

*Quality of local institutions and access to fuelwood in suburban forests of Bangui*

The biomass resources are the main source of domestic energy in Central African Republic (CAR). About 97.2% of households depend directly on it for cooking and heating. Such dependence on these resources may cause degradation and deforestation of forest cover if local institutions don't play effectively its role in regulation of resource. In CAR, almost all forests that supply large urban centers to fuelwood belong to State,. But the fact in this country is that, State and the decentralized communities have difficulty to control these resources, and forest cover is steadily reducing. The trend is more pronounced around major centers like Bangui where forests recede around 0.3km per year. That is the context in which the present study has set as objective to provide empirical evidence basis on theoretical of the role of local institutions in fuelwood management. The main question of study is: can local institutions quality influences the choice of fuelwood collection site in suburban forests of Bangui?

This study based on theoretical literature of property rights which claim the existence of these rights for a sustainable management of resources. It's in this sense that Heltberg (2001) states that when resource is a common pool resource, they are managed sustainably.

Empirically, a first analysis focused on the overview of the institutional contexts on study area of Plateaux. Examination of land codes of the country reveals ambiguities making obsolete the procedure for acquiring land title in the country and thus facilitates anarchy and informal practices in access to forest land.

The second empirical evaluation concerns econometric analysis of choice of fuelwood collection site in the study area in relation to the quality of local institutions. The data for this study come from a household survey conducted in 2013. A multinomial probit model was used. This model has the option of releasing the constraint of Independence of Irrelevant Alternative. The dependent variable of the model is qualitative and is the main site of fuelwood collection. It has three modes: community forest, and public private forests. The main independent variables are the distance between the village of collector and the nearest town, the distance between village and the collection site and the indicator of quality of local institutions. This indicator is constructed from access rules, restriction and sanction vis-à-vis of forests in each locality.

As result, given the type of dependent variable, public forest is set to reference group. Thus, the study found that the distance between village and the nearest town is a decisive factor in the choice of communal forests as collection site. Against, distance between the village and the collection site negatively influences the choice of communal forests. Finally the poor quality of local institutions positively influences the choice of collect in communal forests. This is explained by the fact that in the study area, communal forests are treated as open access resource.