

Common Pool Resources Management: Are Common Property Rights a Good Alternative to External Regimes?

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Abstract

As a result of the profound influence of theories of collective action such as The Tragedy of the Commons, The Prisoner's Dilemma Game, and The Logic of Collective Action, policy analysts have recommended external management, either by government control or market participation, as the most efficient option to govern common pool resources. However, due to the repeated failure of the external intervention, a new alternative has been considered, the common property rights. Due to their long term interaction with the resources, local users have developed mechanisms, rules, and institutions that can be used to favor the sustainable management of the resources. Recognizing these benefits in places where the government has nationalized the resources, it has started a process of decentralization of property rights of natural resources to local users. The purpose of this paper is twofold, to analyze the potential benefits that a common property right regime has in the management of the environmental resources, and to evaluate which are the key factors for this arrangement to succeed. In this endeavor, the case of the Irrigation systems in Philippines is presented.