

INTERNATIONAL FOREST RESOURCE POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

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Summary

One of the important challenges for sustainable forest policy is to manage programs that are delivered by more than one organization or individual. International regimes and global policy networks are increasing forms of contemporary forest policy management at the international, political, regional, and ecological levels alike. Forest programs more and more have to be managed outside a vertical hierarchy and must include some strategies for fostering cooperation and negotiation in multistakeholder situations. There are specific institutional and organizational arrangements for collaborative forest management. It is necessary to characterize different network situations and subsequent implications in order to develop design principles for effective global forest management and policy.

Forest management has become a pioneer field for the creation of such policy networks. The problem of structuring forest networks addresses problems that also emerge elsewhere because of the necessity to define the structures that constitute an otherwise rather amorphous issue area and on which actors involved have to agree, and, moreover, agree in such a manner that the network is reinforced through this agreement. Forest management has been addressed by various networks, which have developed over time. These gained in cohesion when the structure of the network was changed. Hence forest management can give insights into the requirements that have to be fulfilled in order for

a network to increase its cohesion. It is argued that the degree of coherence determines whether forest management is environmentally acceptable or not.

1. Introduction

Forests are complex entities, not only from a biophysical perspective, but also from social, economic, environmental, and political perspectives. The impact of forestry on forests as providers of wood and biodiversity, and as carbon sinks, has led to global concern. At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, forests were among the most controversial issues considered. The design and implementation of global forest norms brought together a large cast of actors who are actively concerned with the global dimensions of forestry problems. However, the polarized interests of the different states prevented agreement on a forest convention, but resulted in only a “non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests”, the so-called “Forest Principles”.

If forests are to play a central role in reducing the threat of global environmental change, the policies of governments and international secretariats towards forest management become pivotal. Environmental externalities of forests are becoming more and more global in reach. Yet the main policy-making actor in global forest politics remains the nation-state. Solving the problems of deforestation and degradation of forests on a global scale will require action at an early stage on the basis of incomplete information rather than at a later stage under the pressures of circumstance. Analysts and decision-makers are increasingly worried that the global forestry regime has become an endless conversation mill, as an internationally agreed upon norm for saving the world’s forests has yet to gain a foothold.

The management of the processes through which global governance structures—or in other words, sets of rules, decision-making procedures, and programs that define global forest management and policy—come into existence has become a major concern. National governments increasingly internationalize forest management and policy.

2. Globalization of Forest Policy and Management

A world government of controlling nation states has not yet evolved. Nonetheless, considerable governance underlies the current order among states and gives direction to the challenges posed by global forest change and the many other problems to which an ever-expanding global interdependence gives rise. Institutional arrangements like international environmental regimes and global policy networks are the units of analysis if progress is to continue in features of governance without government of global forests.

The term “global” is preferred as it is more inclusive than the term “international”. It denotes the fact that forest management focuses on politics and political patterns of multistakeholders, and not only those between nation states. National governments internationalized forest management by agreeing to the “Forest Principles” and by

signing the Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. The international policy process, however, is increasingly embedded in public policy networks of global range. It is important to focus on the dynamics of global cooperation as we identify a loose system of global governance with its own decision-making processes, different to the ones in domestic governance or international regimes.

The modest outcomes of UNCED underlined the malign characteristics of global forest problems. Actors compete for scarce resources and tend to free ride the collective good of global forests. Dissensus rather than consensus is associated with global forest policy. A value conflict and struggle over gains of a relatively assessed good prevails. Costs and benefits of a global forest arrangement are too difficult to assess because of the complexity of the issue. It is not a benign problem which is limited to problems of coordination. Governance is the more encompassing phenomenon.

3. Institutional Governance: Managing Complex Global Forestry Networks

We live in a new era of globalization, where instant communications, the emergence of a global economy, a global culture, and non-state actors have transformed global forestry policy, making redundant many of the approaches developed for understanding and explaining international forest politics. The term “governance” implies a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing, involving public and private actors at the same time, and being reliant on continual interaction, rather than formal institutions.

Inevitably, there are several contending meanings for the term governance. It can variously refer to, for example, the minimal state, corporate governance, the new public management, and good governance. In interorganization theories, governance refers to self-organizing networks of interdependent organizations. Governance is broader than government, covering non-state actors and international regimes. Changing the boundaries of the state means the boundaries between public, private, and voluntary sectors, and the lines between international and national become shifting and opaque, continuing interactions between actors of global forestry networks, caused by the need to exchange resources and negotiate shared purposes, game-like interactions, rooted in trust and regulated by rules of the game negotiated and agreed by network participants, no sovereign authority, so global policy networks have a significant degree of autonomy from the states and are not accountable to them. They are self-organizing. Although the IFF Secretariat has no sovereignty over the various international forestry regimes, it can indirectly and imperfectly steer global forestry networks (Figure 1).

A policy network approach to global forestry suggests a long-term holistic approach to governance. It recognizes that, under certain conditions, interorganizational policy networks complement markets and hierarchies as governing structures for allocating resources and exercising control and coordination. It excludes, by definition, any idea of centralized organization or control of global forestry policy. On the contrary, it signifies a proliferation of modes of governance, levels, and decision-making actors. There is a focus on incentives derived from the polycentric institutional arrangements instead of centralized policy instructions. The work presented by Keohane and Ostrom in 1995

illustrates the similarity of these processes in some regards at a local, a national, and an international scale.

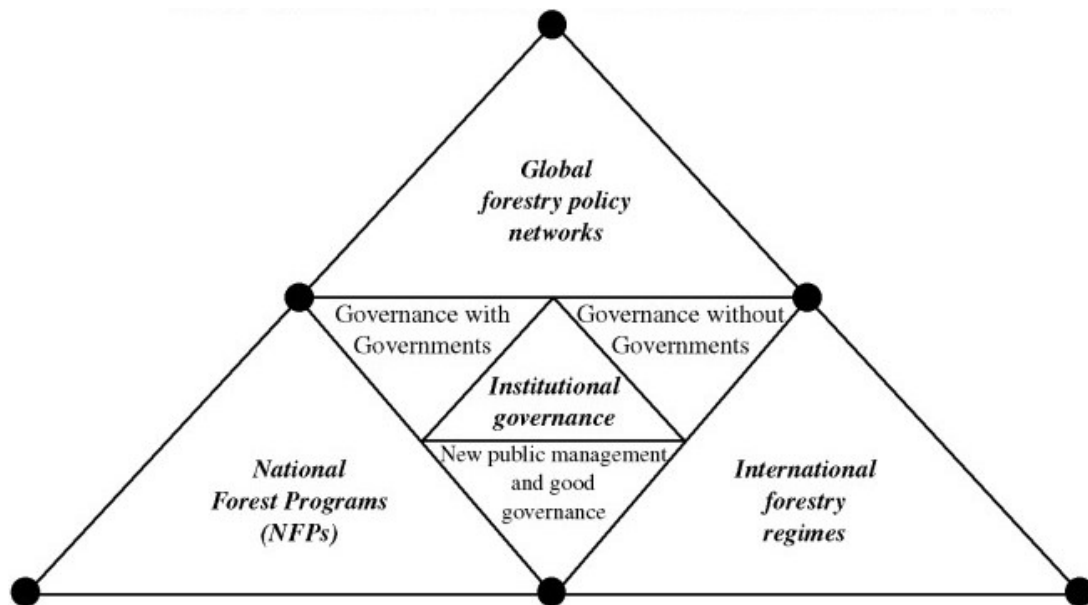


Figure 1: Institutional Governance: Managing Complex Global Forestry

Institutional governance is not treated as a synonym for government. Rather it emphasizes a change, referring to significant governance contributions in global institutions by new forms of “governance with states”, paralleled by changed conditions of ordered rule in national forest programs (NFPs) through the impact of “good governance” or “minimal state” concepts and finally caught up in the proliferation of international forest regimes and particular forms of “governance without government” of an ever more interdependent global forestry policy. There is a need to manage global externalities in a context of networked interdependence.

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