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"Somos pocas, pero buenas"*

A case study of women's participation within community forestry in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Guatemala

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* Translation to English: "We are few, but good ones [females]!"

Abstract

Community forestry has been promoted as a participatory approach for conservation and sustainable development. Yet, community forestry was found to exclude women in different contexts around the globe. Utilizing a Feminist Political Ecology perspective the purpose of this study was to explore women's participation within community forestry in Petén, Guatemala in order to contribute to the understanding of women in community forestry. Through a case study approach I analyzed how women participate in two different community forest enterprises and what factors have shaped women's participation. I found that women participate in different spaces and levels of participation, but are barely involved in decision making. Women's limited participation in community forestry was found to be rooted in how gender is constructed, existing social norms and perceptions of gender roles, entrenched claims of men holding power as well as personal and household endowments and attributes which create barriers for women to participate. However, gendered power relations seem to be changing on a national, local and intra-household setting. External actors have been shaping women's participation and pushing the inclusion of women. Although some women have become more actively involved, women are far from having the opportunity to equally engage in decision making in this case of community forestry.

Key words: community forestry, women's participation, feminist political ecology, power relations, gendered rights and responsibilities, Guatemala

[Word Count: 14, 945]

Resumen

La forestería comunitaria ha sido promovida como un enfoque participativo para la conservación y el desarrollo sostenible. Sin embargo, se ha analizado que mujeres son excluidas de la forestería comunitaria en diferentes contextos en el mundo. Utilizando una perspectiva de Ecología Política Feminista, el propósito de este estudio fue explorar la participación de la mujer en forestería comunitaria en Petén, Guatemala con el fin de contribuir a la comprensión del rol de mujeres en forestería comunitaria. A través de un estudio de caso he analizado cómo mujeres participan en dos diferentes empresas forestales comunitarias y los factores que han influido en la participación de mujeres. He encontrado que mujeres participan en diferentes espacios y niveles de participación, sin embargo están poco involucradas en la toma de decisiones. Se analizó que la limitada participación de mujeres en forestería comunitaria se basa en cómo se construye género, las normas y las percepciones sociales de los roles de género, pretensiones arraigadas de hombres manteniendo el poder, así como dotes y atributos personales y domésticos, que crean barreras para que mujeres participen. Sin embargo, las relaciones de poder de género parecen estar cambiando en un escenario nacional, local y dentro del hogar. Actores externos han influido en la participación de la mujer y han empujado la inclusión de las mujeres. Aunque algunas mujeres se han involucrado activamente, la mayoría de mujeres están lejos de tener iguales oportunidades de tomar decisiones dentro de este caso de forestería comunitaria.

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Abbreviations

ACOFOP	Asociación de Comunidades Forestales de Petén (Association of Forest Communities of Petén)
AFISAP	Asociación Forestal Integral San Andrés Petén (Integrated Forestry Association of San Andrés Petén)
Árbol Verde	Sociedad Civil para el Desarrollo de Árbol Verde (Civil Society for the Development of Árbol Verde)
CATIE	Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center)
CF	Community Forestry
CFEs	Community Forest Enterprises
CI	Conservation International
CONAP	Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (National Council for Protected Areas)
FPE	Feminist Political Ecology
GAD	Gender and Development
GED	Gender, Environment and Development
MBR	Maya Biosphere Reserve
MUZ	Multiple Use Zone
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTFPs	Non-Timber Forest Products
PE	Political Ecology
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WED	Women, Environment and Development
WID	Women in Development

1 Introduction

"Somos pocas, pero buenas!" ("We are few, but good ones [females]!") a female member of the community forest enterprise AFISAP (Asociación Forestal Integral San Andrés Petén) stated when I started exploring women's participation in community forestry in Guatemala's northernmost region of Petén. Indeed, only few women participated when communities were granted usufruct rights[1] for a certain area of forest in the Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR) in Petén in the 1990s (CONAP, 2002:9). Similarly, scholars stress how women are excluded from community forestry around the globe (e.g. Agarwal, 1997, 2001; Benjamin, 2010; Cornwall, 2003; Torri, 2010). This exclusion contradicts one of the key commitments of community forestry that is to be participatory and inclusive.

Since the 1970s community forestry (CF) has been evolving as a participatory approach to forest management; meaning that local communities are actively involved in the forest management and have certain user rights and responsibilities for the forest resources. Arnold (2001:11) highlights that the basic idea behind CF is to combine the conservation of forests with the development of rural livelihoods. In the light of continuous depletion of forests and the concurrent dependence of human well-being on forest resources, interest in CF as an alternative approach to often unsuccessful top-down approaches to forest management has been growing (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999:630).

However, in many cases, CF has failed to meet the high expectations of bringing about a sustainable and inclusive development. Charnley and Poe (2007:314) stress that one pitfall is the assumption of communities' homogeneity, overlooking the multiple actors, interests, power hierarchies and existing social inequalities. Nightingale (2002) argues that in practice, CF has often provided a small male elite with decision making power. Further, Agarwal (2001) highlights that women in particular represent a disadvantaged group in the traditionally male-dominated forestry sector and their exclusion from CF can have negative impacts on the long term sustainability of such initiatives while reproducing social inequalities.

Gender-based exclusion in CF and in natural resource management in general, has been discussed by the scholarly community of Feminist Political Ecology, putting forward the notion that the access to and control over natural resources is gendered.

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[1] The right to use timber and non-timber forest products (Radachowsky *et al.*, 2012:19).

Returning to the case of Guatemala, the community concessions[2] in Petén are a well-known example of CF. According to Monterroso and Barry (2007:7) this is due to the unique experiment in Central America between conservation authorities, communities, local government and international organizations.

Petén is still extensively covered by subtropical rainforests and together with areas in Mexico and Belize forms the largest area of connected forest in Central America (Nittler and Tschinkel, 2005:2). At the same time this mega diverse region is threatened by deforestation and degradation. Pushed by international organizations, the Guatemalan government signed concession contracts with twelve local community organizations between 1994 and 2002 (Radachowsky *et al.*, 2012:19-20). As such, communities were granted rights and responsibilities over an area of almost half a million hectares in the Multiple Use Zone (MUZ) of the MBR for 25 years (ibid).

Many scholars have ascribed positive conservation and development results to the Guatemalan community forestry model (e.g. Barsimantov *et al.*, 2011; Bray *et al.,* 2008; Gretzinger, 1998; Monterroso and Barry, 2007; Radachowsky *et al*., 2012; Taylor, 2010; 2012). However, the community concessions, which are named community forest enterprises (CFEs) by their members, face many challenges.

External pressures include high poverty levels, external interest in natural and cultural resources, large-scale tourism plans as well as human and drug trafficking in the region (Gómez and Méndez, 2005:29). Internally the CFEs face many organizational and administrative challenges (Nittler and Tschinkel, 2005:9). As such, out of the initial twelve CFEs, four have been canceled or restricted (Radachowsky *et al*., 2012:22).[3]

Several studies and official documents (e.g. CONAP, 2002:9; Radachowsky *et al.,* 2012:15; Sundberg, 2003:733) indicate that women have been participating very little in the CFEs. However, the role women are playing within in the CFEs has not been analyzed further in the literature revised, and has been pointed out as a neglected issue by local actors.

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[2] Concessions are a legal mechanism through which the Guatemalan government grants organized community groups with the user rights and protection responsibilities of natural resources of state-owned forest. The concession contracts are renewable if the communities comply the administrative, legal and technical guidelines (ACOFOP, 2005:47-48).

[3] Two community concessions were canceled by the governmental entity CONAP, due to "contractual incompliance" while further two concessions' permission to harvest have been suspended and conditioned by CONAP (Radachowsky *et al.,* 2012:22).

Drawing on findings from literature that explore women's role in community forestry in other contexts (e.g. Agarwal, 2001; Agrawal and Chhatre 2006; Torri, 2010) women's active participation is seen to not only have the potential to play a crucial role in enabling the long-term conservation of forests, but to be fundamental in combating social inequalities in Petén, Guatemala as well.

1.1 Research purpose and research questions

Utilizing a case study research strategy I seek to explore women's participation within community forestry in Petén in order to contribute to the understanding of women in community forestry.

To be able to explore women's participation in community forestry in-depth, this study focuses on how women participate and what has shaped women's participation in the CFEs "Asociación Forestal Integral San Andrés Petén" (Integrated Forestry Association of San Andrés Petén), hereafter AFISAP and the "Sociedad Civil para el Desarrollo de Árbol Verde" (Civil Society for the Development of Árbol Verde), hereafter Árbol Verde.[4]

Through a Feminist Political Ecology lens, I aim to answer the following research questions:

How do women participate in community forestry and how can women's participation be interpreted?

What factors influence women's participation in community forestry and how have these factors in turn shaped women's participation?

1.2 Document structure

Having outlined the focus of this study, Chapter 2 will review the theoretical debate on community forestry and women in community forestry in particular. In Chapter 3 I will outline the conceptual framework utilized for this study. Chapter 4 covers the methodology applied. In Chapter 5 I will introduce the national and local context and describe the two selected CFEs. Chapter 6 is devoted to the analysis, first exploring how women participate and then analyzing the factors which shape women's participation. Finally, in Chapter 7 I will summarize my findings and draw conclusions.

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[4] The abbreviations AFISAP and Árbol Verde are used by the CFEs themselves and are therefore used in this study.

2 Theoretical context

By drawing on previous research below is an overview of the concept of community forestry and the role of women in such.

2.1 Community forestry

In CF communities play an active role in local forest management while receiving benefits from the forest resources. Charnley and Poe (2007:303) emphasize that CF aims to improve socio-economic conditions and ensure ecological stability. Central to the concept of CF is local participation which entails the sharing of responsibilities, uses, benefits and management of natural resources by a group of people whose rights to these resources are ensured by formal and informal rules (Pagdee *et al.*, 2006:34).

As a participatory approach to forest management for conservation and development, CF gained broad recognition in the late 1980s. According to Arnold (2001:18) this was fostered by the popular decentralization policies of the 1990s in support of structural adjustment, market liberalization and the reduction of costs for the central governments. Hence, many governments became interested in shifting responsibilities for forest management to the local level. In the 1990s CF had moved from the experimental level to a widely recognized concept (Arnold, 2001:18), and is currently practiced globally in various forms (Casse and Milhøj, 2011).

Agrawal (2003) points out that many scholars have elaborated on success factors for CF. However, Ostrom (2009:419) reflects that research has tended to simplify complex realities, and often neglected the broader influencing context. Arnold (2001) concludes that 30 years after the beginning of CF, there has been increasing recognition, that this approach is much more complex than assumed and that many community forestry initiatives have been unrealistic and often unsuccessful.

Some of the failures might be explained by the fact that CF is built on several assumptions as argued by Charnley and Poe (2007:312). One fundamental assumption is that local people in a community have the knowledge and skills to manage natural resources sustainably. Another is that the local management will automatically lead to a more sustainable forest management, ensuring biodiversity conservation. A third key assumption is that local forest management brings benefits for the local population (ibid).

Further, Arnold (2001:95) highlights that there are invariably many different interest groups involved and that these often have different, or even clashing expectations about the outcomes of CF. Also, many challenges arise from the rapid changes in management strategies towards CF, often fostered by the donor community, while not taking into account whether or not the capacities exist to implement this approach (Arnold, 2001:112). As mentioned, many authors also stress that communities are heterogeneous and that CF commonly overlooks the social hierarchies and power structures thus failing to address different interests within communities (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999; Charnley and Poe, 2007; Leach *et al*., 1999).

2.2 Women in community forestry

The participation of women in CF has been discussed on academic and political levels worldwide. Historically, not only in the Global South, but also in the Global North, forestry has been seen as a male dominated business. Reed (2010:46) for example stresses that "this division has historically been linked to a particular form of masculinity that valorizes hard, dangerous and physical work […]". Hence, although CF has been promoted as a participatory approach for sustainable development, women are likely to be overlooked (Cornwall, 2003:1329). Benjamin (2010:67) concludes that while men hold the power and make decisions, women are often marginalized. Indeed, Agarwal (1997:1374) finds CF to be "gender exclusionary and highly inequitable". Torri (2010:3) argues that "gender is among the key variables which distinguish groups of resource users". Mwangi *et al.* (2011) highlight that men and women have different roles in forest resource use. While men are usually involved in timber extraction, women mainly use non-timber forest products (NTFPs). Moreover, in many cases women have limited access and control over resources (Meinzen-Dick *et al.,* 1997). Yet, as Atmis *et al.* (2007:788) emphasize, women are more dependent on forest resources, and therefore also more vulnerable to forest degradation.

Several authors have aimed to further explain what affects women's participation in CF in different contexts (Agarwal, 2001; 2010; 2015; Atmis *et al.*, 2007; Boyer-Rechlin, 2010; Coleman and Mwangi, 2013; Giri and Darnhofer, 2010; Nuggehalli and Prokopy, 2009). Although these scholars emphasize different details, there is a common understanding that women's exclusion is rooted in the cultural construction of gender roles and relations of power, creating social barriers for women in particular to actively participate in CF.

Yet, it remains important to highlight why women's participation is found to be crucial. Agarwal (2001:1630) argues that "participation is important in itself as a measure of citizenship

rights". Moreover, excluding women from CF can worsen existing power relations and have negative effects on the household (ibid). Similarly, Torri (2010:16) emphasizes that the active, empowering participation of women in CF is important to not reinforce social inequalities, but to rather "promote equity between the genders".

Another more instrumental argument brought forward by many scholars is that women's inclusion in decision making improves forest management and conservation (Agarwal, 2009a; 2009b; Agrawal and Chhatre, 2006:161). Westermann *et al.* (2005:1795) research suggests that women's participation increases the "collaboration, solidarity and resolution of conflicts". Mwangi *et al.* (2011:n.p.) however stress that mixed CF groups show better results than groups which are composed only of women and also highlight that women should not be pictured in an essentialist way as "natural conservators".

The discussion on women's participation in CF is framed by the broader debate of women in development and environment in general. In the 1970s the concept of Women in Development (WID) emerged which highlighted gender inequalities.[5] Awareness on gender inequalities was additionally strengthened by the 1975 United Nations International Year of Women as well as the United Nations Decade for Women (1976–1985).

Torri (2010:2) explains how the Women, Environment and Development (WED) approach arose from increasing environmental concerns and the view that women were not only victims of environmental degradation, but also important agents in environmental protection. The aim was thus to incorporate and support women within environmental development projects and to limit their vulnerability to environmental degradation (Schubert, 2007:19).

The WED perspective was shaped by ecofeminist thoughts on the supposed inherent relationship between women and nature (ibid). However, this viewpoint received much critique for focusing on the said relationship between women and the environment, simplifying social relationships. Consequently the Gender and Development (GAD) and Gender, Environment and Development (GED) perspective grew, which rejected the idea of a special relationship between women and nature simply based on biological reasons (Torri, 2010:3).

As a result of the gender and environment debate, at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development it was manifested in the Forest Principles that "the full participation of women in all aspects of the management, conservation and sustainable

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[5] Ester Boserup's study "Women's role in economic development" (Boserup, 1970) particularly fostered the notion of women's important role in development and the emergence of the WID approach.

development of forests should be actively promoted" (UN, 1992:n.p.). On the International Day of Forests in 2014 the emphasis on "women as agents of change for forests and sustainable development" shows that more than 20 years later this focus is still relevant (UNFF, 2014:n.p.).

3 Conceptual framework

Having outlined the theoretical context of women in CF, in this chapter I will draw on Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) to construct an overall framework in an attempt to understand women's participation in CF through a gendered lens. Subsequently, I will construct an analytical model particularly based on Agarwal's (2001) understanding of women's participation in the context of CF.

3.1 Feminist political ecology

FPE evolved from the discipline of political ecology (PE)[6] and feminist scholarship[7] in the 1990s (Elmhirst, 2011:129). In their influential volume *Feminist Political Ecology: Global Issues and Local Experiences* Rocheleau *et al.* (1996:287) state that "FPE brings into a single framework a feminist perspective combined with analysis of ecological, economic, and political power relations". Thereby, FPE emphasizes the "complexity and interconnectedness" of these different dimensions, at a local, national, regional and global scale (ibid:289). Rocheleau (2008:722) further analyzes that:

> *FPE scholars have extended the multiple scale analysis of environment and power in PE to gendered relations both within and beyond the household, from individual to national scales […] to complicate what has been called ''community'' and ''local'' as well as the often presumed unit of homogeneous conditions and shared interests, the household.*

FPE scholars argue that differences between men and women in relation to the environment cannot be explained as engrained by biology, but are rather influenced by gender. Gender is understood as socially constructed interpretation of biological differences, varying across places and cultures (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:3). FPE scholars argue that gender is a critical category, influencing access to and control over natural resources, together with other variables such as class, race, culture and ethnicity. Schubert (2007:19) states that by also considering other categories of social differences which influence power relations between actors, FPE aims

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[6] According to Watts (2000 in Robbins, 2012:16) political ecology is a framework "to understand the complex relations between nature and society through a careful analysis of what one might call the forms of access and control over resources and their implications for environmental health and sustainable livelihoods".

[7] FPE draws on the different views of ecofeminism, feminist environmentalism, socialist feminism, feminist post structuralism and environmentalism, as well as feminist cultural ecology, feminist geography and feminist political economy to construct the feminist political ecology view on gender and environment (Rocheleau *et al*., 1996:4).

to prevent "rigidness and essentialism" of gender. In that sense, Truelove (2011:146) stresses that FPE explains "social relations surrounding who accesses and how access is achieved".

Rocheleau *et al.* (1996:4-5) discuss three overall themes in FPE: first, gendered knowledge, second, gendered environmental rights and responsibilities and third, gendered environmental politics and grassroots activism.

The theme of gendered environmental rights and responsibilities is particularly relevant in understanding this case study of women's participation in CF. It highlights the "gendered environmental rights of control and access as well as responsibilities to procure and manage resources for the household or community" (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:10). The key notion is that while women have many responsibilities to purchase natural resources, they have limited rights to access and control natural resources (Robbins, 2012:64). Women's rights are often nested within men's rights and hence controlled by men. Yet it is often women's responsibility to secure resources, such as firewood, food and water. Therefore, women use natural resources differently and have a distinct knowledge of environmental systems and processes (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:13).

The unequal share of responsibilities and rights is rooted in patriarchal ideologies and gendered power relations (ibid:13). Thus, a central concept is the gendered division of power "to preserve, protect, change, construct, rehabilitate, and restore environments and to regulate the actions of others". Gendered power relations are reflected in the different rights and responsibilities of men and women in productive and reproductive activities and the control and access over "quality of life and the nature of the environment" (ibid:10).

Another important concept is that of gendered spaces of environmental rights and responsibilities. Gendered spaces are understood as "spaces that are socially constructed as appropriate and suitable for men and those that are domains for women" (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:292). Such spaces are usually divided into public and private spaces, home and workplace spaces, but these spaces might also be gendered in themselves (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:10).

Moreover, Rocheleau *et al.* (1996:14) stress that gendered environmental rights and responsibilities are dynamic and in many cases women get involved as "a response to their prior exclusion from access to resources". Thereby understandings of gender roles are challenged and women are gaining access and control in different spaces (ibid:18).

The key concept of this study, participation, can be understood through the lens of FPE as a matter of gaining material and symbolic access to and control over natural resources. An

increased participation, or as Rocheleau *et al.* (1996:18) argue "involvement is leading to a sense of agency and empowerment". In this sense, the process of gaining access to and control over resources enables individuals to make choices. These choices lead to change and potentially enhance gender equality concerning rights, resources and voice.[8]

By recognizing "threats to equity and diversity and its promotion of social and environmental justice", FPE intends to enhance gender equality concerning rights and responsibilities over natural resources (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:306).

Elmhirst (2011) notes however, that FPE faces a number of epistemological, political and practical challenges.[9] Nightingale (2011:153) discusses that although intersectionality and the importance of other forms of social differences has been already emphasized by Rocheleau *et al.* (1996), in practice many FPE scholars treat "gender, ethnicity/caste, class and race as separate processes that produce particular kinds of social inequalities". As such, Mollett and Faria (2013:117,120) also urge that FPE has to "theorize a more complex and messier notion of gender", one that considers more in-depth the "colonial present", persistent racialization and social inequalities between the Global North and South.

Considering the context and limited scope of my study I focus primarily on how gender is shaping the access and control over resources. Yet, I will also consider the interaction of gender with other categories of social differences.

FPE is a rather abstract theoretical perspective, embedding my research in the gender and environment debate. In order to break down the abstract notions of FPE to a more concrete level, I will specifically draw on Bina Agarwal's understanding of participation in CF, which is based on her work analyzing gendered access and rights to resources in the South-Asian context.[10]

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[8] This understanding is similar to Kabeer's concept that empowerment is gaining "the ability to make choices" and agency as interconnected with empowerment, representing "the processes by which choices are made and put into effect" (Kabeer, 2005:14).

[9] According to Elmhirst (2011:130) there has been a general shift in social theory, especially feminist theory, arguing that gender has to be understood in an anti-essentialist manner, focusing rather on the "multi-dimensional subjectivities" and not only gender, but also other important categories of social difference, such as race, caste and ethnicity.

[10] Bina Agarwal is currently a professor of Development Economics and Environment at the University of Manchester, UK and has researched extensively on gender and environment, mostly in South Asia. Although she does not claim to be a feminist political ecologist her research on gender dynamics in community-based institutions is certainly close to the ideas of FPE as for example Elmhirst (2011:130) explains. Rocheleau *et al.* (1996:3) categorized her work in the 1990s as being part of the feminist environmentalism, emphasizing "gendered interests in particular resources and ecological processes on the basis of materially distinct daily work and responsibilities".

3.2 Understanding participation

Many scholars have pointed out that while participation has become part of the development discourse, there are many different understandings of what participation entails, who participates and how and what the interests behind it are (Cleaver, 1999; Cornwall, 2008; White, 1996). Participation can be understood as a mean to increase efficiency of development interventions, or participation can be seen as an end in itself for supporting equity and empowerment of disadvantaged groups (Cleaver, 1999:598).

Furthermore, there are different levels of participation. According to Agarwal (2001:1624) participation in CF can range from a "nominal membership" to a "dynamic interactive process in which the disadvantaged have a voice and influence in decision-making". Based on the work of White (1996) and Pretty (1995), Agarwal (2001:1624) proposes a typology of participation, ranging from nominal, passive, consultative, activity-specific, active participation to interactive (empowering) participation. Figure 1 illustrates the different levels of participation and the corresponding characteristic features.
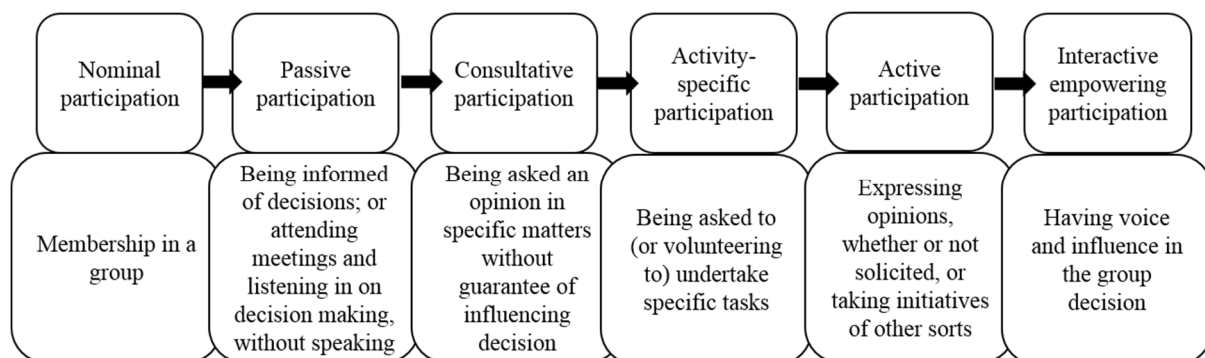
Figure 1: Typology of participation
Levels of participation ranging from nominal, passive, consultative, activity-specific, active to interactive, empowering participation (upper boxes) with corresponding characteristic features (lower boxes) (Own elaboration, based on Agarwal (2001:1624)).

In order to reach "effective participation" as a means to empower and potentially lead to a more equitable, efficient and sustainable development, a change from less active to more active participation is required (Agarwal, 2001:1624-1625). At the same time, Agarwal (2001:1625) acknowledges, that participation is not alone a solution to deeply rooted inequality and existing power relations on different scales in CF.

Agarwal (2001:1638) further argues that women's participation is shaped by rules, norms and perceptions, as well as attributes and endowments of every individual. Figure 2 illustrates Agarwal's (2001:1638-1640) theorization of systemic factors.
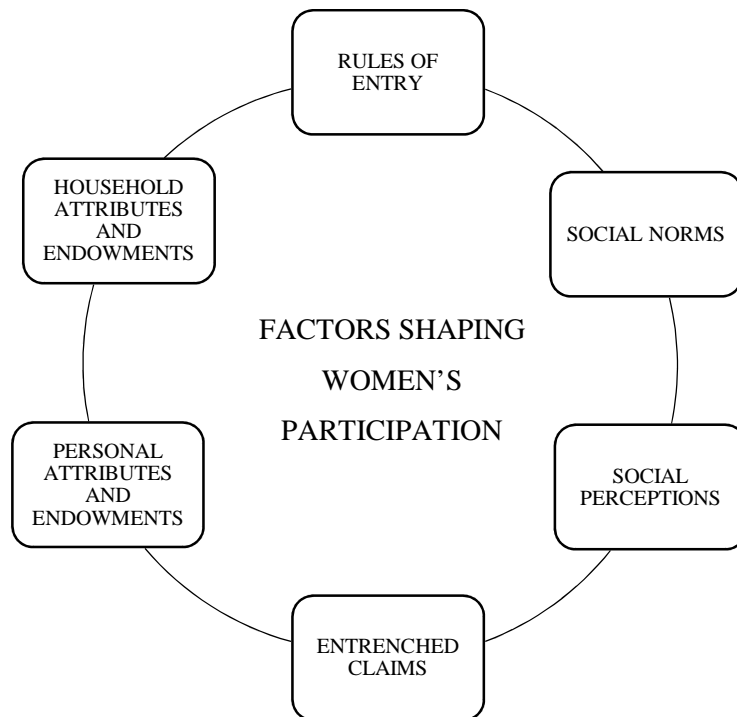
Figure 2: Factors shaping women's participation in community forestry
(Own elaboration, based on Agarwal (2001:1638-1640)).

First, **rules**, might be regulating the entry or membership in community forest organization's general body, or executive committee, e.g. only allowing men to participate, or one member per household etc., potentially excluding women (Agarwal, 2001:1638).

However, even if rules allow women to participate, **social norms** shape gender roles and can define who actively participates in CF (Agarwal, 2001:1638). These norms might entail a 'gender segregation of public space', meaning exemplarily that it might be socially more accepted that men participate in meetings or forestry activities. Further, norms might define a 'gender division of labor', where women may have many obligations such as domestic chores and childcare which constrain their time for participation. Also, 'gendered behavioral norms', defining suitable male and female behavior, e.g. men in leading positions and women's self-effacement, might lead to reluctance to consider women's opinions, or critique women who participate in male-dominated spaces (ibid:1638-1639).

Moreover, **social perceptions** of men concerning women's ability to participate in CF might constrain women's participation. Women with little education might for example be perceived as not capable to participate. **Entrenched claims** by men could further preclude women from participating, since men might not want to share existing benefits and control (ibid:1639-1640).

Last but not least, endowments and attributes influence women's participation in CF initiatives. Women's **personal endowments and attributes**, such as age, marital status, self-confidence, their social and political connections, and property rights also shape their participation. Besides gender, other **household endowments and attributes**, such as caste, class or ethnicity might determine the participation of women and men (ibid:1640).

Agarwal's analysis of women's participation is based on her extensive research in India and Nepal and she acknowledges that regional and cultural differences are important and influence the factors for women's participation in CF. However, she also argues that factors constraining women's participation in CF are similar in many contexts worldwide (Agarwal, 1997:1375; 2001:1645). Further, her theorization has been found useful to explore women's participation in CF in different countries (see Coleman and Mwangi, 2013; Nuggehalli and Prokopy, 2009). Therefore, Agarwal's research provides an analytical model for my study, which I aim to critically reflect upon and contextualize for my analysis to understand women's participation in the Guatemalan context.

4 Methodology

Within this chapter I will present how the study was designed and which methods I used to construct data. Further, I will discuss the quality of this study and reflect about ethical dilemmas.

4.1 Design of the study

This study followed a qualitative research design in order to achieve an in depth understanding of women's participation in CF. According to Creswell (2007:37-39) a qualitative approach allows the researcher to interact directly with the field and construct data, while exploring different sources of information within an emerging approach. The meanings participants gave to women's participation were thereby central and I took an interpretive approach, aiming to show the complexity of the research problem.

According to Creswell (2009:175) a qualitative research design is commonly inductive, creating theory or patterns. However, I situated my research between inductive and deductive. Assumptions and theoretical ideas were guiding my research as Silverman and Marvasti (2008:51) argue, but were not to be tested as a purely deductive approach would do, I rather aimed to be open to themes occurring during fieldwork.

Underlying philosophical assumptions shape research as Creswell (2009:5) explains, which also applied for my study. Following a constructivist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology, I considered reality as socially constructed and knowledge as subjectively developed by individuals through their experiences and interactions which are therefore changeable.

To explore women's participation in CF in Petén, Guatemala, I chose a case study as strategy of inquiry. Silverman (2010:138) specifies that a case study approach is useful to explore a case of something in detail through multiple methods in a bounded context. Hence, this inquiry helped me gain a holistic understanding of the phenomena of women's participation in CF. In order to gain a better understanding of women's participation I decided to focus on two CFEs[11] as units of analysis, following an embedded case study approach as suggested by Yin (2014:55) and illustrated in Figure 3.
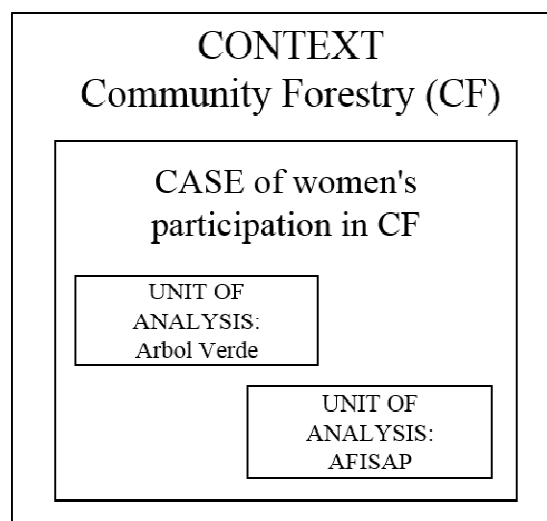
Figure 3: Embedded case study approach to explore women's participation in CF
(Own elaboration, based on Yin, 2014:50).

Along the lines of my philosophical assumptions, and Yin's (2009:15) reasoning that case study research aims to "expand and generalize theories", I do not aim to present statistically generalizable results. I rather wish to contribute with the insights of this case study to the theorization of women in CF.

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[11] The number of CFEs included in this study was limited by the time and scope of this research.

4.2 Data construction

In this sub-chapter I will explain the applied sampling strategies, present the different sources of information and explain how I analyzed the data.

4.2.1 Sampling strategies

I selected Árbol Verde and AFISAP out of a total of eight active CFEs in Petén. I did not select contrasting or unusual examples, because I do not aim to compare, but to better understand women's participation in CF. My internship with CATIE[12], who supported my research, influenced my selection. However, I argue that this did not negatively affect my research, but rather helped to facilitate access. Finally, pragmatic reasons of accessibility by public transport impacted the selection. Thus, my sampling strategy was not random, nor entirely purposive, but depended on the accessibility, a situation which is common in practice according to Silverman (2010:139). However, I consider the two selected units as relevant to my research questions and theoretical thoughts.

Concerning the participants of this study my sampling strategy was purposeful, selecting participants because they "can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem" as Creswell (2007:125) explains. My initial contact persons at the CFEs were the presidents of AFISAP and Árbol Verde, to whom I presented the study's purpose and officially asked for permission. They then acted as gatekeepers, facilitating the access to participants. In order to understand women's participation from different angles I had set the criteria to interview an equal share of women and men, but from different backgrounds (e.g. age, relation with the CFE). I applied snowball sampling, asking participants for other people to include. Thus, most interviewees were active members or workers of the CFEs. However, interestingly the gatekeepers asked me to interview also members who are less active, to get a more complete picture of how women are involved. Moreover, I purposefully chose to interview representatives of NGOs (non-governmental organizations), which have supported AFISAP and Árbol Verde.

For the observations I used a purposeful criterion sampling strategy, meaning that I considered all accessible events, spaces which were relevant to inform my research and enhance my

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[12] From August to November 2014 I did an internship at the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center - CATIE (Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza) in the project Forest and Forest Management in Central America (shortly Finnfor) in the project region Petén, Guatemala. Finnfor focuses on value chains of wood products to enhance the sustainable use of forest resources and support the livelihoods of rural families. Finnfor supported my research and asked me to focus my study on two community forest enterprises which are supported by the project with the purpose to learn about women's participation in the CFEs.

understanding of women's participation. Similarly, I consulted documents, which provided me with a contextual understanding and better picture of my research interest.

4.2.2 Sources of information

By entering the "field" through my internship with CATIE, I already developed a contextual understanding of the CFEs and women's participation. This was very helpful to plan fieldwork which I conducted from December 2014 to February 2015. My research is based on interviews, observations and a document analysis to construct an in-depth analysis of the case I am looking at, as suggested by Bryman (2008:53). Moreover, informal conversations were very enriching. During the fieldwork process I was documenting my research activities, thoughts and reflections in a fieldwork diary.

Interviews

Interviews presented my main source of information. All interviews were semi-structured, meaning that I followed an interview guide with open ended questions, but also adapted the interview to the situation and occurring themes as Mikkelsen (2005:171) suggests. Following this method I aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the complex issue of women's participation in the CFEs. Interview guides are included in Appendix 1.

I held 16 interviews with members of Árbol Verde and 14 interviews with members of AFISAP, resulting in a total of 30 interviews. All interviews were done face-to-face either in the office facilities of AFISAP and Árbol Verde or visiting the participants in their homes, depending on the participant's choice. Furthermore, all interviews were held in Spanish by myself. I intended to conduct the interviews without anyone else attending, to create a higher level of confidentiality. However, for four interviews I was accompanied by a female member of Árbol Verde whose presence might have influenced the interviews but was necessary to create access to the participants.

The interviews with members of the CFEs showed that external actors, and especially the second-level Association of Forest Communities of Petén, (Asociación de Comunidades Forestales de Petén (ACOFOP)) has played an influential role in the process of CF and women's participation. Therefore, I interviewed five staff members of ACOFOP and talked to five representatives from local and international NGOs.[13] A detailed record of participants can be found in Appendix 2.

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[13] I decided to not disclose the names of the NGOs, but to present them as the NGO group, in order to protect the identity of the individuals.

All persons agreed to be interviewed and interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. With the permission of participants the interviews were audio-recorded, with the exception of one interview due to technical difficulties. Nevertheless, I always took notes during the interviews to ensure documenting information as recommended by Creswell (2009:183).

Observations

Following the suggestion of Silverman and Marvasti (2008:145) I did observations to understand the context and study site and complement the information from the interviews. In most situations I was required to change roles between a non-participant observer, not actively engaged in the activities observed and participant observer, engaging actively in a social setting (Creswell 2009:179). I documented my observations in an observational protocol as proposed by Creswell (2007:137) (Appendix 3).

Visiting the CFE's facilities and some participants at home when doing interviews, was very informative to observe how the CFEs work and what role women play in the enterprises and in their personal surrounding. Observations in meetings with members of the board of directors were also very insightful. I was also able to observe Árbol Verde's general assembly[14] as well as the social gathering following ACOFOP's general assembly to observe women's participation in these activities. Moreover, I accompanied women from different CFEs in Petén, also from AFISAP and Árbol Verde, to a one-week meeting of women participating in forest value chains. This event was organized by CATIE in Costa Rica and very revealing for my research. A record of observations is included in Appendix 4.

Document analysis

Additionally, I used documents as Yin (2009:103) recommends to "corroborate and augment the evidence from other sources", to explore how women have been involved in the CFEs and develop detailed descriptions. I focused on internal documents I was provided with by AFISAP and Árbol Verde, such as management plans, public summaries and auto systematizations. It could have been beneficial to consult minutes from meetings and assemblies, however I did not ask for these confidential documents, since it did not seem appropriate to me. A list of the selected documents can be found in Appendix 5.

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[14] I could not attend the assemblies of both Árbol Verde and Afisap because they were scheduled on the same day. I chose to attend Árbol Verde's assembly because at this point of time, I had been doing more visits to AFISAP and just started my research in Árbol Verde. Moreover, I was asked to present myself and my research purpose during the assembly.

4.2.3 Methods of analysis

The analysis of my data has been an ongoing process to interpret data and to be able to answer the research questions. I was guided by Creswell's (2009:185-190) suggestions for qualitative research of doing the data analysis in six interrelated steps. First, I organized and prepared my data by transcribing all interviews and typing up field notes and observations. Then, I read through my data to check for errors and get a general idea of its content. While I was going back and forth from my theoretical perspective to my data I started defining preliminary codes, to arrange data systematically and developed a coding list. Subsequently, I engaged in a more detailed analysis of coding and organizing the data into categories occurring in the data and informed by my theoretical lens. I did this process first separately for both units of analysis and then looked for similarities and differences. From this process I then developed a detailed description of the case and identified within this description the major themes of my data in relation to my theoretical lens. For the representation of my analysis I chose to describe and interpret the meaning of my data through my theoretical lens conjointly. This analysis is enriched by diverse quotations to give participants a voice in my study.

4.3 Quality in qualitative research

Acknowledging that the idea of validity derives from a positivist research perspective, I follow Creswell's (2007:206) interpretation of validity in qualitative research as an "attempt to assess the accuracy" of my study. In order to enhance the validity of my research I aimed to engage with the field and get to know the participants and their environment as Creswell (2007:207-209) suggests. Further, I did data triangulation by considering multiple source of data. Constantly peer-debriefing also contributed importantly to the quality of my research. I admit that consulting key participants on a draft of this study would have further enhanced the validity, but was constrained by time and language barriers.

Regarding reliability I agree with the following definition: "Qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects" (Gibbs 2007 in Creswell 2009:190). I aimed to achieve reliability through transparently documenting the fieldwork process. Recording, detailed transcribing and checking for errors in transcripts and the coding process was further important to ensure the reliability of my study. Yet, cross-checking my analysis with other researchers would have been beneficial.

4.4 Ethical considerations

In order to engage ethically, I always explained the research's purpose in advance and participants could decide to participate or stop participating at any point. Further, I assured participants that information is only used by myself for the purpose of this study. In order to protect the identity of all participants I have changed their names.

Moreover, I decided not to ask for written, but for oral consent, to avoid creating an uncomfortable and formal atmosphere. All participants gave their consent, however I am aware that the support of CATIE and the presidents of the CFEs, might have influenced what people decided to tell me, or people might even have felt obliged to participate. Moreover, I admit that after some interviews I was asked to clarify the purpose of the study again, meaning that my initial explanations might have been insufficient.

Studying women's participation in CF, requires me to reflect about my positionality. I agree with Sultana (2007:388) that it is fundamental to problematize unequal power relations, although I cannot change them as England (1994:85) points out. Therefore, throughout my research process I aimed to avoid picturing women as a homogeneously disadvantaged group as Mohanty (1988:65) warns feminist research tends to do, but to "take seriously the self-understanding of our participants and the extent to which they share our political and social goals and ideals" as Meadow (2013:478) urges.

This study is not just a result of my fieldwork, but rather a construction shaped by my understanding of the world. My research has been formed by my background in forest ecosystem management and my three years working experience in Petén, Guatemala. Although my former experience and fluent Spanish facilitated my research, I do not claim to better understand the social dynamics of this context. I am very aware that my position as a young, white, female master's degree student and as a "privileged Westerner" as Kapoor (2004:631) argues, shaped my research and might have influenced how participant's received me. Engaging with the participants, aiming for a "dialogical process" as Scheyvens and Leslie (2000:128) suggest, has been important for me in order to make the research process less exploitative. In an attempt of cultural sensitivity I decided to present quotes in the original language in footnotes. This also gives the reader the possibility to comprehend participant's voices in their own language.

5 Empirical context

Before developing the analysis I will provide a brief insight on the Guatemalan context, describe the development of community forestry in Petén, Guatemala and present the CFEs AFISAP and Árbol Verde.

5.1 Sociocultural context and development in Guatemala

Guatemala is home to an immense cultural and natural diversity, but is facing severe challenges. Despite having signed the Peace Agreements after 36 years of brutal civil war in 1996, Guatemala is still facing one of the highest rates of violence worldwide (Isaac, 2010:108-111) Organized crime, high impunity and a weak government further hinder Guatemala's development (ibid:112). Although Guatemala is classified as a lower middle income country (World Bank, 2015), it has been ranked as the second poorest country[15] in Central America in 2014 and its society has been found highly unequal (PEN, 2014:29). The country is controlled by a small elite, who is perceived as very corrupt and ineffective (Isbester, 2011). Moreover, Sundberg (2003:719-721) highlights that indigenous groups[16] and women have been especially disadvantaged in the Guatemalan society since the colonial era.

According to the World Economic Forum (2014:195) up until 2013, Guatemala had the widest gender gap in Central America, disadvantaging women especially in regards to economic and political participation.[17] However, in 2014 Guatemala climbed up in the international ranking to 89th place out of 142 countries and has improved the most regarding economic participation of women (ibid:23). Although these results indicate positive change, gendered inequalities are nevertheless still deeply entrenched.

Women's economic participation has been particularly constrained, not just by patriarchal social norms, but by law, denying women the freedom to independently choose to engage in formal work (Paulson, 2013:189). Until 1999 women were only allowed to work if they would still be able to fulfill their role as housewife and even then could husbands still prohibit their wife to work (Cotula, 2007:101-102).

Putting it in a regional perspective Paulson (2013:25) analyzes that the globalization of countries' economy and increasing environmental challenges are changing and challenging

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[15] According to the National Institute of Statistics of Guatemala 53% of the total population was classified as poor in 2011 (INE, 2013:24).

[16] 40% of Guatemala's population identify themselves as indigenous (INE, 2013:3).

[17] Guatemala' position in the international ranking of gender gap had been constantly falling since 2006 from rank 95 (out of 115 countries) to rank 114 (out of 136 countries) in 2013 (World Economic Forum, 2014:195).

gendered structures within Latin America in general. According to Paulson (2013:37) womens' health, access to education and paid work has improved. However, Chioda (2011:xx) points out that women are increasingly challenged to "balance different roles, identities and aspirations" between new career and job opportunities and the traditional duties of caring for their families. Further, although women have gained better access to education, men continue to lead on the political level and the distribution of economic resources favor men (Paulson, 2013:27).

5.2 Development of community forestry in Petén

Petén is the largest and northernmost department in Guatemala, bordering with Belize and Mexico. Before the Spanish conquest in 1697, Petén's lowlands had once been the hearth of the Mayan civilization. According to Schwartz (1990:6) up until only 50 years ago Petén was densely forested, sparsely populated and isolated from the rest of the country.[18]

Guatemala's development and economic growth which started in the 1960s, primarily benefited the countries' elite and displaced many smallholders (Schwartz, 1990:248).[19] In order to increase the agricultural production and respond to the land shortage in the south, Guatemala started to develop Petén's lowlands.[20] This was also pushed by growing interests of the military and international actors in the region (ibid:251).

As a result, from the 1960s onwards Petén experienced a massive population increase, and activities such as swidden cultivation and ranching, resource extraction and commerce. Competition for access to land fostered socio-economic inequalities and political conflicts, challenging the relative stability of the region (Schwartz, 1990:8).

Until the 1970s up to 80% of Petén had been covered by forest. In only 15 years, however, about 50% of the former forest cover had disappeared (Schwartz, 1990:11-12). Fearing further deforestation, environmentalist and aid organizations pushed the Guatemalan government to replace the colonialization strategy by a conservation approach (Sundberg, 1998:388).

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[18] Schwartz (1990:244) claims that in contrast to the rest of Guatemala, the different ethnic groups inhabiting Petén could access land and there was less reason for deprivation of ethnic groups. However, he cautions that although indigenous groups in Petén were less deprived to access land it is still important to consider, that Petén's society had also a colonial heritage, and "forced labor, economic abuse, poverty, authoritarian rule, social inequality, racism, and violence", existed in Petén, but were experienced in a moderate manner compared to the rest of the country (Schwartz, 1990:247).

[19] The increasing inequalities and an economic crisis fostered the growing of guerrilla forces and a brutal Civil War started in 1960 and lasted until 1996, causing over 200.000, in the majority indigenous people's death.

[20] According to Monterroso and Barry (2007:2) the expansion of the agricultural frontier into forested land was common in Latin America during that time.

In 1990 the Maya Biosphere Reserve was founded covering over 2.1 million hectares (Barsimantov *et al.,* 2011:346). The National Council for Protected Areas - CONAP (Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas) was established to implement the new conservation policies but lacked resources and legitimacy to manage the extensive reserve (Monterroso and Barry, 2007:5). According to Sundberg (2004:45) international agencies, primarily USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and international NGOs stepped in to support the MBR and dominated the management during the 1990s. [21] Monterroso and Barry (2007:5) point out that USAID alone invested over US$50 million in the MBR between 1990 and 2006.[22]

Sundberg (1998:405) criticizes that the creation of the MBR took place in an authoritarian and exclusionary manner, without considering local actors and residents, but was rather driven by the agenda of international actors. Due to the extreme shift of land use strategies, and the new restrictions, many local residents felt deprived of their access to resources and conflicts emerged (Barsimantov *et al.,* 2011:346). Further, a new wave of internal migration in Petén and illegal extractive activities challenged the conservation approach and communities organized themselves to claim access to natural resources (Gómez and Méndez, 2005:7-9).

Confronted with these challenges, CONAP was required to consider the involvement of the residents and the community concession scheme was brought forward (Radachowsky *et al.*, 2012:19).[23] Monterroso and Barry (2007:6) argue that in the light of the new conservation approach, the concessions became an option for many communities to keep residence rights and get legal access to forest resources. By 2002, twelve legally established community organizations had been granted concession areas[24] (Radachowsky *et al.,* 2012:20). To ensure a sustainable forest management the CFEs were required to get certified and were also supported by local NGOs during the first years to fulfill the management requirements (ibid:19). From the late 1990s onwards, the second-level organization ACOFOP has been representing the interests of the CFEs.[25] During the entire process numerous international and national NGOs have supported the concessions.

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[21] USAID contracted Conservation International (CI), The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and CARE International to support the MBR's management (Sundberg, 2003:724).

[22] Moreover, other large donors, such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the German KFW banking group financed projects in the area (Gómez and Méndez, 2005:19).

[23] The community concession approach also helped to fulfill the mandate of the Peace Accords from 1996 to allocate at least 100.000 hectares to community organizations (Monterroso and Barry, 2007:4).

[24] The concessions were granted to communities that had been using forest resources historically or were located in the MUZ, but also communities located in the buffer zone and bordering the concession area (Radachowsky *et al.,* 2012:20)

[25] Additionally, in 2003 a second-level enterprise named Forescom was built to collectively enhance the processing and commercialization of timber products (Radachowsky *et al.,* 2012:19).

5.3 Community forest enterprises Árbol Verde and AFISAP

AFISAP and Árbol Verde are both non-resident community concessions, meaning that there are no settlements or agriculture activities in the granted concession area and that associates do not live in the concession, but in communities[26] located in the buffer zone of the MBR (Radachowsky *et al.,* 2012:20) (Figure 4).
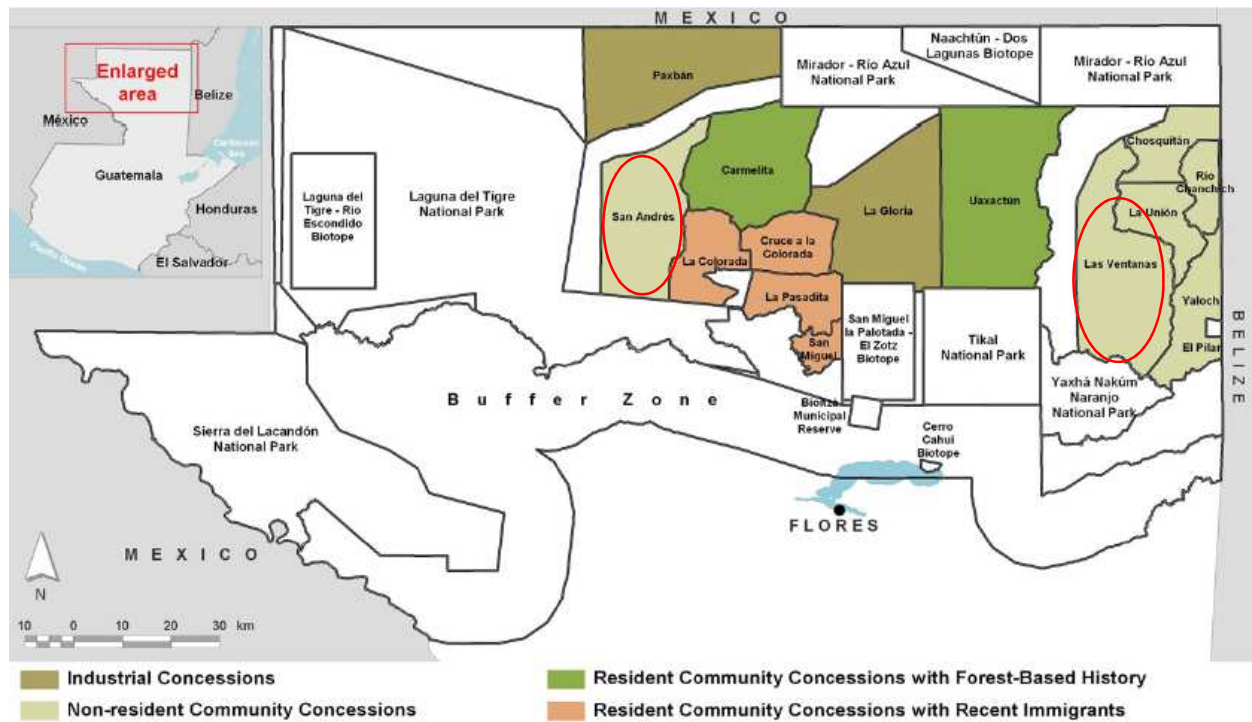
Figure 4: The Maya Biosphere Reserve and forest concessions in Petén, Guatemala.
This map indicates the different types of forest concessions in the Multiple-Use-Zone (Source: Radachowsky *et al.*, 2012:20) and the concession areas of Árbol Verde and AFISAP (circled in red).

AFISAP consists of 169 members, all of whom are residents from the San Andrés community and municipality. The office and timber processing facility is located in San Andrés, whereas the concession area is located 63km North from San Andrés, covering almost 52.000 hectares (AFISAP, 1999).

On their webpage[27] it is stated that AFISAP aims to improve the living conditions of its members and their community through the sustainable use of natural resources from the concession area. The annual profit is reinvested in the CFE and the community (AFISAP 2008:21).[28] AFISAP was founded by a group of residents of San Andrés, registered in 1997 and in 1999 obtained the adjudication of the concession area (named "San Andrés") for a period of

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[26] Not all inhabitants of these communities are members of the community organizations.
[27] http://afisap.org/index.php/vision
[28] The legal status of AFISAP prohibits the division of its profits between members (AFISAP, 2008:21).

25 years. The community of San Andrés is one of the older settlements in Petén (AFISAP, 2008:6) and the majority of AFISAP's associates are originally from San Andrés.

Árbol Verde has 341 members from nine different communities belonging to the Flores municipality.[29] In the Management Plan it is documented that the vast majority of initial associates were Ladinos[30] who had migrated to Petén from other parts of Guatemala. The process of organizing by some members of the communities started already in 1992 and six years later Árbol Verde was officially founded and signed a concession contract (Árbol Verde, 1999:16). The office and furniture selling facility is located in the community Ixlú, while the timber processing facility is based in the community El Caoba. The concession area (named "Las Ventanas") is approximately 100km north-east of the communities and expands over almost 65.000 hectares (Árbol Verde, 2014). Árbol Verde states in their public summary from 2014, that their aim is to improve the living conditions of its members and their communities by implementing productive projects, primarily based on the sustainable use of forest resources from the concession area. Árbol Verde's legal status permits the distribution of profit, benefiting the members economically.

The main income of both CFEs derives from timber products (Árbol Verde, 2015:5; AFISAP, 2008:29), and hence the timber harvest and processing provides most employment opportunities.[31] Furthermore, the control and protection activities of the area also creates jobs. Moreover, both CFEs have developed other products and services, such as for example a carpentry. Although AFISAP and Árbol Verde have a different legal status, their overall organizational structure is similar.[32]

The general assembly which usually convenes twice a year is the highest decision making body where all members of the CFEs have a voice and are able to vote. Every two years, the assembly elects a board of directors, composed of a president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, and committee members[33] which govern the organizations. Figure 5 depicts the general organizational structure of both CFEs.

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[29] The nine communities are: Ixlú, El Remate, Macanché, El Zapote, Las Viñas, El Naranjo, El Caoba, El Porvenir and Zocotzal all located in the municipality of Flores in the department Petén (Árbol Verde, 2014).

[30] People of mixed European and Indigenous descent.

[31] The timber extraction is strictly regulated and certified by Forest Stewardship Council. The main focus has been on the species Mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) and Tropical cedar (*Cedrela odorata*), mainly sold to international buyers. Moreover, lesser known species have gained importance (Árbol Verde, 2015; AFISAP, 2008).

[32] AFISAP is an association while Árbol Verde has the legal status of a civil society organization.

[33] AFISAP has three committee members (AFISAP, 2008) whereas Árbol Verde has five committee members in order to ensure that all nine communities are represented (Árbol Verde, 2015:2).

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        │ Council  │   │Directors │   │   Body   │
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           │ Working  │   │Management│
           │committees│   │          │
           └──────────┘   └──────────┘
                    ┌──────────────┬──────────────┐
               ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐
               │  Other   │   │Productive│
               │Activities│   │Activities│
               └──────────┘   └──────────┘
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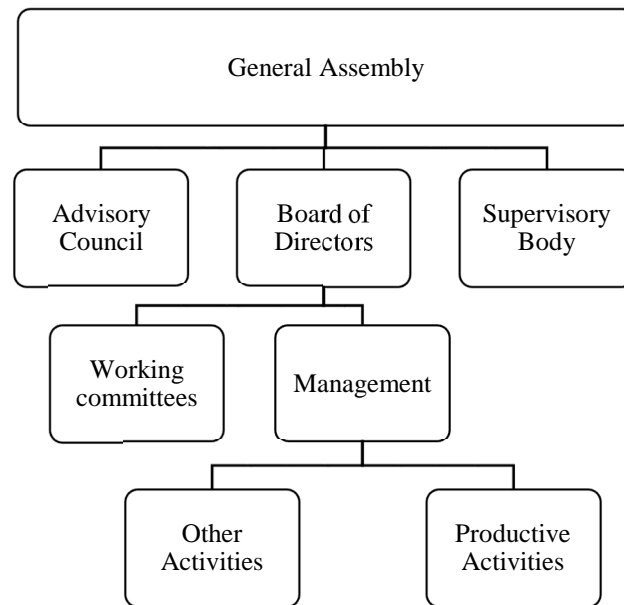
Figure 5: Organizational chart of the community forestry enterprises
(Own elaboration, based on AFISAP (2008:10); Árbol Verde (2015:2)).

Moreover, there exists a supervisory body, and in the case of AFISAP also an advisory council, elected by the assembly to oversee activities. Working committees are further built to support the enterprises' work. Árbol Verde has a committee of control and surveillance and a committee of commercialization. AFISAP has formed committees for discipline, projects, tourism and women (AFISAP, 2008:11-12; Árbol Verde, 2015:2). Further there is a paid management team consisting of an administrative manager, accountant(s) and secretaries to implement and administrate the activities. Additionally, a forest engineer is responsible for the forest resource management.

6 Analyzing women's participation in community forestry

Having introduced the local context, in this chapter I will provide a detailed analysis of my empirical data through the theoretical lens of FPE and the analytical model in order to answer my research questions.

6.1 Spaces and level of women's participation

Within this section I will delve into the first research question: *how do women participate in community forestry and how can women's participation be interpreted?* Thus, drawing on the FPE concept of 'gendered spaces' I will explore the different spaces of women's participation in the CFEs. Within each identified space, I will interpret women's participation through the lens of Agarwal's participation typology.

Based on my analysis of empirical data this section is structured into four main gendered spaces of participation: women's participation on the governance level of the CFEs, their participation in projects and activities, in income generating activities, and at the household level.

6.1.1 Women's participation in governing bodies

According to internal documentation from January 2015, 101 of Árbol Verde's 341 members are female (29.6%), while in AFISAP internal records from December 2014 document that 23 of 169 (13.6 %) members are female. Thus, in both CFEs female members form the minority in the overall governing body, the general assembly.

Despite women being in the minority in the CFEs, interviewees pointed out, and the reviewed documents confirmed, that women are part of other governing bodies in the CFEs. In AFISAP at least one of seven board members was a woman until recently, but no female member was elected in December 2014, as many, especially female interviewees criticized. In Árbol Verde currently three out of nine board members are female. In documents it is stated that women should always participate within the board (Árbol Verde, 2015:2). This was reiterated by many interviewees.

Although women, in both CFEs are elected to the board, they generally take on the roles of treasurers, secretaries or general committee members, but never as vice-president or president, something that female interviewees highlighted in particular. Further, in both CFEs women are represented in the supervisory body. In AFISAP *Edgar* described women in the supervisory body as *"the eyes of the enterprise"*. Women's participation in the supervisory body and as treasurers, was described by several interviewees as very important. This suggests that in both CFEs women enjoy trust and are assigned especially administrative responsibilities. However, the female participation in supportive or administrative positions, reflects gendered relations of power, putting women in a disadvantaged position to take part in decision-making (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:299).

Moreover, I was told that in AFISAP women are part of the advisory council and are also represented in some of the committees. AFISAP's committee for women is composed of five female associates and was founded to promote women's active participation in the CFE (AFISAP, 2008:15). In Árbol Verde, it was not mentioned by any interviewee that women participate in the two working committees. This might be due to the fact that these committees are more directly related to forest management, pointing at the unequal rights between men and women to engage in the management of natural resources (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:291).

Interpreting women's participation in the governing bodies through the lens of Agarwal's typology of participation, my analysis shows that in both CFEs the majority of female members are not actively participating in the governance of the enterprises. Interviewees described, that most female members only participate passively in the assembly as the following statement illustrates:

> We are mainly participating to hear what has been done […]. I have never expressed my opinion in an assembly.[34] (Mirna, Árbol Verde)

My observation in the general assembly of Árbol Verde confirmed that only a few women participate actively by speaking up and expressing their opinion. The women who were talking during the part of the assembly I attended were the female members of the board. Once a man spoke on behalf of a woman, who wanted to express her opinion but did not want to speak herself.[35] Besides attending the assembly, the vast majority of women are not further involved in governing bodies I was told in both CFEs.

Therefore, I interpret that the participation of most female members is either 'nominal' participating by simply being a member, or 'passive' by attending assemblies, listening and being informed. The participation of a few women in the working committees and supervisory bodies in both CFEs as well as in the advisory council in AFISAP can be interpreted as 'activity-specific' participation, since they are asked to undertake specific tasks within the CFE. Very few women, three in Árbol Verde and currently none in AFISAP, are members of the board where there is the greatest potential for interactive empowering participation since most decisions are taken by the board. Figure 6 illustrates the analysis.
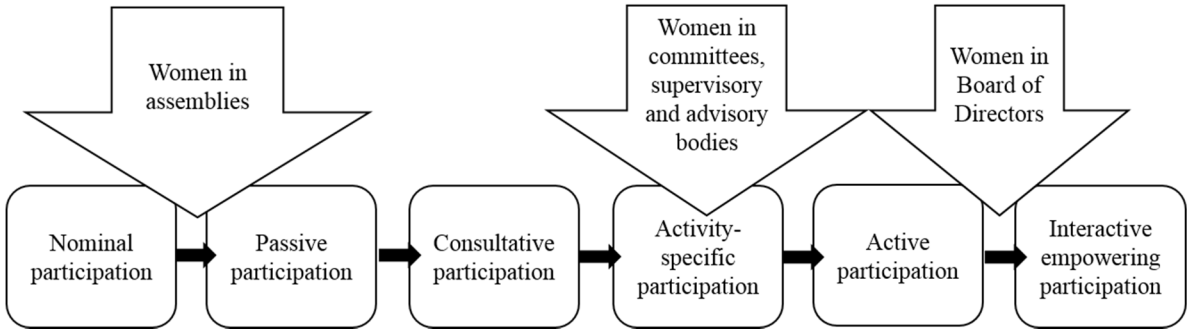
Figure 6: Interpretation of women's participation in governing bodies
(Own elaboration, based on Agarwal's typology of participation (Agarwal, 2001:1624)).

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[34] *Más que todo nosotros vamos a participar a escuchar todo lo que han hecho […]. Nunca he tomado la palabra en una asamblea.*

[35] It is important, to point out that some male members might also participate passively and be confronted with difficulties to speak in public. Nevertheless, reasons why women's participation might be more constrained than men's participation are analyzed in the following section.

Nevertheless, this analysis can only depict general tendencies. Nominal through to an interactive, empowering participation might be possible at all the different governing bodies, but depends among other on gendered relations of power which will be further analyzed.

6.1.2 Women's participation in projects and activities

AFISAP members explained that women have been participating in several project initiatives and workshops which target women and are supported by external organizations, especially ACOFOP.[36] These initiatives have helped women to explore additional income sources as *Gloria* (*AFISAP*) expressed. Further several female interviewees stated that they appreciate this support and feel recognized by these initiatives.

However, initiatives such as elaborating handicrafts and gardening projects have not been very successful and usually end when the often very paternalistic technical assistance ends, *Jorge (AFISAP)* explained. *Erika (AFISAP)* analyzed that especially projects which require women to leave their homes, are less successful, whereas more women show interest to participate in short capacity buildings which can be applied from home. This suggests that women's participation is influenced by the gendered division of spaces in private and public as is argued by Rocheleau *et al.* (1996:11).

Moreover, some women are participating and representing AFISAP in ACOFOP's activities. They have also participated in exchanges organized by NGOs within and outside of Guatemala. I was told that these exchanges are especially related to gender issues, one of which, focusing on women participating in forest value chains, I was able to participate in.

In Árbol Verde, female members are also participating in exchanges and workshops offered by ACOFOP and other NGOs. Further, they take part in technical meetings with other organizations, and represent the enterprise in meetings with NGOs. Regarding project initiatives in Árbol Verde it was pointed out that there has been few opportunities especially for women. However, I was told that women have been considered for all kinds of capacity building initiatives, also related to timber management, in order for women to be trained in all aspects. Further, there have also been project initiatives, such as for example a restaurant and hotel with the intention to create income opportunities for women and men. However, these projects did not work out due to the remote location, I was told.

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[36] There has been trainings for AFISAP's female members, but also female relatives of members on production of creams and shampoos, baking and cooking courses, hammock manufacturing besides others.

Based on this analysis I argue that the level of women's participation in projects and activities can be interpreted as an 'activity-specific' participation, since women are asked to get involved in specific activities, but do not take further part in decision-making processes. Figure 7 visualizes this analysis. Moreover, this participation is mostly short-term and it is important to stress, that only some female members are participating in these activities, this is especially the case in Árbol Verde.
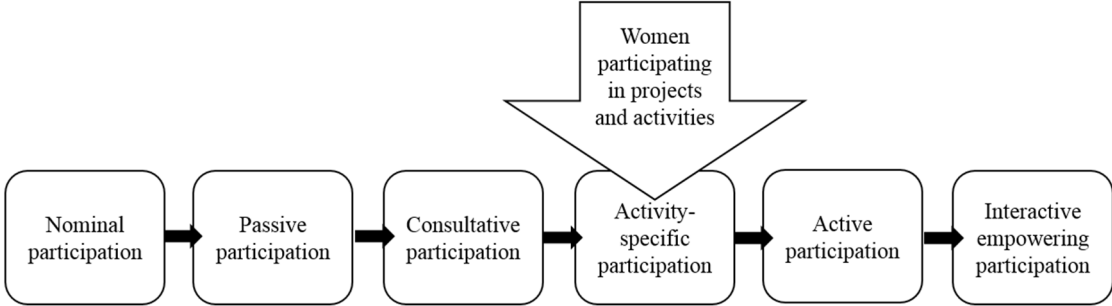
Figure 7: Interpretation of women's participation in projects and activities
(Own elaboration, based on Agarwal's typology of participation (Agarwal, 2001:1624)).

6.1.3 Women's participation in income generating activities

When it comes to income generating activities interviewees highlighted that very few women in comparison to men are involved in paid positions.[37] This was confirmed by my observations. Internal records show that AFISAP generates around 60 full and part time jobs, but only three paid positions are held by women: the accountant's assistant, a secretary and the administrative manager. This latter position was described as fundamental, and was exemplarily named *"the face of AFISAP"* [38] by *Isabela (AFISAP),* showing the importance of this position.

In an informal conversation I was told, that Árbol Verde generates approximately 40 full and part time jobs. However, also only three women are formally employed, one accountant and two secretaries.[39] Interviewees further stated that for these positions women have always been prioritized. The work of the female accountant was especially described as crucial for the enterprise due to her experience and knowledge of the management processes.

Furthermore, in both CFEs some female members are usually also paid to prepare food for meetings, such as the assembly. However, I could observe that this means that these women are

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[37] Participating in the board of directors, the supervisory body, advisory council and committees is generally not paid, however members receive a payment covering expenses on transport and rewarding their time, if they participate in activities *Edgar (AFISAP)* and also *Jazmin (Árbol Verde)* explained.

[38] *La cara de AFISAP.*

[39] The secretaries are both daughters of members and its common that this position is rotated every certain time, to give working opportunities to more members.

limited to participate in these meetings, since they are busy with preparing and serving the food. Moreover, while in both CFEs, women's participation is promoted in the processing of NTFPs[40], the majority of jobs are to be found in timber (i.e. timber harvesting in the field, timber processing in the facilities and value-adding in carpentries) which are exclusively carried out by men. Depending on the number of workers, three to four women in Árbol Verde are contracted to cook in the field during the harvest period. In AFISAP, only one woman is contracted.

Nevertheless, *Esteban (AFISAP)* highlighted that the women working on the administrative level play an important role in the timber management, by managing the necessary paper work. *Carmen's (AFISAP)* statement that *"the woman leads"[41]* emphasizes this notion. This suggests, that although few in numbers, women seem to play an important role in the enterprises' management. My observations of the interaction between members gave me the impression that this is especially the case in AFISAP. Also, the five interviewed staff members from ACOFOP stated that women especially stand out in the management of AFISAP.

Analyzing the level of women's participation in the income generating activities this suggest that women working in the administrative management of AFISAP and Árbol Verde, are influencing decision making. The involvement of women in NTFPs processing and cooking activities rather corresponds to an 'activity-specific' participation and is also seasonal. Figure 8 depicts my interpretation.
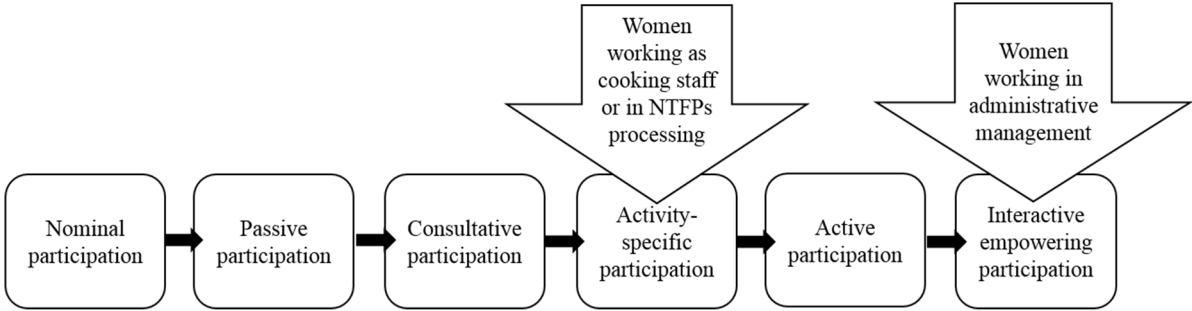
Figure 8: Interpretation of women's participation in income generating activities
(Own elaboration, based on Agarwal's typology of participation (Agarwal, 2001:1624)).

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[40] In AFISAP many interviewees pointed out that some women, female members and non-members, have been working especially in the processing of xate leaves but that there had been no extraction in 2014 and by the time of my fieldwork it was not clear if this activity would be considered again. Contrary, in Árbol Verde I was explained that the use of xate is planned to initiate in 2015 to create employment for female members and female relatives of members.
[41] *La mujer dirige.*

Nevertheless it is important to stress, that most female members are excluded from the income generating activities and women's participation in the administration, as cooking staff, and in processing of NTFPs highlights that the spaces within the CFEs are gendered and women are assigned different responsibilities and rights compared to men.

6.1.4 Women's participation at the household level

Besides the explored participation of women within the CFEs, many interviewees stressed the importance of women's *"indirect participation"*, by taking care of household and the family as the following quote exemplarily shows:

> *[W]omen do participate in the productive activities, because if women would not prepare men's food, they would not have the energy to work. One sometimes says, I do not work, but all the work one is doing at home is just not seen. That is how female partners work in the productive activities.*[42] *(Daniela, Árbol Verde)*

This statement emphasizes the dependency of men on women's support, but also depicts that this support is not recognized as work. In both CFEs this support of men by women taking care of domestic chores was highlighted as very important by male and female members. Interviewees commonly used words such as *"disaster"* and *"chaos"* to describe how the situation of men would look like without women's help. Many asserted that it would be very difficult for men to work without the support from women and this support on the household level is crucial, also for the functioning of AFISAP and Árbol Verde. Likewise, the following interview extract highlights the notion that women benefit from their husbands or male relatives' engagement in the CFEs:

> *…maybe women are not benefited or given direct participation in the process of timber management, from the forest to the processing and commercialization, but they [women] are involved and benefited by the fact that their husbands, sons, or fathers work in these activities of the enterprise.*[43] *(Isabela, AFISAP)*

This reasoning suggests that interviewees perceive a gendered division of labor as mutual dependency between men and women. However, this also shows that women's right to control and access resources are "nested within rights controlled by men", while women are responsible to purchase resources for the maintenance of the household (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:12-13).

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[42] [A]*unque si participan las mujeres en la parte productiva, porque si no les dan comida a los hombres no tienen fuerza para trabajar. Uno a veces dice, yo no trabajo, pero todo el trabajo que uno hace en la casa lo hago, pero no se mira. De esa manera es que las compañeras trabajan la parte productiva.*

[43] *…tal vez no se beneficia, o se le dé participación directa a la mujer en todo el desarrollo de la madera desde el campo hasta el patio y la venta, pero si se les involucra y beneficia por el hecho que tienen esposos, hijos o padres trabajando en esas actividades de la empresa.*

However, through the lens of Agarwal's typology of participation women's contribution at the household level cannot be understood as participation in CF (Figure 9).
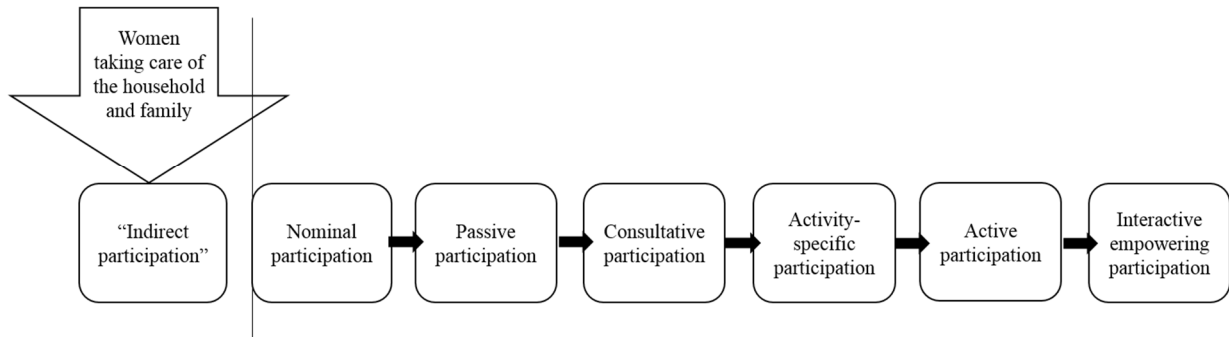
Figure 9: Interpretation of women's participation at the household level
This figure illustrates that women's contribution at the household level falls outside of Agarwal's typology of participation in CF (Own elaboration, based on Agarwal's typology of participation (Agarwal, 2001:1624)).

6.2 Factors shaping women's participation

The analysis above of how women participate in AFISAP and Árbol Verde leaves the question why women do or do not participate? Therefore in this section I will focus on my second research question: *What factors influence women's participation in community forestry and how have these factors in turn shaped women's participation?*

The section will be structured based on Agarwal's theorization of factors shaping women's participation in CF: rules of entry, social norms, social perceptions, entrenched claims, personal endowments and attributes and household endowments and attributes. Additionally, based on my analysis of empirical data, I will add on to this how external actors have been shaping women's participation.

6.2.1 Rules of entry

Participation in the governing bodies of AFISAP and Árbol Verde is only possible for members, whereas participating in projects, workshops or income generating activities is not exclusively for members, but members are usually given priority in both CFEs. Therefore, the fundamental rule of entry to participate in the CFEs is to become a member.

Interviewees from both CFEs described that during the foundation process of AFISAP and Árbol Verde access was generally open to all adult residents of the communities making up the CFEs. Nevertheless, the general notion of interviewees was that women were excluded by other factors, exemplarily *Claudia (Árbol Verde)* resumed:

> *At the beginning women were discriminated, women were not included and therefore women were almost not invited to sign in when [the enterprise] was founded.*[44]

This suggests that there were no gendered rules of entry, but women's entrance was constrained by unequal power relations between men and women, denying many women the possibility to become a member. Hence, in 1999, as internal documents show, there were only 8% female members in Árbol Verde and only 5% female members in AFISAP.

Nowadays, the CFEs are not accepting any more members. However, the number of female members has considerably increased. Árbol Verde currently counts almost 30% female members and AFISAP almost 14%. This shows that over the last 15 years women's participation in terms of membership has been almost tripled in AFISAP and more than tripled in Árbol Verde. The higher increase of female members in Árbol Verde, might be related to the fact that in Árbol Verde one can become a member through buying or receiving the membership right, whereas in AFISAP one can only become a member by receiving the membership.[45]Hence, in Árbol Verde becoming member depends less on the current members passing over their membership rights.

Interviewees from AFISAP and Árbol Verde explained that there are different reasons for passing on membership rights, including old age and when inheriting unwanted membership rights. An emerging generational succession has therefore facilitated the entrance of women to the CFEs. Moreover, out-migration of male members to the USA, a common phenomenon in the region, has favored women becoming members of the CFEs. This was for example the case for *Adriana (AFISAP):*

> *When AFISAP started my husband was a member, but then because of work he had to travel to the USA and gave me his membership right.*[46]

The CFEs support this practice. In fact, I was told that they request memberships to be passed over after a certain time of being abroad. This suggests that men's absence might transform established gender roles and power relations, since women take over men's rights to access and control of resources. Men's migration has also been discussed in other contexts. Giri and Darnhofer (2010:56), for example find that the out-migration of men increases the participation of women in decision making in CF in Nepal.

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[44] *Al inicio mucho discriminaban la mujer, no la incluían, por eso fue cuando se fundó casi no invitaron a mujeres a inscribirse.*

[45] The rules of entry differ in the two enterprises because of their different legal status.

[46] *Cuando inició AFISAP mi esposo estuvo de socio, por cuestión de trabajo tuvo que viajar a Los Estados Unidos y el me dio el derecho de la asociación.*

However, interviewees also cautioned that the decision of who becomes a member is taken in the majority of cases by men who are often still preferring to pass membership rights to male relatives. Becoming a member thus depends many times on the allocation of rights by men. Yet, these rights are not permanent, but negotiated over time (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:12).

6.2.2 Social norms

Even if there are no rules of entry, my analysis suggests that social norms have been defining who participates in the CFEs. Social norms have defined a 'gender segregation of public space' and constrained women's participation especially in the beginning of the CFEs. To start with, public meetings at the community and organization level were described as a traditionally masculinized space where women rarely participated and were even less likely to talk. This is exemplified by *Daniela (Árbol Verde)* who explained that it has been very difficult to participate as a woman in such a space:

> *Me alone between all these men, one feels uncomfortable, because they speak in their vocabulary and one [as a woman] tries to be one of them, so that they do not tease me.*[47]

Lorena (ACOFOP) also stressed that women frequently have faced sexist insinuations when participating in a male-dominated group, reflecting the unequal relations of power and gendered hierarchies within the CFEs. Further, the association of forestry as men's business has fostered the exclusion of women from taking actively part in both CFEs as the following quote illustrates:

> *At the beginning everyone thought, men and women, that forestry activities are only for men and that is why there was almost no female participation.*[48] *(Victor, AFISAP)*

This points to gendered rights and responsibilities to access and control resources, which as Rocheleau *et al.* (1996:297) stress are created by relations of power and patriarchal ideologies. Additionally, female interviewees, especially from Árbol Verde, also expressed that women had and still have little relation with forest, further fostering a gender segregation of CF. For example *Jazmin (Árbol Verde)* claimed:

> *The forest does not strike the attention of us women.*[49]

This is contrary to the notion of 'gendered knowledge' that women tend to have a better knowledge of forests because of their responsibilities to procure resources. The migration

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[47] *Solita yo en la organización entre solo hombres, uno se siente incómodo, hablan su vocabulario y uno trata de llevarle la corriente para que no más le molestan a uno.*
[48] *Al inicio todos creían, hombres y mujeres, que los trabajos forestales eran únicamente para los hombres y por eso casi no había participación femenina.*
[49] *Como mujeres no mucho nos llama la atención de ir al monte.*

background of many male and female members might explain the little relation with the forest. Furthermore, big distances from the communities to the forested areas make the access difficult and for example firewood collection was rather described as a male activity.

In addition, a 'gender division of labor', where men pursue income generating work, while women are responsible for domestic chores, childcare and attending the family, was highlighted by interviewees as very common for AFISAP and Árbol Verde members. This suggests that men and women have different responsibilities and rights concerning reproduction and production activities (Rocheleau *et al.*, 1996:10).

As I analyzed above a gendered division of labor is perceived as mutual dependency between men and women. Yet, as a consequence women might be constrained to engage actively in the CFEs due to the lack of time. Especially childcare was pointed out by many interviewees as limiting women's ability to participate in the enterprises. The following quote illustrates this:

> *It is very difficult for me to leave [the house], because I still have to take care of children. There are many [women] who would like to participate but cannot, because they have small children.[50] (Sandra, Árbol Verde).*

However, *Daniela (Árbol Verde)* argued that childcare is also used, by both women and men, as a pretext, suggesting that there are also other factors hindering women's participation.

Indeed, further constraining factors for women's participation seem to have been 'gendered behavioral norms'. Many interviewees described that men are expected to take care of women leading to one understanding (amongst others) that a married woman does not need to work outside the household, as for example *Alfredo's (AFISAP)* statement shows:

> *Before [we got married] she worked, now that we are married there is someone [I] taking care of her [...] I do not want to see her working anymore, I want to give her everything she needs.[51]*

I was also told by many interviewees that some men do not let women participate in the meetings of the CFEs. This suggests that men exercise power over women and points at the gendered division of power to control "one's own labor and to regulate the actions of others" (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:10). In this sense, *Jorge (AFISAP)* stated: "*Everything depends on the husband's thinking*".[52]

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[50]*A mí me cuesta salir, porque todavía tengo aquí a quien cuidar. Hay muchas que quieren pero no pueden, porque tienen niños chiquitos.*
[51] *Antes ella trabajaba, ahora que se casó hay quien la mantenga [...] ya no quiero verla trabajar, quiero darle todo lo que necesita.*
[52] *Todo depende de la cabeza del esposo.*

Diana (ACOFOP) explained that this restrictive behavior of men is often fueled by the fear that others, men and women, could question why he lets his wife participate, reflecting the effect of social norms on the individual behavior. Additionally, interviewees expressed that some women themselves reinforce gendered behavior norms by for example treating their sons preferably compared to their daughters or do not let male family members help with domestic chores as the following quote demonstrates:

> *We have this problem that she does not like if I wash the dishes, because she fears that others, especially women, could see me.[53] (Rudy, Árbol Verde)*

This statement mirrors that gendered behavior norms are also often reinforced by women's fear to be criticized in society for deviating from the social behavioral norm. Further, several interviewees stated that the majority of women used to accept and rarely challenge their exclusion from the CFEs, suggesting that self-effacement might constrain women's participation. Exemplarily, *Javier (Árbol Verde)* explained the following:

> *It is not that women are not given space, but because of culture, she does not like to be a protagonist.[54]*

However, women's self-effacement has to be contextualized and might rather be resulting from patriarchal ideologies shaping the behavior of the individual (Rocheleau *et al.*, 1996:298). This analysis suggests, that social norms, entailing a gender segregation in public spaces, a division of labor and gendered behavior norms have been constraining women's participation.

Nevertheless, all interviewees stressed that these social norms and gender roles are changing in the Guatemalan society and this has positively affected women's participation in the CFEs. Whereas in the beginning of the community concessions women's participation was very limited, women are getting more involved in public spaces in general, and participate in various spaces within AFISAP and Árbol Verde nowadays. Social norms picturing forestry as a male activity are challenged, especially by women who are involved as *Carmen (AFISAP)* pointed out. The increasing interest to participate might be a reaction to previous exclusion to access and control of resources (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:14). Interviewees from both CFEs also highlighted that the traditional division of labor is challenged and women are becoming

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[53] *Tenemos ese problema, si lavas en la pila los trastes, ella dice, no lo hagas, porque no le gusta que me vean, especialmente las otras mujeres.*
[54] *No es que no se le dé espacio a la mujer, sino por cultura ella no quiere salir a ser protagonista.*

involved in paid work in general. However, *Maria's (AISAP)* statement suggests that this is creating new challenges for women:[55]

> *In the case that women also work, in most cases, women have to get up early, do the cleaning, washing, cooking trying to get everything ready before work.*[56]

This suggests that even if women access public spaces, they remain responsible for the private space, taking care of their homes. Moreover, even though social norms are changing most interviewees highlighted that it remains a slow and difficult process. The active participation of women has only started in the last couple of years, leaving women far from being equally powerful as men in both CFEs.

6.2.3 Social perceptions

Besides social norms, my analysis suggest that especially two social perceptions have been constraining women's participation in the CFEs. First, female and male interviewees commonly expressed that women are perceived as physically weaker than men and therefore not able to participate in forestry activities, as for example *Claudia (Árbol Verde)* explained:

> *A woman cannot be considered equal to a man, she has not the same capacities because a woman is weaker. The Bible compares women as weaker vessel in relation to a man […]. Activities with timber are exclusively men's work, because women's bodies are very vulnerable.*[57]

This statement exemplarily shows that this perception is among other deeply entrenched in religious believes, which I could note in many conversations are very influential on forming gender stereotypes in this context.

A second notable perception that female and male interviewees expressed, is that women are pictured by both men and women as good administrators, secretaries and treasurers, because of certain ascribed characteristics, such as *dedicated, honest* and *cautious*. However, this also means that it is difficult for women to participate in the enterprises beyond assigned roles as *Angela's (AFISAP)* expression illustrates:

> *They have always thought of women in positions behind a desk, or in the kitchen doing something […].*[58]

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[55] Several scholars caution that women's involvement into the labor market can create new challenges since many of the household duties still remain women's responsibility, resulting in a double work burden (Chioda, 2011; Arora-Jonsson, 2014:298).

[56] *En los casos que también trabajan las mujeres, en la mayoría las mujeres tienen que madrugar, tienen que levantarse temprano, hacer limpieza, el lavado, la cocina tratar de dejar todo listo.*

[57] *Para mí que no se puede considerar una mujer igual como un hombre, no tiene la misma capacidad, porque una mujer es más débil. La biblia compara la mujer como un vaso frágil a la par de un hombre […]. Las actividades así con la madera son exclusivamente de hombres, porque el cuerpo de una mujer es fácil de dañar.*

[58] *Siempre han pensado en la mujer, para posiciones atrás de un escritorio, o en la cocina haciendo algo […].*

This suggests, that women are limited by these perceptions to take part in accessing and controlling the activities of the CFEs. Further, my analysis of interviews and observations showed, that these perceptions are shared by men and women, and hence I come to the conclusion that not only men's perception as Agarwal (2001:1639) analyzes, but also the perceptions women have, of women's abilities constrain their participation in CF. Such perceptions derive from a patriarchal hegemony, picturing women as "helpers" taking care of household duties (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:298-299).

However, interviewees also expressed social perceptions of women's abilities which seem to favor women's participation nowadays. Many male interviewees highlighted that women think differently and can therefore give good advice from a different perspective, suggesting that knowledge is gendered and important to consider. Further, especially female interviewees mentioned that women are very hardworking and some capable, but also interested to participate in productive activities, especially on the management level, but also in less physically demanding activities in the timber processing and carpentry. These changing perceptions of gender roles might result from the increased involvement of women. However, although these perceptions might favor women's participation, there are still very few women involved in paid positions and men remain the power holders in both, AFISAP and Árbol Verde.

6.2.4 Entrenched claims

My analysis suggests that entrenched claims by male members over power and control in the CFEs have been further constraining women's participation. An illustrative example is the rejected proposal to reserve at least one seat at the board of AFISAP for a female member in 2010. This incident suggests that some men resist to give women more participation in the enterprises and shows the uneven power relations, disadvantaging women to control and access resources. However, in both CFEs interviewees explained, that even if women are part of the board, their influence depends on the male members of the board as the following quote illustrates:

> *There can be women on the board, but if the male board members do not want that they participate, we push them aside.[59] (Esteban, AFISAP)*

Further, in both CFEs several interviewees expresses that especially the president holds much power over who participates, since he decides what initiatives are supported. Additionally, female members of the board are regarded as important since they are usually expected to

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[59] *Dentro de la Junta Directiva pueden a ver mujeres, pero si los que están como hombres no quieren que participen, las hacemos a un lado.*

represent female members. Therefore, not only male but also female members in power are influencing women's participation.[60] Cornwall (2003:1335) argues however, that the assumption that women represent the concerns of women as a group is problematic since female members might have their own agenda.

Also, entrenched claims seem to be changing. Many interviewees expressed that current leaders are more open to women's participation than before. Further, the participation of some women in leading positions or activities has had a flagship effect in both CFEs and challenged the entrenched claims by men. This effect has also been analyzed by Agarwal (2010:108) who concludes that the active participation of some women encourages other women to participate.

However, participation in the activities of the enterprises is still predominately reserved for men, and some interviewees also expressed that there is a lack of strategic planning and envisioning for women's interactive participation within the CFEs. Moreover, male members still tend to support male leaders, in order to maintain patriarchal power structures. This suggests that although gendered rights and responsibilities are changing, entrenched power relations are still present (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:288).

6.2.5 Personal endowments and attributes

Moreover, interviewees expressed that women participate less than men in the CFEs because of constraining personal attributes and endowments. Almost all interviewees pointed out that little self-confidence presents a major limitation for women to participate in public spaces. *Adriana's (AFISAP)* response to my question if she would speak in the assemblies, demonstrates this: "*No, I am too shy and I am getting really nervous.*"[61]

Many interviewees expressed that women do not want or do not dare to participate because of low self-confidence and that they are limiting themselves. However, when asking why women have little self-confidence, for example *Jazmin (Árbol Verde)*, argued that this is a result of women's subordination and patriarchal power structures. Further, low levels of education were described in many interviews as another major constrain as the following quote shows:

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[60] The rotation of members in decision-making position every two years is practiced to distributed power between more members. However, interviewees from both enterprises stressed that the circle of active male and especially female members is rather small, meaning that power is maintained within few hands.
[61] *No, soy tímida. Me friegan los nervios.*

There are some [women] who would like to participate but they cannot read and write, and this is a limiting factor, especially for the positions of treasurer, secretary, because these positions require good reading and writing skills.[62] (Jazmin, Árbol Verde)

This might also be true for men with little education, as Sundberg (2003:730) analyzes that illiterate people were generally regarded as "mentally inferior" in the conservation discourse in Petén. However, women's participation seems to be especially constrained by little education, since they are generally only assigned administrative responsibilities, where writing and reading skills are necessary as *Jazmin's* statement above illustrates. Moreover, *Oscar (Árbol Verde)* pointed out that girls and women were especially disadvantaged in the rural areas and usually not given the chance to study more than six years.

Furthermore, women's age and marital status also seems to be shaping women's possibilities to participate in the CFEs. *Rebeca (ACOFOP),* explained that especially women who are not married, widows or women who do not have to take care of children tend to be more interested and also able to participate. This illustrates that women are being bound by household responsibilities but also suggests that women are not a homogenous group, and that becoming involved very much depends on her personal situation. Furthermore, *Rebeca's* explanation suggests that younger and older women are more likely to participate. However, several times I observed that the older female members that I interviewed generally take care of their grandchildren, because their daughters work or have migrated to the USA. Further, older women expressed that young women, who are more educated should rather get involved, showing that they feel constrained by little education. However, younger women said that it is especially difficult for young women to be accepted by men. It was also pointed out that women, but also men who have a formal job have limited time, and as I assume based on my observations, also less necessity or interest to engage in the CFEs.

An improved access to education, for both men and women, is seen by most interviewees as essential to overcome limiting personal endowments and challenge gendered relations of power. This is also documented in the literature, for instance Coleman and Mwangi (2013:201) find that education is significantly influencing women's possibilities to participate in CF.

Nowadays, many interviewees expressed that girls and women are very eager to study. In contrast to other more remote communities, the proximity to the urban area in Petén has facilitated a better access to education in the case of AFISAP and Árbol Verde, as highlighted

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[62] *Hay algunas que si quieren participar, pero no saben leer y escribir, y ya es una limitante, mayormente en los cargos de tesorería, secretaria, porque hay que saber leer y escribir bien.*

by *Lorena (ACOFOP)*. Further, it was a common notion that education has helped women to overcome shyness to participate in public spaces as *Maria (AFISAP)* highlights:

> *In the past here in San Andrés, a woman was not given the opportunity to study and therefore for many women it was difficult to interact with other people and I think that education has created opportunities to participate.*[63]

This suggest that access to education has allowed women to redefine their roles, and are beginning to start requesting access to and control over environmental resources in response to former exclusion (Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996:15).

6.2.6 Household endowments and attributes

AFISAP and Árbol Verde were founded by residents of the corresponding communities which are, as several interviewees expressed, especially in the case of Árbol Verde, very heterogeneous, comprised mainly of migrants from different parts of Guatemala. Therefore, gendered social hierarchies might have intersected with other forms of social difference shaping the access and control of natural resources (Nightingale, 2011:153).

Ethnicity might have had an influence during the foundation process of AFISAP and Árbol Verde, since the majority of members in both CFEs are Ladinos. Nevertheless, in the communities compounding the CFEs Ladinos are also the majority. A more profound analysis would be needed on how ethnicity might influence who participates, but goes beyond the scope of this study.

Social class differences in the communities might have shaped who participates, for both women and men, potentially excluding already disadvantaged groups within the communities. Becoming a member was theoretically open to everyone as analyzed above, yet personal affiliations with the community leaders during the foundation process might have influenced who became a member. Furthermore, many people feared to engage in community organizations because of the civil war trauma as the following quote illustrates:

> *At the time when the guerrilla became powerful in Petén, this is how they grabbed people. Some people told me not to get involved because it is dangerous.*[64] *(Juan, Árbol Verde)*

Nowadays, especially in AFISAP, due to the passing over of membership rights within families, some interviewees cautioned that power is concentrated in few families in the San Andrés

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[63] *Antes aquí en San Andrés, a uno de mujer no le daban estudio, y eso le costaba un poco relacionarse con otras personas y desenvolverse y yo creo que con eso que han tenido más educación, uno ya tiene más oportunidades de participar.*

[64] *En aquel tiempo cuando la guerrilla empezó declarando territorio en Petén, así agarraron a uno. Había gente que me decía, no te metas a eso porque es peligroso.*

community, excluding many other families in the community. In Árbol Verde the particularity that members are from nine different localities potentially constrains the participation in activities for both men and women from the more remote communities, compared to the communities where the processing and office facilities are located.

6.2.7 External actors

The analysis of what has shaped women's participation in Árbol Verde and AFISAP would be incomplete without taking into account the power relations on a broader scale and acknowledging the complex interconnections of social, economic and environmental processes on the local, national, regional and global level. As Rocheleau *et al.* (1996:288) argue, these processes shape gendered power relations and the division between men and women to control and access of resources.

As explained above, CF in Petén was formed by international donor agencies and environmentalist NGOs. In the initial phase of the community concessions in Petén, a gender perspective was not a priority I was told by staff members working for ACOFOP and other NGOs. Sundberg's (2003:733) analysis shows that men were pictured as "primary agents of social and environmental change", reinforcing gender inequalities in the beginning of the concession process. However, in the light of the increasing global emphasis on gender equality, the agenda of international donors required their recipients, CONAP, local NGOs and especially ACOFOP, to push women's participation in the CFEs from the 2000s onwards.[65]

Requesting or advocating for a more equal participation seems to have a major influence on women's participation.[66] The general notion in the interviews was that the external support of women's participation has positively impacted women's role and power in the CFEs as the following quote illustrates:

> *Although men do not want a woman there, they have to endure us [women].[67]*
> *(Jazmin, Árbol Verde)*

However, as *Jazmin's* statement touches upon, and many other interviewees emphasized, the inclusion of women in the CFEs has rather been a forced process. *Andres (ACOFOP)* pointed out that the pressure of donors, and their notion of gender and approach to promote gender

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[65] Arora-Jonsson's (2014:299) analysis shows that this occurred globally.
[66] This is also documented in studies on the concession approach in Petén (e.g. Nittler and Tschinkel, 2005:10).
[67] *Aunque los hombres socios no quisieran a ni una mujer allí, nos tienen que aguantar.*

equality through targeting women, initially provoked conflicts in some communities since many men feared to be deprived in their power.[68]

Due to the conflicts, ACOFOP and other NGOs adapted their approach from targeting women to promote a more integral forest management, particularly promoting NTFPs in order to create economic income sources for families. The idea behind this shift was to promote income opportunities for women which are compatible with the traditional gender roles and gendered division of labor. This was not just the case in CF in Petén, but as Arora-Jonsson (2014:298) analyzes promoting gender equality through the economic involvement of women was a global strategy.

Marco a staff member of ACOFOP explained that nowadays ACOFOP aims to achieve the active participation of women within the CFEs, especially in decision making. However, it was pointed out that there is still some reluctance within the CFEs but also within the supporting organizations to promote gender equality. *Rebeca's (ACOFOP)* statement illustrates this further:

> *It is missing that they acknowledge the importance of women's participation and that this is more reflected in the approach. Now it is more like something else which has to be done.[69]*

Some interviewees criticized that donors missed to explain the overall objective of the gender focus and as a result gender equality has commonly been reduced to only increase the numbers of women participating. Interviewees also expressed that there is a lack of strategic planning on how to enhance gender equality in the CFEs in the long-term run since activities are rather isolated, depending on the objectives of the different projects and donors. Moreover, female members from both CFEs told me that many men have learned to talk nicely about women's participation, but not necessarily support the participation of women in practice. This suggests that women might also become involved as a means to fulfill the conditions of international actors, but not necessarily as an end to be able to actively take part in decision making in Árbol Verde and AFISAP.

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[68] The problem of pushing women into development activities and thereby fostering intra-household conflicts has been discussed by several scholars (e.g. Robbins, 2012:65).

[69] *Falta que ven la importancia de la participación de mujeres y pues que en el trabajo pues se ve más reflejado. Es como algo más que hay que hacer.*

7 Concluding remarks

In this case study I explored women's participation in Árbol Verde and AFISAP in Petén Guatemala. I used theoretical perspectives from FPE to interpret women's participation in CF.

In general I found that women participate in different spaces and at different levels. In both enterprises women represent the minority compared to male members. In the governance of the CFEs, the majority of female members only participate in a passive manner, by attending assemblies. Only a few women are more actively participating in the different governing bodies. However, women are rather elected in supportive positions, limiting their ability to access and control forest resources. Supported by external actors, women have been invited to participate in several project initiatives and workshops. However, in income generating activities of the CFEs women are barely involved. Yet, in the administrative management of the enterprises some women occupy key positions and participate interactively in decision making. Additionally, the majority of men participating actively in the CFEs are supported by women taking care of household duties. This contribution is perceived as indirect participation, yet women are limited to actively participate themselves.

In examining what has shaped women's participation, I found that social norms and perceptions of gendered rights and responsibilities have constrained women's participation considerably. Moreover, entrenched claims of men holding power and a lack of strategic envisioning of women in the CFEs have presented barriers for women's participation. Personal endowments and attributes such as little self-confidence and low education levels, but also age and marital status seem to have influenced who is able to participate actively. Further, household endowments and attributes, for instance social class differences might influence who participates. The role of external actors advocating for women's participation has been influential, however requesting the CFEs to involve women has not necessarily led to an interactive, empowering participation for women.

My analysis also suggests that gender roles within the Guatemalan society, the CFEs, but also at the household level are changing and gendered power relations are challenged. Women's participation in AFISAP and Árbol Verde has considerably increased since the foundation of the CFEs and some women seem to start claiming their right to participate in the CFEs. Despite the achievements, it was highlighted that women are still far from having an equal voice in community forestry. Rights and responsibilities to influence forest management continue to be gendered and women are assigned supportive roles in private, but also in public spaces, such as

in the CFEs. Thereby women's access and their ability to make choices over natural resources remains constrained by gendered power relations and a patriarchal hegemony.

I wish to highlight once again that my analysis is necessarily limited and shaped by my worldview. I do not claim to have shown a complete picture of women's participation in CF. Rather, I have constructed this study, in the hope that this analysis can contribute to a critical reflection on possible pitfalls of CF and women's exclusion from interactive, empowering participation.

Within this limited scope of this study I have not been able to discuss how female members of the two CFEs in focus perceive the effects of participating in community forestry, nor am I able to draw conclusions on how women's participation affects the conservation and development outcomes of CF. Having put forward my analysis, interpretations and their limitations, I would like to draw some conclusions in order to contribute to the understanding of women in community forestry.

First, the exclusion of women from CF has to be put in context. My case study suggests that it is not necessarily CF itself that is excluding women, but rather deeply rooted gender roles and unequal power relations which are reproduced within CF. Thus, as FPE scholarly has discussed, the challenge lies in transforming unequal power relations and hierarchies (e.g. Nightingale, 2002; Rocheleau *et al.,* 1996).

This leads to my second conclusion, that the multiple levels of gendered power relations, at the intra-household level, within the CFEs and in interaction with the agenda of external actors, require heightened attention to understand the multiple interest of all actors and their influence on who participates how and why in CF.

Third, this study suggests that the external request of women's participation in CF is a double-edged sword. On one hand, I conclude that imposing a gender perspective and targeting women in CF is problematic and might even reinforce women's subordination. Further, as my analysis of women's participation in different spaces suggests, women have been included in the CFEs, but female participation might be instrumentalized in order to receive funding. Therefore, participation in itself still needs to be critically analyzed since there are different levels of participation as my analysis has shown. On the other hand, my study also suggests that some women have benefited from the external support and are nowadays interactively participating in decision-making. While women's participation might be a mean for legitimacy and

efficiency, it also entails an opportunity for change and increase the voice and influence of disadvantaged groups as White (1996:150) has pointed out.

Having said that, my fourth conclusion from this study is that it is fundamental to not picture women as a homogenously disadvantaged group, but to acknowledge that there are also other aspects of social differences, shaping the access to and control over forests resources. Further, who participates in CF might also be a matter of necessity and interests.

Fifth, while avoiding to represent "women as victims", it remains important to highlight the marginalization of women from the access to and control of natural resources within a supposedly participatory approach for sustainable development. Gendered rights and responsibilities are important to understand within the context of CF, otherwise CF runs the risk of being exclusive, and potentially reinforcing gender inequalities.

Sixth, this case study analyzed that women's participation at the household level is perceived as fundamental in the two CFEs. However, this contribution is not been recognized when looking at participation of women in CF through the lens of Agarwal's typology of participation. Based on my analysis I therefore argue that the understanding of women's participation in CF should be broadened and also recognize the existence of women's contribution at the household level. This is not to reinforce patriarchal gender roles, but to acknowledge women's multiple roles as a first step.

Following this, I agree with Agarwal (2001:1624) that participation is "a measure of citizenship and a means for empowerment". Hence, every individual should have real choices to participate in CF and the power to make decisions for themselves.

Further research would be needed to explore the effects of participation for women themselves and the contributions to a sustainable development. Also, delving deeper into how other aspects of social difference, especially ethnicity but also social class, influence the access and control of natural resources would complement my study. Moreover, it would be worthwhile to explore the roots for paternalistic social structures in the particular context. Such research would facilitate a better understanding of gender roles and power hierarchies, which are as I have discussed mirrored in the local arena of CF. This could inform truly participatory strategies to enhance gender equality within CF, based on a better understanding of complex social realities and local dynamics.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guides

Interview Guide 1 – AFISAP / Árbol Verde

Place and Date:

Introduction:

- Introduce myself
- Explain my research aim
- Explain that I will ensure confidentiality
- Explain that the interview will take approximately 1 hour
- Explain that the participant can stop/end any time
- Ask for permission to audio-record the interview
- Ask the participant for oral consent to participate in my study

Personal data:

- Name:
- Age:
- Sex:
- Civil status:
- Origin:
- Occupation:
- Relationship with community forest enterprise (member, staff):

Main questions:

1) What was / is your motivation to participate in the community forest enterprise?
2) How do women participate within the community forest enterprise?
3) In what activities do women participate?
4) How do women participate in the decision-making of the enterprise?
5) Are there female leaders in the enterprise? And if yes, what role do these leaders play?
6) How has the participation of women changed since the foundation of the enterprise?
7) How do the activities of the enterprise affect women?
8) Who is taking care of the household in your case? What are the most time-consuming activities?
9) What would be different in the activities of the enterprise without women?
10) What are the major barriers/challenges you see for women's participation?
11) What opportunities exist for women's participation?
12) How would you like that women participate in the enterprise in the future?

Closing of the interview:

- Ask if she/he wants to add something
- Give opportunity to ask questions
- Ask for other people I should interview
- Thank for time and participation

Interview Guide 2 – ACOFOP / NGOs

Place and Date:

Introduction:

- Introduce myself
- Explain my research aim
- Explain that I will ensure confidentiality
- Explain that the interview will take approximately 1 hour
- Explain that the participant can stop/end any time
- Ask for permission to audio-record the interview
- Ask the participant for oral consent to participate in my study

Personal data:

- Name:
- Sex:
- Organization:
- Job position:

Main questions:

1) What is the vision/approach of your organization regarding gender equality?
2) What is the background of promoting gender equality in the community forest enterprises?
3) When and why did your organization start working on this issue?
4) How has gender equality been promoted and implemented?
5) What do you think has been achieved?
6) Which dilemmas, difficulties, and challenges have you faced?
7) How do women participate in the community forest enterprises?
8) How has the participation of women changed since the foundation of the community forest enterprises?
9) How do the activities of the enterprises affect women?
10) What are the major barriers/challenges you see for women's participation nowadays?
11) What opportunities exist for women's participation?

Closing of the interview:

- Ask if she/he wants to add something
- Give opportunity to ask questions
- Ask for other people I should interview
- Thank for time and participation

Appendix 2: Record of interviewees

Records of Interviewees AFISAP, Árbol Verde and Supporting Organizations

No.	Pseudonym	Sex	Age range	Organization	Date of Interview
ÁRBOL VERDE					
1	Enrique	Male	40-50	Árbol Verde	08.01.2015
2	Manuel	Male	40-50	Árbol Verde	08.01.2015
3	David	Male	50-60	Árbol Verde	09.01.2015
4	Paola	Female	40-50	Árbol Verde	09.01.2015
5	Jazmín	Female	40-50	Árbol Verde	09.01.2015
6	Sandra	Female	50-60	Árbol Verde	09.01.2015
7	Juan	Male	60-70	Árbol Verde	09.01.2015
8	Jocelyn	Female	20-30	Árbol Verde	14.01.2015
9	Alejandro	Male	40-50	Árbol Verde	14.01.2015
10	Mirna	Female	50-60	Árbol Verde	15.01.2015
11	Edwin	Male	50-60	Árbol Verde	15.01.2015
12	Claudia	Female	40-50	Árbol Verde	15.01.2015
13	Javier	Male	50-60	Árbol Verde	15.01.2015
14	Oscar	Male	50-60	Árbol Verde	27.01.2015
15	Daniela	Female	40-50	Árbol Verde	27.01.2015
16	Rudy	Male	40-50	Árbol Verde	27.01.2015
AFISAP					
17	Carmen	Female	30-40	AFISAP	22.10.2014
18	Francisco	Male	30-40	AFISAP	03.11.2014
19	Isabela	Female	30-40	AFISAP	03.11.2014
20	María	Female	40-50	AFISAP	12.12.2014
21	Alejandra	Female	30-40	AFISAP	12.12.2014
22	Víctor	Male	60-70	AFISAP	12.12.2014
23	Alfredo	Male	50-60	AFISAP	12.12.2014
24	Gloria	Female	50-60	AFISAP	16.12.2014
25	Erika	Female	50-60	AFISAP	16.12.2014
26	Adriana	Female	40-50	AFISAP	16.12.2014
27	Ángela	Female	60-70	AFISAP	29.01.2015
28	Jorge	Male	40-50	AFISAP	29.01.2015
29	Edgar	Male	40-50	AFISAP	02.02.2015
30	Luis	Male	30-40	AFISAP	02.02.2015
SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS					
31	Lorena	Female	-	ACOFOP	28.01.2015
32	Rebeca	Female	-	ACOFOP	28.01.2015
33	Marco	Male	-	ACOFOP	30.01.2015
34	Diana	Female	-	ACOFOP	30.01.2015
35	Andrés	Male	-	ACOFOP	30.01.2015
36	Silvia	Female	-	NGO	04.02.2015
37	Pablo	Male	-	NGO	04.02.2015
38	Neri	Male	-	NGO	05.11.2014
39	Cesar	Male	-	NGO	11.11.2014
40	Miguel	Male	-	NGO	12.11.2014

Appendix 3: Observation protocol

Observation Protocol

General information:

- Place and Date:
- Activity observed:
- Present persons:
- Duration of observation:

Descriptive notes	Reflective notes

Appendix 4: Record of observations

DATE	PLACE	ACTIVITY	COMMENT
AFISAP OBSERVATIONS			
04.09.2014	Office facilities, San Andrés	Presentation to staff members and processing facilities	During internship
02.10.2014	Office facilities, San Andrés	Accompanying visit of auditory	During internship
10.10.2014	Office facilities, San Andrés	Visit of office and processing facilities	During internship
22.10.2014	Office facilities, San Andrés	Visit of office and interviews	During internship
03.11.2014	Office facilities, San Andrés	Visit of office and interviews	During internship
19.11.2014	Office facilities, San Andrés	Group work on women's role in AFISAP	During internship
03.12.2014	Santa Elena	Meeting with President of AFISAP	Supported by Finnfor project staff
12.12.2014	Office facilities, San Andrés	Visit of office and interviews	Independent visit
16.12.2014	San Andrés	Visit of members at home and interviews	Independent visit
29.01.2015	San Andrés / Office facilities	Interviews and presentation to new Board of Directors	Independent visit
02.02.2015	Office facilities, San Andrés	Visit of office and interviews	Independent visit
ÁRBOL VERDE OBSERVATIONS			
07.10.2014	Processing facilities, El Caoba	Accompanying visit of Finnfor project	During internship
10.12.2014	Office facilities, Ixlú	Meeting with President of Árbol Verde	Accompanied by Finnfor project staff
14.12.2014	Hotel facilities, Ixlú	Attending assembly and presentation of research	Independent visit
08.01.2015	Office facilities, Ixlú	Meeting with Board of Directors and interviews	Independent visit
09.01.2015	Ixlú, Macanché	Visit of members at home and interviews	Accompanied by female member of Árbol Verde
14.01.2015	Office facilities, Ixlú	Visit of office and interviews	Independent visit
15.01.2015	El Remate, Office facilities, Ixlú	Visit of members at home and office; interviews	Independent visit
27.01.2015	Office facilities, Ixlú	Visit of office and interviews	Independent visit
ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS			
18.12.2014	Office facilities, ACOFOP	Visit of social gathering after general assembly of ACOFOP	Accompanied by Finnfor project staff
16.01.2015	Office facilities, ACOFOP	Meeting with participants for Central American encounter of women participating in forest value chains	Accompanied by Finnfor project staff
18.01.2015 - 24.01.2015	CATIE, Turrialba, Costa Rica	Central American encounter of women participating in forest value chains	

Appendix 5: List of documents

Document analysis

Árbol Verde (1999). *Plan de Manejo Integrado de la Unidad de Manejo Las Ventanas*

Árbol Verde (2014). *Resumen público de la Sociedad Civil Árbol Verde*

Árbol Verde (2015). *Plan de inversión 2015 Unidad de Manejo Las Ventanas*

AFISAP (1999). *Plan General de Manejo Concesión Forestal de San Andrés*

AFISAP (2008). *Auto-sistematización de Información AFISAP*