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Splitted wood as natural resources use: what reality for the management in common of the forest management scheme of Bounounou (Province of Ziro – Burkina Faso)?

Introduction

This study focuses on how rural actors exit the externally induced but locally accepted creation of a protected forest as a common resource. It deals with the case of a forest management scheme, created on this protected forest, in two villages in Burkina Faso. Rural communities, in particular the local actors involved in this forest management scheme, have their proper understandings and perceptions of what it means to be linked to a common resource as managers, as “owners” and as workers producing economic benefits for themselves and for others (State, wood merchants). We will mainly focus through this practice of splitted wood on the logics and strategies of local actors and their

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understanding of government policy with respect to renewable natural resource management. Local practices, around the already put in place and very well organized forest management scheme, will also be described in this study. The main activities of the forest management scheme in Bounounou administrative district are big wood cutting and selling through a wood market chain. The splitted wood is an activity developed besides the big wood market since 5 years (in terms of increasing). The splitted wood is defined as the rest of small woods (branches of trees) which stay and which have a diameter lower than 10 centimeters. But in practice it is all wood cutting in pieces and selling by stack inside the village on the main roads.

This socio-anthropological analysis, through concrete cases, focuses on firstly, the perceptions that the local actors have of the creation and the organization of this "new" forest; and secondly on the relationships between the actors (members and woodcutters) and the direction (management) of the project and finally on the relationships between the members of cooperatives and the wood market.

This study is done in connection to my PhD research which is taking place in Bounounou (district). My main research interest is based on local perceptions of the forest management scheme and the relation between populations and the forest management scheme and thus protected forest.

Over the last decades in Burkina Faso as well as in other African countries, there has been a lot of experimentation in assisting rural and local communities in using collective rules in the management of natural resources (Hagberg, 1995; Hagberg 2000; Delnooz, 1999). These countries have tested several management plans in their relation with their "environment". The particularity of this kind of management scheme is the implication of rural populations as partners and as recipients, that is, as the primary actors in the production and management chain. With respect to the scheme in question the State, through a development project, tried to construct complex relations between peoples and nature, focusing on how to involve people in the development of their own area. But sometimes this idea is followed difficulties, like in the case of these villages; even though it might seem like that the idea of popular participation is accepted. In other words, the case developed in this paper concerns an apparently successful development

project which nonetheless demonstrates the inherent ambiguities of the very ideas of participation.

In 1989/1990 a national project supported by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations) have put in place, in the rural area, forest management schemes in which rural populations are involved as partners by first accepting to provide their woodlands (bushes), second being members (woodcutters) and third being responsible for the management of the forest. The creation of forest management scheme has two main objectives. Environmentally, the project aims to manage the regeneration (process). Economically, the objective is to sell mainly big wood (fresh and dead) through a chain constructed by the project and the rural communities are made to fit in this management. Hence, being member of this chain in the lower level means to accept to be woodcutters. As a matter of fact the management is financed by one part of the money of the woodcutters (27% and 14% forest taxes). To be a member, you should belong to a village which accepted to be a partner of the management scheme. But as Jacques Weber (1995: 7) has noted even if they agree to participate, the rural populations always conserve their own understandings of how to interact with their bush and with their part of the forest scheme. Contrary to the idealized version of participation and joint management, this forest is not a meaningful entity for the villagers. Six villages have failed to comply with management instructions, according to the technical direction. Instead of cutting and selling big wood, they cut and sell splitted wood on the road and not through the wood chain established by the project.

In this paper, we choose two neighboring villages in the administrative district of Bougnounou: the villages of Dana and Zao are both situated on two main roads and belong to the forest management scheme. These villages are the first splitted wood seller in this management chain. They are the first who thereby demonstrate that this management scheme is not what they want to do in the exploitation of the forest. The forest management scheme is absolutely based on the management in common of “non common resources” (the protected forest of the management scheme). The local actors in these two villages “refuse” to follow the common management scheme created by the project. This notion of “common resources” seems to indicate indeed an evident reality,

certainly, but vague and non-existent at the same moment at the level of the local actors. The local actors try to fight for their individual interests rather than to work for the common.

These questions on participatory management based on common renewable natural resources and on the wood chain process have been the focus of many studies.

- Management of renewable natural resources in Africa and the problems linked to the question of local participation.

Since the conference of Stockholm in 1972 it has been declared that natural resources should be protected for the well-being of human environment and for the populations themselves. So governments and various institutions involved should do everything for the preservation of the resources and *for the development of developing countries*. “It is the urgent desire of the peoples of the whole world and the duty of all Governments” (Stockholm conference 1972). Additionally, the Rio conference in June 1992 outlined that the political stakes through the codification of natural resources usage in the world can point out the opposition of north to south countries (Weigel, 1996:3).

The discourses on natural resources management are based on concepts which are inadequately socially informed and which do not reflect the complexity, diversity and ad hoc nature of institutional formation. The concept of sustainable development has put together a good management of natural resource through particular methods and through the participation of local population. Since the end of First World War, the participatory model has been the reference model of development discourses (Chauveau, 1992; Hagberg, 1995: 3). Hagberg in his reflection on participatory management of forest reserves (in a context of a classified forest) in Burkina Faso, attempts to analyze the different perceptions and priorities, on the one hand of various representatives, State logics and discourses, and on the other hand, of different categories of local actors in their interaction with State forests. In his analysis he focuses on the participatory methods and politics brought by the State, to increase the involvement of local populations. But as he shows, this concept (participation) is part of the development discourse of the State and there is a big distance between what is said and what is done in the practice. Related to the question of management of natural resources, is the question regarding access to

and control over landed resources, i.e. how are the various uses of land or trees controlled and by whom (Hagberg, 1995:5). It is also relevant how in his argument the author links the social dimensions and cultural relationships as well as ecological and technological conditions in population's interaction with the classified forest of Tiogo (State property). He argues later that the juridical statute of the natural resources involved is also a key aspect. With respect to property regimes, the Tiogo forest which is the object of his study is seen as a public property in the sense that the State is the tenure holder. In the government policy of managing renewable natural resources since 1980 in Burkina Faso, there is more emphasis on popular participation. The forest reserves have been opened up for the benefit of the local population (ibid:5). However, forest agents who are State agents control the good management of the resources. These actors implement the colonial forest legislation on the one hand, and play the role of development facilitator through participatory approach on the other hand: the forester's baton and the carrot (ibid:5).

Alain Bertrand (1998) writes that everyone agrees giving the possibility for the rural population to take care and manage the natural resources. Yet he argues that the question is not only to give them the possibility, but also to give them the capacity and the rights to be the managers of their resources. Ribot (1995) focused on this question in his reflections on Senegal forestry which seems to give more flexible right to the charcoal producers than to the local population, the villagers. The participation of the villagers may only be that they "give" away their bushes for the exploitation of wood for the production of charcoal. Even if later the question of real participation of villagers has been allowed, they are still on the margin of the market. They are the ones who get the lower benefits on this production by not getting enough incomes and losing "their forest". A participatory management poses many questions, practical as well as political (Bertrand, 1998: 40). The political aspect is the transfer of power and responsibility and rights from the State to the local population. The practical aspect is all the techniques and methodologies that local populations should follow for a good management program and today also for their own benefits.

Many writings on the problematic of natural resource management in Africa have pointed out the big impact of colonial administration on natural resources management in African

countries. The colonial administration constituted spaces and resources as the property of colonial administration and postcolonial administration (Ribot, 1995 : 1590; Ribot, 2003:4-6 ; Ribot, 1999: 24,25; Somda, 1992, Karsenty,1998). Bertrand also shows that the African States of the postcolonial period have continued using exclusion and repression politics when it comes to the access and the management of natural resources by local population (Bertrand, 1998:41). But this, we know has not worked as expected. The local population has shown their own comprehension of what “public resources” are: using and profiting as much as possible a forest which doesn’t belong to them anymore. According to Parrot’s model, the property which is not with us is replaced by another which in fact is ours (Bertrand, 1998:41). This kind of situation (a non-legitimate customary management and a non-existent State management) has motivated the necessity to establish the local management of renewable natural resources. The local management of these resources should allow the local communities to have the power to manage and to keep responsibilities of the management at the local level. They are the ones who can better control and ensure the permanent supervision in the management of the resource. Bertrand further says that he prefers the concept of local governance rather than local management as it points to the political, juridical and social process of the transmission of responsibilities from the State to the local communities. Local governance encloses much more than local management by involving local communities in the question of the security of land and resources and also in conflict resolution (ibid: 43). This idea doesn’t exclude the State, but would allow the State to play its role of referee in regulation activities, in programme planning and in economic perspectives. It’s not “moins Etat (“Less State”) but “mieux Etat” (“Better State”) (ibid: 44). That avoids applying the model where the management rules and methodologies are constructed and proposed by the technical boards of the development projects and where the local context should follow a management plan built by others. Instead a real decentralization and not a simple deconcentration of interventions in renewable natural resources management would be possible.

- Common resources management

Ced Hesse and Pippa Trench are interested in the question of who is managing the commons. They point out that in Sahelian countries all common lands have been transferred to the public domain under government controlled management, for over 40 years. Local people have been considered to be incapable of managing common property, the community being considered to be unable to stop users from exploiting the resource (Hesse and Trench, 2000:5). So the State with its colonial heritage of managing natural resources, imposed two different external solutions namely privatization and nationalization (Hesse and Trench, 2000:5). However the policies have changed today. Government and international institutions have followed the rhetoric of local participation by involving in certain ways the local population in the management of natural resources.

What are the commons? What is common property and what are common resources?

For Ronald, Oakerson, a commons is an economic resource or facility subject to individual use but not to individual possession. It is a resource shared by a community of producers or consumers (Oakerson, 1986:13). He continues by showing the diversity of types of commons resources such as the type of resources, the physical situation or form, the type of access and use etc. Commons resources can have fixed location or occur as fugitive resource (fish, wildlife); some are renewable (grasslands) some are not (oil pools); some are both open access and indivisible and therefore must be organized as common property; some are treated as a commons by choice. The common meaning which brings together all these specifications and diversity is that all common property deals with one key question: “how to coordinate individual users to attain an optimal rate of production or consumption for the whole community” (Oakerson, 1986: 13). Indeed he argues that all common property falls, by definition, into the broad range of partial subtractability. Each individual user is potentially capable of subtracting from the welfare of the other users (ibid: 15). However what Oakerson is trying to do is to propose a model of analyzing common property resources. It is first necessary to have an appropriate set of rules based on limiting conditions and second the same economies of sharing that Samuelson demonstrated with respect to a pure public good may also be available to the users of common property (ibid:15). For Ford Runge, “common property institutions may

actually contain much that is valuable, and new institutional arrangements with common property characteristics may also be worthwhile” (Runge, 1986:32). Poverty, natural resource dependency, and resulting uncertainties thus create an incentive structure that may make common property a comparatively rational solution to certain problems of resource management (Runge, 1986: 35). Creating common property can be a solution to minimize these three key problems characteristics of village economy: poverty, critical dependency on a local agricultural and natural resource base, and a high degree of uncertainty with respect to income streams. But the key problem in common property resource analysis is the question of property. Property status is the key to assure and secure the resources use in a situation of commons resources. This question of property has been discussed by researchers such as Moore (1998), Christian Lund (2002: 12-13; 2001:14), Carola Lentz (2006: 2) and Hagberg (1998:59) in terms of how access to, use to, and control over resource are organized in society. They show how this question is much more a matter of relationship between persons over things. Moore stipules clearly also that “property is not about things but about relationship between and among persons with regard to things” (Moore, 1998: 33). Control over land has been and is still used as a way of defining belonging and, as an instrument to control the labor and /or taxes of those who live on the land (Lentz, 2006:2).

Common property which concerns the forest management scheme here in the case of Bougnounou, is built and practiced as co-ownership rights by collecting and putting together woodlands and bushes belonging (in terms of traditional - local ownership) to different lineages inside a village and to different villages. This forest scheme proposes and imposes here a common resource, a common use and access (not free access) and a common management to the local actor of 30 villages. How to read the practice which is taking place besides the activities of the management of the common forest?

- Forest management as development project

The kind of forest management scheme discussed here has been supported by FAO and UNDP Programs in many African countries in order to optimize the management of the secondary tropical forests in Africa. A management of natural resources in which the participation of local population is underlined and in which the benefits of the local population is taken into account has mobilized the implication of these UN Organizations

as well as many NGOs. Indeed countries like Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Senegal... have experienced the problematic and the logics of already built management scheme since many years today. Jesse Ribot focuses on the charcoal chain production in Senegal and was trying to put out the real benefits of local people involved in this kind of scheme and market. He shows how the market of woodcutting and charcoal production is built on the villager's forest resources but without their involvement. He insisted on the difference which should be made between local communities. Villagers are not uniform communities (Ribot, 1995; Agrawal, 1997). The charcoal producers are a type of actors different from the villagers. The market is the important thing for the State and the villagers were not taken into account; "Forestry policy and practice has progressively separated commercial from subsistence forest uses and users, and concentrated control over forest -based production and forest product markets in the hands of urban merchants" (Ribot, 1995: 1589). These types of management scheme in the domain of forestry have taken the long tradition by dividing user rights into two categories; commercial and subsistence (Ribot, 2003:1). So all the rights of usage and of access have been specified according to the policy of control and management of the State through forestry agents. The forestry policy gives rights and conceives contractual arrangements in a manner to protect this double system of control and of management (Ribot, 2003: 1). Moreover, it is important not to confuse the comprehension, the practices and the logics of the local actors directly involved in the management scheme and the market process and of the others villagers (non members) in the case of participatory project. The participatory philosophy puts the idea that local population and the village itself should get benefits from what is doing for them with them inside the process. But the members who really work (especially in the case of wood cutting) make complain to show that they do not want to work for the whole village, for those who didn't do anything. In 2005 these facts were at the center of debates of Bounounou woodcutters because this job is the most difficult one. Ribot also argued in his study of Nazinon forest management that the co-operative members feel that these uses of their funds are wrong. They feel the funds are for them and that the village is stealing from them (Ribot, 1999:41). Even so these funds belong to the village according to the rules of the management of this forest (9% of the salaries of the woodcutters). The co-operative has some control but it is

intended for public works, since the forest ostensibly belong to the village as a whole (Ribot, 1999:41).

All these reflections point out the understanding of the local actors on the question of participation in the management of renewable natural resources through this kind of scheme. It is relevant to look at and take into account the perceptions and the definitions of the various local actors with respect to about managing natural resources in common. Ribot shows how with this kind of participatory project local actors, principally the chiefs or local power, are used as intermediaries or as symbols of the “indigenous” to legitimate the project to the local population: non-State authorities supporting State authorities in the process (Ribot, 1999: 25). This reflection kept our attention in the case of Bougnounou where the project used by the approval of Bougnounou chief to have all the villages that were villages subjected to the strength of the chief of Bougnounou “the decision to join the forest management scheme has come from Bougnounou...” (Informant).

Background

Burkina Faso is a Sahelian West African country. It has an area of 274.000 km², a population of about 12.000.000 inhabitants, of which 80% of rural ones and a growth average annual rate of the population of 2, 4%. The tree potential is the object of different estimations that vary between 502 million of m³ and 177 million of m³ (Rouamba, 2003). In Burkina Faso, almost all forests can be considered as secondary. This situation linked to the successive droughts, combined notably with poverty, the extended agro-pastoral production systems and the strong dependence on forest resources, provokes the formation of the secondary forests (Rouamba, 2003).

Wood constitutes the principal energy source for households and these needs are satisfied from the exploitation of natural renewable resources. The principal urban centers of the country have known an important crisis of wood. Wood produced by projects as « forest Exploitation of Gonsé » and « green Belt of Ouagadougou » (PNLD, 1987) reforested by eucalyptus, neem, cassia and gmelia plants (PNLD phase 01/01/1986 -31/12/1987) were not enough. It was necessary to find other productive wood areas for the urban centers. The researches of Backer, of Dubreuil and of Sentenac (Maudoux, 1985) have evaluated

the needs of wood and the production potentialities of wood in each province of the national territory.

The country is divided into 45 provinces. Bougnounou, since 1983, is an administrative district of the province of Ziro. The southern parts of the country where Bougnounou is situated were identified as providing zones of tree *potential*. Located 145 km from Ouagadougou, Bougnounou produces wood for Ouagadougou since 16 years through an exploitation strategy that involves local actors as “community” exploiters and producers. The strategy of the State, through the national project, is to use the existence of the natural forests proclaimed threatened and to propose a strategy which allows the forest to be fire wood supplier, as a source of economic benefits, and at the same time assuring its permanence (Delnooz, 2003). The forest management scheme is in fact based on many woodlands or bushes (*Go* in nuni language) of villages which have constituted several protected forests of the administrative districts. According to the logics of the project, all these forests form one forest. But for the villagers the forest is merely several bushes.

The social context of the forest management scheme

“They came to say that our bushes are in danger and then we should protect it. They will help us to protect it” (informant woodcutters, villagers). The villagers understood that the national project named PNUD/FAO/BKF/085/011 came to inform and to ask the participation of local people in the forest scheme that it conceived. But what they did not understand is that “later they come to speak about wood selling nevertheless they said that they come to help us to protect our bushes” (informant). Bougnounou was the first village contacted by the project. The creation of the forest management scheme had been possible through a negotiation between the national project and the local population in particular with the chief and the notables of the village. It has been more a question of information and explanation of the scheme than a question of negotiation: “When the FAO project came in the village, it asked to have a portion of forest in order to create the “chantier” (the scheme: literally: building site). The chief and the notable ones of the village decide to give one of the bushes of the village” (informant). Bougnounou accepted to be the first partner.

It is interesting to know how the traditional relationship between villages played a role in the involvement of villages as partners of the scheme. Most of the villages could

not refuse to belong to the forest management scheme, because the first negotiation between the project managers and the communities had already been made in Bougnounou administrative district. Many villages belong traditionally to Bougnounou. So the agreement of Bougnounou has meant the agreement of the other villages. The Bougnounou district has 20 villages and 13 villages belong to the forest scheme. These villages are those over which Bougnounou has a traditional power through its history and through the allegiance of these villages to a big “fetish”, the *Kwere* of Bougnounou. The *Kwere* exercises power over people in the village and over the all the villages which “have come to take a “daughter of the *Kwere*””². For instance, Zao village took a “daughter” of the Bougnounou *Kwere*. So traditionally and in their customary rules, the village of Zao is under Bougnounou power. Bougnounou can decide many things for this village. Dana our second village is the village of a nephew of Bougnounou ancestors. So traditionally it follows Bougnounou. So people of these villages said: “The decision to join the forest management scheme has come from Bougnounou... They gave them the information that a project is coming to help them with their bushes and they need many villages”. So they joined them. After the agreement, the scheme has decided to put together bushes which do not belong together. Dana exploits in this case a unity composed of the bushes of two other villages (Salo and Sapo). Every village has its own part of bushes in the unity. Zao village also exploits its unity with two other villages (Pébiou and Laré) which also have their own bushes in the unity. And every village knows its limits in the unity. But in the scheme there are no limits in a unity.

These Nuna³ villages a political system based on kinship and lineages institutions. They are called decentralized societies⁴ in contrast to centralized societies which are organized around one big institution (the king or the chief) (Fortes & Evans-Pritchard, 1940: 5). This means that these societies are based on the autonomy of lineages which have their own history and their own part of bushes inside the village. Every village has given for

² See Duval, 1985; Zougouri, 2006

³ Nuni (sing), Nuna (plural): the ethnic group of the people of all the villages of Bougnounou administrative district

⁴ This context normally should much more underline the independence of the villages from each other and inside the village from each lineage to another. But we are in a specific context of over using the power between villages based on the possession of a “fetish” *Kwere*. It is indeed important to know that the customary power in Bougnounou knew a considerable conceptual evolution, a constant readjustment due to many aspects which are analyzed in our thesis.

the scheme one part of the bushes. This decision has usually been made by the autochthons of the village in terms of the one who has the ownership of the land (the customary chief).

These villages have the practice of cutting and selling splitted wood for everyday consumption, for cooking of the dolo (local beer) and also for travelers that pass. The big wood cutting is done generally for building houses and granaries. The practice of splitted wood cutting is much more than a simple activity, it is part of the every day life of these villagers. It's part of their culture. It didn't begin today so they refuse to renounce of this practice. The management scheme is based on big fresh and dead wood cutting and selling according strict methods of cutting and selling.

The State logics

Today in Africa, one of the greatest concerns of the governments, the institutions of development and also of the population (participation) is how to make a sustainable management of the renewable natural resources in general and in particular water and the forest

Through the project PNUD/FAO/BKF/085/011, the Burkina Faso State introduce in many provinces forest management schemes (de Cassou (Province du Ziro), Bougnounou - Nebiel (Province du Ziro), Sapouy - Bieha (Province du Ziro), Silly - Zawara - Poni (Province de la Sissili)). This has permit the State first to perform its patrimonialisation politics by putting all "free natural resources domain" under its possession and its power. The creation of the schemes is also an environmental aim for the State by trying to protect and impose a conservation program everywhere in the country. The third intent of the State was to solve its concerns of providing the main urban areas with wood fuel. The fourth intent was to generate incomes for the various actors by cutting and selling wood. All these objectives are doing through the rhetoric of participation of the population in the different villages concerned by the project.

The forest management scheme of Bougnounou is grounded upon on what is called "protected forests" which are different from "classified forest" created under the colonial administration (Ribot, 2003). In Burkina Faso, forests resources are devised on two main

categories of domain according their history and their juridical status: classified domain and protected domain. Classified domain is composed of classified forests, national parks and reserves fauna. In general the type of management of this natural resource is a management done by forested services with consultation with local population, or a management under contract with communitarian enterprises or again a management under contract with private enterprises (Akossongo, 2004). Protected domains are domains which are not classified but juridically belong to the State. The article 227 du Zatu N°AN VIII – 0039 BIS/FP/PRES of june 4th 1991 says that « the protected forests are the ones which have not been object of a settlement of classification ». The forests of this protected domain have got many terminologies and specifications. It is indeed interesting to look at the terminological evolution that these forests have known: natural forest, sacred forest, forest of collectivities. As the first officer of project evaluation said in 1985 : « In the begining we called them forests of collectivities in relation with the decret of July 4 1935. But today we call the project BKF forests protected forests». However the management of the protected forest has been copied on the management of the classified forest. By creating the forest management scheme they put the local population in contract with the State in the usage and the management of their bushes. In all the way the project PNUD/FAO/BKF/085/011 has engaged the communities to manage ecologically the protected forest, to cut and sell wood through a wood chain, and finally to be in contract with the State through their forests. What is also interestssing is that the local population call these forests “forêts classées” (classified forest) even if they are not delimited. But the terminology of the State doesn’t identify this kind of forests as “forêt classée” but “forêt protégée”. The presence of the forest agents military contribute to fix people in this denomination. Only the member of the local commnunity can have access to the forest and this through the differents activities of management.

The forest management scheme of Bougnounou - Nebiel - Dalo has a surface of 24.852 hectares divided into 11 unities. Each unity of management is subdivided in 15 pieces (from 80 to 250 ha each). The principal activity of the management scheme being the exploitation of wood, each piece is exploited each year and can yet be exploited only 15 years later. This mode of exploitation is based on a revolution which allows the execution of only one cut of half of marketable wood with the safeguarding of the 50% remainder

thus ensuring the perennality of the forest until the end of the rotation (according to the project).

How the scheme has created its community around the activity of big wood cutting?

From 1990 – 1993, the scheme was led only by the project financed by UNDP and FAO. From 1993 – 2002, it was led partly by the project and by the community created in the villages (UGGF). Since 2002 it is totally managed by the Union of Forests Management Cooperative (UGGF). This UGGF is composed of 30 GGF (Groupement de Gestion Forestière – forest management cooperative) which corresponds to 30 villages. In a GGF there normally should be woodcutters. You chose to cut wood before to be a member of the GGF. These structures are the community created by the forest management scheme inside the villages. Thus therefore the identities of the actors and the types of activities are categorized according to the scheme logics and legal statute. A project has in fact his cultural logic, its way to work with the population, its way to name the population and the things, to categorize the identities around itself. All the terms and words that follow the scheme are constructed in this logic: Technical direction, forest management cooperative (GGF), the Union, management Counsel, internal control Committee, market, woodcutters, wood stores, trucks, load, of cut unity, of regeneration etc., and all that according to a strict methodology supposed respected. In this sense population should make themselves woodcutter before to be take account in the community of the scheme. The members in the GGF and the UGGF should be woodcutters before to be consider as the local actors of the forest managment scheme. the local actors of the scheme are woodcutters who constitute its community. When the scheme talks about its community, it is the scheme members – woodcutters at all the level of the organisation.

Indeed the scheme here is in the heart of several socio-economic stakes and policies (public policies and also local policies) which put in presence several actors that we conceptualized, as Hagberg (1998) had done it in three types of actors: the local actors, the external actors and the actors' in-between. The local actors are those who live permanently inside the village and « belong » to the village (which includes the woodcutters and villagers in general). The external actors are those who reside outside

the village, the rural area but who have a relation with these villages through this scheme, specifically the forest administrations' services in town, the public's institutions, the partners of development, the truck drivers, the wood merchants in town etc. The actors in-between are the actors who live inside the village and the rural area in general but belong to external institutions. Such as the public administration personal, the personal of development project etc. All these actors have their interests specified on the various levels not only of the protection but also of the management of the forest.

The big wood exploitation

The fresh big wood is cut during three months between January and March of every year. It is cut by women and men.

The dead big wood is cut in any period of the year and everywhere in the unity.

The woodcutters should go to cut the wood in their unity and particularly in the delimited parcels (or pieces) of the year. They keep it in the forest. Few days later they go back in the bush to arrange their wood according the measure of the *stere* (1 cubic meter: the local measure is 1, 5 m height) and to bring it near the trucks' road. The trucks should be filling with 18 / 20 *steres* of wood. The difference today between fresh big wood and dead big wood reside in the process to get the money. For the fresh big wood, it is after three months, that the trucks come to begin to take the woods. For the dead wood the woodcutters can have their money in the same time after filling the truck. Each woodcutter should give a transportation ticket to the driver in which it is marked the number of the *stere*, the number of the unity, the name of the village and the name of the woodcutter. This ticket is delivered in a control post in the two main roads used by the trucks. They deliver the ticket and they also pay the money there. The money will reach the woodcutters in June for the fresh wood (But nowadays they can have it earlier than this date). They cut and they wait for the money. The market chain requires this method. This allows the strict control of the trucks, the local actors, the charges, and the payment of the fees by the driver who sometimes can escape the control post after making a deal with the woodcutter by giving the money directly to him.

All this regulation and organization are what the scheme imposed to the local actors. But besides that, they developed many strategies to escape or to facilitate the exploitation and the wood process in general. For instance inside the GGF they recreated many small

groups of woodcutters. As they, the dead wood is much more difficult to cut. So it is done by men in general. In this dead big wood, the woodcutters count upon the small groups that they recreate. The groups can be made up of 2 to 8 persons according to their need of money of the day or of the week or of the month. If it is a daily need they go 5 or 8 persons for a one day cut. As they said, they go with the truck directly in the bush and they fill the truck the same day. This money that they will get, will serve only for a coming market the day after (every three days is the market in all the villages). If the need for money is urgent they will not be more than three because they want a lot of money. In the fresh wood activities the men do not make groups. The money is not enough for one person with the time it takes. For the fresh big wood mainly for women, it is the same scenario. However today the number of women involved in the fresh wood is decreasing. They are stopping to be woodcutter. The incomes that they got from their fresh wood selling is use to produce commercial fund. Cooking and selling the local beer is today the main source of income for them. For the men, fresh wood cutting is easy but “the money doesn’t come quickly”. They prefer dead wood. In addition when it comes to fill the truck the woodcutters, always add 2 more stere with accordance to the driver. The money of the two steres will not be declared in the ticket. This negotiation is dealt between the two actors (local and external).

The “normal wood” i.e. fresh or dead big wood costs 2200 FCFA / stere (4, \$). This 2200 FCFA is divided as follows:

1100 =50% corresponds to the portion of the woodcutter

600 =27% is the portion which is gave to the Union who is responsible of the scheme now for the settlement capital of the whole protected forest

300 =14% is for the State forest taxes

200 = 9% is for the working capital fund of the forest management cooperative in the village.

This description allows following the process of normal wood cutting generally criticized by the local actors. Their choice and practice of splitted wood use seems to fit in a logical argumentation which take into account the long process to gain money through the scheme.

The local actors' logics

Besides of this “well organized” forest management scheme, local actors have developed their own logic of management of the scheme. They exited the established management by focusing in the activity of splitted wood.

Splitted wood and the reality of the management in common of the forest management scheme

Dacoré, the splitted wood in nuni language is the wood that they cut in two or many pieces. Forever this splitted wood has been their practice for the domestic activities and later an activity for selling to other people. This cutting splitted wood is more than a simple activity. It's a cultural activity done mainly by women and sometimes by men. In accordance with the activities of the forest management scheme, the splitted wood is defined as the rest of small woods (branches of trees) which stay and which have a diameter lower than 10 centimeters. Nowadays, this splitted wood has taken a proportion as it brings all the institutions of the State to wonder about the causes and also the consequences of such a phenomenon. The splitted wood is done on all area of the forest and in any period of the year.

Zao cooperative of forest management (GGF) counts around 20 women and 20 men. In Dana they are 25 women and 24 men as the members of forest management cooperative. These members are the only ones who can access the exploitation of the unity for wood cutting or for the collecting of the forest seeds and the regeneration activities. In Zao and Dana all members are involved in splitted wood cutting instead of cutting normal wood according to the scheme's activities. In addition, even non-members in the village are involved in the splitted wood cutting. This splitted wood activity as we said is a cultural activity in this region, and it has always been done. So they see no reason for not doing so “the chantier did not show us how to sell wood. They found us doing this activity” (woodcutter). According to the technical director: “the splitted wood should not be an activity of the forest management scheme because it will kill the wood chain”. These villages produce less wood for the market put in place by the project. This splitted wood selling became very interesting for them and the wood trucks which are linked to the wood chain begin to be interested also of this market of splitted wood. Another market

has in this way settled beside the market of the wood chain belonging to the project communities. How to convince the villagers to stop opening this market? The worry of the technical management concerns the type of wood which is involved in the splitted wood. They use sometimes the normal fresh wood for making splitted wood. It is a reality that the production of normal wood for the trucks and then for the market chain in this village knows a lower production. The market of splitted wood is increasing. The splitted wood is an opened and speed market for the woodcutters: “you are not depending on someone else”. They sell by stack of wood from 100 FCFA to 500 FCFA. Three or four splitted wood forms a stack of 100 FCFA.

The reaction of the villagers in front of the question of the technical direction is that the available fresh wood and dead wood that they should cut are now very far away. They can not go so far to cut these woods for this money. “You have your money in the same moment you do not have to wait one month at least to resolve your domestic problem”. “And it is easy to use the bike to bring the wood in the village for the big wood sometimes you have problems to bring them in the truck road” (specially during the rain season) and “your wood stays there many months before you get possibility to bring it on the road”. Normally all the members of each village which exploit the unity should go everywhere in the unity. But sometimes they stop it if they go far away from their traditional limits. These limits are always taken into account because in every new year of cutting (in January) for example each village makes its sacrifices of its own part. Because of their belief in *kwere*, in January they do two different sacrifices. The first one is what they call the “*Dodjo*” sacrifice. This is a thanks ceremony to show that everyone has been safe during this year by entering and using the forest. This is the most expensive one. The second one is the demand of the authorization and the protection of the *kwere* before entering the bush. This is done in two spaces: “The space” of the *kwere* and the sacred space which are involving in the question of the bush. All of these different sacrifices are paid by each cooperative of the village not by the union. The union also has to pay its own thankful sacrifice for the names of all its cooperatives in Bougnounou the siege of the union (UGGF). Ribot has also showed how this aspect is always involved in this kind of management of forest especially in the case of Nazinon where “the notables asked for a loan for a sacrifice in the name of the whole village... They asked each year.

It's a sacrifice in the name of the village before the harvest. The co-operative is obliged to pay out. We cannot refuse" (Ribot, 1999: 42). Here in the case of these villages, it is important for them to not mix the property of the space, of the bush, not to make confusion on the resources they should use or which are involving in the negotiation for the activities of this forest management scheme. As argued by Weber it is relevant to specify the type of resources involved in an activity (Weber, 1998). The sacrifices concern the type of resources which are in use through the management. The owner of the different bush "has opened" (in terms of access for everyone with is accorded through certain sacrifices) their bush for this. They insist that it is only woodcutting and the linked activities like collecting forest seed and fruits or for the fire-breaks. The activities concerning lands and rivers are not allowed. This is not said but it is known by every one. Before the forest management scheme, the bushes of every lineage were strictly managed by customary rules and law and interdictions (Tchulu⁵). The Tchulu keep people from cutting wood or cultivating land or fishing in a bush which doesn't belong to your lineage, to your family. This kind of interdiction still exists in the forest management scheme even if it seems not to belong to local people anymore. But in reality if some sacrifices are not done, nobody will enter there. The type of right is then linked to the type of space and to the type of resource (Weber, 1998: 21). Renewable natural resources are composed of a layering of resources and of spaces that do not profit from same rules of access of usage and of management. Embracing this idea, Hesse and Trench argue that rights of access particularly to higher-potential areas, vary across different groups of people and are often governed by a range of social factors including kinship ethnicity, status and residence that have been established historically as result of alliance, collaboration and competition between groups (Hesse and Trench, 2000:10) .

This crisis of the splitted wood is revealing in the way the local actors appropriate the reality of the "common resource". First they find that the type of wood that it asked to produce is not interesting for them in terms of benefits, second, they also think that is not useful for a village to have a small part of your own bush in the unity. Even if the scheme has explained that the unity belongs for all the villages, they know that they cannot

⁵ Forbids, totem, secret of word, incest

exploit more than it should be. Third, they think that it is not useful to do this practice of cutting such big wood for this small money, they do not understand why they are the first worker in this scheme and then they are the ones who get the lowest benefits of the wood market. Their rural market doesn't profit them as much as they wanted. They are the ones who follow strict rules of management and regeneration in the forest management scheme. Fourth, they do not agree with the use of their money for the benefit of all the villages than for their own direct benefits. These activities as they said are devaluated. Being woodcutters is a very difficult work. That destroys. At the end splitted wood is the way of looking for (finding) your money according to your own needs.

State, villagers, woodcutters, rural wood markets

The State through the local forest agents and the technical direction of the UGGF has tried to put an end to this activity of splitted wood in the wood market chain. They cannot stop it. So they create new forest fees for the activity of splitted wood. So before to split woods, the woodcutter should pay 2000 FCFA of fees per year to show that you are a splitted woodcutter (since 2005). They pay this fee direct to the forest service agent. In this case everyone in the village split wood. They are not obliged to be a member of the forest management cooperative before to do it. They pay their 2 000 FCFA (4 \$) per year and they cut the wood. They say how they discussed on this subject with the forest agent and the technical director of the forest management scheme. These people had proposed 10 000FCFA (19 \$) per year but they fight to pay this price now. Now they feel now that they have a good control on the rural wood market in their hand. They cut the normal wood when they want or when they need money. This automatically put a distance between them and the forest management wood chain. Now, for the whole period of cut, Dana can have 4 trucks of fresh wood and Zao some year no truck or only very few. They are in the management and they follow their own rules of getting their benefits. Forest management scheme can not count upon these villages of which the geographic position is an advantage for the sale of splitted wood: villages of the road. As the report of the technical director of the forest management said the activity of splitted wood is the activity of splitted wood is a disloyal competition between the carriers of the big wood and splitted wood (Yaro, 2003). He continue that the Direction of forest management

(DAFOR), the different administrative responsible did consultations to find how to deal with this problem. They have decided this action plan:

- interdiction to use fresh wood for splitted wood
- obligation to be a member before to cut splitted wood
- Harmonization and fixing of the price of splitted wood while taking account of the one of the stere of the big wood
- Application of the same distribution plan of the money of the woodcutter as in the case of the big wood
- The creation of rural markets with the formation and the installation of a village clerk marketing of splitted wood

The difficult question here is that all of their worry about for example the use of fresh wood for splitted wood will exist. This is linked to their demand for be a member of the GGF before to cut splitted wood. Every one in the village is in this activity: from women to men, from young people to old people.

These actions were decided in 2003. But in 2005 they got only deal with the villagers may be two: paying of 2000 FCFA per year for the forest tax and convince them to not cut fresh wood for making splitted wood. Through our observation this question is not clear. To have fresh splitted wood you should have cut big fresh wood and then use the remainder of the branches as splitted wood. If you have fresh splitted wood and you didn't full a truck for splitted wood. The question is there.

For the market itself, the wood trucks appreciate also splitted wood because it is a ready wood for direct consummation. In town it will cost much for the wholesalers carriers the owner of the trucks. This is another interesting market for them. Now the urban market in town will guide much more the demand of the type of wood in the rural market. May be the market of especially splitted wood will increase and finally poses some environmental question for the forest management scheme. The activity of splitted wood is a manner to disconnect itself from common management of the renewable natural resources in the framework of the forest management scheme.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to underline a case study on common resources management in Burkina Faso. we are in a situation where renewable natural resources management is put

in a process of commodification in the sense that people by following the policy of the project PNUD /FAO/BKF/o85/011 through a forest management scheme, has transformed their relationship into commercial relationship by cutting and selling wood through wood market chain. This is one the reason why local actors have been involved to a participation project. The splitted wood selling has showed how local actors expressed their logic their proper understandings and perceptions of what is means to be linked to a common resource as managers, as “owners” and as workers producing economic benefits for the others. This study brought out a clash between local actors and the State which underlined many conflicts such as between the splitted wood and normal wood cutting, between protected forests and classified forests, between woodcutters and the UGGF (who play the role of the project). Splitted wood activity is a way for the local actors to escape from the State; they put themselves in a level where they can be a real interlocutor. The State regulates the market of big wood while the local actors regulate themselves the splitted wood market. Today the splitted wood market is an opened market besides the normal wood market.

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