Targeting Natural Resource Corruption

Welcome! We will begin shortly.

This is a Zoom webinar. All participant videos are off and lines are muted, but please feel free to introduce yourself in the chat.

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TNRC Learning Series

Definitions matter: What do we mean when we talk about corruption in conservation, and what difference does it make?

Festus Boamah
University of Bayreuth

Camila Gianella
CMI

Aled Williams
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Elizabeth Hart
Targeting Natural Resource Corruption, WWF
(Moderator)

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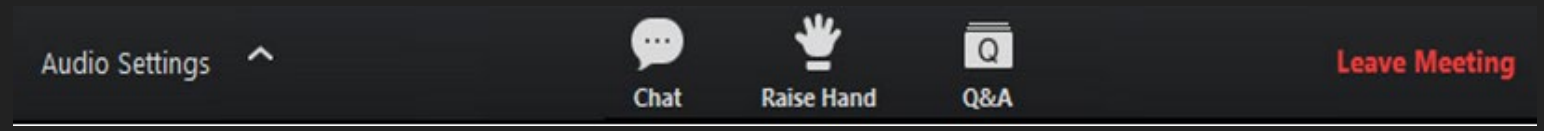
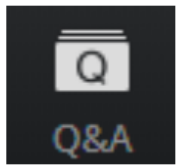
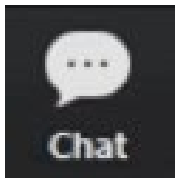
Get engaged





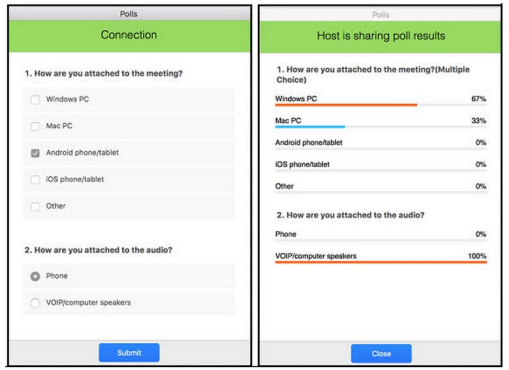
1. Pose questions at any time by clicking on the “Q&A” icon

1 *“Like” questions to “upvote” them for the moderator and/or answer from your experience*



2. Exchange thoughts with other participants via chat

Introduce yourself and share your own insights and ideas in the chat window



3. Respond to polls as they are launched

Make your selections and remember to click “submit”!

POLL

Where are you based?

a. Africa
b. Asia
c. Latin America and the Caribbean
d. North America
e. Europe
f. Other

What we´ll cover

- How has corruption been defined in relation to renewable natural resources?
- How have understandings, definitions and indicators of corruption relevant to natural resources changed or evolved over time and space?
- What are the main implications of the various definitions of corruption in terms of prioritization of policies and approaches for tackling natural resource corruption?
- What lessons should natural resource management practitioners take away from discussions on corruption definitions and how might they apply these in their work?
- Insights from natural resource sector cases (Ghana & Peru)

What are we talking about when we talk about corruption?

Practitioner Definitions

TI and WB definitions similar, focus on agency of individuals
TI: Abuse of entrusted power for private gain (Note: focus on both public and private power)
WB: Abuse of public office for private gain (Note: focus on public office)

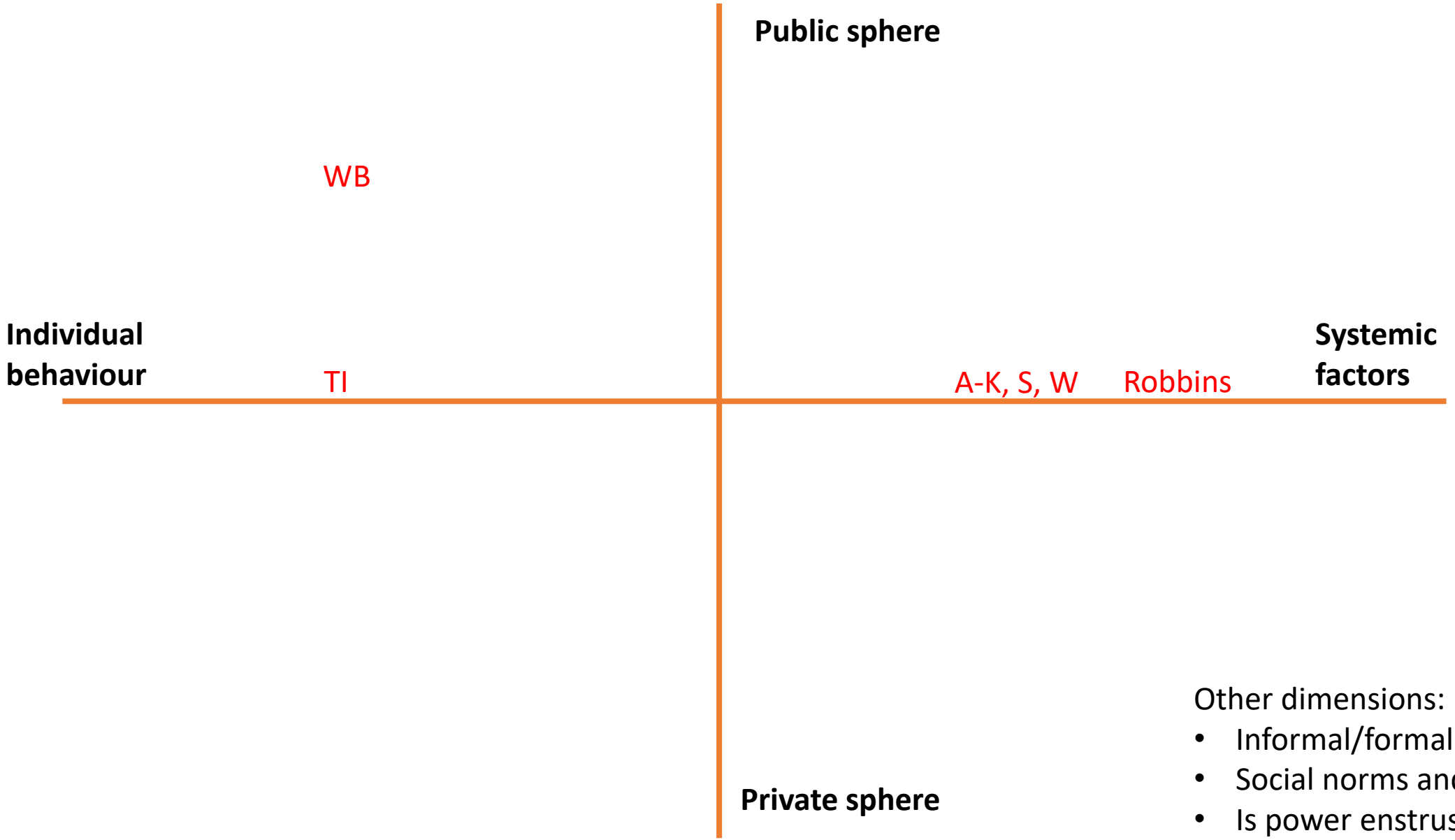
Academic Definitions

Academic definitions more diverse, greater focus on systemic factors
Robbins: A system of normalized rules, transformed from legal authority, patterned around existing inequalities, and cemented through cooperation and trust (Context: Forestry)
Al-Kasim, Søreide and Williams: Manipulation of framework conditions to benefit narrow interests over broad societal interests (Context: Extractive Industries)

POLL

From your perspective, which definition is most helpful for understanding and responding to the impact of corruption in your work?

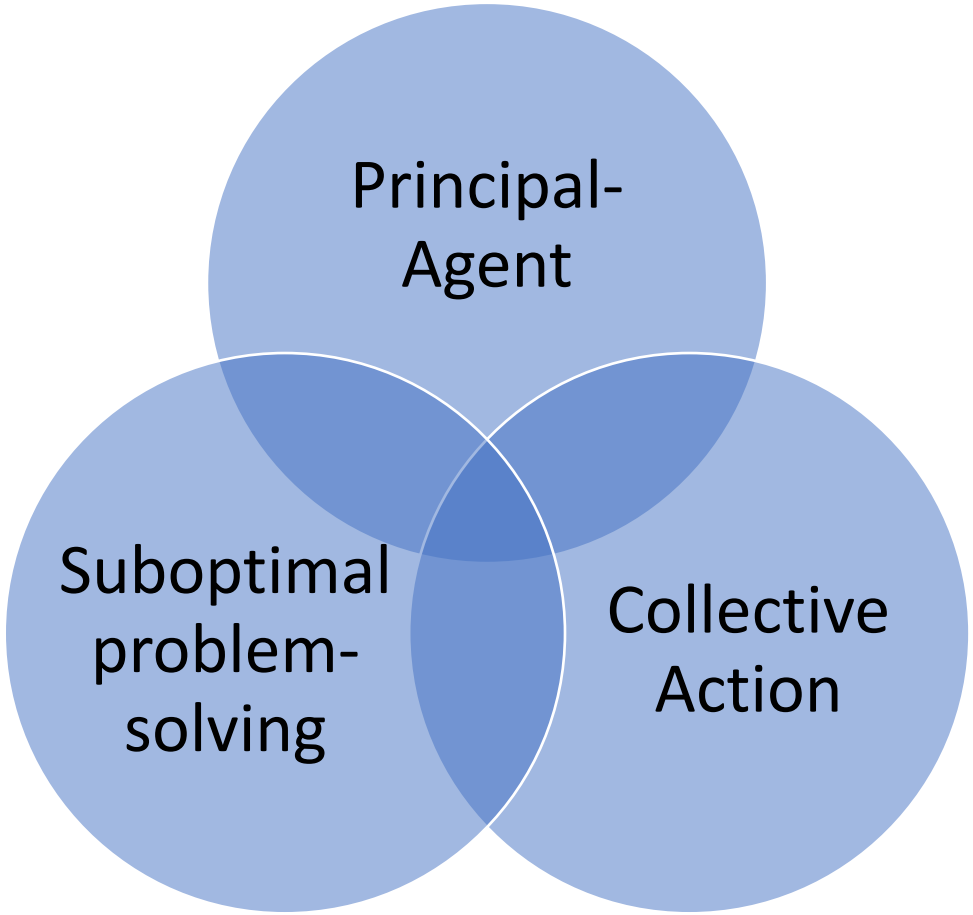
a. Transparency International: “Abuse of entrusted power for private gain”
b. World Bank: “Abuse of public office for private gain”
c. Robbins: "A system of normalized rules, transformed from legal authority, patterned around existing inequalities, and cemented through cooperation and trust"
d. Al-Kasim et al: “Manipulation of framework conditions to benefit narrow interests over broad societal interests”



Other dimensions:

- Informal/formal institutions
- Social norms and customs
- Is power enstrusted or taken?

Three main theoretical perspectives in recent corruption research



Implications #1

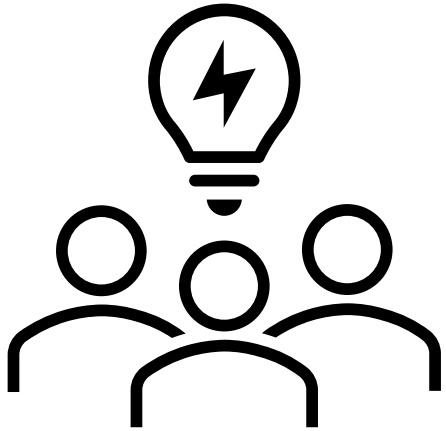
Corruption=individual deviance=principal-agent responses work (i.e. law enforcement, bureaucratic sanctions etc.)

Corruption=system failure=collective action responses needed (i.e. negotiate new political settlement etc.)

Implications #2

Quality of analysis matters for developing appropriate responses

Our assumptions about corruption, a context, a problem, our own position, can skew understanding and make the road to good responses longer



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Why corruption definitions matter: "land grabbers'' in Ghana

- Biofuel land grabbing euphoria in mid-2000s
- Institutionalised corruption and institutional pluralism – outcome of colonial legacy
- Endless struggles for authority over land
- Re-invention of custom and manipulation of laws to legitimise land deals

“Mischaracterisation“ of the corruption problem

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Geoforum

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/geoforum

Imageries of the contested concepts “land grabbing” and “land transactions”: Implications for biofuels investments in Ghana

Festus Boamah

Department of Geography, University of Bergen. Post Box 7802, N-5020 Bergen, Norway.

ARTICLE INFO

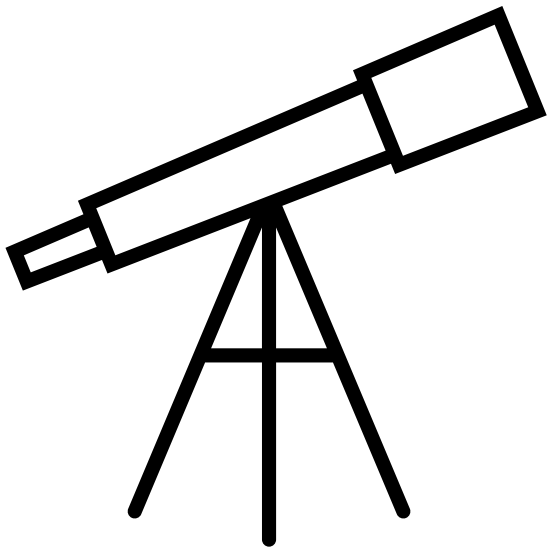
ABSTRACT

In Ghana, the contested concepts of “land grabbing” and “land transaction” are strategically applied by

“Mischaracterisation“ of the corruption problem cont´d

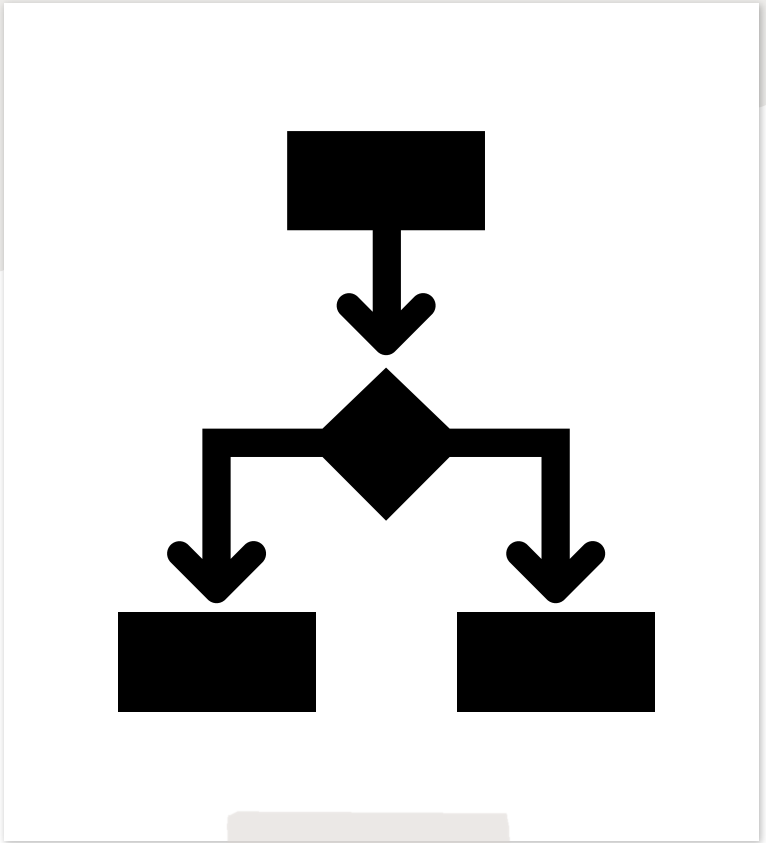
- Customary land tenure regime & ambivalence towards large-scale agricultural investments
- Land reform initiatives re-produce existing complexities
- Bureaucratic procedures in land registration reinforce the role of chiefs as ‘kingpins‘ of large-scale land deals.
- Lack of clarity on the role of chiefs – Landowners or custodians of Land?
- Lack of clarity on which institution must decide – Chieftaincy institution or state institutions?
- Fluid land boundary demarcations – must decide per formal law or custom?

Which corruption perspective applies?



- Corruption as problem-solving? e.g. biofuel investors and labour migrants cut corners to circumvent constraints or maximise gains as the ***most promising remediation*** strategy?
- Corruption as Collective Action Problem? e.g. – clandestine manoeuvres as ***norms*** set and justified by ***precedents***?
- Corruption as Principal-Agent Problem? e.g. – near invincible, rapacious chiefs, or ‘‘lame-duck‘‘ state elites, or selfish politicians pursuing personal gains against collective interests of unsuspecting or unprincipled population?

Outcomes of large-scale land deals

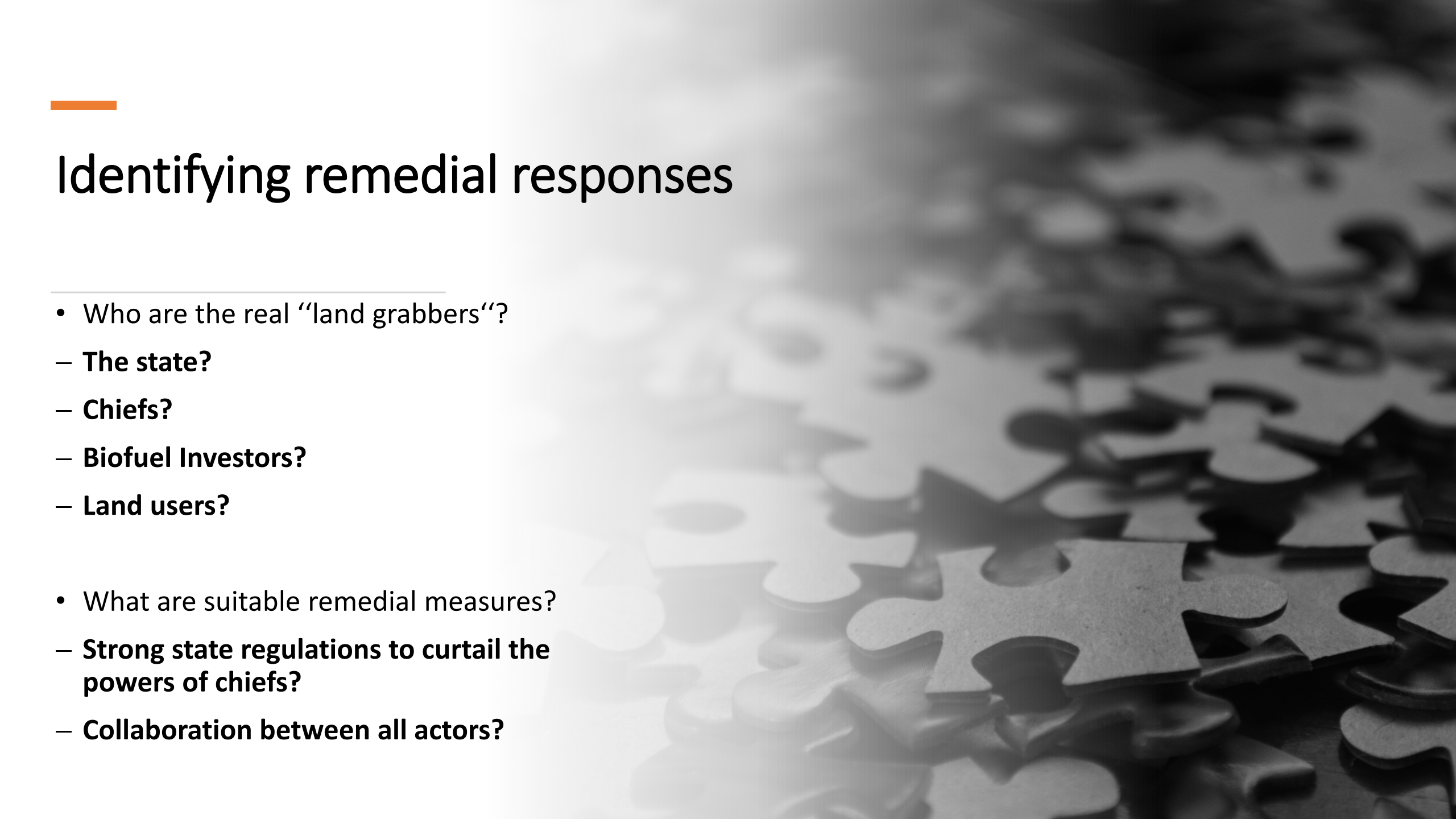


- ‘‘Legal‘‘ Land Deals but massive land dispossession – social justice problems!!!
- Legality or morality?

Identifying remedial responses

- Who are the real ‘‘land grabbers‘‘?
  - **The state?**
  - **Chiefs?**
  - **Biofuel Investors?**
  - **Land users?**

- What are suitable remedial measures?
  - **Strong state regulations to curtail the powers of chiefs?**
  - **Collaboration between all actors?**



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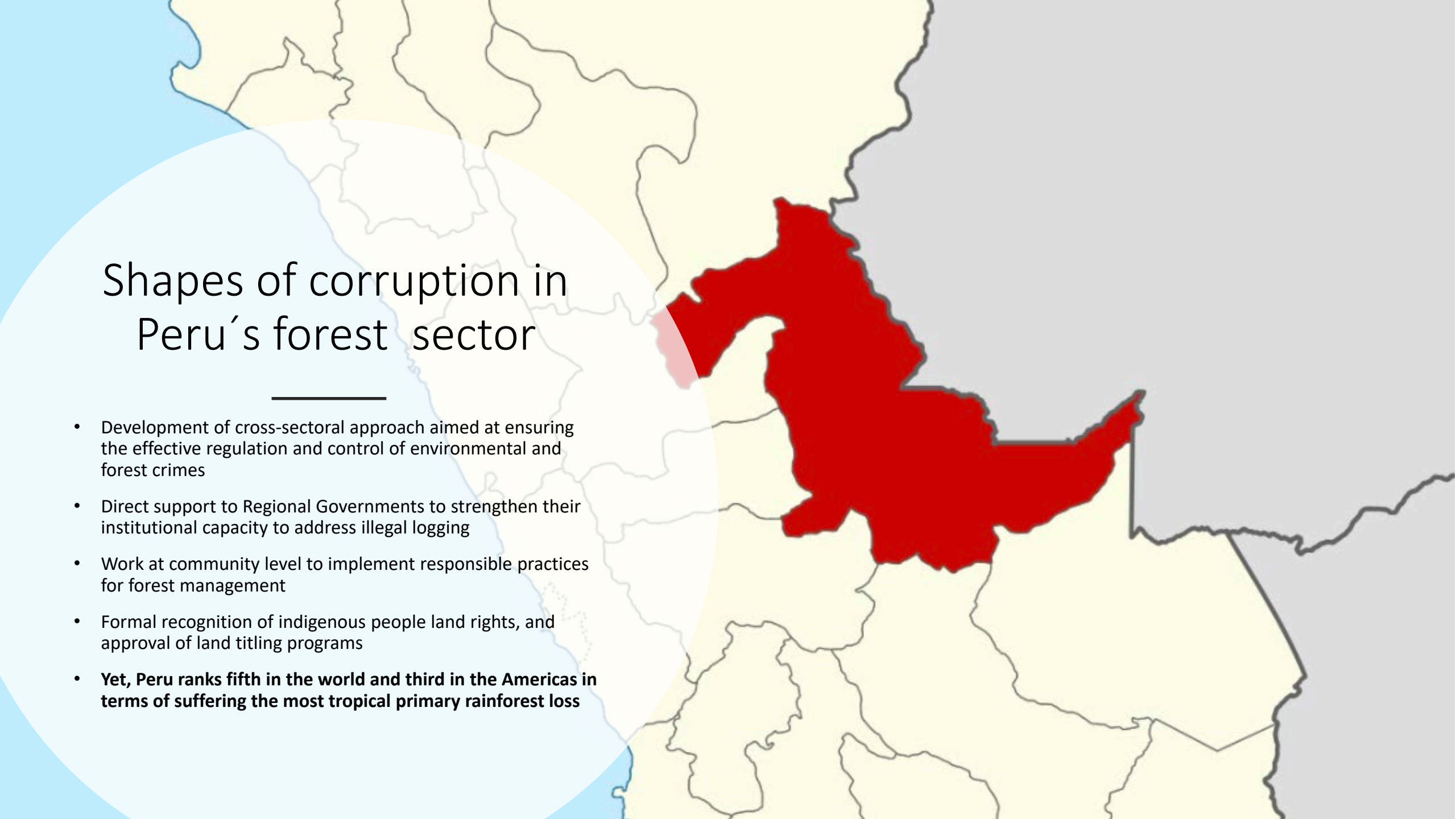
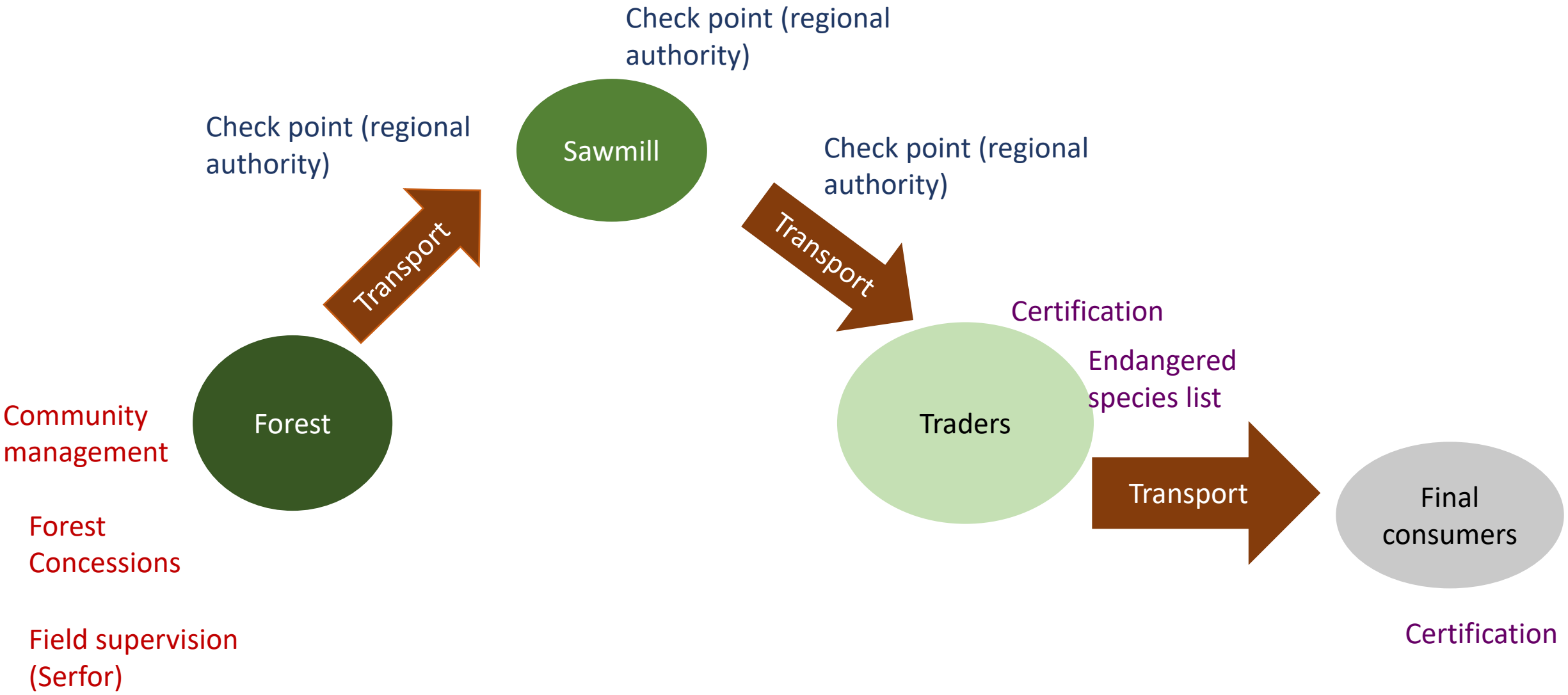
Shapes of corruption in Peru´s forest sector

- Development of cross-sectoral approach aimed at ensuring the effective regulation and control of environmental and forest crimes
- Direct support to Regional Governments to strengthen their institutional capacity to address illegal logging
- Work at community level to implement responsible practices for forest management
- Formal recognition of indigenous people land rights, and approval of land titling programs
- **Yet, Peru ranks fifth in the world and third in the Americas in terms of suffering the most tropical primary rainforest loss**




Check point (regional authority)
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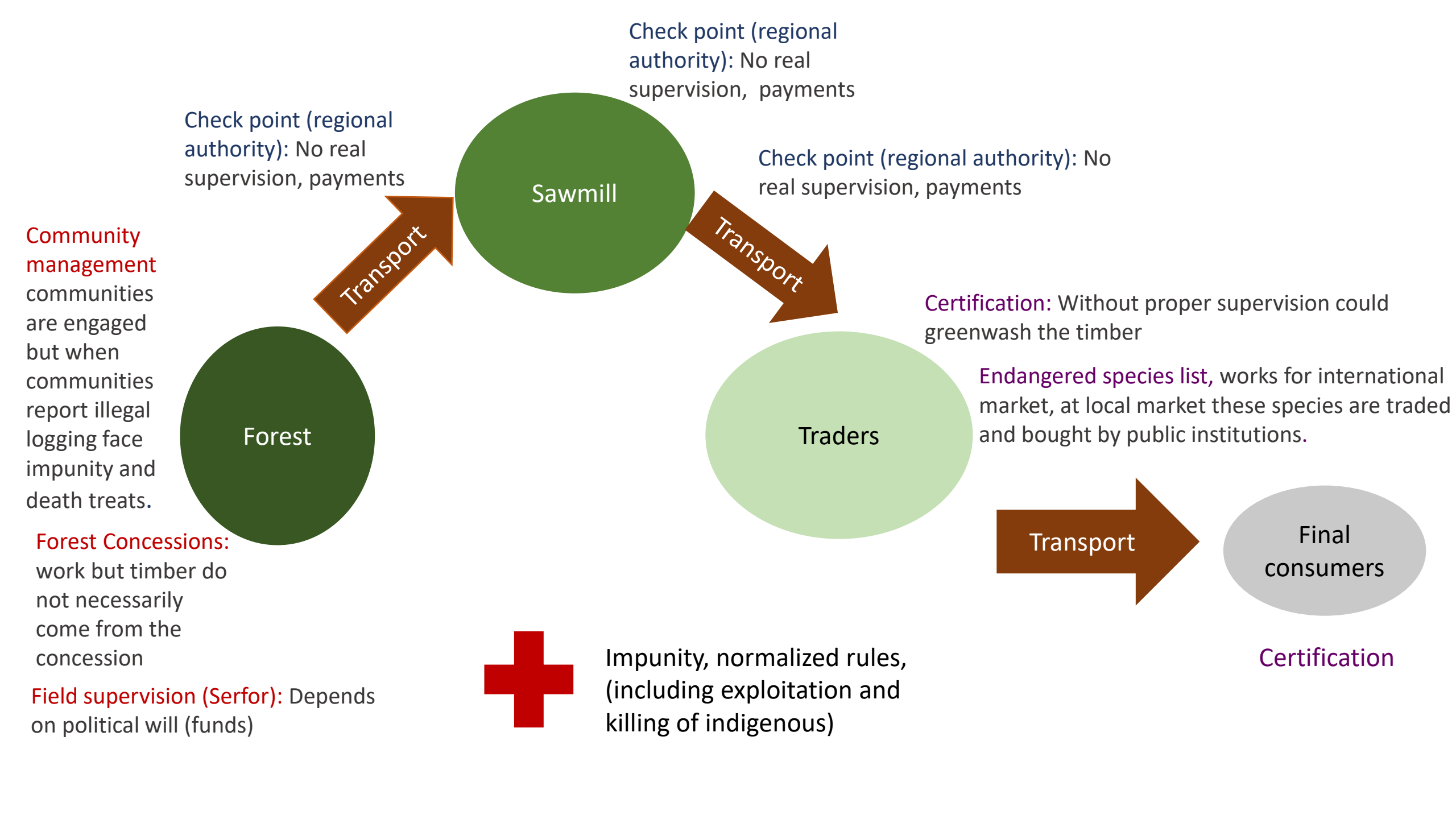
Sawmill
Check point (regional authority)
Transport
Transport
Certification
Endangered species list
Community management
Forest
Traders
Transport
Final consumers
Forest Concessions
Field supervision (Serfor)
Certification


Check point (regional authority): No real supervision, payments
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Sawmill
Transport
Transport
Community management communities are engaged but when communities report illegal logging face impunity and death treats.
Forest
Forest Concessions: work but timber do not necessarily come from the concession
Field supervision (Serfor): Depends on political will (funds)
Certification: Without proper supervision could greenwash the timber
Endangered species list, works for international market, at local market these species are traded and bought by public institutions.
Traders
Transport
Final consumers
Impunity, normalized rules, (including exploitation and killing of indigenous)
Certification

Identifying remedial responses

- Comprehensive approach: Amazon as a territory, with different actors in dispute
- Accountability beyond criminal liability as a way to challenge “normalized rules”: Each time illegal timber is detected, independent commission must investigate to discover what went wrong and implement measures
- Support indigenous groups reports on illegal logging. Introduce clauses in the contracts/agreements with national, regional and local authorities
- Consider the issue of land titling at the core

Some main takeaways

- Corruption can be defined differently;
- How it is defined, and who does the defining, matter for diagnosis and remedy;
- Definitions should be appropriate for sectoral and geographic contexts;
- Corruption analysis tends to be improved when positionalities are explicit, methods are appropriate to research questions, and peer review is double-blind;
- There are muliple opportunities in project cycles to integrate improved corruption analysis.

Sources

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POLL

After attending this webinar, would you say that you have:

- ☐ How corruption has been defined in relation to renewable natural resource sectors
- ☐ How those definitions of corruption have changed or evolved
- ☐ The main implications of various definitions in terms of policies and approaches for tackling natural resource corruption
- ☐ How these lessons can be applied in your work
- ☐ I still don't understand these concepts / I was already familiar with this information

Targeting Natural Resource Corruption

Harnessing knowledge, generating evidence, and supporting innovative policy and practice for more effective anti-corruption programming

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