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Analysis of Deforestation in Elain Area of North Kordofan State, Sudan: The Use of Buchanan Property Rights Approach

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Abstract

Deforestation as a global phenomenon has been extensively studied, from many aspects using different approaches and methods. The novelty of this study is viewing deforestation as a property rights problem using Buchanan's property rights approach (BPRA) as a lens through which North Kordofan (Elain areas) was investigated. The approach was selected not only because it provides important insight on how deforestation problem developed but also it suggests a clear path of solving the problem. The study applied individualistic method and followed a deductive methodology in which theoretical framework of BPRA (constitutional contract and post-constitutional contract) with underlying unanimity principle was clarified. Then, a conceptual framework to analyse deforestation in the study area based on the BPRA was developed. The analysis based on the approach reveals that the once emerged unconscious agreement on social right (social contract) from anarchy situation, between local people (sedentary farmer and pastoralist) in north Kordofan, has been eroded over time with continuous intervention of colonial and post-colonial state. Since then, no consensus or semi-consensus agreements on forest rights were recognised within local people or between local people and state. The discussion reveals how the enlargement of role of the post-colonial state coupled with other factors, resulted in many problems. The change in property rights rules serves the interest of legally enforced modern farmers and urban elites at expense local people interest, increases the efficient but short run agricultural investment at expense of the well adaptive and environmentally friendly traditional agro-forestry systems, created weakly enforced state forests at expense of locally protected communal forest. Overstepping its main task as a protective, impartial body to enforce constitutional contract, the state become the enforced referee as well as player. The legitimacy of unconstrained collectivity become at stake. The need to renegotiate constitutional contract, the rule of the game including the role of state, compromise between different interests to solve disagreement on forest rights, become necessary in order to solve the problem of deforestation.

Keywords: Anarchy, Buchanan, constitutional contract, deforestation, mutual agreement