

From Participation to Governance

A critical review of the concepts of governance, co-management and participation, and their implementation in small-scale inland fisheries in developing countries

Prepared for The Challenge Program on Water and Food

Christophe Béné
Arthur E. Neiland



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C. Béné and A.E. Neiland



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Contents

Acknowledgements	v
Summary	vi
Acronyms	viii
Introduction	1
Background	1
Structure and content of the report	3
Approach and methods used	4
Part I - Governance	5
The concept of governance	5
Definitions and concepts	5
The other (hidden) half of “good governance”	8
Governance in fisheries	9
Management and governance: Are they the same thing?	9
New approaches to governance analysis	12
Part II - Changes in governance	14
Governance reforms: The case of decentralization	15
Rationale for decentralization	16
Natural resource management and decentralization	17
Lessons from past experiences	21
The transfer issue, or the “dilemma of decentralized rural development”	21
Elite capture	22
The issue of lack of representativeness of decentralized bodies	23
NGOs and decentralization	24
Mechanisms toward better governance	24
Participation	24
Typology of participation	25
Weak versus strong participation: Which one is best?	27
Problems with “strong” participation	28
Problems with “weak” participation	31
Downward accountability	32
Some concluding remarks about participation and accountability	34

Part III - Governance reforms in fisheries: The co-management experience	36
Concepts and theoretical framework	36
Origins of “decentralization” in fisheries	37
Fisheries co-management	39
Social impacts of co-management reforms	43
The empirical evidence	43
A lack of conceptual research and base-line data	45
Defining the “fishing community” in African inland fisheries	46
Lessons from the CBFM project	48
Part IV - A strategic overview of future information needs and research priorities	51
Introduction and methodology	51
Research agenda	53
Development goal	53
Purpose	54
Activities/outputs	54
Improved understanding of fisheries governance for poverty alleviation	55
Policy analysis and new approaches for pro-poor policy process	56
Capacity building for policy improvement	58
References	60

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Summary

This report reviews the role, nature and mechanisms of governance in inland fisheries. We do so by reviewing first the wider issues of governance, participation and co-management in natural resource management, and then focus on small-scale fisheries, and, in particular, small-scale (artisanal) activities operated within inland (river and adjacent floodplains) areas in developing countries.

Drawing upon lessons from the literature outside the fisheries sector, Part I reviews and discusses the definitions of governance and 'good' governance, and highlights some of the main issues related to these definitions. The section then focuses on the concept of governance in fisheries. The analysis reveals the frequent confusion that is made in the fisheries literature between 'management' and 'governance', and argues that the two concepts should be used distinctly.

Part II reviews the mechanisms of change in governance. Decentralization, as a governance reform, is used across the first half of this second section to identify and discuss issues of governance reforms. The report concentrates initially on cases of natural resource management decentralization in sectors other than fisheries in order to identify some of the positive but also negative consequences of governance reforms. The review highlights in particular that unless a series of stringent conditions are present, decentralization reforms in natural resource management are likely to fail. The second part of the section focuses on two mechanisms that are thought to improve governance, namely participation and accountability. Here again, the literature relating to sectors other than fisheries offers relevant lessons. In particular, it demonstrated that while participatory approaches can play a key role in strengthening governance, these participatory processes will not provide end-users with reliable, high-quality and cost-effective services unless these end-users can exercise effective leverage through strong democratic mechanisms, in particular downward accountability.

Finally Part III concentrates on governance reform in fisheries. After reviewing the origins of decentralization in fisheries, the report focuses on co-management, and raises a series of questions about the implementation of this concept for the artisanal fisheries of developing countries. In particular, the questions 'who is the fishing community?' and 'who is the legitimate recipient of the newly-devolved power?' are discussed. The analysis shows that the conceptualization of co-management as currently

presented in the literature does not provide a particularly useful framework with which to analyze the reasons for success or failure of current decentralization programs in fisheries. Drawing upon some of the lessons on governance and participation presented in the first parts of the document, the review demonstrates that the current approach to co-management considers the level of participation as the key explanatory element of success (or failure), and thereby neglects some of the other crucial dimensions of governance. In particular, it is shown that the approach by assuming that co-management is more 'equitable' by nature, has generally overlooked the social dimensions of the issue and has not attempted to conceptually or empirically address the question of whether or not co-management effectively delivers positive impacts in terms of poverty alleviation.

The last section of the report (Part IV) draws upon the lessons derived from the three previous sections and develops a series of questions for future research. A particular effort is made to link these research questions to broader strategic issues using the Logical Framework Approach. The section highlights the role that such research in fisheries should play in the more general debate about governance in natural resource management. The use of the Logical Framework Approach also underlines how this research can contribute more effectively to poverty alleviation (particularly in rural areas), a primary goal of the majority of bi-lateral and international development and donor agencies.

Key-words: Governance, participation, accountability, co-management, small-scale fisheries, developing countries, Africa, Asia.

Acronyms

BIDS	Bath Information and Data Service
CBFM	Community-Based Fisheries Management
CBRM	Community-Based Resource Management
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CPR	Common Property Regimes
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
DoF	Department of Fisheries
ECDFPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMT	Irrigation Management Transfer
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPRS	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
NRM	Natural Resource Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHAT	World Humanity Action Trust

Introduction

Governance is about politics and the way power is distributed between different actors within society. It is about how people share decision-making and how this affects their abilities to empower themselves and others. The purpose of this document is to review and critically discuss the role, nature and mechanisms of governance as they operate in small-scale fisheries in developing countries. This document is therefore aimed at fisheries scientists and practitioners, senior staff of government agencies and local, regional, and national decision-makers involved in the planning and implementation of fisheries management in developing countries.

Governance in fisheries – or the lack of it – is a central issue that affects the millions of people engaged in fishing activity, be that in large, industrial operations run mainly within or from developed countries – but also, increasingly, from developing countries – or in smaller-scale, coastal or inland fisheries, operated largely in developing countries. But governance issues in fisheries do not affect only primary stakeholders (fishers, fish traders and processors). They also concern other groups of stakeholders, such as policy-makers, development agencies, researchers, planners, local governments, and traditional leaders, who are engaged formally or informally at different levels in the operation and management. Paradoxically, these different groups are also the ones that shape and determine the form of governance operating at a particular time in a particular place. Governance is not simply ‘decided from above’. Governance is shaped at every level of society. It would be misleading, therefore, to consider these different stakeholders only as passive ‘victims’ of governance failure. They are actors; they are part of the governance process.

Background

Although large-scale (industrial or semi-industrial) fisheries contribute a large part of the overall economic activity within the sector, the focus of this document is on small-scale fisheries and, in particular, on artisanal activities operated within inland (river and adjacent floodplains) areas in developing countries. These fisheries concern hundreds of thousands of professional fishers (usually young men) operating on small, medium or large water-bodies such as rivers, permanent or seasonal ponds, flooded plains and lakes. These professional fishers range from self-employed single operators which can be considered as informal micro-enterprises to wage-paid crew-members employed as part of more formal businesses. But inland artisanal fishing activities are also undertaken by millions of people who engage on a seasonal or opportunistic basis. This includes the ‘non-leading’ members of households (women, children and elderly people) who combine fishing with other domestic activities, but also the fisher-farmers of

floodplain areas who fish full-time during the flood season before returning to farming activities once the water has receded (Sadeque 1992; Adams 1993; Thomas 1996; Purvis 2001). In all these cases the contribution of fishing to household livelihood is substantial. In floodplain areas, for instance, inland fishing is part of a diversified livelihood strategy upon which households rely to: (i) spread economic risk in an uncertain environment (Sarch and Birkett 2000; Béné et al. 2003), and (ii) create synergy between different activities and thereby increase both the return on capital and the income opportunities (Barr 1999; Neiland et al. 2000). When compared with other household activities, the contribution of these fisheries to household cash income often represents a major element in the local economy, often generating more cash than cattle-rearing and sometimes more than crop production (e.g. Turpie et al. 1999).

While fishing can generate significant wealth and act as a catalyst for rural development, in other circumstances it can also become an activity of 'last resort' for the rural poor. When other local economic activities are declining or have been eroded by the general macro-economic context, fisheries will usually provide a safety net for the poor (Panayotou 1982; FAO 1994; FAO 2000). Inland fisheries are particularly important in this context, as they are widely distributed and easily accessible to marginal and/or isolated communities.

Finally, for many poor in rural and also urban or peri-urban areas, fish is also very often the only accessible and/or affordable source of protein. FAO estimates for instance that about 56% of the world population derives 20% or more of their animal protein from fish. The protein contribution of fish exceeds 25% in poor countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia and Uganda, and can reach 90% in remote inland areas. In the Upper Amazon Basin for instance, household surveys indicated that fish provide the bulk of the animal protein consumed, with more than 200 kg of fish being eaten per person per year (Batista et al. 1998).

Despite these central roles played by inland fisheries in sustaining the livelihoods of millions of people in rural areas, there is a growing recognition that present governance systems of inland fisheries are weak and ineffective. In many situations, the fisheries are fished heavily but the poor are denied appropriate access and use, and an increasing number of studies highlight that inland fisheries and the people who use them are facing unprecedented threats. The majority of these threats however originate outside the fisheries sector such as increased competition with livestock for access to permanent or seasonal ponds, alteration of natural river flows as irrigation and/or hydro-power dams change both river ecology and access to the resource by the downstream population, pollution from burgeoning urban populations and industries, and siltation and loss of water quality as a result of deforestation. Central to most of these threats is the issue of water governance, which is now seen as one of the main forces influencing access to, and management

of, aquatic resources, including fisheries (Dunn 1989; Capistrano et al. 1994; Sarch 1998; Van Zalingue et al. 1998; Dugan 2005).

Structure and content of the report

In addition to reviewing and assessing the literature addressing governance *within* fisheries¹ the present document draws extensively from fields *outside* fisheries sciences, including political and social sciences related to development issues. Of particular relevance are the recent works of Jesse Ribot, Robert Jessop, Mick Moore and others at the Institute of Development Studies, and Edwin Brent on various aspects of decentralization, poverty, the participatory approach and governance reforms. A large part of this report has been influenced by their research findings.

A few years ago, Adams (1996a, p.1) stated, "In any fisheries review involving the term governance, recent experience suggests that it is necessary to define what the word actually means". This is still true today and the first section of the report therefore seeks to define the concept of governance. Starting from a broad perspective, Part I of this document reviews and discusses some of the issues related to the definition of governance (and 'good' governance) outside fisheries; it then focuses more specifically on issues of governance in fisheries.

Part II reviews the mechanisms of change in governance. 'Decentralization', as a type of governance reform, is used to identify and discuss issues of governance reforms. We concentrate on cases of decentralization of natural resource management outside fisheries to discuss some of the positive (and negative) consequences of governance reforms. The discussion highlights in particular that, unless a series of stringent conditions are present, decentralization in natural resource management is likely to fail. The lessons drawn from these examples are of great relevance for fisheries governance reforms. The second part of this section focuses on two key mechanisms thought to improve governance, namely participation and accountability. Here again, the review of the literature outside the fisheries sector offers insightful examples and lessons relevant to fisheries policy analysis.

Part III of the report concentrates on governance reform in fisheries. After reviewing the origins of decentralization in fisheries, the discussion focuses on co-management. The report raises, in particular, a series of questions regarding the appropriateness of the concept of co-management – initially developed within the strong state/high institutional capacities context of North American and Scandinavian fisheries – for the artisanal fisheries of developing countries that are

¹ While this review was being finalised, the authors became aware of the research conducted at the same time by Allison and Badjeck (2004) on co-management in African inland fisheries. The comprehensive review of Allison and Badjeck provides a useful complement to the present document.

characterized by a much weaker state and lower institutional capacities. In particular, questions regarding 'who is the fishing community?' and 'who is the legitimate recipient of the newly-devolved power?' in inland Africa cast doubt on the transferability of the concept.

The analysis shows that the conceptualization of co-management as currently presented in the literature does not provide a particularly useful framework with which to analyze success or failure of current fisheries decentralization programs. Drawing upon lessons derived from the literature on governance and participation and presented in the first two sections of the document, the review demonstrates that the conceptualization of co-management, while considering the level of participation as the key explanatory element of success (or failure), neglects some of the other crucial dimensions of governance. In particular we argue that, by assuming that co-management is more 'equitable' by nature, advocates of the model have generally overlooked the social dimensions of co-management, and have not attempted to conceptually or empirically address the question of whether or not co-management effectively induces positive impacts in terms of poverty alleviation.

In Part IV we draw upon the lessons from the reviews and analysis in the first three parts of the report to develop a series of questions for future research. By identifying the links between focused research questions and more global strategic issues, we highlight the role that such research in fisheries can play in the more general debate about governance in natural resource management, and how it can contribute to the overall goal of poverty alleviation.

Approach and methods used

To produce this document an extensive desk-based literature search was undertaken, mainly through on-line searches of the international literature. Specific databases were accessed through the on-line BIDS-Ingenta® system. Material examined included published articles from international journals; working or research papers from research centers (e.g. CGIAR), universities, international institutes and 'think-tanks' (e.g. International Institute for Environment and Development, World Resources Institute); and 'grey' literature, i.e. consultancy reports, documents from international and local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and reports from funding or development agencies (e.g. UK-Department for International Development). The content of websites of major research institutes (e.g. Institute of Development Studies) and international organizations (e.g. UN-organizations, World Bank, European Union) were also examined. In total, more than 280 documents were reviewed and 216 are explicitly referred to. Geographically, the data cover all the regions of the world where issues of natural resource governance have been described and analyzed.

Part I - Governance

'Governance' itself is a contested term. It is used sometimes narrowly by planners and development financiers to refer to the efficient functioning of government with respect to service provision, or to the maintenance of a legal and regulatory framework conducive to private sector growth. In a quite different sense, the term has also been adopted by activists and non-governmental actors ... to describe the role of civil society in protecting against abuse by the state, private sector, and international development agencies" Ratner (2003, p.61)

The concept of governance

The term 'governance' is widely used. Politicians, the media, academics, development agencies, practitioners and even 'ordinary' citizens, all today seem willing to reframe their own interpretations of reality through the lens of this concept. However, as Ratner's quote (above) suggests, and as will be confirmed here, the term 'governance' – in common with such concepts as 'sustainable development' or 'biodiversity' – is now used by many people to mean different things. This confusion comes partly from the fact that this concept is not always well defined by those who use it, which leads some to argue that "it is becoming a ubiquitous 'buzzword' which can mean anything or nothing" (Jessop 1998, p.29). The main objective of this first section is therefore to review some recent works on governance in an attempt to clarify the concept.

Definitions and concepts

Jessop (1998) recalls that the term 'governance' was initially a rather technical concept with two closely related meanings. The first one is an encompassing and broad meaning in which governance refers to "any mode of co-ordination of interdependent activities" (ibid, p.29); the second, more restricted meaning is 'self-organization'. Although governance in the sense of self-organization can be found at three different levels – interpersonal, inter-organizational, and inter-systemic – the term itself is often limited to the second level, i.e., inter-organizational. This second meaning (self-organization) is consistent with recent usages found in the literature, where definitions of governance refer, in a broader sense, to the mode of conduct of specific institutions and organizations with multiple stakeholders, and concentrate in particular on the role of public-private partnerships and other kinds of strategic alliances among autonomous but interdependent organizations. Manor (1999), for instance, defines governance as "the sum of *interactions* between civil society and governments. It is thus a word which clearly has a relational dimension" (emphasis by Manor) in which the key questions focus on how civil society and government inter-relate, and how that inter-relationship might be changed in ways that foster better governance.

Most definitions (e.g. Box 1) emphasize two fundamental components of governance: (a) the 'multi-actors dimension', i.e. the belief that government should not be the only actor involved in the governance process, and (b) the accommodative nature of the process, i.e. the belief that governance should accommodate the interests and expectations of the majority. Interestingly, Jessop (1998) notes that this interpretation of governance (synonymous with inter-relations amongst the state and other actors in the improved conduct of public affairs) is a rather recent one. In its original 'common' interpretation, the term 'governance' had a much narrower meaning, viz. the action or manner of governing. Consequently, for a long time, use of the term was mainly limited to constitutional and legal issues related to the conduct of 'affairs of state'. It was largely used in an overlapping sense with 'government'. "Governance means 'exercise of authority; control' or, more broadly, 'government'" (Brautigam 1991, p.3). Mearns (1996, p.333) points out however that this confusion between governance and government is not particularly helpful, especially "for understanding governance issues outside the arena of formal government administration, a category in which much local-level natural resource management in developing countries may be expected to fall". He argues that, in the absence of government (either because rules have not been devised to deal with specific issues – such as legislation designed to protect the environment – or because weak administrative capacity hinders the enforcement of law and/or

Box 1. Definitions of governance.

"Governance can be seen as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences" (UNDP 1997, p.2-3).

"Governance may be defined as the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and a co-operative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interests" (European Commission 1995, p.2).

"Governance denotes the use of political authority and exercise of control in a society in relation to the management of its resources for social and economic development. This broad definition encompasses the role of public authorities in establishing the environment in which economic operators function and in determining the distribution of benefits as well as the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. (OECD 2003).

"Governance is defined as the systemic framework of social, economic, legal and political structures within which humanity chooses, and/or accepts, to manage its affairs" (World Humanity Action Trust WHAT, 2000).

implementation of policy), governance – or the lack of it – becomes entirely a question of endogenously evolved sets of rules. Mearns therefore suggests distinguishing the two concepts:

“...governance is defined as the exercise of legitimate authority in transacting affairs, and is broadly understood to refer to the maintenance of social order through endogenously evolved and externally imposed rules sets, [while] government by contrast can be defined as ‘the exercise of influence and control, through law and coercion, over apolitical community, constituted into a state within a defined territory” (Healey and Robinson 1992, p.163, quoted in Mearns 1996, p. 300).

With respect to natural resources, government refers to *de jure* sets of rules – as set out in statutory law and state policy relating to natural resource ownership, tenure and use – and the administrative framework through which it is implemented. In contrast, the broader concept of governance refers to the sum of sets that apply *de facto*. It thus includes the customary rules that also influence access to and control over natural resources; the extent to which and manner in which those rules are monitored and enforced; and the traditional or other systems of authority through which they may be legitimized (Mearns 1996, p.300).

Recognizing the distinction between governance and government is therefore critical if the understanding of what constitutes governance is to be improved. Neiland and Béné, however, point out that the close association between ‘governance’ and ‘government’ may represent a useful way to realize the importance of government, the nature of the state and the impact of these two important elements on different countries throughout the world (2003, p.15). Indeed, if we assume that Reynolds² is correct when he concludes “the single most important explanatory variable [of development] is political organization and the administrative competence of government”, then a large part of governance – and thus ‘good governance’ – is strongly related to the capacity of the state and the government to conduct their own affairs, and does not simply depend on the civil society or the market to take over the government’s responsibilities.

Yet, reviews suggest that the state has become increasingly marginalized in the debate on governance, and its perceived inefficacy in the provision of public goods and social services has been recurrently amplified (e.g. Esmail 1997, Ayres 2000). Conversely civil society has become the “darling of rural developers, offering an apparently alternative and acceptable agency to bring about bottom-up development” (Davies and Hossain 1997, p.3). Today much hope is placed on what is conventionally referred to as ‘good governance’ to address the challenging problem of combining economic growth with equity and poverty alleviation (World Bank 1994; IMF 1997). The question, however, that remains, is: what does ensure ‘good governance’?

² Cited in Dethier 1999, p.3.

The other (hidden) half of “good governance”

Although it is clear that ‘good governance’ is a complex subject, various definitions of good governance have started to emerge. “Good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable” (UNDP 1997, p.3). These three elements (participation, transparency, accountability) seem to have wide appeal. However, Moore (2000) challenges this view and asserts that these elements represent only one half of good governance. From Moore’s perspective, the ‘governance’ debate is simply a new term to talk about the old problem of political (under)-development; and what people call ‘bad governance’ is simply synonymous with ‘political underdevelopment’.³

However, as Moore himself admits, referring to ‘political development’ is a risky academic challenge nowadays. There are two main reasons for this. One is that use of the concept would imply assessment of the performance of political institutions. However, there is no consensus about which political institutions should be taken into account. The other is that, within political science and political philosophy there is a deep-rooted and fundamental division in relation to authoritative political institutions, especially to the state. On one side, liberals view state power primarily as a (potential) threat to the wellbeing of citizens, and define ‘good governance’ primarily in terms of legal, constitutional and other arrangements that protect against this threat (Poggi 1978; Roseneau and Czempiel 1992). Consequently, liberals warm to terms like responsiveness, accountability, democracy and participation – i.e. the conventional definition of good governance. By contrast, statist see the state primarily as a means to aggregate power and resources for the collective good. They view the weakness of government – manifested as disorder, vulnerability to external threat, or failure to provide public services – as the prime potential problem. Statists therefore tend to think of ‘good governance’ in terms of arrangements that promote the coherence and effectiveness of the state. They refer to terms like authority, order, capability and autonomy. “Evidently,” Moore regrets, “for ‘diplomatic’ reasons, ‘political development’ has not entered into the contemporary vocabulary of international organizations concerned about issues they label as ‘governance’” (Ibid, p.4).

Beyond this regret, Moore’s analysis is useful in pointing out another ‘hidden’ aspect of the debate on governance, namely, the tendency nowadays for only the liberal dimension of good governance to be promoted to the detriment of the statist approach. In practice, however, these two kinds of governance characteristics (liberal and statist) tend to go hand-in-hand. States which are unable to rule

³ “Political underdevelopment [refers to] a particular set of acute problems: the consequences of the weakness, ineffectiveness, repressiveness and arbitrariness of public authority over significant parts of the poor world” (Ibid, p.2).

many of their citizens or pursue any kind of collective interest in an authoritative fashion (statist criteria) tend also to be relatively arbitrary, despotic and unaccountable (liberal criteria). Conversely, states that display high liberal values (responsiveness, accountability, democracy, etc.) also tend to score high on statist values (authority, order, capability, etc.). Despite this reality, it seems that people focus more readily (or exclusively) on the liberal dimension of good governance, neglecting the other half of the concept.

In the light of this last point, one would certainly agree with Moore that a more useful definition of good governance should be one which recognizes as 'politically underdeveloped' (i.e. with 'weak governance') those countries that score low on both statist and liberal dimensions (ibid p.4). Having said that, it should also be pointed out that in the specific case of natural resource management, in those 'politically underdeveloped' countries it might be useful to step back and ask the question: which of these two dimensions of bad governance is prevalent – the misrule and abuse of resource users by the state (liberal dimension) or the state's inability to manage the resources (statist definition)? Answering this question would help identify policies better suited to addressing issues of 'bad governance' in the domain of natural resource management.

Governance in fisheries

The previous section attempted to clarify the concepts of governance and good governance in a general context. We ended up, however, with a more specific question related to the nature of (good) governance in natural resource management. The present section pursues this discussion in the context of 'fisheries', and seeks to refine the concept of governance within that specific context. We focus on small-scale river fisheries in developing countries. The number of documents addressing the issue of governance in the case of small-scale inland fisheries is rather limited. However, interesting lessons can be drawn from analyses based upon, or referring to, larger-scale fisheries in developed countries.

Management and governance: Are they the same thing?

An interesting starting point for any investigation of fisheries governance is the question raised by Adams (1996a, p.1), viz. "Should we use the terms fisheries management and fisheries governance interchangeably?" In other words, is (fisheries) governance synonymous with (fisheries) management?

For a large number of scholars the two concepts (governance and management) are closely related, or even synonymous. McGlade (2001), in her plea for a change in fisheries governance, states, "...the conclusion is drawn that without a fundamental change in our views *on governance, and hence management*, many of the world's fisheries will fail to survive or remain viable in the future" (McGlade

2001, p.1 – our emphasis). Adams (1996a, p.1) is even more assertive, “Governance in fishery ... must be the way in which the fishery is managed, by whoever is managing it”. However, if it is the case that governance in fisheries is simply “the way fisheries are managed”, then the two terms become interchangeable and the intrusion of ‘governance’ into the fishery science lexicon is not very useful. It is likely to add to the confusion, rather than to improve our understanding of the situation. Indeed, if “management = governance”, then management tools become solutions for governance problems. This intellectual ‘shortcut’ is indeed what was observed recently in the report proposed by the Commission on Fisheries Resources as Part II of the WHAT (World Humanity Action Trust) Report. The Commission, made up of international experts in fisheries, had been asked to express its informed opinion on the question of governance in fisheries. In the first paragraph of the report, it is stated:

“... the Commission concludes that effective governance of fisheries requires the assignment of enforceable rights to shares of fisheries. The importance of rights has been well known for decades, yet rights are either ineffective or non-existent for most of the world’s fisheries. As a result many fishery resources have been overfished and tens of billions of dollars in economic benefits are wasted annually” (Commission on Fisheries WHAT report 2000 p.8).

On the basis of this statement it would be possible for somebody with little or no experience in fisheries to conclude that (a) it is the lack of effective governance that leads to the overexploitation of the resources and the dissipation of economic rent and (b) the solution to this lack of effective governance is the “assignment of enforceable rights”. Yet the dissipation of economic rent (which can indeed ensue from a lack of right enforcement) is an economic issue that has little to do with governance. Assuming such a causal relationship would reflect a misleading connection between economic considerations and political issues. In fact, the enforcement of rights (property but also use rights) has been promoted for decades by fisheries academics for *management* purposes, not *governance* purposes.⁴

Our view is that the two concepts (management and governance) are related but different and that a clear distinction needs to be made if both management and governance issues are to be addressed in an appropriate manner. Management is about action, governance is about politics. Management is about the implementation -in a technocratic sense- of decisions and actions in accordance with rules (these decisions and actions do not have to be restricted to the

⁴ Evidence of this confusion between management and governance is further confirmed by the list of “alternative approaches to fisheries governance” considered by the Commission (ibid, pp.42-47). These alternatives included, (in the order they appear in the report), (a) (End of) subsidies, (b) Ecosystem-based management, (c) Marine protected areas, (d) Artificial reefs, (e) Enhancement and aquaculture (f) Community-based management (g) Co-management or participatory management and (h) Eco-labelling. With the exception of “Community-based management” and “Co-management or participatory management”, both of which address governance issues, all the other “alternatives” are classic management tools.

implementation of the management tools per se, they can also relate to planning and assessment). Governance is about sharing responsibility and power; it is about setting the policy agenda and objectives and about the processes of implementing management actions.

The difficulty of trying to conceptualize management and governance using fisheries as the entry point is evident in the literature. For example, Hanna (1999), in an article entitled 'Strengthening governance of ocean fishery resources', states:

“... a fishery has economic, social, cultural, biological and ecological components. The scope of fishery governance may encompass one, some or all of these categories and except for rare situations where marine ecosystems are relatively untouched, will be forced to deal either directly or indirectly with the tradeoffs between them” (p.279).

However, an alternative view is that governance has nothing to do with many of these components (e.g. ecological processes or biology). The proof is that usual indicators of good governance are “transparency”, “accountability”, and “participation”; they are not “sustainability”, “biodiversity” or “conservation”. If it is correct that one potential consequence of (bad) governance in fisheries is the over-exploitation of the resources, it can equally be argued that a ‘perfect’ governance system – i.e. one with total accountability, full participation, and absolute transparency – can also lead to the complete depletion or destruction of (natural) resources if this is the objective initially agreed by society. Governance is one thing; management (and conservation) of the natural resources is another. Mixing them together benefits neither the resource management agenda, nor the governance debate.

The distinction between management and governance can also be reasserted using a more formalized approach. In their conceptual analysis of property rights and common property resources, Schlager and Ostrom (1992) attempt to clarify some of the concepts used in natural (common-pool) resources research. In their framework,⁵ they distinguish three levels of rules, which they term ‘operational level’, ‘collective-choice level’, and ‘constitutional-choice level’. Every one of these levels is associated with different rights. The “right to management” — defined as “the right to regulate internal use patterns and transform the resource by making improvement” (p.251) — is a right (along with the “right of exclusion” and the “right of alienation”) that takes place at the collective-choice level. Schlager and Ostrom state “The right of management is a collective-choice right (...). Individuals who hold rights of management have the authority to determine *how, when* and *where* harvesting from a resource may occur” (ibid, p.251, authors’ italics). But the right to determine *who* hold these management rights belongs to the third level

⁵ See also Kiser and Ostrom (1982) and Ostrom et al. (1994, pp.46-47).

– i.e. the “constitutional level”. Constitutional-choice rules are about “determining *who* is eligible and the rules to be used in crafting the sets of collective-choice rules” (p.46 in Ostrom et al., 1994 – our emphasis). Devising collective-choice rules — in other words, deciding *who* can manage — is, therefore, a constitutional-choice action. This is what we call governance, i.e. the mechanisms and processes by which power and decision-making are allocated amongst the different actors. The constitutional-choice level is therefore the level at which governance arrangements are designed and/or modified, whereas the collective-choice level is where management rights are designed and/or modified. Management and governance are exercised at different levels.

New approaches to governance analysis

The previous section has emphasized that, although ‘natural resource *management*’ and ‘natural resource *governance*’ are closely connected and share common elements, they are different concepts that need to be distinguished both theoretically and empirically. What is requested therefore, to improve our understanding about issues related to *governance* in fisheries, is a shift in emphasis away from natural resource *management* sciences toward sciences that are more suitable to analyze and address political and power issues, such as political economy, political ecology, policy analysis, or even socio-anthropology.

Interestingly, the increasing attention being given to the concept of governance is occurring at the same time as an important evolution in research themes within various other disciplines. Policy analysis, for instance, has recently moved away from legislative and administrative analysis and toward analysis of interactions between actors, networks and the balance and distribution of power among these different actors (Hill 1997; John 1998; Keeley and Sconnes 1999). In that sense, it comes closer to concerns raised by scholars of political science, for whom power and its distribution are considered as a central element in the analysis of natural resource management (see, for instance, Broad 1995; Brown and Rosendo 2000; Le Billon 2000; Robbins 2000). Furthermore, ‘new’ science, such as political ecology, has recently emerged, with the explicit objective of analyzing the interactions between society and the environment, especially how the environment — and societal issues related to environment, e.g. exploitation, pollution, access, etc., — are politicized and how these issues affect the welfare of those who depend on natural resources for their livelihoods (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987; Greenberg and Park 1994; Bryant 1998; Stonish and Bailey 2000; Castree 2002). These different sciences (political economy, political ecology and policy analysis), have, however, remained very marginalized and been almost ignored within the ‘bio-economic/management science-focused’ domain of fisheries research. It is increasingly evident that these disciplines offer

new perspectives that represent the foundations for a better understanding of natural resource, and fisheries, governance.

Finally, it should be observed that there is an increasing level of international cooperation between scholars and development practitioners from developed and developing countries. Most early development projects focused on providing technical assistance to countries in areas such as agriculture and fisheries, in order to increase production and output. However, the variable performance of these projects, and the need to seek alternative strategies for sustainable development, have led to a broadening of the approach to development projects – including work in the areas of social development, institutional design and capacity-building. Inevitably, this work has involved a consideration and analysis of governance. In many developing countries, international projects and their local counterpart organizations have built up a detailed pragmatic knowledge of governance issues by working and attempting to change the system *from within*, for example, by identifying and targeting the constraints to natural resource management within national bureaucracies. The empirical knowledge and pragmatic experience built up through these activities, and now well-established in international and local organizations and programs, represents a valuable resource for designing future actions in the area of governance reform, and mechanisms must be found to access, learn from, and use this information and knowledge, which rarely appears in the international academic literature.

Part II - Changes in governance

Good governance is essential for achieving most development goals. Increasingly, more attention is being given to identifying the *changes* in governance that can improve the ways public and state affairs are conducted. From a conceptual point of view, however, it is important to distinguish between governance *reform* and governance *mechanisms*.

Reforms concern changes in the governance system itself, i.e. changes in the *form* of governance, usually aimed at shifts in the distribution of decision-making power amongst different actors. For instance, decentralization is a governance reform; it affects the system of governance, in particular the *structures* of the institutions involved in governance and the *distribution of power* between the different actors (usually through modifications of existing law and promulgation of new ones). Box 2 illustrates a case of governance reform in wildlife management in Botswana.

Box 2. Governance reform: The case of Botswana wildlife management

Botswana has seen a decade of policy development aimed at achieving community-based control, especially in the wildlife sector. The Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act of 1992 laid the foundation for Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). Community Hunting Areas, defined by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks and the Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing, are the “units of production” for which community-based organizations can apply for leases. The communities have to organize themselves into representative and legal bodies such as trusts or co-operatives. A clearly laid-out constitution has to be developed and appropriate by-laws defined. After the communities have prepared land-use and management plans conforming to the Wildlife Management Area regulations, a 15-year lease can be obtained. While the policies and regulations for wildlife-use are highly progressive, those for other resources are not. Few comprehensive development strategies have been designed for community tourism (under the Department of Tourism) or for woodlands, fisheries and other products (Ministry of Agriculture).

Source: Shackleton and Campbell (2001)

Mechanisms, on the other hand (in the sense ‘mechanisms which improve governance’) affect, or act upon, governance *processes*. For this, they do not necessarily require a change in the form of governance – they are more likely to affect the governance *level*. Accountability, for instance, is a mechanism affecting governance; participation is another. These different mechanisms can be promoted without necessarily inducing changes in the governance system, but still lead to better governance. Box 3 illustrates an example in Mali where local governance was improved in rangeland management without modifying the existing distribution of power, by improving information flow and introducing conflict resolution mechanisms.

Box 3: Change in governance mechanisms: The example of the PSB programme in Burkina

The GTZ-supported Burkina Sahel Programme (PSB) was initiated in 1991 to improve natural resource management and people's livelihoods. The project initially followed a participatory, community-based land use planning approach (*gestion des terroirs*), but found it inadequate to deal with the social and ecological complexities of the region. Pastoralists who seasonally moved livestock to regions of different climate were not represented, social relations between groups were affecting project outcomes in a way that project staff was unable to understand, and the management of common-pool assets was problematic. Activities were therefore put 'on hold' for a year while the project approach and methods were reviewed and a new strategy developed that focused on social groups rather than territorial units.

With conflicts and rivalries simmering amongst almost every ethnic group in Beiga, the challenge was to create a situation in which all stakeholders would not only agree to participate in the consultative process but also to respect each other's rights to voice their needs and feelings. A consultative committee emerged, with representation from multiple villages, hamlets, and other stakeholder groups. It appeared to be instrumental in, for example, resolving disputes over management of water pumps – which had soured relationships between the groups – and has set up a system for resolving disputes over damage to fields. Negotiating skills were the key to greater autonomy for the committee, and the expertise gained through its dealings with technical and financial partners has enabled it to mobilize resources for micro-projects on socio-economic issues and on the protection of natural resources.

In its first year, the committee drew up a set of rules for the use of resources, such as post-harvest grazing, bouli (man-made water holes), salt licks, and the protection of trees and natural water points. So-called 'outpost committees' and representatives from each hamlet are responsible for following up and enforcing regulations. The new approach acknowledged the local tensions and rivalries and other historic origins.

The willingness of people to confront the underlying historical, social and cultural factors in current resource use and management practices was an important factor contributing to the success of the consultative process. Other factors include finding appropriate entry points for discussion through establishing platforms for negotiation and consultation, building partnerships and supporting legitimate local leaders and resource people.

Source: Banzharf et al. (2000)

In the next two sections, governance reforms and governance mechanisms will be discussed separately.

Governance reforms: The case of decentralization

In reviewing governance reforms, it is essential to consider the case of decentralization. Not only is decentralization a governance reform by nature,⁶ but it is also a primary focus of the current reform paradigm promoted by international (donor or development) agencies, international and national NGOs, national governments and a large part of 'civil society' in both developed and developing countries. A rich international literature has developed on the many forms and intents of these reforms

⁶ Some would argue that decentralisation is a policy reform. This is incorrect. In a decentralisation process, policy reforms are the means, i.e. the instruments, while governance, political, economic and/or institutional changes are the end.

and their development impacts. Among the many incentives to decentralize, one of the most common is a desire to improve the efficiency of government administration and delivery of public services (Esmail 1997; Goldman 1998; Ayres 2000).

Rationale for decentralization

Conventionally, the literature recognizes that two main ‘schools of thought’ have largely contributed to the promotion of decentralization. They are based, however, on rather different theoretical and/or philosophical grounds and pursue different, if not incompatible, objectives. One school relies on public choice theory and its concern for the provision of public services and economic efficiency, the other on the agenda of donor and international agencies and their objectives of good governance and the empowerment of the poor.

Public choice analysts contend that, under conditions of reasonably free choice, the provision of some public goods (e.g. health, education, public transport) is economically more efficient when a large number of local actors are involved than when the central government is the only provider. According to this approach, decentralization, by contracting services out to the private and voluntary sectors, is thought to free providers of cumbersome government hierarchies, and the services will be more efficiently provided because, it is argued, their provision will be linked to performance-based indicators. Furthermore, in the very few circumstances where it may be critical for the state to manage and allocate resources, public choice theory states that this is best done at a decentralized level, so that services can be matched more closely to demand. In particular, in developing countries, where there is a lack of infrastructure and public services outside the national capital, decentralization is seen as *the way* to improve the provision and maintenance of these infrastructures and services. In fact, as remarked by Rondinelli et al. (1989, p.58), in public choice theory the rationale of and/or justification for decentralization has rarely, or never, been questioned; the question focuses rather on the best (i.e. most cost-effective) way to implement decentralization.

Another major promoter of decentralization reforms has been the donors’ agenda, especially in promoting ‘good governance’ reforms. During the 1980s, donors began to pressure developing countries to promote good governance through democratization and decentralization. Decentralization was presented as a pre-condition for effective rural development (Aiyar et al. 1995; Esmail 1997; Goldman 1998; ECDPM 2001). In this approach, participation and decentralization were considered as instruments to enable the inclusion of the greatest number of citizens – in particular the most marginalized and poorest in terms of decision-making and access to socio-economic resources. The World Bank, for instance, in its World Development Report on the role of “the state in a changing world” (1997, p.105) affirms that decentralization is a means of “bringing the state closer

to the people". As such, decentralization is seen as a central tool for poverty reduction (e.g. ECDPM 1999; World Bank 2000; IFAD 2001) and a strong and effective way to promote 'good governance'. For illustration, in its Guidance Sheets on Policy Reforms, the Department for International Development (DFID 1999, section 5.5) states:

"Many examples of decentralization, or more broadly 'designing structure and programmes such that they strengthen the hand of local-level civil society advocates for the poor' have proven positive. Transparency in central-local disbursements, incentives for good performance, and information sharing on the performance of local government have increased accountability and responsiveness to the needs of poor and marginalized people".

Baumann (2000), however, argues that, in so far as these can be identified, donors' views are influenced by public choice theory and the need for economic pressure on governments in relation to structural adjustment. He also points out that the World Development Report argues that the rationale for decentralization is similar to the rationale for 'liberalization, privatization, and other market reforms' and its argument for political decentralization on the grounds of economic efficiency.⁷

Cutting across all these reforms, however, is the idea that some form of increased public participation in local environment and development decision-making will increase policy effectiveness. "Owing partly to the implementation failures of non-participatory development approaches in the past and partly to pressures from civil society, a broad rhetoric of participation has therefore developed among international donors and, increasingly, among governments" (Dupar and Barenoch 2002, p.41). The popularity of the concept is reflected in its institutionalization in the World Bank, where a major working group has been dedicated to participation (World Bank 1998) and the World Bank's rural development strategy has explicitly promoted a highly decentralized and participatory approach since the end of the 1990s (Piriou-Sall 1998).

Natural resource management and decentralization

In the natural resource management sectors, recognition of the inadequacy of governmental agencies in ensuring sustainable practices has provided an argument for greater involvement of the local communities and civil society in the management of those resources (Lawry 1990; Ostrom 1990; Vedeld 1992; IIED 1994; Mearns 1996; Ainslie 1999; Campbell et al. 1999). Decentralization programs in ministries or departments of agriculture, forestry, water, and fisheries

⁷ World Bank 1997 p.120

Box 4: Decentralization in NRM: Irrigation Management Transfer (IMT) programmes across the world

Largely driven by government fiscal shortages and a common inability to raise sufficient revenues from collection of water charges, an increasing number of governments around the world have adopted programs to devolve responsibilities for irrigation management to water user associations. Consistent with general structural adjustment strategies, irrigation management transfer (IMT) programmes have been supported by the major international development banks. IMT is taking place in many countries in Asia, Africa, the Americas and the Pacific. Early efforts to transfer management from government to farmer organizations occurred in the USA, France, Colombia and Taiwan in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Management transfer became a national strategy in developing countries only in the 1980s and 1990s, with Chile, Peru, Mexico, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Senegal, Mauritania, Niger, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Sudan, Somalia, Madagascar, Turkey, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Lao, Vietnam, China, Indonesia and the Philippines. This has been referred to as 'turnover' in Indonesia and the Philippines, 'management transfer' in Mexico and Turkey, 'privatization' in Bangladesh, 'disengagement' in Senegal, 'post responsibility system' in China, 'participatory management' in India and Sri Lanka, 'commercialization' in Nigeria and 'self-management' in Niger.

Source: Vermillon (2001)

have been initiated in dozens of countries across the world as illustrated for water in Box 4.

In NRM, the plea for devolution is usually grounded in three arguments, (i) the limited effectiveness of government institutions in managing natural resources, especially at the local level; (ii) the ability of local institutions to develop well-adapted rules and regulations that enable them to effectively manage natural resources; and (iii) the cost-effectiveness of devolution due to a reduction in transaction costs associated with the management of common resources (Berkes 1989; Vedeld 1992; Baland and Platteau 1996). In addition, NRM is believed to be a better target for decentralization because natural resources are seen as sources of wealth, which can be used to finance both local government and development. In contrast, other sectors that are frequently decentralized – such as health or education – are seen as sinks rather than sources of income.

Devolution of managerial functions in natural resources sectors may also be more appropriate than devolution in other sectors for two main reasons. The first reason is that natural resources are often locally specific, diverse, and with multiple uses, and so designing their management requires local knowledge. The second reason is that access to natural resources involves consideration of existing, new, and often multiple overlapping claims that can generate conflicts requiring local mediation. Local governments or institutions therefore, are in a better position than centralized ones to deliver these functions. Altogether, these conditions explain why many natural resource management decisions are best made at the local level. The responsibility for making those decisions can be transferred to local authorities, so that power over natural resource management and use can

Box 5: An NRM decentralization success story: The case of forest management in Nepal

In Nepal, official support for community-based management of forestry began with several pilot projects in the late 1970s, and was strengthened by the 1995 Forest Act, which transferred full managerial control over local forest areas to Forest User Groups (FUGs). Over 11 000 FUGs have been registered, managing some 900 000 ha of forest and including over one million households (predominantly in middle hill areas), which is a substantial proportion of the country's total forest-adjacent population. To ensure that FUGs could ultimately derive strength through higher-level collective action, as well as learn from the experiences of other comparable groups, in 1996 the National Federation of Community Forestry Users (FECOFUN) was founded as a national-level networking organization, representing over 2 700 user groups from at least 60 of Nepal's 75 districts. It has become a mass social movement, with 3.5 million members - nearly half of the nation's 8 million community forestry participants.

Mostly managing degraded forests, these FUGs have achieved remarkable successes in both forest regeneration and in strengthening livelihoods by improving poor people's access to all kinds of key assets, including social and financial capital, skills, infrastructure, and forest resources. A current concern, however, is that there are now pressures from state forest officials to gain more control over the regenerated forests and to prevent the spread of community forestry to the lowland forest areas that have stronger potential for production of high-value timber. Local government bodies have also begun complaining that FUGs have better assets than they do.

Source: Thin and van Gardingen (2003)

support and be supported by local democratic processes. One example where decentralization may be considered to have led to relatively successful management of natural resources is the case of forest decentralized management programme in Nepal (see Box 5).

Despite these positive aspects, the literature also reports a great number of examples where decentralization reforms involving natural resources have been problematic or even disastrous (Beach 2001; Ngaido and Kirk 2001; Campbell and Shackleton 2002; Ribot 1999, 2002; Lind and Cappon 2001; Dupar and Badenoch 2002; Oyono 2002; Wily 2002). Those different studies demonstrate in particular that from a political and institutional side, three policy constraints can undermine the potential benefits of increased local representation. Those constraints are: (i) the lack of clarity about how to implement the reforms; (ii) insufficient flexibility to allow a range of local environmentally beneficial natural resources practices; and (iii) the central governments' unwillingness to 'hand back' productive natural resources to local people. These issues of political economy and institutional constraints will be dealt with in greater detail in the next section. At the same time, the literature also emphasizes that policy or institutional issues are not the only types of problems faced by NRM decentralization reforms. Ecological or biophysical constraints may also be important. One obvious and fundamental constraint is that ecosystems (watersheds, forest, rangeland or river ecosystems) rarely fall within a single local political or administrative jurisdiction.

In practice, decentralization reforms in NRM might not always have achieved their initial objectives (Campbell and Shackleton 2002; Dupar and Badenoch 2002; Mearns and Bruce 2002; Ribot 2002). In particular, NRM decentralization results frequently in the creation of more local conflicts and social tensions (very often adding to the original ones) (e.g. Ngaido and Kirk 2001), and leads to a range of environmental externalities, waste or even overexploitation of the resources (e.g. Campbell 1997; Beach 2001; Mearns 2002). Recent reviews of decentralization in Cameroon, Indonesia, and Uganda, for instance, reveal that transferring use rights to local bodies has resulted in overexploitation of timber, primarily due to the needs of local governments and local people for income (Oyono 2002; Resosudarmo 2002). In fact, as pointed out by Ribot (2002), there is no reason to expect that local authorities will not convert natural wealth into financial wealth, especially where cash is in short supply and is viewed as more valuable than standing forests. Underlying this is the issue of revenue shortage and fiscal pressure faced by a large number of decentralized governments. A very good illustration of this is the case of China, where recent studies demonstrated how an effective administrative decentralization that is not supported by effective financial decentralization may lead to devastating results in terms of resource conservation (see Box 6).

Box 6: Constraint to successful decentralization: The issue of revenue shortages and fiscal pressures

China's fiscal decentralization reforms, enacted in 1980, required local governments to generate their own revenue for development activities. This step strongly increased the incentives for local governments (from the province to the township level) to pursue quick revenue-generating activities. Much work on the subject of China's decentralization has emphasized how local government's focus on revenue generation has detracted from economic growth objectives and encouraged devastating environmental short-sightedness. Fiscal pressures in other areas have led local governments to promote cash crops in monoculture plantations without regard for social or environmental factors. Cash-strapped local governments are not motivated to enforce national pollution control laws (Campbell 1997); indeed, they see local livelihoods and environmental management as being at odds. Officials believe that policing industries for good environmental performance distracts them from more important development priorities. Self interest may be involved too; local officials often have interests in privately held Township and Village Enterprises (TVEs), which comprise the most polluting actors in China's rural landscape (Jahiel 1998). Revenue shortages also discourage local governments from investing in environmental infrastructure, such as wastewater treatment and solid waste collection and disposal (Beach 2001).

Source: Dupar and Badenoch (2002)

Ironically, in some countries a backlash is already forming against natural resource decentralization reforms. Environmental agencies in Uganda, Indonesia, Botswana, Nicaragua, and elsewhere have argued that too much decentralization has caused damage or overexploitation (reported in Lind and Cappon 2001; Ribot 2002; Shackleton et al. 2002). Some would certainly consider that these calls to

re-establish central control over natural resources are premature, but whether or not it is justified, these examples are of great interest for governance reform in fisheries, and in particular for co-management (as will be discussed in Part III of this document). The calls show that the disadvantages of decentralization should not be overlooked or considered exceptions. Some would even argue that they are the general rule, while success is the exception. In any case, lessons can be learned from these experiences of decentralization.

Lessons from past experiences

The transfer issue, or the “dilemma of decentralized rural development”

The transfer of power to accountable and representative local institutions is a necessary element of effective decentralization. However, in the environmental arena, central governments’ resistance to decentralization can be considerable and result in transfer of only limited and tightly specified powers or consist in imposing non-representative local institutions to receive those powers. As a result, authority over natural and financial resources allocated to local authorities is often extremely limited and highly controlled through excessive monitoring and the enforcement of management planning requirements. As illustrated in the case of wildlife local units in Zambia (see Box 7), these powers are also often transferred to local institutions and organizations that are not systematically accountable to local populations, and are instead often upwardly accountable to central authorities.

Box 7: Lack of accountability: The example of the wildlife local units in Zambia

In Zambia, local government districts (District Councils) and sub-districts (Ward Development Committees) have little direct involvement in NRM. This responsibility is assumed by a set of organizations aligned to the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Services (DNPWS). These organizations vary between Game Management Areas (GMAs), resulting in a complex and confusing institutional set-up. In the Mumbwa GMA, for instance, the Wildlife Management Authority caters for stakeholders at district level and consists of district councilors, parks wardens, chiefs, indunas [local customary leaders], members of parliament, prominent personalities, district representatives of line ministries, and unit leaders. The unit leaders are government officers from the DNPWS, trained to administer the program in GMAs. They have two (conflicting) roles. On the one hand they are community extension officers, conducting sub-authority meetings and coordinating development projects, and on the other they enforce the law on behalf of the state. They are seen as extensions of the state whose functions are to coerce and pacify local people. Consequently, the attitude of community members towards CBNRM is largely negative. In many areas, local people perceive the wildlife programme as a wildlife department initiative, rather than a community-based programme.

Source: Shackleton and Campbell (2001)

The literature also indicates that when self-interested, non-representative or autocratic institutions such as interest groups, NGOs or customary authorities are chosen as overseers, rather than representative bodies, there is a risk of strengthening their autocracy and even weakening democracy (Fisher 1997; Kassibo 2000; Shackleton and Campbell 2001). This is the “dilemma of decentralized rural development” described by Abraham and Platteau (2000). Drawing upon Esman and Uphoff (1984), Abraham and Platteau describe the current strategy of decentralization adopted by central government and/or donor agencies, which, in the absence of appropriate human resources, consists of channeling down resources through the ‘second-best’ (by default) recipients, namely the local leaders. In their essay they argue that:

“The method generally used by donor agencies to circumvent the scarcity of institutional organizers consists of asking rural communities or specific groups to ‘elect’ leaders. For a reason well-explained by Esman and Uphoff (1984), however, such a solution is bound to produce perverse results and to be self-defeating: ‘The most prominent members are invariably selected and then given training and control over resources for the community, without any detailed and extended communication with the other members about objectives, rights or duties. Creating the groups through these leaders, in effect, established a power relationship that is open to abuse.’ (Esman and Uphoff, 1984, p.249). The dilemma of how to achieve rapid and visible results with a limited numbers of institutional organizers is thus translated into another, equally tricky quandary: acting through local leaders enables outside agencies to channel considerable amount of resources towards rural communities in a short span of time, yet at the same time it creates a serious risk of an enormous misuse of these resources by local elites which stand reinforced in the process. In lineage-based societies local chiefs and elders from dominant lineages are ideally positioned to thus ‘capture’ the benefits of decentralized development programs.” (Abraham and Platteau 2000, p. 20-21)

Elite capture

Elite capture is probably the most frequent pitfall in decentralization reform. Both ‘grey’ and published literatures provide many examples of how local elite groups have (re)captured the benefits of decentralization projects for their own use (Moore and Putzel 1999; Dreze and Sen 1995; Abraham and Platteau 2000; Crook and Sverrisson 2001). This elite capture phenomenon is usually the result of power being devolved where institutional capacities are lacking within the community. Chiefs, headmen and other so-called “customary authorities” are often targeted by central governments, donors, and NGOs as appropriate local authorities in decentralization efforts. However, as highlighted by Devereux (1996), Johnson (1997), Moore and Putzel (1999) Leach et al., (1999) Luckham et al. (1999) and many others, customary authorities are rarely democratic. They often inherit their positions, and their degree of local accountability depends on their personalities and local social and political histories. Furthermore, customary authorities are notorious for entrenched gender inequalities and for favoring divisive, ethnic-based membership (Zufferey 1986; Colchester 1994; Baland and

Platteau 1996; Pretty and Ward 2001). In those circumstances it is not surprising that both 'grey' and published literatures provide many examples on how local elite groups have captured the benefits of decentralization projects for their own use, thus reducing considerably the potential positive effect of the reforms for the rest of the local population (Moore and Putzel 1999; Dreze and Sen 1995; Abraham and Platteau 2000; Crook and Sverrisson 2001).

The issue of lack of representativeness of decentralized bodies

Customary authorities are not the only possible recipients of newly devolved power; other groups in the local arena are often empowered in decentralization reforms. These include local councils, membership organizations, single-purpose committees and other user groups. These organizations, which are often empowered as if they were representative, are not always democratically elected. Willmann (1993) notes, for instance, that, in general, the representatives on councils, committees, and associations are usually not elected by a formal voting process but become members due to their social, economic, and lineage position in the community, clan or tribe. This was clearly the case in the South Indian villages studied by Wade (1988), where local councils were typically controlled by members from the dominant castes and by wealthier landowners. In some other cases, even locally elected bodies may not be representative of society as a whole, in particular with respect to gender. With the exception of Uganda and South Africa, women generally remain excluded from these local bodies in most parts of Africa. The Ghanaian District Assemblies (DAs) provide a vivid illustration of this type of exclusion (see Box 8).

Box 8: Lack of responsiveness of local bodies: The case of the District Assemblies in Ghana

Ghana's District Assemblies (DAs) were created initially to enhance electoral participation and access and representation of groups normally excluded, such as the non-educated, farmers, traders and artisans. Experience shows, however, that the social composition of the elected DAs remains distinctly dualist, even after several years, with predictable over-representation of the well educated – but with increasing representation of less privileged groups. For instance, 45% of all elected members in the first election in 1989 were teachers or civil servants, and in the poor Northern District studied by Crook and Manor it was 74% in 1992-93 (Crook and Manor 1998). In spite of the positive effects on public participation that the DAs have achieved since their creation, their responsiveness to popular needs, particularly to the most underprivileged in rural areas, has not been good. In the two districts surveyed in 1992 by Crook and Manor, 70% of respondents felt that DAs did not respond to their needs, and only 22% felt it was better than the previous non-elected system. Similar results were recorded even after extra resources were allocated to the DAs through the DA Common Funds in 1994 (Ayee 1996). As Crook concludes: "the Ghana case is particularly interesting as it illustrates clearly the proposition that 'participation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for greater responsiveness'" (Crook 2002, p.4). With respect to gender issue, Crook notes that only 1.6% of members of the first assemblies were women.

Source: Shackleton and Campbell (2001)

NGOs and decentralization

Grassroots groups and NGOs are usually expected to play a major role in rural development and in decentralization and governance reforms, acting as facilitators, power-brokers or mediators between communities and government agencies, or among communities and other actors (e.g. the private sector). In many cases, their influence and impact have been positive, or even crucial. However, their role needs to be examined critically. Fisher (1997) argues that the NGO field is a “heterogeneous one encompassing a wide range of groups with different ideological agendas” (Fisher 1997, p.458). In particular it should be borne in mind that many international NGOs, and the national or local counterpart they are supporting, are “inspired by a particular vision of the society they wish to develop” (Tandon 1994, p.53). These values differ – they may see themselves ‘humanizing’ structural adjustment or privatization, helping constituents adjust to top-down development projects, or inducing changes in social and economic orders – but they are not value-neutral; their primary motivations are beliefs about what is right and wrong. Although NGOs may present ethical judgments as neutral standards of values that stand outside political contest, these judgments are essentially political. Perhaps, more importantly with respect to the issue of decentralization and governance reforms, these organizations may also not be accountable to, or representative of, local people in a systematic manner. Transferring powers to these organizations cannot be considered more democratic or representative than privatization. The development literature provides examples of cases where membership organizations have failed to sustain their development efforts, or have benefited only a privileged minority (Cousins 1993; Mearns 1996; Botchway 2001; Toulmin and Cotula 2003).

Mechanisms toward better governance

So far, the discussion has focused on governance reform, and in particular on decentralization as one way to improve governance. Reforms, however, are not the only road to change. Even if the governance system remains unchanged, mechanisms can be created that may help to improve the overall quality of governance. Participation has been recognized as one such mechanism, accountability as another. These two concepts are reviewed below. Here again, lessons can be learned and questions asked from a fisheries governance perspective. Some of the issues and concepts discussed here will be of direct relevance in Part III, which reviews co-management experiences in fisheries.

Participation

Participation and the associated concept of “empowerment” lie at the centre of contemporary discourses on development. No longer limited to government reforms, participation has become a key element in the rhetoric concerning

almost every major issue (development, environmental conservation, etc). Today, the concept has taken on the characteristics of a panacea; academic studies, policy statements, NGOs or international organization recommendations etc. that promote the benefits of (good) governance, make “participation” one, if not the core element of development. In fact, as pointed out by Michener, it seems that nowadays “No respectable project can not use this word, nor can get funded without some reference to this concept” (Michener, 1998, p.2105).

It appears that the strong support which has been given to ‘participatory approaches’ stems from the same paradigmatic shift that supported the governance shift. Traditional ‘top-down’ management systems were perceived as inducing inertia, rent-seeking behavior and corruption; and private markets supporting unequal asset distribution and monopoly power were recognized as exposing the poor to exploitative processes, low wage jobs or marginal forms of self-employment. In this context, participatory projects and methods were presented as a possible response to these problems. Indeed, where some stringent conditions are met, there is evidence that participatory approaches can help to reduce poverty and exclusion, by giving local communities direct control over some services and resources, and allowing them to exercise more influence over decision-making processes. For instance, Ostrom’s study of common-pool resource management demonstrated that user groups “can organize themselves voluntarily to retain the residuals of their own efforts” in order to manage collective water sources, fisheries, and forests, thus producing more efficient and equitable results than either the state or market system (Ostrom 1990, p.25).

The positive influence of participation was also confirmed by the World Bank through its water management study which found that participation in water management was crucial to “overall project effectiveness” and to “individual and community empowerment” (Narayan 1994, p.viii). Strong evidence also supports the efficacy of participatory research and action programmes designed to involve potential users in decision-making, monitoring and evaluation processes. According to Chambers (1995), these activities have shown that local people do understand the social and political conditions under which they live, and possess relevant technical knowledge for the solution of many local problems; that involving them in project development allows agencies to acquire better understanding of local needs than do traditional surveys; and that these methods can reduce dependence on outside experts and empower local people.

Typology of participation

Definitions of participation differ, and this affects the way observers perceive the benefits of a participatory approach. Michener (1998) classifies participatory approaches according to the nature of these benefits. Her classifications range

from planner-centered to people-centered approaches. A planner-centered participatory approach focuses on administrative and financial efficiency. From this perspective, the motivation for popular participation is that beneficiary involvement makes projects more likely to succeed in meeting their objectives: if local people participate actively in project planning and implementation, they are more committed to its success. Participation increases local people's acceptance of new policies and technologies promoted by outsiders. Through beneficiary participation, indigenous knowledge can be tapped and local labor, and financial and in-kind contributions can lower the implementation costs.

By contrast, the people-centered approach is the perception that participation is both a means and an end in itself. It is a means to meet locally felt needs and redistribute scarce resources, but also has an inherent value as a process that empowers the poor by enhancing local management capacity, increasing confidence in indigenous potential, and raising collective consciousness. It is close to the concept of 'deep' participation initially promoted by Chambers (1983) and others, where greater participation is seen as way to foster emancipation, and to empower the deprived and the excluded "to do their own analysis, to take command, to gain in confidence and to take their own decisions" (Chambers 1995, p.30).

Cohen and Uphoff's (1980) typology (Table 1) has an applied focus and includes not only different types of participation but also 'who' participates and 'how'. These authors suggest organizing the typology of participation according to the phases in the project cycle (evaluation, benefits, implementation and decision-making), although the phases are not necessarily sequential. The 'who' dimension divides the actors involved into local residents, local leaders, government personnel, and foreign personnel. The 'how' dimension describes various mechanisms by which participation can take place, its form, extent and impact.

Table 1. Cohen and Uphoff's (1980) classification of participation	
Types of participation	Participation in decision-making Participation in implementation Participation in benefits Participation in evaluation
Who participates?	Local residents Local leaders Government personnel Foreign personnel
How is participation occurring?	Basis of participation Form of participation Extent of participation Effect of participation

Several other classifications of participation have been developed, many of which focus on the balance of decision-making power exercised by managers or planners, as opposed to users of a service. Deshler and Sock's (1985) typology, for instance, distinguishes different levels of participation based on the extent of control or power. The scale ranges from pseudo-participation (or the "manipulation of the beneficiaries by development professionals to meet the needs of the elites") to genuine participation, in which participants are empowered by having control over program policy and management.

Many of these classification systems underline the importance of the relative power of outsiders *versus* beneficiaries as a key characteristic in defining participation. The analysis of these classifications suggests that the critical issue here is the distinction between strong and weak participation processes, based on the degree of control that users can exercise over agencies. Weak participation involves 'consulting or informing' the users, while strong participation means 'partnership with, or ceding control to' them. This weak/strong participation gradient is in fact close to the World Bank's 1992 continuum, which ranged from 'information sharing' with beneficiaries, through 'consultation' and 'decision-making' to 'initiating action' (Table 2).

Weak versus strong participation: Which one is best?

In practice, all interventions operate along the continuum that stretches from weak to strong, and all participatory approaches are driven by the best of intentions. This has led to welcome efforts to adapt projects to local needs, and

Table 2. The World Bank's four levels of intensity in popular participation
<i>Information-sharing.</i> Designers and managers of World Bank-supported operations may share information with beneficiaries in order to facilitate collective or individual action. Information-sharing is a form of low-level participation, but it can have a positive impact on project outcomes to the extent that it equips people to understand and perform their tasks better.
<i>Consultation.</i> When people are not only informed but also consulted on key issues, the level of intensity of popular participation increases. There is an opportunity here for people, especially disadvantaged people, to interact and provide feedback to the development agency. Through this feedback the agency can take into account both upstream and downstream issues in the design and implementation stages.
<i>Decision-making.</i> A still higher level of participation intensity may be said to occur when people, notably disadvantaged people, have a decision-making role in matters of policy, project design and implementation. Decisions may be made exclusively by disadvantaged people or jointly with others on specific issues or aspects relating to a policy or project.
<i>Initiating action.</i> When people, especially disadvantaged people, are able to take the initiative in terms of actions and decisions pertaining to a World Bank-supported operation, the intensity of popular participation may be said to have reached its peak. Initiative implies a proactive capacity and the confidence to get going on one's own. This is qualitatively different from the capacity to act or decide on issues or tasks proposed or assigned to people by some external development agency.

Source: Bhatnagar and Williams (1992, pp.178-179)

has generated useful new methods (see for instance Chambers 1995; World Bank 1996). However, recent research suggests that advocates of both approaches are confronting many serious problems in practice.

Problems with 'strong' participation

Brett (2000) suggests that strong participation can only be used for a limited range of activities, and is only likely to succeed where a wide range of demanding organizational and social conditions are met.

Managing large systems – problems of hierarchy and complexity. The participatory movement is primarily concerned with micro- or small-scale development projects for the rural and urban poor. These projects focus on local communities and on the management of local projects, such as school and road construction or maintenance, health centers, extension agencies, water and sanitation. However, there are also a wide range of critically important large-scale projects and programmes on which everybody depends – major roads, tertiary education, national and global research and development programmes, and the whole range of essential goods and services provided by national and global companies. These require complex technology and decisions taken at national and, increasingly, at global levels. Here hierarchy, expertise and professional autonomy in governance and project management are essential, and 'real' participation, involving direct control by local people, is virtually impossible.

Because he believes that strong participatory processes will never displace the need for hierarchical public and private bureaucracies, market competition and representative democracy, Brett states that direct control by the beneficiaries over the way decisions are made and implemented is severely constrained. "Those who claim that these participatory methodologies can fundamentally alter the nature of the power structure that sustains complex societies are simply ignoring the well-established insights of modern social science" (Brett 2000, p. 10). Drawing upon Weber (1968), Brett notes that control over complex systems is "possible only to a very limited degree by persons who are not technical specialists", while the technical superiority of hierarchical systems over other forms of organization means that they will eventually become the only organizational systems able to effectively control these complex systems.

Brett further points out that the majority of large public and private donors are actually good examples of this managerial principle. Although they are actively promoting the participatory ideal, they do not apply the principle to their own activities, but operate on classical Weberian lines and generally adopt weak participatory operational mechanisms (Box 9). Theorists of the firm agree that hierarchy is "ubiquitous within all organizations of any size" (Williamson 1985, p.269). All modern democracies have had to shift direct control from citizens to

Box 9: The limits of strong participation in project implementation

Oakley (1995) remarks that many implementing agencies attempt to justify their programmes by claiming that they are based on mechanisms that offer users significant participation. However, the scale and hierarchical nature of their organizational systems often oblige them to use weak participation, which only involves the need to inform and consult users to improve project design and management (Oakley 1995, p.25). However, they believe that even weak participation will generate many advantages. These include better information about local needs, capacities, and the impact of programmes, ways of adapting programmes to local conditions, delivering demand-responsive services, mobilizing local resources, improving utilization and maintenance of state facilities, and ways of increasing public recognition of governmental achievements and legitimacy. By contrast, they also recognize that such programmes can incur high transaction costs, raise excessive expectations, substitute inappropriate local for technical knowledge, and allow local elites to capture development resources (World Bank 1992, p.41).

their representatives, since (as it was initially suggested by Hegel 1964) every free individual cannot be given a share in debating and deciding political affairs. Ironically, this issue is simply the re-surfacing of the very old debate between the first two main democratic systems: the Ancient Greek Democracy and the Ancient Roman Republic, translated into the issue of development project governance.

In addition to this operational/managerial constraint (where organisational imperatives force large agencies to use methods that offer users little more than a consultative role), a 'conceptual' constraint also needs to be recognised: Efficiency in governance may require some degree of autonomy. As pointed out by Olson (1997), strong participatory supporters often make unrealistic assumptions about the ability of the poor to access decision-making processes. Democratic processes can be subverted by small groups whose interests do not coincide with those of society as a whole. "The poor and unemployed are almost never organized for collective action", so "some civil society democracy programmes ... more often retard than advance the economic and democratic development of the recipient countries" (Olson 1997, p.60-61). In fact, rapid economic development has rarely been associated with participatory organization (Brett *ibid*, p.11). The success of the East Asian economies, for example, is widely attributed to 'embedded autonomy' – the ability to shelter officials from pressures from social groups with vested interests, which might undermine rational economic decisions (Leftwich 1994; Putzel 1997). Indeed, while governments need to be responsive to pressure from 'below', they also need to be able to impose unpopular decisions on powerful social groups; this would be difficult if the latter were exercising direct control through strong participatory processes. These arguments do not deny the need to consult users and consumers. However, they do force us to moderate some of the more extreme claims being put forward by the proponents of participation, and to recognize that the problem of creating accountability is far more complex than many participatory theorists may assume or claim.

Managing small-scale systems – problems of heterogeneity, coordination and conflicts. Small-scale systems are not exempt from the problems related to ‘strong’ participation. The literature is full of examples which, despite their relatively small scale (pilot projects, micro-projects, community/village projects), have encountered major problems related to issues of self-interest, coordination, community heterogeneity and conflicts of interest (Box 10). Furthermore, the implementation of ‘strong’ participation assumes or requires a certain number of conditions to be present. As clearly demonstrated by Putnam (1993), Fukuyama (1995), or Putzel (1997), the capacity to cooperate depends on the level of ‘social capital’, and this is both unevenly distributed and the product of long historical processes and entrenched cultural values. Only where this social capital exists are cooperative projects likely to succeed. This is most likely to be the case where better-educated and privileged groups and social strata are involved. Additionally, participation can be costly and socially disruptive for those involved. Meetings take an immense amount of time and discussions can generate conflicts, so users may well prefer to “hand over their participatory rights to professionals – thereby saving themselves time, energy and, in some instances, conflicts”, as demonstrated by Eyben and Ladbury (1995, p. 197) in relation to a family planning project in Nepal. Such conflicts are probably inevitable, since participatory systems are rarely a response to demand from local people, who may well be locked into hierarchical and deferential structures, but, rather, promoted in response to western values imported by donors (Sachs 1992; Crush 1995; Escobar 1995). This obliges local communities to develop different kinds of organizations from those they have used in the past, thus demanding new skills and the ability to overcome local opposition if they are to succeed.

Box 10: Problems of managing small-scale systems

Despite their small scale, pilot projects, micro-projects, or community/village projects, can encounter major problems. Martinez’s work (1998) in a poor indigenous community in Mexico shows that most of the local projects demonstrating a high level of solidarity were undermined by problems created by unequal and inadequate access to information, free-riding and inappropriate incentives. Another example is Nicholls’ review of participatory UNDP and ActionAid projects in Uganda, which shows that some of the projects had been undermined by “the tension and mistrust resulting from the beneficiary community’s social heterogeneity and internal inequality [which] manifested themselves in the form of unaccountable, autocratic, or corrupt leadership by group leaders known to be taking advantage of group members” (Nicholls, 1998, p.241-252). Michener’s study of a Save the Children Fund education programme in Burkina Faso identifies the “conflicting uses of ‘participation’ by different stakeholders taking part in the same project; the way they all attempted to exploit the situation for their own gain, and concluded that neither the agency officials, nor the teachers nor the beneficiaries were “fully engaged in genuine transformative participation” (1998, p.2105 and 2115). Mayoux showed that these kinds of problems are also relevant to the involvement of women in participatory processes and that “women themselves are frequently less enthusiastic about participating in many participatory development projects” (Mayoux 1995, p.241).

Finally, strong participation, especially in the domain of natural resource management, requires that in addition to power and influence the community has the skills and knowledge to manage the resource. In reality however, as noticed by Baland and Platteau (1996, p.384), "one needs to call into question the romantic view according to which such groups are perfectly informed about the resource simply because of proximity". Imperfection, in terms of understanding and information about the state of the resource and the link between current states and the level of the stock, may lead to irreversible and serious mismanagement decisions. As a result, it cannot automatically be inferred that communities are able to devise rules for resource management/protection. "As a matter of fact, it appears that, in many instances, the direct resource-users (like the centralized authorities) are not fully aware of the complexity of the ecological processes at work, or at least they tend to underestimate the long-term negative effects of their present use on the future state of the resource" (ibid, p.384).

In effect, inland fisheries can easily be used to illustrate the difficulties of implementing strong participation approaches in the case of NRM, irrespective of the size of the system considered (small-scale or larger scale fisheries). First, the existence of dams or similar flow-control structures such as dike, irrigation reservoir or weir can be seen as external 'disturbances' that impact the fisheries system (resource and resource-users) from outside, being therefore generally totally out of control of the resource end-users or resource managers' decisions. In those cases, even if the fisheries management responsibilities have been effectively devolved to the local stakeholders through an appropriate and transparent process resulting in strong participation, whichever entity is in charge of that management may still not be able to make the adequate decisions or implement the adequate planning due to the unpredictable and/or often unwanted effects of those dams or reservoirs built a hundred kilometers upstream. Second, the existence of trans-boundary stocks; very few fisheries rely exclusively on 'local' species whose entire reproductive cycle takes place within the 'administrative' boundaries of the (decentralized) fisheries. Many fish species move up and down along the river during their life, making therefore the management of those stocks a problem which can not be reasonably handled exclusively at the local district, or even regional level, disregarding the quality of the decentralization process or the level of participation of the stakeholders in the management process.

Problems with 'weak' participation

Projects with weak participation have been criticized for their lack of 'true participation'. In theory, such projects could still empower local people and, at the same time, allow specific agencies to operate efficient bureaucratic systems. In practice, however, these systems have serious limits, as they do not transfer real power, have limited accountability mechanisms, and can sometimes be used to

hide poor performance or transfer costs and responsibilities from the users. The fundamental flaw, however, of weak participation is that the right to be consulted does not imply a right to determine outcomes, which continues to depend on the goodwill and competence of the relevant agency. The case of the NORRIP⁸ project in Ghana for instance, is a good illustration of this flaw. In this project, Botchway shows how the concept of participation was only managerial and technocratic in essence, thus greatly limiting the villagers' participation. As a consequence, the project did not allow the villagers to prioritize their own needs. The villagers' participation was instead embedded in a programme initiated from outside. In particular, the project was not linked to a serious systematic effort to enhance the economic and self-financing capabilities of communities. Consequently, the villages did not acquire a stronger position from which to generate revenue through a re-organization of their socio-economic environment. Instead, the communities entered into a new form of dependency, one in which they had to depend on outside forces for assistance in maintaining hand pumps.

The NORRIP project illustrates that consultation can only be as effective as the agencies allow it to be, thus leaving control firmly in their hands. Potentially, this means subverting one of the fundamental principles of organizational accountability. Such problems can only be avoided by finding effective ways of balancing the need for bottom-up control with top-down authority, which suggests that weak participatory processes need to be combined with strong organizational accountability. In other words, the flaw of weak participative governance is not the low level of participation per se, but rather the fact that this may be combined with a lack of downward accountability.

Downward accountability

Accountability is usually presented as one of the three pillars of good governance. However, in contrast to the other two – participation and transparency - which are prominently discussed in the literature, accountability is rarely discussed beyond the allusion to its contribution to good governance. One possible reason for this is that accountability is a technical concept —or perceived as such— not always well-defined or explained in the literature. As a result, accountability does not receive the attention and recognition that its critical role in governance would warrant.

⁸ The long-term objective of the Northern Region Rural Integrated Project (NORRIP) funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Ghanaian government, was to increase the capacity for self-initiated and sustainable social and economic improvement in Northern Ghana through the completion of a series of different development projects, in particular the Integrated Village Water Projects (IVWP). The objective of the IVWP was to provide water supply units (hand-pump fitted boreholes) to the local communities in targeted areas.

Accountability is usually understood (in principal-agent theory) as “the requirement for one party (the agent) to give an account of his action to another party (the principal)” (Power 1997, p.5). This is usually explicitly or implicitly referred to as *upward* accountability. Accountability – and in particular accountability of the State (the ‘Executive’) – has recently attracted a great deal of attention, especially by the World Bank, which has developed a framework based on this concept to address issues of public accountability and corruption (World Bank 2000). In the context of governance, however, experience suggests that the key concept is *downward* accountability to the users. Downward accountability can be defined as the institutional mechanisms or processes through which executing agents or decision-makers are liable to be called to account by their beneficiaries or consumers.

Downward accountability can be created in many different ways. The most common one is election. Election of local representatives in particular is viewed as a critical mechanism for increasing downward accountability of local representative actors. Other mechanisms include procedures for recall; referenda; legal recourse through courts; third party monitoring by media, NGOs or independently elected controllers. In addition, auditing and evaluation; political pressure and lobbying by associations and associative movements; provision of information on the role and obligations of elected representatives; and public reporting requirements can be very effective mechanisms to ensure and improve downward accountability. Finally education; embedment of the leaders into their community; performance awards; widespread participation in election; and social movements are other important ways to reinforce accountability.

Drawing upon four case studies of decentralization from South Asia (India and Nepal) and West Africa (Senegal and Mali), Agrawal and Ribot demonstrate how downward accountability is a crucial element in decentralization processes. They remark:

“if powers are decentralized to actors who are not accountable to their constituents, or who are accountable only to themselves or superior authorities within the structure of government, then decentralization is not likely to accomplish its stated aims. It is only when constituents come to exercise accountability as a countervailing power that decentralization is likely to be effective”. (1999, p.477)

The important point to note, however, about downward accountability is that, although it “goes far beyond the normative demands of weak participation by demanding institutions to give users real control over the agencies that provide their services”, this control is “*not necessary direct*” (Brett 2000, p.17 -our emphasis). In other words, downward accountability does imply some sort of participation, but not necessarily one involving direct control or even consultation. This reflects the fact that there is no strong correlation between the form (or degree) of

participation, and accountability. As long as the members of an agency or committee are accountable to the beneficiaries or users of the project, the empowerment of these users may be achieved without some of the pitfalls induced by a strong participatory arrangement.

Unfortunately, excessive focus on direct control mechanisms (such as participation) to achieve accountability is frequent. In the past this excessive attention on direct controls and consultation has seriously distorted the understanding of the cause of development failure and the search for possible solutions. As emphasized by Brett (ibid, p.17) "The development of comprehensive welfare systems, strong environmental controls, and effective regulation of corporate giants is impossible without *representative* [but not necessarily direct] democracy and a strong state. [Likewise] real leverage over the performance of private firms is much better provided through market competition than through direct controls by, or consultations with, users". This view challenges some of the claims made by the proponents of participatory theory, who seem to assume that participation is the only, and even the best, method of achieving empowerment and emancipation. In fact, participatory approaches can fail, just like state or market systems, if they are not subjected to strong accountability.

Some concluding remarks about participation and accountability

Building on Botchway (2001), Brett (2000) and others, we recognize that, because of the assumed "inherent goodness of the notion of participation", this concept is often presented as a substitute for the true structural reforms needed for social or economic changes. One of the main issues related to the over-enthusiasm associated with the concept of participation is that it tends to become self-justifying: if a participatory project fails, it must be because it was not participatory enough. But is maximum participation the ultimate goal and the 'solution'? Perceptively foreshadowing more recent experiences, Esman and Uphoff argued some twenty years ago:

"The aims of membership participation need to be realistic ... there are many different kinds of participation, not all of them relevant or effective for all tasks. It makes no sense to think in terms of achieving maximum participation, since participating in decision-making or implementation, for example entails costs as well as benefits to individuals" (1982, p.82).

In the light of the experiences in the more recent literature, it seems indeed that in many development projects the justification for participatory programmes has been relatively narrow and ignored many of the contextual issues that remain out of the control or influence of the beneficiaries of development projects. The main lesson is that participation should not be treated as a new and/or all-

powerful 'panacea' but more pragmatically as one element in a wider approach to development management where the need for hierarchy, expertise and discipline in service delivery systems, as well as 'bottom-up' controls is also recognised and included.

What can be learned from this review is that the key factor affecting the performance of governance arrangements is not the degree of participation *per se*, but the nature of the institutional constraints that determine how much leverage users can exercise over relevant agencies, and whether these operate in the state, market or voluntary sector. Leverage does not imply direct control, but does require far more than a willingness to consult. Consultation is beneficial, but users' interests will only be fully respected where agencies are answerable to them. This means that participatory theory must be located within a broader approach that sees strong accountability as the critical variable in social empowerment and emancipation. In the words of Agrawal and Ribot (1999, p.478):

"...downward accountability of those who receive powers from the central state on the behalf of a constituency is the *primary dimension of decentralization* since it can broaden the participation of local populations and enhance the responsiveness of the empowered actors" (our emphasis).

In conclusion, participatory processes can unquestionably play a key role in strengthening governance in certain kinds of decentralization projects and programmes. However, as the discussion above clearly demonstrated, these participatory processes will only be effective where state agencies are well-managed by professional public servants who have appropriate incentives, are allowed to exercise professional autonomy, and who have adequate authority to perform their roles. Furthermore – and perhaps more importantly – participatory processes and decentralization reforms will not provide end-users with reliable, high-quality and cost-effective services unless the end-users can exercise effective leverage through strong democratic institutions, market competition, civil society organizations, and above all, downward accountability mechanisms.

Part III - Governance reforms in fisheries:

The co-management experience

Concepts and theoretical framework

The governance reforms and decentralization programmes that have been widely promoted and adopted in developing countries since the 1990s have also involved natural resources, including fisheries. Governance reforms in fisheries, however, did not simply reflect or mimic the shift in governance paradigm that has occurred in other sectors. As will be demonstrated in the first section below, governance reforms in fisheries have in effect resulted mainly from an internal 'maturation' process that has evolved independently from the influence or the arguments put forward by the two main schools-of-thought promoting decentralization.⁹ Of course, fisheries scholars have not been insensitive to, or uninfluenced by, the wider debate, and terms such as 'governance' are now widely used in fisheries science. But the use of this jargon occurred relatively late, in the mid-1990s; the main arguments for reform in fisheries had been conceptualized and articulated much earlier – through, for instance, the work of Pinkerton (1989), Berkes (1989) or Pomeroy (1991).

Although fisheries possess some characteristics common to other sectors, which makes some of the analytical frameworks and research carried out in these other sectors very useful in understanding the challenges of governance changes in fisheries, fisheries also have some specific characteristics that require particular attention. In particular, in many parts of the world (especially in Africa), the use of, and access to, aquatic resources have been tightly controlled and administered by local traditional leaders (chief fisherman, master of waters, etc.), whose authority has been institutionalized and enforced within the community through moral, political or religious norms and rules. In contrast to many other public service domains, such as health, education and infrastructure, where traditional structures are absent or very limited in extent, the presence of these *pre-decentralization local institutions* poses conceptual and practical challenges.

Conceptual challenges arise from the fact that, as the analysis below will show, these institutions are not considered in the classic bipolar model of 'central government/civil society' used to analyze and conceptualize participation and power devolution in fishery co-management reform. Practical challenges on the other hand arise because any decentralization of fisheries (especially of inland fisheries where the prevalence of these pre-decentralisation institutions is still

⁹ Cf. section "Rationale for decentralisation" p.16.

very important) will have to recognize these authorities and assess whether or not they are the 'legitimate' recipients of any newly devolved power.

Origins of 'decentralization' in fisheries

Although many developing countries' fisheries are characterized by weak central management exercised by national government, and strong local institutions – and thereby provide perfect cases for the proponents of public choice theory (see p.16) – the consensus on decentralization reform in fisheries has been largely influenced by the 'community paradigm'.

In this paradigm, it is assumed that the existence of 'pro-social norms' (Bowles and Gintis 1998) shared by individuals within the community ensures the 'superiority' of local governance over other systems (see, for instance, Folke et al. 1998). In particular, it is asserted that local governance, through the 'moral economy' and social self-regulatory mechanisms, will guarantee the economic efficiency, social equitability and environmental sustainability of the system. Although these three aspects (efficiency, equitability, sustainability) are sometimes assumed to occur simultaneously,¹⁰ one central feature of this paradigm is the emphasis put on the capacity of the community to use and care for (in a 'sustainable' way) the surrounding natural resources:

"The value and wisdom of [community-based management] lies in its recognition that communities, by whatever definition we use, are potentially the best resource managers, since they have the biggest stake in the sustainability of natural resources" (Rivera and Newkirk 1997, p.74)

Under the community paradigm approach, the rationale for decentralization is therefore a pragmatic one; local people are more familiar with a given area than outsiders (including the staff of central agencies who are located in the often distant capital city); local community have a broader understanding of the environment and, in particular, of the specificities of the local ecosystems and natural resources they depend upon. Furthermore, it is frequently argued that local participation ensures self-interest, without which management efforts and investments are likely to fail.

One of the inspirations for such influence has been the 'discovery' by anthropologists and others, since the 1970s, of traditional systems of fisheries management practiced by local communities in Oceania (e.g. Johannes 1978),

¹⁰ This is the so-called "three E's" of community dynamics: Economy, Ecology and Equity. Poffenberger, for instance, states: "In many countries, community involvement is proving to be a cost-effective, socially just, and environmentally sound approach to stabilizing natural forests" (Poffenberger 1996, p.2). Likewise Demuyneck (1994, p.3) asserts: "Community-based management aims at resource preservation or stock rehabilitation, effectiveness to build a socially and economically more viable fisheries and equity to generate equitable returns for all members of the fishing community".

Africa (e.g. Fay 1989; Harms 1989), Latin America (Forman 1967; Nietschmann 1972), North America (Acheson 1975; Berkes 1977), as well in Japan (Comitini 1966; Chang 1971; Ruddle 1989). By the beginning of the 1980s, statements regarding the desirability of reviving or adapting traditional community institutions of fisheries management to meet modern needs were being made in a number of influential papers published by the Food and Agriculture Organization (Panayotou 1982; Christy 1982), the World Bank (Emmerson 1980) and the WorldFish Center – at that time called ICLARM International Centre for Living Aquatic Resource Management (Alexander 1980). Extended to an FAO study of riverine management systems (Scudder and Conelly 1985) and to a generalized examination of the role of fishermen’s organizations (Hannesson and Kurien 1988), such ideas had, by the early 1990s, become almost the received wisdom as far as the management of artisanal fisheries was concerned (e.g. World Bank 1993).

However, the theory that played a pivotal role in the shift of paradigm in fisheries sciences away from a centralized management system to community-based – and then co-management – approach is the theory of common property regimes (CPR). Although one primary impetus of the CPR analysts has been to denounce the conclusions promoted by Garrett Hardin in his article “The tragedy of the commons” (Hardin 1968),¹¹ their underlying intention was clearly to promote decentralization and local-level management reforms. For instance, Ostrom’s very influential work “Governing the commons, the evolution of institutions for collective actions” (Ostrom 1990) has been in fact written in tandem with her participation in the “Decentralization: Finance and management project” sponsored by the Office of Rural and Institutional Development of USAID.¹² Similarly, Berkes, in his introduction to the book “Common Property Resources” (Berkes 1989), leaves little doubt about the actual motives of his research:

“The major area of emphasis here is on communal resource management systems. The ‘tragedy of the commons’ model overemphasizes the solutions of privatization and central administrative controls at the expense of local-level controls and self-management. This book attempts to redress the balance, inviting resource managers and development planners to integrate local-level management (‘planning with the people’) into the existing common-property resource-management framework.” (Berkes 1989, p.2)

In addition to Berkes and Ostrom, many other scholars have been instrumental in the reorientation of the fisheries governance paradigm over the past 15 years (e.g. Jentoft, McKay, Pomeroy, Nielsen) and the policy consensus in favour of

¹¹ See, for instance, Berkes (1985); Berkes (1989); Feeny et al. (1990); Feeny (1994, pp.24-30); Feeny et al. (1996).

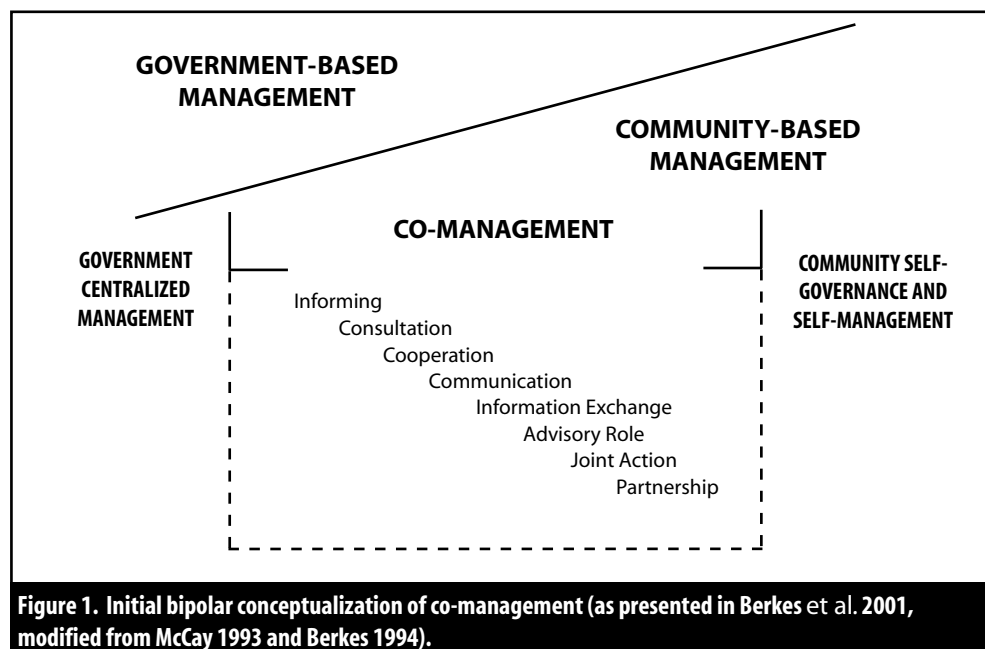
¹² cf Ostrom (1990, p.xvii).

fisheries decentralization – either under co-management or even community-based natural resource management (CBRM) – has now been accepted in a large number of developed countries (e.g. Denmark, Netherlands, Canada), but also in an increasing number of developing countries in Africa (e.g. Uganda, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, Ghana) in Southeast Asia (e.g. Philippines, Malaysia), and in other parts of the world (e.g. the Fiji Islands) (Sen and Nielsen 1996; Norman et al. 1998; Sverdrup-Jensen and Nielsen 1998).

Fisheries co-management

Co-management refers to decentralization reform. Although political sciences may not use this term – using instead terminologies such as ‘natural resource management decentralization’ – co-management is the current model of decentralization applied in natural resource management, and in particular in forestry and fisheries.

Only one framework exists in fisheries literature to describe co-management. This framework (represented in Figure 1) has been initially proposed by McCay (1993) and Berkes (1994), and then slightly modified in Sen and Nielsen (1996), Pomeroy (1995, 2001), Pomeroy and Berkes (1997). The core idea of this framework (hereafter referred to as the ‘McCay-Berkes’ framework in this report) is that co-management is characterized by various partnership arrangements distinguished from one another by the “degrees of power-sharing and integration of local and centralized management system” (Pomeroy and Berkes 1997, p.466). Depending on these different levels of power devolution, five major generic types



Type	Description
Type A(+): Centralized management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The state takes all decisions of policy and does not engage in dialogue with fisheries stakeholders.
Type A: Instructive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is only minimal exchange of information between government and users. This type of co-management regime is only different from centralized management in the sense that the mechanisms exist for dialogue with users, but the process itself tends to be government informing users on the decisions which they plan to make.
Type B: Consultative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanisms exist for governments to consult with users but all decisions are taken by government.
Type C: Cooperative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This type of co-management is where government and users cooperate together as equal partners in decision-making. For some authors this is the definition of co-management
Type D: Advisory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users advise government of decisions to be taken and government endorses these decisions.
Type E: Informative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government has delegated authority to make decisions to user groups who are responsible for informing government of these decisions.
Type E(+): Self-governance and self-management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities or other stakeholders take decisions about fisheries management and do consult or inform government or state laws.

Source: McCay (1993) and Berkes (1994) modified by Pomeroy (1995).

of co-management arrangements can be defined: Instructive, Consultative, Cooperative, Advisory, and Informative – to which the two classic types of management i.e. centralized and community self-management can be added. In its ‘extended’ version (e.g. Pomeroy 1995) the framework includes seven degrees of power-sharing,¹³ associated with seven types of management arrangements (Table 3).

The McCay-Berkes framework can be used to compare fisheries co-management arrangements and a large number of comparative analyses which were proposed in the literature have indeed used this framework for this purpose.¹⁴ However, the classification on which the framework is built is merely *descriptive*. It does not offer any analytical ‘handles’ for identifying or assessing the underlying mechanisms associated with the changes induced by co-management reforms. Consequently, using this framework for anything other than a descriptive purpose

¹³ Note that Kesteven (1997), in his commentary on Sen and Nielsen’s 1996 article, remarks that the typology proposed in the framework is not based on different degrees of power-sharing as stated by its different ‘co-authors’, but based on the direction of information flow.

¹⁴ See, for instance, the many papers on fishery co-management in the Proceedings of the Bi-Annual Conferences of the International Association for the Study of Common Property, available on-line at <http://www.indiana.edu/~iascp/past.html>

may be misleading. In particular, because the core element which structures the framework is based on a gradient of power-sharing, using this framework as an 'explanatory tool' leads to consider the degree of power devolved as the key (explanatory) factor and in particular to associate failure(s) of co-management with too little devolution/participation.

Review of the literature reveals that indeed, most co-management studies argue that there is generally not enough participation in fisheries reforms and that too little responsibility has been passed down to the community. Pomeroy, for instance, asserts, "The devolution of fishery management authority from the central government to local level governments and organizations is an issue that is not easily resolved. Many attempts at decentralization have not delivered a real sharing of resource management power" (Pomeroy 2001, p.135). One reason for this perceived failure is that "Fisheries administrators may be reluctant to relinquish their authority, or portions of it, and governments are often opposed to decentralization" (Pomeroy 1993, p.14-15). Pomeroy is echoed by Sverdrup-Jensen and Nielsen, who comment, "Under the present management arrangements situation [in Africa], user groups will often be patronized in possible disputes with government. The latter seems generally reluctant to devolve power and bestow legal rights and authority in fisheries management to user groups" (Sverdrup-Jensen and Nielsen 1998, p.11). This is also the opinion of Jul-Larsen and his co-authors (2003), who conclude, "Generally speaking, management of freshwater fisheries [in Southern Africa] is still very much in control of governments, and the negotiating position of user groups versus that of governments is consequently comparatively low". As Chirwa (1998, p.69) points out, "The FD's [Fisheries Department's] position of patronage means that the local user communities are the recipients rather than the initiators of decisions. They, themselves, are managed, together with their resources, by the Fisheries Department." (quoted in Jul-Larsen et al. 2003, p.92).

There is an interesting parallel to be made between the statement made by Deshler and Sock (1985) about pseudo-participation characterized as "the manipulation of the beneficiaries by development professionals" (see p.27 in section 'Typology of participation' in this document) and that by Chirwa above. Using the terminology used by the literature on participation, this suggests that co-management in fisheries is often perceived as a 'weak participation' approach characterized by a relatively low level of devolution and responsibility sharing.

This level of devolution is, however, only one dimension to consider within the process of participation *per se*. As emphasized by Cohen and Uphoff (1980), many other important criteria should also be considered when evaluating a project, e.g. the *kind* of participation (participation in decision-making; in implementation; in benefits, in evaluation) or *how* the process occurs (the basis

of participation, its form, its extent, its effects) – see Table 1 above. In other words, assessing the participation process – and in the present case the fisheries co-management process – through the degree of participation or the level of devolution is not sufficient.

Conceptually, the problem arises from the fact that, as noted above, the McCay-Berkes framework attempts to characterize co-management mainly through the level of power devolution – i.e. the degree of stakeholder participation. In that case, the reference criterion is the gradient of power-sharing, running from one extremity (the central government) to the other (the community) –see Figure 1. This mono-dimensional conceptualization of the process reduces governance reform to the degree of participation and does not necessary capture the main factor(s) explaining the degree of success or failure of decentralization reforms.

This point is confirmed by Neiland and Béné's 2003 analysis. Throughout their review of 50 case studies of fisheries management arrangements from developing countries, these authors found no tangible correlation between the level of devolution of authority and the degree of success of the new management arrangements. Some still highly-centralized fisheries score well in terms of management success, while some highly participatory fisheries display lower scores –or vice versa (see their Appendix II for the detailed results). Instead, they identified a series of 10 explanatory factors covering a large range of issues related to governance and policy. Within these explanatory factors, 'participation' appears twice, once within the 'policy' sub-group and once within the 'governance' sub-group. Their analysis therefore suggests that participation – in particular, the level of participation/devolution – is an important factor, but certainly not the only one explaining the success of co-management. Their analysis reveals eight others factors that may affect the fisheries management outcomes – and the list is not necessarily exhaustive.

Focusing on the level of participation as the key element of success in co-management presents other problems. First, it tends to suggest that the stronger the participation, the more efficient and the more likely to succeed is the co-management reform. However, as clearly demonstrated in the literature, 'strong' participation is not without its limitations and dangers, especially in the context of natural resource management (see pp.28-31 in this report). As Brett notes, "Maximum participation may not always be possible or efficient" (Brett 2000, p.1). In effect, as pointed out by Adams (1996b), and confirmed empirically by Neiland and Béné's review, each fishery in each society has its own 'balance point' on the scale of management intervention. "Some fisheries are more effectively managed by governments or intergovernmental bodies and some are more effectively managed by local communities and non-government bodies, with various mixtures in between" (Adams, 1996b, p.339). Thus, advocating for a

systematic 'strong' participation by the fishery community may not be the correct message to send to policy-makers. In other words, the issue of *how much* power is shared may be the wrong question. Instead issues of *how* this power is shared and through which accountability mechanisms may be more important.

Secondly, invoking the 'too little power and weak participation' factor to explain the failure of co-management places the main responsibility for the failure of reforms on government agencies (e.g. DoF) rather than on the community. Two comments arise from this last point, (i) on the empirical side, the literature provides some case studies that suggest that the community can also play an active role in the failure of co-management reforms; and (ii) on the conceptualization side, there is an urgent need to go beyond the discourse on equity adopted by the co-management literature and propose analytical tools which enable assessment of the real impact of co-management reform on issues such as intra-community equity, access to the resource and poverty alleviation. Both comments relate to the 'social' dimension of co-management reforms, to which we now turn.

Social impacts of co-management reforms

The empirical evidence

A significant number of reports and articles have been published on fisheries co-management since the early 1990s. The majority of these studies are of a descriptive nature (Table 4), either reporting the legislative and managerial re-organization produced by the co-management reform – particularly the role of the state and/or the (new) managerial responsibilities/tasks of fishermen's organizations – or discussing the issues of resource management and conservation and the (potential) role/capabilities of the communities. In contrast, very little has been done on assessing the effect of these reforms and in particular their poverty reduction and/or redistributive impacts beyond the implicit assumption that devolution of power empowers the local fishing communities.

Yet many empirical studies suggest that co-management reforms do not systematically ensure the empowerment of local communities (as initially expected) but instead lead either to the strengthening of the state's control or, more frequently, to the reinforcement of the local elite's control over resource policy, management, and allocation. For example, based on their study of the fishing communities of Cape Breton Island in Canada, Davis and Bailey (1996, p.254) showed how "one approach to co-management may have created and entrenched an economically advantaged and empowered fisher elite" to the detriment of the rest of the community.

Table 4. Literature review on co-management in fisheries	
Main subject treated	Share in the literature*
<i>Stakeholder analysis</i> (i.e. description of who are the (new) actors involved in the new management system)	31.3 %
<i>Natural resource management issues</i> (i.e. co-management as a solution to improve the management of the stocks)	29.9 %
<i>Institutional and legislative issues</i> (i.e. description of the role of the state as the provider of the new legislative framework supporting co-management, and the (new) managerial responsibilities/tasks of the fishers' organizations/community)	27.8 %
<i>General policy issues</i> (i.e. co-management reform discussed from a broad fisheries policy perspective, usually with a chronological description of the changes/evolutions that have occurred in the fisheries policies at the national level)	9.7 %
<i>Empowerment and equity issues</i> (i.e. discussion or evaluation of the impacts of co-management in terms of benefits and power redistribution; impacts on the poor)	1.4%

* Based on 162 published articles. Source: Béné and Neiland (2004)

While the number of peer-reviewed studies on these issues is limited, an abundant 'grey' literature (internal reports, reports from NGOs or funding agencies) provides much evidence of the occurrence of these power issues, especially in developing countries. In Ghana, Mali and Niger, where decentralization is being implemented Breuil (2000), Kassibo (2000), Lenselink and Cacaud (2002) all question the appropriateness and accountability of the new institutional arrangements. In particular, they draw attention to the central role played by the traditional local institutions usually 'crystallized' around the authorities of the traditional local leaders, and question the real empowerment capacities of the decentralization reform. Central to the issue is the 're-appropriation' of the newly devolved power by local leaders. In the case of the Malian decentralization in the High Diaka region, Kassibo (2000) reports:

"... the non-resident fishers have been excluded totally from the fisheries committees by the local fishers influenced by the traditional leaders. These traditional leaders ... used the legitimate authority delegated [by the central government] through the decentralization process to appropriate all the top positions in these committees" (Kassibo 2000 p.86 – our translation)."

Kassibo's report clearly indicates that at the root of the failure of this decentralization is a lack of careful consideration of power relations and of personal and/or group organization within the communities involved in the reform. In particular, the performances of the local indigenous institutions and the role of their traditional leaders as the 'legitimized recipient' of the newly devolved power have not been carefully evaluated. For other parts of Africa (Southern region), Jul-Larsen and his co-authors (2003, p.91) admit:

“...the experiences of setting up co-management in the region have not been very encouraging up till now. Most arrangements have tended to exclude user groups from the decision-making process and from influencing who should participate in the making of operational rules for the fisheries.”

A lack of conceptual research and base-line data

Despite these empirically-based conclusions, some other scholars continue to assert that “Co-management seeks equity in fisheries management. It seeks to empower the weak or less privileged groups in a community to allow them to freely participate in and collaborate on management” (Berkes et al. 2001, p.205) -see also Pomeroy (2001, p.118, p.121); Abdullah et al. (1998 p.40); Demuynck (1994, p.3). But the vagueness of the term “equity” highlights the weakness of the analysis. From the experience of other natural resource sectors, it is clear that links between the state, civil society and the poor are complex and vary considerably in terms of the degree of access, reciprocity, exploitation and marginalization both within communities and in community relations with the state and different parts of civil society. In particular, ‘equity’ is a complex concept that may have several interrelated components. When it is asserted that “co-management leads to equity”, it may be necessary to scrutinize which dimension of equity is being considered. Is it ‘equity of access to the resource’ (endowment equity), or ‘equity in rent redistribution’ (economic equity), or ‘equity in the cost of management and transaction’ (institutional equity), or ‘equity of participation in the decision-making process’ (political equity or ‘empowerment’)? These are some of the questions that should be raised before asserting that “co-management leads to equity”.

The only research project (to our knowledge) that has attempted to address these issues comprehensively and rigorously is the Community-Based Fisheries Management (CBFM) program in Bangladesh (see next section). In this project, the research team considered two dimensions of equity – ‘empowerment’ and ‘equity’ *per se*, and then used six different criteria to assess the changes in these two dimensions (Table 5). Using qualitative methods (cardinal ranking on a 10-point scale) the project was able to monitor and quantify the impacts of the co-management programme. The research team concluded “In general, significant changes in indicators of empowerment (participation and influence) and institutional efficiency (ease of decision-making) were reported in the *beels*¹⁵ ... but the pattern of changes was less clear in the river...” (Thompson et al. 2000, p.11). To be able to reach these conclusions, however, the relevant dimensions of equity (or those expected/aspired to by the stakeholders) need to be identified, and ways to evaluate them established. This requires a ‘pre-project assessment’ that generates a baseline against which the changes in equity induced by the co-

¹⁵ Beels are depressions in the deeper parts of the floodplains.

Equity dimension	Assessment criteria
Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater fisher participation in fishery management • Greater influence by stakeholder over decision
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation of range of interest (stakeholders) • Process clarity – transparent management process • Homogeneous expectations among participants regarding management • Distributional equity: Benefits in proportion to costs, or seen as fair by community members

Source:Thompson et al. (2000).

management reform can be compared. Unfortunately, very few studies have undertaken these pre-project assessments, and their assertions that co-management improves 'equity' – however it is defined – lack hard data.

Defining the “fishing community” in African inland fisheries

Running parallel to the issue of equity – or perhaps underlying it – is the other important question of the concept of 'community'. With Agrawal and Gibson's 1999 literature review of the concept of 'community' in mind, it is necessary to raise the question of the meaning of this concept in the specific context of African inland fisheries. Allison and Ellis (2001) and Jul-Larsen and his co-authors (2003) drawing upon their experiences in Eastern and Southern Africa inland fisheries, point out that fisheries communities are much more complex socio-economic entities than are their land-based counter-parts, for two reasons.

First, fishing is rarely the only activity in which households are engaged; instead fishing is usually part of a diversified matrix of activities. Fishing may also be undertaken by different members of the same household, at different times of the day or the year, and with different levels of subsistence or commercial intensity. Even in the case of lake fisheries where a great proportion of the community is expected to be full-time fishers - as compared to wetland or river fisheries – men are involved in many different activities over the course of the year. Under these circumstances, who should be considered as 'the fishing community'? Jul Larsen et al. (2003, p.91) consider that this specific situation induces a fundamental problem that is rarely given full consideration in fisheries science:

“Fishing communities are considered the platform to ensure local participation. There are serious problems connected to this concept, since our study shows that “pure” fishing communities hardly exist along the lakes in Southern Africa. Most communities have a very diverse occupation structure, and fishing is only one among several occupations that provide the livelihood of the local people. In addition, many fishers have two homes – one on the lakeshore and another somewhere else. It is therefore almost impossible to create boundaries between fishers and non-fishers with regards to the representation of “the community” in co-management arrangements.”

Secondly, in developing countries, especially in rural areas, fisheries often play a role of 'safety net' activity. People enter the fishery at certain periods of their life, as a result of particular circumstances (e.g. local or national economic crisis, natural disaster, conflict or war, or simply because of individual temporary vulnerability -when the household head loses his/her job for instance). A good example of this role of safety net is the case of the Lake Kariba fishery at the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. Over the last 30 years, the Lake Kariba fishery has played this role twice. The first time was in the mid-1970s, when several thousand miners working in the copper belt in Zambia lost their jobs and migrated to the Lake region to engage in fishing. The second time was a few years later, during the Zimbabwean Independence War, when several hundred families moved to the Lake region for security and entered the fishery to ensure minimum incomes until the political situation in their region of origin had improved (Jul-Larsen 2003).

In all these different cases, the fisheries provide an alternative activity that helps households maintain themselves above the poverty line – or at least to prevent them from falling too deeply into poverty – by providing income, employment and food. This role of poverty safety-net is usually temporary, and people then leave the sector when they are able to recover from the crisis and find again a new activity (or return to their initial one). In any case, this means that different parts of the 'community' may engage in fishing activities at different periods. Again, this raises the question of 'who is the fishing community?' As argued by Jul-Larsen et al. (2003, p.92):

"This complicates a management system based entirely on the voice of the (existing) fishing communities because it will not reflect the concern of keeping the fisheries as safety valves in people's strategies toward changing (and until now deteriorating) macro-economic conditions. If co-management primarily becomes a tool for allocation of access rights to local communities, it will prevent the freshwater lakes from remaining commons and safety valves. Since a policy including all potential users will be impossible, the only solution to this dilemma is that government takes upon itself to assure that the collective concerns are voiced and taken into account."

In addition to the 'temporal' dimensions highlighted by Jul-Larsen et al. (2003) who show that fishing 'community' is in fact an evolving, dynamic, entity, both at the seasonal and long-term scale-, it is also important to highlight the 'spatial' dimension of the dynamics. In many inland fisheries in Africa, especially along rivers or floodplains areas, two different types of fishers usually 'share' the same resources – the local farmer-fishers or local full-time fishers, and the 'migrant' fishers, who come from another region or another country and stay in the area for a few months or several years. These migrant fishers are usually professional fishers, i.e. full-time fishers who live in temporary fisher camps and follow the resources in an opportunistic way. Again, the question arises: who is the fishing

community? Who is entitled to be the 'representative' of the 'fishing community' to which management responsibilities and decision-power will be devolved? The local fishers, who may fish only two months in the season but usually claim 'historical rights', or the full-time migrant fishers, who totally depend on the fishery for their income and livelihoods but who do not 'belong' to the 'local' population?

Lessons from the CBFM project

As mentioned earlier, the CBFM project in Bangladesh provides additional important lessons in relation to the social dimension of co-management reforms. This programme was based on a partnership between the Department of Fisheries (DoF), five local NGOs, an International Research Organization (the WorldFish Center) and the local communities of 19 water-bodies in Bangladesh. The project's main objective was to develop institutional arrangements and foster capacity for devolving responsibilities for managing fisheries to the user communities (Thompson et al. 2004).

The CBFM was initiated in 1996, and was still operating at the time of this review. It received significant support. For the first six years (1996-2001) the overall budget was approximately US\$1.8 million. A second phase was launched in 2002 with a considerably larger budget of US\$ 5.2 millions (P. Thompson, pers. comm. Dec. 2003). Perhaps more important than the level of financial support, is the continuity of institutional support provided to the actors involved in the project. The local communities have benefited from the continuous attention and support of several NGOs (18 in total), an international research organization and various international experts commissioned by the donor agencies. Furthermore, the programme has been running almost continuously for more than 8 years, which is a relatively substantial amount of time in comparison with the two to three year period that characterizes the funding arrangements of most fisheries development projects.

The project recorded some encouraging results. In several of the open *beels*, for instance, self-assessments using the framework presented in Table 5 revealed significant increases between 1997 and 2001 in perceived levels of participation, influence, decision-making, fishery access and benefits for project participants and for other members of the community. The gains for project participants in decision-making, and control over resources were also significantly higher than for non-participants. Thompson and his co-authors concluded, "this indicates that CBFM has *in some sites* had a wider benefit of empowering poorer fishing households within local fishery management institutions" (Thompson et al. 2004 p.8-9) (emphasis added by us).

However, a recent review of the project reveals that despite these positive aspects, the percentage of households that participated at each site for the period 1995-2001 was relatively low. It varied from 3% to 61%, with an average of 23%.¹⁶ This means that, in spite of the support, assistance and incentives provided through the programme, after five years, on average, less than one quarter of the households in the local communities participated in the programme. In other words, while some positive and encouraging outcomes were generated, the project also clearly underlines the subtlety of community development and the consequent difficulty in explaining the reasons for the results achieved. In particular, the project's results clearly shows that the degree of participation does not necessary explain the level of success of the activities, but is instead dependent on other factors. The case is a powerful example of the complexity of the state-society-community relations, and underlines that no single model can explain these relations.

The issue of the role of local elites is a particularly good illustration of this reality. As mentioned earlier, elite capture has been recognized in the literature as a major issue in the process of decentralization. It may therefore have seemed 'wise' and appropriate to design mechanisms of devolution that reduce or at least contain the risk of 'predation' of the CBFM project by the local elites. However, in Bangladeshi society – as in a large number of other societies, especially in Africa - the local elites should not be viewed in such simple terms. In many societies they are vital political and economic actors, who design and build the system, give it its 'constitution' and stability, and ensure that it functions. Were they removed, the whole system could collapse. As reported by Lewins and Mallick (2000 p.13), who assessed some of the sites included in the CBFM project:

“Proshika [one of the NGOs involved in the project] recognises the need to incorporate the elite and local political representatives into the RMC [River Management Committee]. It was considered crucial to work with the powerful and rich katha owners, for instance, if new management strategies [were] to incorporate controls on katha fishing and their placement.” (Abdur Rahman Proshika Fisheries co-ordinator, pers comm.)

Overall, one of the most important contributions of the CBFM programme to the debate on governance reform is therefore the attempt made to account for and monitor “equity” issues. In this respect, the framework proposed by the project to deconstruct and evaluate different dimensions of equity (Table 5) is a first very important step which needs to be acknowledged and publicized more broadly in the relevant literature.

¹⁶ Figure compiled from Table 2 in Thompson et al. (2004).

What the project may have overlooked, however, is the accountability dimension of the process following power devolution. Indeed, accountability itself does not appear in the CBFM's framework, while participation does. In effect however, this issue of accountability percolates recurrently through the CBFM project's reports. Thompson et al. (2004, p.11-12), for instance, remarks that:

"... they [the River Management Committees] have been prone to new problems of internal factions that arise when NGOs promote more transparent and accountable leadership including elections. Experience indicates that it is important for the sustainability of such organizations either that the leadership is fixed (which tends to concentrate power and give an inequitable distribution of benefits) or that leadership has the possibility to rotate sufficiently frequently through a democratic and transparent process. This may be achieved for instance by election every 1-2 years, so that power does not become polarized with one faction."

As was highlighted in this report, elections are indeed one mechanism to ensure or even increase downward accountability. This last comment confirms the point made earlier, that the low participation rate in the management of the water-bodies may not be an issue in itself, as long as those who are actively involved in this management (i.e. the River Management Committees) are accountable to the rest of the community. In other terms, the CBFM project tends to confirm what other reviews on governance have highlighted (see p.34), that is, the key factor affecting the performance of a governance arrangement may not be the degree of participation *per se*, but the nature of the institutional settings that determine and enforce the degree of (downward) accountability of the decision-makers towards the local communities.

Part IV - A strategic overview of future information needs and research priorities

Design of a research agenda on “poverty alleviation in small-scale fisheries through appropriate changes in governance and management”

Introduction and methodology

In this last part of the document, the priorities and needs for future research in the area of ‘poverty alleviation and improved small-scale fisheries governance in developing countries’ are considered. The approach that has been taken is essentially ‘strategic’ – in other words, an attempt has been made to take an overview of the situation and to focus on the ‘bigger picture’. The following three factors have determined the need to take a strategic approach:

- there is a comprehensive body of literature on ‘governance’ in general and an emerging literature on ‘fisheries governance’, both of which need to be considered;
- the review of the fisheries governance literature undertaken in this document has helped highlight both the strengths and weaknesses of the current knowledge and understanding in this area;
- there appears to be a lack of a ‘strategic’ overview of the information and knowledge required to develop appropriate governance systems for small-scale inland fisheries management in developing countries, with particular reference to poverty reduction.

There are a number of challenges in producing a strategic overview of information needs and research priorities. First, the present review has confirmed the conclusions of others, that ‘fisheries governance’ is complex and dynamic, reflecting the activities of the society that it seeks to regulate. Secondly, in comparison with ‘natural sciences’, there appears to be a limited number of research methods to apply to the study of fisheries governance (e.g. how to define and then measure the performance of governance arrangements in relation to poverty alleviation criteria). Thirdly, the apparent complexity associated with fisheries governance arrangements and their effects is both a constraint and an opportunity for future research. On one hand, the difficulty of designing appropriate research methods cannot be underestimated, and without this essential underpinning, the knowledge base will almost certainly be deficient or biased. On the other hand, real world governance complexity can yield new opportunities for development, and well-focused and timely research has an

Table 6. Logical Framework Approach for a research agenda for 'poverty reduction in fisheries through appropriate changes in governance and management'

Level of activity	Narrative summary
Development goal	Poverty reduction in small-scale fisheries is achieved through appropriate changes in governance and fisheries management within the overall context provided by the sustainable development approach
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Improved knowledge and understanding of the role of governance in the management of small-scale fisheries for poverty reduction is generated and disseminated (ii) Initiation of a policy development process, using new knowledge and understanding (above), to identify and evaluate pro-poor policy options and policy implementation approaches (iii) Implementation of policies for new and appropriate governance arrangements relevant to poverty alleviation in fisheries (promotion of changes and reform)
Activities and outputs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Generation of new knowledge and understanding of fisheries governance for poverty alleviation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Investigation of the conceptual and theoretical role of governance in natural resource management (especially small-scale fisheries) and poverty alleviation, in the specific context of developing countries characterized by low institutional capacities and generally weak overall governance 1.2. Description and typology of the range of governance arrangements applied to natural resource management (especially small-scale fisheries) in developing countries 1.3. Empirical analysis of the impact of governance arrangements on poverty alleviation (especially in fish-dependent communities), and investigation of the potential for change or reform 2. Policy process analysis and development of new approaches for pro-poor policy design and implementation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Description and characterization of relevant policy processes across a range of countries and governance arrangements, with particular reference to decision-making processes in relation to natural resources – and, in particular, to water and inland fisheries resources 2.2. Identification and analysis of factors which affect the 'types' of policy process, using an empirical evidence-based approach to investigate policy performance and options for change 2.3. Identification of 'best practice' guidelines for 'new approaches for pro-poor governance in small-scale fisheries' 3. Capacity-building to support research and related policy processes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Training in research methods for researchers covering policy analysis and institutional analysis 3.2. Capacity-building for policy-makers within key government organizations focusing on improvements in policy planning, design and implementation 3.3. Capacity-building for other stakeholders and relevant economic and civil society organizations

important role to play in understanding the likely entry-points for future changes in government policy.

In an attempt to provide an initial strategic overview of future information needs and research priorities, a Logical Framework Approach (LFA) has been developed. It presents a research agenda for 'poverty alleviation in small-scale fisheries through appropriate changes in governance and management'. The advantages of the LFA in this case include:

- the major levels of activity (development goals, strategic issues and research contributions) can easily be discerned, and in particular, the contribution of research to policy development and the achievement of development goals can be identified;
- the overall logic and the linkages between the different levels of activity can be understood;
- the contribution of existing knowledge and the possible 'gaps' can be identified;
- the underlying assumptions and means of verification for entry at each level can be discerned (although not provided in this initial LFA).

Research agenda

The proposed research agenda is presented in Table 6 in the form of a LFA. It highlights clearly the link between 'research' (programme activities and outputs) and 'policy development and action' (development goal and purpose).

Development goal

The development goal of the agenda is 'poverty alleviation in small-scale fisheries through appropriate changes in governance and fisheries management within the overall framework provided by the sustainable development approach'.

There are a number of reasons for choosing this goal, which draw upon the main findings of this document. First, it is relevant both at the national level for many developing countries in relation to their individual Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and National Poverty Reduction Strategies, and internationally in relation to the new agenda on poverty alleviation of the bilateral and international development agencies (notably through the Millennium Development Goals). Secondly, small-scale fisheries have been identified as a specific area where poverty alleviation is required and justified (FAO 2003; World Bank 2004). Thirdly, in its present formulation, the development goal of the research agenda highlights the importance of the linkage between poverty alleviation and the need for *appropriate* changes in governance and fisheries management. In other

words, there is no assumption about a 'blueprint' for these relationships to cover all parts of the world; instead locally adapted governance arrangements should be the priority. Fourthly, the terms 'governance' and 'fisheries management' have been included separately to indicate that these are distinct, although inter-related, concepts that need to be treated as such. Fifthly, although fishery is the key entry-point for the research agenda, the goal incorporates the wider context of sustainable development and the inter-relationship among fisheries and other sectors of the economy.

Purpose

The development goal can only be achieved if the purpose is realized. This purpose has three components:

- (i) improved knowledge and understanding of the role of governance in the management of fisheries for poverty alleviation
- (ii) initiation of a policy development process, by which pro-poor policy options and implementation approaches are identified and evaluated
- (iii) implementation of policies for new and appropriate governance arrangements relevant to poverty alleviation in fisheries.

The implementation of policies for new and appropriate governance arrangements leading to poverty alleviation in fisheries will depend on policy-makers having relevant information and knowledge. In the first instance, for most developing countries, this will require capacity-building in a wide range of areas including policy analysis, institutional analysis and the management of policy implementation and change. It will also depend on policy-makers and stakeholders engaging in policy and governance debates and following through with institutional (and possibly legislative) reforms.

Activities/outputs

Directly supporting the three purpose components, the activities/outputs fall into three broad categories:

1. Improved understanding of fisheries governance for poverty alleviation.
2. Policy process analysis and development of new approaches for pro-poor policy design and implementation.
3. Capacity-building to support research and policy processes.

Before specifying the content of each of the above, it is important to point out three factors that have shaped the design of the research agenda. First, the review has helped to pinpoint important areas of work based on an implicit assessment

of the status of knowledge. Secondly, the research activities will have to include both 'conventional' research (leading to knowledge generation) and 'action' research (integrated within the policy process itself, answering questions in response to needs as they arise, and possibly incorporating a 'learning process' and step-wise approach to the methodology employed). Thirdly, the research activities have been specified in response to a development goal leading eventually to poverty alleviation, rather than a more general goal of 'knowledge generation'. The research proposed is therefore both targeted and applied in nature.

Improved understanding of fisheries governance for poverty alleviation

The first set of activities focuses on improved knowledge and understanding of fisheries governance for poverty alleviation. The work proposed in this area will aim to extend the existing knowledge about fisheries governance and poverty, and fill some of the important gaps in knowledge that currently exist. Three important and inter-related components for this set of activities include:

- 1.1. Investigation of the conceptual and theoretical role of governance in natural resource management (especially in small-scale fisheries) and poverty alleviation in the specific context of developing countries characterized by low institutional capacities and generally weak overall governance.
- 1.2. Description and typology of the range of governance arrangements applied in natural resource management (especially in small-scale fisheries) in these developing countries.
- 1.3. Empirical analysis of the impact of governance arrangements on poverty alleviation in natural resource dependent communities (especially in fish-dependent communities) and the potential for initiating changes.

This first set of activities should build upon the findings provided by the present governance review through a series of entry points. First, Part I: Governance explored the concepts and theory presented in the literature, but also identified some inconsistencies and paradigm shifts which demand further investigation in order to bring fisheries in line with the general understanding of the wider governance and poverty issues. Second, while the review has presented some detailed examples and case-studies from within the fisheries sector (e.g. pp.46-49), or even outside fisheries (e.g. Box 2 up to Box 10) there is still a need to extend this work and to investigate a broader range of real-world examples to form a basis for international lesson-learning. Third, the review has also highlighted the difficulty of making effective changes in governance, focusing in particular on the experience of decentralization (Part II: Changes in Governance p.14). This suggests that there is a need for a better understanding, based on empirical work, of the pre-existing relations between governance arrangements and fisheries management performance. The acquisition of further knowledge in this area could provide a

basis for future governance changes or reforms. For this, research in the current range of natural resource management sciences (e.g. fish ecology, natural resource economics, socio-economics or even socio-anthropology) should be expanded to include research in policy and political sciences and related disciplines (e.g. policy analysis, political economy, political ecology) – it is important to recognize the contribution of all these different disciplines and the perspectives which they provide in helping to understanding the operation of natural resource systems (NR-societal interactions). Therefore, it is suggested that for research carried out under Activity 1, appropriate study methodologies would have to be developed using a multi-disciplinary approach and combining qualitative and quantitative approaches as appropriate. Within this domain some specific research questions might include:

- Are the biophysical or ecological characteristics of the resource a factor influencing the type (or degree) of governance reform that should be implemented? For instance should decentralization (type, form, level) for a floodplain fishery be the same as that for a lake fishery?
- What are the appropriate -or 'best' adapted- governance arrangements/tools under different fishery exploitation scenarios (e.g. over-fished, actively fished, under-fished fisheries)? For instance, should the involvement of the central authority stay the same as the fishery develops from an under-developed to fully developed activity?
- Are the three 'liberal' pillars of good governance (accountability, transparency and participation) the most important factors to ensure successful governance in natural resource management (or do these concepts refer to Western values which are not necessary relevant elsewhere, e.g. in the context of developing countries)? How should the statist elements of good governance (authority, order, capability and autonomy) be included?
- Is the existence of traditional authorities a good foundation for pro-poor (or improved) governance, and if so how can traditional leaders be incorporated as a third key actor, in such a way that the new arrangements will benefit the poor and/or most marginalized sector of the population? In other words, how important is the pre-existing 'political architecture' to the performance of fisheries management and can these arrangements be used to improve or change matters?

Policy analysis and new approaches for pro-poor policy process

The second group of activities focuses on analysis of the policy process and the search for new approaches to 'pro-poor' policy design and implementation. This work will build upon the increased understanding of the relationship between governance arrangements and fisheries management performance generated by the first group of activities. At the core of the second set of activities are issues and

questions about the inter-relationships between policy, management and governance processes. This second set of activities will need to address three inter-related components:

- 2.1. Description and characterization of policy processes across a range of countries and governance arrangements, with particular reference to decision-making processes relating to natural resources – particularly, water and inland fisheries resources.
- 2.2. Identification and analysis of factors affecting the ‘types’ of policy process, using an empirical evidence-based approach to document policy performance. Our emphasis on the need for this ‘evidence-based approach’ lies in the recognition that although an increasing number of documents proposed in the literature claim to be policy analyses, these tend to be superficial and not systematically based on or backed-up with empirical evidence (but use instead weak secondary sources). Even when there is a good appreciation of the factors affecting policy performance, the subsequent investigation and analysis is often lacking.
- 2.3. Identification of best practice guidelines for ‘new policy approaches for pro-poor governance in small-scale fisheries’. There is an urgent need to develop policy guidelines on key factors and principles based on the improved understanding generated through components (2.1) and (2.2). These guidelines would help policy-makers at national and international levels to ensure that fisheries policy frameworks support pro-poor governance arrangements.

This second set of activities would build upon the key findings of the current governance review, while also placing them within a more general ‘policy analysis’ framework. Three points are relevant to this approach.

First, a comparison of policy processes in different situations around the world would help to provide a better understanding of the key factors that affect policy design and implementation in general. Secondly, many of the factors already identified as important in governance reform (e.g. participation, key actors and power relations), and discussed in Part II and Part III of this report, can be usefully analyzed within a policy process framework (specifically to understand how, why and by whom policy decisions are taken?). Thirdly, this report has clearly identified a lack of empirical work in areas related to governance reforms in fisheries, and their impacts on poverty alleviation and equity (Part III, pp.43-45). It is proposed, therefore, to extend the empirical work on governance reforms within a policy analysis framework to develop ‘best practice pro-poor policy guidelines’. Within this context, some of the more specific questions that might be investigated could include:

- Does 'good governance' and participation systematically improve natural resource management (and in particular small-scale fisheries)? What empirically-based methods can be employed to assess this, and how can the results be used to inform and improve the operation of the relevant policy process?
- In a symmetrical way, do 'good governance' and participation, as promoted through co-management arrangements, systematically improve access to the resources by the poorest and more marginalized? What empirically-based methods can be employed to assess this, and how can the results be used to inform and improve the operation of the relevant policy process?
- How is the policy process relevant to governance in small-scale fisheries affected by exogenous and endogenous changes (e.g. nation-wide decentralization reforms, trade liberalization, land or water tenure reforms, increasing competition for water, productive limits of ecosystems), and how do the various decision-makers and stakeholders react and cope with these effects?
- Does capacity building automatically lead to improved (pro-poor) governance and/or better policy process?

Capacity-building for policy improvement

The third set of activities focuses on building the capacity to support both research and the expected changes in policy processes. While the first set of activities (governance research) and the second set (research on policy process for governance reform) can both be viewed as conventional applied research, the third set of activities (capacity-building) is not a research component *per se* (although, as emphasized above, it will still require some research to help define and assess capacity-building needs which can underpin and support the other two activities). The third set of activities, however, is linked to research in the sense that it has the potential to close the gap between researchers and other stakeholders involved in the policy process. By increasing the capacity of organizations and their constituent stakeholders to participate in the policy process at different levels, to use information and to assess and choose policy options, the likelihood of achieving improved governance that ensures effective fisheries management performance will be increased. Three inter-related components can be included in this set of activities. They are:

- 3.1. Training in research methods for researchers, covering areas such as policy process analysis and institutional analysis.
- 3.2. Capacity-building for policy-makers within key local, district and national government organizations in order to create mechanisms for the effective use of the research findings and to enable improvements in policy planning, design and implementation.
- 3.3. Capacity-building for other stakeholders and relevant organizations concerned with, or affected by, governance reform. This could cover a wide

range of activities such as leadership training, organization management and advocacy. In effect, the range of capacity-building domains included in the agenda should respond to the need to integrate research into the policy process relevant to governance reform, and enable a large number of actors engaged in the policy process at different levels to access and use research information to an increasing extent.

How does this third set of activities relate to the findings of this governance review? First, it is clear that fisheries governance is a growing area of research and the methodologies required to extend this work will need further development and dissemination. Researchers will need training in new concepts, methods and approaches. Secondly, in many parts of the world, government institutions responsible for policy-making lack the essential capacity to develop a programme of governance reform. One of the most vital elements missing appears to be the capacity to undertake cross-sectoral analysis of key issues. Pro-poor governance issues in small-scale fisheries are, however, very often related to issues and/or processes outside the fisheries sector itself, such as water governance. Thirdly, as highlighted by the lessons drawn from co-management experiences (Part III), capacity-building initiatives covering a wide range of stakeholders are often difficult to implement and there is no guarantee of success. The nature of development change as a 'process' (e.g. improved governance leading to poverty reduction) will require an increased level of human capital. The pathway and speed of the process is unpredictable, and the best one can hope for is to create an enabling environment in which governance changes supporting the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development principles are encouraged.

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Further readings on governance in fisheries

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This report discusses the role, nature and mechanisms of governance in inland fisheries. After reviewing the wider concepts of governance, participation and co-management in natural resource management, the report then focuses on small-scale fisheries and, in particular, on inland artisanal fisheries operating in developing countries.

Drawing upon lessons from the literature outside the fisheries sector, the first part of the report reviews and discusses the definitions of governance and 'good' governance, and highlights some of the main issues related to these concepts, before focusing more specifically on issues related to these concepts in fisheries. The analysis reveals, in particular, the frequent confusion that is made in the fisheries literature between 'management' and 'governance' and argues that the two concepts should be used distinctly.

Part II discusses in greater details governance mechanisms and reforms. The report concentrates initially on cases of decentralization reforms in sectors other than fisheries and reviews some of the positive but also negative consequences of those types of governance reforms. We then focus more specifically on two governance mechanisms, participation and accountability. The report shows that while participatory processes can play a key role in improving governance, these approaches will not benefit the end-users (and in particular the poor) unless efficient downward accountability mechanisms are put in place.

Part III of the report discusses governance reform—in particular co-management—in fisheries, and raises a series of questions about the implementation of this concept for the artisanal fisheries of developing countries. The analysis shows that the conceptualization of co-management as currently presented in the literature does not provide a particularly useful framework to analyze the reasons for success or failure of current decentralization programs in fisheries. The review demonstrates that by focusing exclusively on the level of participation as the key-explanatory element of success (or failure) of these reforms, the current approach to co-management neglects some of the other crucial dimensions of governance and overlooks the real effect of these reforms on equity and poverty (alleviation).

Part IV draws upon the lessons derived from the three previous sections and develops a series of questions for future research. The section highlights the role that such research should play in the debate about governance in natural resource management, within the more general context of poverty alleviation in developing countries.

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