



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

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Introduction

S Village (SV) is a Dong minority village, a remote mountain village in Hunan Province (湖南省) in the south of China. It has abundant forest resources and other diversified living beings. Villagers live on forests and rice, living in fir wood houses as well as believe in trees and "Fengshui (風水)". This lifestyle has modeled the meanings of forests in villagers' mind, which formed traditional knowledge for managing the resources for hundreds of years.



Under industrialization and marketization, **national forest-related policies** (e.g. forestry tenure reforms, post-disaster reconstruction policy) and the **traditional forest-related knowledge (TFRK)** are interacting in the village.

So, **How do the policies and the TFRK interact? What results?**

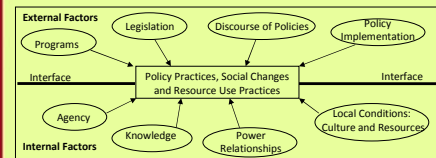
This poster will demonstrate the process and results of the interactions. It may enlighten us how to take measures to protect biodiversity and keep healthy social culture.

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:

Time	2012: June - July 2013: January, July
Methods	• Observation • Secondary data collection • Household/Village Questionnaire • Individual/Group Interview
Contents	• Livelihood (resources, production, consumption) • Fengshui sayings, Village history • Forestland allocation, Post-disaster reconstruction

Case 1 Protection of Houlong Mountain

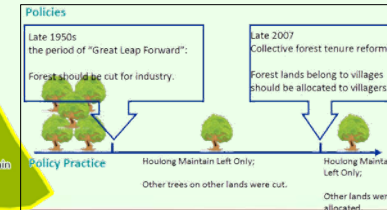
- Map of SV
- Timeline of Fengshui Mountain
- Houlong Mountain & the Fire Disaster in 2012



Fengshui Mountain (FSM) in SV

In late Qing dynasty (1808 A.D.), villagers set up a stone tablet named "Shuikou Stele", claiming that they started planting trees; and after 42 years (1850 A.D.), they carved a cutting ban at the back of the "Shuikou Stele" for protecting Fengshui Mountain of the village which was including Houlong Mountain (HLM) and the purple area on the map. (There were many firs 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 asserted 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 fete others.



Forest Tenure Reforms on FSM in SV

	Gov. (Policies)	Leaders of SV	Ordinary villagers	Results
1960s 1970s	Cut trees for industry of the country	Obedied Gov. but couldn't cut on HLM for Fengshui	"Obey Gov., or fought to death"	Left HLM & cut on other areas for industry
1980s 1990s	Allocated tree lands to people	HLM belonged to the all	Happy when gained tree lands	Only allocated the purple area
2000s	Allocated collective lands	HLM belonged to the all	HLM belonged to the all	No more effects



Case 2 Post-disaster Reconstruction

Building Custom in SV

- Days for cutting trees, laying the foundations, setting up the pillars, lifting the cross beam and moving into the new house should be selected by the Geomancer (風水先生).
- When building a house, the villager should offer sacrifices and prepare a feast for serving other villagers while the others should come to help for free and give blessings.

Buildings don't only mean properties, but also belief and social relations.

Rebuilt after 1951 Fire Disaster	Rebuilt after 2012 Fire Disaster
Rebuilt by household self	Rebuilt by government's aid (uniform rebuilt)
Mutual help from other villagers, even from outside relatives	The government as a monitor of the project (inefficient)
Timber from household self or "buying" from relatives	Timber from buying in market (higher price)
Size of new house was decided by timber amount	Size of new house is uniformly designed by government (larger for most victims)
Nearly 2 years for rebuilding	Nearly 10 months for rebuilding
Traditional resource management	(modern) administrative & market oriented management



- Comparison between Two Reconstructions
- Wood Houses before the 2012 Fire Disaster
- Uniform-rebuilt Houses

2012 Post-disaster Reconstruction in SV

	Government (Policies)	Leaders of SV	23 Victims	Results
Rebuilt price & timber sources	The same price according to market, subsidies as half of the price; timber or currency offered by victims as the other half	Got subsidy and built new house on other place; coordinated uniformly rebuilt of the 23 victims on the former place	Got subsidies; hardly offered timbers from own forests for they did not know if their timbers were used in their houses	Timbers were bought from market at a higher price than budgets so that final price was increased
Quality & Monitoring	According to state standards	The same as the Gov.	Wanted to monitor by themselves	Victims were unsatisfied with the quality and interfered constructing
House Distribution	Allotted after completion; by drawing lots	The same as the Gov. for monitoring bothering	According to the locations of former houses	Allotted after completion; according to the former ones as far as possible

**After the Spring Festival of 2012, SV suffered a fire disaster for electricity using negligently. Over 1/3 households (40 HH) lost their houses (including an SV leader). The disaster was paid attention to by the county gov. It was under the help of the gov. that the fire was stopped. Then the gov. intervened the reconstruction. 23 new houses were uniformly planned and built and monitored by external engineers. Victims accepted the help with pleasure at the first. However, followed were a set of issues. The table above illustrates the process of interactions among the main actors.

Conclusions

- 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 interventions that squeeze tradition.