

Symbolic Violence and Deliberative Governance: Understanding The Dynamics of Community Based Forestry in Nepal

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Abstract

Seeing governance through the analytical prism of deliberative processes can provide a deeper understanding of the challenges for forest and wider environmental governance. Improving deliberative processes must meet the challenges of modifying deep rooted patterns of structural inequalities. This paper pairs improving deliberation (in Habermas's sense) with reducing structural 'symbolic violence' (in Bourdieu's sense). Symbolic violence for our purpose occurs when claims to superior knowledge are used to legitimate closure in deliberation on forest governance practices and accepted by those excluded from effective deliberation. In the field of forest governance, we identify dominant sets of ontological principles as doxa (e.g. valuing technical expertise or feudalistic traditions), that legitimate distributions of material, physical capitals and their exchange and accumulation. In Bourdieu's terms, the control of such a field of intense interactions can only be reproduced by limiting the space for deliberation in the 'field', as dominant agents attempt to defend closed boundaries rather than seek open and collaborative engagement. We show that in two forms of forestry projects in Nepal, this delimiting can work against both greater equity in livelihoods and environmental conservation. The paper then assesses a sociological model of the development of crises in its application to the two case

studies. Crises are seen as necessary conditions for the development of demands for increased deliberation by subordinated participants in both case study programmes, though there are significant differences in the basis for these claims and their possible outcomes.

Key words: deliberation, doxa, forest governance, symbolic violence, Nepal

1. Introduction

Environmental governance is a complex phenomenon, and policies and programmes designed to facilitate participatory forest management can overlook this complexity and play down the inherent uncertainty in interactions between people and nature (Colfer, 2005; Lee, 1993). As a result, policies often fail to deliver development promises in terms of creating less vulnerable, culturally acceptable and ecologically sustainable livelihood opportunities for local people (Springate-Baginski and Blaikie, 2007). Our previous research suggests the need for recognition that subtle relations of power and economy of cultural practices underlie the success or failure of a forest governance reform programme (Ojha, 2006a; Cameron and Ojha, 2006). In this context, this paper develops a framework to understand deliberative interaction among forest governance actors, and explore the possibility of more equitable governance through more open deliberative processes. The paper aims to advance theoretical understanding of deliberative environmental governance processes by linking the Habermasian concept of 'deliberative politics' (Habermas 1996) and Bourdieu's concept of 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu, 1991). This integrated theory is applied to two case studies in Nepal.

The case studies are two community based forest management programmes – Community Forestry (CF) and Leasehold Forestry (LF). The two programmes, although led by the same government organization, Department of Forest (DoF), involve a significant degree of competition and conflict (Ojha et al., 2007; Bhattarai et al., 2007a). This study seeks to provide an explanation of the on-going patterns of interaction among participants in the two programmes at a number of levels, and assess the possibilities for more inclusive deliberation to achieve greater effectiveness in achieving the stated goals of both poverty reduction and forest sustainability.

We trace various sources of 'symbolic violence' that constrain deliberation between the participants of the two programmes, and identify conditions that favour open and inclusive deliberation in policy processes from national planning (with strong external influences) to local implementation. In particular, we analyze a) how a national forest governance programme is enacted as a complex economy of practices by a wide array of participants, and how dominant groups are able to control and access resources available in this field; b) how they create and

defend boundaries to ensure smooth access to valued resources or capitals; c) how certain groups of programme participants commanding greater amount of symbolic capitals influence the functioning of the programme activities and restrict deliberative interactions with other participants; and d) how processes in the wider programme field influence and shape much more local level forest management practices. Through this analysis, we draw comparative policy and practical insights into how programme strategies are affecting deliberative processes with implications for the livelihoods of the poor and marginalized groups living in and around the forest areas.

The paper is based on a recent research carried out by ForestAction Nepal and Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). It is enriched by the insider reflections of the lead author who has been a participant in forest governance field in Nepal as civil society activist, researcher, donor project manager and government forestry staff. The other authors also bring a wide mix of experiences of Nepalese conditions dating back over thirty years as activists and researchers. Building on this experience, the aim of this paper is to provide a conceptual framework to open up strategic issues in forest governance directly applicable to Nepal, but also potentially more widely applicable. To achieve this aim, we have had to prioritise aspects of the two programmes we see as strategically significant, rather than attempt a comprehensive evaluation of either programme in this paper.

2. Symbolic violence and deliberation – a conceptual framework

Deliberative processes in environmental governance are attracting interest (Parkins and Mitchell, 2005). The challenge is to create a framework through which forms and degrees of deliberation can be understood, including when and how deliberation is enacted, contested, constrained, suppressed, distorted and augmented. In this paper, we use Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu, 1998), focusing on *symbolic violence*, to provide an umbrella concept to understand how deliberation can be restricted. Symbolic violence refers to a situation in which powerful actors continue to enjoy unchallenged privileges in accessing resources, capitals and power. It involves elements of domination rooted in the internalised beliefs and mindsets, which pre-structure deliberative practices. In order to understand how symbolic violence is linked with the practice of deliberation, we need to grasp the meaning of Bourdieu's theory of practice), which comprises of five key concepts – field, doxa, capital, and habitus/practice. Below we summarize our use of these concepts.

The concept of a social 'field' provides a manageable context for social agents to enact practice. It is structured, differentiated and constituted through diverse forms of interactions –

communicative interactions, capital exchange, competition, and conflict. When different actors are actively engaged in a field, an array of delimiting legitimating assumptions on values/significance/risks/uncertainties are available to them. These tacitly held assumptions are part of what Bourdieu calls 'doxa'. Doxa comprise principles mapped on to a field that legitimate practices, thus avoiding the need to make decisions through conscious reflections and deliberations. As such, doxa are the potential breeding-ground for symbolic violence. Social agents enact practices guided by a range of doxic beliefs in the field and are divided according to their ownership and command over different types of 'capitals' valued in the particular field, and therefore capitals form another key analytical concept. Finally, Bourdieu attributes practices to the social agents, called habitus, which operate with the internalised schemes of thoughts and action which they develop according to their positioning in the field. The way social agents develop access and utilise doxic principles in defending or accumulating distinguish different forms of habitus. Thus as both structuring and structured form of human agency, habitus reflects tensions between the ideal and the pragmatic pregnant with the possibilities of swift dissonance between expected and the real, that is crises.

The analysis of how symbolic violence and deliberation are related can be seen as having three key stages. Firstly, understanding how a specific social field (such as forest governance) whose demarcation is widely accepted as constituted historically, along with an exploration of forms and diversity of habitus, doxas and capitals in the field. While doing so, we focus on identifying a combination of doxas that restricts deliberation in principle (symbolic violence) – this understanding can be a largely deductive exercise by researchers with substantial experience of the context. Secondly, an analysis of conditions and processes engendering critical loss of doxic confidence providing spaces for challenge to legitimacy by non-dominant groups. Finally, analyzing (and supporting for developmental activists) attempts to turn those challenges into real gains in terms of more open deliberative practices in the field, possibly overflowing into other fields.

Consistent with our previous research (Ojha, 2006b), we claim that four key doxas, and the dominant habitus groups reproducing these doxas, together determine the nature and quality of deliberation in forest governance in Nepal.

First, techno-bureaucratic doxa is shared by a large group of people commonly known as forest officials, foresters, rangers, and forest guards who work in government, administrative and technical services organisations. This doxa underlies greater emphasis on "technical" aspects of forest management than on creating accountable and deliberative institutions of resource control and benefit sharing.

Second, developmentalist doxa is enacted by development NGOs and donor projects who exert significant influence in forest governance in Nepal. They enact the developmentalist doxa as they emphasize the social engineering model of change – programmed and projected methods of social interaction, ordering people in formal groups and emphasising planned activities according to their own priorities – and there is a limited sense of the need to explore how more deliberative processes of restructuring and transformation can take place.

Third, local forest-dependent people share a common fatalistic doxa, in the sense that they have a belief that collectively they do not have the right to challenge or contribute to forest management or developmental planning proactively, nor to demand better deliberative spaces. In the wider field of civil society, this doxa also means that forest, like other natural resources, is regarded as the legitimate preserve of government officials rather than a civil society territory.

Finally, a feudalistic doxa forms a key basis of the construction of different governance units and practices along hierarchical lines within civil society and political institutions. Higher cultural status, and usually economically wealthier members of society (both in and outside government) use these capitals to deny deliberative rights to others, seeing themselves as superior by right of birth.

We analyse how these doxas enacted by different sets of social actors in the field of forest governance in Nepal (as well as the sub-fields of specific forestry programmes) determine the quality of deliberation in governance practices. Such a Bourdieuan structuration may be seen as pessimistic as it allows little room for radical challenge and change in the direction of more open deliberation. In contrast, a Habermasian position, as we envisage it, sees the prospect of enhanced deliberation everywhere springing from a universal human desire for more open communication and more effective exercise of non-violent, non-deceptive human agency. Therefore two central questions that emerge from this framework are: a) what triggers, and under what circumstances, can there be questioning of restrictive doxic practices through demands for more inclusive deliberation from below?, and b) once dominant doxa are more open to deliberation, can the habitus of the marginalized groups gain the necessary symbolic and cultural capitals to engage in more effective deliberation?

3. Community based forestry field in Nepal – evolution, boundaries, and contestations

The field of forest governance in Nepal is primarily constituted through an approach labelled Community Forestry (CF). CF in Nepal is an innovation of global relevance towards meeting the twin goals of conservation and poverty reduction. Through national legislation and local implementation over the past twenty five years, the programme has endowed over fifteen

thousand local Forest User Groups (CFUGs) with rights to manage over one million hectares of forests as community forests, mainly in the environmentally degraded middle hills region of the country (Kanel and Kandel 2004). With this apparent shift of power from government to local level, CF has been seen as one of the few promising aspects of Nepal's development field, and as such it has often been cited by development agencies who have been engaged in, if not responsible for, the five decades of "failed development" in Nepalⁱ. The positive image of CF is being articulated by development agencies not only in the field of development and natural resource management, but also more widely in the field of democratic governance, with the claim that CFUGs and their networks provide a model for democratic governance (Ojha and Pokharel, 2006).

During the seventies, Himalayan degradation was projected as a crisis, which created increased moral pressures on the Western governments to contribute to conservation of a degrading Himalayan eco-system (Eckholm, 1976). This led to an environmental turn of development discourse away from an emphasis on infrastructure and technology transfer (Cameron 1998). In 1989, several donors assisted Nepal government to formulate the nation's most comprehensive master plan for the forestry sector, which stipulated conditions and possibilities of conservation and management of country's forest resources. The plan clearly set out participatory and decentralized development imperatives to guide the management of forests resources, identifying CF as a prioritized programme area for meeting livelihood needs of people (HMG/N, 1988). At a time when the plan was finalized and formally adopted by the government (1989), people's movement for democracy culminated in the promulgation of multi-party democracy in the country. Subsequent governments adjusted and adapted the on-going practices of Panchayat forestry and sections of the policy in line with ideals of democratization, involving users of forests directly in the management of forests, moving beyond Panchayat forestry (which involved transfer of rights only to local elites).

These innovations were legalized through the new Forest Act in 1993 by the first elected multi-party parliament, which guaranteed the rights of local people in forest management. Forest Act 1993 is a landmark development in this regard which legally recognizes local forest user groups as perpetually self-governed institutions to claim 100 per cent of the benefits from the management of forests handed over to them. In the post 1990 environment of openness, there has been a prolific growth of civil society in the forestry sector. Bilateral projects and International Organizations also found more conducive environment to undertake CF activities. Reflections of Nepal's CF became a truly international enterprise – through research, networking and collaborative activities, mainly of developmentalists and technical experts. Since the mid-nineties, CFUG activists have challenged the boundaries of the fatalistic doxa and formed a nation-wide network, the Federation of CF Users, Nepal (FECOFUN), which is a key player in national forest policy debate.

Thus, Nepal's strategic geopolitical situation and fragile environmental condition attracted bi- and multilateral donors, whose uneasy combination of forest science with a developmentalist doxa combined concerns with poverty and the environment as key elements in integrated conservation and development projects. During the 1980s, both developmental agencies and techno-bureaucratic forest officials engaged cooperatively in the field of forest governance to develop decentralization policies compatible with both their doxic positions. At the local level, these doxic principles were converted into governance practices at the interface between developmentalist, techno-bureaucratic, feudal and fatalistic doxa.

In localities researched by the authors of this paper, this tended to result in structural reproduction of symbolic violence through processes of establishing plantations of exotic species, erecting fences and restricting local resource use practices. This exclusion combined doxic dismissal of the value of local people's voices on principle with conscious elements of deception blocking access to forums where their voices might be heard, e.g. "these people are so ignorant on the facts we know that it is not worth telling them about this meeting".

The widespread perception from the mid-1990s that some groups were being excluded from forest governance despite the rhetoric of "community" participation concerned influential external development agencies. For these agencies, we can see an element of doxic crisis as evidence of the reality of exclusionary practices challenged their vision of "community forestry". One technical response to this sense of crisis, though by no means widely recognised as such in local level practices, was the Leasehold Forest Policy, which seeks to enhance the access of the poorer members of the communities to communal land and forest resources by modifying property rights in favour of the poor. The need for this programme was justified in the light of the limited existing and potential impact of community forestry on the livelihoods of the poorest households, confirmed by a growing body of literature produced by more radical developmentalists (Maharjan, 1998; Paudel, 1999; Malla, 2000; Ojha, 2004).

This move coming from one wing of those with a developmental doxa formed an important basis to design and implement Leasehold Forestryⁱⁱ (LF) with the intention of reaching the poor more directly and effectively (Ohler, 2000). The leasehold programme is led by the DoF, which is also the lead agency for community forestry programme, and thus includes an element of techno-bureaucratic doxic influence. The objective of the Leasehold forestry programme is to alleviate poverty and rehabilitate the degraded forest lands in the hills by transferring forest resources (mainly degraded land) to small groups of resource poor households organised into a Leasehold Forestry User Group (LFUG)ⁱⁱⁱ. They are given leasehold tenure for a period of forty years and provided with training and technical inputs including small-scale credits for income-generation activities. In accordance with Forest Rule 1995 and Leasehold Forest Policy 2002, a patch of

degraded forest is handed over to groups of poor people in the form of a Leasehold Forest. The project had a mandate to target families below the techno-bureaucratically sanctioned poverty line, with less than NRs 2500 (1 USD = NRs 73) annual per capita income or less than 0.5 ha of private land holdings^{iv}. The average size of the group is ten households, each allocated an average of one hectare of forestland. The hand-over process is initiated more often by project support staff than through the deliberative demand of local civil society.

While environmental outcomes of both the programmes are seen as positive, the livelihoods impact is contested (Bhattarai et al., 2007a; Pokharel et al., 2007). CF has developed massive institutional base around communal forest management, and LF have also developed pro-poor institutional innovations. But there is a great degree of conflict, or at least the lack of collaboration, between the two programmes. There is often a conflict in the implementation of these two programmes in the field – from deciding whether a patch of forest should be brought under CF or LF or to whether a staff working with district forest office of the DoF should work for CF or LF programme. In the following sections, we analyse how symbolic violence and deliberative closure interact to produce and sustain this situation and the connections to possibilities of crisis and opening deliberative space.

4. Symbolic violence and deliberative closure in the field of community based forestry

CF and LF are both government programmes with the ostensible aims of promoting sustainable use of forest and forest related environmental goods for the benefit of local people. But what is 'misrecognized' is that in the course of generating such environmental goods at local level, a whole array of opportunities for production and circulation of other types of goods or capitals also exist through local governance processes. The programmes can be seen as social arena within which a range of actors contest for different kinds of valued capitals. Because of this contestation, the apparently simple practice of forest management on the ground – forest harvesting, drawing up plans or a village level meeting – are actually a result of the complex deliberations among those with more abundant capitals in the forest governance *field*, moving between national and local levels. Local decisions are made in the context of doxic claims and habitus processes, a context most visible as a national regulatory regime but also expressed as international resources provided locally conditional on performance of some specific practices.

The reproduction of inequalities in both Community Forestry and Leasehold Forestry are hidden from view when dominant groups present themselves as enablers, policy-makers, technical service-providers and/or donors to local people whose fatalistic doxa denies rights to social status, self-governance and freedom. The interests of dominant local and external agencies are mis-recognized by the local forest dependent poor people – constituting deliberative exclusion by

symbolic violence. The actual volume of physical resources which are produced at local level in the form of forest products including timber, fuelwood and fodder – the most visible economic capital - are indeed only a fraction of the total volume of other types of capital accumulated in the name of community forestry – such as project grants, consultancies, research services, jobs, scholarships, and government taxes. The fatalistic doxa of local forest dependent people envisages dominant groups as *Vidhata* (creators of their fate), drawing on an idea of *karma* (a belief on god-ascribed fate) which blames past behaviour, and *Juni* (previous lives), and as being responsible for present inequalities, not the inadequacy of political rights and lack of access to deliberative agency in present life. As a result of this doxa, many local forest dependent poor hardly question the budget, efficacy and activities of projects, donors and NGOs in forestry projects.

The emphasis put on community based forestry as a key dimension of local livelihoods at national level does not find a corresponding priority at the local level. A ranking exercise with some villagers in the central middle hills districts of Nepal found out that forest was only the sixth priority after agriculture, health, education, roads, and drinking water (Ojha, 2006c). Community based forest management strategy is romanticized at national and international levels for its potential for livelihoods of the poorest people, irrespective of the fact that, most of the community forests which have been established in the hills of Nepal are actually very small and too insignificant in relation to the demands for livelihood opportunities^v (with per capita forest area of 0.77 ha^{vi}, and with poor stocking levels).

This suggests the CF programme is being pushed more by the dominant participants of the programme, such as project managers, experts, researchers and activists, than through the demand by local groups of poorer people for increased forest based livelihoods opportunities. Similarly, the national legislative framework of forestry which emerged as the key outcome of donor support in participatory forest management in Nepal, is oriented to conservation of forested ecosystems. Even in the context of community forestry, the 1993 Forest Law is framed largely within techno-bureaucratic forest management doxa and does not allow reduction of forest canopy to allow spaces for cash crop cultivation for poorer villagers. The leasehold forestry programme even goes further in advancing conservation agenda at the cost of local livelihoods, as it explicitly focuses on “reclamation of degraded land through the participation of the poor” (GoN 2002).

The social field of a local forestry programme is not a levelled space equally accessible to all the participants; the positions which social agents occupy are structured according to the distribution of valued resources (such as donor funding, and gate keeper positions) and the structure of rules guiding access to and exchange of such resources. Such rules are structured historically, leading to conditions in which certain local groups, frequently espousing a mix of techno-bureaucratic and

feudalistic doxa, have greater degree of control over capitals in the field, and can thus exert influence on the behaviour of other participants in relation to forest governance. Dominant participants of the programme enact symbolic violence in practice through exclusion from FUG membership on social status grounds, imposition of locally unevidenced technical knowledge, and paternalistic/patriarchal restriction of deliberative procedures.

In Nepal, over the course of decades, local forestry projects has nurtured groups of Brahmin-Chhetri or Newar (the three most dominant ethnic/caste groups in Nepal) people from the elites of urban areas with a developmentalist doxa but more compromised habitus, whose affluent livelihoods are based on the donor project funds. Their symbolic status appears as high salaries (as high as 50 times that of their government counterpart), using blue-plate diplomatic vehicles (despite being Nepalese and residing in Nepal), and engagement with a circle of expatriates. Through control of deliberative processes, these dominant social agents continue to reproduce donor forestry projects, as the interests of all dominant groups converge to create projects with multiple phases, for which agendas of poverty reduction and environmental conservation provide a sound symbolic ground. This is anecdotally reflected in a Project manager's frank acceptance that their project team work hard not to create independence of the local beneficiaries but to justify a new phase of the project to work with (Ojha, 2006c). Consistent with this, another senior project staff member admitted – “yes poverty of my family has been eliminated for sure but I do not think my project has been successful in eliminating the poverty of the villagers^{vii}”

Another key symbolic element that divides participants into dominant and dominated groups is claims to techno-bureaucratic knowledge and expertise. In Leasehold forestry, for instance, expert knowledge has been considered adequate and superior in defining the criteria of the poorest and identifying who should and who should not be members of the LFUGs and when handover should take place.

In community forestry as well, even after formation of the CFUG and signing of the forest management operational plan by the district forest office, the actual harvesting and utilisation decisions are very much affected by the influence from techno-bureaucratic forest officials, together with feudalist landowners acting as timber traders and local politicians, plus developmentalist NGO staff. These feudalist, developmentalist and techno-bureaucratic doxas have a joint interest in restricting deliberations, with its ideals of widespread “civic engagement and social learning of public problems” (Reich, 1990) and developing knowledge of through “interactive and argumentative process” beyond technical efficiency (Forester, 1999).

The impact of restricted deliberative processes is strategically reflected in the decision on which of the two programmes is to be implemented. The authors have compiled a number of instances in which groups of local people who wanted to form CF group have been asked to establish LF group. In the same way, local groups who wanted to form LF have been forced to establish CF.

Thoms et al. (2003) reports that Leasehold Forest hand-over was driven more by the interest of the government staff than the interest of the community, often resulting in the low participation of the poor. In the same vein, Ojha et al. (2005) analyzed the 'deliberative deficits' in the practice of the Leasehold Forestry programme in a site in Kavre district, central Nepal, indicating the predominance of techno-bureaucratic doxa. The way the programme was designed and implemented reflected the interests and styles constitutive of developmentalist and techno-bureaucratic doxa, enacted by programme staff, policy makers and government officials, rather than the aspirations of the local poorer forest users.

Despite the ubiquitous notion of community used in the field of forestry governance, there continues to be a strong dominance of techno-bureaucratic agents in the design and implementation of the programmes. There is a provision for Programme Coordination Committee (PCC) to be established for each donor project to review the progress of community forestry programmes and provide guidance and advice to concerned actors related to the various bilateral forestry projects. For instance, PCC of Nepal-Swiss Community Forestry project generally meets six-monthly and is chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation. A key function of the PCC is to examine the consistency of policy interpretation between the Central and District levels, and to take action if policy or its interpretation is found to constrain the achievement of the Project Aims and Objectives. An analysis of participation of politicians, technocrats and civil society actors in PCC of Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP) during 1997-2003 shows that less than 5 percent of total participants are from civil society groups, while 88 percent of the participants of this forum are technocrats, administrators and managers (Pokharel and Ojha, 2005). The scope and constituency of the forum have been basically designed and influenced by technocrats, right from the process of project formulation, with tokenistic representation of civil actors. More importantly, there was no direct representation of women and dalit people.

The field of CF is older than that of the LF and thus doxa favouring a more pro-market LF have had to struggle for recognition. Participants in both forestry programmes seek to establish their programme field through symbolically powerful rhetorical instruments. Given the strong presence of CF, LF advocates emphasised reclamation of degraded land, with which CF was not so closely associated. A key assumption was that focusing on degraded land provides a good basis to differentiate Leasehold Forestry from Community Forestry. But is it compatible with enhancing opportunities for the poorest? If techno-bureaucratic state officials and expatriate developmentalists were committed to providing material benefits to the poor, then good quality forest that could be found in most localities should have been handed over to the poorest. But this would have been contrary to the interests constituting the dominant coalition of feudal and techno-bureaucratic habitus in the field of local forestry governance.

People continue to be associated themselves with either CF or LF, including within the Department of Forests). One pro-community forester said – “leasehold forestry is just for the sake of those who are engaged in it, in the name of the poor”. One pro-leasehold forestry official said – “many CF groups are now requesting for conversion into leasehold groups”. A CF project manager criticized LF in a recent meeting – “giving just degraded land to the poor is a reflection of the culture of giving phateko luga and basi bhat (torn cloth and left over meal on the plate). A CF project manager engaged pro-leasehold foresters as consultants but then they sought to advocate for leasehold, rather than for open engagement between the two programmes.

5. Symbolic crisis and deliberative possibilities

At the national level in Nepal, political divisions have produced such a crisis of legitimacy that they have clear implications for the field of forestry governance. Both CF and LF are being increasingly subjected to a national discourse on equity and ‘good governance’. The national political transition (away from constitutional monarchy to inclusive democracy) is opening up possibilities for critical reflection and rethinking across all fields, including forest governance.. The new government (established after April 2006 popular movement) has started to review the institutional, programmatic and regulatory aspects of forest sector, in which CF and LF are being discussed and examined.

At the time of this writing in late 2007, the newly appointed minister representing the Maoist political party was under pressure to demonstrate change in the practices of forest governance. But the feudalistic doxa among even radical politicians appear to undermine the need for public deliberation on how forest sector restructuring can be organized. This is manifested in the minister’s attempt to make policy decisions without consultation with the concerned groups of civil society.

On the other hand, the techno-bureaucratic doxa is under greater pressure. The relevance of technical forestry knowledge is being questioned in the changing context, and this is being felt at wider societal levels. On the one hand, forest governance is becoming more and more pluralistic as feudal and techno-bureaucratic control of decision-making is contested in the name of democratic accountability, and on the other, there is an internal crisis of confidence in forest science with limited systematic research and learning initiatives by forestry institutions in Nepal (Acharya, 2005). On the wider level, the positivist epistemological foundations of forestry are being subjected to the post-structural critique of science and associated claims to close debate through claims to incontrovertible evidence (Ojha, 2006a).

In practice, more inclusive deliberative processes where previously dominant doxa have experienced greatest crises are providing spread effects of insightful reflections on the limits of

and the need for radical revisions of the orientations and approach of technocratic forest science. There is a wide consensus on the need to explore local knowledge of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), which range from medicinal herbs to wild bush meat – things that were not the focus of conventional forest science. In this situation, the lack of adaptive research initiatives means that the technical knowledge legitimacy of forest officials is dwindling, or becoming increasingly questioned by people adopting a developmentalist doxa peeling off from the previous dominant consensus on the irrelevance of local people's knowledge to forestry and development. While in the short run, the decline of confidence in the techno-bureaucratic doxa will have favourable impacts on opening up deliberative spaces, in the long run, it is not clear how more inclusive deliberative practices can create a research agenda combining local and scientific approaches to improved knowledge.

Turning to a crisis of confidence in the feudalistic doxa, when CFUG leaders who often have feudalistic doxa, are provided with an opportunity to critically reflect upon their practices, they are likely to develop more equitable provisions for benefit-sharing and decision-making. While CFUGs generally undertake limited practices of internal reflections over practices, there are innovative cases in which poor-focused resource mobilization strategies have been undertaken as a result of progressive internal deliberations in support of the poor. CFUG-level deliberative processes have started to focus on livelihoods of the poorest rather than addressing the environmental concerns and associated restrictions on access that tended to favour local elites and forest guards.

Leasehold Forestry has, somewhat unintentionally, challenged both feudalistic and fatalistic doxa, and brought forth a pro-poor agenda in the forest governance field. It has challenged the Community Forestry, de facto pro-feudalistic, orthodoxy of community-wide management of the forest without an explicit focus on the poorest households for the creation of equitable livelihoods impact. This programme has tested an exclusively poor-focused approach with a smaller group size and has generated two important insights. First, there is a need to go beyond the community as a whole (community referring to the inclusion of both the poorest and marginalized with the local elites) to focus upon the poor directly. Second, there is a need to target the well-stocked resource for the poorest.

As national events unfold transcending the boundary of either CF or LF, the proponents of the two programmes come face to face for deliberation, along with other actors who are less attached to either of the two programmes. Thus practical rivalries in habitus practices may be seen as diminishing the unity in the dominant doxa. These divisions may contribute to factional behaviour at the local level where it is witnessed by people following a fatalistic doxa as a crisis of legitimacy, leading to a questioning of this doxic position and demands for more inclusive deliberation.

6. Conclusion

A key conclusion from this paper is that understanding governance practices in the comparative case study of both CF and LF benefits from using a prism of types of doxa that provide the legitimation of excluding deliberative practices through symbolic violence. Such symbolic violence involves the existence of at least one collusive doxa (fatalistic doxa) among the excluded themselves. But the construction of alliances among the dominant doxa is always uneasy and liable to crisis. The crisis may be inability to manage a clear logical tension in the forms of claims to power, be the exposure of hypocrisy in habitus practices deviating from the doxic principles, or emerging divisions within a doxic position in the face of external challenges. Such crises may then force revisions in the dominated doxa including increased demands for inclusion in deliberative processes.

The two programmes occupy similar social space, and yet have failed to forge synergistic interactions and this has contributed to perceptions of a legitimacy crisis (as reflected in the claims and counter claims over the boundary of the two programmes). There is overlap in terms of resource targeted, beneficiaries to be served, agency to deliver services, and to some extent, objectives to be achieved. CF and LF have together provided evidence as to how community-based resource management can contribute to the livelihoods of local communities, especially poorer, deliberately marginalised groups. CF has been the primary forestry development programme in Nepal, and indeed a broad development institution with regard to the promotion of local people's access to forest resources, though with weaknesses in empowering marginalised groups. LF, with a relatively young history and specific contexts in which it is implemented (i.e. the renovation of degraded land and augmentation of forage and livestock production) has raised issues of direct engagement with poorer people.

At the level of national/international discourse, some proponents of both programmes have begun to appreciate the need to avoid duplications and to forge synergistic relations. But because of the underlying structure of the forest governance field, and the entrenched doxic interests of many programme participants, there has been little structural progress.

Opportunities for more inclusive deliberative practices within and between groups of participants in the two programmes need more critical developmentalist engagement with all four different types of doxa restricting deliberation. This engagement can build upon social interactions becoming more deliberative, and less technocratic, as a) national political conditions favour equitable redistributions of symbolic, cultural and economic resources in all governance fields, and b) cognitive dissonance is experienced between the habitus and the field of practice specifically in the field of forest governance. As Bourdieu argues, the position of the dominant is equally rooted in the doxa of the ordinary people who take for granted the dominant positions of the participants who command higher levels of symbolic resources^{viii}. In the recent years in

Nepal, crisis has erupted in the larger field of national governance, triggering the discourse of sector-wide restructuring, but this new national discourse is at risk of elite capture. In theory, crises unfreeze the social system for agents to question others, and become more-self-reflective in a Habermasian process. But crisis may not automatically lead to transformation, as was evident in the case of concerns with environmental degradation and poverty in Nepal in the late seventies, which was perceived to be a crisis, but was captured by a national technocratic response linked to local feudalistic patterns of power (Ojha et al, 2005). But where there are emerging local crises challenging inequalities in deliberative access, then a more self critical developmentalist doxa may be able to unveil doxic patterns of symbolic violence and reveal hypocrisy in habitus practices.

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ⁱ See Shrestha (1998) and Pandey (1999).

ⁱⁱ The project was funded by His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) loan and Dutch Government grant. The first phase ended in December 2003 and the current phase is currently being implemented.

ⁱⁱⁱ The programme was started in two districts in 1993, and by 2007, the programme has spread to 22 of the 75 districts in the country (Bhatarai et al., 2007b). By the end of 2006, 14734 hectares of degraded forest land has been handed over to 2,871 LFUGs, naming 23,243 households as beneficiaries (HMGN, 2005).

^{iv} However, the annual threshold was increased to NRs 3,035 in later years of the project (IFAD, 1996).

^v The potential of livelihoods from farming is now under crisis due to declining land productivity, and increasing aspirations through the intrusion of markets. People have started to leave farms for foreign employment as far as possible. Most of the villages lack economically active youth males.

^{vi} Based on data from Kanel and Kanel (2004)

^{vii} Personal Communication with Khagendra Siktel, former Senior Advisor to Nepal-Swiss Community Forestry Project, 2003.

^{viii} This is evident in the excessive reliance of local people on experts and their scientific knowledge (such as in choosing species of grasses and demarcating forest boundaries).