

PEOPLE-CENTRED APPROACHES

A brief literature review and comparison of types



**By Dervla Cleary
With contributions from
Pari Baumann, Marta Bruno,
Ximena Flores and Patrizio Warren.**

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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Livelihood Support Programme (LSP)

An inter-departmental Programme for improving support for enhancing
Livelihoods of the rural poor.

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The Livelihood Support Programme

The Livelihood Support Programme (LSP) evolved from the belief that FAO could have a greater impact on reducing poverty and food insecurity, if its wealth of talent and experience were integrated into a more flexible and demand-responsive team approach.

The LSP, which is executed by FAO with funding provided by DfID, works through teams of FAO staff members who are attracted to specific themes being worked on in a sustainable livelihoods context. These cross-departmental and cross-disciplinary teams act to integrate sustainable livelihoods principles in FAO's work, at headquarters and in the field. These approaches build on experiences within FAO and other development agencies.

The Programme is functioning as a testing ground for both team approaches and sustainable livelihoods principles.

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People-Centred Approaches in Different Cultural Contexts Sub-Programme

The goal of this sub-programme is to review and compare the SL model with other development paradigm models in use in different cultural linguistic regions of the world with conceptual discussion of similarities and differences; and to provide a critical analysis of existing SL translations into French and Spanish in order to improve terminology when necessary.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CDF	World Bank's Comprehensive Development F
CPRM	Common Property Resource Management
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CVGT	Communes Villageoises Pour Gestion de Terroirs
DfID	UK Department for International Development
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
GT	Gestion de Terroirs
GTZ	German Technical Development
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRD	Integrated Rural Development
LLI	Local Level Institutions
LSP	Livelihood Support Program in the FAO
NSSD	National Strategies for Sustainable Development
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PIPs	Policies, Institutions and Processes Box of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAM	Service Asset Management groups
SL	Sustainable Livelihoods
SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report aims to give a concise overview of some people-centred approaches to rural development that are being used, or have been used, in different areas of the world. The approaches covered here are the sustainable livelihoods approach, as is being developed by DfID; the gestion de terroirs approach; the farming systems approach; and some approaches that have been emerging from Latin America, and in particular ordenamiento territorial.

The discussion, here, of the sustainable livelihoods approach focuses on reviewing the major principles of the approach and opening the discussion of the SLA's potential in the field. The sustainable livelihoods approach is an emerging and evolving approach to rural development, with a great potential to learn from other approaches in the field, and to successfully apply those in the battle against rural poverty.

The gestion de terroir approach has a longer history than the SLA and as such has many potential lessons to teach. In chapter 2 of this report, there is review of the approach, with an emphasis on these lessons. The key theme in this chapter is the weaknesses of the gestion de terroir approach and the potential for other people-centred approaches to learn from and adapt these weaknesses.

The discussion of the approaches emerging from Latin America involves a review of the practical experience of the integrated rural development schemes in Ceara, Brazil and Oaxaca, Mexico. The newer approach, ordenamiento territorial, is placed within the socio-economic and political context of Latin America in recent decades and its general features considered. The adaptation of the SLA to the Brazilian context is also outlined in this section.

Farming Systems is an approach that has been in place throughout the world for decades. Here the particular form of farming systems being reviewed is that version that is being adapted and developed in the FAO, under the direction of John Dixon. The aim of this chapter is simply to review the approach and discuss some of the features that make it useful for people-centred development.

There is then a comparative review of the people-centred approaches that have been covered, which is set up in a predominantly tabular fashion. The potential for all these approaches in successfully battling rural poverty emerges in this chapter.

INTRODUCTION

This report is a brief overview of some people-centred approaches and has been carried out under the auspices of sub-programme 2.2, on *People-Centred Approaches in Different Cultural Contexts*, of the Livelihood Support Program (LSP). The LSP is an inter-departmental initiative, funded by the UK's Department for International Development, which seeks to improve the impact of FAO interventions at country level through the effective application of Sustainable Livelihood Approaches¹. As noted in the work plan for this program, experts within the FAO and other development organisations have tended to work primarily with methods that they have used for many years, which can result in distrust of new approaches and a reluctance to adopt such approaches. Thus, potential synergies between approaches are often overlooked beyond a more abstract, academic level. The consultants group will be examining in greater detail, through interviews, documentary analysis and approach working groups, the potential for an exchange of ideas, methods and 'best practice' in order to allow the various SL type approaches already in use in the field to learn from and teach one another with the aim that the approaches will be most adequately oriented to the particular cultural context in which they are used. In this way, this review can be seen as simply a general overview of some existing literature on the different approaches and lessons that have been learned from them.

The approaches covered here are:

1. *Gestion de Terroirs*, whose use has been predominantly within francophone West Africa;
2. Farming systems, which has been used regularly within many cultural contexts;
3. The Sustainable Livelihoods framework.
4. Some of the approaches emerging from Latin America, including IRD and Ordenamiento Territorial

The examination of the appropriateness of SLAs in different cultural contexts is noted within the DfID/ FAO Sienna document as being essential to attracting a wider audience to use and adapt the SL approach. As such, the document notes that concern was voiced by participants in the Sienna Forum that the SL approach appeared to be rooted within an Anglophone context, which could prove a serious obstacle to its uptake in other cultural contexts.

Thus, the main questions that would seem to need answering are:

1. What tools and methodologies are being applied to rural development and are they showing some success?
2. Are their lessons that can be learned from these approaches that can benefit the rural poor?

This report makes no pretence to answer those questions, rather the broad intention is to open the debate and clarify some of the more obvious similarities between the approaches and lessons that they may learn from one another. Hence, this review shall begin with a brief review of the Sustainable Livelihoods approach, although, as many authors have already covered this in depth, the review will be limited to that which may be relevant for the rest of the report. This will be followed by a review of the *gestion de terroirs* approach, some of the approaches being used in

¹ Baumann, P., Bruno, M., et al (2003) *Applying People-Centred Approaches Within FAO: Some Practical Lessons* (Work in Progress)

Latin America, and the farming systems approach, followed by an examination of how these approaches compare to one another.

CHAPTER 1 THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS APPROACH

The Sustainable Livelihoods approach has been explained and expanded upon by several authors (Carney, Ashley, etc) so this report will not go into much detail on the approach itself here. Rather, there will simply be a brief synopsis of the main principles underlying the approach, noting its inclusion within the FAO as an increasingly important aspect of its rural development programmes. This will be followed by a review of the various ways in which the approach has been used in the field and a run down of some of the criticisms levelled at it.

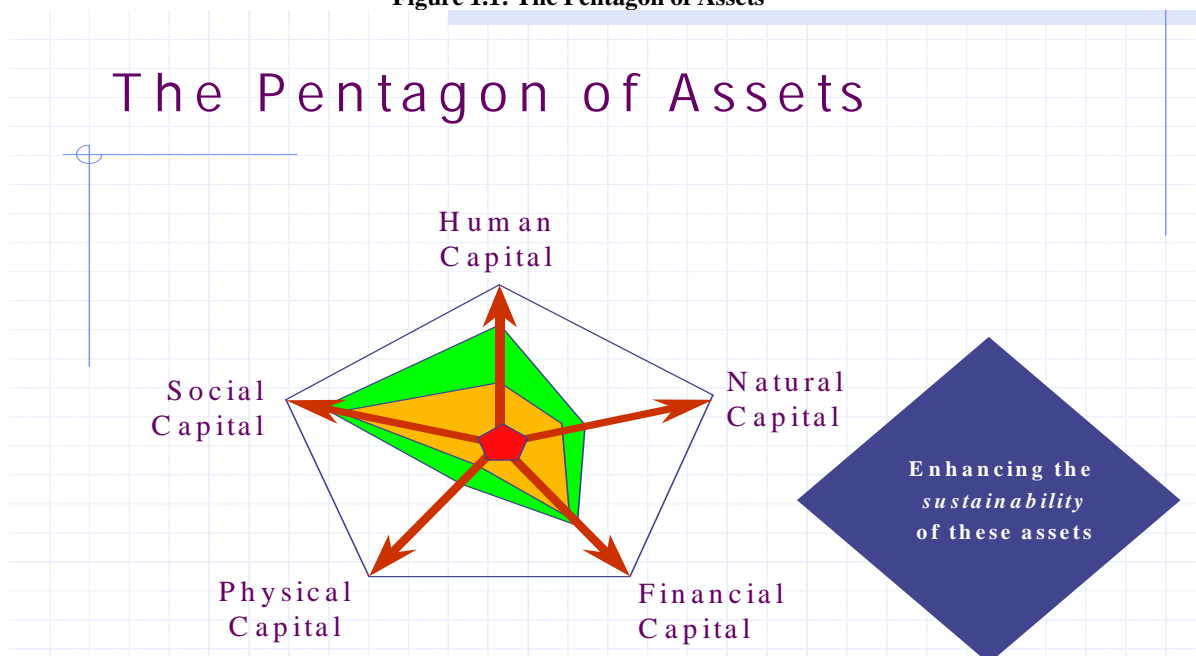
1.1 The Central Tenets of the SL Approach:

The Sustainable Livelihoods approach is noted²as aiming “to promote development that is sustainable not just ecologically, but also institutionally, socially and economically and to produce genuinely positive livelihood outcomes”. This is to be achieved through a variety of approaches, sharing the following elements:

- People-centred
- Responsive and participatory
- Multi-level
- Conducted in partnership
- Sustainable, with the four key dimensions of sustainability being economic, institutional, social and environmental
- Dynamic

Included within this is the notion of the pentagon of five capital assets that are available to rural people³:

Figure 1.1: The Pentagon of Assets

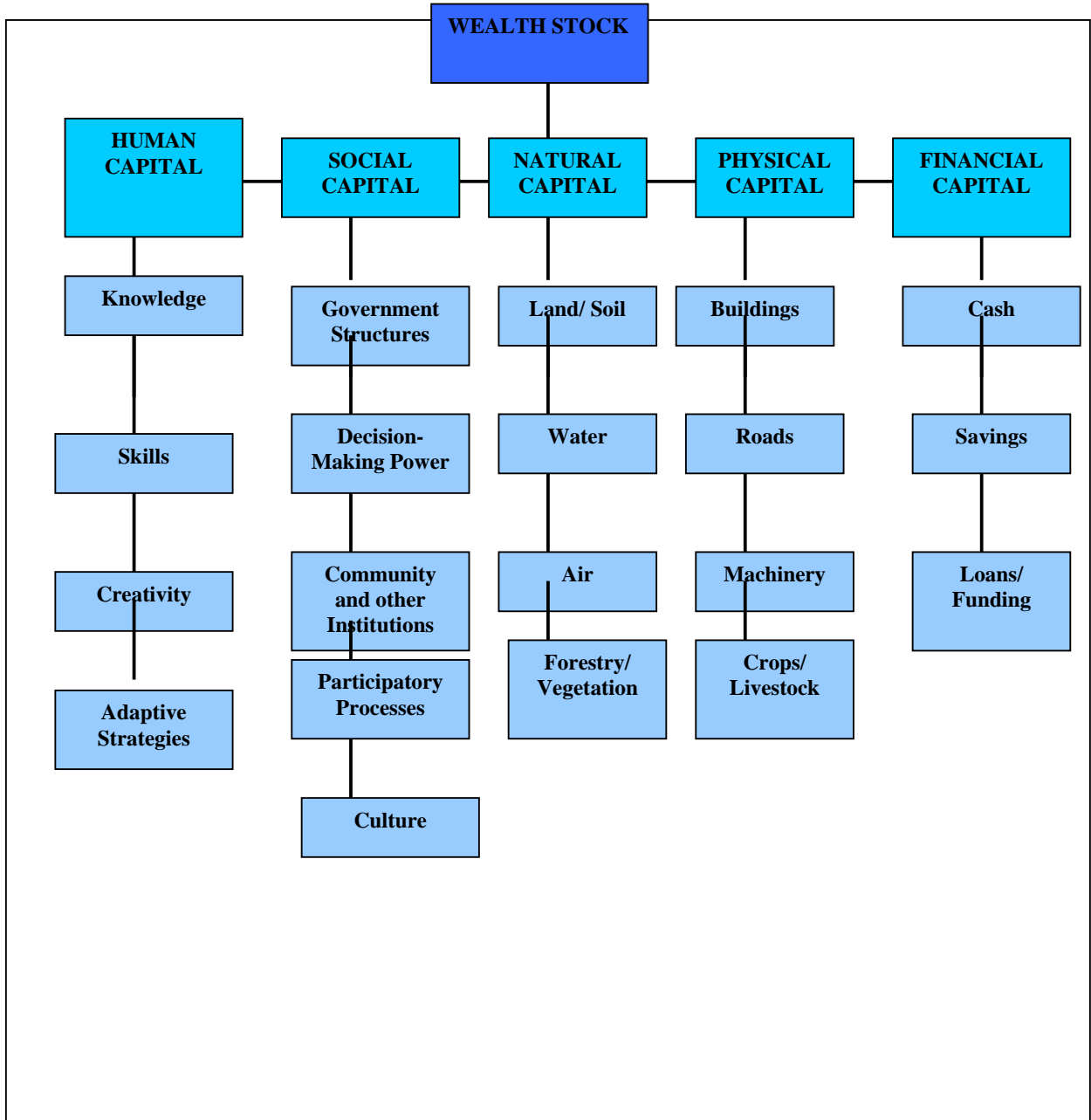


² Ashley, C.; Hussein, K. (2000) *Working Paper 129: Developing Methodologies for Livelihood Impact Assessment*, p.14

³ Slides from de Satgé, R. *Examining the DfID Sustainable Livelihoods Framework: Concepts and Critiques*

Singh and Gilman use the following diagram to illustrate the community assets that are vital to the SL framework⁴:

Figure 1.2: Community Assets as an Entry-Point for SL



⁴ Adapted from Singh, N. and Gilham, J. *Employment and Natural Resources Management: A Livelihoods Approach to Poverty Reduction* SEPED Conference Paper Series No.5, p.5

The FAO's Medium Term Plan includes a commitment to include SL approaches in its future work in the area of rural development. The objectives of the Plan are thus noted as being:

1. To improve the effectiveness of national policies and programmes aimed at strengthening the contribution of local institutions to rural livelihoods and assisting vulnerable populations
2. Foster local institutions and attendant organisational capacity for improving rural livelihoods and ensuring equitable access to resources
3. Strengthen links of local institutions where appropriate to regional, national and international institutions.

As such, it is clear that within the FAO there appears to be a genuine commitment to the use of Sustainable Livelihoods in the search for successful rural development projects, with a particular emphasis being placed upon capacity building of local institutions and the empowerment of local populations through their participation in development planning processes.

1.2 The SL Approach in the Field

Baumann⁵ examines the use of SL approaches in two districts in India, Dehradun (Uttar Pradesh) and Rayagada (Orissa). Regarding this, she emphasises the need for Sustainable Livelihoods to incorporate political capital as an endogenous asset within the livelihoods framework. This is seen as of central importance in terms of ensuring local participation and empowerment, such that she comments that changes in local power structures are going to find themselves in opposition to local elites, such that SLAs may face considerable resistance when there are attempts to organise the local population into groups for changing local access to resources. In this way, the inclusion of political capital would allow for a clearer distinction within the framework between operational and technical factors (resolved through institutional innovation within the current political system), those that are legislative, and those that are political (where politically induced constraints are preventing the successful working of projects). This is further developed in this report, particularly as regards the Latin American context, and has also been the subject of discussion within the consultants' meetings.

Figure 1.1: A Women's Group Meeting to Discuss their Objectives; Orissa, India⁶



Photo: Katia Dini

⁵ Baumann, P. (2000) *Working Paper 136: Sustainable Livelihoods and Political Capital: Arguments and Evidence from Decentralisation and Natural Resource Management in India*

⁶ Taken from IFAD media base: www.ifad.org/photo/region/PI/IN.htm

Ashley⁷ uses the SL framework to explore the links between rural livelihoods and common property resource management (CPRM), focusing on the influence of CPRMs on livelihoods and vice versa. Within this, three examples are examined from Namibia:

- The first focuses on participatory planning of wildlife use with communities, also known as the WILD project – Wildlife Integration for Livelihood Diversification. The project facilitated participatory livelihoods analysis and land use planning, with continuous feedback of lessons into the community and other communities interested in the project. As such, livelihoods analysis was seen as an intrinsic part of the project, rather than simply a stage within it.
- The second was using an understanding of livelihood strategies to enhance the community-based natural resource management program. The main focus was on building institutional capacity for CPRM. As a by-product, the project also identified the factors affecting people's participation in the program.
- The final Namibian example reviewed assessed the impact of tourism development from a livelihoods perspective. As such, the aim was to assess how tourism development impacts upon the different aspects of rural livelihoods, using the SL framework as an analytical checklist.

A fourth example was taken from Kenya with an assessment of the livelihoods impact of wildlife enterprises, aiming to identify how such enterprises are contributing to development and conservation.

Overall, Ashley⁸ found that the impacts of the above programmes on rural people's assets are of primary importance and that such analyses can assist in a wider understanding of why it is that some groups participate and others do not. Such a finding would appear to have the possibility of uncovering, in the situation in Peru⁹ as outlined in the Latin American section, why it was that indigenous populations were not keen to participate and how this may be altered.

Ashley and Hussein¹⁰ used the livelihoods approach to evaluate and assess wildlife preservation projects in terms of their impact on the livelihoods of rural people. Their analysis can be seen to highlight, as one of the weaknesses of the SL approaches, the risk of over-reliance on the SL framework, which leads to a failure to overtly address issues of politics, empowerment, gender relations, etc. This would seem to confirm the conclusions of Baumann¹¹, Marzetti¹², Bebbington¹³, etc.

⁷ Ashley, C. (2000) *Working Paper 134: Applying Livelihoods Approaches to Natural Resource Management Initiatives*

⁸ Ashley, C. (2000) *Working Paper 134: Applying Livelihoods Approaches to Natural Resource Management Initiatives*

⁹ Lopez Ornat, A. (1996) *Strategies for Sustainability: Latin America*

¹⁰ Ashley, C.; Hussein, K. (2000) *Developing Methodologies for Livelihood Impact Assessment*

¹¹ Baumann, P. (2000) *ibid.*, Baumann, P. (2002) *The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach and Improving Access to Natural Resources for the Rural Poor*

¹² Manzetti, G. (2001) *Brazilianising the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach*

¹³ Bebbington, A. (1998) "Capitals and Capabilities"

Carney and Drinkwater explore use of the SL approaches in different development organisations,¹⁴ and some lessons were drawn as regards the practical use of SLAs. For example, CARE International highlighted the importance of ensuring that the livelihoods approach does not appear to be a ‘headquarters driven’ initiative, which can often lead to doubting voices coming from the field. This could be hugely important for FAO to recognise as it begins its introduction of SL approaches. The approach working groups set up by the consultants, and any collaboration with staff in the field in developing the approach are likely to overcome this potential problem area. CARE also emphasised the need to use a ‘light’ framework to ensure simplicity in the field, which was echoed by Lopez Ornat¹⁵ in his work on sustainable development in Latin America. DfID noted that it is not necessary that there be a wholesale abandonment of sector-based approaches for SL projects to be introduced. Thus, there is recognition that SLAs can be successful when run along sector lines, as has been noted in the Gestion de terroirs literature.

Farrington et al¹⁶ attempt to bring the SL literature into a practical setting, noting the usage of the approaches so far in the field. Here they simply reiterate the findings of Ashley¹⁷ and Ashley and Hussein¹⁸ in their work in Namibia and Kenya. Within this discussion, they note that the SL framework is not to be used in isolation and is intended, rather, as a tool to design projects, bringing together different perspectives contributing to a people-centred approach. This serves to underline the necessity of the current work being done in the Livelihood Support Program’s sub-program 2.2, on *People-Centred Approaches in Different Cultural Contexts*, regarding the existence of SL type approaches in different cultural contexts. In this way, it is recognised that the SL framework is not meant to replace other approaches, but rather to build on them.

¹⁴ Carney, D.; Drinkwater, M.; Rusinow, T. et al (1999) *Livelihood Approaches Compared*

¹⁵ Lopez Ornat, A. (1996), *Strategies for Sustainability*

¹⁶ Farrington, J.; Carney, D.; Ashley, C.; Turton, C. (1999) *Sustainable Livelihoods in Practice*

¹⁷ Ashley, C. (2000) *Working Paper 134: Applying Livelihoods Approaches to Natural Resource Management Initiatives*

¹⁸ Ashley, C.; Hussein, K. (2000) *Developing Methodologies for Livelihood Impact Assessment*

CHAPTER 2: THE “GESTION DE TERROIRS” APPROACH

The *Gestion de Terroirs* approach to rural development has emerged from the francophone West African states as an attempt to improve upon existing approaches to local rural development. In terms of its introduction worldwide, this has happened only to a limited degree, with trials in some areas of Latin America. The approach certainly has a number of important similarities to the Sustainable Livelihoods approach being developed by DFID, but *gestion de terroirs* is relevant to the other people-centred approaches discussed here and elsewhere. Through a comparison between *gestion de terroirs* and the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, one can uncover many potential lessons that the latter can learn, particularly as SLA begins to be applied in the field. This section includes a brief outline of the origins and evolution of the concept of *gestion de terroirs*, the major principles upon which the approach is based, and an examination of the different criticisms that have been levelled at the *gestion de terroirs* approach.

2.1 The Origins of Gestion de Terroirs

From the mid-1980s there was a general movement away from projects emphasising technical aspects of rural development within Sahélien West Africa. This can be partly attributed to the widespread recognition that these projects had failed to consider the potential impact of the agricultural intensification they tended to encourage on the environment and natural resources in the region. *Gestion de Terroirs* projects thus emerged from this realisation that existing rural development projects in the region were failing to make a significant impact upon rural poverty. There was a widespread awakening to the reality of the situation within the Sahel region, with an acknowledgement that the environmental problems in the region were dependent upon space, time, and various inter-connecting economic, demographic and institutional factors operating at national, local and international levels¹⁹.

Therefore, it was generally accepted that these issues could only be adequately dealt with within the context of an approach that took into account these various dimensions. The GT approach is regarded as being an attempt to overcome the perceived weaknesses of other developmental approaches that had been operating in the region. Such weaknesses can be said to include²⁰:

- A lack of clarity regarding the rights to use and control land and other resources, a confusion which lies predominantly in the conflict between government and traditional authority.
- The poor performance of large single-sector or integrated rural development projects in the 1970s and 80s.
- An over-extended state administration, which has led to increased pressure on Sahélien governments to decentralise services, etc.
- Adverse trends in the natural resource base, often as a result of agricultural intensification projects encouraged by IRD, etc.

The *Gestion de Terroirs* approach can be seen as an attempt to transfer the management of control and access to natural resources from the grasp of the central government to local

¹⁹ Toulmin, C. (1994) *Gestion de Terroir: Concept and Development*

²⁰ Toulmin, C. (1994) *ibid.*

people. However, the first generation of GT projects simply emphasised the technical aspects of environmental protection and natural resource management, while the priorities of the local populations continued to remain focused on other things, such as credit, water, health, etc²¹. A change can be seen in the early 1990s when the priorities of GT projects began to be drawn in line with those of the locals themselves. Thus, the project terms came to be increasingly defined by the rural communities involved in their implementation. However, it must be noted here that this still did not solve the problem of the transfer of power from government to local population, which has remained largely haphazard in most West African countries, leaving a state of confusion around the question of who controls access to natural resources. This could be seen as a continuation of the earlier conflict concerning traditional versus central government institutions in the management of natural resources, a conflict which was to be resolved through the implementation of GT approaches. (See Ribot²² for a critique of the actual impact of decentralisation and participative rural development in West Africa).

The *Gestion de Terroirs* approach has focused on natural resource management at the village or community level through three inter-related systems²³:

1. Technical projects, such as those related to the conservation of soil, etc.
2. Socio-economic factors related to the organisational structures within which people arrange their livelihood strategies.
3. The legal system and its administration, by which use rights are enforced in practice.

Tall's²⁴ finding that there has been a rapid development of participatory approaches to natural resource management in the Sahel in the past decade appears to confirm the increased importance of taking into account these various dimensions of rural development.

The GT approach has evolved significantly from simply being one of pilot programmes being initiated in order to tackle local problems of environmental degradation, to including general principles of community involvement in natural resource management and the developments of 'terroirs'. The approach has also been gradually seeping through to the level of government, aided largely by the current widespread decentralisation of government within most of francophone West Africa. The World Bank, United Nations Development Program and several small NGOs have been big supporters of GT projects, seeing them as the answer to the problems of poverty reduction and development within the Sahel region of Africa. Given that, however, it must be remembered that GT is not without its critics and that there is often a major gap between the rhetoric of such agencies and the reality on the ground. These two issues will be further explored later.

2.2 So, What is Gestion de Terroirs?

A *terroir* is regarded as a socially and geographically defined space within which communities' resources and associated rights are located in order to satisfy their needs. The GT approach associates groups and communities with a traditionally recognised land area, aiding these communities in building skill levels and developing local institutions for the

²¹ Bouttier, N. (1996) *Décentralisation et Développement Locale*

²² Ribot, J. (1998) *Decentralisation, Participation and Accountability in Sahelian Forestry*

²³ Toulmin, C. (1994) *Gestion de Terroir: Concept and Development*

²⁴ Tall, M. (2000) *Presentation to IIED: Institutionalising Participatory Processes in Natural Resource Management in Senegal and Burkina Faso*

implementation of sustainable management plans²⁵. Lund²⁶ confirms this when he notes that *Gestion de Terroirs* promises to integrate the social and physical environment, from a village perspective. Thus, the 1994 UNSO²⁷ report comments that *gestion de terroirs* involves the wresting of control over resources from the hands of the state, placing them in local people's power, thus allowing them to be negotiated at a village level. Hence, one of the major differences between GT and SLA is that GT focuses on the terroir and SLA focuses on the people themselves and is as such not limited to particular geographical spaces. At the same time, the *Gestion de terroir* approach simultaneously uses local empowerment and capacity building to respond to the immediate socio-economic needs of the local population as well as the long term problems of sustainable land and natural resource management, a feature it shares with SLAs.

The *Gestion de Terroir* approach can be defined as including some mixture of the following elements:

- Community-based natural resource management
- The empowerment of local communities
- Increasing local capacity, through training and education
- Stakeholder involvement – again leading to the empowerment of the community
- Flexibility and adaptability of both projects and funding – this is something which goes against the *raison d'être* of most funding agencies!
- Facilitating resource conflict resolution – through mutual management of resources
- Participatory appraisal – on-going assessment and feedback in the hope of preventative action and trouble-shooting
- Identifying local priority concerns (through involving them in processes of planning and development as well as in outcomes). Within this is the incorporation of local tacit knowledge in planning and development.
- Decision-making by the local community – having an active part in testing new systems, identifying problems, researching solutions

Figure 2.1: Meeting of several village groups at the project offices to discuss the status of the project; Widou Thiengoly, Senegal²⁸



Photo: I. Balderi

²⁵ World Bank (1998) *West Africa: Community Based Natural Resource Management*

²⁶ Lund, C. (2000) *African Land Tenure: Questioning Basic Assumptions*

²⁷ Toulmin, C. (1994) *ibid.*

²⁸ From the FAO media base at: www1.fao.org/media_user/_home.html

The aim of the GT approaches is noted by the World Bank²⁹ as being to tap into social capital through a participatory approach to local rural development. This involves the devolution of decision-making powers from the state and NGO staff to the level of the community or village. There are three main approaches generally applied in the use of *Gestion de Terroirs* methodologies³⁰:

- (1) Natural Resources Management (NRM) approach - Focusing on the physical improvement of the natural resource base through existing institutions. A shortcoming of this is that such projects tend to overlook the broader socio-economic needs of the community. This is all too often the main tool used and is subject to frequent and heated criticism.
- (2) Institution building approach - Where the focus is on creating and supporting community-based institutions. As such, there are two phases to this approach. Phase 1: establishing and training village GT committees, who then devise a local development plan. Phase 2: implementing the plans through NRM. One problem of this approach, however, is that the capacity of these committees is often compromised by their lack of legitimacy as a result of their displacing existing traditional institutions and/ or their non-democratic, non-representative character.
- (3) Local development approach - An attempt to redress the problems of the former two approaches and which involves community organisation, the transfer of financial responsibility for rural land use planning to the committees, and these committees subsequently calling for tenders from local contractors in carrying out the project work. However, this approach also has pitfalls and risks, not least that the committee may often feel that it has to invest in capital-intensive projects in order to be seen as using the project money, and that the committees may come under intense pressure from the villagers to address immediate priorities at the expense of long-term projects.

2.3 Some Weaknesses associated with the GT approach to rural development:

2.3.1 Relatively High Start-up Costs

A significant problem is the slow implementation and relatively high start-up costs that tend to be associated with GT projects, which leave donors wondering where their money is going to and villagers failing to see immediate benefits and therefore losing interest in the project and incentives to maintain the programs. This is also likely to be a problem for SL approaches, and it is difficult to know how best to overcome the problem of slow implementation as this is often the result of the time needed to retrain officials and to train the local populace, as well as to create or adapt village institutions. The World Bank “Findings” report³¹ notes that there are several challenges associated with the community-based approaches to natural resource management, of which, *gestion de terroirs* is one. Thus, they, too, note that the implementation of these approaches tends to take up a significant amount of time, in order to build the capacity of villagers to manage their resources, through training. It

²⁹ World Bank (1998) *West Africa: Community-Based NRM*

³⁰ Dalal-Clayton, B.; Dent, D.; Dubois, O. (2000) *Rural Planning in the Developing World with a Special Focus on Natural Resources*

³¹ World Bank (1998) *West Africa: Community-Based NRM*

must be acknowledged, however, that while this capacity-building is slow and sometimes costly to implement, it is likely that over time the costs associated with GT or SLAs will decrease to lower levels than other rural development approaches. Institutional learning such as is implemented within GT and SLAs is likely to seep down through the different generations, creating a knowledge base that will rely less and less on external support and ultimately lead to the sustainability that both approaches are aiming for.

The Findings report³² also notes that it is existing government and donor processes that often hinder the empowerment of the villagers. Consequently, the report recommends the following:

- The simplification of diagnostic and planning processes
- A reduction of scope of activities financed
- The increased involvement of other agencies in implementation
- An increase in field teams to expand coverage
- Improved operation linkages with agricultural extension staff
- Greater delegation of financial management to local populations.

2.3.2 Maintaining Local Incentive

As regards the problem of maintaining local incentives to continue the programs while no immediate benefits are seen, some GT commentators have suggested that villagers be encouraged through programs of food for work. However, this is liable to create a range of new problems and probably is not a suitable long-term option. This is a problem that is likely to affect most people-centred approaches to rural development as they aim for local participation in projects.

2.3.3 The Policy Vacuum

There exists a policy vacuum around the GT approach. Governments in francophone West Africa who are verbally committed to the *Gestion de Terroir* approach have failed to have this commitment cemented in specific policy measures. As a result, GT programs tend to take place within an institutional vacuum. There is one exception to this: Burkina Faso, which has drawn GT into the law for the reorganisation of agrarian development (RAF) but this has been a limited process. SLA will also need to address this, particularly given that there is a general opinion within developing regions that new approaches are to a certain extent temporary and that within a few years someone else from the developed world will have come up with a whole new approach to rural development.

2.3.4 Local Institutions and Regional Specificity

Donnelly-Roarke, et al³³, in their research into the existence of local level institutions in Burkina Faso, note the country as having a history of informally recognising and including local institutions in governance and development. Thus, there are various forms of local institutions in place, of which, the Service Asset Management Groups (SAMs) are probably the most important. These are a synthesis of long-standing development committees and indigenous management councils. Their goal is for community growth, mixed with a healthy respect for the values of equity and solidarity. Thus, while most rural development projects have economic growth as their central objective, with the optimistic expectation that the poor

³² World Bank (1998) *ibid.*

³³ Donnelly-Roarke, P.; Ouedraogo, K; Ye, X. (2001) *Can Local Institutions Reduce Poverty?*

will benefit from such growth, SAMs begin with equality and solidarity, and aim for growth through these twin principles.

There are four main dimensions of SAM groups:

1. Local institutional accountability
2. Local technical and intellectual capacity for management
3. Economic strategies based on existing local ecological and financial capital
4. Cultural and emotional resonance.

The example of Burkina Faso:

Burkina Faso (BF) is as yet the only West African country to encourage rural people to integrate their local institutions into the legal, economic and institutional framework of decentralisation. Thus, local populations are no longer simply passive beneficiaries of development projects, but rather are partners within the process. The rules by which the local institutions in BF operate are continuously changing, based as they are on cultural and spatial context. Within BF, it is recognised here that there remains strong belief in the traditional values of mutual solidarity, belonging and unity. Thus, it is on this value system that local institutions and local management of resources is able to build. In this paper a comparative study is carried out of the various local institutions in place in four provinces of BF. This clearly demonstrates the cultural dependence of these participatory approaches.

It is a warning, loud and clear, to other SL approaches that the institutionalisation of participation and local empowerment will be largely affected by the cultural context in which they are operating. Thus, the authors note that local level institutions within Yatenga province in BF tend to be plentiful in number, but are isolated and competitive as regards one another. This was seen by the researchers as being partly a result of the fact that many of the groups were performing similar and overlapping functions within a single village, thus leading to considerable competition to grab scarce financial resources. The groups in this area also tended to be exclusive in terms of their membership, limiting the possibility that they could become locally accountable.

Figure 2.2: Villagers responsible for a cereal bank in Yatenga Province, Burkina Faso³⁴



Photo: C. Errath

³⁴ From the FAO media base at: www1.fao.org/media_user/_home.html

At the same time, in Sissili province, local organisations were considerably less numerous but displayed a definite willingness to cooperate with one another. In this way, local participation practitioners are able to utilise these institutions to initiate different levels of consultation and analysis among rural communities, local groups and external stakeholders. In Houet province, there exist traditional chieftaincies, mutual aid institutions and religious organisations, with management committees having a far lower profile. Sanmatenga province, in stark contrast has seen a dense web of organisational activities, with members of one committee often having membership in other organisations, allowing for an effective and smooth flow of information, which has led to high levels of effective collaboration between the various institutions. Thus, external gestion des terroirs projects have had a greater ability to enact multi-sector participatory approaches in the province.

The authors discovered that local accountability and culture-based elements are those most likely to be absent from external donor projects. Their findings indicate that without these two institutional dimensions, the new organisations set-up by these projects will quickly disappear once the external funding dries up. This is something that has continually beset GT efforts, with many rural areas ending up with a plethora of local organisations and communities, many of which flounder as soon as the external funding disappears. This will also be important for SL approaches to take into account, as their very objective of sustainability must be found within the institutions with which one is attempting to introduce the concept at field level.

Research into the practical workings of the *communes villageoises de gestion de terroirs* (CVGTs) in Burkina Faso was carried out by Ouedraogo et al³⁵. Within this it was noted that CVGTs can be viewed as pivotal organs around which institutional development initiatives are formed. The situation on the ground is, however, far more complex than a simple review of theory might suggest. As well as the traditional organisations existing prior to the GT project of the Burkinabé government, there are new organisations created by the projects under the new national law. Local institutions vary between regions and ethnicities. The authors specify a need to link traditional institutions and the newer ones created by the projects, in order to ensure there is no overlap of functions. One characteristic of the new institutions is their extreme diversity. The installation of specific action committees (SAC) was a pragmatic process; with SACs being created as need arose.

One constraint on institutional development was noted as being the absence of a ‘legal personality’ for these groups. This ‘legal personality’ is defined as the ability of a subject of a right to be a holder of this right and to be answerable to its obligations. This comes about either through law or through the will of all parties involved. Villages do not have a “moral personality”, thus the CVGTs that emanate from the villages do not have a “legal personality”. As such, the CVGTs cannot officially exercise the authority that may be necessary in practice.

However, CVGTs play an important role in the promotion of the economic and social welfare of the terroir. The only legal and administrative texts relevant to CVGTs are those in Burkina Faso’s RAF or agrarian reform law. Here the mission of the CVGTs is defined by reference to the competencies of the land committees created within the urban environment and by the heads of departments.

³⁵ Ouedraogo, B; Ouedraogo, H.M.G. (1999) *Elaboration de l’avant-projet d’arrêté portant constitution, attribution, organisation et fonctionnement des Commissions Villageoises de Gestion des Terroirs*

In practice, there has been a tendency for GT projects to ignore the complex social, economic, political and cultural realities in which their target populations exist, instead over focusing on the technical side of NRM. This is probably due, to a large degree, to the difficulties of intertwining cultural, social and economic realities into practical projects in the field.

2.3.5 The Gap between Rhetoric and Reality

The GT approach is rarely treated in practice as a planning process undertaken by local stakeholders, thus indicating a glaring hole between the rhetoric and the reality of *Gestion de Terroir*. Once again, there is a large probability that this is a result of the difficulties of implementing participation in planning and diagnostics on a practical level.

2.3.6 Lack of Long-Term Planning

The GT projects undertaken have also lacked an emphasis on developing long-term contingency plans to allow for changing circumstances. Given that sustainable rural development projects are most likely to be implemented in regions seeing a high degree of volatility – in weather conditions, conflicts, whether internal or external – it is unquestionable that this should be a priority for GT.

2.3.7 Local Power Relations

GT approaches have also been heavily criticised for failing to take into account the power relations that exist within any given community, a failure that can lead to local elites taking over from the central government in monopolising power in the region. Though, see the case of Burkina Faso, which has, through the Local Level Institutions (LLIs), managed to incorporate power relations into local rural development³⁶.

2.4 Partnership Institutions

The question of whether partnership institutions can apply their negotiated rules is dealt with in Barraud³⁷. They consider that the system of authority on which the announced rules of the partnership structures rest constitute, without doubt, the cornerstones of their effectiveness and their viability. The effective application of these rules depends on the legitimacy of the system of authority and the relationships between the partnerships and the different local powers.

The presence of these partnership structures, however, cannot alone fundamentally alter the existing power relations. They remained enclosed within a socio-political context and cannot prevent the opportunistic behaviour of farmers or herders having a privileged access to land and local power. These structures do not alter, either, the ambiguous role of the local administration, or the tendency for control by urban elites or foreign owners of plots of land from closing seasonal access to herders. Thus, the arbitration of the local administration in conflicts not resolved by these partnership institutions is necessary for the continued viability of these systems. This is yet more confirmation of the need for broad government and institutional support for gestion de terroirs and SL-type approaches. This is of central

³⁶ Donnelly-Roarke et al (2001) *Can Local Institutions Reduce Poverty?*

³⁷ Barraud, V.; Béréte, S.; Intartaglia, D. (2000) *Des Instances Paritaires Pour Gérer des Ressources Communes?*

importance to the SL approaches, which are likewise limited in their ability to fundamentally alter power structures at a broader level unless there is some degree of political will to do so.

GT approaches have tended to be holistic, encompassing various economic sectors. However, government departments tend to run along very strict sectoral lines, with a tradition of limited communication and collaboration between sectors. This will have an enormous impact upon the capacity of GT projects and on the partnerships created by these projects. At the same time, this general criticism has been levelled at the supporters of SLAs, who have responded with the acknowledgement that such broad based holism may have to be rethought in some cases to deal with the practicalities of the situation in the field. However, it is likely that the presence of SL-type projects in one sector will spread across the board, leading to greater recognition and respect for the approaches, and perhaps facilitating the implementation of true multi-sectoral projects in the field.

Local communities often tend to lack institutions such as credit providers and it is essential that GT projects build on these in order to ensure that the community does not become simply a passive recipient of donor finances, but rather a more active provider, decision-maker and manager. It is essential that GT and SL type programs take this into account in their institutional capacity building in order to ensure real participation of the community in planning and implementation.

Within the *Gestion de Terroir* concept there is limited room for focusing on institutional issues or for influencing wider policy-making. Projects tend to operate relatively autonomously, although formally attached to government structures. Thus, there is limited connection between the macro and the micro. This is where the SL approach could have a significant impact in that the value-added of SLA is primarily noted as lying in its ability to connect the micro and macro levels.

Hussein³⁸ emphasises the importance of understanding the international context within which policy is formulated. Social dynamics and the roles of intermediaries must also be taken into account in formulating public policy on development and poverty reduction. Public policy should be regarded as an intermediary between the local and international context.

In this way it must be recognised by the GT and SL-type approaches that cultural context is central to the acceptance of their projects and will dictate the tools and methodologies used in rural development. For example, it is noted here that the history of ex-British and ex-French colonies has left them with different political and administrative systems. As a result, there is a clear contrast between Anglophone and francophone countries. At the same, there are similar challenges to be tackled within these countries, such as the management of common resources, issues around the mobility of pastoral livestock, etc. In this way, GT or SLAs must be able to provide a general framework for action with recognition of the need for local adaptability. This is further emphasised by Ribot³⁹ in his discussion of participation and decentralisation in practice. Thus, he notes that in NRM, participation and decentralisation are being pushed as the saviour of rural poverty reduction on the basis that they can increase rural equity, provide greater efficiency, benefit the environment and contribute to rural development. However, he underlines the evidence that these approaches can only offer these benefits to rural communities if there is commitment to a real devolution of power over natural resources to local populations and if there are already in place locally accountable

³⁸ Hussein, K.; Montague, S. (2000) *Hill Agricultural Research Project, Nepal*

³⁹ Ribot, J. (1998) *Decentralisation, Participation and Accountability in Sahelian Forestry*

authorities to whom these powers can be devolved. The reality, on the other hand, is that it is simply a restricted set of powers that are being devolved to locally accountable authorities, while at the same time most local authorities are upwardly accountable to the central state, rather than downwardly to local populations. He also notes the limits of such NRM programs in rigidly structured political administrations. So is he arguing that GT and SLAs must be more political? He then goes on to comment, “efforts at participatory rural development are often contradicted by political administrative laws that systematically disable accountable local representation”⁴⁰.

Another frequently cited critique of *Gestion de Terroirs* is that GT projects tend to be biased in favour of settled communities, often unable to accommodate the nomadic pastoralists common in the area who might use communal resources in a variety of ‘terroirs’. This is a central factor in the resolution of resource conflict and should be dealt with by the SLA’s conflict management sub-programme.

2.5 Practical Application of GT

There have been recent studies into the impact of GT on pastoral livelihoods within the Sahel and here I will briefly outline some. Drabo et al’s⁴¹ study of Oudalan and Séno provinces in North Burkina Faso assessed the involvement of pastoral groups in community organisations, and their role in the broader regional economy. Within these two provinces, operates the Burkina Faso Sahel Program (PSB), financed by several donors in cooperation with the Burkina Faso government. The program supports the population in a search for consensus amongst different users of resources for a sustainable development of this capital. The PSB approach works within the wider framework of the Programme National de Gestion de Terroirs (PNGT). Along with broader trends in the evolution of the GT approach to rural development, the PSB (Program Sahel Burkina Faso) moved from an initial focus on the more technical aspects of development to a stronger focus on the institutional aspects of natural resource management. Particular emphasis was placed on questions of access, of exploitation of key natural resources, and on management devices. This strategy involved significant support for local social institutions. The role of the project itself was limited to facilitating a dialogue amongst the users of the resources through participative tools and interactive and iterative processes of communication.

⁴⁰ Ribot, J. (1998) *Decentralisation, Participation and Accountability in Sahelian Forestry* (p.3)

⁴¹ Drabo, B.; Dutilly-Diané, C.; Grell, H.; McCarthy, N. (2001) *Institutions, action collective et utilisation des ressources pastorales dans le Sahel Burkina Faso*

Figure 2.3: Nomad Pastoralists from Mali arriving in Burkina Faso in search of temporary pastoral land



Photo: F. Botts

The inclusion of nomadic herders into the village groups from 1995 has led to a better understanding of the realities of the ‘terroir’ and a more supportive flexibility and dynamism within the project itself. Thus, there has been the establishment of a real partnership with the local population. As such, the approach has been based upon the following principles:

- Clarification of roles within the partnership
- A valuing of knowledge and particularly local know-how
- Understanding the different interests of the users of natural resources
- A search for consensus through dialogue and continued negotiation
- Continuous training
- An open approach (without predefined stages and outputs)
- A negotiated follow-up process (according to commonly agreed criteria),

All of which sit well within the general framework of *Gestion de Terroirs* and would probably do so, equally, within the *Sustainable Livelihoods* framework.

It is recognised here that the users of natural resources are not split into homogenous groups, and thus the participation of all is paramount to the success of the project. The authors acknowledge the importance of cultural context in their recognition that the PSB inherited a pre-existing organisational structure. In the case of the North Burkinabé, the institutional heritage is a mixture of ‘traditional’ and more ‘modern’ organisations. Politico- religious affairs have traditionally fallen under the domain of the chieftaincy, which is itself controlled by the local elite (Peuhls/ Touaregs) who traditionally administered the ‘Slaves’ (Rimaïbés). Under national decentralisation schemes, village groupings were created. Tribal warfare and the revolution of 1983 contributed significantly to a re-balancing of power in favour of what were previously ‘oppressed social groups’.

As a result of this mixture of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’, there can be found a plethora of organisations in the area. This has been the case in many *Gestion de Terroirs* projects in West Africa and is likely to have a significant impact upon the development of an SL approach in the region. The majority of these organisations have a very limited use as they were created predominantly in order to respond to the support needs of external interventions.

Thus, the members are unclear of their responsibilities; meetings are irregular, and so on. Through GT projects, supra and intra village organisations emerged. Within the associative peasant movements in this region there are tendencies towards democratisation, while more traditional institutions were likely to remain more autocratic.

The research found that there was a positive correlation between the number and duration of NRM projects and the number of NRM institutions. This phenomenon can be explained in part by the tendency of these projects to emphasise the systematic creation of institutions for the execution of the program, and in part by the fact that the population easily organises itself to benefit from external support. It is important to note here that this is a potentially valuable lesson for SLAs.

Barraud⁴² examined the inclusion of pastoral groups into village organisations in Guinea Maritime and eastern Tchad. This inclusion is largely a result of the continued conflicts between the two main groups of users of agricultural land in these areas – nomadic herders and settled cultivators. The study examined the different structures for managing these resources in place in the two areas. In Guinea, there exists an egalitarian/ partnership structure composed of farmers and breeders at the level of groups of villages, and sometimes at a wider district level. Members of the committees are elected by both cultivators and pastoralists. The job of these committees is to manage conflicts, define some rules and apply them. There also exist prefecture committees, which are not egalitarian and are made up predominantly of technical advisors.

In eastern Tchad there were serious conflicts between nomadic pastoralists and settled cultivators, which was a result of strong competition for resources. The nomads were losing their rights to access water sources. Thus, the securing of pastoral water sources became an essential precondition for the continued survival of pastoral livelihoods. The project was accompanied by the setting up of an egalitarian management structure, with the villagers and nomads having an equal weighting in the definition and implementation of rules for the management of pastoral infrastructure and resources.

The egalitarian institutions in both countries allow an explicit negotiation between groups of users. Their success in the eyes of the locals rested on their ability to relieve tensions through amicable and negotiated rule making. The management committees for nomadic herders in Guinea insure effective and direct compensation of cultivators by herders for damage caused to their crop fields. This method of resolving conflicts allows a more objective evaluation of damage, as well as a reduction of recurring costs, when the local administration no longer intervenes in the negotiation. In the same way, in Tchad, the activity of the mixed commission allows an effective respect of the nomadic lifestyle and a reduction in the frequency and gravity of conflicts. In both cases, these institutions have introduced an awareness of the need to secure the mobility of herds and a positive recognition of the role of nomadic herders, often seen by political decision-makers and projects as a problem.

Again, there is a need to emphasise the fact that these two groups are not internally homogenous. This is something that the SLA and other people-centred approaches will have to watch out for as the assumption of homogeneity can lead to a more outspoken sub-group within one of the groups co-opting the process and drowning out the voices of other members of their group.

⁴² Barraud, V. et al (2000) *Des Instances Paritaires Pour Gérer des Ressources Communes?*

In Guinea, the different groups of breeders do not have the same interests or the same livelihood strategies. For the owners of large herds, the committees mean a loss of social prestige and of their monopoly over the management and use of the plains, while for the owners of smaller herds it has facilitated their access to the plains. The more powerful cultivators and chiefs see in the committees a loss of power and a reduction in their perceived resources linked to the nomads, while for the beneficiaries of hydro-agricultural improvements and the exploiters of the coast, the committees constitute a securing of their harvests and an effective reimbursement for damage.

In Eastern Chad, the diversity within nomadic herders is marked. The smaller nomads remain all year in the same region. These breeders, for the most part, cultivate and develop privileged alliances with villagers. The medium-sized nomads have a tendency to stay longer in the North in the rainy season and during the spring, in order to profit from the annual grassy plains. The large herds do not exploit surface water and rapidly move to the south in order to avoid being blocked by the rapidly rising waters. The villagers do not constitute a homogeneous group: many are breeders and therefore have specific strategies for access to water and the preservation of pastures. The others, don't have the same competitive relationships with the nomads, vis-à-vis the pastoral resources.

In spite of the diversity of interests and strategies, there are common stakes between the two types of users. These are the foundations of the partnership approach – based upon dialogue and negotiation.

Batterbury⁴³ criticises the GT approach with his comments that “there will always be situations where the terroir remains an unsuitable scale of intervention”. Also, doubts are raised about local government departments' ability to assume the high capital costs of maintaining GT programmes in the long run. Allison and Ellis further expand on this with his critique of community-based approaches in the context of small-scale fisheries. They comment that while community management appears to satisfy several goals, such as placing decision-making at the local level, inclusion of local knowledge, ensuring participation, etc., this is based on assumptions that are not necessarily always true. For example, the assumption that a 'community' is a group of households with livelihoods based on fisheries, that there exist 'fishing villages' in which the village administrators are preoccupied predominantly with the welfare of fishing families and the conservation of fish stocks above all else, that territorial use rights (TURFS), based on location, are compatible with both the behaviour of fishing families and the fish they catch. However, temporary migration to where fish stocks are larger tends to be a common feature of artesianal fishing. This is unsuited to territorial rights based on residence and tends to mirror what I mentioned earlier regarding the positioning of nomadic pastoralists within the GT framework.

Thus, the effectiveness of Gestion de Terroirs projects is threatened by:

- Institutional constraints
- Real decision-making powers
- Governing tendencies
- The dominating role of the state administration
- The absence of credit systems
- The limited material capacity of stakeholders
- The character of civil society.

⁴³ Batterbury, S.P.G. (1998) *Local Environmental Management, Land Degradation and the 'Gestion des Terroirs' Approach in West Africa*

People-centred Approaches

All of which are likely to have a similar impact upon the effectiveness of projects developed using other people-centred approaches.

CHAPTER 3: APPROACHES AND LESSONS FROM LATIN AMERICA

There exist wide variations in the agricultural and rural sectors amongst the Latin American countries. As such, there are large differences in structure, growth and their ability to meet the new global, regional and national challenges. However, the region can be seen to have some structural similarities. According to IFAD⁴⁴, there are six main features that characterise the rural areas of Latin America and the Caribbean:

- A high degree of inequality
- Indigenous populations accounting for a large proportion of those in poverty
- Rural areas are highly vulnerable to external conditions
- There are broad weaknesses in policy and institutions within rural areas
- There tend to exist acute problems regarding access to land
- The region has tended to be a place in which there has been a significant degree of experimenting as regards the development of economic policies.

3.1. Integrated Rural Development Experiences

Since the 1960s these similarities have facilitated the raise of Latin American approaches to agricultural and rural development. The approach prevailing in the region until the late 1970s was integrated rural development (IRD)⁴⁵. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, better known though its Spanish acronym, CEPAL) played a major role in adapting and promoting IRD throughout the region.

The main features of IRD include a broadly holistic, multi-sector approach to development, with projects tending to be large-scale. Gallopín⁴⁶ notes IRD as implying the inclusion of multiple goals within a project or programme, including increases in production and productivity, social improvement, and physical capital formation. He recognises that attempts to integrate action on different factors, institutional coordination, and strong participation by the beneficiaries are also central to the approach. Many of the projects operated at the micro level, in isolation, such that the end of the 1970s saw an increased need to link IRD projects with an explicit national policy coherent with national and sectoral development strategies. During the 1980s the economic crisis and recession led to the application of structural adjustment policies, including severe reductions in public expenditure. This strongly affected IRD projects, in particular, because they require substantial and sustained investments with long maturation periods. Two projects implemented with IFAD assistance in the Ceara Region of Brazil and in the Oaxaca State of Mexico offer a clear illustration of the goals and implementation strategy of IRD projects, as well as of the bottlenecks that prevented them to be fully successful.

⁴⁴ IFAD (2002) *Regional Strategy Paper: Latin America and the Caribbean*, p.3

⁴⁵ The Integrated Rural Development (IRD) approach has been used in a wide range of contexts also outside Latin America. During the 1980 this approach has been widely discredited amongst those working within the field of rural development, because of the high cost, poor efficiency and top down-orientation of most many IRD projects. However, the “people-centred” approaches of the 1990s have learned a lot from IRD experience. For instance, the *gestion de terroirs* approach was developed as an alternative to IRD, adapting lessons learnt from the latter in an attempt to ensure a more useful, targeted, successful and participatory implementation of rural development projects in the field. Also the SL framework developed by DFID has drawn lessons and experiences from the shortcoming of IRD programmes.

⁴⁶ Gallopín, G.C. (1998) *The Restructuring of Tropical Land Use Systems*

The Ceara Project

The Ceara region IRD project installed in the 1970s, by IFAD, had as its primary goal the improvement of income and living standards of small farmers through increased productivity in agricultural and expansion of small-scale non-farm activities. Within this, the strengthening of institutions was regarded as central to the success of the project⁴⁷. All technical, economic and institutional constraints on the development of small farmers' potential for higher living standards and greater productivity were to be addressed simultaneously. At the time of implementation of the project, however, Brazil experienced a serious drought, such that the federal government created a large emergency programme, which resulted in institutions being diverted from their work within IRD⁴⁸.

One of the main problems of IRD in Brazil was the over-reliance on technology and attempts to teach such technologies to small farmers. The project designers failed to take into account the fact that the logic of subsistence farmers is far more complex than the profit maximising assumption usually applied to large commercial farmers. Thus, it would appear that SL- type approaches have far more to offer these farmers, given their explicit use of local knowledge. The IRD projects in Brazil also failed to take into account the huge obstacle of access to land in the region, devoting minimal resources to the issue, meaning that little was actually accomplished. This, too, will be an important issue for SL approaches, particularly given their failure to adequately deal with the 'grey box' of policies, institutions and processes. As a result of this, there has been an increased demand amongst practitioners and developers of the SL framework to include political capital and context more explicitly in the framework⁴⁹. The IRD project in Brazil is, however, noted by IFAD as being successful in as much as it as built a new capacity of small farmers to organise themselves and promote better participation in rural development, particularly in terms of defining local needs and preparing and setting priorities for projects. It would, therefore, appear that IRD projects might have left some lasting results that can be utilised by those introducing the other approaches into the region, as regards building on existing capacity and understanding how it is that participation has been applied in the area, with the aim that this may be adapted to other contexts and regions.

⁴⁷ IFAD *Brazil: Second Ceara Integrated Rural Development Project*

⁴⁸ This is similar to Mexico where a prolonged economic crisis, hyperinflation and a government policy of fiscal austerity meant that counterpart funding for the IRD project in Oaxaca was reduced, delayed or unavailable⁴⁸. This problem could be faced by SLAs as much as IRDs, particularly in areas where droughts and other meteorological phenomena are relatively commonplace. A question that SL does not appear to fully resolve in this context is whether there is room within such projects to cope with the diversion of funds or institutional backing as a result of such largely unpredictable crises.

⁴⁹ See: Baumann, P (2000) *Working Paper 136: Sustainable Livelihoods and Political Capital*; (2002) *The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach and Improving Access to Natural Resources for the Rural Poor*; Bebbington, A. (1999) *Capitals and Capabilities*; etc for more

Figure 3.1: Goats, bred through the research of the Ceara Agricultural Research Company, being loaded on a trailer; Ceara, Brazil⁵⁰.



Photo: Franco Mattioli

The Oaxaca Project

IFAD have also implemented an IRD project within the Oaxaca State of Mexico. The IRD project in Oaxaca aimed to increase livestock and food production, generate employment through agricultural diversification, and protect natural resources through soil conservation, among other things. This was to be achieved through agricultural production services (increased and improved extension services, land titling, credit provisions, institutional strengthening of the National Institute for Indigenous Peoples (INI)). Central to this was to be community development, farmers' participation and project management. Thus, the project introduced a series of participative mechanisms, such as participatory planning forums and consultation with elected representatives of the target population. Some of the major problems that the project ran into were multiple supervision and a lack of accountability and transparency on the part of institutions involved. The ultimate intention of participation was for the beneficiaries of the project to assume some degree of ownership of the development process, but this did not happen and the project failed to use existing forms of communal participation, resulting in a plethora of community organisations, all unsure of their roles and responsibilities in the wider context of development

However, as for the sister project in Ceara, Brazil, the major problem of the IFAD IRD project in Oaxaca was more of an external than of an internal nature. Indeed the project was designed during the late 1970s boom time of Mexican economy and implemented during one of the worst and most prolonged economic crises in Mexico. A major gap between project planning and implementation took place because of the impact of this crisis on the rural economy of Oaxaca state.

⁵⁰ From: www.ifad.org/photo/region/PL/BR.htm

Figure 3.2: Mexico – Oaxaca Rural Development Project; Centro de Desarrollo run by the project near Santa Ana Trapiche⁵¹



Photo: Franco Mattioli

The role that the drought in Ceará and economic crisis in Oaxaca have played in disrupting the virtuous process that these two project were seeking to start up suggest that the ambitious goals and rich endowments of both initiatives proved to be not rooted enough among local actors to sustain the external shocks affecting the fragile social architecture. This observation endorses Pretty's⁵² comment that IRDs are different to sustainable development in that 'integrated' systems are entirely designed or imposed by outside experts with little attention paid to local needs, desires and constraints, thus leading them to fail. As a result, he views sustainable development as offering new opportunities for rural development and poverty eradication.

3.2. Territorial approaches and “ordenamiento territorial”

Since the 1980s a comprehensive economic-political and socio-cultural change has taken place in many rural areas of Latin America⁵³. Some of the main determinants and elements of this change can be seen to be:

- € The acceleration of the demographic transition process, leading to a progressive shrinking of farm size (“minifundismo”), to the diffusion and adoption of “Green Revolution” technologies (high yield variety seeds, fertilizers) and to a strengthened rural/urban migration flow;
- € The replacement of traditional communication between the peasants' economy and the market (e.g. client/patron, “habilitación”, “caciquismo”, “double functionalism”) with new modernized forms including, among others, contract farming;

⁵¹ From: www.ifad.org/photo/region/PL/BR.htm

⁵² Pretty, J. (1999) *Can Sustainable Agriculture Feed Africa?*

⁵³ See Giarracca, N. (2001) *Una nueva ruralidad en América Latina?*; Schejtmann, A. & Berdegue, J. (2003) *Desarrollo Territorial Rural*

- € The impact of integrated rural development efforts of the 1960s and 1970s, which though not fully meeting their ambitious economic and social objectives, enhanced transport infrastructure and improved access to basic rural services such as schools, health facilities, extension and credit;
- € The massive diffusion in rural areas of literacy, primary education and electronic media, which significantly contributed to decrease the cultural gap between rural and urban sectors of Latin American societies;
- € The progressive diversification of rural livelihoods strategies with local non-farm activities (trade, repair, food processing, cottage industries, “maquila”, etc.) or displaced off-farm activities (migrant rural and industrial labor) gaining an ever increasing importance in rural household economy;
- € The emergence of international migration as a key resource through which rural people increasingly buffer major individual and social shocks and/or re-vitalize (through remittances) de-capitalized household economies;
- € The diffusion in rural society of new claims, such as cultural identity and environmental integrity, which combined with peasant movements’ historical struggle for land and social justice.

Between the 1980s and the 1990s, this change - epitomized by the concept of *nueva ruralidad* (“new ruralness”) - reflected the impact of globalization on Latin American rural societies. At the policy level, this transformation was facilitated by three major thrusts:

1. The so-called *structural re-adjustment* imposed to national government by some powerful donors and international institutions as a way out from the debt crisis. This often entailed the dismantlement of the “vertical” large scale rural development and Agrarian Reform schemes run by the Governments in the 1960s and 1970s, and the “devolution” of rural development responsibility to market forces and the civil society (assisted by donors).
2. The *de-concentration and decentralization* of administrative responsibilities and (to a lesser extent) political power that concretized in policies and laws aimed at strengthening the decision making capacity of local governance institutions (the Department and the Municipality, in particular) and (to a far lesser extent) to transfer them the resources needed to implement rural development processes on a relatively autonomous basis.
3. The partial shift from a growth-and-modernization view of rural development, to the *sustainable development* paradigm. As elsewhere in the world, sustainability was initially interpreted in Latin America as a trade-off between economic development and the conservation of the natural resource base. However, as soon as sustainability was redefined in terms of inter-generational equity (i.e. as a trade of between short term and long term benefits), sustainable rural development evolved into a comprehensive paradigm articulating a variety of environmental, socio-economic and socio-cultural concerns including, among others, biodiversity protection, natural resource management, poverty alleviation, gender equity, civil society democratization, and indigenous people rights.

3.2.1 Structure and components

Territorial approaches to rural development emerged in the 1990s amongst the Latin American academic and development practitioner community, as an attempt to answer to the above policy thrusts and to the rise of a “new ruralness” across the continent. Beyond the diversity of national denominations (“ordenamiento territorial”, “desarrollo local”, “desarrollo municipal”, etc.), these approaches share:

- ≠ A common *focus on the local territory*, broadly defined as the spatial unit in which sound sustainable development processes are more likely to take place;
- ≠ The aim of *fostering decentralized governments and local civil societies* capacity to launch such sustainable development process within their territory⁵⁴

Territorial approaches address the territory both as a geographic space and a historical construction⁵⁵. The *geographic dimension* of the territory consists in its total or (more often) partial overlapping with a geo-physical entity that can be defined on the basis of ecological criteria, such as a mountain range, a watershed, an island, or a climatic micro-region. The *historical dimension* of the territory is defined by factors related to human presence and settlement, such as ethnicity, a particular productive vocation (e.g. the prevalence of a particular farming system, crop or agro-industry enterprise) or, very often, the existence of a local geo-political entity (e.g. a municipality). These human-made factors shape a *territorial identity*, which becomes apparent in the feeling of belonging to that particular territory that is shared (to a variable extent) by its inhabitants. Such territorial identity is indeed the basic indicator of the existence of a territory as a historical construction.

Territorial identity tends to be stronger within small geographic spaces, such as village community territory (corresponding to the Spanish concept of “*terruno*” or to the French concept of “*terroir*”). Weaker territorial identities might exist with reference to broad territorial units such as a department, a region, a nation or even a trans-national historical formation (e.g. Latin America as a whole). However both such *micro and macro territories* are not considered by territorial approaches as appropriate scenarios for territorial development processes. The focus is rather on territories small enough to allow social actors for a significant degree of immediate identification and big enough to contain those natural, economic, social, technological, financial, legal and political assets needed to foster sustainable development. In practice, these “*meso*” level territorial units correspond to the lowest levels of the administrative territorial structure of the decentralized nation state, i.e. to municipalities or clusters of municipalities (“*mancomunidades*”), or any other territorial unit where a direct interface takes place between civil society institutions and local governance structures⁵⁶. From this perspective the concept of territorial development substantially overlaps that of *local development*.

More recently, two additional elements have been included into the definition of such meso-level “local” territorial units: the existence of *relatively self-contained urban-rural linkages* and the emergence of a *cluster of productive activities* reflecting the agronomic and economic

⁵⁴ Schejtmann, A. & Berdegú, J. (2003) *Desarrollo Territorial Rural*

⁵⁵ Warren, P. (2001) *Reflexiones sobre ordenamiento territorial local e investigación-acción participativa en America Latina*; SDAA Team (2003) *El diagnóstico territorial participativo. Hacia la mesa de mesa de negociación. Orientaciones metodológicas*

⁵⁶ Warren, P. (2001) *ibid.*

vocation of the territory. The former is based on the presence within the territory of a small-medium urban centre with a population ranging from 10,000 to 100,000 inhabitants, that can consume, process and trade rural production, while providing services to rural dwellers⁵⁷. A clustering of productive activities refers to the spatial concentration within the territory of enterprises producing a particular type of agricultural, agro-industrial, or industrial commodity and to the synergy that such concentration facilitates in terms of know-how, social capital and capacity to operate on the national or global market in a quasi-corporate manner⁵⁸.

Territorial approaches address the overall situation of a territory in any given point in time as the outcome of a multi-factorial process including the natural resource base, the distribution of livelihood assets in society, the existence of an appropriate know-how, the effectiveness of local governance, the efficiency of urban/rural linkages and the relative capacity to articulate with national and international markets (see below). Such process takes place spontaneously reflecting both endogenous “push” factors and exogenous “pull” factors (originated from the national and global economic and political environment in which the local territory is embedded). The basic assumption of territorial approaches is that it is possible for local actors to enhance control over endogenous and exogenous-generated change, in order to maximize those elements and factors which supports sustainable development and minimize those who have a disruptive impact on the local environment, economy, society and cultural identity. In other words, there is scope to promote an enhanced management of territorial dynamics. During the 1990s this has started to be referred in Spanish as *ordenamiento territorial*.

The concept of *ordenamiento territorial* was originated from State-led vertical policies aimed at managing natural resources or critical ecosystems. However, as soon as the focus of sustainable development shifted from the economy/environment linkages to the more comprehensive trade-off between short and long term cost and benefits (and their distribution), the scope of *ordenamiento territorial* expanded from natural resource management to territorial development at large. Moreover, once applied to a bottom-up approach to development dynamics, the term “ordenamiento” lost its “vertical” connotation to denote a joint-decision making process (*concertación* in Spanish) involving all the stakeholders belonging to the territory⁵⁹. This twofold shift was supported by the acknowledgement of the socio-political (rather than purely technical or economical) nature of any choice concerning territorial management. In this way, the concept of territorial management articulated with the political critique inspiration pervading most Latin American social science and development thought.

3.2.2 History, evolution and institutional linkages

Latin American territorial approaches have a twofold origin. As observed above, some of these approaches originated in the earliest attempts to combine actions aimed at promoting a more sustainable use of natural resources with a bottom-up management style, supported by a participatory methodology. The experience in participatory and integrated watershed management carried out in different countries (Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru) since the first half of the 1990s by the institutions and programs affiliated to the Latin American Watershed

⁵⁷ Schejtmann, A. (1999) “Las dimensiones urbanas en el desarrollo rural”. *Revista de la Cepal*, 67.

⁵⁸ Altenburg and Meyer-Stammer (1999), quoted by Schejtmann, A. & Berdegué, J. (2003) *ibid.*, refer to this property as “collective efficiency”

⁵⁹ Dourojeanni, A. (1993) *Procedimientos de gestión para un desarrollo sustentable*

Management network (Red Latino Americana de Manejo de Cuencas) is a good example of this “environmentalist” stream of “ordenamiento territorial”⁶⁰

The second stream, known as “desarrollo local” (local development), is linked to post-structural re-adjustment de-concentration and decentralization policies. These policies pushed local government to take over functions that were traditionally covered by the central government, such as fostering economic development, maintaining infrastructure, delivering social services and ensuring some degree of protection against environmental hazards. As most local administrators and politician lacked the relevant technical competence, this often led to open the doors of the Municipal Councils to those institutions of the local civil society (enterprises, research centres, grassroots organizations, unions, chambers of commerce, etc.) that can provide appropriate assistance. Moreover, as local government resources were generally limited, a need for joining public/private effort (and often cater for international assistance) was increasingly felt. As a result of these drives, local government lost their traditional “bureaucratic” scope to become the focal point of a consultation and consensus making process (*concertación*) involving all the social actors existing in the municipality’s territory. During the first half of the 1990s this evolution was particularly evident in those countries were - due to major national political conflicts - the national government was not capable nor legitimated enough to control the periphery of the State and decentralized local governments enjoyed a high degree of autonomy (e.g. Colombia, El Salvador, Peru, Chile).

Subsequently, based on the promising outcomes of some pilot experiences, Latin American national governments started to acknowledge ordenamiento territorial and desarrollo local processes as a means to put into practice the thrust that inspired de-concentration and decentralization policies⁶¹. To this end, national ordenamiento territorial and/or local development laws were issued in the second half of the 90s to facilitate the collaboration between decentralized governance institutions and civil society organizations, and regulate territorial development planning and management. Examples of the latter are the Bolivian “People’s Participation Law” (Ley de Participación Popular, 1995), “Municipalities’ Organic Law” (Ley Orgánica de Municipalidades, 1996) and “Ordenamiento Territorial Act” (1997), the complex body of ordenamiento territorial laws and regulations issued by the Government of Colombia between 1997 and 2000; and the Mexican “Rural Sustainable Development Law” (“Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable”, 2002)

In the same years, governments’ endorsement of ordenamiento territorial and local desarrollo practices pushed several donors and development assistance organizations active in the continent to incorporate the new approaches in their regional policies. According to a recent review⁶², substantive reference to the importance of the territorial approach to address rural development problems (including rural poverty) are made in recent policy documents of the Inter-American Development Bank (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) the World Bank the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), and the Inter-American Institute for Agricultural Cooperation (Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura,)⁶³. The same

⁶⁰ Durojeanni, A. (1994) *Políticas públicas para el desarrollo sustentable*

⁶¹ As observed by Von Halderwang, C.; (1997) “Descentralización, fases de ajuste y legitimación”. *Diálogo científico*, 6, 2:9-26; this was essentially responding at a lower cost for central Government to the demands of civil society and the constituency.

⁶² Schejtmann, A. & Berdegú, J. (2003) *Desarrollo Territorial Rural*

⁶³ Since the early 1990s, important experiences in local economic development processes have also been carried out in Latin America and elsewhere also by UNDP/UNOPS and OIT (see Catenacci, B. (2000) *Local Economic Development Agencies*). The latter organization runs since 1998 a distance master course in “desarrollo local”.

source also highlights the linkages existing between the theory and practice of Latin American territorial approaches to sustainable development and similar territorial-based approaches implemented in Northern countries such as European Commission's LEADER Program⁶⁴) and Canadian Government's "Canadian Rural Partnership" Program.

3.2.3 Territorial approaches and *ordenamiento territorial* in FAO

Though some themes of territorial approaches (such decentralized governance, rural institutions reforms and private/public sector linkages) have been dealt with by the latest FAO Regional Conferences for Latin America⁶⁵, it must be acknowledged that this Organization has not been able (nor interested) so far to fully mainstream local development and *ordenamiento territorial* in its policy agenda. Whatever the reasons for this, this institutional choice contrasts with the pioneering normative work carried out at FAO headquarters by a small group of SDAA officers and consultants since 1997, as well as a number of experiences in local development and/or *ordenamiento territorial* conducted by some FAO field projects in Latin America and elsewhere (such as, for instance, the "Participatory Upland Conservation and Development" Project in Bolivia, the "Lempira Sur" Project in Honduras and the "Assistance to Agrarian Reform" Project in the Philippines).

SDAA normative work on territorial sustainable development has been inspired by two complementary sources: on one hand it represented an attempt to apply to the context of development projects (and in particular of land management and Agrarian Reform initiatives) the analytical and methodological tools developed by the French "systèmes agraires" school⁶⁶; on the other hand, it was significantly influenced by the relevant Italian experiences on "sviluppo locale" and "gestione del territorio"⁶⁷. In addition to that SDAA approach incorporated elements of participatory and integrated watershed management as developed in the framework of the Inter-regional Project for Participatory Upland Conservation and Development (PUCD) Project⁶⁸, which included, among other, the application of the participatory action-research paradigm (see below) to territorial management.

Field testing of the above "cocktail" in a variety of settings (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Philippines, Angola and Mozambique) has contributed to the progressive fine-tuning of a methodological proposal for conducting "participatory territorial diagnosis", which is currently under discussion and validation. This proposal has benefited from the exchange with Latin American and East European colleagues, which took place in special events held in Caracas (2001) and Budapest (2003). A third international workshop titled

⁶⁴ LEADER is the acronym for "Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l'Europe Rural" (Linkages among Development Action in Rural Europe).

⁶⁵ Berdegue, J. & Schejtmann, A. (2003), *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Mazoyer, M. & Roudart, L. (1997) *Histoire des agricultures du monde. Du néolithique à la crise contemporaine*; FAO (1999) *Guidelines for Agrarian Systems Diagnosis*.

⁶⁷ In particular, SDAA conceptualisation of *ordenamiento territorial* has directly benefited from the experience in peri-urban territorial management which was developed in North-eastern Italy with the technical assistance of the University of Padova (Franceschetti, G. (2000) *Dinamiche fondiarie nelle aree periurbane*). Moreover the concept of "pacto territorial" (SDAA Team (2003) *El diagnóstico territorial participativo*; Groppo, P. (2003) *Desde el diagnóstico participativo*) is clearly drawn from Italian "patti territoriali" policy (agreements between the central and the local government to support through ad hoc credit lines and incentives for agricultural and industrial small enterprises for the development of marginal areas; Garofoli, G. (1998) "Desarrollo rural e industrialización difusa: aprendiendo de la experiencia italiana").

⁶⁸ Warren, P. (1998) *Developing Participatory and Integrated Watershed Management*; Warren, P. et al (2000)

“Territorio y Desarrollo Sostenible” (“Territory and Sustainable Development”) was recently (June 2003) organized by SDAA in collaboration with the Rural Innovation Institute of the International Centre for Tropical Agricultural (Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical, CIAT) and the Institute de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) of the University of Montpellier, France, in Cali, Colombia, from 17 to 20 June 2003. This workshop joined experts and practitioners from different areas of Latin American with the aim of starting up a forum for exchanging experiences and evaluation findings related to the processes and methods for participatory and negotiated ordenamiento territorial, and exploring pathways towards the implementation of new territorial development initiatives consistent with the emerging economic-political and socio-cultural context of Latin American countries (SDAA, CIAT, IRD 2003; Groppo and others 2003).

3.2.4 Key-focus, analysis, planning, implementation, evaluation

By definition, territorial approaches focus on the complex web of linkages and interactions among environmental, economic, social and cultural factors which frame, determine and orient territorial development. This includes linkages and interactions that take place within the territory, as well as those that occur with neighbouring territories, national economy, society and culture and global markets. Both types of linkages and interactions are addressed as highly dynamic evolutionary processes, prone to change according to the historical evolution of the territory and the “macro” context in which it is embedded⁶⁹.

This holistic-systemic and dynamic-historical view of territorial development tends to produce very complex analytical models, featuring a very high number of variables and indicators⁷⁰. Though useful for a thorough description and understanding of the local situation, such complexity is difficult to handle in the context of local action-oriented diagnosis and planning processes (see 3.2.5 below). A major challenge for territorial approaches is thus to control the potential proliferation of factors to be considered by the analysis, without losing their holistic-systemic and dynamic-historical inspirations.

No univocal and consolidated model or framework seems to exist in this connection. Instead, the analytical models used to frame a territorial diagnosis and planning process tend to be highly contextual, i.e. to reflect the major issues and concerns emerging from an introductory exploration of the territory. Such exploration entails a negotiation about what is relevant and important for that particular territory, which takes place among the social actors involved in territorial diagnosis. An illustration of such preliminary modelling activity is provided by a territorial diagnosis and planning experience carried out in the sub-watershed San Carlos (Municipalidad de La Guardia, Departamento de Santa Cruz, Bolivia) in the framework of the above mentioned PUCD project⁷¹.

⁶⁹ SDAA Team (2003); Schejtmann and Berdegúé (2003)

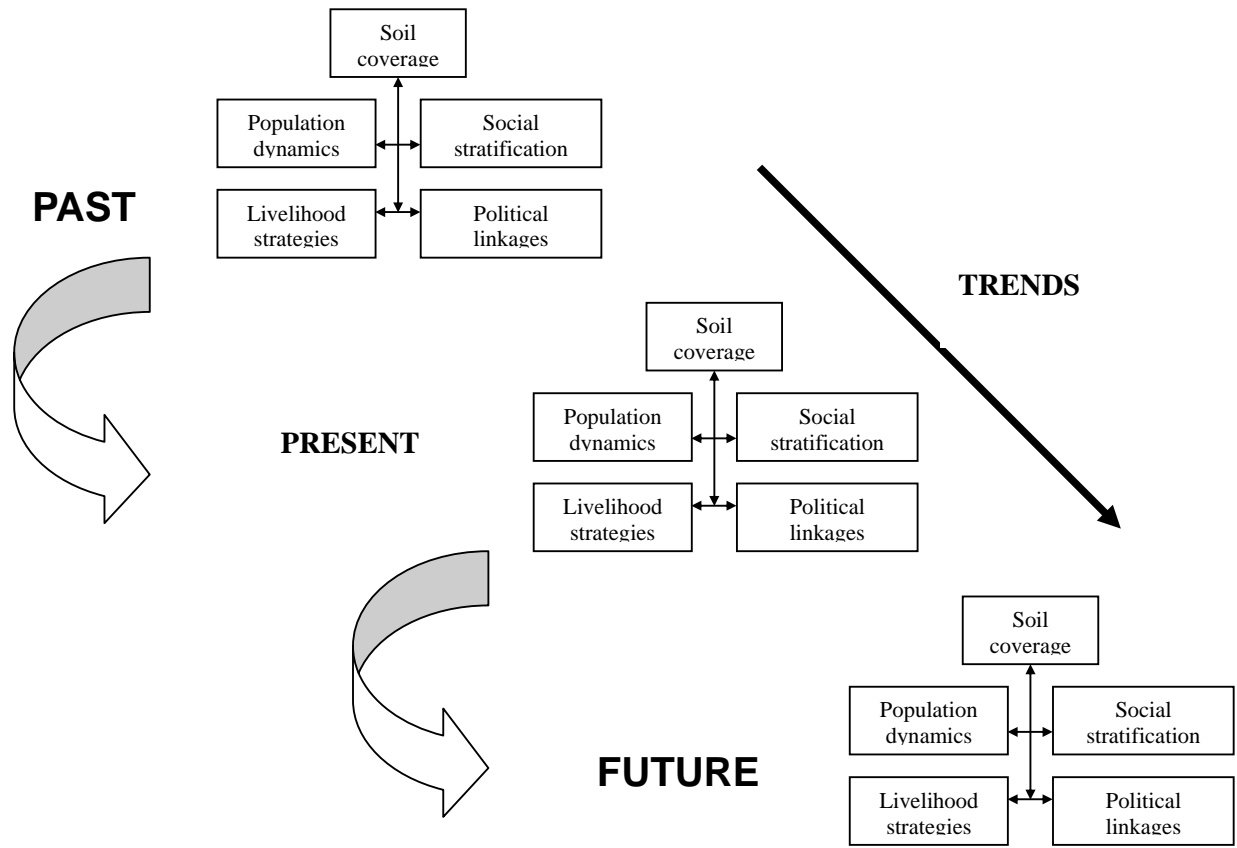
⁷⁰ See for instance Catenacci (2000); Gobierno de Colombia (1998); Gobierno de Bolivia (1999); Municipalidad de Cali; Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo (1997); Municipio de Santiago de Cali (1999)

⁷¹ Warren (1999) *ibid.*; Warren (2000) *ibid.*; SDAA team (2003), *ibid.*

During this exercise the need to control the complexity, duration and cost of the initial diagnostic and planning phase led the facilitating team (including international and national experts and representatives of the Municipality) to identify five clusters of key-variables to be considered in analysis. These included:

1. *Soil coverage*, i.e. the spatial distribution over the territory of the natural and man-made vegetal formations (forests, rangeland, agricultural land, etc.) and its change over time.
2. *Population dynamics*, i.e. the changes in the structure of population related to natural growth and in- and out-migration.
3. *Social stratification*, i.e. the differences existing among local social groups according to wealth, status and ethnicity.
4. *Livelihood strategies* (“estrategias de vida”), i.e. the way in which members of different social strata gained a living (including on-farm, off-farm and non-farm activities).
5. *Political linkages*, i.e. the relationships existing between village level groups and organizations, the Municipality and departmental/national institutions.

Fig. 3.3 – Territory dynamics analytical framework adopted in San Carlos watershed, Bolivia⁷²



⁷² Warren, P. (2000) *ibid.*

These clusters of variables were selected because of their capacity to capture a situation featuring major land degradation phenomena, complex in- and out-migration flows, significant socio-economic gaps and ethnic differences among the inhabitants of the territory, a strong trend towards off-farm income diversification in household economy, and disruptive conflicts between local grassroots organizations and official institutions. Analysing the historical evolution of these variables (also in the light of the changing linkages between the territory and the “external” environment) was deemed to allow for the identification of major trends and problems to be addressed by the participatory planning process (see figure 3.3).

This choice proved quite successful. The analytical model allowed participants in territorial diagnosis to develop a territorial development plan covering the control of critical environmental risks (landslides and floods), the support to livelihood diversification processes according to the assets actually available to different groups (including the landless poor), and the improvement of communication flow among grassroots organizations and the official institutions (which all together was more than enough in the light of the available resources). An impact evaluation system, based on the above analytical framework was also included in the plan to check whether the agreed activities process would be capable on the mid-term (3-5 years) to solve (or at least alleviate) the problems identified during the diagnosis.

3.2.5 Methodologies and tools

The above “in-house” example highlights also the important function that participatory method plays in designing, planning and managing territorial development processes. Notwithstanding, the Latin American sources consulted for preparing this note are apparently paying limited attention to the systematisation of a territorial development participatory methodology.

In some countries (e.g. Gobierno de Colombia (1998); Gobierno de Bolivia (1999)), a major emphasis is given to the so-called “mesas de concertación”. These are local forums in which an exchange among local and external social and institutional actors takes place with the aim of reaching a consensus on issues to be considered and included in territorial planning. “Mesas de concertación” (or equivalent forums) play indeed a pivotal role in shifting from top-down to bottom-up territorial planning⁷³. However, the value of their output is likely to be affected by several factors including in particular (i) the extent to which participants are actual and legitimate representatives of different social groups existing on the territory and (ii) the validity and reliability of the information on which opinions expressed and decisions made are based.

Concerning the latter, it must be stressed that most Latin American experience in territorial diagnosis hang between conventional “hard” studies which leave little room for the active participation of local actors and more participatory “demand-based” exercises, which, however often result in “shopping lists” rather than in a sound identification of the territory’s trends and problems that can direct sound local planning. This has led some FAO practitioners to test the use of participatory action-research⁷⁴ in the context of territorial development practice.

⁷³ Groppo, P. et al (2003) *ibid.*; SDAA team (2003) *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Warren, P. et al (2000) *ibid.*; Warren, P. (2001) *ibid.*; SDAA Team (2003) *ibid.*; Groppo, P. et al (2003) *ibid.*

Based on Paulo Freire's "educación popular"⁷⁵ and Orlando Fals Borda work⁷⁶, participatory action-research is defined as a learning process through which professionals and researchers with different disciplinary backgrounds assist disadvantaged local people to make sense of their situation by providing them with the analytical concepts and methodological tools needed to generate valid, reliable and relevant information⁷⁷. Examples of the latter are:

- ∄ The identification of agronomic threats and opportunities existing in a farm jointly conducted by the farmer and an expert agronomist;
- ∄ The identification of major environmental threats by interpretation in small groups of a historical series of GIS maps of the territory;
- ∄ Ex-ante or ex-post participatory cost benefit analysis of a new rural enterprise, assisted by an agrarian economist;
- ∄ The participatory analysis of social strata and ethnic relationship within the community (stakeholder analysis) supported by a social scientist;
- ∄ The discussion with local actors of ethnographic life histories to make the new generation aware of the determinants, outcomes and perspectives of socio-cultural change processes.

These examples (drawn from the above Bolivian example⁷⁸) suggest that participatory action-research basically consists in socializing the professional expert knowledge (and in testing its validity and relevance against the indigenous point of view). This entails that participatory action-research deal simultaneously with the production of knowledge and its communication throughout the community. In addition to that, participatory action-research assumes that the generation of awareness among social actors and the promotion of a proactive behaviour leading to change is the final validity test of such "socialized" knowledge⁷⁹.

A recent SDAA contribution⁸⁰ to the methodology of territorial diagnosis and planning represents probably the more systematized attempt to articulate participatory action-research paradigm with the consensus making process epitomized by Latin American "mesa de concertación" practice.

The SDAA model splits the territorial diagnosis and planning process in three main phases: overview ("mirada"), understanding ("comprensión") and negotiation ("horizonte de

⁷⁵ Freire, P. (1971) *Pedagogia degli oppressi*

⁷⁶ See Fals Borda, O. & Rahman, M.A. (1991) *Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action-Research*.

⁷⁷ It must be stressed that participatory action research differs from most "conventional" PRA practice for assigning a pivotal role to scientific and technical expertise in participatory processes. While PRA practitioners tend to assume that lay people understand the reality at a level of validity and reliability which is sufficient to solve community problems, participatory action-research believes that in most cases lay people capacity to analyze and transform reality needs to be fostered by transferring selected scientific knowledge and technical know-how elements (Argyris 1990).

⁷⁸ A list of participatory action-research tools for ordenamiento territorial is presented in SDAR Team 2003 (annex).

⁷⁹ Argyris, C.I; Ayales, E.D.; et al (1990) *Action Science*

⁸⁰ SDAA Team (2003) *ibid.*; Groppo (2003) *ibid.*

negociación”). The first phase aims at identifying the critical challenges of territorial development and the key-informants, which may provide relevant knowledge of the local situation. In addition to that, during this first phase, awareness-raising activities are conducted to promote and facilitate public participation in the process and the empowerment of the weakest social groups.

In the second “understanding” phase a thorough stakeholder analysis (“análisis de los actores”) is conducted, aimed at identifying the difference of interests and concerns which may exist in local society and at assessing power imbalances and gaps. An analytical framework covering the socio-economic, productive and eco-systemic factors affecting the problems and challenges identified in the first phase is also developed and relevant information collected. Then, information is analysed in a historical perspective with the aim of identifying mid/long term trends affecting territorial development and make projection for the future, based both on verbal and cartographic (GIS) sources. This entails a dynamic use of the analytical framework aimed at eliciting cause/effect relationships, risk factors, and feedback loops. As representatives of local actors are involved in this exercise, it is at this stage that the competence in systemic analysis of the expert facilitators starts to be shared and becomes “socialized”.

The third phase starts with the restitution to local actors of second phase findings, according to the means more appropriate and acceptable in that particular context (meetings, interactive media, etc). Restitution is meant to be a major opportunity to discuss and validate with local social actors territorial diagnostic findings as well as to set up the “constituency” which will participate to the “mesas de negociación”. Once these conditions are meant, participatory planning is started up focusing on the identification of actions that might contribute to solve the problems identified during the diagnosis, assess their social and technical feasibility, and negotiate the contribution and role of each local actor in the implementation process.

Probably the major strength of the above model is the capacity of combining different inspirations and experiences (some of which are drawn from other development approaches of the 1990s⁸¹) into a flexible operational itinerary for territorial diagnosis and planning, which is likely to adapt to different situation and settings. Yet, the model has been so far applied only in a rather partial manner and on a limited scale and several questions are left unanswered, concerning the scale of intervention, the legal and political conditions which might enable (or prevent) implementation of such a participatory diagnostic and planning process, the representativeness of participants in the “mesas de negociación”, the management of extreme social exclusion and marginality, and last but not least, the continuity of the process after that external support is withdrawn⁸². The opportunity of finding practical answers to these questions and consolidating the overall proposal will depend to a significant extent on the interest that the concerned FAO units will show towards territorial approaches and local development (within and outside Latin America).

⁸¹ These include, among others, “collaborative management” (Borrini-Feyerabend, G. (1996) *Collaborative Management of Protected Areas: Tailoring the Approach to the Context*) and “gestion de terroirs”.

⁸² Groppo, P. et al (2003) *ibid.*

3.3 ‘Brazilianising’ the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

During the late 1990s attempts were made to adapt the SLA approach to the Latin America context. An interesting experience was carried out in this connection by DFID, which held a series of workshops in Brazil in order to discuss the relevance of Sustainable Livelihoods approaches to the particular country context. Within the workshops, there were changes made to the underlying principles of SLAs and to the DFID SL framework⁸³ in order to include issues that were specific to Brazil. Thus, there was an additional focus added on gender and power relations, which were seen by workshop participants as a weakness of the DFID framework. There was also an increased emphasis on the long-term impact of projects and their outcomes. Also, given the importance of inequality as a social, economic and political issue in Brazil, the approach was SL slightly altered to centre on poverty and inequality.

The Potential Weaknesses of the DFID Framework in this Context

A central problem identified in the Brazilian workshop was the lack of tools within the Politics, Institutions and Processes box of the SL framework (which others have also noted several times). Thus, yet again, the question of the use of SL approaches in the context of wider power relations was raised. Ditchburn et al also noted that one of the reasons for Brazilian (and Latin American) perception of SLA has a “foreign” approach has been the SL approaches lack of incorporation of the history of the country, with particular reference to the power relations in existence. Manzetti⁸⁴ also noted that there was a general feeling that the programme was incomplete due to a lack of discussion around the use of methodologies and how to apply the SLAs in practice. The SLA framework itself was Livelihoods indeed altered during these workshops as can be seen here⁸⁵:

⁸³ Manzetti, G. (2001) *‘Brazilianising’ the SLA*

⁸⁴ Manzetti, G. (2001) *ibid.*

⁸⁵ Manzetti, G. (2001), *ibid.*

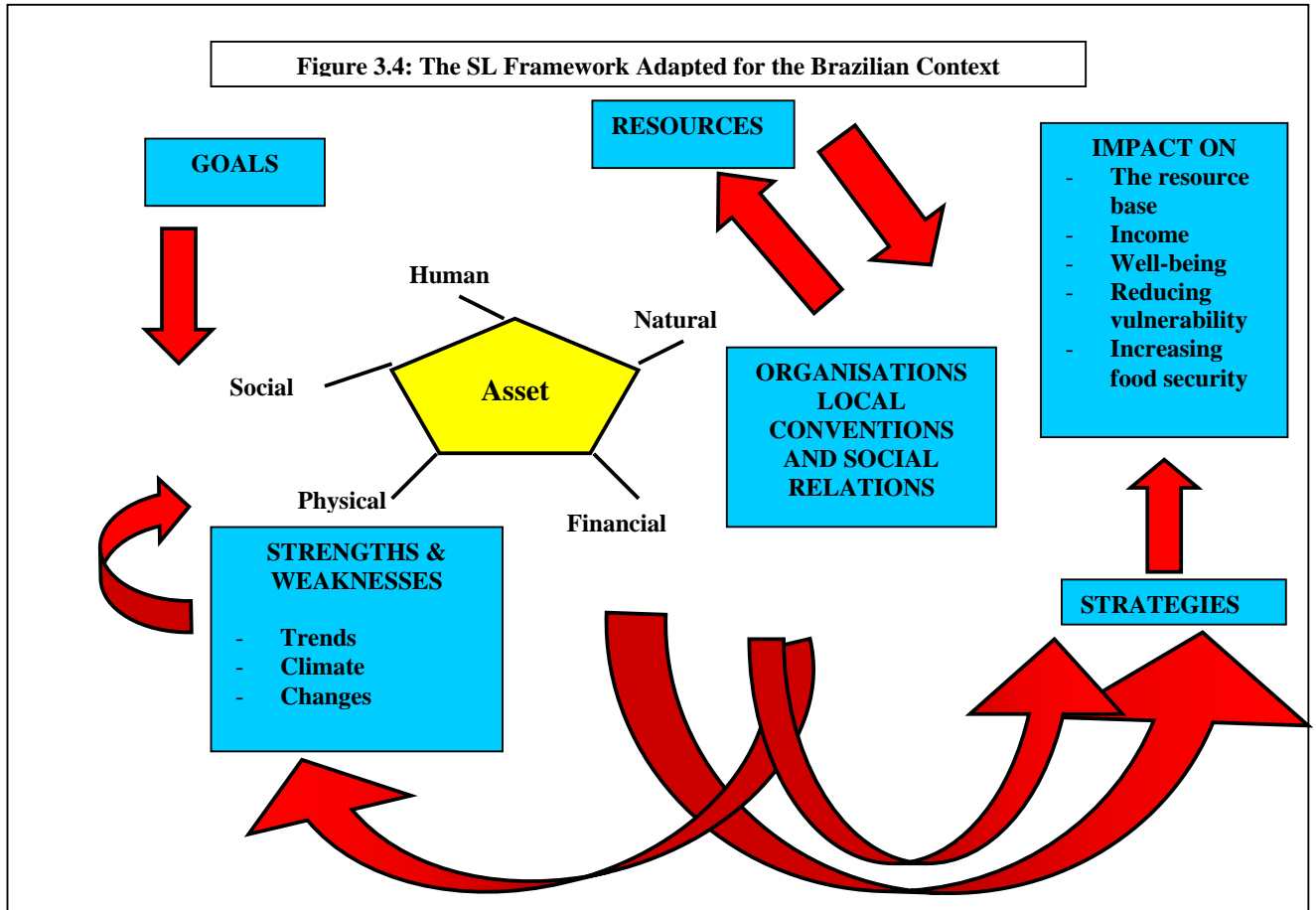
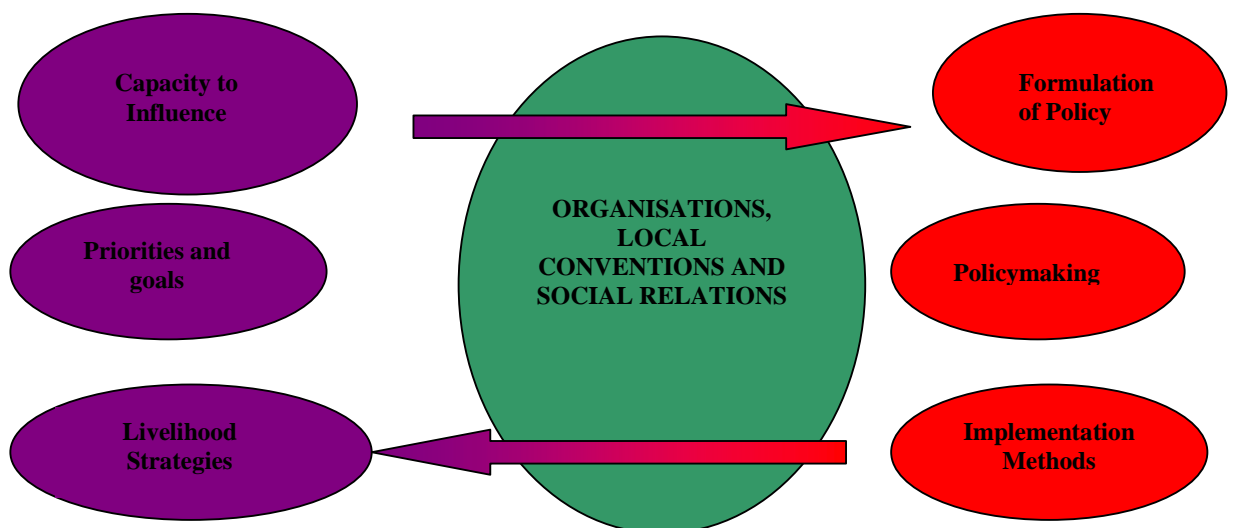


Figure 3.5: A Brazilian Framework for SL



Ditchburn et al⁸⁶ further discuss the use of SL approaches in Latin America, noting that the prime reason for their lack of uptake in Bolivia, Mexico and Brazil has been the lack of adequate translation of the key concepts into Portuguese and Spanish; a problem that is currently being investigated by the Livelihood Support Programme's Sub-programme on People-centred Approaches in different cultural contexts. It has also been noted⁸⁷ that there was a widespread feeling that the approaches are simply an imposition of DfID's agenda, which results in a loss of true local ownership of the programmes. Given the context of Latin America, it is unquestionable that politics are of paramount importance. SLAs and gestion de terroirs have claimed to be almost entirely apolitical, seeing this as one of their benefits. This, however, has significantly hampered their ability to alter the status quo and has increased the risk of local elites co-opting participatory planning processes. It should be noted that it would be almost impossible to enter Latin America and achieve anything positive without the political dimensions of development and poverty being of central importance.

This is further emphasised by Baumann⁸⁸ who, in discussing the use of the SL framework, notes that the framework fails to include theories of change based on politics. She then comments that the inclusion of political capital into the SL framework is critical for the following reasons:

∄The notion of political capital is essential as 'rights' are claims and assets – which, in SL language, 'people draw on and reinvest in to pursue livelihood options'. Because these rights are politically defended, how people access these assets depends on their political capital. It is therefore critical to understand how these are constituted at the local level and the dynamic interrelation between political capital and the other assets identified in the SL framework.

∄Political negotiation over rights is not transparent and cannot necessarily be captured in structures and policies. The notion of political capital is critical in linking structures and processes to the local level and understanding the real impact these have on Sustainable Livelihoods.

∄The balance of power and location of political capital is not fixed and is under constant political challenge. As is the case with the other five capital assets, an understanding of how political capital operates will emerge gradually and is constantly evolving.

∄Not to include political capital also weakens the SL framework as an *approach* to development and therefore the likely effectiveness of interventions to meet SL *objectives*. Political capital is important because transforming structures and processes is likely to be met by resistance to change. Political capital places the focus on transition costs of policies and projects; on those that are likely to meet resistance and on how these may be manifested. Further, placing political capital into the framework avoids a false sense of objectivity in deciding between alternative institutional arrangements, and makes explicit the values and notions of justice on which choices are made⁸⁹. In fact, it may be possible to learn from UNDP in this respect as they include political factors within their list of assets available to rural people⁹⁰.

⁸⁶ Ditchburn, L., Biot, Y., Armstrong, G., Wheatley, J. *Sustainable Livelihoods Approach: Latin America*

⁸⁷ Ditchburn, L. et al *ibid.*

⁸⁸ Baumann, P. (2000) *Sustainable Livelihoods and Political Capital*

⁸⁹ Baumann, P. (2000) *Sustainable Livelihoods and Political Capital*

⁹⁰ Carney, D.; Drinkwater, M. et al (1999) *Livelihoods Approaches Compared*

CHAPTER 4 FARMING SYSTEMS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

There exist various perspectives on farming systems, their meaning and their practical application, amongst various agencies involved in agricultural development. For the purpose of this paper, however, the focus will be on FAO's use of the farming systems approach in their movement towards sustainable agricultural development. In order to better explain this approach and its potential similarities and lessons for the SLA, this section will briefly outline the main understanding of the approach at the FAO and some of the uses to which it has been put. To gain a broader understanding of the system, it would probably be useful for the reader to look in more detail at "Farming Systems and Poverty: Improving Farmers' Livelihoods in a Changing World" by John Dixon and Aidan Gulliver (FAO).

The farming systems approach utilised by FAO⁹¹ acknowledges the strong inter-relationship between poverty and hunger, whereby:

Lack of adequate income Lack of food security Lower labour productivity; reduced educational achievement; reduced resistance to disease **Reduced income**

Agricultural development is thus seen as playing a pivotal role in the reduction of poverty, in both rural and urban areas.

4.1 What are Farming Systems?

Farmers view their farms as systems in their own right, with a variety of available resources for them to draw on in accordance with their needs. Among these are:

- Natural resources, such as different types of land, a variety of water sources, and access to communal property
- Climate and biodiversity
- Human capital
- Social capital
- Financial capital

In this way, it appears to be quite similar to the SLAs in that it accounts for all assets available to farm households. The household, its resources and the resource flows and interactions at the individual farm level are together referred to as a 'farm system'⁹². The functioning of the individual farm system is likely to be greatly influenced by external factors, such as policies, institutions, markets and information linkages. In this way, the farming systems approach acknowledges the existence of the 'Policies, Institutions & Processes' box that is an important part of the DfID SL framework.

A 'farming system', then, can be considered as being a population of individual farm systems that have broadly similar resource bases, enterprise patterns, household livelihoods and constraints, and for which similar development strategies and interventions would be appropriate⁹³. In this way it seems to follow the same thought process as the SL approach,

⁹¹ Dixon, J.; Gulliver, A., Gibbon, D., Hall, M. (2001) *Farming Systems and Poverty*

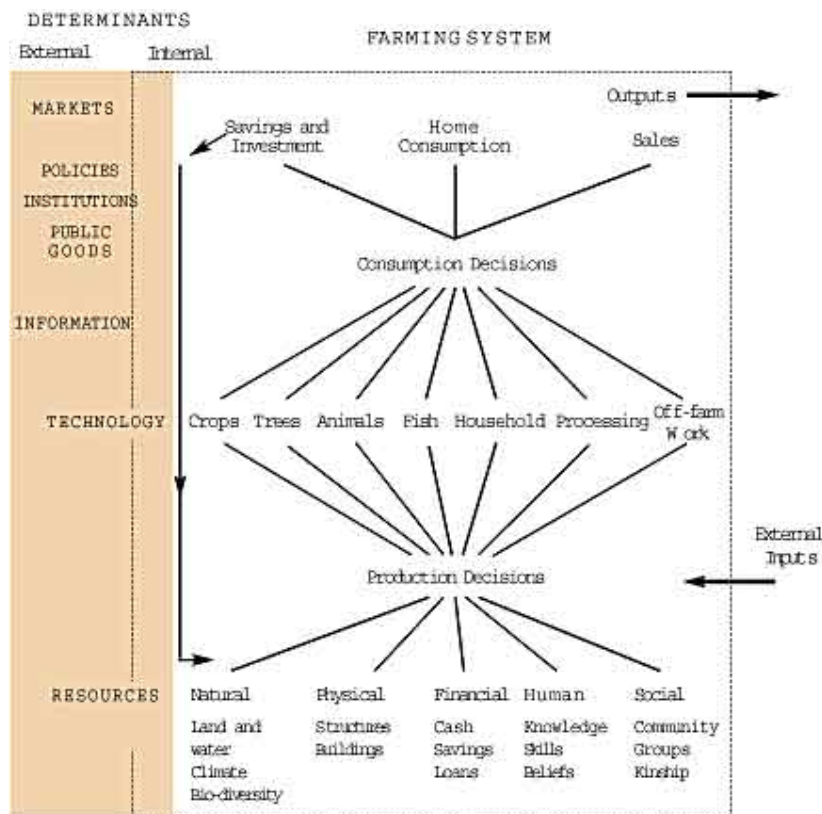
⁹² Dixon, J. et al (2001) *ibid.*

⁹³ Dixon, J. et al (2001) *ibid.*

through its recognition that development interventions will need to be tailored towards specific regions and types of agriculture.

The farming systems approach developed from the 1970s, and since then has seen the beginnings of a radical shift from top-down views of agricultural development towards a more holistic perspective. However, it is necessary to point out here that the farming systems approach has adapted and altered its focus over time, such that it is clear that some proponents of the approach, such as Keating et al⁹⁴ and Kaya et al⁹⁵, continue to focus their efforts on technical services extension to small-scale farms. Dixon et al⁹⁶, on the other hand, note that there has been a far greater accent on the socio-economic aspects of farming systems, based on the wider goal of improved livelihoods and greater food security. As such, analytical tools are seen as becoming increasingly participatory, with a greater emphasis on local knowledge, group planning and monitoring.

Figure 4.1: A Schematic Representation of Farming Systems⁹⁷



⁹⁴ Keating, B.A., McCowan, R.L. (2001) *Advances in Farming Systems Analysis and Intervention*

⁹⁵ Kaya, B.; Hildebrande, P.E.; Nair, P.K.R. (2000) *Modelling Changes in Farming Systems*

⁹⁶ Dixon, J. et al (2001) *Farming Systems and Poverty*

⁹⁷ Taken from Dixon, J. et al (2001) *ibid.*, p.20

Farming systems can be classified into eight broad categories, depending on climate, resources, and so on, available to farmers in the region⁹⁸:

- Irrigated farming systems
- Wetland rice based farming systems
- Rainfed farming systems in humid areas of high resource potential
- Rainfed farming systems in steep and high lands
- Rainfed farming systems in dry or cold low potential areas
- Dualistic (Mixed large commercial and small holder) farming systems
- Coastal artisanal fishing
- Urban based farming systems, typically focused on horticulture and livestock production

Similar to the other development approaches reviewed here, the Farming Systems approach acknowledges the existence of a variety of strategies, which may be used by small- holder farmers in order to pull themselves out of poverty. As such, Dixon et al mention five main household strategies to improve livelihoods:

- Intensification of existing production patterns
- Diversification of production and processing
- Expanded farm or herd size
- Increased off-farm income
- A complete exit from the agricultural sector within a particular farming system

(One example of improving off-farm income can be seen in the photo pictured below, where a Sri Lankan woman uses a sewing machine, provided to her through United Nations funding, in order to make and sell clothes:)

Figure 4.2: A Sri Lankan woman sewing clothes for sale as part of a UN scheme⁹⁹



Photo: G. Bizzari

⁹⁸ Dixon, J. et al (2001) *ibid.*, p11

⁹⁹ From the FAO media base at: www1.fao.org/media_user/_home.html

It is through acknowledging these various strategies that are used in order to decrease households risk of poverty that farming systems analysis has a variety of entry points for assisting in the sustainable development of agriculture. These five main strategies are also recognised by the Sustainable Livelihoods approach, as well as by *gestion de terroirs* and the various approaches being utilised in Latin America and the Caribbean.

4.2 Determinants of Farming Systems

Farming systems types are determined by a variety of factors, which allow analysts and development workers an opportunity to broadly categorise areas and prescribe a loose set of possible projects, while acknowledging the heterogeneity that exists within these categories. Thus, the following section will be a short review of the factors that determine a farming system.

4.2.1 Natural Resources and Climate

The interaction of natural resources, climate and population provides the physical basis for farming systems. A rapidly growing population in many developing countries, coupled with a strong emphasis on increased production by development agencies in the 1970s and 80s, has led to a tendency to intensify farming. This has placed an overwhelming pressure on woodlands and natural eco-systems, which has in turn threatened the biodiversity of many development regions. As a result, there has been a growing tension between the goals of development and conservation, with many viewing the situation as an “either/ or” solution, rather than acknowledging the symbiotic relationship between the two. Thus, we have a situation whereby the changes in the global climate are leading to greater food insecurity, substantially increasing the risks to household livelihoods, which has tended to lead to greater intensification of agricultural production and thus placed a greater burden on the environment. In more recent years, however, various development approaches, including the Farming Systems approach, have attempted to break this cycle of environmental degradation and food insecurity through a recognition of the two factors as co-dependent rather than mutually exclusive.

4.2.2 Science and Technology

There has been, in recent decades, a rapid expansion in investment in agricultural science and technology. Both IRD and the Farming Systems approach have encouraged the introduction of scientific methods and greater technology into the agricultural sector in an attempt to overcome rural poverty. Poorer smallholder farmers in marginal areas have not, however, had much opportunity to benefit from such investment. There has been little research into integrated technology for diversifying the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and increasing the sustainability of land use. The focus instead tends to be on the intensification of farming. Recent years have, however, seen a gradual shift in the global research agenda, as the importance of the smallholder farmer in rural development has become clearer. This is likely to be of importance to people-centred approaches to rural development, including the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach as it attempts to build human capital and improve farm livelihoods in rural areas.

4.2.3 Trade Liberalisation and Market Development

The 1980s saw IMF and World Bank inspired structural adjustment programs in many developing economies. The short-term result of this has tended to be shortfalls in ensuring adequate services for more marginal smallholder farms as public goods have become speedily

privatised and government intervention pulled back. However, Dixon et al¹⁰⁰ are inclined to foresee the broader trade liberalisation as opening up new markets to farmers in developing worlds, forcing greater competitiveness, and eventually increasing the well-being of smallholder farmers in marginal areas. One word of warning here, though, this is not a foregone conclusion and will be greatly affected by the continuing subsidies given to farmers in the EU and USA. The external market forces are likely to continue to have an enormous impact on the livelihoods of the rural poor. Unfortunately, however, the FAO cannot really do anything about this. The Farming Systems approach, the approaches being developed in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the SLA all make some attempt to ensure the sustainability of the livelihoods of farmers, such that they will be able to weather large changes in market conditions and government policy, and as such will not be heavily affected by changes in international agricultural trade policies.

4.2.4 Policies, Institutions and Public Goods

There has recently been, on the international and national stages, a movement towards greater participation through decentralisation of government and the privatisation of services. However, there continues to be further marginalisation of smallholders and female-headed households, as government services are not adequately replaced by the private sector and civil society has tended to be unable to cope with replacing the shortfall of services. Policy shifts have a dramatic effect on production incentives in farming systems. This further echoes the criticisms of Sustainable Livelihoods and *gestion de terroirs* that there needs to be a greater emphasis on the role of politics and public policy making, while the Farming Systems approach also recognises the role of policies, institutions and public goods (see Figure 4.1). In the GT approach, there were calls for participation, and the central role of local community organisations, to be institutionalised in government policy and law making, which would be relevant in this case, as well as in the case of the SL approach.

4.2.5 Information and Human Capital

The need for better information and enhanced human capital has been increasingly recognised and attempts have been made to deal with it through literacy programs and wider access to primary education. However, with the spread of HIV and continuing civil conflict, there has been an increase in the number of female-headed households in developing countries. For the most part, these households are being left out of agricultural extension services, although this is an issue that is gaining in importance for the people-centred approaches covered in this report. However, it remains a huge problem that the all these approaches will have to face time and time again in the field.

¹⁰⁰ Dixon, J. et al (2001) *Farming Systems and Poverty*

Figure 4.3: Women attending a literacy class as part of a rural development project; Peru¹⁰¹



Photo: A. Odul

4.3 Recognition of Cultural and Regional Differences

Through its categorisation of different systems types within one region and between different regions, the farming systems approach allows for far more tailored development interventions than would have been seen in the past. Through its recognition of the importance of human and social capital, as well as of policies, processes and institutions, it bears a strong resemblance to the many of the other people-centred approaches, such as the sustainable livelihoods approach. In this, it lays the foundations in many of the areas in the world where it has been used in the field, allowing a more smooth transition towards more people-centred and participatory practices. By developing from the farming systems basis and altering the intervention to allow for cultural and regional differences the Sustainable Livelihoods approach could be largely successful in its attempts at alleviating rural poverty. There is, within the farming systems approach, a greater recognition that many traditional farming systems incorporate features that:

1. Permit participants to reduce or share risks
2. Make efficient use of resources
3. Resolve potential conflicts over resource allocation, while at the same time ensuring the long-term sustainability of limited natural resource endowment.

The same can be said for the GT approach and is an important lesson for the SL approach when it applies its principles to the field. This recognition too is clear in the new approaches being developed in Latin America and the Caribbean.

¹⁰¹ From the FAO media base: www1.fao.org/media_user/_home.html

CHAPTER 5 COMPARING SOME PEOPLE-CENTRED APPROACHES

In this chapter there will be a brief review and comparison of the features of the different people-centred approaches to rural development, which have been examined in this report. The chapter has been laid out predominantly in the form of tables, which should more clearly illustrate the comparative points made in the text. Table 1 attempts to give a concise summary of the broad history and contextual base of the development approaches.

Table 5.1: Overview and Comparison of the Main Development Approaches

	SLA	GT	IRD	FS	LAA
History	Developed in the UK in late-1990s. A change in perspective by researchers from food security to the broader idea of livelihoods; from material to a social emphasis. SLA built on this, using lessons learned from other approaches to rural development	Mid-1980s: shift from emphasis on technical aspects of rural development in Sahelian West Africa. GT emerged from this, with recognition of wider issues impacting on rural poverty: environmental, economic, demographic, institutional factors.	Emerged from 1960s, at the same time as realisation that the future of rural development lay in small farm agriculture and not in industry. IRD emerged for the practical operationalisation of this recognition and the consequential focus on rural growth linkages, and the central role of the small farmer	Started from field-based experience in the 1970s, as it became obvious that there were clear differences between actual circumstances in the field and those in research stations.	In the last decade some international agencies and national governments have started reflecting on the need to formulate a new PCA, considering the experience and the results of the different approaches applied in the region (IDB, IICA, ECLAC, IFAD, etc)
Key Focus	People and their existing strengths and constraints	The “terroir”: a socially and geographically defined space within which communities’ resources and associated rights are located in order to satisfy their needs.	Structures and Areas	The farming system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . People-centred (considering heterogeneity of social actors) . Territorial-based development
Structure and Components	Principles and framework for analysis	Principles are implicit; no one defining structure	No one defining structure for IRD, emphasis simply on integration, and the importance of national government agencies in dispensing services	Different approaches in different contexts. Diagnostic Processes central to this are: natural resources (land, water, common property); climate and biodiversity; human capital; social capital; financial capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Principles are implicit and are similar to the ones proposed by SLA. . Framework analysis not yet developed
Methodologies and Tools	No specific methodologies; draws on existing tools.	Three main methodologies have been used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NRM: - Institution building, and then NRM - Local 	No specific methodology, although in all cases, expert groups are used to assess needs, with no local participation. Reliance on	Dynamic process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research in agronomy - Modelling - Interaction between social and physical systems - Gender data 	No specific methodologies but takes into account: technical research, territorial planning, institutional building, participatory

People-centred Approaches

	SLA	GT	IRD	FS	LAA
		development: community organisation, transfer of responsibility to local stakeholders	quantitative information for diagnosis and analysis	collection systems Population dynamic - Etc	approaches
Cultural Context	Anglophone	Francophone	International	International	Latin American
Identity	Well developed identity with key texts, guidance sheets, web-site and recognised experts.	Diverse institutional history, but without any definitive texts or major players	Well-developed identity	Diverse and varied international institutional histories but some key defining texts and experts	Attempts to construct an identity based on common elements proposed by different organizations
Organisational Support	Strong ties to DfID, ODI and other development agencies, including NGOs such as CARE and OXFAM	Used by FAO, World Bank and IIED, to a limited extent in West Africa, as well as by other small NGOs.	Was widely used by development organisations throughout the world, thus had strong institutional support from major development agencies, e.g. FAO, World Bank, etc.	International Farming Systems Association (IFSA) with associations in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe. Highly institutionalised. Roots in US academia.	International Organizations (ECLAC, IDB, IICA, IFAD, FAO), International Cooperation and national governments
Current Uses Within FAO	Relatively on the margins within FAO, although it is having an increasing importance as the approach is further developed. Promotion of the sustainable livelihoods concept is a key objective of the FAO Strategic Framework for 2000 – 2015, although there is less importance placed on the use of the framework and the approach if FAO programming	Recently the approach has been declining. At the moment it is used within the Investment Centre for project preparation for the World Bank	No longer a mainstream approach	Use d to a lesser extent, although there is still strong investment in the evolution of the approach, and resources within FAO are still being put into FS	Some Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCP)
Current Status of Approach Outside FAO	Relatively mainstream – has become the approach to rural development, and is supported by the UK government, as well as a number of other organisations, including large NGOs, such as OXFAM and CARE	Not a mainstream approach. Tends to have a limited visibility and appears to be being absorbed, to some degree by Community-Driven Development (CDD), mainly through the World Bank	No longer much used for programming and development	Has moved out of the mainstream of the development context	Some international agencies are promoting a new PCA for LAC (ECLAC, IDB, IICA, IFAD, FAO), as well as international Cooperation and national governments

	SLA	GT	IRD	FS	LAA
Key Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Broad analysis of development problems b) Focus on livelihood outcomes instead of project objectives c) Analysis of complexity d) Clear identification of principles e) Enables a more realistic prediction of potential outcomes and impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Establishment of partnerships b) Local participation is key; c) Institution and capacity-building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Laid the foundations for an integrated perspective of rural development b) Carried out ‘core functions’, which are now considered as essential functions of national governments c) Created an enabling environment for development through the provision of infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Adapted new technologies to cultural context and resource constraints b) Led to better understanding of development dynamics c) Reinforced own strategies d) Enabled greater farmer flexibility e) Looked to external factors influencing farmer decisions f) Inclusion of farmers in action-research and practice; g) Supported a productive dialogue across disciplines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) It takes into account heterogeneity in rural areas in LAC b) It proposes differentiated strategies to address people’s needs and different territories c) It considers lessons learned from other approaches applied in LAC and elsewhere.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Little practical experience b) Fails to deal with politics and rights c) Time and money consuming d) Requires multidisciplinary teams and specialist training e) Difficult to quantify information on capital assets gathered through SLA f) No defined role for markets/economics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Relatively high start-up costs; b) Policy vacuum c) Gap between rhetoric and reality regarding participation d) Lack of long-term planning e) Local elites taking over f) Failure to include marginal groups, such as nomadic pastoralists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Failed to achieve transformative objectives it had promised b) Top-down approach to rural development c) Lack of success in achieving poverty alleviation d) No inclusion of the community in development processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing complexity and proliferation of academic interest has blurred operational practicalities Continuity of traditional hierarchies – top-down approach – prevented objectives being reached Not able to change concepts and attitudes necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . The framework is not yet structured . Key elements and principles are not yet institutionalized

5.1 What? Where? The Key Principles of Some Development Approaches

The questions here are:

- What are the key principles of the development approaches mentioned here? (This seems to be covered quite sufficiently in the table 5.2 below.) And what features do these approaches have in common? One principle that seems to be gaining importance in all but one of the approaches (IRD) is the concept of participation by the local population in the development of their locality. This appears to stem from a broader movement towards the recognition of local populations as being more active in the development process, rather than simply passive recipients of benefits. Holism is another principle that appears to be common amongst all the approaches mentioned here as development agencies acknowledge the need to tackle the various roots of rural poverty in order to ensure that there are real improvements in the quality of life of the local populace.

- Where are these principles developed and applied? In other words, are the principles an offspring of a strong academic tradition; are they important in the field application of the approach? For example, the sustainable livelihoods approach has a strong identity based upon its key principles. As yet, however, the approach has had limited experience in the field such that the application of these principles is not yet truly tested. In the case of Gestion de Terroirs, on the other hand, the principles can often be sacrificed in the field in the face of a pragmatic acceptance of the realities of the particular context involved.

Table 5.2: The Major Principles of the Approaches

	SLA	FS	IRD	GT	LAA (90's onwards)
Key Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People-centered - Responsive and participatory - Multi-level - Holistic - Conducted in partnership - Sustainable - Dynamic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small farmer-oriented - Farmer participation - Location-specificity of technical and human factors - Problem-solving approach - Systems orientation - Inter-disciplinary approach - Feedback to future agricultural research and policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broadly holistic, multi-sector approach to rural development - Production-oriented - Provision of infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community-based NRM - Empowerment of local communities - Local capacity-building - Stakeholder involvement - Facilitating resource conflict management - Identifying local priorities 	Principles are implicit and are related to: people centred, territorial based, decentralization and capacity building, multisectoral economy, competitiveness and efficiency, multi-level, links rural-urban, and the consideration of cross-sectoral issues (gender for example).
Role of principles within Approach (implicit etc?)	Key part of the approach	Not a part of the organizing framework	Important in terms of national level planning of programs	Principles underlie the methodologies, but are often sacrificed to pragmatism in practical usage	The approach is not yet systematized
Linkages to policy and politics	Policy is central	No real acknowledgement of policy	Policy is key	Policy is important in theory, though frequently not in practice	Policy is central (linkages micro-macro)

Experience of application	Limited as approach is relatively new	Application is widespread throughout the developing world, although the particular use of the approach varies significantly between time, place, and organization.	Application was widespread throughout the developing world. Generally perceived to have failed in its application	Relatively widespread use in West Africa; some trials in Latin America and other regions, but not very successful. Has been in use for about 18 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited • Lessons learned not yet systematized
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5.2 What is the predominant focus of the approach?

All the approaches here have overwhelmingly focused their attention on rural development. Their policy focus does, however, vary significantly, with the sustainable livelihoods approach emphasising the people at the centre of the development process, while Gestion de Terroirs tends to focus on specific social and geographical areas. (See Table 5.3 for an overview). Entry-points, as can be seen in the table, tend to be at local community level, although there are increasing attempts to focus on the regional level as well. The meso-level can be problematic, as it often requires the presence of stable government or civil society institutions in that region, such as strong municipal government.

Table 5.3: Main Focus of the Approaches

	SLA	FS	IRDP	GT	LAA (90's onwards)
Sectoral Focus	None, but started in NRM	Rural dev	Rural	Rural	Tends to be rural development, with a recent emphasis on territorial units
Policy Focus	The people at the center of the development process	The farming system and the wider systems of which it is part.	Small farmers and their role in rural development	Geographical area and social and economic activities taking place within this area	Rural people and territory (noting heterogeneity). Attempts to formulate more differentiated policies
Macro-Level; global and national	The use of the Sustainable Livelihoods framework is encouraged for macro level planning, and can be especially useful in the drawing-up of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)	Occasional entry through policies and structures at the non-local level (national)	Entry tends to be overwhelmingly through national governments, their ministries and agencies	Little focus on macro-level, although recent changes have led to the recognition of the importance of the global and national level, with some governments (such as in Burkina Faso) cementing GT in national level policy making	Although there is a recognition of the importance of the global and national level, few measures have been taken to include PCA in national strategies of rural development
Meso-Level; regional	Through processes, such as decentralization, the SL framework can be a useful aid in regional	Regional zones are mainly technical, rather than an entry-point for programs	Entry also through municipal governments	GT criticised for not dealing with the regional aspects of development. Recently some	Through processes, international agencies and national governments are

	SLA	FS	IRDP	GT	LAA (90's onwards)
	planning, while this level may also provide an entry-point for some SL projects			countries have seen a stronger development of regional and municipal government structures, allowing GT to develop relationships between Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and such institutions.	promoting decentralization and strengthening financial, administrative and political capacities of the municipal structures to provide the services required for territorially-based rural development
Micro-Level; community, household, individual Micro Level (Continued)	Focus of SL is mainly on communities and households as an entry-point for projects, although this is not necessarily the case	Main entry-point for FS is at this level – through farm household or community	Failed to adequately reach the local level - main criticism of IRD was that it did not involve the local	The main entry-point is through the local community based within a specified “terroir”	In general, rural development initiatives have been mostly local, one-off projects, discontinuous and unconnected from any national and international strategy. The new proposals promote the modification of this situation, choosing as entry points territorial units and social actors (considering heterogeneity)

5.3 What are the technical aspects of the approaches?

The methods used for the design, application, monitoring and evaluation of the approaches are very different for each approach. It must be said, however, that most of these approaches, with the exception of IRD, have made some attempts to include consultations with locals at various stages of the development cycle. These attempts are not always successful, but they do indicate the increasing recognition of the important role of local populations in rural development and poverty alleviation.

Table 5.4: From Diagnosis and Design to Monitoring and Evaluation

	SLA	FS	IRDP	GT	LAA (90's onwards)
Diagnosis	Diagnosis is mainly conducted through consultations with the local or target population,	Diagnosis of farming constraints and potentials: (1) Research secondary sources for basic data of	Key role of outside technical experts in diagnosis and research	Very technical, with very geographical tools, such as mapping, being used for diagnosis.	Diagnosis is mainly conducted through consultations with rural communities. Some agencies are promoting holistic

	SLA	FS	IRDP	GT	LAA (90's onwards)
	with the aim of uncovering their priorities The focus of SL is ultimately on holistic diagnosis	target regions (2) Identification of target groups of farmers using agro-ecological or farming systems criteria (3) Exploratory diagnosis, analysis and synthesis of findings (4) Construction of database for monitoring and evaluation			diagnosis
Design	Programs may be either single-sector or multi-sector focused. The involvement of target populations in the design of projects is central	Possible strategies to overcome constraints, potentials to build on are formulated – taking into account technical feasibility, economic and political viability, social acceptability	Primary importance given to technical teams from outside region in design of programs	Design of GT programs tends to be technical, with emphasis on the use of outside experts, rather than the involvement of local groups. Strong focus on technical analysis of the territorial lay-out. Move made to a more socio-economic framework for the design of programs	The involvement of rural population in the design is still incipient. Some proposals say that programmes and projects should be designed in such a way that include decentralization of activities and participation of beneficiaries
Implementation and Management	This is again a participative process, with there being a strong emphasis on stakeholder ownership of projects and their implementation and management	Farming Systems project team making the major decisions as regards the implementation and management of projects. Even where there is local involvement in management, the FS team tend to be the top-level management	Partners for IRD projects tended to be national and regional government. Projects were usually managed by a project management unit, which posted interdisciplinary technical teams in the field	One problem associated with GT was that local institutions that were being set up by the programs lacked any legal legitimacy, making it difficult to effectively implement and manage programs.	Generally technical units manage projects. Some agencies and national governments are promoting the involvement of communities
Monitoring	Participative Monitoring and Evaluation Importance of collecting both normative data and information relating to the	Tracking farmer adoption of recommended strategies	Through the Project Management Unit	Theoretically monitoring of projects should be participative, involving local community organizations, but in practice, it is	Monitoring is carried out by executing agencies and donors. Some agencies are using Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (i.e.

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	SLA	FS	IRDP	GT	LAA (90's onwards)
	criteria deemed central by the target population			often taken over by outside experts in a program management unit	IFAD in Guatemala)
Evaluation	This allows feedback through lessons learned	Assessing impacts of adoption – feeding into further research. Evolution through lessons learned.	Inadequate evaluation as Project Management Units became swallowed-up by government agencies. No real feedback of lessons learned	Evolution of approach through the feedback of lessons learned	Evaluation is carried out by executing agencies and donors. Some agencies are talking about flexibility in monitoring and evaluation to incorporate changes in the subsequent stages

5.4 How do the approaches deal with broader issues?

There are issues that these approaches confront in the field that do not fall simply under the category of rural development, that are far broader and with greater implications for society and development, including politics, power, human rights, gender and environment. Table 5.5. illustrates the different ways in which the approaches mentioned here attempt to deal with these broader issues. As such, we can see that politics is clearly an important arena in terms of development, although the approaches prefer not to deal with the complexity that can be involved in this area. Rather, the aim seems to be to ensure some degree of sustainable development that would not be hugely impacted by the political context. The same can be said of some of the other issues discussed here, such as human rights, although there has undoubtedly been a concerted effort to mainstream environment and gender throughout the development of rural areas.

Table 5.5: Some Important Cross-Cutting Issues and How they are dealt with

	SLA	FS	IRDP	GT	LAA (90's onwards)
Politics	Attempts are currently being made to include politics in the SL framework, with calls for the introduction of a sixth “capital” asset in the form of ‘political capital’	Politics are not involved	Involves politics to a degree only at the negotiation stage at the level of national governments.	Certainly, there is a dimension of local politics involved, particularly in the creation of community organizations	Politics is considered only at the negotiation stage at the national level. Although with decentralization local levels are gaining some spaces
Conditionality	Explicit and deliberate attempt to unlink development aid from conditions	Tends to be conditional	Strongly conditional	In theory, the aim is to remove conditionality from development aid, although this is a matter of debate in practice	Tends to be conditional

	SLA	FS	IRDP	GT	LAA (90's onwards)
Empowerment	Central to SLA – as seen in capitals pentagon, the importance of human capital	Recently more emphasis on the importance of empowerment of farmers through capacity building	Partnerships were with government agencies, and NGOs, with an emphasis on technical staff, so there was no real attempt at empowering local communities and individuals	Empowerment to be achieved through local capacity building and the strengthening of community organizations. Although this is not often fully achieved in practice	Emphasis on the empowerment of the poorest (small farmers, the rural landless, artisanal fisher folk, indigenous people, rural poor women), through target strategies. There are still few results
Human Rights	Not explicitly recognized. Tend to be overlooked, especially as regards rural development. Within this civil rights tend to carry more weight than Social and Economic. May be included in a new asset: “political capital” as is being suggested by some SL developers	Not explicitly recognized within the FSA	Not considered a factor in rural development	No real mention of human rights, although there has been increased recognition that such rights should be included within the approach.	Not really mentioned, but in some cases there has been a recognition of the indigenous rights, as well as the promotion of legal reforms to benefit women and other disadvantaged groups. In specific cases, there has been a concern of displaced people because armed conflicts, terrorism, natural disasters
Secondary Rights (Access to communal land, water, etc)	Part of SL framework, although not a part of the principles	Dealt with as part of the broader farming system	IRD provided infrastructure at a broad level – no dealing with local community and no concern with secondary rights	Access to common lands and water sources is a important focus in GT, especially as regards the nomadic communities in the Sahel.	Promotion of some legal reforms to facilitate access to, rationale use of and decentralized management of natural resources (land, water)
Gender	From an SL perspective, improving women’s access and participation is an integral part of achieving sustainable livelihoods	No specific attempt to deal with gender or the inclusion of other marginalized groups	No mention of gender or other marginalized groups	Gender and the strengthening of other marginal groups tend to be overlooked in GT, as the strong focus on the community tends to mean the overpowering of vulnerable groups such as women. There is a nominal acknowledgement of the need to deal with gender	There are some achievements, but there is a gap between <i>paper</i> and reality. There is a need to allocate resources and efforts to address gender inequalities
Environment	Central to SLA in the form of	Environmental sustainability is	As agricultural intensification	GT grew from a perception that one	Environment is important at all levels

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	SLA	FS	IRDP	GT	LAA (90's onwards)
	Natural Capital	viewed mainly through scientific and technological research. FSA has traditionally focused on intensification of farming, which has had the effect of destroying biodiversity, but this has changed in the 1990s	was central to the approach, it tended to result in the over-use of natural resources, exacerbating environmental damage and putting huge amounts of pressure on local ecosystems. Environmental consequences were not fully considered, and were often seen as opposing development	of the main failings of the previous rural development approaches was their tendency to intensify production, thus destroying the long-term viability of land and eco-systems. As a result GT does try to emphasise the environment and sustainability in its programming.	(macro, intermediate, micro). Promotion of community-based natural resources management (i.e. forestry). Recognition of the importance of indigenous knowledge in the use and conservation of natural resources.
Sustainability	Central to the SL approach in the form of a cycle resulting in people's actual outcomes and livelihoods	The sustainability of farmer livelihoods is increasingly important to the FSA	IRD tended to emphasise the intensification of agriculture as a means for raising living standards amongst smallholder farmers. The sustainability of its methods were not considered key to the approach – as soon as external donor support left, projects tended to disappear	Sustainability of livelihoods and in particular the ability to withstand uncertainty and risk is nominally important to the approach	Almost all international agencies and national governments agree that sustainability is not only related to natural resources and environment. Although there are few experiences on how to measure different types of sustainability. Some agencies define sustainability as the steady improvement of standards of living among the rural population which does not require continuous infusions of external financial aid and does not degrade the natural resources base.
Capacity to deal with conflict	One branch of the SLA does specialize in conflict management in terms of access to natural resources. The SL framework can also be used to deal with conflict management	No mention of conflict and how FS would deal with it. Although it may be dealt with through the management of common resources	No attempt to deal with conflict – projects simply postponed or their focus altered	Principle of GT is facilitating conflict management through NRM, although has difficulties with this in practice	Natural resources management needs the application of some measures to deal with conflict (i.e. land titling, public goods, externalities, property rights). There are few experience in LAC

5.5 Overcoming Common Fault Lines

Here there is an attempt to compare how the approaches deal with some common fault-lines, such as micro-macro linkages, holism versus sectoral entry-points, qualitative or quantitative information. Thus, the questions are:

- Are the people-centred approaches discussed here forging adequate linkages between the community level and the national level? We can see that the SL approach is making some attempts to create macro-micro linkages, and a discussion of how this may be achieved can be found in chapter 6. The Latin American approaches appear to place more emphasis on the need for such linkages in order to maintain the sustainability of rural development.
- In practice, which are the approaches stressing, a holistic diagnosis of the development needs, or the use of sectoral entry-points? It must be noted here that, for reasons of pragmatism, when an approach implements a project in the field sectoral entry-points tend to be favoured.
- What data should be used for diagnosis, monitoring and evaluation – quantitative or qualitative? The choice here often depends on the academic origins of the approach, such that more technical approaches (Farming Systems and IRD) tend to favour the collection and use of quantitative data. Approaches that stem from a more sociological academic background (SLA) generally encourage the collection and use of more qualitative data. Again, however, there is a gap between what is said and what is done, and in practice it is most likely that the data will be some mix of quantitative and qualitative information.

Table 5.6: Overcoming Common Fault Lines

	SLA	FS	IRD	GT	LAA (90's onwards)
Micro-Macro Linkages	Attempting to create linkages between macro and micro levels– using the SL framework in designing the national PRSPs in coordination with regional/local governments. That is, as a consultative process	Acknowledgement of the need for policy reform at national and global levels to support the sustainable development of farming systems at a local level. Although no real discussion of the role of FSA in this reform.	Tendency to enter at the macro level, so that one reason for its lack of success in practical application was its failure to reach the local level	Tendency for the focus to be on the micro level. For more effective and efficient programs, however, there is a need for greater cooperation between the two level, which may be achieved through the PRSPs and other central government attempts to acknowledge the role of GT within national decision-making processes	Attempting to consider multi-level interventions: (i) at the macro level, supporting the design of policies, strategies and investment programs; (ii) at the intermediate level, supporting activities related to institutional modernization and information management; and (iii) at the micro level, promoting territorial approaches, participatory planning and participatory management of natural resources.
Holistic Diagnosis versus Sectoral entry-	Emphasis on holistic diagnosis, although in	Holistic diagnosis of farming system type	Entry-points are sectoral, and tried to be inter-sectoral	In principle, there should be holistic diagnosis for GT.	Both of them. Promotion of holistic diagnosis

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	SLA	FS	IRD	GT	LAA (90's onwards)
points	practice it can be necessary to use sectoral entry-points and build on them to make the program more holistic			In practice, however, entry-points tend to be sectoral as they deal with institutions and agencies run along strict sectoral lines.	to respond with multisectoral and differentiated strategies and programs. The aim is to address the different needs and strengths of the heterogeneous rural population and diverse territories.
Quantitative and Qualitative Information	Tends to be more qualitative-friendly than the other approaches, although particulars will tend to depend on project designers	The technical roots of FS would favour a more quantitative approach to data collection and analysis	Technical roots favouring quantitative information	This is dependent upon the particular project staff, although more technical projects tend to favour quantitative data over qualitative	Tendency to consider mostly quantitative information, but it uses also qualitative information collected at the field level. On the other hand, there is an increasing demand for gender-disaggregated data at the international, national and local levels to know the contributions of men and women to development, and to formulate more adequate interventions.
Analytical Detail versus Pragmatism	As yet, SLA has tended to be used predominantly in diagnosis, rather than implementation, although it also lends itself well to implementation	Recommendation Domains: farming systems classified into domains, within which the same broad research and recommendations are conducted. Thus, trying to balance analytical research and pragmatism	Analytical detail is more important	Analytical detail is important, especially in mapping processes, although eventually must give way to pragmatism in program implementation	Previous experiences have demonstrated that the emphasis was on diagnosis and sectoral studies, rather than implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The new proposals tend to balance the analytical detail and the execution, although new experiences are not yet systematized.

CHAPTER 6 SO WHERE DOES THE REAL VALUE ADDED OF SLA LIE?

Within this section the discussion will centre on the ability of SL approaches to link macro policies to micro realities, which can be considered as the arena in which the SLAs are most powerful as compared to the other approaches. As such, this section will involve a brief outline of the various strategies being employed at national level for rural development, and then examine them in the context of current trends and the Sustainable Livelihoods approaches. By this I mean that a brief outline will be given of National Strategies for Sustainable Development, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and the Comprehensive Development Framework with some comments as to how they make act as a launch pad for SLAs, and whether there is even any reason to view SLAs as potentially adding to these processes and truly linking macro and micro strategies.

6.1 National Level Development Strategies

At the moment there are three similar national-level development strategies being pushed by different international actors. Heidbrink and Paulus¹⁰² briefly outline the main focuses of the three.

- Firstly, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) are encouraging the formulation and implementation of National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSDs). These are high-level frameworks to integrate and harmonise existing development plans and strategies at a national level. The role of donors within this process is seen as being one of facilitator and promoter. In terms of its practical application, a UK headed task force is laying the groundwork for the strategies with five selected partner countries – Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Nepal, Tanzania and Thailand.
- Secondly, the World Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) is attempting to widen the development perspective beyond macro-indicators, to include structural, human, physical and country-specific factors in national development plans. The basic principles of this strategy include ownership of the framework by the countries concerned, a holistic approach, a long-term perspective, and the broad involvement of all relevant actors. In terms of its practical implementation, the CDF is currently being tested in 13 pilot countries, including Bolivia and Uganda. However, the process has not been immune to criticism, with several sceptical voices surrounding the issue of the World Bank being a 'backseat driver' and pushing its concerns above those of the countries concerned. Countries, such as Bolivia, have complained that the World Bank has simply latched onto an existing process within those countries and are pushing it to its limits in the demand for results.
- Finally, the World Bank and the IMF are encouraging the drawing up of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and tying them to debt relief in the countries concerned. It is these that the Sustainable Livelihoods approaches are seen as

¹⁰² Heidbrink, K.; Paulus, S. (2000) *Strategies for Sustainable Development in the Thicket of National Planning Processes*

having most in common with and as having the potential, through developing a 'checklist' against which to compare these approaches, to link macro policies and micro realities. A central facet of these PRSPs is that there must be involvement of the actors affected by their outcomes in their drawing-up, thus giving a sense of ownership of the process at a macro level. At the moment, some countries, such as Burkina Faso, Ghana and Tanzania, have launched interim PRSPs, with others, such as Bolivia and Uganda, beginning the first activities on the road to drawing-up PRSPs.

From this brief synopsis of the different approaches it should be noted that there are some countries involved in at least two of these strategies, with Bolivia being involved in all three. This may facilitate a smoother entry of SL approaches in these countries as they look to build on the work of each of the strategies. A warning note must be sounded here in that there is a potential danger that the three strategies could be carried out in isolation from one another, with little or no feedback between them.

6.2 Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)

GTZ have dealt significantly with the PRSPs, facilitating a range of countries in drawing up the strategies, including Mozambique. Asche et al¹⁰³ note that from the point of view of GTZ, the main risks and challenges regarding the PRSPs are that:

- (a) There may be a trade-off between the speed of their elaboration and their quality, with many countries opting for the former at the expense of the latter, due their connection with debt relief
- (b) There may, as a result, also be a trade-off between speed and participation, thus reducing the concept of ownership to a theoretical principle as opposed to a practical expectation. Here the SLAs may have a significant role to play in building the capacity of local actors to participate in planning processes, which may seep up to the higher government levels
- (c) A sidelining of existing national strategies and action plans which may be part implemented or may have already been designed within the cultural context and with an appropriate understanding of the assets and constraints facing all actors involved in the development process
- (d) Neglect of existing project and programme experience, such as the lessons from and the existence of community groups as a result of gestion de terroirs projects.
- (e) Over-extending government capacity at local and national levels, leading to increased competition amongst government and non-government organisations for increasingly scarce resources.
- (f) Over-extending CSO capacity

¹⁰³ Asche, H.; Breustedt, C.; Kampmann, M. et al (2000) *Poverty Reduction Strategies in Developing Countries*

- (g) A trade-off between the asset of donor plurality and the need for a unified approach.

Carney¹⁰⁴ furthers this discussion, when she notes that coherence between PRSPs and SLAs is critical to ensuring successful outcomes in rural development. Thus some areas in which SLAs are seen as having the potential to enrich PRSPs are:

- In understanding livelihood groups and their assets
- In predicting responses to different policy options
- In managing cross-cutting issues
- In highlighting the long-term
- In underlining the importance of participation
- In promoting a more decentralised approach
- In setting targets and monitoring them
- In providing a 'checklist' to assess the PRSPs.

From this it is clear that there is a viable argument to back up the notion that SLAs have the capacity to link the macro and the micro. The present moment appears to be the ideal time, as there currently exists such a high level of support for national and local strategies on the global stage. The SL approach being developed within the FAO must therefore investigate and learn from the existing approaches (such as *gestion de terroirs*, Integrated Rural Development, Farming Systems, and those in use in Latin America) as well as from the broader sustainable development strategies being developed at national and international level. Through integration and alteration, the SLA has the opportunity to contribute significantly to poverty reduction and rural development.

¹⁰⁴ Carney, D. (2001) *Discussion Paper for DFID SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS Meeting*

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Further information about the LSP

The Livelihood Support Programme (LSP) works through the following sub-programmes:

Improving people's access to natural resources

Access of the poor to natural assets is essential for sustainable poverty reduction. The livelihoods of rural people with limited or no access to natural resources are vulnerable because they have difficulty in obtaining food, accumulating assets, and recuperating after shocks or misfortunes.

Participation, Policy and Local Governance

Local people, especially the poor, often have weak or indirect influence on policies that affect their livelihoods. Policies developed at the central level are often not responsive to local needs and may not enable access of the rural poor to needed assets and services.

Livelihoods diversification and enterprise development

Diversification can assist households to insulate themselves from environmental and economic shocks, trends and seasonality – in effect, to be less vulnerable. Livelihoods diversification is complex, and strategies can include enterprise development.

Natural resource conflict management

Resource conflicts are often about access to and control over natural assets that are fundamental to the livelihoods of many poor people. Therefore, the shocks caused by these conflicts can increase the vulnerability of the poor.

Institutional learning

The institutional learning sub-programme has been set up to ensure that lessons learned from cross-departmental, cross-sectoral team work, and the application of sustainable livelihoods approaches, are identified, analysed and evaluated for feedback into the programme.

Capacity building

The capacity building sub-programme functions as a service-provider to the overall programme, by building a training programme that responds to the emerging needs and priorities identified through the work of the other sub-programmes.

People-centred approaches in different cultural contexts

A critical review and comparison of different recent development approaches used in different development contexts is being conducted, drawing on experience at the strategic and field levels in different sectors and regions.

Mainstreaming sustainable livelihoods approaches in the field

FAO designs resource management projects worth more than US\$1.5 billion per year. Since smallholder agriculture continues to be the main livelihood source for most of the world's poor, if some of these projects could be improved, the potential impact could be substantial.

Sustainable Livelihoods Referral and Response Facility

A Referral and Response Facility has been established to respond to the increasing number of requests from within FAO for assistance on integrating sustainable livelihood and people-centred approaches into both new and existing programmes and activities.

For further information on the Livelihood Support Programme,
contact the programme coordinator:
Email: LSP@fao.org

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