



STAKEHOLDERS, INTERESTS AND POWER AS DRIVERS OF COMMUNITY FORESTRY

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The key principle of community forestry is to involve local forest users into the common decision-making procedures and implementation of forestry activities. Their participation is considered to produce increasing economic, social and ecological benefits for the local community. In political terms community forestry is a governance program based on decentralization. The review done by Wollenberg et al (2008:39) indicates the outcomes of two distinct types of decentralization of forest resources, i.e. co-management and local governance model, which are partly in line with the official program of community forestry.

International Comparative Research

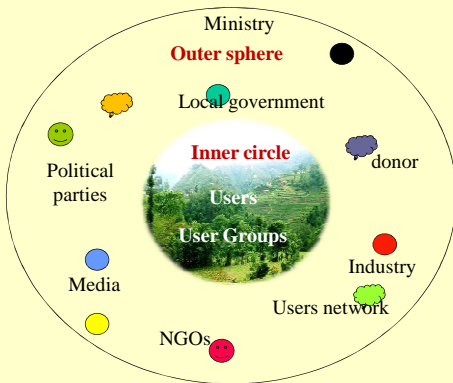
The common reality across the globe is that the governance process of community forestry has not yet produced the expected outcomes. Therefore we question the underlying causes of the failures of community forestry and more importantly how better power strategies can be designed in order to make community forestry work. The research group hypothesizes that "governance processes and outcomes in community forestry depend mostly on interests of the powerful external stakeholders".

Research Group

"Community Forestry Working Group" within the Chair of Forest and Nature Conservation Policy, at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (Germany) carries out the research on "Stakeholders, Interests and Power as Drivers of Community Forestry". The comparative research project is conducted in eight countries, both developed and developing in four different continents namely: Albania, Cameroon, Germany, Indonesia, Namibia, Nepal, Peru and Thailand. The research in the respective countries is executed mostly by native researchers.

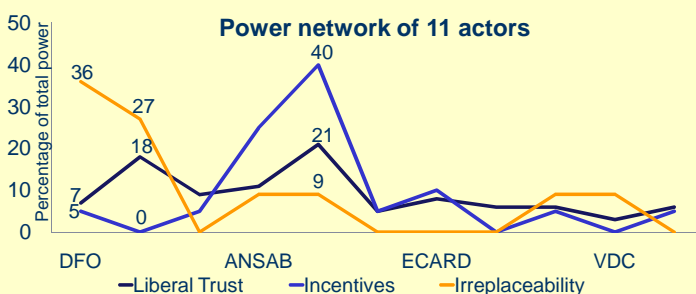
Power analyses

We adopt Weber's definition of power where actor A imposes his/ her will on actor B. We assume that the three power factors: trust, incentives, and irreplaceability (Hasanagas 2004) are the key factors to explain how the actors drive the activities of community forestry and its outcomes.



Power = f (Liberal Trust, Coercive Trust, Incentives, Irreplaceability)

To identify the most powerful stakeholders within each community forestry case we conduct a quantitative and a qualitative power analysis. The quantitative network analysis uses the knowledge of the stakeholders to identify the partners of the network. The sum of all estimations is a robust indicator of the power of each stakeholder. The most powerful stakeholders are selected for further qualitative power analysis.



Example: Bhitripakha Community in Boch Village Development Committee (VDC), Dolakha District, Nepal

Power based explanations and design of power based governance strategies

We use the empirical data to explain the outcomes of Community Forestry as function of the interests of the most powerful stakeholders. We expect that the most powerful stakeholders will not be situated in the inner circle of the community forestry network, but in the periphery. Another conclusion could be that strategies for improving community forestry are most effective if they influence the setting of external stakeholders and their network. The specified results of the project will provide a basis to further development of governance models of community forestry, which will work due to their basis within power strategies.

References

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