Mapping social cohesion in restoration landscape: Evidence from Western Rwanda

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Introduction

- Social cohesion has been identified as a leverage point in restoration.
- Landscapes in the Global South often involve a complex interplay of social, economic, and environmental factors. Stakeholder analysis helps identify and understand these diverse interests, leading to more informed and inclusive decision-making.
- Stakeholder analysis ensures that these voices are included in the planning and implementation of restoration projects, promoting equity and preventing conflicts.
- Rwanda committed to restoring 2 million hectares of degraded land, with a lot of restoration projects going on in the western province.
- A cohesive network increases the chances of successful and sustainable outcomes.

Objectives

This study contributes to the existing literature by:

- Identifying the key actors involved in forest landscape restoration in Western Rwanda.
- Evaluating the level of social cohesion among stakeholders in landscape restoration.

Methodology

- The study was conducted in Western Rwanda, specifically in the Rutsiro and Ngororero districts.
- It involved collecting data through thirty-five Netmap-based interviews and six focus group discussions from six villages in two districts.
- Net-Map is a participatory, innovative tool for social network analysis which combines elements of qualitative and quantitative

Results

- The key actors are government institutions (Districts, RFA, REMA, RAB), community-based organizations, and NGOs (ARCOS and Tubura).
- There is a difference in collaboration and communication networks between Rutsiro and Ngororero districts. Based on density, average degrees and average closeness, social cohesion is stronger in Rutsiro than in Ngororero, indicating a more effective network for collaboration in the Rutsiro District.
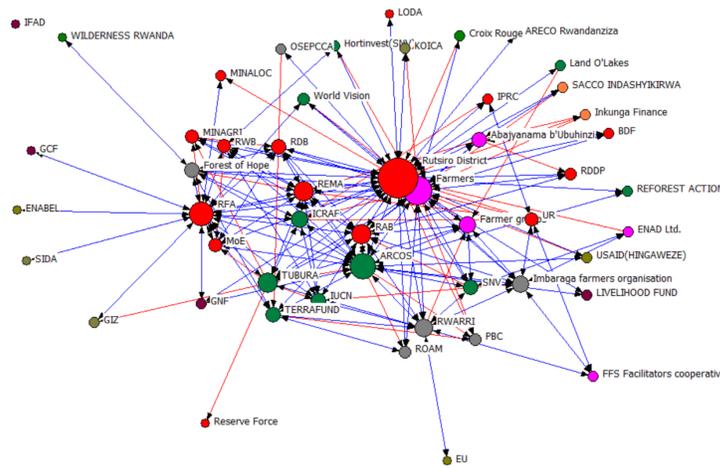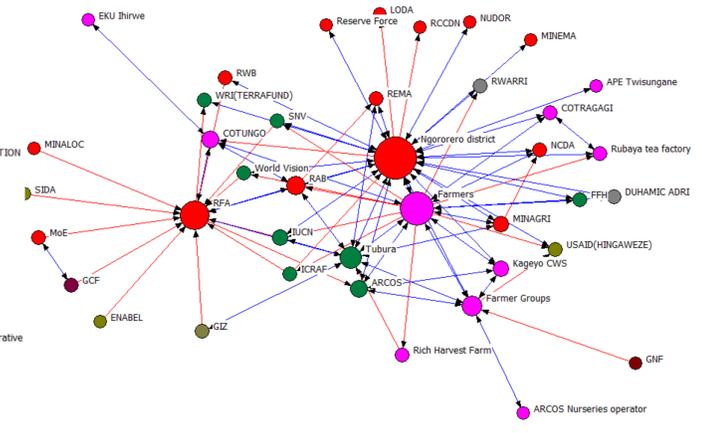

Figure 2. Rutsiro District communication network map

Figure 3. Ngororero District communication network map

Table 1. Collaboration and communication between Rutsiro and Ngorororero districts

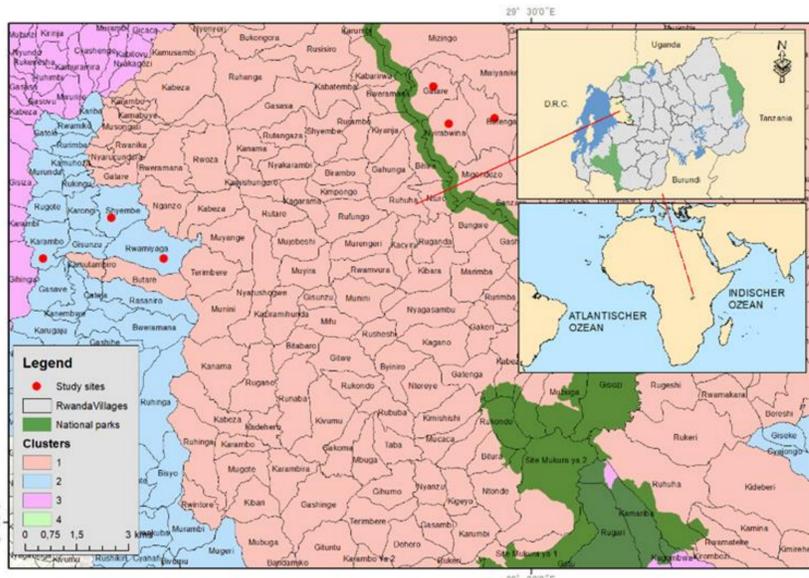|	Rutsiro		Ngororero
Collaboration			
# nodes	51		40
# ties	347		135
Avg Degree	6.80		3.375
Density	0.14		0.087
Avg Closeness	98.27		88.65
Communication			
# nodes	51		40
# ties	301		139
Avg Degree	5.90		3.475
Density	0.12		0.089
Avg Closeness	98.86		83.00

Figure 1. Map of Rwanda with Ngororero and Rutsiro case study villages

Outlook

- Rutsiro can serve as a model for enhancing social cohesion in landscape restoration.
- Further investigation for a deep understanding of the nature and breath of collaboration between actors and on the implication of social cohesion on restoration outcomes in Rutsiro vs Ngororero is suggested.
- Strengthening collaboration and communication could enhance social cohesion among actors.