Mapping local knowledge in multi-levels governance processes
A South North perspective

Pierre Maurel et al.

Mapping Ethics
Lausanne, April 14-15, 2011
• Numbers (statistics, maps, …)
  – permits scrutiny of phenomena in ways that enable judgment
  – make visible some objects of the world and keep invisible some other ones
    => Help to create the reality that they measure
  – easily circulate
    => Allow to monitor or govern « at a distance »
  – channel and legitimate types of development
Key issue

How to reduce power asymmetry due to quantitative instruments in the decision making processes for local development?
An ethical issue: promoting information systems based on local spatial knowledge
Local knowledge mapping (LKM)
Case studies in different contexts

Analytical variables
- Governance context
- Triggering event(s)
- Purposes of LKM
- Participants
- Type of knowledge
- Legitimation and validation factors
- Effects
Dordogne river case study

• Downstream impacts of river flow regime due to hydroelectric dams operations

• Dam operator : EDF (scale: European energy market)

• Impacted but invisible local people
  – Fishermen (recreational, professional)
  – River tourism professionals
  – Canoeing
  – …
Dordogne LKM experience

- **Triggering event**
  - A sociological study imposed by the head of the Dordogne river basin authority (EPIDOR) to water and energy engineers

- **Legitimation and validation of local knowledge**
  - Systematic sorting by the sociologist among facts (proved in the field or through pictures) and opinions
  - Aggregation of individual knowledge on collective maps
  - Sociologist as the spokesperson of these impacted and scattered invisible people => stakeholders community
Key-words expressed by local stakeholders to describe the impacts of river flow regime changes
Outcome of the decision process

An early warning system of river flow regime

http://www.debits-dordogne.fr/
Madagascar Land Reform experience

• Triggering event
  – A political will to improve land tenure security as a major development catalyst;
  – A bottom-up and « low cost » approach based on LKM proposed by a French researcher;

• Legitimation and validation of local knowledge
  – Local knowledge mapping instead of surveyors;
  – To convert legitimate land use rights into legal land ownership rights;
  – Implementation under community control and without any western intervention.
Map based on local knowledge

Property lines (or parcel boundaries) drawn by land owners on aerial photography.
Outcome of the decision process

A land reform process focused on a wider access to land rights registration and for mitigating land grab risks.

http://www.foncier.gov.mg
Conclusions

• Informational gaps or myopia for describing local situations
• Learning from the South
• Developing for a given territory permanent and internal resources for auto-observation and auto-analysis
• Combining quantitative and qualitative data