

PhD Abstract

Community empowerment through spatial knowledge brokering in multilevel forest governance

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Problem definition

Scholarly literature on local and indigenous knowledge addresses its importance to forest and biodiversity conservation; indigenous and local people's rights stipulated in international conventions; and issues related to participation and the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), but scarcely examines how the exchange and use of local people's knowledge in multilevel governance can lead to empowerment.

Research Question

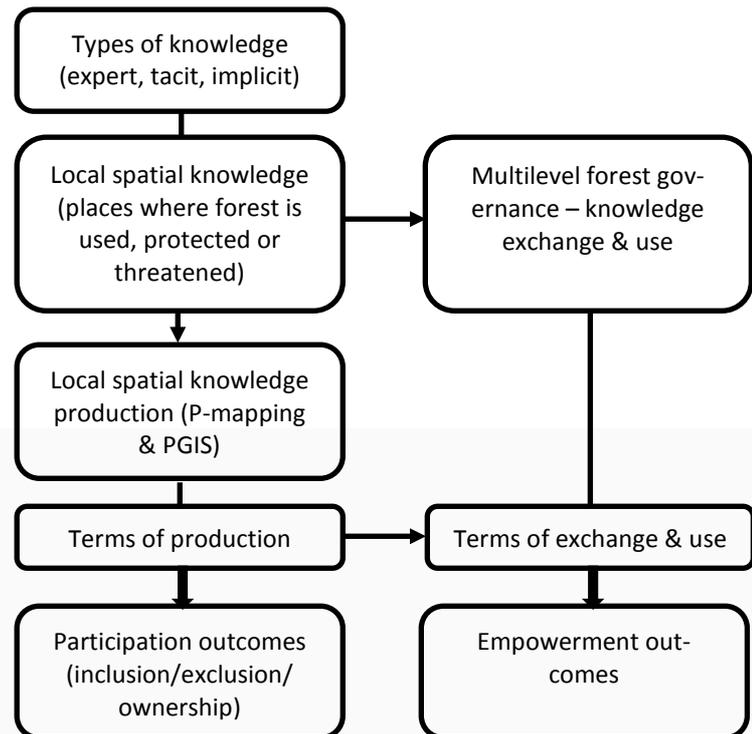
How can local people in Ghana's high forest zone be empowered through participatory spatial knowledge management (PGIS) and knowledge brokering in multilevel forest governance addressing forest conservation?

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework draws from theories on multilevel forest governance, inclusive development, empowerment, knowledge brokering and participatory spatial knowledge management. It guides the analysis of terms under which local spatial knowledge is produced, exchanged and used, and how knowledge brokering can enhance local people's empowerment.

Methodology

Comparative analysis between relatively intact and degraded forest reserve. Mixed methods, including participatory mapping



and Participatory Geographic Information Systems (PGIS), household survey (N=598), participant observation, workshop, 54 semi-structured interviews, and review of literature, internet sources and policy documents.

Expected Results

Insights into (a) rich, but partial, spatial knowledge of local people of their environment, (b) interactions between local people and knowledge brokering organisations; (c) the effects of production, exchange and use of local spatial knowledge on people's empowerment.

Expected Graduation

March, 2018