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Irina Kouplevatskaya

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INSTITUT DES SCIENCES ET INDUSTRIES DU VIVANT ET DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT
PARIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR LIFE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Laboratoire de Politique Forestière

14, rue Girardet, CS 4216, 54042, Nancy, FRANCE

Thèse, présentée par : ***Irina KOUPLEVATSKAYA***

Pour obtenir le grade de

DOCTEUR DE L'INSTITUT DES SCIENCES ET INDUSTRIES DU VIVANT ET DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

Sujet :

Stakeholders' Participation in a Forest Policy Reform Process: from Democracy Promotion to Power Re-distribution. *A Theoretical Case Study in Kyrgyzstan*

La Participation des Acteurs d'un Processus de Reforme de la Politique Forestière: de la Promotion de la Démocratie, à la Redistribution du Pouvoir. Etude théorique sur le cas du Kirghizistan.

à soutenir publiquement à AgroParisTech, ENGREF, Paris, le 25 avril 2007

Gérard BUTTOUD, professeur de politique forestière, AgroParisTech ENGREF Nancy, (directeur)
Claude MILLIER, président du conseil scientifique, ECOFOR, Paris
Robert NASI, chercheur principal CIFOR Bogor, Indonésie, directeur d'unité CIRAD, Montpellier
Davide PETTENELLA, professeur associé d'économie et politique forestières, Université de Padoue, Italie (rapporteur)
Olli SAASTAMOINEN, professeur d'économie et politique forestières, Université de Joensuu, Finlande (rapporteur)
Jean-Pierre SORG, professeur associé, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale, Zürich, Suisse

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Stakeholders' Participation in a Forest Policy Reform Process: from Democracy Promotion to Power Re-distribution. *A theoretical Case Study in Kyrgyzstan*

Irina KOUPLEVATSKAYA
Doctoral applicant, scientific assistant
Laboratory of forest policy, AgroParisTech, Nancy

director of the thesis: **Gerard BUTTOUD**, Prof. Forest Policy, AgroParisTech, Nancy.

Summary of the thesis

This work is based on a practical experience in facilitation of a forest policy reform process in an ex-Soviet Republic during an 8 years period (1997 – 2005). Participation was introduced and promoted along a complete policy cycle, consisting of the problem definition (through analysis of the actual situation), elaboration of a strategy and an action plan, policy implementation, evaluation and adaptation. This practical experience has been combined with theoretical reflections and analysis, and later on enriched by research in the framework of a comparative study of the new modes of governance in forestry in 10 European countries (GoFOR project) and an overview of the present state of art in the field of forest policy in relation to the aspects of participation. Ideas motivated by the practical experience and theoretical research have been presented in various conferences and research courses and published in the proceedings of the related conferences. During the period of the work over the doctoral thesis, five articles have been published in peer reviewed journals, four of them are included into the thesis.

The thesis paper falls into 5 main chapters.
The practical experience, empirical analysis and the research within the GoFOR project are briefly presented in the Chapter I, titled "*The history of the thesis*". This introductory chapter describes a case study in Kyrgyzstan, my changing role in the process, as well as the theoretical studies and new experience within the European research project. The objective of the Introductory Chapter is to explain the reasons which brought me to the construction of the present thesis.

The Chapter II, called "*Participation as a constructed concept*" discusses participation as part of a dominant discourse of sustainable development. The complexity of the concept of *sustainability*, leads to different interpretations of "participation". The predominant

interpretation of participation in a certain place and at a certain time period defines it's main characteristics and importance for the decision making. Thus participation nay be considered as being constructed and following the changes in the contexts and in the actors' positions. Four propositions are developed in this chapter, promoting the idea of "constructed participation".

- The *first proposition* presents participation as defined by the societal, economic, political and cultural contexts. Based on various theoretical with explications complemented with practical examples from the Kyrgyz experience and from some European countries, this proposition states that participation is not a universal concept, but rather a societal and cultural one.
- The *second proposition* introduces the idea that participation does not work by itself, but is constructed in time and space and is following a specific logic. As there may be different rationales for initiating participation, it may also follow different logics. The chapter considers participation from the rationalist and communication points of view, describing various approaches which could promote participation fitting to a specific logic. Finally an example from the Kyrgyz forest policy reform process presents an experience of how through the application of certain approaches and techniques, the communicative and rational logics could be combined with consecutive incidences it for participation.
- The *third proposition* deals with the fact that types of participation change over time, along the process. The iterativity of the process, introduced by the combination of rationalist and communicative logics creates the conditions for permanent learning and adaptation among the process participants. The learning resulting from the adaptation to changes is the key word in the proposition. As there may be different interpretations of participation, same there are different interpretations of learning. A learning spiral, proposed by Amdam, is taken as a basis for the analysis of participation within this thesis.
- Learning from participation leads to the changes in the positions and roles of the involved participants. Hence, the *fourth proposition* states that participation leads to a re-distribution of power. Different interpretations of power are proposed in the section and which is finally considering the link with the decision making process. Participation is often presented as a process leading to empowerment. The example from the Kyrgyz case study shows how participation leads to the consolidation of power of the stronger participant, which in this case is the State Forest Service.

The Chapter III titled *"From propositions to theory"* introduces the "mixed model" framework, as derived from the "mixed scanning" of Etzioni and applied for the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan. The evolution of interests, oppositions and roles of various stakeholders, caused by the introduction of the mixed model framework, is analysed on the Kyrgyz example. A controversial nature of the framework, which is combining rationalist and incremental communicative logics, creates a permanent opposition. As a result, learning occurred in this process permits some of the participants to take the lead in the process and direct it towards achievement of their proper interests. Thus, a double spiral combination is formed. After some introduction on "inward" and "outward" spirals of planning, this chapter develops a theory of double spirals in a decision making process.

The Chapter IV is devoted to the four peer reviewed *articles*, published in journals. These consecutive ***articles*** present the logic of the research:

The evolution of stakeholders' participation in a process of forest policy reform: from Concept to National Forestry Programme in Kyrgyz Republic. (*Journal Forestier Suisse, vol. 156, 10/05, 2005).* The paper is systematising the participatory forest policy reform in the Kyrgyz Republic, describing 2 clearly shaped stages of the process: the stage of policy elaboration (1997-2001) and the stage of policy re-orientation (2001-2005). The circumstances and driving forces for such a distinction, its impact on the content and outcome of the policy process, as well as different types of participation and how they are changing in the course of the whole forest policy reform period are in the focus of the study. The paper also raises the question of how a democratic process of public participation influences the formerly centralized decision making system.

Assessment of an iterative process: the double spiral of re-designing participation (in co-authors with Gérard Buttoud; *Forest Policy and Economics, 8 (5) 2006).* The paper is treating a forest policy cycle as an iterative process with chronological deductive series of commonly agreed upon steps. The conceptual framework of the mixed model addresses the issue of forest governance reform through linking deductive instrumental and communicative approaches to a decision making process, thus promoting participation. In the course of a participatory process, the positions and roles of various participants, including the forest service, are permanently changing, adapting to the evolving conditions. Formal policy evaluation gives an occasion to explicitly bring up the issues of changed roles and interests, giving information to the stakeholders that they may act while re-defining their positions. At this step some participants may give a clear manifestation of their proper expected results, they are aiming at. Thus the process passes from an outward spiral (communication, collaborative learning) to an inward spiral (adaptation and control), forming a systematic, so called "double spiral". This dynamic is illustrated in the paper based on the case of a forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan. The paper also explains how, the mixed model framework applied for the policy definition, where the various participants are at each step alternatively balancing from collaborative learning (outward spiral) to target–oriented strategies (inward spiral), the leads to this "double spiral" theory.

Participation as a new mode of governance?: scientists and policymakers linked in a double spiral. (Reynolds, K.M. & al., 2007 - *Sustainable Forestry: from Monitoring and Modelling to Knowledge Management and Policy Science*, CAB International, Wallingford/Cambridge: 35-55). This chapter of a book is treating a policy formulation process as a procedure for promoting changes. Learning occurred in the iterativity of a policy process leads to a redefinition of interests and positions of participants, including those of the scientists, when they are involved, as it was the case in Kyrgyzstan. Scientists are often presented as a resource of an objective knowledge and judgement, which are needed for the legitimisation of policy decisions. Although similar to the other actors of the process, scientists permanently adapt their inputs to the re-defined balance of interests. Scientists are called to explain to policy makers the reality through theories, which are adapted to the changing context. This adaptation encourages power re-distribution and also confirms the image of the scientists. On the example of the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan, the double spiral theory explains how the State Forest Service and the policy scientists, (including myself), involved in the process of forest policy reform, with an international donor adjust mutually, for promoting a win-win-win situation (which is questioned in the book).

The involvement of stakeholders in a forest policy reform process: democracy promotion and power redistribution. *((Journal Forestier Suisse, 157(10) 2006.* Public involvement in a policy process is a constitutive element of democracy in particular and means of empowering citizens and the public in general, but it may be also used as a tool for organising power re-distribution or re-enforcing existing power structures. This paper treats the question of power in relation to decision making and participatory process as well as the impact that participation has on the empowerment of some groups of actors. The examples from the Kyrgyz process as well as from the GoFOR case study are used for illustrating the ideas.

The Chapter V is the conclusion chapter, which is, at the same time, presenting questions for the further research. Three concepts are crossed in this chapter: Participation, Democracy and Power. From various interpretations of democracy, its characteristics of deliberation and representation are taken for the analysis. Democracy and participation, together, are considered from the point of view of the possibilities for representation of various interests and empowerment of different stakeholders. An empowerment does not become an evidence immediately, but participation leads to power. In the decision making process power is expressed through various ways and forms. Power in a discourse, which is expressed through different strategies of the actors and stakeholders, is analysed in this chapter. The changes in the roles of the stakeholders and actors (both concepts are defined specifically for the purpose of the thesis) cause the re-definition of power relations. In such a context, different from a traditional view, the role of the scientists becomes critical. It changes from the provider of a neutral vision and specific knowledge to one of the manipulators of the process. This permanent mutual learning, adaptation, appropriation and manipulation define the permanent development and envelopment of the process: from learning to controlling and appropriation. Finally this unstable nature of a permanent construction, adaptation and re-construction is may be true not only for participation itself, but, as a mutual consequence to all the interactions within a decision making process, which may be interpreted in various ways.

Gratitude

This thesis would never come into existence without a very rich experience of working together with many nice and interesting people, and I am very grateful to all of them:

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To my family:
for trust and care, for the humorous touch, for daily support, for being part of my life;
to my son Tim: my moral responsibility in front of him keeps me moving on;

To the future readers of this thesis:
for the interest, for the comments, for the critics and, may be, for the continuation of research on this subject.

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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

The history of the thesis

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I. The history of the thesis

This introductory chapter explains the reasons which brought me to the construction of the present thesis. The thesis is a theoretical case study of the evolution of the roles of different stakeholders and actors involved in a forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan and their influence on the course of this process. A lucky combination of two possibilities for me: (i) to be permanently involved during the 8 years of the policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan, where my role was permanently evolving; and (ii) to take a distance and to analyse this experience, to compare it with the existing theoretical discourse, as well as with similar processes in other countries with different contexts; gave me a very rich empirical material which makes the basis for this thesis.

In the *Introduction*, some common information about the Kyrgyz forest sector and the logic of the forest policy reform are presented, as a basis for the understanding of the general context. Further on, in sub-chapter 3, there is an explanation of my role in the forest policy reform process, which was changing consequently to the changes of this context. After the explanation of the practical experience, sub-chapter 4 contains the description of my studies within the Laboratory of Forest Policy, ENGREF, which permitted to look for a theoretical explanation of the questions posed during the practical experience, as well as to attempt to develop a new theory, the theory of the double spirals of mutual learning and power re-distribution in a policy reform process.

1. The forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan

The period covered by this sub-chapter corresponds to my work within the Kyrgyz-Swiss Forestry Support Programme, from 1995 to 2004. The forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan was initiated and to a great extent pushed by the Kyrgyz Swiss Forestry Support Programme. Obviously, the context of the transition from a centralised to market economy and from a centralised top down decision making to democracy had an impact both on the situation in the forest sector and on the course of the reform. Together with that, new engagements and obligations as well as new possibilities brought in by the international aid had a considerable influence on the process.

1.1 Why there was a need for a forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan

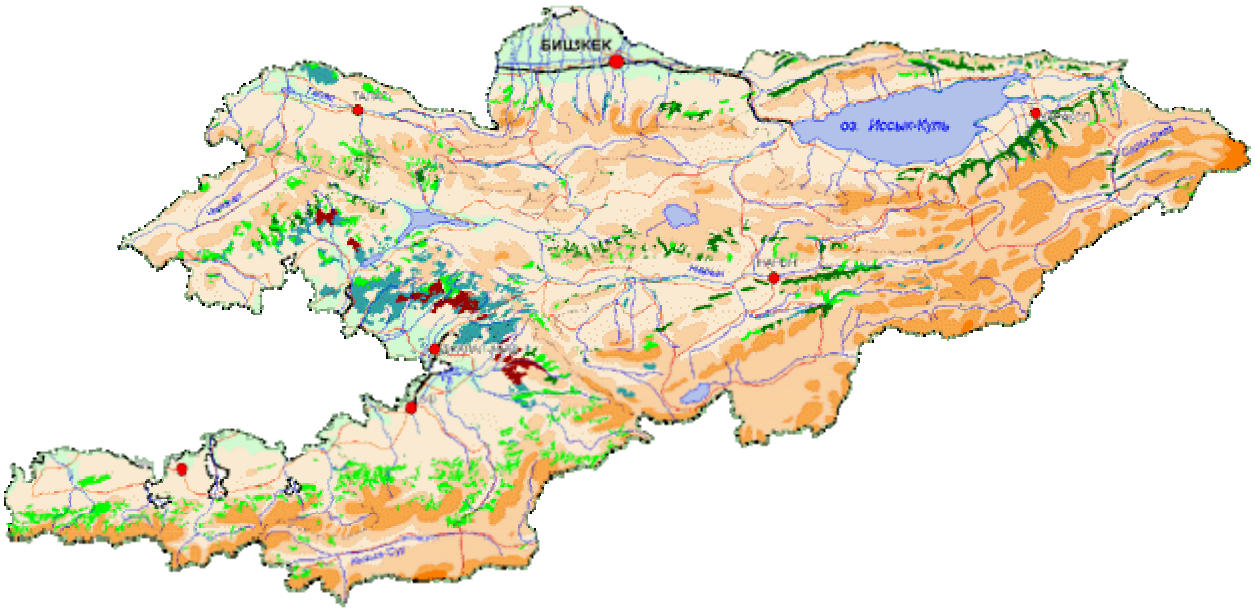
1.1.1 General Background

Kyrgyzstan is one of the former republics of the Soviet Union became politically independent in August 1991 and since the same moment it started it's transition to the market economy with decentralisation and privatisation of the main economic assets. Over 90 % of the

Republic are high mountains with the average elevation of the terrain being between about 600m and 7439m above the sea level. The forests in Kyrgyzstan are mainly mountain forests with the area of about 850 000 hectares which makes about 4.25% of the total area of the Republic.

Forest Characteristics: Forests of the Kyrgyz Republic take quite an inconsiderable area, a bit over 4.2% of the country territory. The total area of the State Forest Fund is 2.8 millions ha, including the 843,000 hectares of forest covered land. This represents about 8% of the manageable land area, while 40.4% is the surface not suitable for forest growing at all – water, rocks, glaciers, the rest being used for agricultural purposes – arable lands, pastures. Forests form a unified State forest fund, which includes both forest covered areas and lands which are not covered with forests but are intended for forestry purposes. There is a considerable variation in species composition and structure of forest stands within the country. Spruce (*Picea schrenkiana*) is the dominant species in the northern Tien Shan; Juniper forests (*Juniperus*), growing mainly in the dry regions in the South but also at the high altitudes (up to 3 500m); walnut (*Juglans regia*) is growing in the south of the country, as well as pistachio (*Pistacia vera*), almond (*Amagdalus communis*), and river-side forests, composed by willow, poplar, birch and see-buckthhorn (*hippophae rhamnoides*), etc.

Map of the forests in Kyrgyzstan (KIRFOR, GIS)



Forest Products and Economy: The total timber stock is approximately 23.5 millions cubic metres. Timber is mainly harvested in the spruce forests, growing in the North of the country, but as most of the stands are said to be inaccessible, possibly due to the lack of appropriate technologies, the trees are mainly over mature and the output of industrial timber is very low (only 20-25%). Harvesting of industrial timber in the walnut fruit forests, growing in the South of the Republic, is limited by the law, though at present there is some harvesting of burls for export purposes. In the course of sanitary fellings (the only type allowed in the

walnut forests) the annual harvest is about 18,000 cubic metres with 8-10% of industrial quality timber. Construction demand is estimated at higher than 500,000 m^3 per year which far exceeds the local production, estimated at 80,000 m^3 per year. The latter figure includes official leshoz production of 40,000 – 50,000 m^3. The gap between demand and supply is expected to continue because the wood imports that supplied the market under the FSU have declined dramatically. Between 1987 and 1997, these imports have dropped from 450,000 m^3 to 50,000 m^3.
The principal forest product is wood for construction and energy. Poor rural communities rely heavily on forests for fuel-wood. Kyrgyz forests also provide important non-wood products, including animal grazing, mushrooms, fruit, nuts (e.g., walnut, almond, pistachio, apple, plum, apricot, cherry, and pear), medicinal plants, honey, and game.
Management aspects: Main activity in the forests is executed by *leshozes* (State forest farms, similar to kolhozes, the only type still existing from the Soviet Union period with the same structure and almost unchanged ways of management). *Leshozes* (46 in Kyrgyzstan, but the number is changing) are State enterprises, implementing management, productive, protective and silvicultural functions, used to work by the plans from the state with provided budget. Economic transition caused the cut of the budget with the remaining plans, resulting in a big crisis for ***leshozes*** (Müller & Venglovski, 1998).
During the Soviet period in the logic of centralised planning system, Kyrgyzstan had a role of an agricultural producer with the main importance in land-use given to husbandry (sheep and cattle breeding). Forests were not considered as being important for the country's economy. Generally they were considered as mountain protective forests with high importance for slopes' protection and water –regulation. Hence, the economic use of forests was practically banned and only sanitary measures were permitted.
The transition to the market economy and the related economic recession have completely changed this situation, and caused the increase of the local pressure on the forests, in the form of uncontrolled fellings, both for construction timber and fuel wood, excessive collection of non-timber products, mainly walnuts, which left little chance for natural regeneration, and unregulated overgrazing in the forests around villages.
Thus, the forests play even a more important role in rural development and improvement of the environment. They are not used for a large scale production of industrial timber: the annual amount of timber procured by all the *leshozes* cannot meet the needs of the country, which are at least 10 times higher than procurement.
The increasing local needs appeared as in a complete contradiction with the political reality: with the forests being the state property and the legislation promoting conservation and protection of the forests and not considering them as a resource with an economic value.
Though the livestock has significantly decreased since the independence, human pressure, mainly expressed in firewood collection and cuttings, is still the main negative factor influencing forests. Today, forestry has to face a changing policy and economical environment. Transition to the market economy requires some adaptations (commercial behaviour, bottom-up procedures, stakeholders' participation, link with private activities).

At present the condition of forests is very unstable, major part being over-mature with very weak natural regeneration. The situation is being aggravated by a permanently increasing human pressure, especially in the South of the country, in walnut and juniper forests.
Due to the need for meeting, at least partially, the national demand for forest products, *leshozes* have to be adapted to new ways of economic management (organisation of work, accounting, planning, marketing) similar to private enterprises, whereas the relations with local authorities and population should be based on democratic principles and co-operation.

1.1.2 Context

The forest policy reform was not a crucial issue at the beginning of the Swiss co-operation, when the activities were aimed at the improvement of the management of forest industrial enterprises (*leshozes*[1]) and silvicultural practices. Only after two years of trials at the field level, it became clear that technical management reforms in the forest sector were not possible without a general reform of the forest policy in the country. The need for a forest policy reform was stipulated by various factors, mainly caused by the country's independence from the former Soviet Union.

The Kyrgyz Republic became independent in August 1991 following the break up of the Soviet Union. This was accompanied by very severe economic and social shocks, including a decline in gross domestic product of around 50% between 1990 and 1995 and a decline in industrial output of almost 70%. Fiscal transfers from Moscow came to an abrupt end. A major program of macroeconomic reforms and structural adjustment including the privatization of many state-owned enterprises was formulated in order to cope with the decrease of the state budget and transfer of some public functions to the private sector. This private sector was previously in-existent, but due to the pressure of economic and structural transformations, had to be chaotically formed on the basis of former state factories and farms. The collapse of the formerly strong economic integration and narrow specialisation of different Soviet Republics (eg. Kyrgyzstan was specialised primarily in sheep breeding) as well as the resulting lost of the vast Soviet market (eg. in 1990, some 98% of Kyrgyz exports went to other parts of the Soviet Union) caused a severe degradation of the Kyrgyz economy.

At the same time, there were changes in the governance of the society through the democratisation of public administration and power decentralisation within the state structures. Top down centralised planning system was chaotically replaced by the introduction of market rules into the management of national economy. The situation was very controversial: because of the developing market relations and decentralisation of the functions, the state was losing it's autocratic power, although still keeping the traditions of top down decision making; at the same time, due to the massive privatisation in the country, a new actor was emerging the private sector, which was still weak and under-developed. Thus, in the new conditions, there was a need for the empowerment of the new actors.

Parallel to the internal transformations, the new international diplomatic establishment of the country and related international obligations have also imposed new requirements and obligations, for example in relation to the human rights and sustainable development. At the same time, new possibilities for international aid from international donors have introduced new challenges.

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[1] *Leshozes* - territorial forest management units, organised with vertical hierarchical structure of planning, financing and reporting. A leshoz is typically made up of a central office with technical and administrative staff and several forest ranges. During the Soviet period the leshozes were organized as cooperatives, covering all basic needs of the resident leshoz "community" (products for everyday life, primary health care, nursery care, schooling, and social amenities) and served in this way as a complete unit of social organization. In the Kyrgyz Forest Code (1999), "leshoz" is defined as "a detached productive-economic unit, which is the main constituting part of the state management in the forestry sector and implements the functions of the state territorial body for the management of forests and forest enterprises".

1.1.3 The situation in the forest sector

In the years following the independence, the situation in the forest sector had a dual nature: on the one hand, it was influenced by the economic difficulties of transition (the cut of the state budget both for technical forestry measures and for the salaries); general impoverishment of the population and a consequent increase of human pressure on the forests (and naturally increased illegal activities in the forests). On the other hand, contrary to the context changes and reforms ongoing in the country, nothing was changing in the forest sector.

The organisation and functioning of the forest sector during the Soviet period was to a great extent preserved after the independence and could be characterised by the following features:

(i) A centralised, highly hierarchical structure of the forest sector remained the same, with most of the power for decision making concentrated at the higher administrative levels. The privatisation processes did not touch Kyrgyz forest sector. The forests staid under the total state ownership. The State Forest Service was (and still is) the state body responsible for the forest management, hunting, management of national parks and other protected areas as well as for biodiversity conservation. Provincial (*oblast)* forest administration units (oblast forest departments) are in charge for forest management at the level of each province. Locally, the state forest management enterprises (*leshozes*) are left responsible for the control, protection, management and use of the forest resources, as well as of all the state owned non-forested land which is located on *leshoze's* territory (mainly pastures, but sometimes also arable land). The entirety of the forested and non-forested land on *leshozes* forms the state forest estate all of which is destined for forestry use in the long run. The *leshozes* report to the *oblast* forest departments and to the central administration, while the *oblast* departments are subordinate to the central administration.

(ii) A top-down planning of control/protection, conservation and economic management of the forest resources was still executed with no link to the availability of the state budget and local capacities for implementation. In general, due to the legally fixed high protective importance of the Kyrgyz mountain forests, timber harvesting is very limited and the forests can give a very high economic output. Therefore, the dependency on subsidies for forestry activities, which was already high during the Soviet time, has increased even more after the independence.

(iii) The forest policy remained conservation-protection oriented, with distinct technical orientation of the forest sector as well as its planning and control systems. Neither the social role of the forests nor their multifunctionality was in the agenda even during the Soviet period, and still less after the independence.

1.1.4 International aid

Since the very beginning, as an independent country, Kyrgyzstan has become active at the international political arena and initiated processes for joining and signing international and regional conventions as well as for participating in the major intergovernmental structures, networks and initiatives on sustainable development. Thus in line with the declared democratic directions for the functioning of the society, a framework of international commitments (even if they were often not binding), was being created in Kyrgyzstan.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has changed the geo-political arrangement in the Central Asian region, giving rise to new actors, interests and possibilities. Because of the initial progress towards democracy, as well as for strategic (geographic location) and economic (existence of some rare resources like gold, uranium, mercury and antimony) reasons, Kyrgyzstan became an attraction for international donors, who were coming to the country with their conditions and requirements.

The Swiss Development Co-operation came to the country in 1994 as a result of the reorganisation of the international development institutions at the world level. For the forestry sector, the Swiss Development Co-operation was the first donor to come to the Kyrgyz forest sector[2] with a serious long term (10-15 years) development support programme. The framework established by the international dialogue on forests, which has emphasised the need for analysing forest development in connection with ecological, economic and social factors, was fitting well the conditions and situation in Kyrgyzstan. Thus, together with the other support initiatives, the Swiss co-operation has also brought a consistent package of assistance to the forest sector. After the initial fact-finding mission, it became clear that the habitual approach to forest management through the application of the satellite imagery and silvicultural techniques was not sufficient and would advance too gradually, requiring a long time period. At the same time, such approach would have provided only technical data, like the information on the rate of the deforestation, increment etc. with no operational conclusions in term of decision making in the new conditions. There was also a timing pressure on the decisions, needed within the process of the rapid transitions. Since there was this strong requirement for an immediate change in the policy decisions, policy scientists have been invited to assist in the introduction of a change in the process of decision making in the forestry sector. The initial idea of this support programme was to deal with the development of the forest sector in a complex way, through assisting to the improvement of the management, technical practices, forest research and education. Soon, the practical experience has proved that those improvements only in the management system could not be effective without a general reform of the whole policy of the forest sector.

Initially, the Kyrgyz forestry administration, was seeing the donor support as a substitution for the missing state budget and thus has demanded the financing of infrastructure, salaries, plantations and so on, trying to cover “holes” in all the needs. As a political consequence, this financial “oxygen” coming from the donor’s funding has decreased the dependence of the forestry service from the state government (Ministry of Finance) with a possibility of autonomous functioning. Mindful of the general weakening of the state, as well as decentralisation and privatisation processes ongoing in the country, this could potentially give a great power to the state forest administration[3]. For the Swiss Support Programme, a reform of the forest policy would give a general framework for the development of the sector, but also well grounded arguments for the Programme’s objectives and priorities in the discussions with the forestry administration. Therefore, the Swiss Development Co-operation has decided to support the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan.

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[2] The official co-operation agreement between the government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Swiss Confederation was signed in November 1994 and a support programme to the Kyrgyz Forestry sector was officially launched in early 1995, to be executed by Intercooperation, a Swiss implementing agency, in the partnership with the Kyrgyz forestry administration.

[3] Herein after in this thesis the wording “forestry administration” is used in a preserved form from Russian language and means the headqurters of the forest service at the National level

2 The logic of the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan is the only ex-Soviet country where a complete cycle of forest policy reform was implemented based on participation of various actors and stakeholders. Although this process was introduced and promoted by the Swiss Support Programme, it was not in the philosophy of the Swiss Co-operation to be directly engaged in the political issues. Moreover, the *Intercooperation*, a Swiss foundation responsible for the implementing of this Support Programme in Kyrgyzstan, had good competencies for technical issues, but not for the organisation of a policy reform. That is why, since the very beginning, they have invited a scientific advisor for forest policy, (Gérard Buttoud), for the proposal of methodology and design of the process. A special component of the project was also identified (co-ordinated by me) with the task of follow up all the activities related to the support to the Kyrgyz forest policy reform.

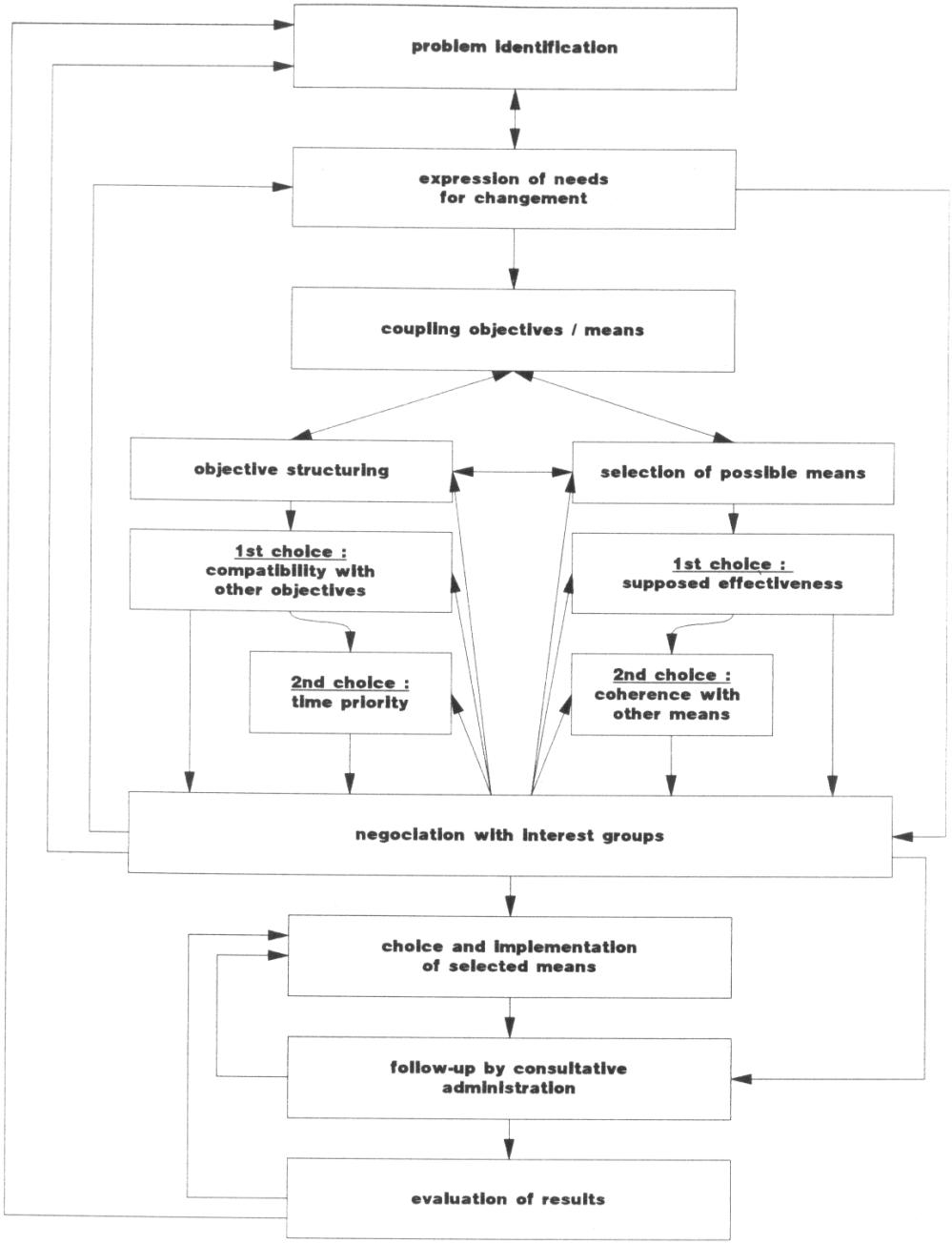
2.1 The logic of the "policy cycle" combined with the involvement of the stakeholders

The political and social contexts of the country, where the State was still very strong and present at all the steps of decision making but, due to the democratisation processes, could not be the sole decider anymore, have required a special framework for the forest policy reform. A theoretical framework of the "*mixed model*"[4] was proposed by the scientific expert as the most appropriate for the Kyrgyz context. The essence of the *mixed model* is the combination of the habitual technocratic top - down decision making procedures and repeated communication/consultation with different stakeholders at each step of the process. Scheme 1 explains the logic of the application of this framework, as it was proposed in Kyrgyzstan in 1998 for the initiation of a new forest policy definition. Later, based on the experience of Kyrgyzstan, this framework of the « mixed model » was further precised and developed (Buttoud & Yunusova, 2000). The work over this thesis, indeed, led to some further development of this framework.

The proposed framework was supposed to allow the public authority to have a clear deductive agenda with precise links between the expected results, objectives and related means, with a parallel consideration of needs and positions of the other actors and stakeholders, and thus would guarantee the effectiveness of decisions. In the framework of the "mixed model", a forest policy making is a systemic inductive process, which includes normative and deductive logic of the rationalist decision making, combined with communication with all the stakeholders along the process.

[4] The concept of the « mixed model » will be further developed and presented at length in Chapter III, as well as in the article "Assessment of an iterative process: the double spiral of re-designing participation", *Forest Policy and Economics*, 8 (2006) proposed as part of this thesis.

Scheme 1. The forest policy process as defined in the Mixed Model



(Buttoud and Samyn, 1999).

Thus, all the steps of the classical "policy cycle" were followed in the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyztan, (cf. table 1).

Table 1. Benchmarks in the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan

1997-1998- ***Concerted diagnosis*** (identification of problems and possible solutions), which has been done in a form of a report on the *Analysis of the Current Situation in the Forestry Sector in Kyrgyzstan***.** The aim of the analysis was to define potentials and constraints in the sector.

1999 – ***National Forest strategy*** (definition of objectives and priorities) in the form of a *National Concept of Forest Sector Development***.** This document was conceived as a governmental statement, signed by the Prime Minister of the Republic, setting up 5 strategic political goals for 20-25 years and 10 main direction lines for their achievement.

1999 - ***Reform of legislation and regulation*** in the form of a *New Forest Code***,** as a legal framework for the implementation of the policy Concept.

2001- A 5-years ***Action Plan***[5] for 2001-2005 which was called *"Programme LES"*. This Action Plan was conceived as an executive tool for the implementation of the National Concept of forestry sector development, with concrete activities, oriented to the achievement of results, calling for the formulation of a revised Concept to guide policy activities.

2003 – ***Evaluation of the Forest Policy*** has allowed to formulate a common vision on the achieved results as well as on the necessary changes and adaptations in order to reach a better implementation.

2004 – ***Revised*** *National Concept of Forest Sector Development***.** A new edition of the Concept for forestry development was prepared based on the results of the evaluation of forest policy in the period of 1999-2003. The abstract 5 strategic lines of the previous Concept were replaced by 3 corner stones reflecting the priorities of the Kyrgyz forest policy:

- The ***Forest***: which needs to be protected through an organisation of *Man*'s activities;
- The ***Man***: people should not be only *tools* in forest management, but also *actors* and final beneficiaries of the forestry activities.
- The ***State***: which needs to have its functions changed in order to be able to play an active role in the new framework

This revised version served as the main political document, defining the strategy of the forestry sector development and the framework for the other documents of forest policy and forest legislation.

2004 – ***National Forest Programme (NFP)*** for the period 2005-2015, as a medium term document with the aim of defining a complex of activities and measures for the implementation of the National Concept of Forest Sector development.

2006 – ***National Action Plan*** *for the development of the forestry sector of the Kyrgyz Republic***,** with a short-term (5 years) vision, a practical instrument with the concrete actions for the realisation of the National Forest Programme.

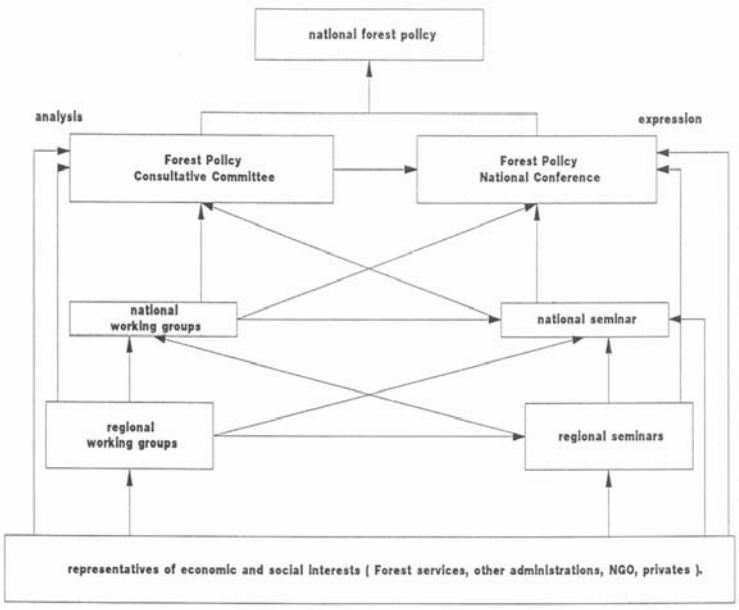
[5] At this step, the initial logic of a policy reform was not followed and the *Action Plan* was elaborated before the preparation of National Forest Programme.

One of the big challenges of the period was to introduce stakeholders' participation in the policy process. Political, social and economic situation in the country (i.e. as mentioned above, democratic processes, transition to market economy and general impoverishment of the rural population), the multiplicity of existing interests in relation to forest management, together with international requirements for participation as a guarantee of sustainability, have called for a maximum involvement of the stakeholders.
The introduction of participation was a special challenge for the Kyrgyz society, which could be characterised as basically a traditional society with: (i) the Soviet past and still practised vertical top down decision making system; (ii) general reluctance and prudence of lay people in expressing their ideas; (iii) lack of culture of participation in policy making.

At the same time, the State was very strong and its role should have neither been neglected nor diminished. It was especially true for the forestry sector, where traditionally, technical expertise has always served as the main basis for decision-making. Thus, in the Kyrgyz process, the traditional top down technocratic decision making system needed to be matched with a new approach of "bottom up" participation, i.e. involvement of other actors and stakeholders.

Such involvement in Kyrgyzstan was organised through interviews, discussions during field trips, establishment of working groups and conducting of workshops, round tables and conferences. Scheme 2 presents the structure of participatory approach for implementing the Mixed Model, as it had been initially proposed for the application in Kyrgyzstan.

Scheme 2. Structure of participatory approach for implementing the Mixed Model.



(G. Buttoud and Samyn 1999)

2.1.1 Analysis of the current situation in the forest sector in Kyrgyzstan (1997-1998)

Before introducing the idea of a forest policy reform, some basic information on the situation was needed. Therefore, a preparation of the analysis of the current situation in the forest sector was supported by the Swiss Programme, and, after some negotiations ("*we know all what is going on in the sector and there is no need to ask "others" about it*"), Kyrgyz forestry service agreed to formulate it as an objective. The expected result from the analysis was to identify existing problems and issues to be addressed by the new policy. The Swiss Programme was expecting that an analysis of the current situation made in a participatory way would lead to a formal expression of the needs for changes.

When the general frames for the analysis have been defined, *a National Forest Policy Commission* (an equivalent of the Forest Policy Consultative Committee, from the *scheme 2*) was established at the Government level with the representatives of various ministries, in order to follow-up the new forest policy formulation and guarantee a comprehensive approach.
Following the principle of attracting as many stakeholders and actors as possible, for the Analysis of the current situation in the forest sector, it was proposed to combine *participatory rural appraisal* (PRA) with the analysis of *statistical data*. Thus, all the activities were done according to the following logic:

- During 3-4 months in 1997, preliminary individual interviews through questionnaires and open discussions with the personnel of *leshozes* and representatives of the local (village) authorities were held all over the country.

- The statistical reports were checked and proved to be often mutually contradicting and not realistic (they were adjusted for reporting to top-down defined plans), so they were informative, but could not be used as a sufficient basis for the analysis.

- The collected information was then summarised by a *working group*[6] (comprised of the specialists from the Ministry of environment, Forest service, Forest research institute and the Swiss programme (myself) and presented during a *workshop* in March 1998, with over 50 participants coming from the forest sector and local administrations. The aim was to precise, correct, amend and modify, where needed, all the data and information to be further used as a basis for the report on the analysis of the actual situation in the forest sector. The ultimate goal was to habitualise people to the idea of a common work and discussions, as well as to the realistic possibility of bottom up planning.

During this workshop, the issues brought up by the participants were separated into categories as: (i) issues evident for everybody; (ii) disputable issues with a possibility for a compromise;

[6] different from the proposed scheme (*scheme 2*), there was only one working group which was leading and co-ordinating the process at different levels.

(iii) disputable points without any possibility for a compromise. This approach to the classification of issues under discussion is part of a methodology called ***"constructive confrontation***" (Buttoud, 1999 (b)). It was permanently used at the later stages of the process as a basis for the negotiation of disputable issues, when discussions were focused on the second group of ideas, classified as "*disputable with a possibility to a compromise*". The issues, classified as "*evident for everybody"* were considered as an admitted decision or as a possible solution for the problem under discussion. Whereas the *disputable points without any possibility for a compromise,* if they were not reformulated in a more acceptable form, were generally excluded from the dispute. This rule was agreed upon with the participants at the beginning of each workshop.

Indeed, the analysis of the current situation has disclosed economic and technical problems, mainly caused by the situation of transition from subsidies to market relations oriented management, as well as the weakness of the old institutional system of the forest sector. It has clearly indicated the needs for changing the existing way of managing the sector.
The draft report prepared by the working group and endorsed by the National Commission was presented at an International Conference in September 1998, with over 250 participants, in the presence of the President of the Republic and high officials from Switzerland. Thus the engagement in the new forest policy formulation was approved by the top national officials and confirmed by the main donor of the forest sector.

The presentation of the results of this analysis was followed by a special Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic (UP N300, 06.10.1998) on the New Forest Policy in the Republic, requiring the "elaboration of a new National forest policy, which would guarantee in 2000-2025 the creation of conditions necessary for the conservation of the dynamics of regeneration and sustainable use and development of forests and forest sector, as well as improvement of ecological conditions and environment of Kyrgyzstan" (National Forest Policy of Kyrgyzstan, 1999). The same decree has also made a focus on the involvement and responsibilisation of the local State administrations and self-governments (regional governments and village councils) in the definition of local priorities and potentials and involvement of the local population into the forest management aspects, as well as implication of the other ministries in the solution of the problems linked with the forest management (regularisation of the land-use, establishment of a necessary legal framework).
This presentation of the report on the analysis has marked the official beginning of the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan and the growing political importance of the forest sector and forest administration.

2.1.2 The National Concept for Forest Sector Development (1999)

The success of the analysis has inspired both the forest service and the Swiss Programme to continue the forest policy process with the preparation of the "National Concept for forest sector development". This National Concept, or strategy, was based on the results of the Analysis of the current situation in the forests of Kyrgyzstan and conceived as a set of five

political goals for 25–30 years translated into 10 strategic lines for their achievement. It constituted the basic statement of the Government engagement in forestry development.

The formulation of this National Concept has started immediately after the work on the analysis, when the human capacities created for the participatory policy definition were still fresh and active. The process has followed the same logic as the previous step, with the National Commission for the general follow up and legalisation, a working group for collecting, analysing and summarising information; workshops and discussions in the field for guaranteeing a "bottom up" access to the process.

The draft concept was presented in March 1999, during a National Conference on New Forest Policy where all the stakeholders and actors involved in its elaboration have been invited. All in all, over 500 persons have directly participated in the discussions and workshops for the preparation of the National Concept. This process has helped to define the sector priorities, as they were seen at that moment, proved the necessity of the forest policy reform, but also confirmed the possibility and efficiency of participatory approach for forest policy formulation.
The final document of the Concept was approved by the Resolution of the Government of Kyrgyz Republic (signed by the Prime Minister), (N298), on May 31, 1999 (National Forest policy of Kyrgyzstan, 1999, p. 106) and has defined the following five priority goals, which were supposed to be achieved through the strategy implementation:

(i) *Ensure a sustainable management of forests:* which means that the policy will aim at ensuring the forest resources management and protection according to the principles adapted to the national situation. The increased pressure on the forests was linked to the further worsening of the condition of the already fragile resource, threatening its biodiversity and health. Moreover, soil and slope protective function of the forests as well as their role for water regulation (with the problem of the Aral Sea getting more and more importance) were also put under a question. Thus, social and economic transformations in the transitional society have sharpened the importance of ecological aspects in the link with the forest management.

(ii) *Improve the management of leshozes*: The lack of means in the State budget defined the need to reduce administration costs and integrate the economically active parts of the forest sector into a market economy structure. Thus, for promoting economic independence, the new policy has foreseen the establishment of new rules for management and marketing of forestry products and services, based on evaluation and pricing with market principles. New appropriate accounting and managerial procedures should be introduced, and the tasks of *leshozes* personnel changed to promote effectiveness and creativity. For the elaboration and implementation of the new types of management plans, which would promote sustainable forest development, a specialised staff should be prepared, able to address social, economic and ecological questions of forest management.

(iii) *Associate local population and stakeholders to forestry development:* The impoverishment of the population, especially in the rural areas, had resulted in the

increase of human pressure on the forest resources and illegal activities in the forests, thus changing the modalities of forest protection and management for the foresters, through the forced presence of social aspects and orientation to multifunctionality, was considered as a way out. Therefore, the new forest policy was aimed at the encouragement of an active participation of individuals or groups in the forest management. The leasing of some parts of the State forests will be introduced, resulting in increasing awareness and willingness of the rural population to protect and manage forests, and finally ensuring that significant economic and social benefits will be received from the forests.

(iv) *Promote private activities*: General political and structural changes in the country and limitations in the interventions of the State have required changes in the functioning of the forest sector. Thus the strategy of the forest policy was that the lands and techniques have to be transferred from the State to the interested stakeholders for the private process promotion. Private units devoted to tasks related to forestry were to be encouraged by clear regulatory and financial incentives.

(v) *Re-define the role of State*: The solution retained was: not less State, but better State. All public tasks and activities related to all kinds of forests and plantations will be entrusted to one agency. The work must be linked between *leshozes* and local administration, through regional plans. Changes will be introduced into a flexible national planning system, defining ways of achievement which could be corrected in course of implementation. New management procedures and funding system will be established. Additional rights and duties will concern personnel tasks and their social position

These were the priorities, which would be later consecutively followed in all the documents of forest policy.

In the logic of the forest policy reform, this National strategy was supposed to serve as the basis for further reforms in the sector:

a) An *institutional reform* which is needed in order to guarantee structures which would enable policy implementation.

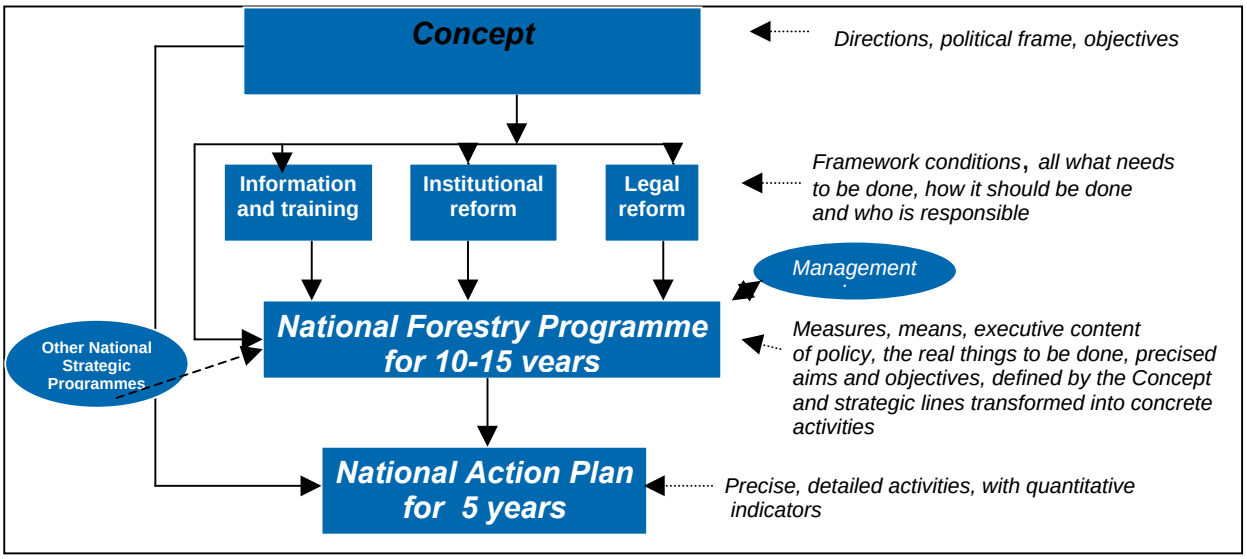
b) A *legal reform* which should be aimed at the definition of the legal framework for the implementation of the new policy, in other words, the definition of the “rules of the game”.

c) *A reform of the system of information and education* which would promote mediatisation of forest policy and its priorities among all the population of the country, as well as guarantee the training of the qualified forestry personnel, equipped with the necessary technical knowledge and adapted to the new requirements of the transition period.

All these three reforms were supposed to be necessarily carried out at the same time, (or before), as the elaboration of a National Forest Programme, which was the consecutive step of

the forest policy reform (scheme 3), to be consequently implemented and translated into *management decisions* through a more detailed planing (Action Plan).

Scheme 3 : Logical sequence of the forest policy reform ("Les-Tokoi, 2004)



But, in fact, the first phase of the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan did not completely follow this logic.

2.1.3 The Forest Code (1999)

A legal framework defining general norms is usually provided by the Forest Code. At the moment of the definition of a new forest policy in Kyrgyzstan, there existed a Forest Code approved in 1993, almost immediately after the independence. In general, in this document only the names of the new structures were different from the previous ones while the philosophy and content were basically copying those of the Soviet Forest Code.
Because of the juridical tradition, still remaining from the Soviet time, and also because of the high political challenge of the legislative reform in the newly independent Kyrgyzstan, the reform of the Forest Code came up as an immediate consequence of the Concept, with no expressed need for a further step in a participatory way. Thus, prepared in a highest emergency, the elaboration of the Forest Code has been the first break down in the logic of the participatory process.

Before the Parliamentary and Presidential elections (early 2000), the presentation of the Forest Code was a big political challenge for the leadership of the forest service. It was agreed that the new Forest Code will be based on the strategic lines of the National Concept for Forest Sector Development and will serve as a legal framework defining rights and duties of

all the stakeholders and actors for the implementation of the new forest policy. Therefore, at the beginning, the exercise of the draft Code elaboration was following the same logic as the 2 previous steps of the policy process, when a working group was established and workshops were organised at different levels for the definition of the needs in and the content of the legal reform. Nevertheless, soon, under the reason of the urgency in decisions, the administration of the forest service took the process under its sole control.

The step of elaboration of the legal framework has got a more formal character than the previous steps of general discussions over the actual problems and strategic objectives for reaching a desired future. The Forest Code had both important symbolic values (the fact of being an author of a Forest Code on the eve of electoral campaign could put a considerable weight on the scales of a candidate's package[7]) and practical significance for the forest sector (as the main reference, defining the rights, responsibilities, authority and duties for the main actors and stakeholders).
Thus the step of the Code elaboration has demonstrated that participation, even if accepted for general decisions, may be limited by the administration (with a complete control over the process) in the case of more challenging issues with a clear political importance.

The approach followed for the definition of the forest legislation was completely different from what has been foreseen by the Mixed Model framework. Instead of taking, as a starting point, the goals and strategic lines of the "National Concept for Forestry Development, and translating them into concrete rules, the methodology, chosen by the legal specialist of the forestry administration consisted in cleaning the old texts of the forest legislation from all the obsolete wordings, especially those related to the Soviet Union reality; and copying amendments introduced into the new Russian Forest Law, which has been under elaboration during the same period. The Swiss Programme did not realize at that moment that something was wrong in the process and has accepted this way of proceeding, although it was completely different from the previously followed methodology. At the same time, the participants of the Concept formulation process were surprised that the decision, although taken in a traditional way, did not take their views into consideration.

Finally, the resulting draft of Code kept little from the National Concept's strategies, although, during the draft presentation at the Parliament, multiple references were made to the document of the National Concept of forest sector development, as a conceptual basis for the legal framework.
This deviation from the process was, in fact, the first reaction of the Kyrgyz forest service hierarchy to participation. Such reaction can be understood as directed from the external factors, imposing participation, such as the decentralisation and democratisation processes in the country and international requirements for sustainable development; and internal actors, the hierarchical structure of the forest service, which was aimed at maintaining a sufficient control over the process, both, for the symbolic and political challenges, as well as for the decision making ownership.

[7] Shortly afterwards, the head of the forestry administration, at that moment, has been elected a Member of the Legislative Assembly, and, for some period he has even acted as a speaker of the Parliament.

2.1.4 The National Action Plan (2001)

The same interest of the forest sector administration towards the controlling of the process of forest policy formulation has led, several months later, to a similar approach to decision making at the step of planning. Opposite to what was proposed as a logical sequence of a forest policy reform, the step of the National Forest Programme elaboration, together with all the necessary reforms, was omitted. Instead, the preparation of a 5 year Action Plan has been immediately started. Evidently, it was easier to change psychological and social set up through introducing participation, than to break bureaucratic schemes and habits.

During the Soviet Union, all the activities in general, and also for the forest sector, were specified in a 5 year Action Plan (the plan for the forest sector was called "LES" Programme, ("les" means *forest* in Russian). In such a plan, both the activities and the related budget were centrally defined, based on the reports on the previous plans. The year 2000 was the last year of action of the preceding "Les" Programme 1996-2000, therefore, for the forest sector administration it was an emergency to repare of a new 5 years Plan, which still remained a tool for the Ministry of Finance to plan the economic provisions. In such a traditional view, all the departments needed to provide their own data, following a specific format and with a fixed deadline. Thus, as long as the rules for general strategic planning have not changed in the country, there was no time for considering a National Forest Programme. As a result, the formulation of the Action Plan has followed an approach which was also different form what has been initially proposed in the logic of the forest policy reform process (see scheme 3).

As it was defined in the process framework, proposed by the policy scientists to the Swiss Programme, the new Action Plan was expected to follow a different approach and be based on the local capacities, contrary to just a top-down defined plan. Therefore, at the beginning all the participatory procedures have been again re-introduced. This time, due to a very technical nature of discussions, there was less involvement of the representatives of the local administrations and authorities, and a more numerous presence of the State forest service personnel.
Written questionnaires for the basic economic and management analysis were sent to all *leshozes*. Workshops were organised at the field level all over the country for the explanation of the approach to the new planning, where the objectives and expected results should be based on the directive lines of the National Concept, while the means for their achievement should be defined according to the own capacities of the *leshozes*. As it had been done during the previous steps, the collection and analysis of information were done by a working group, constituted by representatives from the Forest service, the Ministry of environment, the Forest research institute and the Swiss support programme (myself).

Regardless of all these efforts this big participatory process did not lead to a new type of an Action plan, as it was expected. Under the time pressure the forest service was in a hurry to get the approval of the documents. Inside the working group, there was no common agreement about the content of the Plan: the specialists with the soviet experience of planning did not agree to the adjustment of the new plan to the local potentials. Once again the situation was similar to that of with the Forest Code. The discussions over the

Action Plan have got out of the general issues framework and started to present a real practical interest: an instrument for control and clear responsibilities for concrete activities within a short period of time. The central administration office in this case was not ready to give up its power and let the *leshozes* define by themselves the level of their dependency from the higher ups.

With the objective to fit to the deductive logic of the mixed model, a tentative draft Plan was written by G. Buttoud and myself, basing only on the results from the participatory meetings. This draft Action Plan was logically in line with the strategies of the National Concept and was entirely based on the ideas and proposals generated during the participatory process. The activities needed for the achievement of the goals were specified as well, together with the information on expected results and means (which were specified individually by each *leshoze*). At the end of each activity, responsibilities and indicators for control were provided. This alternative draft supported by the Swiss Programme was timely presented to the Government Commission, but was not accepted as being not conformed to the habitual models. Several specialists in the forest service, previously responsible for the definition of such plans have re-written it in a traditional way with prescribed numbers of hectares of forest plantations and with no link to real local potentials. But the vocabulary and the structure of the National Concept was again preserved, while the title of the Concept and the word "participation" were used again as a password for the lobbying of this new plan.

Having understood the power brought in by participation, the forestry administration was again using the process to promote conventional decision making, which was supposed to maintain their traditional role and authority.

2.2 Re-orientation of the new forest policy.

The National Concept for Forest Sector development was one of the first strategic policy documents elaborated in Kyrgyzstan with a broad participation, although, it was evidently condemned to be revised in a short period of time. On the one hand it was because of the lack of the previous experience in strategic planning that the participants were focused on the search for solutions of immediate problems with no strategic vision of the situation. So, after several years of implementation, many of the "strategic goals" defined in 1997-1998 have been already achieved or have lost their actuality. From the side of decision makers, the Concept was mainly considered as a formally adopted political document, but not as a basis for action (cf. the Forest Code and the Action Plan).

On the other hand, the political, economic and social conditions in Kyrgyzstan were changing very rapidly because of the transition context. The policy needed to be adapted to the permanent changes. The role of the State had required a reconsideration, because of the further democratic processes ongoing in the society, and due to the active development of the private sector. The Swiss Support Programme, having temporarily ceased its support to the Kyrgyz forest policy process in the period of 2001-2002, was intended to get back to it, but leaving more space for the proprietorship of the process by the forest sector administration.

2.2.1 The evaluation of the forest policy implementation (2003)

This needed re-orientation of the new forest policy was highlighted by the *evaluation of the forest policy implementation (2003)* which was initially foreseen by the National Concept after the 5 years' period. The assessment of the forest policy implementation in the first years would provide the State Forest Service with the information on the practical fulfilment of theoretically defined plans; on the difficulties and gaps in co-ordination; and suggestions on how to contribute to their better fulfilment. The five years period since the definition of a strategy was still a good moment when, if the need may come, a modification of the relevant plans and decisions was still possible. Moreover, an assessment at an early stage could help to develop the rules for a regular analysis of a policy implementation, as well as the mechanisms for the adaptation of means to the continuously changing environment.

This evaluation was, in a way, a revival of participation in the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan. The new forest administration immediately accepted this proposal from the Swiss Programme, because it has seen the possibility of attracting many new donors to the forest sector. Thus in the struggle for a good international image, "participation" was still a good entrance card for getting appreciation from the external players, and an obligatory principle.
At that time, the experience of the Kyrgyz forest policy process had got an international reputation of a successful forest policy reform process, as it was presented in several international conferences and scientific seminars (Buttoud, 1999; Buttoud, 2000; Buttoud & Yunusova, 2000; Buttoud & Yunusova, 2002; Kouplevatskaya, 2005; Yunusova, 1999; Yunusova, Buttoud & Grisa, 2003).

The Swiss Support Programme could not any more stay away from the forest policy reform, therefore, the step of evaluation was used as a means for re-entering into the forest policy process. In fact, at this point both the forest administration and the Swiss co-operation were changing their strategies. By a mutual agreement between the donor and the forest policy experts, the forest service alone needed to take over all the aspects dealing with the organising, leading and controlling of the process. A special working group (mainly consisting of the specialists from the forest administration) has been intensively trained by the Swiss Programme and the forest policy experts. Hense, at this step of policy reform, this working group was the sole responsible for the collection and analysis of information during the field workshops.

Over a 7-months period, 32 workshops were organised at the field as well as at the regional and national levels, to make the assessment of the 5 years' policy implementation and to collect practical suggestions of possible improvements and priorities for the future. At this step, round tables and mass media presentations were very actively used for the mediatisation of the process. An international conference was organised for the presentation and validation of the results, where representatives of the parliament, government and local administrations made a large part of the participants.

The same approach of involving all the stakeholders into the evaluation was chosen as a means for forming *a common vision* on the achieved results in the implementation of the National forest policy (the Concept, the Forest Code, the Action Plan) as well as for determining the further steps and developing *adapted activities and measures.* The principle of participation would lead to an *ownership of results* among the involved institutions and people. It was made clear to everybody that the evaluation had nothing to do with control over people or organisations, that it was only an analysis of the process of implementation with subsequent discussions of both strengths and weaknesses, the latter prompting what needed to be revised and improved.

The structure of the policy evaluation was still following the logic of the theoretical framework of the « *mixed model* », combining both a rationalist (based on deductive technical expertise) and communicative (based on participatory approach) frameworks. Whereas the *rationalist framework* was expressed through the (i) expert assessment which was based on the data analysis (mainly quantitative) of the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of pre-defined activities and (ii) organisation of a core group, which was in charge of providing this expertise. While the *communicative framework* was implemented through semi-open meetings with a pre-determined procedure at national, regional and local field levels for collection of additional data and confrontation with the local opinions. The core group was also in charge of organising the related workshops, carrying out possible additional experts' studies and co-ordinating the results from the workshops.

Both approaches were synthesised in a common matrix for the description of the level of evaluation of the whole policy. Basically, the matrix has included the following aspects:

- Identification of each action;
- Expected results from the action presented in a detailed form;
- Objectives and step by step approach applied for their achievement;
- Means (human, financial, organisational) used for the achievement of the objectives;
- Constraints met during the implementation, detailed and analysed;
- Indicators of achievement (quantitative, qualitative).

A brief overview of the results of evaluation is presented in *Table 2*.

During this period, a comprehensive road map (*scheme 3*) of the forest policy reform was also designed and accepted by all the actors, in order to be used in the future monitoring steps. This road map has clearly stated the sequence of documents and their role in the construction of a new policy. The former experience with the preparation of the Forest Code and the Action Plan were definitely considered as mistakes.

Table 2. Summary results form the policy evaluation in Kyrgyzstan

1. **Effective results:** For the definition of effectiveness and efficiency answers to a general question on "*How effective and efficient was the implementation of various policy directive lines at the field level, compared to their identification during the policy formulation process?*" were searched for. All participants of the process admitted that a huge progress had been made since the beginning of the process of the new forest policy in 1997:
- basic forest policy documents have been elaborated and approved: a new Forest Code, the Action Plan for 2001-2005 ;
- the State Forest Service has become an independent structure under the President of the Republic ;
- the state budget allocated for the forest sector has been significantly increased;
- a general reform of the forest sector has been started, with more responsibilities given to the field level, including local population and private entrepreneurs ;
- an increasing number of technical activities has been carried out (in inventory, education and management), and general interest for forestry topics has been increased at the political level and among the public as well ;
- awareness within the forest sector has increased, privates became active in the processing of forest products.

2 . Limitations and constraints: For the identification of strong and weak points the following questions needed to be answered: - *Which elements of the policy have been best understood and implemented, and why? Were any of the previously stated problems solved? What are the points where the implementation was weak? What are the reasons for the failure in implementation?*
A complete list of limitations and constraints has been produced, including, in summary, the following:
- presently incomprehensive Forest Code and regulations;
- unrealistic objectives set up by the Action Plan for 5 years (Les Programme1996-2000);
- bad networking between foresters and local population, private and State actors, representing different views; poor collaboration with other ministries and agencies;
- lack of a system for a regular participatory follow up and monitoring of the activities during technical implementation;
- unclear concept for involving privates in the forest management; misunderstanding of the concept of Community Based Forest Management and leasing issues;
- poor material equipment of the forest service on the whole and low professional qualification of the staff;
- forestry institutional structures and management are not fitting to the new strategy of forest policy.

3. Proposed Changes: - Needs for changes have been identified through the answers to the questions*: how to proceed to be more successful in carrying out the planned actions? What needs to be changed, why and how?*
As a result two groups of proposals have been formulated:
- proposals linked to re-orientation of actions
- to precise concepts for Community based Forest Management and leasing ;
- to transfer all productive functions to the privates;
- to clarify the roles and responsibilities at the various levels of the forest service;
- to define the personnel policy.
- proposals linked to procedural improvements
- to amend the forest legislation and promulgate the regulations;
- to establish the next action plan 2006-2010, based on a normative National Forest Programme for 10-15 years ;
- to design a comprehensive system for an institutional reform ;
- to design a programme for the staff training.

2.2.2 The revision of the National Concept of Forestry Sector Development (2004)

As it was clearly stated in the conclusions of the evaluation of five years implementation of the new forest policy in Kyrgyzstan, a revision of the Concept for forestry development was needed. It was needed due to various reasons:

(i) Some activities have been already implemented since 1999 and there was no need to mention them again, especially as objectives.

(ii) Many of the formulations needed to be modified and updated to the changed conditions.

(iii) There were some changes at the national level (general economic framework, transition to the market economy, land and land use status, changes in the structures and institutions, etc.) occurred since 1999. Thus, a more detailed and precise consideration than in the previous strategy was required. The change of context has also required some changes in the objectives and means of the forest policy.

(iv) Certain issues were not clearly formulated in the previous version of the Concept, for instance all what was related to the financial autonomy of the *leshozes*, to the national forestry fund, or to the concept of collaborative forest management, which was still unclear for many actors. Thus the related objectives were not treated during the five years.

The changing political, social and economic environment has brought in a big need for amendments in the strategy. Moreover, in the course of discussions of the evaluation report, it became evident that many of the expected results have been already achieved. Since the State forest administration has got new functions of controlling the flora and fauna, more attention needed to be given generally to the aspects linked with the *sustainable development as a whole*. Thus, mindful of these findings, it was clear that a new version of the Concept was needed rather than just some minor polishing and editing of the Concept of Forestry Sector Development (version 1999) as it has been initially foreseen.

What were the differences between the two versions? First of all, the Concept of 1999 was aimed at the preferable future: “What do we want to achieve?”, while the revised Concept of 2004 has defined principles for forestry development with the focus on the 3 corner stones: “People, Forest and State”, instead of the five strategic lines of the previous Concept. Thus the priority of the multifunctional forest management was stressed, with a focus on sustainability and a changed role of the State.

The ideas of the strategic lines have not been completely changed, only their structure, which was now ordered in a more coherent and rigorous way. The introduction of this change meant that after the 5 years of implementation of the new forest policy in Kyrgyzstan, it was possible to have a more comprehensive view on the meaning of *sustainable forest management.* Broader principles for promoting a sound management of the forests, contrary to the solution of daily problems, were now possible to be considered.

The editing of this revised Concept was a pure technical work of an expert group inside the forest service. Parallel to this technical work, an involvement of the actors and stakeholders was organised at the political level, with the representatives of competing ministries of environment, agriculture, justice and finance, but also members of Parliament, Government and the President's office. This political involvement was important because the new Concept was clearly presented as the primary basis for all the future political and legal documents to be designed in the forest sector. The permanent institutional changes at the national level (restructuring, reorganisation of various ministries and agencies, as well as staff rotation, with a permanent risk of cancelled institutions) have forced the forest administration to look for a support from the "colleague" ministries, who were more or less in a similar situation. There was also an understanding that maximum possible involvement of the other ministries at the steps of discussion, will guarantee less objections from their sides at the steps of approval. Such development of the process could be interpreted as one of the indicators of a "naturally expressed need" in *inter-sectorality*.

The presentation of the revised Concept was followed by a big media campaign and the Revised Concept was approved by the Prime Minister, by the Decree N 256, 14 April 2004 (The Concept of the Forest Sector Development in Kyrgyz Republic, 2004).

2.2.3 The National Forest Programme (2004)

The year 2004 was again the year before the Parliamentary and Presidential elections. This situation has promoted rapid decisions. That is why the National Forest Programme (NFP) was elaborated practically at the same moment as the revision of the National Concept. There was no big contradiction between these two steps: the strategic lines of the Concept were to be translated into a comprehensive set of more precise actions giving the policy content at the country level. The Concept had a general strategic view for the period of 20-25 years while NFP would focus on the activities of the next 10-15 years. As everything can not be done at the same time, thus, the ranking of priorities was to be established by the NFP.

The NFP was needed not only for the practical implementation of the policy commitments, but also to satisfy the requirements from international donors, who were getting more numbered in the Kyrgyz forest sector. The Kyrgyz State forest administration has clearly seen that the exceptional experience of a complete forest policy reform cycle, especially with the "participation" label, might give enormous possibilities for attracting new donors. Therefore, the forest sector administration undertook the responsibility of preparing a National Forest Programme. This step was previously missing in the Kyrgyz forest policy cycle, as during the forest policy formulation in 1997-2001, there was a gap between the National Concept and the five years Action Plan. The methodology followed by the working group inside the State Forest Service for the preparation of NFP, was the same as the one proposed in the Swiss alternative tentative draft of the Action Plan in 2001. Thus the global logical sequence of the whole reform process was finally re-installed.

The preparation of this document has again worked as a pure technical exercise implemented by the same working group which was trained for the policy evaluation. The drafting was still

based on the proposals brought up by the policy evaluation in 2003. In general, the preparation of the draft text for the NFP did not take too much time, only 4 months. The proposed Programme was approved (Government decree N 858, November 25, 2004) and presented by the Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic at the first International-regional Congress on forest policy, as a model for forest policy formulation for the post-Soviet countries. A lot of attention was given this time to the dissemination of information about the process and about the new NFP. The information was aimed at both political and international circles, but also at the *leshozes* and local administrations. It was mediatised through printed and audio-visual media, round tables and technical professional meetings.
At this point, the State forest administration has not only got the sense of ownership of the process and its results, it has also learned how to use both the process and its results for the political campaign and for attracting more international donors to the sector, thus getting independent from the Swiss support.

With the publication of the Action Plan in 2006, the complete policy cycle was achieved in the Kyrgyz forestry sector. As mentioned earlier, in other countries in transition there is no comparable example of a full forest policy reform cycle carried out with a conceptual framework, a sequential logic and transparent participatory procedures. Only few countries in the world (Finland, for example, as well as some other countries, but not as an entire process) have had such a big involvement of stakeholders all along the forest policy reform process.

3. My role in the Kyrgyz forest policy reform process

Now, looking back at the process of the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan and analysing the course of the events, I can clearly see that nothing was happening by itself. Each of the participant, each actor had their specific influence on the process and on the results. I was not an external passive observer either. Now, from the distance of time and space, analysing the roles' distribution, I can clearly see how my role was changing consequently with the changing contexts, but also, in its turn, influencing the contexts.

3.1 Forest policy formulation

I have been working for the Kyrgyz-Swiss Forestry Support Programme, from the very first days of its establishment in 1995, when I started as a translator-administrator, till the end of 2004, as a Deputy Director of the Programme. Since 1997, I was appointed as responsible for the project on the reform of the Kyrgyz forest policy, as well as for the project on the forestry education and training. My role was changing together with the changing context and roles of the other actors of the process: from the organisation and facilitation of participatory procedures at the beginning of the policy formulation, to the training and follow-up of the working group during the policy evaluation-redefinition periods.

At the same time, for the Swiss Support Programme, which was framed by the donor's plans and requirements, the production of regular reports was a more evident indicator of success than the qualitative changes among the participants. Moreover, the decisions on the inputs (both funding and expertise–wise) to the process were taken by the donor. That is why, at

some points, the course of the process was influenced by the procedures and requirements from the side of the donor, which I also had to follow.

3.1.1 From the process organisation and facilitation, to capacity building

Forest policy was not part of the specific knowledge of the Swiss Support Programme representatives in Kyrgyzstan. It has neither been initially a part of the task package. Therefore, when the absolute need for a comprehensive forest policy reform became evident, a methodological assistance was required from a policy expert. This policy expert has got a complete confidence from Intercooperation (the Swiss implementing agency) for designing the process and for it's follow up all along the period under consideration (1995-2004).

In 1996-1997 among the senior Programme staff in Kyrgyzstan (1 Swiss representative as the Programme leader, 1 book-keeper-translator and me as administrator – translator) I was less than the others involved in the technical aspects of the support, dealing instead with the public relations and contacts with the forestry and other administrative/governmental bodies at the National level. Therefore, I was "detached" to the forest policy process. Together with Gérard Buttoud, I was carrying out the interviews, facilitating and moderating workshops and taking part in the working group.

So, at the first steps of this participatory process, my functions have included translation, organisation, co-ordination and, later on, facilitation of the preparation of the Analysis of the current situation in the Kyrgyz forestry sector.

As soon as the importance of the policy reform (and the probability of it's success) became evident also for the Swiss Support Programme, I was appointed as a responsible for the project on forest policy. Being trained in participatory procedures during the first step, I continued interviewing and facilitating workshops all over the country, both, together with Gérard Buttoud, during his missions to Kyrgyzstan, and, more and more often, just by myself. Being a representative of the donor, I still had the role of a moderator and organiser of the process. I was also continuing to co-ordinate the working group, although, this time getting much more involved in the editing of the draft Concept. The process was going very smoothly, and now, looking back, I can say that it was the period of the most genuine participation, very inspiring for the future.

During the discussions held for the elaboration of the 5 years Action Plan which was a very technical exercise, my role has started to change. My responsibilities still included the tasks of organisation, moderation and facilitation of the participatory process, but a new element of training has come up. Elaboration of the Action Plan was the first step on the way of policy implementation, therefore, the logic of the policy cycle, the procedures for translating National strategy into the practical management plans, needed to be explained to the specialists from *leshozes*, who should be responsible for that. I undertook this task, and, through explaining the philosophy of the process to the others, I got personally involved in it.

Therefore, during the first signs of the "stagnation" in the process, when the idea of the new type of planning was not welcomed by the authorities, I have even participated in the lobbying of the draft Plan in front of the Forestry administration. Finally, the conservative approach to the planning has won, but, at least the ideas and the structure of the Concept's directive lines were preserved in the Action Plan.

Personally, I have also learned from experience, that my direct implication in the forest policy reform process was not necessarily appreciated by the donor agency, which sometimes (especially when the final result was not clearly seen, while the chances of failure were considered as existing), needed to keep "a diplomatic distance" from the events and processes in the country-beneficiary, which was considered as the only owner of the results.

3.1.2 Upgrading my own level

During the definition of the Action Plan, I felt that I would need some additional education n forestry, and even in a field broader than forestry, because the people, whom I was dealing with, had already good technical forestry knowledge. Whilst the introduction of participation of different stakeholders has brought up social and ecological issues to the discussions, I was realising that just forestry knowledge was not sufficient. Another reason was that very often the ideas which I was trying to promote were different from the habitual way of thinking in the forest management sphere and I needed to have good grounds to be listened to. The process was changing the way of planning and decision making. Of course, I was respected and listened to due to my status of the responsible of the project on the forest policy reform within the Swiss Support Programme. But I wanted to gain still a better confidence from the forestry specialists. For many of them, those who have been educated during the Soviet period and made part of a technocratic bureaucracy, the existence of a specialised diploma and a degree were very important. Therefore, in 2000 I entered the International University of Bishkek (which had an internationally recognised level of Magisters' courses), where I presented a thesis on the topic of "Conservation and sustainable management of juniper forests of South Kyrgyzstan"[8] and got an "excellent" diploma and a Magister's degree in

[8] The idea of this topic for the thesis was formulated during the preparation (1998-1999) of the ***International Symposium on the Problems of the Juniper forests in the South Kyrgyzstan,*** which was held in August 2000 in Osh, South Kyrgyzstan. For different reasons, the Swiss Support Programme had no specific activities in this region. It was only during the policy reform process, which was covering different regions of Kyrgyzstan, that I met many people coming from the juniper area and was touched by the problems they were facing: extreme South of the country with difficult ecological and economic conditions; special protected status of the juniper forests when no timber harvesting is allowed, while other types of forest use are very limited vs. poor life standards and lack of social security for the population which were resulting in a the very high human pressure on the forest resources. After some discussions with the leadership of the Swiss Programme the idea on the necessity to attract the international attention to the problem of artcha forests was finally accepted, but, initially with no financial engagements. With the scientific support of Gérard Buttoud, we have made the analysis of the situation in the region, prepared a "problem tree" of the artcha forests and wrote a scientific proposal for the researchers and practitioners from all over the world to come and share their experience of managing juniper forests. A project for the sponsors was also prepared. The Symposium took place in August 2000 with over 200 participants, coming from 25 countries of the world. This Symposium has provided a basis for the preparation of the JUMP EU research project, aimed at the formulation of integrated management plans in the juniper forests of South Kyrgyzstan. This project was implemented from 2004 to 2006 by the Laboratory of forest policy, ENGREF.

ecology and management of natural resources. This way, for many of the members of the forestry administration, psychologically, it was easier to accept me in the role of an expert and not only as a facilitator.

3.1.3 International mediatisation of the Kyrgyz experience

Each of the steps of the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan has presented a unique experience of introducing participation in a forest policy in an ex. Soviet country. So, from the very beginning of the Kyrgyz process, I was often invited to present the main features and analysis of the process at international conferences.

My first summarised description and analysis were presented during the ***Nordic Research Course on Regional Forest Strategies***, organised by European Forest Institute (EFI) and held in Mekrijarvi, Finland, in June 1999. The course was attended by 16 participants from 9 different countries (Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Poland, Austria, France and Kyrgyzstan). The goals of the course were: (i) to provide an overview of theories important for understanding the opportunities of the forest sector in the context of regional development; (ii) to demonstrate the necessity of working in multidisciplinary teams and to address the necessity to study forest based development issues from a multidisciplinary perspective; (iii) to provide a broad basis for devising regional forest policies and strategies, and to illustrate the role of the regional forestry strategies as policy tools by linking the applied theories and practice.

During this course I made a presentation, titled "*The Kyrgyz forestry concept: a participatory process for forest policy formulation in Kyrgyzstan*" (Yunusova, 1999, pp. 93-105), where methodological aspects of and first lessons from a participatory policy definition process were explained, on the example of the Analysis of the current situation in the forest sector of Kyrgyzstan carried out in 1998, and the National Concept for forest sector development approved in 1999.

The participation in this research course was my first exposure to the European research world in forest policy, where I could discuss different issues of forest policy with young scientists and prominent professors from different European countries. I also got some training on theoretical and practical aspects of participation in the formulation of regional forest strategies.

The Swiss experience in the Kyrgyz forest policy process, especially the success story of the Concept elaboration were also interesting for the Swiss Forestry Department (BUWAL), so I was invited to participate in an international seminar on the *Sustainable land use in mountainous areas*, organised by the Austrian and Swiss Forestry Departments in Gmunden, Austria, in November 1999. The aim of the seminar was mainly a comparison (the exchange of experiences) of various measures taken by the Swiss and Austrian forest departments for the promotion of sustainable land use in mountainous areas. Participation of stakeholders was presented there as one of the instruments, leading to sustainability. During this seminar, I made a presentation "*Participatory process for forest policy formulation in Kyrgyzstan*", focusing mainly on the methodological aspects of participation in forest policy formulation and results of the process (the proceedings of this seminar were not published).

My participation at the ***International Symposium on Multipurpose Management of Mountain Forests: concepts, methods, techniques***, held by the European Observatory of Mountain Forests (EOMF) in co-operation with IUFRO, in June 2000, in Pralognan-La Vanoise, France, gave me an impetus for developing a scientific critical look at the Kyrgyz experience. My presentation during this symposium was focused on the analysis of the practical implementation of the framework of the *mixed model* and a related methodology promoting participation in the forest policy formulation on the example of Kyrgyzstan. Later on, this paper was further elaborated and finally published in a peer reviewed journal "*Forest Policy and Economics*", in co-authors with Gérard Buttoud, titled *"A "mixed model" for the formulation of a multipurpose mountain forest policy. Theory vs. practice, on the example of Kyrgyzstan.* (Buttoud & Yunusova, 2002). In this paper the idea of the "mixed model" was further conceptualised and precised, based on the experience of it's application in Kyrgyzstan. It was my first publication with a peer review, and it was not an easy work to do. It was very different from the usual types of writing I was used to (progress reports, annual reports for the Swiss Programme, reports on the situation and texts of the National strategies during the forest policy formulation). A search for rigorous wording, brief, logical, well-stated and clear presentation: all this has demanded several re-writings of the text of the article. I do not want to say that these aspects were not needed for the reports and other types of writings I was doing before. It was just the style and requirements, even the way of thinking that were so much different.

As after the Action Plan's break down, the Swiss Support Programme decided to suspend its support to the forest policy reform, I took this time for continuing the analysis of how the methodology, specifically designed and applied for a participatory forest policy formulation in Kyrgyzstan, was working in practice. The progress of this analysis was presented in a number of international conferences and research courses.

First of those was an **international research course on *"The Formulation of Integrated Management Plans (IMPs) for Mountain Forests"***. This research course was organised by the European Observatory of Mountain Forests and University of Torino in Bardonnecchia, Italy, in June 2002. The idea of this research course was that the fragile ecosystem of mountains makes the problems of their sustainable management more acute and urgent, therefore it may be served as a good basis for the discussion of the new frameworks for management plans, taking into account the aspects of multifunctionality, new types of expertise and integration, necessarily bringing up the importance of the involvement of various stakeholders. For the discussions during this research course, we have prepared 2 presentations in co-authors with G.Buttoud (Buttoud & Yunusova, 2003 (a) (b)):

The first paper "*The mixed model for decision making as a conceptual framework for IMP formulation*" was promoting the idea that the conceptual framework of the mixed model can be successfully applied for the formulation of the integrated management plans for the mountain forests. The framework of the "mixed model" is based on the search of a link between the rationalist and communicative approaches. This combination of the technical planning and communicative aspects, may lead to the balance of competitive social needs and interests, automatically promoting multi-beneficiaries management schemes and multi-facet partnerships between the public authority and various stakeholders. This frame consecutively includes an analysis of the present situation, a structuring of various objectives of the plan, as well as the definition of strategies and measures to be implemented for the achievement of those objectives. Promoting the creation of conditions for reaching compromising solutions,

this method was presented as being particularly adapted to public decision-making in mountain forests, where demands from various stakeholders are numerous while the problems are urgent to be solved.

The second paper, "*Negotiation concepts, methods and procedures for IMP formulation*", was focused on the practical aspects of negotiation as one of the key elements in a participatory process of IMP formulation. The importance of negotiation is usually increasing in the case of the mountain forests, that is why, as proposed by the paper, for the IMP formulation a formal comprehensive sequence of various negotiation techniques and procedures based on a clear rule of games, and aimed at avoiding from the possible side-effects, is needed.

These two papers have given a theoretical framework for the proposal for a EU JUMP project, aimed at the introduction of integrated management plans in the Juniper forests of South Kyrgyzstan.

During this research course in Bardonnecchia, my involvement was not limited only to presentations, I was also moderating a group work on participation and was a member of the organising committee.

The **International Congress on Economic and Ecological Benefits of the Mountain Forests** took place in Innsbruck, Austria, in September 2002. The Congress was organised and supported by the Austrian Federal Office and Research Centre for forests, the University of agricultural sciences in Vienna, the Federal Ministry of agriculture, forestry, environment and water management, as well as some other research and administrative institutions of Austria. The idea of the Congress was to consider the multifunctionality of the mountain forests through the prisms of economic, ecological and social aspects and the multiplicity of the research topics dealing with that. The strategic objective of this event was to demonstrate the interest of Austria in the respect of the International Year of the Mountains, in a counter-balance to the Swiss, Kyrgyz and French initiatives, as well as those of the FAO. My presentation (which was published in co-authors with Gérard Buttoud and Ennio Grisa[9]) was titled "*Reforming Forest Policy in Kyrgyzstan (Central Asia, former USSR). Impediments to multiple-use strategy in extreme ecological and unstable socio-economic environment*" (Yunusova, Buttoud & Grisa, 2003) and contained a rather critical view on the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan, providing a detailed explanation of all the steps of the process and analysis of the reasons why the successful policy definition was not continued by an easy implementation step. This presentation has been published after some revisions in a peer-reviewed journal *The Austrian Journal of Forest Science.*

The international interest to the experience of the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan was progressively growing and attracting more and more attention, as one of the rare examples of a full policy cycle. Twice, in 2002 and in 2003 I was invited to present it in the **Community of Practice, organised at the Department of Forest Policy,** at **FAO**, Rome by the NFP Facility. *Communities of practice* are networks of people with similar interests and work. The purpose of this one was to generate knowledge and to share information in order to enhance participation of all stakeholders in the National Forest Programmes' process. In addition, the

[9] Ennio Grisa, Programme Leader of the Kyrgyz Swiss Forestry Sector Support Programme since 2001.

members of this community of practice, usually high ranking national representatives and internationally recognized experts, meet once a year to report on the progress made so far with the national forest programmes in their respective countries. The objective of this community of practice is to contribute to the international call to ensure adequate stakeholders' participation in the National Forest Programme processes by bringing together experts in stakeholder participation in order to share views, experiences, lessons learned and information on the recent developments; to build or strengthen partnerships; to harmonize relevant approaches and to make them available to actors worldwide.

My two consecutive presentations were dealing with the practical experience from the process in Kyrgyzstan:
"*Participation as a basis for the elaboration of forest policy: practical example from Kyrgyzstan*" (Yunusova, 2002), as presented in 2002 was a description of the methodology applied for the promotion of participation and its practical application in the case of Kyrgyzstan.

The second presentation in 2003 "The *National forest policy in Kyrgyzstan: 5 years on the road with participation (assessment of the stakeholders participation in the evaluation of forest policy*)" (Yunusova, 2003), was focused on the role of evaluation in the policy process. It was mainly concentrated on the methodological aspects of evaluation, and contained some critical analysis of the Kyrgyz process.

Both of these presentations were later on used as examples of the case-studies for the manual "*Guidelines on how to make NFP process work through participation*", prepared by the FAO Forest Policy and Information Division, as a result of the work of the Community of Practice. This manual is planned for publishing in 2007. As it is explained in the welcome note of the manual, it is "designed for use by NFP co-ordinators, forest sector planners in respective ministry policy units, government agency leaders involved in reform, policy makers and strategists, advisors on governance in both developed and developing countries. These guidelines have been prepared to assist NFP practitioners in their planning to enhance the participatory elements of the processes that they are convening or taking part in". These guidelines is a good example of how theoretical discussions and research could produce a practically valuable document, which, in it's turn, I hope, soon will become a basis for the further research and theoretical discussions.

After those presentations, I felt a need for a more comprehensive and scientific view on the evaluation of the whole forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan. This is why I have analysed the two basic stages of the process in a paper, published after a peer review by the ***Swiss Forestry Journal*** *n 10, in 2005. This paper is part of this doctoral thesis document.*

A more theoretical analysis of the way how participation may be evoluting along a policy reform process, as well as the influence of participation on the power redistribution has been presented during the **International Conference on the Evaluation of Forest Policies and Programmes**. This conference was organised by the European Forest Institute (EFI) and IUFRO in June 2004, in Epinal, France, with the objective to initiate a discussion on how to evaluate the results from changes, occurred over the period since the beginning of the international dialogue on forests and sustainability. It is generally agreed that this debate has brought changes in the ways the policy aspects of sustainable forest development are addressed by both the scientists and decisions-makers. The attention has been focused on the full value of the forest, on the conservation of biodiversity, participation of stakeholders and public in general, inter-sectoral links and iterativity fed by the collaborative learning. Consequently, the changes in the forest policies have been followed by the increase of the involvement of the policy scientists in the search of retained solutions and definition of the new concepts, although the aspects of evaluation have not been properly treated yet. The conference in Epinal was aimed mainly at the discussions on how to assess the modifications, which approaches may be developed to be adapted and appropriate to the new concepts. Both empirical cases and theoretical research were discussed during the conference in order to define the present state of art in the methodological tools and issues demanding a further enhanced research and ways to promote networking between the decision-makers and researchers.

My presentation during this conference has questioned the issue of iterativity which may lead to the definition of a new vision of the forest policy reform process because of an evaluation. The presentation was titled "T*he Spirals of forest policy development or transformation of participation in an iterative process – the case of Kyrgyzstan*" (Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova, 2004). Here, for the first time, I was speaking about the evolution of a participatory process along a "double spiral". The idea of a double spiral consists in the proposition that generally, a progress of a policy process may be described through consecutive spirals with two directions: the *outward* spiral of "learning", when all the participants of the process are open for any type of decision; and the *inward* spiral of "control", when one of the stakeholders or actors involved in the process starts to control the process and leads it to the solution desired for him. Evaluation of a policy may served as a trigger, a turning point of the outward spiral into an inward one. This "double spiral theory" is linked with the theories on collaborative learning and decision making cycle and will be further disclosed in the next chapters.

Based on this presentation, a special article has been written in co-authors with G. Buttoud "Assessment of an iterative process: the double spiral of re-designing participation" (Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova & Buttoud, 2006). It has been published in a peer reviewed journal ***Forest Policy and Economics*** *, volume 8, issue 5, in 2006 and is part of this doctoral thesis document..*

Although all of my presentations were well accepted and caused heated discussions, I felt that I still could not get all the answers from the debates. Many of the questions that I have started to raise for myself were remained unanswered. In the course of preparing for and participating

in the conferences and also during the discussions with the community of practice in FAO, comparing the situations and processes in different countries, presented during such events, I started to generate a critical attitude both to the process and to the roles of different actors in it.

3.1.4 My new role during the stage of the new forest policy re-definition and the beginning of research

At the period of the new forest policy re-definition, my functions changed not only because of the obtained degree, but, mainly, because of the intention to create a sense of ownership of the process within the forestry administration. I was not so much involved in the field interviews and workshops any more, but rather in the preparation, follow-up and back-up of the activities of the working group. This working group, selected by the forestry administration among the young and most active and promising specialists of the service, has got a special training, organised by G. Buttoud with my assistance. So, at the evaluation step, I was supporting the working group in it's field workshops, training the members for the further steps and doing permanent analysis and summary of the results. The drafts of the revised National Concept as well as the National Forest Programme were prepared by the same working group, with my permanent support and back-up.

I was involved in the process both at the field level (for the interviews and workshops) and at the national level (for the co-ordination of the working group). A negotiation of each step of the process with the forestry administration was still taking much of time, as there was still a "mixed" attitude towards participation among the forestry authorities. All these activities have allowed me to see the changes occurring both in the way the people were participating, and in their attitude to the process. The relations within the forest service, vertically and horizontally, as well as between the forest service and other stakeholders, were changing.
It was during the stage of the policy reformulation that I started to link the experience of participation with the questions of power and the importance of specific interests for the promotion of participation.

During the whole period of the policy reform in Kyrgyzstan, I had a wonderful possibility of meeting and discussing with people in the field. As I was neither part of the forest sector administration, nor a member of the forest service, the people whom I met, felt free in expressing their ideas. At the same time, I had a good access to and relations with various levels of administration. Partially it was because of my former University friends who have got high official positions; partially because of my previous work as a free-lance interpreter, when, while working for high representations of UN, OSCE and other international organisations, I have assisted in high-level political (often tough) discussions (which also gave me a good insight vision of the functioning of the State structures). But, basically, because I was not depending on either of them, nor on the results of the forest policy reform, and this gave me a sort of a distant position in the process, promoting free natural discussions at any level.

Myself, learning during this policy process I have seen that all the other participants were also learning and that having understood the logic of the process, they started to use this process for their own purposes.

Already during the preparation of the policy re-definition and discussions with the people, involved in the previous steps of the Kyryz forest policy reform, it was clear that regardless of the conservatism at the decision making level, many changes had occurred among the people and structures involved in the process. At this point I felt that I could not keep just for myself all the interesting observations which I have made during this time. I did not feel interested any more in being part of that process. Therefore, I decided to enrich practical observations by theoretical knowledge and transform them into a doctoral thesis. I wanted to make a research in the field of forest policy. More particularly, I was interested in the involvement of different stakeholders in a decision making process and their role in it. Thus I have applied to ENGREF and was admitted as a Doctoral applicant (December 2003) at the Laboratory of Forest Policy, ENGREF, Nancy, with the subject of the doctoral thesis defined as: "*Assessing Stakeholders' involvement in National Forest Policies' Formulation and Implementation : the case of Kyrgyzstan (Central Asia, former USSR).*

In the course of the analysis of the process in Kyrgyzstan, during the year 2003, I have carried out a small survey among 37 persons, from different levels of the Kyrgyz Forest Service, local administration as well as local stakeholders, NGOs, scientists who have been involved at different steps of the Kyrgyz forest policy reform. The objective of the survey was to see if participation had really brought in any changes (and, if yes, what had changed and why) in the decision making process. The ideas, which I have got during the interviews with these people were put in the construction of this thesis.

Simultaneously I was still continuing my work for the Swiss Support Programme to the Forest Sector of Kyrgyzstan, as it was directly linked with the initial subject of the thesis. Soon it became clear that such a combination was not the most efficient way for writing a doctoral thesis. My duties and responsibilities as the deputy director of the Swiss support programme required continuous meetings and discussions of administrative issues and public relations for the representation of the Programme. As a project leader, I needed to prepare plans, follow up their implementation and write reports. A considerable time was also needed for permanent consultations and support for the core group working on the forest policy reform process. All these activities were taking too much time and energy from the research work. I left the Swiss Programme and Kyrgyzstan at the very beginning of January 2005 and moved to Nancy, to the Laboratory of Forest Policy, ENGREF, to a position of a scientific assistant, funded by the EU GoFOR project.

4 The research work in the Laboratory of forest policy (ENGREF)

Since I have joined the Laboratory of Forest Policy, ENGREF, Nancy, in January 2005, I got a good possibility for a theoretical analysis of my previous practical experience. I also got a chance to compare the process of public involvement at the various stages of forest policy cycles in different European countries.

The style of my work has changed: I was not any more under the pressure of meetings and needs to immediately solve managerial questions. On the opposite, I was under the pressure of being free to organise my work and process of theoretical *a posteriori* reflections over my former practical experience. Looking back to the process in which I have been involved in, I can analyse from the time perspective the iterativity of the process and the adaptation of the actors, while comparative studies of GoFOR provide me with rich comparative material for the analysis of the process.

4.1 EU research project on the new modes of governance in forestry and questions related to participation

Since 2005, the Laboratory of Forest Policy, ENGREF, Nancy is involved into a EU 6th framework research project on the New Modes of Governance for sustainable Forestry in Europe (GoFOR) (www.boku.ac.at/GoFOR). The idea of governance is not new in the forest sector. But so far, neither comparative analyses nor systematic evaluations of the effectiveness of these practices have been carried out. The research project "*'New Modes of Governance for Sustainable Forestry in Europe – GoFOR'* strives to critically assess practices of the new modes of governance as a basis for policy relevant conclusions and recommendations in order to safeguard sustainable forest management in Europe".[10] The project is aimed at delivering a comparative analysis of the new modes of governance in the forestry sector in ten European countries. Currently there are 31 researchers from these countries, who are involved in the project. Based on a common conceptual framework, there are 5 elements which are considered as the main components of new modes of governance (within this project) in the forestry sector: public participation, different levels of decision making, intersectoral links, iterative and adaptive processes, sound expertise.

The Laboratory was appointed as the thematic leader on the component of "participation", (one of the five constituting elements of governance, as selected for GoFOR) and this is why I was employed to work for this project, due to my experience in the subject, which was missing in the other teams of GoFOR. My first research work in the Laboratory was the preparation of a concept paper on participation; for this project I had to do a comparative analysis of the various theories and approaches to participation (www.boku.ac.at/GoFOR).

4.1.1 A typology of participation prepared for the GoFOR project

This typology of participation, prepared for the GOFOR project was later on synthesised and used for this thesis for the development of propositions on participation (see next sections). It is based on a summarized analysis of different theoretical frameworks depending on the actors involved in the process, it's activators (initiators) and types of taken decisions, with general characteristics of each type of participation. While preparing this typology, I have seen that the concept of "participation" is a very controversial one, and even among policy scientists there is no consensus about its interpretation. The preparation of this typology made me also think that, in fact, the definition of "participation" is, to a greater extend, defined by

[10] GOFOR www.boku.ac.at/GOFOR

the *interpretation* of the various aspects and factors linked to the process. It is influenced by the *policy models* followed by the scientists, as well as by the *purpose of* such *interpretation*, and, sometimes, by the *existing experience*. I have also learned about different controversies existing in the interpretation of participation.

I have noticed a clear link between the initiation of the process and the characteristics of participation. This observation was later on used in the thesis during the development of propositions. For instance, in one of the propositions, I am using this link between the initiators of participation and the type and logic of the process, in order to demonstrate their relation with the possibility of influencing the decision.

Generally, the idea of the propositions, besides of the other factors, was inspired by my practical experience and by the research I was involved in for the GoFOR project.

"Participation" as an element of governance

Governance is often used as a label for more sustainable policies or features of social systems. It is also defined as a label for a new mode of governing, i.e. where traditional government by "command and control" is replaced by network-like mechanisms of decision-making. To this end, governance is explained as a reaction to societal change that traditional government can not steer. Theories about governance are rarely explicitly concerned with the concept of participation. Indirectly, different modes of participation and the participation of different groups are a focal issue, which is natural as long as it is related with such issues as democracy, decentralisation and partnership.

There is a wide and diversified understanding about what does participation mean. It may be understood as a basic *principle* necessary for consensus building; as a *mechanism* for democratic learning and consciousness-rising; as a *process*, a *communicative* action.
Depending on the theoretical frameworks, involved actors, activators and types of decisions, taken in the process, the following types of participation may be formulated, as presented in the table 3:

Table 3 : Typology of participation according to the involved actors and types of decisions

Type of participation	**Actors**	**Activators**	***Decisions***	***Characteristics***
Public participation (consultative planning) "resource participation" *passive participation*	open to all	State lead process	Consultative informing policy or planning decisions	Separates role of *organisers*: initiate process; define topics, period, conditions; invite participants; and the role of *participants*.
Public deliberation "social enquiry process" *active participation*	Self organised actors, citizens	Self organised policy community	Commonly desired conditions + social learning	Discourse and generation of new choices, meanings consequences.
Representative participation "functional participation"	Limited number of representatives from selected stakeholders	State or non state actors and stakeholders	Related to specific issues	Limited to organised groups of stakeholders with specific knowledge and interests. Marginalised groups are not included.
Community participation (joint forest planning and management) "Auto-mobilisation" "active (interactive) participation	Self-defined local stakeholders	Self - mobilised local stakeholders (or indirectly by the state or donors)	"common good" and "just society"	Organised and non organised actors need different approaches

4.1.2 Comparative studies

The research design used in the GoFOR project is a *multiple case study* approach, whereas the **unit of analysis** is neither a country nor a sector, but **governance processes**. The idea is to learn from governance processes which come from different countries and different sectors.

The analysis was comprised out of 2 stages: the pre-assessment stage (when the research questions have been mainly of an *exploratory* and *descriptive* nature. Most of the questions asked for « *WHAT IS ?») ;* and the main – assessment stage, when much more was already known about the cases, therefore the research questions were extended to a more *explanatory* nature (« *HOW* » and « *WHY* » the specific phenomena are developing).

Both, the pre-assessment and the main-assessment phase included the following steps:
1. Empirical field work: (interviews with policy actors; document analyses; participatory observations).
2. Comparative, systematic analysis of main-assessment reports before the background of research questions generated for each constituting element.
3. Overall systematic analysis of the main-assessment reports from a comparative perspective and overall reporting.

The analysis was oriented towards both: the individual case studies at the level of each country and the analysis of the constituting elements, context factors and effects, throughout all the countries, with the comparison across the cases. The case study reports present a kind of individual "case stories" that give a broad overview on what the case is about, how the governance and its elements have been manifested in the given case, what were the effects and how the processes and effects could be explained. At the same time, they also provide the empirical "material" needed for *comparative analysis across the cases.* Basically, the interest is to "*see to what extent specific characteristics can be recognised as part of the current governance practices in forest policy and related policies. In other words, if and how the governance has been institutionalising and occurring in governance practices in the forest policy and related policy fields so far* (TOR for the main assessment, GoFOR).

The comparative analysis of various theories related to participation and especially the comparative study of participatory processes in different countries, on the one hand, provided me with the theoretical explications missing in my empirical analysis, while, on the other hand, gave me reasons to think that regardless of the context and background differences, there are common points in the evolution of participatory processes in forest policy. Thus the work for the comparison of the different modes of governance, and particularly, the component of participation in 10 European countries, helped me to structure better my research.

4.1.3 Pre-assessment case study in France

The aim of the pre-assessment

At the stage of the pre-assessment I was doing both (i) the analysis of all the 5 constituting elements of the new modes of governance in France, on the example of 2 case studies, selected by the French National Advisory Panel[11], and (ii) a comparative analyasis of participation as an element of the new modes of governance across all the case-studies. As the new modes of governance are new phenomena in France, the pre-assessment study was focused mainly on the changes occurred in the context and mechanisms of forest policy in France, in the light of the five constituting elements of the governance: participation, inter-sectoral co-ordination, multi-level governance, role of accountable expertise, possibility for adaptation and iterativity. This pre-assessment has been aimed at the achievement of the following objectives:

- to provide an overview on the changes in the modes of governance in forestry over the past 10-15 years, as a basis for the selection of the case studies;
- to clarify context factors;
- to clarify availability and accessibility of an empirical evidence for each of the possible case studies;
- to define methods, approaches and procedures, adapted to the conditions of France, for the implementation of the case studies.

The methods, approaches and procedures, as well as the formulation of the research questions adapted to the conditions of France were tested. This analysis of the changes has led to the definition and selection of the case studies, which were made in a common discussion with the members of the National Advisory Panel, directly involved in the process.

National Advisory Panel

Even if it was not really required by the Terms of Reference of the GOFOR project, we, in the Laboratory, decided to apply the participatory approach to the pre-assessment study as much as possible. The criteria of representativity, combined with motivation, interest and willingness to participate were put on the basis of the choice of the interviewees. Eight most active known persons in the political arena linked with forestry and environment, including representatives from environmental NGOs, public administrations in both Ministries of Agriculture and Environment, private owners' associations, processing industries and local elected bodies have been contacted in relation to their interest to be involved in the pre-assessment. All of them have expressed their interest and 7 have been finally interviewed. Those seven persons have also constituted the National Advisory Panel, which was responsible for the proposal of the case studies for the main assessment.

[11] Each partner of the GoFOR project was supposed to organise a national panel of advisers, comprising experts from a diverse range of both academic and business fields (with representatives from national governments, organisations of land owners, industry, as well as environmental NGOs). This panel should play an important role as "back-stopper" in various phases of the research. This is supposed to result in creating a vast network of interested bodies and individuals throughout European countries.

In fact, the philosophy of the pre-assessment in France was to look for the broadest possible involvement of the interviewees in the construction of the study, whilst having a free possibility to speak and provide their views on the changes occurred in the French forest policy. The same principle was followed for the establishment and work of the National Advisory Panel, which has been based on the good will, initiative and motivation of the contacted persons.

Findings of the pre-assessment

The results of the pre-assessment study have shown that the system of governance in forestry in France has started to change, although these changes are rather re-active, as they are being pushed from the exterior, therefore, the process, which has been just started, will have a very long way to go. Among the "pushing factors" for the changes in the modes in governance in forestry in France there were several factors.

- First of all it was the *International context*, with the debates on the *sustainable forest management* which had an impact on the management procedures and imposed the modality of participation; the debate on the *acid rains* which has changed the links between the politicians, managers-technicians and researchers.
- Another factor was the *initiatives at the European level*, including the strategies for certification and biodiversity, which are promoting bottom up process and change the mentality of people towards a different understanding and appreciation of environment and sustainability.
- The globalisation of market has influenced the timber market-related networks and had an impact on the re-assessment of the values of the forest, in its turn, demanding the change in the governance.
- The i*nternal context in France* itself, with the *economic changes*, linked with the modifications in the system of the timber market and *social aspects*, related to the increased role of the local governments and ongoing decentralisation, with the transfer of the power to the territorial levels. Both, the economic and social changes have a very strong link with the consequences of the *storm in 1999*, which had pushed for the re-assessment of the approaches to the traditional forest management as well as to the forest functions and values.

As the result of the pre-assessment study, 2 cases were proposed for the main assessment:

(i) *Territorial Forest Charters (CFT in French)* as an example of one of the most interesting changes, introduced by the last French forest law of July 2001. CFT is an association of stakeholders aimed at the development of a common project for increasing the participation of the forestry activities in the rural development which are giving a basis for the organisation of a partnership at the local level. This new flexible structure is specific to France, and is used as a kind of experimentation of the new modes of common activities among the actors at the local level. These new mechanisms introduce a big change in the concept of the National forest policy itself, which is progressively passing from a sectorial to a territorial one.

(ii) Relief Plan for the Forests (Plan Chablis), as an example of a general mobilisation and participation in the decision making process, caused by the emergency conditions after the 2 storms in December 1999. This case gives an example of the evolution of initiatives for

decisions and their implementation, with a big responsibilisation of the stakeholders at the local and regional levels, and including various levels in forest policy in France. This was a rather new fact, because of historical strong centralisation of the public decisions in the country only at the National level.

From this pre-assesment study, it appeared that *participation in France* is, to a great extend, perceived as *imposed by international processes*, and supposed to be implemented by the governmental administrations as an obligatory *proforma*. It was largely admitted, that regardless of a great demand for participation, it is not part of the French culture and, therefore, the process does not go easily. The traditionally centralised structure of the State defines the top down mode of decision taking, while participation exists in the form of consultation. In fact, regardless of the ongoing decentralisation and retrieval of the State, there are no procedures neither modalities for participation in the form of concertation and negotiation which could lead to a commonly defined decision. In the French system of decision making in forestry, a priority has been always given to good technical decisions, and the level of decisions has not shifted yet. When a decision is open for participation, it is usually limited to a discussion with specific stakeholders and not with all of the actors. Even if the arena is more open for the environmentalists now, they are still involved mainly at the level of discussions but not in decisions.

For me, it was an interesting observation. After my experience in Kyrgyzstan, where I have seen instrumentalisation of participation by some powerful actors, I was realising that participation was “not working properly” in Kyrgyzstan because of the lack of a democratic experience in the country, when both for the decision-makers and for the public in general, or stakeholders participation was a new experience. The pre-assessment study in France has given me indications that even in a country with a long democratic tradition participation is not necessarily the most popular and effective way for decision making. Thus, together with the enriched theoretical basis and experience, I have got more questions to answer in my thesis.

Participation in forest policy related processes in other GoFOR partner countries

Apart for the implementation of the case study in France, as the thematic leader, the Laboratory of Forest Policy was also engaged in a comparative analysis of the element of participation in the different cases of the other partners of the GOFOR project. My work for this analysis of the different types and characteristics of participation, as a component of the governance process in the project partner countries, allowed me to make general conclusions related to the common and opposite aspects linked to participation in the ten European countries under the analysis. Surprisingly, they were not very much different from the similar characteristics of participation which I have defined in the forest policy process in Kyrgyzstan.

Thus, among the ***reasons for the introduction of participation*** into the policy process there were the international requirements; new reality in the country or in the forest sector in particular (sometimes an emergency situation); self interests of the organizers/initiators of the process; need to lobby a specific political position; economic challenges (including a decreased public funding for the sector) and long standing problems demanding urgent solution.

As for the ***initiators*** of participation in a forest policy process, the most frequently mentioned were: the Federal/national governments; sector ministry; external (European, or international initiatives); politicians or political parties; interest groups; provinces or local governments.
From the point of view of the ***involved actors*** and stakeholders, the analysis has showed: other governmental institutions; people (interest groups) from the same « camp », i.e. sharing the same views and priorities; organised interests groups (often nominated and invited by the organisers); other stakeholders; and, in several cases, volunteers.

The ***motivation*** factors for those actors and stakeholders involved were: economic interests; political interests; « group » interests (preservation of competencies, more independence from forest owners' interest groups, etc); need for lobbying; new reality; potential to influence the decision, (including: for the avoiding of the risks of unfavourable decisions); « spiritual interests ».

What was also common for all these cases under the analysis was that among the "***outsiders***" of the participatory process, there were the general public and representatives of the "opposed interests".
For the explanation of the ***non-participation*** in the process, the results of the analysis mention: restrictions from the organisers; lack of challenge (in the subject or in the possibility to influence the decisions); (non) availability of resources and (restricted and dosed) access to the information.

Various ***breaks*** of the public involvement were also specified as: (an insufficient and restricting) legal basis for participation; the reality when the political statements are not supported by participatory mechanisms; the difference between the political discourse vs. practice; the contradiction of the environmental priorities (often promoted at the National or Federal levels) vs. socio-economic interests (represented mainly by the local or private groups); a corporatist forest policy framework, where traditionally technical decisions prevail.

Thus, finally ***in practice***, in the majority of the analysed cases, the participation is generally perceived as a principle; imposed as a requirement; has no political significance (or introduced for the questions of no political or strategic importance); and even once initiated, the interest to participation is necessarily decreasing along the process.

These conclusions from the pre-assessment studies and comparative analysis between the different European countries showed that participation may have different forms and types, depending on the culture and background of the participants, on the aims and objectives of the initiators of the process, as well as on the context factors. At the same time, regardless of all the differences between the countries under analysis: economic, social and political conditions, importance of the forest sector, the level and culture of democracy, there were some common features, which required from my side further reflections and elaboration.

4.3 From comparative studies to further research

The initial results of the comparative analysis of participation in various policy processes in the 10 European countries, showed a close link between the questions of power and democracy, as well as the risks of using participation for the consolidation of power. This was directly contributing to the construction of the theoretical framework for the thesis.
Accountable expertise is considered as one more element of the new modes of governance and is studied with the GoFOR project, thus, the findings of the pre-assessment study on the new modes of governance have also provided me with some ideas about the role of the experts in general and scientists in particular. These ideas, complementary to my reflections about my proper role in the policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan, as well as the role of the scientists in general and their link with the roles of the other actors of the process, lead to a proposition that, although scientists are often invited to a process as representatives of an objective knowledge, they are not neutral, same as the other actors of the process. The scientists also promote their own interests, even if they are rather symbolic ones: the interest to prove the appropriateness of their involvement in the process, to justify the validity of the proposed methodologies and approaches, etc.

These ideas I have put into the presentation, made during the International **IUFRO conference** on the "***Sustainable Forestry in Theory and Practice: recent advances in inventory and monitoring, statistics and modelling, information and knowledge management, and policy science"***. This conference was held in Edinburgh, UK, in April 2005. The goal of this conference was to demonstrate how scientific knowledge has evolved in the recent years to address the challenges posed by the sustainable forestry debate, when the emergence of major international initiatives and the growing importance accorded to forest certification programs in many countries around the world. The aim was also to attest to international recognition of the importance of sustainable forestry both within the forest sector and for the general public. The conference included several sub-groups, suggesting that many disciplines have a role to play in advancing and applying new principles and practices in support of sustainable forest resource management. I was participating in the sub-group on *Science and policy*, in the section on *Scientists and policy makers in a participatory mode of governance.*

*My presentation during this conference, with the title: "**Participation as a new mode of governance?: scientists and policy-makers in a double spiral**", was focused on the policy formulation process as a procedure for promoting changes. Based on the experience form Kyrgyzstan, I assumed that learning occurred in the iterativity of a policy process leads to a redefinition of interests and positions of all actors involved in such a process. While scientists are often presented as an objective knowledge and judgement which are necessary for the legitimation of policy processes and decisions, when they come to the process, similar to the other actors, scientists also adapt their reactions to the re-defined interests. The scientists explain to the policy makers the reality through theories and adapt theories to the changing reality. One of the conclusions of the paper was that such adaptation may promote power re-distribution and the image of the scientists. After minor revisions through a peer review, this paper was accepted to be published in a **CAB International publication**, as a chapter of a book on "Sustainable Forestry". This paper forms the third publication presented in this doctoral thesis document.*

Gradually, the analysis of participatory processes in different European countries within the GoFOR project, made me going deeper in the reflection on the question of the relations between power and participation, as well as their links to democracy. Participation is entirely linked with democracy, by definition, at the same time, it can promote power consolidation through a further strengthening of the more powerful structures. Can the knowledge of the regularities of the evolution of participation in the decision making process and their incidences on the power redistribution (which could be again demonstrated through the theory of the double spiral) help in preventing the abuse of democracy and participation?

I shared these ideas during the **Summer research course**, organised by the Laboratory of Forest Policy, ENGREF, France, with the support from the General Council of the Vosges. ***"Participation in Forest Policies: apple pie or new mode of governance",*** June 2005**,** Gérardmer, France. The idea of this research course was to gather together policy scientists from different European countries, and from the North America, who are working over the questions of participation in forest policy. This was also an opportunity for discussing the topic: which conditions should be met in order to have the ongoing participatory processes for supporting sustainable forest management, considered as contributing to a relevant mode of governance?

*In a presentation, titled "**The involvement of stakeholders in a policy reform process: from democracy promotion to power redistribution",** I was considering participation as a constitutive element of /and requirement for/ a democracy. The public involvement in the decision making process may vary, depending on the cultural and ethical backgrounds as well as on the significance of participation for the functioning of the society. Therefore, on the one hand, participation may promote democracy, whilst giving more consistency to people's voices, but, at the same time, through political learning, it leads to a redefinition of issues and, thus to a redistribution of power. Based on both empirical evidences drawn from experiences of forest policy reforms and an analysis of the basic theoretical frameworks, the presentation has questioned wherever participation is really a pre-condition for democracy. This presentation and the discussions followed afterwards, made the basis for the paper, published after a peer-review and consequent revisions in the **Swiss Forestry Journal** in 2006. It constitutes the fourth publication, presented in this doctoral thesis document.*

My idea is still to develop this subject further on. In the framework of this doctoral thesis, participation is considered to be a basis for reaching the goal of sustainability through a policy reform process, involving various stakeholders and actors with expressed diverse, often opposed interests and objectives. But participation is also clearly a constitutive element of democracy, and thus leads to an empowerment of the citizens through associating them into the decisions. The example of the Kyrgyz process also warns that participation may be a basis, and sometimes a tool, for a power re-distribution to the benefit of the stronger players, and thus, may be instrumentalised by some of the latter.

Chapter II
PROPOSITIONS

Participation as a constructed concept

- **Participation from evidence to construction:** pp. 46-54

- **Proposition 1**: ***Participation is not a universal concept, but rather a societal and cultural one:*** pp. 55-70.

- **Proposition 2**: ***Participation does not work by itself, but is constructed in time and space and is following a logic*:** pp. 71-85

- **Proposition 3:** ***Types of participation change over time:*** pp.86-99

- **Proposition 4:** ***Participation leads to a re-distribution of power which symbolically consolidates stronger actors:*** pp. 100-112

II. Participation as a constructed concept

This part contains propositions, formulated from the reflections fed by practical experience and search through theoretical explications. *Proposition 1* is built around participation as a socially constructed phenomenon, defined by cultural, economic and political contexts and interpreted through social theories. *Proposition 2* considers participation as being predefined by the rationale for its initiation. Being constructed according to a certain logic, the process can be designed through different methodologies, which may facilitate or manipulate its efficiency. The *3d Proposition* develops the idea that the types of participation change over time. Learning which occurs in the process leads to re-definition of interests and positions of participants, consequently leading to the re-definition of their roles and behaviours in the process. Hence, the way how participation is functioning is also changed. *Proposition 4* is about power. The concept of power is treated as being produced in the discourse in inter-relations between different actors of the process. Due to the socially constructed nature of participation in a policy process, power is permanently produced, consolidated and re-distributed.

1 Participation from evidence to construction

The aim of this chapter is to explain how "participation", can be interpreted in different ways, depending on the actors involved into the process and on the types of decisions coming out of it. It also depends on a subjective interpretation of reality and, thus, may be specific to some place at a definite period of time. The issue of participation was brought into the forest policy by the debate on sustainability, which is also a disputable concept. This link between participation and sustainability is used as a starting point for the understanding of the multiplicity of interpretations of the concept of "participation". The analysis comes from general considerations of the various approaches and interpretations, to the analysis of the participatory process in Kyrgyzstan.

1.1 Participation and sustainability

The international dialogue on sustainable development has naturally had an impact on the understanding of *sustainability in forest management*. In the international forestry context, several important changes have occurred. The traditional systems are undergoing great stresses, (from the tropical forests in Africa, Brazil and Indonesia, to the boreal forests of Russia and Europe). The forest management linked with the needs and wishes of human beings had to deal with these changes. First of all, the concept of sustainable forest management has been expanded from the conventional definition of a sustainable yield, to encompass economic, environmental and social qualities that contribute to the forest dependent communities and ecosystems.

Such an expanded view on sustainability has led to the escalation of a controversy over forest management issues, especially the competing demands on forestlands for recreation, habitat preservation and timber production. It has also led to the extension of the needs and requirements for the management of forest resources, thus the currently available staff and funds became no more adequate to perform forest health, co-ordinate management and accommodate the increasing demands of multiple users. Therefore, as long as the social

aspects were getting more and more importance in link with the discourse on sustainable forest management, people's *participation* in the management-related decisions was identified as an important criterion and a requirement for sustainability. The *public involvement* would widen the forest policy away from a narrow concept of a sustained yield of timber products derived mainly from the industrial-productivist views on the forest sector, towards a more embracing concept of managing all forests for the sustained yield of multiple goods and services for the benefit of multiple stakeholders. The stakeholders are supposed to express their different demands for forest goods and services and this should lead to a change in the ways to manage the forests. Such process was expected to result in the empowerment and creation of the sense of ownership of (and thus the responsibility for) the decisions among the stakeholders, as well as to provide the managers with the useful knowledge about the local forest use and management strategies same as means for conflict resolution.

At the international level, the requirement of (and a commitment to) participation has been clearly declared in various international initiatives. The Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration states that: *environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all the concerned citizens at the relevant level*.
Agenda 21, the plan of action accompanying the Rio Declaration, has also pledged the governments to pursue broader public participation in decision-making processes and policy formulation for sustainable development. These initiatives have marked the beginning of the «era of participation». Thus, participation has become a part of the dominant discourse of *sustainable development* and indicated that administrators and experts might approach the public interest by allowing the "public" to participate in the environmental decision making (Tabbush, 2004).

1.2 Why there are different interpretations of participation

The term "*participation*" has been interpreted in various ways through multiple definitions, depending on the focus of analysis. As long as participation in the forest policy field was conditioned by the requirements of sustainability, here, in the framework of this thesis it seems logical to apply the same system of reasoning for the multiplicity of interpretations of "participation", as it was proposed by H. Schanz (Schanz, 1996) for the interpretation of "sustainability".

1.2.1 Different interpretations because of different focuses and interests

Speaking about the multiplicity of interpretations of biodiversity, H. Schanz assumes that "*different interests* are the reason for the bewildering variety of different interpretations" (Schanz, 1996). How can it be linked with the diversity of interpretations of *participation* and what does it mean in practice?

Looking in the retrospective, "participation", as a requirement for *sustainable forest management* (in the general framework of sustainable development) was primarily applied to the developing (and later on to the transitioning) countries, where social and ecological components of forest management were in conflict. Mainly the ***international development institutions*** were initially dealing with the definition of "participation", as a means for struggle against poverty; as a way of opening the access to decisions and resources for the disadvantaged stakeholders, or the "have-nots". This had a double implication on the definition of participation: (i) *participation* was often considered in the framework of a development project, and hence, the stakeholders of the project were under consideration. (ii) Otherwise, when participation is seen as means for poverty alleviation and sustainable development through economic solutions, the focus is made rather on equal possibilities and economic aspects of the forest management (or of general development processes) For example, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank define "participation" as:

> "a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources that affect them" (The World Bank Participation Sourcebook, 1996; The WB, 1994, in Reitbergen-McCracken J., Narayan D., 1998).

In the western countries, where the question of access to the resources or other inequalities are not the priority, the demands for a positive image of a good governance, make the interpretation of participation linked with the formulation of *civil position, democracy* and *political* (collaborative) *learning*. Hence, participation is often interpreted as:

> "the activities that affect formulation, adoption and implementation of public policies and\or that affect the formation of political communities in relation to issues or institutions of public interest" (Andersen et al. 1993).

The focus on participation in a political process highlights different characteristics of participation:

- When participation is interpreted by the ***governmental agencies***, while translating international requirements to the national level, the aspects of accountability of decision makers, and processes aimed at avoiding conflicts and disagreements, give a different focus to the interpretation of *participation*: it is defined as an *act of sharing commitments and contributing responsibilities, based on consensus building.*

- Participation is considered as having *communicative objectives and political learning effect* (e.g.Kristinsen 1998), as far as it teaches the participants to become better capable of understanding and taking a position towards political issues. Within this framework, the citizens' participation assumes that a common political concern is present and thus it regards the process as a continued negotiation. Hereby, "participation is also considered valuable as it contributes to citizens' *political learning,* - their ability to take part in negotiated governance" (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2002).

- Participation is also presented as a *consciousness-raising process* through which people begin to understand their political roles and the need for legitimate conciliation and contribution (Sewell, O'Rirdan, 1976).

- In a democratic society, when it is implied that all those involved in the activity or responsibility are recognised to have something to contribute, and, as a matter of fact, are prepared to any outcome as a result of their action or inaction, participation is considered as able to bring with it *self-realisation and ownership*. The result is the ability of people to effectively prepare, present and evaluate the issues and efforts in a variety of socio-economic, and environmental settings (Dovie, 2003).

The process of public participation in this framework includes progressive stages with different functions and scope that can be summarized as *information sharing*, *consultation* and creation of the sense of *commitment* and *responsibility* among the different stakeholders for the results (delegation), through their involvement into the process. The degrees and extend of this delegation may be different, depending on the structure of the society and, probably, on the type of democracy. For example, the "Inter-American Strategy for the Promotion of Public Participation" defines *Public Participation* as

> "a process by which the government and civil society *open dialogue*, establish *partnerships*, *share information* and otherwise interact to design, implement, and evaluate development policies, projects and programs…that require the *involvement* and *commitment* of all interested parties, including among others, the poor and traditionally marginalized groups, especially disadvantaged racial and ethnic minorities" (ISP *Policy Framework*, 1999).

From this viewpoint, the public participation is viewed as a *basic principle* for providing transparency and sharing of information. It is a necessary prerequisite for consensus building (Glueck, 1999; Shannon, 1999).

- The definitions of participation, proposed by the ILO and FAO in 2000 (which seem to be most appropriate as a basic definition of participation for this thesis), make reference to forest policies and changes towards participatory approaches in the European and North American continents, as initiated mainly by public agencies and not by the banks or other development institutions. So these 2 definitions are more adapted to a broader political context and a more general application. They stress the importance of the modalities of participation and have the following wording:

> "Public participation is a voluntary process whereby people, individually or through organised groups can exchange information, express opinions and articulate interests, and have the potential to influence decisions or the outcome of the matter at hand" (FAO, 2000).

"a process which *is inclusive* with respect to interests, *voluntary* with respect to participation, may be a *complement* to legal requirements, is fair and transparent to all participants, is based on participants acting in good faith and does not guarantee or predetermine what the outcome will be. The intensity of public involvement varies from simple information exchange to more elaborate forms of collaborative decision-making or implementation. The stress is rather to the "*process*" than the "content" of participation" (ILO, Geneva, 2000).

- Another way to interpret participation is to consider it as a *mechanism* for influencing decisions.

  "Public participation is a two-way communication, with overall goal of better decisions, supported by the public. It is a mechanism by which the public is not only

listened to before the decision, but has an opportunity to influence the decision from the beginning to the end of the decision-making process" (Creighton 1992).

This approach to defining participation is also followed in the thesis, when participation is considered as a mechanism for power consolidation.

This schematic presentation of the diversity of interpretations of the concept of "participation" shows that this variability may be explained not only by the purpose of participation itself, but also by the priorities and philosophies of the processes. Thus, for the support and development initiatives provided externally, where economic mechanisms are considered as the appropriate solutions, the focus is made on the *sharing of control over resources and activities (implementation or use).* While, in the case of the national policies, the centre of interpretation is the *sharing of commitments and responsibilities,* while participation is expected to bring political learning and empowerment.

1.2.2 Participation as defined according to the involved actors and types of decisions

The interpretation of participation can be defined not only by the purposes and focus of the process, but also by the *types of actors*, involved into the process. Depending on the involved stakeholders and actors as well as on the types of decisions taken in the process and on their impact on the decision, the term participation will have different implications. The following schematic typology illustrates some of these differences (see also summarised *table 2*, chapter I)[12] and explains the terminology which is applied in this thesis to describe different types of participation.

Public Participation (FAO) - it may be also called *Consultative planning* - whereby a decision is based on participation through consultation, without considering any share in decision making neither obligation to consider the public opinion. Consultative planning process is, by principle, open to all the actors who are willing to express their viewpoints. It is usually an organised formal process, which leads to a consultative informing about policy or planning decisions. From the point of view of the main characteristics, consultative planning clearly separates the roles of the participants and those of the convenors, wherein the initiators of the process define the topic, the period and the conditionalities of the public involvement. As a general lay public, in fact, is often characterised as being passive, hense, it is usually the organiser who is selecting and inviting participants, thus pre-defining their input into the process. For this type of participation, in our typology and in this thesis, the term "resource participation" (Buttoud, 1999) is considered as the most applicable. This type of participation may be also referred to as *resource participation***,** when the information on facts is the main element in communication, while a symbolic presence of stakeholders is used to legitimise the decision. (Buttoud, 1999b). This type of participation is promoted by administration as an utilitarian approach. It is also a p*assive participation*, just a consultation on facts and present situation, with the aim of collecting ideas on what to do and what to plan, as well as a position concerning possible decisions. Both terms: *resource participation* and *passive participation* are applied in this thesis.

[12] This table is based on the comparative study, prepared in the framework of the GoFOR project.

Public deliberation is a social inquiry process. Social inquiry occurs when the actors self-consciously organise themselves as a learning community (Fisher and Forester 1993; Forester, 1996).

> "Citizens are the main actors in public deliberation and, as a policy community; they organise themselves in deliberation. The social inquiry is aimed at the establishment of common meanings and understanding through discourse, and generating new options, choices, understandings and desired consequences" (Fisher and Forester 1993).

Such process creates capacity for social learning (Korten, 1989) through which actors create commonly desired conditions. This participation is considered as an active participation, when people participate by taking initiatives that are independent of external institutions to help change their systems of organisation. Such self-initiated mobilisation and collective action may, or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power (Dovie, 2003). It is a d*e facto* participation, based on spontaneous discussion among participants.

Representative participation finds different interpretations among policy scientists. Sometimes this definition also includes (i) *Collaborative planning* which is a collective process for resolving conflicts and advancing shared visions with the involvement of diverse stakeholders; and (ii) *Coordinated resource planning and management* whereas planning teams made up of agencies' representatives, landowners, interest groups etc, as well as members of general public are involved in the process. But, as a general definition,

> "a *representative participation* is based on common democratic principles and a dialogue in a pluralistic society" (Habermas, 1977).

A representative participation is generally open for a limited number of representatives from selected, better organised, usually the "direct" stakeholders or groups of specialists, possessing some specific knowledge. The interests of the marginalised groups in this case, are usually not considered. This process may be initiated both, by the public authority as well as by other actors or stakeholders. An external facilitation may be invited for promoting the process of negotiation between various presented priorities and interests. The involved stakeholders may be with or without decision making power, depending on the scale of the process and issue under discussion. It is limited to the decisions related to some specific issues. This is "*functional participation*" (Buttoud, 1999), as long as the information about the ideas is both an input and the output of the process and the participants are taking part in the decision making procedures. As Dovie (2003) defines, in a functional participation

> "people participate in order to meet pre-determined objectives which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organisation" (Dovie, 2003) .

This type of participation takes place rather after major decisions have been made. The local institutions involved are therefore dependent on the convenors.

Community participation, or, otherwise, *joint planning and management* is a type of participation, when forest departments and local user groups share products, responsibilities, control and decision-making authority. The process is aimed at the achievement of a "common good" and "striving for a just society". It is usually a local process, with one of several groups of self-defined stakeholders involved. The process is usually not initiated (at

least directly) by the authority. It is led by some auto-mobilised actors, or, in developing countries, may be introduced and initially promoted by the donors or development projects. Once started, a community participation may concern all the decision-making stages. It is a process of "auto-mobilisation" (Buttoud, 1999).
For an effective community participation, the organised and not organised actors will require different approaches. An interactive participation**,** as defined by Dovie, different from self-mobilisation, (Dovie 2003), is when people participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local groups or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives, making use of systematic and structured learning process. These groups take control over local decisions and, in doing so, people have stakes in maintaining the structures or the practices.

This multiplicity of interpretations of "participation" comes not only from the interests and priorities of the various institutions at different levels, but also from the different understanding of the reality among the people (experts) in these institutions, or scientists, who are dealing with participation. The perception of a reality can be based *on facts*, and thus rejected when these facts are considered with the scientific scrutiny (Schanz, 1996). It can be based *on theoretical knowledge*, which could be, in it's turn, questioned by practice; or on the *empirical results*, and in this case, it will be at least partially true, in the limits of the event, time and space, i.e. it may be applicable for one particular case, place and period of time.

The different bases for interpretations of participation described in the above paragraph illustrate that this concept is neither stable, nor definitive. That is it is prone to be influenced by various factors, as well as by the subjective perceptions of those who are defining the concept. As this sub-chapter is treating the multiplicity of interpretations of participation in the same logic as H. Schanz was treating the variety of understandings of the term "sustainability", his conclusion would be also logical to be quoted here:

> "All of them (interpretations) are based on facts and experiences and therefore true, so that none of these interpretations can be disproved. The question of a predominant interpretation in a certain region and a certain time period is one of political acceptance and power and not of objective rationality" (Schanz 1996).

This idea retained in this thesis permits some flexibility in using a practical example of a participatory process at a definite place along a definitive period of time as a basis for interpretations of the phenomena occurred during this process and a construction of some further propositions or theories.

1.2.3 From interpretations to propositions

Some empirical evidence.

The work over this thesis has started from a concrete experience in the Kyrgyz process, and not from a specific theory. At the beginning of the Swiss support to the Kyrgyz forest sector, including in the field of the forest policy, the question of power in a participatory process was not an issue. Switzerland was very actively involved in all the international dialogues and

initiatives related to sustainable development and to sustainable forest management. Therefore, when the idea of participation as a motor in the policy process was introduced, it was considered as an evident constitutive element of the new modes of governance in forestry, aimed at sustainable development of a newly independent country, which was in transition to the market economy.

One aspect has not been foreseen. The Kyrgyz society was in the period of a permanent construction: the construction of the new political structure and ways of administrating the society; new economic relations; new requirements for knowledge, information and education. It was the period of the establishment of a new State, independent not only in the possibility for taking its own decisions, but also in the solution of its own problems. It was declared as a new society on the "island of democracy", with a free expression of the people's will, but what to do with this "freedom"? A new notion, "the people of Kyrgyzstan", different from the notion "we are the Soviet people", was under a formulation, but still with the same individuals as "the people". New economic relations oriented to the market were being established inside the country, but practically all the previous economic links and relations in the external markets had been lost.

When the concept of participation was introduced in this environment, it needed to be adapted to the ongoing political changes, structural reorganisations and "social constructions" in the country. It became a newly constructed phenomenon, adapted to the social, cultural political and economic changes, as seen from the "place" perspective. Parallel, it was changing over time, following the changes occurred among the actors (through learning and empowerment), while creating new changes (power re-distribution). In other words, participation was changing, whilst following the changing contexts. It was also "constructed" by the actors of the process, who, in their turn, were changing and adapting themselves to the new conditions. The actors were not equal in the aspects of the general background, access to the information and stakes in the process. Therefore, their influence on the "construction" was not equal either. The concept of participation has merged with the political context. From a "key word" for sustainability, it became a "pass word" for the political discourse.

Focusing on this empirical observation, I started to look for some general theoretical explanations for these changes. The comparison of different facts found in the literature in the course of the research, or ideas expressed during discussions in the conferences, as well as the confrontation of the theoretical discourse about participation and decision-making to my own practical experience, allowed me to come to the construction of several propositions, related to participation.

Why propositions?

Why the word "proposition" is used for presenting the ideas in the chapters below? Why not hypothesis or evidences?
The term "*hypotheses"* is not appropriate in the case of this thesis, as there is no deductive normative analysis of the process with the use of a formal theory, whereas hypothesis"could be verified or contradicted by the empirical evidence. This is basically a "constructed" research, based on an empirical analysis of one forest policy process.

On the other hand, the word "*observations"* is not suitable either, because even if these ideas are based on a specific event, they do not represent a judgement based on noting and recording this event. The word "*evidence*" does not fit perfectly either.

For the ideas which are in the process of construction, it is preferable to avoid assertions and positivist declarations or affirmations. Finally the word "*proposition*" seems to be the most appropriate, as it allows to stress that the statements are not static, they are constructed in the course of the research and are the elements of a debate, reflections and a further construction.

The following paragraphs include four propositions related to the interpretation of participation, based on the empirical analysis of the participatory forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan through some theories, as it has been built up though this thesis in a constructivist perspective.

***

2. Proposition 1: Participation is not a universal concept, but rather a societal and cultural one.

The variety of definitions and interpretations of participation, as well as of the ways of dealing with it show that it is not a static concept.

Participation is a social phenomenon, therefore it is defined by the social framework. The actors of participatory processes operate within their socially constituted worlds. People construct multiple socio-historically grounded realities and react accordingly to these constructions. Therefore, it would be misleading to consider participation as an absolute action, with context-free properties. It is to be analysed from a multi-layer perspective, starting from the consideration of the psychological aspects of the individual actors through formal and informal behaviours of institutions till a political culture of the country, as it is also defined by the contextual factors of the organisation of a society.

> "Expectations from participation are shaped not only by the fundamental principles, but also by contextual variables" (Webler, T., Tuler, S., 2002).

Evidently, the context of societal setting is a complex of permanently changing and inter-linked actions and circumstances, which are difficult to specify. It is not the objective of this thesis to go into the depths of psychological or social-anthropological aspects of this matter. Rather, for the demonstration of the logic of the construction of this proposition, several types of contexts which influence the interpretation of participation are schematically distinguished, although, in reality these contexts are much more inter-linked and inter-dependent. Further on a link with some social theories is made, for the interpretation of participation through those theories.

2.1 Social-cultural context as a determinant for participation

A public involvement process never starts from scratch. It usually emerges from some already existing community interactions. It is assumed that the personality of a given participant, the historical role of his or her organisation within the community or in the forest management activities and the past relationship between the participant and forest manager define his or her mode of participation (Côté M.-A., Bouthillier, L., 2002). The individual personal psychological characteristics are indeed essential for decision making. But what are the other factors, relevant for the understanding of the nature of public involvement?

2.1.1 Cultural context as a determinant for participation

Participation, as a process, is rooted in historically variable and culturally mediated practical activities and inter-relations. It may be, thus, under the influence of a diversity of cultural aspects and traditions. As a consequence, the character of a participatory process will be constituted differently in varying socio-cultural contexts. In a systemic analysis, like the one presented in this thesis, as long as a person and a cultural context are mutually defining, the way of self-expressing, same as the mode of participation, are considerably pre-determined by the cultural background of the participants. The cultural background is based, among others, on the traditional moral, religious, socio-cultural and historical values, which will differ considerably from a society to another one. Moreover, the difference is significant between the western societies, heavily marked by the ideology of individualism, and eastern/oriental societies with traditional links, relations and different types of hierarchical connections.

Another type of cultural differences is in the attitude to and perception of the public involvement into a policy process. An example of that may be marked in the former socialist and former Soviet countries, which for a long time have been experiencing the ruling of totalitarian states and censorship. The Kyrgyz case is presented below as an illustration of that.

The impact of the cultural context on participation in Kyrgyzstan

When a participatory approach for the forest policy definition was introduced in Kyrgyzstan, several "cultural specificities" needed to be considered, while designing the methodology and techniques for participation.

For instance, the *traditional hierarchical structure* of the society, when the word of the elders, or, in the modern reality, of the higher ups, has more weight than the words of the others, a certain adaptation of the methodology was required in order to avoid from the domination of the authorised opinion. Hence, at the beginning of the process, initial discussions and workshops were organised without the presence of the elders or the higher ups. And only at the later stages, when some culture for participation and self-expression was created, mixed meetings became possible and even productive.

Another "specificity" was linked with the *common*, for all the participants, *background* of the previous top down decision making system. At the initial stages of the process, people coming to the workshops, were not ready to openly express their ideas. More than that, they had a *different understanding* of many of the discussed questions: like, for example, speaking about efficiency of implementation, the foresters were thinking only about the costs, without considering benefits.

The participants with different backgrounds (technicians and administration) were *speaking different languages*, as daily they had a "different use" of terminology (i.e. more formal and bureaucratic language for the representatives of administration and less formal for the field people).

Evidently, all of the participants had different concerns, needs and priorities, but, at the same time, they had one common point: being inexperienced in planning, they had *no strategic vision* and thus were focused always on the current problems. While, at the same time, discussing the problems, the participants were taking unsuccess or failure in implementation, as well as any other critic, *personally*, as their own personal failure, and, in reaction, tended to be defensive, (sometimes even close to being aggressive).

The *perception of information* was another crucial factor: people, coming to the process were not used to discussions. They were often just listening, without hearing, or speaking for the sake of speaking, for showing off themselves, but not for contributing to the discussion.

An example of "cards on board" technique in different cultural contexts

A formal technique of «cards on board» is usually applied to promote participation and give equal possibilities for self-expression to each of the participants. Therefore, this technique was applied in Kyrgyzstan as a way for coping with the factors brought up by the cultural context. Each participant anonymously, that was also important in the Kyrgyz conditions, could express his position in a written form. This technique was very much appreciated[13] and has considerably promoted the introduction of participation in the forest policy reform process.

The same technique of "cards on board" is often used not only for the development projects but also for the planning and definition of strategies at global level in Swiss and German institutions. The reason for that in this case is of course not the incapacity of self-expression among the participants. The "cards on board" may also allow the organisers to have a very clear and structured discussion and facilitates the processing of results. Evidently, this technique goes well with the Germanic culture and with the need for formal rationalised reasoning and decision making.

Whereas when the Laboratory of Forest Policy tried to apply the same technique in the Vosges, in France, for the definition of common strategies during a meeting dealing the partnership between the mayors of the forestry communes and representatives of the ONF (State Forest Agency), it did not give the same results. Regardless of the well established structure on the board, with a clear view on common and conflictual points, the discussion went on with no reference to the order of the cards. It turned out that only the most organised participants were expressing their positions through putting the cards on board, while most of the others preferred a freely expressed oral argumentation. Hence, a good structure did not serve as a basis for a compromised decision, which was reached only in the course of a free debate. This "failure" of the technique, or, rather, unforeseen development of the process, can be explained by the "latin" culture of the participants, which requires a free self-expression and leaves very little space for an "organised" negotiated compromise. *A priory*, such solution could be reached only through a conflict resolution.

[13] This technique was really well adapted to the conditions in Kyrgyzstan, (although, during the small survey which I carried out in 2003, many of the respondents specified that the limiting factor of the cards was the difficulty to formulate a clear idea at a small space of a piece of paper). Nevertheless, even during internal meetings in *leshozes*, including outside of the organised forest policy process, this technique was frequently applied.

This example is given to illustrate that the cultural context has an impact not only on the mode of participation, but also on the techniques and methodologies which may be applied in a participatory process.

2.1.2 Construction of participation through constructed realities and values

It is not only the cultural concept that pre-defines the mode of participation. In the discussions of the complex policy matters for lay people it is natural to take different perspectives in relation to the same issue. Thus, even in the same cultural context, different participants (or groups of participants) usually acquire different importance to the challenge of participation and to the decisions on stake. These perspectives differ from the *scale* point of view: local, regional, global processes and priorities; from the *educational* (background knowledge), *political* (party interests) and *personal* concerns. This list could be continued, but the essence is that different perspectives cause people to see different sides and aspects of reality and problems differently. Even the perception of reality and definition of a problem will be under an impact of all these perspectives.

An individual perception of a reality is defined by the perception of individuals interacting in this reality. Thus, facts are constructed by the very processes which used to represent them (Ankersmit, 2000). The *social construction* of reality, as presented by Berger & Luckmann (1966) means that, the actors interacting together in a social system form over time mental representations (or *typifications)* of each other's actions. These representations eventually become *habitualised* into reciprocal *roles* played by the actors in relation to each other. The knowledge and people's conception of what reality *is* becomes embedded into the structure of society.
At the same time, there are few, if any, "universal constructionists",

> « our mental representations of objects in the physical world are socially constructed, and our social relationships to and interactions with those objects are socially constructed. The social sphere, however, is different, as important social realities (for example money) may exist by virtue of their social construction by people over time » (Hacking, 1999).

For example, the concepts of “participatory decision making”, “participatory policy definition” do not have any direct equivalent wording in Russian language. This may be due to the context of the top down decision making tradition and culture, where was neither practice, nor habit for participation in the policy processes. It had no social importance, was not part of the reality, thus there was no need to create a special verbal construction for it. Generally, the language is presented as a determinant for the definition of concepts representing the world. The classical example for demonstrating cultural differences is the dozens of words for “snow” in the Inuit language (Rorty, 1983, Shannon, 2003), because for “their” reality, each nuance of the state of the snow represents a big importance for their daily survival.

On the other hand, the same concept would have a different meaning for different groups of stakeholders, depending on their constructed realities. Thus, for example, the objective of the *conservation of forest biodiversity*, in a society where the rural people are in a great

dependence from the forest resources, would have not the same meaning, as for an international NGO, or for the government of that country. The values in the reality of African hunters are not the same as those of, for example WWF International. Their representations of the realities (and, consequently, of the values), of each other and of their respective roles are absolutely different, if not opposed. Hence their modes of participation in the process related to the conservation of the ("*their* forest", in case of the hunters) biodiversity will be diametrically different and conflictual. At the same time, from the administration of the society point of view, a participatory process is expected to lead to the achievement of some solutions which would not be otherwise reachable to the same extend without participation. It should

> "lead to the incorporation of public values into the decisions; improvement of the substantive quality of decisions; resolution of conflicts among the competing interests; building up a trust in the institutions; and educating and informing the public" (Beierle 1999).

Of course, in most of the participatory processes the opposition of values will not be so strong and evident, as between the African hunters and the WWF. But what is relevant, is that when different *values* need to be incorporated into the decisions, the process is often linked with *conflicts* between the *competing interests*. This competition between interests leads to the creation of networks and coalitions for their lobbying and promotion. The interactions between these coalitions contribute to the further design of a participatory process and its results.

Thus the mode and the content of participation, as well as the fact of participation itself, depend to, a great extend, on the different values representing the socially constituted realities of the participants. The interactions and oppositions between the different values construct the process itself. Better-shared shared values are usually those that are promoted by the better-organised stakeholders (institutions with the shared representation of reality, promoting a common, collective corporate value). The individual values may not have a big influence on the process, but they can just explain fact of participation or non participation of a particular individual.

2.1.3 How participation is interpreted through social theories

This chapter is based on the assumption that participation as a concept is linked with sustainability, and at the same time it is representing a cause for sustainability. The interpretations of sustainability proceed from the conflicting views of how the reality works, from the expressed personal preferences and value judgements.

> "In the discourse about sustainability no value conflicts have been solved. Only certain values are discussed so that social bargaining process may begin" (Schanz, 1996).

Thus, conflict resolution, or, at least its limitation, is a necessary attribute and moving force of a participatory policy process. It is generally accepted that a conflict gives the society its dynamics, its evolution. Therefore, in the framework of this thesis it is presumed that the theories explaining the dynamics of the society, can also be applicable for the explanation of the dynamic of a participatory process.

Social stability and social change

For the interpretation of participation within this thesis, the *theory of social change* has been considered as a basis. The theory of social stability treats conflicts as the main elements of a non-stability that the system has to solve. This non-stability is pushing the society to a permanent adaptation to changes, in longing for social optimal balance and stability. According to the *theory of social change*, the society is permanently changing in search for new balances, whereas the conflicts are the main elements in changing. Thus, *conflicts* are basically a constitutive part of the society and therefore indispensable in case of public involvement into a policy process.

> "…Conflicts arising among actors can lead to the changes of the structure, same as a conflict may have a positive role in social development, and can be controlled and even managed for a better social development" (Buttoud, 1999).

Thus, following this theory, conflicts can be a moving force for a participatory process and, when managed, can define the course of the process. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, participation was brought in by the international donor, but it would not have developed, if it had not been trigged by the context of conflicts between the existing top down system of decision-making and inability of this system to finance the implementation of those decisions. The Kyrgyz State forest service was searching for a stable political position within the changing state structure. That is why it was ready to invest time and efforts into the solution of the conflicts both within its own hierarchical structure and with the opponents from the other ministries. Participation in this case was seen as a mechanism for solving, or, at least for softening these conflicts. Bringing additional information, it permitted a quick adaptation to the changing contexts, and thus, helped to control the changes. That is why, even if initially opposed to the idea of involving anybody into a decision making process, the forest administration has finally started to promote it.

Interest groups and historically oriented theory of society

The interests and the actors of the process have been already specified as determinant factors for the interpretation of participation. Following this logical framework, another important social component which is relevant for the interpretation of participation is the existence of "interest groups" and their controversies.

In a participatory decision making process, especially in the relation to the management of the natural resources, there is always a permanently present issue of opposed interests. For the objective of expressing social needs and representing precise interests, the members of a society constitute *interest groups* (lobbies).

> "Interest groups are formal associations of members (individuals, public) who share the same interests and agree together to promote or to defend them. An interest group is defined by the social status of its members as well as by their objectives" (Buttoud, 1999).

Even though the individual persons, constituting the interest groups have agreed about a common position, the issues they are lobbying for are usually not entirely reflecting the individual preferences of each of the group member. The patterns of their behaviour and communication are socially constructed, same as the positions, information, interpretation of the reality and experience. The "*Historically oriented theory of society*" of Habermas states that:

> "… the processes, as a whole, may be explained through reconstructing current conditions with a view to the past and anticipated future" (Habermas, 1979).

The members of a society (eventually the actors of a participatory process) each have their own interpretation of the common history and of what and how is changing in the society. In the course of interactions they commonly produce a "meaning", a definition of a situation. This "common meaning" makes the basis for a common interest/value for an interest group. During the participatory policy process, each interest group would be lobbying for their commonly defined "meaning" and mutually influence each other's position through a conflict resolution or management.

At the same time, they change the situation through a decision taken as a compromise or a consensus reached in the course of negotiation or even, sometimes, unilaterally imposed. Thus, the actors, through the communicative action, are at the same time the products of the social and historical context; the agents of change in this context; and also the producers of continuity (history).

Social systems theory

The action logic of the interest groups can be linked with the *Social Systems theory*, which considers organisations or organisational networks as closed and self-referred social systems. This self reference helps to reduce the complexity of issues by restricting the range of attention.

> "In social systems, the technological information infrastructure, the hierarchy, culture, laws and processes reflect accumulated communication" (Shannon, 2002).

A similar process of restriction-accumulation takes place in the interest groups, where the individuals restrict the expression of their proper interests to the definition of a "common good", even if that new created meaning does not entirely represent an aggregation of individual preferences and ideas. So, the functioning of the interest groups may be compared with the functioning of a social system.

In the interpretation of this thesis, a process of participation forms a situation when the power of decision making may be shared among the interest groups, who are representing different positions. This interaction takes part in constituting the development of a quasi-social system. The co-involvement of interest groups with opposed and even conflicting interests creates a dynamism in the process. As a response to this dynamism, the system, basing on past reactions and experience, creates new ways of addressing new problems or situations. The same individuals may act in various social systems, using the same or different communication patterns. The rules and reactions may change, following the more resistant and stronger patterns, or, otherwise, a new communication may be established.

Thus through the communication between the interest groups, through the dynamism of their reaction to the other interest groups, the patterns for participation are also changing. This means an *adaptation* of the participating groups, which makes them more resistant and also resilient to the changes and their impacts.

Advocacy coalition theory

For the resolution or management of the conflicts, which are necessarily existing and arising for and around a participatory process, the negotiation of a compromise between the opposed interests is often presented as a solution. The search for a compromise through negotiation between different interest groups is usually explained through the *Advocacy Coalition Theory*. According to Sabatier (1986, 1988),

> "… within any policy subsystem, there are several "advocacy coalitions" with shared normative commitments and casual beliefs".

In this thesis, it is presumed that the mode of participation of the various interest groups can be compared with that of the advocacy coalitions as it also depends on these belief systems. Therefore, the related strategies of participation may be proposed and adopted by the interest groups for reaching these objectives.
In the advocacy coalition theory, the concept of "belief systems" is used rather than the concept of "interests".

> "Interest models must still identify a set of means and performance indicators which are necessary for a goal attainment. This set of interest/goals, perceived causal relationships and a perceived parameter state constitutes a "belief system"… These belief systems gain complexity and sometimes can fragment into more specialised sets of core ideas; new information and new situations" (Shannon, 2002, citing Sabatier 1988).

The application of this theory adds the "bricks" of "*learning*" and "*adaptation*" to the construction of the interpretation of "participation", which will be used in the subsequent chapters.

2.1.4 Interests and conflicts as "bricks" for construction of participation

The interests and conflicts here are considered as the factors, defining the way of *why* and *how* the construction of participation is going.
Most of the participatory processes are based on a simplified model of the interests-driven approach, which stresses that the main rationale for decision is an "interest". The *interests* determine the actions people take, thus they constitute one of the most important factors defining a political process.

> "In the logical framework of the communicative action, every decision by the public authority is considered to have as a rationale, a translation of the expressed formal interests and social needs into actions" (Buttoud, 1999b).

Before being formally expressed, both needs and interests exist rather in a form of personal preferences of the individual stakeholders and actors coming to the process. They are both constructed in the course of interactions and communication among those stakeholders as well as with other interest groups. Thus, after being negotiated and agreed upon, they may represent a *social need*[14], which is defined as:

> "… a coherent set of commonly shared ideas and opinions, linked with ideologies and beliefs, on which a group of stakeholders generally agrees" (Buttoud, 1999b).

Although not all the interests brought to the process are expressed and subject to negotiation. In fact, the interests are more often hidden than openly expressed, as they can reveal the true motivation and thus fragilise the actors' positions.

In forest policy, Krott reveals key interests from three dimensions of "ecology, economy and social factors" and defines interests as:

> "… based on action orientation, adhered to by individuals or groups, and designating the benefits the individual or group can receive from a certain object, such as a forest" (Krott, 2005).

In the framework of this thesis, this statement does not seem to be totally appropriate, as treating the interests only as benefits related to the forests from the ecological, economic and social points of view would be a bit restrictive. A policy process is also necessarily linked with (and moved by) ethical (Saastamoinen, 2005; Gamborg & Larsen, 2005) and political interests, which are symbolic and deal with the process itself and not with the resource. Nevertheless these symbolic interest may play a very important role for the initiation and progress of a participatory process as well as on its impact on the decision. The opposition between "symbolic" and "practical" interests; between "direct" and "indirect" benefits, is still another moving force for the evolution of participation in the process.

The pluralism of those dimensions (economic, ecological, social, political and ethical), as well as the subjective understanding of an expectation from each of them by each stakeholder coming to a process, where those interests are present and need to be negotiated, necessarily evolve conflicts. These conflicts and interests continue to be constitutive elements and moving forces of the participatory process, as long as a forest policy process is considered as

> "… a social bargaining process for regulating conflicts of interests (see above: *benefits*)" (Krott, 2005).

Besides being a product of an interaction between opposed interests in a policy process, a conflict is basically an objective and a constitutive part of a society. Getting back to the systemic theory of *social change*, a social optimal is by principle considered as illusive. Thus, a society is always adapting to changes in search for another balance and stability. In this framework, conflicts are the main elements of non-stability that the system has to solve. A sustainable solution of those conflicts may come from their communication and negotiation.

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[14] *social need* may be also expressed as an *expectation*, when it is not formalised; as a *demand* in addressing the public authority; as *exigency*, when the demand is expressed as non-negotiable.

The negotiation for conflict management or resolution, in this case, is a central aspect in participatory processes, as it leads to a construction of common positions, shared interests and social needs. It means that the society is constructing participation in order to get adapted to the changes in the social needs and interests and thus approach itself to some balance and stability.

On the other hand, theories of social change state that the society is changing in order to reach new steps, new balances. It means that the modes of participation, initiated in (and by the members of) this society are also changing, depending on the conflicts and interests which have provoked the initial change. This interaction of changes creates a permanent iterativity of the process.

As the actors of a participatory process are human beings and members of a society, their way of participation, reactions in and expectations from the process, will be defined by their cultural, historical and social background, interpretation of reality, of personal and collective values and position within a group, personal qualities and other social aspects. The existence of different interpretations of reality and future gains, as well as different values and opposed interests, defines direct or indirect objectives and moving factors of the process. The solution of conflicts brings in the component of change and a formulation of interest groups. The opposition between the interests and values creates conflicts and instability of the society, which itself is permanently changing in reacting to the changes introduced by participation. This adaptation to the changes, together with the permanent interaction between the existing and newly emerging interest groups creates new conflicts, new resolutions and new changes. All these elements together create iterativity of the process.

2.2 Economic context as one of determinants for participation

Following the proposition of the importance of social and cultural contexts for the definition of participation, the importance of the economic aspects of values and interests can not be underestimated either. This leads to the consideration of the role of an ***economic context*** in the understanding of participation, which is raised from the empirical experience.

One of the aspects explaining the public involvement into the definition of the forest policy-related decisions is, indeed, the *economic importance of the forest sector* in general, as well as of the forest and forest-related products and services. It would become a decisive factor for the involvement of the stakeholders when the local scale of participation is considered, for example at a commune or village level. At the same time, the potential to influence the decisions and, therefore, the motivation for participation would be rather defined by the dominant uses and functions of the forests: for example timber production vs. forest protection.

The forest *ownership structure* has also had an impact on participation. For example, during the GoFOR study, while describing participation in the forest policy processes in in different countries, a general tendency has been noted that more importance and priority is given to the interests of private owners' when the share of the privately owned forests is big enough. At the same time, in France, with a considerable share of publicly (State or communal) owned forests, and due to the importance of timber harvesting, the modalities for participation are different.

In South Africa, where the social and environmental issues tend to receive a secondary consideration, co-related to the satisfaction of economic objectives of a minority group, participation in a development of a new forest policy follows, to a significant extent, the same direction (Foy, Pitcher, Willis, 1998).

In Kyrgyzstan for quite a long time the issues of forest policy have presented no interest for the ordinary public, not only because it was always linked with rather technical decision making, but also because the forest lands were entirely State-owned and did not contribute to personal benefits. Since the beginning of the forest policy reform process, which was going parallel to decentralization and land reform, giving a possibility for private initiatives, the interest to the policy process has progressively increased among the local population and the local authorities, following the extension of forest lands' lease or it"s attribution for communal use.

In these considerations, the scope and type of participation are explained by a more or less direct economic motivation behind initiating (or joining) a participatory process.

Many of the findings of the EU GoFOR project, indicate that often the interest of participation in a forest policy-related processes is linked with the existence of financial incentives. The examples are provided with the EU economic initiatives for the support of the protection of ecological areas, as for Natura 2000; the EU "LEADER" projects for agricultural and rural development in Germany; the development of the Territorial Forest Charters (CFTs) in France.

These incentives have a direct influence of the composition of participants: usually the majority is composed by the potential beneficiaries of funding, or, ultimately, potential "losers". People come to the process when they are sure to gain something, or, when there is a risk of losing, in this case, they take participation as a means to loose as little as possible. For example, it may be supposed that farmers and private forest owners are coming to the Natura 2000 meetings in order to minimise their loses in the course of the introduction of protected areas.

The direct or indirect economic incentives are, certainly, an important factor for initiating participatory processes of elaboration of the national forest policies supported by the international donors in developing or transitioning countries. Both the process for the new policy elaboration and the necessity of participation are put forward as a condition for the future funding, whereas at the local scale the people can often be considered as being directly paid for their participation.

Participation introduced by the Swiss Support Programme in Kyrgyzstan was initially accepted by the State forestry administration also because it was a condition for the continuation of financial support. At the very first stages of the process, to make it attractive, the participants, coming to the meetings were even given some amount of money for participating. But progressively, this approach was abandoned at the initiative of the forestry administration. The allowances were limited to per diems and, gradually, a full boarding has replaced even this type of payment. And still some of the respondents during the small survey made in 2003 have pointed out that (among other reasons) the possibility to travel and a full boarding were also an attraction for their participation.

Thus, indeed, same as the importance of the values (symbolic, political, ethical) and the way of their expression in general may have an influence on the mode and the role of participation, the economic values have also some role in it. Quite often, even if not expressed directlt, in the analysis they may be considered as context factors (the importance of the forest resources) and as externalities (international requirements). Still, at the practical level, their importance should not be underestimated.

2.3 Political context as a determinant for participation

Searching for the understanding of modalities for participation in a political decision, it is impossible to avoid speaking of the mode of decision making, that is, of the ***political context***, which includes various aspects:

Among the aspects, relevant for the understanding of participation characteristics, some scholars mention *the policy style* of a country, which describes certain behavioural patterns, playing an important role in the policy formulation, decision-making and policy implementation. It frames the way of functioning of the policy communities and networks. This policy style varies over time and among different policy sectors (Parsons 1995). Two main dimensions are usually considered in the literature (Richardson et al. 1982):

(i) A government's *approach* to the decision making may be an *anticipatory* and *active*. With this *attitude* to the societal problems and priorities, the decisions are taken through agreements and consensus with the selected interested parties. It may be also *re-active*, when the decisions are taken unilaterally by the government itself and imposed on the others.

(ii) As for the government's approach to decision making, the *relations* between the government and other actors or stakeholders may be either *consensus* or *conflict oriented.*

Still, the definition of a policy style remains disputable and anyway subjective. Hence, it will not be considered as an important explanatory factor in this thesis.

A more important factor is the *political-institutional framework* which requires in depth consideration. The openness of the political system for an input and participation from the societal groups is an important aspect of the so-called "**political opportunity structure**"

(Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1995). In the framework of this political opportunity structure, the States may range along a continuum from "strong" to "weak". For the purposes of analysing "participation" this range could be specified through a division into two general categories, according to their *openness to input* (participation) and their *capacity for output* (policy implementation).

In this conceptual framework, a state's overall strength or weakness is usually considered as proceeding from internal factors such as centralisation, strength of social cleavages, strength and number of political parties, and patterns of linkages between the interest groups and the government. The *strong States* are relatively *closed to input* and have a *high* capacity for controlling *output*. They tend to be centralised, have only minor social cleavages, and have weak or passive interest groups. Therefore, participation in the strong states will be in the best case limited to consultation and information. The *weak states*, on the other hand, are characterised by the *openness to input* and a lack of capacity to impose them on the output side. Here the decentralisation, strong social cleavages, and strong interest groups are the main characteristics. These characteristics of the weak and strong States can be decisive for the composition of participants and for the process of participation itself.

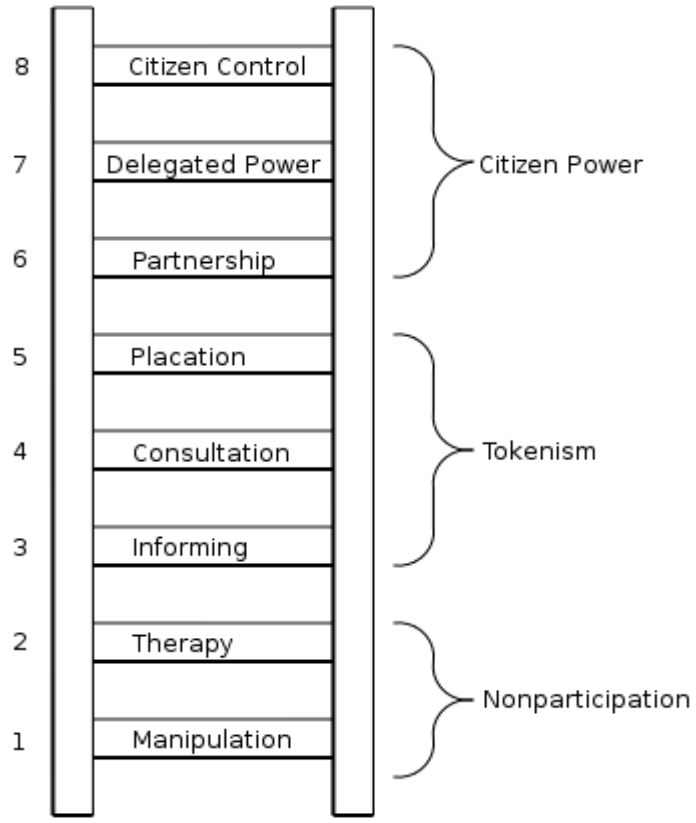
A *political culture* is another aspect helping in the interpretation of participation. Political culture is presented as consisting of beliefs on how governmental, political, and economic life should be carried out. It creates a framework for political change. Political culture is unique to nations, States, and other groups. For example, the proponents and opponents of sustainable forestry, their support groups, as well as the third parties, who are usually representatives of organisations and coalitions, have stable general interests and "core beliefs" (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1994). Their capacity to act depends on their general strength and competence, but personal will and skills can also make a difference for their ability and potential for participation.

Forest policies in general are influenced by a variety of different governmental and non-governmental actors, the configuration being different in each country. Even for the definition of the participants, a "group" may be defined differently in different societies. This fact just adds some "meat" to the proposition that participation is constructed by the contexts.

2.4 Is there a "bad" or a "good" participation?

As participation may vary, being determined by various factors, it is logical to ask, if there may be "less" or "more" participation, "better" or "worse". In the previous paragraphs, the expectations from participation, same as the type and quality of participation, are defined by contextual variables and linked with different values. Speaking about the qualities of participation, in many publications it is assumed that the results, the output, may be "measured", or assessed positively or negatively. The idea of "measuring participation", still popular among many of the policy scientists, is based on the "Ladder of participation", proposed by Arnstein (Arnstein, S., 1969), whereas the ***level of participation***, depending on many reasons, may be high or low.

Scheme 4: The ladder of participation, source Arnstein, 1969



According to the proposed ladder (Scheme 4), at the lower end, participation is just a dissemination of information to raise the awareness about certain processes or outcomes; while at the higher end, participation implies a shared decision making power among the concerned stakeholders and a joint implementation of policies.

Manipulation and *Therapy* are the two rungs corresponding to the levels of "non-participation" that have been contrived by some managers to substitute for genuine participation. Their real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs and policies, but to enable the decisionmakers to "educate" or to "cure" the participants.

Rungs 3 and 4 progress to the levels of "*tokenism*"[15], or symbolic cooperation, that allows the have-nots to be heard and to have a voice: (3) *Informing* and (4) *Consultation*. Are often presented by the decisionmakers as the total extent of participation. In fact, under these conditions the citizens may hear and be heard, but the participants lack the power to insure that their views will be heeded by the authority. Rung (5) *Placation*[16] is simply a higher level tokenism because the ground rules allow have-nots to advise, but retain for the powerholders the continued right to decide.

Further up the Arnstein's ladder are the levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of influencing the decision-making. Citizens can enter into a (6) *Partnership* that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders. During the partnership relations, Arnstein sees power as redistributed through negotiation between citizens and power holdlers.

[15] *Tokenism* - refers to a policy or practice of limited inclusion of members of a minority, usually creating a false appearance of inclusive practices, intentional or not.

[16] *Placation* – sin. conciliation, propitiation; to act for overcoming distrust and animosity, for winning the favour or support of smb.

Planning and decision-making responsibilities are supposed to be shared, for example, through joint committees.

At the topmost rungs, are the (7) *Delegated Power*, when the citizens, holding a clear majority of seats in committees, with delegated powers to make decisions. The public is supposed to have the power to assure accountability of the authorities to them; and the (8) *Citizen Control*, when the have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power. They assume the entire process of planning, policy making and managing a programme.

This ladder of participation has its proponents and opponents and debates are still going on. This qualitative nature of the ladder of participation has given grounds to many comparative analysis of participatory process. Nevertheless, it does not seem to be appropriate in the framework of this thesis.

The present proposition that participation is a societal concept, which is defined by the socio-economic, political and cultural aspects of a given society, contains the idea that the role and the mode of participation depend on the interests and possibility for their expressions and interpretation; that the pattern of participation and reactions of the involved actors are not a constant but are permanently adapting to the changing reality. Therefore, it does not make sense to render a judgement on a better or a worse participation, neither on the "more" or "less" participation.

The thesis is aimed at approaching the understanding of the mechanisms of changes in participation, caused and created by various contexts and, reciprocally, the influence of participation on the changes in the contexts and actors of the process. Such a reciprocal dependence and complex relations between the different elements of the contexts and participation, which are permanently changing and causing further changes, does not leave it possible to make any simple qualitative value judgement in relation to participation.

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Indeed, participation may be interpreted in different ways, depending on the "angle" from which it is viewed at. The modes of participation, as well as the expectations from it are defined and constituted under the influence of a diversity of social, economic, political and cultural aspects. Parallel to the *social-cultural context*, the role of the *economic* and political contexts for the formulation of participation can not be neglected either. The importance of the forest sector in general for the economy of a particular society, or for an individual as a forest user, will define the challenge and stakes for participation and lobbying. From the short term perspective, more practical economic incentives attracting to or coming out of the process can promote both the participation itself and the acceptance of its results. The *political context* defines the relations between the government and the other actors or stakeholders. The degree of strength of the State is decisive for the prevailing type of participation, and especially for the types of decisions coming out of the process. All the above facts based on different theoretical positions and complemented with examples from

the Kyrgyz experience as well as from some European countries, contribute to the idea of the proposition that *participation is not a universal concept, but rather a societal and cultural* one. The mode of participating and it's impact on the decisions have their specific features and are different not only in different societies, but also within the same society. They are derived from the characteristics of the involved participants, depending on their status, backgrounds and priorities. In such a framework, participation will result as different, but it will not be "better" or "worse", "less" or more".

The question remains to know, which of the contexts has a stronger influence on the mode of participation; and what is in common in "participation" regardless of the differences caused by the different contexts.

3. Proposition 2: Participation does not work by itself, but is constructed in time and space and is following certaine logic.

The modes of participation are determined by the context of the society, but even under the influence of this context, participation does not exist by itself, it is in permanent construction, shaped by various factors. The question is how participation is constructed within a logical model. In this thesis, the logic of such construction is presented as depending on the initiating actor, on the stakes put for the process, on the interests and conflicts, and directly limited to the mode of decision making.

3.1 Rationales of initiators as determinants for participation

Looking for an understanding of the mechanisms of participation, the rationales for participation are also considered as determinant factors defining the type and content of participation.
There are various rationales for advocating participation, which differ, depending on *who* is calling for it. In many of the cases, the initiative for a participatory policy process comes from a public authority. Why would they look for the involvement of the other actors and stakeholders?
The most frequently used arguments for participation can be grouped in the following way:

A political argument rests in the idea that it is necessary to involve the public to ensure the political viability of policies (Perhac, 1998).
*A normative (*or *instrumental)* argument follows the stance that technocratic orientation is incompatible with democratic ideals. Citizens are the best judges of their own interests and the public is the only appropriate source for many of the value judgements entering the process.

> "An effective stakeholder participation in the science-policy decisions makes them more credible, salient and legitimate. It is linked with the popular sovereignty, political equity, empowerment of citizens and the definition of collective will" (Fiorino, 1990; Webler&Thuller, 2002; Perhac, 1998; Eckley 2001).

A substantive argument states that lay judgements are as sound, or even more so, than those of the experts are (it is also referred to as the local or insider knowledge).

> Generally, it is the public who possesses important factual knowledge relevant to public policies (Fiorino, 1990; Perhac, 1998).

A functional argument for participation is based on enhanced responsiveness and legitimacy of the public institutions, increased efficiency and a better implementation of decisions through the reduction or solution of conflicts.

This thesis follows the political and functional arguments for participation and thus participation is linked with the ***major characteristics of a good governance.*** For ensuring a good governance process, participation is supposed to be required in order to guarantee the following features:

(i) ***Transparency*** of the decision making process, so that the decisions are taken and their enforcement is done in the manner that follows commonly accepted rules and regulations. Through participation, the information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement.

(ii) The ***rule of law*** component of governance which requires participation as a guarantee that the fair legal frameworks are impartially enforced, with the full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities.

(iii) Participation is also an essential argument for the ***effectiveness and efficiency*** of decisions. This means that the processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of the society while making the best use of the resources at their disposal, including the aspects of sustainability and protection of environment.

From the good governance perspective, there is also an increasing awareness of the need for an active stakeholder participation in policy processes in order to improve the *quality* of policies *per se* and their translation into reality.

> "Greater stakeholders' ownership in processes thus taking into account civil society's needs is expected to facilitate the successful implementation of the forest policies. Most environmental decision making processes will benefit from introducing a participative structure, because if the people are affected by a policy, a programme or a plan are not involved into the processes, the implementation will likely run a greater risk of being contested or flouted" (Appelstrand, 2002).

Thus, participation is needed for the common acceptance of decisions.

(iv) As long as the decision making process in relation to the management of the natural resources is linked with the conflicts between different presented interests, the involvement of the representatives of all those opposed interests can make this process a ***consensus oriented*** one**.** Therefore, one of the essential arguments for participation is certainly its potential in reaching a *consensus* or *a compromise* among the stakeholders during the decision taking.

Of course, this consensus is not a simple addition of all the expressed positions, as "some decisions might lead to the benefit or disadvantage of some stakeholders more than the others" (Appelstrand, 2002). But, some authors argue that participation can at least provide "an overall view of the various interests and conflicts and create a basis for arriving at a balanced solution acceptable to all *parties*" (Appelstrand, 2002).

(v) The fifth characteristic of good governance is the ***accountability***. Accountability is usually linked with democratic legitimation of political decisions and is based on principles, like the transparency of procedures and proactive communication or public access to documents. Accountability within the good governance

presupposes that not only the governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organisations have to report to the other actors in the process. From this point of view, participation is seen as
"… a means to facilitate successful implementation of forest policies and may be defined as a process through which stakeholders have the potential to influence and share control over the development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them" (FAO, 2004).

In forestry, with the tradition of technocratic decision making, the accountability of expertise is getting a special importance, it means a special type of expertise[17] , (impartially selected), namely one that is brought to (and becomes influential in) political decision-making processes in a democratically legitimised way. In this case public participation is considered as "… a means to understand a diversity of opinions to work towards a consensus through a transparent and equitable process. Today there is, without a doubt, "a growing demand" from the society for more consultation and involvement, and more transparency and accountability within the forestry-related institutions" (FAO/ECE/ILO 2000).

(vi) The arguments for ***equity and inclusiveness*** suppose that the decision making process should produce results that meet the needs of the society. This can be reached only if all the various positions related to the use of the resource are expressed and taken into consideration, including those of the environmental NGOs and associations of tourism and recreation. Participation thus is considered as the way to reach multifunctionality, whereas,
"… in the contemporary forest management, the multi-purpose usage must consequently be taken into consideration in the attempts to reach a reasonable balance between overlapping and also conflicting interests" (Appelstrand 2002).

(vii) ***Empowerment*** is also considered as an outcome from participation, which is seen not only as an arena for negotiation of conflicting interests, but also as a forum for shaping common values and political learning (idea of Macpherson 1977 in Boon, 2001). This political learning is supposed to promote further empowerment and responsiblisation of different stakeholders.

(viii) ***Responsiveness*** is sometimes added as a last argument. It means that institutions and processes attempt to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe, therefore, these stakeholders themselves have to define their priorities.

Depending on the leading argument for the initiation of the process, participation will be shaped and designed accordingly, in order to correspond to the initial idea of the initiator.
As the concept of "participation" may be treated differently, depending on the interests, organisers and involved actors, hence may the logic of the process be different and/or differently interpreted.

[17] Definition elaborated and applied within the GoFOR project

3.2 Rationalist logic for participation

The purpose of the process influences the course and the content of participation, and thus, pre-defines its logic. Global international processes (international dialogue on sustainability, multifunctionality and general democratization of societies) have influenced the situation so that even traditional technocratic rational top down policy frameworks needed to change the logic of policy making, which they could not any more do without, at least, a minimum participation.

> "Government-citizen relations are high on the public agenda. Citizens and organizations of civil society have become increasingly vocal in recent years, bringing forward issues and demands and trying to influence policy makers…Governments also realize more and more that citizens' input can be a vast resource for policy making – especially in an increasingly complex world" (Gramberger 2001).

Thus, a consideration of participation as a *principle* which provides transparency and sharing of information, as well as a (pro forma) requirement for sustainable development is well merged with the ***rationalist*** framework of public decision making. This framework is

> "based on a deductive chain of decisions taken by the public authority, which is in charge, as such, of making public choices for the society. In this conceptual framework, the common interest is defined by rationalist norms in an extra-societal way" (Buttoud, 1999).

In relation to the forest sector, this policy model takes, as its core assumption, that technical information and analysis conducted by experts are the best way to make a "good policy" (Shannon, 2001). In this framework, a public authority (or forest administration) acts as an initiator, or "facilitator" of a public deliberative process by creating a public forum for discussion, but also by "managing" this discussion. The role of participation in this case is

> "… to *improve the nature and quality* of information considered by the policy and decision-makers" (Shannon, 2003).

This could be also a consultation process or *resource participation*, when participants act as "information sources" and may express agreement or disagreement with the decision, without any power of influencing this decision. As the technical "expert" knowledge has the priority in the rationalist model, the moments of the process for public involvement, the methods of such involvement, as well as the issues put for the discussion, are defined by the "experts". The decision is rather made through scientific technical analysis than through deliberative process.
In the rationalist decision making framework, apart from the source of information at the initial stage of a process,

> "… public involvement may be also "useful", at the later stages for promoting political legitimacy of decisions, but this involvement should be minimized so as not to interfere with the technical analysis" (Shannon, 2003).

One of the examples of the models, where the participation logic could fit the rationalist decision-making framework, may be the Vroom-Yetton management model. This model has been originated in a managerial theory and is based on observations of how managers make effective decisions (Brazer, Keller 2006). It is aimed at matching methods with purposes and helps to prescribe how an official, charged with organising public participation could choose among a variety of participatory strategies. The model is proposing a good or right public participation, i.e. a normative theory of what a public participation in western developed democracies should be. It prescribed to be based on fairness and transparency and included 3 basic activities that constitute a public participation discourse: agenda and rule making; moderation and rule re-enforcement; substantive discussion of the issue.

> "The competence or expertise in this model refers to the construction of the best possible understanding and agreements given what is reasonably knowable to the participants at the time the discourse takes place. It is conceptualized as two basic necessities: access to the information and its interpretation and the use of the best available procedures for knowledge selection" (Webler & Thuler, 2002).

Making a link to the previous chapters, it can be continued that when a participatory process is initiated and organised by a public authority, in our case a forestry administration, it may be a well structured participation, but there is a big probability that the participatory process will follow the rationalist logic, when participation will be the type of "resource participation", aimed at getting information and not at sharing a decision.

3.3 Communicative logic for participation

In the framework of communicative action, on the contrary, all those involved in the process, have something to contribute, i.e. to effectively prepare, present and evaluate the issues in a variety of socio-economic and environmental settings. Thus, participation becomes a political processes, in line with ***incremental*** decision making framework,

> "which considers that the decision is a set of actions taken by a network of relations between the actors (stakeholders) and the representative structures of the public authority. In this framework, the common interest is defined as a result of all needs and interests expressed by the stakeholders. The public authority has a passive role of translation of social expressions (Buttoud, 1999),

Communicative policy model is often referred to as a very appropriate one for the establishment of the relations between different stakeholders and the public authority The core assumption of this model is that the social dialogue is seen as essential.

> "Through the dialogue in public forums, problems are gradually framed, understood and courses of action proposed. A participatory process is, therefore a goal in the communicative policy model" (Shannon, 2003).

In this framework, participation is viewed not only as a goal, but also as a *mechanism for democratic political (collaborative) learning*. It is assumed that knowledge is a social construction. On the one hand, the public can bring the "knowledge of reality", through being

engaged in defining problems, identifying possible solutions and participating in evaluating their outcomes at different stages, while the expertise can contribute with a technical knowledge through a permanent dialogue with the public. Therefore, the role of a dialogue is central for creating knowledge or information.

Through the communicative model, participation leads to the creation of a capacity for collaboration among the actors, sufficient to make the policy work. The social dialogue also leads to the definition of conflicts and public problems, at the same time creating a possibility for their solution through building policy networks and consensual agreements based upon information. The two-way experts-public communication leads to the creation of a new knowledge for the both.

This policy model is, to a great extend, dependent on the social and political contexts, as it pre-supposes a strong civil engagement and civic competence from the participants, as well as a consensus on the representation of interests and diversity of the formed interest groups. The capacity and experience in communication are also important factors for the modes of participation.

3.4 Negotiation, as the end for participation

In most of the cases, the rationalist and incremental logics are working at the same time, in the same process (cf. the mixed model). Thus, participation may be viewed as a process by which public concerns, needs and values are mutually constructed and incorporated into a government decision making through a combination of the "bottom up" and "top down" approaches, that is the technocratic (top down) and the communicative-incremental ones for (the bottom up). Such a combination becomes constructive only if it is based on negotiation of conflicting interests and definition of common, compromised goals. Usually this process is accompanied by a collective learning occurring among all the actors of the process. The communicative action logic is compliant with the *constructivist policy model*.

This model is based on the assumption that both technical knowledge and scientific information are socially constructed just like values and political interests.

> "These interests are combined in the course of a social dialogue. Hence, this model integrates rationalist and communicative policy models and recognises that both scientific and communicative aspects are critical for empirically grounded and politically legitimate policy" (Shannon, 2003).

Different methods promote this incremental communicative logic for participation. They are rather adapted to the gathering/sharing of information process, oriented to consensus.

There are various methods and techniques which can promote communication along a process, depending on the context; the issues to be dealt with, the actors of the process, and, of course, the challenges to be met. Those approaches for negotiation are different, and often, as a consequence, the results in terms of decisions are also different.

The "mutual gains" method:
This method considers that a co-operation among actors is the only way to get a compromise and that only gains (or benefits) are additive.

> Thus, "the best solution for the community will be the situation when the sum of the individual gains is the most important one" (Buttoud, 1999b).

On the basis of positions expressed by the participants, some decisions may be generated, which consider specific topics with related common benefits. Another solution considers only the topic or questions when the interests of the stakeholders, or the majority of them, are supposed to be common. This method, although, is successful only for the solution of some special concrete problems, especially at the local level. But it is not relevant when the issues under concern are seen as public goods and services, neither for a policy in general. The theory of adding benefits are also disputable, as the resulting "total" of the added benefits is not necessarily equal to the *common benefit*. .

The "community of interests" method:
This method is based on the interest-driven approach, in which the participants are supposed to be only interest motivated. The interests are clarified and expressed in a comprehensive and systemic way through an expert study. The common interests identified through this study give basis for policy strategies.

> "Participation in such a procedure can restrict the concrete role of stakeholders, so that the level of acceptability of the related interest groups is not guarantied, because the negotiation is based on principles and not on the facts and real positions" (Buttoud, 1999b).

This "community of interests" method can be also employed by the public authority for a participatory process, especially for treating questions where only interest groups are concerned. Those two approaches are basically looking for a consensus through putting in common positions for a shared vision, and where the forest service is asked to define the priorities in the short term (for instance, the issues of the timber production in France).

Another group of negotiation methods is aimed at treating disputable issues, and thus goes through a discussion of the opposed positions. Those methods are basically focused on the treatment of the needs for changes as expressed by the stakeholders.

The "environmental mediation" method:
The approach here is to make participants negotiate a long term vision on what they expect as final outcomes from the policy or a programme. When they accept a common end, they formally engage themselves in the contribution to this solution, by carrying out common deducted patterns for reaching this objective. The final expected outcome is basically built up through foresight strategies or perspective scenarios. The disputable items related to the different possible future scenarios are discussed by all the participants, but in a very abstract way.
For this method the role of the experts in facilitating the discussion is essential and may lead to the solutions, very different from the present situation.

The constructive confrontation method

The hypothesis here is that for the determining of a solution, the divergences are more important in negotiation than common positions. The *constructive confrontation* technique (Burgess & Burgess, 1996) has been used in the USA for the negotiation of different positions between the state and the other stakeholders, and is aiming at dealing with concrete present issues, to be solved in a short or a medium run. Different from the environmental mediation, which is aimed at the elaboration of short term solutions, after defining a common long term end, the constructive confrontation (for "constructivist" with no moral aspect), builds up short term solutions through solving immediate conflicting issues. (Buttoud, 1999b).

The stakeholders should first express their views, discuss them in common meetings with the other participants, and finally negotiate a compromise on each on them. Every point expressed by the participants is classified into:

(i) Self-evident statements or positions, considered as compatible and accepted by everybody, and therefore, not necessary to be discussed.
(ii) Positions, supposed to be compatible under certain conditions, these disputable issues are negotiable, and give the basis for discussion aimed at finding a compromise.
(iii) Positions, absolutely incompatible, these disputable issues when considered after discussion as non-negotiable (mainly for ethical considerations), are excluded from the discussion with this approach.

This constructive confrontation technique treats only the existing present problems. It may help, as well, to identify and clarify hidden problems. But, the negotiation of each topic separately from the other ones, does not guarantee the coherence of the final solution with the other decisions, resulting from the other compromises reached in the process.

All these methods described above, may be applied in a pure rationalist logic of participation. In this case, the difference is made through the moderation of the process, as well as through the existence of a "good will" of administration to consider the inputs from the process.
As all the methods are aimed at reaching a consensus through providing or getting some additional information, the negotiation, in this framework, may mean that:

> "… the involved people keep discussing their private understanding of a certain knowledge with the others, in order to check if what they have gained in knowledge upon internalisation, does not differ from what the others understood to have externalised" (Beers et al., 2002).

From the above examples of the different logics applied for the interpretation of participation, it is seen that the construction of the process itself (depending on the interests of the organisers), will be either aimed at the improvement of the nature and quality of information, required by the decision makers, or at the process of sharing responsibilities and consensus building.

With all the drawbacks, the choice of a method is not always explicit, as it directly depends on the objectives of the process, as well as on the logic for the initiation of participation and it's type. In their turn, these factors are to a great extend under the impact of the internal and external context factors. Thus participation is formed not only indirectly, under the influence of contexts, aims and expected results of the process, but also directly through the more or less implicit application of certain methods.

3.5 The example of the Kyrgyz process: methodological aspects of the expertise-communication link

In Kyrgyzstan, the constructive confrontation approach has been followed since the very beginning for different parallel reasons:

- The country was under a strong pressure from the international community to pass to a market economy in a very short time. At that moment the discussion of common long term visions was surrealistic in the context of fight against poverty.
- At the beginning the conflicts between the forest service and the administration of environment were so strong, that it was illusory to consider a common vision even in the long run.
- The technique of the cards on board mentioned above, needed to be selected in order to promote free expression of all participants; this technique directly fits into this approach.

A combination of two logics

The structure of the policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan from the policy formulation to evaluation and adaptation has followed the conceptual framework of the mixed model, constituted with both: rationalist (based on deductive technical expertise) and communicative (based on participatory approach) approaches.

The rationalist framework was expressed in the expert assessment. It was based on the collection of data (mainly quantitative) on the current situation and on the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of the pre-defined activities. A core group was organised as being in charge of providing this expertise based on a very simple methodology. This approach was systematically applied during the first stage at each of the steps of the forest policy reform.

The *communicative framework* consisted in semi-open meetings with a pre-determined procedure at the national, regional and local field levels for the collection of additional data and confronting « centrally available information » with the local opinions. A core group was in charge of organising the related workshops, carrying out possible additional experts' studies and co-ordinating the results from the workshops. Both approaches were synthesised in a unique matrix for the descriptions required for each specific step of the forest policy.

During the two main periods of the process, the mobilisation of expertise and communication, same as the link between them, have progressively changed. At the end of the second period, the forest service experts have acted as experts in communication, rather than in technical issues, and the integration of formal data into the participatory meeting proceeded differently than before (Buttoud & Yunusova, 2002).

Construction of participation through communicative and rationalist approaches

Both, communicative and rationalist aspects were present at each of the steps of the logical sequence of the policy process:

(i) At the step of the *classification of issues, challenges and principles*, first of all there was a need for the establishment of common rules and procedures. Therefore, before taking part in the workshops and meetings, each contacted person has received information on the general procedures, more specifically on the questions to be discussed at the first step. Thus everybody was informed about the content of discussion and the objectives of the process. Together with the communicative part of the process (participation), an analysis of existing statistical and legal documents (the rationalist part) has contributed to the formulation of a general view on the current situation.

At the same time, as a result of the first analysis of the public debate on forestry and forest policy issues, a general set of issues for the new forest policy was defined. The role of the expert (facilitator) at this step was to define a framework for further procedures and to select special issues to be dealt with in both individual and collective discussions.

(ii) The next step in this sequence, the *expression of participants' positions* generally had a communicative nature. For this step, individual interviews of all the participants either in oral and in written form were used. The participants expressed their personal ideas, thoughts and opinions, without considering those from the other participants. The communicative action was complimented by the rationalist procedures, when all the collected material was analysed by the core expert group. The synthesised result was presented for a discussion to the participants during a workshop. It was the step for precising, correcting, amending and modifying the first information considering the whole set of the collected ideas. Thus rationalist procedures were always complementing communicative ones. The technique of cards on board was promoting the discussion and processing of the results.

(iii) During the next step of the policy process, almost pure communicative one, which consisted in the *discussions for a negotiated decision*, numerous seminars and workshops helped to confront the participants' ideas and the information received during the individual discussions with the positions expressed openly in public. Sometimes such public exposure of ideas was leading to the change of positions.

Clear rules were dealing with the composition of the groups. During the workshops, the groups were consisting of about 15-25 persons, with not more then 50% of them representing public bodies, including not more than third of foresters among them. The others were the representatives of the local population. An independent facilitation with rigorous moderators specialised in the discussed topics, rather than in the discussion leading techniques, was applied in order to promote participation in this framework.

For the rationalist contribution, some additional elements were sometimes collected after the workshops from both, the specific studies and from some special inquiries (especially at the local level, in order to guarantee the representation), as well as from the contacts with the resource persons (experts). Such a combination of approaches firstly allowed a formulation of a more comprehensive view on the situation (comparing to a workshop with a limited number of persons). Secondly, it helped the participants, even for those unaccustomed to the

communicative procedures, to express their views and positions. They were also getting a better understanding of what has to be done, how it has to be done and what could be the possible consequences, thus approaching a conscious participation in the formulation of a forest policy.

Techniques and methods for promoting ***communication***

At many of the steps in the Kyrgyz process, the *technique of cards on board* was very efficient. It required both the expert work and the involvement from the participants. This technique was used for the expression of ideas related to the discussion of objectives of the plan, or, generally, the forest policy. It was also applied during the discussions of problems met in reaching the objectives, usually general and specific problems.

In the Kyrgyz case general ideas were expressed more frequently, and participants were easy to agree about the same views. The technique was also good for the identification of priorities, although often there was a confusion between the importance of the problems and the priorities in tasks. The technique of « cards on board » helped to establish a real negotiation and not only for the collection of ideas from the participants. The workshops were following the *constructive confrontation framework (*see also Chapter I; 2.1.1) with the categorisatio of cards as a basis for a compromise compleented by a general discussion in order to draw additional ideas and proposals which have not been expressed through the cards.

For the process of forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan, one aspect has been always crucial: all the stakeholders, coming to the process had different backgrounds. It means that they had also different ways of expressing their positions, as well as different understanding of the same concepts, especially the abstract ones. Thus, for example, the understanding of the word "strategy" was not the same among the administrators and the forest workers or villagers. Similarly, a phrase like "a secondary use of the forest" was understood differently: what was a "secondary use" for the foresters was the "prime use" for the local population. In other words, a negotiation may be only possible when there is a common language and understanding of different concepts, which should be agreed upon before the initiation of the negotiation (Buttoud & Yunusova, 2002).

In the logic of the "mixed model", which was applied in the Kyrgyz process, the discussion and negotiation between the public authority and the stakeholders have been introduced at each step of the process (Scheme 1, Chapter I; 2.1). These procedures have guaranteed the maintenance of communicative features along the process, which was strongly dominated by the habitual top down decision making initiatives and practices.

Does the methodology for constructing participation open a way for manipulation?

The application of this constructive confrontation method was formally effective in Kyrgyzstan. At some steps it led to the creation of conditions for a formal structured representation of opposed positions and for a real participation in the decision-making process. Although, what became also clear during the Kyrgyz process, was that the role of *facilitation* (and a facilitator) was one of the decisive factors for the intensiveness and efficiency of participation.

During the application of the constructive confrontation framework, a facilitator was a key person in the process. It was up to him/her to bring the participants together and to collect their positions in a common discussion. The functions of a facilitator have also included the selection of the special issues to be addressed during the workshops, the moderation of the process of expressing ideas and positions on the cards, as well as grouping of the cards. The facilitator was also leading common discussions of the ideas expressed on the cards. At this step the content of the compromise depended entirely on this person. He/she had to ask for the opinion of the participants in case they disagreed with the positions expressed on the cards, to select the disputable points and to lead the discussion to a compromised decision. It was up to the moderator-facilitator to take a decision not only on the issues to be discussed, but also on the way they are to be discussed, because often the interests groups, or individual stakeholders, while promoting their own interests, were not intended to listen to the other expressed opinions and disregarded completely those who were not present. The moderator-facilitator was the only one in real position of "driving" the discussions through giving (or not giving) the floor to the speakers.

Such a big power and responsibility may easily facilitate the control over the process, through deciding on the topics to be discussed or to be omitted, through specifying priority subjects, through promoting interventions of some of the stakeholders and not the others. Only the neutrality of a facilitator can be a guarantee for a fare negotiation, but is this neutrality possible? There are always interests behind any processes, either symbolic, or more material. Thus, a biased facilitation may be the result of it.

The example from the case of Kyrgyzstan shows that there exist many ways of influencing the nature of participation. Whereas the choice of the methods, the knowledge of techniques and the possibility for their application, may not only promote the construction of participation and define it's type and modalities, but also give efficient instruments for manipulating the participants.

3.6The role of information for the construction of participation

The quality and the way of participation are to a great extend defined by the objectives, initiators and the logic of the process. The factor of information may be also mentioned as a crucial factor for the construction of participation. Generally, information is, at the same time, an input, an output, and thus, a basis for constructing both the process and the reality.

During the small survey about participation made in Kyrgyzstan in 2003, the participants of the policy process have indicated that their involvement into the forest policy reform has helped them to have a better understanding of the priorities and challenges of forest management and forestry in general. At the same time, it gave them a better general knowledge about the state policy, political processes and even more practical information about the situation in the other regions of the country. The study of the partnership between the forestry communes and the forest service in France gave similar results. The reaction of both, the mayors and the representatives of the French State Forest Agency (ONF) in the Vosges, when they were asked for an opinion on their mutual partnership, was similar. In both cases the fact of "being involved" was presented as giving some additional knowledge.

At the same time, information may be one of the restricting factors for participation. Lay people coming to the process do not always possess the knowledge necessary for a decision, especially in such a technical field like forestry. Otherwise, they lack a long term and strategic vision, and thus their inputs can not be relevant for a decision. This fact directly defines the input from the participants and, consequently, the type of participation.

The quality, type and amount of information made available during the process, determine the nature, but also the outcome of participation, and thus it is never neutral. For instance, selected information can be given, depending on the policy outcome desired by the participant and thus may lead directly to manipulation.

All participants seek for excluding the biased discussions on the issues that may damage their interests, and thus to "filter" the information. This position can lead to direct consequences in the case of stronger actors. An example may be the debates on the genetically modified plants or atomic power plants, when, for the sake of the strategic or corporate interests, only a half-truth of possible side effects is given to the general audience by the promoters of these solutions.

The information received in the course of a process may be also "filtered" at several stages by the convenors or by the moderators of the process, and objectively, it is not possible otherwise. For example, one of the objectives of deliberation is to find a compromise in relation to a "common good" among all the various interests. In the relation to the use of a resource, these interests may be opposed and conflicting. Thus, in case of a search for a compromise, it will lead to general statements hiding specific demands of multiple stakeholders. Or, when there is a need for weighting one interest against another (for example during the selection of the cards on board, it is often the convenors (or facilitators) of the processes who decide whose interests are more important.

Retaining of information is another instrument for influencing a decision. In the case of an urgent need for solving important conflicts, the participants of negotiation usually tend to either stick very hard to their initial positions (to be used as a weight during the debate), or, at the beginning, do not express themselves at all. They often prefer to keep some strategic information, which they do not want to communicate, thinking that this may help them to maintain a certain position. They may also expect that the opening of this information at a specific step of a discussion could bring more power. (Buttoud & Yunusova, 2002).

In Kyrgyzstan, at the beginning of the process the information was not considered as a real tool by the forest administration. That is why, for quite a long time, little attention was given to the mediatisation activities and to the dissemination of information about both the policy process itself and the situation in the forest sector, while some explanation of the specificities of forestry would have helped the outsiders of the forest sector (public administration at different levels, local stakeholders, etc) to get to the essence of the forestry problematic. Possibly, the forest administration wanted to limit other stakeholders' possibilities for being involved in the forest policy reform process, through keeping the information from them.
At the later stages, when the power of communication was appreciated as able to bring some power, this attitude has changed, and for the NFP preparation and presentation, *mediatisation* became one of the major priorities of the forestry administration. In this case the information (which was carefully selected) about the process and the sector, was contributing to the popularisation of the image of the forestry administration.

3.7The donors' role

The donors, as well as other international organisations, often have their role in the determination of the logic for participation. In opposition to traditional ways to decision making, especially in the forestry field, where the decisions were taken and implemented by those in power without public consultations, the donors have strongly proposed the involvement of beneficiaries. Participatory development and associated strategies arose as a reaction (Dovie, 2003).

The international dialogue on sustainable development and sustainable forest management had an incidence on the international donor community, participation of that stakeholders has become an obligatory condition and requirement in the definition of projects.

> "A great attention is accorded to ensuring that stakeholders were aware of the process (communication) and were able to meaningfully participate in its preparation (consultation). It is necessary to be explicit about what is required by consultation, and to design a robust process which can stand up to a public scrutiny, while remaining within the limits of available resources, and, thus, deliver an acceptable output within a useful time horizon. Stakeholders must be provided with an adequate information in an understandable form, as well as with the means to respond within a reasonable time" (Foy et al. 1998).

Such relations also have an influence on the type of participation, which would be introduced into a policy process as foreseen by a financed project. As the "beneficiary" is interested in meeting the expectations of the donor, he will act in the participatory process through expressing the views he think are expected by the donor. Thus the "participation", due to the methods and techniques presented above, will lead to the expected decision.

In the case of the support to the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan, the Swiss co-operation did not impose this philosophy. On the contrary, the approach for support was based on the establishment of partnership relations with the Kyrgyz side. It was reflected in the title of the Programme (Kyrgyz – Swiss Support Programme to the Kyrgyz Forest Sector Development) and was perceived as a working mode. But, finally, the whole process of the forest policy reform was a process of translation of the principles of sustainable development into the Kyrgyz context with the priorities defined commonly, but within the internationally established orientations. Through the methodology brought from outside, although adapted to the Kyrgyz context. Probably, because of this adaptation, the process was in the long run appropriated by the Kyrgyz authorities.

Participation is a societal phenomenon adapting to the changing reality and to the modes of functioning of the society. It is not static, "given" but is constructed through the interactions and newly produced modes of functioning of the society. The "constructing bricks" for participation depend on a variety of certain factors.
First of all these are the rationales for the initiation of the process, supported by political, normative, substantive or functional arguments, which respond for "what" is constructed. Before analysing a participatory process, a question should be always asked: "How do rationales for participation influence the character of the process and its results?" There are also interests and conflicts present in the process, determining why and how this construction

is going. This leads to the question: “If a conflict is the basis for constructing a new reality, what do we know about this new reality, and do we make the output directly through managing the conflict?”. Once started, the process follows more or less a definitive logic, which has been chosen by the initiators of the process. This logic may be rationalist, top down with the prevailing expertise. It may also be communicative, when participation is viewed as an act of sharing and contributing responsibilities. In the case of forest management, a consensus between the opposed interests is hardly realistic. Other methods and frameworks are needed, aimed at building up a compromise. The framework, proposed in this thesis combined the rationalist and the communicative approaches.

4. Proposition 3: Types of participation change over time.

4.1 Environment of changes triggers changes in behaviour

Participation in forest policy process is permanently trigged by the debate on sustainability and sustainable forest management. The concept of sustainable forest management is usually interpreted as a set of practices that are economically viable, socially acceptable and ecologically sound. Thus it should be based on a co-operative and participatory democratic style of interactions (WCED, 1987). Naturally, this new approach to forest management has required a change in the habitual attitude to forest and forest policy. This need for changed practices and approaches in forestry is linked with more general processes of changes in a society (Buttoud 2002; Schanz, 1999). The general processes of change are usually characterised by a shift away from industrial understandings and interests with the domination of technological way of being and thinking (Dreyfus, 1996), towards new values of social, moral and ethical orientation (Etzioni, 1997; 2003; Saastamoinen, 2005; Gamborg & Larsen, 2005). The environmental dimension has increasingly become part of economic thinking (Humphreys, 1996). The society is pushed by conflicts and changes and, in reaction, is forced to adapt to changes in search for new balances and solutions to the created conflicts. In this context, the co-ordination and reconciliation, as a means for conflict management, between the opposed and incompatible interests, have necessarily acquired a big importance.

The shifts in the understanding of forests and their role have led to the definition of new objectives of and approaches to forest policy. New actors have been brought to the arena, with new roles and new ways of interactions, while, in response, the traditional actors had to consequently re-define their proper roles and attitudes. This process of change and mutual adaptation is still ongoing, which means that there is a permanent definition and re-definition of roles and positions, attitudes and interests. Logically, the way of representation of these new roles and interests is also permanently changing. Thus, the ways, the content, the objectives, or, more generally, the modes of participation are also changing over time.

What are the factors, promoting this change?

4.1.1 A combination of rationalist and communicative frameworks

The new actors and stakeholders coming to participate in a forest policy process do not necessarily have a special knowledge of forestry or of politics, neither sufficient information on the subject under discussion. It means that when participation is introduced, the traditional rationalist schemes of decision making, typical for forestry, become not valid any more. The reason for that, as presented by Etzioni (Etzioni, 1997), is the following:

> "… they (*the members of community, coming to a participatory process*) would not be able rationally to complete the analysis of the kind of issues they typically face. In communities and societies, the number of players is large and changing, rules are modified as the action unfolds, information is always much more meaner than what is needed, the relative power of those involved and those affected changes frequently,

> and the rules of engagement are in flux. As a result, participation in all decision making must rely on much humbler processes than the rational decision making."

To compensate this deficit of the rationalist decision making, communicative procedures may be introduced into a policy process for the promotion of participation.

This combination of incremental rationalist and communicative frameworks for decision making creates the need for a permanent mutual adaptation of the process' participants to the changing roles and re-defined solutions. This adaptation is expressed in the re-definition of objectives and formulation of hidden strategies from most of the participants, in the establishment of coalitions and new networks, and, in general, in the changing modes of participation.

4.1.2 Incrementality promotes learning: but "learning from doing" or "learning for getting?"

The requirement for participation and communicative procedures bring to the process different values, situations, contexts and interests as the different social actors have different visions of the world and thus different desired future conditions. Thus, due to that, a policy planning is more than just a technocratic matching of means to ends. It becomes a mechanism for learning and creating new capacities among the participants.

> "The process by itself is generative in that a participatory approach requires the existence of the organisational and individual capacity to participate" (Thompson, 1977, quoted by Shannon, 2002).

Hense, policy planning can "… build social capital by offering an opportunity for public thinking, learning, and also action" (Friedman, 1987).

Therefore, as a social process, learning could be considered through different interpretations

Learning as a social process

Under the influence of social and political factors, mutual adaptation of roles, positions and expressions create a "learning effect" on all the participants. Although, same as the capacity for adaptation, the capacity for learning is different among the different actors of the process, depending on their access to the information, general background, social and political status, and many other factors.

In the course of participation, various stakeholders come to the process with their individual understandings and interpretations of the reality, as well as with their own ways of expressing these understanding and own positions. The understandings and the ways of expressing are different for different persons, due to a wide range of individual characteristics. They are also different for different interest groups, due to the variability of commonly defined positions between the groups. The participants of a policy process are usually acting not only as

individuals, but also as members of interest groups. Thus, their choices and positions reflect not only their proper individual social characteristics, but also the culture of self-positioning and preferable solutions of the interest groups and communities of which they are members. Hence:

> "… the processes that change these positions are in part group processes, and not individual deliberations, thus the liberal assumptions of individuals as the unit of analysis need to be supplemented or in some cases abandoned altogether" (Etzioni, 1997).

The same is true for the capacities for learning. The theory of learning (Daniels & Walker, 1996; Daniels, 2000; Dovie, 2003) states that different people have different learning styles. Normally, a learning process involves four different modes: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. Different learners combine these modes in different ways.

> "The learning style depends on the tendency of a person to make use of the same set of cognitive processing activities over a variety of learning situations, sometimes including the notions of motives for study or learning orientation. In learning, the learners are motivated by personal interests to learn and to built own knowledge and insights, derived by the motivation to learn from wanting to perform » (Simons, 1991).

During a social interaction, the "learners" are linking the newly recieved knowledge to their prior knowledge. They construct individually a new internal representation of the presented information. Each participant of the process personalises new information by giving a meaning to it, based upon earlier experiences and his own interest in using this new information. At the same time, being a member of a group or a community, each individual takes part in the process of a "common treatment" of the received information. The context of a group is influencing not only the style of learning, but also the mode of thinking and the way of self-expression of the individuals. This is partially due to the fact that there is often a tension between the common conceptual structure and the understanding of the discussed problem or ideas by the group, as a whole, and separately by the individual members of this group. It happens also, because there is a tension between the individual interests and the group interests. This tension is often presented as a driving force for the collective thinking and learning in a group. Therefore, in a participatory policy process, «learning» consists in acquiring, interpreting and using the information about the policy problem (or about the process itself), either for the individual purposes, or for the commonly agreed solutions in the interests of the group.

At some points of the process the individual interests may prevail over the commonly defined ones, when the new knowledge is employed for reaching some individual objectives (for instance, the political interest of the chairman of the forest service, in the case of Kyrgyzstan). Such cases are not so common; they can be promoted by a special policy power or a personal charisma of an individual, but in more general terms the group interests prevail.

Thus, the style, type and capability of learning are defined by the social perspectives, i.e. by the environment in which the individual is present and by his socio-cultural perspective. Whereas the individual is part of that environment while the process of participation structures and shapes the cognitive activity. The socio-cultural perspective introduces mutual

interdependence in the relations between the group members while emphasising the dialectic nature of the learning interaction.

Collaborative learning

While learning is an important feature of participation, it brings up an issue of conflicting interests. Therefore, the aspects of negotiation and conflict resolution do influence the styles and modes of learning and adaptation. Traditionally, in forestry, for a policy definition, the goals, defined through a technocratic rational planning approach, are "assumed at the outset from an ideological or moral standpoint" (Shannon, 1999, 2002). Whereas in a participatory process of open public deliberation, the goals "arise from practice and reflect pragmatic compromises among social actors" (Forester, 1989, quoted by Shannon, 2002). For the linking of rationalist and communicative perspectives, *collaboration* is proposed by some of the scientists as the most appropriate mechanism. Summarised from the literature, *collaboration* may be defined in the following way:

> "Collaboration is an activity that includes *sharing*[18] resources – including staff and budgets, working to craft *joint decisions*, engaging the opposition in designing creative solutions to shared problems, and building *new relationships* as needs and problems arise. … The structural element of collaboration is produced and maintained by the agency of actors to engage in co-operative, *supportive learning* and *adaptive behaviour*".

We speak about collaboration, when " … through communicative processes, various actors develop *common visions* for actions along with creating the *capacity to achieve* these visions" (Shannon, 2002).

Public participation based on *collaborative learning* is argued to be able to lead to the objectives of collaboration.

> "*Collaborative learning* process emphasises *communication and negotiation* over concerns and interests in order to *improve a situation*, rather than *bargaining* over positions to *solve a problem*. It emphasises making *progress* towards *desirable* and feasible *change*, rather than on *achieving* a particular set of *future conditions*. Finally it stresses the need for systematic learning in order to make good policy" (Daniels & Walker, 1996)

Collaborative learning is a technique which has been developed over the past decades in the North America. This approach is specifically designed to deal with situations that are simultaneously complex and controversial, and was applied in the United States basically to deal with natural resource decisions. In the collaborative learning mechanism, there is a combination of the activities that are informed by systems thinking and adult learning theories and application of various techniques that emerge from the field of public policy mediation (primarily environmental) and negotiation (Daniels, 2000). Collaborative learning relies on system theories at two different levels.

[18] Emphases added

- The first level is the application of the soft system methodology[19] to inform the overall sequence of activities and the need to develop a process which would include multiple views and positions to what should be called a "problem" and what would be an "improvement".
- Second, it uses the *alternative dispute resolution* features as "discrete learning opportunities" that promote the enhancement of the "breadth of people's thinking about the situation"

According to Daniels (Daniels, 2000) ,

> "these have successfully moved people beyond single-issues agendas: they still care passionately about the issue that motivated their involvement, but they now see that their issue is intertwined with those that other groups are equally committed to".

One of the most distinguishing features of the collaborative learning is it's emphases on *active learning*, when, "based on the new information a new behaviour is produced" (Gunderson, quoted by Shannon, 2003). Thus, it is a logical consequence, that when collaborative learning is established during the process, the change of behaviour will influence the agenda and modes of participation.

What is intriguing about the collaborative learning, is the fact that, on the one hand, it is oriented towards conflict management through the creation of a shared vision and a progress towards desirable change. In the forest management related issues, when contradictory interests are brought up to the agenda by deliberation and communicative procedures, a shared vision and a compromise about desirable change are usually hardly possible. On the other hand, collaborative learning is very much based on the communicative skills and competence. The proponents of collaborative learning state that

> "… collaborative learning facilitators draw on mediators' transformative techniques to foster mutual understanding and to promote integrative negotiation. … It seeks to enhance parties' competence in such skills as listening, questioning, clarifying, giving feed-back, social cognition, sustaining dialogue and collaborative arguing" (Daniels & Walker, 1996).

It means that the effective learning which occurs during such a process does not only depend on the personal capacities of the participants themselves, but also, and to a great extend, is shaped and directed by the facilitators and the techniques they choose for "fostering" the sharing of visions.

[19] **Soft Systems Methodology** (SSM) is an approach to organisational process modelling. It can be used both for general problem solving and in the management of change. It was developed in England by Checkland P., and Wilson, B. This approach applies both the critical theory of Habermas, in relation to his theories of knowledge and communicative rationality, and the work of Foucault, on the nature of power. The intention is to create a *metamethodology* that will identify the key elements in the problem to be solved and then decide which of the available methodologies should be applied to those elements (wikipedia.org/wiki/**Soft_systems** - 21k)

Other interpretations of learning

Learning as a social process is commonly accepted as a necessary outcome of all participation processes. For example, in the Situated Learning Theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991)

> "… learning is considered as not only as the intentional effect of a hierarchical relationship between the one who teaches and the ones who learn: it's a necessary result of everyday life activities. … A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a socio-cultural practice. Learning is an evolving, continuously renewed set of relations ».

Treating learning as a social process means that it is not considered simply as « learning by doing », or experimental learning, but as a new knowledge, position and behaviour generated in the course of social interactions.

> « Learning is in the relationships between people. It is in the conditions that bring people together and organise a point of contact that allows for particular pieces of information to take on relevance. ... Learning does not belong to individual persons, but to the various conversations of which they are a part » (*Ibid*).

There exist different interpretations of learning.

Public learning is a very popular term among the American scholars. In summary,

> "public learning results form public deliberation and participatory planning. Public learning occurs … as public deliberation takes place over time about issues of public concern, and as participatory processes bring together a new community of inquiry focused on a common problem and concern. Public learning is when a « public » gains greater understanding and appreciation for different points of view through participatory and deliberative processes and changes. These changes may be in individual valuations, in social values, in perceptions of the world, in understanding of natural processes, in appreciation of economic costs and benefits and so on. These changes lead to the possibility of new kinds of actions and behaviours" (Shannon, 2003a; Yankelovich, 1991, quoted by Shannon).

This interpretation of learning is close to that of *collaborative learning*, although it is less precise. It may be not fully appropriate for the understanding of learning which occurs during participation in such specific policy processes, as that of the forest policy, as long as this interpretation is focused on a general public, whereas "public" as it is, is seldom present in the forestry-related decision making processes. Still, this interpretation indicates that learning in deliberation may change patterns of behaviour and thus participation.

Social learning is a more spread out term applied to this process. According to theorists in the social learning tradition, social learning as well as new knowledge,

> "… is derived from experience and validated in practice, and therefore, it is integrally a part of actions » Friedmann, (1987).

> Thus, "social learning is a process of deliberation about the empirical outcomes of action as well as about the meaning of desirability of possible outcomes. Social learning means that change occurs throughout the deliberative community of actors and organisations, the experience in collaborative process may change values, interests, visions and understanding among the actors throughout the deliberative community" (Yankelovich, quoted by Shannon, 2002).

In this interpretation same as for the collaborative learning, the new meanings and new behaviours are still considered across the "desired future conditions"

From the other point of view, which is shared by this thesis, people may undergo learning together but without any common actual or intended outcomes (Engestrom, 1987,1999). This way, the learning process is collective (or even collaborative), but the outcomes are the individual ones. There is a distinction between *learning in social interactions* and *collective learning*, which is here defined as a collective strive for common outcomes.

For the participants of a forest policy reform process, the social learning perspectives and the contexts for learning may be similar, although the individual intentions and expected outcomes will affect the individual learning within the group. For the purposes of lobbying, different groups may initially consciously decide to (or unconsciously opt for) collaborate in participation and learning, focusing on common activities or on common outcomes. But, as soon as their proper positions undergo a re-definition, their behaviour and status in the common participatory process will change, and participation will be aimed at the satisfaction of their proper new agenda.

Once learning is directed to the achievement of some objectives in a policy process, it may be also treated as a *political learning*. During the lobbying for opposed interests (values), learning can become an instrumental process of satisfying commonly (for the group) defined interests or achieving some a priori beliefs (for advocacy coalitions). In this case, the political learning is an instrumental process of putting dominant policy ideas (or the ideas of a stronger group) into effect. Sabatier defines

> "policy oriented learning as a relatively enduring alteration of thought or behaviour based on experience and aimed at achieving or revising policy objectives"(Sabatier, 1988).

In the framework of this thesis, the policy learning is applied in a broader sense than proposed above. When the new knowledge which is received in the course of the interactions within communicative strategies of participation creates new behaviour and patterns for participation, aimed not necessarily at the achieving or revising the general policy objectives, but also individual or group interests and agenda. Learning is anyway considered here as the main factor of changes in the participation processes.

4.2 J. Amdam's learning spiral

The social learning theory was further developed by J. Amdam (Amdam, 1995, 2000) in the application to a local development process, which he considers as a "never-ending learning process". As for the local planning, J. Amdam is also promoting the combination of

rationalist procedures and communicative negotiation strategy. The participation strategy, when all the participants have managed to jointly develop common basic interests, or a common vision, seems to him a "harmonic dream" which has a long way from the realities of a complex society (Amdam, 2000). Thus, social learning and mobilisation, according to Amdam, are concentrated on a learning dialogue between the participants involved in the process, where an agreement should be reached about a common solution.

A basic statement is to be mentioned in relation to the definition of this common goal: the communicative negotiation strategy presupposes that there are conflicts of interests, and some of the conflicts are not easy to be solved through a compromise. That is why, as suggested by J. Amdam, during a strategic planning, some time should be taken to go through more than one stage or "circle" of a planning cycle (see fig.1) and concentrate on the issues where a solution is possible.

Traditionally, the continuous learning process is presented as divided into the following stages:

- The *first stage* deals with the obtaining of knowledge about the situation. Amdam stresses that in the analysis of the situation, it is needed to focus on the potentialities. For a strategic policy planning (as it was the case in Kyrgyzstan), the concentration only on the potentials will be not sufficient, as the information on the problems and risks is also essential.

- In the local community (in the case of the local planning) or, even at the broader scale of the society, there is, naturally, a diversity of interests with a possible tension and conflicts about what the situation is like and how it should be. That is why the comprehension of this knowledge with regard to the individual situations and challenges of the community, with a consequent development of visions and goals for the community, is the *second stage* of the process. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, this step consisted in the elaboration of the National Concept for the forest sector development, which defined the main strategic directions for the period of 25 years.

- Based on the general strategy (for a community or for the forestry sector), *the third stage* should include the development of implementation instruments and specific actions aimed at the achievement of the strategic goals. Within the local planning, this will proceed in the definition of a plan. In the case of a forest policy, this stage will include the definition of a National Forest Programme and, as a further step, the definition of an Action Plan. Implementation of these plans is a direct consequence from this stage.

- The evaluation of the achieved (intermediate) results of the implementation of a local plan or a policy in general. A regular evaluation is a critical point which gives valuable information on the valability of the previous steps of learning and planning as well as new information for the adaptation. This evaluation should lead to new experience and learning of what is functioning well and not so well, what are the challenges, the capacity to meet those challenges and so on (based on Amdam, 1998; 2000).

Figure 1. Planning as a continuous learning process. *(Ref. J. Amdam, 2000)*

> "Through such planning-learning process over time, the participants can learn to trust each other and understand which questions are better not to ask, and which can lead to co-operation…. Start with issues where the success is most likely and introduce more difficult issues when trust and personal understanding is better" (*Ibid*).

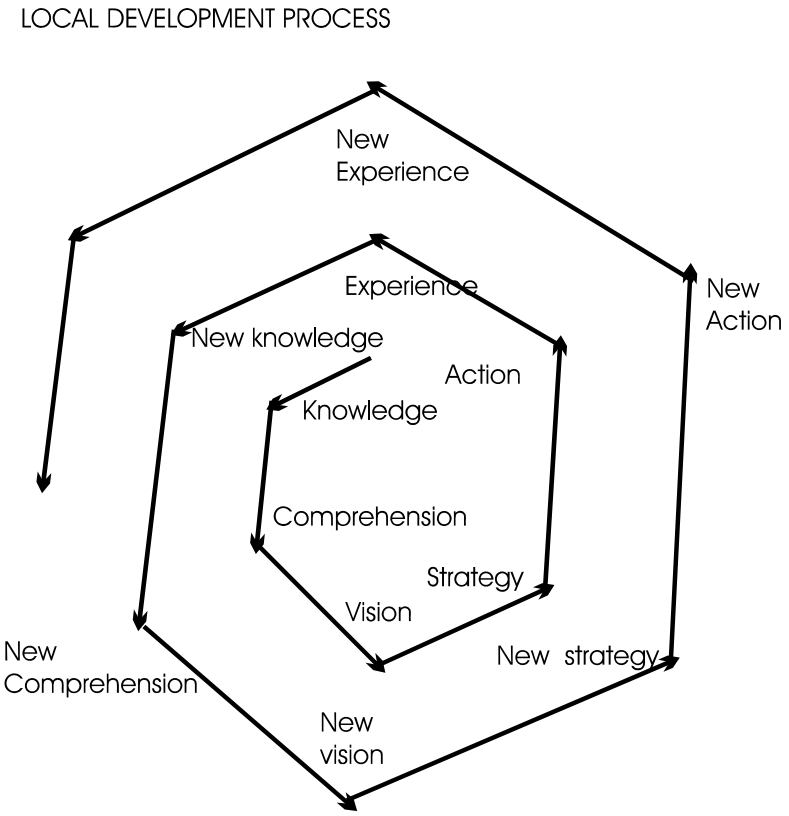
Such a process functions most often as a « slow moving » learning. It is similar to the "muddling through" theory for planning, where each participant compares new knowledge with his previous one, evaluates effects from the earlier steps, and takes a new step according to his/ her interests. This process of discussing and negotiating disputable questions may be a very long one. Because of the insufficiency of information, there may be disagreements about the future consequences of various alternative solutions, reached in the course of negotiation. This will require additional negotiation, re-negotiation and additional changes.
Basing on the above considerations, Amdam proposes that the process of learning can be presented along a "learning spiral" (fig. 2).

The "learning spiral" includes the same stages as a continuous learning process, but, instead of a line or a circle, with a finite start and end, it never gets back to the previous position, while more is learnt at each step of the process. J. Amdam suggests present the learning and the planning of a development process as a spiral with an increasing radius.

Why is the radius increasing? First of all, because the decision making should start from "small ambitions", or simpler problems to be solved. In the course of the process, according to Amdam, the participants learn to trust each other and to communicate with each other, so

that at the next steps "more ambitious goals" may be formulated and new participants may come to the process.

Figure 2. The development process as a learning spiral (*Ref. J.Amdam, 2000)*



> « starting with the actions that the partners felt more necessary and which gave good results with regard to common needs. A good start created new invovlement and confidence and new visions, strategies and actions – and more collaboration » (*Ibid).*

J. Amdam argues that, over time, a process like this can go through many « loops » of continuous planning. Certainly a continuous mobilisation on broad issues is not realistic, therefore, there will be periods of enthusiasm, losses of energy and slow down of the process, then a new start up, or the process may be laid aside. During «slow moving » moments between the loops, technical solutions and compromises over specific problems will prevail over broad participation and discussion of strategic issues.
This idea of presenting the policy process along a spiral was taken as a basis for the elaboration of the double spiral of a decision making process.

4.3 Learning in the "mixed model" framework

The iterative progress of the process in the mixed model framework necessarily creates a context for permanent adaptation and learning, through combining technocratic rationalist and communicative approaches to decision making, leading to a "dual learning effect":

- On the one hand, within the *rationalist* procedures, participation is conceived as a means to reach an improved policy and decision making through the information about the various preferences and interests, provided to the decision-makers. Through this process the decision makers are "confronted" with the reality and "learn" about the existence and priorities of various interest groups/stakeholders.
- At the same time, together with the additional information, the *communicative* approach brings legitimacy and formal acceptance of decisions. During this process the decision makers go through "political learning", in other words, a learning of how to get legitimacy and popularity.

In the organisational development literature (Argyris 1977; Argyris and Schon 1978; Argyris 1993) learning is presented as a process of detecting and correcting errors. It occurs under two conditions: i) matched intention and outcome, and ii) mismatched intention and outcome.
Single-loop learning arises when matches occur, or when mismatches are corrected by behavioural change. It is focused principally on effectiveness, or how best to fulfil existing objectives in the context of a given set of norms and values. The « single loop learning » is also referred to as *policy oriented le*arning (Lee, 1993), when the advocacy coalitions respond to new information or new adversaries and revise or strengthen their strategies in order to better achieve their objectives.

On the other hand, the incremental part of the "mixed model" foresees that there should be regular "*feed back loops*" from the decision makers to the interest groups at each step of the policy cycle. During such "feed back loops", a dialogue, and thus a negotiation, is introduced. Additionally to the usual communication of the rationalist framework, during the feedback loops the participants do not only provide a complementary information, they can question, object and propose their own solutions and consequently contribute to the definition of the expected results and action. The feedback loops theoretically give different participants a direct possibility to contribute to the decision.

A term of a "*double loop learning*" is suggested by (Argyris 1977; Argyris and Schon 1978; Argyris 1993 ; Lee, 1993) for describing such situation. Double-loop learning occurs when mismatches are corrected by first questioning and changing underlying values and then behaviour. Hence, double-loop learning is a process of change focused initially on effectiveness under existing norms or goals but then results in conflict over the norms or goals themselves (Argyris 1977, 1993).

4.4 From learning to gains from participation

How did it happen in practice, this change of positions and commonly defined objectives? How and why have the actors of the process changed their patterns of behaviour? What are the gains promoted by the learning from the interactions within a participatory forest policy reform process? All these questions are important for understanding the logic of the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan.

Evidently, the participatory forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan has considerably helped the central forest administration to consolidate its status and position. Parallel to this evident raise of the popularity and image of the Forest service in general and political success

of the central forestry administration in particular, the interest groups and individual participants were also profiting from the participatory policy process.

Thus, private initiatives in forestry have been formalised, organised and got a recognition as actors and stakeholders in forest policy. The forest sector itself has been enforced, consolidated along the hierarchical structure. On the one hand, there was an improvement of relations and information flow from the headquarters to the field level, and vice versa, which has resulted in the consequent improvement of the efficiency of contacts and decisions.
On the other hand, locally, the foresters were obliged to give more consideration to the interests and needs of the local population, looking for compromising solutions. This was the first step towards accountability of the forest service and appreciation of the forest problems by the local population.

As for the gains at the individual level, several years after the introduction of participation into the forest policy process in Kyrgyzstan, discussions with the people involved from the very beginning, as well as with those who have joined up the process at the later stages or have never officially participated in it, have helped to construct quite an interesting picture of how participation was seen by them.

In general, the fact that participation was introduced into the forest policy reform process was considered by all the participants as an important sign of social recognition. For example, the selection and invitation of participants by the forestry administration, was not percieved as a lack of democracy, but, rather as an indication of appreciation of their professional (or political) qualities. Thus, regardless of the status or affiliation of the person (a representative from the local population, a specialist of the forest service, or somebody coming from another sector or an NGO) the fact of being invited for participation gave him/her a better recognition within his direct environment.

Many of the participants, coming from the forest sector, who have been involved in the process from the initial stages, have been later promoted within the hierarchy. At the same time, the political decisions (individually expected outcomes) and minor practical gains were getting more and more separated and “individualised” for each of the involved interest groups.

The growing popularity of this participatory process can be explained by several aspects. First of all, contrary to the rather abstract nature of discussions at the beginning of the forest policy formulation process which was aimed at the definition of a general strategy for *sustainable forestry development*, the further steps of the policy reform have included very practical aspects. The evaluation of policy implementation, the elaboration of a 5 years action plan, the National Forest Programme for 10 years: all these documents have included technical and practical aspects, much more familiar and clear for the participants. As the discussions during these steps were linked with the information on the description of activities and amount of the work to be done, means devoted for that, time frame, expected results and indicators for evaluation, this part of the process has acquired a clear practical nature for personal and professional interests.

Secondly, for many of the stakeholders, participation in forest policy reform has become a habitual reality, with already customary techniques, so that the workshops did not cause any fear neither risks for those invited. There appeared even « professional participants » knowing well «what was expected from participants » and how it should be presented.

Thirdly, participation in the forest policy reform became a sort of "political labelling" ("those who are not involved are not democratic enough"), and thus attracting the interest of the environmental NGOs, other ministries and agencies and governmental/political structures.
The mass media have also become actors of the process, together with regular presentations on the TV, radio and newspapers devoted to the problems and achievements of the forest sector. Each special step of the forest policy reform was getting a special attention in the news emissions and press conferences. The budget specified for the forest policy reform process has progressively included a more and more considerable sum to be dedicated for publicity of the process and mass media. It means that participation started to bring legitimacy and popularity together with social, political and economic gains (not only of a symbolic value) to all those involved.

Thus, participation, already during the first phase of the process in Kyrgyzstan, has contributed to the re-definition of positions and establishment of new interest groups and coalitions.

In the course of all the consecutive steps of the incremental forest policy process, the scopes of information (both as an input and the output of the process) and, consequently, the knowledge, were permanently increasing and transforming into an adaptive management. At the same time, the discussions with different stakeholders have lead to the optimisation of not only the decisions but also of the management of the process. It can be said that the Kyrgyz forestry administration was "learning to manage by managing to learn" (Bormann et al. 1993).

The appreciation from the hierarchical "higher ups", the government and the president of the Republic, gave a legitimisation to the process and understanding that participatory policy formulation helps to improve the image and political status of those beneath.
This knowledge has led to the re-definition of the initially commonly stated (but very general and "individually unclear") objective of "forest policy reform aimed at sustainable forest management", to an "individual" (very practical and clear) unilateral objective of forestry administration "to improve the political status of forestry administration". At the same time, each of the involved participants was also learning about eventual potential gains.

At the end of each step of the policy cycle, the various participants (representatives of interest groups or individuals) did not necessarily accept the commonly achieved compromise as their own position. Each of them (having learned from the process) adopted a new position, defining a new situation with objective possibilities for the expression of some new needs for change and, gradually, for subjective possibilities for personal gains. Thus the resulting solution was not a stable situation, but a permanently changing one. The negotiation process between the opposed interests did not lead only to the definition of a common interest of the society. It was also creating this interest. Through the reciprocal information flow from the participants (and among the participants), it has not only translated a pre-existent social debate in policy terms, but it has organised social and policy debate itself, creating new values, but also new demands for changes (Buttoud & Yunusova, 2002).

These observations confirm the proposition that the type and quality of participation are to a high degree driven by the interests and views of each of the stakeholder involved in the process and change over time together with a redefinition of the interests and views.
The iterative confrontation of the opposed interests, negotiation of conflict points and adaptation to the new situations and contexts creates conditions for the learning. Learning

occurred through the social interaction along the process might change initial knowledge and expectations/interests and views from the process. Thus, the new received knowledge automatically changes the interest and views behind the involvement and, thereby, the expected outcome from the process (which may be different from the commonly defined initially expected outcome). Basically, learning in a process is a factor of change and learning through participation may lead rapidly and easily to changes in positions, in behaviour, and thus to changes also in the way the participation is working. Participation is basically an unstable and iterative procedure.

5. Proposition 4: Participation automatically leads to a re-distribution of power, which consolidates stronger actors.

Striving for the achievement of the « individual » expectations, change the type and quality of participation, even (or especially) if the process is constructed and follows a clear rigour. In fact, these rigorous procedures which help to construct participation may also help to instrumentalise participation when used by one of the actors of the process (who has, possibly, learned faster than the others) for the achievement of his proper interest.
Thus, as a consequence of the involvement of the various stakeholders into a decision making process, it always results in a re-distribution of power.

The introduction of participation into a decision making is often presented as a possibility for the representation of under-represented interests through deliberation and communication. Apart from the information, one of the other declared important aims of participation is the empowerment of the involved stakeholders, through the transfer of power from one decision-making body to those who would be concerned by the impact from this decision or by its implementation. It is also related as to a possibility to potentially influence the formulation of this decision.

What exactly happens during this process? Do all the participants have equal capacities for the empowerment? How will the participants act in order to acquire the power? What kind of power are they looking for? What are the decisive factors for empowerment? Does the power distribution go only in the direction of the empowerment of the "initially not powerful"? What are the moving factors and interests for this distribution?

The definition of power has been transformed from being studied as part of *human passions*: as a wish for domination over others, expressed in the present means to obtain some future apparent good; as a right for making laws (Hobbes, 1651; Locke, 1690; Mill, 1859; Merriam, 1934); as a part and essential requirement of integrative dynamics in society (Kidd, 1919); as a corporate domination and authority (Locke, Hamilton, De Jouvenel, 1945) and ability to impose one's will despite resistance (Weber, 1962); to the analysis of *the decision making* as a paradigm for understanding power (Lasswell, 1948; Dahl, 1957). From the multiplicity of positions, it is this one, which is retained in this thesis, which is considering the concept of power through the decision making process and the interactions between various actors and stakeholders of such a process.

5.1 What is power

Before getting down to the reflections about the empowerment in the course of participation, it is necessary to specify, what is meant by "power" in the framework of this thesis.
Over the centuries, "power" has been a concern of theoretical discourse of political philosophers and, later on, of policy scientists. Without going into further details or a more profound analysis, a summarised classification of different approaches to the interpretations

of power, is intended to help in the further analysis of the aims and impacts of a participatory decision making process.

« Psychological/emotional » interpretation of power:
For many centuries the concept of "power" has been interpreted from different perspectives, while the priority was mainly given to the link of power relations with the emotional dynamics of human nature, or, otherwise, human passions, in the context of discussions on sovereignty, democracy and political rights.
Consideration of the will for power as a part of human psyche, a requirement of a human nature, was the first ever approach seeking to understand the nature of power. For many of political philosophers and policy scientists, "power" was linked with the emotional dynamics of human nature, or, otherwise, human passions in the context of discussions on sovereignty, democracy and political rights. In this framework, the power is understood as a *psychological imperative*, while the relations of power are not the effects of the socio-economic and political conditions, but rather opposite, the sociological and historical forms are considered as effects of psycho-natural imperatives.
Thus, the classical political philosophers have developed the concept of power in connection to *human nature*, from the point of view of the dynamics of passions for *liberty* and *domination* over the others. In 1690, Locke argued that:

> "to understand political power… we must consider what estate the men are naturally in. … A state of perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit … without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man" (Locke, quoted by Ashcraft, 1986).

These ideas have found further development in the middle of the XIX century:

> "… The disposition of mankind, where as rulers or as fellow citizens, to impose their own opinions and inclinations as a rule of conduct on others is so energetically supported by some of the best and by some of the worst feelings incident to human nature that it is hardly ever kept under restraint by anything but want for power" (Mill, quoted by Dahl, 1957).

"*System-structural" interpretation of power*:
Another approach to the understanding of power is its interpretation as government, as an authority of owners and controllers of economic production and a corporate domination. It ranges from the Marxist interpretation of power based on the ruling class and structural arrangements of a capitalist society, to Weber's (Weber, 1962, 1980) representation of power as a corporate domination. It is seen as the probability of imposing one's will despite resistance. At the same time, a good organisational structure with hierarchical monitoring and control is able to create a powerful control mechanism, limiting the individual's possibility to make decisions outside of this "jurisdiction".

> "Power is utilised not only when actions are engaged which affect others, but that it is relative also to the class-structural basis (advantages and disadvantages of actors) and resources available to the individuals or groups in question. Therefore, to achieve any meaningful analysis of power, it is necessary to take into account societal structure, the mediation of interests and relationships and social action" (Clegg, 1979, p. 79).

In this framework, the concept of power is treated as a consequence of social structures, where power relations are shaped by institutional roles and relationships.

Power as communicative dynamics:
Early XXth century political scientists have linked power to both emotional and communicative dynamics. B. Kidd (1919) argued that power in civilisations rests on collective emotion. Here, the interpretation of power is getting out of the frame of only the human nature and is rather considered as an *integrative dynamics* in a society, although still bearing the capacity of domination:

> "Political power posseses a peculiar and indefinable integrating quality important for the individual personality and for the social group of which it is a part. ... Adequate functioning of political powers is essential to the fullest and richest development of the individual no less than of the group life. … In political power situations, there appears a type of force through which masses of human beings are manipulated. … Their lives, their liberties, their fortunes, are subject to organised command and control"(Merriam, 1935).

5.1.1 Different faces of power

Summarising different approaches, several dimensions, or "*faces*" of power have been defined in literature (Dahl 1957; Gaventa 1980; Lukes 1974; Barnett & Duvall 2005). Starting from the assumption that:

> "Power is evenly distributed across society with each possessing the ability to influence the political process through involvement in various interest groups" (Dahl, 1961).

The concept of power is described as having four main dimensions:

1. According to *calculus approach* the power relations may be expressed as an *explicit conflict* dimension, (public choice theories, pluralists, functionalists), where power is linked with a decision making process and is defined by its conditions of fulfilment:
   > "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (Dahl, 1961; Buchanan&Tullock, 1962).

At the same time, it represents the capacity to mobilize general resources in the society for the attainment of social goals.

2. The *system structural approach* treats power from a social and historical description in terms of categorical divisions of society. Power is considered not as a fixed part of a social structure, but as a process, an aspect of an ongoing *social relationship*. It is a *manifest conflict* dimension:
   > "Knowing that there is a conflict between A and B, A can arrange matters so that the conflict never surfaces. Prevailing values and decision making procedures may be portrayed as « objective » or « fair » but may in fact operate in a way that is « biased » towards the best interests of A" (Dahl, 1961; Digeser, 1992).

In a democratic process, these relations may be held through a delegated authority. In this case power may be defined by *expertise* ("in the land of the blind, the one eyed man is the king"), by *knowledg*e (shared or kept secret), by money, force, moral persuasion, by *social*

influence or tradition. Within this approach, democracy is characterized as a system of *competing elit*es, (elite pluralism), who are seen as the main participants in a decision making process. They have the power to make decisions and the power to keep issues off the political agenda.

3. The *psychological approach* addresses the power as a *desire*, naturally embedded in the human psyche.

> "The supreme exercise of power is to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have" (Lukes, 1974).

This approach represents the *apparent consensus masking actual conflict* dimension. The relations of power here are focused on leaders and followers, while the rule by elite group is inevitable. Even in democratic societies, elite groups dominate the political decision-making process either because of the superior personal qualities of the leaders, like intelligence, education (Pareto, (1916) 1979; Buchanan&Tullock, 1962; Hofstaad, 2002; Roberts, 2004), or because of their superior organisation ability in face of disorganisation of other elites, and the population at large.

4. *Power through dependence* treats power as a competition for scarce resources (social as well as material): those who control resources have power over those who need or desire but do not control them. These are the "social structural forms" of control deprivation and control maintenance, whereas,

> … power is individual's relative capacity to modify others' states by providing or withholding resources or administering punishments (Keltner et al. 2003)

In this case the dependence and the power created by it should be distinguished from the *influence*[20] (in the meaning of producing change on the others) so that power can be understood as a *structural characteristic of social interaction* rather than the outcome of a social interaction (Fiske & Dépret, 1996).
The idea of understanding power as a characteristic of social interaction is followed in this thesis.

The point of this typology here is not to decide which dimension of the scale is "better" or "worse", but rather to provide an analytical frame in order to enable distinction between processes and power relations and thus facilitate the main conclusions of this thesis.

5.1.2 Power and decision making process

Opposite to the above interpretations of power, which were concerned with the most appropriate means to reach a chosen end (as efficiency in implementation and power of control), "power" was also interpreted through a decision making process. Following the idea

[20] In fact, Fiske (Fiske, 1996), for example, separates *influence* as a psychological change, and *power* as a resource control. According to him, the social influence is producing two forms of modalities of social impact: *Social dependence* which is leading to normative influence: when there is uncertainty about ambiguous aspects of physical reality we depend on others for valid information. And a *Cognitive dependence*, which is leading to informational influence

of linking power to communicative dynamics, the focus on the decision making as a paradigm for understanding power was brought up by H. Lasswell:

> "Power is an interpersonal situation; those who hold power are empowered… The power relation is give-and-take. It is giving-and-taking … in a continuing spiral of interactions" (Lasswell, 1951).

It has been assumed by many policy scientists that power exists in various dimensions of "pluralistic" *interactions* between individuals and groups, therefore, the basis for power interpretation should be the *actual decisions* and the *decision making* processes (political discourse), which is inviting argument and debate in the course of decision-making.

> "in a society ...there are manifold relations of power that permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse" (Foucault, 1980).

Foucault is interested in *discourses* through which certain knowledge is formed; discourses which have influence on the actors (agents) of the processes. Power is productive, the human "agents" are not only it's targets, but are also it's effects. According to him,

> "... power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society » (*Ibid*).

A political discourse brings up various interests to the political agenda. The interests are one of the moving forces of the process. Thus, the *interests interplay* may be considered as one more paradigm for the interpretation of power. For example, the power of not revealing the interests, or, revealing them at a strategically convenient moment; the power of shaping preferences together with the power of persuasion for a compromise, or acceptance of the decision through the application of techniques for communication; the power of specific knowledge – all these types of power may be exercised by certain participants of the process, thus influencing the outcome.

The component of *domination* is (directly or indirectly) present in many of the interpretations of power. In this thesis, domination will be considered as a more specific form of power, which is objectively given in social relationships by some specific conditions.
At the same time, power is not restricted to domination. In this thesis the interpretation of Michel Foucault is taken as a basic interpretation of power, which tends to emphasise the role of *discourse* and *social identities* and not the institutional rules and procedures as the key political mechanisms.

Therefore, as a starting point for the consideration of the "power" question in a participatory policy reform process, the focus should be made on the *discourse*, or on *inter-relations* between the different actors of the process. These actors are individuals, or groups of individuals, and thus, following the psychological/emotional interpretation of power, they are prone to *human passions* (including the will for the power as domination). Whereas *domination* is a possibility to impose one's decisions on the others, while preserving own

liberty. At the same time, it also gives a possibility to "obtain some future apparent good" (Hobbes, 1994 quoted by Mill, 1994), that is, to pursue either *material or symbolic interest*.

In a participatory process, the actors are representing the interests of some social or societal groups and corporate interests, where power is a means to create conditions for a better organisational management of these structures as well as for the achievement of some pre-defined gains. The achievement of those gains will select this group from the others as a better organised, more efficient and thus deserving more "liberty" in deciding, than the others.
As power is created, exists and evolves in the course of and along the interactions between the individuals and groups (with their interests), it produces new power(s). Each of the actors of the process is bringing some knowledge (information), and in the course of the interaction, some new knowledge (information) is produced. As an input and an output of the process this knowledge may be both, a characteristic (attribute) of the power and a tool for gaining it.

5.2 Representation and empowerment

Indeed, the question of the competing interests is central both for a participatory process and for the power. It is supposed that the participants, coming to the process should negotiate their confronted interests and justify their positions in the view of the "common good" within a given reality. This negotiation is supposed to bring a balanced compromise about a "common good", or a future potential gain.
These aspects of a common good, common values, common interests and common goals are in the core of a participatory decision making. It is also a starting point for the concerns related to participation, because, evidently, deliberation is not an aggregation of interests. Each of the participants has not only his own concepts, perceptions of reality and ways of expressing this reality (Buttoud & Yunusova, 2002), but also his own expected results from the process. The public interpretation of what is a common good differs from the individual opinion.

Most of the stakeholders coming to the process have little competence in valuing complex issues, like, for example, biodiversity conservation, and usually a very little experience in participatory and communicative procedures. Consequently, when asked to make up their mind and express a position or special preferences on the unclear subject or in unusual, artificial conditions (which may be the case during the organised participation in round tables, public hearings or workshops) they will not come up with a well structured or strategic vision. They will rather be focused on practical day-to-day matters. In this respect some fears are also often expressed that "uninformed participants" are not able to give a scientifically and technically justified opinion.

This position is often expressed as an argument against a broad participation in very technical or specific issues, in general in technology, industry, and also in forestry. For example:

> "… the greater the level of participation, the greater the risk that any single group, that perceives its particular interests or values to be adversely affected by the application of

> technology, will be able to exercise a de facto veto over a technical enterprise almost regardless of the consequences for other affected interests or values" (Ozawa, 1991).

On the other hand, an intensive opposition from a small or well informed (i.e. possessing a specific knowledge) minority, may immobilise the interests of a larger (but not informed) majority through applying this specific knowledge. This is, for example, quite a customary experience in the relations/negotiations for forest management issues between the forest service and the local population.
A shift in the representation of interests may also occur if one of the interest groups has an effective and well-connected political advocate.

Such ways for mis-representation separate still more the individual participants, representing different interests. As a result, the process consolidates even more the positions expressed by the more structured (more experienced in discussions) representatives. The interests of margined groups (which are already under-represented in the process) normally form the conflictual positions. Due to this conflictual nature, they are not shared by the others, by the majority of the stakeholders. In a formal debate, more formal groups are much more prepared to defend their own solutions. Thus the already under-represented interests are once again excluded from the negotiation. The "commonly agreed" good finally represents the views of an active and realistic majority. So, this majority also dominates in the negotiation of a possible compromise, hence, the negotiated and agreed upon solution will represent the interests of the more powerful stakeholders.

The special knowledge which is often required for a decision leads to a firm guidance of the general participants from an informed and politically active minority (Roberts, 2004). In the case of the Kyrgyz forest policy reform process, such guidance was initially exercised by the Swiss Programme, through the methodological advice on the forest policy reform, and, at the later stages, by the Kyrgyz forest administration.

Moreover, in such a specific field as forestry, which is on the one hand characterised by the variety of the opposed and conflictual interests among the stakeholders, and, on the other hand, by the lack of a special challenge for the general public (the predominant perception of the forest as a timber resource and a sphere of technical experience is generally limiting the interest of general public in the participation in the forest-related issues), there is a very little guarantee that common interests will be correctly addressed, formulated or protected. Thus, some of the presented interests and views may have a better representation than the others. This may result in the fact that most of the deliberation processes may be led by some "authorized elites", by the stronger actors.

5.2 Empowerment and responsibility

Are all the stakeholders and actors of a participatory process at the same level of responsibility in the process of decision-making? It is evidentl that, for example, a forestry administration has not the same responsibilities, rights and duties as the other participants in

the decision making process. As a specialised administrative structure, it is the forestry administration, which is generally authorised by the State to manage and develop forest lands and resources. It is responsible, in front of the state, for the implementation, as well as for carrying out the monitoring and control over all the forestry related measures and actions. A forestry administration is not an elected body. It is usually nominated by a public authority, and it is responsible in front of this public authority. That is why in spite of the opening of a decision making process through participation, at the end the forestry administration will be the only body responsible for reporting to the public authority on the results of the common action.

It means that as the final responsibility is not distributed in a decision making process, the power of decision may not be equally distributed among all the participants either.

The second aspect in this respect is that in many cases, the forest is still looked at as a timber resource. Therefore, despite of participation or consultation, the economic interests of timber industry are prevailing in the process. These interests are often tightly connected with the priorities of forest service. Thus, instead of counter-balancing each other in a communicative process of a participatory decision making, they are promoting a common view on what are the forest management objectives. Hence, they come from a strong lobby for a common interest, which may be different from the interests of other stakeholders, involved or not directly involved into the participatory process. The development of the Territorial Forest Charters in France is a good example of such a situation.

Certainly, it can never be really sure that all the social needs are expressed. How can ethical and cultural aspects of forestry for people be taken into consideration if only a limited number of identified and specific stakeholders are participating in the process? How could potentialities for the future be represented? Power is distributed. Everybody owns his own situation. Those who can make continuous adaptations to discontinuous change survive and flourish. People legitimise new ways of behaving, they provide systemic (opposite to programmic) solutions and they provide a framework in which focused improvement efforts can be launched. At the same time, what type of decisions the stakeholders are involved in? “The citizens have the right to tell what they want, but not how, this is the duty of experts” is a usual administrative position towards the public involvement. “The public say *what*, and the experts tell *how*”. This position constitutes a strategic issue for power in a decision making process.

One of the solutions for a better representation of interests, *generative politics* is proposed by Anthony Giddens (Giddens 1998) and promoted by M. Shannon (Shannon, 2002) for forest policy. A generative politics would advocate and implement decentralisation of political power as well as generating resources in order to enhance individuals' autonomy. A notion of 'generative politics' is put forward by Giddens as a mechanism for achieving that 'active trust' between the state and the community.

> « generative politics would require the State to enter negotiations with social groups in an 'open' and non-prescriptive attitude as regards the outcomes of those negotiations. Certainly the State should not seek to impose outcomes on communities. On the contrary a 'generative politics' would require the State to treat social groups as part of a "reflexive citizenry" (Giddens 1998).

In generative politics, according to M. Shannon, (Shannon, 2002), the public authority plays many different roles at the different stages of the process:

- First, "a convenor" role at the outset by using scientific assessments of the social, cultural, economic, biophysical and ecological contexts.
- Then, it "facilitates" a public deliberation process by creating a public forum for discussion, debate and analysis. This is supposed to give opportunities for careful social learning.
- The role of a "co-ordinator" is essential to design and garner the necessary resources to carry out activities forming the pathway of actions to achieving strategic goals.
- Once activities are underway, the role of the public authority shifts to "social learner" along with the other involved actors and stakeholders.

A risk, in this case, is that the public authority may be too much "present" in the process and thus have multiple chances to exercise power. For example, as a "convenor", it prepares the initial information/knowledge as a first input to the process, thus pre-shape the agenda with it's power from the specific knowledge that may not be available for the others. As a "facilitator", it applies methodologies and techniques permitting the power of shaping the preferences and persuading for a compromise or acceptation of a decision. The role of "co-ordinator" gives a chance for the selection of participants and activities, for example through providing or not the resources. Thus, this approach may very easily be used in order to serve the interests of the corporate power of this public authority.

The example of Kyrgyzstan clearly shows that the more powerful stakeholder, the state forest service in this case, has not only promoted their own interests, but instrumentalised the process of deliberation for the strengthening of their status. This was possible because the more powerful actors are learning faster than the others and have more possibilities for the appropriation of the results.

5.3 The Kyrgyz example

5.3.1 General context

Due to the insignificance of the forest resources in Kyrgyzstan, the forest sector has never been considered as an important one from the economic, structural or political points of view. During the Soviet time it was totally subsidised by the state and preserved for the protection of mountain slopes. The decision-making process consisted in centrally defined 5-year plans of activities with a strictly allocated related budget and statistical technical reports on the forest cover increase with specification of hectares of the newly created plantations and forest protection measures, as a prove of budget implementation and a justification for a new budget. Structurally the forestry section was part of a State Committee on Nature. Thus, there was no real political challenge to be a head of this forestry section.

The forests were managed by the hierarchical branches of this forestry section. The specificity of the sector has required technical decisions, therefore it was a privilege of specially trained

professionals thus presenting no interest for the specialists from other structures. There was no concurrence for being part of this forestry section.

The forests in Kyrgyzstan are usually located in the mountains, far from the cities, (therefore there was no big recreational demand), while the rural population, living in the proximity of the forests, was well subsidised during the Soviet time, therefore, there were no big conflicts of users, and thus no special social challenge in relation to forest resources.

This situation has changed after 1991. The first consequences of the break of the Soviet Union for the forest sector were the sharp decrease of the State budget (with the preserved tasks and plans) and disappearance of all the subsidies both for the sector and for the people living in and around the forest. Thus the economic benefits from the resource and social conflicts due to the lack of resources[21] in general, became an issue in forest management.

The forest sector has practically lost the State budget, but it has attracted international interest: businessmen looking for precious timber and non-timber products, scientists for a new genetic pool, donors for the development support and conservation of environment. This gave new possibilities to the sector, making it strategically and politically more attractive and challenging.

5.3.2 Participation and power distribution

What did participation change for the forestry administration?
First of all, the forestry sector has got a political recognition in the State structures. It became an independent governmental agency and then, even a State forest service subordinated directly to the President's office. An interesting link may be made between the intensity of the participatory procedures and the status of the forest administration: during the gap in the forest policy reform, when the process was suspended, the status of the forestry administration was diminished to a department within the Ministry of Emergency and Environment. While the highest position, under the President's office, was obtained in the period of the policy evaluation and adaptation, that is, the period of the best organised and managed participation. Thus, participation has brought the power and a certain domination of the forestry administration in the State structures with some liberty in the sector decision making.

Secondly, inside the forest sector, the hierarchy was strengthened, because, (regardless of all the critics and weak points of participation) on the one hand, all the levels from a forester to a leshoze director were involved in (or at least informed about) the decision making process, and thus "responsibilised" for its implementation. On the other, hand, due to the lack of specific knowledge (strategic vision) and experience, the technical levels were only able of proposing routine technical decisions, thus getting into a more dependence on the headquarters for strategic visions and political solutions. Thus information and knowledge became evident attributes of the power of deciding.

[21] With the suspension of subsidies, the leshozes personnel has lost many of the social benefits, which used to be distributed within the sectors of economy. Contrary to the agriculture and industry people, who have profited from the privatisation programme, foresters could not get any share of the "common good" as the forests and the forest land were preserved under the state ownership. The rural population, having lost the state financial support, got directly dependent on the forest resources, mainly for energy and land use.

This strengthened internal situation of the forest sector has led to their corporate power in relations with the other structures. New types of collaborations started to be established with the local administrations (village councils, communes etc) aimed at the solution of conflicts in the forest management related issues. New alliances for political and sponsor-oriented lobbying were formed, for example, with environmental NGOs. This corporate power is expected to lead to some future potential gains. These potential gains may have a symbolic nature, like, for example, an independent political status of the forest service, an image of a democratic public authority. The gains may be also material: attraction of new support and development projects with new donors; increased state budget for forestry activities and condition of forestry specialists; co-financing of forestry activities together with the communes and local administrations etc.

From individual perspectives of the people involved in this participatory process, they were also exercising a certain power. Through being the sources of information, they had the power of possessing some specific knowledge of the local situation or of some practical aspects, which was unavailable, but necessary for the forest service administration. They have exercised the power through expressing and negotiating their interests (even if not always successfully) and thus creating some types of "interest coalitions". By some of the stakeholders, the power was exercised through a decision not to decide. For example, the Ministry of finance refused to approve a budget based on the measures defined by the new forest policy. The power for the others was expressed in the abstention from participation. It was the case with the Ministry of environment and, at the beginning, with the environmental NGOs. Non- participation was a strategy in order to give them a possibility for criticising the process and its results.

One more indicator of the increased power of the State forestry administration[22] due to participatory forest policy reform process was the fact that the position of the head of the forestry administration became very attractive. Many candidates started to claim to it. Thus, as soon as this process was started, the head of the agency, a forestry specialist, was replaced by an experienced politician. This person has literally boosted participation, personally being implicated in many of the meetings and discussions. His experience of a politician allowed him to understand the potential of participation and to use it for his own political carrier: from the head of the forest agency to the member of Parliament and speaker. To him personally, participation gave the power in the sense of domination, through deciding for the others and being free in the choice of his own decisions (including from the legal prosecution, as a member of Parliament). This power was also linked with both symbolic and material gains. The next head of the forest service, with the experience of his predecessor, has used participation for attracting the interest of international donors to a collaboration with him personally, as a specialist in forestry and forest policy reform.

For many of the other participants, the involvement into the process was bringing professional career and good political image. Thus, between 10 and 20 representatives of the forestry sector have been elected in the local, regional and even national parliaments.

[22] Here and after in this thesis the wording "forestry administration" is used in a preserved form from Russian language and means the headqurters of the forest service at the National level

What is interesting to mention, is the change in the status and positions of the people (mainly coming from the hierarchy of the forest service) who have taken a critical position during the forest policy reform process. At the initial stages of the process most of them have been promoted by the central forest administration, to better positions, with the comments for everybody: "look, we have absolutely changed the way of managing. The constructive critic is very much appreciated and we promote those have the courage to criticise and propose changes". Although, at the later stages, these people were either disappearing from the process, or, continued to be present, but much less active. In some cases the most persistent critics were still promoted in the hierarchy, but sent to the more distant and more difficult places. "You know what is not working well. You know how to solve the problems. So, you need to go to the places where the problems are really urgent". As an example, the nomination as a director of a newly established (means with no infrastructure and resources) national natural park in the most distant area of Kyrgyzstan, at the border with Tadjikistan, with a complex of social, ethnical, economic ecological, legal and other problems, has concerned one of the most active, well trained but too much critical participants in the forest policy reform process.

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Regardless of the differences in the approaches to the definition of power, there is one common feature between them. It is the possibility to influence, to decide, and to profit from the situation. The idea of a participatory process is to share the decision making power. But in fact, the procedures for the process are defined by the norms, which, in their turn, are to be defined by the initiators (who have the power of knowledge and decision to initiate the process). The powerful structures necessarily define the norms, which help them to keep the power, and thus there is always a possibility of using the participatory process for consolidating the already existing power.
Power is for dominating the others, it is enabling the strongest to do something. But in a participatory process the other actors have an option to do otherwise, not necessarily always following the most powerful, and anyway express views and positions that the stronger have to take into account.

In a process of participation, learning and psychological effects on the participants usually get the major importance. The participants face each other from unequal positions of power; from material differences and class backgrounds, from knowledge and information access as well as abilities that separate experts from the laypersons.

In the post soviet countries the introduction of a participatory approach into the policy processes had a high learning effect on all the involved participants, changing their ways of self-expression and self-definition within the society. Deliberative process linked with the generation of aadditional information has the capacity to change the initial positions of the involved actors and stakeholders. This has added an important component of social learning and led to the formulation of new alliances and new strong stakeholders, at the same time bringing new (formerly absent) stakeholders to the arena, thus influencing the power distribution.

The most powerful groups, when they achieve the power (as domination for decisions and liberty from the others), have a relatively limited life span. They grow decadent, decay, lose their vigour and come to be replaced by other, more vigorous groups (Pareto, 1916, quated by Zanden, 1960).

Therefore, same as a policy cycle, the cycle of power redistribution is an iterative process, with its rules and laws. It is linked with the involvement of participants into a dynamics of a re-distribution of power. But does it mean that a participatory process is necessarily a mechanism which changes the procedure for decision making? Participation is formed by the context, but it is also changing the context, bringing in new positional balances among the stakeholders. Can those changes be predicted? In a way, participation is always a challenge for power re-distribution or consolidation. How to avoid from it? Does it need to be avoided?

Chapter III

From propositions to theory

- ***The "mixed model" framework***: pp. 114-124
- ***From a "mixed model" framework to the theory of a "double spiral***: pp. 125-131

III. From propositions to theory

The 4 proposals developed in the previous section were progressively elaborated through a regular process of construction in the research. They are not fixed stated normative assertions, but elements to be considered as a basis for further questions and analysis, and thus supposed to give way to broader conclusions. For the moment, in the form they are expressed now, they have been used to build up theoretical considerations supposed to explain phenomena studied in a systemic way. As a result of these constructions, a theory has been formulated, which has also contributed to the development of those proposals. This Chapter presents the actual state of the reflections in the thesis related to the attempt to theoreticise the "mixed model" framework, which is also presented in the papers, constituting part of the thesis[23] basing on the facts described in the previous section. As there are permanent feed back loops between statements and theoretical explications, the description of theoretical elements presented here is slightly different from and more detailed compared to what has been formulated in the papers, constituting the thesis.

1. The "Mixed model" framework

1.1. From "mixed scanning" to "mixed model"

In the framework of this thesis the paradigm of the "mixed model" has been taken as the initial basis for the construction of the research, by providing a framework for treating the case of participation on the basis of assumptions about the nature of it's reality.
This idea of the "mixed model" framework which is linking deductive instrumental procedures and communicative action, was introduced by Etzioni (Etzioni, 1967), for any kind of managerial decisions, then adapted by Buttoud and Samyn (Buttoud, Samyn, 1999) for forest policy decisions, basing on concrete examples from Madagascar, the Gambia, Rwanda and Gabon. Later on, it was further developed by Gérard Buttoud and me (Buttoud &Yunusova, 2002) on the experience of designing the new national forest policy in Kyrgyzstan.

Etzioni's "humble decision making"

This chapter presents a general interpretation of Etzioni's idea related to the necessity of a "mixed scanning" as a "third" approach to decision making (Etzioni, 1967), as at the time it became clear that the "old fashioned" (rationalist) decision making model did not meet any more the needs of the contemporary world.

[23] Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova, I., Buttoud, G., *Forest Policy and Economics*, 8 (2006); Kouplevatskaya, I., *CAB International* 2007

Rationalist approach is no longer sufficient

The rationalist approach to decision making has been for quite a long time presented as the ideal method for developing public policy. Lindblom (1959; 1980; 1990), has addressed it as a «rational-comprehensive» approach and described it in the following way:

> « … policy makers begin addressing a particular policy issue by ranking values and objectives. Next, they identify and comprehensively analyze all alternative solutions, making sure to account for all potential factors. In the third and final step, administrators choose the alternative that is evaluated as the most effective in delivering the highest value in terms of satisfying the objectives identified in the first step » (Lindblom, 1959).

But, in the real world, the decision makers are not working this way. According to Lindblom, who was considering the aspect mainly from the economic view point, this way of decision making does not work for several reasons:

- First, defining and identifying separately values and objectives is conceptually difficult. There are always trade-offs in public policy. It is difficult to say with certainty, for example, that it is better to decrease the number of employers to balance the budget.
- Second, separating means from ends (policy recommendations from the objectives of those policies) is impossible. Instead, the policy solution is always bound up with the objectives. The problem of reducing traffic congestion could involve building either highways or mass transportation. But for many interested parties each of these potential "solutions" to the problem of congestion is likely to be a policy goal in its own right.
- Third, it is impossible to aggregate the values and objectives of the various constituencies of the executive bureaucracy (citizens, private organisations, and legislators, appointed officials) and to determine exactly which preferences are most important. The quality of a policy is indicated by its ability to achieve broad support, not by some assessment that it is most efficient according to some abstract criteria.
- Finally, it may also be inefficient to identify and analyse every policy option. For all but the most narrow policy choices, it takes too much time and too many resources. Administrators are very busy and the volumes of detail on even relatively simple issues would be overly burdensome to analyse (Lindblom, 1959).

This means that any **decision making process can not be based only on rationalism, as the main principle for governing business decisions**. This idea was further supported by Etzioni, who was stating that, usually in the rationalist framework it is considered that:

> "… decision makers should and *could* explore every route that might lead to their goal, collect information about costs and utility of each, systematically compare these various alternatives and choose the most effective course" (Etzioni, 1998).

But, as he further argues, the **information flow is usually much bigger than the managers can process.**

> "The managers must often proceed from only partial information, which moreover they have no time to fully process or analyse. … The data are generally poor and vastly interpreted " (*Ibid.*).

Another reason which can explain the need for changing the mode of decision making is that due to globalisation, for many managerial decisions, the dependence on ***external events*** and conditions is getting very high, making also high the level of ***uncertainty,*** therefore any long-term forecasts and strategies will necessarily need permanent ***adaptation*** as reaction to the external changes.
Etzioni has also pointed out that the majority of the decision makers see their decisions as professional, even ***technocratic,*** but rarely as *political* (*Ibid.),* and, thus, tend to limiting any external involvement into the decision making.

Consequently, the rationalist decision making procedures, although require a comprehensive knowledge of every facet of a problem, can not provide all the necessary and realistic information which is needed for a modern strategic decision. It has no potential for the adaptation to changes, neither it considers the knowledge and the interests of the other individuals. In the modern conditions it can not any longer be sufficient, as, following Etzioni (Etzioni, 2003),

> "Successful decision making strategies must necessarily include a place for co-operation, coalition building and the whole panorama of different personalities, perspectives, responsibilities and powers".

This rationalist approach to decision making completely fits to the way the State forest administration is acting in Kyrgyzastan, when the State is an omnipresent body, due to a long history of being part of the Soviet system. Most of the decisions taken by the State agency are still including all the characteristics of a top down and command and control model, including inside the process of the forest policy reform.

Incremental[24] *approach for a better efficiency*

Having criticised the inefficiency of the rationalist approach to decision making, Lindblom (1959) has suggested instead a much more constrained process of "successive limited comparison". Lindblom has called it a *"branch" method*, explaining that the administrators usually look only at policies that differ in relatively small degree from the policies currently in effect. Thereby they reduce the number of alternatives to be investigated, while simultaneously narrowing the scope of investigation. "They look at two nearby branches and not on the whole tree, roots and all". This successive limited comparison, which Lindblom has also called "*muddling through*" was thought to be the primary cause of the general tendency towards incrementalism in policy development.

The decision-makers are rarely opting for the development of dramatically different and new policies. Instead, they tend to build on existing policies, "repairing" them here and there in a continuous, evolutionary process. Lindblom argues that there exist some problems that are simply so complex and difficult that even the smartest, most persistent leader will be unable to find an optimal solution for. As a result, decision-makers typically muddle through

[24] *Incremental* decision making was introduced by Dahl (1957, 1961)

complex problems with small changes in the status quo. They come up with a solution that they believe suffices, even if it is not optimal, and then move on to the next problem (Lindblom, 1959).

Lindblom presented such incremental "muddling through" as a very efficient approach, because it is rather efficient for analysing practical options.

Since this “muddling through” proposal of Lindblom, the *incremental* decision making is often presented as an alternative to the rationalist one. It is not longing for comprehensive knowledge, but, instead, concentrates on the smallest possible “units of change”.

> “Incrementalism is a formal title for what is otherwise known as the science of muddling through, it advocates moving not so much toward a goal as away from trouble, without any grand plan or sense of ultimate purpose” (Etzioni, 1986).

Incremental planning's basic weakness is its assumption of a pluralistic society composed of small interest groups. Opponents of incremental planning argue that society is dominated by certain groups, which makes competition unequal and undemocratic. Decisions reached through incrementalism, therefore, **reflect the interests of the more powerful groups**, rather than those of the community in general.

Other critics argue that *Incremental planning* only addresses a **limited range of alternatives**. By doing this it does not allow for fundamental decisions that are made and neglects basic societal innovations. Additionally, with its limited consideration of variables, incrementalism has nothing in order to guide the accumulation of small steps that could lead to significant change (Etzioni, 1998, 2001, 2003).

This concept of decision making has appeared as very well fitting to the way the forest policy reform process was evolving in Kyrgyzstan, as at the very beginning of the process and somehow also after it, there was no common clear State vision on what to do for the development of the sector. The forest policy reform process has evolved in an unstable and unclear envelopment through successive changes based on adaptation[25].

Mixed scanning for adaptive decisions

Indeed, as the incremental decision making is focused on limited areas, nearest to hand and one at a time, it eliminates the need for a complete and comprehensive information. It also “avoids the danger of grand policy decisions, by not making any” (Etzioni, 2001). At the same time, incrementalism requires a high level of consensus building, thus solving the question of the unique source of knowledge through communicative aspects. The weaknesse of the incremental decision making is it’s “conservatism”, as it is inevitably choosing a direction close to the prevailing one. It is opposed to reflection and analysis, and calls the executives to remake the world, rather than to seek to understand it.

Mindful of the limitations of the two above ways of decision making, Etzioni has proposed a “third” way, as he called it adaptive decision making or ***mixed scanning***.

[25] this is described in detail in the paper “The evolution of stakeholders’ participation in a process of forest policy reform in Kyrgyz Republic”, *Swiss Forestry Journal*, 156 (2005) 10,

> "Mixed scanning is an adaptive strategy that acknowledges our inability to know more than part of what we would need to make. … Mixed scanning is a hierarchical mode of decision making that combines higher order, fundamental decision making with lower order, incremental decisions that work out and /or prepare for the higher order ones" (Etzioni, 1986)

Thus, *mixed scanning* combines a shallow and deep examination of data, a generalised consideration of facts and choices with a detailed focused examination of these facts and choices.

> "Mixed scanning involves two sets of judgements: the first are broad, fundamental choices about organisations's basic policy and directions, the second are incremental decisions that prepare the way for new, basic judgements and that implement and particularise them once they have been made. Thus the mixed scanning is much less detailed and demanding that rationalistic decision making, but still broader and more comprehensive than incrementalism" (*Ibid*.).

The combination of the two types of decision making allows them to mutually compliment each other: the requirement of analytic capabilities and the knowledge of distant future consequences of the rationalist model are complimented by incrementalism, or muddling through small steps, taken in the "right" direction whenever the present course proves to be wrong. When the decision makers evaluate their small steps, they must refer to broader guidelines or *a priori* decisions, which may be provided by the rationalist decision making framework. Mixed scanning also requires deep public awareness of the fundamental decisions and of the main alternative schemes, but less involvement in the incremental decisions.

As a combination of two types of decision making, the mixed scanning is including the elements of both:

- a *scanning process* whose purpose is to review the situation/implementation from time to time, to identify what is possible to anticipate and what requires a detailed attention and, in general, to provide an *overview* on the future directions; and
- the *detailed planning* of the selected relatively small sub-issues, identified during the scanning.

This approach is less demanding than the full search of all options that are required by rationalism. It helps to adapt to the new partial information as soon as it becomes available. It is more "strategic" and innovative than incrementalism and helps to achieve broad goals and purposes.

Etzioni himself calls this model adaptive, or "humble decision making" (Etzioni, 2001) and admits that since the first publication of the article on the "mixed scanning" in December 1967, this idea has generated a steady stream of discussions, critics and applications, but very little empirical research. Contrary to that, the *mixed model* framework is based on the empirical analysis "theoritisised" by the research.

1.2 Why the mixed model?

The Mixed scanning approach to decision making proposed by Etzioni is supposed to be appropriate to any kind of decision making. It was later applied by some researchers to computer programming as well as in the sphere of public health, education system, and to the study of the law (Etzioni, 1986), but primarily it was aimed at the business managers and executives.
In forestry, and forest policy in particular, a forestry administration has traditionally had almost an exclusive right for deciding due to the specificity of the field. The rationalist criteria and procedures were, and somehow still are, essential basis for the concrete actions and their control.

The global development processes, and, in particular, the international debate on sustainability, brought up the evidence of insufficiency of technocratic decision making for the forest sector. Stakeholders' participation in the forest management related questions became a real issue on the international agenda and was very much promoted by support and development organisations, first of all by the FAO, and later on by the World Bank. A decision making framework adapted to the specificity of the forest sector was needed, and thus, Etzioni's "mixed scanning" was developed and adapted into a "mixed model"[26].

1.2.1 What is the difference between the "mixed scanning" model and the "mixed model" framework?

One of the main differences of the mixed model framework from the "mixed scanning" is that the mixed model was not created as a *theoretical consideration*, but as ***empirical evidence***. The "mixed model" framework was developed from the practical application, and as the experience is permanently being enriched, the framework still continues to be developed and clarified.

Considering the difference from a more practical point of view, it should be also pointed out that "*scanning*" is focused on a permanent regular assessment of "sets and series of increments", received in the course of the process and adaptation to the general desired outcome (Etzioni, 1986). The "mixed model" framework is focused on the communicative aspects, whereas the rationale for decision does not come from the expected result, but from the communication itself. Negotiation is in the core of the "mixed model".

Indeed, it is very difficult to reach a common vision in relation to the forest policy among all the numerous stakeholders at the local, national and international levels. They all have different values, therefore, the main challenge of the process is to translate these visions into a public context. Thus a *consensus*, promoted by the incremental decision making is not appropriate for the forestry issues, while *awareness*[27] is not sufficient. Therefore negotiation

[26] Application of the "mixed model in forest policy process is presented in Buttoud & Samyn, 1999; Buttoud & Yunusova, 2002; as well as in the paper Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova, I., Buttoud, G., *Forest Policy and Economics*, 8 (2006), making a constituting part of the thesis

[27] « Incrementalism requires a high level of consensus building; … mixed scanning requires deep public awareness of the *fundamental* decisions and of the main alternative schemes » (Etzioni, 1986).

is one of the major tools within the "mixed model" framework for reaching a compromise between the various positions and interests.

This means that during each step of the policy cycle there should be a consultation-negotiation with all the involved stakeholders and actors, about the issues on the policy agenda. As it became evident during the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan, this negotiation usually leads to the re-definition of the initial positions and proposals (even if the negotiated compromise has not been reached). That is why there were created some permanent feed-back loops during each step of the policy cycle (See Fig.3)

At the beginning of each step of the policy cycle definition of problems, objectives, means and so on, there are always expressed *initial* positions or proposals of priorities (*blue rectangles on the scheme*) which are brought into the participatory process usually by the organisers or, by the decision makers. At the same time, each of the stakeholders or actors who decided to be involved in this decision making process, also comes with his own positions and priorities (*yellow ellipses on the scheme)*. These positions (at least the stronger and the better represented ones) are confronted and *negotiated* in the course of communication.

The communication and negotiation between the public authority and the stakeholders usually follow the procedures when the stakeholders can also express their *initial demands and positions.* These initial demands and positions of the stakeholders are expressed through preliminary individual inquiries, which are later processed and systematised by a working group (when possible). As a next step, they are *commonly discussed* and negotiated during workshops, with the use of various techniques for negotiation (eg. *constructive confrontation)* Sometimes there may be some small loops back to the precedent step, because changes may occur in both, the actions and in the context.

This *negotiation* (*a black **N** inside a yellow ellipse on the scheme*) with/among stakeholders and public authority leads to the change of the initial positions and proposals with their adaptation to the results of negotiation.

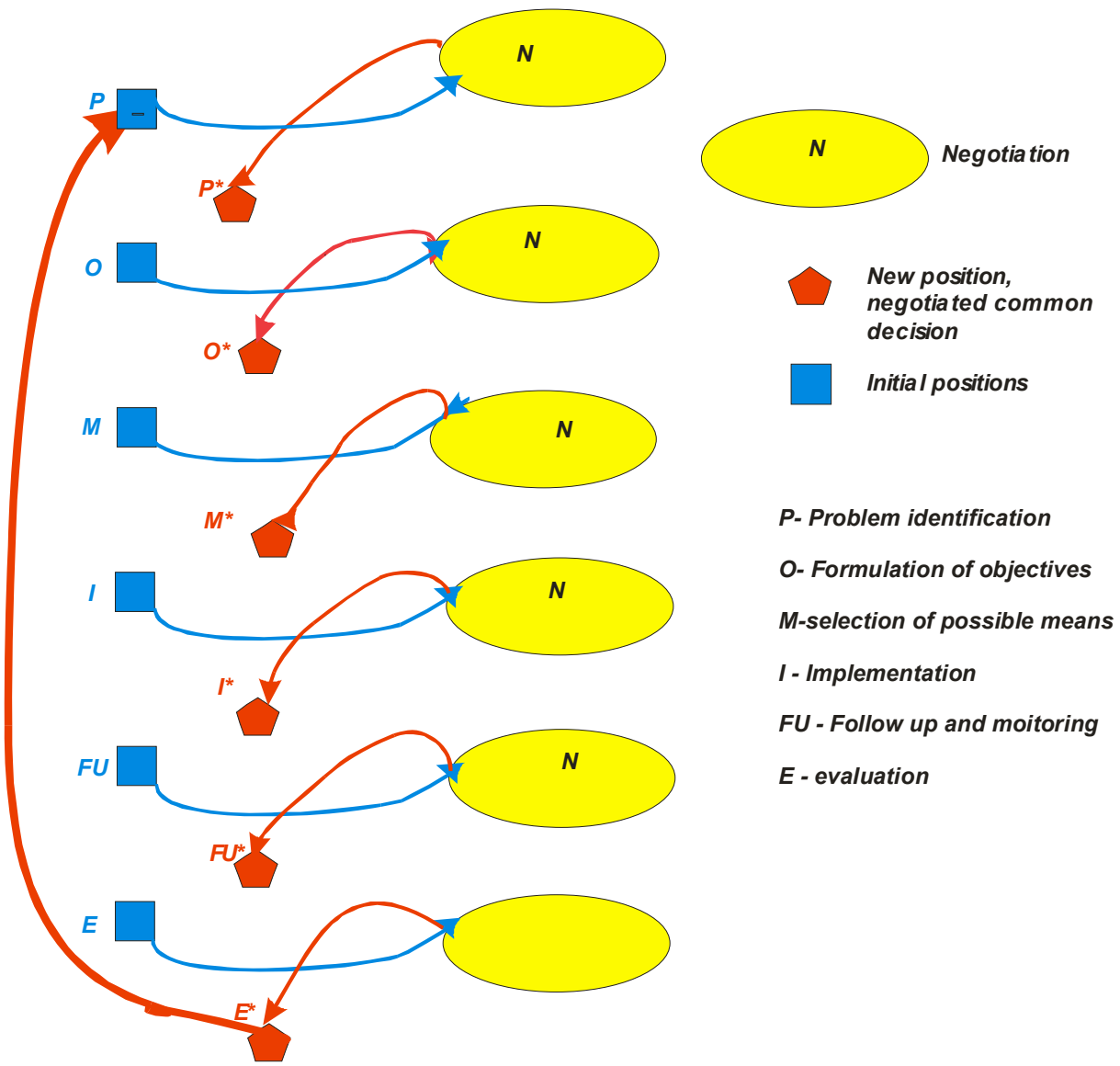
This adaptation of the initial positions and proposals brings to the *decision* or to a *new* common *position*[28] (*a red polygon on the scheme)*, different from the initial one. The same procedures are followed at all the steps of the policy cycle, at a bigger or a smaller scale within each of them depending on the "more" or "less" adaptability of the various expressed views.

1.3 Empirical development of the "mixed model" during the process in Kyrgyzstan

The process of the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan, presented in this thesis, until now, gives the only example of a consecutive application of the "mixed model" along a complete policy cycle. The possibility of a permanent follow up of this process over a 8-years period allowed to develop further this framework in an iterative and "constructive" approach.

[28] the Etzioni's term "increment" may be also appropriate in this case

Figure 3. The logic of the negotiation through the Mixed model framework



1.3.1 Oppositions lead to iterativity

The combination of the rationalist and the communicative logics provided by the mixed model creates permanent, or iterative, oppositions. These are evidently, the oppositions between the conflicting interests brought to the process due to communication, but not only. The oppositions created by the introduction of the mixed model framework are various and multiple:

- oppositions between the well structured deductive way of technocratic decision making and the evolving and permanently changing social reality.
- oppositions between the overall responsibility of the forest administration for the achievement of the results and the necessity of sharing the decision making with the other stakeholders.

- also a confrontation between the "internal" specific sector knowledge and "external" opinions and expectations in relation to this sector.

Thus, the nature of the mixed model itself creates instability and opposition.

Several illustrative examples from the Kyrgyz forest policy reform process are given in Table 4.

Table 4: oppositions created in an iterative process, on Kyrgyz example

1. The question of ***sustainable forestry*** was a big issue from the very beginning of the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan. Additionally to the complexity and vaguness of the concept itself, the internal conditions in Kyrgyzstan in 1997 added still more complexity: (i) previous forest management exclusively protection/conservation oriented and expressed in thousands hectares of new plantations; (ii) the requirement to consider the interests of all the stakeholders, and increased human pressure on the forests creating big conflicts. How to pass from this unfavourable situation into a real rigorous sustainable forestry development? Consequently, the *sustainable forestry development* was broadely defined as a strategic goal of the new forest policy requiring the satisfaction of general principles of sustainability, adapted to the social-economic situation in the country. This gap created by practical context and vague formulation of an abstract concept resulted in a technical decision interpreted into practical terms in the Action Plan by the increased number of hectares of the new plantations and stricter procedures for the guarding. The decision *loop got back* to the initial level. It was the evaluation of forest policy implementation (2003) which showed that hundreds of hectares of new plantations, without a proper management, did not improve the forest condition, while the increased restrictions and guarding were not effective in difficult economic situation. A *new loop* has started with re-discussion and re-formulaiton of objective as "sustainable forest management" was introduced, with an expressed need to set up new modalities for such a new type of management and increased role of research, science and education. Thus, this ***opposition between vague priorities and changing understanding of reality*** have created a demand for iterativity in the policy definition. 2. The involvement of various stakeholders has created enthusiasm and expectations of a changed way of governance in forestry. At the same time, their focuse on presing daily problems and lack of strategic vision result in the need to re-define forest policy strategy already in 5 years period, creating conditions for a new loop in the process. For the decision makers, regardless of the changed procedures for policy definition, the National Concept for Forestry Development remained still a formally adopted document, and not as a basis for action. This opposition between the technocratic decision making practices and communicative procedures was aggrevated by the lack of participation culture and participatory procedures. Thus there was a permanent tendency of shifting back to the habitual top down planning from the decision-makers and and pushing for bottom up procedures from the other involved stakeholders, these ***oppositions along the process*** were creating new and next loops. There were also opposition between the secotr priorities and general context and many others due to the permanently changing context of transitions. These oppositions were creating a need for a permanent adaptation, giving raise to new feed back loops in the process and forming spirals.

The above examples clearly showed that a context where most of the positions and situations are not stable and disputable, leads to a situation, when the decisions emerging from the

process are not stable either and require a permanent re-negotiation and re-definition. That is why, when the mixed model is implemented, there may occur not one, but several feed back loops between the different steps of the policy cycle, when the participants of the process will be re-defining their positions while adapting to the reactions from the other participants and to the changing context. Thus the essence of the mixed model, the combination of incrementalism and communication, oriented to the process, by itself, creates a framework which leads to instability of decisions and permanent re-negotiation (cf. the point-line arrow in Fig. 3).

The communicative part of the mixed model opens the process for the opposed interests, thus introducing conflicts with related procedures for conflicts resolution. Concretely, a negotiation of conflict points is taking place during these feed back loops and leads to a negotiated compromise, with the definition of new solutions and creation of new coalitions.

Finally, the framework of the "mixed model", indeed, contributes to the promotion of participation. It provides rigorous instruments and framework for detecting the needs for the societal changes, following up these changes and adapting to them. Through this possibility of adaptation, the "mixed model" creates conditions for the iterativity of the process. At the same time, the capacity for adaptation is different and subjective for the different actors of the process. The Kyrgyz example shows how a particular stakeholder with a better knowledge and capacity to adapt may use (instrumentalise) the same framework of the "mixed model" for guiding the process to his preferable solution.

Thus, parallel to the learning from the side of decision makers, the other actors and stakeholders involved in the process, also learn to formulate and express their priorities and demands, i.e., they also go through a political learning, organise themselves better and start lobbying for their interests.

In fact, this negotiation at each point leads to a new situation and new revised stakeholders' positions. Thus, each next loop of the cycle starts not from the same initial point, while the scope of issues and involved interests will be widening. Thus, the essence of the "mixed model" framework directly fits into the "learning spiral" of J. Amdam (1995, 2000, 2003), although not totally.

- The first sequence of the cycle with the problem identification, formulation of objectives, selection of possible means and implementation follows the scheme of the "*muddling through learning*", when the capacities for participation are generated and get developed. All is changed during the evaluation.

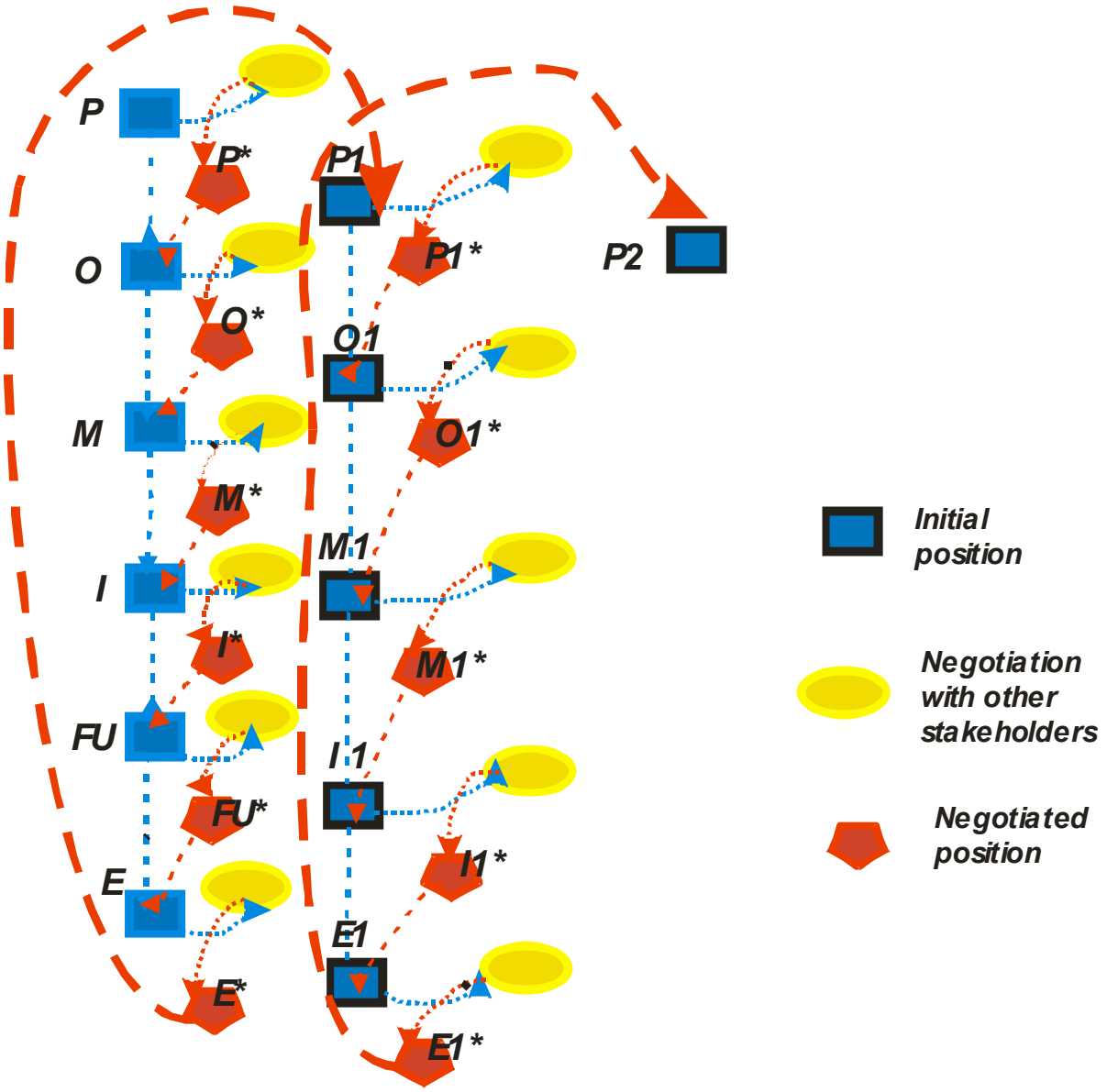
- The evaluation appears as a critical point. When the change of positions becomes clear and transparent, the interests are re-defined and distributed, while learning, accumulated during the process, allows some of the stakeholders to use this new knowledge for turning the process towards their re-defined expectations. It means that the "spiral of learning" will not continue *ad infinitum*, as it is suggested in the scheme of J.Amdam, but will start ***a new movement after the critical point***, thus creating a sequence of loops (Fig.4).

The intensity of the stakeholders' involvement in the process depends on the degree of their satisfaction from participation and results of the process. This degree of satisfaction may define the intensity of the process, (what was called by J. Amdam as "*slow moving*" periods).

It is during those periods that the technical decisions start to prevail over the communicative procedures, and the role of the authority/administration becomes a dominate one. For example, in the Kyrgyz forest policy reform case, the process was very intensive during the policy definition, but the forest code elaboration may be analysed as a “slow moving period”.

The intensity was re-gained for the Action Plan definition, and absolutely decreased in the period of final drafting and implementation of this document. The evaluation stage has brought a “reanimation” of the policy process and stakeholders’ involvement in it, but with the new changed roles. These changes in the roles have occurred due to the learning. They have provoked a new development, but also a change the nature of the process.

Figure 4. “Continuity” of the “mixed model”

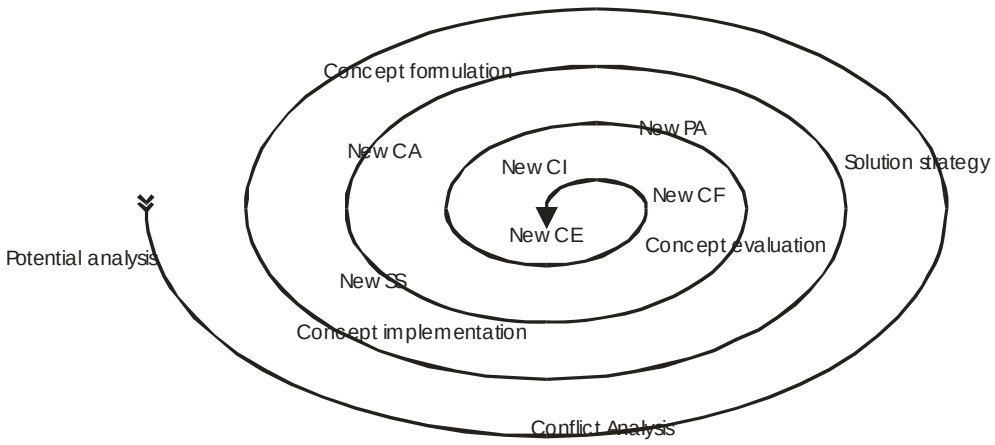


2. From a "mixed model" framework to the theory of a "double spiral"

2.1 Spirals of policy development

J. Amdam (2000) has presented a decision making process as interpreted through an inward or an outward spiral. The inward spiral of decision making describes the situation when there is a belief that there exists a solution and that it is possible to reach that solution by a system of using a stepwise approach to get increasingly closer to it.

Figure 5: An inward spiral



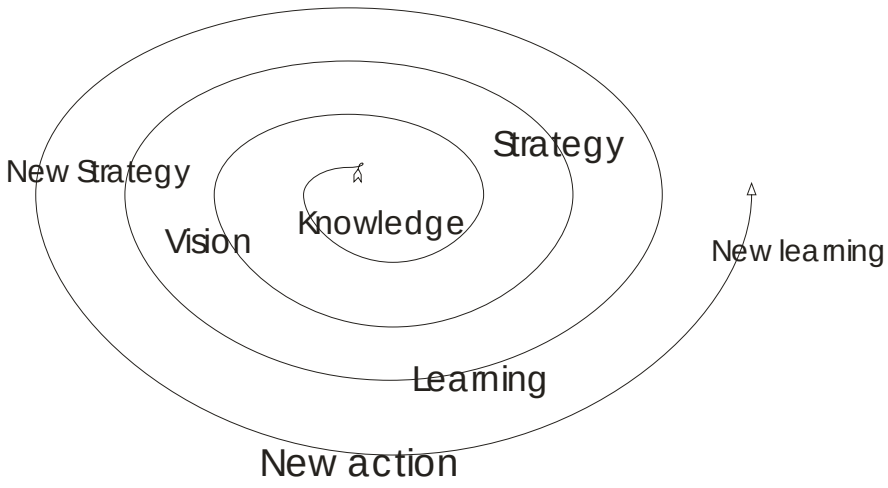
ref. Barstad, 2002

This inward spiral (fig.5) clearly describes the process, which in the mixed model corresponds to the period, when the approach to decision making through *rationalist planning* is prevailing. It is focused on finding the best solutions for precise and limited objectives, combined with an iterative logic of continuous adaptation. This approach is often used as a strategy in public planning situations, because all desired objectives can not be achieved at once due to the affects of changes in the society and in the existing environment. Thus the decision maker has to be prepared to repeat the process continuously and make necessary corrections in order to achieve the desired goal. This approach is presented as a useful tool for reaching long-term goals. The iterativity of the process defines the formation of loops and includes evaluation, which is permitting to check if the goals are reached and which changes are to be implemented. Thus the process consists in: (i) the *problem definition* with the specification of potentials and conflicts which may promote or prevent the achievement of a certain goal. Then the steps of (ii) *vision building* and (iii) *strategy setting* are aimed at the expression of the (iv) *desired outcomes*, which are followed by the (v) *formulation of a plan*,

(vi) implementation and (vii) evaluation; based on the results of evaluation, the process re-starts again from the (i') *information gathering'* and (ii') *vision building'*.

Opposite to this, the planning process described through an *outward spiral* is seen as a *learning process* which develops from a circle to a spiral. According to J. Amdam (1995), such process starts with motivation, education and training of leaders, which must be gradually extended to the other members of community. The next step in the learning circle is to organise the learning process and introduce new methods of planning, new models, new ideas etc. The third stage is usually a period when these new ideas and models are tried in practical and simple situations but without great ambitions. Then, all these must be discussed and evaluated before starting a new learning circle with higher ambitions. The circle which follows consists in repeating the same stages but with greater ambitions, new participants, and more realistic problems (Fig. 6).

Figure 6. An outward spiral



In the Amdam's conception, decision making processes can be characterised separately using this theory of the spiral: more deductive approaches, aiming at concrete results, evolved through an *inward spiral* (policy envelopment) whilst open minded approaches, more iterative and usually based on a fair communication, work along an outward spiral (policy development). But in our case, with the implementation of the mixed model a character of both is appearing.

In Amdam's view, the process of decision making, or planning, no matter whatever which logic it follows: an outward or an inward one, is a never-ending process, with repeating cycles and loops (Amdam, 1995).
Due to the incremental aspect of the "mixed model", the process is based on a consecutive sequence of steps, when the implementation of each of them creates conditions for the broadening of the process and formulation of loops. At the same time, it is not a steady

process as there are active "*periods of enthusiasm*" and the periods of "*slow down*", thus different sizes of loops are created. A permanent change of positions due to the negotiation, learning and adaptation leads to a situation when the radius of those loops is changing, as suggested by Amdam (2000) for the spiral of learning (See also Chapter II; 4.2-4.3).

Thus, in the "periods of enthusiasm" the radius is *increasing*, forming an *outward spiral*. While during the "slow down" moments, when technical solutions prevail over the broad participation, the radius is *decreasing*, thus forming an *inward spiral*.

The "mixed" feature of the mixed model creates oppositions and conflicts which lead to permanent changes and immediate adaptations to these changes. The "mixed model" brings in a permanent opposition between the two different logics of decision making: between the orientation towards the results, which is presented through an *inward spiral*, and orientation towards the process, leading to its development along an *outward spiral*.

This opposition between the two logics creates a condition that in a decision making process constructed in the "mixed model" framework, ***both spirals*** are finally present. The *outward spiral*, with increasing radius, corresponds to periods where a motivation to learn is dominant and there is a shared readiness to adapt. This situation is usually typical for the beginning of the process, when all the participants are still in the phase of defining their own visions and solutions. There is a high degree of openness and a willingness to accept that "a change in the process may change the goals". Opposite to this, the *inward spiral*, with a decreasing radius, is the spiral of control, when the majority of participants enter in the period of « slow down » and one of the actors starts to try to direct the process towards own objectives. In this thesis, the focus is made not only on the description of the process, but mainly on the analysis of the changes in the roles and positions of some of the actors along this process.
The reference to the mixed model creates the conditions for analysing the dynamic and logic of the process using both outward and inward spirals. The theory of spirals can be applied for the description of the process evolution and changing. It can also provide an explanation of the changes in roles and objectives of some actors along the process. This was done in detail on the example of Kyrgyzstan. (see the papers constituting the thesis).

2.2 Fomation of series of double spirals: (example from Kyrgyzstan)

Additionally to the analysis of the roles of different actors in the process, the application of double spirals may illustrate the changes in participation. In fact, in the Kyrgyz conditions, the changes in the concept and modalities of participation generated by the progressive learning in the process have introduced sequences of break-downs and ruptures in the regularity and continuity of this movement[29]. Evidently, the whole process in Kyrgyzstan could not be represented through a *single outward spiral*, which was quite prominent at the initial stages of the forest policy reform, while "participation" has been being discovered by all the actors and stakeholders. The changes in the roles and rules of the process brought in by the elaboration of the Forest Code beyond participation has marked a *critical point*, which gave way to the change of the spiral's direction. At this point the decision-making procedures have acquired

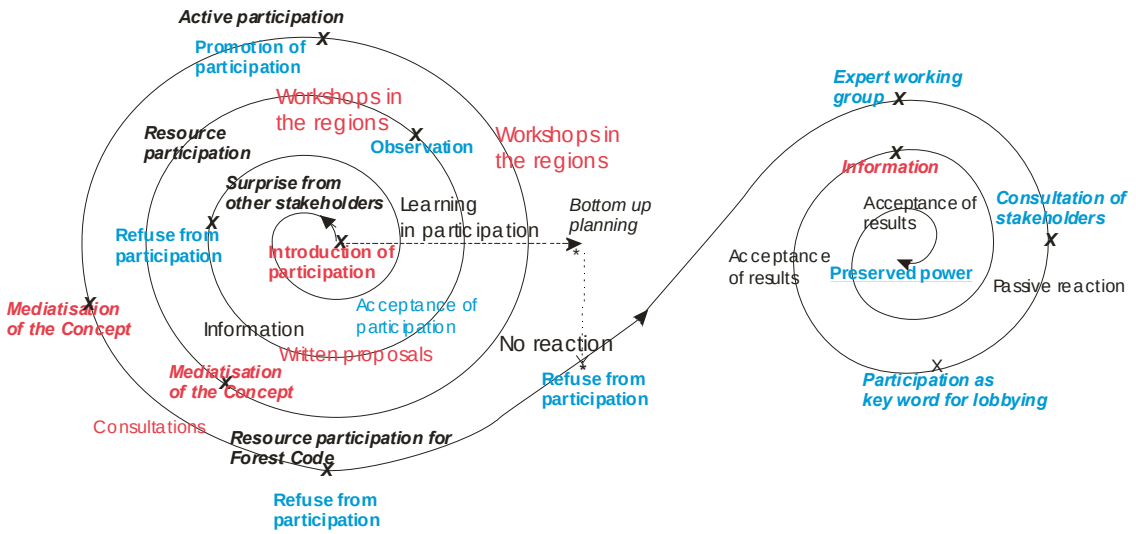
[29] The process is described in detail in the paper published in the Swiss Forestry Journal, 156, 10/05, 2005, See Chapter IV.

the features of an inward spiral, when the technocraic expert decisions prevailed and the work was done by a small working group.

This was evidently a period of "*slow down*" in participation and monopolization of the process by the state forestry administration and total preservation of the decision making power. At the same time, the phrase "participatory decision making" was used as the main argument in lobbying for this draft code in the Parliament.
As a new concept in Kyrgyzstan, participation was more or less working at the beginning of the forest policy reform, rather for general decisions, when the expected outcomes were still *abstract* for everybody (both in the case of the analysis of the current situation and in the Strategy for forestry development), while the procedures and methods were *new* and their effects *unknown*. Opposite to this, the Forest Code had a very *concrete strategic* (even if partly symbolic) importance. A possible change of the Forest Code's logic and philosophy, basing on the participatory decisions, would have necessarily caused a considerable transformation in the management and administration of the whole forest sector. Of course, the forestry administration was not ready to such changes (Fig.7). At the same time, it was the forest sector administration the sole possessor of the necessary expertise for the legal drafting. The other stakeholders had neither such specific juridical knowledge nor big experience in participation and lobbying of their own interests. Thus, the forest administration took the opportunity to block the probable changes. This loop of the process was finished.

When participation is not yet rooted in the modes of the society administration, the "critical mass" of the "power of expertise" which is derived from the rationalist part of the mixed model, is still very important, and thus can easily take the lead and transform the essence of the process, thus determining a new spiral with an inward direction. An expected result of this change is to get to the solution, favourable for the holder of this power.

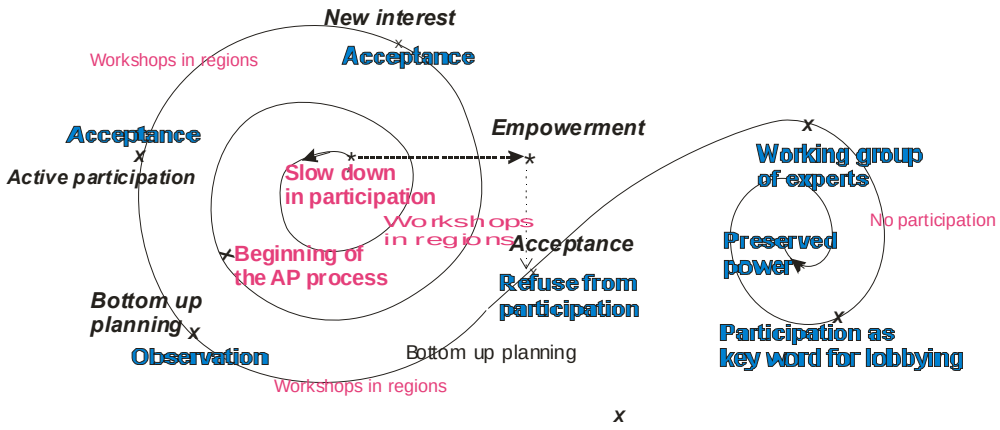
Figure 7: Participation and learning along a double spiral in Forest Code elaboration



Legend:
Blue inscription: reaction to participation form the side of the forestry administration and changing positions
Black inscriptions: reaction from the other actors of the process
Red inscriptions: functioning of participation

The beginning of the next step, the 5 years Action Plan (Fig. 8), was marked by the same atmosphere of "*slow down*" of participation. Necessity to nvolve different stakeholders was re-introduced and pushed again by the Swiss Programme, starting another outward spiral. Very soon it became qualitatively different from the previous stage. On the one hand the issue (planning of activities) was better known and thus better mastered by the stakeholders. On the other hand, participatory procedures have become also known and better mastered.
The issues under discussion were very practical and clear for most of the stakeholders. Hense, from *consultation* and *resource participation*, prevailing at the initial stage, was replaced by a *bottom up planning* at the beginning of the Action Plan definition. This change happened due to the existence of the best specific local knowledge at the lower levels of the forest service hierarchy. The final drafting of the plan became again a *critical point* for the direction of the spiral. The forest administration (headquarters) having realised that the participatory approach for the plan design was resulting in definition of new kinds of activities risked to give more autonomy or authority to the local foresters, and, thus, a possible change in the hierarchical process in the whole administrative structure. Again at this moment there was a clear change from an outward, open for learning and adaptation direzction of the spiral, to the inward one, controlled and directed by the state forest administration hierarchy. Due to the created potential for participation and learning occurred among the actors, this period of this second spiral was shorter then that of the first one. (The change of participation during the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan is presented in detail in the peer-reviewed article, published in the *Swiss Forestry Journal*, 2005, which is part of this thesis).

Figure 8: Participaiton aling a double spiral in Action Plan elaboration



Legend:
Blue inscription: reaction to participation form the side of the forestry administration and changing positions
Black inscriptions: reaction from the other actors of the process
Red inscriptions: functioning of participation

These two examples illustrate how within a rather short period of time, two consecutive decision making processes for the elaboration of two forest policy documents have developed a re-definition of roles, positions and interests among the participating stakeholders. This redefinition can be represented through the successive development of an outward spiral of learning, followed by an inward spiral of control. The critical points for the "switch" of direction are defined by the stronger actor, (in both of the cases the forest administration hierarchy), which was opposed to changes trying to preserve its position.

Due to the learning occurred in the first phase of the process, the radius of the second double spiral, especially the inward part of it, is much shorter, than the radius of the first one. Hence, due to the learning and adaptation to changes, the process of the redefinition of roles and positions goes faster, but still with a different speed for different stakeholders. In our case, the more powerful actor, the forestry administration hierarchy, had a higher capacity of learning and application of the new knowledge.

The theory of the double spiral of decision making is not restricted to the analysis of a specific case. In a broader sense, the change of (and towards) participation during the whole period of the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan can be also analysed with the same referent. (This example was presented in the peer-reviewed article, published in the in the *Forest Policy and economics, 2006.* This article is part of the thesis*).*

Summing up:

From the Kyrgyz example of the mixed model implementation, it was possible to draw interesting conclusions in the logic of the iterativity in a policy reform process. This double spiral theory, although not completely constructed, appeared as a new and promising idea to be presented in scientific papers (cf. 2 of them included in this thesis). Questions are certainly still numerous. What are the precise factors in the inversion of the spiral? Can an inward spiral get to the expected result as initially aimed at?

At the beginning of each decision making process, apart from the concrete expected result, there is always a more or less shared vision of a common objective. For example: “participation is introduced for the empowerment of stakeholders” was the initial objective in the Kyrgyz case. In fact, this common objective will probably never be reached. At least within one cycle of a decision making process. No matter how open the process is, there is always an underlying question, “who finally has the power to decide”? At the beginning of the process when the positions and approaches are not yet (equally) clear, the ultimate objectives of all the involved stakeholders are to define their own positions in relation to the others. This goes through mutual adaptation and individual learning. As the initial capacities of the participants are not equal, their capacities for learning are also different. Thus at one point, one of the stakeholders is the first to re-define his position and shape his proper objective in the process. Since this moment, this stakeholder becomes the (may be indirect) leader of the process, moving it towards the achievement of his ultimate objective. The process goes on because the other stakeholders are not informed about this change and do not realise it immediately.

The application of the same rigorous procedures (application of the same rules of the day) allows those “stronger” stakeholders to instrumentalise participation and direct it towards their proper expected result, thus changing the outward ‘learning spiral” into an inward “controlling” one, aimed at the achievement of the newly defined solution.

In fact, this ultimate “desired solution” can not be reached either. The continuous learning and adaptation also brings the other stakeholders to a re-definition oftheir positions. New interest groups and coalitions are constituted, and thus the situation and environment are changing, requiring a new re-definition of the supposed common objective. Hence, a new spiral of learning is started again and continues till a new re-definition of the ultimate objective. The period of learning, same as the period of controlling, in this second spiral tend to be shorter

and shorter, so that the process will go faster due to the knowledge, already generated during the previous double spirals.

Certainly, this interpretation of stakeholders' roles and positions along the forest (or a more general) policy reform process through double spirals is an abstract vision of the inter-relations during the process under the impact of various contexts. There are no normative elements in it, which would be possible to measure in the habitual sense or strictly position them along the spiral. At the present step of the research, the points along the spiral are fictive and have rather a demonstrative character.

Chapter IV

Articles

- ***The evolution of stakeholders' participation in a process of forest policy reform: from Concept to National Forestry Programme in Kyrgyz Republic.***: pp. 134- 145
- ***Assessment of an iterative process: the double spiral of re-designing participation:*** pp.146-162
- ***Participation as a new mode of governance?: scientists and policy makers in a double spiral***: pp**.** 164-187
- ***The involvement of stakeholders in a forest policy reform process: democracy promotion and power redistribution.***pp.188-198

The evolution of stakeholders' participation in a process of forest policy reform: from Concept to National Forestry Programme in Kyrgyz Republic. (*Swiss Forestry Journal,*. 156, 10/05, 2005).

This article was the first effort to have a general comprehensive analysis on the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan. Looking back on the events I have been part of, from the distance of time and place, helped me to have an analytical view on the changing roles and positions of the different stakeholders, and, consequently, the evolution of participation in the process. In fact, the process is clearly divided into two stages. The first stage is linked with the definition of the new forest policy, but also with the introduction of participation into the decision-making. The second phase begins with the evaluation of the first five years of the process and corresponds to the re-orientation of the new forest policy. This stage is marked by the clear definition of the leading stakeholders in the process and the effects of learning from participation. The analysis of the evolution of participation in both stages is given on the background of the presentation of the main forest policy documents elaborated at that time. Some context factors, essential for the understanding of the situation are given as well.

Although my previous papers and presentations were rather dealing with either methodological aspects or some separate steps of the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan, the work over this paper gave me another angle for consideration it. It helped me to see the process and interactions within it in their continuity and iterativity. In fact, it gave a formal basis for the thesis and re-definition of its title. I got another understanding of participation, and thus, the idea of the formulation of propositions linked to this concept. This new understanding, even if not yet finalised, was different from the vision and ideas of my former colleagues from the Swiss Support Programme in Kyrgyzstan about participation and the policy reform process in general. That is why it was very important for me to have this article published in the Swiss Forestry Journal and, indeed, I had some feed-backs both from my former colleagues, but also from the people interested in Kyrgyzstan, and in the aspects of participation.

To work individually (not in co-authors) on a peer-reviewed article was one more new experience for me. I had to learn to accept critics, and not to be discouraged by it. To put all the multiple "important details" and "essential descriptions" into *just* several pages of the article, but presented in a comprehensible way. I understood the importance to be rigorous.

This article was a big test for me. It also gave me a certitude that I wanted to go on with the thesis.

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Der Einfluss von Aufnahmefehlern und Wachstumsvorgängen auf die Stammzahlverteilung in Buchennaturverjüngungen unter Altholzschirm
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Erfassung von Waldlücken mittels Laserscanning
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The Evolution of Stakeholders' Participation in a Process of Forest Policy Reform in Kyrgyz Republic
Valentin Queloz und Ottmar Holdenrieder
Wie gross wird Heterobasidion annosum s.l.? – Eine Literaturübersicht

The Evolution of Stakeholders' Participation in a Process of Forest Policy Reform in Kyrgyz Republic *(reviewed paper)*

IRINA KOUPLEVATSKAYA-YUNUSOVA

Keywords: Forest policy process; participation; deliberation; governance; Kyrgyzstan; Central Asia. FDK 903 : (575.2)

Abstract: Die unter Mitwirkung erfolgte Reform nationaler Forstpolitik beweist, dass es sich um einen komplexen, mehrschichtigen Prozess handelt, in dessen Verlauf sich alle Beteiligten laufend an den sich ständig verändernden Kontext anzupassen haben. Am Beispiel von Kirgistan wird gezeigt, dass Mitwirkung nicht nur ein Vorgehen der beratenden Demokratie oder ein gemeinschaftliches Lernen ist, sondern sie ist für die stärkeren Stakeholder-Gruppen auch ein Mittel zur Wiedererlangung der Macht.

Abstract: National forest policy reform based on participation proves to be a complex multi-layer process in the course of which all the participants are subject to continuous adaptation to the permanently changing context. The example of Kyrgyzstan shows that participation is not only a procedure for deliberative democracy or collaborative learning, but also a means for re-appropriation of power by the stronger stakeholders.

Introduction

The Kyrgyz forest policy reform process began in 1997 as a stakeholder participatory process. In retrospect, this reform process has two clear stages: between 1997–2001 a new forest policy was elaborated, and during 2001–2005 there was a reorientation of this forest policy. What were the circumstances and driving forces leading to these distinct stages? What characterized this shift and how was the content and outcome of the policy affected? Can existing theories of decision making and social development help to explain this shift? Did democratic processes of public participation in policy formulation influence the formerly centralized decision making system? Are there lessons learned from this experience that could be «transposed» to the design or understanding of other reform processes? What can be learned from the experience of the Kyrgyz forest policy process about using participatory processes as a means to reform centralized political systems? This paper provides an analysis of the evolution of the participatory procedures developed in the Kyrgyz forest policy reform process in order to suggest some answers to these questions.

Moves towards decentralization and democratization in the developing countries have created a new political climate that requires policy makers to be more accountable to the public. This is characteristic not only for the countries in transition, but also for the countries with «old democracies». The idea of creating better governance through broader participation of civil society is theoretically supported by scholars in both US and Europe (APPELSTRAND 2002; GERMAIN *et al.* 2001; FINGER-STICH 2003; SHANNON 1999, 2003; TABBUSH 2004), and also by European Union goals of achieving greater democratic governance through participatory models. Presently, when in «many countries Representative Democracy has been heavily criticized for its inability to protect citizens' interests... leading to the crisis of legitimacy faced by institutions» (PIMBERT & WAKEFORD 1991), the idea of participatory democracy is posed as an alternative model. Participatory democracy means that all the people who may be affected (i.e. all stakeholders) should be involved when policies and plans are made, put into action, monitored and evaluated. Participatory democracy is based upon a belief that open, public deliberation provides a policy or decision making environment in which reasons are publicly exchanged and the ability to mold solutions and achieve consensus on policies is developed from the exchange of such public reasoning. Clearly, a participatory process is based upon the principle of inclusion, in that the involvement of multiple social actors is necessary for sufficient representation of all affected and interested stakeholders. In practice, there is attention to ensure the participation of previously excluded citizens so as to equalize political influence. Thus, a participatory model embraces both open discourse and deliberation and broad inclusiveness of viewpoints and interests in order to democratise policy making and move beyond representative democracy and traditional forms of consultation (BREGMAN 1999). Different stakeholders have different ways of understanding of what is happening as well as different solutions to perceived problems. Ensuring that all points of views are given a fair hearing and full consideration means that a complete set of, often contradicting, claims, concerns and issues would be drawn up as a basis for a negotiated compromise leading to a commonly accepted decision (BUTTOUD & YUNUSOVA 2003b). Deliberation and inclusion also provide an important learning experience for the participating policy makers, bureaucrats and professionals, by challenging their beliefs, attitudes and behaviour through debate and interaction with lay people and ordinary citizens (PIMBERT & WAKEFORD 1991). A first experience of deliberative participation in the forest policy formulation, implementation and evaluation processes in the Kyrgyz Republic, one of ex-soviet republics, gives an interesting context for analysing the evolution of stakeholders' participation in a process of forest policy reform.

Framework

The Kyrgyz Republic emerged as a newly independent state after the collapse of the Soviet Union and declared itself a democracy. The period under consideration (1991–2004) is clearly marked by a new phenomenon for the Kyrgyz society: transition to a market economy and political decentralisation with consequent institutional, economic and social reforms. The needed modes of governance were considerably different from the previously practised ones, which were extremely centralised, top-down planning systems. Thus, different types of relations in society led to the recognition of and need for changing the ways of political decision making. Those general trends in the political life of the country had a direct impact on the situation in its forestry sector. The Kyrgyz forestry sector at this time can be characterised by (i) state ownership on the forests, managed by the state forestry administration through territorial subdivisions (management units)[1]; (ii) insignificant forest cover combined with low accessibility and

limited management[2]; (iii) concomitant to low legal market value, a high ratio of uncontrolled excessive use by the local population (through grazing and illegal fellings for firewood and construction purposes) caused by the economic difficulties in the country; (iv) very unstable conditions of the forest, due to previously imposed silviculture and especially unregulated human pressure.

In this context, the process of elaboration of a new forest policy was initiated, having been introduced and facilitated, to a great extent, by international donors[3]. Mindful of the multiplicity of existing interests in the relation to forest management and the wide variety of stakeholders, the importance of the expression and representation of all the interests was considered as a main requirement of the new forest policy. Furthermore, consequent to the democratic processes which were being developed in the country, the forestry administration could no longer serve as the only decision maker. Thus deliberative processes needed to be introduced as a mechanism for decision making in order (i) to help the stakeholders to form their own opinions and expectations; (ii) to offer the participants of the process a possibility to justify their views and permit definition of potentials and priorities, because deliberation encourages people to provide general justifications or reasons, and not just private preferences (Levine 2002); (iii) to give the decision makers a better insight into the public' concerns and, finally, (iv) to legitimise the decisions. The inclusion of various stakeholders representing different, and often opposed, interests (with the background of practical lack of previous experience with participation in common decision making) required a very rigorous framework in order to base decisions on a compromise between various existing positions and interests.

For the conditions of the Kyrgyz Republic, a combination of an instrumental rationalist model policy making and the communicative incremental one seemed to be the most appropriate framework, since this approach could combine the habitual way of top down decision making with new democratic trends in the development of the Kyrgyz society. With the application of the «mixed model» (Buttoud & Samyn 1999; Buttoud 2000) adapted for forest policy decisions using specific cases (Buttoud & Yunusova 2002, 2003a), the forest administration acted as a major contributor, trying to reconcile a logical rationalist sequence for identifying and classifying principles, objectives and means (normative and deductive logic) with a negotiation approach (systemic and inductive process), thus replacing instrumental rationalism by a social consensus. The main feature of the mixed model is to involve all stakeholders at each step of a rationalist sequence for defining and implementing new decisions. This process may bring a mutually complementing top-down and bottom-up approaches into procedures and institutions (Buttoud 1999a). The mixed model, as applied in the Kyrgyz process, included the following steps, all conducted in a participatory way:

- systematic analysis of the current situation;
- formulation and structuring of objectives (aimed at the solution of identified problems), grouped as a comprehensive strategy with expressed needs for changes;
- identification of precise measures and means for the implementation of the strategy;
- policy implementation;
- follow-up and evaluation.

The basic objectives of the new Kyrgyz forest policy formulation process were concerned with:

(i) specification of the relationships between the forestry administration, local authorities and the local population, based on co-operation and democratic principles;
(ii) definition of the need for technical adaptation with a guarantee of a better link between conservation and use of the forests;
(iii) overcoming organisational limits and an outdated management structure, which were characterised by excessive centralisation, heavy bureaucratic systems, excessive control from the politically powerful and strong controlling structures;
(iv) improvement and adaptation of forestry legislation.

Participation during the first stage: elaboration of a new forest policy (1997–2001)

Analysis of the current situation in the forestry sector in Kyrgyzstan (1997–1998)

The process began in an empirical way by conducting a participatory rural appraisal (PRA) that was still based on a traditional rationalist analysis of the potentials and constraints for defining the public action. The technique was based on the following procedures: preliminary individual enquiries, conducted both in written form and as interviews, for the expression of initial stakeholders' demands and positions; complementary information from the analysis of existing documents; workshops for common discussion of individual positions; working groups for expert analysis and summarizing of all the received information; public seminars for presentation and open discussion of the results at a broader level. At this step, the term «participation» was introduced, along with procedures for promoting participation. In order to help the participants to overcome their mental resistance and promote free deliberation, the technique of «cards on board» was applied (the participants were asked to provide their ideas anonymously, on the cards, which were then grouped on the board and served as a basis for discussion).

What kind of participation took place? Looking back at this first step, several main characteristics of the process could be stated:

- It was a very broad inclusion of various actors and stakeholders of the forestry sector, from all the levels of hierarchical structure, vertically and horizontally (over nine hundred people, have been participating during the nine months period of the process).
- It was rather a consultation, where the decision-makers were asking a group of stakeholders to give their opinions and/or provide advice on some topics, without delegating any decision authority. At the same time, it was a resource participation, as the stakeholders were invited to participate not only for their information input in the discussion, as resource persons. Their presence was instrumentalised also for legitimization of the processes or its decisions vis-à-vis a higher hierarchy (Buttoud 1999a). The information on facts was the main element of communication and the participants were rather expected to give their knowledge and opinion on the difficulties and potentials of the sector

[1] Still preserved from the Soviet time hierarchical system of «leshozes» (territorial forest management units) with centralized top-down decision making.
[2] For over 50 years silvicultural measures were restricted to maintenance and sanitary measures, due to declared protective role of the forests.
[3] Basically the Kyrgyz-Swiss Forestry Support Programme (Kirfor), which has been implemented in Kyrgyzstan since 1995 by a Swiss Foundation, «Intercooperation».

at the moment. At the same time, having no previous experience of participation in decision making, and being unsure of possible outcomes, they were anyway reluctant to make any analysis or critiques.

- It was a collaborative learning process, which formulated a general consensus that a new forest policy was needed in order to improve the situation. Collaborative learning is an approach which tends to reconcile various positions in an adaptive way through a direct co-operation. As it gives the main initiative to the actors (partners) themselves, a clear basic consensus among them is required at the outset to ensure the effectiveness of this method (Buttoud & Yunusova 2003b). At the same time, it was also basic practical learning: from the side of participants-both technically (learning how to express their own ideas) and mentally, (learning that participation in policy formulation process was possible in principle). From the side of the decision makers, (forestry administration), it was learned that inclusion of other actors and stakeholders (including forestry technicians, the executors of decisions) may bring additional information and ideas and promote the legitimacy of decisions.
- The supporting role of the expert group had an utmost importance both for organizing and leading the process and analyzing the results.

National Concept of Forestry Sector Development (1999)

This document was conceived as a Governmental statement setting up strategic political goals (for 20–25 years) and defining the main strategies for their achievement. The same conceptual framework of the mixed model, the same techniques promoting participation and deliberation, the same procedures for involving participants as during the analysis of the current situation in 1997–98 were applied for the process of elaboration of the National Concept of Forestry Sector Development (Yunusova 1999). However, since this step immediately followed the analysis, the capacities for participation created during that preceding step of the policy process were evident and easy to assess:

(i) People involved during the first step often volunteered to participate in the second one, willing to be part of decision-making.
(ii) Having learned how to express their own positions, participants started to provide critical and constructive ideas.
(iii) Establishment of the process and involvement of the actors were easier to organise;
(iv) Contributions of participants were changing from an informational to a quality participation, as the participants did not limit themselves to only providing information. They were now able to argue and defend their own positions. Furthermore, they were willing to check whether the expressed ideas were included in the draft document.
(v) Forestry administration itself became very much involved in the process: providing assistance in organisation, mobilising actors and stakeholders for participation, directly participating in the process and lobbying for the results at the Government level.

The changed attitude to and capacities for participation inevitably caused the change of methodology. A more conscious participation (compared to the stage of analysis) gave a clearer shaping of the stakes, thus bringing up the issue of a necessary compromise between conflicting interests (total protection vs. multiple use; top down planning vs. decentralisation; public involvement in forest management vs. strictly restrictive legislation, etc). The strategic character of the document required compromise on the visions of the long term perspectives (25–30 years in the case of the National Concept of Forestry Sector Development), thus all the disputable items related to the different possible scenarios for the future were discussed by the various participants, in a very abstract way. For stimulating the discussions and promoting a compromise, the technique of «cards on board» was applied oriented to the needs of negotiation: cards received from the participants were re-grouped on the board as:

(i) ideas understood and accepted by everybody, thus not requiring further discussion (eg. status of foresters and forest guards, increase of the forest cover etc) and considered as commonly acceptable possible decisions;
(ii) ideas generally conflictual, but leaving a possibility for negotiation (eg. mainly the aspects related to conservation and utilisation of resource and internal management structures inside the forest service);
(iii) points absolutely conflictual, with no possibility of discussion at the moment of presentation (mainly inter-institutional relations with the ministry of environment), such issues were usually excluded from discussion.

Further negotiation was mainly concentrated on the ideas from the second group of cards. But, due to the abstract nature of the discussed strategy, such cards were not yet numerous.

New Forest Code (1999)

A Forest Code, as a legal framework defining rights and duties of anyone for the implementation of the new policy, needed to be derived from the Government statement and based on the strategic lines defined by the National Concept of Forestry Sector Development (Concept). The phase of draft elaboration of this Forest Code introduced the first break down in the participatory process. As a result of deliberative elaboration of the Concept, forestry administration in general, and its leader at that moment in particular, had created a very good image of «democratic reformists» both at the national level and governmental structures, and throughout the hierarchy of the forest service. In the circumstances of parliamentary election campaigns, occurring at that moment, the Forest Code was of a very high political interest. Thus, within a very short period (6 months) the forestry administration prepared a draft Forest Code with no link to the Concept and participation. This way, the important political decision was made in traditional technocratic authoritarian way, disregarding results of participatory process, but using «participatory» as a slogan while lobbying the draft Forest Code in the Parliament.

Programme «Les» (2000) – 5 years Action Plan for the period 2001–2005

After being defined and legally constructed, the new forest policy needed to be implemented. The programme Les[4] (Action Plan 2001–2005) was conceived as an executive tool for the implementation of the National Concept of Forestry Sector Development. The prepared draft included a general part

[4] Programme «Les» («forest» in Russian) – For juridical reasons, the name was preserved from traditional 5-year plan of activities prepared for the forestry sector in a centralized way, during the Soviet period.

with orientation for activities and basic elements for achieving objectives defined by the national policy (approaches to be conducted, means to be set up). In the annex, following the same logic, more detailed tables presented main objectives, priorities, expected results and related means engaged at the level of all the management units. The tables also focused on the role and tasks of forestry administration in assistance to the strategies of the management units. Such a technically comprehensive draft plan was a result of a process which followed the same logic of the mixed model (as during the Analysis and Concept preparation), when the input from various actors and stakeholders received in the course of discussions and workshops was complemented by traditional technocratic planning at the level of the management units themselves and analytical summarizing of results by an experts' group.

An abstract approach treating general conceptual issues, as it was applied for defining the strategic links of the policy, was not sufficient for more specific discussions related to what should be done immediately. Furthermore, for the participants the operational technical aspects of concrete activities to be implemented (by most of them), have presented much more interest and importance than abstract strategy, thus the conflicts of interests became more evident and frequent. For this purpose, the approach of constructive confrontation (Buttoud 1999b) was adapted. The method consisted in grouping and discussing all the disputable issues expressed (at that moment) by the participants, which would need to be addressed by the plan. Hypothetically, discussion of the existing problems and analysis of divergences can give a good basis for defining means for resolution and implementation. Practically, and this was the interest of the applied methodology, many of the formerly conflicting issues found a compromise resolution in the course of such discussion-confrontation. A simple and very «present practice»-oriented way of putting questions was adapted to the knowledge, experience and capacities of the participants of the process. In the process of plan formulation, the participants were mainly representing foresters, forest rangers (forest management units i.e. the direct implementers of the plan) and the local population: villagers and representatives of the local authorities (village and regional councils), i.e. those who would be affected by the plan. Thus the logical frame for discussions was oriented towards:

- The present situation (description, logic) disclosed through questions like: «How are the forests used by stakeholders? Who are the main actors? How much is the forest beneficial to the users? What are the relations between stakeholders and the forest managers? What are the interests of the local people to the forest? How do foresters consider the demands of local population?»
- The challenges to be addressed, defined through questions like: «What are the local and regional problems to be solved through forest conservation and development? What are the priorities for forest management?»
- The existing capacities through questions like: «What is (at the moment) existing and being done? Are the existing management tools adapted to forest conservation and development? Are there additional possibilities for improvement of actions?»
- The constraints to be foreseen: «What are the constraints limiting the implementation of previously planned activities? Are the previously planned activities achieving the expected results? What can be potential difficulties for reaching some of the defined objectives? Is there any risk in implementing some actions, with possible negative side-effects? What are the disputable points between managers and other actors?»
- The actions to be identified: «How can the situation be improved in the future? What are the priorities in selection of possible measures? What would be the time-frame for each defined action? How can the technical planning be improved? Which new technical or organisational solutions may be useful? Which actions would be proposed by the participants?»
- The partnership structure: «Is there any need for an additional coordination of actions? How the actions are to be carried out? What should be the arrangements between the various participants? What are the relative responsibilities of the actors in implementation?»
- The way for follow-up and evaluation of the actions: How to appreciate or even measure that the action is satisfactorily conducted or not? Which indicators must be retained for each negotiated objective? What should be the best periodicity for the evaluation? Who could perform the follow up and evaluation (Yunusova 2003)?

This logical frame gave a good basis for the common part of the plan, which was providing general lines for activities. Complementing technical tables have been prepared by the management units, following similar techniques, with the inclusion of all the staff of the unit (new procedure in practice)[5]. An expert group at the level of forestry administration was responsible for the final design of the draft plan. The application of the «mixed model» considerably broadened the structure of participation and promoted a complete «bottom up approach». The process was first conducted at the regional level, and then aggregated, with the use of similar techniques, at the national level. Discussions and negotiations between the public authority and the stakeholders were introduced at each step of the process and, in many cases, led to compromise decisions. Nevertheless, the well organized broad deliberative process applied for the formulation of this action plan, in the long run did not guarantee that the final approval of the plan would respect democratically created ideas and concerns. Presentation of the final draft of the Action Plan for the approval of the Government was in the responsibility of administrators who have been dealing with the preparation of 5 year action plans since the time of the Soviet Union. Initially they were involved in the participatory process for the definition of the new Action Plan, but quit the process with the arguments that plans should be defined by specially trained experts. Eventually, they have re-arranged the prepared draft plan so that it would fit habitual framework and re-oriented it to the achievement of the extended areas of new forest plantations. And that was the Action Plan approved by the Government. Since the Action plan for the forestry sector would not have a very big impact on the majority of the population of the country, the forestry policy makers did not feel obliged to be accountable to the general public, while, at the sectoral level, where the structure was very much hierarchical, accountability did not present a very big challenge. As it was the case with the Forest Code, a soviet style top down prescriptive 5-year plan (with complete disregard of results of participatory process) concluded this first stage of the new Kyrgyz forest policy reform. Implementation of this plan was expected to follow a usual «top-down command»-«bottom up report» system.

[5] Here it should be noted that not yet all the management units were able to prepare such tables, which could be partially explained by the lack of experience and skills for analysis and planning and, sometimes, professional knowledge among the managers. This proves the importance of the role of capacity building in promoting quality participation.

Evidently, when the democracy has not been well-rooted in the society, just an individual deliberative process, initiated for a quite technical decision does not change the conventional authoritarian way of decision making.

What can be concluded from this first stage?

The participatory process for the Kyrgyz national forest policy formulation is usually presented as a successful exercise by the government and the international community. As a new phenomenon (for Kyrgyzstan reality) it has introduced significant changes in public norms and procedures. It has also changed the foresters' understanding of forest management and economy (including multipurpose management concept and norms), due to the involvement of the local population into the process. Finally, various participants have realised that they could play an effective role in decision making, and that policy was not an abstract notion. All this is true, but there were also some big constraints in the process. (Yunusova *et al.* 2003). First, it was difficult to associate many participants coming from private or non governmental institutions, the former being not active yet, and the latter showing little interest when it comes to forest management issues. In the majority of cases, participants of the workshops, coming from the forest service at different levels, used the discussion as a forum for promoting their own interests. Finally, the following summarised conclusions can be drawn from the first stage.

Democratic processes really require learning elements

The psychological weight of the soviet system heritage decreased the capability of deliberation and free self-expression for many of the participants. At least at the beginning of the process, participants seemed to be reluctant to speak or even have an opinion on forest policy measures. From the methodological point of view, the technique of cards on board at the initial stage of the process, proved to be very helpful in «getting the people talking.» The «experienced» participants, those who were involved in different steps of the process, have progressed from consultation-participation to free deliberation and lobbying. The evidence for this was the change of manner and content of their contribution to the process. The majority of participants did not have a strategic vision and were not experienced in abstract thinking. Thus, technical and practical issues related to their daily lives and professional activities were covered better in discussions, while strategic policy aspects were left out. This dynamic demonstrates that a bottom-up approach alone is not sufficient for a comprehensive decision. The input of many of the participants was limited by their scope, knowledge and experience. Therefore, a technical expert analysis should complement the communicative processes.

Democratic processes depend on political, cultural, ethical and historical frameworks

A broader model of policy decision making is needed for guiding the final decision (unless the interests of a majority are on stake). Otherwise, there is always a risk of disregarding decisions taken in a participatory way. This is especially true for narrow sectoral policies, which also have a more narrow impact on the society in general. The dominant role of the State in the decision-making may result in the increase of regulatory and restrictive aspects of the legislation, thus leading to the consolidation of power of the already most powerful stakeholders (as it was in the case with forestry administration and the Forest Code). It is impossible to «force» participation. During the period under consideration, forest policy formulation might have been viewed as a narrow sectoral process by NGOs, the Ministry of Environment and Nature Conservation, as well as by other sectoral ministries, who opted for not participating. There are various reasons for this ranging from their lack of readiness and knowledge for participation, (same as it was the case for the other stakeholders) to the feeling of competing interests (conservation of environment vs. multipurpose forest use). There is always the question of representation. Usually representation refers both to the relationship between the individual participants and the entity they are expected to represent as well as to the relationship between these entities and the broader society. How representative were the participants in the Kyrgyz case, if generally in the society there are no constituted associations or interest groups? In this case one can never be sure that all the relevant components (here, social needs) may be reasonably expressed. If only some of identified and specific stakeholders are participating in the process, how does one include ethical and cultural aspects of the meaning of forestry for the people? Each participant has his own concepts, perceptions of reality, language for knowing this reality. Tools and conceptual frameworks may differ from one participant to another, because expected results are also different. Pluralism means very often incoherence (Buttoud 1999b). As the participants may be numerous and opposed, there may be a lot of contradictory issues. Participatory planning was frequently used by the politicians as a binding obligation to achieve the plan's fulfillment. As an example, the «participation card» was played when lobbying the Parliament, leading to the beginning of the instrumentalisation of participation.

A rigorous methodology is needed for facilitating the process of deliberation

As one of alternative strategies of the forest policy formulation in Kyrgyzstan was to install deliberative participatory procedures for decision making in the forestry sector, special attention was given to a broadest possible involvement of various stakeholders. For this purpose, written enquiries and oral interviews were used along with workshops and common discussions. A rigorous technique for combining the above factors is costly, takes significant effort and considerable time. At the same time the practice showed that the involved participants tended to react and behave differently during individual interviews and group discussions. Quite frequently, speeches during workshops were contradicting answers provided during individual interviews. Therefore, for the organizers of the process it was essential to utilize a combination of various types of communication. It was also concluded that only the nominal group process (groups of participants involved in discussions) was not sufficient to identify stakeholders' issues, values and desired changes. Because of a possible lack of representativeness and preparation of many of the stakeholders for participation, there was a great likelihood that some of the key issues might be left out simply because no one happened to mention them. That is why it was very useful in the Kyrgyz process to combine communicative participative aspects and a technical analysis.

Moderation is a key issue in the process

In the deliberation process, with the inclusion of various types of representatives, there may be many sources of subjectivity. Participants in the process may have limited competence in valuing complex processes, such as forest policy or biodiversity conservation. Routine habitual procedures in the day-to-day matters, when people are making decisions for themselves, are different from the situation when their views, expressed in unusual and for them artificial conditions may lead to a decision, binding for the others. This fact surely affects delib-

eration. On this point, the role of an independent facilitator-moderator is essential. In this respect two important observations are worth mentioning.

- Selection of a moderator: a) a moderator should have some knowledge about the subject of the debate and the background of the process, while at the same time, having no specific personal (nor corporative) interest in the result of the debate; b) a moderator is not supposed to give advice on the possible solutions, but mainly to help participants look for a solution, so experience with the techniques of moderation is important; c) a moderator should have a good potential for an immediate analysis of what may be needed for both stimulating the discussion and mastering the situation.
- Techniques for moderation: a) systematic use of the technique of «cards on board» through a pre-established procedure for expressing basic views and structuring negotiated conclusions; b) open discussion only for comments at the end of each workshop, and conclusions drawn only from clear, verified and reported consensus; c) «active listening» during the discussion, permitting the separation of facts and interpretations, or individual assessments; d) promotion of the involvement of participants through organized discussion; e) observing the procedure of the process (agenda, time-frame, ethics of discussion); f) systematic coming back to the discussion of conclusions of the previous step before initiating the next one.

The involvement of a facilitator may also bring to the consideration of the absence of information during the discussion as a piece of information by itself. In most of the cases, an expert study of the issues being discussed is needed in order to provide the negotiation process with external «neutral» information to be discussed afterwards among the participants.

Those were the key lessons from the first period of the new forest policy elaboration in Kyrgyzstan.

Participation during the second stage of the process: re-orientation of the new forest policy (2001–2005)

Why a re-orientation of the new forest policy?

The reasons for a re-orientation of the new forest policy in Kyrgyzstan were linked to several basic factors. One of them was the continuous transition processes in the country: The concept of a societal transition generally refers to the idea of short revolutionary period leading to incremental or gradual processes of change in complex systems. Such transitions, or structural changes, are the result of many causal interactions on a number of different levels (Loorbach 2004). Historical analysis of societal transitions suggests that transition processes go through different stages, whereas the nature and speed of change differ in each phase:

- predevelopment phase with very little visible change on the societal level, but with a lot of experimentation;
- in the take-off phase the process of change gets under way and the state of the system begins to shift;
- in the acceleration phase structural changes take place in a visible way through an accumulation of socio-cultural, economic, ecological and institutional changes that react to each other; during this phase, there are collective learning processes, diffusion and embedding processes.
- in the stabilisation phase the speed of societal change decreases and a new dynamic equilibrium is reached.

From this point of view the policy formulation stage, described in the previous section has followed the same logic and was developing as an outward spiral[6] (Barstad 2002; *figure 1*).

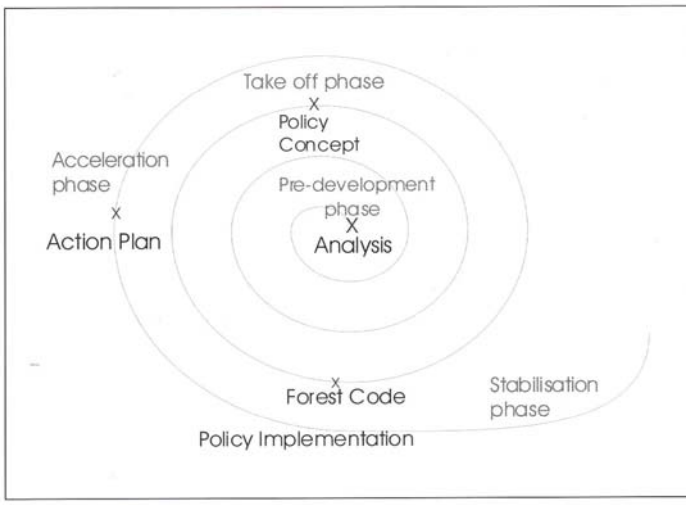

Figure 1: **The forest policy process in Kyrgyzstan conceived as an outward spiral and developed following the transition phases (Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova 2004).**

Abbildung 1: Der forstpolitische Prozess in Kirgistan, dessen Übergangsphasen durch die Spirale versinnbildlicht werden.

At the same time, transition from a planned to a market economy followed by decentralization and general changes in social, economic and political environment, in their turn, had an impact on sectoral policies and governance which were changing very fast following the transition phases. Thus, after only five years of having the new forest policy in place, considerable changes had occurred in the society and required policy adaptation. The second factor was the iterativity of the process. The iterative deliberative process which has been initiated for forest policy formulation requires continuous adaptation through small steps instead of fundamental changes, according to the muddling through theory for continuous adaptation (Lindblom 1959). It is aimed at solving one problem at a time, often using some former solutions until they are proven false. This tactic is applied when reaching for long-term strategic goals, and thus there is an iterative need for evaluation at some intervals, in order to see how the goals are being reached and what kind of changes and adaptation might still be still needed. The results of evaluation of forest policy implementation after 5 years, as foreseen by the National Concept of Forestry Sector Development, can give a clear vision of the needed adaptations. Adaptation, like continuous learning, is a process whereby the actors are seeking for better ways in order to realize their own needs, interests and values, i.e. for the new means to reach existing goals, while taking the results achieved as a basis for defining new goals with consideration of the changed situation.

Public deliberation through participation, which was the basis for policy formulation during the first stage, has initiated a deliberative process with communicative objectives and political learning effect, insofar as participation was teaching the participants to become more capable of understanding and taking a position towards political issues (Boon 1999). Deliberation also creates social learning which means that the

[6] Barstad, J. 2002: Iterative planning processes; supporting and impeding factors. http://www.metla.fi/eu/cost/e19/barstad.pdf (September 21, 2005).

deliberative community learns together through analysis and debate. Through such deliberative processes arise various conceptions of «desired future conditions» for society and the economy (Shannon 2002) and, also uses of resources. Thus the «learning effect» achieved during the stage of policy formulation has affected both the capacity for participation and quality of input in the course of participation, which means that not only has the way of decision taking has changed, but also the decisions themselves (in this case strategy and activities, means and ends also needed to be changed, or, rather adapted to the new knowledge). During the policy formulation stage, the involved actors and stakeholders, the participants, having no previous experience of involvement in decision-making, no strategic view on «desired future», incapable of clear formulation of their stakes and ideas, could not make a strategic contribution to the process. The situation was similar as for the administration: new experience of sharing the decision-making process, of an intersectoral view of sectoral policy, and a as yet unacknowledged need for political legitimacy of decisions did not promote a good leadership of the process. As a result, the National Concept of Forestry Sector Development lost its strategic value already after 5 years because the constituting ideas and priorities had only a short-term vision.

Evaluation of forest policy implementation (2003)

A retrospective evaluation of the processes and results is required from the perspective of strategic adaptive planning (Amdam 1997). This is why an evaluation of the forest policy implementation after 5 years period was planned by the National Concept of Forestry Sector Development. This evaluation was also intended to provide the State Forest Service with practical suggestions for how to contribute to better implementing the relevant decisions at the field level at the time when, if the need might come, there was still a possibility for modification of the relevant plans and decisions. As the policy process is a continuous one, the same procedures, as for the formulation stage, were applied for the evaluation of policy implementation. The expert work complemented contributions from the workshops' discussions which were led with the application of the same methodology of constructive confrontation. Draft proposals prepared by an expert group were regularly presented for a broader public debate through round tables, conference and mass media presentations. (Yunusova *et al.* 2003). The final report on evaluation of forest policy implementation was presented, discussed and officially accepted at a National Conference, where representatives of Kyrgyz Government, Parliament, offices of the Prime Minister and the President of the Republic, sectorial ministries and international projects working in the country, as well as specialists of the forestry sector were involved.

Revision of the National Concept of Forestry Sector Development (2004)

One of the results from the evaluation procedure was to stress that considering the changes occurring at the country level, a new Concept needed to be developed to replace the 1999 statement. At this step, the state forest administration completely appropriated the results of the participatory policy evaluation process so that the revision of the National Concept of Forestry Sector Development was conceived as a purely technical work by the expert group inside the forest service. This was also partly due to the time pressure on translating the results of the evaluation of forest policy implementation into political commitments. The core group directly used the recommendations of the evaluation in the new National Concept of Forestry Sector Development, considered now as the primary basis for all future political and legal documents to be designed in the forestry sector. This new Concept had a particularly high political importance for the forestry administration, as it guaranteed preservation its achieved status and functions, so that participation has been also organised at the political level: representatives of competing ministries (environment, agriculture, finance), members of Parliament, Government and the President's office were invited to a round table discussion, where the results of the evaluation of policy implementation were once again presented as a basis to be transformed into amendments to the National Concept for Forestry Development. The resolution issued after the round table discussion was used for lobbying for approval of the document by the Government. At this step, when the question of power distribution was put on the table, the «mutual gains» method (Buttoud 1999b) for stressing the community of interests and reaching a consensus was effectively applied. Starting from this step, the results of the forest policy process became part of the public relations' campaign of the forestry administration and were broadly presented in printed and visual media.

The National Forest Programme (2004)

In order to put into practice the policy commitments of the Concept, a National Forest Programme (NFP) was elaborated. The National Forest Programme defines a complex of activities and measures for implementation of the National Concept of Forestry Sector Development. Following the international forest policy process, the state forest service realized the importance of an NFP for satisfying requirements of existing and potential donors. Therefore, the preparation of this document again worked as a pure technical exercise, made by the same expert group with support of international consultants, based on results of the participatory process during the policy evaluation step. The reasons for such a choice were similar to those described in relation to the revision of the National Concept of Forestry Sector Development. The draft was approved by the Prime-Minister and presented at the Regional Congress as a model of forest policy formulation for post-Soviet countries. The re-animation of participation at the stage of policy evaluation in Kyrgyzstan played a major role in the executive steps of the process, but it did not clearly influence the final decision.

General conclusions from the second stage

The evaluation process is a way to brush up participation

After a «step back» during the policy implementation stage, when «plan – report» relations were following a purely technocratic top-down scheme, the evaluation brought back the issue of involvement of various actors and stakeholders. Although it was not a spontaneous process, it was again initiated by an international donor (Kyrgyz-Swiss Forestry Support Programme, Intercooperation). But, at this stage, the state forest service, having learned from the policy formulation experience that it could gain from the process of involving stakeholders, took a more active position and led the whole process. The need for intersectorality has become more pressing, presumably due to the general processes ongoing in the society, and thus representatives of other ministries (Ministries of Environment, Justice, Finance, Water and Agriculture) were frequently invited for discussions. Local communities were included into the process as well as local authorities (village councils and regional administrations were regularly informed on the results). Participation as information feed-back was

broadly used at this step. From an administrative perspective, this type of participation can be considered as an efficient means for data collection and an integral part of a broader participatory strategy (Nordic Council of Ministers 2002).

To some extent, it was still a consultation from the side of forestry administration, when participants were not given a real power to influence the decisions, while a new characteristic of the process was functional participation that is besides bringing the information, the participants were actively taking part in the discussions in order to have their ideas disputed and changed from the general discussion (Buttoud 1999a). Now the process has included components of expert deliberation with stakeholders' review and political dialogue, with public deliberation expert review (Shannon 1999).

There are different capacities for learning in the process of participation

Considering the policy-making process as a process of learning, the questions are, who has learned, what has been learned and what kind of impacts the learning has produced. In the Kyrgyz case, the groups of those who learned more, may include experts (the working group, consultants, representatives of the donor organization), state officials (politicians, forestry administration, bureaucrats) and some social actors (interest groups, general public). Theoretically these people could learn about different options for structuring decision-making organizations and processes, the different means to accepted ends, and even the different ends that policy can achieve. Practically, it became evident that the more powerful and better organised stakeholders, in this case the forestry administration, could learn faster and take control over the discussion procedures and get more power due to the deliberation process (in Kyrgyzstan political and administrative status of forest service, during the policy process period, has grown from a department within Ministry of Environment to a Forest Service under the President of the Republic, with managing and controlling functions over the forest wildlife resources). As for the social groups, the level of learning from participation was directly depending upon the status of participants: technical forestry personnel were less open to participation and more restricted to an expression of their daily needs. In the process of an open negotiation leading to a compromise decision, the capacity for abstract thinking and a vision of the future was created among many of the participants of the process. However, the majority of them were still concentrating on the immediate (mainly material and technical) needs, being primarily problem oriented. Because of the huge problems to be faced daily at the technical management unit level and the lack of a long term vision, it was difficult to introduce strategic programmes that have required participatory adaptation. For most of the local foresters a day-to day fulfilment of conventional quantitative plans was evidently still easier to understand and to assess. At the same time, more independent and free to express positions and pursue the ideas were the representatives of science and environmental NGOs, who were new actors in the process.

Capacity building is a precondition for quality participation

The experience of participation has been introduced, but not yet fully rooted. Finally the decision makers could continue to manage at the local level in the conventional way. Following the results of the forest policy evaluation, the forest ranger was declared as a «key-person of the forestry sector» responsible for all management decisions, but at the field level no important change could be noticed in the way the decisions are made even at the moment when the NFP was starting to be implemented. This was, again, due to the lack of training for forest rangers and directors of forest management units (leshozes) in the new management procedures.

Once introduced from outside, participation does not immediately become a deliberate necessity

The idea of sharing the responsibilities for decision making was introduced and once accepted by the forestry administration. Nevertheless, it has not yet become a rule, or a deliberate necessity, required by the public or the stakeholders. The officials, in the best case, agreed to consult the «executors» for their opinion/ideas, or, just use the fact of consultation as an alibi for legitimacy, but were not yet ready for sharing the responsibility for the output of implementation. Participation of the lower levels in the hierarchy has been even used by the forest administration headquarters to block a trend towards an increase of the authority of regional offices. As a result, the executors, not really ready for changes, were convinced that the old way of decision making was less risky.

What can be learnt from participation in the forest policy process in Kyrgyzstan

This example of the first policy reform in Kyrgyzstan brings some highlights regarding what is participation at the national level, and draws some conclusions of general significance.

Democratic processes basically depend on political, cultural ethical and historical backgrounds. The quality of a deliberative process is highly determined by the readiness of the involved stakeholders to participate and debate expressed positions. The role of moderators\facilitators is essential as a guarantee of a balance and equity for all the expressed positions and stakes. The same stage of the process may be characterised by different types of participation. Participation may evolve over time, in the course of an iterative process which is basically moved by social and political learning. At the same time, the capacity for learning is determined by social power of participants and their status. More powerful participants with a higher hierarchical level have a better capacity for learning faster from the process and for instrumentalising the process for their own benefit. When deliberative practices are not yet rooted, there is an evident rapture between the participatory planning and top down controlled implementation. In the societies in transition, processes of changes occur with a different speed, frequency and logic compared to «stable» societies with a long culture of democracy. Due to the lack of experience, practice and democratic culture, also due to very high costs, deliberative processes for policy formulation, implementation, evaluation and adaptation can not be spontaneous in the countries in transition. There is a need for an external impulse and support. But, in any case, public participation does not guarantee that the final decision will consider the input from the process.

Summary

The formulation and implementation of a national forest policy is not a simple linear process of common discussions and negotiations because the permanently changing context requires a continuous adaptation of the involved stakeholders. The process of the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan (central Asia, a former USSR republic), based on participation, clearly shows two distinct periods: a first period of policy formulation

characterized by collaborative learning of the participants of the process; and the second period of policy implementation and adaptation, when the various stakeholders redefined their own strategies and roles. Although the process is still ongoing, this example demonstrates that participation is not only a procedure for deliberative democracy or collaborative learning, it is also a means for re-appropriation of power by the stronger stakeholders in a changing context.

Zusammenfassung

Die Entwicklung der Mitwirkung von Stakeholder-Gruppen im forstpolitischen Reformprozess in Kirgistan

Die Formulierung und Einführung einer nationalen Forstpolitik ist kein einfacher, linearer Prozess wie bei gewöhnlichen Gesprächen und Verhandlungen. Der ständig sich wandelnde Kontext erfordert eine kontinuierliche Anpassung der beteiligten Stakeholder. Der auf Mitwirkung gestützte Reformprozess der Forstpolitik in Kirgistan (Mittelasien, ehemalige Sowjetrepublik) zeigt deutlich zwei verschiedene Phasen: eine erste Phase der Ausgestaltung der Politik, die durch gemeinschaftliches Lernen der Mitbeteiligten gekennzeichnet ist, und eine zweite Phase der Anwendung und Anpassung der Politik, im Verlauf derer die verschiedenen Stakeholder-Gruppen ihre eigenen Strategien und Aufgaben umdefinieren. Obwohl der Prozess weiterhin läuft, veranschaulicht das Beispiel, dass Mitwirkung nicht nur ein Vorgehen der beratenden Demokratie oder ein gemeinschaftliches Lernen ist, sondern sie ist für die stärkeren Stakeholder auch ein Mittel zur Wiedererlangung der Macht in einem sich verändernden Kontext.

Übersetzung: Margrit Irniger

Résumé

Evolution de la participation des groupes d'intérêts au processus de réforme de la politique forestière au Kyrgyzstan

Formuler et mettre en œuvre une politique forestière nationale n'est pas un processus simple et linéaire à l'instar de simples discussions ou négociations. En effet, le contexte en perpétuel mouvement nécessite une adaptation continue de la part des parties intéressées. Le processus de réforme de la politique forestière du Kyrgyzstan (Asie centrale, ex-république de l'URSS), basé sur la participation, montre clairement deux phases distinctes. La première consiste à formuler la politique et est caractérisée par un apprentissage en commun de tous les participants. La deuxième concerne la mise en oeuvre et l'adaptation de la politique, les différents groupes d'intérêts redéfinissant leurs propres stratégies et leur rôle. Bien que le processus soit encore en cours, l'exemple montre que la participation – en plus d'être une procédure de la démocratie consultative ou un apprentissage en commun – représente également, pour les parties intéressées les plus puissantes, un moyen de récupération du pouvoir dans un contexte en évolution.

Traduction: Claude Gassmann

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Author

Irina Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova, Scientific assistant, Engref, Laboratory of Forest Policy, 14 rue Girardet – CS 4216, FR-54042, Nancy, France. E-mail: kouplevatskaya@engref.fr.

Assessment of an iterative process: the double spiral of re-designing participation (in co-authors with Gérard BUTTOUD; *Forest Policy and Economics*, 8 (5) 2006).

This article is derived from the presentations which Gérard Buttoud and myself gave on the occasion of the International Symposium on the Evaluation of Forest Policies and Programmes, organised by ENGREF, together with EFI (European Forest Institute), IUFRO (International Union of Forest Research Organisations) and ENSTIB (School of Wood Sciences and Timber Engineering) in Epinal, France, in 2004.

Evaluation of forest policies was the core issue of the discussions during this Symposium. There was no unanimity in the interpretation of the concept of evaluation. Some scientists were promoting traditional rationalist vision linked with efficiency, based on deductive or systematic analysis. The others were more concerned by the context factors, social and policy issues which determine the actors' behaviour. They were also more oriented towards the impact assessment and iterativity of the process. This vision of evaluation was close to mine.

The idea of the evolution of participation in a forest policy process along a "double spiral"[30] was introduced for the first time at this occasion. It did not shock the people, but did not cause heated discussions either. There was a discussion on a single spiral process development in the fields other than forestry, but it was rather a descriptive spiral of the iterativity of a planning process and adaptation of plans. The inter-relations between the different stakeholders and their roles in the process were not in the focus of such discussions. At the same time, the analysis of the Kyrgyz process gave me clear indications about the links between participation, iterativity of the process, instrumentalisation of participation and consolidation of power.
Together with Gérard Buttoud, we started to think of this possible theory of a "double spiral" development of a policy process. This theory was initially trigged by our analysis of the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan, but also by the "Muddling through" theory of Lindblom, related to iterative planning and adaptation, and the idea of J. Friedman, developed further by R.Amdam and J.Amdam, of a planning process aimed at the exiting solution, which can be presented through an *inward spiral* (the spiral of control), while the process open to any kind of solution, where the motivation to learn is dominant, as presented through the *outward spiral*, the (spiral of learning).
We kept the idea of the "outward" and "inward" directions of the spiral for the description of the evolution of participation within the policy process. The paper presents the idea of this theory illustrated by the example of the Kyrgyz forest policy, whereas the period of the policy formulation is presented through an outward spiral, when the State and the stakeholders are trying to learn from each other and from "experiencing" participation. While, since the moment when the potentials and weaknesses of this new approach got clear to one of the stakeholders (in this case the forest administration) the direction of the spiral is changed to the inward one, and the forest administration takes the process under it's control. Evaluation was considered as a turning point in the process, because it gave a clear picture about the strengths and constraints of the process, of the stakeholders and of the new approach. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, evaluation was also a way to revive and brush up participation.

[30] I made a presentation titled « The spirals of the forest policy development or transformation of participation in an iterative process – the case of Kyrgyzstan », which was published in the proceedings of the symposium.

Thus the first elements of a theory were proposed for publication in the *Forest Policy and Economics* journal, in a special issue devoted to the Evaluation of forest policies and programmes, and it was accepted after some minor revisions.
After the publication, I had got many requests of the text and the references of the article, but, unfortunately, until now, there was no debate with the interlocutors.

The presentation of the theory of a double spiral in the thesis is slightly different from that of the paper, because the work over it has not been finished yet and the theory is still in the process of construction.

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Assessment of an iterative process: The double spiral of re-designing participation

Irina Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova *, Gérard Buttoud

Laboratory of Forest Policy, The French Institute of Forestry, Agricultural and Environmental Engineering (ENGREF), Nancy, France

Abstract

The procedures for reforming forest policies and programmes as promoted through the international dialogue on forests are addressing hard challenges to forest administrations, which are basically still working along a very different scheme for decision making (top-down and command-and-control systems, with no evaluation of the results). One of the most relevant conceptual frameworks to address the issue of forest governance reform under such conditions is the mixed model which tries to link the deductive instrumental and the communicative approaches in a progressive process for change. In the mixed model, the basic structure of the decision making process is a chronological deductive series of steps whose content is defined through a negotiation procedure. The monitoring of the implementation of the forest policy reform aiming at a permanent adaptation to the changes in the context, including those brought from the reform process itself, is provided by the means of participatory assessments along the chain. The mixed model is especially adapted to the follow-up of the National Forestry Programmes, which are supposed to be carried out through an iterative and participatory scheme.

As most of the time the deductive and communicative approaches are not completely fitting to each other, the process of re-designing the forest programme works as a combination of outward and inward spirals (the double spiral), revealed by evaluation procedures.

The experience of the evaluation of a complete cycle of forest policy development in Kyrgyzstan (Central Asia, ex-USSR country), an 8-year case history of implementation of the "mixed model", is presented. The paper explains why the mixed model was used as a basis for the process of forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan, and how in this framework the various forces expressing participants' interests were alternatively balancing from collaborative learning (outward spiral) to target oriented strategies (inward spirals). The paper also shows how the evaluation exercise carried out after 5 years led to a re-definition of the participatory procedures linked with a re-construction of the forest administration authority.
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Keywords: Policy process; Forest policy; Evaluation; Participation; Mixed model; Iterativity; Kyrgyzstan; Central Asia

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +33 383 39 68 43, +33 383 39 68 45; fax: +33 383 30 22 54.
E-mail address: kouplevatskaya@engref.fr (I. Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova).

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1. Linking rationalist evaluation to communicative perspective as a base

1.1. The special role of forest services in forest policy processes

Over the past 15 years, the international dialogue on forests has been bringing some basic changes in the way the forest policies and programmes are designed and evaluated. Different new concepts, supposed to be conducive to sustainable development, have been introduced, and some of them are bringing big changes in the way the decisions are taken in the forest sector. Participation is now presented as a key-word (if not THE key-word), which is supposed to give a new framework for any kind of decision making procedures, and this is, obviously, a considerable change for forestry specialists, who were used to decide through controlled top-down rationalist procedures. Thus a question may be raised: are all the stakeholders on the same level of decision making? Usually, after a period of enthusiasm while designing new programmes and policies, the step of implementation brings back more trivial aspects, and, at the moment for assessment or evaluation, some evidences are reintroduced. Most of the time, it leads to the revision of the concept of forest policy itself.

Among those evidences, the one to be particularly stressed, and carefully considered in the subsequent steps of the policy process, is that in no case the forestry department has the same responsibilities, rights and duties as the other participants in the decision elaboration and implementation.

1.2. Forest services as responsible for implementation

First, the specialised administrative structure is in charge of carrying out the reform, and conducting the related actions derived from the participatory process. Many participants may express their views and contribute to the designing of the process; some of the planned activities may be carried out through a partnership with specific actors more directly engaged in the implementation of such measures; but at the end, only the forestry department is responsible for the implementation procedures and, as such, is supposed to report to the public authority on the results from the common action. This makes the main difference for its position.

Such an asymmetry in the relative positions of the different partners in the forestry programme implementation necessarily creates the need for an adaptation of the evaluation methods to the rationale of the executive agency. Thus the assessment of what is being carried out also needs to be goal oriented, as the conventional technical action of administration is supposed to be based on the instrumental rationality and on a deductive scheme of decision making (measures directly aimed at achieving the predefined objectives), without any consideration of the needs and interests expressed by the users.

1.3. Forest services as experts in designing actions

In addition, the knowledge that may exist among the various participants in a forest policy process is very different from one stakeholder to another. The type of interest they express, as well as the more or less inclusive views they have on forest development, introduce basic differences which usually lead to misunderstanding and discrepancies in the dialogue installed through the participatory procedures. The forestry department staff is usually supposed to have a high level of education and general background on the topics to be addressed in relation to the forest development, which puts them in position of experts in the field of discussion.

Furthermore, there are many issues in the forestry field which cannot be addressed only through the views reflecting interests, as it is the case with the participation of stakeholders. Forests bring many utilities to society, which may not be completely taken into consideration by any stakeholder. Some of the more complex issues (like biodiversity, ecological sustainability) may require a specific knowledge which should not be linked with any kind of social interest. This is the role of the forestry department staff, together with other experts (scientists, experts from environmentalist non-governmental organisations) to bring in this knowledge in order to shape and direct the discussions on what is to be done at the global level (scientifically based deductive decisions).

1.4. The mixed model

Derived from this consideration is a need for taking into account the special position of the forestry depart-

ment in designing and implementing forest policies and programmes. Deductive instrumental procedures have to be kept as a component of the forest policy decision making, and not excluded from a communicative process which would be only directed towards inter-subjective understanding and agreement among stakeholders, omitting direct causal relations. This may only come from merging the two decision making rationales.

A conceptual framework called the mixed model, developing effective processes aiming at a more flexible strategy for decision making and linking the two theoretical approaches, was introduced by Etzioni (1967) for any kind of policy decisions, then adapted by Buttoud and Samyn (1999) for forest policy decisions basing on concrete cases of Madagascar, The Gambia, Rwanda and Gabon, and fully developed by Buttoud and Yunusova in 2002 on the experience in designing the national forest policy in Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia. Its main feature is to involve all stakeholders at each step of a rationalist sequence for defining and implementing new decisions, which is bringing a crossed top-down and bottom-up approach into procedures and institutions, leading to self-reliant policies.

The mixed model, which is rather costly in time, people and money, includes the following steps, all conducted in a participatory way: concerted analysis of the current situation; formulation and structuring of objectives; identification of means and implementation of the project; follow-up and monitoring, evaluation (cf. Fig. 1). Such a conceptual framework provides a tool for confronting decision makers, especially the forest services, to the evolving social reality. It proved its relevance and effectiveness in the conditions when a change is urgent and the State is still important.

With the mixed model, the evaluation procedure makes basically a part of the process of policy development, and is carried out according to the same philosophy, through involving all the stakeholders in a sequence of instrumental rationality. The evaluation is conducted with the use of the same techniques and procedures for negotiation with all the stakeholders, including those retained in the previous step of the policy formulation.

There are numerous stakeholders at the local, national and international levels, and the main concern

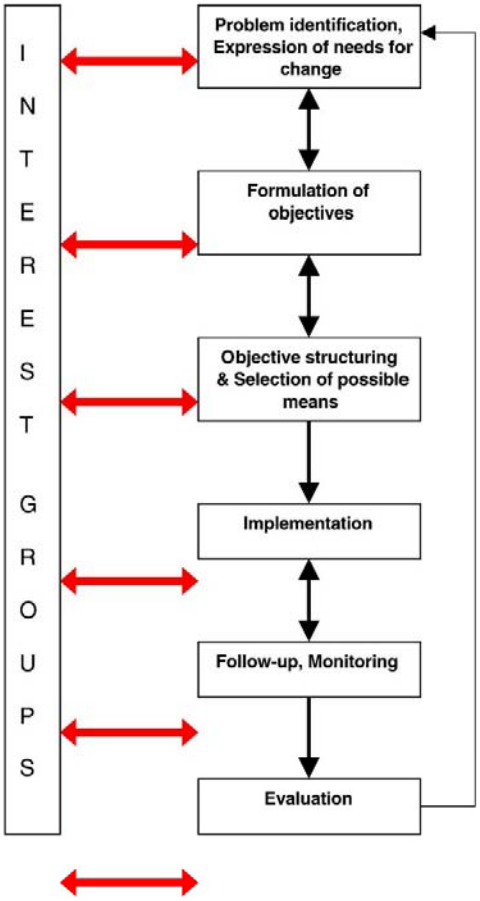

Fig. 1. The mixed model.

is to establish a fair and balanced method, so that all of them can take part in the decision making process. The agreed way of conducting the participatory process has to be the result of negotiations between all interest groups, although, in practice it seems to be almost impossible to achieve this ambitious goal. When it comes down to practice, there are unavoidable flaws and discrepancies between the model and reality (Buttoud and Yunusova, 2002), nevertheless, the current practices derived from this theoretical model are aimed at the most possible coherence to the conceptual framework.

The basic issue to be addressed at the evaluation step is the balance in knowledge building to be found

between expertise (Who is an expert? In what? At which steps of the process? On which issues?) and communication (Why to communicate? With whom? How? When participation should take place?). Regarding those matters, the situation may considerably vary from one case to another, leading to empirical adaptive procedures which, in their turn, may be a source of deviation from the defined concept, due to the instability, or, sometimes even vagueness of the boundaries between expertise and communication. An advantage from the mixed model (which is, at the same time, a difficulty) is the possibility to automatically promote adaptive governance at each step of the policy process, the development of empirical procedures learnt from the local experiences giving its iterativity to the process.

At the evaluation phase, the mixed model completely fits to the administrative norms whilst basing the assessment on a consideration of various stakeholders' positions. The definition of criteria and indicators required by the deductive instrumental scheme is facilitated and conceived in a proactive way, the set of C and I being both a prescriptive code and an instrument for promoting adapted policy and management. The use of the mixed model as a conceptual framework for participatory evaluation leads to a strictly structured procedure which simplifies the negotiation of disputable issues. This approach may often contribute to the shortening of the rationalist sequence, the introduction of communication leading to a permanent discussion related both to the concept of forest policy and the objectives and means of the programme implementation.

2. Evaluation at the core of adaptive management

2.1. Evaluation as a crucial point in the forest policy reform process

The mixed model cannot be interpreted as a fixed conceptual framework, on the contrary, it leads to instability and re-negotiation, due to the divergences between the deductive instrumental and the communicative viewpoints and positions. It directly addresses the issue of governance, just because the formulation and implementation of the forest policy decisions work in a context of a self-organising system creating new structures and institutions. As a consequence, the mixed model is a constructivist approach, directly and permanently contributing to the definition of the new modes of guidance (negotiation vs. persuasion) at the same time as both public and private actors are engaged in policy designing and making. In such a context where most of the views and actions are disputable, emerging decisions are not stable, they evolve through giving rise to various types of approaches and practices in a changing frame of community of engaged actors. In the mixed model, a permanent confrontation takes place between external expertise and communication among stakeholders, which needs to be settled. As instrumental rationalism and collaborative learning are very often leading to opposite solutions, several feedback loops may be necessary before defining the series of specific consensus, permanently re-interpreted through the two basic different logics. At every step of the process of forest policy reform, there is a permanent need for a re-interpretation and re-negotiation of goals and means by the various participants, including the forestry department.

The process of continuous adaptation through successive small steps, called muddling-through, creates the iterative need for evaluation at some intervals, in order to see how the goals are being reached and what kind of changes and adaptations are still needed. In this iterative scheme, evaluation plays an important role, being a crucial moment when the whole formal procedure may be set up for the re-definition of the policy scope and measures. In most of the cases the responsibility of the forestry department is to be engaged in assessing the results, which brings back oppositions and contradictions with the stakeholders. The evaluation procedure, especially conducted through the mixed model related approaches, is thus very challenging for most of the actors, who come back to the re-negotiation with different views and positions.

Evaluation in such a context is definitely a dynamic and context-dependent process of re-interpretation and re-negotiation of the policy, but is neither just a simple step in a linear series of activities, nor a defined momentum for a neutral analysis (after an implementation phase) of the effectiveness, efficiency, equity, utility, etc. of the applied measures, as it is usually stated in the static and conventional deductive instrumental approach.

2.2. The double spiral of power re-distribution

In the mixed model, there is a permanent opposition between solutions and decisions drawn from the deductive instrumental and communicative approaches, which may lead to a permanent negotiation.

In this negotiation, the forestry department from the one side and the various stakeholders (and sometimes the public) from the other, are in position to learn both from each other and from the mutual confrontation in the permanently changing context. A compromise is not always easy to be rapidly reached, and inductive discussions are progressively developing along the spiral.

When the context evolution is not well understood by some of the actors (including especially the forest service, who is not always aware of what participatory democracy means), learning is more important than lobbying in the decision making context. The adaptation of solutions drawn from the negotiation proceeds step by step through an outward spiral (Barstad, 2002) where the various participants in the process are trying to define their respective positions, getting from discussing a better knowledge of the current capacities, which they can develop, but without any precise view about the state to be reached. This process of continuous learning is open to any kind of solution at all the stages, while the main moving force is that the knowledge created by the process may change the goals and help in adapting to the new situation. As the international dialogue on sustainable forest management clearly promotes a broad involvement of stakeholders, an open discussion is usually proposed for passing from resource participation to quality participation based on dynamic learning. It may take some time for the various participants to distinctly shape their views and interests and to express clear positions. The mechanism of outward spiral for building-up knowledge through collaborative learning is constructive of the policy concept to be shared among the participants. Nevertheless, as soon as the supposed knowledge of participants is increasing and reaches a level when decision making conditions become less uncertain, there comes a pressure from those of the participants who are confronted to challenging issues (including the forestry department). They start to get the process evolving towards a solution which would be more depending on their own understanding of what their interest is. Thus the process is characterised by the belief that there is a solution and it is possible to reach it through a step-wise approach. If one of the related participants is a powerful actor (it may be the forestry department, the representation of private owners, some environmental NGO or the group of industrials), this can lead the process towards a predefined solution which is supposed to be reached step by step with a strong pressure or control from that interested actor. At this time, the outward spiral may change for an inward spiral (Barstad, 2002).

Such a permanent trend for the creation of a double spiral in the decision making process, as far as the power distribution is concerned, is easily identified through the implementation of the mixed model, for instance whilst characterising the strategy of a forestry department confronted to the need of adaptation to participatory democracy.

Fig. 2 explains, as an example, how a collective learning in the negotiation procedure may lead the forestry department to the development and mastering of an instrumentalised participation for consolidating its position. Such situation may be typical for most of the countries confronted to forest sector reform, especially those where the State has a prominent position in the decision making system (such as in transitioning countries).

Evaluation comes at a core point along the double spiral, marking the beginning of the inward one, the right moment when the forest service may be in position to re-activate the participatory process whilst taking the control over the discussion procedures.

In most of the cases, the inward spiral is shorter than the outward one, because aiming at an objective defined through the instrumental rationalism is basically a linear short perspective. It may be as shorter as longer is the outward spiral, because when the learning process has worked out fully, there is more chances to get to a solution in a shorter period. Although, whilst the supposed expected result from the learning process (outward spiral) is never achieved, the same situation is usually repeated with the inward spiral, due to various causes, including a bad appreciation of the reality, additional external or internal changes related to the forestry sector, and even sometimes a poor control of the participation procedures from the forest service which may not be

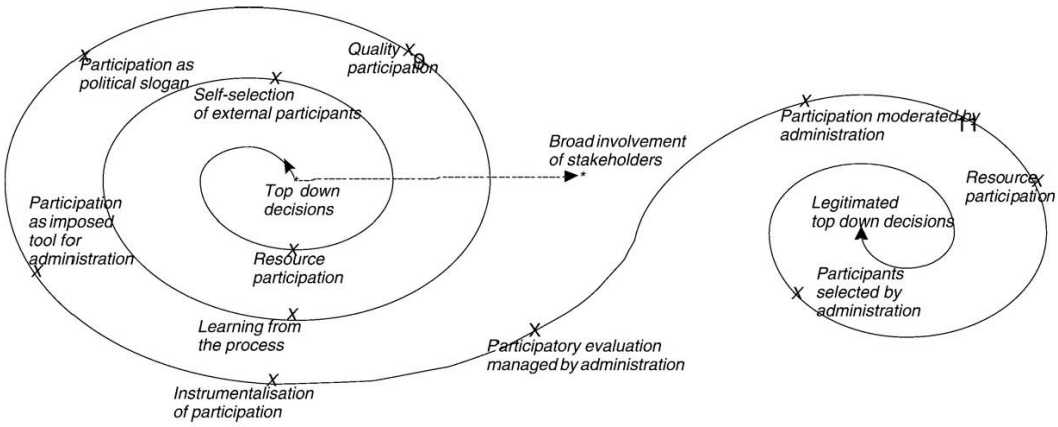

Fig. 2. The double spiral in action.

experienced in such processes. Consequently, the final target at the end of the inward spiral is never reached in practice either.

Thus each double spiral is basically expected to lead to another double spiral characterised by the re-conception and re-designing of the forest policy. At the moment when a new context is bringing new needs for changes in the concept, new objectives and means of the policy, a new process of learning starts again, based on the new current conditions. Proportionally, the learning process along the outward spiral is getting more effective after each coil, the successive double spirals typical of this continuous framework for change are shortening in time.

3. The case of the forest policy process in Kyrgyzstan

A full forest policy cycle as it occurred in Kyrgyzstan, (Central Asia, ex USSR), carried out with the use of the mixed model for the formulation (1997–1998), implementation (1999–2003) and evaluation (2003–2004) as well, provides a case study, in order to trace how this double spiral theory may work in practice.

The forestry sector of the country is characterised by: the state ownership on the forests, which take about 4% of the total area of the republic and are in a quite unstable condition due to silviculture practised in the Soviet period and unregulated human pressure at present; a low legal market value of the forests, while illegal harvesting is very high; a very hierarchical structure of the forest service with top down decision taking; State budget financing allocated only for salaries, which are very low. The general situation in the country is marked by declared transition to the market economy and decentralisation, with consequent ongoing institutional, legal and social reforms.

The basic document of the forest policy in Kyrgyzstan is called National Concept for Forestry Development, approved in 1999 and revised after evaluation in 2004. In the text it is referred as *policy concept* or *concept for forestry development.*

3.1. Why an evaluation of the forest policy was needed in 2003, after 5 years since policy elaboration?

The participatory process, as carried out, was a new phenomenon in Kyrgyzstan when the forest policy formulation was started in 1997. The various participants in the process had, within a very short period of time, to learn how to analyse the possibilities, potentials, and risks, how to make strategic plans for the future and avoid from getting caught in an endless loop of momentary problems, to find a possibility for a compromise when discussing opposite points of views. Moreover, the political, economic, and social environment in the country was continuously changing, due to the economic and political impacts of the transition to the market economy and democracy. Even the organisation responsible for the forest policy

implementation (at present, the State Forest Service under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic) changed its status four times over this period.

Since 1996, some international programmes and projects became active in the forestry sector, dealing with conservation of biodiversity, harmonisation of legislation and other fields, including development of small and medium-sized enterprises engaged in processing of forest products. Such external structures brought their own requirements and priorities. Thus there was a pressure from the international donors to evaluate what had been done.

From this point of view, the analysis of forest policy implementation in the first years is of an important significance, since it is namely in the first years when the normative plans are practically fulfilled and start to disclose difficulties or lack of coordination on the way towards realisation of previously taken decisions. It can also provide State Forest Service with concrete suggestions for a better and prompt implementation of decisions at the field level, at the time when there is still a possibility for modifications. At an early stage it is also easier to develop the rules for a regular analysis of policy implementation, as well as the mechanisms for its adaptation to the continuously changing environment.

This was the basic context, and also rationale, of the evaluation of the new forest policy, which was conducted in 2003–2004.

3.2. Changes occurred in the society leading to a re-design of the policy concept

During the same period, many changes have happened, with important impacts on the course of the forest policy process.

3.2.1. At the framework level

The international dialogue on sustainable forest management and other international processes related to biodiversity had an impact on the forest management practices in Kyrgyzstan. Some procedures and techniques supposed to be conducive to the sustainable forest management were introduced. At the same time, the general framework for economic reform within Kyrgyzstan, especially the further transfer to the market-oriented economy and related social and political changes in the society, set up new priorities for the forestry sector. In addition, some policy initiatives taken in Kyrgyzstan for poverty alleviation and human development urged the forestry administration to take corresponding measures.

3.2.2. At the technical level

All the changes in the public structures and institutions during the 5 years period caused changes in the objectives and means of forest policy. Some of the planned activities had been already implemented since 1999, or had lost their actuality due to the permanent changes in the society, therefore there was no need any more to mention them again in the forestry concept, especially as objectives. In the cases when no result had been achieved, a modification of the formulations was required for a better comprehension of the actual situation. With the ongoing privatisation and decentralisation, the ownership and land use statuses had an impact on forest policy and required special consideration in the new version of the forest policy concept.

There were some issues which have not been clearly formulated in the previous version of the concept for forestry development, for instance all what was related to the independence of *leshozes* (State forest management units, consisting of various forest ranges and forming a territorial division of the State Forest Service), to the role of the national forestry fund, and to the definition of the so-called "collaborative forest management".

The forest code promulgated in 1999 was supposed to be based on the lines of the policy concept but because of a haste in its elaboration (for political reasons), there was a poor link between the two documents, thus there was clearly a need to stress again the importance of the forest policy concept as the basis for all technical, legal and political documents related to the forestry sector.

3.2.3. At the communication level

A broad participation at the policy formulation step resulted in the fact that many of the provisions of the former concept, dating from 1999, were more of a short-term nature (reflecting immediate interests' attitude of the people involved), thus a more conceptual broader vision was needed in a revised concept.

The role of the State and the ways to involve people (including local authorities, private entrepre-

neurs and villagers, same as other forest users) into the forest management were not clearly defined in the policy concept of 1999. Some experience had to be drawn from the first years of implementation, in order to get more precise and operational objectives.

And, finally, the functions of the forestry service had changed, and further changes were to be expected in the framework of a broader institutional reform, thus a new framework was needed through a new policy concept.

Basing on those considerations, an evaluation exercise of the national forest policy, carried out in a participatory way in 2003, led to the establishment of a new forest policy concept, promulgated in 2004. The main differences between the first forest policy concept 1999 and the policy concept of 2004, redesigned following the results of evaluation, were in the fact that the concept 1999 was aimed at preferable future (What do we want to achieve?) and thus contained 5 strategic goals and 10 directive lines for their implementation. Due to a new knowledge and a better understanding of both sustainable forest management and concrete possibilities for change, which were generated among participants during the implementation, the revised policy concept 2004 has defined principles for sustainable development of forestry with the focus on the three corner stones "People, Forest and State".

3.3. Evolution of participation, as seen from the evaluation exercise

As "participation" had been a key word in the whole process since 1997, this evaluation of the forest policy gave the right opportunity of an in-depth assessment of the participatory method which has been applied.

At the beginning of the process, the first step was the analysis of the current situation in the forestry sector of Kyrgyzstan. For the first time, a participatory approach was introduced in the country, when participation was organised through multiple interviews, discussions at different levels, workshops with the involvement of forestry sector personnel from all steps of the horizontal structure, together with representatives of the local population and local administrations, from science and NGOs. At this stage, the participatory process was certainly introduced and strongly promoted by an international donor (Intercooperation, Kyrgyz-Swiss Forestry Support Programme, being implemented in Kyrgyzstan since 1995). As there were no clearly perceived stakes at this moment, this participation was mainly a resource one, when participants were expressing their own views on weak and strong aspects of the current situation in the forestry sector. Nevertheless, this exercise generated a learning process, when everybody learned that (i) it was possible to participate in policy formulation, which was inconceivable after many years of soviet tradition, and (ii) people still needed to learn about how to participate.

This process gave many ideas on how participation could be organised in the post-soviet countries. The technique of cards on board has been employed to promote free expression of ideas, creating a new habit of speaking openly and participating in the policy process. The methodology of "constructive confrontation", focusing on negotiable disputable topics and views whilst excluding evident and ethical non-negotiable issues, was useful due to 2 reasons: (i) participants had no prior experience of policy discussions and were mainly willing to immediately expose their needs and select means before defining objectives; (ii) with transition to market economy there was a big pressure for rapid concrete changes, and this context was not promoting broad and abstract visions, as it could be needed for foresight and environmental mediation techniques. Such experience was used for the next step, which was the preparation of the national concept for forestry development in Kyrgyzstan (National Forest Policy of Kyrgyzstan, 1999), providing the vision for the next 20–25 years. At that moment participation was applied as a broad general principle, when the involved participants were not acting only as resource persons, but were invited to define potentials, objectives and priorities of the forestry sector and many new and important (and sometimes unexpected) ideas were brought to the table for discussion. At this time the forest policy formulation process in Kyrgyzstan was basically conceived as a simple outward policy spiral, clearly iterative and with a possibility for further continuation at each step of the participatory process (cf. Fig. 3).

The next step, the elaboration of a forest code which was supposed to be derived from the strategic lines of the new policy concept, introduced a first

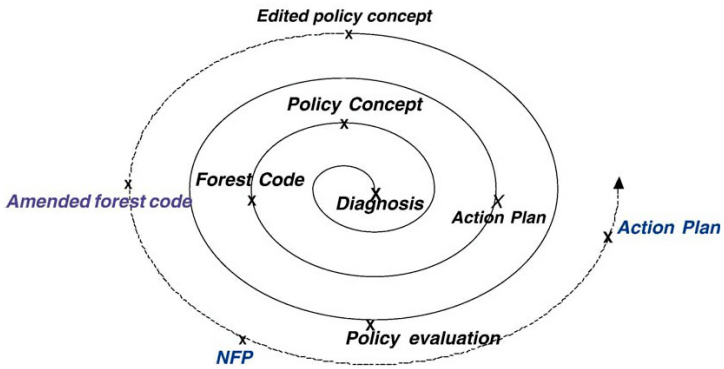

Fig. 3. The forest policy process in Kyrgyzstan conceived as an outward spiral.

break down in the process. As the law was presenting a very high political interest (before the parliamentary elections) it was prepared solely by the forest service administration, within a very short period (6 months) without taking into consideration the richness of ideas brought by the previous discussions. It also showed that the forestry administration could take important political decisions disregarding the results of the participatory process, but using "participation" as a slogan while lobbying the draft forest code in the Parliament.

The preparation of the 5 years action plan, so-called "*Les Programme*", started then with the same participatory approach as applied in the policy concept elaboration, with a rather quality participation when related to technical aspects. The draft plan included not only expected results, but also potentials and means for implementation, defined by each *leshoz*, the due implementing agencies. At this step of the process, the nature of participation definitely changed, as the stakes became more clear to all the involved participants: the *leshozes* were mainly interested in the flexibility in technical and managerial decisions, while the central administration had only in mind the strengthening of its own position and the increase of the forest cover (as a good indicator which could be presented in the reports to the government). Such a contradiction could have led to a conflict within the sector, due to the openness of the discussion... and the process was stopped. Thus, there was no official finalisation of the process, no public presentation of the draft and the finally approved version has lost most of what had been gained through participation during the previous months. That "*Les Programme*" for 2001–2005 resulted in a conventional catalogue of technical top-down decisions, on a similar model to those followed during the soviet period.

3.4. An instrumentalisation of participation by the administration

Initially, the forestry administration was rather reluctant about a broad participation in the policy formulation. There was no knowledge of what the participation could bring to the process, at the opposite, there was an anxiety that participatory discussions could raise critic and may be destructive. Another reason was the long-time institutional opposition between the forestry service and the Ministry of Environment, at that time perceived as a strong institution with a risk that the State Forest Agency may become a sub-division of this Ministry. Contrary to that, participants coming from the forestry sector brought a positive input and new interesting ideas, even if there were some critics (which were not too strong and mainly related to economic aspects or immediate needs). The Ministry of Environment did not take the process seriously, so its representation was very weak and to a great extent disregarded for the lack of input. The representatives of the local population, when invited, were basically mute. At the time when practically all the activities of the villagers in the forests were contradicting the law (illegal felling, collection of firewood, unauthorised grazing and hay-making), there was little collabora-

tion with the foresters. The NGOs participating in the process were very few, and focused, first of all, on the insignificance of the forest cover in Kyrgyzstan. This fact was considered as very positive by the forest service, because this was in line with its own priority and could give a chance for an increase of the State budget allocation for the forestry purposes.

The highlight of the process has been the participation of the President of the Republic in the conference organised for the presentation of the policy concept. At this conference held in 1999, the importance of participation was stressed and forest was declared as the head for everything. This progress led forestry administration to understanding the importance of participation in forest policy formulation. As a consequence of this new consciousness, the benefits of such an exercise of participatory forest policy formulation were immediately internalised by the State forestry administration. It started to promote the process and, afterwards, used the results for strengthening its own position. Even when the results of participation were disregarded in administrative and political decisions, as it was the case with the 5 years action plan, 2001, the forestry administration was still referring to it as a common plan for the whole sector, prepared in a bottom-up way. Progressively, the utilisation of the results of participation by the forestry administration, gradually led to the restriction of participation itself. During the years followed, the decisions tended to be taken basically in a top-down manner, though were sent to the subdivisions for comments, which were later hardly considered.

3.5. Does participation lead to a strengthening of the central power?

The participatory process during the policy formulation step brought to the floor the grass-root levels of the public structure, and, thus, forest rangers were declared as the key persons in the forestry sector and were since nominated directly by the headquarters, and not by the regional (*oblast*) departments as it was the case before. The *leshozes* also became subordinated and reporting directly to the central headquarters. Regional forest (*oblast*) departments, were transformed into territorial sub-divisions, based in *leshozes*. Those steps produced an image that the forestry administration was demonstrating its willingness to improve the institutional structure by involving and empowering the field levels. In practice, all the decision making and controlling power were concentrated at the headquarters level through the direct contact with the *leshozes*. Those management units were fully occupied with the search for immediate technical and logistical solutions, and since this decision had to address the headquarters for any decision of a more general managerial nature, and not to the regional levels, as it was the case before. In fact, the dependence of *leshozes* from the central administration has increased.

On the one hand, this reform was presented as an implementation of a participatory decision, because during the preparation of the concept 1999 there was much critic about those regional forest departments. Thus the elimination of this chain (from the decision-making point of view) directly followed the wishes expressed by some of the participants in the process, who were willing to give more initiative to local forest rangers. On the other hand, those participants from the grass-root level were not prepared yet for becoming real deciders due to the lack of political, social and even technical knowledge. Besides, the daily overcoming of all the economic/management difficulties left no time for their further true active participation in general decisions. As far as the local people was concerned, regardless of the trials on introducing collaborative forest management in the South of the country, the population was not yet organised into any type of associations of forest users with common interests and possibility for representation. It was the case, partially, due to the same economic reasons as for the *leshozes*, and also, probably, because of the lack of habit for participatory democracy in the whole political decision making system.

As a consequence, it can be stated that, by the moment when the evaluation of the forest policy implementation was undertaken in 2003, the State forest administration had become already the sole decision maker in the forestry sector, consolidating all the aspects related to the use, management, control and conservation of the forest resources, and, more generally, of wild flora and fauna. Plus, the head of the State Forestry Service was nominated as the coordinator of all the international donor projects in the field of biodiversity at the country level. This may be analysed as directly resulting from the participatory

approach, with a relevant contribution of the process to the improvement of the social awareness, the communicative skills, and the technical background of the forestry staff.

3.6. Evaluation as a way to brush up participation

In such a context, the evaluation of the policy implementation was also clearly needed as a possibility to reanimate the participatory process which was blocked since 2000. At this step, the process was again impulsed by the same international donor, Switzerland, with leadership undertaken by the State Forestry Service (SFS): a trained core group (represented mainly by SFS experts) has facilitated workshops and discussions all over the country, with invitation of all the structural levels of the forestry service.

Compared to the policy formulation step, the evaluation exercise was marked by a more active involvement of the local authorities and NGOs, local forest users and even several private entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, a restrictive selection of the actors was done by the SFS with the explanation that participants should be at least prepared and knowledgeable of what they were speaking about. SFS, feeling comfortable with the mixed model which promoted both social and strategic orientation, was in a position to specify the rules of the communicative game.

As for the learning in the process, it should be noted that those participants who already had some experience of policy discussions, mainly as resource persons at the concept 1999 formulation stage, were giving answers presumably expected from them. Nevertheless, due to the applied methodology, the evaluation revealed weak and strong points of implementation and priorities for the future. The result was even more instrumental than before, although strictly related to the SFS strategy for consolidating its power.

3.7. The double spiral theory on the Kyrgyz example

The evolution of the type and role of participation in the mentioned process may be analysed as evolving, forming a set of two *double spirals*.

The first of these double spirals is related to the period of formulation of the first policy documents, from the forest policy formulation phase in 1997 to the termination with the action plan elaboration in 2001 (cf. Fig. 4). After learning about and from the participation, the SFS realised the possibility of using "participation" as a slogan, with no basic change for the concrete decision making process, as it was revealed through the preparation of the forest code and the 5-year action plan.

The second double spiral was progressively initiated through implementing the new directions after 2001. It took all its content with the participatory evaluation carried out at the beginning of 2003 (cf. Fig. 5). During this phase, the State Forest Service has clearly defined its strategy whilst using participation as a tool for defending its position against repeated political pressures for a change of the forest administration structure at the governmental level. It clearly turned into an inward spiral with the 2004 edition of the policy concept. This new policy document has been used in the course of 2004 in order to promote an ongoing institutional reform process and parallel functional analysis which was definitely oriented to the concentration of the authority in the sole SFS hands.

A new step in the Kyrgyz forest policy reform was taken in spring–summer 2004, with the formulation of the National Forest Programme, adopted in November 2004. In the course of formulation of this programme, additional changes have been brought, based on new demands from participants from the field, as well as on the conclusions from the experiments in the framework of the ongoing decentralisation process. Those changes will certainly add new elements in the debate, which may consequently bring to a third double spiral, in a particularly open way due to the context of the recent changes in the country's political regime.

In both spirals, none of the desirable future situations, respectively a bottom up planning framework during the period 1997–2001 and a mixed model for decision making in the period 2001–2004, have been fully reached in the course of the process. Under the prominent influence of external factors, participation was getting additional impulse at some steps of the process, with each new coil of the spiral bringing to a situation different, if not opposite, compared to the initially expected. At the same time, the knowledge generated during the process has not only changed the direction of the spirals, but also decreased the time period and length of each spiral from 1997 up to 2004.

The sequence of forest policy formulation in Kyrgyzstan and the related applied approach, constitute a

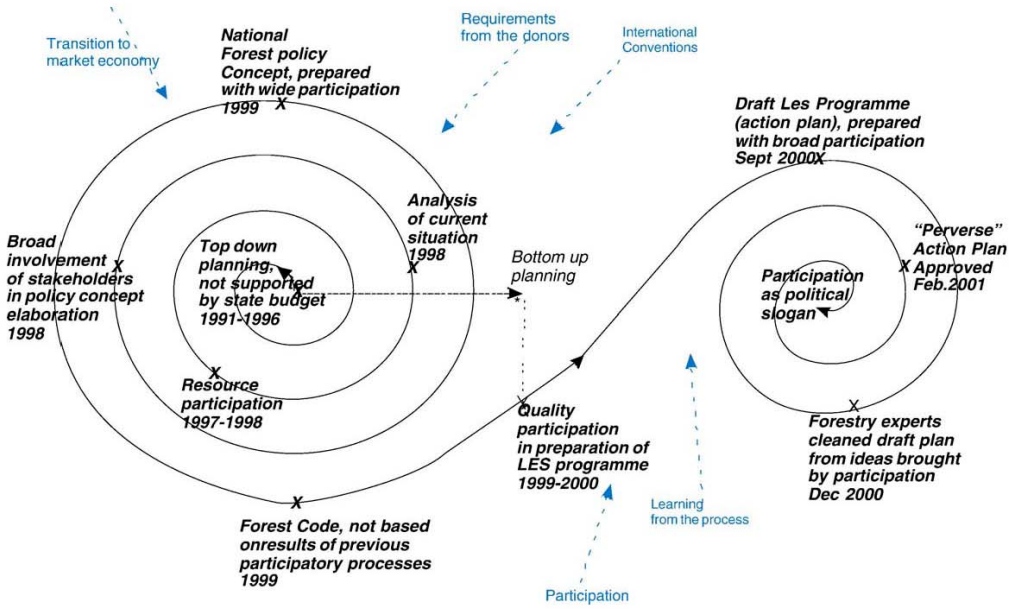

Fig. 4. The double spiral of iterative forest policy process during the period 1997–2001.

comprehensive process leading to a forest policy which has been elaborated, implemented and evaluated in a participatory way, because: (i) at the origin there was a full outward spiral of policy formulation cycle implemented in practice and giving a chance for further iterativity; (ii) the policy concept 1999 was

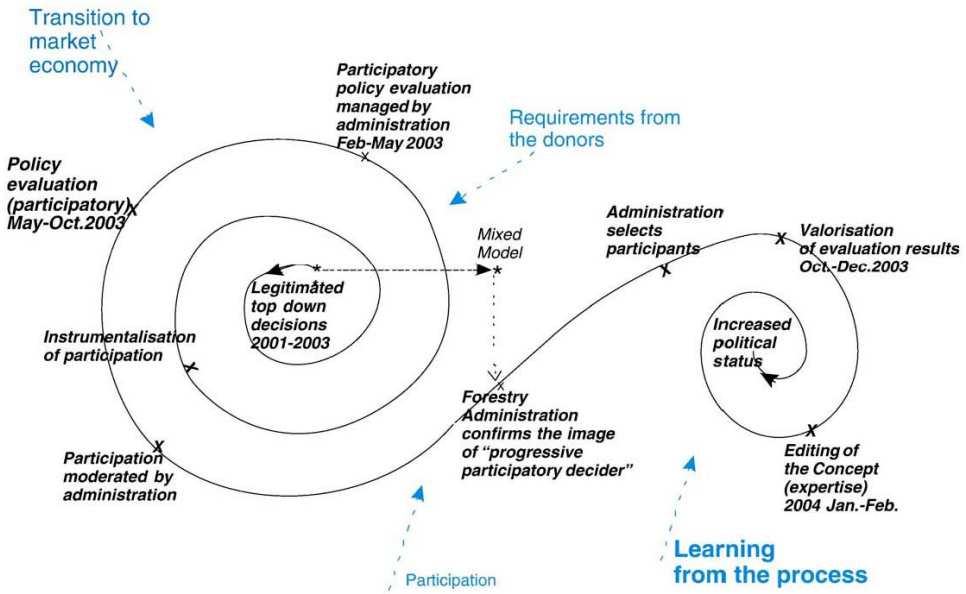

Fig. 5. The double spiral of iterative forest policy during the period 2001–2004.

elaborated in an open participatory way, then evaluated after 5 years of implementation, again in a participatory way, and, as a result, necessary adaptations were proposed for better effectiveness; (iii) the State Forest Service has improved its status and strengthened its position, getting more social and also technical expertise from the discussions; (iv) carrying out the evaluation in a participatory way was a good exercise to get a broader view on the evolution of the forestry sector; (v) participation in the forestry sphere is not an alien notion any more; this fact was not evident at the beginning of the process, minding the history of this post-soviet country.

But it is also important to keep in mind the following aspects. As it is characteristic for any political process, interests are modified and new ones may emerge in the course of the process. Thus the stakes of the following loops or coils of the spiral may be very different from those of the previous ones. The spiral of any process is not a technical but an intellectual, social and political one. At some stage it can acquire a different direction and even leave no possibility for a real iterativity any more.

Evaluation is basically a political process, itself being part of the changes and bringing new changes. Learning from the process and adapting is an ideal situation, but in practice more powerful actors learn and adapt faster and may instrumentalise the process for getting more power. Adaptation is a result from participation and evaluation, but, finally, what is being adapted?: the decisions or the ways to take those decisions? In the case of Kyrgyzstan, both aspects are evident, although there were strong pressures from various bodies, including of course from the State Forest Service, for aiming at the second one.

The example of Kyrgyzstan, analysed in this case study, is not unique. Many situations in various countries, especially those where the State is still dominant, or where urgent and important changes are required in the decision making system, may refer to the same explicative framework. In many cases, the introduction of participatory democracy may result in the re-structuring of pre-existing frameworks whilst reinforcing existing social and economic power structures. A participatory process within the context of technical government decision making can enhance not only the legitimacy, but the power and the authority of the governmental agency. In this context, the importance of the evaluation in the strengthening the agency as well as in the increasing the legitimacy of its decisions, appears as central. The double spiral theory, revealed by the implementation of the mixed model, explains how a policy process may involve in a context of the permanent re-distribution of the power among the various actors of forestry development. It clearly reminds that policy is a question of power and information. Therefore, identifying through the evaluation process the components of this double spiral is not a theoretical question to occupy the scientists. As it is the case with the mixed model, it is both a theory and a practice which teach a lot about how to carry out policy reform processes.

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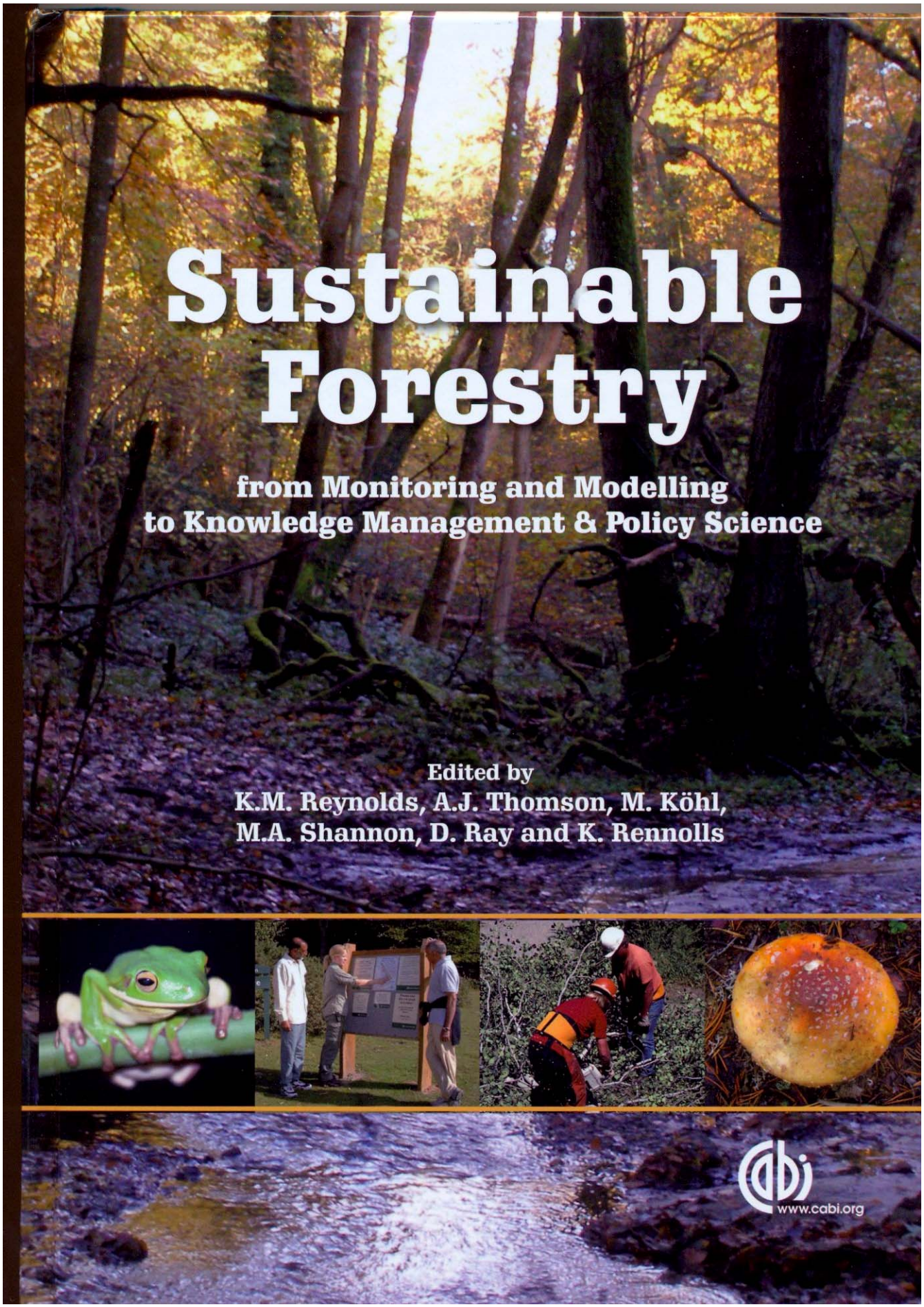
Participation as a new mode of governance?: Scientists and policy makers linjed in a double spiral. (a chapter in a book: *Sustainable Forestry: from Monitoring to Knowledge Management and Policy Science,* CAB International, Wallingford/Cambridge, 2007: 35-56)

This article (chapter in a collective book) is based on the presentation made during the International IUFRO conference on the "*Sustainable Forestry in Theory and Practice: recent advances in inventory and monitoring, statistics and modelling, information and knowledge management, and policy science*", held in Edinburgh, UK, in 2005. The presentation was made in the sub-group on *Science and policy*, in the section on *Scientists and policy makers in a participatory mode of governance* and was titled "***Participation as a new mode of governance?: scientists and policy-makers in a double spiral.***

Why although working about participation in forest policy, I was speaking about the role of the scientists?
The role of the scientists and the questions of science-policy interface are becoming one more topic in fashion, and there are more and more scientific conferences and seminars dealing with this subject. Are scientists to be considered as sources of specific (often technical) knowledge necessary for efficient decisions? Are they bearers of an objective knowledge and judgement which are necessary for the legitimation of policy processes and decisions? Are they neutral in the process of a decision making? Is their involvement just an alibi?
For me, the role of a scientist, especially a policy scientist, in a decision making process became an issue when I started to analyse the Kyrgyz process and the role of the policy scientist in it.
During the conference, I have shared my ideas with the participants of the sub-group. Again, based on my Kyrgyz experience, I explained that when scientists come to the process, they are not neutral. Similar to the other actors, they also adapt their reactions to the re-defined interests and new positions. Indeed, the scientists posses some specific knowledge in the process and its mechanisms, that is why they can explain to the policy makers the reality through theories. But they can also adapt theories to the changing reality. As a conclusion I suggested that the adaptation of scientists to the changes in the process and positions of the stronger stakeholders may promote power re-distribution and the image of the scientists themselves. In this presentation the double spiral theory was applied to illustrate the changes in the behaviour and strategies of the scientists and their impact on the process.
The presentation caused heated discussions on the engagement and neutrality of the scientists. Especially the idea that scientists could promote consolidation of power created many uncomfortable feelings. Some of the discussions have continued out of the sessions, more extended to the questions of power and democracy, but there was no discussion of the theory itself yet.
The chairman of this sub-group Norman Johnson, was among the 5 scientists mobilised by the president of the USA, Bill Clinton for the solution of the spotted owl problem. He proposed me to further elaborate my presentation and submit it for publication as a chapter of the CABI book on Sustainable Forestry. The paper was accepted with minor revisions.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3 Participation as a New Mode of Governance? Scientists and Policymakers Linked in a Double Spiral

IRINA KOUPLEVATSKAYA*

ENGREF, Laboratory of Forest Policy, Nancy, France.

Abstract

The international dialogue on forests has changed how scientists are involved in policy-making as well as the nature of their relationship to decision makers. Policy scientists and biologists brought new concepts and types of knowledge into the international lexicon, but soon found their statements utilized to justify reorientations of national and regional policies. This instrumentalization of scientists is especially clear in transitional countries, which are under strong pressure by the international community to introduce rapid and important changes in their policy systems in order to conform to international standards. The policy formulation process generally promotes policy changes. Seldom is it a linear process with a beginning and an end; rather, policymaking is iterative, allowing for a redefinition of the interests and positions of all actors involved in the process. Scientists are often viewed as a source of objective knowledge and judgement in the policy process, whose participation can help legitimize policy changes. However, just like all other policy actors, scientists are not neutral purveyors of objective knowledge, but value-laden people with their own world views. Thus, scientists like other policy actors adapt throughout the policy process as their own knowledge, their perspectives and even their world views change as a result of policy discussions. Thus, policymakers rely on scientists to represent 'reality' through scientific theories and concepts, but then, as new representations emerge through policy discussions, scientists must adapt their theories and viewpoints to the shared understanding created through policy dialogue. Often neglected in science–policy

* Ms. Kouplevatskaya is the former Deputy Programme Leader of the Kyrgyz–Swiss Forestry Support Programme, intercooperation Kyrgyzstan. This chapter was written in the framework of a doctoral thesis in forest science (forest policy) at the French Institute of Forestry, Agricultural and Environmental Engineering (ENGREF), Nancy, France, under the scientific direction of Prof. Dr Gerard Buttoud, who was also the consultative expert for the Kyrgyz–Swiss Forestry Support Programme in Kyrgyzstan.

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research is a focus on how this mutual adaptation may promote power redistribution and affect the image of scientists.

This chapter is based on the 7-year participatory process of policy reform in Kyrgyzstan, leading to the adoption of a national forest programme (NFP) based on concepts derived from the international dialogue on forests. The policy process theory of the double spiral is used to explain the evolving link between scientists and policymakers, both of whom are compelled to redefine their mutual relations in a process of reinterpretation and renegotiation of goals and means. Indeed, the involvement of scientists resulted not only in an increase in rationalist approaches to policy analysis and policymaking, but surprisingly also in a communicative approach conducive to international principles of sustainable forest management. As a preliminary comparison, basic information collected from experience with participatory processes in various European countries tends to reveal the same iterative sequence formed with an outward spiral of expanding understanding followed by an inward spiral of focus and clarity evidenced in many situations.

Keywords: Forest policy, modes of governance, participatory process, national forest programmes, power redistribution, Kyrgyzstan.

What Might Policymakers and Scientists Expect from Each Other in an NFP Process?

The international debate on the concept of sustainable development focused global interest on the sustainable use of natural resources. Debates on the social values of forest products and services are often at the centre of major environmental controversies thus defining special tasks for forest policy scientists, distinguishing them from the tasks of the other scientists related to natural resources (biologists, ecologists, etc.).

Sustainable forest management focuses on the multiple functions of forests, the multiple beneficiaries of forest products and services and the necessity of integrating marketable and non-marketable goods and services. National forest programmes (NFPs) are expected to face the challenge of promoting a new mode of resource governance that will *inter alia* work with an expanded, although imprecise, definition of sustainable forest management (SFM); resolve conflicts of interest among beneficiaries; address various kinds of coordination problems of providing the multiple functions and benefits of forests; handle complexities of inter-sectoral and multi-level coordination among policy actors; and promote effective mechanisms for stakeholder participation. In this framework, forest policy research contributes to the policy process by generating theoretically informed propositions and hypotheses about the social, political and institutional preconditions for sustainable forest management.

Within the policy process, policy scientists are looked to for clarification of ambiguous concepts, like sustainable forest management and national forest programmes, and to generate methodologies for public decision-making procedures. In such a context, forest policy scientists form a link between the public, managers and politicians. The literature on theories of decision making schematically reveals

three main groups of views related to the links between scientists and decision makers: the incrementalists, the rationalists and the cyberneticists.

1. The incremental decision-making school is associated with Charles Lindblom (1959) and his incremental 'muddling through' paradigm and stresses the role of scientific analysis as sufficient to solve the political problems faced by public administrators. Its premises are the following:

(a) Due to the fact that decision makers are cognitively constrained in time and other resources, including information, they can never achieve the ideal of comprehensive analysis of all ultimate goals and all available means, rather they typically 'muddle through' by focusing on proximate goals and known means. They usually come up with a solution – a means of achieving a desired end – that they believe 'suffices', even if it is not optimal, and then move on to the next goal. Thus, decision makers are cognitively constrained from pursuing complexes of long-term goals, and thus analysis is never sufficient to achieve the multiple goals encompassed by sustainability.

(b) Reality has a pluralist nature due to differing and conflicting social values, objectives and visions held by actors. It is difficult to ascertain the majority's preference or to find a preferable consensus; therefore public debate is rarely sufficient to solve the problem of cognitive limits of analysis and reasoning.

(c) Public policy is accomplished through decentralized bargaining in a democratic political economy. Incremental decision making holds a pluralistic view of a society as composed of competing interest groups who are lobbying the government for certain decisions. Decisions are constructed by a series of consultations largely based on people's actual experiences. Large decisions are distributed among a large number of independent actors, each pursuing their own interest (Lindblom, 1959; Friedman, 1987).

In such a framework, analysts are considered the only ones capable of making a comprehensive analysis with a general and objective view. However, for analysts to indeed be objective, their analysis must be founded upon scientific methodologies. The ultimate 'scientific analysis' is done by scientists themselves, and thus scientists are the source of policy analysis for decision making. However, the scientists are not viewed as policy actors, but rather as sources of information and analysis that are 'untainted' by politics.

2. The rationalist school of management, criticizing the 'muddling through' view of decision making, attributes great importance to the power and rationality of the decision maker and the predictability of human behaviour based on assumptions of a 'rational actor'. In this school, a rational decision maker bases a decision upon analysis and believes that solutions based upon what a 'rational actor' should do accurately predict policy outcomes. As commentators note, this assumption of a 'rational actor' ignores the actual relationships between ideology, values, events, goals and means (Gunton, 1984). The decision-making process is viewed as a logical rationalist chain: identification of a problem, development of goals, assessment of all possible solutions and the choice of a solution on the basis of the desired results in achieving the goal (Hudson, 1979). Scientific research in this case focuses on developing general theories of behaviour of

natural, social and political systems. The assumption of scientific policy analysis is that the world, including human behaviour, is predictable and stable over time.

3. A third group of theoreticians, drawing from cybernetics, focuses on dynamics of social change affecting a decision-making process. They reject the absolutism of the two former traditional approaches: (i) that social changes are basically directed by the elite (voluntarism, as promoted by the rational school of management); and (ii) that social changes are brought about by society as a whole (pluralism, incremental school of decision-making process). Nevertheless, the proponents of cybernetics aim at combining the advantages of incremental and rationalistic planning in three levels of decision making (Etzioni, 1967):

(a) Fundamental political decisions are to be taken at the highest level in order to establish choices aimed at long-term goals (based on scanning of internal and external factors that relate to the problem and proposed solutions).

(b) Opportunistic, incremental decisions will be taken within the framework of the fundamental goals (short-term and middle-term policies).

(c) Periodic reviews of the incremental decisions and of the fundamental goals are necessary, based on the criterion of the achieved progress (review of strategy).

Thus the role of the scientists for the definition of long- and short-term goals (ends), analysis of internal and external factors (means) and evaluation of the progress (scientific judgement) is conceived as a part of the process of strategic political decision making.

The cybernetic framework is an implicit theoretical reference for many forest policy reform processes, and is the formal basis in the concept of a 'mixed model', developed for combining the involvement of the stakeholders and administration in a forest policy reform process in societies in transition (Buttoud and Samyn, 1999; Buttoud and Yunusova, 2002, 2003). The main feature of the mixed model is to involve all the stakeholders at each step of a rationalist sequence for defining and implementing new decisions, thus combining communicative and technocratic aspects and crossing top-down and bottom-up approaches to decision making. It creates a discourse between solutions and decisions, which may lead to a continuous negotiation. In this framework, the decision makers are confronted by the evolving reality and have to adapt to it.

Such permanent confrontation combined with mutual learning of all the actors involved in the process, followed by their adaptation, both to each other and to the changed reality, and a redefinition of initial positions and strategies, is an iterative process that progressively develops along spirals of learning and focus (Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova and Buttoud, 2005).

Following these theoretical implications, policy scientists have a variety of tasks: to develop theoretical and methodological advice for the decision makers; to bring to the process not only knowledge but also neutral and objective expertise; and to contribute their scientific judgement in addressing complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty. The role of policy scientists based upon the cybernetic theory and the 'mixed model' framework is elaborated by the example of the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan, a former Soviet Republic.

The Case of Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan, a small mountainous country of Central Asia, is one of the few countries with a full process of formulation, implementation, evaluation and adaptation of a national forest policy. Since independence in 1991, the new economic and political situation in Kyrgyzstan has led to important changes in the general governance of the country. At first glance, the forest, which covers about 3–4% of the total area of the country's surface, did not present a huge challenge for the national policy decision makers. Nevertheless, due to the declared democratic transformation, the managing and decision-making practices for forests needed to be changed. In addition, at the same time, the transition to a market economy and collapse of the economic and political linkages with Russia resulted in a considerable reduction of the state financing of the forestry sector, which, together with the aggravated conditions of the people living in the direct proximity of the forests, posed societal pressure for changes in the forest management.

As a result of the reorganization of international development institutions at the world level in 1994, the Swiss Development Cooperation became one of the main donors to the country, with a support package including assistance to the whole forestry sector. The international dialogue on forests emphasized the need for analysing forest development in connection with ecological and socio-economic aspects; therefore these two directions were initially privileged by the donor. Scientists–ecologists were asked to evaluate the risk of overuse of the scarce national forests, drawing upon a global assessment of forests through new techniques in the application of satellite imagery. Very soon it became clear that the process of technical data collection would advance gradually and require a long time period. This was not adapted to the timing pressure on the decisions needed within the process of a rapid transition. At the same time, the results would provide the policymakers only with the data on the rate of deforestation, with no operational conclusions in terms of decision making in the new conditions. Since there was a strong requirement for an immediate change in the policy decisions, forest policy scientists were invited to assist in the introduction of a change in the process of decision making in the forestry sector, on the basis of a rigorous neutral analysis.

The Swiss Development Cooperation was strongly promoting the involvement of scientific knowledge for the social and economic aspects of the forest policy reform. From the very beginning of the project, there was a commonly shared understanding that the social factor might become prominent in the orientation of the public decisions in the sector. At the same time, most of the technical experts involved in the support/cooperation activities were not yet familiar with the conditions of post-Soviet Central Asia and thus were not equipped with an effective toolbox for forestry development in the transitional conditions. Expertise of policy scientists, in this framework, was fostered to provide ideas, knowledge and experience on how to initiate, implement, evaluate and adapt a forest policy process. In the course of the whole forest policy reform process, which began in Kyrgyzstan in 1997 and is still ongoing (Yunusova *et al.*, 2003), the position and role of the scientists has continuously changed. Through collaborative learning

procedures both scientists and policymakers, and, at a lower level, other involved stakeholders, were brought to a permanent mutual adaptation.

Adaptation along spirals

As the state was still very strong in Kyrgyzstan and the social aspects, previously under-considered, were gaining more and more importance, the mixed model for the forest policy process was chosen as the most adapted framework (Buttoud, 1999b). The application of the mixed model permitted the combination of the rationalist sequence of decision making (including diagnosis of the present situation, listing of structured objectives and sets of possible means, selection of priorities and definition of strategic lines, procedures for regular follow-up and evaluation) with communicative iterativity (Buttoud and Yunusova, 2003), which focuses on building a conclusion through a negotiation at each step of the sequence, with feedback loops to the previous stages. All the involved parties brought to the process their own understanding of reality and their priorities and thus contributed to the definition of acceptable expected results. Thus, the forestry administration developed a comprehensive view of the situation to which it had to adapt. Participation in a decision-making process was a new experience for all of the actors and stakeholders involved in the process; learning – through gathering new information and new experiences – led to changes in thinking and doing (Weick, 1990, as cited by Shannon, 2002) and was a necessary step in the process, prior to any adaptation and decision taking. The emergence of mutual adaptation created a permanent dialectic between the phases of learning and the phases of appropriation of the results of the process (including the form of knowledge and information).

Due to the iterativity of the process, these phases traced a spiral because the feedback loops, according to the 'muddling through' paradigm, described 'a process of continuous adaptation through small steps instead of fundamental changes; from a solution of one problem to the definition of another one' (Lindblom, 1959). The spiral may have an outward direction and an inward one (Barstad, 2002). The outward spiral (the phase of learning) describes a situation where the various participants of the process redefine their own positions with no clear picture yet of the desired outcome. When all the actors of the process are open to any solution, the outward direction of the spiral is fed by continuous collaborative learning, knowledge generation and adaptation of solutions.

In contrast, an inward spiral (phase of appropriation) is a stepwise movement to a predefined solution, which could presumably be reached in a step-by-step progress. In an inward spiral, the decision-making process is taken under control by an actor who is faster to formulate his own interest in the process and push towards the newly defined goals, which usually leads to a solution conforming to the interest of a strong actor. The outward movement usually continues till the moment when one of the actors of the process forms a clear vision of a solution most profitable for him. This will be a critical point for the change to an inward spiral aimed at reaching this solution and controlled by the actor. Thus, a double spiral is formed, where the inward part may have a shorter circumvolution period (Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova, 2004).

The empirical experience shows that such a solution is practically never reached due to various subjective factors (poor appreciation of the reality, importance of

stakes and bad governance) and objective factors (linked to the continuous changes in the society and permanent adaptation). Mutual learning in the process may also change both previously commonly defined goals and unspoken hidden agendas, thus leading to new solutions. The end of each double spiral necessarily gives the initial point for another double spiral. Many decision-making processes can be described with the application of this theoretical framework of a double spiral, in regard to the changes in the views and roles of the involved actors. This is the case in the links between decision makers and policy scientists jointly involved in the previously mentioned participatory process of the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan, where a double spiral may be illustrated by the changes in the roles and perceptions of the forest policy administration (policymakers) and scientists.

A pair of double spirals in forest policy formulation

The first stage in the process of the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan corresponds to the period from 1997 to 2001 and includes the preparation of the following basic documents: *Analysis of the Current Situation* (1998), *National Concept for Forestry Development* (1999), *Forest Code* (1999), *5-year Action Plan – National Programme LES* (2001) (Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova and Buttoud, 2005).

At the beginning of the process, the issue of forestry development in view of the transition to a market economy was ambiguous. The way in which economic and social components of sustainability could be integrated into forest management was a major issue, while the meaning of the concept itself was not clear for either the local actors, including the government, or the donor. Old top-down centralized decision-making procedures needed to be reconsidered in a new reality, when the state was administratively still strong but financially very weak; society was evolving rapidly; land-use issues and access to the natural resources were aggravated in the context of increasing poverty; and the data related to the forest resources were inconsistent.

In such conditions, the donor invited scientists to support the definition of a new framework for the forest policy. The phrase 'forest policy' initially was not accepted by the Kyrgyz decision makers, with the reasoning that it was much too close to 'politics' (in Russian it is the same word for both meanings), and foresters would prefer to stay away from politics. For the Kyrgyz government high officials, educated during the USSR time and traditions, science had great significance, but of a rather symbolic nature. In the traditional top-down system of decision making, 'the science' was used as a systematic reference for grounding important political decisions. However, science was considered to be based upon fundamentally ambiguous theoretical approaches with content understandable only by the scientists.

Urged by the importance of changes to be introduced and by the requirements from the donor, the Kyrgyz officials declared readiness for initiating a forestry sector reform process, but, following the habitual traditions, under the stipulation that there would be a scientific background. Thus, policy scientists joined the process of forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan with clear terms of reference from the donor requiring results in terms of advising policy decisions for public governance, and a suspicious nod of politeness from the forestry administration,

willing to have a neutral scientific justification. In the course of the process, the forestry administration (formerly a purely technical management) became more and more political in the broad sense of the word. Simultaneously, the role of the scientists and their attitude to the process were also changing. This development could be studied in parallel in the two double spirals presented in Figs 3.1 and 3.2.

Decision makers in forest policy formulation

The initial point of the outward spiral for the forestry administration (Fig. 3.1) was determined by the inherited system of centralized top-down planning in the forestry sector, oriented towards the achievement of quantitative results. During Soviet socialism, the role of state planning was fundamental; it determined the process, which was, accordingly, a deliberately political process (Davis and Scase, 1985). This practice was mechanically continued after the break with the Soviet Union, aggravating the situation by the fact that the state was still planning and controlling the implementation of activities that were justified neither by the financing from the state budget nor by objectively defined priorities and local potentials. The concept of sustainable forest management introduced by the donors through the advice of the scientists was incompatible with the situation in the Kyrgyz forestry sector in the mid-1990s. The requirements of sustainable management related to the conservation of biodiversity, productivity and regeneration capacity of the forests; to the relevant economic functions and development of all the values of the forests, including those with no direct market benefit; and to social sustainability linked with the role of the forests for poverty reduction

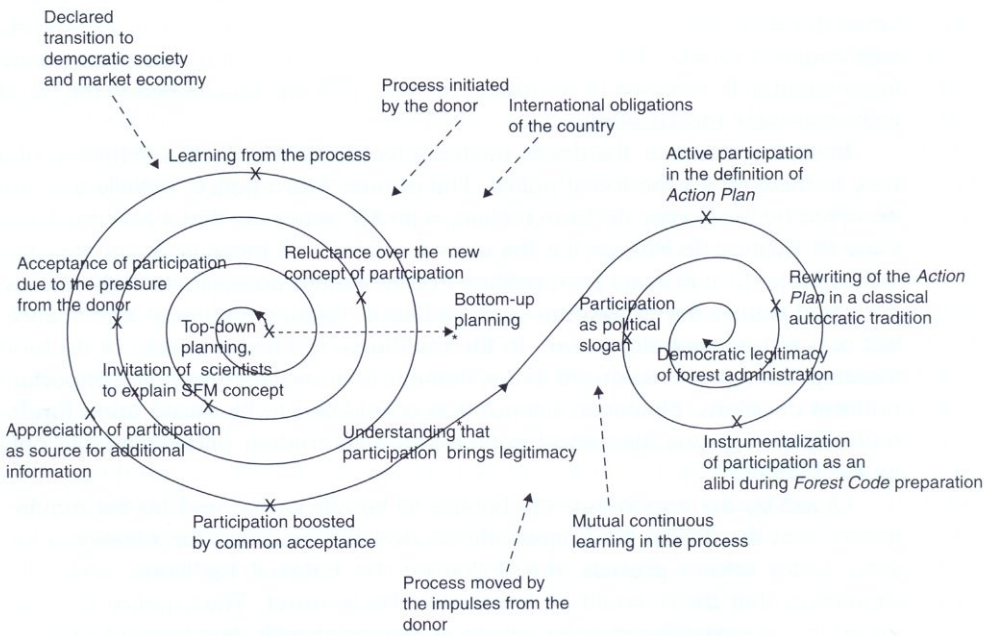

Fig. 3.1. The change in the perceptions and roles of decision makers during the forest policy formulation stage.

and integration of interest groups into the forest management and related decision-making processes: all indicated an urgency of reform of the forest policy in Kyrgyzstan.

A participatory approach for the forest policy reform, as one of the basic features of sustainable development and consistent with the democratic transformations of the society, was proposed by the forest policy scientists, but initially rejected by the Kyrgyz forestry administration. The main expressed reasons for an aversion to participation were linked with:

1. The high cost of the process: 'This money could be much better used for the creation of artificial forest plantations. This is the real indicator of forestry development in the country.'
2. A belief that other stakeholders and actors may not have sufficient special knowledge required for political decisions, while the forestry staff along with the hierarchy (foresters and forest rangers) would be interested in the decrease of the plans and would not give reliable information. 'If we let them plan, they will find many justified reasons for doing nothing.'
3. A fear that integration of the other ministries into the process (environment, finance, agriculture) would undermine the sectoral interests of the forest sector (risk of losing political power through sharing information). 'We do not interfere in their business: why open the gates for them to interfere in our place?'
4. The existing knowledge and experience at the level of the headquarters did not require any additional input from outside.

The donors insisted on the need for the broad participation of various actors and stakeholders and started the process with the facilitation of the policy scientists. The results received in the course of analysis of the present situation of the Kyrgyz forestry sector (during the year 1997) dissipated the fears of the forestry administration:

1. The donors confirmed that the money allocated for the participatory reform process would never be authorized to be used for plantations.
2. Other stakeholders, namely local authorities and village councils, gave no importance to the process; the local population and other forest users, including still a few private entrepreneurs, were occasionally represented by separate individuals and did not have a big say in the discussions; while foresters involved in the process did not bring too much criticism of the existing system (which was an unuttered fear), but, on the contrary, brought in some practical information.
3. Other ministries have gladly accepted the invitation to participate in the national working group on forest policy reform, with one symbolic meeting before launching the analysis, but did not attribute a big importance afterwards to the process itself.
4. The analysis of the situation was not considered to be a political decision and did not present a big challenge.

Consequently, the capacity of the participatory method to bring additional information has been appreciated by the forestry administration, which began to be more and more involved in the process and tried to broaden the number of

participants, mainly from inside the forest service itself. In addition to that, there was a possibility for the forestry administration to have permanent contacts with all the hierarchical chains of the forest service, which permitted better control over the situation and organization of parallel meetings for discussing technical issues, after the workshops held for participatory forest policy reform. The presentation of the results of the *Analysis of the Current Situation* in the Kyrgyz forestry sector (1998), which was carefully prepared together with the forest policy scientists, brought significant public and political success for the Kyrgyz forestry administration. The President of the Republic participated in the presentation of the analysis and stressed the importance of both the forests – as 'the roof of the nation, the head for everything' – and the democratic initiatives of the forest service.

The introduction of participation in the forest policy decision-making process was conceived as a type of experiment, because in Kyrgyzstan, and specifically in forestry, it was a previously unknown phenomenon and nobody could precisely tell how it would evolve. The goal of any experiment is to learn something. In the case of the Kyrgyz process, the first lesson was learned by the forestry administration – the involvement of various actors could bring additional or missing information. Later on in the course of this incremental process, the scope of such information and, consequently, the knowledge was continuously increasing, and gradually transformed into adaptive management. It could be said that the Kyrgyz forestry administration was learning to manage by managing to learn (Bormann *et al.*, 1993).

Discussions with people brought optimization not only to the decisions but also of the management of the process. Appreciation from the top-level administrators gave legitimacy to the process and created an understanding that participatory policy formulation might help to improve the image and political status of the forest service. This knowledge led to the redefinition of objectives and the outward spiral acquired a tendency for changing inwardly. As the state forestry administration declared itself in the Kyrgyz political environment as a democratic reformer, for them, keeping this political status attained greater and more practical importance than sustainable forest management, which has remained an abstract notion, required by the donors for the continuation of financial support. That is why participation was still promoted as a process, while political decisions (*Forest Code, National Programme LES (5-year Action Plan)*) were approved with no regard to the results of the participatory process (Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova 2004, 2005; Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova and Buttoud, 2005). By the end of the described period of the forest policy formulation, participation became a political slogan and an alibi for the Kyrgyz state forestry administration – an instrument that guaranteed legitimacy of decisions facing the government, because they were democratically taken; obliged the executors for implementation, as they have been associated in the decisions; and gave a good image to the forestry service internationally vis-à-vis other potential donors, as a democratic administration, longing for sustainability.

Policy scientists during forest policy formulation

As argued by Hunt (1990), the major purpose of science is to develop laws and theories to explain, predict, understand and control phenomena. In the as yet

unknown donor conditions of Kyrgyzstan, this was exactly what was needed. So the donor, together with the forestry administration, invited scientists to define the scope and needs of support for the Kyrgyz forestry sector. For the invited scientists the situation was also new, but they were equipped with theories and ready for an experiment.

A scientific fact-finding analysis showed that the growing poverty of the local population caused by the transition conditions in the country signalled the need to switch from ecological/conservation priorities, as previously propagated, towards sustainable forest management. Therefore, policy scientists were asked to define a conceptual framework and logic for sustainable forest management possibilities in Kyrgyzstan, to predict how it might develop and to provide monitoring over the process, with periodic insertion of guiding ideas when (or if) needed. The focus was on social and economic aspects of forest management as a requirement for sustainability.

The scarcity of the forest resource and its high protective importance due to mountainous conditions defined the multiplicity of (often opposed) interests in relation to forest management. The importance of the expression and representation of all the interests and views of the stakeholders was considered as the main demand of the new forest policy. Consequent to the democratic processes that were being developed in the country, the scientists have introduced a concept of participation as a basis for forest policy decision making. The top-down decision-making power of the state was still very strong in the country, while democratic processes, including capacity for public deliberation, are not rooted in the society yet. There was neither a tradition of nor a clearly expressed need for public deliberation, especially in a specific field like forest policy. In such circumstances pure bottom-up planning would be neither efficient nor sufficient; therefore the policy scientists proposed an adapted methodology, which combined familiar top-down decision-making processes with bottom-up participatory procedures.

The proposed framework of a mixed model (Buttoud and Samyn, 1999; Buttoud and Yunusova, 2002, 2003) allowed the forestry administration to retain its logical rationalist sequence of decision making, including the identification and classification of the principles and objectives, and, at the same time, combined this approach with the communication and negotiation of means with the other involved stakeholders.

The 'common interests approach' in a deliberative democracy framework combined with the constructive confrontation model (Buttoud, 1999a,b) formed the core of the forest policy reform process. For the policy scientists, the introduction of participation to a formerly centralized decision-making process was an interesting experiment. In conducting this experiment, they were seeking to design better policies but also to devise a better experiment. One of the 'hidden goals' of the experiment was to learn how decision-making theories might work in a country with an emerging democracy. For the policy scientists, the reactions of both decision makers and the other participants of the process were food for thought. The knowledge received from the process permitted the scientists to adapt themselves to the requirements from the decision makers and also to adapt the proposed methods to the situation.

After the success with the *Analysis of the Current Situation*, which was led by a mixed team of Kyrgyz and European forest policy and economists, the policy scientists earned the respect and confidence of the forestry administration and were inspired to develop participation and engage in the process. Such appreciation from the side of the forestry administration gave legitimization to the scientists and their proposals. The donor, mainly preoccupied with the technical expertise, left the forest policy process in the hands of the policy scientists, who continued to support the Kyrgyz forest policy formulation through the design and introduction of the procedures for the definition of the *National Concept for Forestry Development* with an adapted methodology. This exercise was followed and actively promoted by the forestry administration.

Forestry personnel and other stakeholders who joined the process adapted to the participatory procedures and grew to feel much more free to engage in the discussions. Indeed, they started to provide not only knowledge of the actual situation but also constructive and critical ideas. Even if the process was still under the very strong guidance of the policy scientists, there was a general feeling that the methodology proposed for participatory forest policy formulation was appropriate for the local conditions and quite efficient in application.

The first deviation came during the preparation of the draft of the new *Forest Code*. 'In the actual political conditions (in the view of forthcoming parliamentary elections) an urgent elaboration will simplify the approval of the new code. Besides a *Forest Code* is a purely technical legal exercise; therefore lengthy participatory procedures are not appropriate.' With these explanations, the forestry administration excluded the policy scientists from the process. Nevertheless, 'participation' was used as a 'password' during the lobbying for the draft *Forest Code* in the parliament, which gave clear notice of the deliberate instrumentalization of participation by the forestry administration. This change of appreciation for participation by the forestry administration and the use of participation as an alibi created uncertainty and puzzled both the donor and the scientists (Fig. 3.2).

In spite of this reaction, the participatory forest policy formulation process continued as initially planned and involved more and more participants. Contrary to the rather abstract nature of discussions for the *National Concept for Forestry Development*, the *5-year Action Plan* (*LES Programme*) included technical and practical aspects, which were much more familiar to the participants and which considerably facilitated their participation. After the 'hitch' with the *Forest Code*, the forestry administration regained their enthusiasm for promoting participation. 'The foresters and rangers will be responsible for the implementation of the plans; therefore it is up to them to define the plans.' Consistent with 'bottom-up' planning principles, the forest management units (*leshozes*) proposed a methodology for drafting their own 5-year plans based on local potentials and disadvantages. This exercise failed. There was neither sufficient experience in planning nor the professional knowledge for implementing it.

The forestry administration felt vindicated that top-down planning was more efficient, and the policy scientists learned that top-down willingness to engage in participatory processes must be complemented by bottom-up preparedness for it. The scientists were left alone to finalize the results of the participation and transform them into a draft *Programme LES* (*5-year Action Plan*). They needed

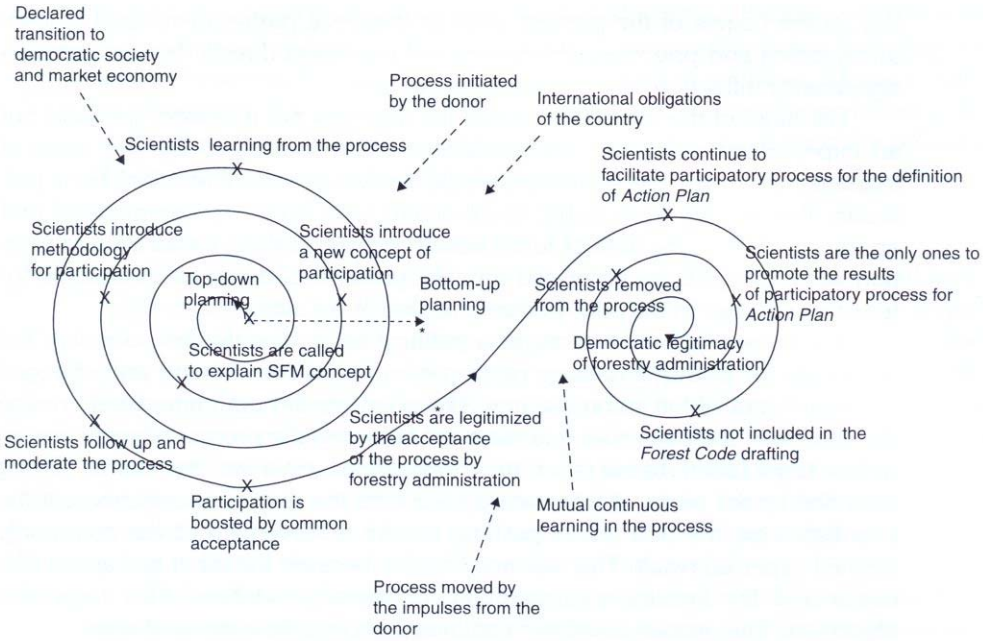

Fig. 3.2. The change in the perceptions and roles of policy scientists during the forest policy formulation stage.

to satisfy terms of reference and deadlines from the donor. The support for the forest policy process in Kyrgyzstan was suspended; the approved *Action Plan* did not take into consideration results of the participatory process (Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova, 2005; Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova and Buttoud, 2005) and the scientists were removed from the process by the donor.

Some outcomes

The outward movement of the spiral at the beginning of the process was determined mainly by the external factors: the process was initiated and 'pushed' by the donors; internal conditions of the country and international commitments of the state obliged the forestry administration to follow the requirements of the donors. The situation was open. The concept of participation was introduced and tested as a basis for forest policy definition, with no predefined agenda as to how the process should proceed, but with the establishment of democratic procedures for policymaking aimed at sustainable forest management, which was perceived as a potential expected result (ideal future).

During the course of the process, the forestry administration changed from aversion and negation of participation to its appreciation. Parallel to that, the attitudes regarding the role of the scientists and their proposals for the new way of forest policymaking were also changing. At the beginning of the process, the goal, defined in common by the donors, decision makers (forestry administration) and scientists (possibly with different degrees of awareness and consciousness), was to reach sustainable forest management through democratic planning.

But, in the course of the process, each of the three parties developed its own understating and priorities, which were not expressed directly but nevertheless significantly influenced the course of the process.

The head of the forestry service at the time was not a forestry specialist but an experienced politician, who understood that sticking to the old ways of management in the new conditions would weaken the administration. For a politician, the benefits from public involvement were easier to comprehend and appreciate. Hence the idea of forest policy decision making based on participation was promoted, incorporated into the process, declared as a principle for forest policy and, in the end, instrumentalized as an alibi.

The forestry administration, as a political actor, was the first to realize the possibility for instrumentalizing participation for its own benefit and changed the movement of the spiral inwards. The scientists did not immediately realize the change in the objectives and were still following the process of participatory policy formulation because of their obligations vis-à-vis the donor. Being bounded by the terms of reference agreed with the donor, at one moment the scientists were the sole actors pushing for the achievement of the commonly defined expected result. This was not effective because the other two actors (the donor and the forestry administration) unilaterally redefined their respective objectives. The process could not continue in its initially conceived state.

A pair of double spirals in forest policy adaptation

The period of forest policy adaptation covers the time between 2001 and 2004. After the approval (2001) of the *Programme 'LES'* (*5-year Action Plan*) in the form of a traditional top-down prescription of the number of hectares of forest plantations to be reached, no further steps were made at the national level towards forest policy reform. The status of the forestry administration was changed (it was transferred as a department to the Ministry of Environment and Emergency Situations), and the forest management units returned to reporting on the hectares of plantations. The donor continued support at the technical level only.

The policy scientists resisted the instrumentalization of participation and the break in the process. Science, above all else, is a critical and analytical activity and a scientist is pre-eminently a person who requires evidence before he or she delivers an opinion and, when it comes to evidence, is hard to please (Medawar, 1990). The situation in Kyrgyzstan provided evidence for two outcomes: (i) learning from the process by the forestry administration resulted in instrumentalization of participation and power redistribution; and (ii) the donor's decision to suspend the support interrupted the logic of the process and implementation of commonly elaborated decisions. Scientific recommendations were not implemented; therefore the policy scientists could not be responsible for the results. In addition, they did not like to be used as an alibi for failure. The policy scientists started to criticize both the forestry administration and the donor.

For the donor their international image was important (and it was at risk) not only because of the criticism from the scientists, but also because the forest

policy formulation process in Kyrgyzstan started to attract the interest of the international community as the first experience of participatory policy formulation in an ex-Soviet republic. Clearly, the process needed to continue. All this resulted in changes in the perception of and roles in the participatory forest policy reform process by the decision makers and the scientists during the period of forest policy reformulation (Figs 3.3 and 3.4).

Decision makers in policy adaptation (Fig. 3.3)
An evaluation of the 5 years of forest policy implementation was required by the *National Concept for Forestry Development* (1999) and it provided a good opportunity for the forestry administration and the donor to recommence collaboration within the forest policy reform process. Following the same logic as at the policy definition stage; the forestry administration insisted on the methodological evaluation of the process from the same policy scientists, based on the fact that they had experienced success elsewhere with the proposed methodology. Engaging the same policy scientists strengthened the whole forest policy formulation process, partly because there was already a habit of working with these particular policy scientists. After all, why change the winning team?

The evaluation was to follow the same rules and approaches as the forest policy formulation process, meaning a reintroduction of participatory procedures. However, as a result of the learning during the policy formulation stage and the experience of implementation, the roles of the actors changed during the evaluation process. Both the donor and the policy scientists began with critiquing the appropriation of the results of the process by the forestry administration, since the latter was responsible for the results of the new policy. The forestry administration in turn wanted to regain its lost position and so supported the reanimation of participation in forest policy reform and assumed the leadership in the

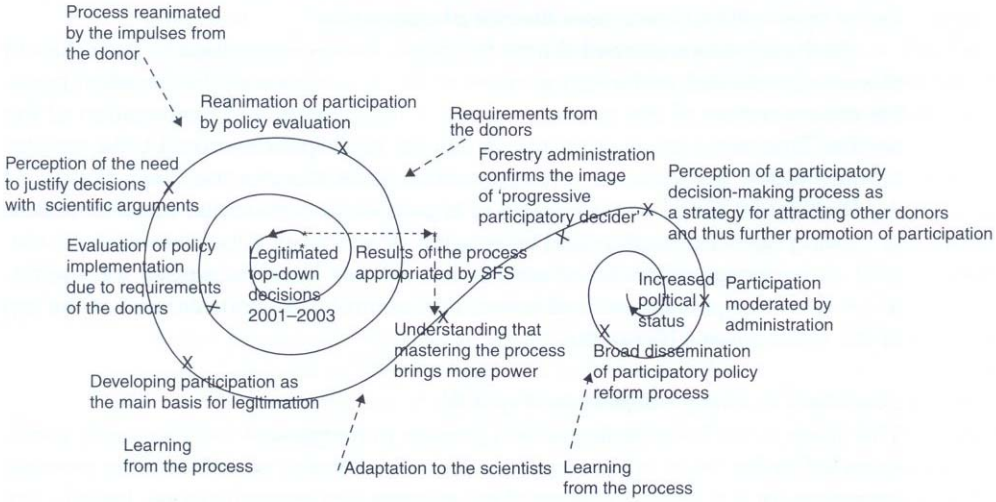

Fig. 3.3. The change in the perceptions and roles of decision makers during the forest policy evaluation stage.

process. A working group with representatives of the forestry administration, the donor and the policy scientists collected information through workshops and interviews, facilitated by the forestry administration, with no direct intervention from the policy scientists. Results from the workshops were complemented by a simple analysis of statistical and economic reports, prepared by the forestry administration. The same working group prepared a final report on the evaluation. In spite of the omnipresence of the forestry administration, the evaluation of the first 5 years' implementation of the *National Concept for Forestry Development* was a process open for broad participation of various stakeholders and actors (carefully selected by the forestry administration), including some new ones who were passive during the policy formulation stage.

The majority of the participants invited by the forestry administration understood the current situation. The local population lived in poor economic conditions, leading to increasing human pressure on the forests. Experiments with community forest management and leasing of the forest lands had not solved this problem. 'We need to involve those whose lives depend directly on the forest resources. If they are better informed about the problems of forestry and forest conservation, they may change their attitudes towards the resource and to the service.' Other ministries wanted to be part of the process: 'Good relations facilitate lobbying. Involvement in the discussion and decision will prevent opposition at the stage of approval.' In contrast to the passiveness of environmental NGOs during the forest policy formulation stage, 5 years later they provided a stronger voice and full engagement in environmental policy issues. 'Once they are convinced, with their help it is much easier to pass ideas through to the government.' Foresters and forest rangers, who were either excluded or only symbolically present during the policy formulation stage, were not fully engaged. 'If they are involved, they cannot criticize the decision afterwards.' Opponents and adversaries of the forestry administration were included. A fear of possible criticism was one of the main reasons for the initial aversion to the idea of participation. 'The floor given for an open critique decreases the risk of opposition.'

All these lessons learned during the policy formulation stage by the different players contributed to the appreciation of the importance of the broadest possible dissemination of the information about the process and propagation of the results. This well-organized instrumentalized participation brought the forestry administration the status of an independent service under the direct control of the President's office and an image of a pioneer of democratic transformations (including open evaluation and adaptation of a policy). All of these results created a new image of the forest service as a reliable business partner for international donor organizations, and power and control were consolidated at the top of the forest service hierarchy.

Scientists in policy adaptation (Fig. 3.4)

The break in the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan (which exactly corresponded to the break in the direct involvement of policy scientists in the process) gave time for a scientific analysis of the process and its implications. Initially, the scientists came to the process with an assumption that the involvement of multiple actors and stakeholders would provide a basis for realistic decisions, leading

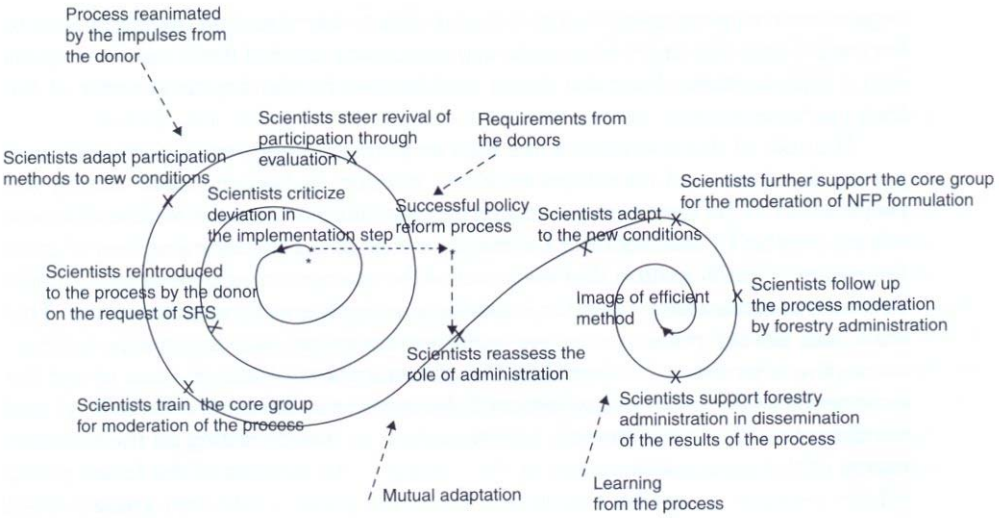

Fig. 3.4. The change in the perceptions and roles of policy scientists during the forest policy evaluation stage.

to the sustainable forest management, and would be in line with the democratic processes of a country in transition. The rhythm of the process depended from their perspective on the rhythm of involvement by the policy scientists. Obviously, the policy scientists brought in a methodology and techniques promoting participation and were very much involved in the facilitation of the processes, including adapting the techniques and methodology – although not the theory – to the changing situation. The choice of the theory, method, approach and concept adapted to a context was itself dependent upon political acceptance, and this is directly derived from the origin of the process itself (Buttoud, 2000).

The reality in Kyrgyzstan showed, on the one hand, that democratic behaviour (public deliberation) cannot be simply imported into a society, but that people need time for learning and becoming part of the practice. On the other hand, the rapid and organized learning from within the powerful structures (presumably those stakeholders who had bigger stakes and challenges in the course of the process) permits instrumentalization of participation for the benefit of those structures. A new policy concept and theory are needed to explain how the process was working, or how it has worked, and what should be adapted specifically for societies in transition. The short period of policy formulation gave some ideas for further theories, but it was not yet sufficient.

At this point there was a new call from the donor and forestry administration for methodological input for organizing policy evaluation. Even if the common goal was the appropriation of the process by the forestry administration, from the beginning it was generally agreed that public participation would be the major principle for the whole process. The policy scientists promoted the revival of participation through evaluation, but, contrary to the previous stage, were no longer directly involved in the process. The specialists from the forestry administration were trained in the methodology and techniques for policy evaluation and the

organization of participation of actors and stakeholders, and all the responsibility for the process was given to a working group, comprised of those trained experts and a representative from the donor and headed by the deputy director of the forest service.

The role of the scientists at this step was limited to general observation and punctual advice and consultations when needed. It became clear during the preparation of the report on the results of the evaluation and the writing of a new edited version of the *National Concept for Forestry Development* based upon the results of participation that the input of the scientists was considerable, if not decisive, because of the need for a synthetic analysis and conceptualization. This work was always presented as the achievement of the working group. Furthermore, the scientists contributed to the dissemination of information about the experience of the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan at the international level and continue to support the forestry administration in disseminating all the achievements of the participatory process. As a result of the 8 years of the forest policy reform process, it can be concluded that a full policy cycle was implemented in Kyrgyzstan, including all the stages from the situation analysis to the national forest policy adaptation through evaluation. Indeed, now all of the basic documents for the forest policy are in place and the principles of participation are accepted as the basis for policymaking.

Some outcomes and conclusions

What the participants learned during the policy formulation stage made it likely that the actors would come back to the process in order to pursue their own specific interests. The forestry administration learned about the potentials of power that participation could bring. Ironically, the interests of the decision makers were to change as little as possible in their decision-making procedures in order to control the decisions themselves. Appropriation of the process and its results, which was an objective of the policy adaptation exercise proposed by the donor and promoted by the working group (mainly comprised of the representatives of the state forest service) as moderators of the process and by the scientists, gave the forestry administration a possibility to achieve both: maintain the power over decisions and develop a good image of a democratic authority, further strengthening its political status. Moreover, the involvement of the other stakeholders improved the links within the forest sector as well as with the other sectors, contributing again to the power and status of the forest administration. And, last but not least, democratic decision making attracted other donors to the forestry sector, with the forest service as a reliable partner.

Scientists are often expected to provide objective knowledge and unbiased judgement appropriate for legitimating both decisions and processes. For the process to become legitimate in the new conditions of a country in transition, it was important to demonstrate that the proposed theories were viable and the methodology appropriate. Clearly, this implies that scientists must adapt themselves and their methodology to current conditions. When the state administration is still very strong and public deliberation is not yet a habitual practice,

scientists naturally orient themselves to the stronger actor. In this case, the adaptation of the scientists included the observation and analysis of the reaction of the policymakers to the proposed methodology, an improvement of techniques for participation based on this reaction and finally an adaptation of the participatory process itself to the needs of the administration.

There is also a third party to the story, the donor, which has been generally referred to as an 'external factor', but at the same time was a real decision maker and had a decisive role in the evolution of the process. The forestry administration was the local partner of the donor for the project. The reputation of the policy scientists as providers of a neutral and objective expertise served as a tool for moderating the reaction of the forestry administration. So the donor invited the policy scientists as a guarantor of objectivity, definers of the framework and moderators of the policy process. The unforeseen effect of such involvement (i.e. the strengthening of the position of the forestry administration and its getting out of control) did not fit with the agenda of the donor and led to suspension of support for the policy process.

The criticism from the scientists at the international level and mainly the need for the success of the project led to the revival of the donor's engagement in the forest policy reform, but with the obligation of achieving a result with the responsibility (especially in case of failure) shared with the policy scientists. The same scientists were invited as for the first stage, and the success of the participatory forest policy evaluation and adaptation inevitably made the donor the winner, who could now claim 'experience in forest policy reform in countries in transition'. Unexpectedly, the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan based on a participatory approach brought a win–win–win outcome for everyone involved.

From the scientists' point of view, the participatory forest policy formulation in Kyrgyzstan was a practical test of theory and methodology. As in any experiment, the results can surprise the experimenter and it is up to a good scientist to recognize and pursue the implications. So, even if the conclusions challenge the classical image of a scientist, they need to be reported. Adaptation is one feature of such a scientific approach. In principle, scientists are ready to adapt themselves, and thus they can help promote a general adaptation by others. A policy formulation process, like planning at any level, is a procedure for promoting a change. To plan means to order actions you will carry out as needed and the change is intended to improve the present situation (Buttoud, 2000). Scientists, having a reputation of being 'neutral', may be called upon to provide an 'objective' analysis of the facts, which can then help the decision makers to decide.

The case study of Kyrgyzstan has shown that scientists are equal actors in the process and may have their own understanding of expected results and ways to reach them (means and ends). However, since scientists propose a theory (or methodology) for these processes, their values and perspectives can dominate the choice or the application of the proposed theory. Just like the other actors of the process, the scientists are not neutral; they too want to be winners and prove that their theories and methods are working. Can it be stated that the scientists were the principal motors for changing the direction of the movement of the spiral?

Does the analysis of the development of the double spiral lead to the conclusion that the double nature of the spirals was caused by the proposed methodology of the mixed model?

In politics, the use of science always entails a legitimization strategy, whether it succeeds or fails. In other words, politics cannot be avoided and a pragmatic rationalist approach is the only effective orientation (Antypas and Meidinger, 1996). The case study suggests that, when decision makers need validation for their actions, they seek out the scientists. Once the decision is made, the scientific expertise can become an alibi for the decision makers when it is challenged.

In Kyrgyzstan, the scientists have adapted theories to the reality and this adaptation has directly created a win–win–win situation. Another uncontrolled outcome was that the results of the policy evaluation indicated a need for a general reform of the forestry sector, which would include reorganization of the forestry administration. The donors have already engaged themselves in the support of this process. Are we in for a couple of new spirals? The context has changed with the 'tulip revolution' in Kyrgyzstan in March 2005. Was it fed, at least indirectly, by a process such as the participatory forest policy reform process? Or is there again, more globally speaking, a power redistribution between the decision makers winning from the public deliberation?

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The involvement of stakeholders in a forest policy reform process: democracy promotion and power redistribution. (*Swiss Forestry Journal*, 157(10) 2006.

The idea of the inter-relations between participation, as an instrument for the promotion of democracy and, at the same time, as a mechanism for the re-distribution and even *consolidation* of power has been disturbing me since the moment I started to analyse the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan.

Both theoretical and practical aspects of the GOFOR project and the comparative analysis of participation in the policy processes in the 10 European countries – GOFOR partners, have indicated to me many similar aspects in the strategies of the main stakeholders during the process and their impact on the final decision. On the one hand, it showed the dependence of the modalities of participation on the cultural and ethical backgrounds, but, on the other hand, it proved that learning, which is generated by the process, creates conditions for a necessary re-definition of positions and interests, and, as a consequence, adaptation to the changed context. The effect of permanent learning and adaptation seemed to require a special attention.

The summer research course, organised by the Laboratory of Forest Policy, ENGREF, with "*Participation in forest policies: an apple pie or a new mode of governance"* as a subject was a good opportunity for comparing different situations and visions and touching tricky aspects of participation. The presentations and discussion during this seminar, permanent discussions in the Laboratory about the problematic of participation and policy decisions in the countries like France, Togo, Gabon, Ukraine, Balkans, were confirming the idea that participation, in fact, not necessarily linked with democratic empowerment and can be easily promoting consolidation of power. In the laboratory we decided to look, if we can define the fundamental and conceptual explanations on the mechanisms of public decision making.

The first draft of the article was disputable, and, may be too much critical, so it was returned from the reviewers with the demand for major revisions. I am very grateful to the editor of the Swiss Forestry Journal and to the director of the Laboratory of forest policy, for their constrictive support, which gave me courage to re-write this article. It has also given an inspiration to continue in the research on this topic.

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Dr. Jean-Pierre Sorg
Tel. 044 632 32 14, Fax 044 632 15 98
E-Mail: jean-pierre.sorg@env.ethz.ch

Redaktionsassistenz / Editorial Assistants
Margrit Irniger, lic. phil. I
Tel. 044 632 32 09, Fax 044 632 15 98
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Christian Lanz
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The involvement of stakeholders in a forest policy reform process: Democracy promotion and power redistribution *(reviewed paper)*

Irina Kouplevatskaya

Keywords: Democracy; participation; policy reform; power; forest policy. FDK 624 : 9

Abstract: Oft wird Mitwirkung als Werkzeug präsentiert, um Demokratie zu fördern, aber gleichzeitig führt dies zu einer Neudefinierung der Angelegenheiten, Entscheidungen und ebenso zu einer Neuverteilung von Macht unter den Interessenvertretern. Gestützt auf empirische Beweise, die auf Erfahrungen mit der forstpolitischen Reform in Kirgistan (eine der früheren zentralasiatischen Sowjetrepubliken) und auf der Analyse grundlegender theoretischer Systeme von Mitwirkung beruhen, wird die Frage nach der Macht in Bezug auf Entscheidungs- und Mitwirkungsprozesse und in der Beeinflussung der Stakeholder-Gruppen gestellt.

Abstract: Participation is often presented as a tool to promote democracy, but it also leads to the redefinition of issues, decisions as well as to power redistribution among stakeholders. Based on empirical evidence drawn from the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan (a former constituent republic of the Soviet Union) and from an analysis of basic theoretical frameworks for participation, the paper treats the question of power in relation to decision-making and participatory processes as well as the impact that participation has on the empowerment of some groups of stakeholders.

Public involvement in a policy process is a constitutive element of democracy in particular and a means of empowering citizens and the public in general, but it may be also used as a tool for organising power re-distribution or re-enforcing existing power structures.

Participation and forest policy

Why raise the question of participation and democracy in a forest policy process?

In conventional forest management approaches, the power of deciding is not questioned as such, as it is mainly restricted to technical expertise. This type of framework is generally referred to as rationalist technocratic decision-making that originates at the top of the hierarchical administrative structure. Neither external input nor exchanges of opinion or the setting of priorities are necessarily included into such a process. Decisions taken in this way are based on the rationalist analysis of objectives and the means necessary for their achievement, and lead from the best solution of a single problem to the definition of another one. This framework leaves no space for either deliberation or negotiation, while participation, if existent, is limited to a one-way information flow from «the other actors and stakeholders» to the «deciders».

Set against this philosophy, in the international debate on sustainable forest management governments have pledged to work towards broader public participation in decision-making, giving more importance to participation and deliberation in the forest policy processes. The need to promote economically viable, socially acceptable and ecologically sound forest practices, has extended the former understanding of forestry from sustainable yield harvesting towards sustainable management of multiple goods and services for the benefit of various stakeholders. The requirement of including environmental, economic and social aspects in forest management raises the need for new decision-making procedures, based on democratic participatory style of interactions. On the one hand, public participation is inevitable, because forest expert knowledge alone and pure economic or ecological approaches to forest management no longer suffice. On the other, the global trend of democratic societies to increase public involvement in decision-making processes should promote social sustainability. Participation has therefore become a major factor in the dominant discourse on sustainable development and indicates that «administrators and experts might arrive at the public interest by allowing the «public» to participate in environmental decision making» (Tabbush 2004).

For many years prior to the necessity of participation in forest policy processes, public involvement in policy decisions and debates about empowerment, legitimacy and social/political learning was in the hands of the social and political sciences. In these debates, participation is usually presented as a constitutive element of and an essential requirement for democracy. Democracy is assimilated with the possibility given to citizens for free deliberation and involvement in policy decision-making at various levels, thus creating conditions for learning, empowerment and raising citizens' awareness of their responsibility while giving legitimacy to decisions (Fishkin 1991; Levine 2002; Roberts 2004). An effective stakeholder participation in policy decisions gives credibility, saliency and legitimacy to such decisions. It is linked to the sovereignty, political equity, and the empowerment of citizens and the definition of collective will (Webler & Tuler 2002; Eckley 2001).

Different theories specify different types of democracies, with the use of different approaches and definitions. These differences depend on the ways in which the public has access to decision-making processes and the role it is accorded. These ways can be summed up and grouped as:

- Participation through representation: when elected representatives act in the interests of the groups or parties who have voted for them. In fact, these representatives have enough authority to act on their own initiative, depending on the changing circumstances.
- Participation through public deliberation: a social inquiry process, that occurs when the actors self-consciously organise themselves in deliberation as a learning community. The aims of this process are to establish common meanings and understanding through discourse, and to generate new options, choices, understandings and desired consequences (Dryzek 1990, 1993; Forester 1996). It is a *de facto* participation, based on spontaneous discussion among participants (Dovie 2003).

From this point of view, the issue of democracy is relevant to the forest policy and sustainable forest management, as it can act as a guarantee for the social sustainability. Roberts (2004) summarises it in the following manner:

- A transparency in the decision-making process;
- Equal representation of the interests of various stakeholders;
- A clear definition of and agreement among all the participants about a general, or common interest, (as well as priorities, expected results, objectives);
- Willingness of the public to be involved in the process;
- Negotiation of the various interests as the basis for the process and a possibility of trade-off decisions among the perceived benefits of the various alternatives made by the involved stakeholders;
- A combination of individual preferences in a clear, easily understood manner so that the citizens would recognise how they have influenced the outcome.

Participation as viewed by forest policy scientists

The need to take social, ecological and economic factors in forest management into account has not only introduced public participation into forest policy processes but has also made it a subject of analysis for forest policy scientists. What is the difference between participation in general and participation in a forest policy process? From a functional or instrumental point of view, participation can be seen as an instrument, providing additional information to that of the technical knowledge of the experts while, at the same time, legitimising technical decisions. The role of participation is to improve the nature and quality of information considered by policy and decision-makers (Shannon 2002).

From an ethical or normative point of view, participation is a democratic process for communicative decision-making based on various stakeholders' views.[1] An analysis of the literatures[2] leads to the conclusion that when participation is treated as a democratic process for communicative decision-making based on an interactive communicative system it can be considered as:

- a principle, which guarantees transparency of decisions and consensus building among the presented opposed positions and priorities (Glück 1999; Shannon 1999);
- a mechanism, which provides political (collaborative) learning and consciousness raising for all involved actors (Appelstrand 2002; Boon 2001; Nordic Council of Ministers 2002);
- a process of communicative action, which results in legitimacy of decisions and empowerment of the involved participants. This communicative action creates a shared understanding through public deliberation within a community of interpretation leading to mutually defined social goals and a common vision of desired outcomes (Arnstein 1969; Buttoud 1999; Shannon 2002).

The concept of participation does not have one simple interpretation. Moreover, when applied to the sphere of forest policy, it preserves all the complexity of definitions and approaches from the social/sociological/political sciences, while adding specific features of policies for the management of natural resources.

Depending on the theoretical frameworks, the stakeholders involved in the process and the types of resulting decisions, participation can also be defined as:

- Consultative planning or resource participation (Buttoud 1999), whereas the decisions are based on participation through consultation, without either sharing the decision making power or an obligation to consider public opinion. This type of participation is also presented as a passive one, because the one-way flow of factual information comprises the main element.
- Representative participation (Boon 2001), collaborative planning, functional planning (Buttoud 1999; Dovie 2003) these various definitions are related to a collective process for resolving conflicts and advancing shared visions on the decision under discussion. This type of participation is usually related to the involvement of selected groups of diverse stakeholders in relation to a limited number of selected issues.
- Auto-mobilisation (Buttoud 1999), deliberation (Shannon 2003), community participation (Jeanrenaud 2001; Finger-Stich 2003), refers to situations where forest departments and local user groups share products, responsibilities, control and decision-making authority. This is a de facto, or active participation, in which mobilised and active participants can contribute to decision-making process.

The involvement of various stakeholders in forest policy processes necessarily means the confrontation of various opposed interests (Buttoud 1999; Buttoud & Yunusova 2003a, b) and thus makes it more likely that a legitimated decision in respect of a negotiated common good can arise out of this confrontation. As a result, participation in forest management and policy processes is usually a procedural result from economic, political and ethical needs that takes the various demands, requirements and interests expressed by different stakeholders into account. Participation as a process for the definition of forest policy not only opens up ways for various stakeholders' interests to be taken into account, but may also effect a change in the visions and positions of all participants.

In the present article, participation is considered from the ethical/normative point of view, as a democratic communicative process leading to a commonly negotiated decision taken with the involvement of various stakeholders.

From empowerment to power re-distribution

In the interest of social stability, public involvement in decision-making is considered by some authors as a possibility for the representation of under-represented interests through deliberation and communication, which may eventually lead to the political empowerment of the «have-nots» (Arnstein 1969). In his «ladder of participation», Arnstein puts «citizen power» at the higher end and passes through «delegated power» to «citizen control», which he describes as a situation when the «have-not citizens» are able to negotiate with traditional power-holders and obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power. Thus the question of power is not alien to the participatory processes.

The empowerment could be interpreted as a transfer of power from one decision-making body to those who would be concerned by the impact from this decision or by its implementation. What exactly happens during a participatory decision-making process? Do all participants have equal capacities of empowerment? How will participants act in order to acquire

[1] Buttoud 2005, unpublished.

[2] Cf. the author's analysis entitled «Concept paper on public participation» within the EU research project on New Modes of Governance in Europe (GoFOR). www.boku.ac.at/GOFOR (October 6, 2006).

power? What kind of power are they looking for? What are the decisive factors for empowerment? Does the distribution of power flow only in the direction of the empowerment of the «initially not powerful»? What are the moving factors and interests for this distribution?

Before getting down to the reflections about empowerment in the course of participation, it is necessary to specify, what is meant by the concept of «power» in the framework of this paper.

Over the centuries, «power» has been a subject of theoretical discourse for political philosophers and, later on, policy scientists (Clegg 1979; Gauld 1996; Dahl 1961; de Jouvenel 1993; Weber 1980). For many, power is linked to human passions in the context of discussions on sovereignty, democracy and political rights. Power has been considered through the integrative dynamics of the society, through the will for domination, power of making choices and also through the decision-making paradigm, which seems to be more appropriate for the objectives of the present paper.

Addressed from the different approaches, the issues have several dimensions or «faces» (Dahl 1957; Gaventa 1980; Lukes 1974; Barnett & Duvall 2005). Power is evenly distributed across society with each possessing the ability to influence the political process through involvement in various interest groups (Dahl 1961). At the same time, it represents the capacity to mobilise general resources in society for the attainment of social goals. From a social and historical description and in terms of categorical divisions of society, power is considered not as a fixed part of a social structure, but as a process, one aspect of an ongoing social relationship. In a democratic process, it may be held through a delegated authority. Power may be provided by expertise, knowledge, money, force, moral persuasion or by the social influence of tradition. Within this approach, democracy is characterised as a system of competing elites, (elite pluralism), who are seen as the main participants in decision-making processes: they have the power to make decisions and the power to keep issues off the political agenda. Relations of power focus on leaders and followers, where elite rule is inevitable. Even in democratic societies, elite groups dominate political decision-making processes, either because of the superior personal qualities of the leaders, like intelligence or education (Buchanan & Tullock 1962; Hofstaad 2002; Roberts 2004), or because of their superior organisational ability in the face of the disorganisation of other elite groups and the population at large.

These four dimensions of power can be summarised with the following questions: «Who, if anyone, is exercising the power?»; «What issues are taken off the agenda and by whom?»; «Whose objective interests are being harmed?» and «What kind of subject is being produced?» (Digeser 1992, as quoted by Barnett & Duvall 2005). These four central questions of power are echoed in the questions linked to participation.

Participation, from ideal to reality

As an element of a democratic process, participation in a forest policy aimed at sustainable forest management can be expected to promote consciousness raising and political learning. It is required for a consensus between the opposed interests and leads to legitimate decisions, empowerment and raises the involved stakeholders' awareness of their responsibility. These considerations necessarily lead to the questions: Who are the stakeholders involved? Or, more generally, who are the participants of the process? How do they start to participate and at which point of the process? What are the reasons for their involvement? These questions may be developed on the basis of both theoretical explications from literature and practical experience.[3]

Who are the participants?

As potential participants we must consider all citizens and the population at large. A democratic deliberation, linked with empowerment, depends upon active citizens, willing to invest their time in political debate (Shannon 2002). Nevertheless, many of the studies of participatory decision-making processes, as well as everyday practice, show that, in fact, the «public» may be passive and is anyway difficult to define. It is not individual citizens who participate, although selected stakeholders or organised groups have clear stakes for participating. As a result, participation in forest policy issues, as in any political process, will consciously and directly engage the people interested in (and affected by) the choices, as well as those whose actions, budgets and commitments are necessary to carry out the chosen courses of action (Reich 1985 in Shannon 2002). It also means that all participants entering the process will arrive with the aim of promoting their own (group) interests.

If the principle of equal representation of all the interests is to be followed, how can the under-represented stakeholders be identified? How can the question of proportionality be settled in a forest policy process? Which stakeholders are integrated elements of the political system? From the structural functionalist point of view, a group influences the case proportionally to a number of people in the group (Hofstaad 2002). This means that more numerous and better-organised groups of stakeholders will have more chance to promote their interests, and thus, influence the decision. This link between representation of interests and access to decisions is especially important in the case of natural resources management. There are several reasons for this:

> The fact that forest policy is linked with abstract and symbolic challenges, as well as to ethical values (for instance, environmental issues and ecological values of the forests) decreases the challenge of participation for (lay people) individuals. Another reason is that individuals, generally pre-occupied by the everyday priorities, have no time to invest into the process of deliberation, as they are convinced that their proper ideas will not necessarily be followed (Tabbush 2004).

The study by A. Finger-Stich on the management of communal forests in the Alps in France and Switzerland provides us with a good example; Finger-Stich (2003) shows that forests are often marginal to people's pre-occupations. They are usually more interested in their local forests or recreational activities. In order to facilitate their participation it is therefore necessary to take account of the territorial realities and focus on practice-oriented considerations in forest management related issues.

[3] For the examples relating to France, material was used from a pre-assessment study implemented by the Laboratory of Forest Policy (ENGREF, France), within the framework of the EU research project on the new modes of governance in forestry (GoFOR). For the examples from Kyrgyzstan, experience was used from the forest policy reform (see also Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova 2004, 2005) and from the EU research project on the elaboration of integrated management plans in Juniper forests of South Kyrgyzstan (Jump, Chorfi 2004).

Some of the interested (concerned) actors may be not recognised as relevant participants (stakeholders) by the policy-makers and thus excluded from the process.

In southern Kyrgyzstan for instance, the forest services did not consider a particular NGO – which was involved in village development activities – as sufficiently important when it came to developing a forest management plan for the region. Or, in France, during the formulation phase in the NFP process, environmental NGOs were invited to policy discussions only if the discussed issues were related to biodiversity, but not to the debates on forest production, timber harvesting and wood chain strategies.

Some actors or stakeholders who may have objective interests are not aware of that and thus stay away from the process.

An analysis of partnership relations between the forest communes and the State Forest Agency (ONF) in France shows that elected mayors do not often interfere in forest management issues, either because they place great trust in the forest service («foresters are well educated specialists, paid for their services, therefore they are totally responsible for all what is linked to forest management»), or they do not consider the forest to be an important issue for their communes. In France, only about 40% of forestry communes participates in the discussions on forest policy issues via their national association. Another example comes from the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan, where, at the initial stages (analysis and policy formulation), environmental NGOs and representatives of the village councils were practically absent – basically for the same reasons as in France; it was only in the later stages (after the policy evaluation) that the challenge for participation in forest policy became clear to them too, and they started to participate actively in the process (Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova 2005).

The resources available for different stakeholders may not be equivalent to their interests or legitimate claims, thus limiting their possibilities for participating.

A participatory process is a very costly and time-consuming activity and is therefore still restricted in many cases to those who can afford it. This is clearly shown in examples from countries with restrained economies. During the initial stage of forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan, the process was organised and led by an international support project[4] and, at a later stage, solely by the State Forest Agency. In both cases, the local population (a very important stakeholder with a great dependence on forest resources, but very weak economically and badly organised socially and politically) was only sporadically involved in the process (Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova 2005). This low level of participation is not merely down to limited economic resources; mechanisms for the representation of interests of non-organised stakeholders (NGOs, associations, etc) were practically non-existent in Kyrgyzstan. The interests of already marginal stakeholders therefore have very little chance of being represented.

Finally, quite often participation is not a spontaneous, free and open process of deliberation, but a procedure, which tends to be restricted to selected stakeholders. The selection may depend on the convener, on the various resources available for participation (not only material ones, but also time, information, networking), and on the importance of the stakes. This may be organised consciously or happen spontaneously. But, in any case, in practice, a participation process is clearly moved by powerful and well-organised groups of stakeholders with well-defined interests and stakes. In forest policy processes, the forest service and the representatives from processing industries are often the most influential stakeholders as they have more resources available and more direct stakes.

When is the process open for participation?

When is the process opened up to public and who determines this moment? Who decides which issues are put on the agenda and advanced for participatory decision? In many cases, the role of the convener of the process is not attributed to an external intervener, but is taken (formally or not) by some of the stakeholders who have important stakes and are directly interested in the results of the process. These stakeholders are well organised, possess sufficient resources, the basic factual information and a clear vision of the expected result of the process. All those characteristics are usually attributed to the powerful structures, governmental and administrative bodies or institutions. Such bodies naturally promote technocratic rationalist top-down decision-making procedures, which is why they are able to open up the participation process when it fits the rationalist agenda:

(i) When experts and deciders have already addressed the major topics, and the principle decision is taken. Participation in this case is a means for validation and legitimacy, a sort of a democratization of autocratic decisions.

(ii) When the topics are external to the competence of the conveners of the process. However, in this case, the decision is not taken by the wider public but rather by groups of experts or powerful stakeholders who may be concerned by the topic. The exchange between them in the course of a participatory process may lead to the reassessment of the issue, and thus, these small groups involved in the process take final decision. The acid-rain debate of the 1980s in France, the selection of the territories for the Natura 2000 directive, or any establishment of a «specially protected area» status provide examples of such processes.

(iii) When the topics are urgent and concern many stakeholders. The convener's grasp of the complex matter is likely to be inadequate and the process is therefore opened to participation – not only to gain information, but also to share responsibility (especially when decisions then taken risk being unsuccessful or unpopular). The openness of the process in this case, as well as the degree of the participants' involvement, also depends on the importance of the stakes and on the availability of resources and knowledge. For example, in France, the storms of December 1999 created a situation that required immediate reaction and the mobilisation of all necessary resources. An active and broad participation of all stakeholders was a spontaneous response to this emergency situation. Final decisions on the Relief Plan for Forests (Plan Chablis) were however limited to the representatives of private owners or forest communes, and environmental NGOs were not involved.

(iv) When there is moral pressure or an external requirement to follow. With the international dialogue on sustainable

[4] Kyrgyz-Swiss Forest Sector Support Programme, which is active in Kyrgyzstan since 1995.

forest management, international institutions exercise strong pressure on national governments to enable participatory approaches to define forest policies as a precondition for social sustainability. The NFP (National Forest Programmes) processes provide an example of this. In addition to this «moral»[5] obligation, the requirement of participation is quite often directly or indirectly linked to financial instruments. For instance, many EU initiatives prescribe participation as a pre-requirement for financing. Such participatory requirements from donors are even more rigorous in the case of developing or transitional countries.

Finally, the moment of the process when participation is introduced, together with the reasons leading to the introduction and the issues on the agenda, have a decisive role on the nature of participation and its capacity to influence the decisions. However, as long as the better-organised stakeholders and stronger interests determine participation in forest policy, they are usually the ones who determine the moment and the agenda for participation. Consequently, directly or indirectly, these stakeholders may influence the nature of participation and hence, the «openness» of decisions.

This does not affect the democratic nature of the decision-making process: the mere fact that opinions and voices of people may be expressed in very different ways within various frameworks makes public deliberation or participation the basic corner stone and an integral element of any democratic process.

How can participation be «instrumentalised»?

In scientific discourses dealing with deliberation, democracy is often seen not only as an organisational principle but also as enhancing legitimacy, since it ensures the legitimate basis for decision-making processes. In this way, political decisions are reached through deliberative processes where participants negotiate opposing interests and justify their positions in view of the common good of a given reality. Such processes are thus ideally designed to foster mutual learning and to eventually transform preferences into a policy choice oriented to public interest, which is reached through social learning (Shannon 1999).

The structural functionalist approach, on the other hand, considers policy as a process of transformation of demands and support into decisions (Gaventa 1980); the involvement of stakeholders here is a question of who feeds the demands and how they are transformed into a decision. In this respect, a «common good» is at the core of participatory decision-making. This is likely to be a highly disputed point as far as forest management is concerned, where the interests of various stakeholders are so different and even opposed; moreover, the public judgement on what is a common good may be different from the opinions of other stakeholders. On whose opinion is the decision to be based?

Due to the specific nature of forestry (prevailing technical decisions, sectorial interests, stakes which are either symbolic and abstract, or specific for a particular group of owners, users) participation in forest policy processes is often limited to some stakeholders' groups. New participants to the process are always unequal from social, economic and even educational points of view. Some participants are better organised than the others (resources, networking), and are therefore better equipped to express their arguments and have their views and positions accepted by other actors. «Anyone who claims to know – and goes unchallenged that this cannot be done or that is the one and only alternative open, can achieve great effect on a decision» (Lindblom 1980). The process may often be led or dominated by these stakeholders, and the related demands will correspond to their interests, excluding those of the less organised participants.

Even in the case of a very open process, the readiness to participate depends on the importance of the tabled question, which in turn defines the groups of stakeholders who will be more active in such participation, «feeding the decision» with their demands. Thus, especially in forest policy where the distinction between the direct interest groups (forestry administration, industries based on forest products, forest owners) and indirect interests (general public, other sectors, environmentalists) is clear, there is always a possibility that the decision will be taken with the domination of the stronger interest group. Simply opening up a decision-making process to «outside» participants does not necessarily guarantee an equitable decision, although it lends strong legitimacy to any decisions reached at the end of the process.

Public involvement in a policy definition process is also a means to disseminate information and increase knowledge of a particular topic among the lay public. During the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan (Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova 2005), for example, many participants indicated that their involvement in the meetings and workshops during the different stages of the process had helped them to better understand the priorities and challenges of forest management and forestry in general. It also raised their levels of general knowledge on state policy, political processes and furnished them with practical information about the situation in other regions of the country. The reaction of mayors and representatives of the State Forest Agency (ONF) in the Vosges region of France was similar: discussions in public meetings caused the mayors to re-consider their vision of forest management priorities and look for new types of collaboration.

Viewed from this angle, participation is an instrument for creating new information and visions, even though, at the same time, the aspect of information may be one of the restricting factors for participation.

One argument often used to restrict participation in policy decisions is that lay people coming to the process do not always possess the necessary knowledge. Average citizens do not usually have the information required to comprehend the management of complex public affairs and arrive at a well-grounded rational choice. When the process is opened to the general public, the latter can usually only express agreement or disagreement with statements already formulated by the authorised decision-makers. This may lead to a firm guidance from an informed and politically active minority (Roberts 2004). This is especially true for such a technical field as forestry. Moreover, the uninformed public lacks a long-term and strategic vision, and its input carries no weight when decisions are taken. Paradoxically, this was the conclusion reached in the evaluation of the forest policy implementation (in Kyrgyzstan) after five years, although it was defined in a participatory way (Kouplevatskaya-Yunusova 2005). It is also commonly assumed that powerful participants seek to exclude discussion of issues that may damage their interests, and thus «filter» the information. This may be the case, for instance, regarding debates on genetically modified plants or atomic power stations, when, for the sake of strategic or corporative interests, only half-truths are given of possible side effects.

In fact, even the information received in the course of the process is «filtered» at several stages by those who convene or moderate the process:

[5] International initiatives aimed at sustainable forest management do not carry any legal obligation.

(i) as one of the objectives of a deliberative process is to find a compromise that leads to the «common good» by bringing all the various and opposed interests into the process, the search for a compromise leads to general statements that hide specific demands of multiple stakeholders.

(ii) divergent interests must be weighed against each other, and the weighting of these is often left in the hands of the convenors of the processes who decide which interests are put on the agenda.

(iii) a compromise on a «common good» can be only reached through negotiation that focuses exclusively on disputable aspects, and largely excludes controversial or non-negotiable points (such as ethical ones). In a common situation when marginal interests, (usually controversial points, as they are not shared by the others) are already underrepresented in the process, and, thus excluded from the negotiation, the «common good» finally agreed on represents the views of an active and realistic majority, and the democratically agreed solution lies in the interests of some powerful stakeholders.

As for forestry decisions, despite on-going decentralisation and the rolling-back of the state, priority is still given to technical decisions, and participation is generally limited to discussions between specific stakeholders. The predominant perception of the forest as a timber resource and a sphere of technical experience does not encourage the participation of the general public in forest-related issues. Consequently, and despite diverse efforts to have a consultative process, the timber industry and the forestry administration retain their decision-making authority, and may thus promote a common interest that does not fit well with the interests of other stakeholders, involved or not involved into the participatory process.

As a conclusion

The requirement of participation in a policy process is usually presented as derived from the need for sustainable development and in order to reach realistic decisions that take account of all the various interests, priorities, potentials and risks. At the same time, it is the condition of a democratic society that «everyone should have a voice» and to find ways to empower its constituent citizens. Participation may therefore be considered from the point of view of a result (as an empowerment) as well as a process in itself (negotiation of controversial interests). In forest policy decisions the participatory process usually focuses more on the definition of a policy (or plan) than on implementation and assessment. The elaboration process is unlikely to be controversial, as participants discuss an abstract desired future, and not the concrete ways to achieve it. What can the stakeholders contribute to the process? The position of the administrators is invariably: «Participating citizens have the right to say what they want, but not how this should be achieved, this is the duty of experts».[6] The public says what, and experts say how».

The conveners may be criticised as co-opting the process by giving other stakeholders the appearance of delegating authority and responsibility by inviting them to define policy, while they themselves retain control over processes and outcomes. The importance of technical know-how in forestry issues makes it even easier to exercise control. From this perspective, participation may be a means to create an illusion of democratic decision-making. The choice of information in a planning process is critical for the final decision. For this reason it is rarely neutral but guided instead by the type of information that will support the policy outcome desired by the convenor or promoted by the most powerful stakeholders.

Nevertheless, even in this case, as participation was initiated to create social acceptability and legitimate decisions, the deciders – whoever they are – need to be accountable to the public for the decisions that are reached, and are therefore obliged to adapt their positions and decisions to the results of the discussion.

If participation is assessed as a process, to the learning and psychological effects on the participants are usually accorded major importance. Participants in these processes face each other from unequal positions of power, and differ with regard to socio-economic class, knowledge and information abilities that separate experts from laypersons, or from personal capacities for deliberation and persuasion associated with educational and occupational advantages (Shannon 1999). The exchange of views and additional information that a process enables may also change the positions of the other stakeholders and adds an important component of social learning. This may lead to the formulation of new alliances and strong stakeholders, while at the same time bringing new (formerly absent) stakeholders into the arena. Notwithstanding its weak or critical points, participation as a process does, therefore, have a clear impact on power redistribution.

The iterativity of power

Regardless of the differences in approaches to democracy and power, one common feature is the possibility to influence, to decide, and to profit from the situation. The idea of a democratic process is to share decision-making power. Procedures for democratic processes are determined by the norms, which are usually defined by powerful institutional structures. The powerful structures necessarily define the norms in ways that help them to retain power and there is thus always the possibility that democratic processes will be used to consolidate already existing power. Does this mean that we are trapped in a vicious circle? Power can indeed be used to dominate others, and enables the strongest to act. The corollary of this, however, is that it gives other («powerless») actors the option of thinking and acting differently, not necessarily always following the most powerful. Social learning within a participatory process influences power distribution. Having achieved a position of power, most powerful groups have a relatively limited life span. They grow decadent, decay, lose their vigour and come to be replaced by other, more vigorous groups.

Thus, the cycle of power redistribution is an iterative process, with its own mechanisms, rules and laws. An analysis of participation within the framework of an evolving process of change therefore leads to the involvement of participants in the dynamics of a re-distribution of power. A participatory process is necessarily a mechanism that not only changes the procedure for decision-making, but also the context, bringing in new positional balances amongst the stakeholders. In a way, participation always represents a challenge to power holders by generating power re-distribution or consolidation. It may even be questioned whether this co-substantial element in a participatory process is not a main reason for this process in itself, whether in forest policy reform or in other fields of application.

[6] This phrase repeatedly cropped up in the pre-assessment study of the GOFOR project to describe the position of the forestry services in different countries with regard to participation in forest policy.

Summary

Participation promotes democracy, lends more weight to people's voices, and empowers citizens by giving them the means to share in decision-making processes. At the same time, through political learning, it leads to a redefinition of issues and, thus, to a redistribution of power. Nevertheless, the term «participation» is, in itself, very controversial, which might help to explain the wide range of attitudes of various stakeholders. Any type of participatory process is ruled by a hidden agenda, because the ability to influence a decision brings power. If power is the core issue of a democratic participatory decision-making process, how do we avoid the risks arising from manipulation or the outright abuse of democracy? Based on empirical evidence drawn from experiences of forest policy reforms as well as on an analysis of the basic theoretical frameworks, the paper questions whether participation is a pre-condition for democracy. In order to analyse the relationship between the requirements of democracy and their practical implications, a general overview of the concepts of democracy and types of participation is presented. The question of power is treated within the context of decision-making processes and the impact of participation on the empowerment of some groups of stakeholders.

Résumé

Association des groupes d'intérêts au processus de réforme de la politique forestière: promotion de la démocratie et redistribution du pouvoir

La participation promeut la démocratie, concède plus de poids aux opinions de la population et permet aux citoyens de s'engager dans les processus de décision. Au niveau de l'apprentissage politique, elle entraîne simultanément une redéfinition des problèmes et une redistribution du pouvoir. Toutefois, la notion de «participation» est très ambiguë, ce qui peut expliquer la variété des points de vue de différents groupes d'intérêts. Chaque type de processus de participation est déterminé par un programme «secret» parce que le pouvoir dépend de la capacité d'influencer une décision. Si le pouvoir est le problème central du processus de décision avec participation démocratique, comment pouvons-nous faire pour éviter les risques de manipulation et d'abus de pouvoir? Se basant sur des preuves empiriques fondées sur les expériences faites en matière de réformes de la politique forestière et de l'analyse de systèmes théoriques fondamentaux, l'article pose la question de savoir si la participation ne constitue pas une condition préalable à la démocratie. Afin d'analyser la relation entre les exigences de la démocratie et ses implications pratiques, un aperçu général présente ensuite les concepts de démocratie et les types de participation. La question du pouvoir est traitée dans le contexte des processus de décision, ainsi que de participation et de l'influence de certains groupes d'intérêts.

Traduction: Claude Gassmann

Zusammenfassung

Der Einbezug der Stakeholder im forstpolitischen Reformprozess: Förderung der Demokratie und Neuverteilung von Macht

Mitwirkung wirbt für Demokratie, verleiht der Stimme des Volks grösseres Gewicht und ermöglicht es Bürgern, sich in Entscheidungsprozesse einzubringen. Im politischen Lernprozess führt dies gleichzeitig zu einer Neudefinierung der Angelegenheiten und ebenso zu einer Neuverteilung von Macht. Trotzdem ist der Begriff «Mitwirkung» sehr vieldeutig und kann erklären, warum verschiedene Interessenvertreter bzw. Stakeholder so unterschiedliche Standpunkte vertreten. Jede Variante von Mitwirkungsprozess ist von einer «versteckten» Agenda bestimmt, weil die Fähigkeit, eine Entscheidung zu beeinflussen, Macht mit sich bringt. Wenn Macht zu einem Kernproblem im demokratisch-partizipatorischen Entscheidungsprozess wird, wie können wir dann die Risiken der Manipulation und des Machtmissbrauchs verhindern? Gestützt auf empirische Beweise, die auf Erfahrungen mit Reformen der Forstpolitik und auf der Analyse grundlegender theoretischer Systeme beruhen, wird gefragt, ob Mitwirkung eine Vorbedingung für Demokratie ist. Um die Beziehung zwischen den Anforderungen der Demokratie und deren praktischen Implikationen zu analysieren, folgt ein allgemeiner Überblick über Konzepte von Demokratie und Typen der Mitwirkung. Die Frage nach der Macht wird im Kontext von Entscheidungs- und Mitwirkungsprozessen und der Beeinflussung von Stakeholder-Gruppen gestellt.

Übersetzung: Margrit Irniger

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Author

Irina Kouplevatskaya, Scientific assistant, ENGREF, Laboratory of Forest Policy, 14 rue Girardet, CS 4216, 54042, Nancy, France. E-mail: kouplevatskaya@engref.fr.

Chapter IV
CONCLUSION

- ***Participation and power***: pp 200-213
- ***Power relations in a decision making process***: pp. 213-228
- ***Spirals of power***: pp.228 - 232
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Conclusion

Participation gives a possibility for all the people to express their opinions and interests and have a potential to influence decisions. But, as there is no context free from social or political domination, the interests will not be equally represented in the process, while the participants may re-define their positions and join different coalitions of interest groups. The re-definition of positions and learning in the process is supposed to lead to the empowerment of the participants and thus, to the re-distribution of power, although, in the context of dominating interests, power consolidation may be a more frequent result of the process, than power redistribution.
In this conclusive chapter, I would first make a reference to participation as a means for promoting democracy and empowerment. For this purpose a brief overview of several types of democracy are presented from the point of the view of representation of interests, access to the decision making process and modalities for public involvement. Taking deliberation as the most effective style of public involvement in the decision making, I will analyse the link between the empowerment of all the stakeholders and consolidation of power for the stronger ones.

The second section lays out the concept of power and its different interpretations and further focuses on the relations between power and discourse, as social relations between various partners in their institutional disposition, whereas power relations are analysed though the antagonism of different strategies. Mutual adaptation of various stakeholders in the discourse of institutional environment and interactions leads to the formation of leading stakeholders, who are finally profiting from the process and consolidating their positions. The role of knowledge and scientists gets a new interpretation in such discourse. The consolidation of power for the already stronger stakeholders, and unstable power relations constructed in the interactions of different actors, analysed as a social and not a political process, generates questions for the future research.

I. Participation and power

Participation in forest policy, which has been evolving around the international discussions of sustainability and sustainable forest management, has been introduced here, in the framework of the thesis, as a constructed notion. Depending on the involved *actors*, their interests and visions of the reality; types of decisions, *objectives*, rationales and logic of the *process*, participation may get different interpretations and forms. The nature of participation may be changing *over time* and under the influence of the societal, cultural, economic and political *contexts*. Being an *iterative* process, it is linked with *learning* among the involved parties and *adaptation* of their roles, behaviour and positions, necessarily leading to a *redistribution* of *power*.

1. What is the link between participation and democracy?

Apart from being linked with the concept of sustainability, traditionally, participation is presented as a characteristic feature and even as an indicator of democracy. In literature, participation is often considered not only as a means for gathering the information, but also as a consciousness raising process through which people begin to understand their political roles and the need for legitimate conciliation and contribution to a policy decision (Sewell, Phillips, 1979; Germain, 2001). A usually presented definition of participation (FAO/ECE/ILO 2000), stresses the main characteristics of participation as follows:

> *"…a set of voluntary processes whereby people, whether as individuals or in groups, can exchange information, express opinions and articulate interests, and have potential to influence decisions or the outcome of the matter at hand"*(emphasis added).

Thus participation provides legitimacy and promotes democracy as it is based on the similar characteristics. In fact, a democratic government is ideally designed to channel and *assimilate information* between the governors and the governed. There is also a general belief that in democratic societies, the individuals have the right to be informed, *consulted* and even allowed to *share decision-making* authority on matters which may impact them (Sewell, Phillips, 1979 ; Buchy and Hoverman, 2000). As a consequence of that, democracy is sometimes assimilated with the possibility given to citizens for free deliberation and involvement in policy decision making at various levels, thus creating conditions for learning, empowerment and raising citizen's awareness of their responsibility while giving legitimacy to decisions (Fishkin, 1991; Levine, 2002; Roberts, 2004). At the same time, due to the multiplicity of diverse and opposed interests, which are always present in a society, the notion of "*common interests*" or "shared values" is very important in the definition of democracy. The constructivist and interpretist schools which are referred to as a epistemological framework background for the present thesis, even consider democracy as merely a procedure that allows individuals who have different commitments to work out *shared policies* (Etzioni, 1997).

1.1 What do we know about democracy?

There are various definitions of what is democracy, depending upon the functioning of the society. Here, in the framework of the thesis, there is no point of going into a profound analysis of the various types of democracy. Therefore, based on the literature analysis, only several types of democracies are schematically selected and defined with the focus on the *decision making process*, for the purpose of a general overview and the definition of common and characteristic features. The difference in the types of democracy is characterised by the different ways for the people to access the process of decision making and their roles in it.

1.1.1 Direct democracy

Direct democracy is a political system where citizens vote on all major policy decisions. It is called "direct" because there are no intermediaries or representatives. All the present examples of direct democracies concern small communities (like in college faculties, or, frequently in the United States, in small towns with the population under 10.000 people). A limited direct democracy also exists in some Swiss cantons (Kobach, 1993).
A direct democracy may be therefore described as

> "a system wherein all citizens can directly participate in the political decision-making through a systematic expression of their visions of the reality in an open process, which serves as a basis for decision, with no special method or procedure*"(*The Global Constitution, 2005).

The citizens thus learn to make collective decisions, and realise their potential of self-expressing. Otherwise direct democracy is also referred to as the "*rule by referenda*" and is presented as a means for creating a sense of freedom and political efficacy, when people act as a *collective wisdom* and have a real control over their lives and environment.
In such a framework, direct participation is supposed to provide a mechanism for those without power to challenge those who have it, as long as at the end the decisions are influenced by an expressed majority.

This power of the majority vote appears as a "political naivety" (Roberts, 2004). Because generally, and especially in the matters related to the technical issues of forest management, average citizens do not possess the information sufficient for comprehending the management of complex public affairs, and thus, to provide a well grounded rational choice, required for a decision. This can lead to "a firm guidance from an informed and politically active minority" (Roberts, 2004). Hense, in a direct democracy, when the process is open for the opinion of an uninformed public, this public can only express an agreement or a disagreement with the statements, which have been already formulated by the authorised decision-makers. There is a lack of guarantee that common interests may be addressed or protected, thus high expectations cannot be fulfilled, while, with the rule of the majority vote, there is always a risk of a permanent imposition of the majority's will on an outvoted minority, the "tyranny of a majority" (Fishkin, 1991; Guinier, 1994, Cohen, 1997).

It is difficult to find an example of a decision making process in forest policy held in a "pure direct democracy style", but in the framework of this thesis it is still presented for the purpose of a typology of different ways of the public access to the policy decision making.

1.1.2 Representative democracy

Another way to access the decision making is representation. In a *representative democracy***,** there is an

> "… indirect citizen participation, when the voters elect representatives who are expected to act in their interests, although not as their proxies, i.e. not necessarily as directed, but with enough authority for taking initiative and acting as appropriate, depending on the changing circumstances" (IDEA, 2005).

The values, attitudes and socio-economic characteristics of those involved in the public involvement process more or less correspond to those of the general public. The representatives are supposed to mirror who they are representing (Wellstead, et al. 2003). For example, in rural areas with a large number of forest workers in favour of a local pulp mill expanding, the elected (by majority votes) representatives would be mainly comprised of forestry workers, who share the same values, although, it is not necessarily a true reflection of the general citizens' interests.

This true representation of all the interests is hardly possible not only because of a great diversity of views and positions even within a group of people who have voted for the same representative. It is also, because the people's representatives themselves are split between the interests of their community, the interests of their political party structures, and their personal interests. There is an additional pressure on the elected representatives, as they are political figures, from the state bureaucracy, lobby groups, big business, industries and others. Because of this variety of interests, including the interest to be re-elected, the peoples' representatives adapt their discourse and actions to the interests of the stronger and potentially more influential actors. Individual or minor-groups' voices are not easy to be identified in this flow.
Traditional representative democracies tend to limit citizen participation to only voting, while leaving the main work of governance to professional (political, industrial etc) elites. Such elites, according to the power balancing theory, are counter-balancing each other and thus are supposed to ensure a fair process, although, even in this case, there is not much space for the individual or minority interests.
As a result,

> "… representation works well as long as people elect their leaders and otherwise stay out of politics and do not attempt to influence or control their representatives" (Roberts, 2004).

In the representative-type democracy, *consultation* is the most popular way of participation: the people's opinion is sought by the politicians for additional information, reflection of the general opinion and legitimacy, but with no guarantee of considering it in the decisions.

This situation is very similar to that of the decision making in a "traditional" forest policy process, whereas due to the specificity of the field, the major public, or, generally, stakeholders, stay (or are kept) away and are only sporadically *consulted*.
For example, in France, which is a country with a long reputation of a representative democracy, a rapid analysis, made during the GoFOR pre-assessment study has demonstrated a unanimity in the opinion that participation would not be not part of the French (or, more generally, Latin) culture and exists only in various forms of consultation.

Looking at the situation with the forestry-related decisions, regardless of the ongoing decentralisation processes and a relative retrieval of the state from this sphere, the priority is still given to the technical decisions and participation is limited to discussions with specific stakeholders. The predominant perception of the forest as a timber resource and as a sphere of technical experience is often limiting the interest of general public in the participation in forest-related issues. Participation in the framework of a representative democracy does not represent a balanced and realistic picture of interests, as well as possibilities for their integration into the decision.

1.1.3 Deliberative democracy

Additionally to the two types of public involvement into the decision making process presented in the paragraphs above, when participation is basically aimed at the gathering of information and achieving communication among the stakeholders, *public deliberation* is presented as being aimed at the establishment of common meanings and understandings, generation of new options, choices and desired consequences (Dryzek 1990, 1993; Forester, 1996). Deliberation is a process when people

> "… assemble, and dispassionately discuss the facts of the situation, explore their logical implications, examine the alternative responses that might be under-taken and choose the one that is the most appropriate as determined on the basis of empirical evidence and logical conclusions" (Etzioni, 1997).

Deliberation is the term adopted from the literature to highlight the style and nature of problem solving through *communication* and collective consideration of relevant issues. It implies *equality* among the participants, the need to *justify* and argue for all types of *truth* claims and an orientation towards *mutual understanding* and *learning*.
At the same time, deliberation refers to the style and procedure of decision making without specifying which participants are invited to deliberate. For a discussion to be deliberative, it is essential that it relies on mutual *exchange of arguments* and reflections. (Tuler, S., Webler, Th., 1995; 1999, 2002).

In contrast to the direct and representative democracies, which emphasise voting as the central institution of democracy, deliberative democracy theorists argue that legitimate lawmaking can only arise from the public deliberation of the citizenry (Habermas, 1982, 1994; Druzek, 1990; Cohen, 1996, 1997).

Thus, *deliberative democracy* (or, often also called *discursive democracy)* is based on the *inclusion of* multiple social actors, coming with their concerns and values, into a *deliberative process,* which provides an arena for exchange and negotiation of presented different positions of the actors, who have voluntarily joined the process**.**
Deliberation is expected to produce a variety of positive *democratic outcomes* (Chambers, 1997; Cohen, 1997; Fishkin, 1991, 1997; Mendelberg, 2002) which are the following:

- *citizens* should become more *engaged* and active in civic affairs;
- *tolerance* for opposing points of view will increase;
- citizens will *improve* their *understanding* of their own *preferences* and become able to justify those preferences with *better arguments*;
- faith in the democratic process will be enhanced as people who deliberate become *empowered*;
- political decisions will become more considered and informed by relevant reasons and evidence;
- the *legitimacy* of the constitutional order will grow because people will have a say in and an understanding of that order.

These democratic outcomes are very similar in nature to the outcomes which are usually presented as being expected to be brought by participation in general.

In the Habermas's vision of deliberative democracy, *discourse* gets a major importance. Thus, according to Habermas (1990)

> "… in discourse ethics, morality emerges within a communication framework. In the conversation or discourse, all who could be affected by the adoption of a certain moral action or normative claim, should be included. … It is the communicative activity, which through discourse leads to universally valid claims".

Discourse presupposes a special form of a dialogue, in which all the affected parties have *equal rights* and *duties* to present claims and test their validity in a context free of social or political domination (Habermas, 1982, 1994). Thus, in a deliberative process, the participants are supposed to negotiate confronted interests and justify their positions in the view of the common good in a given reality. The proponents of the deliberative or discursive democracy give much attention to the procedures, or processual requirements of discourse ethics, stating that:

- no party affected by what is being discussed should be excluded from the discourse;
- all participants should have equal possibility to present and criticise validity of claims in the process of discourse;
- participants must be able and willing to empathise with each other the validity of claims;
- existing power differences between participants must be neutralised so that these differences would have no effect on the creation of consensus;
- participants must openly explain their goals and intentions and guarantee transparency (Habermas, 1990; 1994; Kettner, 1993, as quoted by Flyvbjerg, 2002).

The observation of these five requirements is supposed to lead to a "free deliberation among equals, which is held by discourse participants as the source of legitimacy in the decisions they make as a body", in this ideal deliberation, "no force except that of the better argument is exercised" (Cohen, 1997). This idealistic view on the deliberative democracy may not really find a realistic implementation in practice, because the participants of such a process may not be really equal in the sense that they have adequate and equal opportunities for defining and validating the choice on the matter that is expected to best serve their interests. In reality,

> "there are thin or non-existent empirical evidence for the benefits that deliberative theorists expect" (Mendelberg, 2002).

It is difficult to imagine that all the potentially affected parties are making part of the discourse, express and are able to define their claims. Even the claims themselves, same as the *plurality of interests*, are constantly shifting in the course of the process under the influence of various factors (see *Proposition 1*; *Proposition 3*).
It means that theoretically and procedurally, following this deliberative framework, a participant's interest is defined as

> "… whatever that person would choose with the fullest possible understanding of the results of that choice and its relevant alternatives" (Dahl, 1961).

As the "fullest possible understanding of the results of the choice" would be very difficult to equally achieve among all the participants of the discourse because of the objective and subjective differences in the positions and backgrounds of the participants (see Part II: *proposition* 1), the "common" choice does not necessarily correspond to the interests of all the participants of deliberation. Nevertheless, and regardless of all the critics and risks of idealistic vision of the notion of deliberation, it is taken as a basis for the analysis of a decision making process, as one of the possible optimal ways for the stakeholders' involvement into a policy process which may lead to sustainability.

2 From representation of interests to power re-distribution

2.1 Whose interests are represented?

A clear condition to have a fair discourse is that the process should be in a context free of social or political domination. In practice, any policy making process occurs within the context of a particular set of ideas,

> "… that recognize some social interests as more legitimate than the others and privilege some lines of policy over the others" (Hall, 1993).

Regardless of the differences in the access to the decision making process, the idea of the existence of a "common good" comprised of common values, common interest and common goals, is prominent in any type of democracy, and it is in the core of a participatory decision making. At the same time all the interests can not be equally represented, at any point of time, one set of ideas normally prevails.
Participation is thus considered as a *tool* to guarantee the *equal* representation of all the *interests*, especially those of the *disadvantaged* or less powerful stakeholders. Such a representation should eventually lead to an equal *responsibility* over the taken decision. *Does participation lead to equal responsibilisation?*

In most of the speeches on participation, the representation of under-represented interests through deliberation and communication is supposed to eventually lead to the political empowerment of the "have-nots". In the "ladder of participation" Arnstein, (Arnstein, 1969), puts "citizen power" *at the lower end of the ladder*, and passes through "delegated power" and "citizen control", which she describes as a situation when the "have-not citizens" are able to negotiate with traditional power-holders and obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power. Thus the questions of *power* and power *re-distribution* are at the core of the participatory process.
Participation leads to power re-distribution. *What are the mechanisms for this re-distribution*?

In fact, participation, even in the form of deliberation may not give an aggregation of interests for the following reasons.
First of all, because

> "…individuals have different perspectives and see things differently, because words, phrases, expressions and objects are interpreted differently according to their frame of reference" (Healey, 1992).

Secondly, because generally the interests of the individuals coming to the process are complex and vague, and hense they are often defined through an opposition to the interests of the other actors.

As it was concluded from the Kyrgyz experience, the interactions in the course of participation can also affect the way how people understand their interests themselves, or may lead to the re-formulation of the interests. New interests may be constructed in the course of the social interactions. When people enter a participatory process, they often have a better sense of their expected results (desired future) than they do of the best means for accomplishing those goals. That is why deliberation process would rather directly concern solutions, than issues, through discussions aimed at the solution of immediate problems than at common alternative strategies and actions.

In addition, the participants coming to the process are never equal (from social, economic and even education points of view) (*Proposition* 1), some of them, who are better organized may have better arguments to have their views and positions expressed and accepted by the other actors. That is why, most of the deliberation processes are led by some "authorized elites" or by the stronger actors.

At the same time, as deliberation participants do not act as individual persons, but are usually coming out within a group, they have to adapt their personal interests and definitions to those of the group, or, otherwise, to adapt the interests of the group to their own, hence:

> "the individuals' ideas about themselves, interests and values are socially constructed through communication *("discourse communities")* (Leskinen, 2004).

Thus, this longing for the definition of "common values" and the construction of new values through communication lead to the re-definition of the "*stronger*" group[31]. When during a participatory process, under normative pressure, a minority capitulates (at least in public) to the majority, even when it continues to disagree with it in private, the *majority's preference* becomes more popular than the "force of a better argument", which is usually presented as the core of deliberative processes (Davis et al., 1977; Habermas, 1987, 1996; Mendelberg, 2002). So, the expressed interests of the "stronger" majority are put in the core of deliberation.

Apart from the question of *majority*, the question of "*equality*" is also an important for assessing representation of interests, as with any mode of participation, people, in fact, deliberate at highly unequal rates. Many studies have showed that participants who have more prestigious occupations, positions, status, better education and income tend to speak more, to offer more suggestions and to be perceived as more convincing in their speeches, because they have a more sophisticated reasoning. These qualities give additional means for influencing the process to those, who are socially in a better position, at the same time making them better resistant to the influence from the others.

[31] This phenomenon may be explained through the *social dilemmas* and *group* theories, when deliberation can create a norm of group interest in which individuals first see their own interest as consonant with the self-interest of every other member of the group; then include the group in their self-concept, changing gradually from «self-regarding» into «other-regarding» facets of communication and eventually leading to the inter-group competition (social comparison), with the separation of a winning stronger group.

> "The well educated are more likely to show up to deliberate, and once there, can present both deliberately good and socially legitimate arguments. The structural inequalities in the society can thus undermine deliberation both through the ability to deliberate well and through the ability to influence decisions through social mechanisms not sanctioned by deliberativits" (Mendelberg, 2002*).*

There is another aspect linked with the representation. Usually representation refers not only to the relationship between the individual participants, but also to the relationship between these participants and the entity, the institution they are expected to represent. At the broader scale, there are also relationships between these institutions and the general society. *Whose interests are represented in such cases?*

There is a very complex structure of relations between various participants of a decision making process. The opening of a decision making for participation and deliberation leads to the re-definition of the interests and positions, and thus, also, opens the way for power re-distribution, although with a privileged position for certain actors. This change in the appropriation of the deliberative process does not basically result in sharing of power and empowerment of powerless.

2.2 Participation and empowerment

E*mpowerment*, which is usually interpreted as a transfer of power from one decision-making body to other stakeholders and actors who may be concerned by this decision and its implementation, can be misused or misunderstood.

> "At some level it may mean that power has been developed or decentralised and that people have a more effective say in the running of their affairs. At a more strategic and individual level though, empowerment reflects more a state of personal development, a state of the mind through which people engage in a learning process, increase their self-esteem and confidence and are better able to use their own resources" (Chambers, 1997).

In the sense of such qualitative changes at the individual level, which are very difficult to trace and measure immediately, indeed, there is clearly an empowerment during the deliberation. However, at the same time, empowerment also often implies an aspect of increased critical awareness and it is believed that in case of successful empowerment, the meaning of "power" has shifted from power "over" to power "to", designating an enabling power. The fact is that in reality, this awareness is the product of learning from the process. As long as the stronger and better organised stakeholders have the capacity to learn faster, this "power to" control the process and formulate the final decisions remain with these stronger stakeholders. Thus, together with the empowerment in the sense of learning, the increased self-esteem and confidence, there is also an empowerment of the "already powerful" in the sense of a further consolidation of their power over the others.

But what exactly happens during a participatory process? How dol different actors of a process act in order to obtain the power? What kind of power are they looking for? What are the decisive factors for power re-definition and re-distribution? Who is finally empowered?

These are the very concrete questions to be addressed in an evaluation of a participatory process.

Empowerment may be understood in terms of consensus, or as formed by conflict. There are two basic positions in this respect. The first one, mostly represented by Habermas, is promoting consensus reached through the application of clear procedures. According to Habermas (1987),

> "communicative rationality … brings consensus-building forces of a discourse in which participants overcome their at first subjectively based views in favour of a rationally motivated agreement".

Giving great importance to the rules and procedures of the process, Habermas sees them as being able to guarantee the impartiality of the process of judging (Habermas, 1990). The rules for a correct process should be defined and normatively given in advance, in the form of the *ideal speech situation*. This is the rational part of his approach. As for the content, what is right and what is true in a given communicative process is to be determined solely by the participants of that process. Focused on the consensus building, Habermas trusts the *rational nature of people*, who could be empowered through the force of the better argument.

A different view is the position of Foucault, which is shared in the framework of this thesis. For Foucault, the validity of decisions and empowerment are established via the *mode of communication*. For example, it can be done via a hidden control, rationalization, charisma, the use of dependency relations, rather than through rational arguments concerning the matter at hand. Mindful that in a participatory process, there is always an opposition of interests and permanent re-definition of stakes and positions, a consensus would not be a natural outcome of such process. On the contrary, the efforts aimed at conflict resolution lead to an empowerment through the interactions and definition of new strategies.

What is decisive for the understanding of the power relations in the participatory decision making process is to understand, how communication takes place and how politics and democracy operate. Is communication characterized by consensus seeking and absence of power, or can this communication itself be considered as the real exercise of power? This question is the core issue for the analysis of a decision making process. Can we meaningfully distinguish rationality and power from each other in communication as suggested by Foucalt? Or, can rationality be viewed in isolation from power, as promoted by Habermas?

2.3 Power and discourse

The requirements of deliberativists (Habermas, 1987, 1996; Cohen, 1996; Fishkin, 1991) for the "neutralisation" of power differences and for the "context free of social or political domination", although unrealistic in practice, indicate the importance of the "power" aspect in a participatory process. Another approach to deliberation states that there are forms of discourse that are not deliberative and the inequalities of power in deliberative situations are inegalitarian, especially in the situations of conflicts or important challenges (Mansbridge, 1992; Mendelberg, 2002).

Linking the question of power to deliberation brings back the issues of the role of *discourse* in the re-distribution of power. That is why the notion of «discourse», applied in the framework of this thesis also requires a special clarification.

Inequality and domination make part of the society, through the existance of dis-advantaged stakeholders, minorities by gender, ethnic, political and other characteristics. This reality makes rather unrealistic the two basic requirements to discourse from Habermas (1982, 1987, 1990), who stated that the participants of a decision making process (from "*all* affected parties") should have all «*equal rights* and *duties*» and act in a «context free of social or political domination».

That is why, without any underestimation of the importance of the commonly agreed rules of discourse, as promoted by Habermas, still, his approach with the groundwork of "consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech", seems to be not sufficient for the analysis of how the power re-distribution is working along the participatory decision making process.

The communication among the "non-equal"[32] participants is more typically characterised by a non-rational rhetoric and maintenance of *different interests* than by consensus seeking and freedom from domination. As long as the attitudes among the participants of the process are based not solely on the personal preferences, but also, and to a great extend, depend on the *general context* and on the common or "*group" interests*, the preferences and visions of reality, are usually formed under the influence of that context (*Proposition 3).* Naturally, different groups have different visions of reality and different preferences. Due to the inequalities among the participants, these preferences are usually opposed and contradictory. That is why not the *consensus*, but rather a *conflict* is in the core of discourse and deliberation.

Foucault's approach to discourse, which is usually presented as being contrary to that of Habermas (Flyvbjerg, 2002; Ingram, 1994; Kelly, 1994), seems to be relevant in this sense. *Discourse*, in its general sense, consists not only in the « discourse » itself in it's primary meaning[33], but it is also composed of an "architectural" disposition, shaped by the institutional environment and interactions, whereas power is explained as being generated by the discourse in the social relations between the various partners. The exercise of power in this transcription is seen as:

> "… not simply a relationship between partners, individual or collective, it is a way in which certain actions modify others. Which is to say, of course, that something called *Power*, with or without a capital letter, which is assumed to exist universally in a concentrated or diffused form, does not exist. (Foucault, 1982).

If power does not exist universally, the questions relevant here are not: "what is power?" or even "how is power exercised in such or such institution?". The questions to be treated in order to understand the "re-distributory mechanisms" along a participatory process are rather: "*what are the main characteristics of power relations in a decision-making process"?; "how*

[32] This «inequality» from knowledge, status, power, stakes etc points of view is much more net in the relations among participants in the forest-use related issues, that is why this approach is particularly interesting in the case of forest policy process.

[33] In the social sciences a *discourse* is an institutionalised way of thinking, a social boundary defining what can be said about a specific topic, « the limits of acceptable speech » (Butler, 1997)

did they appear, how are they formed and evolute"? For answering this question, power should be analysed not from the point of view of its internal rationality, but, following Foucault, by analysing power relations through the antagonism of different strategies.

2.4 Power relations analysis through antagonism of different strategies

Three types of power relations are distinguished by Foucault (1982): (i) strategic games between liberties, (ii) government and (iii) domination.

The power relations based on the s*trategic games* are considered as an integral feature of human interactions. In general it signifies the structuring (by the stronger actor) of the possible field of actions of the others (the less stronger actors). This interaction can take many forms: ideological manipulation or rational argumentation, moral advice or economic exploitation. Although, it does not necessarily mean that in this type of relations, power is exercised against the interests of the other part of a power relationship. It does not mean either that "to determine the conduct of others" is intrinsically "bad" (Foucault, 1982).

According to Foucault, in this scheme, the power relations do not always result in a removal of options available to individuals. On the contrary, power relations result in an "empowerment" or "responsibilization" of the subjects, forcing them to "free" decision making.

The second type of power relations, *government*, refers to a more or less systematised, regulated and reflected modes of power (a "technology") that goes beyond the spontaneous exercise of power over others. These power relations follow a specific rationality, or a "form of reasoning", which defines the topics of action or the adequate means to achieve it. Government, then, is the

> … regulation of conduct by the more or less rational application of the appropriate means (Hindess, 1996).

Domination is a third and particular type of power relationship that is at the same time stable and hierarchical, fixed and difficult to reverse. Domination is "*what we ordinary call power*" (Foucault, 1988).

> "Domination refers to those asymmetrical relationships of power in which subordinated persons have little room for manoeuvre because their margin of liberty is extremely limited" (Foucault, 1988b).

States of domination are not the primary source for holding power or exploiting these asymmetrical relations among the participants. On the contrary, according to Foucault, they are the effects of technologies of government. Which, in their turn, account for the systematisation, stabilisation and regulation of power relationships that may lead to a state of domination (Hindess, 1996, Lazzarato, 2000).

The concept of governmentality articulates politics and knowledge into “political knowledge”. Political rationality is not a pure neutral knowledge which simply “represents” the governed reality. It is not an exterior instance, but an element of government itself which helps to create a discursive field in which exercising power is rational. Foucault introduces differentiation between power and domination in the sense that the strategic games between liberties may result in the fact that some people become able to determine the conduct of the others, which is what is ordinary called “power. On the other hand, there are different states of domination, with the governmental technologies between them.

2.5 Knowledge and power

Despite of the differences in the interpretations of power, the aspects of *knowledge* and *information* take an important, although a disputable, part in the power (redistribution) relations. Why is it disputable? On the one hand, an important part of power/knowledge relations is the belief that those who are in power have *special knowledge*. On the other hand, knowledge is not pre-formulated, but is *created* by social processes and interactions. In reality these two beliefs do not exist separately, they are inter-related. Power is producing knowledge and information, and vice versa, the information and knowledge are constructing power. We saw already that in a discourse process, each of the participants of the discourse comes with his/her understandings, information, knowledge and visions of the reality, which may be shared with or opposed to the other members of the process. As a result, in the course of such interactions, *new knowledge* is created while the initial positions, knowledge and understanding of the participants may change due to the learning, occurred in the process.

The production of knowledge and the exercise of power (here in the sense of *system structural approach* and *strategic games* relations) intertwine, so that each of them begins to respectively enhance the other one. This process creates reciprocal and mutually reinforcing relations between the circulation of knowledge and subsequently the power, as a *control of conduct*. Such relation gives the basis for the *double spiral* (Part III).

This situation brings to the attention the fact that in the fields of specialised knowledge like forestry for example, actions are governed by the constituents of the structures of the sector administration themselves, because it is them, who, at the initial stage, possess that specialised knowledge. It means that the understanding of fields of knowledge is constructed within their discourses, (as it is the case when the mixed model is applied). The field of knowledge defines the field of power and vice versa.

But only a specialised knowledge is not sufficient for holding and gaining power in a policy process. The assumption that sustainability in general and in forest management in particular, is linked with the stakeholders involvement into the policy definition, it’s acceptance and empowerment for the implementation brings up the issues of efficiency, legitimacy and social cohesion of the decisions.

Generally, in literature, *efficiency* describes the degree to which scarce resources are utilised for reaching the intended goal. The more resources are invested to reach a given objective, the less efficient is the activity under question. *Legitimacy* is presented as a composite term that

denotes the degree of compatibility with the legal requirements, due process and political culture. It includes an objective element, such as legality, and a subjective element, such as the perception of acceptability. While the *social cohesion* covers the need for social integration and collective identity in spite of plural values and lifestyles.

These three aspects find an easy parallel with the power relations and exercise of power. All the three of them also imply the need for a specialised knowledge. Where does this specialised knowledge come from? What is the link between the "knowledge input" and the re-distribution?

II Power relations in a decision making process

The interaction between various actors in the discourse, expressed in ideological manipulation or rational argumentation, moral advice or any other type of strategic games, creates the exercise of power as it defines the way how certain actions may modify the others. What are the roles of different actors and stakeholders of the process and how are they modified, under the influence of which factors? What creates the power in the process and mechanisms for its re-distribution or consolidation.
Based on the Kyrgyz case experience, this chapter is considering the roles of different stakeholders in the policy reform process and their transformation in the course of mutual interactions.

Analysing a forest policy process from it's composition point of view, usually it is difficult to classify it as a process of public participation. Because of the scarcity of the resource, lack of high economic importance, distance from cities, culture, traditions etc., in the Kyrgyz example the general public did not have a big interest, nor a clear challenge to be involved into this process. Such situation is generally valid not only for Kyrgyzstan. Most of the reports on the analysis of the case-studies within the GoFOR project (http//:www.boku.ac.at/GoFOR) have noted the lack of the interest of public in general to the forestry related issues. The reasons for such passiveness are counted, on the one hand, by the fact that traditionally forestry is considered as being technical and thus reserved to the specialists. On the other hand, due to the low importance of the challenges and stakes, the general public is not ready to invest time into such related processes. The exception was reported for the public living in a direct proximity of the forest, or the cases, when the personal/professional activity of the public could be influenced by the forest policy decisions, although, such groups can not be any more considered as general public. They acquire the status of *stakeholders*.

1 Stakeholders of the process

The definition of stakeholders has always been a controversial issue. The reason for this controversy is that it is difficult to know when to stop considering a group of people as a

"general public" that just wants to be involved, and start treating them as genuine or minor "stakeholders". A similar confusion is also linked with the definition of a "community", when speaking about "community involvement, as it is sometimes based on a geographical and sometimes has cultural or ideological meanings.

Initially, the *stakeholders* have been understood almost the same way as shareholders, as persons or groups of people who have a personal or financial involvement or stake in a business. (Buchy, Hoverman, 2000; Gamborg, 2002). This interpretation is also reflected in the New Oxford Dictionary of English definition of a stakeholder as a "person with an interest or concern in something, especially a business".

This attitude has been changed in the analysis of stakeholders in relation to the involvement in decision making, or in a policy process. Since then, the term "stakeholder" is used in contrast with "shareholders' to stress that the interest is not necessarily based on the possession of shares in an enterprise. In the broader sense, a *stakeholder* can be seen as somebody who can *affect*, or *be affected*, by a certain *action*. Still the definition of a stakeholder rests on the notion of interest.

> "To be a stakeholder one must be able to express or at least to be capable of having interests, not necessarily financial or economic ones, in a business or activity" (Gamborg, 2002).

There is still a discussion on how broad should be the definition of the stakeholder and their interests, and if these interests should be understood as legal rights. Still more complication is added when the abstract issues of the capacity of the forest (or an ecosystem, or the future generations to have an interest or a preference for something) are discussed. The ethical aspects of interests are a very complicated issue. In the framework of the thesis, the assumption is followed, stating that:

> "… all the stakeholders /within one group of stakeholders/ are potentially members of one community, while they clearly have significantly divergent interests, needs and values, they also have some significant shared goals and bonds" (Etzioni,1996).

That is, in the framework of this thesis, the word "***stakeholders***" is applied to represent any group of people, who are belonging to the *same community* (in the corporative or professional sense; or are residents of the same area; or are sharing the same philosophy, e.g. environmentalists, etc) who may *commonly* influence or be influenced *by* this specific decision making process, despite of the multiplicity of their individual interests and values. A difference is made here between the groups of *stakeholders*, with the focus on their commonly (for the interest group) defined ultimate objectives and strategies for their achievement and *actors* of the process[34]

This is why this research especially focuses on the assessment of the impact of involvement on the relationships among various parties involved and, consequently, a change in their positions and power interactions.

[34] here, «actors » of a participatory process, or a discourse, are understood as *individuals*, rather than groups, who could affect, or be affected by, the process or it's results.

2. Scientists in the discourse

The knowledge claims and inputs are normally produced by scientists, who are usually invited by the decision-makers to contribute to the decision-making process:

- As representatives of "pure knowledge", or "truth" in their "*scientific estate";*
- In order to apply specific knowledge to the "human condition", in their "*professional estate*";
- In order to apply knowledge according to the "public codes" in their "*administrative estate*"; and
- In order to exercise power under public authority, in their "*political estate*" (Price, 1965).

Viewed from different theoretical schools, the spectre of interpretations of the role of scientists is rather large and diverse. It may be linked or not with the changes, introduced by the decision. Thus, according to the ***Incremental decision making school***[35] the scientists' role is to solve the political problems faced by public administrators. They are considered as the source of information and policy analysis but not viewed as policy actors. All the social changes in the society are supposed to be brought about by the society as a whole. The ***rationalist school*** of management attributes great importance to the power and rationality of the decision-maker, as well as to the predictability of human behaviour, based on the assumptions of a "rational actor". Scientific research in this case focuses on developing general theories of behaviour of natural, social and political systems. This school suggests that the social changes are basically directed by the elite. The group of theoreticians drawing from ***cybernetics*** focuses on the dynamics of social change affecting a decision making process and distinguishes three levels of decision making (Etzioni, 1967). Within this scheme the scientists are implied at all the three levels of the process: for the definition of *ends* (long and short-term goals), *means* (internal and external factors) and for rending the *scientific judgement* (evaluation of the progress). Thus, the role of scientists is conceived as a part of the process of strategic political decisions making.

The dynamic of the cybernetic school has served as the formal basis for the elaboration of the "mixed model" framework, which was adapted to the forest policy needs and was applied for the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan, described in this thesis.
The main feature of this framework consists in crossing top-down and bottom up approaches; in the combination of rationalist and communicative actions; of technocratic and incremental aspects of decision making. The discourse, resulting from this combination between the solutions and decisions leads to a continuous adaptation of the decision makers to the evolving reality. This combination creates a permanent confrontation between the positions and strategies of the various actors, combined with their mutual learning along the process. This learning by the participants, trigges their consecutive adaptation to each other and to the changing reality. As a result, their initial positions and strategies are also adapted and re-defined.

[35] This school is associated with Charles Lindblom (1959) and his incremental « muddling through » paradigm.

In this framework, policy scientists have a variety of tasks: to develop a theoretical and methodological advice for the decision-makers, to bring to the process not only the knowledge, but also neutral and objective expertise, and to contribute their scientific judgement in addressing complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty.

Scientists are usually expected to provide objective knowledge and unbiased judgement. But they are also professionals, with their professional pride and dignity which need to be maintained. As members of a society, they are part of the social interactions. At the same time, scientists are human beings with passions (including the passion for power?). With all this complexity, is it possible for them to be and to stay objective and neutral, at the same time as being part and even active actors in a policy process, where the discourse is producing confrontation and conflicts, learning and adaptation? As long as the scientists take part in and are the effective actors of the participatory process, a proposition can be made, that similar to the other actors of the process, the scientists should be also subject to learning from the interactions. Consequently, this learning leads to the adaptation of the scientists' positions and strategies.

2.1 Power from specific knowledge and lost neutrality

Before the forest policy reform process has been initiated in Kyrgyzstan, the scientists were invited to define the general scope and needs for the Swiss support to the Kyrgyz forest sector, as the country was yet unknown and the conditions of the society in transition were new for everybody. At this point their theoretical scientific knowledge and readiness for experiment were required. The scientific analysis has indicated the need for the switch from ecological/conservation priorities towards the sustainable forest management, which would presuppose an involvement of various stakeholders into a decision making process. Thus, the policy scientists needed to define a conceptual framework and logic for sustainable forest management possibilities, to predict how it might develop and to provide monitoring over the process with a punctual follow up and consultation as well as to propose a methodology and procedures, suitable for that goal.

Thus, at the beginning of the forest policy formulation process, the policy scientists had the role of the *resource of a specific knowledge* on the theories of social interactions and *generators of methodological* and procedural aspects for a policy process. It was the scientists who promoted the change in the decision making modalities and opening the process for participation.

The concept of participation was introduced as a basis for the forest policy definition, but in the conditions of Kyrgyzstan, the top-down decision making power of the state was still very strong, while democratic processes, including a capacity for public deliberation were not rooted in the society yet. There was neither a tradition of, nor a clearly expressed need for public deliberation, especially in a specific field like forest policy. In such circumstances pure bottom up planning would be neither efficient nor sufficient. This is why, as a way out, adapted to this situation, the policy scientists have proposed a methodology, which combined habitual top down decision making processes with bottom up participatory procedures (the mixed model). There were two crucial factors which defined the position of the scientists in the process. First of all it was the fact that the policy scientists were the "only holders" of this

new adapted methodology, which gave them a certain power. Secondly, the common belief that these scientists were representing a neutral objective position in the contradiction between the political interests and strategic priorities of the forestry administration as well as principal positions of the environmentalists vs. every-day common needs of the other stakeholders. These two factors made the them the stronger actors at the very beginning of the process. *The exceptional specific knowledge* and *image of objective neutrality* gave at that time the scientists a *power* to direct and control the process at the initial stage. Over the time and along the process this status of the scientists has been adapted to the changing roles and positions of the other participants of the process.

For the policy scientists, the introduction of participation to a formerly centralised decision making process was an interesting experiment of a design, application and adaptation of a methodology. In conducting this experiment, they were seeking to design better policies, but, also to devise a better experiment. One of the "hidden" or not expressed goals of the scientists was to learn, how decision making theories might work in a country with an emerging democracy. For the policy scientists, the reactions of both the politicians/decision-makers and other participants of the process gave food for further theoretical considerations.

The knowledge received from/in the process permitted the scientists to adapt the proposed methods to the situation and, at the same time, to adapt themselves to the requirements from the decision makers. Thus, as the scientists were not only directing and controlling the process, but also had their *own interests* and goals to pursue, they became *neither less nor more neutral* than the other actors of the process.

2.2 Power from learning and adaptation

After the successful results of the initial stages of the forest policy process in Kyrgyzstan, the scientists[36] have earned the respect and confidence of the forest administration and thus were inspired to develop participation, through further engagement in the process. Such appreciation from the side of the forestry administration gave *legitimisation* to the scientists and their proposals. Once their proposed methodology and approach got appreciated, the scientists have got a *new goal* to follow in this discourse: to keep up this appreciation and to prove even further that the proposed methodology was a good and an appropriate one for the local conditions and quite efficient in application.

The exclusion of the scientists from the process by the forestry administration during the preparation of the Forest Code was the first sign that something was changing in the interactions between the actors of the process.
The roles and positions of the actors have changed: forestry administration felt vindicated that top down decisions were more efficient and continued to do so. Although, they have understood that "participation" did not disturb too much and may be a good key-word to promote the approval of decisions, at the same time improving their political status and image.

[36] Speaking about the experience of the "scientists" in Kyrgyzstan, mainly the experience of prof. G. Buttoud, as a forest policy expert, invited for the methodological support of the Kyrgyz forest policy reform process and myself, as I was promoting and supporting the application and adaptation of this methodology *sur place.*

The donors, who have initiated the process, felt lost seeing that the democratic initiatives were not rooted so easily, and thus suspended the support to the forest policy process. Thus, there was a risk for the scientists to lose the power, in the sense of the "possessors of a specific knowledge". At the same time, they have learned from this experience that learning from the process by the forestry administration has resulted in instrumentalisation of participation. This knew knowledge forced the scientists to adapt their position and the proposed methodology to the new conditions.

The break in the forest policy reform process gave some time for a scientific analysis of the process and its implications. Initially the scientists proceeded from the assumption that the involvement of multiple actors and stakeholders will provide a basis for realistic decisions leading to the sustainable forest management and will be in line with the democratic processes of a country in transition. Consequently, a methodology and techniques promoting participation were introduced with a very active involvement of the scientists in the facilitation of the process. From this perspective, the rhythm of the process depended on the rhythm of the involvement of the scientists and was absolutely stopped while they were out of the process.

A new policy concept and theory were needed to explain how the process was working, or how it has worked (and why?) and what should be adapted specifically to the societies in transition. So the scientists' role was not only to apply theories to practice, but also to verify and test the validity of those theories and adapt them according to the newly received knowledge.

Since the evaluation of the first results of the new forest policy in Kyrgyzstan, the role of the scientists was changed, getting limited to general observation and punctual advice and consultations, when it was required. The specialists from the forestry administration were trained in the methodology both for the techniques for policy evaluation and for the organisation of a participatory process. Thus the power of "specific knowledge" was shared. Since this moment, the forestry administration became the leading actor of the process and started to promote participation, at the same time taking control over the procedures and its content.

The policy scientists have promoted the revival of participation but, contrary to the previous stage, were no longer directly involved into the process. This was part of the adaptation of the scientists, which included observation and analysis of the reaction of the policy-makers to the proposed methodology, an improvement of techniques for participation based on this reaction. For the process to become legitimate, in the new conditions of the country in transition, it was important to demonstrate that the proposed theories were viable and the methodologies appropriate. This was also important for the personal interests and professional image of the scientists.

In order to reach this objective, in the conditions when the state administration was still very strong, while the public deliberation was not yet a habitual practice, the scientists, naturally, had to orient themselves to the leading actor. As a result, the methodology, the techniques and the participatory process itself were adapted to the needs of the forestry administration, the leading actor at that moment.

From the "scientists'" point of view, the participatory forest policy formulation in Kyrgyzstan was a practical test of theory and methodology. Adaptation was one of the features of their positions and approaches. In principle, the scientists usually have a good abstractive capacity. This can help in understanding the evolution of the context and thus in promoting a general adaptation of the other actors of the process. This is giving them a potential for influencing the outcome of the discourse and thus getting a legitimisation for their proposed approach.

Summing up, the case of Kyrgyzstan has showed that scientists are not only equal actors in the process, but, same as the others, they are not neutral stakeholders. They also come with their proper interests and understanding of the expected results and ways to reach them (means and ends) and they want to prove that their theories and methods are working. However, since scientists have the power to propose a theory, or a methodology for these processes; their values and interests may *dominate* (or influence) the choice or the application of the proposed theory. Moreover, this favourable adaptation may easily promote the interests and positions of the stronger actor, who, in its turn, will legitimate the scientific input.

Science (and more generally, expertise) has at its disposal methodological rules for generating, challenging and testing interactions and to influence (directly or indirectly) the decision making options through providing analysis of the possible consequences and side-effects. This helps the policy makers to be effective. For the policy scientists to be effective, they need to maintain scientific credibility. Just "speaking truth to the politicians" is not sufficient for that. Hence, the policy scientists may be tempted to change strategies and adapt their advice to the needs of the politicians. At the same time, as researchers, they also analyse the experience and promote new theories with a critical view on the roles of different actors, including their own, in order again to be required by (and thus to have a control over) the politicians. In such relations, is it possible to say where does science (expertise) end and policy begin?

3. Forestry administration[37] as a stakeholder of the process

In the centralised planning tradition, inherited from the Soviet period, the State forestry administration was the sole planner, decider and controller for the forest sector. This role was getting uncomfortable in the conditions of transition to market economy, democratic reorganisations in the country and decentralisation of the state functions. Hence, the forestry administration had to accept the beginning of a participatory process and follow "the rules of the game" avoiding the exercise of any influence on the participants. Thus, at the initial stage the forestry administration headquarters were *silent observers* of the process.

Gradually, the understanding of the challenges of participation for the power re-distribution has turned the forestry administration into an active *stakeholder and promoter of the process*. Although, initially taking participation rather as a source of additional information and a possibility for strengthening the relations with all the hierarchical chains of the forest service, the forestry administration was giving a priority importance to the quantitative aspects of the

[37] Herein after in this thesis the wording "forestry administration" is used in a preserved form from Russian language and means the headqurters of the forest service at the National level.

process: through increasing the number of the involved participants, mainly from inside the forest sector, and broadening the scales of the process to all the regions of the country. At this point, participation was limited to a pure *consultation*, or exchange of information, not only because of the position of the forestry administration, but also because the other stakeholders involved at that moment, could not yet go further, than just a pure description of the situation and statements on the existing problems.

The public and political success brought by the first years of the participatory forest policy reform has changed both the position of the forestry administration and its role in the process. In the *new role* of a *democratic reformer*, the forestry administration was promoting the participatory procedures not only at all the hierarchical and geographic-administrative levels of the forest service, but has also introduced first signs of inter-sectoral co-ordination through the interactions with other governmental agencies and institutions, as well as for lobbying it's reports and proposals in front of the government and across the sector hierarchy. The participatory process has acquired the qualities of a *discourse* in the sense of communication among "*non-equal*" participants, whereas under the influence of the general *context and* the *opposition* between the common "group" (stakeholders) *interests*, *new power* relations have been formed through the mechanisms of *conflict resolution* which were introduced by the application of the mixed model framework.

The more participation was appreciated by the forestry administration, the more evident was becoming the segmentation of "*actors*" within it. Those were the actors seeking for a special power or political/professional promotion, whose individual interests were at the core of the cause of the instrumentalisation of participation. For example, as soon as the director of the forest service has appreciated the positive impact of the image of "a democratic reformer" for his political carrier, he made "participation" a key word of all his political and professional speeches. Since this moment, it was not the content, brought by participation which was important, but the mediatisation of the process[38] and promotion of the image of forestry administration. The process continued with the same participatory procedures, followed up by the scientists while the decisions, although containing no traces of the fruitful discussions in the field, were presented as results of a participatory process.

Thus, the participatory process in Kyrgyzstan became an instrument for the State forestry administration, the application of which guaranteed ligitimacy of its decisions in front of the government, because they were democratically taken. It has also put moral obligations on the executors (the forestry personnel along the hierarchy) for the plans' implementation, as they have been associated in the decisions. The longing for the achievement of personal goals of individual actors has changed the initial commonly agreed upon objective of the participatory process and has ultimately promoted the common interest of the forest service hierarchy. The success of individual actors from this stakeholder group (eg. Director of the forest service) in getting power due to the discourse and instrumentalisation of this process, has also gained power for the whole stakeholder group. Thus this group has got an indication of a possibility of winning a more stable position through obtaining control over the process.

Hence, the role of the forestry administration has been changing from a careful observer to a promoter, and, finally, a user of a very convenient tool of participation. Parallel to that, the position of the forestry administration was considerably strengthening: from an insignificant

[38] See the example with the elaboration of the Forest Code

section within the Ministry of Environment to the agency with a ministry status and subordination directly to the President of Republic.

Thus, instead of re-distribution of power among the participants of the forest policy reform process, it was consolidated around the forestry administration.

4 Other stakeholders

4.1 Personnel of the forest service

At the beginning of the forest policy reform the other stakeholders were not yet formed, as they were not yet organised. (From this point of view, it can be said that the Kyrgyz forest policy reform has not only resulted in a new forest policy, but has also contributed to the formulation of stakeholder groups for a policy process).
The first group to express an interest to the process was the foresters from the different levels of the forest service hierarchy. In fact, in the issues related to the forest management they were potentially among the first to gain something from the process. As, according to the existing system of planning, they were supposed to implement the "from top to bottom" defined plans, participation in the forest policy process could have given them a chance to make these plans at least realistic, based on the real potentials. However it did not happen immediately, while the positions, same as the roles of the foresters were changing with the time in the course of interactions with the other stakeholders.

Initially, the forest rangers and the foresters were brought to the process by the policy scientists, as representatives of the forest sector. Having almost no previous experience of participation at the beginning, they took the role of "*passive sources*" of practical knowledge and actual information on the problems and potentials of the forest sector. The lack of practice in planning and strategic vision have resulted in the situation that the first "long-term strategy" elaborated in a participatory way was no longer actual already after five years.

What is interesting to note is that over the 8-9 years period under the analysis, the position and the role of the foresters in the process did not undergo a considerable change. Indeed, they were learning from the process and, in a way adapting their behaviour to the new conditions and knowledge. Nevertheless, the role of the foresters in the process has been always a sort of a background for the major play executed by the administration. Even when the process came to the practical field level, during the elaboration of the integrated management plans, the role of the foresters was rather that of "passive executors".

Why the role of the foresters along the hierarchical structure did not evolute during the process and time? It was probably not because of the lack of the previous experience in participation. Among them, there were several personalities who have became "actors" and got professional (and some of them even political) promotion, due to participation. The others, on the contrary, have acquired the reputation of the "never satisfied critics" and were nominated to the less favourable positions. Probably the reason is a very rigid hierarchical institutional structure, when the lower levels of the hierarchy could play only a secondary background role in the power distribution strategy of the administration, the stronger stakeholder.

4.2 Local population

Although the local population is a very important stakeholder in the forest management (Mueller & Sorg, 2000) it did not become immediately a *stakeholder in the forest policy* process.
Traditionally, the indigenous Kyrgyz population has been involved in cattle and sheep breeding, practising distant-pasturing and, in fact, leading a nomadic life. The forest in such relations was considered primarily as a source of energy (firewood) but also as a competitor for pastures. The need for construction timber was not very expressive, as mobile nomad tents (yurtas) are based mainly on willow carcasses, and, otherwise, do not require much wood. Moreover, during the Soviet time, the demand in timber was mainly satisfied by the cheap Siberian wood.

The break of the Soviet Union has considerably changed the economic and social situation especially for the rural population, including those living in the proximity of the forests. Regardless of the privatisation of the former kolhozes and sovhozes, the agricultural activity did not create immediate prosperity for the "new owners". Private farming did not become a panacea. People were getting poor, and thus, their pressure on the forest was increasing. This growing pressure, naturally, had ecological, economic and social consequences which were of great importance for sustainability and thus plaid a decisive role for the introduction of a participatory multifunctional forest management (Sorg, 2002) and decision making in Kyrgyzstan.

The economic instability in the country, growing unemployment, rapture in the social assistance, as well as many other factors of instability linked with the period of transition to the market relations, has put the rural population into a great dependence on the forests and forest lands. The following factors would count for such dependence:

- Because of the high prices on energy sources there was a considerable increase of the need for firewood.
- The decreased number of heads of cattle and sheep in the course of privatisation were linked with the decrease of distant pasturing activities and thus has increased the need for the permanent housing, while the imported timber was getting more expensive than the trees in the neighbouring forest.
- Together with the impoverishment of one part of the population, a richer part was also developing with the corresponding "needs for the luxury". Thus, the precious timber of protected species (juniper, walnut, especially walnut burls) was getting a special material value and interest.
- The non-timber products (not really harvested before) have acquired a good marketable value, as natural biological goods, and started to be collected in industrial quantities.
- The forest lands in the proximity of the villages were getting more on demand, both as pastures and for agricultural crops.

As a result of all those changes in the needs, the relations between the foresters and the local population connected to the regulation of forest products and forest land use were based on a *permanent opposition* and *conflict*. In practice, in most of the cases the activities of the local people in the forest were qualified as illegal[39]. The beginning of the forest policy reform process was not marked by an active presence of the local population who was definitely stakeholders for the forest management issues, but has neither really seen the challenge of participating in the policy reform nor trusted the forest service.

A survey was carried out in 2003[40] among the various stakeholders and actors to see if participation has really changed anything in the decision making in forestry. This survey has brought elements explaining why the local population fif not find a big challenge in the forest policy reform process.

First of all it is surely the lack of the previous experience and culture of participation,

> "*Uuuuh, Bishkek is far away. The government is too far. We are just small people. It is not up to us to decide the politics, nobody will listen to us*"[41].

The second reason is the lack of knowledge for strategic planning.

> "*The "concept", the "strategy", what is in these words? There are chiefs, they were taught to do it, and I need to plant potatoes and feed my children*".

In fact, many reasons of such "domestic" character may be found to explain the passiveness of the local population, who was supposede to be the final beneficiary of the new forest policy, although, one may wonder whether they are the most relevant ones. It is not possible that all the rural population was so uneducated and inert. Naturally the poor presence of the local population in the forest policy could be due to the "too much presence" of the forest service in it, while there was lack of mutual trust and confidence. But the general factor was that the representation of the local population, both at the regional and, of course, at the national level, was not promoted and thus not organised.

Usually, people do not join a discourse, unless they see an immediate (which is more simple to see than a strategic) challenge for themselves in the result of the discourse. This assumption is proved by the fact that (still in the Kyrgyz example) the same people who initially did not care about the national forest policy reform process became active (participated in the meetings, elected their representatives, demanded the information on the results etc) when the planning came to the stage of the integrated management plans, which were made at the level of leshozes and villages (Chorfi, 2004; Kouplevatskaya, 2007).

[39] According to the Forest Code of Kyrgyzstan the forests are referred to the "protective mountain forests" and thus the economic activities there are very limited and strongly regulated.
[40] The analysis was based on the interviews (37) taken in 2003 from the former participants (and non participants) of the process.
[41] Here and after there are given quotations from the interviews held among the foresters and local population in 2003

Who was representing the interests of the local population in the process? Both the policy scientists and the donor were looking for the equal presents of the interests of the local population, but without the insight knowledge, they could give only a theoretical input.
The *local administration*, who could have become the representatives of the interests of the local population, was in-existent for the process, especially at the initial phases. In the period of the mediatisation of the process, the forestry administration has sporadically invited some representatives of the local and village government, although it was inefficient. There are several possible reasons for that: the first is that "local government", as an institution, is still at the stage of formation in Kyrgyzstan. Since the moment of the country's independence, there were several reforms in the structures and tasks of the local government and, the process is still ongoing. The second reason is a very frequent rotation of officials in this position. Thus, the local government, even if periodically, there were some representatives present at several steps of the process, did not play any role in the interactions of the stakeholders.

4.3 Environmental NGOs

At the beginning of the process in Kyrgyzstan, the environmental NGOs were not acting as stakeholders. On the results of the survey in 2003 and on information from private discussions, the opinion was formed that the environmental NGOs in Kyrgyzstan saw the money generation as their main activity and, thus, were totally concentrated on bidding for international and regional projects. In this logic, at the end of the 1990s, when the forest policy reform process has just started, it was more "in the fashion" to complain against the foresters as "distracters of the environment", and to promote the opposition between the foresters and the environmentalists. During the interviews, this was proposed as a reason why the environmental NGOs did not come to the process at the beginning.

On the contrary, during the second stage of the process, when the status and the popularity of the forest service have considerably increased, compared with the initial stage, several NGOs became active participants. This time, the interest of the NGOs was explained by a good international image of the forest service, gained due to the participatory forest policy reform. More and more international organisations were coming to the forestry sector of Kyrgyzstan, looking for contacts and potential field of co-operation, thus the NGOs got interested in supporting the initiatives of the forest service, hoping for future collaboration. Such collaboration was also positive for the forest service. As explained by one of the heads of the state forest administration:

> "*Once they are convinced in the correctness of our ideas, it will be easier with their support to pass our decisions through to the government*" (From the interviews, 2003).

However, those new stakeholders did not change the existing distribution of power in the discourse, although they may have further contributed to the strengthening of the position of the forestry administration.

4.4 Other ministries and agencies

The other ministries and agencies, those who were traditionally considered as stakeholders for the forest policy reform (the ministries of environment, agriculture, justice, finance; the agency of the land registration and others) were invited for participation in the process and some of them were even part of the national working group for the forest policy reform. But when it came to participation in discussions and lobbying, they have opted for not participating. There may be various reasons for that, ranging from the lack of readiness and knowledge for participation (practically as it was the case for the other stakeholders), to the feeling of competing interests, as there was a long-term competition among the ministry of environment and the forest agency for the responsibility over and management of the specially protected areas and national parks[42].

Finally these other ministries did not play a big role in the process. Only during the second stage of the process, when the forest agency had gained a stable position in the government hierarchy and a favourable image, they became more open for collaboration, joint lobbying and creation of some minor coalitions. All those new relations were usually rather favourable for the forestry administration.
Just an example: at the beginning of 2007, after some structural re-organisations caused by the revolution of March 2005, there exists one State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry under the government of the Kyrgyz Republic. The positions of the first vice director and the state secretary of this agency are taken by the former deputy chairmen of the former forestry administration. Both of them had the leading positions during the participatory forest policy reform process.

4.5 Donors

Apart from the policy scientists and Kyrgyz institutions, there was one more indirect (or direct?) stakeholder of the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan, the donor[43]. This donor, regardless of a declared neutral position and just a support to the needs of the Kyrgyz partners, was a very important stakeholder of the policy process. The donor had a rather symbolic stake in the process, to prove that collaboration was efficient and effective, but it had a very big power of modifying the actions and positions of the other stakeholders:

(i) the donor was at the initiative of the whole forest policy reform process;
(ii) the donor's strategy to transfer the ownership of the process to the Kyrgyz government, has been of a majour influence on the evolution of the process.

Thus, the donor, without having "power" as a stake in the process and having only symbolic challenges, was still a very powerful actor and promoted the consolidation of power in the hands of the forestry administration.

As a result from these various positions and challeneges the modalities of participation in the framework of the forest policy reform process were built by the most influential stakeholders.

[42] It is a paradox, but due to the mediatisation of participation in the forest policy reform, forest agency has finally got this responsibility over the specially protected areas and National parks.
[43] In the period since 1995 for quite a long time the Swiss development Co-operation was the only donor in the Kyrgyz Forest sector with it's project : « Kyrgyz-Swiss Forestry Support Programme » (KIRFOR).

They became influential not only due to their initial positions and capacities, but also due to the *new knowledge* acquired during the process and mutual interrelation and interactions. The new knowledge on the capacities of participation has shaped a new definition of the expected results and new challenges for some of the stakeholders. These newly defined expected results and challenges, usually different from those jointly defined at the beginning of the process explain the change in the modalities of participation and roles of participants.

The other stakeholders (private entrepreneurs, associations of land users, local population) had not clearly shaped expectations and needs. They have joined the process for a possible gain, just for being part of the game (as it was the case with the NGOs). However, usually there is always more chance for gaining, when being on the same line as the stronger player. In this logic, such participants indirectly promote the strengthening of the already strong stakeholder. The other parties, who may be influenced by the decision, or by the process, but for whom the gains are not yet evident or seem to be not realistic, are less willing to be involved in participatory processes and stay passive or do not join the process at all.

5 Is it a win-win win situation, or a triagle of power?

As a consequence, in the Kyrgyz forest policy reform process there were three main stakeholders, who could influence it with the aim of a maximum possible gain from it, and who have finally benefited from the process.

The *scientists*, who were invited as a neutral knowledge, but turned out to be equal actors in the process, with their own understanding of the expected results and strategies for their achievement (means and ends). In fact, the scientists could not stay neutral. Since they have proposed a theory or a methodology for this process, their values and perspectives were able to dominate the choice and the application of the proposed theory. Thus, they needed to prove that their theories and methods were working. The scientists have executed the power of exclusive knowledge (on the theories, techniques and procedures), but mainly the capacity to analyse and adapt.

In the case of Kyrgyzstan, the *adaptation* of scientists has included the observation and analysis of the reactions of decision-makers, the State forest service administration, to the proposed methodology and, based on this observation, a consequent improvement of techniques for participation. This adaptation has brought the benefits for the scientists in the form of appreciation and acceptation of the scientific interference, thus it permitted a success of the process and a legitimisation of the proposed methodology. In a way, it has also brought a possibility of this doctoral thesis a proposal of a theoretical framework of the double spiral.

This process scientists a unique possibility to test and develop a theory and a methodology in the conditions of a society in transition. This experiment was a much more important benefit for the professional scientific credibility, as it gave a substantial basis for the further construction of a theory, which started to be recognised and discussed at the international level.

The *forestry administration* has been searching for a stable political position in the changing state structure, hence it had the interest to change as little as possible in the decision making process. This was not possible in the context of transition and permanent changes. Thus, there was a dilemma: to accept some minor changes with the risk to lose everything, or to change all, but, finally, in reality to change nothing and preserve all. This is why the forest service administration has accepted to open the decision making process for a broad participation and announced its readiness to share the responsibility for the plans and decisions. As an effect, this process of "responsibilisation and sharing" has created new power relations, consolidated around the forest sector administration. In that sense the phrase: "if we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change"[44] is getting the right meaning.

For the *donor*, the international image and successful project implementation were the most important benefits from the process, and, inevitably, the experience of the participatory forest policy formulation and the well managed process of policy adaptation have produced a "success story" for the donor.

In the process, the donor had the power over the scientists only through the conditions of the Terms of Reference, which were defining the scope of actions to be implemented, the time frame and the expected results. The scientists in their turn had the power of specific knowledge, which was so necessary for the success of the project; the power of the "neutral image" and "free expression", which could be critical for the donor's international image.

On the other hand, the scientists needed the understanding, acceptance and appreciation from the side of the forest service administration, in order to maintain the status of the bearers of "exceptional knowledge". To be successful and to reach their corresponding proper expected results, the scientists needed the forestry administration, same as the forestry administration needed the scientists.

For the forestry administration, the scientists were giving instruments, necessary for the control of the process and for turning it into the needed direction. In this case the donor had a more passive role to follow the process, on the condition that it's expected result (which is probably the closest one to the initially commonly defined one) of a successful process, leading to the policy reform, will be achieved.

For the last chain in the forest policy cycle, the elaboration of integrated management plans, the final practical step of the general implementation of the national policy, the "scientists" and the forestry administration have continued their collaboration. Basing on the knowledge of each other, got during the previous steps, with the mutual knowledge of the respective requirements and potentials, they kept on to commonly develop the process. Thus a new project came into being, financed by the European Union and focused on the elaboration of a methodology for the integrated management plans (IMP) in the juniper forests of the South Kyrgyzstan (JUMP – Juniper Management Plans). The logic of the integrated management plans comes out of the general forest policy framework at the national level with the locally defined activities. Such planning of the activities in the forest includes both the technical work of the foresters and the various types of land use needs of the villagers. The IMPs formulation follows the same logic of the mixed model framework, as the forest policy reform, consisting in the combination of participatory procedures and professional expertise. It is significantly

[44] A famous phrase from the film of Luchino Visconti "Il Gattopardo", 1963.

based on the compromise between the conflicting interests of the different actors and stakeholders. Thus, all the potential, generated by the previous interactions is now mobilised for the continuity of the process, but at the local level, with a more active involvement of the local population.

The relations with the donor, on the contrary, were practically terminated for the both: for the forest sector administration and for the scientists.
A proposal could be made that this fact is linked with the factor of time. In principle, both the forestry administration and the scientists are oriented for a long-term perspective. Regardless of the availability and source of financial means, they need to continue their activities: the forest management for the forestry administration, or the research, experiments, adaptation and further research for the "scientists". Hence, in a way, their future possibilities depend on the results they can produce: the better they succeed, the more they will have chances to continue in the future. Thus, it is in the nature of forestry administration, or, more general, policy makers and policy scientists to look for the adaptation and continuity in their interactions with the others.

The position of the donors was different. First of all, the donors are used to function within the time frame of a project implementation, oriented on the achievement of the planned results, and not necessarily on the continuity of the process. The donor, in the Kyrgyz case, at the beginning of the process and project had also a long – term orientation, but it was rather the orientation to testing all possible mechanisms and techniques, which could bring a success. The second phase of the process was closer to the end of the project. There was neither time nor space any more for testing and learning, as this phase was strictly result - oriented. That is why the process leadership by the state forest administration was fitting well to the agenda, (success) but not to the philosophy of the Swiss donor (discontent), creating a double feeling about the final outcome of the process.

Secondly, the position of the "payer" introduces some pre-defined and granted domination in the status of the donor during the discourse. Thus, this automatic power of domination due to the superiority of resources puts the donor into a condition, when there is not really a need to adapt its position. This lack of a real need for adaptation, is finally limiting the power of the donor. The power in the meaning of taking a final (for the moment) decision and influencing the decisions of the others.

III. The spirals of power

1. The "minority" stakeholders and their role

In the Kyrgyz example there appeared three clear powerful stakeholders in the process. At the same time, in the socially constructed process it is not possible that the "stronger" or a more influential stakeholder will win all the time and that there are no changes among the "weaker" or "under-represented ones. First of all it is necessary to stress that the "strongers" are not necessarily always representing the majority. Secondly, the "under-represented", "disadvantaged" or "low-status" position participants, who could be here presented through a working term "*minority*" (not from the point of view of their number, but in the sense of their

initial potential to represent their interests and positions in the process) should not be always equated with the powerless.

When this "minority" succeeds in voicing its view, it may set in motion the kind of productive conflict. As they do not have a clearly shaped expected result, or a pre-defined agenda, similar to as the "majorities" do, the "minority" can represent an objective information. They represent the opinion on the main issues, rather than a view point about the main issue itself (Mendelberg, 2002). At the same time, the minorities are "stigmatised socially" (Moscovici, 1980, 1985; Mugny et al. 1991; Wood et al. 1994; Mendelberg, 2002). They are not consistent with each other, there is a lack of certainty, so they can not have a direct immediate impact or influence on the majority. In this situation those who offer a new view of reality and succeed in challenging the majority's accepted perspective are those who are most valued (Mendelberg, 2002).

Still, the role of even the most passive participants may not be neutral either. Even if they do not succeed in changing the position of the majority, they can prompt this majority to think about new alternatives and from different perspectives. One of the stronger stakeholders may act as a translator of their interests in the process. In the Kyrgyz policy process the policy scientists have often acted as possible translators of the interests of the local population, especially at the step of elaboration of the integrated management plans (JUMP project), or, in a parallel project on the introduction of agroforestry approach to forest management in the walnut forests (Sorg et al. 2003). Naturally, these "translating" initiative and capacity depend on the balance between the stronger stakeholders. In any case, the aspects of legitimacy and accountability of decisions necessarily require that the "deciders" adapt their decisions and the process to those (almost) silent, but still present stakeholders.

That is why I would question the well spread out belief about a participatory process (without necessarily limiting it only to the forest management planning), which is stating that:

> "*People decide to participate in forest management planning in order to influence the decision making process, whereas forest managers are reluctant to relinquish their control over the resources. The impact of the public involvement process will be influenced by the degree to which marginalised stakeholders gain power in order to transpose their views into alternate forest management prac*tices" (Coté and Bouthillier, 1999)

This thesis rather promotes the idea that even when the marginalised stakeholders gain no evident power directly and do not manage to transpose their views into practices and decisions, just their presence in the process, inevitably changes the decisions and the ways of taking them. The stakeholders are all coming to the process with a specific agenda, which is not necessarily expressed or clearly defined. While some groups come, focused on the ceasing the control over the process and thus, leading to their proper expected results, the others are just experiencing development and learning. That is why it is not possible to measure normatively the success of participation for all the stakeholders. All the participants are agents of changes and thus "producers" of continuity. Consequently, in any case the process never gets back to the initial point and is developing along a spiral.

In fact, at the beginning of a decision-making process the "*minority*" may be passive, silent and not organised, with practically no possibility for an effective say. However, once this process is open for participation, and discourse is introduced but still lead by the "majority", it becomes a conduit for social pressures to conform this majority, when the participants follow the path proposed by the "knowledged" and "better informed" actors. There is no change yet in the understanding neither any learning (or new knowledge generation) has occurred. The spiral still goes on in the outward direction. In the permanent interaction these stronger stakeholders need to adapt mutually, to maintain a certain balance between them. At the same time, to stay stronger, they are obliged to establish networks with the "minorities", to be more consolidated and have a better understanding of the situation and the interactions. Once this consolidation and understanding are achieved, these stronger stakeholders become the leaders of the process, take it under control and the spiral changes the outward direction into an inward one. In fact, this understanding may be wrong or not complete, as it was the case with the forest code, the interactions produce new context and partnerships and the process goes on, creating a new spiral.
In various cases the stronger stakeholders are competing for having their proper views prevailing over the others. They may use the positions of the weaker stakeholders as possible arguments: for instance, scientists, promoting the local populaiton's voice in order to give more consistency to the proposed methodology and to counter the position of the state forestry administration, aimed at the maximum preservation of power in the administrative sphere.

2 Discourse and iterativity of the power re-distribution

A distribution of power in a process is never definitive, same as there is a change in the positions and expected results, there is also a permanent power re-distribution. According to Foucault, the goal of a "fight" in the discourse is either to force the opponent to abandon the game, (thus the winner gets all the power), or to set up new relations of power. Hence,

> "there is a circularity between power relations open to fight and a fight aiming at power relations. Therefore there is a constant instability in power relationships which excludes by definition any form of determinism" (Foucalt, 1982);

or, also:

> "We must make allowance for the complex concepts and unstable process, whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power. Discourse transmits and produces power, it re-inforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (Foucault, 1980).

Discourse becomes, thus, a tactical dimension of how power relations work between institutions, groups and individuals. All these agents normally join a policy reform process, seeking for the changes: changes in the situation, in the policy, in their ability to influence the situation and policy. However, the discourse is also promoting changes in the positions of these agents and in their needs. New needs are constructed through the process. Like, for example, the forestry administration in Kyrgyzstan, came to the process with both, the need to follow the donor's requirements and with the ambition to keep its leading position. With the learning from interactions, new needs were shaped: not to lose the decision making power; to improve the political status; to promote the process, while obtaining a better control over it; to

re-introduce participation; to use participation for the strengthening of the hierarchy and image etc.

According to Foucault, a power relation is not a direct action on a person, but an action upon other actions, and thus,

> "the exercise of power consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome. … Indeed, a power relation is not an action which determines another action, but an action which influences another action by determining a field of possibility for it. In this field of possibility, ways of resisting are by definition present" (Foucault, 1982).

The change of needs is always leading to a change of power, and thus to a change of policy. However, this change may only happen when a new "counter-discursive" element begins to receive wide attention through the means of communication. This counter discursive element may be introduced by one of the actors of the process, not necessarily as a resistance to the process itself, but as a *resistance* to the *commonly defined expected result*, because of the change of his proper needs and expectations. For the change to happen, the means of communication of this new representation are required.

Here comes the leading role of the scientists in the process. They are bringing the knowledge which functions as a form of power. This knowledge also promotes further dissemination of power and a creation of influential stakeholders and actors of the process. The policy change is directly linked with the change of the composition and strategies of the actors as well as with the behaviour of the groups of knowledge. (The type of knowledge defines the type of power). Certain groups of knowledge may be disqualified, while new may appear, changing the modalities of the discourse and power relations.

When the knowledge and ideas of the actors remain unchanged, the policy change is incremental, because there are no pushing factors. Thus the speed of change is affected by the changes in actors, their needs and establishment of new networks. When in the Kyrgyz case, at the beginning of the process there was no clear knowledge and understanding of the mechanisms of participation, the spiral of the process was incrementally developed in the outward direction. Whilst, when the forestry administration has comprehended the framework, there was not only the change of direction of the spiral to the inward (spiral of control), but also the change of the intensity of the process. Thus a rapid change in the actors' positions, leads to rapid policy change, making the second inward spiral much shorter.

At the beginning of the process, the most influential stakeholders are ready for an open discussion through collaborative learning (outward "spiral of learning") with the other stakeholders involved in the process. Because of learning and adaptation, the stronger stakeholders, with the "hidden agenda", will have to adapt their way of participating and to re-shape the initially expected gains. This moment of change will define the turning point for the inward direction of the process (inward "spiral of control"). Thus the process will be promoted by the influential stakeholder for the achievement of this new agenda.

The majority's support is nevertheless essential for the legitimate "winning" of some of the interests. The "inwarding" direction of the spiral is an effective strategy only in cases when the more influential stakeholders are sure to gain the support of the other actors in the process.

Thus, permanent strategies emerge in the efforts of all the players to reach a consensus regarding the use of cultural, political, social and economic elements.
These observations contribute to the understanding that the variability of participatory processes is constructed by the major interests at stake as well as by the cultural, economic and social aspects mobilised for supporting these interests.

IV Where we are

This thesis has analysed the experience of a forest policy reform process in a former soviet country, with a centralised decision making system and rigid strict hierarchical administrative structure. It has tried to develop propositions, built on this analysis, and search for understanding of the questions raised by this development. Instead, the search for the answers leads to the new questions.

From 1997 to 2004, a complete cycle of forest policy reform was implemented in Kyrgyzstan. Two important phenomena at international and national levels have preceded it: the international dialogue on sustainable development, and the democratic transformations in the context of transition to market economy. Donors came to the country to implement international requirements of sustainability and to support the promotion of democracy. Hence the Kyrgyz forestry administration, with traditional technocratic decision making structures and procedures, has been confronted with the need to change the habitual approaches (as required globally), and the desire to keep as much power as possible (locally). As a result, this dialectic gave the policy scientists a special role in the process: (i) they were called for introducing rigour into the process, through approaches based on social sciences' studies permitting consideration of all the different interests, using concepts and methods linking rationalist and communicative aspects for changing the public policies in the sector; (ii) being considered by both parties as "neutral" actors, the policy scientists have also given a legitimacy to the process, which, in its turn, brought up the legitimisation of the expressed social needs. The objectives of neither the donors (oriented towards global values) nor the forestry administration (focused on power distribution) were considering the interests of the civil society, which were not clearly expressed for the lack of socially active NGOs in the Kyrgyz forest sector. Thus, policy scientists have served as translators of the local people's needs and a linking bridge between those groups of interests, through introducing participatory approach to the policy reform process, which helped to promote people's views. On the whole, the forest policy reform has re-defined the role of the State through establishing private and local responsibilities in forest management, whilst the participatory policy process promoted the emergence of new actors. It has changed the distribution of power in the sector, and finally contributed to the strengthening of the position of the forestry authority.

This work was focused around the thesis that participation in forest policy reform, whilst leading to a re-definition of power of participants, in most of the cases leads to the consolidation of power of the already powerful stakeholders. Ultimately, it gave raise to the questions related to the connection between democratic processes and empowerment, representation of interests and mechanisms for the power re-distribution.
Often it is not the common agenda which is pursued by the process. The context of changes and expressed needs for changes, as well as the permanent adaptation of the various stakeholders to the changing context, bring to the clear leadership in the process by some

stakeholders and their re-defined (and not expressed) interests. This leadership is never definitive and permanent, it is also adapting to the other present (expressed or not) interests and positions, even if they are not dominating at a definite moment, as this situation may also change and the domination may be shifted. It is not only the possibility for the expression of interests, which defines the re-distribution of power along the process.

A decision-making process depends on the actions of the actors, whether individuals, companies, institutions or states. It is a socially constructed process which includes series of contradictory processes, promoted by the combination of the rationalist and communicative procedures and incrementality. It is the actors of the process who construct participation, which, in its turn, depends on how they perceive it and discursively construct its general tendencies, although, at any time only one discourse may be dominant. While one discourse dominates, it can be and always be resisted: different agents and actors will offer different explanations (narrations) of participation and its effects.

The analysis of the case of the participatory forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan in this thesis was done from my own position, which can be considered as a position of an agent, an actor and, at some point, as a stakeholder of the process. It is pre-defined not only by my personal interests, but also by the adopted ontological and epistemological position, which necessarily had methodological implications.

Following the hermeneutic, or interpretist tradition, the aim of understanding is reached through the focus on the meanings that the actions have for the actors of the process. Thus the results are one possible interpretation of the relationship between the social phenomena. The interpretation or understanding of social phenomena can only be discussed within discourses and built upon the interpretation of the meanings the involved actors give to their actions. Thus, this produced explanation is particular to that specific time and space, and partial, being based on a subjective interpretation of the views of only some of the actors involved. Any such explanation is provisional, there are no truth claims.

At the same time, following Foucault,

> " Experience is acquired within a prior discourse. … scientists have to interpret it in the wider discourse of which it is part" (Foucault, 1982).

This is what I have tried to do in the thesis: to understand the impact of participation on the stakeholders and the impact of stakeholders on the process and interactions within it.

Participation as an element of democracy: the way it is functioning, produces disputable mechanisms for the power consolidation. Representation of the interests of the others can also give more power to those who are representing. Does it mean that democracy leads not to the empowerment of the civil society, but is a mechanism for consolidation of power for the already powerful?

It is logical that participation brings to the re-allocation of power as the ways of appropriation of decisions and the process are changing. **But** the more powerful, the principle stakeholder, during some time, is winning still more consolidation, instead of re-allocation of power.

In the discourse, composed of institutional environment and social interactions, this consolidation of power is not a political mechanism, it is rather a *social construction*, social functioning.

Participation is presented as one the basic elements of *governance*, while governance is supposed to replace the habitual way of managing the society through *government*, when it is no more sufficient in the context of changes evoked by the striving for sustainability. In fact, the so called "retreat of the state" is often just a prolongation of government, that restructures the power relations in society. Governance is often introduced "from exterior": by international conventions and initiatives or by a situation of crisis. What are the relations between the government and governance? It can be a natural opposition, a *resistance* of government against this new approach to the society administration. Such resistance is doomed, because governance is based on the capacities of the civil society and, once introduced, may provoke the construction of new partnerships and networks of actors, which, in their turn may resist to traditional government and start promoting elements of governance. Thus the power of the stakeholders may increase through this networking and partnerships inside the civil society itself and with the political community. It will be an increased power over decision making as well as systematic empowerment. The resistance of government against governance may cause an opposite resistance in favour of governance.

Each actor in the network has his/her own reference to the previous system, but in their functioning they have a tendency for looking for stability, based on what they have learned from the instability of others. Thus, when the elements of governance are introduced (because of the national/international obligations or crisis), the government does not know how to react and keeps some resistance against it, which is creating a counter-resistance among the other stakeholders, which could be risky (power re-distribution) for the government. Hence the strategy of the government needs to be changed. Looking for stability the government may adapt its own reactions and promote the elements of governance, but according to its own agenda. The concept of *resilience*[45] looks like an appropriate one for understanding this mechanism, and there is a scientific interst in developing it for analysing such systems. Applying the double spiral theory for the interpretation of this situation, we will have the outward direction of the spiral during the introduction of governance, when the government is still resisting, while the counter-resistance of the other stakeholders is keeping the process going on. And the moment, when the government realises that adaptation may be much more effective for keeping (or re-gaining) it's former power of the decision making process and accepts some elements of governance, is the turning point for the direction of the spiral. As a result, the government consolidates its power (through creating new networks with the stakeholders, agreeing with such adaptation) and takes control over the process. Thus the process goes along the inward spiral. Having got adapted, the government gets resilient. Does it mean that the switch from resistance to adaptation promotes the consolidation of power and the outward direction of the spiral? Due to the learning from the interactions, it is not only the government (or, as it was analysed in the thesis, the stronger stakeholders) who is learning. It means that, the longer the process is going on, there bigger are the chances that the other stakeholders (for example the NGOs or associations, as the most active and organised units of the civil society) can understand the power re-distribution mechanism and take the process

[45] Resilience – various definitions reflect different aspects of stability, but mainly built around tensions between efficiency and persistence ; constancy and change, predictability and unpredictability. R. is the ability to return to a stable state after a perturbation.

under control, leading to the inward direction. But even in this case, the re-distributed power will not have the same nature as before. Governance changes the nature of power.

What does the government gain from getting resilient? It depends on the focus of consideration. If the focus is on the *persistence* and *constancy* of the role and decision making power of the government, regardless of perturbations and changes, then the resilience gives the stability of *functioning* for the government system. What would be interesting to analyse in this case, is the strategies and behaviour of the system to reaching this objective. While, if the focus is rather on the *change* and *efficiency* of functioning of the government system after absorbing the "perturbation", caused by the introduction of the elements of governance, then the effect from resilience is an alternative *stable state*, and improved efficiency of functioning. The analysis in this case should look for the answers to the questions: How much (and what) can the government system absorb from the "perturbation" caused by the new approaches to decision making? What are the new boundaries which are established with other "stable states" of the other systems (stakeholders of a policy process)? What are their properties, how do they function, what are the interactions between them? How stable is this "alternative stable state" of the government system and how many "stable states it can have? How can the resilience of power be analysed?

How can the double spiral theory be further developed for the explanation of the decision making process and power relations in it?

Interaction in the discourse produce changes in the positions strategies and policies. How to translate changes into the different levels in the changing environment? Changes are a social process. How to be resilient to the changing environment and not to lose, but rather to gain from the changes? Concepts and theories are needed for the understanding and appropriation of changes. What is the role of scientists in it: producer of theories or translator?

These are just several consideration and questions emerged during the work over this thesis. These are theoretical questions, but there is a real world. The outcomes and answers are shaped by the way this real world is socially constructed. Both the reality, as a context, and the discoursive construction affect what a government does in response to global pressures.

My analysis is not the only possible way to see the Kyrgyz experience, as different theoretical positions are likely to produce different propositions. This, in turn, may effect the conclusions which could be drawn. The aim of this thesis was not to develop casual links and statements which would specify that under a given set of conditions, there would be regular and predictable outcomes.
Having started from the assumption that the world is socially and discursively constructed, the emphasis was made upon an understanding rather than an explanation.

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ANNEX

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