



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

An Overview of the 3 'T's

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**Treasure, Turf and Turmoil: The Dirty Dynamics
of Land and Natural Resource Conflict**

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Multiple meanings of land and natural resources

Land and natural resources are important to local communities in many different ways:

- **Group & Territorial identity**
- **Political autonomy**
- **Asset** (economic and social)
- **Economic benefits**

Multiple meanings of land and natural resources

Important to the state as well:

- Economic assets
- Administrative territories
- National image
- Geo-political importance
- Possible global or regional importance



Photo: ARD/Tetrattech

A rapidly changing world

Multiple drivers and symptoms of change:
economic/political/ environmental

- Climate change
- Global corporate reach
- Urbanization
- Rising food prices
- Changing consumer appetites
- Accelerating *enclosure of the commons*
- 'Green Revolution for Africa', biotech, biofuels...



Photo: ARD/
Tetrattech

... How are communities, governments and aid agencies responding to these dynamic trends?

Terminology: Tensions, disputes, conflicts, violence...

How do we use these terms?

- Turn to your neighbour to your left.
- Take turns to define and discuss these terms:
 - Tensions
 - Disputes
 - Conflicts
 - Violence
- Are your definitions the same or different?

Land and natural resources in developing countries

- ‘Local’ conflicts often have *global & regional aspects*. ***What examples do you know?***
- Multiple & overlapping uses by different kinds of users of different status
- Mismatch between customary & state tenure systems
- Only minority of land holdings are registered
- Women’s rights are precarious

Conflict and controversy over the commons

- Ownership rights disputed by the state and communities
 - Different actors blame each other for 'poor resource management'
 - Massive privatization of the commons
 - Collective or customary rights *can* be secured
- ... carefully!



Photo: ILRI

Beyond 'greed or grievance', 'scarcity or surfeit'

- Conflict occurs due to *both* 'scarcity' and 'abundance'
- Defining complex links between natural resources, biodiversity, property rights, and conflict is a conflictual process
- “*There is competition over resources... the competition, however, is not just to win but to define the rules, the players, and the extent of the playing field*”

Struggle and conflict over access to resources

- Governing land and natural resources is an essential part of 'good governance'
- Poor governance leads to disputes
- **Turn to your neighbour to your right.**
- **Take turns to define 'good governance'**
- Left to fester, or in context of wider problems, *disputes over resources will lead to violence*
- 75% of conflicts since 1980s were in agrarian states with customary tenure
- ***Can you provide any examples?***

Land and natural resources and large-scale conflict

- Large-scale conflicts linked to grievances:
MOTIVE
- High-profile resource disputes trigger violence: OPPORTUNITY
- Resources in 'war economy' sustain violence:
MEANS
- Population displacement leads to overlapping claims over land and property

What examples of these factors do you see in countries that you work in?

Post-conflict disputes

Common issues in post-conflict disputes:

- Overlapping rights and claims
- Lack of relevant land/ NRM policies
- Dysfunctional land administration
- Land grabbing/encroachment
- Calls for compensation
- Ambiguous, controversial or unenforceable laws.

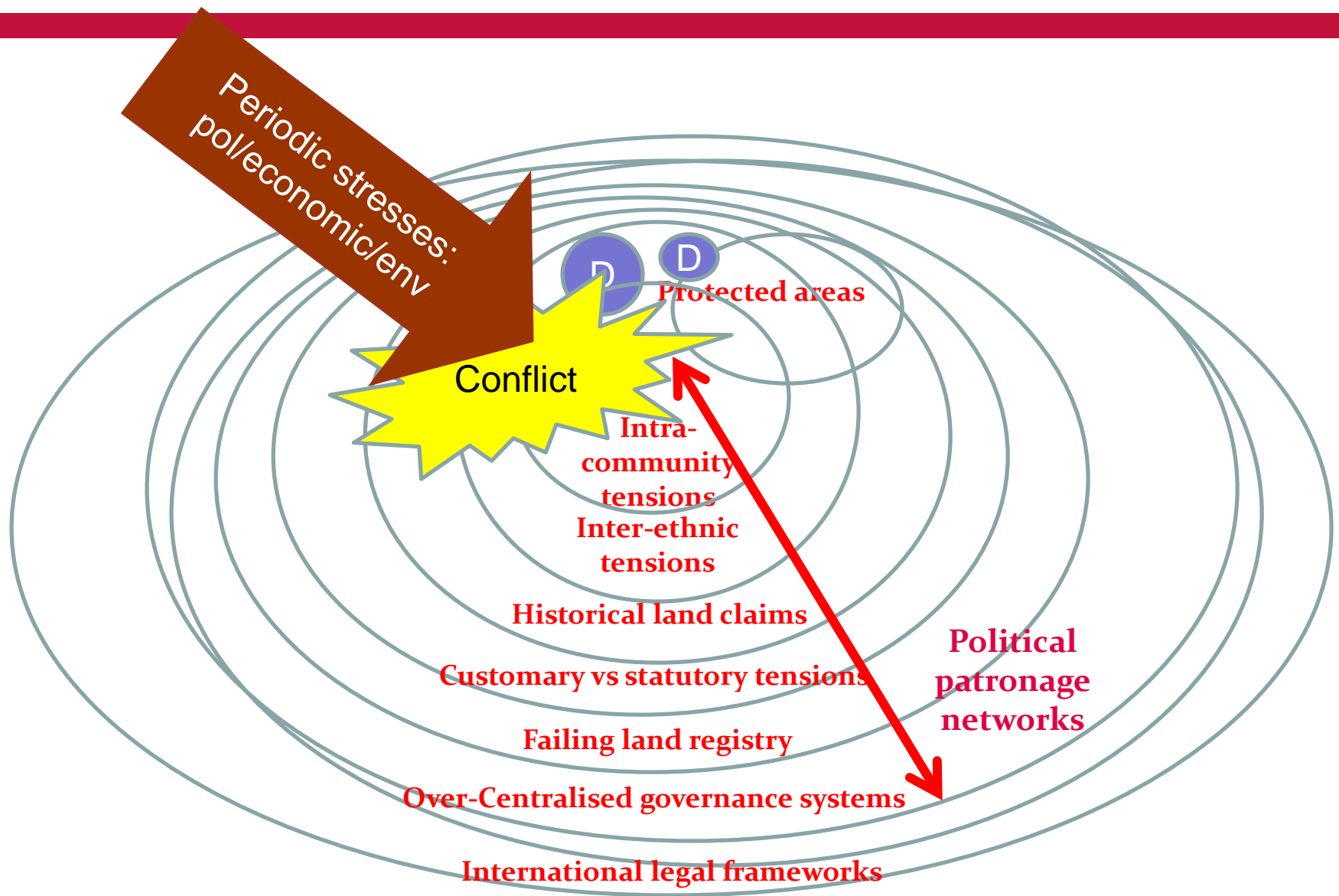


Photo: ARD/
Tetrattech

Analyzing conflict (large- and small-scale)

- Conflict has multiple causes
- Conflicts evolve over time
- Common situation of 'no war, no peace'
- Conflict affects the legitimacy of institutions
- This affects how, and with whom, USAID may work

Example: “Nested” conflicts



Vulnerability and control over land and natural resources

- Threats to the environment impact vulnerable people severely
- The poor, landless, women and indigenous peoples may be displaced during struggles
- *Subsidiary rights* are often critical to vulnerable groups.
- When rights are abrogated, low level conflict can erupt that often involves environmental damage.



Photo: Chris Huggins

Vulnerability and control over land and natural resources

- On the other hand, “vulnerable” groups can demonstrate amazing resilience. Poor farmers in Niger fostered the regeneration of millions of hectares of semi-arid lands, assisted by new policies that assured them rights to trees.

Do you know of other examples of such resilience and initiative?



Photo:
ARD/Tetrattech

Costs of ignoring rights to land and natural resources

Projects which don't account for all potential claims to resources and social tensions risk causing violence.

Do you have any examples?

- E.g. Water schemes which divert water from downstream users may be destroyed
- E.g. Trees planted may be uprooted if planted on contested land
- Demarcation of rights can help vulnerable groups, or 'shut them out' completely

The good news...

- Land and natural resources reforms can make substantial improvements to livelihoods
- Improved management of land and NR can represent concrete forms of participatory governance
- Land and NR are therefore entry points with great potential for progressive change
- ***Can you provide examples?***



Photo: ARD/Tetrattech

Learning points from this presentation

- Land and natural resources have multiple meanings for different actors
- Contested governance of land and natural resources is a major source of conflict
- Conflict is rarely 'local': look for connections
- Environmental fluctuations and long-term changes make governance more challenging
- Improving governance of resources can reduce conflict, secure livelihoods, and protect the environment