Forest Conflict in Asia and the Pacific

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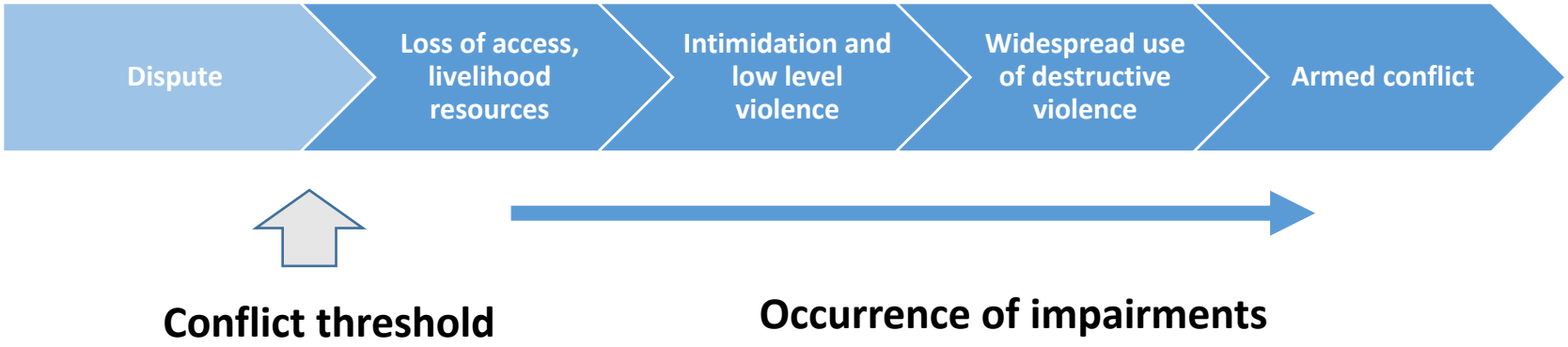
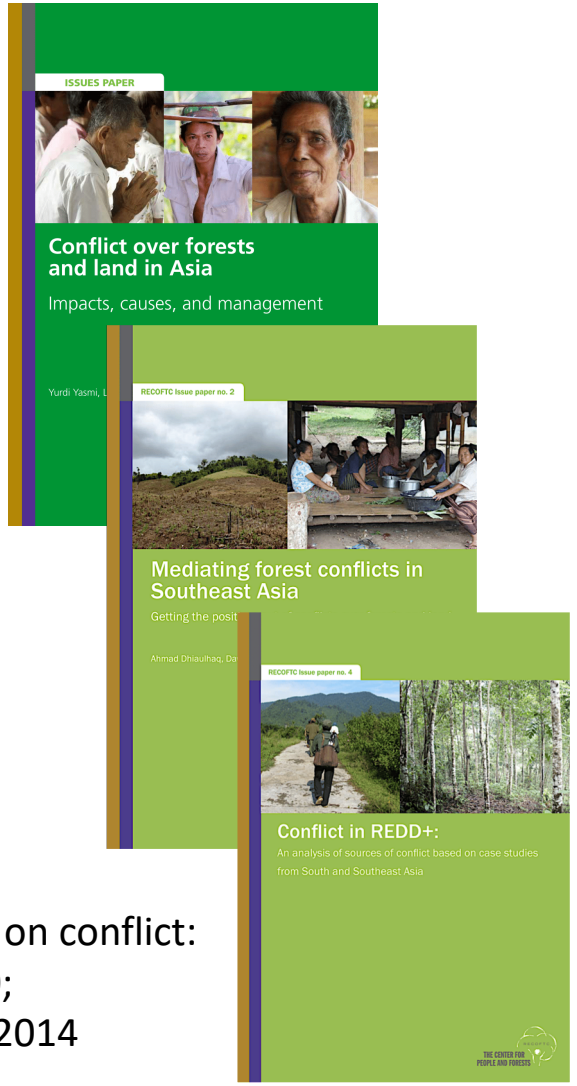
Key questions to be addressed

- How have forest conflict (the nature, issues, actors) changed since 1990s?
- What drives the changes?
- How will they look like in 2030?

Forest conflict



Asia-Pacific:
Rich forest, a hotspot of forest conflict



Global hotspots of forest conflict:

- **South-East Asia**
- Central Africa
- Several areas of South America

(Mola-Yudego & Gritten 2010)

(RECOFTC works on conflict:
Yasmi et al. 2010;
Dhiaulhaq et al. 2014
RECOFTC 2016)

How serious is the problem?

Conflicts had affected roughly 75% of Asia's forests (de Jong et al. 2007)

- **Afghanistan:** Land was a major cause of conflict in 2008
- **Cambodia:** 285 reported land disputes in 2015
- **India:** Land disputes constituted almost 80% of the civil caseload (or 20,866 cases) in Bihar State in 2010.
- **Indonesia:** MoEF received 222 tenurial-conflict complaints in 2016-May 2018
- **Thailand:** Over 85% of natural resource conflict documented in 1993-1995 in NE Thailand (932 conflicts) are over forest and land.
- **Vietnam:** Land conflicts = more than 70% of complaints received by the Government

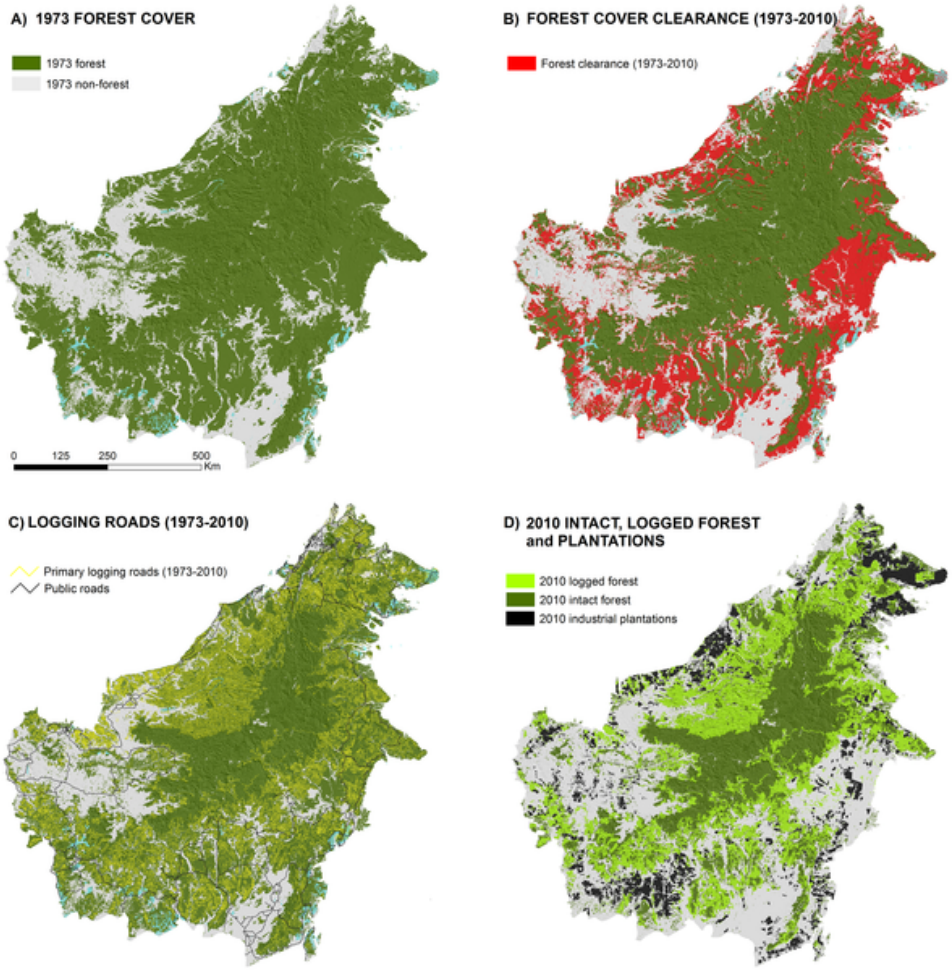
Sources: de Jong et al. 2007; Waldman 2000; NGO Forum Cambodia 2015; Deininger et al. 2015; MoEF 2018; Prasit et al. 1995; Sikor & To 2014)

Three camps of theories explaining key drivers of natural resources conflict

- **Scarcity** theory (e.g. Homer-Dixon 1994,1999)
- **Power relations** (access, control) / political ecology theories (e.g. Peluso & Watts 2001)
- **Opportunity** theory (e.g. Collier and Hoeffler 2001)

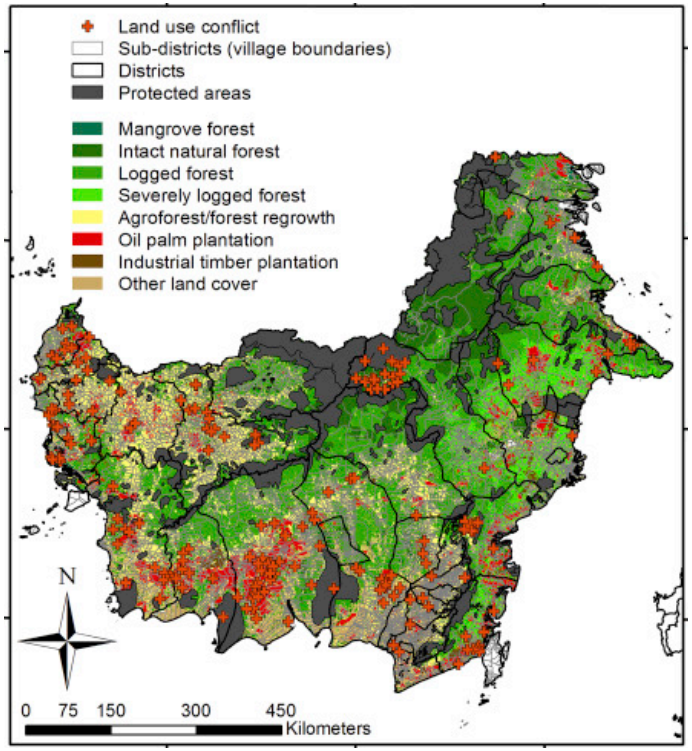
Forest change and spatial pattern of forest conflict

Forest change from 1973-2010



Gaveau et al. (2014)

Land use conflict (red cross)

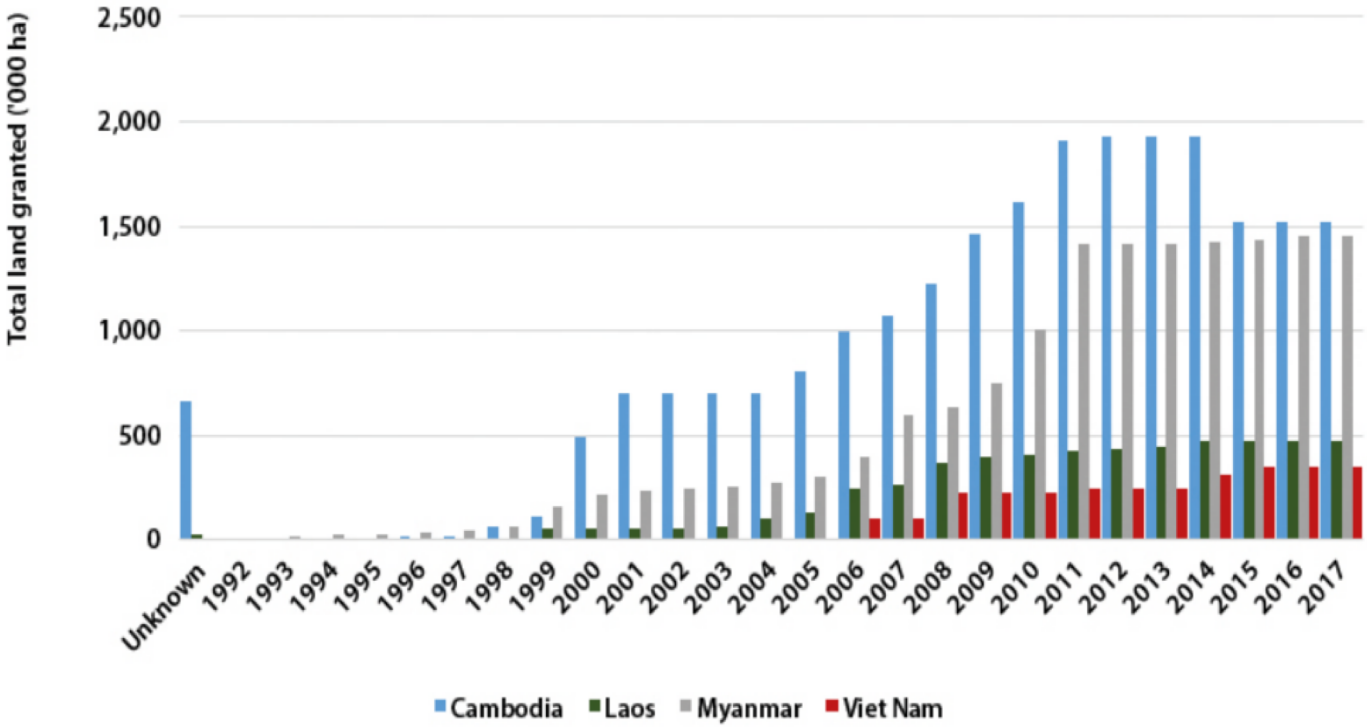


Abram et al. (2017)

Factors affecting forest conflict in the Asia-Pacific in the last decades

- Rapid socio-economic growth
- Demographic transformation (population growth, mobility/migration)
- Dramatic changes in land use and land cover
  - Decline of forest areas
  - Encroachment of non-forest uses (e.g. agriculture) into remaining natural forests
  - Intensification and changes in cropping pattern
    - **Towards export-oriented monoculture commercial crops**: rice, cassava, maize, sugarcane, rubber, oil palm, acacia (pulpwood) plantations
  - Increasingly-visible role played by agribusiness corporations and investors (e.g. in large-scale agricultural and forestry concessions and investments)
- Global 'land grab' phenomena in SE-Asia
- Civil society movement (transnational activists networks)
- Raise of international regulatory and voluntary mechanisms for sustainability (e.g. certifications)
- Forest for climate change mitigation and sustainable development

Area under agriculture and tree-crop concessions since 1990s in Mekong countries

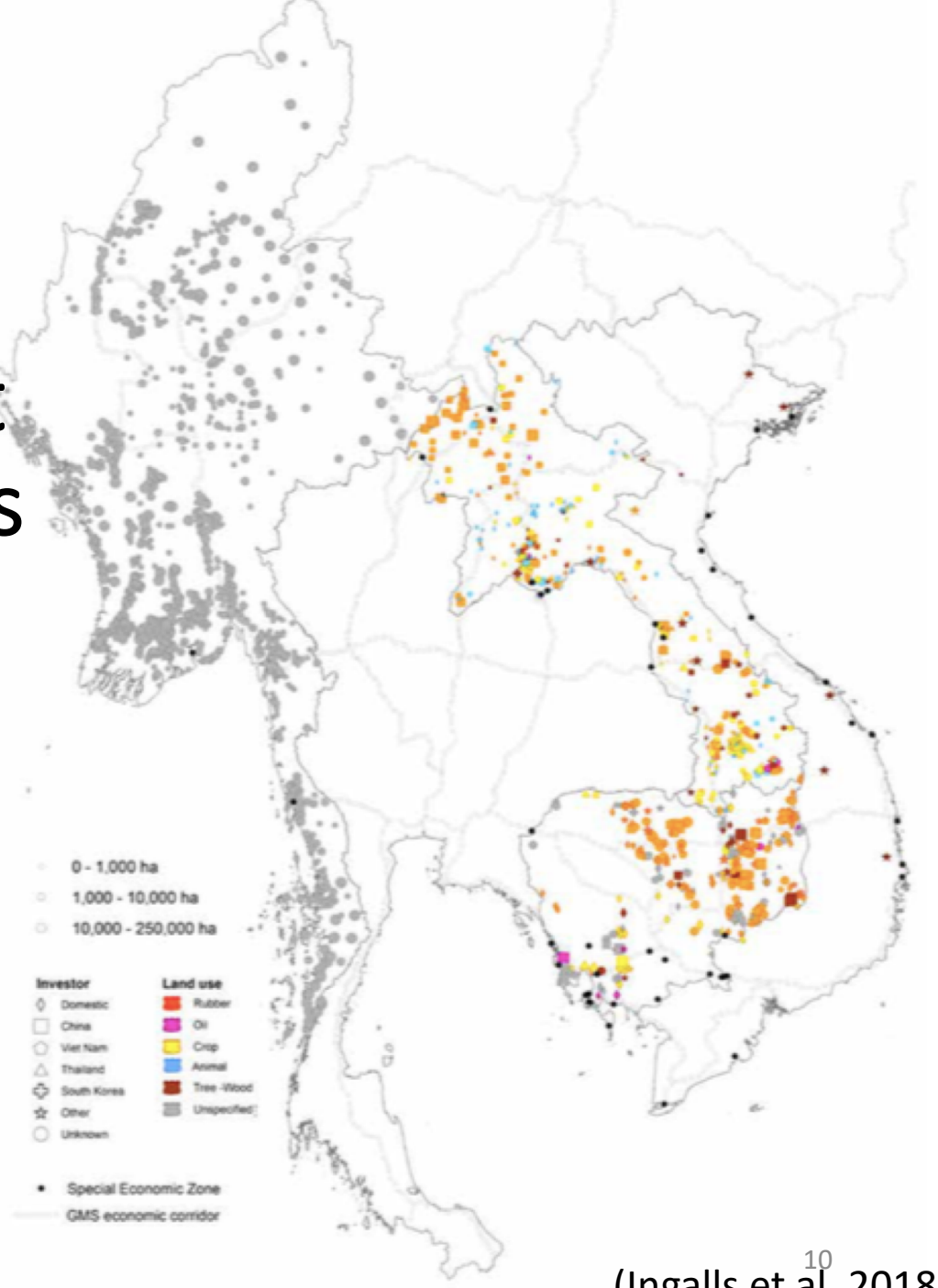


- 76% of agricultural concessions is devoted to the boom crops: rubber, sugarcane, oil palm, cassava and maize
- Cambodia: Land concession areas represent 66% of the total area cultivated by smallholders farmers

(Ingalls et al. 2018)

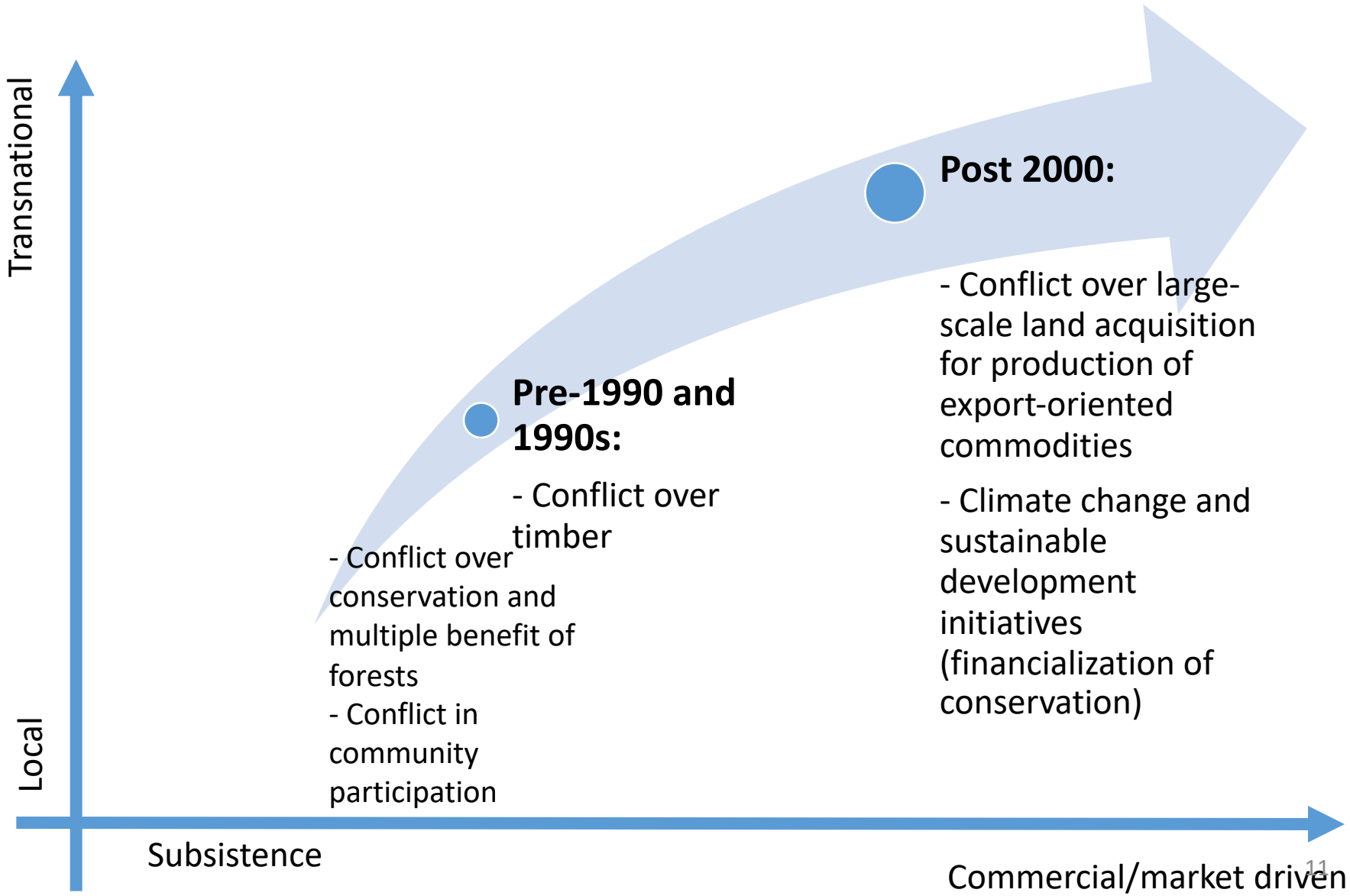
Transboundary nature of investment and land development in the last decades

- Domestic investors are still significant, but international investors become more prominent
- China, Vietnam, Thailand and South Korea (together accounting for 36% of total concessions in Cambodia and 60% in Laos)



(Ingalls et al. 2018)

Trends in forest conflict



Conflict over timber (logging)

- Pre-1990s and during 1990s especially in Southeast Asia, and later on in the Pacific
- **Primary actors:**
  - local communities vs. private or state logging companies
  - Community vs. community
- **Direct causes:** overlapping claims, lack or unequal benefit sharing, unclear tenure, and elite capture
- **Scale:** local

Conflict over conservation and ‘multiple-benefits of forests’

- Getting prominent in 1980s -1990s
- Establishment of conservation areas partly in response to domestic and international pressure to halt deforestation and address natural disasters (flooding)
- **Conflict actors**: conservation agencies and NGOs vs. local or indigenous communities and its NGO supporters
- **Direct causes:** exclusion of prior forest uses, loss of livelihood sources, arrests and criminalization
- **Scale:** local

Conflict in participatory forestry

- Getting prominent in 1980s -1990s
- **Conflict actors:**
  - Community vs. community
  - Community vs. neighboring actors/land use (over boundaries)
- **Direct causes of conflict:** boundary and benefit sharing issues, elite capture.
- **Scale:** local

Conflict over large-scale land acquisitions for production of export commodities (monocrop)

- Getting more prominent in late 1990s and 2000s onwards
- Influenced by global market (increasing demands for some commercial commodities): rice, cassava, maize, sugarcane, rubber, oil palm, acacia (pulpwood)
- **Scale:** beyond local (national and transnational) in terms of issues, actors and scale
- **Actors:**
  - More complex than just between companies and the state vs. local communities and NGOs
  - It also involves international investors, financial institutions, transnational advocacy networks, certification bodies, media
- **Direct causes:** exclusion of prior land uses, lack of FPIC, overlapping claims, unclear tenure

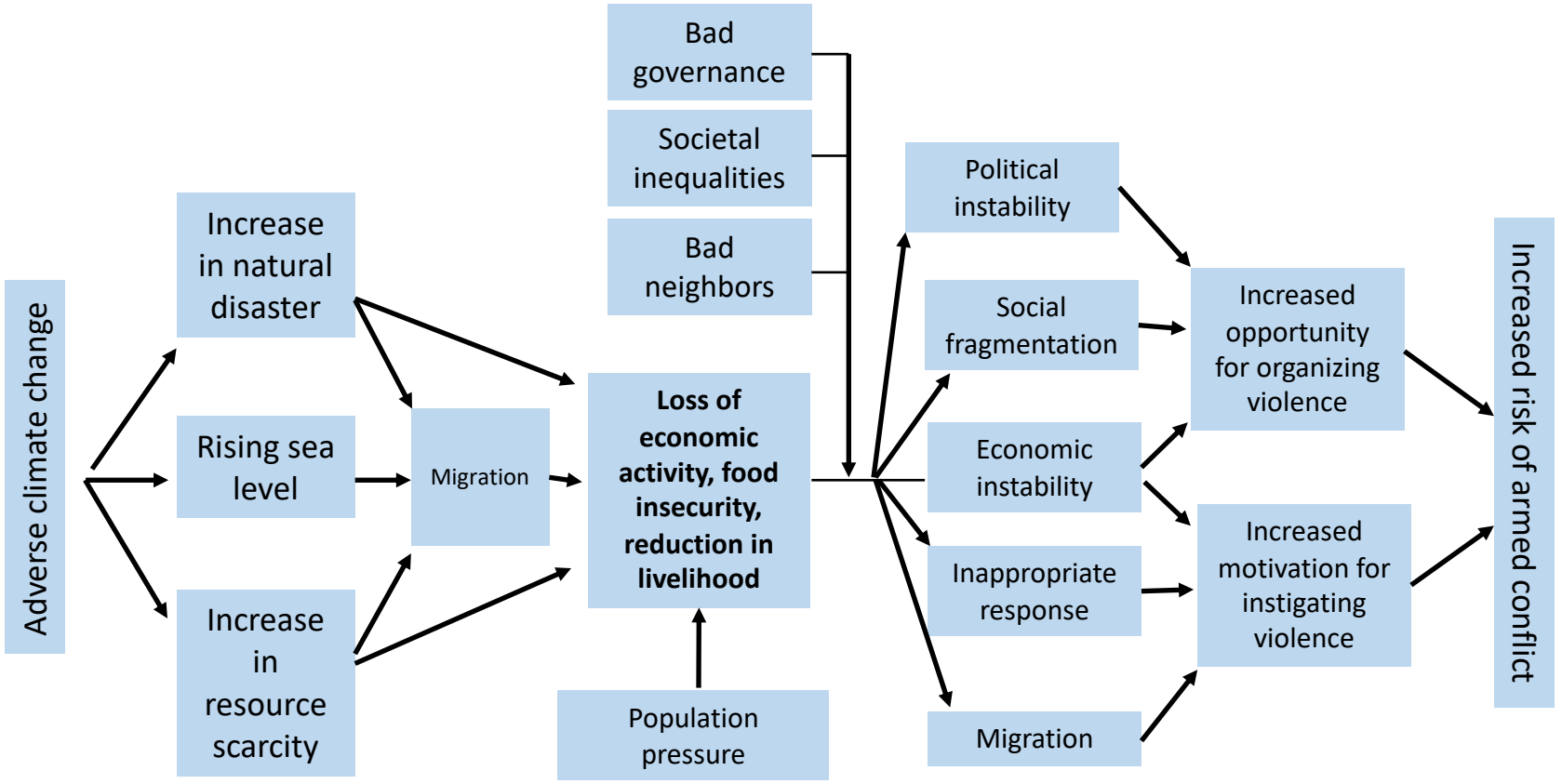
Conflict over climate change mitigation and sustainable development initiatives

- 2000s onwards
- REDD+, FLEGT, food security initiatives, promotion of bioenergy
- Potentials for both reducing and increasing the number of conflicts
- **Conflict in REDD+**: regarding *who* 'owns' the rights over forest and carbon; *how* and *how much* benefits should be distributed;
- **Social safeguards and FPIC:** tend to 'rendering technical' to meet requirements rather than substantive local engagement (Milne et al. 2018)
- **Causes of conflict:**
  - Exclusion of and conflict with other land uses and claims; constraint to local livelihood strategies
  - Elite capture
  - Disruption of local institutions;
  - Weak land governance in general
- **Actors and scale:** local, national and transnational

Outlook for forest conflict in 2030 and beyond

- In ‘business as usual’ scenario, potentials of forest conflict remain high:
  - Increase of global commodity demands for food, fibre, fuel
  - Increase of initiatives for climate change mitigation and sustainable development including initiatives for conservation and landscape restoration projects
  - Governments’ ambitions and target to expand large-scale agricultural and forestry production
  - Population: expecting some five billion new middle class consumers by 2030 (IIED 2013)
  - Weak forest governance and unclear tenure
- Climate change as ‘threat-multiplier’ to conflict (next slide)

Climate change as 'threat-multiplier' to resource conflict



Buhaug et al. (2006)

Thank you.
Any feedback?

1. Your overall assessment: what can be improved?
2. Inaccuracy of data/information or errors? → your concrete suggestion how to address it
3. Data or information that need to be added (gaps) → and your concrete suggestion where to get these data and information
4. How to make it more interesting and appealing while maintaining the brevity

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