



What role for forest certification in improving relationships between logging companies and communities? Lessons from FSC in Cameroon

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Why this research?

■ Objectives

- To review the FSC-induced 'social' schemes
- To assess the effectiveness of these schemes with 3 FSC-certified logging companies (6 logging concessions)
- To add another piece to the FSC-puzzle in the Congo Basin

■ Research questions

- What is the effectiveness of MDPs?
- What impacts on the 'communities / logging companies' relationship?





Findings

■ FSC-induced improvements

- ‘Socio-economic’ units with dedicated budgets
- MDPs with dedicated budgets
 - To cover running costs and annual activities
 - Range US\$ 4-7k/yr
- Conflict-resolution teams
- Increased participation of local population to forest management (border patrolling, anti-poaching...)
- *Ad-hoc* policies targeting indigenous people
- Participatory maps of customary spaces



MDPs

■ Mission

- Permanent interface between communities and companies
- Collect complaints and arbitrate conflicts
- Identify and manage 'development' projects

■ Structure

- The 'legal' option (Chief of village, Local and external elite, indigenous people, youth, women, farmers reps.)
- The 'company' option (1 'manager' each 2/3 villages, 'associate members' – company and council, 'observers' – local admin, chiefs, NGOs)



A vertical structure

MDPs a 'construct' of the companies

- Mistrust of local population
- Lack of ownership
- No engagement of the local admin

Consequences

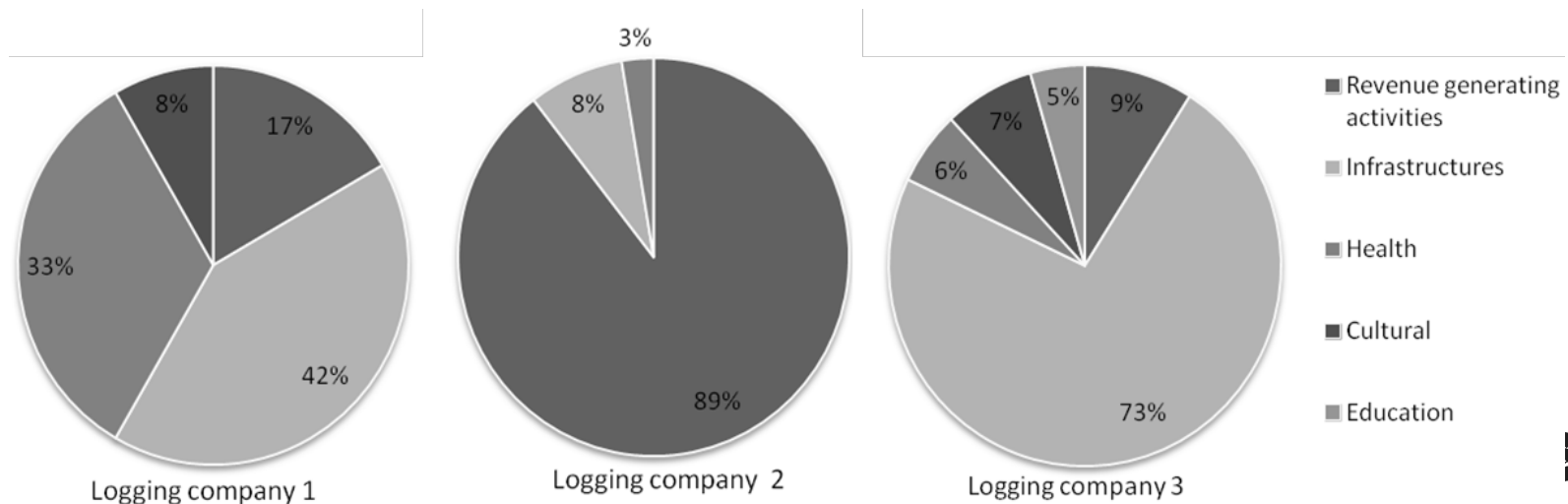
- No legitimisation
- Weak representativeness
- Company leadership on dev't projects
 - The more visible v. the more useful



Dev't projects

■ Funding of micro-projects

- Money managed by the MDPs
- Money directly managed by the company
- Funded with stumpage levies (US\$ 1-2/m³)





Effectiveness

- **Not (yet) effective on existing conflicts**
 - Overlapping of logging titles
 - Degradation of culturally relevant places
 - Delimitation of production forests v. 'agro-forestry' areas

- **A source of new intra-communitarian conflicts**
 - On disbursed funds
 - On customary land
 - On suspicion of company/MDP-reps collusion

Conclusion

■ FSC-induced improvements

- ‘Social’ issues better integrated into management
- Improved forms of conflict-resolution (negotiation v. imposition)
- New benefit-sharing schemes
- Certification helps to enforce forest regulations

■ Shortcomings

- CBs evaluate ‘existence’ v. ‘effectiveness’ of MDPs
- Companies show ‘existence’ but not (yet) convinced about the usefulness of investment as part of ‘good management practices’



Some ideas



- **Improve the social policy of certified companies**
 - Consider the distribution of power within the communities
 - Review the current top-down approach
 - Identify the real 'needs' of communities
 - Community vs individuals





Merci

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**Thinking beyond
the canopy**

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