



Discursive Institutionalism: Analysis of the Forest Policy Review Process of Ghana

Yaw Amo Sarpong (Assistant Research Fellow/PhDCandidate); Corresponding Author, Bureau of Integrated Rural Development (BIRD, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, Ghana

Daniel K. B. Inkoom, PhD (Senior Lecturer); Department of Planning,
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana

Ibrahim Latif Apaassongo; Department of Agricultural Economics Agribusiness and Extension,
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana

Abstract: Analysis of ideas and discourses of actors and stakeholders make political scientists understand how ideas and discourses are put across and defended in national policy debate. Stakeholders' debate at different levels on ideas and issues of local and global concern, ranging from good forest management practices to nature conservation and forest policies. Ghana's forestry sector is complex with different actors, stakeholders, agencies, and institutions engaged in continuous discussions on concepts, beliefs, and ideologies for better policy development. This paper answers its central research question by identifying "old" and "new" stakeholders of Ghana's forestry sector, the ideas they stand for, their discourses, beliefs, concepts, the interests they want to defend and the ensuing power relations via discursive institutionalism theory. Stakeholders employed diverse means at policy review forums, to influence the review committee to consider their ideas. Evidence of formation of stakeholder coalitions to push across ideas and discourses provided the best audience leading to acceptance and inclusion in the policy output of the forestry sector. It is concluded that discursive institutionalism theory can be used to explain how stakeholders and actors share ideas and discourses in a policy process.

Keywords: Forest policy, discourse, stakeholders, institutional analysis, power relations, ideas, discursive institutionalism

I. Introduction

The explanatory power of ideas and discourse in relation to what is said; where, when, how, why it was said and which stakeholder or agency said it when formulating new or reviewing old sectoral policies, programs and philosophies is interesting [1-3]. The analysis of the ideas and discourse of different actors and stakeholders make scientists understand how agencies put their ideas across and how they defend them in a national policy debate. Different theories of the policy process can be used in analyzing any policy process [4, 5] but the discursive institutionalism theory lends insight into the role of ideas and discourse in politics while providing a more dynamic approach to institutional change than the other forms of institutionalism theories [1].

Ghana has a total land area of 238,500 km². The distance from south to north is about 670 km and from west to east is about 560 km. Ghana has two main kinds of vegetation; forest and savanna. Tropical high forest occupies the southern portion and the savanna the northern and southeastern portions of the country. Taxonomically the two are very distinct and very few plants occur naturally in both kinds of vegetation. The savanna covers about 65.5% of the total land area of Ghana and tropical high forest covers about 34.4% of the total land area of Ghana). The approximately 0.1% accounts for the coastal plains and sandy beaches. The total forest cover of the country translates to approximately 0.5% of the world's forests [6-10].

Ghana's forest is categorized into unreserved forest and government protected forest reserves. There are about 266 protected forest reserves covering a total land area of about 12,200 km² and 200 of these are located in the high forest zone. Total forest and wildlife reserves occupy 18,000 km² or 22% of the tropical high forest zone of Ghana. Unreserved close canopy forest covers an area of 400,000 km² [8].

Timber is currently being harvested from production areas of about 45% of the total area within forest reserves. The remaining 55% is designated as protection, conversion and research areas in conformity to Ghana's policy for environmental conservation [10, 11].

The country's vegetation also produces wide range of goods and environmental services aside timber, with national importance including; medicinal plants, and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) such as snails,

mushrooms, 'bush meat', fruits etc. [3, 7]. The forest also produces indirect ecological benefits such as nutrient cycling, water conservation, and serves as carbon sink, it also help to protect biodiversity and landscape. For some forest fringe communities, the economic interest in the forest is huge, from illegal logging, participatory forest management, tree plantation development, game for bush meat, collecting snails and mushrooms to converting forest into cattle pasture.

According to Abebrese (2002), though global forest continues to dwindle in terms of area and quality, the problem is more pronounced in Ghana. The rate of forest lost outside forest reserves is alarming and the fact is that original forest cover are no more except for some parts of the forest reserves, and in small patches of protected areas and sacred groves near villages. The proportion of forests outside forest reserves declined from 20% in 1955 to less than 5 per cent in 1994 [12]. There are about 700 km² of plantations in Ghana with about 590 km² in the high forest zone. There are many plantation developments by government and the private sector with some being public-private partnership, example is the 'tuangya' going on in the unreserved areas of the forest zone [13-15].

The main cash crops cultivated in the forest zone are cocoa, oil palm and citrus. Other annual crops grown include plantain, cocoyam, yam and cereals (e.g. maize and rice). In all cases of farming, the forest is cleared before crops are planted. Agriculture in Ghana with cocoa being the main cash crop is the highest employer of the citizens employing over 60% of the working population and the second highest foreign exchange earner after mining [16].

The forest policy review process of Ghana is characterized by various actors and stakeholders, some are agencies, international organization and civil society organizations some of whom are in some form of coalitions. These coalitions operate in different arenas, with internal rules, norms, ideas, and concepts they adhere to, example of which is the Forest Watch Ghana (FWG) which is a coalition of some local and international NGOs (CARE, SNV/Netherlands Development Agency, Tropenbus Ghana, Institute for Cultural Affairs, Ricerca e Cooperazione, Green Earth Organization, Friends of the Earth, Friends of the Nation, the Ghana Wildlife Society and many more other environmental NGOs) and individuals interested in forest and nature conservation [9]. Some of these actors and stakeholders have high impact factor in terms of how they articulate their ideas during debates in the forest policy review process than others because of the kind of power they have to convince and influence and change the rules of the game of the review process.

Stakeholders of the forestry sector of Ghana debate at different levels and in different arenas on ideas and issues of both local and global concern. Some of the debate bothers on good forest management practices, new global forest laws and certification programs to nature conservation and forest policies in Ghana.

If a policy review process is not properly conducted by institutions with the right knowledge, to meet and share ideas on best policies to address the current trend of forest degradation through illegal logging, the loss of environmental services may in large part fall on those current and future generations who do not own the forest, live in or near it. Without strong and effective institutions to formulate and implement better policies, the sector might not be able to control forest lose and improved livelihoods for current and future generations [3, 17].

In the year 1994, the forest policy of Ghana which was over 50 years old was updated to reflect the reality of the changing times as well as give direction to sustainable forest management [18]. This policy was to ensure that all segments of society enjoy benefits accruing from the forests in an equitable manner. Additionally, some forestry institutions were restructured and legislative enactments were introduced. The Policy was also intended to serve the greater country objective under the Vision 2020 of maximizing the rate of social and economic development of the country and securing optimum welfare and adequate means of livelihood for all Ghanaians. One of these legislative instruments restricted the use of chainsaw in milling timber.

This was later followed by a set of interim measures to include traditional authorities and communities in the consultation process for allocating forest concessions, but it was revealed at the forestry policy review forum held in Kumasi on 14th October, 2010 for Paramount Chiefs in Ghana that this has not been the case. The chiefs revealed to the review committee that they are involved but little by the Forestry Commission in the management of the forest and that most concessions are given out without their consent. A conveyance certificate became a requirement for logs in transit to ensure that timber was legally and sustainably harvested [21].

The need for reviewing specific government guidance and control in the forestry sector of Ghana has further become very necessary due to the emerging international conventions, rules, partnership programs and protocols regarding this and other natural resource sectors. The government of Ghana is very keen to sign onto these forest and other natural resource intervention programs, the country was the first to ratify a Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union (EU) aiming to correct the bad forestry practices of the state [19]. As to whether these programs are scrutinized and reviewed in consultation and collaboration with all stakeholders of the economy in order to help achieve better results and impact is yet to be investigated. The current and ongoing wave of global forest laws and other programs has made the forestry sector of Ghana realize the need for a review of the forest and wildlife policy of Ghana which has outlived its usefulness.

The program REDD, which is Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) an effort to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development has been mentioned and considered. The “REDD+” which goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks was also deliberated at some of the stakeholder forums of the policy review process of Ghana. Other interventions and forest management programs like the Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM) have made it important for the policies of the forestry sector of Ghana which was developed in the year 1994 to be reviewed. Under the Clean Development Mechanism, emission-reduction (or emission removal) projects in developing countries can earn certified emission reduction credits. These saleable credits can be used by industrialized countries to meet part of their emission reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol [20].

Taking into account all the above argument, there is increasing local concern over environmental issues like adverse weather conditions due to climate change and extinction of some indigenous NTFPs due to biodiversity loss which are related to the degradation of forest. Apart from the forestry sector’s role in improving livelihoods and maintaining environmental quality, it also helps in the nation’s economy therefore the need to critically review policies governing this crucial sector from time to time to address the changing trends of environmental issues.

II. Objectives

Analysis of the explanatory power of ideas and discourse in relation to what is said; where, when, how, why it was said and which stakeholder or agency said it within the forestry sector in formulating new forest policies, programs and philosophies is yet to be conducted.

There have been problems with the 1994 Policy since the annual cut has to satisfy a timber industry that is characterized by excessive installed capacity and low recovery rates, mainly focused on exporting to a hardening market place, and domestic consumption that is mainly fed from illegal sources. At the same time, environmental concerns have increased to the extent where wildlife and biodiversity conservation are demanding equal attention with forest protection and rehabilitation of degraded and understocked areas occupying a third of the forest estate so the need for the review [21].

According to Schmidt (2008), discursive institutionalism (DI) is very unique in its approach to analyzing policies than other forms of institutionalism theories. It is different from the rational choice institutionalism (RI), sociological institutionalism (SI) and historical institutionalism (HI). The DI helps in making sense of the actions of certain actors and stakeholders in the political debate in the forestry sector. DI looks at the role of ideas in the actions taken, the importance of deliberation in democratic legitimacy, the construction of political interests and values, and the dynamics of change in history and culture [1]. The processes involved in the forest policy review (FPR) of Ghana can be analyzed and explained using the DI theory. The ideas and discourse of stakeholders of the forestry sector will be analyzed using DI to determine which stakeholder said what, how, when and where it was said.

The forestry sector is very complex and has lots of actors, stakeholders, agencies and institutions engaged in continuous discussions on their concepts, beliefs and ideas on how to formulate better policies. It is important to note that the ideas these actors bring into the arena during policy discussions become effective when they are already involved in doing some activities on the ground by way of community advocacy, policy briefs at conferences and workshops, consultancy for the sector etc and not just mere talk [3, 22].

According to some political theorists, DI is the new branch in neo-institutionalism that tries to overcome the traditional institutional thinking like path-dependency and incremental change, the turn to ideas, concepts, narratives and discourse in institutional dynamics and political science [1, 4, 22, 23]. The DI distinguishes the difference between discourses and institutions and the effect discourse has on institutions which is a form of ‘analytical dualism’ [4, 22].

The specific objectives of this paper are:

- i. To identify actors of the policy review process, their concepts and beliefs, their interests, and the ideas they want to share
- ii. To use the discursive institutionalism theory to explain what is happening in the forest policy review of Ghana

The above objectives will help answer the research question of; “how are ideas and discourse articulated by actors and stakeholders of the forestry sector of Ghana?”

III. Institutional Ideas and Discourse in the Forestry Sector of Ghana

Policy design, formulation and review in the forestry sector of Ghana involve a lot of stakeholders, some are ‘old’ and have been in existence for so many years whereas others are ‘new’ and only came into existence recently. Irrespective of whether a stakeholder is old or new, their ideas and discourse are expressed in the policy debate in order to formulate better policies which will be beneficial to society and the world at large [24-

26]. The need to consult with various actors and stakeholders of different sectors of the economy and disciplines allows different ideas and discourses to be expressed resulting in holistic understanding of different views, opinions and interests thereby enhancing systems thinking to bring about the best policy output for the sector [27].

Some important actors, stakeholders, institutions, agencies and commissions that influence policy decisions of the forestry sector of Ghana:

Ministries

- Environment, Science and Technology
- Lands and Natural Resources
- Water Resources, Works and Housing
- Trade and Industry
- Employment and Social Welfare
- Tourism
- Food and Agriculture

Agencies and Commissions

- Forestry Commission of Ghana (and all its departments)
- Timber Export Development Board
- Ghana wood workers association
- Timber companies
- Forest Products Inspection Bureau
- Forestry Research Institute of Ghana
- Association of Ghana Industries
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Lands Commission Secretary
- Federation of Ass. of Ghana Exporters
- Ghana Energy Commission
- Ghana Export Promotion Council
- Ghana National Petroleum Corp.
- Local and International NGOs
- The Mineral Commission of Ghana
- The Universities in Ghana
- Ghana National Petroleum Corporation
- Centre for Development Partnerships (CDP) of the World Bank
- The European Union

Apart from the above mentioned actors, stakeholders, institutions, agencies and commissions, many more individuals and stakeholders like the traditional authorities, forest fringe communities, non-timber forest products (NTFPs) collectors, charcoal producers, fuel wood users, etc also play vital roles within the Ghana forest policy review (FPR) setting.

There is also a broad coalition of civil society networks and organizations interested in the forestry sector known as the “Contact Group” with members from both local and international NGOs as well as the academia. This group which was formed in 2007 in response to the opportunities that the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) offered for engaging civil society organizations and other individuals on how to better manage the forest and increase revenue. This and other civil society groups have since extended their work to include other sector initiatives e.g. REDD+ and the overall governance reform which include the FPR.

Upon interviewing their leadership, represented by Forest Watch Ghana (FWG), the group now works towards the attainment of sustainable and just forest development and biodiversity conservation in Ghana through campaigns including:

- i) fair access to forest resources as between different stakeholders and in particular for improved access for forest dependent communities;
- ii) fair distribution of benefits from forest exploitation as between different stakeholders and in particular for forest dependent communities;
- iii) greater democratic stakeholder participation in forest policymaking and management particularly for forest dependent communities;
- iv) greater civil society mobilization around forest and natural resource issues.

Apart from several NGOs, the Contact Group has other members such as organized labor, traditional and other community leaders, research and academic organizations, the FWG, the Domestic Lumber Traders Association, members of District, Regional and National Forest Forums. Using the discursive institutionalism (DI) theory to analyze how this and other groups convey their ideas, beliefs and discourse, and the medium and forum through which they do so. Stakeholder groups use different modes of communication and with their power

position in relation to others give them an edge in convincing policy-makers in accepting their ideas than those of other competing stakeholders who might share contrary ideas. Even though the Contact Group is not composed of all the civil society groups in Ghana that are interested in forestry, it is believed by the some of the public and some committee members responsible for the FPR that they represent civil society organizations in the sector because of their numbers, position within the sector, interests and how their ideas are argued. 4. Ideas and discourse of the major stakeholders

The review of the 1994 Ghana Forest and Wildlife Policy, and the 1996 Ghana Forestry Development Master Plan as well as other relevant documents provided useful insight into Forestry activities in Ghana and how the sector engages stakeholders to solicit for their ideas. The review of these documents gave a better appreciation of challenges of stakeholder engagement processes within the forestry sector of Ghana since there are different kinds of stakeholders involved [10, 11].

Analysis of ideas and discourse of stakeholders is a process of systematically gathering and analyzing qualitative information about stakeholders on what they say, how they say it, what they stand for and determine whose ideas are being considered over the other in a policy debate [1, 4]. It is the identification of the old and new key stakeholders of the sector, an assessment of their interests, and the ways in which these interests are considered in the policy arena [28].

At a stakeholders' workshop organized by the sector ministry in Accra recently, the invited stakeholders, described stakeholders of the sector as, those directly or indirectly affected by forestry activities and may influence the outcomes of the forest and wildlife policy review. In effect, a stakeholder was considered to be any individual, community, group or organization with an interest in the forestry sector and the outcome of the forestry policy review, either by being affected by the outcomes or not, or by being able to influence the policy implementation in a positive or negative way.

There are major elements in stakeholder categorization. There is the categorization of the 'old' stakeholders (those who have been with the sector for several years) and the 'new' stakeholders (those who joined the sector recently as a result of their interest or new intervention programs or both). There is also the categorization of Key, Primary and Secondary stakeholders. Key stakeholders are those who can significantly influence or are important to the success of the sector. Primary stakeholders are those individuals and groups who are ultimately affected or impacted either positively or negatively by activities of the sector. Secondary stakeholders are all other individuals or institutions with a stake, interest or intermediary role in the sector. [29-34].

In reality, during a recent field study it was realized that the distinctions were not clear-cut, there are overlaps between these categories; some old- and new- primary or secondary stakeholders may also be key stakeholders. The stakeholder categorization may not be static as well; a primary can become secondary or key stakeholder depending on changing circumstances and roles in the sector and the policy debate.

At a recent stakeholders' workshop organized for the traditional authorities (chiefs and elders), they argued that people living in and around the forest should be the ones the new policy should benefit since they depend mainly on the forest for their livelihoods. It also came up that traditional authorities have much interest in relation to the forestry sector compared to all the other community members because of the royalties paid by timber merchants as part of their social responsibilities to them after harvesting timber from their land. The chiefs and elders are considered key stakeholders and are very important and influential since traditionally they are the custodians of the lands on which the forests exist and forestry activities take place.

Forest fringe community members were categorized as primary stakeholders since they are impacted directly by policies of the forestry sector and its activities but have no big influence on the output of policy. The depletion of the forest cover has negative impact on their farms, chain saw activities in and around their farms destroy crops and cost them financially [30, 35].

The secondary stakeholders such as the local and international NGOs do not have much interest in royalties and are not directly affected by illegal chainsaw activities that destroy the forest and farms, but have interest in community and global benefits of forestry activities for example climate change [30, 36]. Table 1 below gives a summary of stakeholders and their discursive relations. The table also shows how important and influential a stakeholder is in the policy process as well as their level of participation in the policy debate.

Table 1: Stakeholder Mapping Matrix showing the discursive relations of some Stakeholders of the forestry sector of Ghana

Stakeholders	Key Ideas	Importance to the policy process	Influence on policy decisions	Participation
Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources	- To formulate new forest and wildlife policy that will take into consideration rebuilding the lost forest estate - maintain vital ecology and life-sustaining processes and conserving pools of genetic material - success of sustainable resource management	Very important since it is the sector ministry in charge of the policy review	Highly influential to the policy decisions since it is in charge of implementing the policy initiative programs (e.g. VPA)	Present at all workshops

Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology	Scientific research into best practices of forest management and helping the sector ministry to account for the costs of nation's forest depletion	Very important in the review process since it is an allied ministry to the sector ministry	Influential to the policy process	Was consulted but did not participate in all the workshops
Forestry Commission of Ghana (and all its departments)	- Develop effective capabilities at the District, Regional and National level in the management, conservation and sustainable development of the nation's forest and wildlife resources - Develop participatory Governance through promoting public awareness and involvement of rural people in conservation so as to maintain life-sustaining systems; preserve scenic areas enhance the potential of recreation, tourism and income-generating opportunities.	Very important in the review process	Their activities is crucial in changing the direction of the forest policy of Ghana at any point in time	Have been participating in most of the stakeholder workshop organized by the forest review committee of Ghana
The Contact Group/Other civil society organizations interest in forest activities	- Promote public awareness and involvement of rural people in conservation - work towards sustainable and just forest development and biodiversity conservation through campaigns and advocacy - Offer direct engagement with - policy research; - direct engagement with policymakers; - citizen mobilization and capacity building; - mass communication; - lesson learning and experience sharing; and - Partnership or collaboration with national, African and international CSOs.	Very important in the review process	Very influential in the policy process and will still be influential during implementation (e.g. Tropenbus Ghana, Civic Response, CARE Int., SNV etc.)	Participated in the stakeholder workshop designed for just civil society groups. They continue to engage with the sector ministry even after the workshop.

Source: Field research, May – August, 2014

Stakeholder representatives and some individual participants at some of the FPR stakeholders' workshop recognized that stakeholders have very different levels of power to make their ideas heard and influence decisions to affect the output of the FPR. They also pointed out that stakeholders vary in their importance and potential to affect forestry activities. Potential to contribute to good forest management, good policy statements and livelihood improvement for forest fringe communities and other timber users lays in factors such as knowledge about global forestry, local forestry activities, and type of resources available and international connections.

Some stakeholders have considerable ideas to contribute to sustainable forest management, yet have little power to do so because they are not better situated within a stronger institution with enough power that will help convince others with their ideas. Others, by contrast have lower potential, yet have considerable power to change the current discourse with their argument and support from other coalition members. To understand the power relations of some of the stakeholders of the forest policy review process, a basic "ranking" of stakeholder groups according to power and potential was developed for stakeholders to rank but not themselves in a questionnaire format. The average was deduced and used to rank stakeholders. The following table shows the results. In the table, the main current stakeholder groups are listed and given an indicative ranking along the following lines:

- Size of group (5 = very large, 1 = very small): an indication of the number of people in the group (e.g. traditional authorities will have a fewer number than community members but more numbers than the sector ministry)
- Potential to contribute to forest policy debate (5 = very high, 1 = very low): an indication of the contribution which the group could make, given their size, with their current role, level of knowledge and expertise – if they had the power to do so
- Power to contribute to and influence forest policy decisions (5 =very high, 1 = very low): an indication of the power each group currently has to contribute to the debate on the forest policy review

Table 2: Ranking of stakeholder groups' power and potential to contribute to forest policy review debate

Stakeholder Group	Size Of group	Potential to contribute to policy decisions	Power to contribute to and influence forest policy decisions
Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology	2	3	3
Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources	5	5	5
Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing	2	2	2
Ministry of Trade and Industry	2	3	4
Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare	2	2	2
Ministry of Tourism	4	2	2

Ministry of Food and Agriculture	2	2	2
The Traditional Authorities (Chiefs)	4	4	4
The Contact Group/Forest Watch Ghana	4	4	5
Forestry Commission of Ghana	4	5	4
Timber Export Development Board	2	3	2
Ghana wood workers association	4	2	2
Timber companies	3	2	2
Forest Products Inspection Bureau	1	2	2
Forestry Research Institute of Ghana	2	2	3
Association of Ghana Industries	4	1	1
Environmental Protection Agency	1	3	4
Lands Commission Secretary	1	2	2
Federation of Ass. of Ghana Exporters	3	2	1
Ghana Energy Commission	1	2	1
Ghana Export Promotion Council	1	2	2
Ghana National Petroleum Corp.	1	1	1
Local and International NGOs	5	5	5
The Mineral Commission of Ghana	2	2	2
The Universities in Ghana	3	3	3
Ghana National Petroleum Corporation	1	2	1
Centre for Development Partnerships (CDP)	1	2	2
The European Union	4	4	5

At the government organized workshops to solicit for ideas for the new policy, most stakeholders submitted written notes while others did some sort of computer presentation to help influence the committee to consider their ideas on the policy review and to further consult them on how to implement these ideas into programs.

Here is an excerpt from one such note from Civic Response in 2010:

“These notes are provided as a preliminary contribution to the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources proposal to replace the 1994 Forest and Wildlife Policy. We hope that there will be further opportunities to engage the Ministry as the process develops and indeed after any new policy is adopted. Given the opportunity we would be happy to submit a more considered version of this note.”

Analyzing the above statement, it can be inferred that civil society groups of which Civic Response is one of their most active actors has a very good strategy to put their ideas and interest across and for continuous engagement with the management of the forestry sector. Their strategy is unique, they have joined coalition forces called Forest Watch Ghana (FWG) and its active members (Tropenbus Ghana, CARE, SNV, Friends of the Earth, Institute for Cultural Affairs, Ricerca e Cooperazione, Green Earth Organization, Friends of the Nation, the Ghana Wildlife Society) and many more other environmental NGOs with particular interest in the forest in order to make their ideas and discourse realized.

IV. Conclusion

Ideas and discourses of some stakeholders of the forestry sector of Ghana are accepted and included in the policy output of the forestry sector of Ghana when they are presented with a common voice in the form of a coalition group. The coalition groups formed by stakeholders increase their power to influence policy decisions. Individual stakeholders even though might have better ideas, fail to change and influence policy decisions when their ideas meet opposition from powerful coalition groups. Discursive Institutionalism theory helps to explain and make sense of how institutions are able to change social norms through ideas and discourses, advocacy, and getting involved in policy debate and processes. The importance of ideas and discourse of actors and stakeholders of the forestry sector of Ghana in shaping the sector through better policies was also noted. The analysis of the power relations and participation of stakeholders in the policy processes make us understand how institutions can influence policy decisions in favor of their ideas and believes. At the policy review forums, some stakeholders submitted written notes while others did computer presentations to help influence the committee to consider their ideas, but those that had formed coalition with other actors had their ideas getting the best audience. From the above analysis and discussions, it is concluded that the discursive institutionalism theory can be used to explain how stakeholders and actors share ideas and discourses in a policy process.

References

- [1] Schmidt, V.A., *Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse*. Annual Review of Political Science, 2008. 11(1): p. 303-326.
- [2] Henry, L.A., *Between transnationalism and state power: the development of Russia's post-Soviet environmental movement*. Environmental Politics, 2010. 19(5): p. 756 - 781.
- [3] Wiggins, S., K. Marfo, and V. Anchirinah, *Protecting the Forest or the People? Environmental Policies and Livelihoods in the Forest Margins of Southern Ghana*. World Development, 2004. 32(11): p. 1939-1955.
- [4] Arts, B. and M. Buizer, *Forests, discourses, institutions: A discursive-institutional analysis of global forest governance*. Forest Policy and Economics, 2009. 11(5-6): p. 340-347.
- [5] Sabatier, P.A., *Theories of the Policy Process*. Westview Press, 2007. Second Edition: p. 344.
- [6] BIRD, K., *Need for Policy Coherence in Land and Forestry*. Consultancy Report, Ghana Land and Forestry Policy Support Facility (GLFPSF), 2005.

- [7] Eshun, J.F., J. Potting, and R. Leemans, *Sustainability of Forestry and Timber Industry in Ghana*. International Forestry Review, 2010. 12(4): p. 383-395.
- [8] Abebrese, M.O., *Tropical Secondary Forest Management in Africa: Reality and Perspectives, Ghana Country Paper*. FAO, 2002.
- [9] Albert, K. and V. Mercy, *Advocacy in Programming: The Case of Forest Watch-Ghana*. CARE INTERNATIONAL, 2007.
- [10] MLF, *Forest and Wildlife Policy of Ghana*. Government of Ghana, Ministry of Lands and Forestry, Accra, Ghana, 1994.
- [11] Policy Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Division, M.o.L.a.f.M., Government of Ghana., *Forestry Development Master Plan, 1996 - 2020*. The Republic of Ghana, 1996.
- [12] Ghana, F.D.O., *Forestry Department's Annual Reports*. Government of Ghana, Ministry of Lands and Forestry, Accra, Ghana, 1952-1994.
- [13] Blay, D., et al., *Involving local farmers in rehabilitation of degraded tropical forests: some lessons from Ghana*. Environment, Development and Sustainability, 2008. 10(4): p. 503-518.
- [14] Owubah, C.E., et al., *Forest tenure systems and sustainable forest management: the case of Ghana*. Forest Ecology and Management, 2001. 149(1-3): p. 253-264.
- [15] Zhang, D. and E. Aboagye Owiredu, *Land tenure, market, and the establishment of forest plantations in Ghana*. Forest Policy and Economics, 2007. 9(6): p. 602-610.
- [16] Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research, *State of the Ghanaian Economy*. ISSER, 2009.
- [17] Appiah, M., *Co-Partnership in Forest Management: The Gwira-Banso Joint Forest Management Project in Ghana*. Environment, Development and Sustainability, 2001. 3(4): p. 343-360.
- [18] Smith, E.K., *Development and Setbacks in Forest Conservation: The New Political Economy of Forest Resource Use in Southern Ghana*. Ministry of Lands and Forestry, 1999.
- [19] "Illegal or Incompatible?" Project team, *Social safeguards in the Ghana-EU Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) Triggering improved forest governance or an afterthought?* Wageningen University and Research Centre, Wageningen, the Netherlands, 2010: p. 10.
- [20] Michaelowa, A. and F. Jotzo, *Transaction costs, institutional rigidities and the size of the clean development mechanism*. Energy Policy, 2005. 33(4): p. 511-523.
- [21] Beeko, C., *The EU's policy with respect to Imports of Illegally Harvested Timber and the Commission's Regulation on the Matter – An African Perspective*. Draft paper presented at International Conference on the External Aspects of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. The External Dimension of Sustainable Development, Brussels, 2009.
- [22] Buizer, I.M., *Worlds Apart; Interactions between Local Initiatives and Established Policy*. Wageningen: PhD thesis Wageningen University. Wageningen University, 2008.
- [23] Marsh, D. and G. Stoker, *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Houndmills and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002.
- [24] Frankel, J.A. and K.E. Rockett, *International Macroeconomic Policy Coordination When Policymakers Do Not Agree on the True Model*. The American Economic Review, 1988. 78(3): p. 318-340.
- [25] Cortner, H.J., *Making science relevant to environmental policy*. Environmental Science & Policy, 2000. 3(1): p. 21-30.
- [26] Krott, M. and N.D. Hasanagas, *Measuring bridges between sectors: Causative evaluation of cross-sectorality*. Forest Policy and Economics, 2006. 8(5): p. 555-563.
- [27] Jakobsen, C.H., T. Hels, and W.J. McLaughlin, *Barriers and facilitators to integration among scientists in transdisciplinary landscape analyses: a cross-country comparison*. Forest Policy and Economics, 2004. 6(1): p. 15-31.
- [28] Boström, M., *How State-Dependent is a Non-State-Driven Rule-Making Project? The Case of Forest Certification in Sweden*. Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning, 2003. 5(2): p. 165-180.
- [29] Brugha, R. and Z. Varvasovszky, *Stakeholder analysis: a review*. Health Policy and Planning, 2000. 15(3): p. 239-246.
- [30] Fürstenau, C., et al., *Multiple-use forest management in consideration of climate change and the interests of stakeholder groups*. European Journal of Forest Research, 2007. 126(2): p. 225-239.
- [31] Aas, C., A. Ladkin, and J. Fletcher, *Stakeholder collaboration and heritage management*. Annals of Tourism Research, 2005. 32(1): p. 28-48.
- [32] Arnaboldi, M. and N. Spiller, *Actor-network theory and stakeholder collaboration: The case of Cultural Districts*. Tourism Management, 2011. 32(3): p. 641-654.
- [33] Kangas, A., et al., *Stakeholder perspectives about proper participation for Regional Forest Programmes in Finland*. Forest Policy and Economics, 2010. 12(3): p. 213-222.
- [34] Vigar, G. and P. Healey, *Developing Environmentally Respectful Policy Programmes: Five Key Principles*. Journal of Environmental Planning and Management, 2002. 45(4): p. 517 - 532.
- [35] Materne, M. and B. Jean, *Influencing policy processes: Lessons from experience*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, 2008. Policy Assistance Series 4: p. 114.
- [36] Kok, M.T.J. and H.C. de Coninck, *Widening the scope of policies to address climate change: directions for mainstreaming*. Environmental Science & Policy, 2007. 10(7-8): p. 587-599.