View metadata, citation and similar papers at core.ac.uk

brought to you by CORE

provided by Edinburgh Research Explorer

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

Advocating for Change? How a Civil Society-led Coalition Influences the Implementation of the Forest Rights Act in India

Citation for published version:
Barnes, C, Van Laerhoven, F & Driessen, P 2016, 'Advocating for Change? How a Civil Society-led Coalition Influences the Implementation of the Forest Rights Act in India' World Development. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2016.03.013

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):
10.1016/j.worlddev.2016.03.013

Link:
Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Published In:
World Development

General rights
Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy
The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Download date: 14. Jun. 2018

World Development Vol. 84, pp. 162–175, 2016
0305-750X/© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.
ELSEVIER
www.elsevier.com/locate/worlddev
CrossMark
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2016.03.013

Advocating for Change? How a Civil Society-led Coalition Influences the Implementation of the Forest Rights Act in India

CLARE BARNES, FRANK VAN LAERHOVEN and PETER P.J. DRIESSEN*
Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Summary. — Forest policy implementation is a political endeavor involving both state and non-state actors. We observe that civil society organizations (CSOs) often federate into civil society-led coalitions (CSCs) in order to shape forest policies in their favor. They appear to be successful in doing this during the policy design phase but we know little about whether they are able to see through to implementation the changes they have put in motion. Analyzing CSC strategies during policy implementation could help to explain variation in the extent to which forest policies are successfully implemented. This paper analyzes the strategy choices and potential impact during policy implementation of a loose CSC comprised of CSOs, activists, people's movements, researchers, and lawyers that advocates for the full implementation of the Forest Rights Act in India. Drawing from the Advocacy Coalition Framework's focus on belief systems, complemented by insights from political ecology and civil society/social movements literature, we develop a framework to analyze CSC strategy choices. Our analysis is conducted at the national level and in two states, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. We employ qualitative research methods, including 38 interviews with CSC and non-CSC members, and a comprehensive analysis of the main CSC listserv and 1000 relevant English language newspaper articles. Our study reveals that the CSC employs a range of conflictive and collaborative strategies in its attempts to influence state-led implementation processes, at both national and state levels. It draws on a loose, heterogeneous network with ability to connect internally and a clear moral justification of its involvement in FRA implementation. However the diverse range of views on the implementation issues held by CSC members, lack of dedicated funding for coordination, limited legitimacy in the eyes of some state actors and a constricting wider institutional setting, impedes the CSC's ability to make coalition-level strategy decisions. Our results lead us to argue that CSCs are undoubtedly active in forest policy implementation at the national level and in the two states analyzed, though limited coordination of strategies potentially restricts their impact on the policy implementation process.
© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Key words — civil society, advocacy coalitions, forest policy, India, policy implementation, Forest Rights Act

1. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of forest policies that have the potential to significantly impact large swathes of forests and the lives of the millions of people depending on them, can hardly be seen as an apolitical endeavor. Yet, the political nature of forest policy implementation remains understudied (Kashwan, 2013; Krott *et al.*, 2014). While forest policies are primarily the responsibility of states, civil society organizations (CSOs), in their many forms, have the potential to significantly affect their implementation (Blaikie & Springate-Baginksi, 2007). They often federate into groups to increase their chances of doing so. This paper aims to advance our understanding of the strategy choices of civil society-led coalitions (CSCs) in their attempts to influence forest policy implementation at the national and sub-national levels. CSCs can be formed by various CSOs including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), people's movements, community based organizations (CBOs), activists, unions, plus researchers, lawyers, and journalists. Their members share beliefs on whether a policy should be implemented and engage in non-trivial forms of collective action to shape policy implementation in their favor (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). We define policy implementation here as "what happens between an apparent intention on the part of the government to do something, or to stop doing something, and the ultimate impact in the world of action" (O'Toole, 2000, p.266). We focus on *forest* policy implementation as these policies affect often conflicting environmental, social, and economic interests which has led to political struggles between states and CSOs at international, national and local levels (Arts & Buizer, 2009; Blaikie & Springate-Baginksi, 2007).

The traditional view of policy implementation as a distinct, technical activity which follows a politically laden policy design phase comprising deliberations over policy problems, goals and instruments, has been widely criticized (Lester & Goggin, 1998; O'Toole, 2000; Torenvlied & Thompson, 2003; Van Eerd, Dieperink, & Wiering, 2015). Rather, policy implementation should be seen as a continuation of a political process, involving debate and struggles between a multitude of state, non-state actors and target groups, each attempting to shape implementation according to their own beliefs and interests (Blaikie & Springate-Baginksi, 2007; Clement, 2010; Hill & Hupe, 2002; Kashwan & Lobo, 2014; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999). While political attention at the center moves on to the next agenda item (termed by Hill and Hupe (2002) as *early* policy-making), the politics of policy implementation (or *late* policy-making) gets underway across a plethora of diffuse decision-making arenas, often at sub-national governmental levels (Pollard & Court, 2007).

Civil society scholars raise the need for rigorous analysis of the potential of CSOs to affect change in policy processes (e.g., Bebbington, Hickey, & Mitlin, 2007; Edwards, 2009). They observe that CSOs often federate into loose coalitions to promote collective goals (Edwards, 2009; Hertel, 2015; Krinsky & Crossley, 2014; Lecy, Schmitz, & Swedlund, 2012) [1]. This common goal (such as advocating for or against a particular legislation or infrastructural project) spurs a diverse set of actors,

* Final revision accepted: March 5, 2016

who bring their own networks, interests, and approaches, to engage in collective action. Most empirical research of these CSCs has been directed at *early* policy-making, especially their capacities to successfully raise issues up the political agenda and affect policy changes at national (Hertel, 2015) and international arenas (Berlin, 2009; Pattberg & Widerberg, 2015). Comparatively less is known about what these coalitions do once the policy they advocated for or fought against is being implemented (e.g., Lele & Menon, 2014; on the Chipko movement in 1970s India; Gupta, 2014), i.e., during the politics of *late* policy-making.

Processes of implementing forest policies encounter various implementation issues leading to them not achieving their intended goals (Clement, 2010; Fleischman, 2014; see Hill & Hupe, 2002, for theoretical perspectives on "implementation deficits" as coined by Pressman and Wildavsky). So, it appears that CSCs struggle to see through to full implementation the changes they have been so successful at putting into motion. What happens then to these CSCs post policy enactment? *What strategy choices do CSCs make to influence forest policy implementation, why and with what potential effect?*

To answer this question, we take as a case study the CSC attempting to influence the implementation of The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (hereafter FRA) at national and state levels in India. This Act marks a major shift toward the recognition of forest dwellers' individual and/or community rights to the land they have inhabited for generations and as will be argued later, can provide an illuminating case of CSC strategy choices in policy implementation processes. Several authors have analyzed the CSC which advocated *for* the FRA and was involved in its design and drafting (see Kashwan, 2013; Kumar & Kerr, 2012; Springate-Baginski *et al.*, 2009) but a systematic analysis of the strategy choices of the CSC during *policy implementation* has yet to be conducted. It is particularly interesting to take the FRA as a case, given current wider debates on the relevance of tenure security for international forestry programs, such as REDD+ (see Resosudarmo, Atmadja, Ekaputri, Intarini, and Indriatmoko (2014) for an analysis of tenure security as a precondition for effective REDD+ implementation, Sunderlin *et al.* (2014) for a discussion on vertical integration of national and local level efforts to reduce tenure insecurity, and Ravikumar, Larson, Duchelle, Myers, and Gonzales Tovar (2015) for the horizontal governance challenges of reducing tenure insecurity). Our analysis contributes to this discussion through increasing our understanding of how such forest tenure policies themselves are implemented. It is therefore relevant for scholars interested in CSCs and policy implementation, especially policies affecting forest tenure.

2. BACKGROUND TO INDIAN FOREST GOVERNANCE AND FRA

During the colonial era in India, the rights of forest dwellers were usurped in the name of centralized commercial forestry. Post-independence forest policies (such as the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 and Forest Conservation Act of 1980) continued to label forest dwellers as "encroachers" on forest-land (Aggarwal, 2011; Blaikie & Springate-Baginksi, 2007). Though there had been earlier agitations, it was when the Ministry of Environment and Forests misinterpreted court orders in 2002 and started a mass eviction drive of those living in forests, that the contestation surrounding forest dwellers' rights really gained momentum (Springate-Baginski, 2009). Grassroots people's movements ultimately federated into a coalition with like-minded activists, left-leaning politicians, and academics under the national-level banner Campaign for Survival and Dignity (CSD) (Kumar & Kerr, 2012) and demanded a "comprehensive replacement of the oppressive control of the forest bureaucracy on forested tribal homelands by restoring democratic control over forest governance to statutorily empowered village assemblies" (Sarin & Springate-Baginski, 2010, p. 6). The CSD faced fervent opposition from a lobby group of "fortress conservation" wildlife organizations and individuals (Springate-Baginski, 2009) who claimed in the media that granting rights to forest dwellers will lead to biodiversity loss (Aggarwal, 2011; Kashwan, 2013; Kumar & Kerr, 2012). Kashwan (2013) also identifies a third group advocating in favor of community-based conservation.

The FRA was finally passed in 2007, with the accompanying rules enacted in January 2008. It includes (i) provisions on the individual and community rights that can be claimed, (ii) the process for claiming these rights, which starts with communities forming a Forest Rights Committee to verify claims, and (iii) the empowerment of right-holders for conservation and protection of the land or resources granted (Saxena, 2010).

3. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

(a) *Justifying our focus on CSCs*

There is strong empirical evidence that actors in a policy subsystem (such as surrounding the FRA) aggregate themselves into coalitions to advance their mutual goals (e.g., Edwards, 2009; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999; Springate-Baginski, 2009). Krinsky and Crossley (2014) argue that social movements in particular are often conceptualized as networks of activists and/or organizations, which can overlap with policy networks. Similarly, Tilly (2005, p.61) argues that "constituent units of claim-making actors often consist not of living, breathing whole individuals, but of groups, organizations, bundles of social ties" leading to the blurring of state/non-state boundaries (Deo & McDuie-Ra, 2011; Springate-Baginski, 2009). In the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) literature, coalitions have been empirically identified and analyzed in controversy-ridden natural resource policy sub-systems, similar to the subject of this paper (for example, Matti & Sandström, 2011; Weible, 2005; Winkel & Sotirov, 2011). Two characteristics broadly define a coalition: their members *share policy beliefs* which are normative beliefs that project an image of how the subsystem ought to be and they engage in a *non-trivial degree of coordination* (Sabatier & Weible, 2007).

While coalition members share policy beliefs, they may display heterogeneity in (i) their views on particular issues or means to address problems in policy implementation (ACF calls these secondary beliefs, see Weible, Sabatier, & McQueen, 2009), (ii) the types of organizations, networks, and overlapping or complementary coalitions they are part of (Kumar, 2014), and (iii) their personal interests for reaching the mutual goal (Kumar, 2014). The degree of coordination within a coalition can range from strong (e.g., developing and implementing a common plan) to weak (monitoring each other's actions and responding with complementary strategies) (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Coordination can encompass varying forms (Weible *et al.*, 2009). For example, Matti and Sandström (2011) analyze coordination as the sharing of information and the seeking of advice.

When a policy such as the FRA moves into the late policy-making phase, the CSC advocating for its implementation at state level could alter along several lines. The shared policy beliefs for full FRA implementation may be sufficient to bind a coalition as they advocate for legislation to be passed (as shown by Kumar and Kerr (2012) regarding the CSD), but is this sufficient to maintain coordination during policy implementation? We can expect views on *how* implementation should be realized to differ across coalition members, which may impact the strength of coordination during implementation. Applying ACF terminology here, we would expect a shift from strong to weaker coordination as decision-making venues shift. Strategy choices may also alter as (i) what worked during policy design at national level is no precursor for success during policy implementation at state level, and (ii) the expected effectiveness of certain strategies may be perceived as varying across states.

(b) *What strategy choices can CSCs make?*

Access to resources is often conflated with power, but it is only when resources are actually employed through strategies that the behavior of another actor can be influenced (Arts & Van Tatenhove, 2004; Avelino & Rotmans, 2009; Berlin, 2009). The spectrum of strategy choices listed below can be drawn from in order to mobilize available resources in an attempt to convert (relational) power into actual influence on the state actors responsible for policy implementation. Our typology of strategy choices at the disposal of CSCs is loosely based on Biermann and Siebenhüner (2009) and Widerberg and Van Laerhoven (2014) who make a distinction between cognitive, normative, and executive strategies. For analytical purposes it is useful to make this distinction in strategy types, however we recognize that one action undertaken can contain elements of multiple strategy types. For example, framing research in a particular light in the media contains both normative and cognitive elements.

Firstly, a CSC could make use of *cognitive strategies* (Krott *et al.*, 2014; Sabatier & Weible, 2007) defined here as the construction and communication of knowledge (Avelino & Rotmans, 2011, p.803) to advocate for their policy beliefs. Lindblom (1968 in Weiss, 2000) argues that in political decision-making in a democracy, knowledge is used as a political weapon in the fray while Pollard and Court (2007) stress that communicating evidence, rather than its empirical basis, is critical in influencing policy.

Secondly, *executive* strategies whereby coalitions use their position (e.g., in terms of proximity to the policy implementers) to either assist or lobby states (Sabatier & Weible, 2007) could be used. Tools employed here could be trainings, demonstrations, or contacting decision-makers. We differentiate between transitive power (conflict-oriented zero-sum games) and intransitive power (all achieve something in a collective effort) to discuss executive strategies as being either conflictive or collaborative (see also Arts & Van Tatenhove, 2004; Gupta, 2014; Hertel, 2015; Kashwan & Lobo, 2014). However, we recognize that organizations could be simultaneously *with* and *against* the state (so employing conflictive *and* collaborative executive strategies) depending on the particular (sub)issues they concurrently aim to address and individuals they are approaching (Hertel, 2015).

The third type of strategy CSCs can employ are *normative strategies* which are used to influence the process of how an act is interpreted and the rules are framed (Majone, 1989). A coalition uses tools such as diffusion of framing (Krinsky & Crossley, 2014; Weible, Heikkila, deLeon, & Sabatier, 2012) or "coining or popularising particular vocabulary" (Pollard & Court, 2007, p.136) to garner support for their viewpoint from different publics. Indeed Kumar and Kerr (2012, p.768) found the CSC's "capability to generate and circulate credible frames of justice, legitimacy and rights of the poor" to be influential in the policy design phase. Lukes (2005) argues that this form of influence may not be explicitly directed at a particular institution or actor, rather this "third form of power" can shape actors' perceptions and preferences without explicit coercion. Applied here, by diffusing frames of forest dwellers' rights, actors' perceptions of the need to implement FRA may be positively affected.

These three types of strategies can be aimed at various audiences. In this case, India's highly centralized federal system means policies passed by the Union government (center) are implemented by states (Gupta, 2001). The 42nd Constitutional Amendment in 1976 moved forests from the State List to the Concurrent List, meaning state decisions on forests require central government assent. However, the economic and political importance of the states is growing (Jörgensen & Wagner, 2015) and, depending on the legal status of the policy, there is room for states to adjust policies and give their own emphasis to certain aspects of the policy. Gupta (2014) highlights the variations in policy-making between states, as well as over issues and time. The complex forest governance framework has been observed by scholars such as Kumar and Kerr (2012) and Blaikie and Springate-Baginksi (2007), with the former authors arguing that the "arena of political struggle" has shifted from the center to the states as the FRA is being implemented.

There are thus multiple decision-making venues involved in policy implementation allowing for a multitude of actors and institutions at central and state levels toward which the CSC could direct its efforts (Gupta, 2014). At the national executive level both the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) as the nodal agency, and the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFC), are important ministries, the Supreme Court as the highest judiciary and members of the Lok Sabha as the legislative, could receive attention from the coalition. Though department names vary, at state level the CSC could direct their efforts toward the departments Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes (S.T. & S.C.), Environment/Forest, Revenue and Panchayati Raj, as well as members of the Legislative Assembly, and the High Court judiciary. We also include the national media in our analytical framework, as a medium through which coalitions can employ normative strategies (see above). We limit our analysis to CSC strategies aimed at national and state level decision-making venues, while acknowledging that members often also work with forest dwellers at a local level on implementation issues (see Barnes & Van Laerhoven, 2015).

(c) *Why and how do CSCs make certain strategy choices?*

Strategy choices are informed by both access to resources and the CSC's own assessment of which strategies are most likely to be successful. Table 1 gives an overview of the types of resources that may be accessed and subsequently mobilized by means of the strategies outlined above. We divide the resources into those accessed at the coalition level and those which are specifically found at the level of coalition members, the total of which can be accessed by the coalition (See Table 1).

We can expect CSCs to direct their efforts toward strategies and decision-making venues where they feel they will have the most success. So while the resource mix at their disposal may

Table 1. *Types of resources which could be accessed by the coalition or members*

Resource	Description and justification	References
Coalition level		
Internal coalition network	*Ability to connect:* In order to draw on (concentrated or fragmented) capabilities, dense, well-connected networks (i.e. with high network closure either directly well-connected or through a central "bridging" actor) are useful. This allows the coalition actors to share knowledge, solidarity, advocacy skills, and experiences *Homogeneity of beliefs:* Policy beliefs—and to a lesser extent, secondary beliefs—bind the coalition. A high level of shared beliefs is a strong resource for the coalition *Heterogeneity of members:* A higher number of different organizations and sectors represented in the network increases the capabilities at the coalition's disposal. This is especially the case as members may be simultaneously part of a number of coalitions. However, transaction costs related to coordination may increase as the diversity of actors brings potentially diverging perspectives, interests, and goals	Adam and Kriesi (2007), Kumar and Kerr (2012), Krinsky and Crossley (2014), Sandström and Rova (2009), Sabatier and Weible (2007) and Kumar (2014)
Legitimacy	*Legitimacy* has been defined as a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed systems of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions (Suchman, 1995, p. 574 cited in Lister, 2003). It can consist of *legality* (i.e. the formal expression of rights, duties and expectations, found at the organizational level), moral *justifications* of an institution and the actions undertaken, and *consent and acceptance by different audiences* of actions and/or portrayal of knowledge which could be found at coalition level	Schouten and Glasbergen (2011), Berlin (2009), Lister (2003) and Blaikie and Springate-Baginksi (2007)
Wider Institutional setting	By this we mean the political opportunity structure, the wider public opinion, and the rule structures under which the coalition operates. This could be the rules under which civil society can participate in state implementation of national policies, the tools (such as Right to Information) which can be drawn on by coalitions, or a particular event in the institutional setting which could be favorable (a window of opportunity). This resource originates beyond the coalition and affects the coalition as a whole	Gupta (2014), Berlin (2009), Sabatier and Weible (2007), Krott et al. (2014), Arts and Van Tatenhove (2004) and Kingdon and Thurber (1984)
Members level		
Finance	The organizations within the coalition receive or generate funding, not the coalition. Financial resources allow coalition members to gain other resources	Berlin (2009), Sabatier and Weible (2007) and Blaikie and Springate-Baginksi (2007)
Knowledge	Members may have different types of knowledge (scientific, local, and regarding FRA), the total of which is available to the coalition. Types of knowledge more readily accepted by others e.g. scientific knowledge is an especially useful resource	Krott et al. (2014) and Blaikie and Springate-Baginksi (2007)
Argumentation skills	Individuals can possess the skill "to argue, to name and to frame" which results in discursive power (Arts & Van Tatenhove, 2004, p.340; Fischer, 2003)	Arts and Van Tatenhove (2004), Berlin (2009) and Fischer (2003)
Personal motivation	The willingness to apply resources using a particular strategy is seen as a condition of power held by an individual organization	Avelino and Rotmans (2011)
External connections	Here, we refer to connections with the state—or institutional access. Individual organizations have their own connections and networks, the total of which is available to the coalition	Berlin (2009), Kumar and Kerr (2012)
Legitimacy	Legality (see legitimacy under Coalition level for the explanation)	Schouten and Glasbergen (2011)

allow for multiple strategies to be employed, the interplay of many other elements can affect their choice of strategy. This may be due to their own norms, as well as their perceptions of the success rate of strategies employed in the past, and the personalities of the individuals in official positions (Blaikie & Springate-Baginksi, 2007) to which they direct their efforts.

(d) *Analytical framework*

In Figure 1 we show the three elements comprising our framework for analyzing which strategy choices are made and why. The relationship between the resources which can be accessed by a CSC and the strategies employed is complex. Therefore we do not draw direct causal links between particular resources and strategy choices. Rather, a CSC's available resource mix and its anticipated level of success at any given time influence, both (i) its ability to make coalition-level strategy choices, and (ii), the range of strategy types and target audiences available.

We turn to the third part of our research question, i.e., the potential effect of these strategy choices, in the discussion section. Given the complexity of policy decisions made by state organizations, it is not possible to measure the direct effect of particular strategy choices. Our literature review presented above, does however allow us to speculate on the *potential effect* of the choices made on policy implementation.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

(a) *Case selection*

The implementation of the FRA presents an interesting case study for three reasons. Firstly, it is a contentious forest policy currently being implemented at the state level across India. Secondly, we see that CSCs were greatly influential in the policy design stage with people's movements, activists and left-leaning politicians and academics federating under the banner Campaign for Survival and Dignity (CSD) (Gopalakrishnan, 2012a; Kashwan, 2013; Kumar & Kerr, 2012). Thirdly, the pro-FRA CSC, centered around the CSD, was not completely satisfied with the final provisions in the FRA (Bhullar, 2008) as they had been watered down by parliament (Springate-Baginski, Sarin, & Reddy, 2013). We can therefore reasonably expect that this CSC would continue to attempt to influence FRA implementation after the FRA Rules were passed in 2008.

(b) *Identification of the CSC at the national level*

Sabatier and Weible's (2007) two criteria for identification of coalitions were used to identify the CSC at a national level. Firstly, shared policy beliefs are revealed by signatories to statements and open letters issued by the CSD (available online: http://www.forestrightsact.com/statements-and-news/135-joint-statement-on-anti-fra-case-in-sc). Signatories share the belief that the FRA should be fully and widely implemented. Secondly, a non-trivial degree of coordination is shown, for example, through participation of different types of organizations and individuals at regular national level meetings. At least three meetings per year were jointly organized, usually by NGOs. The largest meeting in 2013 attracted 255 participants from NGOs, activists, lawyers, grassroots movements etc. across 13 states. It was jointly organized by an NGO in the Community Forest Rights Learning and Advocacy Process (CFR-LA)group, and people's movement (AJAM). As an illustration, we show in Table 2 the three large meetings in the year 2013. The majority of attendees worked at NGOs, though at each meeting a significant number attended from other types of CSOs. Each meeting resulted in a shared statement of key issues and recommendations.

The CSC is identified at the national level. Implementation of the FRA is the responsibility of states therefore we analyze two levels of strategy choices within the CSC; (i) national, and (ii) members based in two selected states, namely Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Odisha. These States are both actively implementing the FRA but differ on aspects that create an interesting backdrop for exploring the strategy choices of the CSCs at state level. Firstly, the recent history of forest policy implementation differs. Odisha has a much richer history of strong grassroots organizations opposing what is seen as state

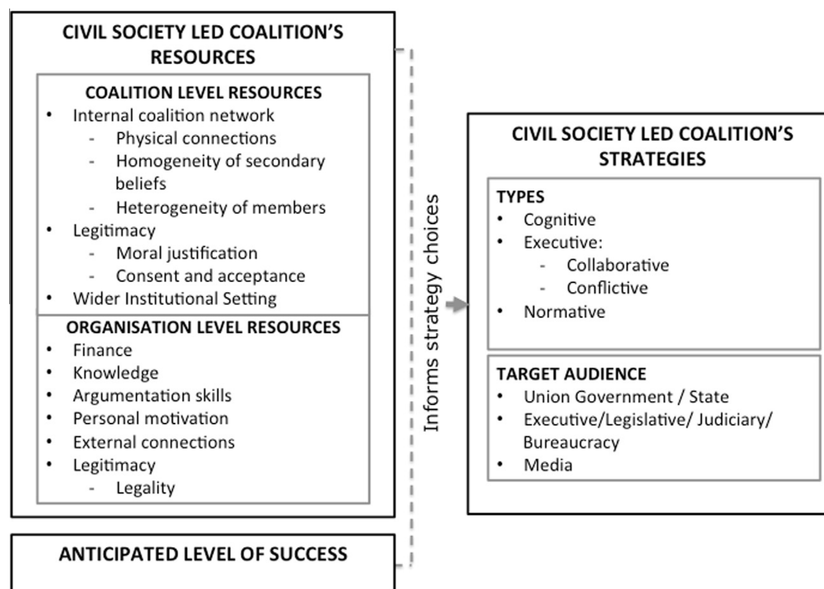

Figure 1. *Analytical framework.*

Table 2. *Participants at national-level CSC meetings in 2013*

Name of meeting	National Consultation on Community Forest Rights under Forest Rights	National Consultation on Forest Rights Act and Protected Areas	National-level public hearing on community forest rights
Date	March 2013	Nov. 2013	Dec. 2013
Organized by	Vasundhara and Kalpavriksh, supported by Oxfam India	Future of Conservation group (FoC)	CFR-LA and AJAM
Participants			
Total	73	35	250
Type	(no. participants/no. organizations)		No. organizations presenting case studies
NGO	38/24	20/11	10
People's movement	9/7	5/4	6
CSD organizer	4		2
Activist group	3/2	2/2	5
Lawyer	1		3
Academic	12/10	4/3	1
Journalist	2/2	2/2	
Donor	2/2	2/2	
International Governmental Organization	2/2		
Government initiative			1
Guest	1 union level MP	2 union level officials (MoTA), state FD officials	2 state level MPs

interferences on forestland, compared to AP. Secondly, differences in FRA implementation processes hint at variations in the roles of CSCs. The two states responded differently to a common critique point in the first year of FRA implementation regarding forest rights committees, set up to review claims. These were supposed to be formed at hamlet level, but in reality were being constituted at village level. In Odisha this was corrected very quickly, while in AP this continued into the first implementation phase. Also in AP, the village-level committees (Van Sanrakshan Samiti (VSS)) previously formed under a different program, Joint Forest Management, were highly controversially converted into the Forest Rights Committees under FRA, while no such attempt at rushed implementation was undertaken in Odisha.

(c) *Operationalization and data collection*

Table 3 gives an overview of how we operationalized the elements in our analytical framework and the data sources (see data key).

Data key

(1) 22 in-depth interviews with CSC members based in Odisha, AP or active at the national level, complemented with the following interviews: two CSOs opposing FRA implementation, seven high-level MoEFC officials, four Forest Department officials, and three researchers in July and August 2014.
(2) Interviews with seven MoEFC, two AP, and two Odisha Forest Department officials in July and August 2014.
(3) CFR-LA listserv analysis of all posts 2012–14.
(4) CFR-LA listserv analysis of two non-consecutive months per year in the period 2012–14.
(5) Top 1000 newspaper articles retrieved from the Lexis Nexis Academic search engine using the search term "Forest Rights Act", in all English language news, during January 01, 2008 to April 17, 2014, filtered to national-level publications and all articles in the top 5 national Hindi language newspapers, same time period, referring to "Forest Rights Act" (450 articles).

While we are aware that incidents of misreporting in Indian newspapers do occur, our steps of (1) analyzing a large number of articles, (2) selecting only direct quotations and (3) analyzing the articles collectively to draw out patterns, means we do gain an impression of the normative strategies employed. A similar method was successfully undertaken by Forsyth (2007) in Thailand to analyze representation of activists in the media. Our use of gray literature is necessitated by the absence of scientific reports on the coalition's activities during late policy-making. Gray literature (such as meeting reports and newspaper articles) is also an appropriate empirical source for the data we require.

5. RESULTS

(a) *Strategies*

For each strategy we indicate whether they are performed by the CSC at national, state or member level. Where possible we include which type(s) of organization employed the strategy.

(i) *Cognitive strategies*

At the *national* level CFR-LA conventions case studies containing local knowledge are compiled and widely circulated to officials, beyond those attending the meetings (e.g., Desor, 2013).

At the *state* level, there is potential for coordinating research in Odisha, through the small group of NGOs in the FRA Alliance. Our interview data seem to indicate that in AP there is no or little coordinated research undertaken at the CSC level.

Our interviews reveal that cognitive strategies are mostly implemented by individual or small groups of members, rather than at either national or state level. In terms of scientific research this covers issues in the claims processes, placement of FRA in a wider institutional setting, and post-claims forest governance. Several publications have arisen from the research, which are made public through websites, regular newsletters (two NGOs) and listservs (activists and

Table 3. *Operationalization of the variables*

Strategies	Indicators	Data
Cognitive	Research conducted and communicated to state actors or to the media, use of local knowledge and FRA policy knowledge	1,3
Executive	Evidence of specific collaborative or conflictive strategies	1,3
Normative	Newspaper analysis of organizations mentioned in the media and their framing of FRA. *Mentioned* is defined as directly quoted, events covered, or open letters published	5
Resources	**Indictors**	**Data**
Coalition level		
Internal coalition network	*Ability to connect*: analysis of posts to main listserv administered by the CFR-LA. Purpose of posts and meeting invitations analyzed	4
	Homogeneity of beliefs: views on the reasons why FRA should be implemented and views on the main implementation issues (secondary beliefs). Open questions posed to reduce socially acceptable answers. Coded and clustered using Discourse Network Analyser (DNA)	1
	Heterogeneity of members: classification of member types (NGO, activist etc.)	3,1
Legitimacy	*Moral standing:* Statements used by the coalition to justify their involvement in FRA	1
	Consent and acceptance: Evidence of state actors commissioning work from the CSC or attending CSC meetings, roles MoEFC/FD actors feel the CSC should engage in and why this role is justified. We focus on MoEFC/FD actors as they are generally resistant to the FRA, yet are in positions to significantly influence its implementation (Springate-Baginski et al., 2013)	2,3
Wider institutional setting	Derived by asking what affects CSC effectiveness	1
Members level		
Finance	Perception of reliability and flexibility of funding	1
Knowledge	*Of FRA and related acts:* Involvement in drafting FRA or other policies (e.g. Land Acquisition Act, Joint Forest Management)	1
	Of ground issues: Activities/research conducted at ground level (directly/through partner CBOs)	
Argumentation skills	History of advocacy, involvement in other campaigns (e.g. Right to Information, Land Acquisition Act), experience filing petitions	1
Personal motivation	Size of FRA component in their work, previous involvement in CSD campaign	1
External connections	Connections with other civil society networks, membership of boards, connections with the state	1,3
Legitimacy	*Legality:* Registered organizations	1
Anticipated level of success	Open question on why certain strategies are chosen	1

academics). Members have also published in Economic and Political Weekly magazine (e.g., Rao, 2014), and have published books (such as Lele & Menon, 2014). Two of the NGO members undertook commissioned research for MoTA on FRA implementation.

Aside from research, NGOs and activists in both states translate FRA guides into the local language. In both states NGOs and a lawyer train officials of the Forest, Tribal Welfare, Panchayati Raj, and Revenue departments. One NGO in Odisha produced a training module for officials commissioned by UNDP/MoTA. Local knowledge is also an important part of both conflictive and collaborative executive strategies as will be discussed in Section 5(a)(ii).

All in all, it appears that cognitive strategies are widely employed by various types of members, with scientific research also being collated and communicated by the CSC at national and state levels through direct connections with the executive, legislative, and bureaucracy.

(ii) *Executive strategies*

The CSC employs a combination of collaborative and conflictive strategies, which are initiated by various members and executed by the wider coalition at either national or state level, as shown in Table 4.[2]

In addition, a significant collaborative strategy undertaken at *national* level by a small group of CSC members, was their participation in a Joint Committee set up by MoEFC and MoTA in 2010 to review the implementation of the FRA, under the chairmanship of the Retired Secretary of the Planning Commission, N.C. Saxena. Involvement in such a committee also contains strong cognitive elements as members are able to communicate their on-the-ground knowledge directly to actors from the executive and bureaucracy. The Joint Committee was comprised of 20 members including two academics, four representatives of NGOs, one representative of a people's movement and activists brought in as expert members (Saxena *et al.*, 2010). The larger NGOs and lawyers interviewed stressed the need to balance conflictive and collaborative strategies in order to engage in a "positive way" (four NGOs, two lawyers). However, the strong reaction of some activists to this choice of collaborative strategy reveals diverging secondary beliefs between CSC members at the national level about how to achieve full FRA implementation.

Individual members compliment the CSC strategies by separately employing mostly conflictive strategies such as writing letters to both national-level executive and legislative politicians (one activist, two NGOs) and state-level legislature and bureaucracy (five NGOs, two activists and a lawyer). Such actions also contain clear cognitive elements as local knowledge, and expertise in understanding and translating FRA legislation are drawn on to strengthen these actions.

(iii) *Normative strategies*

Our analysis revealed a lack of coordinated normative strategies at both *national* and *state* levels. CSC members quoted in the English language media analyzed spoke in an individual capacity, or representing CSD, rather than on behalf of the wider CSC. Three members (one activist, two NGOs) were mentioned five times or more during the period analyzed (Table 5). The final column shows that only

Table 4. *Executive Strategies executed*

Activity	Number (2012–14)	Organized by	Target audience
National level			
Conflictive			
Convention/Public hearing/Rally	4 (plus 1 organization holds a rally every parliamentary session)	3 different People's movements	Executive (MoTA and MoEFC) Legislative Wider public
Open protest letters	7	4 drafted by 1 NGO 3 drafted by CSD	Executive
Collaborative			
Consultation on NPs and FRA	2	Future of Conservation group	Executive
Provide input on draft government documents	2	People's movement CFR-LA	Executive
State-level			
Conflictive			
Consultation	2	People's movement in Odisha NGO in AP	Judiciary Executive Bureaucracy
Rally	3	People's movement in Odisha	Executive Bureaucracy
Collaborative			
Support of UNDP/MoTA regional consultations	2	NGO in AP NGO in Odisha	Executive Bureaucracy

Table 5. *No. of articles in which CSC members are mentioned per year*

Organization (type)	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	–6/2014	Total	High Readership No. (%)
CSD (Activist)	0	1	5	3	2	2	1	14	5 (36)
Kalpavriksh (NGO)	0	0	1	2	4	1	0	8	4 (50)
Vasundhara (NGO)	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	5	4 (80)
Total	0	1	7	5	10	3	1	27	13 (48)

13 articles were published in a top 10 English language Daily based on readership in 2012 (2013 figures were under revision) (Tambat, xxxx) or by a news agency. Three interviewees (two activists, one NGO) stated that they direct efforts toward the media when national-level events such as General Elections or the FRA rule amendments open up the media space for them and one activist stated that the media can be used to disseminate any government plans to dilute the FRA.

Across the 450 Hindi language newspaper articles reviewed, only one CSC actor, a Supreme Court lawyer, was quoted. Most articles covering FRA did not mention specific actors.

In 14 of the 27 articles analyzed (Table 5) the members framed their arguments in terms of the illegal nature of any government (in)actions which hinder FRA implementation. A second frame used six times was that of the historical injustice corrected by the FRA, and the democratic rights of the forest dwellers. Both powerful frames are difficult to refute given forest history in India. One activist stated that he framed demands in the media in such a way to shape current public opinion. Emotive language was used by the CSD activists within the coalition to denote the actions of Union and State governments, such as them "actively sabotaging" the FRA (Gopalakrishnan, 2012b).

Most interviewees referred to their state-level media connections as a means to share local-level implementation issues, or success stories. However, two NGOs interviewed shared their caution with publicity seeking as it may damage their longer term influence with state actors.

(b) *Coalition-level resources*

(i) *Internal coalition network*

Ability to connect: Members have access to up-to-date websites (www.fra.org.in, www.forestrightsact.com), and a listserv run by CFR-LA. This is an open Google group of more than 350 members comprising NGOs (approx. 40–50%), people's movements (20–30%), researchers (15%) and a few journalists. Between 30 and 100 new posts per month are placed, indicating the ability to connect with other members. It is used for a wide variety of purposes though predominantly to transfer information between national, state, and local levels (see Table 6).

60% of the posts are from NGOs and 26% are from activists. There is a small core of more active members with 71% of the NGO posts being from the two NGOs that set up the website and listserv, and one activist is responsible for half of the activists' posts.

Table 6. *Purposes representing >5% of posts on CFR-LA listserv*

Purpose	Number	%
Sharing a newspaper article	57	31
Update on FRA implementation from the field	31	17
Sharing official letters, notifications, rules	20	11
Sharing a study/report	13	7

At least three national-level meetings per year (during the period 2012–14) were organized by either the CFR-LA group itself (again, predominantly the same two NGOs who manage the listserv), the FoC which focuses on protected areas under FRA, as well as CSD activists and people's movements. An open invitation to these meetings is often sent via the listserv. Our analysis of the participant list of four well-attended national-level CFR-LA and FoC meetings during 2009–2013 showed that participation ranged from 38 to 255 organizations. The meetings result in a statement of shared strategies and individual actions to be undertaken. Each meeting was mostly attended by different organizations—i.e., only four NGOs participated in all four meetings. This is an indication that a wide range of individuals and organizations felt able to attend these meetings and thus connect with other organizations.

In Odisha, regular open meetings and informal discussions are held by CSD-Odisha with state- and district-level NGOs and CBOs indicating an ability to connect. The largest NGOs have also formed an FRA Alliance research network. In AP, there is a low ability to connect shown as only one state-level meeting was held during the period analyzed and only one member of the CSD is active. Respondents stated that there is no active network at state level in AP and local CBOs and NGOs work in isolation, partly due to being more geographically dispersed.

Shared beliefs: Our analysis of the beliefs of the coalition members shows that while they shared the common goal of pushing for FRA implementation, they do this for a variety of reasons (Tables 7 and 8).

The members generally share the belief that the FRA corrects for historical injustice and that it is possible for forest dwellers to live in harmony with the forest. Strikingly no organization gave both the reasons, "control" *and* "forest governance". This indicates a possible split in the CSC: eleven organizations interviewed lean toward seeing the FRA as part of a wider land rights battle, while seven others see the FRA as required for successful forest governance.

In total, CSC members raised 26 separate issues they perceived as hindering the smooth implementation of FRA (see Table 9).

Our analysis using DNA reveals that all organizations share at least one implementation issue with another organization. The average number of issues shared is four to five, up to a maximum of nine. Only four organizations shared nine issues, which represents correspondence on 35% of the issues. This means that in a relation between any two organizations in the coalition, there are fewer perceived issues joining them than are particular to either organization.

There is no clear distinction in the perceived implementation issues based on either type of organization or state located in. However Table 10 shows that we do observe an interesting

Table 7. *Reasons given for FRA implementation*

"FRA should be implemented as..."	Frequency[b]
...it corrects for historical injustice" (historical injustice)[a]	14
...communities are able to live in harmony with the forest" (harmony)	12
...a first step toward giving forest dwellers more control over their resources" (control)	11
...recognizing rights of forest dwellers stimulates good forest governance" (forest governance)	7

[a] Abbreviated form of each reason is given in parenthesis, as used in Table 8.
[b] $N=20$, several reasons could be given.

Table 8. *Combinations of reasons given as to why FRA should be implemented*

Combinations of reasons given	Frequency
historical injustice	2
control	2
control+harmony	2
control+historical injustice	3
control+harmony+historical injustice	4
forest governance	2
forest governance+historical injustice	1
forest governance+harmony+historical injustice	4
Combinations of reasons including control	11
Combination of reasons including forest governance	7

Table 9. *Stated FRA implementation issues*

Statements on the FRA implementation issues	Statement frequency
FD want to hold onto the forest resource	20
Many communities require empowerment to gain rights and govern the forest sustainably	15
MoTA is a weak industry	13
State governments often delay implementation	12
Individual rights receive more attention than community rights	11
Presence of conflicting policies, acts and rules	10
FRA requires new way of thinking from all levels of government	10
FD often purposefully delay implementation	10
Recording of titles not done consistently or correctly	9
Lack of MoTA presence on the ground	9
16 statements with a frequency of <9	

Table 10. *Comparing reasons given for FRA implementation with stated implementation issues*

Implementation issues	Reason why FRA should be implemented	
	Control (%)	Forest governance (%)
FD doesn't have capacity or lacks full awareness	27	57
Individual rights receive more attention than community rights	45	86
Influence of district-level politics on claims process	9	43
Lack of MoTA presence on the ground	18	86
Lack of attention for post-claims support	9	43
State governments delay implementation	64	29

pattern when we compare the reasons given for FRA implementation (Table 8) with some of the implementation issues (Table 9).

These results indicate that the reasons an organization want FRA to be implemented has some bearing on where they direct their efforts post implementation and therefore which implementation issues they perceive. This point will be returned to in the discussion.

Heterogeneity of members: On a national level, the CSC comprises a loose, open, heterogeneous coalition of NGOs, activists, people's movements, CBOs, journalists, researchers, lawyers, and other individuals. There are various network organizations within the CSC such as the previously mentioned CFR-LA, the FoC which focuses on protected areas under FRA (comprised mostly of CFR-LA members but not including the activists), CSD and people's movements AJAM and All India Union of Forest Working People. The heterogeneity of the types and locations of members means that the strength of connections between members will vary, a point we return to in the discussion. The heterogeneous membership means a wide range of member level resources are brought to the CSC, as seen in Table 11, below.

(ii) *Legitimacy*

Moral standing: In justifying their involvement in FRA implementation, CSC members refer to their understanding of issues on the ground gained through their (i) long-term involvement at the grassroots levels, either directly or through their network, and (ii) involvement in drafting the FRA (*early* policy-making) or other rights issues. They also share the view that states will not or cannot implement the FRA without being pushed by civil society. Combined, this means the CSC members claim moral standing for the position they take in FRA implementation.

Consent and acceptance by state actors: The CSC as a whole is not afforded legitimacy by the MoEFC or FD officials interviewed. Most officials felt the CSC's role should be limited to what can be considered apolitical roles, such as providing awareness and guidelines to communities or officers, technical support (e.g., mapping), or research on implementation issues. The academics, lawyers, and larger NGOs appear to be viewed with less suspicion by the officials interviewed than activists. Larger NGOs have been involved in programs led by both MoEFC and MoTA e.g., the National Biodiversity and Action plan, and have been asked to train officials. Four members (NGOs, a researcher and activist invited via an NGO) were asked to participate in the Joint Review of FRA implementation. The academics and lawyers in the coalition gain their legitimacy from their professional titles and/or their publication record. The officials directed some distrust at the activists citing skepticism of their personal motivation, commitment to work in remote rural areas, and openness to work *with* government actors.

(iii) *Wider Institutional Setting*

Political events were seen as both a resource, such as the 2014 Lok Sabha election which increased attention for issues affecting rural voters, and a hindrance, when the bifurcation of Telangana and AP States took political and bureaucratic attention elsewhere. All respondents stated that the current political climate promotes a form of development which puts pressure on both the FRA and civil society. The CSC actively links FRA issues with wider land rights and democracy debates to attract wider support and media coverage at rallies.

Summarizing, the CSC-level resources to be accessed comprise (1) a loose, heterogeneous network with ability to connect, but where members have a diverse range of views on the implementation issues; (2) a clear moral justification of its involvement in FRA implementation, but mixed legitimacy in the eyes of the MoEFC/FD and (3) a constricting wider institutional setting occasionally punctuated with opportune moments for gaining media attention.

(iv) *Organization-level resources*

The CSC at national and at state levels can draw on extensive knowledge of the wider institutional setting, FRA provisions and local conditions, plus argumentation skills, legal legitimacy, and extensive networks beyond the CSC. Members' varied motivations could also be argued to be an important resource. Financial limitations, especially the lack of dedicated funding to facilitate cooperation within the CSC, is seen as a great restraint. The only resource difference between the states, which was reported by four respondents, is that members in AP receive less funding than Odisha as AP is seen by donors as being more developed.

(c) *Influence of resource mix and anticipated level of success on strategy choices*

Here we explore the two ways in which the CSC's strategy choices are informed by the resource mix accessed by the

Table 11. *Level of resources at organization level*

Resource	Level (no. of respondents)
Finance	– No dedicated funding for the CSC to collaborate on strategy choices (all) – Lack of reliable, dedicated, long-term funding (10) – Lack of funding for activists does allow for independence (2)
Knowledge	– Larger NGOs report to have in-depth knowledge of the institutional setting (8) and on the ground knowledge (9) gained from involvement in the FRA drafting (4), experience working in the field (9), networks with smaller CBOs (3), holding national level meetings (5) and their own extensive research (4) – Level of knowledge on FRA provisions and the political climate held by smaller CBOs may be more limited (3) – The activists have previous experience of working on land rights or social justice issues (4)
Argumentation skills	– Gained through experience in influencing previous or current related policies or involvement in the CSD (16)
Personal motivation	– The FRA is part of a wider struggle for land justice (5) – Connections to the communities (4) – FRA is a large part of their work so continuation of their organization could be a motivation (7)
External connections	– The CSC can draw on many connections at the national and state levels with members sitting on government run expert committees, or advice organs such as the National Advisory Council under the previous government
Legal legitimacy	– All the coalition members interviewed were registered under the Societies Registration Act (1860), giving them legal legitimacy, though some smaller CBOs in the coalition would not be

CSC and the anticipated success of certain strategies. Firstly, their *ability to make coalition-level strategy choices* is positively influenced at both national and state levels by (i) the open listserv which enables members to connect, and (ii) the high level of knowledge of the FRA and on the ground issues which informs CSC-level discussions. However coordination is negatively influenced by the heterogeneity of members, diversity of beliefs on implementation issues, lack of dedicated funding for collaboration, and varying degrees of legitimacy afforded by many MoEFC and FD officials.

Secondly, funding challenges and elements of the wider institutional setting (a weak MoTA and hostile environment for civil society) appear to influence the *range of strategy types and target audiences* perceived as available to the CSC. Collaborative executive strategies are favored above conflictive strategies. This choice is reinforced by members' perception that collaborative strategies can be successful as they open up channels for conflictive strategies. It is also compounded by the positive experiences of some members who have collaborated with officials in the past (such as in the Joint Committee). The high level of knowledge and argumentation skills allows for the CSC to choose cognitive strategies. Strategy choices and their target audiences are also influenced by three factors: (i) the personal motivations of members, (ii) the perceived perceptiveness of politicians and officials, and (iii) members' perception of their legitimacy in the eyes of different state actors.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

During late policy-making the CSC can be characterized as a form of non-trivial collective action among a heterogeneous group of actors sharing the belief that the FRA should be implemented, but that it is only weakly coordinating its strategies to reach this goal. The CSC therefore conforms with Sabatier & Weible's definition of a coalition, though our results do add nuance to our understanding of the functionality of coalitions during *late* policy-making (as will be discussed below).

The CSC at national and state levels employs both conflictive and collaborative executive strategies which are complemented by conflictive strategies at member-level. This supports findings in literature that CSOs work both within and outside the state (Hertel, 2015; OHanyan, 2012). Both cognitive and normative strategies are mostly being performed at member level rather than CSC level, with media attention being seen as complementary to other strategies. We observe some coordination in Odisha of both executive and cognitive strategies, whereas in AP there appears to be little coordination of the more geographically dispersed members. This could potentially be partly due to the different historical contexts of community forestry across the two states, as raised earlier. The CSC's attention at both national and state levels is mostly directed at the executive and bureaucracy, but interestingly, though the actions of the FD are seen as a major obstacle to FRA implementation by 20 of the 22 respondents, the coalition does not, or cannot, direct its efforts toward the basic training of FD officers.

Our analysis of the resource mix at the disposal of the CSC and the success they anticipate from employing various strategies, helps to explain why strategies are employed at both the CSC and member level during policy implementation. Kumar and Kerr (2012, p.768) found that the success of the CSC in getting the Act passed was due to "the open and flexible network structure; the capacity to mobilise masses at the grassroots; the ability to leverage expertise and research; and the capability to generate and circulate credible frames of justice, legitimacy, and rights of the poor". While the loose heterogeneous network structure and resources highlighted by Kumar and Kerr (2012) are also found in the CSC during policy implementation, we observe that diversity of beliefs on implementation issues, lack of dedicated funding for collaboration, and varying degrees of legitimacy afforded by many MoEFC and FD officials, limits the ability of the CSC to make coalition-level decisions which individual members are motivated and able to implement. This makes it more likely that members will make independent decisions as to where they direct their attention and efforts based on their own resource mix, organizational approach (collaborative or conflictive) and anticipated success. Our observations conform with March & Olsen who argue that calculations of appropriate action appear to be based on "organisational arrangements that link roles/identities, accounts of situations, resources, and prescriptive rules and practices" (March and Olsen, 2006, p. 690). The accessible resource mix and the wider institutional setting favor collaborative strategies above conflictive strategies at both national and state levels, and enable the CSC to lean heavily on cognitive strategies.

So what potential effects do these strategy choices have on FRA implementation? The ACF and network literature would argue that the limited ability of the CSC to make coalition-level decisions weakens the strength with which coordinated strategies can be carried out. This is significant for the potential effect of the CSC on FRA implementation given that the type of policy implementation issues the CSC itself identifies (Table 10) encompass cultural changes within large state institutions, thus appearing to call for CSC-level collective pressure in national or state arenas. At state level, there is a correlation between a more connected CSC in Odisha and a higher level of implementation. In AP CSC members feel this lack of a strongly connected network reduces the impact they can have on state-level institutions, with one member stating "if we are the only ones writing letters etc. the government thinks this is just the concern of one NGO". The causal relations between a strong CSC network and policy implementation require further research if we are to understand the role CSCs can play in this political context. Our research did reveal other exogenous factors which come into play in AP such as the diverted political attention due to bifurcation and lack of funding for CSOs.

Some direct effects can be seen from the collaborative executive strategies in the form of government circulars issued after high-level officials attended CSC-led consultations, or the contribution of the CSC members in the Joint Committee to the Amended Rules issued in 2012. Members argued that conflictive strategies such as rallies or open letters, maintain pressure on officials and generate wider attention. This was especially important when the state threatened to dilute the FRA by reducing the scope of its applicability. The normative strategies cannot be expected to have much influence on policy processes, given the limited number of newspaper articles including quotations from CSC members. Respondents feel a compilation of strategies is required as their effects are determined by other factors such as the timing of their efforts (e.g., making use of elections), the opportunities to discuss FRA issues in multiple forums and the target officials' own views on FRA implementation and division of responsibilities for policy implementation. Our analysis also reveals the mixed legitimacy afforded to CSC members by MoEFC/FD officials meaning they're likely to view the CSC's research through a perceptual filter (Sabatier & Weible, 2007) which leads them

to question its scientific integrity. This influences the potential effects of an organization's cognitive strategies.

We have shown that political debates and struggles surrounding forest tenure transition policies, such as the FRA, do not simply end once an Act has been passed and legislation has been drafted. Late policy-making during policy implementation (Hill & Hupe, 2002) appears to take on a new form as decision-making venues disperse and civil society actors restrategize as to how they can best influence policy processes in favor of their own beliefs and interests. Through our case selection we have seen distinctions between the states, but also many similarities in the types of resources CSCs can access and the decisions they make. This leads us to claim that we can draw insights that have wider applicability to other states where CSOs are involved in FRA implementation, but also even more broadly, to situations in which CSCs are attempting to influence tenure reform policy implementation. We present two wider interrelated discussions to stimulate further research on CSCs involved in policy implementation.

Firstly, our contribution to ACF literature revolves around our observations of the significance of secondary beliefs to the strength of coalitions during policy implementation. Our results lead us to argue that shared policy beliefs (here seen as the belief that the FRA should be implemented) may provide sufficient binding power when there is a clear common goal and target audience during policy design (or *early* policy-making). However, they appear to be insufficient to unite the CSC in the context of diffuse decision-making across levels during policy implementation (*late* policy-making). The diversity in shared beliefs (both *why* members feel the FRA should be implemented, and the secondary beliefs of the main implementation issues) appears to be one reason why strategy choices are not purely made as a coalition during policy implementation. Further empirical research is required to understand how ACF assumptions on the binding power of belief systems apply to *late* policy-making where decision-making arenas are more diffuse. Drawing on assemblage theory (De Landa, 2006), which introduces notions of overlapping membership, linking elements and bridging people between assemblages of actors may bring useful insights (see Kumar, 2014). Our results also hint at relationships between the types of beliefs i.e., the reasons coalition members fought for the FRA helped explain the diversity of perceived implementation issues. This requires further empirical exploration if we are to better understand the strength of coalitions in influencing policy implementation. Do the reasons a coalition member fought for FRA influence their perceived implementation issues which in turn affects their strategy choices? Or alternatively, do the reasons a coalition member fought for FRA affect their strategies during implementation, which in turn affects the perceived implementation issues?

Secondly, our analytical framework provides a useful tool for assessing CSCs' strategy choices. It can be used ex ante to help predict their likely impact on policy processes, or ex post to explain the level and form of impact assigned to particular strategy choices. We complemented ACF's focus on belief systems by drawing on insights from political ecology and civil society/social movements to inform our framework. Analytically distinguishing between the resources coalitions can access and the strategies they employ helped us draw out the two types of influence the resource mix can have on strategy choices. We purposefully did not attempt to draw out direct causal relationships between particular resources and strategies employed. This proved useful given the interplay of factors at both coalition and member level, which determine strategy choices. We suggest future research explores nuances in coalition heterogeneity such as including attention for the history of the emergence of coalitions, overlapping memberships, material and expressive properties of organizations and elements linking members and coalitions (as also suggested in Kumar, 2014; Matti & Sandström, 2011). This would further improve our understanding of the complexities of coalition membership in late policy-making.

Observed difficulties in forest policy implementation and lack of empirical research on the role of CSCs in this political process triggered this research. So what can we draw from this paper which could help us to better understand issues in forest policy implementation? The shortcomings with state-led forest policy implementation have been widely reported and have been used to argue for more civil society involvement to improve implementation processes. Our empirical contribution to this debate is to argue that CSOs, both as individual organizations and as part of loose coalitions, are certainly important actors in this political process, and could potentially affect the direction of policy implementation. Our analysis does however show that they certainly cannot be seen as a silver bullet to solve limitations of state-led policy implementation, at least not in the constrained political and institutional context currently found in India. Forest policy implementation is inherently political and the extent to which CSOs, either individually or as part of a coalition, are able to influence policy implementation for the better is an important question that still needs to be empirically assessed in different contexts and across different scales. Understanding the strategy choices, as analyzed here, is the first step. Analyzing how these strategies play out in combination, and over lengthy implementation processes, will be the next step to developing an empirically rich basis for wider discussions over the current and potential roles of various state and non-state actors involved in *late policy-making* processes in contentious policies of forest governance.

NOTES

1. The boundaries of what constitutes civil society are not clear (Edwards, 2009). We distinguish between the following CSOs: NGOs as professional organisations with a paid staff base; CBOs as voluntary local organisations working at district level or lower and People's movements campaigning at state or national level through their loose network of activists and CBOs. As we note the over-simplicity of an NGO/ people's (or social) movements binary (Batley, 2011; Brown, 2014) we use these definitions purely as an identification tool and make no assumptions as to the activities in which they engage.

2. Further details of the results are available upon request

REFERENCES

Adam, S., & Kriesi, H. (2007). The network approach. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the policy process* (pp. 129–154). Colorado: Westview Press.

Aggarwal, A. (2011). Implementation of Forest Rights Act, changing forest landscape, and "politics of REDD+" in India. *Resources, Energy, and Development, 8*(2), 131–148.

Arts, B., & Buizer, M. (2009). Forests, discourses, institutions: a discursive-institutional analysis of global forest governance. *Forest Policy and Economics, 11*, 340–347. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2008.10.004.

Arts, B., & Van Tatenhove, J. (2004). Policy and power: A conceptual framework between the 'old' and 'new' policy idioms. *Policy Sciences, 37*(3–4), 339–356. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11077-005 0156-9.

Avelino, F., & Rotmans, J. (2009). Power in transition: An interdisciplinary framework to study power in relation to structural change. *European Journal of Social Theory, 12*, 543–569. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1368431009349830.

Avelino, F., & Rotmans, J. (2011). A dynamic conceptualization of power for sustainability research. *Journal of Cleaner Production, 19*(8), 796–804. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2010.11.012.

Barnes, C., & Van Laerhoven, F. (2015). Making it last? Analysing the role of NGO interventions in the development of institutions for durable collective action in Indian community forestry. *Environmental Science & Policy, 53*, 192–205. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2014.06.008.

Batley, R. (2011). Structures and strategies in relationships between non-government service providers and governments. *Public Administration and Development, 31*, 306–319. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/pad.606.

Bebbington, A., Hickey, S., & Mitlin, D. (Eds.) (2007). *Can NGOs make a difference? The challenge of development alternatives*. London: Zed Books.

Berlin, D. (2009). Why some greens are more powerful than others: On destabilisation, power shifts and the democratic potential of NGOs. *International Review of Sociology: Revue Internationale de Sociologie, 19*(2), 331–349. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03906700902833635.

Bhullar, L. (2008). The Indian Forest Rights Act 2006: A critical appraisal. *Law, Environment and Development Journal, 4*(1), 20–34, Available at <http://www.lead-journal.org/content/08020.pdf>.

Biermann, F., & Siebenhüner, B. (Eds.) (2009). *Managers of global change: The influence of international environmental bureaucracies*. Cambridge, USA: MIT Press.

Blaikie, P., & Springate-Baginksi, O. (2007). Understanding the Policy Process in Participatory Forest Mangement. In O. Springate-Baginski, & P. Blaikie (Eds.), *Forests, people and power: The political ecology of reform in South Asia*. London: Earthscan.

Brown, T. (2014). Negotiating the NGO/social movement dichotomy: Evidence from Punjab, India. Voluntas*, 25*, 46–66. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11266-012-9324-7.

Clement, F. (2010). Analysing decentralised natural resource governance: Proposition for a "politicised" institutional analysis and development framework. *Policy Sciences, 43*(2), 129–156. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11077-009-9100-8.

Deo, N., & McDuie-Ra, D. (2011). *The politics of collective advocacy in India: Tools and traps*. Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press.

De Landa, M. (2006). *A new philosophy of society: Assemblage theory and social complexity*. London, New York: Continuum.

Desor, S. (Ed.) (2013). *Community forest rights under forest rights act: Citizens' report 2013*. Kalpavriksh, Pune and Vasundhara, Bhubaneshwar with Oxfam India, Delhi, on behalf of Community Forest Rights Learning and Advocacy Process. Retrieved from <http://fra.org.in/document/Community%20Forest%20Rights%20under%20FRA%20Citizens%20Report%202013.pdf>.

Edwards, M. (2009). *Civil society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fischer, F. (2003). *Reframing public policy: Discursive politics and deliberative practices*. Oxford Scholarship Online.

Fleischman, F. D. (2014). Why do foresters plant trees? Testing theories of bureaucratic decision-making in central India. *World Development, 62*, 62–74. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.05.008.

Forsyth, T. (2007). Are environmental social movements socially exclusive? An historical study from Thailand. *World Development, 35*(12), 2110–2130. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2007.01.005.

Gopalakrishnan, S. (2012a). *Undemocratic and arbitrary: Control, regulation and expropriation of India's forest and common lands*. New Delhi; Washington, DC: SPWD; Rights and Resources Initiative, Retrieved from <http://www.rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/doc_5642.pdf>.

Gopalakrishnan, S. (2012b). Missing the forest for the trees. *Indian Express*, Retrieved from http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/missing-the-forest-for-the-trees/963599/0.

Gupta, J. (2001). India and climate changes policy: Between diplomatic defensiveness and industrial transformation. *Energy and Environment, 12*(2–3), 217–236.

Gupta, K. (2014). A comparative policy analysis of coalition strategies: Case studies of nuclear energy and forest management in India. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice, 16*(4), 356–372. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13876988.2014.886812.

Hertel, S. (2015). Hungry for justice: Social mobilization on the right to food in India. *Development and Change, 46*(1), 72–94. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/dech.12144.

Hill, M., & Hupe, P. (2002). *Implementing public policy: Governance in theory and practice* (2nd ed.) London: Sage.

Jörgensen, K., & Wagner, C. (2015). Low carbon governance in multi-level structures: The role of the EU in the Climate Relations with India (Beyond 2015: Exploring the Future of Global Climate Governance, as part of the Indian-European Multi-level Climate Governance Research Network (IECGN). In *Paper presented at the Amsterdam conference*. Retrieved from <http://www.indiaeu-climategovernance.org/Reports/2014-15-Joergensen-Wagner-Amsterdam-15_11_14.pdf>.

Kashwan, P. (2013). The politics of rights-based approaches in conservation. *Land Use Policy, 31*, 613–626. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2012.09.009.

Kashwan, P., & Lobo, V. (2014). Of rights and regeneration: The politics of governing forest and non-forest commons. In S. Lele, & A. Menon (Eds.), *Democratising forest governance in India* (pp. 351–377). Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Kingdon, J. W., & Thurber, J. A. (1984). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Krinsky, J., & Crossley, N. (2014). Social movements and social networks: Introduction. *Social Movement Studies: Journal of Social, Cultural and Political Protest, 13*(1), 1–21. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2013.862787.

Krott, M., Bader, A., Schusser, C., Devkota, R., Maryudi, A., Giessen, L., *et al.* (2014). Actor-centred power: The driving force in decentralised community based forest governance. *Forest Policy and Economics, 49*, 34–42. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2013.04.012.

Kumar, K., & Kerr, J. M. (2012). Democratic assertions: The making of India's recognition of forest rights act. *Development and Change, 43*(3), 751–771. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2012.01777.

Kumar, K. (2014). The sacred mountain: Confronting global capital at Niyamgiri. *Geoforum, 54*, 196–206. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2013.11.008.

Lecy, J. D., Schmitz, H. P., & Swedlund, H. (2012). Non-governmental and not-for-profit organisational effectiveness: A modern synthesis. Voluntas*, 23*, 434–457. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11266-011-9204-6.

Lele, S., & Menon, A. (2014). Introduction: Forest governance beyond joint forest management, godavarman, and tigers. In S. Lele, & A. Menon (Eds.), *Democratising forest governance in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Lester, J. P., & Goggin, M. L. (1998). Back to the future: The rediscovery of implementation studies. *Policy Currents, 8*(3), 1–9.

Lister, S. (2003). NGO legitimacy: Technical issue or social construct? *Critique of Anthropology, 23*(2), 175–192. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0308275X03023002004.

Lukes, S. (2005). *Power: A radical view* (2nd ed.) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Majone, G. (1989). *Evidence, argument, and persuasion in the policy process*. Yale University Press.

Matti, S., & Sandström, A. (2011). The rationale determining advocacy coalitions: Examining coordination networks and corresponding beliefs. *The Policy Studies Journal, 39*(3), 385–410.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (2006). The logic of appropriateness. In M. Rein, M. Moran, & R. E. Goodin (Eds.), *Handbook of public policy* (pp. 689–708). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

OHanyan, A. (2012). Network institutionalism and NGO studies. *International Studies Perspectives, 13*, 366–389. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1528-3585.2012.00488.x.

O'Toole, L. J. (2000). Research on policy implementation: Assessment and prospects. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 2*, 263–288.

Pattberg, P., & Widerberg, O. (2015). International cooperative initiatives in global climate governance: Raising the ambition level or delegitimizing the UNFCCC? *Global Policy, 6*(1), 45–56. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12184.

Pollard, A., & Court, J. (2007). How civil society organisations use evidence to influence policy processes. In A. Bebbington, S. Hickey, & D. Mitlin (Eds.), *Can NGOs make a difference? The challenge of development alternatives* (pp. 133–152). London: Zed Books.

Rao, P. T. (2014). Politics of tribal land rights: Notes from Andhra Pradesh. *Economic and Political Weekly, 49*(16), 67–70.

Ravikumar, A., Larson, A. M., Duchelle, A. E., Myers, R., & Gonzales Tovar, J. (2015). Multilevel governance challenges in transitioning towards a national approach for REDD+: Evidence from 23 subnational REDD+ initiatives. *International Journal of the Commons, 9*(2), 909–931.

Resosudarmo, I. A. P., Atmadja, S., Ekaputri, A. D., Intarini, D. Y., & Indriatmoko, Y. (2014). Does tenure security lead to REDD+ project effectiveness? Reflections from five emerging sites in Indonesia. *World Development, 55*, 68–83. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.01.015.

Sabatier, P. A., & Jenkins-Smith, H. C. (1999). The advocacy coalition framework: An assessment. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the policy process* (pp. 117–166). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Sabatier, P. A., & Weible, C. M. (2007). The advocacy coalition framework: Innovations and Clarifications. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (pp. 189–220). Colorado: Westview Press.

Sandström, A. C., & Rova, C. V. (2009). The network structure of adaptive governance: A single case study of a fish management area. *International Journal of the Commons, 4*(1), 528–551, Retrieved from <http://www.the-commonsjournal.org/index.php/ijc/article/viewArticle/156>.

Sarin, M., & Springate-Baginski, O. (2010). *India's Forest Rights Act-the anatomy of a necessary but not sufficient institutional reform (working paper no. 45)*. Retrieved from Institutions and Pro-Poor Growth <http://www.ippg.org.uk/papers/dp45.pdf>.

Saxena (2010). *Report national committee on forest rights act*. Government of India: A Joint Committee of Ministry of Environment and Forests and Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Retrieved from <http://www.moef.nic.in/downloads/public-information/FRACOMMITTEEREPORT_FINALDec2010.pdf>.

Schouten, G., & Glasbergen, P. (2011). Creating legitimacy in global private governance: The case of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil. *Ecological Economics, 70*, 1891–1899. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2011.03.012.

Springate-Baginski, O., Sarin, M., Ghosh, S., Dasgupta, P., Bose, I., Banerjee, A., ... Rao, P. T. (2009). *Redressing 'historical injustice' through the Indian Forest Rights Act 2006: A Historical Institutional analysis of contemporary forest rights reform* IPPG discussion paper 27. Retrieved from <http://www.ippg.org.uk/papers/dp27.pdf>.

Springate-Baginski, O., Sarin, M., & Reddy, M. G. (2013). Resisting rights: Forest bureaucracy and the tenure transition in India. *Small-scale Forestry, 12*, 107–124. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11842-012-9219-x.

Suchman, M. (1995). Managing legitimacy: Strategic and institutional approaches. *Academy of Management Review, 20*, 571–610.

Sunderlin, W. D., Larson, A. M., Duchelle, A. E., Resosudarmo, I. A. P., Huynh, T. B., Awono, A., *et al.* (2014). How are REDD+ proponents addressing tenure problems? Evidence from Brazil, Cameroon, Tanzania, Indonesia, and Vietnam. *World Development, 55*, 37–52. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.01.013.

Tambat, S.V. (xxxx) Review of The Press in India (2008 to 2012). Report submitted to The Press Council of India, Department of Communication & Journalism, University of Pune. Retrieved from http://presscouncil.nic.in/WriteReadData/Pdf/ReviewofthePressinIndia.pdf.

Tilly, C. (2005). *Identities, boundaries, and social ties*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Torenvlied, R., & Thompson, R. (2003). Is implementation distinct from political bargaining? *Rationality and Society, 15*(1), 64–84.

Van Eerd, M. C. J., Dieperink, C., & Wiering, M. A. (2015). 'A dive into floods': Exploring the Dutch implementation of the floods directive. *Water Policy, 17*, 187–207. http://dx.doi.org/10.2166/wp.2014.025.

Weible, C. M. (2005). Comparing policy networks: Marine protected areas in California. *Policy Studies Journal, 33*(2), 181–201.

Weible, C. M., Sabatier, P. A., & McQueen, K. (2009). Themes and variations: Taking stock of the advocacy coalition framework. *The Policy Studies Journal, 37*(1), 21–140.

Weible, C. M., Heikkila, T., deLeon, P., & Sabatier, P. A. (2012). Understanding and influencing the policy process. *Policy Sciences, 45*, 1–21. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11077-011-9143-5.

Weiss, C. H. (2000). The experimenting society in a political world. In L. Bickmann (Ed.), *Validity & social experimentation: Donald Campbell's legacy* (pp. 283–302). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Widerberg, O., & Van Laerhoven, F. (2014). Measuring the autonomous influence of an international bureaucracy: the division for sustainable development. *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics, 14*(4), 303–327. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10784-014-9249-2.

Winkel, G., & Sotirov, M. (2011). An obituary for national forest programmes? Analyzing and learning from the strategic use of "new modes of governance" in Germany and Bulgaria. *Forest Policy and Economics, 13*, 143–154.

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect