

Decoding Fairness in the Value Chain of the Tagbanua Wild Honey Community Forestry Enterprise



Denise Margaret Matias¹, Justice A. Tambo¹, Till Stellmacher¹, Christian Borgemeister¹, and Henrik von Wehrden²



Indigenous wild honey hunting and gathering



Giant wild honey bees nest in the forest

Traditional gathering of honey from giant honey bees (*Apis dorsata* Fab.) transformed from a traditional practice into a commercial activity aimed at conserving forests while providing income to indigenous Tagbanuas. Previously gathering small amounts for personal consumption, the Tagbanuas are now gathering as many honeycombs as they can.

Power relations, benefit sharing, and equity

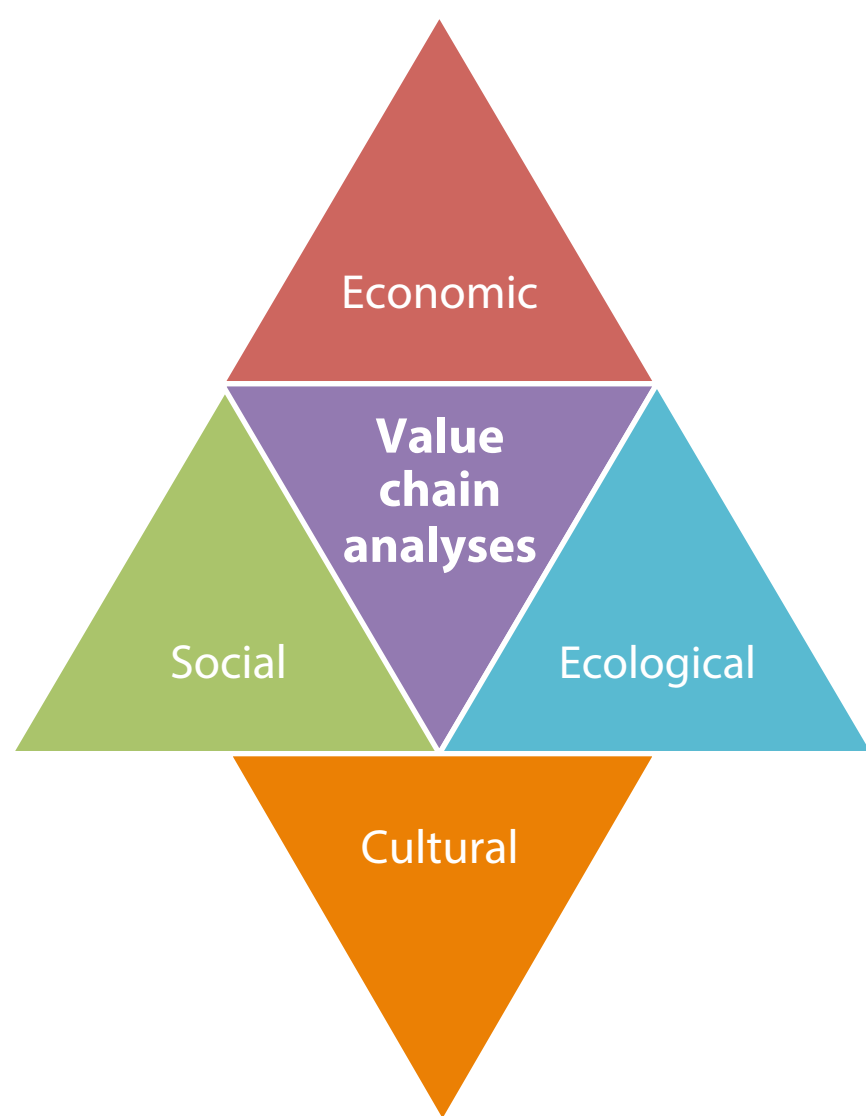
Most of the bargaining power rests in the downstream actors. The enterprise is a monopsony (i.e. only one buyer for many sellers as opposed to monopoly), where the buyer can dictate the price at which transactions take place. It seems that the enterprise falls short in fulfilling the following elements of equity:

- Access
- Decision-making
- Outcome



Examining the role of a community forestry enterprise in indigenous livelihood

“What are the risks and opportunities associated with a strategy that changes the way a community utilizes its commons?”



The wild honey enterprise exemplifies the alternative development strategy of commercializing non-timber forest products (NTFP). We conducted a value chain analysis integrating the pillars of sustainability, and adding “culture” to reflect impacts on the community’s indigeneity.

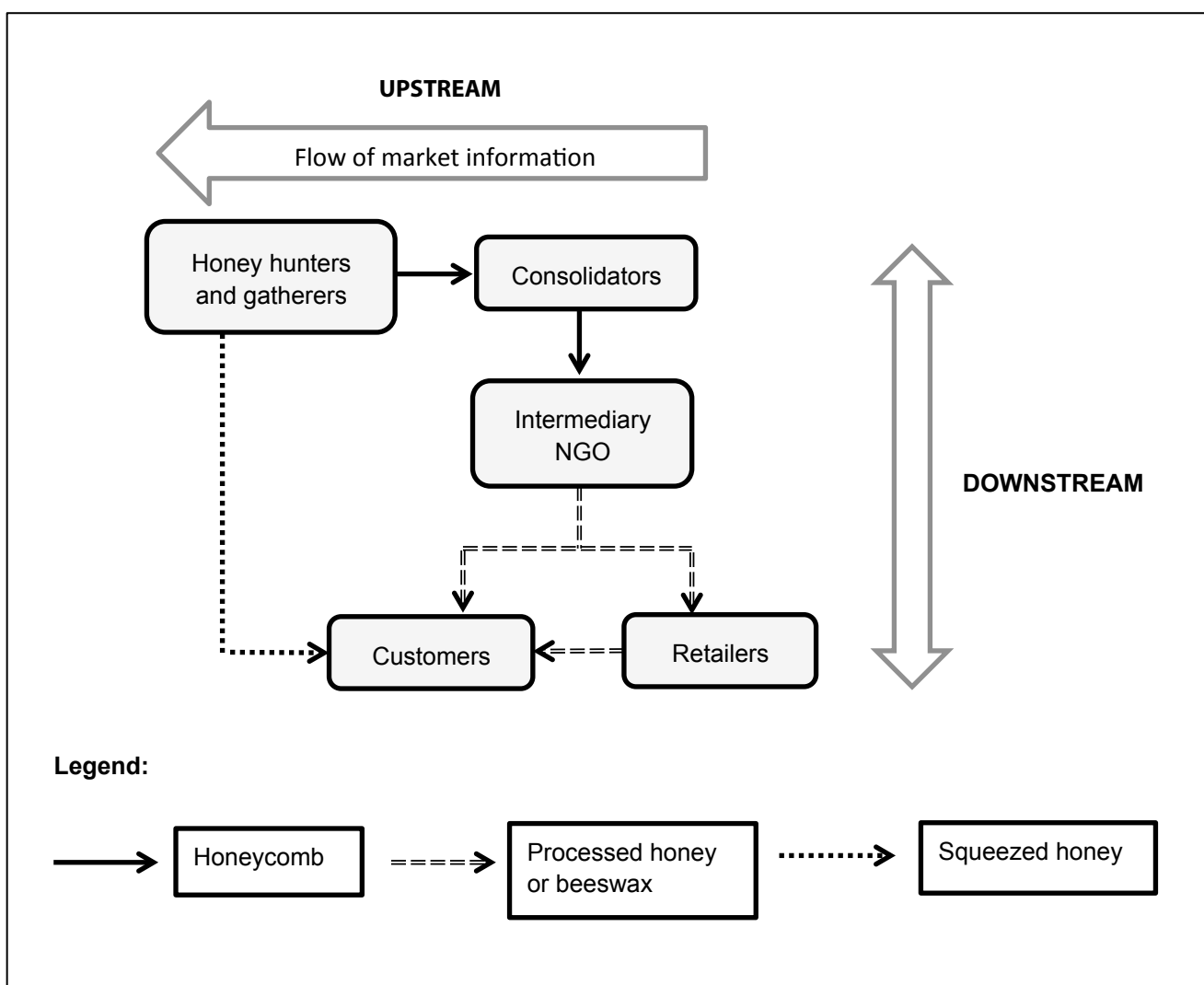
Forest conservation, livelihoods, and cultural preservation



Cash income from wild honey has affected traditional Tagbanua culture:

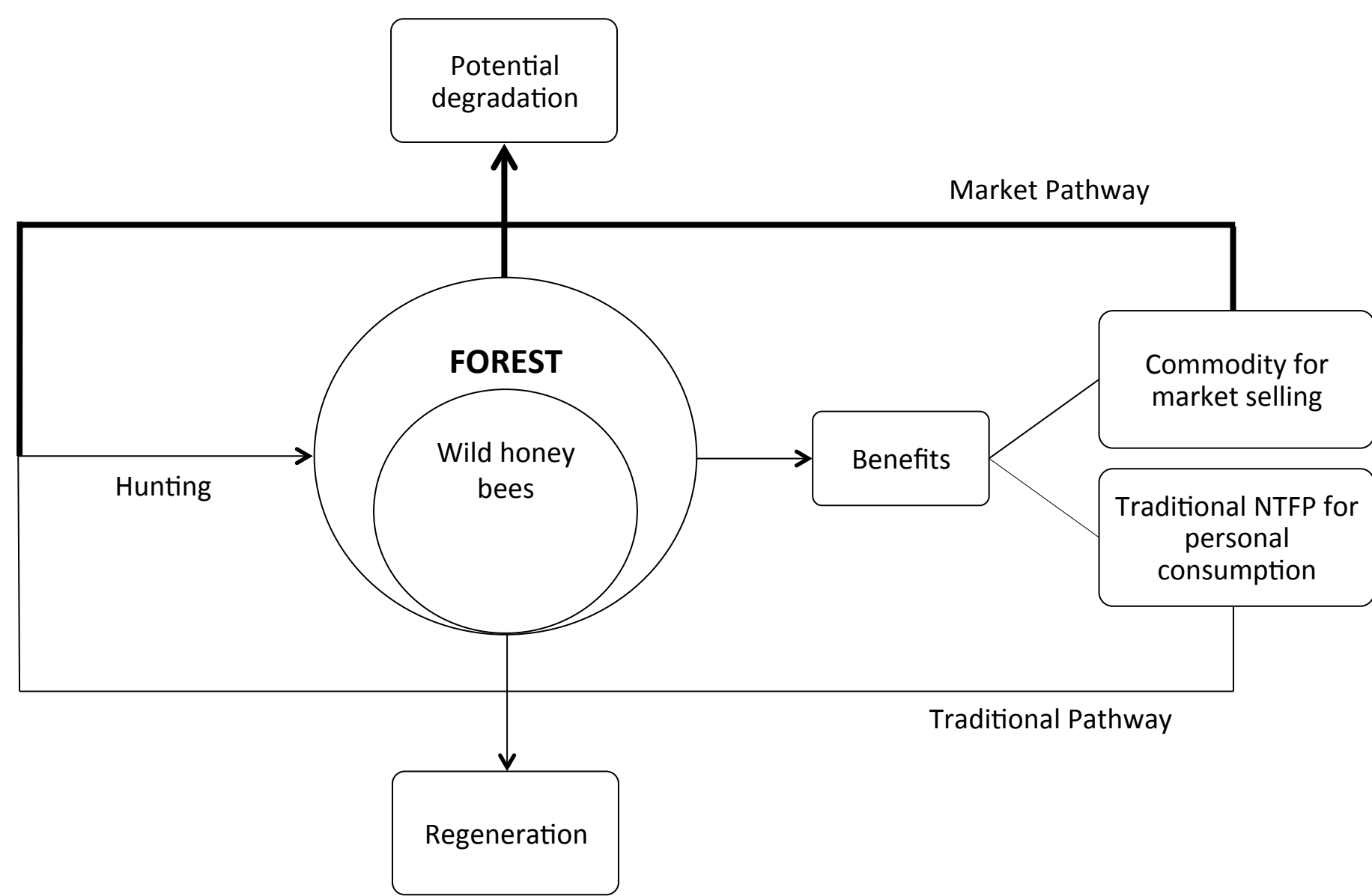
- Selling of culturally important beeswax
- No longer eating brood (baby bees) but rather leaving it to regenerate honeycombs for another harvest
- Increased harvesting of honeycombs

Tracing the value chain of the wild honey enterprise



The wild honey enterprise value chain is straightforward and simple. Honey hunters and gatherers sell to consolidators within the community who, in turn, deliver the honeycombs to an intermediary NGO, which processes the honey and beeswax. These are the end-products sold to individual customers and retailers.

A call for an alternative development pathway



The traditional pathway, under the context of minimal population pressure and non-market exploitation, can pave the way for a niche market which can ensure a premium price for wild honey. This could provide the same amount of income for fewer honeycombs, thereby avoid overharvesting.

Analyzing annual gross margins for the year 2015

	Honey hunter and gatherer	Honey consolidator	Intermediary NGO	Retailer
Gross margin per kilo of honey or honeycomb	Php 30.74 / € 0.59	Php 30.66 / € 0.59	Php 184.12 / € 3.54	Php 585.00 / € 11.25

Upstream actors, restricted to low value addition, capture the least amount of profits while the downstream actors involved in high value addition capture bulk of the profits.

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¹ Center for Development Research (ZEF), Walter-Flex-Str. 3 53113 Bonn, Germany
² Leuphana University, Scharnhorststr. 1, 21335 Lüneburg, Germany
denise.matias@uni-bonn.de