pressures) and in project design and implementation—another domain of policy. As Lund (1998) has argued, projects themselves create their own local domain of law—project law. Further, in contrast with Bates arguments, while I assume that governments and international actors are making instrumental decisions, their instrumental choices are driven by (often unacknowledged) theory and ideology. While a project manager may make choices in order to produce the indicators of success, such as implementation of a forest management plan, they do so believing that democratic decentralization is more efficient and equitable than are other approaches, or they bring with them a Thatcher-Reganism mistrust of anything government or a populist belief in NGOs or in popular participation. How they justify their actions and their beliefs may differ greatly from what they do in practice.

¹⁸ Transnational corporations are also taking the instrumental approach. Shell Corporation, for example, as they express in an ad in the *Malaysian Naturalist* journal, searches for "...individuals and organizations who share our global vision and local values, our business concerns and community interests. People with the right attitude, aptitude and with the experience to match." (Shell 2005).

decision makers informed by the anti-government stances of the Thatcher-Reagan 'revolution' and by civil society movements, government is something to avoid (even if representative) and democratization is produced through a plurality of voices created through the support of civil society. This vision would steer decision makers toward NGOs and other local authorities. These visions of democracy—rooted in liberal democratic philosophy, populism, beliefs in the rights of indigenous peoples—serve also as theories of causality that inform the structuring of policy.

Institutional choice is not a linear decision that leads systematically to a desired outcome. The decision to work with NGOs, elected or appointed single- or multi-purpose committees, user groups, interest groups, village chiefs, religious leaders, local line-ministry representatives or elected local governments is justified by a number of conflicting arguments.¹⁹ Each local institution and authority is attributed a different logic and value, and also subject to divergent judgments.²⁰ Institutions may not have the effects that policy makers and project designers expect. Choice does not lead to a singular outcome. Each institution must contend with other institutions. The institutions chosen by one policy maker may interfere with or reinforce those chosen by another—for the same or opposite purposes. Outcomes may depend on the mix of institutions and of

¹⁹ Local people are touted as having special local (or for some 'indigenous') knowledge, while others describe them as ignorant and in need of technical assistance and oversight. Local people are attributed self interest leading to effective local management of services and resources, and simultaneously viewed as selfish, hungry peasants who will over-exploit resources out of poverty and need. The local is sold as the place of higher efficiency through mobilization of local knowledge, transaction-cost reduction, better matching of services to needs, higher accountability due to transparency and embeddedness, but also as the place where this same embeddedness leads to nepotism and elite capture. Many want to see the local as uniform and harmonious communities, but it usually turns out to be highly stratified by caste, class, clan, religious, age and gender, and sometimes political affiliation. The local is *der heimat*, Shangri La or some place of primordial bliss, and the place of isolation, constraint, provincialism, conservatism and parochialism to flee. It is the place of reified tradition or of backwardness. While easy to romanticize, the local rural world or local 'community' is all of these things.

²⁰ Customary authorities are held up as either the 'legitimate' representative of the people, or they are represented as being gender-biased and abusive patriarchal horrors. NGOs are private groups that pursue public interests or interest groups pursuing their own ends. Many development experts believe NGOs represent the public, while critics argue they are usually captured by elite or charismatic leaders. Often NGOs, while claimed to be 'of the people', are chosen to serve the implementation interests of outside organizations. They are of the people but they are subject to the iron law of oligarchy and they are also subject to corruption. They build and thicken civil society and pluralism, or they fragment the local into competing and conflicting groups. Elected local government is corrupt and inefficient or it is the democratically elected representative of local people. Elected local government is a place to institutionalize service delivery or public participation in decision making, it is also avoided as being too slow and inefficient. With all of these conflicting qualities, how is it that governments, World Bankers, bi- and multi-lateral donors, and large NGOs choose the local authorities who are to represent public interests in the local arena? All of the above arguments and more are used to justify current choices. The choices are sometimes based on theory, sometimes on ideology, most often on expediency and the instrumental objectives (technical or political) of national and international agents.

objectives at play in the local arena—in addition to being a function of the nature of the specific institution empowered by outside interests. A plurality of institutions may interfere with consolidation of representative local government. The need for quick and efficient service delivery may be inconsistent with the slow process of public decision making through cumbersome democratic processes.

Institutional choices are at least partly based on the objectives of governments and international organizations. They are also based on the history and powers of existing local institutions and the relation of those institutions to government bodies and donors. Across Africa, chiefs were weak and mistrusted at independence due to their association with colonizers. More recently, in cases such as Mozambique, chiefs were strong due to their role in the revolution. Governments may be obliged to work with chiefs or other local institutions based on their social and political economic roles. Nevertheless, there is some choice on the part of central authorities and international bodies. The objective of this concept paper is to bring attention to and frame an analysis of the effects of these outside agents. But understanding the role of policy also requires attention to the articulation between outside agents and existing local institutions and actors who present themselves, resist, engage and choose their forms of action and interaction with respect to the objectives of outsiders.

As democratic decentralization is legislated and implemented, the procedural objectives of new democratic processes conflict with the instrumental objectives of central ministries (Ribot 2002; Shivaramakrishnan 2000).²¹ These may be informed by ideological bent or by a specific outcome-orientation, or may be informed by the political needs of those who allocate resources. In Guinea in the late 1990s, USAID's natural resource management division refused to work through local government because it was "inefficient" and "slow." Instead, they created their own NRM management committees to implement reserve management programs (author's field work 1998). In Mali, SOS Sahel chose to revive defunct customary leaders. They worked with these authorities believing

²¹ This project focuses on local democracy. Local democracy is argued to have instrumental and intrinsic values. Services and development are instrumental values. They can be delivered with or without democratic institutions. If instrumental objectives are carried out through democratic institutions there are good arguments democratic decision making will increase the long-run efficiency and sustainability of instrumental objectives while reinforcing the intrinsic value of democracy. In these arguments, downward accountability of institutions is key to efficiency (Manor 1999; Agrawal and Ribot 1999;). But, if services are delivered through private or civil society institutions, which claim greater efficiency (at least in the short run), the instrumental leverage of accountability is diminished while delegitimizing democratic authorities. While there are acknowledged interactions between service delivery/development interventions and local democracy, the priority of many agencies is on services and development. Democracy is seen as secondary. In addition to undermining democratic institutions, what is lost in favoring the instrumental objectives of service delivery and development are the potential long-term instrumental benefits of institutionalized forms of public accountability. Is the need for development agencies to show quick results undermining the long-term procedural objective of democracy?

that 'traditional' authorities would better manage the forests than would new democratic authorities. In doing so, they undermined the authority of fledgling local democratic institutions (Kassibo 2003). In Indonesia, international NGOs work with indigenous groups whose practices are consistent with conservation (Li 2001, also see Shell Corporation 2004). On the other hand, in Zimbabwe the rural local government authorities were effectively designated local conservation authorities in the early 1990s, and a close relationship was established between the previously autonomous CAMPFIRE Association and the elected Rural District Councils that, in significant if-complicated ways, empowered the Rural District Councils (Hammar 2001). These kinds of choices and justifications are common.²² They shape whether the local authorities chosen are representative of local citizens, are private bodies exempt from public scrutiny, or are managerial units to implement outside agendas.

One major factor that drives local institutional choice under decentralization reforms may be characterized as resistance to decentralization by donors, governments and international NGOs (see Ribot and Oyono 2005). Choice and resistance must be viewed in parallel. Contradictory discourses and actions are about the contradictory incentives that actors face. Decentralization may be idealized and promoted for its ostensible development outcomes while being resisted and undermined due to the threat it poses to those who must make and implement decentralization policies. Institutions may choose and promote certain policies and the institutional interlocutors who will carry them out. They may also and simultaneously resist these policies and undermine the very logic of the choice they are making. These two cannot be seen as separate. They must be linked in the analysis of choice.

Understanding what drives the decision makers who are currently choosing local institutions will help to target recommendations for improving the effects of choice.

III. Politics of Recognition: Outcomes of Institutional Choice

The effects of institutional choices on the emergence and consolidation of local democracy may be very different than expected outcomes or objectives of governments and international organizations. Empirical data that link the institutional arrangements associated with different development approaches to social or ecological outcomes are scarce (Tendler 2000; Little 1994; Brock and Coulibaly 1999:30; World Bank 2000:109; Conyers 2001:28-9; Mansuri and Rao

²² Senegal and South Africa provide additional examples. In Senegal, central government has chosen to create local elected authorities through a party list system that leaves local councils upwardly accountable to the ruling party—by transferring management powers to these bodies, they are able to control the decisions local authorities make over lucrative forest resources (Ribot 2004). In South Africa, the land commission is working with customary authorities (despite the presence of elected local government and a constitution requiring land distribution via democratic local institutions) based on notions of the legitimacy of these authorities, but also probably based on their importance as patronage resources (Ntsebeza 2001).

2003). Decentralizations in the natural resource sector rarely establish the basic institutional arrangements of empowered and locally accountable institutions, making it difficult to measure decentralization's effects (also see Ribot and Larson 2005; Oyono 2005). This framework broadens the scope of research by facilitating empirical interrogation of the democracy and natural resource management effects of the ensemble of institutions being recognized in the local arena.

The term 'recognition' (*a la* Taylor 1994) evokes the political philosophy literature on identity politics and multi-culturalism. This literature provides a framework for exploring the effects of cultural recognition on individual identity and individual well being, and on democracy (see Taylor 1994; Kymlicka 2002; Fraser 2000). I extend the discussion to the recognition of institutions, which, like the recognition of culture, confers power and legitimacy, and cultivates identities and forms of belonging.²³ The choice of a local institution by government or international agencies is a form of recognition.²⁴ Here, I use the term recognition as "acknowledgement" following Li's (2001:625) formulation of the three social processes that comprise recognition: cognition, memory and acknowledgment. Cognition is about classification, the ability to identify something; memory draws upon experience rooted in emotional or imaginative projection; acknowledgment "...is about giving recognition they [others] ask for or deserve" (Li 2001:652). The acknowledgment of local institutions, assessed by some agent as 'asked for or deserved', has multiple effects that can shape democratic inclusion.²⁵

The framework being developed in this paper is designed to help measure these effects of recognition by focusing on three democracy outcomes. Each is discussed below under the sub-headings representation; citizenship; and public domain. The following sub-sections define the parameters of these components of democratic inclusion so that comparative ethnographies on the effects of institutional choice can benefit from common frames of analysis.²⁶

²³ For example, policies are often created to assure the survival of a given cultural community. "Policies aimed at survival activity seek to *create* members of the community, for instance, in their assuring that future generations continue to identify as French-speakers [in Canada]" (Taylor 1994:58).

²⁴ This type of recognition takes place through the transfer of powers, partnering in projects, engagement through contracts, or via participation in dialogue and decision making. Recognition strengthens the chosen institutions, reinforcing the forms of belonging they engender and the identities of their members.

²⁵ While Li (2001:652), quoting Fabian (1999:66) points out that recognition as acknowledgment "...cannot be 'doled out like political independence or development aid'," acknowledgment—via the dialogical interactions of power transfers and association—is being allocated in the name of development. This acknowledgment may not be "asked for or deserved," nevertheless, it has multiple effects that can shape democratic inclusion.

²⁶ The parameters of what is the "public domain" as a component of democracy clearly overlap with issues of representation, belonging and citizenship. Nevertheless, I treat public domain as a separate component of democracy here in order to highlight how certain institutional choice effects can be analyzed in terms of whether they enclose or expand the scope of public powers.

Representation

In recent decades many institutions have been developed with the purpose of increasing popular participation and empowerment in planning and decision making (Fung and Wright 2003; Fung 2003).²⁷ While increased participation may have democratic characteristics—bringing a broader cross-section of the population into decision making—participation is often neither representative nor binding (Mosse 2001). What makes a political system representative is the presence of systematic mechanisms by which society can hold decision makers accountable—that is, both positive and negative forms of sanction (Manin, Przeworski and Stokes 1999). M. Moore (1997) defines democracy substantively as the accountability of leaders to the people. Following Manin, Przeworski and Stokes (1999), democratic representation is when leaders are both responsive and accountable to the people. Local democratic institutions must have the power to be responsive to local people's needs and aspirations if democratic institutions are to develop a meaningful role within the local community (Manin, Przeworski and Stokes 1999). To be responsive, leaders need powers—the discretionary power to translate needs and aspirations into policy and policy into practice (Ribot 1999,2001; Agrawal and Ribot 1999; Pritchett and Woolcock 2004). In the simplest sense, then, democratic institutions are accountable to the people and are empowered to respond. In short, they are representative.

In the case of decentralization (and other forms of development intervention), outside authorities choose, and therefore recognize, local authorities. In doing so, they cultivate these authorities—strengthening and legitimating them. Using the framework developed herein, researchers can explore the degree to which chosen institutions are representative, that is, 1) the degree to which they are accountable to the populations in question; and 2) the degree to which these institutions are empowered and enabled to respond. In current decentralizations, governments and international donors are often choosing to avoid elected local government—which would in a democratic decentralization ostensibly be the appropriate site for democratic local inclusion—in favor of other institutional forms (Romeo 1996; Ribot 2004). This choice is critical in that it at once deprives local elected authorities of the powers being transferred to the local arena, while empowering alternative authorities—such as local line ministry offices, NGOs, customary chiefs, and private corporations. It delegitimizes elected local authorities in favor of legitimating the alternative authorities. The choice is setting up a dynamic in which elected local government is competing and in contention with other local authorities concerning power and legitimacy to make public decisions and to deliver services.

²⁷ Fung (2003) writes, however, about participation and governance as if representation is not key. All of his categories are about participation of civil society and of people within civil society in processes of decision making. He does not seem to view representative forms of government as sufficient or even necessary to the democratic processes.

Democratic (downwardly accountable) local authorities can be strengthened through recognition. They may be weakened if 1) they receive too little power, or 2) if other local institutions are empowered in a manner that causes competition or pre-empts their ability to serve public interest. Manor (2005) describes, for example, underfunded local governments with a mandate to manage natural resources which must operate in an arena with over-funded environment committees. Empowering other institutions in the local arena with public powers can 1) take powers away from democratic local government, and 2) it can produce competition with local government. That competition can be divisive or it may lead to more efficiency and better representation all around. It may also lead to conflict. It can undermine the legitimacy of local democratic authorities while producing conditions for elite capture, or it may produce a pluralism of competition and cooperation that helps establish and thicken civil society.²⁸

Recognition is not only a process of reinforcement and legitimization, it can also be transformative. Receiving powers or being chosen as a partner can re-shape the accountability of local institutions. Conyers (2002) has argued, for example, that when transfers are conditional or insecure, recipient authorities are forced to respond to the needs of those institutions making the transfer if they are to retain their privileges. She points out that when transfers are made as privileges that can be taken back by central government or other outside agencies, local institutions become upwardly accountable. Whereas, transfers made as secure rights can be exercised with discretion in response to local needs. As Conyers puts it, the “means of transfer” matters in the establishment of local democracy (2002). How does recognition reconfigure accountability relations? Under what means of transfer do local institutions become more upwardly or downwardly accountable when recognized? Transfer of secure discretionary powers enables authorities to carry out their own agendas independent of the transferring agency. The transfer of mandates makes an authority accountable to those who hand down the mandate. Conditional transfers orient accountability toward the conditions of maintaining privilege. Hence, the ‘means of recognition’ will certainly be a factor shaping representation.

In sum, recognition may shape democratic representation directly by strengthening or weakening democratic institutions, or indirectly by creating competition for power and legitimacy between democratic and other institutions. In decentralizations, the means of transfer by which recognition takes place can determine the upward or downward accountability of local institutions, shaping the character of representation. In characterizing the representativeness of local institutions chosen in decentralizations, this framework trains the focus on whether institutions are both downwardly accountable *and* empowered to respond to local people’s needs.

²⁸ It is worth making the link to arguments about virtuous cycles between state and civil society made by Fox (200__). In this link, positive relations develop between civil servants and the population. It is worth asking if this kind of link can develop in the absence of civil servants with sufficient resources. [**Re-read Fox article and cite in bibliography.]

Citizenship

Citizenship rights "...involve 'the many' obtaining control of the legitimate means of violence, the state, in order to enforce protections or rights against élites who wield public and private power. Equally important, citizenship involves protecting 'the few' who have little power (e.g. minorities of race, class, gender, and religious affiliations) who need shelter from the tyranny of 'the many' and/or élites. These rights and protections also involve obligations or duties to interact within and promote the commonwealth and the political system in as much as they are needed. At a foundational level, all citizenship rights are legal and political because citizenship rights are legislated by government decision-making bodies, promulgated by executive orders, or enacted and later enforced by legal decisions."

Janoski and Gran 2002:13

Janoski and Gran (2002:13-14) define citizenship as "...passive and active membership of individuals in a nation-state with universalistic rights and obligations at a specific level of equality." The elements are *membership*, *active* ability to influence politics, *passive* right to exist within the legal system, *universalistic rights* applied to all citizens, *equality* in the procedural domain and in some substantive arenas.

The concept of citizenship is predicated on both individual and group rights. Liberals emphasize the individual with a focus on equal liberties for all persons. Communitarians focus on the society or nation and are concerned with justice and cohesion. Republican theorists tend to emphasize individual and group rights with a focus on conflict and competition as the means for changing those rights. With challenges in the past two decades to the authority of the state and legitimacy of the nation, the question of rights has also shifted. This shift has brought into question the state as the locus of rights. "Rather than merely focusing on citizenship as legal rights, there is now agreement that citizenship must also be defined as a social process through which individual and social groups engaged in claiming, expanding or losing rights" (Isin and Turner 2002:4). Citizenship has come to be a process of being politically engaged and shaping the fate of the polity in which one is involved (Isin and Turner 2002).

The shift that is taking place from rights-based to process-based citizenship parallels a larger shift taking place from adherence to rules to engagement with rules through authority. As citizenship shifts from a set of rights and obligations that are granted to a process of engagement, the rule makers take on greater importance.²⁹ Authority becomes key. The citizen's job is to make authorities

²⁹ Michael Mann (1987 cited by Isin and Thurner 2002:6) makes the striking point that to pair rights with obligations has its dangers. "The notion that citizenship might entail obligations has strategically been appropriated by right-wing governments who wish to use citizen charters as techniques for regulating public utilities" (Isin and Turner 2002:7). But Isin and Turner do not throw out obligation—they speak of a "need to evolve a language of obligation and virtue" which

accountable to citizens. Authorities open to influence facilitate citizenship. Authorities that impose their will are less inviting of engagement.³⁰ In this sense, they are less amenable to the production of citizenship. In this way, the accountability structure of authorities and their means of transfer have effects for public conceptions of citizenship and citizen engagement in a democracy. Using this framework, researchers should take into account process-based conceptions of citizenship in order to discern the effects of institutional choice on citizen engagement and the accountability of recognized authorities.

In particular, researchers can use this approach to examine the potential effects of recognition of identity-based forms of authority and belonging. Taylor's (1994) 'politics of recognition' describes a set of tenets for redressing inequities that stem from identity politics. Recognition redresses inequities by privileging cultures and identity groups that have been marginalized. It identifies marginality as a product of their 'misrecognition' or prejudices against cultures and cultural forms. In focusing on identity-based misrecognition, Fraser (2000) argues that the politics of recognition loses sight of the role of redistribution and material equity in redressing injustices.³¹ Fraser (2000:108) adds that "...insofar as the politics of recognition displaces the politics of redistribution, it may actually promote inequality; insofar as it reifies group identities, it risks sanctioning violations of human rights and freezing the very antagonisms it purports to mediate."³² In short, the politics of recognition perpetrates a double crime. In ignoring material inequality, it reinforces material injustices. By reifying culture, Fraser argues (2000:112) it places "...moral pressure on individual members to conform to a given group culture. Cultural dissonance and experimentation are accordingly discouraged, when they are not simply equated with disloyalty. So too is cultural criticism, including efforts to explore intragroup divisions, such as those of gender, sexuality and class."

Fraser (2000:112) notes that "...the tendency of the identity model is to brand such critique as 'inauthentic'." Her analysis brings up the uncomfortable issues of judging authenticity and judging other cultures. She argues that the identity

would include such virtues as the respect for other cultures. Because they believe it should be based on virtues of respect along with a strong sense of place and tradition, they see citizenship as the answer to fundamentalism, racism and nationalism (Isin and Turner 2002:9).

³⁰ Engagement does not have to be invited. Resistance is also a form of engagement that is used to confront imposed authority.

³¹ Fraser (2000:108) argues that recognition as an approach is marginalizing, eclipsing and displacing redistributive struggles. She calls this phenomenon 'displacement'. She argues that recognition struggles "...serve not to promote respectful interaction within increasingly multi-cultural contexts, but to drastically simplify and reify group identities." She believes that they tend "...to encourage separatism, intolerance and chauvinism, particularism and authoritarianism." She calls this the problem of "reification."

³² Recognition based on culture (identity politics), for example, may displace redistributive struggles. Privileging the misrecognition or depreciation of culture and identity as the causes of inequality embedded in "free floating discourses" often wholly ignores material and social bases of distribution. In this way, material inequality may be seen as merely an outcome of misrecognition (Fraser 2000:110-111).

model supposes "...that a group has the right to be understood solely in its own terms—that no one is ever justified in viewing another subject from an external perspective or in dissenting from another's self-interpretation." She points out that this runs counter to the Hegelian dialogical view which presupposes that cultural identity is an auto-generated self-description, "...which one presents to others as an obiter dictum." She continues "seeking to exempt 'authentic' self-representation from all possible challenges in the public sphere, this sort of identity politics scarcely fosters social interaction across differences: on the contrary, it encourages separatism and group enclaves."³³ To avoid this double standard, researchers should view cultural and political authorities as well as community and private leaders in the same critical light. The results of such an analysis will be the starting point for a dialogue among cultural and political stances.

Fraser (2000:112) argues that by reifying group identity, recognition obscures internal cultural differences and subordinates the "...struggles within the group for the authority—and the power—to represent it." It subordinates individuals to the recognized cultural forms—encouraging "...repressive forms of communitarianism, promoting conformism, intolerance and patriarchy" (Fraser 2000:112). These critiques are not limited to instances where culture-based injustices are redressed through strengthening of cultural identities or privileging of one cultural form over another. I would argue that these critiques can be extended to instances where any non-democratic *authority* is privileged—an assertion that this framework is designed to test.

Not only is multiculturalism subject to Fraser's critique, but so are many forms of institutional support (pluralism, privatization, NGOism, support for customary chiefs) now being promoted in the name of natural resource management and local development. By examining the effects of choosing these different institutions in natural resource management decentralizations, this project will test the following propositions. The support of authorities privileges and strengthens those authorities—whether their constituencies are identity-based or interest-based. When governments and international agencies empower local authorities, they are enforcing upon the members of the groups the particular forms of comportment of the chosen authorities.

The implication of Fraser's (2000) arguments are important in the context of institutional choice. Recognition can reify identities producing a singular "authentic" authority, enabling these recognized actors to define authenticity.³⁴

³³ Yet, people are always judging others—as good or bad, just or unjust. We don't hesitate to judge other political systems as fascist, totalitarian or democratic. Yet when we label other systems as 'culture', we suspend judgement. It is as if the term 'culture' provides political protection. By naturalizing others as 'cultural,' differences are essentialized and judgement reflects only a relative perspective that cannot have moral weight. Emic is privileged over etic.

³⁴ The search for "authentic" customary authorities was a significant feature of the colonial project of indirect rule, especially in Africa (see Annex A on this point, and its importance given the current resurgence of customary authorities in Africa).

These chosen authorities are enabled to recognize other actors as authentic, or to discipline those they consider inauthentic. They are able to determine who belongs and who does not. Recognition can reify cultural and non-cultural authorities. Criteria are necessary to judge the likely human rights and material equity effects of choosing particular authorities. Fraser (2000:115) does so by proposing the ideal of “participatory parity,” by which all citizens and citizen groups, regardless of identity, must have equal opportunity to participate in democratic institutions. The proposed framework is designed to help test whether recognition of substantively democratic—downwardly accountable—authorities in fact reinforces these inclusions and enfranchisement, and how these effects compare to the effects of recognizing authorities that are coercive of, or not accountable to, their members.

Culture or identity-based authorities are particularly coercive because belonging may not be voluntary—someone is born into a certain phenotype, lineage, ethnic group, religion, location, language group or accent.³⁵ By dint of these identity markers, the strengthened authority may be empowered to reign over them. For example, Mamdani (1996) describes indirect rule under colonialism as a system in which the individual is “encapsulated” in culture. Via colonial backing, individuals are subject to the cultural authority. Under indirect rule, cultural authorities were chosen by colonial governors based on arguments about their legitimacy and based on their willingness to comply with the administrative needs of the colonial powers.³⁶ Culture—the particular culture of the cooperating authority—was enforced on the individual. As Fabian (1999:65) notes, colonial powers “...pretended to act within existing legitimacy when they appointed so-called traditional chiefs in order to establish indirect rule (incidentally revealing tradition as a potentially hypocritical notion).” Chiefs were not chosen for representation or justice (although colonial authorities claimed these concerns—see von Vollenhoven 1920; Buell 1928; Mair 1936; Deschamps 1963).

For interest-based authorities, liberal philosophers tend to view belonging as voluntary. Hence, strengthening interest-based authorities seems to escape Fraser’s (2000) criticism of coercion. But, giving power to a particular individual may create opportunities under their authority that require adherence for anyone wishing to participate in what may be critical productive activities or resources. In this sense, belonging may not be voluntary—it may determine access to subsistence opportunities or shape people’s scope for advancing. It will certainly shape their range of opportunities for what political philosophers like to call ‘living the good life’. In the context of rural poverty alleviation and development or natural resource management and use, such necessity often drives belonging. By recognizing local interest-based institutions, decentralization and other forms of local or community-based intervention carry similar risks to those described by

³⁵ Clearly some identities are ascribed and others acquired. Some can be voluntarily changed and others cannot.

³⁶ The need to confer legitimacy on these authorities produced in many cases early iterations of the authenticity rhetoric critiqued by Fraser above.

theorists focused on the recognition of culture. Again, 'recognition' reinforces the recognized authority. As such, the framework for analysis enables researchers to scrutinize equally identity- and interest-based institutions and forms of belonging.

Recognition of one authority over another produces new forms of belonging and exclusion, and potentially conflict. State or international-agency recognition of traditional authorities enforces tradition—squelching as non-traditional or non-authentic those who dissent from the positions of the state-backed leader. In the process, the skewed material distribution and patterns of access to resources and markets that is at the basis of local stratification and inequality are obscured by arguments that the chosen authorities are legitimate and/or efficient for outside instrumental objectives. In the same manner, state recognition of interest groups (whether private actors, user groups, community-based organizations or non-governmental organizations) privileges these groups in decision making over what might be public resources, giving them power to include or exclude actors following their own narrow (private) definition of interest or criteria for belonging. This study will test the hypothesis that, in the name of democratic decentralization, pluralism and participation, many institutional choices are weakening individuals' influence over their leaders. In particular, this study will examine the notion, common in pluralistic approaches, that including as many different interest-based institutions as possible in the mix of 'stakeholders' actually produces a more representative outcome.

Pluralists such as Dahl (1967) and civil-society and social capital theorists such as Putnam (1993) argue that engagement and interaction among a plethora of institutions results in more-democratic forms of decision making (also see Wollenburg, Anderson and Lopez 2005; Prichett and Woolcock 2004). These theorists assume that some generally accepted rule of law is in place to guide interactions, and that there are responsive political decision makers for the plurality of institutions to influence (Dahl 1989; Putnam 1993). Putnam (1993), for example, uses the concept of social capital to explain how and why some governments are more accountable and responsive to local people. He implicitly views social capital as an input to an existing system of governance. But practitioners seem to assume that social capital in itself or a plurality of institutions produces democratic outcomes—as if it alone can create the very infrastructure of "participatory parity." They conflate pluralism and social capital (as an input) with the system of democratic governance itself. By creating a plurality of institutions at the expense, however, of representative local authority, does the pluralist approach undermine the checks and balances of democracy that make pluralism consistent with democratic processes? It is important to note that pluralism is a configuration of interests and inputs—it is not a governance structure. By keeping this distinction in mind, researchers and theorists can investigate what the effects are of a plurality of institutions on democratic governance institutions and processes.

Institutional choice by governments and international authorities has likely played a large role in the emerging volatile new mix of local identities and conflicts across Africa. Geschiere and Boone (2003) at least partly attribute Africa's new local institutional landscape to weakening of the African state. They note that as nation states lost status in international relations, new and volatile forms of local belonging and identity sprung up. Ideas of belonging shifted from ethnicity toward a language of 'autochthony', which carried with it claims for the exclusion of 'strangers' or late comers and migrants. Under these conditions, localist forms of belonging, according to Geschiere and Boone (2003), imply "...a direct attack on the very idea of national citizenship and the formal equality of all citizens before the law." They can privilege 'first comers' over later settlers, producing new divisions and conflicts. In a sense, they are attributing these new identities to the failure of the state to impose more integrative forms of belonging and citizenship—due to the state's weakening and fragmentation.

Geschiere and Boone (2003) also point out that it is "...certainly not only external influences that are at play here. Local forms and popular anxieties—reinforced by an increasing feeling of deprivation in the face of an ongoing pauperisation—acquire a new lease on life in connection with the broader trends [of globalization and a weakening state] mentioned above." They also attribute these changes to the success of customary authorities in becoming intermediaries in 'development new style' (predicated on the proliferation of new local institutions). Geschiere and Boone (2003) point out that "...belonging is becoming a central issue not only through external influences and political strategies 'from above'..." but belonging under growing conditions of insecurity also "...strikes a deep chord among the population." The re-emergence of customary authority within 'development new style', the kinds of institutional choices being made in local development, the weakening state and exposure of local people to the vagaries of markets and international policy, certainly all converge to produce what appears to be a fragmentation of local forms of belonging and identities.

By reinforcing and creating authorities, institutional choices are strengthening and creating forms of belonging and the identities that accompany them. Yet the form of belonging most commonly associated with representative democracy is residency-based citizenship. It is associated with a person's identification as a local and national citizen. Part of the task of democratization is the production of a sense of citizenship—a sense of agency and the entitlement to influence those who rule. Underpinned by its universalism and its residential basis, this sense of a citizen's right and ability to participate in public politics are what comprise the concept of the "public domain."

Public Domain

The transfer of powers to non-representative institutions can reinforce forms of belonging and associated identities. It follows that retaining powers in the public

domain—the public political space where citizens feel able and entitled to influence their authorities—maintains and reinforces public belonging and identity. Conversely, privatizing public resources and powers to individuals, corporations, customary authorities or NGOs diminishes the public domain. This enclosure shrinks the integrative space of democratic public interaction. Without public powers there is no space of democracy. Without public powers in the hands of representative government, there is no representative democracy (Manin, Przeworski and Stokes 1999).

Public action forms the domain of democratic process. Enclosing it diminishes the space of democracy. When the authorities receiving these powers are customary or religious authorities, this enclosure also constitutes a desecularization of powers (Asad 2003). Perhaps this is exactly the strategy of the Bush administration when it channels public resources to religious groups to deliver public services. In doing so, the administration has succeeded in empowering religious authorities while diminishing the public domain—all in the name of effective social service delivery. In essence, the Bush administration is enclosing the domain of the secular and the public. It is carrying out the conservative agenda of shrinking the state but is doing so by expanding the legitimacy, reach and powers of Christianity and the private sector.

Citizenship develops when there is a space of public power and decision making in which people can engage. Empowered public institutions are a site of citizen engagement. For example, Anu Joshi (pers. comm., IDS, 2001) observed that people engage with and adhere to authorities that can make meaningful decisions and deliver needed goods and services. She noted that civil society organizes to influence such empowered authorities when these authorities are accessible and open to influence by individuals and civil society. In this sense, empowering democratic local government and the creation of a public space of engagement can encourage the production of citizenship—by providing an integrative public domain where citizens can engage in collective decision making and action.

Public domain is about the location of discretionary powers and the accountability of the institutions that hold them. Public domain is also an arena to which society adheres and around which people form identities. These identities are embodied in representative authority and other government institutions with discretionary powers to be responsive to people's desires and needs. In this sense, the creation of a political identity around the public domain has much in common with the ideas of citizenship discussed above.³⁷ Despite these overlaps, this project will also use the concept of public domain to examine who has discretion and the effects of this on public identity and citizenship.

³⁷ As mentioned above, the separation of these two categories of democracy outcomes is largely heuristic.

In decentralizations, distributing public powers among multiple interest and identity groups may fragment society into interest- and identity-based forms of belonging. In this sense, the particular distribution of decentralized powers has consequences for the coherence and divisions within local society. The privatization³⁸ of public powers to NGOs, customary authorities and private bodies diminishes or encloses the domain of integrative public action, undermining residency-based belonging and citizenship while fragmenting the local arena into multiple interest- and identity-based forms of belonging (Ribot 2004).

In short, public powers held in the public domain are part of the production of citizenship and of the space of integrative collective action that is democracy. These powers are the substance of democracy, they constitute the substance with respect to which people are represented. In what ways a transfer of powers expands or encloses the public domain is another criterion which research should assess the effects of institutional choice in natural resource management decentralizations. For decentralizations to produce benefits in equity, efficiency, and democratization, the expansion of the public domain through the maintenance of public powers is essential. Public powers are what citizens engage in. They are what representatives decide over. Without them democracy is empty.

IV. Research Approach

My current research is bringing together existing case material that can shed light on the politics of institutional choice and the politics of recognition in natural resource management decentralizations. The objectives are 1) to derive policy lessons from the literature and from existing cases through comparative analysis; and 2) to assess the effectiveness of the above framework (questions and methods) for more in-depth comparative research.

The researchers will be brought together for a meeting in June 2006 to share their cases. The meeting will be held just after the International Association for the Study of Common Pool Resources (IASCP) to be held in Bali from 19-23 June 2006. All researchers in the program will be expected to present their findings at IASCP and at the comparative research findings meeting that will be a few days prior to IASCP. At the research findings meeting we will tease out lessons and outline pertinent comparative research findings, questions and methods. Preliminary findings will be presented when I present this framework—but, as you might guess, they are not ready for the writing of this framework article.

³⁸ I use the term 'privatization', rather than simply 'transfer' here in order to indicate that all of these bodies receiving powers are 'private' in the sense that they are not systematically accountable to the public writ large, but rather to individuals or their members.

The product of this effort will be a policy brief and a more in-depth comparative research proposal for further comparative study of the links between center-transfers and the local democratization process. If the authors of the case studies feel it is useful, these papers may be published as a special issue of an international journal and/or an edited volume.

Research Questions and Methods

The research focuses on the effects of institutional choices by governments, international development agencies and other international organizations on three dimensions of local democracy: 1) representation, 2) citizenship, and 3) the public domain.

The project will explore the degree to which chosen institutions are representative, that is, 1) the degree to which they are accountable to the populations in question; and 2) the degree to which these institutions are empowered and enabled to respond.

Research described in the body of this concept paper indicates that the institutions being chosen by governments and international organizations in the name of democratic decentralization are undermining the formation and consolidation of democratic local government. Representation seems to be undermined because: chosen institutions are not substantively democratic; and chosen institutions compete with democratic local government for powers and legitimacy. Citizenship, collective identity and collective action appear to be undermined because: identity- and interest-based recognition are fragmenting the local arena into multiple forms of belonging; and institutional choices are resulting in the enclosure of the public domain.

Below are some research questions that may help us to interrogate phenomena discussed in this paper. These are preliminary questions that need further development and focus.

Research Questions

Institutional Choice Research Questions: What individuals and institutions are governments, donors and international NGOs choosing to work with in the local arena? How do they explain and justify their choice of local institutions? Is their actual choice consistent with their explained reasoning? How do they explain the difference between their justifications and actions if there is one?

Representation Research Questions: To which local institutions are central governments, aid agencies and international NGOs transferring powers? What kinds of powers are being transferred and under what conditions? Are these

institutions representative? How does recognition reshape accountability and the extent to which these institutions are representative?

Citizenship and Belonging Research Questions: Are institutional choices cultivating inclusive or exclusive forms of belonging and identity? Are they cultivating citizenship or subject status among local populations? Under what conditions does a plurality of institutions produce more-democratic forms of identity and belonging? Are current patterns of recognition producing competition with democratic authority, forms of belonging and identity? Are they producing inter-group conflict? Are they producing positive and productive forms of competition?

Public Domain Research Questions: Are the current patterns of power transfer and institutional choice enclosing the public domain? Are they diminishing those domains of decision making that people identify with collective goods and collective action? Are they enclosing the space for integrative decision making? Is the public domain being enclosed via privatization and empowerment of non-market private bodies such as NGOs, chiefs and religious leaders? Is the secular domain being enclosed in favor of religious and cultural forms of authority, identity and belonging?

Political Economic and Social Context: Research using this framework can help explain when and how local representation emerges or is suppressed in processes called democratic decentralization. This implies explaining institutional arrangements in terms of policy choices, but also in terms of social and political economic conditions at multiples scales—such as present and historical relations of dependence and reciprocity, party politics, changing economic conditions, stratification, violence and conflict, patterns of access to resources and finance, etc. Local histories, local actors and their political-cultural institutions also shape local political-administrative and institutional arrangements—and reshape the choices made from above (see Guyer 1992; Boone 2003; Bierschenk 2005). These are not to be ignored. Nevertheless, the focus of research should remain on how policy shapes outcomes—in the context of these other forces. While the focus is on representation, the explanations must take into account all relevant variables.

Outcomes Research Questions: What substantive outcomes can be correlated or traced from institutional arrangements observed? Can the causal links be drawn between more or less representative arrangements and the following: patterns of natural resources management and use; increases in well being or income; changes in equity and distribution of benefits; conflict or cooperation; and social cohesion?

Research Methods

Approaching the above questions requires several methods. Researchers should first characterize changes in institutional arrangements (actors and their powers) before and after powers are transferred (whether or not it is called decentralization). That is, it is necessary to assess changes in the central and local institutions present, and to evaluate which institutions are receiving which new powers. Then researchers should characterize the forms of accountability and changes in accountability relations of each institution. Then the key problem is to relate these changes in institutional arrangements—actors, powers and accountability (see Ribot 2004 for a discussion of the actors, powers and accountability approach)—to outcomes. Clearly there are many methods that can be applied to querying these variables. These include participant observation, interviews, surveys, mining of the literature and other typical approaches used by ethnographic researchers. The methods discussed below are only suggestive.

Representation

To whom are local decision makers/empowered institutions accountable? Who is being represented by those institutions with powers? Representation is made up of sanction and responsiveness. Both are variables that can be observed.

There are many approaches to measuring accountability. Accountability is counter power (see Agrawal and Ribot 1999). It is the exercise of sanctions in order to influence others. To measure the use of sanctions requires careful observation. Are local people sanctioning their leaders—via magic, protest, third party monitoring, communication, sabotage, electoral behavior, and so forth (there is a list of accountability mechanisms in Ribot 2004:Annex C).

To whom do leaders respond? This can also be observed by exploring who is served by the projects and decisions of leaders. It can also be observed through interviews of leaders and a careful analysis of the constraints under which they perceive themselves to be working.

Representation is also often measured through surveys that correlate the wishes of local people with the actions of decision makers. Are the decisions of leaders consistent with the articulated wishes of the local populations?

But, accountability and representation are not always linked. If decision makers do not have the means to respond, then no amount of accountability can force them to deliver the services people want. Hence, representation must be explored with respect to the powers that decision makers hold. Are they responsive where they are able to be responsive? Why? How? What mechanisms are in place to influence their actions and to make them responsive and therefore representative?

Citizenship and Belonging

Citizenship and belonging are variables that must be measured through close observation and interviews. Do people engage the state? Do they engage local authorities? If so, through what practices? Do they feel they belong to and have a right to make claims on particular groups and authorities? To what groups do they consider themselves to be members? How do they feel about other categories of belonging? What are the bases of conflicts among groups? Has the locus of conflict and cooperation among identity or interest groups changed with the changes in institutional arrangements? What does conflict and cooperation indicate about changes in citizenship and belonging?

Public Domain

This is a variable that requires more reflection. It is the space of public action. Has it grown or shrunk? Are there public projects? Do people engage in them, and if so, how? Are collective powers shrinking through privatization and desecularization? Do people feel more or less included in collective action? Are there more or less opportunities for participation in collective projects and their benefits? How is this manifested in practice?

V. Conclusion

The object of this exercise is to problematize and theorize local democracy and its component parts, representation, citizenship and belonging, and the public domain, so as to develop sharper methods for analysis of change and progress. For empirical study, researchers can use this framework to develop their own indicators and approaches to measuring and describing these variables, their importance and their evolution (before and after powers are transferred). The first step is to test whether these are the relevant variables for understanding the causes and effects of institutional choices and recognition. Are these the variables that characterize substantive local democracy? What other factors must our research take into account?

Annex A: The Case of Re-emergence of Customary Authority in Africa

One important institutional transformation taking place across rural Africa is the re-emergence of so called “customary” and “traditional” authorities. This re-emergence is at least partly cultivated from above—a result of government, donors and international NGOs recognizing these chiefs and headmen. The re-emergence of customary authority is so widespread and takes so many forms that it must also, of course, be attributed to particular local histories reshaped by global changes that give new life to traditional forms of belonging and identity.

This re-emergence parallels increased attention to themes of indigeneity in literature on cultural politics and development. The past several decades have witnessed the emergence of multiculturalism from the struggles of liberal democratic philosophy to grapple with cultural difference (Taylor 1994; Frasier 2000; Povinelli 2002). The multicultural movement resonated with the naïve populism of social capital approaches and many other forms of participatory development. Today, a large portion of development critics (Escobar...) and professionals alike believe that indigenous peoples and their cultures should be favored in, and should control, development interventions.

But several important blind spots are evident in development approaches that favor indigeneity. First, political analysis and judgment of indigenous governance systems are not featured in the new approaches. Second, custom and customary authority are conflated such that customary authorities are favored rather than custom itself. Focus on indigenous identity and governance has increasingly shifted from the individual to the collective, from the culture to the authority, and from the cultural authority to both interest-based and identity-based authorities.

But, not everything indigenous is ‘good’. Many of the ‘indigenous’ governance systems, when analyzed as *political systems* rather than being viewed as *cultural forms*, would be labeled totalitarian, fascist, despotic, oppressive, patriarchal, gender biased, stratified, gerontocratic, and so forth. Some indigenous cultures even condone and continue forms of servitude and slavery. But when we call them ‘indigenous’, it is as if suddenly the nature of authority and governance is obscured behind a fog of cultural relativism. Those who favor other cultures and indigenous peoples do not want to judge them.

Elizabeth Povinelli (2002:6) identifies some of the contradictory effects of this new multiculturalism:

“Franz Fanon and members of Subaltern Studies have suggested how colonial domination worked by inspiring in colonized subjects a desire to identify with their colonizers. The Australian example suggests that multicultural domination seems to work, in contrast, by inspiring subaltern and minority subjects to identify with the impossible object of an authentic self-identity; in the case of indigenous Australians, a domesticated non-conflictual ‘traditional’ form of sociability and (inter)subjectivity. As the nation stretches out its hands to ancient Aboriginal laws (as long as they are not ‘repugnant’), indigenous subjects are called on to

perform an authentic difference in exchange for the good feelings of the national and the reparative legislation of the state. But this call does not simply produce good theatre, rather it inspires impossible desires: *to be* this impossible object and to transport its ancient pre-national meanings and practices to the present in *whatever* language and moral framework prevails *at the time of enunciation*" [italics in original].

Povinelli points out that there are limits to the cultural recognition that Aboriginals receive in Australia. On the one hand, they have to be different enough to "merit" a cultural denomination different than their white compatriots. But their cultural practices cannot be too different to offend the larger society's liberal sensibilities. Povinelli (2002:13) says of "those who consider themselves liberal" that "they encounter instances of what they experience as moments of fundamental and uncanny alterity: encounters with differences they consider too abhorrent, inhuman, and bestial, or with differences they consider too hauntingly similar to themselves to warrant social entitlements—for example, land claims by indigenous people who dress, act and sound like the suburban neighbors they are." Nevertheless, in the intermediate space between repugnance and sameness, we find tolerance of political systems we would ordinarily—were they not "traditional" or "indigenous"—condemn as unjust and unfair. Tolerating these systems subjects people to traditions we would not tolerate in our own societies.

But, the liberal and populist project makes one more slip of hand. Rather than enabling indigenous tradition to flourish, it subsumes it within notions of indigenous *authority*.³⁹ Traditional and customary authorities become the interlocutors for all indigenous peoples. But can tradition be represented by non-traditional authorities (quite separate from the question of whether traditional authorities are even 'traditional')? Custom and customary authority are not always separable (see Mann and Roberts 1991 for a discussion of law as process). Their fusion and conflation both in indigenous and outsider practice undermines the potential for representing custom, tradition, or culture—the desire, needs and perspectives of indigenous peoples—through democratic authority. How does democratic authority in the presence of process-based legal systems articulate with 'tradition' 'custom' or culture—does it replace traditional authority or operate in parallel or in hierarchy? Certainly parallel or hierarchy. How is power divided among them if they do work in parallel? In the colonial period, European powers chose to recognize and work through traditional authorities.

Recognized by the state or by international organizations, traditional or customary authorities are transformed, as were the colonial chiefs in Africa. Their powers backed from the outside, their accountabilities are turned upward,

³⁹ Conflation of tradition and traditional authority is common. While tradition and traditional authority cannot always be separated, in some instances customs can be recognized and represented by non-traditional authorities such that custom can enter into decision making without the intermediary of customary authority. This was the case in the affirmative action movement in the US.

producing the room for abuse that was legion across the colonial world. Customary authorities played an important role in the colonial period as the local administrators for European powers—under the French system of ‘Assimilation’ and British ‘Indirect Rule’. Colonial rulers backed their control over land enabling them to implement the colonial economic management and extraction projects (Watts 1993). The colonial project used chiefs to legitimate their own presence. The search for the ‘authentic’ chief was part and parcel of the colonial legitimization project. By independence, chiefs and headmen lost the favor of local populations and of government due to their colonial collaboration. The recent revival of ‘authentic’ customary authority in Africa is especially troubling given their role as instruments of colonial domination.

Today customary authorities are re-emerging as a political force across a variety of sectors. They are mobilizing and being recognized by governments, donors and international NGOs. While the phenomenon of chiefly comeback is not sector specific, it has been especially salient in natural resource issues.⁴⁰ Over the past decade, “customary” or “traditional” leaders—chiefs, headmen, kings, etc.—are having a renaissance. They have reasserted their authority in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa; Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe (Therkildsen 1993:84 citing Van Rouveroy Van Nieuwaal 1987; Brock and Coulibaly 1999:152; Ntsebeza 1999,2002,2005; Manor 2000; Muhereza 2003; Jeter 2000:A1).

The resurgence of customary authorities has implications for the relationship between central and local governments, and therefore bears on decentralization efforts in several different ways. As discussed in the main text of this concept paper, transfer of powers to non-democratic institutions (including, but not limited to, customary authorities) instead of local government may inhibit the formation of robust local democracy. In South Africa, Mozambique, Uganda and Zimbabwe, the comeback of customary authorities is supported by allies in government and is undermining elected local authorities (Ntsebeza 1999; Manor 2000; Jeter 2000:A1). Muhereza (2003), for example, has pointed out that ‘decentralized’ control over forests (taking the form of effective privatization) in Uganda may contribute to the strengthening of Kingdoms at the expense of the democratically elected Local Council system. Similar cases of chiefly strengthening at the expense of elected government are found in South Africa (Ntsebeza 2003) and Mali (Kassibo 2004).

Members of central government in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger also often evoke chiefs as a threat to or a reason not to decentralize or establish democratic local institutions. Government authorities argue that supporting new democratic

⁴⁰ Although it would take a more systematic comparison among sectors, I would speculate that they have been favored more systematically in natural resource management due to widespread ideas about indigenous peoples being closer to nature. The naturalization of indigenous peoples goes hand in hand with the indigenization of the management of nature. See further discussion below of the role of customary authorities in natural resource management.

institutions will lead to conflict with customary authorities. As such, the resurgence of customary authorities threatens democratic local government reforms. Because chiefs are threatened by transfer of control over land allocation to democratic institutions and the more general undermining of their authority by alternative representative local institutions, they and their allies in central government—who may also lose their rural power base through local democratization—pose a serious threat to decentralizations. These examples illustrate that a variety of political motivations at different levels—not just central government—is driving the reemergence of customary authorities.

In natural resources, the empowerment of customary authorities, on the grounds of legitimacy and on arguments that these authorities represent local people, is common (see Ribot 1999; 2004). Van Rouveroy, van Nieuwaal and van Dijk (1999:6) have argued that across Africa land and natural resource management are being renewed as arenas for chiefly power: NGOs “appear to have turned chiefly office into an arena of brokerage, thus opening new perspectives and avenues for entrepreneurial activity;” natural resources and land allocation are described as domains in which chiefs’ “nostalgic claims to authentic ritual power are effectuated in terms of real political power.” Chiefs use this discourse to their advantage in their relation with post-colonial African states. Chiefs use the domain of natural resource management and land allocation to manipulate this relation to their own advantage. “In most cases chiefs succeed in invoking ritual rights from the ‘past’, which they then translate into instruments for ‘hard’ political brokerage. Chiefs negotiate their positions in the context of global discourse on sustainability, environmental awareness and national and international interest in ecological preservation” (van Rouveroy, van Nieuwaal and van Dijk 1999:6). In many countries where land issues are politically charged, chiefs mobilize their past roles as authorities over natural resources in order to maintain their political relevance to (and advance their power struggle with) national political authorities.

In a first round of research on decentralizations involving natural resources (Ribot 2004), these patterns observed across Africa indicates that problems around the choice and recognition of local institutions by governments, international agencies and international NGOs may be affecting democracy at the local level. This re-emergence needs further investigation. Is the inclusion of these authorities in public decision really making “the basis for the emergence of strong, legitimate regimes in the years ahead,” as Rothchild (1994:7) asserts? Mozambique’s 1992 peace agreement states that “The Government undertakes to respect and not antagonize the traditional structures and authorities where they are currently de facto exercising such authority” (Rothchild 1994:7). The South African constitution also recognizes chiefs as legitimate local authorities (Ntsebeza 1999).⁴¹ Given that in places like South Africa and Mozambique

⁴¹ In South Africa, traditional chiefs are fighting for powers over land tenure arrangements. These hereditary powers are not representative and their empowerment is inconsistent with the democratic principles of elected representation enshrined in the constitution (Ntsebeza 1999). Customary authorities are also insinuating their way into ostensibly democratic local government

customary authorities are already written into the constitution, the question now becomes: how should customary authorities participate in government? What should their relation to emerging local democratic governments be? While traditional leaders may, at times, be recognized to be “vital social forces in their communities” (Rothchild 1994:8), does this mean that they represent and are accountable to society or can speak or act fairly on its behalf? Does it mean they have a right to rule?

As discussed above, challenge to local democratic institutions is not just from chieftaincy. Local democratic institutions are also challenged through privatization and the transfer to NGOs of public powers—both very common in natural resource management decentralizations. This project aims to use the natural resource lens to better understand the effects of the choice and mix of local institutions on democratic decentralization.

structures. In 2000 their representation on local government councils was increased from ten to twenty percent and functions, such as land management, that even the constitution requires to be executed democratically have been transferred into the domain of chiefly authority (Ntsebeza 2002). The Municipal Structures Second Amendment Bill (section 81.1a—still pending) states: “Despite anything contained in any other law, a traditional authority observing a system of customary law continues to exist and to exercise powers and perform functions conferred upon it in terms of indigenous law, customary and statutory law, which powers and functions include – (a) the right to administer communal land...” (Ntsebeza 2002:9).

Annex B: The Case Studies

Participant Papers are divided into four thematic groups:

Group I – Institutional Choice and Recognition in Natural Resource Management: Competition, Cooperation and Conflict among Local Institutions

1. Papa Faye – Institutional Pluralism in Forestry Decentralization in Senegal: The Stakes for Local Democracy
2. Renata Marson Teixeira de Andrade-Downs - The Proliferation and Fragmentation of Authority in River Preservation and Fisheries Management on the Lower São Francisco River, Northeast Brazil
3. Po Garden - The Consequences of Institutional Interplay and Density on Local Governance of Water Resources in Northern Thailand
4. Ashwini Chhatre - The Boomerang Effect: Transitivity of Accountability with Respect to Natural Resource Management in Democratic Institutions [India]

Group II – Institutional Choice and Recognition in Natural Resource Management: External Patrons, Local Clients

1. Solange Bandiaky - Village Management Committees versus Local Collectivities in Malidino Biodiversity Community Reserve in Senegal
2. Fabiano Toni - Institutional Choices on the Brazilian Agricultural Frontier: Strengthening Civil Society or Outsourcing Centralized Natural Resource Management?
3. Marja Spierenburg and Harry Wells - The Quest for the Global Commons: Public-Private Partnerships, External Actors, and Community Land Rights in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area [Southern Africa]
4. Mafaniso Hara - Decentralisation or Line Ministry Institutional Empowerment in Fisheries Management? The Case of Mangochi District, Malawi

Group III – Institutional Choice and Recognition in Natural Resource Management: The Re-Emergence of Customary Authority

1. Euclides Gonçalves - Decentralization Reforms and the Re-Emergence of Traditional Authority in Mozambique: Study of the Inharrime District
2. Anne Larson - Forests, Indigenous People and Municipal Governments: Exploring Representation [Nicaragua and Guatemala]
3. Roch L. Mongbo - Institutional Traps of Participatory Approaches: Traditional Authority and Natural Resource Management and Decentralisation in Benin
4. Peter Hochet - Institutional Choices and Local Custom in Minyankala, Southeastern Mali

Group IV – Institutional Choice and Recognition in Natural Resource Management: Governing the Commons in a Centralist State

1. Wang Xiaoyi - Central Government Environmental Policies and Failures of Grassland Management: A Study of Inner Mongolia, China
2. Bréhima Kassibo - Democratic Decentralization, Institutional Pluralism, and Accountability in Forest Stock Management: A Study of the Community of Siby, Mali
3. Tomila Lankina - Central State Re-centralization, Karelian Forestry Administration and Community Governance [India]
4. Parakh Hoon - Can the Tail Wag the Dog? Contrasting institutional choices for governing natural resources in Botswana and Zambia

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