TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT DRESDEN

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Institutional Structure and Performance
A Comparative Analysis of Community Forest Management
Case of Vietnam

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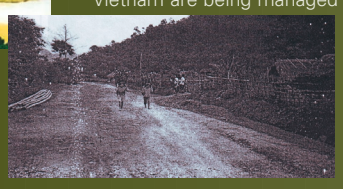
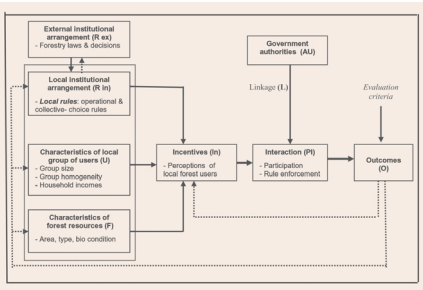


Introduction

The total area of forestland of Vietnam is around 19 million ha, accounting for nearly two third of the total country's land. The resource not only plays an important role in protection of the country's ecological environment but also is the essential asset for livelihoods of the majority of mountainous ethnic minorities - the poorest of the poor in Vietnam. At present, totally there is approximately 2.3 million ha of forestland that is being managed by local communities. Most of the communal forestlands in Vietnam are being managed under two different institutional structures. The first is village forest management (VFM), in which all households of a village belong to a forest management group. The second is forest user group (FUG), formed by a small number of households - a subset of a village. Although community forest management (CFM) is being considered as a promising forest management system in Vietnam, so far there has been lack of study on the relationship between the institutional structure and the performance of CFM models. This study, therefore, tries to fill this gap by conducting comparative institutional analysis of 11 CFM models in the two institutional structures to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics on institutional arrangements of the CFM models in the different institutional structures?
2. How have the CFM models in the different structures performed?
3. What are the influences of institutional factors on the performance of the models?



Conceptual framework

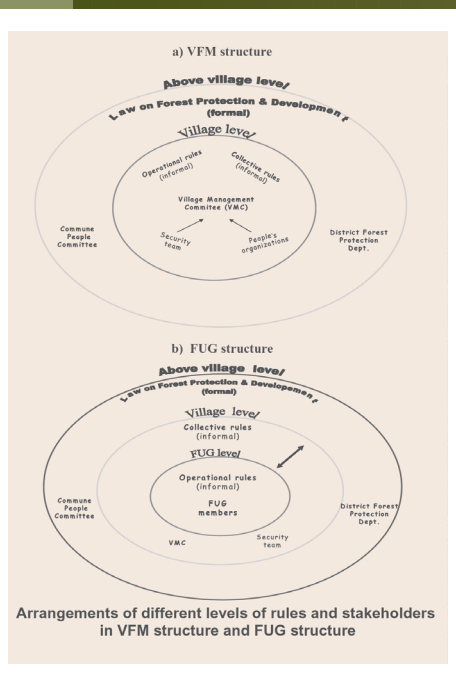
Research methodology

- The conceptual framework of this study is based on the institutional approach to natural resource management and is adapted from the frameworks for common-pool resource analysis of Oakerson (1986) and Thompson (1992).
- Three different data collection methods are applied: Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), household and informal interview, and forest inventory.
- Multi-criteria Analysis (MCA) is employed to evaluate the performances of the CFM models in four aspects: i) resource entirety, ii) economic efficiency, iii) equitability, and iv) sustainability.

Hoa Binh province & locations of study villages

Study area

- This study was conducted at Hoa Binh, a mountai nous province in the Northwestern region of Vietnam.
- Five villages were selected as study sites. In which, 11 CFM models (3 VFM models and 8 FUG models) were chosen as case studies.
- All the communal forests of the CFM models are natural forests and have been managed by local people for long time (at least 6 years)



Arrangements of different levels of rules and stakeholders in VFM structure and FUG structure

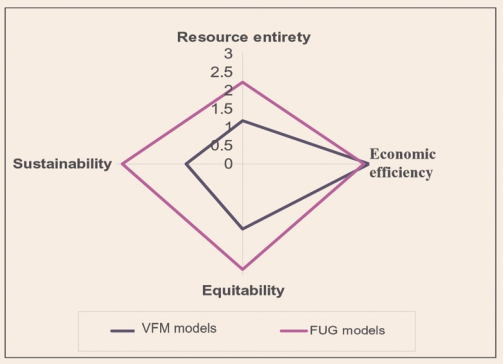
Results

a) Characteristics of the CFM models

- In the VFM models, local communities are both de facto owners and users of the forests. All activities related to the communal forest management are managed by the local village management committees (VMCs) with the assistances of village security teams or hired forest guards. The rule making and enforcement of the VFM models is taken at village level, and the VFM models operated almost independently without or with little support from government authorities
- In FUG structure communal forests are still common property of a village, but FUGs are the users of the resources. All the FUG models in the study villages originated from previous VFM models. Local VMCs informally allocated patches of communal forestlands to FUGs for management through forest management contracts. The FUGs have to pay the contract fees to the VMCs, and the VMCs have responsibility to help the FUGs in rule enforcement and conflict resolution. In this structure, the FUGs are nested under the local communities, but they are still relatively independent from the VMCs. In the FUG models all communal forest management activities of the FUG models were directly carried out by member households.

b) Performance of the CFM models and its determinants

- The performances of the FUG models were significantly better than the performances of the VFM in three aspects: resource entirety, equitability and sustainability, but there was no significant difference between the FUG models and the CFM ones in terms of economic efficiency.
- The statistical tests show that group size has significantly negative relationship with level of rule enforcement and performance indexes of resource entirety, sustainability, and the overall indexes.
- The influence of the group homogeneity indexes (E index and W index) on the performance of the models is not clear.
- The linkage between local group and local authorities in the resource management has a positive effect on the success of the CBFM models. The involvement of local authsorities is an important factor that backs the local group in sanction efforts and conflict resolution. It is also necessary to prevent local communities from abusing their rights in use of the forests (problem of overuse of the forests).



1= weak performance; 2= moderate performance; 3 = strong performance

Average performance indexes

Factors influencing rule enforcement level & performance indexes

Factors	Dependent variables					
	Rule enforcement level	Resource entirety index	Economic efficiency index	Equitability index	Sustainability index	Overall index
Group size *(number of hhs)*	**-.621****	**-.661****	.202	-.472	**-.580***	**-.565***
Group ethnic homogeneity *(E index)*	.312	**.617****	-.191	**.579***	**.588***	.519
Group wealth homogeneity *(W index)*	.331	**.563***	-.151	.335	.472	.406
Distance from village center group to the forest *(km)*	-.513	-.387	-.301	-.115	-.365	-.322
Number of management activities taken by the group	**.617****	**.746*****	.000	**.592***	**.656****	**.668****
Average man-days spent per HH per ha	**.610****	**.673****	-.500	**.791*****	**.747*****	**.661****
Linkage between local group & goverment authorities	**.816*****	**.960*****	.162	**.903*****	**.977*****	**.935*****

, **, and * denote that correlation is significant at the 0.1 level, the 0.05 level, and the 0.01 level, respectively*

Conclusions & Recommendations

- The FUG is one of the two key institutional structures for managing communal forests in Vietnam. It follows an adaptive approach of forest management, reflecting the institutional evolution in communal forest management systems. In the context of this study, the FUG models performed more successfully than the VFM models. Group size and linkage between local groups and local authorities are two key determinants affecting the performance of the CFM models.
- It is suggested that FUGs should be recognized as legal entities (like local communities) in policy frameworks for communal forestland management, and FUG structure should be considered as a promising alternative in community forest management projects. In case, there are some small scattering patches of communal forests within boundary of a village, these forest patches should be allocated to FUGs through forest management contracts between FUGs and VMCs

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