

Fuelwood Rush and the Assemblage of Community Forest Management in Burkina Faso

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Where ? The context

Burkina Faso:

- 274 200 km² ,
- 21 510 181 inhabitants, 89% rural dwellers, relying on the rural sector,
- 6,6 millions ha of forest: 25% registered in the state domain, 75% non-registered
- Up to 60 000 ha of forest loss annually while reforestation is de 1 100 ha/year (INSD 2020, FAO 2002)

Forest resource governance:

- Colonial era, centralized, decentralized
- Dual, conflicting customary & state formalized governance systems
- Internal migration: higher competition, complex land/tree tenure involving autochthons & migrants
- Local governments since 2004



What ? Fuelwood high stake!

Fuelwood, more than a commodity, hopes for

- ✓ economic prosperity,
- ✓ social peace and
- ✓ sociopolitical stability!

- 91% rely on fuelwood for household energy needs,
- Fuelwood for social peace!

60 000 ha forest loss per year!
community forest management
(CAF) program as solution



What? The CAF

The CAF is a socio-ecological system created in 1989 for

- ✓ sustainable fuelwood provision,
- ✓ forest management, and
- ✓ income generation for local people



However, in southern Burkina, Issues of governance, forest conversion, conflicts are reported (Karambiri et al. 2020, Yoni & Sedogo 2015, Ouedraogo 2015; Etongo 2015, Thieba 2003)



How? Research Questions & Methods

We ask:

- How was the CAF elements assembled ?
- What are the implications for adaptive governance, specifically flexibility, innovation and social learning?

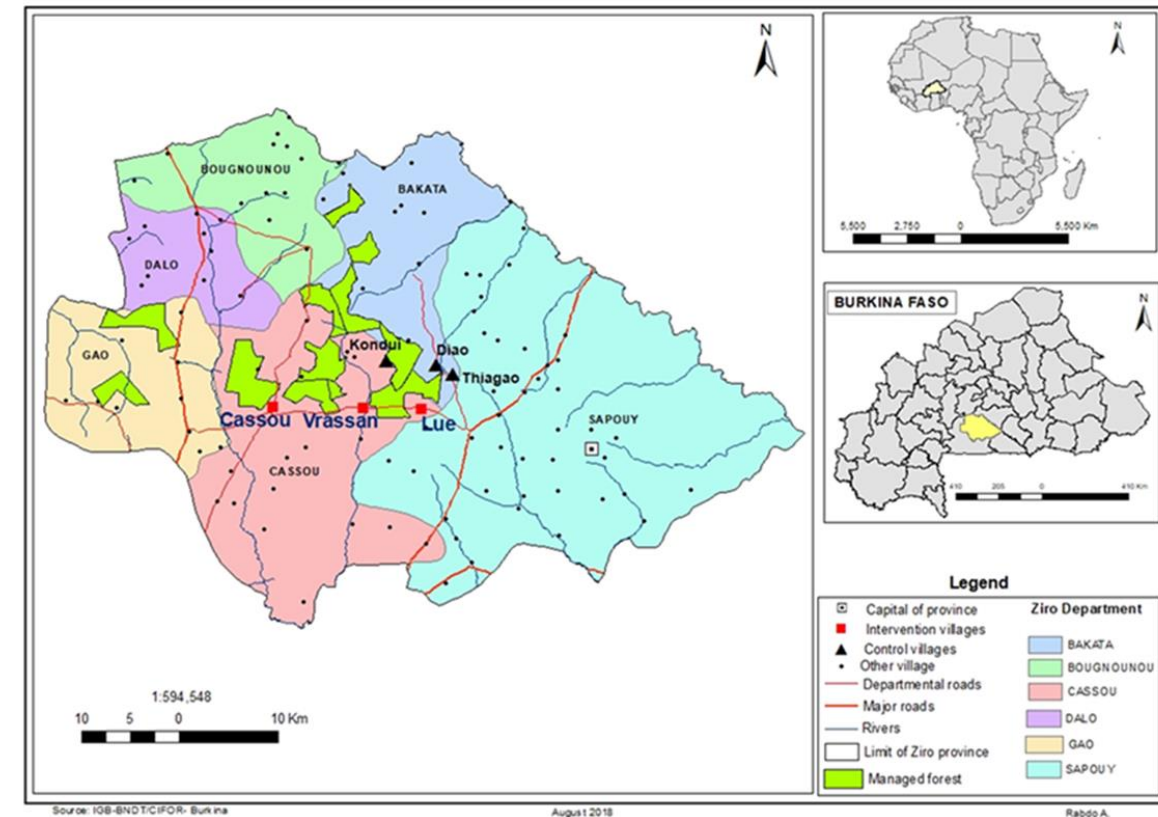
Assemblage theory: practice of assemblage '*the on-going labour of bringing disparate elements together and forging connection between them*' to sustainably govern a given resource (Li 2007)

- Coding
- Territorialisation
- Stratification

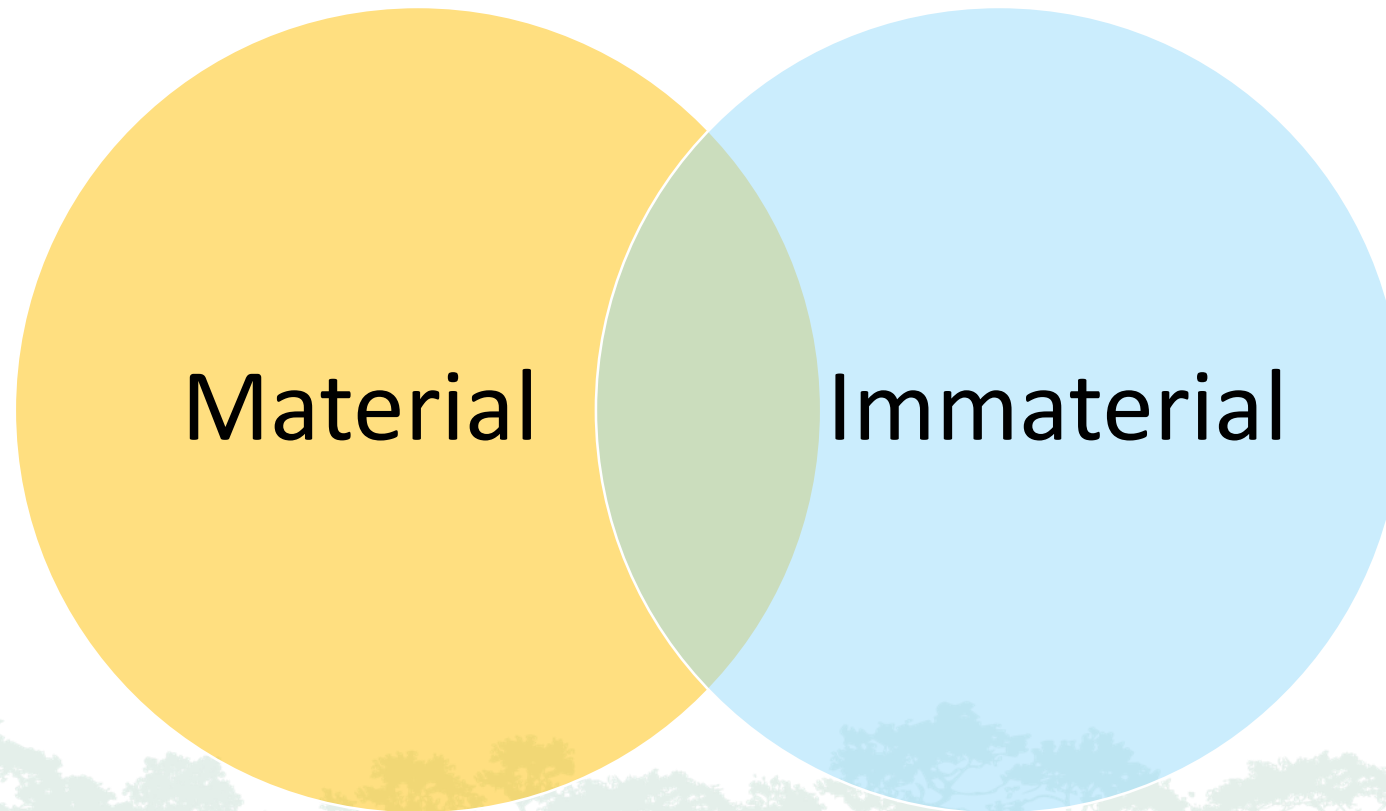


How? Research Questions & Methods

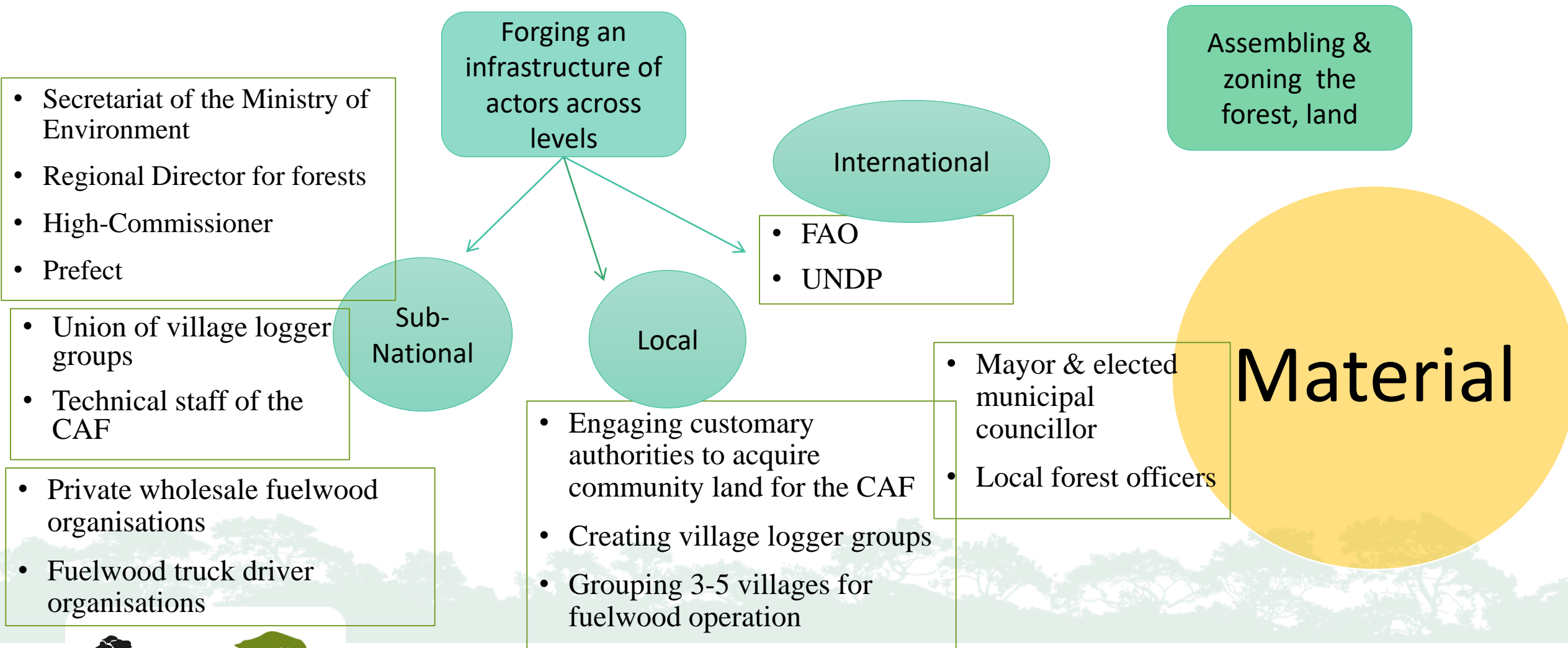
- In-depth & semi-structured interviews,
- 116 interviewees (54 in village C, 24 in V, 33 in L) & 5 national actors,
- 15 FGD segregated by men, women and youth groups from June to September 2017.
- Interviews transcribed, respondents' names anonymized,
- Data processed in Atlas.ti 8 software,
- Inductive coding



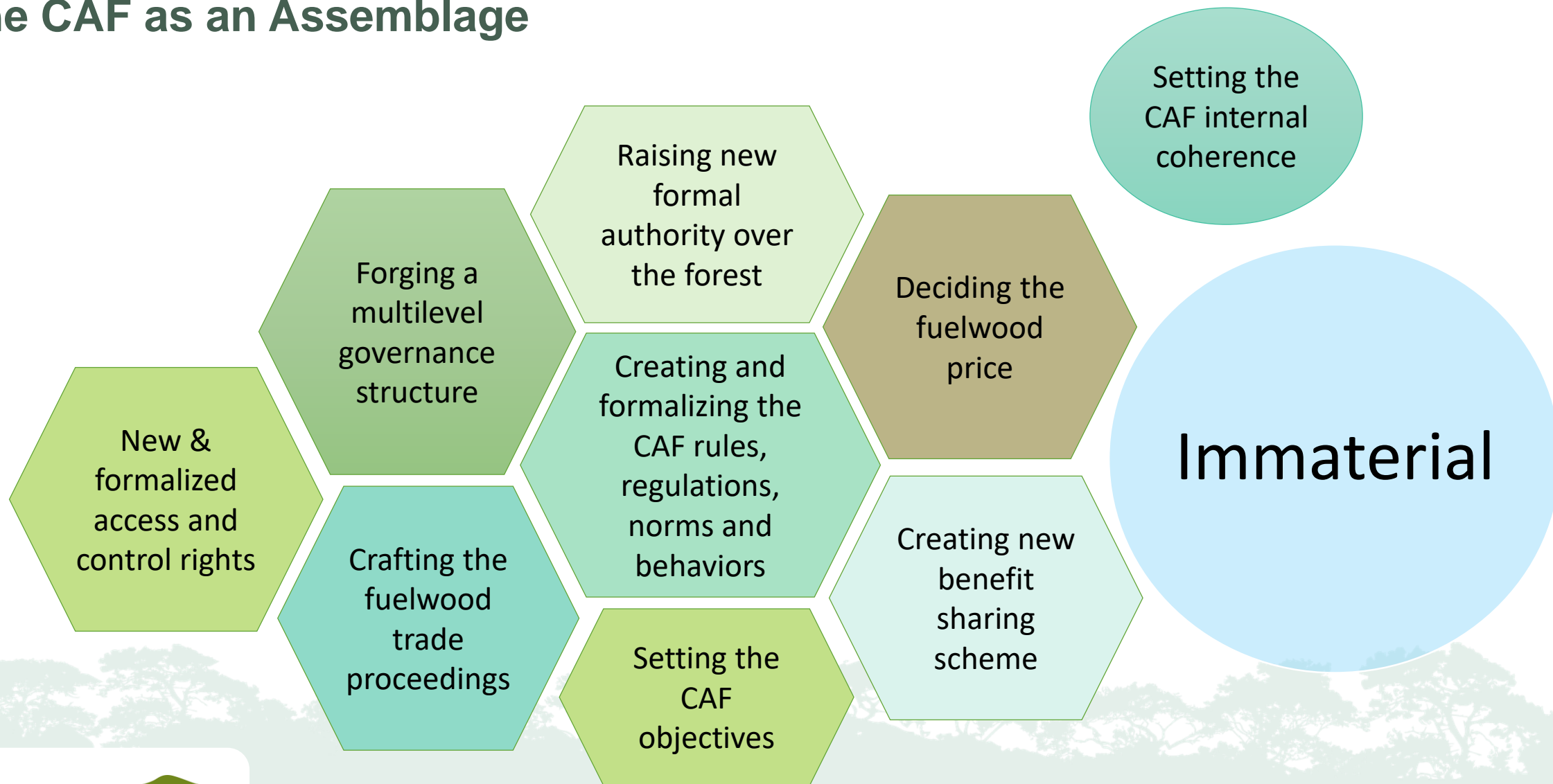
Manufacturing the CAF as an Assemblage



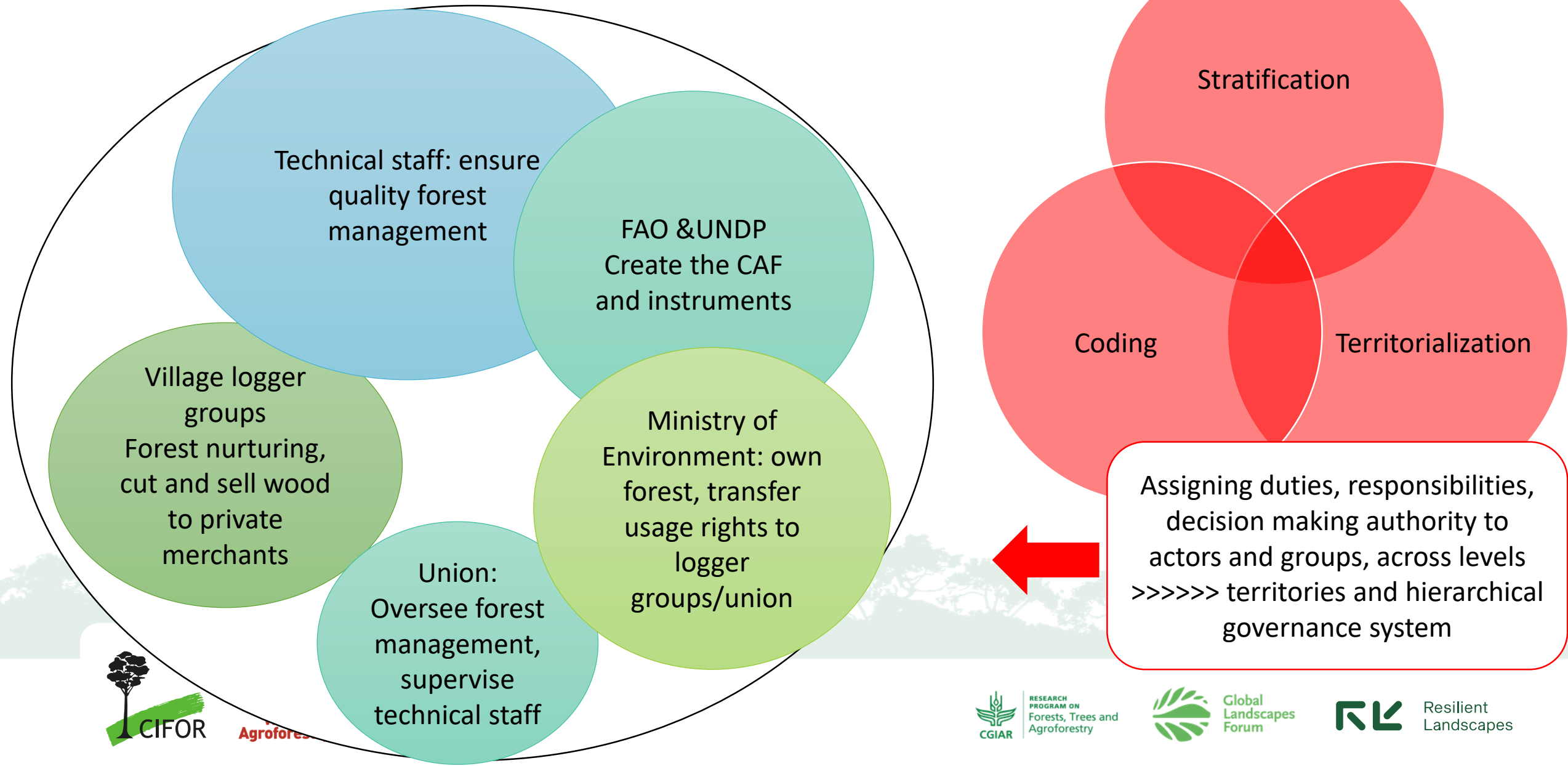
The CAF as an Assemblage



The CAF as an Assemblage



Territorialization & Stratification through Coding



Two decades later...

The CAF emerged as:

- ✓ spaces of resistance,
- ✓ struggles for control over fuelwood resources,
- ✓ benefits sharing and
- ✓ decision making among and between local actors, the CAF's bureaucracies and fuelwood private market

- Rigid formal system
- Fragmentation of internal coherence and external boundaries (e.g., forest conversion, land sale to agribusiness people)
- Many more assemblages emerge
- Participatory approaches were claimed, local actors' empowerment is yet to come!
- Forest management, sustainability disappeared from objectives, to the fuelwood rush!
- Loss/decrease of communal village development funds compromise the existence of the forest!



Two decades later...an example of challenge within the CAF assemblage

Long, burdensome & costly fuelwood trading process:

- Load the fuelwood in trucks !
- Get invoice from forest unit manager,
- Follow the trucks to the CAF marketing clerk 15-20km away to collect the money
- Insecurity (getting robbed)
- Risks of losing revenue (mismanagement with marketing clerk and truck drivers)
- Waste of time and money (when marketing clerk is absent from office)

Parallel changes introduced in practice

- Change introduced in practice, but not in formal regulations
- Load the fuelwood in trucks !
- Get the money directly from truck driver
- Implications:
- Truck driver declare the fuelwood sourcing;
- Risks of loss of money for the CAF, and the village (the forest management fund, the village development fund)



Conclusion & recommendations

- The CAF assemblage was rigid, didn't allow flexibility, innovation, and social learning for adaptive governance
- Our case brings issues of power relations within the assemblage theory discussion



To Policy makers, 3 major shifts are critical

- Shift from a technical and market-based logics sustaining the fuelwood governance toward an integrated development & empowerment of local people.
- Recognising and addressing the asymmetric power relations within the CAF system for sustainable forest management, more equity and social justice in the fuelwood sector;
- Reform the CAF system to include the private fuelwood actors for more coherence, and reforestation efforts



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