Chapter 2. ACTORS, ENTITLEMENTS AND EQUITY IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

2.1   Management actors

People have diverse perceptions of the same environment. A forest can be seen as an aggregate of trees waiting to be felled and sold, a place of rest and leisure, a source of food and firewood, the hiding nest of dangerous animals, the sacred home of water-giving gods, a place providing safe haven from pursuing enemies, a hiding place for insurgents against a government, or the habitat of a rare sub-species of pangolins. These different perceptions correspond to different under-standings of the values, opportunities and risks that the same environment has to offer. As a basic source of livelihood, the forest should be utilised and protected. As a place of leisure, it should be visited in the weekend in the company of friends. As an immobilised capital, it should be exploited. As a dangerous place, it should be avoided or cleared out. As a sacred place, it should be worshipped and respected. As a valuable ecological niche it should be enlisted as protected area as soon as possible….

In a broad sense, everyone on Earth could recognise opportunities and risks in the

whole planetary environment and in the management of *all* natural resources.[1] Via the physical cycles of water, air and energy, the movements of living organisms and people and the expanding global exchanges of goods and information, powerful linkages are established among distant ecosystems and the human and animal populations living therein. The most impressive example may be the enormous consumption of fossil fuels in the industrialised North, which is altering the chemical composition of the atmosphere and influencing the climate all over the globe. As a result, nomadic pastoralists in Niger may find that drier seasons will exacerbate their conflicts with sedentary peasants. Mozambicans may find themselves hit by exceptional flooding. And Maldives islanders may even lose their basic "living ground" because of the melting of Arctic ice. Thus, the residents of Niger, Mozambique and the Maldives can indeed have legitimate concerns about the propensity of North Americans and Europeans for a high-energy consumption lifestyle.

In practice, however, most people and organisations are principally concerned with the status and management of a specific, and usually *local*, natural environment. It may be the case of the territory in which they live and work, the resources that generate their sustenance and income, the land they own, have a right to use or a mandate to care for, or the territories to which they feel historically and culturally tied. And yet, even for local environments, recognising environmental values, opportunities and risks is not a simple matter. Some people may not be informed or aware of phenomena, activities and decisions affecting the territory or resources at stake. Others may lack the time, resources, self-confidence and organisation to articulate their concerns and express them forcefully. In addition, environmental interests may not be neatly defined (exceptions are private property borders, and borders of an area defined in the mandate of an institution), or their definition, while clear and binding to some, may seem hazy to others (such as the three stones put on top of each other to set out the exclosures of the nomadic pastoralists in Iran and Yemen). Commonly, however, borders are recognised in a generic and geographically fuzzy way. For instance, down-stream communities may be broadly interested in soil conservation "upstream", fishermen may be concerned with spawning grounds "all along the coast", and hotel owners may be interested in the preservation of the "landscape" that attracts tourists.

What is more, individuals, groups and institutions do not usually recognise single values, opportunities and risks, but *bundles* of those for the same territory or resources at stake. This may generate all sorts of dilemmas. Local people may be willing to preserve their unspoiled scenery (aesthetic value) *but also* need a new road and the jobs provided by factories (economic opportunity). A conservation organisation may have a mandate to preserve a species habitat (ecological value) *but also* may recognise that, as a consequence, another interesting species may disappear from the territory (ecological risk). The local administration needs tourist revenues (economic value) *but also* knows that the tourists will introduce cultural and health problems in the area (cultural and health risks). The very *recognition* of certain environmental values, opportunities and risks and not others is a cultural phenomenon at the core of a society's world-view and of the body of knowledge, practices and technology that characterises its economy, politics and lifestyle. And it depends on inputs and capabilities that may not be under the control of the people concerned.

The above complexities notwithstanding, we will assume here that for any specif-

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[1] Lovelock, 1979.

ic territory or set of natural resources, some communities, organisations, groups and individuals will recognise some relevant values, opportunities and risks. Such communities, organisations, groups and individuals are the ones who, once properly organised, may effectively express their interests and concerns and become actively involved in management. The awareness of relevant opportunities and risks (*i.e.,* interests and concerns) and some form of organisation to express those *vis-à-vis* others are necessary preconditions for any social action in natural resource management. Murphree (1994) postulates such prerequisites when he refers to the difference between individuals and groups, on the one hand, and "institutional actors" on the other:

"*The concept of actor is a social construction rather than simply a synonym for individual. Nor is an institutional actor a synonym for group. An institutional actor is an entity organised for the interests of some group or set of goals. Groups and individuals are considered within the context of organised institutional arrangements.*"

Thus, according to Murphree, the difference between an institutional actor and a non-specified individual or group is that the institutional actor is *organised* for an interest or purpose. It is in this sense that we will use the term "institutional actor" or "relevant social actor" in this work. In the current literature, another term— stakeholder— is often employed to describe the same concept. We have purposefully chosen not to adopt such term in a prominent way in our analysis of co-management approaches. Although the term "stakeholder" is widely recognised, it is not accepted by all. Some recall that it derives from the times of land grabbing in North America, when ownership titles were distributed to people who would demarcate new lands with stakes. Stakeholders, then, were the individuals who ran with a stake in hand to cover as much land as possible within a given time. As pre-existing rights and concerns of indigenous inhabitants were not respected in those land appropriation processes, the term "stakeholder" carries a negative connotation for some people, especially in non-western cultures.[2]

The very recognition *of certain environmental values, opportunities and risks, and not others, is a cultural phenomenon....*

Another term applied in the literature (especially in French) is the one of "strategic groups" understood as "groups of social actors possessing the same interests with respect to a given issue". This concept is essentially empirical. The strategic groups cannot be defined *a priori*, even though some hypotheses may be made about how certain actors may react and behave with respect to a given issue. In fact, it is often the case that some unforeseen factors— such as a system of social and cultural ties, reciprocities, alliances, some political or personal rivalries— reveal themselves much more

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[2]   Smitu Kothari, personal communication, 1998.

influent than other "objective" conditions in determining motivations and positions *vis-à-vis* NRM decisions.[3] For instance, in a village in Senegal the strategic groups identified *a priori* by the staff of a project included: the youth within a local cooperative; the youth outside of it; the adult population; the local elite; and the outside actors (governmental agencies and NGOs). What was later revealed in practice was that the key strategic groups were, in fact, only the lineage groups that had different access and tenure to specific landholdings. Another strategic group, the one of local women buyers of vegetables, became also apparent as time went by.[4] In contrast, a project among the Qashqai nomads of Iran dealing with rangeland biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods simply asked the local people to identify their own internal structures and subdivisions. They identified nomadic camps, clans and sub-tribes as institutional actors, and certainly not the externally promoted cooperatives— the only local actors recognised by the central government.

Box 2.1   Institutional actor (also "relevant social actor" or "stakeholder")

An institutional actor in a given subject or event is a bearer of specific interests and concerns *organised* to express them and carry them forward.

With reference to the management of natural resources, an "interest" refers to a recognised opportunity with potential origin in the natural resources or influence/ impact on them and a "concern" refers to a recognised risk also with potential origin in the natural resources or influence/ impact on the same.

The term "stakeholder" is at times used in place of "institutional actor". In this volume we have chosen to do so only rarely (*e.g.,* when used by original authors), for reasons explained in the text. We will, however, report here some conceptual definition from recent literature:

"Stakeholder is a term which, over the last few years, has come into common usage by most donor organisations; it was first used in business management theory and has since been widely adopted as a further refinement of the user concept. It is an umbrella term, which covers all the people and organisations who have a stake in, and may be affected by, an activity, a development programme or a situation, or who may have an impact or influence on it. In some situations stakeholders may both "be affected by the intervention and also have an impact on the intervention." (Hobley, 1996)

"… the various institutions, social groups and individuals who possess a direct, significant and specific stake in the protected area will be referred to as its 'stakeholders'." (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996)

"In the context of Bank-supported activities, stakeholders are those affected by the outcome— negatively or positively— or those who can affect the outcome of a proposed intervention." (World Bank, 1996)

Some authors include among "stakeholders" not only organised social actors, but also animals and plants (or wildlife in general) whose survival depends on the resources of a given area (Hobley, 1996, page 96). This approach is not taken here, as those animals and plants would still need some human advocate to foster their interests in co-management processes.

Which social actors are most likely to express interests and concerns in the management of a given territory, area or set of natural resources? Checklist 2.1 lists a typology of possibly relevant social actors, including communities, organisations, groups and individuals. Among the listed actors, only some will be willing and

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[3]   Lavigne Delville, 2000.
[4]   Olivier de Sardan quoted in Lavigne Delville, 2000.

capable of investing their own time and resources, organising themselves, acting to get their interests and concerns socially recognised and taking on some NRM responsibility. Those will effectively become the "institutional actors" in the management of that territory, area or resources.

Checklist 2.1   Categories[5] of social actors possibly relevant in natural resource management

- **Local actors**, including the communities, organisations, groups and individuals who live and work close to the resources, the ones who possess knowledge, capacities and aspirations that are relevant for their management, and the ones who recognise in the area a unique cultural, religious or recreational value. (This is an ample category, including several sub-categories.)

- **Natural resource users**, including local and non-local, direct and indirect, organised and non-organised, actual and potential users, as well as users for subsistence and income purposes.

- **National authorities and agencies** with explicit mandate over the territory or resource sectors (*e.g.*, ministries or departments of forests, freshwater, fisheries, hunting, tourism, agriculture, protected areas and, in some cases, the military).

- **Sub-national administrative authorities** (*e.g.*, district or municipal councils) dealing with natural resources as part of their broader governance and development mandate.

- **Non-governmental organisations and research institutions** (*e.g.*, local, national or international bodies devoted to environment and/ or development objectives) which find the relevant territories and resources at the heart of their professional concerns.

- **Businesses and industries** local, national or international (*e.g.*, tourism operators, water users, international corporations) which may significantly benefit from natural resources in the area.

- **Non-local actors,** national and international, indirectly affected by local environmental management practices (*e.g.,* absentee landlords, down-stream water users, environmental advocates or animal rights groups).

- **Individual professionals** employed in environment and development projects and agencies dealing with the management of natural resources in the area.

Institutional actors usually possess specific capacities (*e.g.*, knowledge, skills) and/ or comparative advantage (*e.g.*, proximity, mandate) for resource management, and are usually willing to invest specific resources (*e.g.*, time, money, and political authority) for it.[6] Among them, traditional groups and organisations (*e.g.*, a council of elders, a fisher folks society, or a peasant association) are particularly valuable. Traditional groups possess a tested structure and representation system and generally enjoy a broad social recognition— what some commentators called *social capital*— to take on an effective role in natural resource management.[7] Table 2.1 shows a list of relevant social actors for a specific National Park in India: eighteen major stakeholders, bearing different interests and concerns! The analysis of the relevant social actors was carried out by the staff of the governmental agency in charge of Park management and provides a telling example of the complexity of stakeholder differentiation.

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[5]   These categories are obviously not exclusive, and some institutional actors may belong to more than one category.
[6]   Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996.
[7]   Ostrom and Ahn, 2001.

Table 2.1 Relevant social actors in Rajaji National Park (India)
(adapted from Rathore, 1997)

Relevant social actors	Main interests/ concerns
Gujjar communities (more than 500 households, total population over 10,000, now semi-permanent residents)	Cattle rearing and marketing of milk (Gujjars depend entirely on park resources)
Ban workers (18 villages south of Dhaulkhand; prior to 1991, 6,707 households were allowed Bhabbar grass collection)	Bhabbar grass extraction from the park (average income: Rs700-800 per month)
Other dwellers in the surroundings of the Park (in all 57 villages, including the Ban workers)	Fuelwood, fodder collection, cattle grazing, water source for agriculture, theft for subsistence
Taungya villages (four in number, 250 Taungya workers)	Same as above
Tehri Dam oustees (occupy 48.56 hectares, more than ten houses constructed)	Maintaining their camps inside the park, along the elephants' movement route
Army ammunition dump	Defence requirements
Hydle Power Department	Irrigation in the command area
Railways and Road transport department	Providing surface transport facilities
District Administration in Hardwar/ Dehradun/ Pauri Garhwal	Space for headquarters construction on the park periphery, socio-economic uplifting of people dependent on park resources
Rajaji Park Management (8 Rangers, 15 Deputy Rangers, 22 Foresters, 66 Forest Guards and 49 Wildlife Guards)	Wildlife Conservation in Rajaji
Social Forestry Division, Hardwar (buffer zone east of Rajaji)	Productivity of the buffer forests and forest conservation
Forest Division in Shiwalik and Dehradun	Same as above
Township of Hardwar	Dependable supply of fuelwood and medicinal plants
NGOs	Representing and defending the interests of local people
Wildlife Institute of India.	Preserving Rajaji as a learning laboratory for researchers, faculty and trainee officers
Zila Parishad and Panchayats	Development of viable local institutions
Tourism Department	Promotion of tourism in Rajaji and elsewhere
State Forest Department and Ministry of Forest & Environment	Biodiversity conservation through the Protected Area concept
Doon Valley Integrated Watershed Management Project	Ecological restoration in Doon Valley

Indigenous and local communities

Indigenous peoples and local communities— including mobile communities (see Box 2.2)— have a central and pre-eminent role to play in natural resource management. Typically, they have long associations with nature and a deep understanding of it. Often they have made significant contributions to the maintenance of many of the earth's most fragile ecosystems, through their traditional sustainable resource use practices and culture-based respect for nature[8]. This argument has recently been forcefully brought to the fore,[9] countering years of theoretical and practical neglect of the rights, interests and capacities of local people *vis-à-vis* "scientific" management practices, agency decisions and national development schemes. Nonetheless, indigenous and local communities are not yet recognised as full partners in mainstream environment or development initiatives. In the best of cases, only their *participation* in activities identified by outside experts is recommended and has become an issue to tackle.

Indigenous peoples and local communities are social units that possess a strong, usually historical, relationship with a given territory and natural resources and are involved in the different but related aspects of local livelihoods.

Box 2.2 **Indigenous peoples and mobile indigenous peoples**
(adapted from ILO, 1989; and Dana Declaration, 2002)

According to the ILO Convention no.169 (1989) indigenous peoples include:

- tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural, and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations;

- peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.

According to the same Convention, self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of the Convention apply. Among the criteria used by indigenous peoples to identify themselves as such are: their own historical continuity with pre-colonial societies, the close relationship with the land and natural resources of their own territory, their peculiar socio-political system, their own language, culture, values and beliefs. In general, they do not belong to the dominant sectors of a national society, they see themselves as different from it and prefer to relate with the international networks of indigenous peoples.

The term mobile peoples (*i.e.,* pastoralists, hunter-gatherer, sea nomads, shifting agriculturalists and other peoples with dynamic regular changing patterns of land and resource use) encompasses a subset of indigenous peoples whose livelihoods depend on extensive common property use of natural resources and whose mobility is both a management strategy for dealing with sustainable use and conservation and a distinctive source of cultural identity.

Indigenous peoples and local communities are social units that possess a strong, usually historical, relationship with a given territory and natural resources and are involved in the different but related aspects of local livelihoods. As this definition can apply to a range of sizes (*e.g.,* is a city a community? Is the sum of all people

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[8]   Beltr€n, 2000.
[9]   See, for instance: Durning, 1989; Agarwal and Narain, 1989; West and Brechin, 1991; Western and Wright, 1994; Pye-Smith and Borrini-Feyerabend, 1994; Stevens, 1997; Ghimire and Pimbert, 1997; Kothari *et al.,*1998; Pimbert and Pretty, 1998; Posey, 1999; Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.,* 2004 (in press); and, with specific regard to mobile indigenous communities: Scoones, 1994; Niamir-Fuller, 1999; Chatty and Colchester, 2002; and Farvar, 2003.

inhabiting a given watershed a community?), one could further specify the term to describe people likely to have "face-to-face" encounters and/ or direct influences in their daily life. In this sense, a rural village, a tribal group moving together in a transhumance path or the inhabitants of an urban quarter can be considered a "community", but not all the inhabitants of a district or town. A community usually possesses some form of *social organisation*— often based on the need for the management of a particular resource or set of resources— and its members share in varying degrees political, economic, social and cultural characteristics (in particular language, behavioural norms, values, knowledge, skills and technologies) as well as ethnic and health features. It is not usual, however, for communities to be recognised as micro-political bodies with administrative capacity.

[Indigenous peoples and local] communities constitute important cultural units… the self-awareness, pride, sense of common identity and solidarity of their members often represent the last defense against massive socio-cultural change and incorporation by outside models and socioeconomic forces.

Important processes in community life regard *social integration* (cooperation to address common needs) and *cultural continuity*. Mechanisms that promote integration in communities include patterns of *reciprocity* (like exchanges in labour, pooling resources, births, marriages and deaths, or economic trade) and *redistribution* (sharing resource or economic surpluses among individuals or households). Mechanisms that promote continuity are the *acculturation* of children in society and a variety of *local organisations* with specific tasks, responsibilities and rules of functioning. Many local communities thus constitute important cultural units, and the self-awareness, pride, sense of common identity and solidarity of their members often represent the last defence against massive socio-cultural change and incorporation by outside models and socio-economic forces.

In the sense just described, a local community can indeed be regarded as *one* actor for a variety of decisions concerning the territory and natural resources of its interest. And yet, for other decisions the communities may include a variety of different opinions and be willing to have them all expressed. As a matter of fact, communities are neither perfectly homogeneous bodies nor are they culturally static. On the contrary, they continuously grapple with *cultural change* and *social conflict* (for instance clashing of needs and wants among people belonging to different families or ethnic sub-groups). Thus communities need to continuously manage a balance between the opposite forces of integration and conflict, continuity and change. Their capacity to deal with contrasting socio-cultural phenomena as well as their capacity to gain a livelihood from a given environment provides us with a measure of their capacity to adapt and their social resilience.

No community can be regarded as homogeneous regarding all interests and concerns on the management of the local environment and resources. On the contrary, most of them, including traditional rural communities, are highly internally differentiated. Among the factors at the roots of different interests and concerns in environmental management within the same community are basic characteristics such as clan, ethnic group, gender, age, caste, social class, economic status, education, skills and profession. Ownership of land or other resources is a discriminatory factor but other factors are also important. These include place of residence, existence of cash savings in the household (or tent-hold), linkage to a particular party or religious group, access to means and sources of external information (*e.g.,* technical or bureaucratic), social standing, physical ability, intra-household

division of tasks, household surplus or scarcity of labour, presence of salaried people in the household, and so on.

One of the important innovations of the co-management approach is that it spotlights different interests and concerns not only between communities and other actors in society but within local communities as well. In this sense, one may speak of co-management when a community joins in management with external actors, but also in entirely community-based and community-run initiatives, as long as different interests and concerns within the community are recognised and represented.

Table 2.2 provides a typology of interest groups within a local community *vis-à-vis* the management of a regional park in Liguria (Italy). The expressed interests and concerns, although only schematically reported, illustrate the spectrum of interests and concerns that can exist within a small and relatively homogeneous local community. Noticeably, the information provided in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 is available because someone took the initiative to organise a meeting to discuss the management of the local park. The individuals who participated in the meeting introduced themselves as members of a given category (mostly related to resource ownership and profession) and spoke in the name of their categories. The spectrum of community interests and concerns would likely look different if someone else would have called the meeting and/ or different social groups (for instance the village elders or an association of women) would have participated and expressed their interests and concerns. It is important to keep this in mind, as often the "interest groups" get organised on the basis of an external impulse or occasion.

...one may speak of co-management [even for] entirely community-based and community-run initiatives, as long as different interests and concerns within the community are recognised and represented.

Table 2.2 Local stakeholders in Aveto Regional Park (Italy) (adapted from Triantafyllidis, 1996)	
Individuals, groups and organisations within the "local community"	*Key interests/ concerns*
Local authorities	Avoiding jurisdiction conflicts
Aveto Regional Park Committee	Respect of law; sound ecological management
Farmers	Cropping, breeding & forest harvesting
Cooperatives	Fair income for members
Hunters	Good hunting and fishing grounds available
Landowners	Maintaining property rights
Holders of Common Properties *("beni frazionali")*	Maintaining property rights, harvesting and grazing included
Restaurants, hotels and shop owners	Enhancing commerce and tourism
Pro Loco (local association to promote tourism)	Enhancing tourist flow and revenues; social animation
Students (primary & secondary school)	Leisure and future involvement (jobs?)

Among the many categories of potentially different interests in a local community, two may be relevant nearly everywhere: age groups and gender groups. As such, they deserve particular attention. Younger people represent the future and, at least on that account, are supposed to have the most compelling interest in maintaining their environment viable and productive. There are, in fact, telling examples of effective involvement of adolescents and children in natural resource management.[10] But not all youngsters can be expected to be sensitive to environmental values or good managers of natural resources. In great part this is due to modern school systems, which, following the colonial legacy, often succeeded, over and above everything else, in alienating the young from their ancestral traditions and culture. Often, indeed, the "stakes of future generations" are most forcefully represented by the traditional elders of a community. In Yemen, the traditional systems of land and water management that assured for millennia the prosperity of the country are now rapidly falling in disarray. Most youth and adult men leave the rural villages in search of easy and lucrative jobs in the cities. The ones left behind to care for the land and preserve the ancient management systems, when they still succeed in doing so, are only the elderly and the women. This is the case in many so called developing societies.

With the possible exception of usually temporary living and working arrangements (*e.g.,* labour camps, or villages abandoned by migrant workers), human societies always include men and women, and their interests in natural resources and roles in managing them are usually different. For instance, a survey of forest product uses was carried out in villages surrounding Mount Elgon National Park, in Uganda.[11] It was found that women were mostly interested in being able to gather firewood, vegetables, mushrooms, medicinal plants and bamboo shoots from the park's territory, while the men were keener on grazing permissions, and on collecting less frequently extracted resources, such as materials for house construction and maintenance. In addition, the men wished to gather bamboo shoots for sale, rather than for household consumption, as stated by the women.

For the communities living in the surroundings of Mount Elgon decisions that are pleasing or acceptable to the men may then be detrimental or unacceptable to the women, and vice-versa. A programme to protect wildlife may bring revenue to men (such as jobs as park guards) but more abundant wildlife may be only a cost to women, because of crop damage or increased danger in daily tasks. Forest protection may favour the commercial farmers who use water to irrigate their fields, but disfavour the women and children who have to walk much further to find fodder, poles or firewood. If only men or only women are allowed to negotiate resource management agreements for the whole community, the other gender group may find its interests poorly represented, if not outright neglected. It may thus be inequitable and unwise to accept the voice of one gender group as representing a whole community: both men and women should organise and participate in management.

Madhu Sarin, a most effective advocate of gender consideration in stakeholder analysis,[12] adds a further dimension to this point, and warns against generalisations and gender stereotypes. She stresses *combinations of social characteristics* (*e.g.,* gender and caste, gender and socio-economic class) as main determinants of interests and concerns in resource management, and she recommends remaining open to surprises:

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[10]   Hart, 1997.

[11]   Scott, 1994.

[12]   Sarin, 1996; Sarin and SARTHI, 1996.

"...forest-related roles and responsibilities [of] women and men in Haryana's Shiwalik belt… vary dramatically within and between villages in terms of occupational, caste, economic and cultural characteristics.... Jat women do not go to the forest at all. While some Gujjar village women collect fodder from forest, in the majority of villages they do not do so. [Among the Banjaras] men harvest the grass from the forest [but] processing into ropes is done by women. In Bar Godam, only the men collect bamboo from the forest while in another Banjhida village, Kalka… the collection of bamboo from the forest was done by the women. The Lavana women of main Nada villages collect heavy headloads of both grass and tree leaf fodder for several months of the year…. [But] the stereotyped image of rural women carrying heavy head loads of firewood is extremely rare in Haryana's Shiwalik belt. Practically none of the women in the area's diverse communities are responsible for domestic firewood collection. Occasionally they do pick fallen twigs and branches while collecting fodder, but firewood collection in the belt is essentially a male task, done by either male children, adults or elders."

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Combinations of social characteristics (e.g., *gender and caste, gender and socio-economic class) are main determinants of interests and concerns in resource management....*

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2.2   Entitlements to manage natural resources

We have seen that the interests and concerns of different social actors in natural resource management can originate from a variety of roots. Some may live in close geographic proximity to the resources, or their ancestors may have been associated with them from times immemorial. Others may own the resources, either legally or by custom, or may have acquired some use rights on them. Some organisations may have been assigned a management mandate by the government. Some households may be totally dependent on natural resources for livelihood or income. And some individuals or groups may simply possess unique knowledge and skills applicable to the local environment. Such different interests and concerns, which can well coexist for the same territory or body of resources, may compel different social actors towards contrasting management options. Whose opinions should count? Who should decide?

The above questions are fundamental in co-management processes, and no single answers are appropriate or possible. Always, however, it is advisable to understand the "playing field" as thoroughly as possible. This involves an analysis of the relevant social actors (organised and non-organised), their mutual relationships, the context in which they live, their management claims and the justifications— foundations, motivations, historical roots— they put forth for them. Who are the social actors willing and organised to take part in management (the institutional actors)? What are their claims? How do they justify those claims? Can their different justifications be compared and weighted *vis-à-vis* one another?

In the analysis mentioned above— at times referred to as "stakeholder analysis"

in current literature— we can utilise the concept of "entitlement" to great advantage. We understand here as an entitlement to manage a territory or set of natural resources a socially recognised (legitimate) claim to participate in one or several of its relevant management activities. Entitlements do not usually refer to exclusive or extreme powers (all or nothing). Rather, they cover some specific activities, such as using part or all of those resources, deriving indirect benefits from them, taking responsibilities on related tasks or speaking up and negotiating on management decisions. For instance, an entitlement to manage a given territory could be a broadly recognised claim to speak up and negotiate with others in relevant decision-making processes. An entitlement to manage firewood and fodder from the local forest may be recognised as the right of a household to gather enough dry and green material to warm their home, cook and feed their animals. Gathering more than that, for instance gathering firewood for the market, would be seen as going beyond their entitlement, and would have to be negotiated.

In the working definition used in this volume, an entitlement does not need to be legally codified, and it is more a statement of facts ("what is") than a statement of norms ("what should be"). It can in effect be understood as the end result of a combination of determinants including both accepted normative values (see Checklist 2.2) and differentials of power (see Checklist 2.3). As such, it is a dynamic social construct that finds its meaning only within the social context that created it.

Different social actors are not all equally entitled to manage resources. On the contrary, some have most of the relevant decisions at their fingertips and others have almost none. In general, a mix of visible and hidden factors combines to generate a given distribution of the benefits and costs of management. In some cases, an open debate can take place on those matters and an adjustment of the respective positions and influences can be agreed upon. In others, poorly recognised social actors struggle for years to enhance their own measure of control over natural resources. Still in others, even attempting to put forth some interests and concerns may be a dangerous activity. A re-arrangement of the entitlements of different social actors can even be promoted and supported from outside the relevant context (*e.g.,* by some conservation and development initiatives), but it is only within the local context that a new balance of entitlements must be achieved and sanctioned.

Box 2.3	Entitlements in natural resource management

An **entitlement** to manage a territory or set of natural resources is **a socially recognised claim** to participate in one or several management activities, such as planning, advising, taking decisions, implementing plans, appropriating benefits (including using resources), assuming responsibilities, monitoring and evaluating results, etc.

An entitlement is a formal or informal **title to do**, a dynamic social construct that finds its full meaning only within the social context that created it. Sometimes it is codified by the legal system, but often it is not. It reflects facts ("what is") rather than norms only ("what should be"). It usually results from a combination of social determinants that include both accepted normative values and differentials of power. And it is an evolving social phenomenon, more akin to a process than to a fixed state of affairs.

The concept of entitlement owes a lot to the seminal work of Amartya Sen, for whom[13] *"the word entitlement does not refer to people's rights in a normative sense— what people should have— but to the range of possibilities that people can have."* Thus, entitlements are "*the set of alternative commodity bundles that a person can command in society using the totality of rights and opportunities that he or she faces… based on processes such as production, own labour, trade, inheritance or transfer.*" In the words of Leach *et al.* (1997): "*An extended entitlement approach sees entitlements as the outcome of negotiations among social actors, involving power relationships and debates over meaning rather than simply the result of fixed moral rules encoded in law.*"

Leach *et al.* (1997) provide a further analysis of the concept: "*Environmental entitlements are the alternative sets of utilities derived from environmental goods and services over which social actors have legitimate, effective command and which are instruments in achieving well being.*" Such entitlements "*…enhance peoples' capabilities, which are what people can do or be with their entitlements. For example, command over fuel resources derived from rights over trees gives warmth or the ability to cook, and so contributes to well being.*" Also: "*Entitlements are what social actors actually get in practice…. By "legitimate" we refer not only to command sanctioned by a statutory system but also to command sanctioned by customary rights of access, use or control or other social norm.*"

In the words of de Graay Fortman (1997): "*Entitlement is the possibility to make legitimate claims, i.e., claims based on rights. It is a function of both law and power. Power means opportunity, actual command. Law legitimises and hence protects in case of dispute…. People continue to try to improve their entitlement positions. Hence, more than a given state of affairs, entitlement is… a process in society.*"

As entitlements are social constructs, we can attempt to understand their social roots and justifications. To begin with, there exist a variety of grounds for entitlements recognised as valid and legitimate on the basis of accepted normative values in different societies (see Checklist 2.2). For any given society, such validity and legitimacy may be acknowledged in a more or less explicit way. For instance, they could refer to a body of written law, but also to customary law or to the basic tenets of social life. The latter may include the right to life and the other basic human rights of the United Nations (UN) Charter but also human solidarity, democracy, social equity, sustainability of the environment, or obedience to a cultural or religious credo. Some specific principles may be upheld by the large majority of a society, and thus become a sort of social norm. These may include "respect of law and order", pragmatism, adherence to "scientific principles", liberalism, respect of free market and private property, basic fair play, affirmative action, patriotism, effectiveness and efficiency in management, and so on.

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[13] Quotes of A. Sen (1984) from Leach *et al.*, 1997.

Checklist 2.2   **The roots of entitlements:**
examples of grounds to claim a "title" to manage natural resources
(adapted from Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996)

● legally recognised rights to land or resources (*e.g.,* property rights, usufruct rights)

● customarily recognised rights to land or resources (*e.g.,* use rights, communal property, ancestral domains of indigenous peoples)

● specific mandate by the state (*e.g.,* statutory obligation of a given agency or governmental body)

● proximity to the resources (*e.g.,* the residents of the local community)

● direct dependence for subsistence and survival (*e.g.,* food, medicine, communication)

● direct dependence for basic economic resources

● historical, cultural and spiritual relations with the natural resources at stake (*e.g.,* in the case of indigenous peoples)

● continuity of relationship (*e.g.,* local communities and long-time resource users *versus* recently arrived immigrants, tourists, hunters from other areas)

● social equity (fairness) in access to resources and distribution of benefits from their use;

● number of people bringing forth the same interests and concerns

● unique knowledge and skills for the management of the resources at stake

● losses and damage incurred in the management process

● degree of commitment, effort and resources invested in natural resource management

● actual or potential impact of the activities of the social actor on the resource base

● general recognition of the value of the perspective/ position (*e.g.,* "scientific validation", "fitting the local knowledge system", aiming at "sustainable use", following the "precautionary principle", etc.)

● compatibility with the country's policies and body of law (*e.g.,* a Freedom of Information Act, the special rights of indigenous peoples)

● compatibility with international conventions and agreements (*e.g.,* the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Convention, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification).

In all, different "grounds", differently acknowledged and respected by different cultures, can be upheld and used by social actors as a *justification* for their claims to participate in managing natural resources. For instance, an indigenous community may claim a role in managing a territory within a state-controlled protected

area on the basis of their customary rights. A local business may claim a right to use certain resources as in so doing it is providing jobs for local people. A governmental agency may impose some rule of access to a territory for the sake of national security. But this is not the whole story.

In many societies, the emergence of specific environmental entitlements has little to do with an explicit social consensus on claims and values, and more to do with the exercise of coercive physical power, power of position, economic power, household and group power, etc. (see Checklist 2.3). As some have put it:[14] "The history of environmental management systems shows that those are more a reflection of dominant socio-economic thinking than of the level of ecosystem knowledge." The social actors who can exercise various types of power, do so to overcome, distort or impose upon more legitimate claims. At times, however, one form or another of power is also utilised to back up a socially legitimate claim. For instance, coercive power may be necessary to prevent some people from hunting wildlife, even though the hunting ban may be fully inscribed in a country's environmental legislation. Or personal charismatic power may be necessary to advance the claims of an ethnic minority demanding a more equitable distribution of water rights within a community.

Checklist 2.3   Forms of power that shape and affect environmental entitlements
(adapted from Lewis, 1997)

● power of position (having authority, being in a position to make or influence decisions)

● power of knowledge (having information unavailable to others)

● personal power (being personally forceful, persuasive)

● household power (being from a well-connected family)

● group power (being a member of an ethnic, religious or other type of group that has a dominant social position or, for example, being male in male-dominated society)

● economic power (commanding financial and other economic resources in overwhelming amount with respect to the resources of others)

● political power (having a powerful supportive constituency or access to political leadership)

● legal power (having strong expert legal council, or privileged access to courts)

● coercive physical power (having police or military backing or weaponry)

Another important kind of power— the power of passive non-compliance, subtle sabotage, evasion and deception— has been the route of escape for many of the disenfranchised (dis-entitled) throughout history.[15] At times, this has allowed them to survive and gather more environmental benefits than the established system of power would have allowed (the environmental impact of this type of behaviour is still in need of thorough investigation).

Whether today it is advisable for many under-privileged to continue on the route

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[14]   Weber and Bailly, 1993. On this, see also the illuminating article by Ram€rez (2001).
[15]   Scott, 1985.

of passive non-compliance or attempt "developing their own entitlements" in a transparent and open struggle is still a matter of debate. In some societies characterised by large power disparities, the recent development of democratic systems and the state of law allowed a number of social movements, unions, consumer and minority groups to adopt a transparent and direct strategy of confrontation, sometimes even in a overtly legal manner. For example, a recent struggle in India, where the legal system has always favoured the literate gentry, led to the recognition by the Supreme Court of the right of a community elder to provide oral testimony in matters of customary law. Other societies, however, cannot yet provide the conditions that would make a transparent and direct debate safer and more convenient than a hidden search for private advantages. In fact, even in relation to the above example, the experience of many Indian community activists working on land rights issues shows they are constantly exposed to physical danger and repression.[16] This is by no mean an isolated case, as activists attempting to improve the NRM conditions of their communities are routinely singled out for violent repression[17] and non infrequently murdered.[18] This represents a most serious obstacle to the promotion and spreading of partnerships in natural resource management.[19]

2.3   Equity in managing natural resources

In the context of multiple social actors with conflicting interests and concerns or competing entitlements on the same territory or set of natural resources, is there a way (or are there many ways) of pursuing *equitable* management arrangements? One fairly obvious first consideration brings to the fore the essential distinction between equity and equality. Certainly not all social actors deserve the same entitlements to natural resources. We are far from the simple democratic rule of "one person, one vote", as the interests and concerns of different social actors with respect to the same resources can be enormously different in both quantity and quality. But *who* deserves a privileged position? Who should be considered a "primary stakeholder", and thus a rightful decision-maker *versus* an associate, an advisor, or simply someone to be kept informed about the decisions of others?

For some authors, one or more roots or grounds for environmental entitlements appear much more fundamental than others. Marshall Murphree, for instance, stresses that there is one major and most important distinctive characteristic among social actors with a claim on natural resources, and this is the distinction between local and non-local actors:[20]

"The danger is that this perspective [stakeholder analysis] can easily transform interests into a conceptual collective proprietorship by a vast and amorphous

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16   Prabhu Pradip, personal communication, 2002.
17   One example among many is recounted in Varela, 2003.
18   Again, one example among many is illustrated in Henderson, 2000.
19   Borrini-Feyerabend, 1997.
20   Murphree, 1994.

circle of stakeholders. Those stakeholders who have invested most in professional expertise and monetary capital form the board of directors. But this accounting procedure is false. Communities' investment in their environments— their land, their resources, their labour, their local environmental knowledge, their managerial presence, and their stake in the future… is far higher than that of all external actors put together…. Community interests, responsibility and authority should be paramount."

Consequently, Murphree organises social actors into three categories (Table 2.3), according to their range of action and institutional affiliation, clearly distinguishing between *local* and non-local institutional actors (governmental and non-governmental) and stressing that the former should have a pre-eminent position in management decisions.

Table 2.3 **Categories of institutional actors** (from Murphree, 1994)	
Community institutional actors	"Responsive to local relational dynamics, accountable to collective community interests, and able to articulate views and positions effectively with external institutional actors."
Government institutional actors	"State institutional actors derive much of their strength from their status as "gatekeepers": coercively backed authorities that determine what communities can and cannot do. They also derive strength from their ability to control the flow of fiscal and other resources from the centre to the periphery. Rarely do flows to communities offset what has been extracted from them. Finally, state agencies act as gatekeepers for donor grants and aid projects."
Non-Governmental institutional actors	"…focus on specific issues or problems. NGOs arise in response to perceived needs and their *raison d'être* falls away when the need (or the perception of it) changes. They can mobilise financial and personal resources comparatively quickly and efficiently. They have the money, personnel, and rapid-response capacity for programmes and projects, while national governments claim sovereignty and gate-keeping authority."

The distinction between local and non-local actors is not the only one possible. Elinor Ostrom offers another demarcation criterion between resource "appropriators" and resource "providers". The appropriators are the ones who simply harvest or pull out resource units. The providers are instead engaged in the process of creating, maintaining, or restoring a resource. Fishermen are usually appropriators but become engaged in provision when they change the structure of the seabed in order to improve the habitat for nesting. Irrigators are engaged in provision when they construct or maintain a canal. Many self-governed systems of common property resources *provide* their own rules as a result of extensive discussion, bargaining, and negotiation over what these rules should be, and only those rules ensure the long-term sustainability of the resource.[21] Obviously, the providers have stronger grounds to claim resource entitlements than pure appropriators do.[22]

… distinguishing between resource appropriators and resource providers…

A similar but not identical distinction is made by Gorman (1995) between primary and secondary users of coastal resources in Tanga (Tanzania). In Table 2.4,

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[21] Elinor Ostrom, personal communication, 1998. See also Ostrom and Walker, 1997.
[22] For a given set of natural resources, providers and appropriators can mix, coincide or remain neatly separate.

primary users are defined as the ones who directly depend on the resources for their livelihood, either in situ or by harvesting. The secondary users are the ones whose use of a particular resource follows after the direct harvesting or *in situ* uses. The former would be "more entitled" than the latter in resource management.

Table 2.4	Users of coastal resources in Tanga (Tanzania) (adapted from Gorman, 1995)	
Resource	**Primary users**	**Secondary users**
Ocean ecosystem/ seawater	Seaweed farmers, salt boilers, solar salt producers, sea transport workers	Exporters & users of sea transport; tourism operators
Coral reefs	Lime collectors/ burners, house builders, tourism operators, trophy collectors	Builders (cement, limestone)
Fisheries	Fishermen— hand lines, traps, nets (seine & dragnets), dynamite, divers, boat owning fishermen "visiting" fishermen, trawlers Fisherwomen— ach seining, octopus & mollusc collectors, tourism operators (game fishing)	Men and women fish traders, fish processors (fryers, driers, and smokers), and fish dealers for inland market and for export, tourism operators.
Beaches	Fishermen, fisherwomen, households (sanitation needs), tourism operators	Traders, processors
Mangroves	Pole cutters, fishermen, salt boilers, solar salt producers, lime burners, boat builders, house builders, traditional healers, households engaged in crab & other fisheries, mariculture.	Mangrove pole traders, saw millers.
Bare Saline areas	Solar salt producers, brine wells	Salt traders
Rivers	Households, sisal estates, coconut plantations, transport, industries	
Ground Water	Households, farmers, sisal estates, industries.	
Coastal forests & woodlands	Households of salt boilers, lime burners, timber cutters, charcoal makers, boat builders, traditional healers, honey gatherers, hunters	Saw millers, transporters of fuel wood, fish processors
Wildlife	Hunters, tourism operators, trophy collectors, safari companies	

Finally, there is also a school of analysis that stresses not only an attribute of relevant social actors ("local", "producer", "primary user") but singles out outright one of them— the indigenous peoples and local traditional communities— as being in all cases the primary and most important of them all. For Farvar (1989) the most important characteristic of local communities is that they have evolved with the natural resources, and have developed rich and detailed management systems that have stood the test of time. A variety of *intruders* in the community space (colonial powers and other foreign invaders, the national state and government agencies, missionaries of various denominations, traders and business, national and international corporations, donors and developers of all venues) clamour for attention and pretend to be considered rightful stakeholders. The solutions to the local problems imported by these outsiders have generally not improved the management systems devised by local communities and have at times even destroyed whatever existed and replaced it with tragically ineffective open access regimes. The local communities may or may not wish to accept the claims and/ or enter into partnership relationships with external actors in a variety of syncretic natural resource management systems adapted to the new environmental, social and economic conditions (see Chapter 1). The local communities, however, should always maintain a position of predominance and control *vis-à-vis* others.
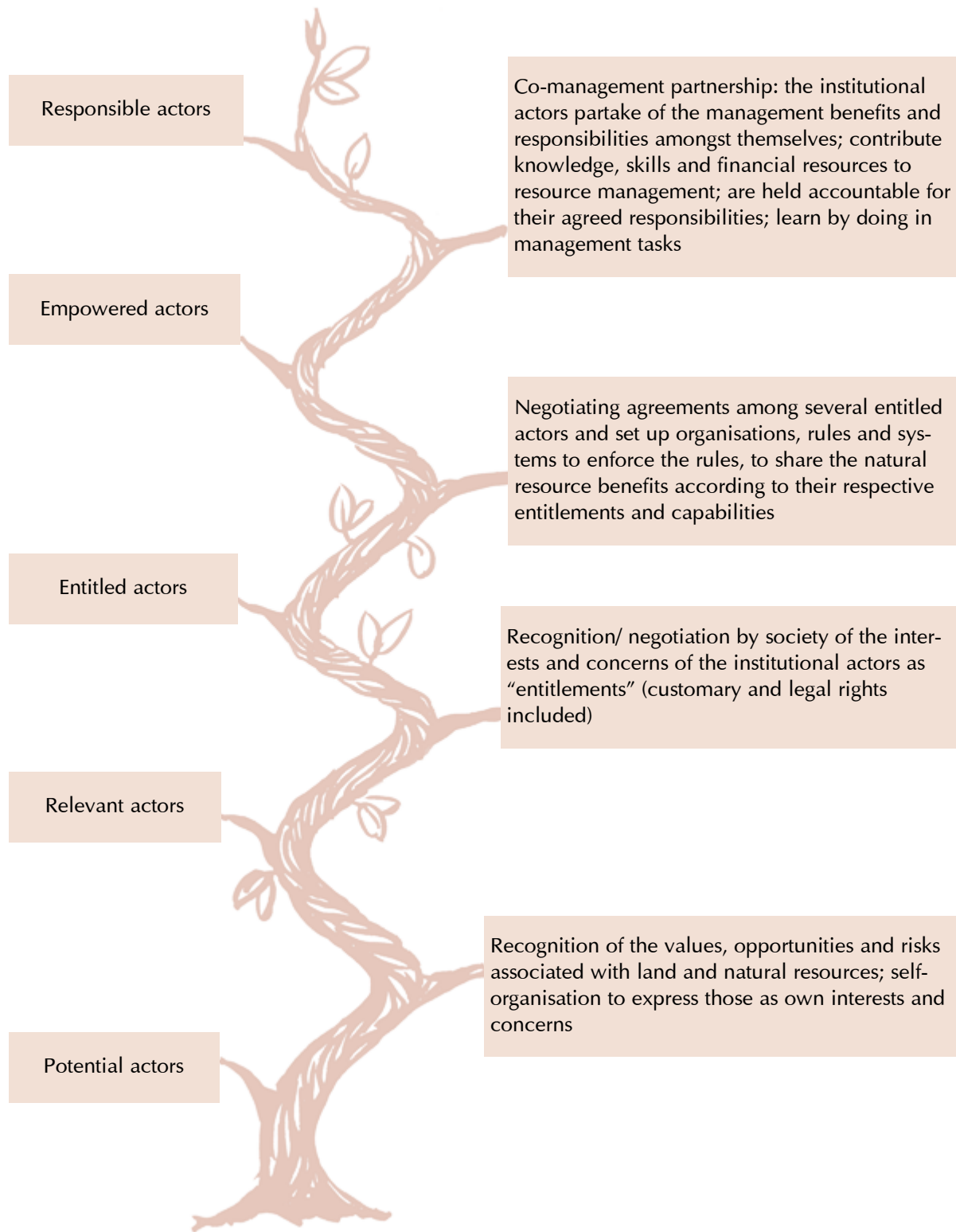
We may agree with Murphree, Ostrom, Gorman or Farvar on a crucial distinction among key relevant social actors on the basis of locality, productive efforts, dependency for livelihood or belonging to an age-old resident or mobile community. We may pick an entirely different criterion, whether or not listed among the ones in Checklist 2.2. Or we may remark that many important criteria— such as locality, productive efforts or dependency for livelihood— tend to converge on the same social actors. In a typical situation, a complex patchwork of claims (often several claims for each relevant actor) interplay with important power differentials within a context of relatively limited opportunities and resources. In all cases, having appreciated a plurality of relevant actors and their related bundles of entitlements and claims— we can ask ourselves a crucial question: in a given, specific and usually complex context, what does "striving for equity" mean? How could the system be rendered the fairest possible? The following statements offer some initial reflections:

● Striving for equity in natural resource management means helping the under-privileged to "develop their own entitlements"[23].

● Striving for equity in natural resource management means recognising entitlements rooted in valid and legitimate grounds (as defined by the relevant society) rather than entitlements rooted in the exercise of one or the other form of power.

● Striving for equity in natural resource management means promoting a fair negotiation of functions, benefits and responsibilities among entitled social actors.

To explore the practical implications of the above we may examine a generic (and by necessity fairly idealised) process by which social actors empower themselves as entitled and responsible resource managers (see Figure 2.1). At every step of that process we will ask ourselves what concrete conditions and inputs may be necessary to enhance equity. (Figure 2.1 is indeed an "idealised" sketch, as real life processes are generally more chaotic, with steps back and forth in place of a linear and smooth progression.)

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[23] This point is stressed by Vithal Rajan (personal communication, 1997).

Figure 2.1 Towards social actors empowered and responsible in natural resource management— a schematic view

Responsible actors

Co-management partnership: the institutional actors partake of the management benefits and responsibilities amongst themselves; contribute knowledge, skills and financial resources to resource management; are held accountable for their agreed responsibilities; learn by doing in management tasks

Empowered actors

Negotiating agreements among several entitled actors and set up organisations, rules and systems to enforce the rules, to share the natural resource benefits according to their respective entitlements and capabilities

Entitled actors

Recognition/ negotiation by society of the interests and concerns of the institutional actors as "entitlements" (customary and legal rights included)

Relevant actors

Recognition of the values, opportunities and risks associated with land and natural resources; self-organisation to express those as own interests and concerns

Potential actors

We propose that the first step in the process is for social actors to *recognise some specific opportunities and risks* in a relevant territory or set of natural resources. Opportunities may include all kinds of feasible or profitable utilisation of natural resources, ranging from shifting cultivation over a forested region to indigenous nomadic pastoralism in rangelands; from harvesting and channelling water for irrigation to covering the land with cement to enlarge a landing strip; from gathering medicinal plants and other natural products to pasturing animals in rangelands, and from recreation by spending a few days in wilderness to setting up a habitat preservation area. Risks may include all kinds of damages that may come from the environment— from contracting malaria in the surroundings of a tropical wetland to having agricultural plots destroyed by flooding; from losing a harvest because of pests to being exposed to attacks by wild animals in the surrounding of a protected area. Risks may also include all sorts of negative impacts the environment may suffer as a result of human activities.

Many environmental opportunities and risks are well know by people and acted upon on a daily basis. Others, however, are not known at all, possibly because of lack of specific information or awareness of conditions and consequences. A second equity concern is thus about assuring that the *relevant information is available* to everyone potentially concerned. If some social actors are not sufficiently informed and aware about the resource management issues, there is little they can contribute or do about them.

Once individuals, groups and organisations recognise for themselves some relevant environmental opportunities and risks, they need to *articulate and express* those as their own interests and concerns. Thus, a head of household in rural Burkina Faso planning to open up new land to agriculture will express his intention to the local *Chef de Terre*, and ask for the customary permission. An environment NGO in the United States of America (USA) will call for a meeting of its members, discuss the priority issues among a number of potential topics, and then begin a letter campaign, organise a demonstration, lobby politicians, or do whatever else is appropriate to be heard and obtain results. A national environmental protection agency will set up an investigation on a topic of concern and then develop, publicise and enforce rules on the matter on the basis of the obtained results. A Council of Elders in a nomadic pastoral community in Iran will meet to assess the carrying capacity of their summering and wintering grounds before the season of migration and to take decisions on migratory routes for their flocks. As we have already argued, communities, organisations and individuals become "institutional actors" by expressing their interests and concerns and organising for action. The latter point is particularly important, as social actors may be powerless simply because they are not sufficiently or effectively organised.

In the above, equity would require that social actors are free to express their views and opinions, as well as free to gather and organise to further their views and interests. Both of these requirements are far from trivial in many countries today. In fact, assembling and organising— a fundamental human right in the UN Charter— can still be treated as a crime. When organising is politically feasible, it may still be difficult because of legal constraints (such as complex procedures, or simple lack of a legally-recognised status for communities and local associations of resource users). Finally, the process of organising may be challenging because of a more prosaic but no less impeding lack of time, financial resources or human skills.

Depending on the context in which the interests and concerns need to be heard, social actors may require more or less extensive preparatory work before being able to effectively convey their claims. Sometimes this includes establishing one's own legal identity (as an accepted association or organisation gathering a constituency that shares some basic NRM interests and concerns, and is willing to act (see Box 2.4). Nearly always, however, this involves discussions and agreements on priorities, objectives and strategy. It may include establishing a representation system (see Box 2.5), joining an existing organisation or even establishing a new one (with membership rules, etc.).

Box 2.4   **Social groups organised to manage forests in India**
             (adapted from Sarin, 1996)

Among the more complex aspects of the forest protection process is the definition through inter-group negotiations of the "social units of organisation" and of the specific boundaries of the forest area to protect. Due to the scattered settlement pattern of tribal and semi-tribal communities, most villages near the forests do not have compact settlements. Instead, they consist of individual houses scattered next to agricultural landholdings. Most villages have a number of *falias* (hamlets) named after the particular sub-caste or tribe residing in it. These are not easily identifiable as physical units as they are essentially *social* units. In addition, the boundaries of the administrative "revenue village" (*gram panchayat)* do not necessarily overlap with the boundaries of the social units. There is also considerable variation in the amount of forestland within the boundaries of different revenue villages, with little correlation between a village's population and the forest area within its boundaries, despite the fact that the majority of the population continues to have similar levels of dependence on forest produce. In all, physical proximity, extent of dependence and social relations, rather than formal "revenue village" boundaries, have determined which people use which forest area, as well as the composition of the forest protection groups.

The process of organising with others to bring forward one's own interests and concerns requires time, financial resources and human skills that may not be readily available, especially among the underprivileged social actors who may need them the most. A poor, single head of household may be a careful natural resource manager, possess a wealth of knowledge and skills and have solid customary rights over a given set of natural resources. Yet she may have little spare time to take part in meetings, no transport facilities to travel to a gathering place, no literacy to check on background information and little self-confidence to speak in public.

Traditional and long-standing local bodies of various kinds offer important opportunities for local people to be represented *vis-à-vis* external actors inter-

ested in the management of the same territory or set of resources. Today, however, many such local bodies are losing rather than acquiring importance. It is an unfortunate development of recent history that many communities that did possess traditional institutions for resource management have seen them devalued and weakened by modern state policies that do not recognise them, learn from them, nor assign to them any meaningful role.[24] In the words of Baland and Platteau,[25] *"…state authorities have an interest in tightly controlling all significant attempts by local communities at organizing themselves, particularly so if these attempts result in the development of large-scale grassroots movements or networks or in the assertion of claims for more authority."* In some cases, effective traditional systems of resource management exist and could play a most important role for conservation and development, but their recognition by outsiders may still be limited.[26] In other cases, the traditional organisations exist but are unable or unwilling to represent the variety of interests and concerns of their communities and can be corrupted by outside forces.[27]

> *…many communties that did possess traditional instittuions for resource management have seen them devalued and weakened by modern state policies that do not recognise them nor assign to them any meaningful role.*

Box 2.5   **Forms of representation**
(adapted from Borrini, 1994)

- **self-representation** (face-to-face; people personally express their opinions, discuss, vote, work, offer a material contribution, receive a benefit, etc.; people represent themselves);

- **direct representation** (people delegate others— relatives, friends, respected members of their community, traditional leaders, leaders of a community-based group— to represent them in all sorts of activities but maintain a direct, face-to-face relationship with their representatives);

- **indirect representation** (people delegate others— experts, appointees of large associations, non-governmental organisations, parties, elected or other government officials— to represent them in all sorts of activities, but they rarely, if ever, interact with their representatives on a person-to-person basis).

Some may argue that elected political officials and administrators at various levels are the ones to represent local interests and concerns, including concerns regarding natural resource management. There is some truth in this, insofar as freedom of information and the formal procedures of democracy (*e.g.*, periodic elections) are respected, but there are also obvious limitations. For instance, indirect representation systems (see Box 2.5) are rarely appropriate to convey the specific and detailed concerns of small groups of people, and surely cannot deliver the full range of knowledge and skills of local resource users. In general, effective direct representation is crucial to assure the participation of stakeholders who do not enjoy a high social status, and it is thus an essential concern for equity in natural resource management.[28] In many cases, the traditional organisational structures for the management of common property or common pool resources (such as a council of elders) remain the most appropriate to represent local interests. These organisations may need to be identified, recognised,

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[24] Bromley and Cernea, 1989.

[25] Page 379 in Baland and Platteau, 1996.

[26] In the Bijagos archipelago (Guinea Bissau) the local people have a varied, complex and effective system of natural resource management of enormous value for the Bijagos Biosphere Reserve (IUCN, 1996a; Maretti, 2003). Yet, the communication between the local councils of chiefs and the rest of society (state administrators, economic operators, etc.) is still limited.

[27] A community in New Guinea faced a choice between fast, lucrative and destructive timber exploitation and slower, a bit less lucrative but sustainable timber exploitation in its own ancestral territory. The elders from the community— in charge of deciding for everyone— unequivocally chose the former option. One of them, interviewed on why they did so, replied "I have old teeth and like to eat tender rice. I like to eat it *now.*" See McCallum and Sekhran, 1997.

[28] Borrini-Feyerabend, 1998.

understood, supported and empowered to act. Some corrective and support measures could in fact be negotiated with them (for example, to incorporate the representation of missing segments of the community, to take on some self-monitoring and feed-back procedures or to ensure a high level of interaction with their constituencies).

Informed, organised and effectively-represented social actors are just a starting point in the struggle to further one's interests and concerns in NRM. It is only in the political moment of acceptance and recognition by society that those interests and concerns become "entitlements". Some entitlements are legally-sanctioned and uncontested rights, recognised pretty much everywhere in the world (*e.g.*, an owner of a plot can cut grass on her land). Other management entitlements are fuzzily defined and/ or actively challenged. A governmental agency with responsibility about public health matters might need to fight and win a legal battle with industry owners before being able to tighten regulation on polluting discharges in the environment. A community that lived for centuries in a territory now declared protected area might need to struggle at length if it wishes to maintain some form of access to its natural resources. A factory owner dependent on the water discharge from a watershed might have to negotiate with a watershed committee to assure a regular supply to his factory. Justly or unjustly, others in society may not share the subjective perception of one's own entitlements and that recognition might have to be achieved, bargained for, or even "conquered".

Again, some equity considerations are paramount to assure a fair chance to all relevant actors in the sensitive moment of negotiation. A society ridden with discriminatory procedures, for instance, will not be able to assure to all the same chances to be heard and responded to in a positive way. Moreover, only a political arena open to new ideas and offering the concrete possibility to meet and discuss conflicting views and interests allows new key relevant social actors to emerge and their entitlements to be recognised. In other words, a measure of political openness and participatory democracy is needed for new subjects to be socially accepted (*e.g.,* for community representatives to sit on a Park Management Board, or for an association of squatters to manage a water supply and sanitation system in their own neighbourhood).

[Equity demands] a measure of political openness and participatory democracy.

In time, the newly recognised entitlements will be specified, systematised and codified. Stronger or weaker types of entitlements will then correspond to the breadth and strength of the social consensus around them. Within stable systems of reference, entitlements will likely evolve and stabilise into socially-codified norms and/ or legally-codified rights.

Box 2.6   **Asymmetrical rights in Joint Forest Management in India**
(adapted from Sarin, 1995)

The Joint Forest Management (JFM) programme seeks to develop partnerships between local community institutions (as managers) and state forest departments (as owners) for sustainable management and joint benefit sharing of (usually degraded) public forest lands. In essence, the states Joint Forest Management resolutions assure participating villagers free access to most non-timber forest products and a 25 to 50 % share of poles and timber at final harvesting. In return, the villagers are expected to protect the forest

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after conforming to the membership and structure specified by the forest department. The forest departments reserve the right to cancel the JFM agreement unilaterally (and, in most cases, even to dissolve the community institution itself). In such a situation, the community has no right to any compensation for its investments of labour, time or capital. If the forest department fails to honour its commitments, the villagers have no reciprocal rights for penal action (except in Haryana where they can at least demand compensation).

On the basis of the entitlements recognised in society, concrete management initiatives can begin. The entitled social actors can identify priorities, develop plans and find among themselves, or acquire from outside, the skills and resources necessary to manage the territory or set of natural resources at stake. It is here that each actor can assume, on the basis of the agreed entitlements and its own capabilities, a specific set of management functions, benefits and responsibilities. With Leach *et al.* (1997), it is paramount to recognise that, in this essentially political moment of negotiation: *"...different groups of actors may give priority to different environmental resources and services, and particular trajectories of landscape change will bring a different distribution of costs and benefits to different groups of people.… Landscape change is a fundamentally political process, involving negotiations and conflicts between actors with different priorities [and] who are differently positioned in relations of power."*

In political struggles, equity considerations are again paramount. On the one hand, there should exist places and times for negotiation (*negotiation platforms* or *fora*) and some form of logistical organising. A powerful way to maintain an inequitable *status quo* may be simply never to allow a meeting and organised discussion to happen. If the meetings do happen, however, every participating actor should possess the capability to negotiate. Such capability is the end result of a subtle combination of qualities, which may involve various human skills (*e.g.,* personal assertiveness, clarity and forcefulness of communication, language skills, etc.) but also freedom from fear and freedom from needs which may impose the silence and withdrawal of some actors. In the negotiation process, the use of relatively neutral meeting places, timings that allow everyone to participate and presence of impartial and competent facilitators are generally helpful (see Chapter 6).

A limited space of anarchy (...“absence of fixed governing structures”) [promotes] democratic experimentalism, which, in turn, is likely to foster more resilient and stronger societies.

When the management functions are expected to last through time, it is appropriate to institutionalise the social agreement by establishing a multi-stakeholder management body. (The process of negotiation among relevant actors and the types of plans, agreements and organisations that may result from it are explored in detail in Chapters 5 to 9 of this volume). Again, only a socio-political context in which the development of new organisations is allowed in a non-regimented way would permit such events to take place. Such a measure of *democratic experimentalism* characterises strong societies, in which the citizens and civil subjects in general are accustomed to assuming social responsibilities.[29] A limited *space of anarchy* (where anarchy is intended in the literal sense of “absence of fixed governing structures”) seems thus to promote democratic experimentalism, which, in turn, is likely to foster more resilient and stronger societies.[30] For instance, if a national law establishes that the management board of protected areas in the country *must* be composed of— let us say— ten elected local officials and university experts, the Boards will never include other concerned and well-informed representatives of the civil society. Important management contributions that may surface on a case-by-case basis will not have a chance to be incorporated…

Only by assuming responsibilities corresponding to their own socially recognised entitlements and by engaging in a flexible process of learning by doing in management, the relevant actors become effectively and fully empowered. Again, for the sake of equity, flexibility is needed in revising plans and agreements and in re-arranging rules on the basis of lessons from experience (this may allow some partners to contribute in the implementation phases what they might have not been able to contribute earlier on). To balance that flexibility and to protect the interests of the weakest actors, reliable conflict management, arbitration and legal enforcement procedures, and a fair and effective judiciary system, are also paramount.

[Equity demands that] the interests of the weakest actors [be protected by] reliable conflict management, arbitration and legal enforcement procedures and by a fair and effective judici-

In Part II of this volume, Checklists 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 offer some concrete ideas about how to foster equity in natural resource management. Figure 2.2 also offers a sketch of what can be done to increase equity in the various steps of the CM process.

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[29] An example in point is Switzerland, where federalism and strong devolved powers created a society where social responsibility if fully assumed by citizens. See Dorf and Sabel, 1998 and Scott, 1998.

[30] Borrini-Feyerabend, 2004 (in press).

Figure 2.2 **Including equity considerations in the process towards empowered and responsible social actors— a schematic view**

Responsible actors

Empowered actors

Co-management partnership: the relevant social actors share benefits and responsibilities amongst themselves; contribute knowledge, skills and/ or financial resources; are held accountable for their agreed responsibilities; "learn by doing" in natural resource management tasks

Acceptance of a measure of **democratic experimentalism** ("legal and political space" to accept new actors, new rules and new systems to enforce rules); **flexibility** to adjust plans on the basis of experience; **effective enforcing** of negotiated agreements and rules

Existence of **negotiation platforms**; **capability** of entitled actors— including economic and political capability— **to negotiate** with others; nondiscriminatory time, place, language and format of meetings; impartial and effective facilitation, in languages all actors understand

Entitled actors **negotiate agreements** and set-up **organisations**, **rules** and systems to enforce the rules to share natural resource benefits according to their own entitlements and capabilities

Entitled actors

Recognition/ negotiation by society of the interests and concerns of the institutional actors as **"entitlements"** (customary and legal rights included)

Absence of social discrimination; **fair hearing** available to all institutional actors; political openness towards participatory democracy

Relevant actors

Recognition of the values, opportunities and risks associated with land and natural resources; **self-organisation** to express those as own interests and concerns

Relevant **information** accessible to all; **freedom** of expressing views and **organising** for action; time and resources to organise; fair system of **representation**

Potential actors