

Submitted Abstract

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>> SYNTHESIZE MOUNTAINS OF KNOWLEDGE <<

Abstract

In mountain and alpine areas, resources have been governed through community-based institutions in a collective and subsidiarity manner, who ensured stewardship and local decision-making over the resources. Community-based institutions for resource governance are referred to as commons in the literature. Such institutions base on cooperative mechanisms that reallocate gains from resource extraction and reinvest them to restore and strengthen local commons and increase resilience to external factors. Because of their relevance, there is the need to understand local impacts of global changes on commons and co-produce community-based solutions to face challenges and go in the wished direction, fitting local specificities and global challenges, such as biodiversity and climate crisis as well as increasing social and economic disparities. The study aims at exploring which reconfigurations enable community-based resource management to foster sustainable development. The study focuses on a pilot project in two mountain communities in Northern Italy about setting up community entrepreneurship relating to community-based tourism for the revitalization of collective resources for the thriving of the community in a sustainable, just and ecological manner. Studies on the role of knowledge co-production in the process of innovation of community-based resource management in response to ongoing changes in mountain social ecological systems are missing. The questions we aim to respond to are: what is the outcome of knowledge co-production in terms of reconfigurations in community-based resource management? What are the perceptions of community members and external local stakeholders on how collective resources can be revitalized and managed as drivers of community sustainable development? We adopted a transdisciplinary approach and a research action methodology to co-design intervention and research aims and tools. We applied the social-ecological system framework coupled with social innovation scholarship. Data from co-designed focus groups, survey, participatory activities, interviews and participant observation have been collected and analysed using a qualitative content analysis method. Results and interpretations are presented on: transformations in perceptions of the resource, in actors and stakeholders' constellations, in deliberation processes, as well as a discussion on the role of knowledge co-development in the study. The study results have been submitted for publication to Mountain Research and Development Journal.