



Potential for co-management approaches to strengthen livelihoods of forest dependent communities: A Kenyan case



Felix Lamech Mogambi Ming'ate^{a,*}, Hamish G. Rennie^b, Ali Memon^c

^a Department of Environmental Studies and Community Development, Kenyatta University, PO Box 43844-00100, Nairobi, Kenya

^b Department of Environmental Management (DEM), Lincoln University, PO Box 84, Lincoln 7647, Christchurch, New Zealand

^c Research, Investigations and Monitoring Unit, Auckland Council, Private Bag 92300, Auckland 1142, New Zealand

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 16 May 2013

Received in revised form 1 June 2014

Accepted 12 June 2014

Keywords:

Co-management

Livelihoods

Arabuko-Sokoke Forest

Forest-dependent communities

Kenya

Institutional design

ABSTRACT

Many natural resource management researchers have focused either on institutional design and evaluation or on livelihood outcomes per se without explicitly acknowledging and rigorously examining linkages between the two. Thus, a major gap in the current literature on co-management institutional arrangements is the extent to which co-management has strengthened the livelihoods of poor forest-dependent communities. This gap is addressed in this paper by developing and testing an argument that well-designed co-management arrangements have strengthened the livelihood outcomes of poor forest-dependent communities in a Kenyan case study. The hybrid analytical framework developed for this analysis situates Ostrom's (1990) design criteria for co-management institutions in the broader context of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework. It then uses this analytical framework to evaluate the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Reserve (ASFR) co-management initiative in Kenya, based on a three-step process. First, the paper provides an overview of current institutional arrangements for governance of the ASFR co-management regime. Second, it evaluates the extent to which these governance arrangements can be characterized as devolved collaborative governance, informed by Ostrom's (1990) design principles and; third, it evaluates the extent to which the livelihood outcomes of forest dependent communities that are participants in the co-management project have had their livelihoods strengthened as a result of the ASFR co-management governance arrangements. The paper demonstrates that the institutional arrangements for ASFR co-management are relatively nascent and emerging because the governance arrangements for the ASFR co-management project cannot be characterized as fully devolved de jure collaborative governance. Notwithstanding this, the findings reveal that participant forest-dependent communities in the co-management project had improved livelihoods compared to forest-dependent communities outside the co-management scheme. It is suggested that this is due to the de facto co-management arrangements.

Published by Elsevier Ltd.

Introduction

In recent decades, there has been a shift globally from a top-down, state-centred model of management of natural resources to a more decentralized approach in which a range of actors participate in the governance of natural resources (Brown et al., 2007). Co-management, or the sharing of power and responsibility between the government and local resource users, is an arrangement whereby such partnerships can come about (Berkes,

2009). There is no single universally accepted definition of co-management (Armitage et al., 2007; Berkes, 2009). The term often refers to a range of arrangements, with different degrees of power sharing, for joint decision-making by the state and communities (or user groups) about a set of resources or an area (Armitage et al., 2007; Berkes, 2009).

A key question in the current literature is to what extent co-management approaches are appropriate for tropical forest governance and delivery of sustainable livelihood outcomes in developing countries where poverty is a major concern? Tropical forests are diverse, and so is the range of people who look to such forests to meet a variety of subsistence and income needs. These multiple interests may include overlapping management systems: traditional management for local people's access to a range of products, forest land, and jobs; industrial management for

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +254 721351892.

E-mail addresses: Mogambiminate@yahoo.com, ming'ate.felix@ku.ac.ke (F.L.M. Ming'ate), Hamish.Rennie@lincoln.ac.nz (H.G. Rennie), Ali.memon@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz (A. Memon).

timber harvesting, and governmental efforts to manage for conservation and other goals (Wunder, 2001). Prior to the 1990s, tropical forests were largely managed through top-down highly centralized bureaucracies. Rules and regulations concerning permitted uses were made by remote bureaucrats with little input from local people. As a result, forest-dependent people often have declining access to resources that are vital to their families' welfare and lack fair representation in forest-related decisions that affect their daily lives (Tole, 2010).

In Kenya, for example, until recently, state forest management objectives mostly excluded local resource users from forest decision-making. There were minimal and stringent provisions for subsistence extraction and use of forest products. In general, the Forest Department (now the Kenyan Forest Service (KFS)) has wielded tremendous power and authority over forest resources, with no accountability to local communities living adjacent to forest areas and decision-making in the Forest Department has been quite hierarchical. This practice originated during the colonial period and was continued after independence. Ironically, in spite of the strict protectionist strategy adopted by government forest managers, the destruction and degradation of Kenya's forest resources has been a problem and forest cover continued to decline (Abwoli et al., n.d.; Matiru, 2000). Thus, improving forest cover and reducing forest destruction and degradation emerged as key goals of Kenya's national development strategy (Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing & Kenya Forests Working Group, 2006). Central to this is the government's recognition of the role to be played by forest-dependent communities in ensuring that tree cover is maintained.

A key, often implicit, assumption in the forestry co-management literature is that co-management approaches will make the livelihoods of adjacent poor forest-dependent communities significantly more sustainable. However, the contribution that collaborative forest management can make to the sustainability of the livelihoods of the rural poor forest-dependent communities may be questioned on several grounds. For example, Carter and Gronow (2005) emphasize that ease of access to forests and low capital and skill requirements enable large numbers of people to generate some income from forest products, although rarely enough to escape poverty altogether. Other critics note that, from the perspective of the poor, sustainable forest use can only provide contributions rather than whole livelihoods: it can enhance the contribution of forests to improving the living standards of households in rural areas, but it is not a long-term solution to poverty (Jumbe and Angelsen, 2007); has a weak track record in poverty reduction and empowerment of the marginalized (Bene and Neiland, 2004); does not often provide the shortest route out of poverty (Sayer, 2005); appears to, at best, have no significant positive impacts on the livelihoods of the poor who depend on the forest (Edmunds and Wollenberg, 2003); and is not a panacea for legitimacy of the governance arrangements (Jentoft, 2000). It is useful to note, however, that despite these criticisms the role of devolution of natural resources to local people for poverty alleviation is not as well studied as other devolution outcomes (e.g. equity, sustainable forest management and participatory inclusiveness) (Tole, 2010).

The above arguments raise an important research question that this paper addresses: *Does forest co-management strengthen the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities and make them more sustainable?* The research hypothesis in this article is that a well-designed co-management regime will strengthen the livelihoods of poor forest-dependent communities and make them more sustainable. In arguing thus, we do not see a sustainable livelihood as merely one that does not erode its resource base, but as one that is also able to withstand shocks. A stronger livelihood is one that will provide more security against shocks and thereby make the community more sustainable. This hypothesis is predicated on an

Table 1

Break down of the sample size from the two communities under study.

| Type of participant | Breakdown of participants in the study | Number of participants in the study |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Communities piloting co-management | Dida | 14 |
| | Kahingoni | 12 |
| | Kaftson | 12 |
| | Detailed household case studies ^a | 9 |
| Communities not piloting co-management | Kaliapapo A | 10 |
| | Kaliapapo B | 7 |
| | Shela | 9 |
| | Mongotini | 15 |
| | Detailed household case studies ^a | 6 |
| Key informants | Households | 8 |
| | Organizational | 9 |
| Total number of interviews ^a | | 109 |

^a The total number of interviews includes the second round of interviews labelled as detailed household case study participants. Therefore, a total of 94 individuals were interviewed.

assumption that the co-management regime in the case study is well-designed and operating effectively.

Study method

The study area, the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Reserve (ASFR), is located in the Kilifi and Malindi districts on the north coast of Kenya (Fig. 2). There are approximately fifty villages adjacent to the forests that are considered largely dependent on the forest (Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Management Team, 2002). For nearly two decades, a pilot co-management regime was adopted between three of these villages (Kahingoni, Dida and Kaitsoni) and four government agencies (the Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forestry Research Institute and National Museums of Kenya). Despite not having advanced beyond its 'pilot' phase, this arrangement has come to be regarded as co-management, the only one involving a forest reserve in Kenya (Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Management Team, 2002).

The research methods used were designed to elicit understandings and experiences primarily of local inhabitants about the co-management arrangements and their effectiveness in the delivery of sustainable livelihoods in the above three pilot villages compared to those of inhabitants in four non-pilot forest-dependent villages: Kaliapapo A, Kaliapapo B, Shela and Mongotini.

Data collection combined overtly living in and observing the study communities and participating in community activities, document analysis and 109 semi-structured interviews with village inhabitants and key organizational informants (government and NGO officials) (Table 1). Included in the 109 interviews is a second round of interviews with 15 householders which explored in greater depth the details of their household livelihoods. These interviewees were chosen based on the initial round as being reasonably representative of particular types of livelihoods (e.g. bee-keeping). Interviewees were initially identified on the basis of their positions in organizations involved in the co-management arrangement based on documentary evidence. Additional interviewees were identified through the snowball technique.

The fieldwork was conducted by one of the authors, a male Kenyan fluent in the dominant language of the area and carried

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6548544>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6548544>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)