Conflictive Interactions between Forestry Traditional Knowledge of Dong Minority and Modern Policy Interventions in 5 Village: an Actor-oriented Perspective

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Introduction

Tai Mountain is a (3°N) in the south of China. It has abundant forest resources and other diversified living beings. Villagers live on forests and rice, living in 101 houses as well as believe in trees and ‘Fengshui’ phrases. This lifestyle has modeled the meanings of forests in villagers’ minds, which formed traditional knowledge for managing the resources for hundreds of years.

Method

Research Approach:

Actor-oriented approach (AOA)

- The goal of AOA is to understand the interactions among different world views or various cultural patterns
- “Agency” of actors is the basis of the theory.
- Each actor has different “project” and capacity to act.
- Policy practices, social changes and resource use practices are results of interactions and mutual effects among actors.
- Social interface” is a key for understanding the world.
- Knowledge, capacity and power of actors interact and change in the social interface
- Field researches are of crucial role in the whole study

Field Researches:

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Case 1 Protection of Houlong Mountain

Fengshui Mountain (FSM) in SV

In late Qing dynasty (1880 A.D.), villagers set up a stone tablet named “Shukou Stele”, claiming that they started planting trees; and after 42 years (1850 A.D.), they carved a cutting ban at the back of the “Shukou Stele” for protecting Fengshui Mountain of the village which was including Houlong Mountain (HLM) and the purple area on the map. (There were many trees on the purple area and many other kinds of trees on HLM. HLM can guard the village against fires from the grazing mountain.)

The cutting ban assured the Fengshui Mountain belong to the village and should be managed by all the villagers. If someone cut trees on that mountain, he should be punished to kill his pigs to feed others.

Case 2 Post-disaster Reconstruction

2012 Post-disaster Reconstruction in SV

Quality & Monitoring

According to state standards

House distribution

Allocated after completion by drawing lots

The same as the Gov. for monitoring bothering

According to the locations of former houses

Distributed after completion according to the former ones as possible

1. Under industrialization and marketization, many traditional things in SV have changed:
   - The meanings of trees and mountains: Objects of Belief → Resources Mobilized by Politics → Monetized Goods
   - The subjects of power for managing forests: Village Community → Government vs. Households
   - The changes were the result of conflicts and compromises among various stakeholders.
   - Modern policy interventions may have conflicts with and squeeze traditional knowledge in community practices.
   - With the increasing influence of industrialization and marketization, the forests and mountains may be faced with more powerful industrial influences.

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