



# **Governments are Decentralizing Responsibilities for Forest Management in Africa, but are Rural People able to take on their Rights?**

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## **Hypothesis**



- Tenure & secure rights to land are important, but not enough to improve livelihoods & sustainably manage forests
- Other conditions are needed:
  - Greater sharing of power (equity, gender);
  - Ability to organize, have rules, & sanction;
  - Ability to process & value add; and
  - Ability of rural people to competitively enter market.

# Waves of Change in Forest Tenure in Africa



- Early indigenous (forest dwellers) communal forest tenure disrupted & dislocated by migrations;
- State as master of land & forest (colonial & post colonial); and
- Post 1990's Forest reforms & decentralization.



***Create complexity of tenure & decentralization regimes – with overlaps (customary-statutory), & conflicts – over 35 countries in Africa with community forestry on “books”***

# Who Owns Africa's Forests?



Forest Type (Ha. Mill)	Central Africa	French W. Africa	Eastern Africa	Southern Africa	Totals
Public (Gov)	368.3 (99.8%)	42.0 (97.6%)	127.4 (96.8%)	<b>76.2 (36.0%)</b>	613.9 (81.3%)
Public (reserved community & indigenous)	0.6 (0.2%)	0.8 (1.8%)	1.6 (1.2%)	<b>121.3 (57.3%)</b>	124.3 (16.5%)
Private (community & indigenous)				<b>3.6 (1.7%)</b>	3.6 (0.5%)
Private (individual & company)		0.3 (0.6%)	2.6 (2.0%)	<b>10.4 (4.9%)</b>	13.3 (1.7%)
Total	368.9	43.1	131.6	<b>211.5</b>	755.1

Sources: FAO data sets, FRA 2005; & with some assumptions & designated functions for southern Africa

## Some Assumptions for Southern Africa



- Use of designated functions – where rights to use, managed & control resources are better integrated (so more than tenure) - CFM
- Public or government controlled – refers to formal Government Forest estate (can include JFM)
- Forests designated for production – mainly public, but with progressive transfer to private sector, which can include communities – ownership of land with Gov, but rights to use privatized
- Most low productive forests community owned – forests with multi-purpose functions – recognition varies
- Other functions (sacred, on farm, rich patch) – most likely under community *de facto* control

## Tanzania – an example



Forest type	Area
Central Forest Reserves (managed by central gov.)	12.3 mill Ha (36.5%)
Local authority Forest Reserves (managed by District)	1.6 mill Ha (4.8%)
Village forest reserves (managed by village), area increasing with registration	2 mill Ha (5.9%)
Private forests (private sector)	61,000 Ha (0.18%)
Forests on general lands (non-reserved, <i>de facto</i> community)	17.7 mill Ha (52.6%)
Sacred, traditional forests (ones “formally known”)	370 Ha
Totals	33,661,370 Ha

Source: Blomley et. al. 2008

## Various forms of decentralized forests



- Village & community forest reserves in Tz
- Community & decentralized forests in some West African countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal) – “terroire villegois”
- Joint (collaborative) forest management (Tanzania, Uganda, Cameroon) – with state



In general – rights to less valuable forests &/or products devolved, not high value forest products (except trials in Ghana, Tanzania); varying levels of planning & restrictions imposed

## Contestation – widespread, but hidden



- Rarely recognized officially– so difficult to analyse – except through case studies, e.g. Uganda;
- Contestation over conversion for other forms of land use, grabbing; or to assert customary rights; &
- More extensive “lower” level contestation in terms of “illegal” access – for products

## Are rights secure?



- In decentralized forest management – extent & scale to which Government can withdraw rights undermines decentralization (e.g. Central Africa)
- If communities have ownership – can they make best use of their rights? – to manage, process, value add? (*plans, permits, taxes, rules*)
- Attainment of rights often delayed (even if conditions met) by “lack of willingness”

## Equity & Gender



- Its much more than “community”! – whose rights & responsibilities ***within*** a group
- Women often “*de facto*” providers at farm level, yet with little power in management
- Legislating not enough without implementation (which may result in power struggles)
- Effects of culture & tradition on gender & rights of different groups (often excuse to hold onto power)
- Elite capture (from within or external) – esp. If resources increase in value

## Do devolved rights reduce poverty?

- Poverty & forests often go hand in hand in a “vicious cycle”
- Contribution of forests to GDP, National accounts negligible, as data not captured in statistics – even if contrib. significant at local level
- Inability to add value & market (beyond subsistence) mean real value of rights reduced

## Some Economic Data

Country	Forests & GDP	Econ Value	Other values
Sudan	10%	\$650 mill p.a. Gum Arabic \$80 mill p.a.	66% pop involved with forestry. 70% depend on fuel wood
Tanzania	3.3% (& 10% of exports)	2.8% value of agric. Sector; In Shinyanga \$14 p.p. p.m. for 2.25 million people (800+ villages)	92% depend on fuel wood
South Africa	2% or 1.7% (FAO)	\$4,674 mill p.a. – 55% of which NTFP	Over 325,000 employed
Namibia	6%	Devils claw worth \$10 mill p.a.	89% rural use fuel wood (20% urban)
Uganda	2% (Min finance) or 6% (Forest sector)	Forest business worth \$165 mill p.a.	90% fuel wood, & 90% herbal remedies

## Key Opportunities



- **Tenure rights** – important but ability to negotiate, defend & benefit from
- **Equity & Gender** in context of elite capture & male conservatism, but can create space for democratization
- **Minor or high value products** – Moves to higher value forest products?
- **Shift from Government to Private sector** – can create opportunities for partnerships with communities
- **Role of JFM/CM** – community stake in reserved estate – but high transaction & planning costs
- **Climate change** may enhance importance of sector & need for enhanced community rights

## Some Threats



- **If decentralized** – Is there adequate support (technical, financial, management) for communities to use opportunities in policy & law?
- **Often very high transaction costs** (time, plans, rules, regulations, permits, taxes, delays, bribes)
- **Role of customary rights** (recognized?) – evictions, contestation, encroachment
- **Forests low on agenda** – therefore less focus in PRSPs (Governments, donors)
- Population pressures & displaced peoples


## Some Conclusions



- Official data not reflect policy rhetoric of community forestry –with exceptions
- Improved forest tenure not yet result in improvements in livelihoods – nature of resources devolved, community support mechanisms in place
- Focus on official data underplays richness of community forests
- Lack of responsible treatment of forest sector in national accounts undervalues its importance
- Forest projects short term, yet forest management long term (investment, management, support, markets)
- Civil society role in facilitating change & translating rhetoric to action

So:



- Its more than devolved rights, more than communities managing forests;
  - Lies in ability of rural communities to invest & enter the market; and
  - Requires longer term investment & removal of perverse incentives.
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- Goes beyond tenure & management plans to Sustainable Forest Management as business for communities