

Recentralization through Decentralization -national forest governance in Thailand-

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Summary of today's presentation

- Previous research on recentralization caused by decentralization policies focused on what kind of power was taken away from local communities
- The real effects of recentralization cannot be understood without the observation of how local people receive these policies
- This presentation will show how recentralization became effective for the local communities

Framework of PhD Research

- The purpose is to understand the movement of power from the perspectives of the local communities
- How is the diffusion and concentration of power in natural resources interpreted by the local communities?

Today's Presentation

- How did the decentralization policy of forest management in Thailand become recentralized ?
- Why did local communities choose to participate in this policy?

Politics of NR Management in SEAs

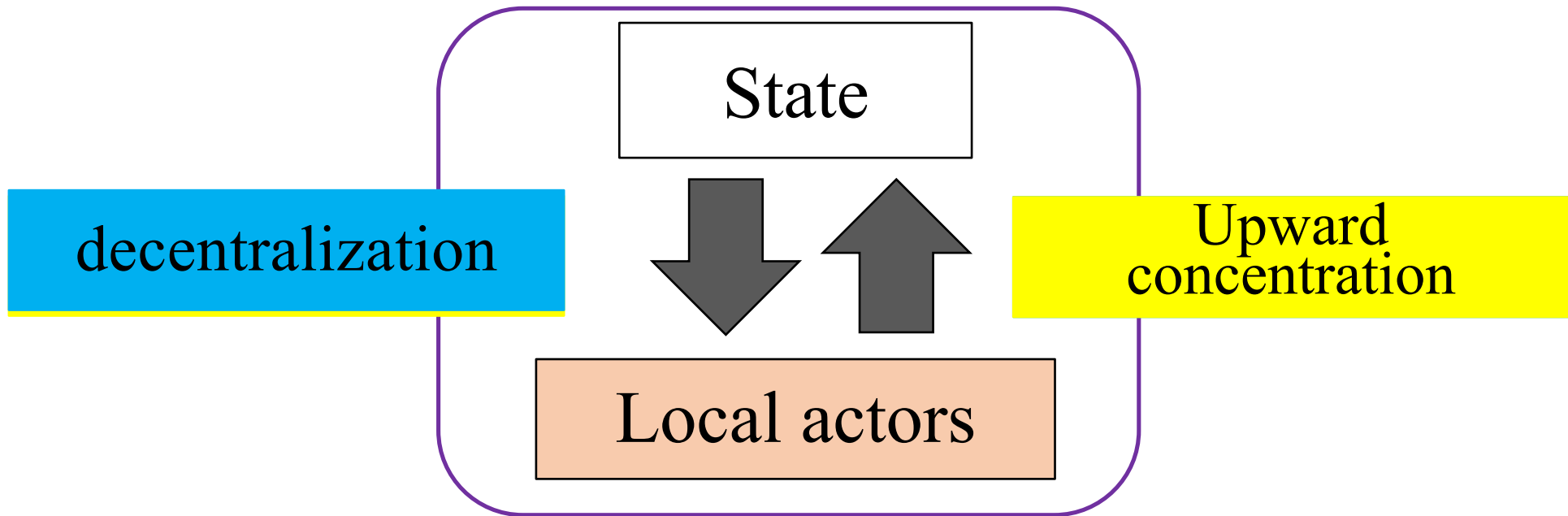
- Centralized management established in 19th century
- In globalized society, power spreads to other actors shifting from centralized “government” to multi-level “governance” (Rhodes 1996, Giddens 1999, Khramann2003, Lemos & Agrawal 2006)
- In previous research, one-way diffusion of power was observed, especially at the local and global level. (Inoue & Shivakoti 2015, Larson & Ribot 2004, etc.)

Previous Research on Decentralization

- Extensive research on power that local actors receive
- Research on power taken away from states (Schmedier 2003)
- Power that states receive in the process of decentralization
 - ⇒ “recentralization” (Oyono 2004, Mutebi 2004)
- Recentralization is regarded as having negative effects for local actors

Focus on effects of recentralization on local actors

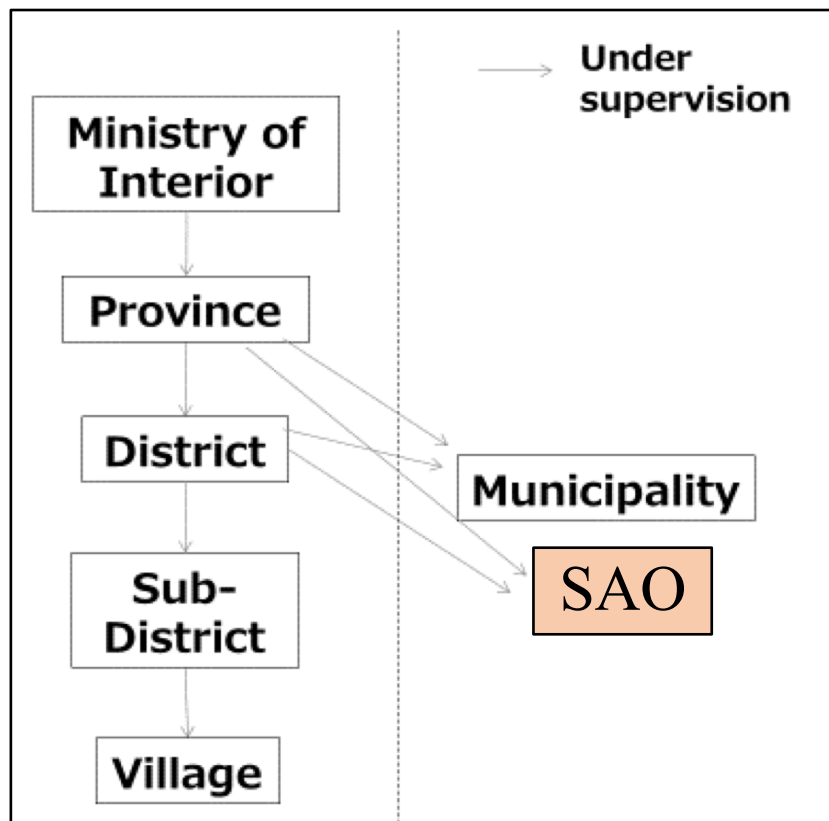
Figure: Power transfer



Decentralization policies of forest management

- Two types of decentralization in forest management
(Fisher1999)
 - ① Decentralization from central to local government
ex. Indonesia and the Philippines
 - ② Decentralization from central government to local community
ex. Community forest in Thailand

Decentralization policies of forest management in Thailand



Administrative decentralization (2000~)

- Establishment of Sub-district Administrative Organization (SAO)
- Central, provincial, and local administration (Chardchawarn2008)

Methodology

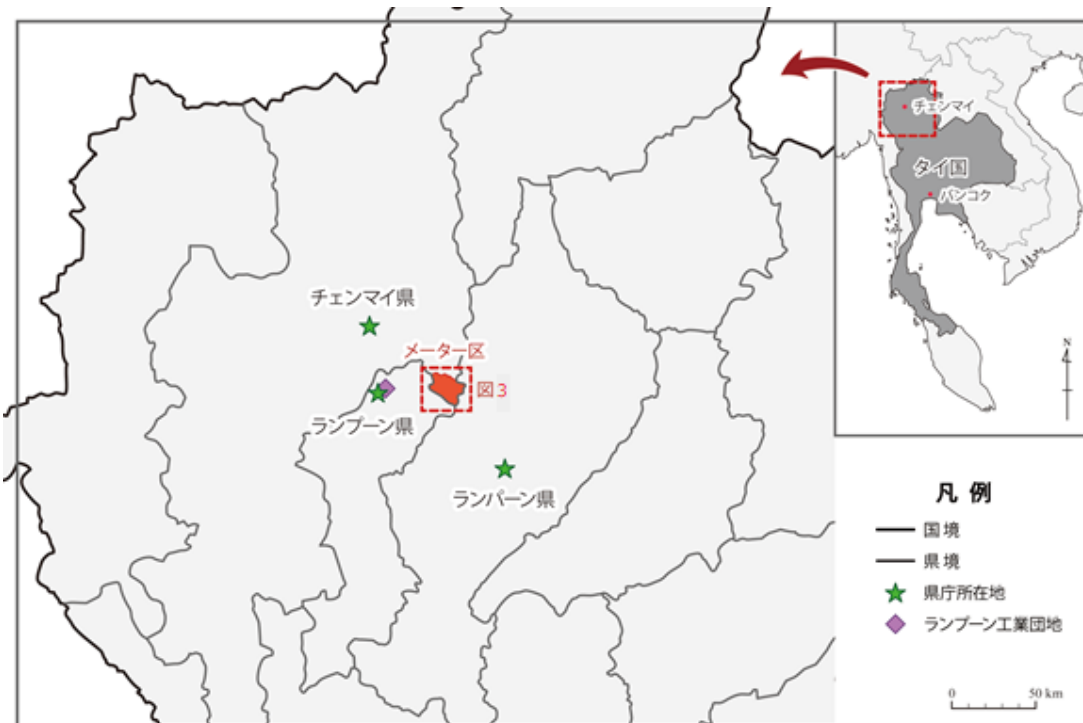
1. Policy Review

- Comparison of **private cultivation rights** and **community titles deeds**
⇒How did forest management policy become recentralized?

2. Field study

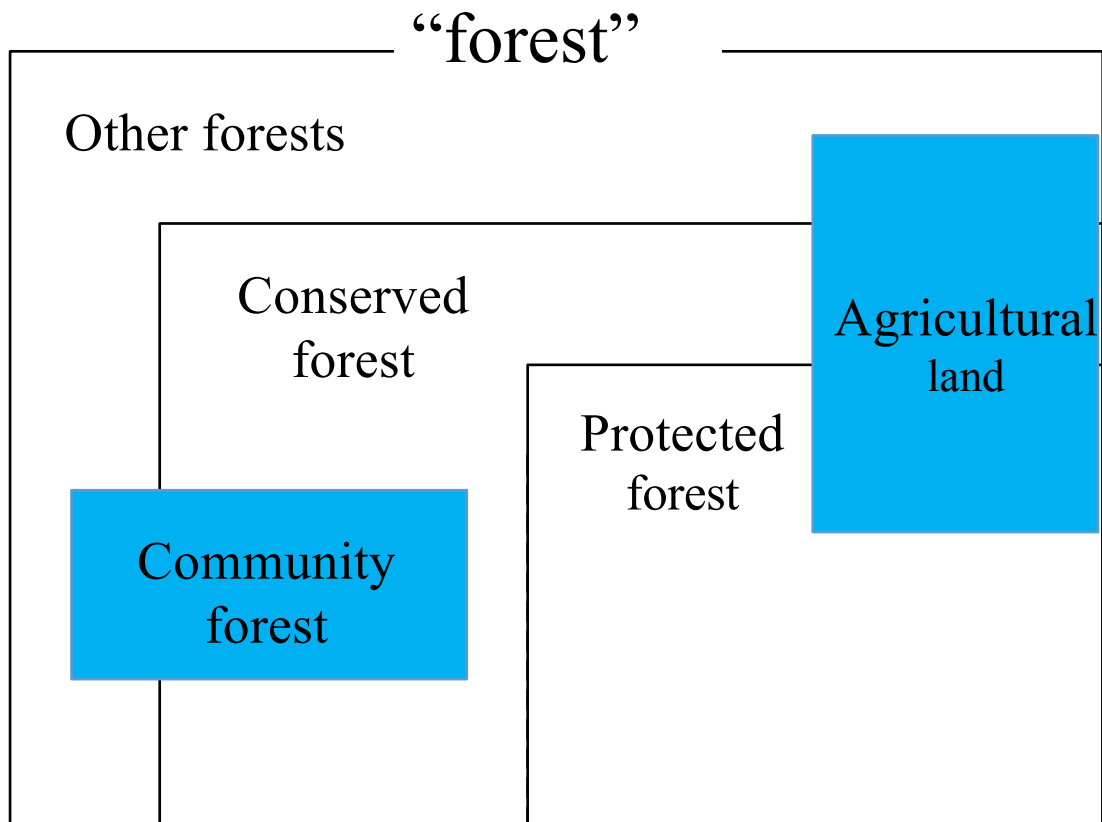
- Research on the effects of community title deeds on a local community
⇒Why did local people participate in the policy?

Fieldwork site: Mae Tha Sub-district



- Total 57 days of fieldwork in 2015 + interview in 2018
- Household survey on economic situation
- Interviews about people's impressions of the policy

Case study: farmlands in “forest”



- 20% of conserved forest is agricultural land (Krasuang Mahathai 1993)
- Cultivation in “forest” is illegal
- Conflicts and trade-offs between the government and local people

Private Cultivation Rights

from 1979 ~1990s

- Cultivation rights were given individually
- No ownership rights
- Users have autonomy against their utilization
- Lands that are not approved also continued to be cultivated, and officials gave silent approval

Community Title Deeds

2010~present

- Implemented in 2010
- 75,000 ha of lands were approved (34% of targeted land) by 2019
- SAO became an important actor
- Community-based management
- Local People cannot freely utilize the land

Results① Policy Analysis

Characteristics of Community Title Deeds

1. SAO as the middle actor
2. Complicated Local Management System
3. Temporal utilization rights given to communities
4. Prohibition on selling rights to outsiders
5. Land Bank System

Results① Policy Review

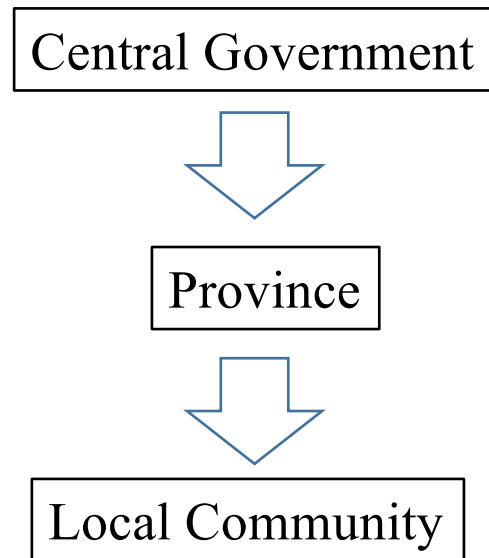
Comparison of Rights

	Ownership	Management	Utilization
Private Cultivation Rights	State	Private	Private
Community Title Deeds	State	Community-based	Private

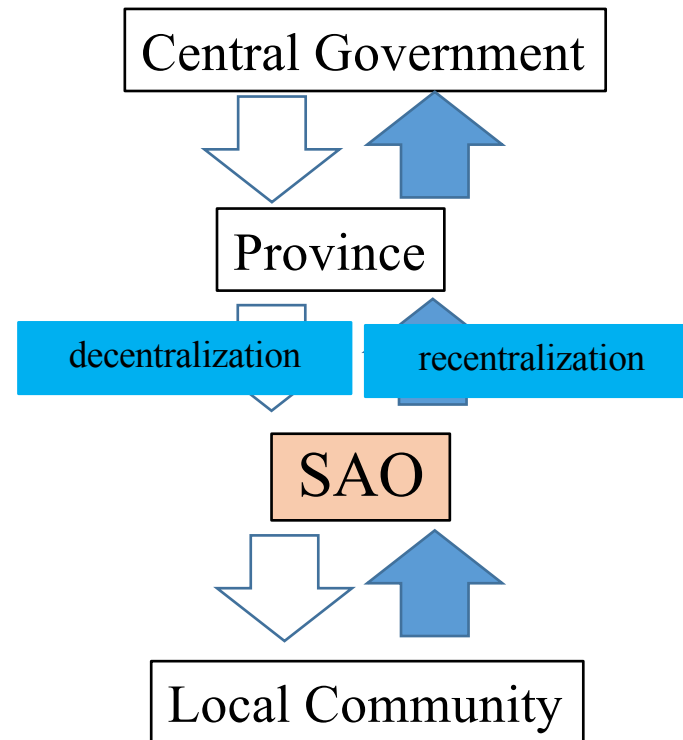
Results① Policy Review

Comparison of Power Transfer

Private Cultivation Rights



Community Title Deeds



Results② Effects on local communities

Land assurance

- Formal land certificates were given to 79% of the agricultural lands in “forest” that were illegal in the past
- All lands in the sub-district are occupied by local people

Results② Effects on local communities

Economic benefits

- Some people started new businesses by mortgaging the land
- Increase in property values
- Products can be sold to large companies

Conclusion and Implication

How did decentralization policy of forest management in Thailand become recentralized ?

- Traditional customary rights were abandoned
- Not much power given to SAO
- The government intends to decrease agricultural lands and increase forest lands

From conflicts to cooperation between government and local communities

Conclusion and Implication

Why did local communities choose to participate in this policy?

- Trade-offs between the government and local communities
- Positive effects for the local communities

The change in lifestyle gave incentives for the local people to participate

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