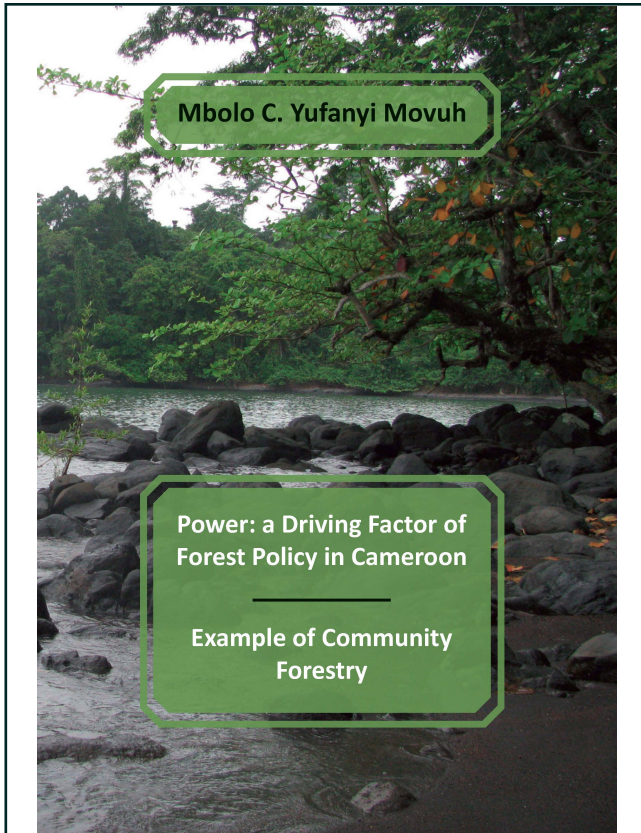




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Power: a Driving Factor of Forest Policy in Cameroon
Example of Community Forestry



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1. Introduction and Background

Forest policy sciences emerged in the mid-90s with its primary focus in the temperate regions, but swiftly shifted its concerns to tropical regions, due to researchers' curiosity about the principal causes of deforestation (De Jong et al., 2012). Due to the growing influence of forests or forestry in issues such as sustainable development, social equity, biodiversity conservation and climate change, forest policy became even more important in the later years. The role of forest policy in promoting community forestry and local governance in natural resource managements has been emphasized in recent international scientific discourse and publications (see Ribot & Larson, 2012; Oyono et al., 2012; León et al., 2012; Larson & Pulhin, 2012; Larson & Dahal, 2012; Cronkleton et al., 2012; Arts, 2012; Broekhoven et al., 2012; Coleman & Fleischman, 2012; Cashore & Stone, 2012; Poteete & Ribot, 2011; Andersson & Agrawal, 2011; Barsimantov et al., 2011; *Rebugio et al.*, 2010; Schreckenberg et al., 2009; Wollenberg et al., 2007; Flint et al., 2008; Charnley & Poe, 2007; Ribot & Agrawal, 2006; Ribot, 2003; 2009; Larson, 2005; Blaikie, 2006; Dahal & Capistrano, 2006; Shackleton et al. 2002). Specifically for Cameroon, a trend of theoretical and practical studies has been evident in recent years, analyzing forest policy and how community forestry and its processes have been a game changer in natural resource management (see Oyono et al., 2012; Oyono, 2009; Oyono 2005a,b; Oyono 2004a,b; Alemagi, 2010, 2011; Mbile et al., 2009; Etoungou, 2003; Mandodo, 2003; Sobze, 2003; Mambo, 2004, 2006; Ribot, 2003, 2004; Bigombe', 2003).

Although forest policy science is relatively young, forest policy in the tropics, especially in Africa, is as old as the debut of colonialism in the continent. In Cameroon, for example, forest policy reforms can be traced far back to colonial times (Larson & Ribot, 2007; Oyono, 2004b),



with very negative impacts and outcomes. Nevertheless, in recent times, there have been positive developments in forest policy formulation and implementation – including the local people in forest management and correcting their previous exclusion by the colonial policy in the management of their forest resources, thus acknowledging the self-determined life of people within the forest. One of these developments is community forestry. This synthesized framework paper not only summarises but also analyses forest policy through community forestry. Power being the core of analyses as a driving factor of forest policy in Cameroon, the framework questions the “role that Power plays in forest policy in Cameroon, using community forestry as an example”. With scientific questions such as: (1) how can power be described in the context of forest policy, in this case community forestry; (2) what are the power processes? and (3) what outcomes of this power processes could be observed?, the framework analyzes the importance of power through political and critical theories, connecting them with theories and concepts formulated by the Community Forestry Working Group in Göttingen, backed by empirical data collected on the field between 2008 to 2011.

Most, if not all, of the publications mentioned above have focused their attention on analyzing the impacts and outcomes of forest policy through the spectrum of local governance in forestry or natural resource management. Single or comparative case studies in one or a cross-section of countries have produced far-reaching results in all the case studies; these, not being self-evident especially after the forest policy change in Cameroon and elsewhere in Africa. For example, Ribot & Larson (2012) examined the effects of forest policy change and decentralization on local communities through the implementation of REDD (Reduced Emissions from Degradation and Deforestation). They argue that, “in spite of reforms since the end of the colonial period and more recent discourses of participation and democracy, the forestry policy environment rarely supports the needs or aspirations of rural communities” (ibid.: 233). They further reiterate that, “poverty is not just about being left out of economic growth. It is produced by the very policies that enable some to profit – today from timber, firewood and charcoal, tomorrow from carbon”. Finally, they conclude that, “the outcomes of

forest policy and implementation processes worldwide demonstrate the multiple and competing interests and goals of different stakeholders and the weaker power of those who consistently lose out, [...]” and that, “to make forestry policy emancipatory, strong social protections or safeguards are still needed that require REDD and other interventions to support and work through local democratic institutions”.

Oyono et al. (2012), investigated forest policy through, “the state of livelihoods under the exercise of new community rights to forests in rural Cameroon”. In their findings, they argue that rights-based reforms such as management and marketing rights in community forestry have not improved basic assets and means at the household level. This is a very relevant statement or finding, since in the basics of this framework paper, our social and economic outcomes boil down analytically to how the policy (e.g., community forestry) affects the local forest user. They describe the forest policy process in terms of community and market rights as being of “popular participation in decision-making, inclusion, discretionary powers, equity, democratic accountability, efficiency, transparency, collective-well-being and ecological sustainability” (ibid.: 175). All these culminate in a process of a shift in forest policy aiming at positive social, economic and ecological outcomes for the forest custodians. Oyono et al. conclude that the process and practice of community forestry through rights-based or development-based approaches of livelihoods have not been significantly consolidated. The present research also found similar indications, and this framework paper sheds light on the processes in the social relationship and mindset of stakeholders directly involved in these approaches.

Larson & Dahal (2012), in their comparative study carried out in ten countries in Asia, Africa and South America (including Cameroon), explain the forest policy shifts through forest tenure reforms, with implications for both communities and forests. In their argument, they assert that this is based theoretically, in part, “on the belief that communities can be good forest stewards” and, practically, on the understanding that “those responsible for implementation do not always appear to follow these benchmarks”. They further stress that “understanding this emerging dynamic as a forest tenure reform calls for the systematic and comparative analysis of the associated processes and outcomes



of these changes, amidst other global transitions, and of the need to develop frameworks and approaches that can facilitate such comparisons". While their research explores the origin, nature, goals and results of policies formally recognising or granting new community rights to forests, with particular emphasis on understanding the challenges they have faced in implementation and the extent to which they do, they do not go as far as analyzing the social relationships and the background mindsets of the stakeholders involved. The framework paper goes further in this regard.

Because this paper is limited to an analysis of the power relations in forest policy through the case study of community forestry, the detailed contemporary discourse and practical empirical findings of the literature cited will not be discussed. Nevertheless, the above-mentioned literature mirrors the current state of art. In the literature, forest policy in Cameroon has been linked to participation, equity, livelihood, tenure and sustainability issues, with the stakeholders being the direct connection to these issues. Closely linked to stakeholders' participation is the issue of power (Broekhoven et al., 2012). For Broekhoven et al., understanding stakeholders' relations and dealing with power and powerful groups is essential for the success of forest governance reform processes. Intentionally or otherwise, the above-mentioned recent findings have a limited scope, in that power in forest governance reform (forest policy) typically remains an implication and less an explicitly addressed issue. This is also why this study is important since it explicitly analyzes the power issue.

The framework paper does not contradict most of the findings in the mentioned publications, but goes further to answer the main question of **how "Power" acts as a driving factor in forest policy in Cameroon, through the example of community forestry**. It traces the development of forest policy in Cameroon and the mindset behind policy shifts. It also analyses the social relationships between stakeholders and the outcomes of their interests and actions. The theories and methods presented are scientifically sound in terms of reliability and validity. Forest policy can be understood differently when empirics are viewed through the lenses of different theories. Such endeavors allow the interpretation or explanation of social events, resulting in the creation of

new knowledge when confronted with additional empirical “reality”, or create abstract knowledge that can be applied to new contexts (De Jong et al., 2012). In their paper, De Jong et al. also explain that “each successful use of theory in analyzing a specific forest policy issue is a ‘test’ of the theory and by no way self-evident. Such testing of existing theories is an important contribution to the general academic discussion of each theory. The application and practical use of theory produces new perspectives on both the theory and the empirics” (ibid.: 6). In this synthetic framework book, political and critical theories are used to analyze forest policy processes in Cameroon, within the family of critical policy analysis (Arts, 2012). The framework study focuses on the following main sections:

1. How is the theoretical framework applied in the publications by the author linked to the scientific discourse of forest policy?
2. How is the methodology applied in the publications by the author linked to the scientific discourse of forest policy with emphasis on field research in community forestry?
3. How do the results of the publications by the author correspond with the existing scientific results on community forestry in Cameroon?
4. What is the relevance of the results of the publications by the author for forest policy and forest policy discourse as practiced in Cameroon?

The next sections will present the main contents of the publications by the author, providing the baseline of this framework study:

The article, “The colonial heritage and post-colonial influence, entanglements and implications of the concept of community forestry by the example of Cameroon” (Yufanyi Movuh, 2012), by the author of this framework paper, uses Cameroon and its forest policy to approach the colonial paradigm till date; in the implementation of the Program for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (PSMNR) through Community/Council Forest Managements (CFM) and open-access Forest Management Units (FMU), in conserving and sustainably managing the vast biodiversity of its forest resources. The history of the forest and environmental management is explored, while parallels are drawn confirming the colonial heritage and the continuation of Western-style ideologies, theories and concepts of

community forestry management in Cameroon. The paper is partially based on the concept of the Community Forestry Working Group in Germany, carrying out a comparative research study on “Stakeholders’ Interests and Power as Drivers of Community Forestry”. It uses case studies in the South West Region (SWR) of Cameroon, to verify and confirm the hypothesis that community forestry management is a “colonial heritage”. Furthermore, it uses the background of “post-colonial theory” and Adams & Mulligan’s¹ five points on “colonialism’s legacy for conservation” to strengthen this argument, with a direct link to the impact on the local communities. The author of this article is its sole author.

Secondly, the article, “Back to basics: Considerations in evaluating the outcomes of community forestry” (Maryudi et al., 2012), of which the author of this paper is an equal contributor, presents a theoretical approach on how to analyze the outcomes of community forestry. The contributions of the author can be found in section 2 and 3 of the article, explaining the concept of community forestry based on the core policy objectives of alleviating the poverty of forest users, empowering them, and improving the condition of the forests.

The third article, “Sequence Design of Quantitative and Qualitative Surveys for Increasing Efficiency in Forest Policy Research” by Schusser et al. (2012), presents a method on how to conduct empirical comparative research. It discusses an approach that involves a quantitative study, a qualitative follow-up study and triangulation of the results of both studies. The method is designed to make comparative research more resource-efficient and therefore useful for a large comparison of cases in different countries. The strength of this method is that it allows for the identification of powerful actors within the community

1 See Adams, W. M. & Mulligan, Martin John, 2003 (eds.). *Decolonizing nature: Strategies for conservation in a post-colonial era / edited by William M. Adams and Martin Mulligan* Earthscan Publications, Sterling, Va.: <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/fy036/2002152952.html>.

forestry network. The author of this framework study used the same methods presented in Schusser et al. (2012), to carry out field research for this study. The corresponding author, Carsten Schusser, developed the quantitative design and found scientific ways of triangulating the quantitative and qualitative results. He is the first author of the article.

The fourth article: “Power, the Hidden Factor in Development Cooperation. An Example of Community Forestry in Cameroon”, by Yufanyi Movuh & Schusser (2012), presents the Actor-Centred Power (ACP) concept as a starting point and blueprint of the forest policy study, to examine power as it is wielded in community forestry in Cameroon. It analyzes the empirically applicable actor-centred-power concept, which consists of three elements: trust, (dis)incentives and coercion; and at the same time connects these elements with the post-development theory. The author of this synthetic framework book is the first author of the paper.

The fifth article: “Analyzing the Establishment of Community Forestry (CF) and its processes. Examples from the South West Region of Cameroon” by Yufanyi Movuh (2013), reconstructs and analyzes the establishment of the community forestry processes in Cameroon, questioning the extent to which the community forestry models can act as a decentralization and devolution tool. Analysis show that the community forestry process is centralized, slow, long, complex and expensive, making it difficult for local communities to play an active part in policy implementation. Results also confirm that decentralization and devolution for sustainable local forest governance could offer the communities an opportunity to derive livelihoods from their forests, but the models and processes have also inhibited them through centralized control of the State and its development partners. The author of this article is its sole author.

Table (1) below, specifies the major contributions of the articles mentioned above to this framework study:

Table 1.

Overview of publications and their contributions to this study

Nr.	Publications
1	Yufanyi Movuh, M. C. (2012). The colonial heritage and post-colonial influence, entanglements and implications of the concept of community forestry by the example of Cameroon. <i>Forest Policy and Economics</i> , 15, 70-77. Http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2011.05.004
2	Maryudi, A., Devkota, Rosan, R., Schusser C., Yufanyi, C., Salla, M., Aurenhammer, H., Rotchanaphatharawit, R. and Krott, M. (2012). Back to basics: Considerations in evaluating the outcomes of community forestry. <i>Forest Policy and Economics</i> , Vol. 14(2), 1-5. Http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2011.07.017
3	Schusser, C., Krott, M., Devkota, R., Maryudi, A., Salla, M., Yufanyi Movuh, M., C. (2012). Sequence Design of Quantitative and Qualitative Surveys for Increasing Efficiency in Forest Policy Research. <i>AFJZ</i> , Vol. 183(3/4), 75-83
4	Yufanyi Movuh, M. C. and Schusser, C. (2012): Power, the Hidden Factor in Development Cooperation. An Example of Community Forestry in Cameroon— <i>Open Journal of Forestry</i> , Vol. 02, No. 04, p. 240-251. Http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ojf.2012.24030
5	Yufanyi Movuh, M. C. (2013). Analyzing the Establishment of Community Forestry (CF) and its processes. Examples from the South West Region of Cameroon. <i>Journal of Sustainable Development</i> , Vol 6, No. 1, p. 76-89. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/jsd.v6n1p76 .



Theoretical Framework	Methodology	Results
X		X
X	X	
X	X	
X		X
X		X

2. Theoretical Framework

For the theoretical background of this synthetic framework, Cameroon's forest policy is described through political and critical theories, precisely, post-colonial theory, actor-centred-power theory in connection with Max Weber's theory on power and Max Krott's theory on forest policy, post-development theory, and the theory on decentralization and devolution, all pertaining to community forestry.

2.1 Linking Forest Policy And Post-colonial Critique Emanating From Post-colonial Theory

As explained by Ribot & Larson (2012: 247), “despite a new language concerning decentralisation and the recognition of indigenous or rural peoples' rights, forest services around the world still treat local people as subjects and continue to colonise forested territories. The policies they apply today are almost all – even when given a participatory or decentralised patina – relics of colonial management based on earlier European practice (as in Africa) or of post-colonial entrenched bureaucracies (as in Latin America)”. Conservation and development, with the involvement of the Western former colonial powers in natural resource management policies in Africa is as old as Christianity and colonialism in Africa. The present linkage to benefits acquired from these resources concerning management and especially sustainable management of forests and participation of the forest custodians, is an adjustment to suit the powerful. Due to colonialism and also often because of the post-colonial asymmetries in power relations between the former colonial so-called master and the colonized, forest and development policies in Africa have seen changes based on blueprints of Western or European

superiority. From the time of the liberation of territorial Cameroon from colonial rule (1960/61) until 1994, three new amendments were introduced (1973, 1974 and 1981) in its forest policy, but these amendments did nothing but reproduce the hegemonic colonial tenure framework (Oyono, Ribot & Larson 2006).

Today's forest policy in Cameroon is linked to its colonial past and this could be best analyzed using the post-colonial theory. Post-colonial theory here is analyzed as "a process of continuity", forming "an intermixture of events, processes and actors that transcend any form of periodization [...], acknowledging the continuing domination of post-colonial societies by former colonial masters in one form or another [...] connected to nature and forest policy formulation and implementation" (Ramutsindela, 2004: 1). Central to this critical examination is an analysis of the inherent ideas of European superiority over non-European peoples and cultures that such imperial colonization implies, critically analyzing the assumptions that the colonizers have of the colonized (Denyer, n.p). A key feature of such critical theoretical examinations is the analysis of the role played by representation in installing and perpetuating such notions of European superiority.

Discussing the effect of the colonial heritage in almost all aspects of Cameroon's politics, and in particular in natural resource management policy, is fundamental in understanding present-day forest policy and the community forestry component of the forest policy. Juxtaposing the community forestry component (theory and practice) with the assumptions and of the "logic" of the colonial practice of natural resource management in Cameroon until its liberation in the early 1960s, is relevant for understanding the present-day outcomes of community forestry. If the aim of post-colonial theory is to expose and deconstruct the relics of colonialism in the former colonized societies, then this paper sheds light on how this could be achieved through the forest policy spectrum. The colonial heritage as seen through the lens of community forestry can be identified in the concept of land tenure and the colonial logic of conservation and degree of participation and misinterpretation or neglect of community priorities. It is also found in the involvement of former colonial masters or institutions in the community forestry concept formulation and establishment. The relevance of the colonial heri-

tage in the analysis of the relatively new Forestry Law of 1994 and its community forestry component is among the issues discussed by the author in Yufanyi Movuh (2012).

In this article, community forestry was analyzed using post-colonial theory and arguments from Adams & Mulligan (2003), to portray the “colonial lineage” reflecting the colonial mindset. They explain that both the exploitation of nature in the colonies and the impetus to conserve nature for longer-term human use has been shaped by the interaction between colonial experiences in the centre and the periphery. It can only be better understood by looking at the following interactions within community forestry policy: a) the favour of techno-scientific knowledge over folk knowledge; b) nature seen as separated from human life; c) the bureaucratic controlled engagement with nature; d) the paternalistic external imposition; and e) how nature and people were made productive. All these points, also discussed by Adams & Mulligan, are fundamentally rooted in European values, constructing nature as nothing more than a resource for human use and wilderness as a challenge for the rational mind to conquer. These arguments are illustrated with the use of empirical findings from the field study. Although many researchers and scholars have tried to link colonialism, colonial legacy and entrenchments to forest policy in Cameroon, no one has really offered a basic concept to empirically analyze and evaluate this connection. The post-colonial critique emanating from the post-colonial theory as described by Yufanyi Movuh (2012) stands as an innovative piece for such an analytic development. This article is the first ever, using a critical approach of the post-colonial theory to analyze forest policy in Cameroon.

2.2 Linking Forest Policy and Post-development Critique Emanating from Post-development Theory

Because community forestry is rapidly becoming so important as a new paradigm in forest policy, many global funding agencies have bought into this paradigm and feel that it is a far more ethical way of donating money for the protection of forests and at the same time fulfilling their development agenda (Yufanyi Movuh & Schusser, 2012). But also, in

the last three decades, critical political and social scientists alike have had a growing interest in analyzing global society, especially areas of the world with weak economies that strive for better social and economic developments. They use critical theories to deconstruct the development theory that emerged in the period after World War II (late 1940s). This has been characterized by the continuing changes in the society, triggered by the unsatisfactory manifestation of the power relations between stakeholders of development projects and programs. The works of scholars such as Sachs (ed.) (1992), Escobar (1995) and Rahnema & Bawtree (1997), in the field of post-structuralism and post-development are very important cornerstones of post-development theory.

In Yufanyi Movuh & Schusser (2012), post-development theory is used to strengthen the argument that the whole concept of development theory and practice is influenced by Western-Northern hegemonies, imposing blueprints of their values over the rest of the world. Post-development theorists call for the rejection of the development concept (Sachs (ed.), 1992; Escobar, 1995; Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997), looking beyond it. The theoretical concept came into existence following criticisms of development projects and the underlying development theory (Matthews, 2004). The concept sees development as a tool used by Western societies in the post-World War II era, to define development concerns, dominating the power relations arena, with the interests of development “experts” (the World Bank, International Monetary Fund [IMF] and other western development agencies) defining the development priorities and excluding the voices of the people they are supposed to “develop”, with intrinsically negative consequences. It argues that to attempt to overcome this inequality and negative consequences, the stage should be taken over by non-Western, non-Northern peoples, to represent their priorities and concerns. It differs from other critical approaches to development (such as “dependency” theory, “alternative development” theory and “human development” theory) in that it hitherto rejects development in its present form and calls for an alternative to development (Sachs (ed.), 1992; Escobar, 1995; Rahnema, 1997; Matthews, 2004, 2006), thus, moving beyond development.

Forest policy in Cameroon is implicitly and intricately dominated by development partners (see Ribot & Larson, 2012; Oyono, 2009; Oyono

2005a,b; Oyono 2004a,b; Alemagi, 2010, 2011; Mbile et al., 2009; Etoungou, 2003; Mandodo, 2003; Sobze, 2003; Mambo, 2004, 2006; Ribot, 2004; Bigombe', 2003). Post-development theory essentially questions the development that has been a response to the problematization of poverty that occurred in the years following World War II (Klipper, 2010; Matthews, 2004), and labels this type of development as being "an historical construct that provides a space in which poor countries are known, specified and intervened upon" (Escobar, 1995: 45). Hobley (2007: 4) rhetorically asks "why, if this was so clearly the case thirty years ago, we are still repeating the same mistakes with the same consequences", echoing poverty alleviation also as being a rationale for the international funding of community forestry. The theory critically analyzes how forest policy in Cameroon and its implementation through bilateral and multilateral actors using their forest development policies, has created an uneven playing field for the local stakeholders in community forestry. In the author's publications and also in this framework paper, the post-development critique emanating from post-development theory, as described by Yufanyi Movuh & Schusser (2012), stands as a ground-breaking piece for such an analytic development. This article is the first ever using a critical approach of the post-development theory to analyze forest policy in Cameroon.

2.3 Actor-centred-power (Acp): Connecting Max Weber's Theory on Power and Max Krott's Theory on Forest Policy

The common reality across the globe, and in Cameroon in particular, is that the governance process of community forestry has not yet produced expected outcomes (MINEP, 2004; Devkota, 2010; Yufanyi Movuh, 2013). While McDermott and Schreckenber (2009: 158) have defined community forestry as the exercise by local people of power to influence decisions regarding management of forests, including the rules of access and the disposition of products, the "power shift" rhetoric from the State to the local communities through community forestry in Cameroon opens a question of power-sharing in putting these management objectives into practice. In Cameroon since 1995,

a new forest policy act (proclaimed in 1994) has been implemented in order to accommodate two approaches: community forestry and sustainable forest management. Conserving and enhancing biodiversity through rural peoples' involvement was one of the components of the new forest policy act of 1995 (Sobze, 2003; Yufanyi Movuh, 2008: 1). This law places the emphasis on increasing the participation of the local populations in forest conservation and management in order to contribute to raising their standard of living.² For the first time in Cameroon's history, the 1994 Forestry Law and its 1995 decrees of application, provided for a legal instrument for community involvement in forest management (Oyono, 2005a, b; Yufanyi Movuh, 2012, 2013; Mandondo, 2003).

As community forestry is being recognized as a paradigm shift of forest policy in the so-called developing countries, it is essential to understand the dynamics and distribution of power, so as to address the way it is wielded among stakeholders. More often than not, power comes in many forms and is concealed where it is strongest and therefore resists scientific analyses (Krott, 2005). Consequently, community forestry outcomes require a logically and theoretically based concept of power. As an important phenomenon in social relations, power has always attracted the attention of scientists in forest policy. Referring to Max Weber's classic sociological definition of power, Krott (2005) relates the issue as pertains to forest policy, as follows: "those who utilize or protect forests are forced to subordinate their interests to politically determined programs in the face of conflict. This is as a result of stakeholders and political players availing themselves of power" (ibid.: 14).

To understand this better, the work of Krott et al. (2013) analyses Actor-centred-power. Yufanyi Movuh & Schusser (2012) is also of great relevance for the understanding of ACP. Krott et al. (2013), describe ACP as follows:

2 The Forestry Law No 94/01 of 20th January 1994 and its decrees of application No 95/531/PM du 23 August 1995.