GEOG/PLAN 639

Graduate seminar in Community-based Resource Management

Fall 2007: Wednesdays, 1:30-4:15 in Saunders 116

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Course homepage http://webct.hawaii.edu

Course description

The poor track record of top-down centralized management and regulation of natural resources by states and governments has led to an increased emphasis on the notion of “community management.” We use “community-based resource management” as an umbrella term for related terms that include “collaborative management,” “community management” or “local management.” In this alternative approach, communities and community-based institutions are deemed to potentially be better positioned to: 1) respond and adapt to locally specific social and ecological conditions; 2) represent local interests and preferences; 3) mobilize local resources; and 4) create mechanisms for increasing accountability for their natural resource management decisions and actions.

Despite these potential benefits, a community-based approach carries with it a number of risks and constraints. In this class we will look at the dilemmas of community-based resource management approach by critically examining the key premises for successful community-based resource management. We will explore the complex social realities at the local level, and how they are affected by broader economic (market) and political forces. To ground class discussions, we will refer to applications in the management of forests, lands/water resources, and coastal/marine resources.

Course requirement

This is a reading seminar, and students should expect to read up to 150 pages of articles or book chapters per week.

There is no final term paper for this class. Instead, each seminar participant is required to submit three position papers and one book review (more on this later). Upon consultation and approval by the course instructors, advanced PhD students have an option to take Plan B (writing and presenting his/her research proposal to substitute two position papers).

Position papers are 6-8 pages long, addressing the questions based on your reading and interpretation of the literature. You are encouraged to bring in other sources such as other bodies of literature, case studies, or your own experience to enrich the discussion of the assigned topic. POSITION PAPERS ARE DUE ONLINE 72 HOURS BEFORE CLASS DISCUSSION (i.e. by 1:30 the preceding Monday). Please post all papers (draft and final) on the class WebCT.
Students not writing a position paper for that week should write a one-page commentary on the presented paper(s) as feedback to the writers. Please bring the commentary to class and make enough copies for everybody. This is our way of building a collective analysis of a set of readings and issues. If there are more than one position paper in a week, commentary should still be confined to one page, and should reflect analysis of ALL papers and your own reading of the literature.

Book:


Note: the paperback edition of this book ($22.50) is due out in November 2007 – but may be too late for our purpose. Amazon used-book website has a few ‘almost new’ hardback copies available for more reasonable prices.

**WEEKLY OUTLINE**

[Subject to change without notice]

**Week 1. 8/22/2007 Introduction**

Course overview and mechanics.


**Week 2. 8/29/2007 Dilemmas of community-based management**

Many have argued that community-based resource management is a viable alternative to centralized management regimes. What are the risks in this alternative approach? Are there any circumstances in which CBRM should NOT be recommended?


Week 3. 9/5/2007 Common property resources and collective action
Garrett Hardin's 1968 *Science* article, "The Tragedy of the Commons" is one of the most cited references in the social sciences. Assuming that the notion of self-interested, rational behavior as the major driving force of individual and social action is correct, what are the ways that a group of resources users overcome free-rider and other problems to develop workable systems of common property resource (CPR) management? Under what conditions do CPR users will or will not develop institutions for cooperative management? To what extent do prevailing property institutions allow user groups to manage their local resources?


Week 4. 9/12/2007 Governing institutions
Decentralization and co-management initiatives aim at resource governance that is BOTH more effective and more democratic. Comment on whether these goals are generally compatible, and what could happen if one goal is given more priority. Can decentralization and co-management occur without full-scale democratization?


Week 5. 9/19/2007 Resource tenure
What are the ways by which people gain legitimate access to natural resources? Refer to the informal as well as formal dimensions of resource tenure. Following up on last week’s discussion, discuss the implications of resource tenure on the viability of community-based management regimes.


**Week 6. 9/26/2007 Community, territory, and identity**

Community boundaries, in terms of both territory and identity, are dynamic and subject to negotiations and contestations. Comment on how different strategies develop in response to external and internal pressures such as direct competition over benefits from land, forest, and marine resources; the changing identities and economic positions of individual members; as well as the changing power structure that impacts a community. What are the implications of these dynamics on the viability of community-based management regimes?


**Week 7. 10/3/2007 Participation I: critical views**

Examining the realities of popular participation and political representation. Who participates? What are the aims of participation? How do typical participation processes relate to conventional agency or legislative decision-making processes? Whose needs are represented? What forms does participation take? How much authority do stakeholders have in participation processes?


Week 8. 10/10/2007 Participation II: practical challenges

What types of decisions are generally under-represented in participation processes? How do organizations honor the pretense of participation but subvert the sharing of authority over important decisions? To what extent do conventional participation processes marginalize women, minorities and other types of stakeholders? If so, how? What are the implications of these challenges in community-based management regimes?


What types of norms or rules govern effective community-based resource regimes and how are they developed and expressed? What types of violations occur, if any? What types of enforcement mechanisms are in place? What are the sanctions for non-compliance? In your opinion, what are the conditions for CBRM projects in order to develop (new) effective rules?


Week 10. 10/24/2007 Local / Indigenous Knowledge

What do we mean by ‘local and/or indigenous knowledge?’ How, if at all, do we assess the ‘validity’ of local/indigenous knowledge? How do we weigh the relative importance of ‘local/indigenous knowledge’ and ‘technical/scientific knowledge’ in any particular CBRM situation?


Week 11. 10/31/2007 Micro Enterprises
What are the challenges that face micro enterprises in building a viable economic basis for community-based resource regimes? Understanding Dove’s position regarding the (in)ability of local communities in competing against external interests, how important is the strategy of developing micro enterprises for the overall goal of CBRM projects? Under what conditions are local micro-enterprises likely to be successful?


Week 12. 11/7/2007 Mapping power
Under what conditions would the strategy of adopting Spatial Information Technology an effective tool for community-based resource management regimes? Comment on the cautions that mapping initiatives could actually disempower local people, and the responsibilities of mapping facilitators (e.g. NGOs, donor agencies).


Week 13. **11/14/2007 CBRM in the broader context**

What are the rationales for “scaling up” from site-based management to networks or larger-scale community or co-management initiatives? How are networks organized to foster cross-site learning and improved management? What are the potential strengths and weaknesses of “learning networks”? What happens when a successful program is used as a model in other places? Discuss the roles of international organizations in reproducing global ideas and disciplines such as ‘conservation’ and ‘democracy’


Week 14. **11/21/2007 Thanksgiving week - No class meeting**


Summing up the semester, what have we learned about community-based natural resource management? What issues are emerging as CBRM becomes a mainstream approach to natural resource management? The last class meeting will also hear presentations of research proposals from students who opt to take plan B.
For further reading:


