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“Development on the margin”

Stakeholders, Interests and Power as Drivers of Community Forestry: Case Studies from Ecuador and Peru

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Abstract

This analysis comprises two community forestry (CF) cases: the first one corresponding to a Shuar Centro in Ecuador, and the second to an Asháninka community in Peru. The analysis focuses on the stake holders, their interests in CF and their power. Additionally the outcomes of CF are examined. The applied network analysis makes power networks pertaining to community forestry visible. A three dimensional power model developed by Hasanagas (2004) was used. This model operationalizes power as coercive trust, liberal trust and incentives. In addition irreplaceability gives to a stake holder high power due to a specific situation. Finally, for assessing the outcomes of CF, the study evaluated indicators of sustainability classified in economic, ecological and social dimensions.

By evaluating the CF networks of both case studies, similarities in terms of network size and composition were found. Communal, governmental and aid actors occupy central positions in both networks. In the case study of Ecuador, the power is predominantly focused on communal actors while in the case study of Peru governmental actors hold the greatest power. In both case studies, communal actors, who have the right to use the forest resource, as well as the government actors, responsible for issuing permits for the harvesting and marketing of forest resources, are irreplaceable in their roles within the networks. The aid actors, which are seen as trustworthy institutions and as maximum providers of incentives, play a leading role in the implementation of CF.

Assessing the outcomes of CF by evaluating social, economic and environmental indicators, overall positive results in both case studies were found. In both cases, communal forest enterprises are important for generating social and economic benefits, as well as in for implementing sustainable forest management. In the case studies of Ecuador and Peru the legal framework that regulates the access to forests is also crucial in the level of benefits that different actors may obtain from CF.

Keywords: Community forestry, networks, power, stakeholders