

A Way Forward to Comparative Forest Policy in the Future: Connecting Area Studies in Overseas and Japan

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In the forest economic studies in Japan, “Overseas Area Studies” and “Comparative Forest Policy” have developed in different ways. “Overseas Area Studies” have been conducted mainly in “non-Western” areas, such as developing countries in tropical areas. In contrast, “Comparative Forest Policy” has developed with a primary focus on “Western” areas.

Recently, as globalization progresses and cross-border exchanges among researchers have become more active, conventional study frameworks have changed significantly. Moreover, many common research questions now span both “Western” and “non-Western” countries. Besides, we have accumulated a lot of knowledge and insights into forest management and local livelihoods in tropical countries through vigorous fieldwork as well as collaborations with counterparts and international students. Consequently, we have understood we have similar forms and histories of forest management in Japan and other tropical countries. Nonetheless, few studies compare cases between Japan and tropical countries. However, those studies seem to have good potential to develop the comparative forest policy further.

For example, Japan and Indonesia have commonalities in forming modern land ownership. In addition, many tropical countries are promoting social forestry programs, giving local people management rights to state forests. Some of them have a form of profit-sharing forest management similar to the Japanese system (*bunshu-rin*). Besides, Japan recently introduced a tree harvesting rights system in the national forests (*jyumoku saishuken seido*), while many tropical countries have a long history of concession systems in the state forests.

This presentation will discuss the potential of future comparative forest policy connecting overseas area studies and Japan.

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Landscape Management Related Policies in Mexico and Japan

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Introduction

In the context of a multi-dimensional crisis, landscape approaches are promoted as frameworks to face the complexity of problems at multiple scales according to context and involving multiple disciplines and stakeholders (Sayer et al. 2013). Landscape management is key to reconciling multiple objectives and conflicting interests for decision-making in an iterative process (de Boo and Wiersum, 2002), as it not only involves the how to restore, but also the what and where and who decides (van Oosten, 2013a). This presentation aims to compare the landscape management related policies in Japan and Mexico and the possible similarities or differences in the challenges faced regarding their landscape management situation.

Methods

A literature review on landscape management related policies in Japan and Mexico was conducted. For this, regulatory policy instruments such as legal apparatus and norms, as well as programs or strategies related to landscape at the national level were considered. Next, a qualitative analysis was done in terms of objectives, structure, the use of language regarding landscape terms, the focus area and the participation mechanisms mentioned.

Results

At the national level, Mexico has no legal regulations that explicitly consider landscape as an element for territorial planning and the term is only mentioned in some laws. However, there were other proposed instruments aligned with the international agreements signed by the country. In contrast, in 2003 Japan implemented a “Policy Outline for Building a Beautiful Nation” promoting the concept of good landscapes (Ando, 2008) and establishing a legal apparatus related to landscape management.

Discussion

Similarities in Mexico and Japan are that both had a sectorized institutional structure, such as the Ministry divisions and responsibilities. Mexico lacked legal support for policy alignment at the national level. Still, it has strategies and policies that respond to international commitments. In contrast, Japan has a clear legal framework regarding landscape, although it is more focused in the cultural and urban areas. In both countries, the conceptual and institutional division might cause challenges to articulate an integrated implementation.

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Community Engagement and Challenges in Forest Healing Tourism: Case of Wanagama, Indonesia

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Introduction

Forest healing potential has gained global recognition. In Gunung Kidul, Indonesia, Wanagama Eco Edu Forest present an emerging initiatives surrounded by the forest resource and diverse communities. The integration of cultural and social diversity is suggested to facilitate forest healing practices into sustainable tourism. However, communities awareness and support in this sector remains unclear. This study aims to explore community awareness and challenges related to the forest healing tourism in the surrounding area to comprehend the situations.

Method

The study was conducted in August 2024, field observation and focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with villages surrounding Wanagama Eco Edu Forest, Banaran, Ngleri, Gading, and Bunder villages located in Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta Special Region Province. Data analysis comprised in phenomenology and inductive method, to identify community awareness and challenges based on current conditions.

Result

The investigation revealed varying levels of community engagement with Wanagama. The communities from Banaran and Ngleri has more interaction level with Wanagama, while Gading and Bunder have less and face no tourism activity as the government forest closed. Despite lack of training and atleast one socialization, all communities stated a minimum awareness about the development. Given the challenges including low income, low education level, and limited access to forest healing experiences, they possessed valuable cultural assets, tourism knowledge, and potential facilities such as homestay. The communities expressed hope for future cooperation and assistance from Wanagama as seeking the participation independently will be difficult.

Discussion

To facilitate sustainable development of forest healing tourism, it is necessary to enhance collaboration between Wanagama and surrounding communities. Currently, only four communities limitedly engage with Wanagama unless invited. By providing training, and pursuing community based tourism mechanism, the surrounding tourism activity and forest healing potential can be realized, benefiting both economy and environment.

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Contemporary Forest Tenure Reforms in Myanmar: Implications for State's Concessions and Participatory Land Approach

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Introduction

Forest tenure reforms are advancing as a solution to forest encroachment. Myanmar has recently adopted a community-based governance model, including Community Forestry (CF) and agroforestry. Both aim to promote collective and individual management of forest resources. However, these programs often struggle with low local participation. This presentation discusses why only passive participation is observed and how unexpected results have emerged.

Methods

The study applied "governmentality" theory, focusing on the power dynamics between state practices and regulations and local populations. It examines how these interactions shape forest land governance and resource management. We collected local insights on land access, usage, and conflicts through focus group discussions and key informant interviews in two villages within Naypyitaw's Permanent Forest Estate in Myanmar.

Results

Forest Department (FD)'s primary goal in establishing agro-based CF is to restore the encroached forests. To achieve this, FD employs a primary strategy of surveilling land management through three techniques: monitoring, incentives, and penalties. The two communities, despite their proximity, practice distinct forms of agriculture—banana orchards and betel vine orchards—resulting in different land use practices. Additionally, local traditional land use practices are entirely based on voluntary efforts and mutual agreements with unilinear and scattered occupation. This complicates their participation in CF due to challenges in forming user groups that require contiguous land tracts and leads to unequal land use allotment.

Discussion

FD's land surveilling methods and CFUG format transited from originally intended participatory ambition to exclusion techniques by reconstituting people-forest boundaries. This phenomenon led to passive participation and unexpected outcomes such as unequal land use allotment. It emphasizes the understanding both state and non-state factors and contributes to the implementation of international programs like REDD+ for forest conservation in Myanmar.

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Financing forests for climate change in Myanmar Ideas, financial flow, and limitations

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Introduction

After Myanmar's democratization in 2011, there was a strong push for forest conservation via global financial support. Despite these efforts, deforestation and illegal logging continue to hinder progress. This research aims to explore the development of a new emerging state's consensus around the "forest-climate" relationship and examines the subsequent financial mechanisms that underpins conservation efforts within Myanmar's evolving political economy.

Methods

This research adopts an integrative framework that merges "Marxist political economy" with "Foucauldian political ecology," utilizing Foucault's genealogical method. It combines materialist and discursive views from both traditions and applies Gramscian concepts of "hegemony" to examine the prevailing consensus in state's environmental policies. The study employs diverse sources, including publications, gray literature, newspapers, social media, state's budget reports.

Results

Following the 1990s, Myanmar's political economy evolved under neoliberalism. Neoliberal market liberalization led to unprecedented deforestation rates in Myanmar's history. Myanmar shifted its focus to forest conservation, halting efforts to generate foreign earnings from forestry. This movement fostered a broad consensus on forest and environmental issues, emphasizing the relationship between "forests" and "climate". Subsequently, Myanmar welcomed financial aid from the global community and increased use of national budget in forestry. However, more than 99% of the financial aid focused on regulatory reforms and subsequent reforestation efforts with minimal investment in improvement of operational forestry initiatives in forestry industry.

Discussion

Our results indicate that Myanmar distinguishes between forestry activities in restoration and those in operational utilization, viewing restoration efforts primarily as conservation. This emphasis was largely influenced by neoliberal privatization policies and state's forest-climate consensus. This raises a critique: Can conservation occur without improvements in operational practices for utilization? It can contribute to the global aid chain and informs forest policy making.

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Enhancing Public Communication of Multilateral Climate Discussion in the FOLU Sector

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Introduction

Advancements in global climate policy emphasize the need for clear communication to bridge gaps between national policymakers and local stakeholders, especially considering the unique complexities the country faces as a major carbon sink (UNFCCC, 2019; Jones & Perez, 2018). Yet, existing research often fails to make these high-level discussions accessible to local stakeholders (Smith, 2019; Lee & Hunter, 2020). Therefore, this study discusses improving communication in the multilateral climate discussions across Indonesia's FOLU sector.

Methods

We critically analyzed discourse within policy documents and interviews with Indonesian policymakers. We also examined the data to identify communication, capacity, and alignment challenges.

Results

The findings revealed several communication and implementation challenges. Firstly, misalignment between national and local officials hampered policy communication, creating confusion and delaying policy action. In addition, local capacity gaps meant stakeholders prioritized execution with immediate financial support over long-term commitments, highlighting a disconnect from international goals. Besides, the complexity of multilateral agreements further complicated communication, particularly in low-literacy regions, making it difficult for stakeholders to grasp the relevance.

Discussion

Closing communication gaps for effective climate action is essential, indicated by misalignment and capacity challenges found. Smith (2019) and Lee & Hunter (2020) highlighted similar barriers, emphasizing the need for simplified and targeted communication. This role misalignments and resource limitations reflected broader issues in policy translation. Future efforts should prioritize a standardized toolkit for climate policies, integrating stakeholder input and leveraging collaborative training programs to strengthen local capacity for climate action across Indonesia.

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Politics of Maps in Indonesian Era of Decentralization
—Case of KHDPK Forestland Redistribution in Java, Indonesia—

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Background:

Formal recognition of forests rights for local community as tenure reform could address tenure concerns and forest conservation (Larson et al., 2013). In Indonesia, forest land tenure is currently experiencing reformation via various regulations based on spatial districts, specific for Java and the rest (Lukman et al., 2019). The discourse of the overall framework is to decentralize and empower local communities for “equitable” economics. In the newly introduced system, forest land redistribution is subject to two modes: agrarian reform and social forestry (SF). The newly introduced KHDPK scheme introduced a map proposing an area for social forestry with two criteria (i) unproductive or (ii) prone to conflicts, separating the control from former state-owned entity Perhutani. The map was released by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) yet the rationale and logic are unclear in certain cases.

Methods and Sites:

We conducted a qualitative method of in-depth interviews to understand the current state of forestland redistribution implementation under the KHDPK scheme in Indonesia, specifically in Probolinggo, East Java, to reconstruct the decision process behind the map.

Results and Discussion:

From the field observations, we found that certain KHDPK forestland in Probolinggo can be regarded productive nor has any tenure disputes, contrary to the criteria. To date, the rationale behind the creation and land category of the map are uncertain. The shifts entail fundamental changes in monetary flow with taxes that farmers are requested to pay real estate and operational taxes which were formerly managed by Perhutani. Providing investment to develop alternative livelihoods is one viable option to ensure farmers’ financial resources to look after the forests.

The KHDPK framework offers certain advantages for local communities in gaining full rights to manage forestland; however, the policy implementation should be evaluated to prevent future failures. Also, the power relationships amongst the state agencies, local authorities, former state-owned entity Perhutani and local communities are to be analyzed.

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The actual condition and challenges of cultivated land in state forest area:

A case study in T village, Riau, Indonesia

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Introduction

The Indonesian Government implemented spatial planning for sustainable development. While the delineation of state forests serves as the foundation of spatial planning, the presence of cultivated land within these state forest boundaries poses a significant challenge. This study aimed to identify the actual conditions and challenges associated with land cultivation in the state forest area of T village, Riau Province, Indonesia.

Methodology

In this study, current regulations were analyzed to understand the legal context. To reveal how cultivated land has gradually formed within designated state forest area, time-series satellite images were compared, and interviews with the local people were conducted. A household survey was conducted to reveal the livelihood and landholding structure. The field survey was conducted between May and August 2024.

Results and Discussion

A comparison of satellite imagery and interviews found that forest fires became particularly severe around 2005, prompting local people to cultivate the burned areas. Local people could expand their cultivation due to the absence of external entities such as business organizations. However, in 2023, the government installed boundary markers along the state forest area. Under current laws and regulations, locals who wish to continue cultivating land within state forest areas must either seek its release from the state forest area or apply for enrollment in social forestry schemes. This process requires knowledge of the latest laws and regulations, as well as the submission of documents using drones and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Preparing these documents poses significant challenges for local people, with limited support from external organizations. Additionally, the household survey revealed that much of the cultivated lands within state forest areas fail to meet the requirements for release. Moreover, applying for social forestry schemes is unfeasible for many people, as their livelihoods predominantly rely on agriculture. Thus, current laws and regulations may restrict local livelihoods in T village. For effective exploration of sustainable land use within existing regulations, local people must first understand their rights and responsibilities regarding current laws and regulations.

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Politics over definitions of the forest in contemporary India

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Introduction

How to define the forest is related to the legal coverage of forest-related regulations. Hence, defining the forest is inherently political. The present study focuses on India, where various kinds of legal as well as discursive battles are ongoing in the forest sector, and aims to explore recent legal issues related to the definitions of the forest and consequences that have been or will be brought about by changes in definitions.

Methods

I consulted primary sources, i.e., original documents of related acts and court decisions, as well as secondary sources, i.e., newspaper articles and commentaries written by civil society organizations, including both conservation advocates and human rights advocates.

Results and Discussion

The Indian Forest Act in 1927, which is in force, legally categorizes forests into three, i.e., reserved forests, protected forests, and village forests. Due to severe deforestation and forest degradation, the Forest (Conservation) Act (FCA) was enacted in 1980. This act prohibited conversion of forests for non-forestry purposes without prior permission of the central government. However, there was no clear definition of the forest in the FCA, and state governments conventionally applied the FCA to reserved forests only. In 1996, the Supreme Court (SC), through the decision on the case of “T.N. Godavarman Thirumulkpad vs Union of India & Ors.”, directed governments to apply a “dictionary meaning of forests”, meaning that any kinds of forests shall be subject to the FCA. This was to extend and enhance forest protection based on the principle of “judicial activism.” An interpretation of the SC’s direction by the central government led to violent eviction of tribal forest dwellers in the early 2000s. This provoked nation-wide political movements by tribal peoples, resulting in the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. In 2023, the FCA was amended. This amended FCA does not refer to the SC’ direction in 1996 and confines the scope of forests basically to those in the Indian Forest Act 1927 and other related laws. In addition, several exemptions from the act are specified in terms of development. The amended FCA has been criticized from various viewpoints. Thus, how to define the forest has been an intense political issue in India since the 1990s, and the Supreme Court has had a crucial influence. Based on these facts, I will make discussions and provide implications.

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How Do Framing Effects Influence Implicit Prices for Agricultural Water Quality in China and Japan?

An Enhanced Benefit Transfer Using Choice Experiments

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China and Japan, both characterized by smallholder farming economies, place significant emphasis on economic incentives, environmental awareness, and perceived benefits, which strongly influence willingness to pay (WTP) for agricultural water quality improvements. Given these shared yet distinct influences, this study employs Lasso Meta-Analysis to explore how framing affects WTP estimates within each country's context. By using choice experiments, it uncovers the nuanced trade-offs and preferences specific to each population. By highlighting how framing impacts WTP, this research offers insights into how cultural and geographical contexts shape responses in choice experiments, deepening the understanding of benefit transfer applications.

The meta-analysis selects literature from the CNKI and CINI databases using the keyword "water quality" and focuses on studies providing implicit price estimates for water attributes. After filtering for agricultural water studies from the past decade and excluding duplicates, 7 Chinese and 3 Japanese articles are included, yielding 23 water quality WTP estimates for analysis. The meta-database undergoes publication bias testing and sensitivity analysis, ensuring robustness and reliability in study selection and interpretation.

To address multicollinearity, this study applies the LASSO method to identify significant variables for the meta-regression model. Using cross-validation, the optimal tuning parameter (λ) is set at 74.92, allowing Lasso regression to effectively highlight key predictors of implicit prices for water quality attributes. The regression findings reveal that the significance of interaction terms between the country dummy and the degree of water quality improvement highlights key differences between China and Japan in valuing water quality improvements: Japanese respondents exhibit higher WTP with diminishing marginal returns, partially influenced by income, while heterogeneity testing further suggests that cultural factors significantly contribute to these differences.

This study underscores the importance of culturally sensitive choice experiment designs that balance alternative and attribute types to enhance WTP accuracy. The findings reveal Japan's weaker marginal utility decline, suggesting that Japanese respondents value continuous improvements more than their Chinese counterparts, whose WTP declines more steeply with incremental improvements. Differences in environmental awareness, income, and policy priorities across China and Japan reflect distinct regional demands for water quality, guiding policymakers toward tailored, sustainable strategies for agricultural water management.

Key words: willingness to pay, framing effects, choice experiments, benefit transfer, meta-analysis, heterogeneity

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