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The Politics of Expertise in Participatory Forestry: A Case from Tanzania

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A Politics of Expertise

- Politics of natural resource management (Ribot *et al.*, 2006)
 - The construction of expertise & professionalisation (Nightingale, 2005)
- Co-production of science and society (Jasanoff, 2004)
 - Knowledge construction and exchange as messy and political
 - Power in the application of knowledge
- Access: ***“the ability to benefit from things”*** (Ribot & Peluso, 2003: 153).
 - Who and What as well as How and Why



Research Questions

1. How did CBFM frame forest management according to particular kinds of knowledges?
2. What benefits (access to forest products, forest revenues, etc.) did the CBFM intervention give rise to?
3. What was the role of expertise in shaping access to the benefits rendered by CBFM?

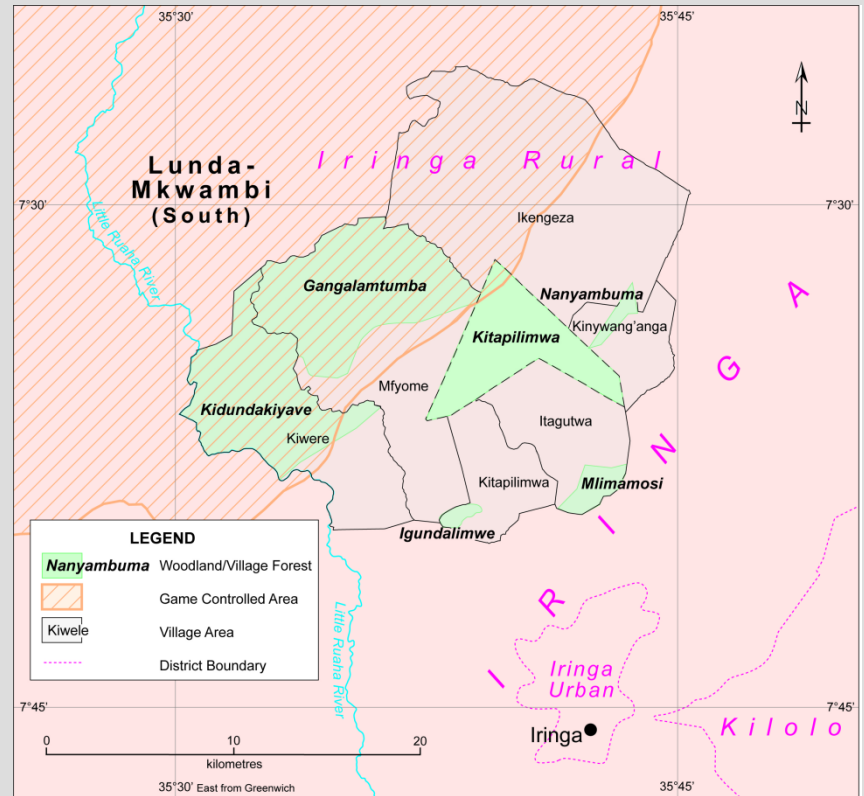
CBFM in Tanzania

- Triple Aims:
 - Improve forest quality
 - Improve local livelihoods
 - Improve forest governance
- Implemented in Village Land Forest Reserves and managed by Village Natural Resource Committees
- National Forest Policy 1998
- ~1,500 villages involved
- Leading example of PFM and devolved natural resource management



Source:
FAO

CBFM in Kiwele



Methods (2003-2011):

Qualitative interviews; Focus groups; Participant observation; Local resident reports; Participatory activities

How did CBFM frame forest management according to particular kinds of knowledge?

- Management Plan (baseline, targets, rules, procedures)

Management Responsibilities	Management Procedures
Meetings	Monthly
Report Writing	Monthly
Record Keeping	Meeting Minutes Standardised Triple Receipt System (user permits, fines paid, expenditures)
Forest Patrols	Weekly patrols Standardised reporting forms (disturbance, animals seen) Occasional inspections of the forest by the committee
Accounting	Revenue collection Revenue use in collaboration with the village council Standardised record keeping
Information Dissemination	Monthly report and finances shared with District Forest Officer Quarterly presentation at village public meetings
Interviews	5 monthly

- Privileging of Knowledge
 - Numeracy & Literacy
 - Identification of flora and fauna
 - Management system
- Changing paradigm of forest management
- Politics of participation
- Training

See also Topp-Jorgensen *et al.*, (2005)

What Benefits did the CBFM Intervention give Rise to?

Expenditure Category	Total 2003-9
1 District Share	1,092,678
2 Public Infrastructure and services	2,871,600
3 Tree planting and Nursery	1,294,100
4 Office Running Costs	473,800
5 Meetings and Seminars	2,112,178
6 Patrol Allowances	4,064,400
7 Travel Allowances	1,463,200
8 Leader Allowances	2,331,661
9 Other**	1,472,550
Total	17,176,167

- Rights of access
- TSh 4 million for community development
- Leaders' and Scouts' allowances
- Additional benefits (travel, escorting trucks etc.)

*1,000 Tanzanian shilling ~ 1 USD

** 'Other' includes beekeeping, fines, poles

What was the role of expertise in shaping access to the benefits rendered by CBFM?

- Legitimate authority
 - social construction of experts
- Committee Stagnation
 - Election processes

“The important people know about it, not the rest”

Interview with Kiwele resident, April 2010

“To return half of the members of the VNRC is not a request, it is not up for discussion, and is a must”

District Forest Officer speaking at VNRC elections, 2010

- Instrumental use of knowledge and expertise
 - Discursive construction of charcoal production as environmentally damaging
- Intra-community struggles and power dynamics

Tobacco vs Charcoal:

“The charcoal makers used to empty a whole area of forest”

Focus Group with tobacco farmers, April 2011

“We had already set aside a large area for the tobacco farmers, and if we issue permits for charcoal producers, this would mean the forest is over-used”

Interview with Village Chairman, April 2011



Summary

- Politics of expertise key to access
 - Framing of intensive forest management
 - Professionalisation
 - Shaping participation and benefits
 - Integrated into existing power dynamics and struggles
- Importance of the politics of knowledge and expertise
 - Management plans as a political instrument
 - Politics of knowledge in calls for capacity building

