Title: Do locals have a say? Community participation in governance of forest plantations in Tanzania and Mozambique

As large-scale forest plantations expand in developing countries, concerns are rising about their relation and integration with adjacent local communities. Community participation in forest governance can potentially affect the distributional effects of benefits from plantations and mitigate their adverse effects. This could enhance the integration of plantations with adjacent communities. Using data from villages adjacent to large-scale forest plantations in Tanzania and Mozambique, we explore differences in community participation between the plantations. In Tanzania, we compare villages adjacent to private, FSC-certified plantations with villages adjacent to a non-certified, state-owned plantation to assess differences in the participation of households in the plantations’ activities. In Mozambique, we compare villages adjacent to FSC-certified private plantations with villages adjacent to a non-certified private plantation to assess whether certification status is related to differences in community participation in the plantations’ activities. Our quantitative analyses show that households in villages adjacent to the private, certified plantations in Tanzania are more likely to have a say in the activities of the plantations than households in villages adjacent to the non-certified, state-owned plantation. In Mozambique, we find that households adjacent to the certified, private plantations are less likely than households in villages adjacent to the non-certified private plantation to have a say in the activities of the plantations. We use insights from access theory to explain our findings in Tanzania: the private plantations may have stronger incentives to involve local people in order to guarantee their investments in plantations than the state-owned plantation. We further found that some social groups (male-headed and plantation workers) are more likely than their counterparts to have a say in the activities of the plantations. We emphasize that increased and fair community participation in the governance of forest plantations is vital in terms of integrating plantations in rural landscapes. The results call for gender balanced community participation to promote equity in participation in the governance of forest plantations.