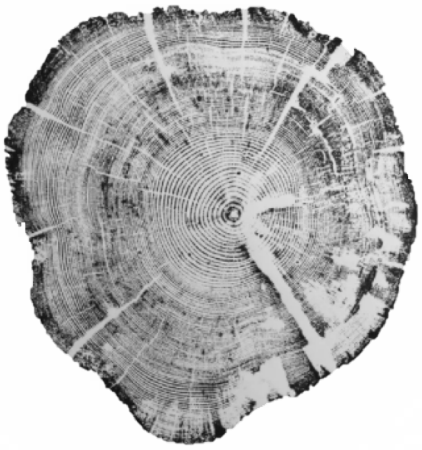
The influence of REDD+ on access to natural resources for forest-dependent communities in Cross River State, Nigeria

A Master Thesis submitted to the **Environmental Policy Group**



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The influence of REDD+ on access to natural resources for forest-dependent communities in Cross River State, Nigeria

Master thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in International Development Studies at Wageningen University, the Netherlands.

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Abstract

REDD+ entered the global stage over a decade ago as a relatively simple way to ease the climate impacts of land-use change. However, REDD+ has not evolved as expected by those who had high expectations of the initiative. Studies have not only indicated how the conservation programme encountered difficulties in terms of efficiency in reducing forest degradation but also how it can have reverse impacts on access to natural resources for forest-dependent communities. When looking into the issue of access to natural resources under REDD+, a prime focus has been placed on its connection with insecure property rights. However, property rights do not tell the full story about access. Ribot and Peluso (2003) came up with a wide array of access mechanisms to move beyond debates focused solely on property rights. The aim of this thesis is to widen the debate on access for forest-dependent communities under REDD+ by using the case of the REDD+ readiness phase in CRS, Nigeria. It hereby brought together existing literature, enriched by expert interviews. This thesis shows how using a wide perspective on access can contribute to an all-encompassing understanding of how forest-dependent communities could be influenced on their access under such a conservation programme. It showed how not only legal mechanisms but also structural and relational mechanisms played a role in the limited ability for communities in CRS under REDD+ to derive benefits from natural resources. It appears that although imposed restrictions can be outbalanced by a new type of access in theory, that this can be hard to realize in practice. It is therefore suggested for REDD+ projects and programmes to look beyond the REDD+ rhetoric and to reconsider the place given to communities to make sure their access is at least not negatively influenced, and ideally, to ensure they can obtain substantial benefits. This is especially important given the increase in similar offsetting programmes across the globe.

Key concepts: REDD+; Access; forest-dependent communities; natural resources; Cross River State; Nigeria

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Firstly, I would like to extend my appreciation to my supervisor Annah Zhu for providing guidance and feedback throughout my thesis process. This thesis process included both this thesis, but also my initial and previous fieldwork proposal for Nicaragua. This year took an unexpected turn because of COVID-19 which made the initial fieldwork, which was all set up, impossible to continue with. I would like to thank both Annah Zhu and Eira Carballo Cárdenas for their genuine and always thoughtful help throughout my entire thesis process. In addition, I cannot thank the interviewees that took their time to engage in my thesis enough. Without you, this thesis would not have been possible to do. Also, I would like to show gratitude to my family, friends and housemates who helped me through this, sometimes certainly difficult, process. You helped me in finding the motivation to continue to work from home and to not give up. Finally, I highly appreciate the thoughtful comments and recommendations from my brother and from my boyfriend, thank you.

Foreword

My interest in conservation initiatives and its implications for forest-dependent people started at my job at a restaurant. One tree would be planted in African countries every time someone bought a beer. I wondered what this would imply for people living close to these forests; Would this imply that they would lose access? Would it positively contribute to their livelihood standards? This is where my interest in carbon forestry and forest conservation began. As REDD+ is a global conservation initiative that values carbon being stored in forests, I decided to choose this topic for further research.

List of Figures and Tables

Abbreviations

ATF: Anti-deforestation Task Force
CAMM: Conservation Association of the Mbe Mountains
CIFOR: Center for International Forestry Research
COP: Conference of the Parties
CRS: Cross River State
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization
FCPF: Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FPIC: Free Prior and Informed Consent
GHG: Green House Gas
NDC: Nationally Determined Contributions
MRV: Monitoring, Reporting and Verification
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
NICFI: Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative
NTFP: Non-Timber Forest Products
PES: Payment for Ecosystem Services
UN: United Nations
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WCS: Wildlife Conservation Society

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Anthropogenic climate change has emerged as one of the most pressing issues of this time. Plenty of alarming developments, ranging from changing weather patterns threatening food production to rising sea levels posing the threat of flooding, show the direct need for action. In the absence of global and national mitigation and adaption actions, it will become harder and more expensive to adapt to these changes (United Nations, n.d.). It is in this context that the international community has focused on adaptation and mitigation actions regarding the forestry sector. The forestry sector has namely been under pressure by developments such as agricultural expansion, infrastructural expansion, logging, and fires (UNESCAP, 2012). As a consequence, the destructive land-use change of tropical forests contributes to 10-15 % of the global carbon dioxide emissions (DiGiano et al., 2016).

In recognition of the importance of the protection of tropical forestry, international actors have developed REDD+: a global forest management tool to combat global climate change (UN-REDD, n.d.). REDD+ is spearheaded by the United Nations (UN), and values the carbon that is stored in forests as a way to reward tropical developing[1] countries for conserving forests, through support from the private sector and multilateral and government funds. This might take the form of direct payments or carbon offsets[2]. REDD+ can also help developing countries to meet their established Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) as set under the Paris Agreement (Bertazzo, 2019). The framework began with a narrow focus on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in developing countries (RED). This was proposed by Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica who were among the first parties in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that promoted this framework. Once the initial deforestation framework was in place, it was extended to include the avoidance of forest degradation (REDD). The final framework now also includes sustainable management of forests, enhancement of carbon stocks, and improved forest protection (REDD+) (Angelsen et al., 2018). Ever since, more than 50 countries have developed national-REDD+ initiatives; dozens of subnational governments have adopted nested approaches; and over 350 local REDD+ projects have been carried out across the globe (Duchelle et al., 2019).

The performance of these projects and programmes have mainly been measured by how much carbon they have sequestered or enhanced (Arts et al., 2019). Of course, assessing the amount of sequestered or enhanced carbon is of importance. However, the relevance of forests reaches further than sequestering carbon alone. Forests also contribute significantly to the livelihoods of forest-dependent people (UNESCAP, 2012). It is crucial for their livelihoods, their cultures, their institutions, and their social relations (Bayrak & Marafa, 2016). Assessing carbon forestry thus also goes beyond the scope of only measuring carbon sequestration, as it is equally important to assess how these initiatives impact the lives of forest-dependent people, who often find themselves in marginalised situations.

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[1] I am aware of the critique related to the terms 'developed' and 'developing' countries. Due to a lack of a better alternative, I will use the terms throughout this thesis as they are convenient for communication while keeping in mind its critiques. Critiques relate i.a. to the superiority of Western values that the word development holds (Banuri, 1990, p.35-36). Especially as it is unavoidably linked to "*the words with which it was formed—growth, evolution, maturation*". Development, therefore, implies a certain desired change towards a modern, capitalist country. It implies "*a step from simple to complex, from inferior to superior and from worse to better*" (Esteva, 1992, p.19). Hereby all the existing capacities, differences, and knowledge in these contexts seem to be omitted.

[2] Carbon offsetting is the process of compensating for one's emissions (typically measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide-equivalent (CO_2e)) by funding carbon emission reductions elsewhere (McAfee, 2016).

As REDD+ incorporates much of the world's last remaining forests into the economic system, it inevitably opens up new forms of capital accumulation which can influence land-use patterns and access to natural resources (Hein et al., 2020). When REDD+ was first announced, concerns were expressed about the potential risk that those living in and around forested areas could lose access to their land (Dehm, 2016). Studies have shown that payment for environmental services – including REDD+ projects – can limit access to forest resources (see Corbera et al., 2007; Peskett et al., 2011; Poudel et al., 2015). This can pose a hardship for the poorest households especially, as it is hard for them to access alternative livelihood resources (Corbera et al., 2007).

This thesis focuses on the case study of the REDD+ readiness phase in Cross River State (CRS), Nigeria[3]. At the time of Nigeria's REDD+ support, a financial crisis took place which diminished government revenue. The former Governor of CRS, Lyel Imoke, therefore sought for 'creative funding strategies' which included carbon financing by introducing three REDD+ pilots. To prepare itself for REDD+, CRS declared a total ban on timber harvesting enforced by a militarised Anti-deforestation Task Force (ATF). It was against this background of REDD+ in Nigeria, that issues were raised concerning access to natural resources for forest-dependent communities (Asiyanbi, 2016).

Despite the current impasse of REDD+ in CRS due to a lack of funding and political will, strategies are being developed to continue with the second phase. The area of focus includes several community forests and is often referred to as the country's 'last rainforest'. The forests in this region have been under pressure for decades as the area serves as one of the largest producers of export crops in Nigeria, generating large revenue flows (Krause et al., 2019). This thesis focuses on two out of the three REDD+ pilot areas; the Mbe/Afi and the Ekuri forest cluster. It focuses on communities that control a relatively large part of these forests. In the Mbe/Afi forest cluster, the focus is on the Kanyang II and Buanchor communities. In the Ekuri cluster, the focus is on the Okokori, the new and old Ekuri, and the Iko-Esai communities.

This thesis provides new insights into factors influencing access to natural resources for forest communities in CRS under REDD+, and adds to a more informed debate on access under REDD+ in general. This research, therefore, mainly builds upon A Theory of Access, developed by Ribot and Peluso (2003), to categorize both legal and structural and relational mechanisms that influence access. It hereby brings together existing literature, enriched by expert interviews. Nigeria appears not to be a unique case in the sense that restrictions are being imposed with inadequate compensation outcomes. The militant nature by which REDD+ has been implemented in CRS, however, does make it a more extreme, although not unique (see Cavanagh et al., 2015), case compared to other REDD+ initiatives that share issues of access.

Problem statement

The establishment of REDD+ has drawn a lot of attention to the connection between community property rights and environmental services that benefit the wider public. Concerns have been raised on how restrictive boundaries around REDD+ projects, setting "*unfamiliar temporal and spatial rules*", could have negative consequences for those communities being dependent upon the forest for their survival (Leggett & Lovell, 2012 p.6). Such concerns are, among others, a result of experiences from the traditional approach to conservation efforts by creating protected areas. Such an approach has often led to the overriding of community rights whereby the value of access to natural resources for these people have often not been well taken into account by the public that benefits (White & Martin, 2002).

[3] Officially the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

For REDD+ to be fully implemented, it must progress through three stages. The first stage is the readiness phase which is considered to function as *"the foundation for successful REDD+ programs"* (Lujan & Silva-Chávez, 2018, p.6). This first phase includes the development of REDD+ strategies or action plans; the formation of policies and measures through stakeholder consultations; the development of capacities in Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV); and possibly the start of demonstration activities (Lujan & Silva-Chávez, 2018). Large financial flows have gone to countries that started with their REDD+ readiness phase and the associated pilot projects to test the initiatives. These early stages were already aligned with concerns from a wide range of actors, warning that forest-dependent communities would lose out on the initiative (Corbera, 2012). Research on the first stages of REDD+, looking into the issue of access for communities, have mainly focused on insecure legal rights (see Agyei, 2012; Bernard et al., 2014; Beymer-Farris & Bassett, 2012; Corbera et al., 2011; Dokken et al, 2014; Leggett & Lovell, 2012; Paudel et al., 2015; Sunderlin et al., 2014). Studies on REDD+ further down the line have also shown this same issue of access from a property rights perspective (see Barbier & Tesfaw, 2012; Broegaard, et al., 2017; Kansanga & Luginaah, 2019; Larson et al., 2013; Samndong & Vatn, 2018; Sunderlin et al., 2018). This indicates that the issues found in these early stages will likely continue as projects and programmes evolve. A broader elaboration on these studies is outlined under chapter 3.

The focus on rights might not come as a surprise since there is a consensus among forestry specialists that secure tenure rights are of importance to achieve sustainable forestry projects (Friedman, 2020). This issue is often highlighted when focusing on REDD+ since the majority of rainforest nations have insecure land tenure systems for communities in place. Although a lot of countries do recognize customary land tenure systems, a mere 10% of global land is legally recognized as being in the hands of forest-dependent communities. Africa contains most of the community land; 79% of the land is being held by communities, while only 27% is officially recognized under national law (Frechette et al., 2018). In recognition of this often discussed topic, almost every national REDD+ preparation proposal acknowledges the importance of clarifying land tenure as a foundation for effective results (Sommerville, 2013).

However, 'secure' legal rights do not tell the full story about access. Ribot and Peluso (2003) came up with a wide array of access mechanisms, to move beyond debates focused solely on property rights. They explain:

"Our move from concepts of property and tenure to access locates property as one set of factors in a larger array of institutions, social and political-economic relations, and discursive strategies that shape benefit flows" (Ribot & Peluso, 2003, p.157).

Such a broad analysis of access for forest-dependent communities under REDD+ is missing. Creating such an analysis is, however, important as the wide range of access mechanisms expose not only how access might be limited under REDD+, but also the potentials to derive benefits from the programme to outweigh restrictions. Figure 1 indicates the two ways in which REDD+ changes access: it for example reduces access to natural resources by restricting the collection of fuelwoods and it can increase access to the benefits generated by REDD+ projects by implementing alternative income-generating activities.

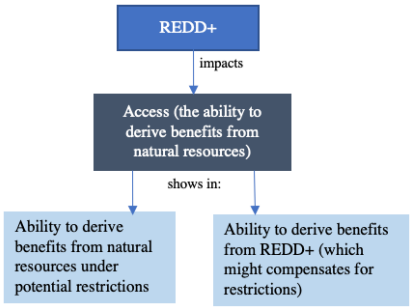

Figure 1. How REDD+ impacts access

Source created by the author.

This thesis focuses on the readiness phase of REDD+ in CRS, Nigeria. Research has reflected on restrictive community access under REDD+ by mainly focusing on land and carbon rights, institutional arrangements, and the lack of community inclusiveness (see Asiyanbi, 2016; Isyaku, 2017; Isyaku, Arhin, & Asiyanbi, 2017; Nuesiri, 2015; Nuesiri, 2017; Schoneveld, 2014). An all-encompassing analysis of access to this case, however, is still missing. This thesis has the aim to widen the debate on access for forest-dependent communities under REDD+ by using the case of CRS in Nigeria.

This is relevant for two reasons. Firstly, since the projects in CRS are at an impasse, it creates the space to reconsider strategies. By having an overview of factors influencing access, it can help to reconsider the place given to communities in these projects to make sure their needs are well considered when the projects would be picked up again. Secondly, it can function as worthy factors to take into account when considering the place given to communities under REDD+ schemes in general. This to make sure their access is at least not negatively influenced, and ideally, to ensure they can obtain substantial benefits from the initiative. This is especially important given the increase in similar offsetting programmes across the globe.

Research questions

This study will research the different access mechanisms of forest-dependent people in CRS in the context of the REDD+ initiative by starting with an investigation into the different benefits that the state government and forest-dependent communities derive from the forest. Next, an investigation into the legal access mechanisms is performed, followed by the analysis of structural and relational access mechanisms. These steps are formulated as the below-mentioned research questions.

Main research question: *How has REDD+ influenced the ability of forest-dependent communities to derive benefits from natural resources in Cross River State, Nigeria?*

Sub-questions:

1. Which benefits do forest-dependent communities and the state government derive from natural resources in Cross River State?
2. What is the role of legal mechanisms in the access for forest-dependent communities to natural resources?
3. What is the role of structural and relational mechanisms in regulating access for forest-dependent communities to natural resources?

By answering these questions, this thesis moves away from more traditional debates on access to natural resources that solely cover property rights and ownership. The first research question helps to see the different benefits that the state government and communities derive from the forest under REDD+ pilot areas. This helps to place these actors in the context of REDD+ in CRS. The second research question takes legal mechanisms of access into account, thereby covering property rights which are considered to be an important access component. However, it also includes illegal access, acknowledging the complex ways in which access to resources is often determined. The third research question emphasizes the belief that some other mechanisms, apart from legal rights are also of importance in shaping access. Answering these three questions contributes to knowledge on access to natural resources in the context of REDD+ by covering the wide range of access components to natural resources. This thesis demonstrates the importance to use a wide array of mechanisms to understand the complex issue of access to natural resources for forest-dependent communities.

Thesis outline

This thesis is organized as follows. Chapter two covers the theory and methods. This starts with a section on legal pluralism to elaborate on different property rights systems that often exist in REDD+ contexts. Then there is a shift to political ecology which introduces the school where A Theory of Access from Ribot and Peluso is derived from. This theory serves as the guiding lens for this research. Following is an elaboration on the research design, which covers a systematic literature review and expert interviews. This chapter ends with a clarification of concepts. Chapter 3 then explains the establishment of REDD+ and includes a section on what we have learned so far on the initiative by reviewing the literature. Thereafter the results of the case study are covered in chapter 4. Chapter 5 covers the discussion of this thesis which evaluates the data and shows how it fits wider scientific debates. It also includes a reflection on the derived data and suggests further research areas. This thesis ends with a concluding chapter that answers the main research question.

Chapter 2: Theory and Methods

This chapter elaborates on the main building blocks of the framework. Also, there is a section on additional concepts that helps to create a better understanding of the concepts that are used throughout the thesis. Next, there is the methodology section that generates an understanding of how the data was obtained. This methodology section also includes a short elaboration on the selection of the communities and the validity of this case study.

Theoretical framework

The main focus of this thesis is on access to natural resources for forest-dependent people, whereby property rights are an oft-recurring topic within this debate. The first section will therefore focus on legal pluralism to elaborate on different property rights systems that often exist in places where REDD+ initiatives are implemented. Then there is a shift to political ecology, more specifically to Ribot and Peluso's theory of access. This theory goes beyond property rights and outlines a broad set of access mechanisms. It is supplemented with a section on environmental values. It ends with an outline of concepts used throughout this thesis.

Legal pluralism

Property rights can be conceptualized as "*claims to use or control resources by an individual or group that are recognized as legitimate by a larger collectively and that are protected through law*" (Meinzen-Dick & Pradhan, 2002, p.6). Legal anthropology bases the recognition of claims over natural resources on rules. Such rules outline which actors have rights, the type of rights, and the conditions by which the actors "*establish, maintain, transfer, and lose rights*" (Meinzen-Dick & Pradhan, 2002, p.7). However, it is often the case that different laws are highlighting different rights for different actors. In a context of such plurality of laws, it happens that different claims are made by different people in their negotiation to control a natural resource. This relates to the concept of legal pluralism. This concept has gained popularity by social scientists by the turn of the century. The phenomenon of legal pluralism has existed throughout history, however (von Benda-Beckmann & Turner, 2018).

Legal pluralism, explained by Franz and Keebet von Benda Beckman (2006), refers to a multiple set of legal constructions that co-exists, often in contrary ways, in one domain. This implies that legal pluralism moves away from conventional conceptions of property rights that consider property as statute law, which may originate with state legislatures. Legal pluralism rather recognizes the co-existence of other legal orders such as customary, religious, local, and project laws. This does not mean that these different legal orders have the same magnitude of power. It is for instance possible in a conflictual context between the state and local forest users that state law is more powerful in appropriating forestland than local property law (Meinzen-Dick & Pradhan, 2002). While legal pluralism is applicable in almost every context, it is particularly important to take into account in contexts of conflict where there are complexities around claims (von Benda-Beckmann, 2001). Such complexities are depicted in figure 2 which shows overlapping land tenure systems within a project area.

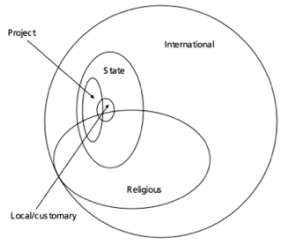

Figure 2. Legal Pluralism

Source from Meinzen-Dick & Pradhan (2002, p.4).

Political ecology

Complexities around claims to natural resources may also be witnessed in areas where REDD+ is implemented. REDD+ initiatives are implemented in complex territories with long histories of interactions between people and ecosystems and the legacies of external interventions (Leach & Scoones, 2015). Paul Robbins warns, in outlining the conservation and control thesis, that control of natural resources can be taken away from local people by officials and global interests in the name of the preservation of ecosystems. Conservation studies show that actors, in their aim to control natural resources, often depict local production practices as unsustainable, even when such local practices hold a long history of sustainable use of natural resources (Robbins, 2004). The school of political ecology is concerned with such issues of access to natural resources and corresponding power relationships with the arrival of conservation efforts.

Political ecology emerged in the early 1970s next to the expanding environmental movement of the era. The anthropologist Eric Wolf was among the first who expressed his critique about cultural ecology and ecological anthropology, as he highlighted the importance to "*contextualize local ecological realities with the broader political ecology*" (Robbins, 2007, p.1385). Piers Blaikie argues that in order to explain environmental degradation that one has to put smallholder households, especially in developing countries, in their wider political-economic context (Bassett & Peimer, 2015). The mix of political, economic, and cultural-ecological perspectives, that try to explain changes in the environment which bring the uneven distribution of costs and benefits, is a central premise to the school of political ecology (Bryant, 1997). Since political ecology is such a transdisciplinary field, it is more considered to be a theoretical approach than a theory (Nygren & Rikoon, 2008).

A theory of Access

'A theory of Access', developed by political ecologists Jesse C. Ribot and Nancy Lee Peluso, lends itself well to this thesis. In this theory, they critically discuss the way the term 'access' is often, to their understanding inadequately, operationalized within the property and natural resource studies. They stress the importance to move from traditional property debates that mainly focus on property rights and legal ownership, towards a recognition of a broad set of factors that influence access to natural resources. Ribot and Peluso (2003, p.153), therefore, define access as "*the ability to benefit from things—including material objects, persons, institutions, and symbols*". This definition of access focuses on who benefits from things and trough what processes. It assumes that different people have different 'bundles of power'. Ribot and Peluso see power in line with Foucault as "*embodied in and exercised through various mechanisms, processes and social relations – that affect people's ability to benefit from resources*" (ibid., p.154). 'Bundles of power' relate therefore to a set of relationships that enable different people to gain, control, and maintain access to natural resources. To control refers to the power to mediate the

access of others and also the power to exclude. To gain or maintain access is mediated via relations with those who have control (ibid.).

Two mechanisms

Ribot and Peluso make the differentiation between two mechanisms by which access is gained, controlled, or maintained. The first mechanism is 'rights-based access' which is divided into legal and illegal forms of access. The legal-based access applies to property relations and legal pluralism, concepts often used by Franz and Keebet Von Benda-Beckmann, as explained earlier. Ribot and Peluso (2003) praise the concept of legal pluralism as this moves the focus from solely legal-property arenas towards arenas of less formal social relations. Ribot and Peluso complement right-based access with illegal access. Illegal access is a form of direct access whereby the benefits obtained from the natural resource are not socially sanctioned by law or society. Illegal access works through coercion (through threat or force) and stealth and thereby influences the relations between people who maintain, control of gain access to natural resources.

Ribot and Peluso (2020) recognize that rights-based benefits indeed are part of the access repertoire, but argue that it only covers one mechanism of gaining access. They argue that although rights can be a way to gain access, that property and access can still coexist in uneasy ambiguity. This is in line with studies of Sikor and Lund who have focused on the relationship between access and property rights. As such, they developed the concept of the so-called 'first grey zone', which is a zone between "*what people have [property] rights to and what they merely have access to*" (Sikor & Lund, 2009, p.2). It is for example possible that a smallholder farmer holds legal property rights to possess a piece of land, but that he does not have the right to enter markets as this access is mediated by another actor. This takes away the ability to let the smallholder farmer benefit from the natural resource. The access theory developed by Ribot and Peluso also highlights the possibility of this disjuncture between rights and diverse practices. Such a component of a lack of access to the market, next to legal property rights, is highlighted by the mechanism of structural and relational mechanisms of access.

Structural and relational mechanisms of access operate alongside the right-based mechanism. These mechanisms as outlined by Ribot and Peluso are influenced by Piers Blaikie (1985) who developed 'access qualifications'. Blaikie's access qualifications refer to capital and social identity that, as he argues, influence who can access natural resources. Ribot and Peluso extended Blaikie's qualification by examining "*how technology, capital, markets, knowledge, authority, social identities, and social relations can shape or influence access*" (Ribot & Peluso, 2003, p.165). Important to note is that these categories may facilitate, complement, or oppose other access mechanisms. Below it is described how each of these dimensions can influence access.

Access to technology can facilitate actors to benefit from natural resources. Access to advanced irrigation systems can cause someone to enjoy the resource for example (Ribot & Peluso, 2003).

Access to capital can be used to buy the right to have access control. It can also be used to maintain access when this access to capital is used to "*buy influence over people who control resources*". Access to capital can also advance someone's' power as this can foster access to important state officials for example (ibid., p.165).

Access to markets is often referred to as the capacity "*to gain, control, or maintain entry into exchange relations*". The ability to benefit from a resource can be influenced when for example international merchants begin to extract resources, which can affect property rights (ibid., p.166).

Access to labour is beneficial when labour is needed to derive benefits from the resource. Those who can for example find workers to help on a coffee plantation can make the owner of the land, who controls the labour opportunities, benefit from the resource (ibid.).

Access to knowledge includes beliefs, ideological controls, and discursive practices, as well as negotiated systems of meaning, which all influence the access to a resource. A certain discourse can, for example, influence access to natural resources. Ribot and Peluso explain how Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) use the term 'the global commons' to legitimize their interventions in the name of environmental protection. This discursive method can influence their access to natural resources (ibid.).

Access to Authority includes legal and illegal forms and tends to be influenced through economic capacities and social relations which can influence the access of people to resources. People with low economic capacities may lack money to travel to a state official which can restrict their access to a resource (ibid.).

Access through social identity includes "*groupings by age, gender, ethnicity, religion, status, profession, place of birth, common education, or other attributes that constitute social identity*". It is for example possible that a community leader who controls resources can decide to allocate resource access along patriarchal lines that allows men to benefit mainly from the resource (ibid, p.171).

Access via the negotiation of other social relations. Similar to identity, social relations, such as friendship and patronage, are important to have access. Ribot and Peluso are influenced by the work of Sara Berry on access. Berry says that: "*since access to resources [depends], in part, on the ability to negotiate successfully, people tended to invest in the means of negotiation as well as the means of production per se*" (as cited in ibid, p.171). This thus means that certain identity-based relationships can influence the benefits that someone derives from resources.

Environmental values

According to Ribot and Peluso, it is of importance, before identifying the different mechanisms in place, to map the flow of benefits of interests. It says that this first step can be "*as straightforward as examining the farm-gate profits from a particular crop*". It may also be as "*complex as identifying the flow of benefits from that crop throughout its entire trajectory*" (Ribot & Peluso, 2003, p.161). This first step is important for gaining an idea about the most important stakeholders and their potential different interests and perceptions about the same forest land and forest resources. Winter (2005) explains as such that the management of natural resources is often a complex terrain where different stakeholders hold different values. Despite the inclusion of this first step, there is not much elaboration on how to categorize the benefits. To give more direction to this first step, it will be supplemented with environmental values.

Environmental values are explained by Schultz et al. (2004, p.32) as "*those values that are specifically related to nature or that which have been found to correlate with specific environmental attitude or concern*". This correlation is shown in several studies which concern the management of natural resources (see Manning & Valliere, 1996; Stern & Dietz, 1994; Williams, 1979). Different and sometimes competing values can exist within a specific context. Within the context of natural resource management, there are two relevant values to be distinguished: instrumental and intrinsic values. Intrinsic values refer to benefits for nature, while instrumental values refer to benefits for humans. Instrumental values are in turn to be differentiated between 'direct-use' and 'non-use' values of natural resources. Direct-use includes activities such as farming logging, mining, and gathering Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP). Non-use refers to indirect benefits for people and relates to a good feeling.

Non-use values include in turn existence value and bequest value. Existence value relates to the enjoyment that people derive from the existence of natural resources. Bequest value relates to the conservation of natural resources for future generations. This relates to a perception of benefits from the idea that natural resources will be in place for future generations (Winter, 2005).

Additional concepts

Forest-dependent people

Despite its long-continued and widespread use, the concept of forest-dependent people is often not clearly defined. Since the focus of this thesis is on forest-dependent people, developing a clear concept is important. The broad meaning of forest-dependent people often refers to people that gain benefits from forests in some way (Newton et al., 2016). The concept implies some degree of reliance on forests. Peoples' livelihood may rely on their access to forest-derived benefits. These benefits can include both physical resources and subjective wellbeing in terms that environmental services support cultural services for example. This implies that their livelihood will end up in difficulties when forest access is reduced (ibid.).

The risk with the concept of 'forest-dependence' is that is can easily be used loosely which results in referring to any people who someway rely on forest products. It can be argued that someone who relies on paper or wood from the forest is dependent on the forest to some extent. However, this person might not entirely be dependent on this usage for its livelihood existence. To guard for the misuse of the concept, Neil Byron and Michael Arnold have made a typology of different types of forest users. They make a differentiation between those who rely on forest use for their livelihood existence and have no alternative, and those who make use of products from the forest products or enrol in economic activities which involve forests but do this as a matter of choice. When I use forest-depend people throughout this thesis I refer to those who are more or less directly dependent on forests and its natural resources for their livelihood existence. These people can be divided into two dimensions. The first relates to those who live inside the forests and depend on it this land and its resources for their subsistence basis. People in this dimension often include indigenous peoples, hunter-gathers, or ethnic minorities. This implies that those people often live outside the political land economic spheres of society. The second dimension relates to people that live close to the forest. These people are often involved in small scale farming and use forest products regularly for their livelihood exitance (Fisher et al., 1997).

Based on the abovementioned sources, the notion of forest-dependence that will be applied throughout this thesis will refer to: " *[People that live in or close to forests] in relative poverty in substantially-forested developing countries [and whose livelihood existence depends on environmental services derived from the forest]* " (Newton et al., 2016, p.388).

Carbon tenure

As forestry-related adaptation and mitigations initiatives bring land tenure arrangements to the stage, it is no surprise that the question of carbon tenure is also set afore. Initiatives as REDD+ include carbon credits which can be seen as a form of property. The concept has entered the REDD+ debates relatively recently (Karsenty et al., 2014). Within the literature, and at the international scale, there is often no clear definition of carbon tenure which leads to diverging views on this subject (Loft et al., 2015). Carbon rights can be in the hands of those owning or controlling land. However, carbon rights can also be considered as "*self-contained, intangible assets with a monetary value*"(Duchelle et al., 2018, p.95). Such an ambiguous status of carbon tenure creates issues for the implementation of results-based

REDD+ activities. This poses uncertainties for powerless households specifically as it is hard to demand such rights that are not yet officially recognized. To create at least clarity on the concept used throughout this thesis, the following conceptualizing of carbon tenure will be applied: "*the right to sell, trade, and purchase a carbon credit*" (Duchelle et al., 2018, p.95).

Methodology

I conducted a systematic literature research, complemented by expert interviews to strengthen findings and to fill existing gaps. Below, a thorough explanation of the processes of the systematic literature review and expert interviews are described.

Systematic literature review

A systematic literature review implies a more or less systematic way of collecting and interpreting previous research to contribute to answering the research questions. This type of research integrates different findings from multiple empirical findings which can advance knowledge that no single case study can (Snyder, 2019). I synthesized studies that relate to my research topic by using different data platforms. Google Scholar has been used to search for scientific literature by doing a quick search on the topic. Google Scholar provides limited possibilities to combine numerous search terms with Boolean operators, which makes it limited in providing a more narrow overview of the literature on a certain topic. Besides, Scopus and WUR Library have therefore been used to search for scientific literature. These are well-established database platforms that hold a broad variety of peer-reviewed journals and have many Boolean operators. A short overview of the systematic literature review is included in figure 3. Which is also more broadly described in the following section.

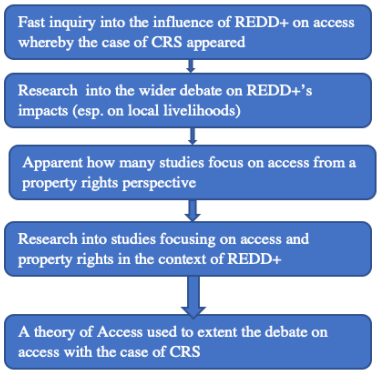

Figure 3. Systematic literature research

First, by using The WUR Library platform, I used the search terms "REDD+" AND "access" AND "communities". This resulted in the article from Krause et al., (2019) on the REDD+ pilot projects in CRS and showed issues relating to access to natural resources for communities.

To first gain a broad understanding of REDD+'s livelihood implications, I looked into the effects of REDD+ by reading into peer-reviewed articles, books, and reports from NGOs. I hereby started with Google Scholar, using the search terms "REDD+" AND "livelihood impacts"[4]. Hereafter I used more specific terms once I gained an idea on the potential effects of REDD+. As such, I used Scopus which

[4] Hereby the book of Suich, Tacconi, & Mahanty (2010) has been used which includes an overview of livelihood implications because of REDD+ across the continents of Africa, South-America and Asia.

allows for stricter filtering whereby the used terms are depicted in table 1. The terms were presented in the title, abstract, or key-words, and excluded the natural sciences and findings from before 2008. A selection of 26 studies (based on reading abstracts and titles mainly) used throughout my thesis for providing background to findings and to generate contexts are included in the appendix (1).

By looking into REDD+'s impact on local livelihoods, it was apparent that many studies focused on access from a property rights perspective. To elaborate further on this, Scopus was used by applying only the terms of (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("REDD+")) AND (access) AND ("community" OR "communities"), hereby excluding studies before 2008 and from the natural sciences. Scopus was then used by entering the terms of (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("REDD+")) AND (access) AND ("land tenure" OR "property rights"). Again, studies before 2008 and those from the natural sciences were excluded. Finally, "REDD+" AND "access" ("property rights" OR "land tenure") were included in Google Scholar and by reading into abstracts and titles, additional articles were selected. These latter found studies were checked if the WUR Library platform held them to guarantee for trustworthy articles. This resulted in the total selection of 14 articles, based on mainly reading the abstracts and titles. In the appendix (2+3) the selection of the specific articles that were used to create the debate on access is included. A division was made between studies that focused only on the first readiness phase and those on projects and programmes further down the line. This, to make sure that issues that would appear in the first phase (where the case of this thesis has gone through) were also in place in further stages.

For the theoretical framework, I used scientific literature from the school of political ecology and guiding concepts of the study. I used the internet with the abovementioned data platforms to find scientific articles and books for accessing these data. I started broadly by using Google Scholar. I entered the search terms 'political ecology and conservation' and started reading the first found studies. I hereby used the snowball method to find relevant data by using a key document on the subject of political ecology as a starting point. A Theory of Access has been selected because of recognizing its importance on the debate on access.

For the selected case, I have used Scopus and used the key words "REDD+" and "Nigeria". The terms were presented in the title, abstract, or key-words. This gave 22 hits and by reading the abstracts and omitting natural scientific studies, the selection of 14 articles relevant to this case was made. Also, by again using the snowball method, an addition of one PhD study has been included. The selected literature for the case study all includes (sometimes in combination with quantitative research) qualitative research methods. The inclusion of these qualitative studies on REDD+ means that I could use data that include comprehensive perspectives of forest-dependent people. Of course, qualitative research methods depend partly on the interpretation of data by the observers. This implies that if two people do the same research, that they could both come up with different findings. However, since such studies describe their methods and limitations, and because I used multiple studies enriched by expert interviews, I could tackle these potential biases to a large extent. The scientific papers that are included are peer-reviewed which ensures that its qualities are assessed. Besides scientific data, I have also used Budget Speeches of the Governor, news items, and reports written by the UN on the REDD+ cases. This, to gain a broad as possible understanding of the context and different understandings. Besides, I included a report from the Nigerian organization Social Development Integrated Centre (Social Action) which researched REDD+ in CRS. Altogether, this resulted in a total of 19 sources, as included in the appendix (4).

Besides, for the chapter on the establishment of REDD+ I have derived data by using Google Scholar using the terms 'REDD+ history'. A custom range of articles older than 2016 (the year of the Paris Agreement which was an important moment for REDD+) has been applied to include recent studies that allow for a large cover of the history of REDD+. Hereby the Research Handbook on REDD-Plus and International Law was found among the first hits. From there on, a method of snowball sampling has

been applied which helped to find other relevant information on REDD+ in general. This has been complemented with reports from the UNFCCC, which includes decisions being made at COPs, and the website of UN-REDD programme, to get a broad idea of how the initiative works. These findings from the UNFCC and UN-REDD programme were found via google.

Table 1. *Literature findings in Scopus*

Search terms	The number of findings in Scopus
"REDD+" AND "Land tenure"	116
"REDD+" AND "Property rights"	65
"REDD+" AND "traditional" AND "practises"	30
"REDD+" AND "carbon" AND (sequestration)	710
"REDD+" AND "FPIC"	19
"REDD+" AND "Alternative livelihoods"	37
"REDD+" AND "Drivers of deforestation"	174
"REDD+" AND "Financing"	85

Expert interviews

To strengthen the findings from secondary literature research and to fill existing gaps, I have conducted expert interviews. The gaps were mainly on finding the explanation of why communities found limited space in steering the programme in the directions of their needs to benefit from natural resources under the programme. By interviewing both researchers and experts included in the programme I have been able to expose certain discrepancies which serve as a way to explain why communities found restricted access. By engaging with different experts in the field of CRS specifically, it has become clear how the official rhetoric of REDD+ is also partly overtaken by those involved in the programme. The researchers were hereby valuable as they were more critical of the programme, as they had no direct stake in the programme as such. All the interviews were also helpful in understanding what was really going on with the programme at the moment. Especially as I was not able to be there myself to see what was going on and to understand how the programme has been designed exactly. As such, it became clear that REDD+ in CRS is now at an impasse, something that is not communicated via official REDD+ channels.

I have derived data from semi-structured expert interviews via Zoom and Skype[5]. Semi-structured interviews cover certain topics while it allows the interviewer to stay open for unexpected outcomes and to have a discussion with the interviewee. The expert interviews serve as a qualitative empirical research method which allows experts to share information. Experts in the field of REDD+, and especially on the case of CRS, shared knowledge that is not yet available in the literature. I emailed forty-one experts to ask for an online interview. The selection for the experts was mainly done via articles on REDD+ in CRS, and the REDD+ readiness proposal. Via the interviewees, I also received contacts for new interviews. During all of the interviews, I asked for informed consent on the use of both their answers to include in my thesis and to record the interview to transcribe them afterwards. The identities of the interviewees were secured by changing their names and keeping their identity descriptions limited (see table 2).

The free programme *Atlas.ti cloud version* was used for transcribing the interviews. The transcripts were subdivided under different topics, which made it easier to include them under the three sub-questions. The topics were divided into 5 groupings (see appendix 6) to be able to relate the 15 different codes (see appendix 5) to my sub-questions.

[5] These are video-calling platforms.

Table 2. *Expert interviews*

Idris-Post-doc researcher
Michael-NGO worker
Victor-Researcher
William-Community representative
David- CRS REDD+ official
Daniel-Researcher
Mia-REDD+ specialist

Selection of the communities and project areas

The decision to select the six communities was based on the large areas that they control. Besides, these were the communities that were included in the literature on REDD+ in CRS that has been used for this research. The studies where I derived my data, and the expert interviewees, have also been involved in the two clusters (so except for the mangrove) and have focused on these communities. One study explained the inaccessibility to access the mangrove area wherefore no data could be selected. As I have used the method of snowball sampling for generating interviews, it was more likely to engage with those that worked within these clusters as well. The findings from this thesis thus relate to these clusters and communities alone. Besides additional information on the Ekuri and Iko-Esai, and to a smaller amount Kanyang II and Buanchor, there was not a lot of additional information to be found on the Okori community. The extensive study of Isyaki also sampled these communities, and this thesis derived important information from that research. Isyaki applied a Q-methodology, which is generally used to measure subjectivities among participants who rank presented statements. I have mainly derived information for the chapter on environmental values from a section from his study whereby 30 participants, 6 from every community, were selected for that method. The forest as a source of survival, underpinning the direct-use value, is according to his study the most widely shared discourse among the participants of the communities. Another common feature across the communities (with an eigenwaarde from 2.67) was on the discourse of 'forest is beautiful'. Also, the statement of the importance of forest for future generations was shared.

Validity

This thesis enhances a profound understanding of access for forest-dependent people through the intensive study of REDD+ in the Mbe/Afi forest cluster and the Ekuri forest cluster. The internal validity is high due to the wide variety of literature, supplemented by expert interviews. However, the findings cannot easily be generalized externally as it is context-specific. Nigeria appears still not to be a unique case in the sense that restrictions are being imposed with inadequate compensation outcomes. The militant nature by which REDD+ has been implemented in CRS, however, does make it a more extreme although not unique case compared to other REDD+ initiatives that share issues of access. The overview of access mechanisms and new insights that appeared in this thesis can as such be used as factors to take into account when implementing (REDD+) carbon offset initiatives.

Chapter 3: The establishment of REDD+ and its impacts

This chapter includes a section on the establishment of REDD+. First, the most important decisions that have been made at COPs, which led to the establishment of REDD+, are discussed and summarized in table 4. Following, REDD+'s outcomes are outlined under the section of 'What have we learned so far on REDD+?' which covers efficiency and livelihood impacts. This latter topic emphasizes access to natural resources under beginning and progressing REDD+ activities.

Establishment of REDD+

The Kyoto protocol (1997), which has mandated the European community together with 37 industrialized countries to reduce their Green House Gasses (GHGs), marked the beginning of global carbon markets. Carbon trading credits were considered 'the' way to address global climate change. The Clean Development Mechanism was hereby established which enables Annex I[6] countries to purchase carbon offsets that are produced because of emission reductions in developing countries. These purchased carbon offsets can be used by Annex I countries to meet their national emissions reduction (Newell et al., 2013). Carbon forestry specifically was picked up slowly and in small volume under the Kyoto protocol. The reason for this is that it has been considered an uncertain investment for a long time and there have been difficulties in measuring sequestered carbon (van der Gaast et al., 2018).

A framework specifically on carbon forestry was not included in the Kyoto Protocol. However, there were still ongoing discussions on the development of a specific framework on carbon forestry given its potential to reduce emissions caused by deforestation in developing countries. Continuing discussions finally led to the idea of reducing emissions from deforestation, commonly known as RED. The idea was officially proposed by Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica, supported by eight other Parties, at the COP11 in 2005 (Park et al., 2013). These two countries argued that:

"*In the absence of revenue streams from standing forests, communities and governments in many developing countries have little incentive to prevent deforestation…without a more complete market valuation, standing forests cannot overcome the economic opportunity cost associated with their conservation*" (Government of Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica, 2005, p.4).

A two-year process on the development of RED has been agreed upon in 2005. Soon, it was recognized that forest degradation also contributes significantly to emissions, and RED was subsequently launched as REDD (Arts et al., 2019). Momentum for the recognition of the forestry framework was facilitated by the influential report of the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change. The main warning of the report is that climate change poses serious economic and social disruptions and strong actions are therefore preferable. Reducing emissions from deforestation are considered as essential in the report (Stern, 2006). Also, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published the Fourth Assessment Report in 2007. This report estimates that land-use change, including deforestation and forest degradation, contributes around 17 percent of GHG emissions per year (IPCC, 2007). Parties in the UNFCCC also recognized the concern and REDD became formally recognized at the 2007 COP under the Bali Action Plan. The Bali Action Plan calls for demonstration activities and led to the establishment of three programmes for financial and technical support for capacity building (readiness),

[6] Annex I countries include both industrialized countries that were part of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in 1992 and countries with economies in transition.

which prepares a country for participation. These programmes include the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) of the World Bank; the UN-REDD programme which is an ensemble of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); and the Norwegian International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) (Skutsch, 2017). Up to 2009, there were already 100 demonstration activities and 79 REDD+ readiness activities on the way in 40 different developing countries (Parkt et al., 2013). Reference towards the plus in REDD was also made in 2007 with the inclusion of "*the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest*" (UNFCCC, 2008, p.3). This would be formally adopted in 2008. The reason for this was that REDD alone would 'disadvantage' those countries that already reduced deforestation. These countries would not be able to participate and receive incentives. Another reason was that it would be unfortunate to have forests under lock as they function as vital sources for local livelihoods. Therefore, it would be important to manage the forests in a sustainable way whereby emissions might be balanced by removals (Skutsch, 2017).

Although no treaty has been agreed upon during the COP15 in 2009, the mobilization of financial resources from six countries to foster its implementation was made as the importance of REDD+ was recognized in the global combat against climate change. Methodological guidance on REDD+ activities was also defined which, among others, included the recognition of the establishment of a participatory approach with full engagement of local communities in monitoring and reporting (UNFCCC, 2009). Despite the reference to local communities, scepticism regarding benefits for this group of people has been expressed. Human rights campaigner at Amazon Watch, Andrew E. Miller, argued that:

"*Many indigenous peoples, understandably, are sceptical that the latest silver bullet is really in their interest. In fact, serious concerns have arisen that implementation of REDD could counteract fundamental indigenous rights, in the same way that countless conservation schemes have limited local subsistence activities and led to displacement around the world*" *(as cited in Haldar, 2011, p.82).*

To protect local communities, safeguards (listed in table 3) were highlighted in 2010 at the COP16 when the Cancun Agreement was adopted. This agreement defined requesting elements for developing country Parties to partake in REDD+. These included the establishment of "*a national strategy or action plan, forest reference levels, a monitoring system, and a system for providing information on how the safeguards are being addressed throughout the implementation*" (Park et al., 2013, p.214). The aim of the safeguards is to manage risks that have been associated with REDD+ and to make sure that it actually benefits local people (Voigt & La Viña, 2016). These safeguards are expressed in broad terms which leaves considerable flexibility for participating countries to interpret them according to their ability or willingness. This led to worries among civil society organizations that these safeguards might not be able to be implemented extensively. Besides, an agreement was made on the creation of the Green Climate Fund as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of REDD+. Developing countries adopting REDD+ can have access to this fund across the three REDD+ phases (Skutsch, 2017). Finally, the three-phase approach to REDD+ implementation was also set up at the COP16. This includes the readiness phase, the implementation phase, and the result-based phase. The readiness phase includes efforts relating to building national strategies that prioritize stakeholder engagement; designing a safeguards information system; improve governance which includes progress towards secure land tenure; developing a forest emission reference level and a national forest monitoring system; and possibly start with demonstration activities (UN-REDD, 2016a). The second phase includes national strategies, policies, and actions that have been outlined in the first phase to be implemented and tested. This phase includes results-based demonstration actions and demands additional capacity building, technology development, and transfer. The last results-based phase includes the actions that are implemented at the national level and the results that are fully measured, reported, and verified. The verified emissions reduction unit equals one ton of C02 emissions reduction (UN-REDD, 2011).

Table 3 *The Seven REDD+ Safeguards*

1.Actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements.
2. Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, considering national legislation and sovereignty.
3. Respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities by taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws, and noting that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.
4. The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular, indigenous peoples and local communities, in actions referred to in paragraphs 70 and 72 of the decision.
5. Actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity. The actions referred to in paragraph 70 of this decision are not used for the conversion of natural forests but are instead used to incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services and to enhance other social and environmental benefits. It should consider the need for sustainable livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities and their interdependence on forests in most countries, reflected in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the International Mother Earth Day.
6. Actions to address the risks of reversals.
7. Actions to reduce the displacement of emissions.

Source adapted from UNFCCC (n.d.).

Little progress was made in the following COP17 and 18 and the main focus was on safeguards and the controversial issue of financing sources for REDD+ (Skutsch, 2017). More achievements were made at COP19. The Warsaw Framework on REDD+ was established which builds on the Cancun agreement and was based on seven elements. The seven elements include (1) requested information on how safeguards are followed; (2) coordination of support for the implementation of REDD+ activities; (3) modalities for national forest monitoring; (4) summary of information on safeguards from participating developing countries after the start of the implementation of REDD+; (5) technical assessment of reference emission levels; (6) modalities for MRV of forest-related emissions; (7) information on drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (UN-REDD, 2016).

The next COP made no real progress on REDD+ and discussions were again mainly focused on finance and safeguard information systems (Skutsch, 2017). However, a decade of negotiations between Parties to the UNFCC resulted in the implementation of REDD+ under the Paris Climate Agreement as an effort to slow down climate change. The agreement sets the effort to let the global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Countries have, therefore, established NDCs to reduce their emissions (The World Bank, 2015). The crucial role that forests play in offsetting human actions was acknowledged (The World Bank, 2015). More specifically, REDD+ was enshrined in the stand-alone Article 5 of the Paris Agreement. This mandates all countries to maintain and enhance GHG sinks, whereby emphasis is put on forests. Moreover, it encourages parties to implement and support REDD+ whereby both market and non-market approaches might be used (Skutsch, 2017). The Paris Agreement also established article 6.2 which states that its parties are allowed to use internationally transferred mitigation outcomes to achieve their mitigation targets. Fear has been that the combination of articles 5 and 6,2 together can cause additional accounting when both developing and developed countries use the emissions in their NDC. States think differently on this issue (Greiner et al., 2019). As such, article 6 under the Paris Agreement has been unresolved. The COP25 in 2019 could neither reach an agreement on this topic (Evans, 2019).

Table 4. *Important decisions made during COPs regarding REDD+*

2005 COP11: Announcement on a two-year process on the development of RED was agreed upon. **2007 COP13:** Formal recognition of REDD. Also, the call for demonstration activities resulted in the establishment of financial and technical support for capacity building (readiness). Also, the FCPF of the World Bank, the UN-REDD programme, and the NICFI was a fact. **2008 COP14**: The concept of REDD+ was formally adopted. **2009 COP15**: Mobilization of financial resources came from six industrialised countries to foster the implementation of REDD+. **2010 COP16:** The Cancun Agreements established the requesting elements for developing country Parties to partake in REDD+. Also, the three-phase approach to REDD+ implementation was set up together with seven REDD+ safeguards. An agreement was also on the Climate Fund. **2013 COP19:** the Warsaw Framework on REDD+ was established which builds on the Cancun agreement and is based on seven elements. **2015 COP21:** The Paris Agreement included article 5 on REDD+.

Different REDD+ paths

REDD+ processes take on different forms at different scales. At the global level, under the UNFCCC, there are debates on how to create a worldwide scheme for REDD+ that generates a global trade in emission rights. However, a multilateral agreement on this subject has not been achieved so far (WUR, n.d.). Despite, REDD+ activities are implemented at multiple scales where the subnational, national, and nested approaches exist. The subnational or project approach limits the role of governments whose task concerns mainly the approval of such activities. It enables early involvement and broad participation. Such projects are attractive to private investors and incentives mainly flow to successful outputs that relate to the delivery of carbon credits. The projects are mainly undertaken by NGOs, private corporations, individuals, and by different government agencies with an orientation towards the voluntary carbon markets. A con is a difficulty to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation at a larger scale as this approach focuses on a defined area or project site. In addition, there is the risk of leakage which means that destructive forest activities might be displaced to other areas. The national approach is conducted by the national government. A country is hereby inclined to reduce emissions during a determined period, in comparison to a historic reference level. The national government carries hereby the responsibility to enhance their policies and to distribute the credits (Angelsen et al., 2008). The FCPF and the UN-REDD programme help these countries to develop capacity building and technologies through financial help (WUR, n.d.). A pro of this approach is the potential of lower levels of leakage, lower transaction costs, and more oversight for governments to make REDD+ integrate with forestry mitigation strategies (Wunder et al., 2020). However, this approach is less likely to include private investments or local levels of government. It is also challenging and will likely take a long time to change patterns of long-standing deforestation (Angelsen et al., 2008). A nested approach is a combination of both approaches. It allows a country to implement subnational REDD+ projects to eventually scale up to the national approach when it has enhanced its capacities and bettered its governance. It also allows a country to account for and receive international offsets at sub-national and national levels at the same time. However, a con is the difficulty of the harmonisation between the two different levels (Angelsen et al., 2008). Also, pilot-projects that have been implemented under a nested-approach have generally lagged a prosperous move from local projects towards larger-scale activities (Wunder et al., 2020).

This latter nested-approach is adopted by countries and states that are included in the Governors´ Task Force on Climate and Forests. Since 2008, this platform enables Governors that are involved in REDD+

activities to share information and lessons learned. Besides, it has the goal to help states and provinces to secure "*both public and private funding for jurisdictional strategies and low-emissions development programs*" (GCF, n.d.).

CRS is also part of this platform and has adopted a nested approach to REDD+. This thus implies that it has combined efforts at the national and state level. It hereby hoped that "*as federal capacities grow, new Nigerian states with political commitment will join in the REDD+ process*"(R-PP, 2013, p.12). Nigeria, with the adaptation of this approach, has gone through the readiness-phase in three project pilot areas in CRS only.

What have we learned so far on REDD+?

Turning the tide on deforestation

REDD+ entered the global stage over a decade ago as an easy way to lessen the climate impacts of land-use change. The basic idea is simple. Tropical developing countries should be rewarded for keeping their forests instead of cutting them down. Since the introduction of the carbon forestry framework, it has spawned a wide range of studies, discussions, and project and programme implementations. However, REDD+ has not developed as was expected when it was first proposed.

REDD+ still has to prove itself in bringing valuable contributions in turning the tide on deforestation of tropical forests. Generally speaking, there have been three main issues around REDD+. The first relates to 'leakage' which means that destructive activities might move to other places where REDD+ has not been implemented. This means that destructive land-use change still occurs. The second issue is 'permanence' which relates to the risk that carbon is only temporarily stored in forests. It is not certain that land use destruction or natural hazards will not release the stored carbon into the atmosphere in the future. Finally, there is the risk of 'additionality' which is associated with the risk that reduced GHG emissions would have occurred anyway, also when there were no REDD+ activities in place (Bayrak & Marafa, 2016).

Despite its contributions in creating an improved understanding of drivers of deforestation and increased forest-monitoring abilities, there is also a wide-based critique on the ability of REDD+ to change business as usual (Duchelle et al., 2018). Skutsch & Turnhout (2020) explain that there is a prime focus on communities among the main drivers of deforestation within REDD+. Such a community focus considers local people to be the main responsible for forest degradations, especially because of traditional agriculture like slash and burn[7]. However, the conventional line of argument that slash and burn is the leading source for deforestation has been challenged (see Brown & Schreckenberg, 1998; Ickowitz, 2006; Thrupp et al., 1997). The issue of focusing on communities within REDD+ projects is that corporate drivers of deforestation hereby tend to be overlooked. The meta-analysis study of Weatherley-Singh and Gupta (2015) shows how REDD+ initiatives often focus on local direct drivers of forest degradation who therefore are often included in interventions and alternative livelihood projects, while national and international indirect divers are largely omitted. They argue that such REDD+ initiatives are incapable to respond to the complexity of drivers of deforestation who operate at different levels. This, according to Skutsch and Turnhout (2020, p.2), leads to a "*mismatch in REDD+*

[7] Slash and burn agriculture is a farming method that involves the process of growing crops by first cutting and burning a piece of land. The burned soil contains potash which enhances the nutrient content. When productivity is reduced, farmers rotate to a new piece of land.

between the causes of deforestation and the importance that is given to communities, who are seen as the central actors in solving this problem". Still, using such a community focus is preferable as community interventions are relatively easy to implement. Focusing on the commercial drivers of deforestation is harder as these actors have powerful interest groups who can try to manipulate environmental policy to serve their own needs. They argue that even when the government knows about the impact of large-scale commercial groups, that they cannot specify their focus on these actors. By defocussing on these actors, you avoid conflictive interference which potentially comes with political costs (Skutsch & Turnhout, 2020).

Adding to the issue of the functionality of REDD+ is the issue of funding. Questions remain whether REDD+ should be fund-based, by contributions from developed countries without reference to performance, or market-based. Those that are critical against the market-based option argue that this will solely bring advantages to global financial institutions and capitalists who dominate the carbon market whereby the marginalized positions of forest communities remain unchallenged. It has also been argued that voluntary carbon offsets could stimulate too much of the commodity on the market, which could lead to a decrease in prices because of the weakness of demand. At the moment, the main funding flow is from development assistance. However, many participating developing countries argue that there is a long-term financial commitment on the side of developed countries missing (Dutschke, 2013).

Community-level impacts

When focusing on the community level, REDD+ has attracted a lot of attention to the issue of rights of forest-dependent people. Since REDD+ was first being proposed, there has been a continuing debate on land rights specifically. Oft hearing critique links with the study of Sandbrook et al. (2010) that highlight the importance of secure property rights for communities in REDD+ projects and programmes. This study argues that increasing the value of forests by bringing these resources into carbon markets, without securing land rights for communities, could lead to limited access to natural resources and limited carbon benefits derived from REDD+ for these people. This tendency is according to the study observable as such land reforms are often politically resisted, especially when government bodies can take most of the benefits.

Findings on early phases of REDD+

The first phase of REDD+ initiatives is often defined by large financial flows, resources, and great expectations (Fletcher et al., 2016). However, experiences often do not align with such early-stage expatiations down the line. Evidence from the readiness phase and the including pilot projects shows that the simple concept of REDD+ has been hard to implement in practice. Many projects have ended up in impasse, have been dropped, or have transitioned into more traditional conservation projects with no focus on the commodification of the forest (Sills et al., 2014). Redford et al. (2013, p.437), therefore, refer to these initiatives as 'conservation fads' which are "*approaches that are embraced enthusiastically and then abandoned*". These early stages have also been aligned with concerns from a wide range of actors, warning that forest-dependent communities would lose out on the initiative (Corbera, 2011).

Studies on the REDD+ readiness phase in Nepal, expose several issues relating to forest-dependent communities being affected by the project. Insecure land tenure came afore as a core issue that played an important role in the limited ability of communities to continue to access natural resources. The decisions taken by the government reflect a tendency towards the recentralisation of forest management and restricting access for communities. As such, decisions were made on the expansion of protected

areas, the restriction on traditional practises, and bans on timber harvesting. In addition, communities were inadequately included, showing in poor representation and limited capacity to express concerns (Paudel et al., 2015).

The study by Beymer-Farris and Bassett (2012) on the first REDD+ phase in Rufiji Delta in Tanzania also focuses on the concern of communities having insecure land tenure. This fostered a situation whereby the resource control moved away from communities and reduced access to important resources. The study of Dokken et al. (2014) focused on six REDD+ pilot sites in Tanzania and also mainly focused on the issue of insecure land rights for communities. It hereby stresses the concern of forests being valued for their carbon benefits, while communities lack formal rights to secure their benefits from the natural resources. It is shortly touched upon how the projects will introduce alternative livelihood sources to compensate for the access restrictions, but it does not play a central role in the study and there is a lack of broad elaboration on how this would play out.

In addition, findings from nine sub-national readiness projects in Cameroon also highlight the concern of insecure land and carbon tenure for communities and a lack of community inclusiveness. The project plan moreover included zoning areas as protected sites, which had overlap with places where communities live. This implied the restriction of accessing natural resources (Freudenthal et al., 2011).

Findings from the readiness phase in Papua New Guinea on the April-Salomei project also considers secure land and carbon rights for communities of central importance in order for them to access benefits from REDD+. A lack of awareness and understanding among the involved communities has been considered to be a barrier to community inclusiveness. Also, the benefit distribution at the backdrop of restrictions on subsistence farming activities causes concerns (Leggett & Lovell, 2012).

Finally, research by Agyei (2012) on the REDD+ readiness phase in Ghana paid attention to the lack of legally recognized rights for forest-dependent communities which, according to the author, jeopardizes their ability to be a shareholder of the benefits of the scheme.

More positive results from the REDD+ readiness were found in the study of Bernard et al., (2014) on the Kasigau Corridor project in Kenya. Despite the concerns of insecure land tenure being expressed, the study shows how the pilot project has provided alternative livelihood opportunities as sustainable eco-charcoal production, dryland crop production, and ecotourism which benefitted the communities.

Such alternative livelihood options are of importance. REDD+ implements certain restrictions in accessing natural resources in order for it to generate carbon credits. Proponents of the initiative suggest that communities that are dependent on such resources for their livelihood survival are to be compensated for such restrictions in access with livelihood support and a share of the carbon finance (Sunderlin et al., 2014). Alternative livelihood options may include the incentive to adopt other subsistence strategies, like horticulture or sustainable animal husbandry. Also, the establishment of certain usage zones has been implemented under REDD+ activities that function as areas were certain traditional activities are allowed to be continued. Leggett and Lovell (2012) add to the oft showing issue of the lack of capacity to implement alternative livelihood options, the concerns of how these might not be socially and culturally acceptable. They moreover argue that land boundaries are often culturally sensitive, implying that some communities will likely not agree with such simple classifications of zoning areas.

REDD+ studies further down the line

The issue of access under the first phase of REDD+ is also observable in further stages of these projects and programmes. In some cases, REDD+ has proved to be able to function as a vehicle to foster land tenure clarifications to a certain extent. In Indonesia, a meeting between the REDD+ Agency and the Indonesian President resulted in the 'One Map Policy'. This has pushed for more state control and transparency in the mapping process to create the possibility for local people to submit their land claims. In Peru, the Saweto Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities under the Forest Investment Program (FIP) has been established as a result of REDD+. This mechanism, funded by the World Bank, gives support for enhancing territorial and resource rights (Sunderlin et al., 2018).

However, these seem to be more isolated cases and REDD+ in further stages also show how insecure land tenure can influence limited access to natural resources for forest-dependent communities. There is as such a broad set of literature available that also focus on the link between the issue of access and property rights in further stages, which makes it not unique to this first phase alone (see Barbier & Tesfaw, 2012; Broegaard et al., 2017; Corbera et al., 2011; Kansanga & Luginaah, 2019; Larson et al., 2013; Samndong & Vatn, 2018).

Chapter 4: Case study

Context

Nigeria is named after the Niger River which enters the country in the northwest and flows south where it meets the fertile Niger delta on the Gulf of Guinea. The country is located in the western part of Africa, compromises a total area of 910,768 square kilometres, and is composed of over 250 ethnic groups. Nigeria is known for its petroleum but is also rich in other resources which include arable land, timber, natural gas, tin, iron or, zinc, and coal. The country has suffered from environmental issues that are associated with overpopulation, deforestation, loss of arable land, and oil pollution (CIA, n.d.). Not all problems regarding environmental degradation and natural resource depletion in Nigeria can of course be traced back to colonialism. However, it is undoubtedly the case that the nature of Nigeria's environmental issues has some connection with its colonial past. This section, therefore, includes the colonial history of Nigeria. A specific focus is put on timber production and land tenure as this creates an understanding of the current forestry sector which is the context where REDD+ in CRS was being planned. This chapter starts with a short introduction to British colonialism. Following, the land tenure system and the forestry system under colonialism is explained. Then the situation in Nigeria after colonialism, with a focus on CRS, is being discussed. This chapter ends with the organisational structure of REDD+ in CRS.

Colonialism

Colonialism is the governing of political, economic, cultural, and religious influence over another territory by the creation of a settler or exploitation colony whereby indigenous peoples are being ruled. The main purpose of colonialism includes economic profit maximisation by the exploitation of natural resources and the creation of new markets (Enuoh & Bisong, 2015). The modern Nigerian state[8] originates from British colonial ruling which started in the 19th century. The British established a form of indirect colonial rule whereby existing traditional structures functioned as conduits to enforce administrative and legal structures. This system functioned as an intermediary between the people and the British government in the hope to minimize opposition (Chimee, 2014). The single colony of Nigeria was created in 1914 when the northern and southern protectorates were amalgamated (Enwerem, 1995). This implied that different groups were merged, which would result in a colonial legacy of a weakly united country with interregional and interethnic tensions.

The British and their collaborators developed a corrupt accumulation system that facilitated revenues by; increasing European trading companies who obtained exclusive monopoly rights of exploiting natural resources; offering Nigerian farmers unequal terms of trade; and implementing taxations (Osoba, 1996). This was a result of the desire to take advantage of natural resources which was triggered by industrial development in Europe. This increased agricultural, mineral, and timber production in Nigeria. To facilitate timber production, a new forestry system was implemented by the British administration.

[8] I am aware that the country which is called Nigeria has been manufactured by colonial rule and that not all its people recognize Nigeria as their country or consider themselves as Nigerians. Some for example consider themselves rather as Biafrans living in the Republic of Biafra, which lays in the eastern region, but which is officially part of Nigeria.

Land tenure and the forestry sector

In pre-colonial Nigeria, access, ownership, and the use of forest land and forest resources were regulated by the communities themselves (Ibrahim, 1997). In the southern part, where CRS has been a part of, there was a system of unwritten customary law in place which varied between localities. Land tenure was regulated by customary rules of inheritance. The land titles were not individual in essence but were in the hands of a family, community, or kinship. Decisions concerning land were also rather collective. The land was moreover associated with belief systems linked to natural resources. The written Islamic law on the other hand, which dominated the northern part of Nigeria, enjoys uniformity between localities. Land tenure could be acquired by having permission from the Imam (Nwapi, 2016).

Forests played a crucial role in the survival of communities as it enabled them to do agriculture and hunting to conserve them. To preserve the forest, certain activities were therefore undertaken by communities. These included i.a. the building of dams to divert floodwater and the monitoring of forest resources on communally owned land to prevent them from exploitation (Ibrahim, 1997). British colonialism introduced a new forestry system built around restrictions for communities to use natural resources, which were reflected in different ordinances. The main incentive for the British to protect the forests and its resources was to secure the continued supply of resources to industrialised Europe.

Before the British introduced their forestry system, there were European timber and rubber traders who made concession agreements with community Chiefs to access the forest. However, it got hard to control the activities of those cutting timber and tapping rubber. Therefore, to protect the forest, the new forestry system came into force whereby land had to be converted into forest reserves. The Governor of the southern Lagos colony, William McGregor, instructed with the first forest ordinance of 1901 his personnel to persuade communities to intergrade about one-third of their forests to the forest reserves which were under the supervision of the local authority. Because of opposition, this percentage was reduced to 25. Another forest ordinance was the one of 1908 which made it illegal for communities to use or fell some specific valuable timber species that were not situated within the reserves (Ibrahim, 1997, p.134). Another important ordinance was the one of 1916. Under British colonialism, northern Nigeria's land tenure system had to make a place for statutory regulation of land tenure under the Land and Native Rights Act of 1916. This allowed the Governor to decide over all the crown and native lands in northern Nigeria for the common benefits of the natives (Hosaena & Austen, 2016). Despite the law of 1916, which reflected the desire of the British to assert ultimate ownership over land, it remained upon the traditional rulers of the Emirs to decide over agricultural issues (Hecht, 2020). In the southern region, traditional land tenure systems also remained. The British did argue that customary law should not be contrary to public policy and they established statutory and common law (Nwapi, 2016). The Public Lands Acquisition of 1917 for example allowed the colonial Governor to acquire land when this was required for public purposes in the southern area of Nigeria (Oluwatayo et al., 2018). However, the colonial administration let the traditional farming productions, build upon customary law, stay. These lands were not prone to the extension of state power over land, because of fear of social and political unrest. This hindered European plantation companies to take full advantage of fertile land. The Miller Brothers and the United Africa Company were the only two big corporations being able to acquire large pieces of land in 1905 and 1907. They obtained the approval to develop two rubber plantations after failing efforts to save southern Nigeria's rubber export (Schoneveld, 2014).

The forest ordinances were replaced by the implementation of the Forestry Act of 1937, which was legitimized by the Major Oliphant's report. This report argued that local communities contribute to a great extent to the depletion of forest resources in Nigeria. The act of 1937 gave the Governor the ability to declare any forest, at any time, as a forest reserve when it was according to him important to protect

forests or to increase forest growth. The Governor was hereby only required to communicate his plans to the communities living on the concerning lands. By 1946, federalist changes were created, and Nigeria changed her unitary system towards a system that was divided into three regions (the Northern, Western, and Eastern Region). In 1954 Nigeria formally adopted a federal system. These federal changes meant for the forestry system that the functions from the central government were transferred to the regional governments. The power of the central government under the unitary system to have the last say in issues concerning the management of land was hereby also transferred (Ibrahim, 1997).

Independence

Towards independence resource exploitation increased, logging permits in forest reserves were granted, large-scale plantations were established, and oil fields were discovered. By the time of independence in 1960, the British contained the existing structures of accumulation under which foreign companies dominated the key sectors of the economy. Also, they handled over their legal authority to rule to their Nigerian deputy bourgeoisie from different regions who also received different positions in the enterprises. These new roles opened the door for corruption and in its turn leading to resource exploitation, something which has been characterizing military and civilian regimes after colonialization (Osoba, 1996).

The forestry system by the time of independence remained largely unchanged. By 1967, the regional governments were replaced by federal states. This implied that the control over forests was transferred to these state governments. The Governors of the states acquired the power to control and protect reserved and protected forests. The Governors could moreover acquire lands for public use under the law of 1978 (which is further elaborated on in the next chapter). This vests the authority over land in the hands of the Governors of each state, who holds it in trust for the people of that state (Asiyanbi et al., 2017). The Governor often delegates functions to the Commissioners of Agriculture and Forestry, who also grants timber concessions and logging permits. The Governor has moreover the power to adjust laws, impose monitoring systems on the transport of timer, confiscate timber and NTFP, and arrest and prosecute those that violate forestry laws (Isyaku, 2017).

Under the economic interest of the state Governors, forests in CRS have been under pressure for decades as the area produces a large flow of export crops (Krause et al., 2019). Between 1960 and 1990, CRS lost a lot of timber in forest reserves. This was facilitated by the granting of concessions to timber companies (Enuoh & Bisong, 2015). In addition, resource exploitation by multinational corporations, being able to acquire large pieces of land with the connivance of the state, has left its mark. The economic exploitation of natural resources in CRS continues to cause forest conversion with the result of deforestation, environmental degradation, and local communities being dispossessed (Nwapi, 2016).

Substantial population growth, decades of profit-driven activities accompanied by issues of access to land relating to ethnicity and corruption[9], diminished Nigeria's forest cover and biodiversity. By 2016, Nigeria's forest cover was estimated at 7,23 percent, which lies under the 10 percent threshold for sustainability (Usman & Adefalu, 2010). However, conservation efforts, also in CRS, have been in place. These efforts peaked between 1989 and 1991 with the establishment of the Cross River National Park and the management of enclave and buffer zone communities under the Integrated Conservation and Development Project. These initiatives have caused the rise of an NGO sector in CRS. Environmental degradation gave also rise to the establishment of the Federal Ministry of Environment

[9] In 2019 Nigeria received a score of 26 out of 100 on the global Corruption Perceptions Index, which measures perceived levels of public sector corruption. A score of 100 refers to full accountability, while a score of 0 refers to full corruption (Transparency International, 2019).

in 1991 (Asiyanbi, 2016). More recently, the REDD+ initiative was set afore as a promising conservation effort to protect the natural resources in CRS.

The organisational structure of REDD+ in CRS

REDD+ in Nigeria follows a nested approach whereby the implementation proceeds both at the state and national level as it requires a national system of carbon accounting. The nested approach was also needed as the federal government cannot put a legal claim on the land because of the Land Use Act of 1978 (Asiyanbi et al., 2017). REDD+ is thus implemented by two units: at the national level, under the Department of Climate Change, and at the state-level under the Forestry Commission of Cross River State. The programme came up with four outcomes, as shown in table 5, which are divided under the federal (1+2) and state (3+4) level. This section will further elaborate on the organisational chart of the REDD+ readiness process in CRS, which is also presented in figure 4.

Table 5. *The programme's outcomes as proposed in the draft of 2011*

1. Institutional and technical capacity improvement at the national level.
2. Preparing the framework for REDD+ expansion across the country.
3. Improved institutional and technical capacity for REDD+ in CRS.
4. REDD+ readiness demonstration in CRS.

Source adapted from UN-REDD Programme (2017, p.77).

Federal level

Nigeria has committed itself to REDD+ by first of all participating in international negotiations. It also established in 2013 the National Advisory Council on REDD+ which is the highest decision-making entity for the REDD+ process. The Federal Ministry of Environment, whose primary task is to conserve and manage Nigeria's natural resources in a sustainable way, takes on the leadership. The state-level is also included in this Council with the Governor being the co-Chairman. Also, the UN Resident Coordinator serves as a co-Chairperson. The main tasks of the council include the monitoring and evaluating of the REDD+ process and implementation, and the overseeing of federal-state coordination on REDD+ issues (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011).

In addition, a UN-REDD Nigeria Programme Steering Committee was created to control the annual management of the programme, whereby the main activity concerns the approval of annual reports and work plans and budgets (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011)

The main role of the National REDD+ Technical Committee is to give technical advice and support for programme activities, in cooperation with Cross River State's REDD+ team (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011, p.27). Its tasks include the development of a roadmap for Nigeria's REDD+ Readiness Framework and Strategy. This Committee in its turn is advised by several actors. First of all, by the Federal Department of Forestry, which aims to ensure that the programme is integrated into the approach of Nigeria regarding sustainable forestry management. Secondly, by the CSO/NGO Platform for REDD+, ministries and agencies, academia, and the media (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011).

Finally, the REDD+ Unit, under the Department of Climate Change, carries the responsibility for the management of federal-level activities. These activities, related to outcomes of 1 and 2, include i.a.; *"preparing drafts of annual and quarterly work plans; preparing all progress and monitoring reports;*

overseeing the programme activities and consultants; and ensuring that the programme payment and records are efficient and in line with required international standards" (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011, p.79).

State-level

The government of CRS has shown its dedication towards REDD+ by the implementation of a total logging ban in 2008 and the establishment of the ATF under the leadership of the Governor and the oversight of the Chairman of the Forestry Commission (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011).

The CRS Technical REDD+ Committee was moreover established and provided with the job to oversee the decision making and to advise the government accordingly. This Committee is to be supported by different institutions to foster a good climate to implement REDD+ in CRS and to facilitate a functional relationship with the federal REDD+ construction (Isyaku, 2017). It includes forest-dependent communities, NGOs, academia, key ministries and agencies, a climate change council, and the CRS Stakeholder forum. The climate change council, whose chairman is the state Governor, has moreover the task to provide policy and technical advice at the state level. Also, the stakeholder platform was developed which should include the perspective of all non-governmental actors and stakeholders to make sure these are sufficiently included in the programme (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011).

Finally, the CRS Forestry Commission's REDD+ Unit carries the responsibility for the day-to-day management of REDD+ activities in CRS. Concerning the outcomes of 3 and 4, this CRSFC and its REDD+ Unit, should i.a. oversee the programme activities and expose management and implementation problems (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011).

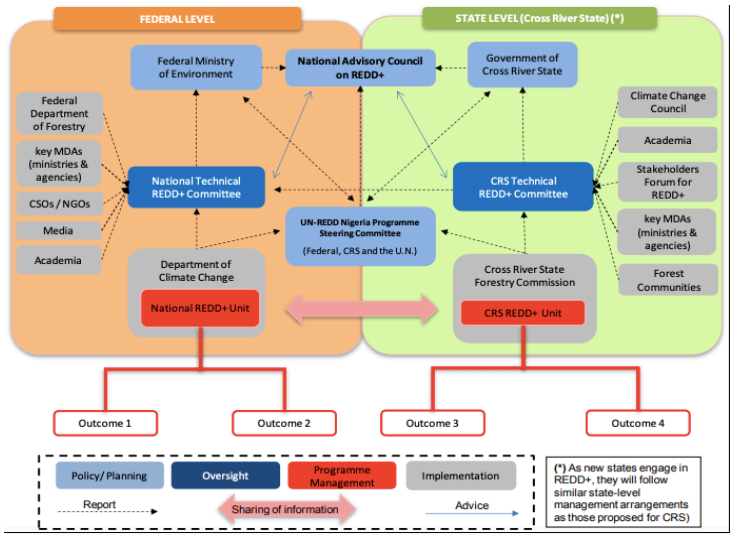

Figure 4. Organisational chart of the REDD+ readiness process in CRS

Source from UN-REDD Programme (2017, p.77).

Benefits derived from the forest

The stakeholders that will be discussed in this chapter include the forest-dependent communities and the state government. The main aim of this section is to provide an answer to the first sub-research question: *Which benefits do forest-dependent communities and the state government derive from natural resources in Cross River State?* Hereby the environmental values, as explained under the chapter of theory and methods, are used to categorize the different benefits that the actors derive from the forests more systematically. First, an emphasis is put on the state whereby a short history of its economic activities is discussed. This helps to understand the motives of the state to support REDD+. Following, the selected communities are discussed which includes a description of how they manage the forest. This chapter ends with a summary.

The state government

CRS was among the first in tropical Africa to implement de-centralized forest management. Starting in the early '90s, this was done by granting power to community authorities to manage the forest sustainably within community forests. Johnson (2003) argues that limited success was achieved as the decentralized forest management served rather a way for meeting international compliance, while government officials themselves engaged in exploiting the forest.

Illegal logging has increased tremendously since 1999 with the first civilian regime in place. Those involved in this business included the President, the Governor of CRS, and government ministries (e.g. the Forestry Commission). Under this civilian regime, large parts of forest stocks in CRS were sold to timber companies and political friends. Plenty of concessions were granted to local timber companies in violation of forest laws and logging quotas. Some Chiefs, elders, and youth in communities got envelopes from state officials with the question if they were willing to support illegal logging in community forests. The illegal logging might have been approved by the state government under the wish of fostering oil palm and other plantations. It is argued, given the fact that old oil plantations had abundant bushland for additional planting, that new plantations made a way to cut down timber for selling (Johnson, 2003). A fact remains that the economic exploitation of natural recourses in CRS has continued to cause forest conversion with the result of deforestation and environmental degradation.

Support for REDD+

Against the background of the state's financial crisis, partly caused by decreased oil revenues where the state is dependent upon, the Governor of CRS during that time, Liyel Imoke, sought for 'creative funding strategies'. These included both carbon financing and the attraction of agricultural, mining, and industrial investments (Asiyanbi, 2016). Regarding the strategy of fostering carbon financing, the state Governor said at the Budget Speech of 2011 and 2012 the following:

"We expect to access substantial financial and technical resources from the UN-REDD" (as cited in Asiyanbi, 2017).

The beginning of REDD+ in Nigeria started with Imoke hosting the 2008 stakeholders workshop on the Cross River State Stakeholder's summit on the environment. Recommendations for the Governor were to ban commercial logging in the state and to support carbon forestry. The Governor aligned with these recommendations and a two-year logging ban was enforced by the ATF which, in preparation for REDD+, the government set up. At the 2010 Budget Speech Imoke would say:

"To reduce deforestation while contributing to solving the climate change crisis we placed a ban on all logging within the state. The state is participating actively in the global REDD and other climate change campaigns" (Imoke, 2010).

In 2009 Imoke attended a REDD+ capacity-building workshop in Ghana, led by the Katoomba Group which is an international NGO promoting carbon forestry (Larsen & Brockington, 2018). The Governor has made a written statement in 2009 wherein he officially committed CRS to work on REDD+. Later that year he asked the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Environment for support. During the COP15 in Copenhagen towards the end of 2009, Imoke expressed his wish to gain support for Nigeria to design a REDD+ readiness programme. In 2010 Nigeria officially became a member of the UN-REDD+ and a year later a grant of 4 million dollars was assigned to design a REDD+ readiness programme (Larsen & Brockington, 2018). Additional funding of 3,6 million dollars was granted in 2014 by the FCPF when the readiness preparation proposal was approved in 2013. The formal implementation started in 2014 and was supported by the World Bank's FCPF, UN-REDD and the California based Governance Climate Force (Asiyanbi, 2017). Three areas in the CRS, particularly in community forests, functioned as pilot sites. The communities are especially farmers, hunters, and forest gatherers and compose of around *"70% of the rural population of Cross River whose livelihoods depend on the forests"* (Asiyanbi, 2016, p.148). The decision to establish these clusters derived according to Asiyanbi from the wish to meet the economics of scale since the project is attractive to carbon finance only if the project area includes the multiple community forests and forest reserves. However, clustering also resulted in stoking tensions between communities with contiguous forests. The more communities were told to cluster, the more they wanted to foster benefits by clearly marking out their forest. This happened for example between Iko-Asai and Ekuri. The Ekuri expressed their fear for Iko Esai's to gain control over parts of the Ekuri forest (Asiyanbi, 2017).

The strategy of attracting agricultural, mining, and industrial investments has been fostered by The Cross River State Privatization Council, which was created in 2010 to attract foreign investors (Nwapi, 2016). Emphasis was hereby put on the modernisation of agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Governor's Office stressed the importance to improve technical capacity in the agricultural sector through the private sector (Schoneveld, 2014).

So, at the same time that the Governor expressed its support to foster REDD+ in CRS, it also granted land to corporations and gave them access to harvest and sell timber to local dealers. Dansa Allied Agro secured for example around 75,000 hectares of land at Oban community, located in the national park. Because of the land clearance, the timber that was felled was sold to local dealers. The Forestry Commission argued, despite the logging ban being in place, that *"the Ministries of Land and Agriculture retained the right to licence promising investors"* (Ekott, 2016). Also, Wilmar International Ltd's gained in 2011 the approval of the CRS government to have access to a minimum of 50,000 ha of land for large-scale oil plantations. The land that was acquired by the company was previously used by local communities for small scale agriculture and timber cultivation. The local communities were allocated without prior consent (Nwapi, 2016).

Currently, with Governor Ben Ayade in place who took office in 2015, there is an impasse of REDD+. Victor said that the biggest reason for the impasse has to do with politics:

"There is a lack of interest by the state government to support the programme because the government is not receiving expected returns from it" (Victor, personal communication, July 26, 2020).

An indication that the current Governor Ben Ayade is not in favour of REDD+ relates to his proposal when he took office in 2015 to construct the Cross River Calabar Ikom-Kastina Ala Superhighway, or

'Cross River Superhighway'. This road would connect the coast in the south-east to areas in the south-central of the country. It was initially proposed to let the superhighway go through the Cross River National Park and surrounding conservation forests, including REDD+ areas (Mahmoud et al., 2017). Due to national and international concern raising issues about the environment and implications for communities, the project has not taken off yet (David, personal communication, August 2, 2020).

Michael (personal communication, June 26, 2020) explained that the impasse has mainly to do with insecure long-term funding. William (personal communication, July 27, 2020) explained that they are therefore working on the REDD+ investment plan and are looking for investments for REDD+ to be picked up again and to continue with the second phase.

Idris explained that both insecure funding and a lack of political will resulted in the current impasse:

"The ability of REDD+ to be picked up again and move on as plan depends on the international funding availability and the political will of the state government. Because right now, the government who is in its second turn is not particularly interested in REDD+, so it was the former government who was interested in REDD+" (Idris, personal communication, June 24, 2020).

Communities in the context of REDD+

The REDD+ pilot projects include mainly community forests, secondly forest reserves, and thirdly some small parts of national parks (as shown in figure 5). These three forest regimes are the main ones in CRS. In CRS there are 14 forest reserves in place which cover around 2700 Km2. These lands are gazetted lands which are held by the government for conservation and sustainable management. The community forest cover around 1600 Km2 of the total land surface in CRS. These lands are controlled by different communities but fall under the arrangement of the state government under the Law of 1978. Besides, there are national parks that are managed by the federal government and cover around 4000 Km2 (Oyebo et al., 2010).

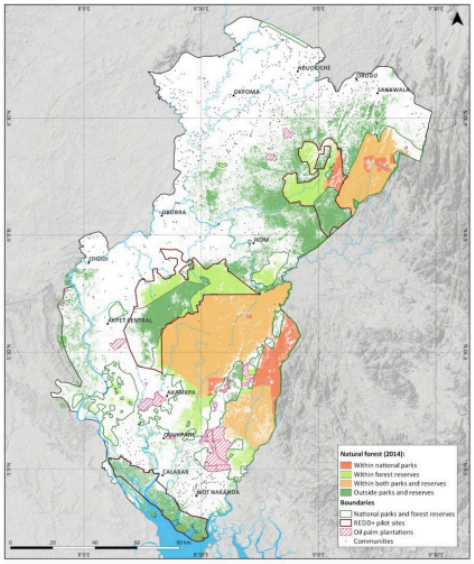

Figure 5. Forest regimes under REDD+ pilot projects

Source from UN-REDD Programme (2017, p.8).
Note: the community forests, outside the parks and reserves, fall under the dark green colour.

The three pilot-projects of REDD+ in CRS are the Mbe/Afi forest cluster, the Ekuri forest cluster, and the Mangrove forest reserve (respectively depicted as I, II, III in figure 6). The Mbe/Afi cluster, compromising around 50,000 hectares of forest land, is situated in Boki Local Government Area of CRS. There are around 18 different communities that control this area. The biggest part of the forest is hereby controlled by the Kanyang I and II, and Buanchor communities. The Ekuri forest cluster compromises around 19,000 hectares of forest. It includes Ekuri, Iko-sai, Okokori, Etara, Eyeyeng, Owai, Ukpon River community forests and reserves and also compromises other small neighbouring communities (Isyaku, 2017). This study focuses on the following communities that control the largest areas. In the Mbe/Afi forest cluster, these include Kanyang II and Buanchor. In the Ekuri cluster, these include the Okokori, the new and old Ekuri, and the Iko-Esai.

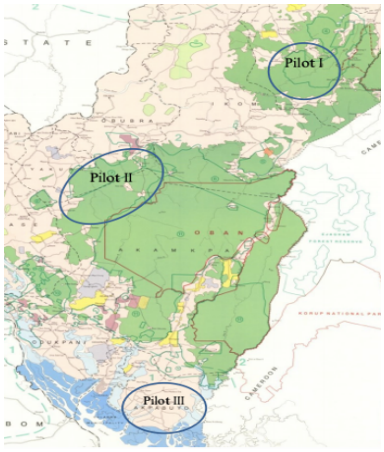

Figure 6. REDD+ sites in CRS

Source from Asiyanbi (2016, p.7).

The Ekuri, including both New and Old Ekuri communities, control around 33,000 hectares of ancestral forest and consists of 6000 people. This is one of the biggest community-owned forests in West Africa. The Ekuri won the Equator Initiative Award[10], developed by the United Nations Development Programme in 2004, for being exceptionally successful in managing forest in West Africa. Their forest management was a response to environmental and logging threats, coming partly from neighbouring communities. This made the community gather to make a conservation initiative. The way the Ekuri manages the forest is via different zones; protected area and corridor zones for animals; farming zones; NTFP and forest management zones; an agroforestry zone; and an ecotourism zone. However, the latter zone has not been used optimally as bad access has prevented the zone to turn into a touristic area. The primary source of economic activity is subsistence farming, producing NTFP and handcrafts, local trading, fishing, and hunting. The forest falls under communal management. This means that also subsistence farming areas and timber fall under this type of ownership. The way they deal with the forest is also via particular management. Members of the Ekuri are allowed to fell trees for their own use, but not for commercial sale. Communal timber sales do take place but are managed under the Ekuri Initiative. This initiative manages plots that have been specifically appropriated for the growing of trees for sale. When they fell a tree, they use a particular directional technique, whereby damage to the forest and soil is limited. Besides regulations on tree felling, the Ekuri also has regulations in place concerning forest and farm products. They have registration fees for productions, sales taxes, and gate fees. Every

[10] This prize recognizes " *innovative initiatives from local communities and indigenous peoples that demonstrate exceptional achievements in the area of nature-based solutions for local sustainable development*" (UNDP, n.d.).

product is moreover controlled by a committee which has the task to oversee that 70 % of the weekly revenue is collected and given to the community treasury (Equator Initiative, 2012). Income generated from the sale of farm and forest products contributed to the building of roads and bridges which enabled access to markets. The income was moreover invested in the building of two schools, a health centre, and a civic centre (Asiyanbi, 2016).

The Iko-Esai is also a large community in the REDD+ Ekuri Cluster. This community has the longest history in the management of community forests, which started even before colonial time. Also, the Iko-Esai community has been operating forests successfully in working together with the conservation NGO Centre for Education Research and Conservation of Primates and Nature (CERCOPAN) for ecotourism purposes. The livelihood of the Iko-Esai depends entirely on the forest. The main livelihood source is farming, gathering NTFP, and hunting and gathering fuelwood (SGP, n.d.). The community also used to be dependent on granting logging concessions to timber dealers. With this income, they paid for development projects. CERCOPAN has the main goal to conserve and rehabilitate the Nigerian primates and their habitat. Their help has caused a halt in logging and hunting of primates. CERCOPAN has hired a forest patrol officer to protect the forest, together with local hunters. It moreover established an educational programme to raise awareness on conservation in CRS. Finally, it also supplied development projects, such as fostering sustainable farming practises and the provision of health facilitates (Isyaku, 2017). The Okokori community is another large community whose livelihood depends on farming and forest gathering mainly (Okokori Traditional Rulers Council, 2016).

The Boki region lies within the cluster of the Afi/Mbe. People in this region are highly dependent upon the forest for survival. Most of them use farming, while some hunt wild animals which are partly sold to local restaurants that depend on bushmeat (Unah, 2019). Communities that will be highlighted in this thesis within this cluster are the Kanyang II and Buanchor. These communities have been doing community-based wildlife conservation with the help of the international NGO Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) (Isyaku, 2017). Communities, including Kanyang II, were part of the Conservation Association of the Mbe Mountains (CAMM) helped by WCS to conserve the forest, protect the animals, and support local development. The communities, with the help of CAMM, made a land-use plan for their territories. This marked some areas as farming and logging zones and some areas as protection zones where hunting and harvesting were not allowed. Also, more sustainable cocoa farms have been promoted (Unah, 2019).

Shared environmental values attached to the forest among the communities thus relate to direct-use benefits which serve as a vital source of livelihood survival. A member from the new Ekuri community, therefore, explained for example in the study of Isyaku (2017) that conserving the forest is important to ensure the continuation of the provision of forest resources for their survival. In line with direct-use benefits, contrary to conservation, is the involvement in destruction activities by deforesting land. These activities are derived from poverty and function as a way of survival, as explained by the Okokori community. Another direct-use value of the forest is tourism. Research across these communities regarding their values attached to the forest shows in addition that there are not a lot of cultural or spiritual areas in the forest. This has to do with the fact that the communities are now mainly converted to Christianity. Still, besides direct-use values, also non-use values are attached to these forests as they cause enjoyment among the communities. This includes hearing the sounds of animals, smelling the forest, and seeing the landscapes. This implies that the forest also contains an existence value orientation. A member from the Okokori explained that seeing the forest shows him the beauty of God's creation and conserving the forest is therefore according to him of importance. A member of the Buanchor community added that the forest serves as a source of joy as it reminds him of his childhood. Moreover, a New Ekuri member explained the bequest values attached to the forest by highlighting the

importance of conservation for future generations. This was shared by members from the Kanyang II community (Isyaku, 2017).

Summary

The history of the economic initiatives undertaken by the state seems to indicate that the main incentives to support REDD+ fits within a capitalistic narrative. There is a discrepancy in supporting the conservation of tropical forests on the one hand while granting access to forest land to big corporations on the other. This has to be placed against the background of a financial crisis and the search for new sources of income. It thus seems that the main environmental values attached by the state to the forest relate to direct-use benefits.

When focusing on the communities, it seems that the benefits derived from natural resources form an important source of livelihood survival. This highlights the direct-use values attached to the forest for these communities. Some communities involve in conservational efforts, whereby some are supported by international NGOs, some members (and surrounding communities) involve in destructive activities. Besides direct-use values, the communities also derive non-use benefits from the forest. These include both bequest values showing in the wish for future generations to be able to still enjoy the forest, and existence values showing in deriving enjoyment from the forest.

Thus, in answer to the first sub-question, this section has shown that the state attaches mainly direct-use benefits to the forest which comes forth out of the wish to create capitalistic benefits, while the communities place besides direct-use values which rather comes forth out of a way of survival, also existence and bequest values to the forest.

Legal mechanisms

This section has the aim to answer the second sub-question: *What is the role of legal mechanisms in the access for forest-dependent communities to natural resources?* It starts with a specific focus on the Land Use Act of 1978. Then the context of REDD+ is being incorporated. It then shifts from land tenure to carbon rights. Following is a section on the logging moratorium. It ends with a summary that includes the answer to the second sub-question.

The Land Use Act of 1978

Post-colonial governments have fostered land grabbing and displacing local communities to draw profits from natural resources (Schoneveld, 2014). Profits derived from natural resources going to the Nigerian bourgeoise were facilitated by the Nigerian Land Use Act of 1978. This Land Use Act would replace the Northern Nigeria Lands Tenure Law of 1962, which again was the succession of the 1916 land ordinance (Hosaena & Austen, 2016). The law of 1962 made all lands in Northern Nigeria, occupied or not, 'native lands'. It made land being "*subject to the disposition of the Minister [who is] responsible for land matters [and]…who holds and administers them for the use and common benefits of the native, that is to say, persons whose fathers were members of any tribes indigenous to each state in Northern Nigeria*" (Udoekanem et al., 2014, p.185). The land use act of 1978 was born out of the wish to standardise land administration systems throughout the whole country because, just like the British administration, the Nigerian government was confronted with the difficulty to acquire land under customary law. The independent government, therefore, decided to extend the system in the north to the entire country (Nwapi, 2016). While national parks fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government, the land use act of 1978 vests all other lands as trust in the hands of states (Krause et al., 2019). This had to make it easier for the state government to obtain land for 'development purposes'. Companies could hereby acquire large pieces of land with the connivance of the state, even when these lands belong to local communities. Development purposes could also include conservation efforts, which in this case would include REDD+. Land under REDD+ areas could thus easily be transferred to the state because of the Land Use Act of 1978. This means that the law can out rule customary land tenure. Customary land tenure is moreover insecure as it is largely unwritten which can facilitate land speculation and land grabs (Nwapi, 2016). Similar to other post-colonial countries where different land tenure systems overlap, it is the state that holds de-jure right to land and forests while communities hold informal rights and have less power (Asiyanbi, 2016).

Law Review under REDD+

The legacies of colonialism have persuaded in the forestry and land sector in Nigeria. Post-colonial Governors have misused the policies for their own interest and for increasing the state revenue. In 1994, the Federal Department of Forestry requested for reforms in the forestry sector to gain influence over it. It was proposed to implement a National Forestry Law, to review the Land Use Act of 1978, and to establish a National Forestry Commission. In 1995, as a consequence, the federal government made a committee to look into the National Forest Act (the Federal Ministry of Environment Nigeria, 2006). A National Forestry Bill was finally accepted by the National Council on Environment but was not yet included in the law. To align with international obligations, the federal government stimulated a fast approval of the National Policy of 2006 (Isyaku, 2017). The main goal of this policy is to "*achieve sustainable forest management, leading to sustainable increases in the economic, social and environmental benefits from forests and trees*" (ibid., p.23). Objectives that fall under this policy include fostering community participation in the management of forest resources, the promotion of decentralisation, and pursuing carbon credits and other

international funds to foster biodiversity conservation. It is moreover pointed out that states and communities *"should guarantee tenure rights to individuals and private investors for forest plantation development at agreed terms"* (ibid., p.32).

In 1999 the Cross River State Forestry Commission (CRSFC) was established, an autonomous organization that is the main government agency responsible for controlling the forests at the state level (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011). This commission aims to foster a participatory approach that is focused on the community. It also aims for forest conservation and says that it is *"committed to genuinely devolving forest rights and responsibilities to communities"* (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011, p.23). The commission is controlled and helped by a Management Board with participation from government officials and civil society. To prepare itself for REDD+, the CRS, through this CRSFC, established the new Forestry Commission Law in 2010. The law recognizes community forests and exclusive customary rights. However, section 26 (2) also says that the Commission, in the interest of the public, can declare any forest land into a protected forest. This, as argued by Isyaku (2017), implies that the land tenure system of forest-dependent communities in the REDD+ pilot sites in CRS is insecure. The law also states in section 84(c) that the non-permitted use of timber and non-timber forest produce in a community forest shall be considered as an offence (Cross River State of Nigeria, 2010).

It thus seems that the National Forestry Act of 2006 and the Forestry Commission Law of 2010 recognize forest communities as stakeholders but consider the state as the holder of statutory rights which can supersede customary forest rights when this serves the interest of conservation or public interests, as in line with the Land Use Act of 1978. Despite customary authorities having some de facto rights over managing the forests, it remains upon the Governor of the state to overrule them. Post-colonial countries upholding such a system of overriding customary land tenure is also described in the study of Kalabamu (2019) which is focused on Sub-Saharan Africa.

Studying how REDD+ considers the land tenure system is of importance since there are insecure customary land rights in place. As being emphasised by the UN-REDD programme, secure property rights for forest-dependent people are considered to be an important element for a successful implementation of REDD+ (UN-REDD Programme, n.d.). This importance was also highlighted in the REDD+ readiness preparation proposal of Nigeria. Herein it was stated that:

"without tenure, communities have little vested interest in their protection. Providing forest use rights to households, or communities where they can benefit from the forest area, will provide incentives for them to protect the area and help to stop encroachment. It will also ensure that local communities will benefit from REDD+" (R-PP, 2013, p.52).

Even though this statement seems to start with highlighting the importance of secure land tenure rights for local communities, its last reference to forest use rights shows a discrepancy. This word choice suggests a lack of dedication to truly enforce secure land rights for forest-dependent people as it reduces its efforts to forest use rights. Asiyanbi (2016, p.150) argues also that this indicates a lack of a *"legally defensible ownership and control rights for communities"*. Idris argued that such insecure land tenure arrangements pose difficulties for forest-dependent communities:

"[the land tenure system] makes it very difficult for communities under REDD+ to continue to have access. So that is why the communities are now kicking out REDD+. Because what they are saying is that REDD+ is only coming to recentralise forest ownership. So, they prefer the old system where they could just go into the forest and do what they want to do" (Idris, personal communication, June 24, 2020).

Tenure complexities, in the context of an absence of political will to make significant land tenure reforms, is an oft hearing challenge to the implementation of REDD+ initiates in Africa and other parts of the world (Isyaku et al., 2017). This is also to be witnessed in the case of Nigeria. As changing legislation is difficult to achieve, William argues that safeguards should fill the gap on the issue of land tenure:

"It takes time from the government and legislators to review and change the laws. But ... the safeguards are in place and communities are adequately consulted and feel comfortable that they have a strong say in whatever activities that are happening in their forest" (William, personal communication, July 27, 2020).

Carbon tenure

Besides land tenure, there is the issue of who contains the right to sell, trade, and purchase carbon credits. Bayrak & Marafa (2016) argue that REDD+ projects and programmes should consider carbon tenure, as secure land tenure for local communities does not automatically result in benefits derived from resources on these lands.

Although acquiring a legal status of carbon tenure is often lacking, it does exist in other places in the world. An example is Australia:

"The primary feature of the carbon rights legislation in each state in Australia is the validation of the carbon right as a land interest separate from the land upon which it is situated. In this respect, the legislative provisions have amended the established common law presumption that trees growing upon the land and the carbon contained within those trees are a natural part of the land and therefore belong to the landowner" (Karsenty et al., 2014, p.21).

Some scholars argue that linking carbon with land tenure rights could, however "*jeopardize the objective of securing the tenure rights of communities and local people [since]… it could encourage governments to refrain from transferring property rights*" (Karsenty et al., 2014, p.26). A community leader in the Ekuri saying "*our forest absorbs carbon*" indicates according to Asiyanbi (2016, p.151) that communities themselves, however, do not make a difference between owning the land and owning the carbon.

The legal status of carbon, as in the case of Australia is contradictory to the case of REDD+ in Nigeria. Carbon tenure is, however, mentioned in official documents. In the REDD+ readiness proposal, it was stated that there should be a review of both land and carbon rights since communities do not possess formally recognized ownership. On carbon ownership, it was stated that:

"There should be an investigation of the possibilities for communities to secure tenure of the carbon resources in their community forests. It may be possible for the government to grant communities secure carbon rights even if their land continues to be legally owned by the state" (R-PP, 2013, p.8).

However, Idris explained in the following quote that there are indications which point the right to sell, trade, and purchase carbon credits towards the direction of the state:

"So when REDD was introduced, there was a proposal that was later withdrawn after a lot of controversies. The proposal, I saw a copy of it, was proposed to give the communities 10 percent of the carbon credit money, and the government would take 90 percent, and that created a lot of problems.

Because what … [the communities] were saying is: we have been stopped from taking timber, we have been stopped from doing things in the forest, only for the carbon to grow, and now that we sell the carbon we only get 10 percent. But then when I spoke to the REDD chair at that moment, he said: no, it's only a proposal, we are not meant to do that. But there was not another proposal that would give a higher percentage to the communities as far as I know" (Idris, personal communication, June 24, 2020).

This is in line with the research conducted by Asiyanbi (2016) that confirms this state-proposed carbon credit sharing formula, which according to him has indeed been challenged by community leaders. He explains that this proposal document has never been subject to prior public consultation. The document is available in the headquarter of the Forestry Commission and with some leaders from communities.

Another indication that suggests that the state owns the carbon is how they can exclude others from the forest. Although it is said that it should be decided upon who contains the carbon rights yet, Asiyanbi (2016, p.150) argues that the activities undertaken by the state to exclude others from using the forest give an indication who has "*the rights that matter, not least the right to exclude others*".

The Logging moratorium

The exclusion of others to access natural resources is enforced by the logging mortarium. This has been carried out by the ATF, chaired by the American primate conservationist Peter Jenkins. The ATF is under the official supervision of the office of the state Governor and includes the military, the police, and the navy which shows its militant nature (Asiyanbi, 2017). The mortarium, which started with a two-year declaration in 2008, was eventually prolonged indefinitely. It has been in place for the entire state to avoid leakage. Governor Imoke officially committed CRS to this ban in a letter of 2008 in which he declared "*a two-year moratorium on logging, timber cutting and sawing in forest reserves and ... adequate measures to halt deforestation and forest degradation*" (Imoke, 2008, p.2).

Before the mortarium, there was an arrangement in place which would divide royalties from logging that would take place in community forests. When the timber was extracted from community forests, the communities would receive 70% percent of the royalties and the state government 30% (Krause et al., 2019). When the timber was extracted from non-community forest reserves, the division would be 50/50 (R-PP, 2013). From these royalties, communities were able to invest in community projects such as schools and health facilities. Moreover, timber dealers were required to get a stamp from the Forestry Commission officials that show that the taken timber was mature. With the mortarium in place, such arrangements stopped (Idris, personal communication, July 10, 2020).

The ATF would eventually restrict the entire movement of wood, whereby accusations of the use of violence and intimidation have been publicly exposed in Nigerian newspapers (see Akpan, 2019; Asiyanbi, 2020). This also implied that it became illegal for communities to extract required wood to build their homes. Petty loggers, which refers to individuals who cut trees on their own farm and take them to markets to support their local livelihood, were thus also arrested whereby both their equipment and the wood were seized (Asiyanbi, 2017). In 2012 the ATF reported to have confiscated i.a. 105 chainsaws and 46 vehicles. One year later this included i.a. 184 chainsaws, 89 vehicles, and hundreds of tons of timber. To prosecute the many 'offenders'[11], the ATF established mobile courts by 2014 (Asiyanbi, 2016).

[11] It is decided to use the quotation marks due to the existing criticism related to the arrests undertaken by the ATF.

Even though REDD+ does not provide carbon emission credits for NTFP resources, the logic of protecting the forest made the ATF expand the ban to NTFP[12] such as rattan, cattle and chewing stick, and firewood. Asiyanbi (2016) provides examples of a case whereby two men were prosecuted for the illegal transportation of cattle stick whereby either a year of imprisonment or a fine of NGN 470,000[13] was imposed. Another man was caught in the forest cutting cane for which he had to pay a fine of NGN 10.000[14].

When I talked about this with David, he strongly opposed such accusations. He argued that there were no restrictions to sustainable harvesting of NTFPs and said that:

"It is both annoying and hilarious that people will allow their biases to influence information and knowledge with such gravity" (David, personal communication, August 2, 2020).

David argued moreover that the moratorium had nothing to do with REDD+, as it was already in place before the official start of it. Other scholars argue, however, that it had everything to do with REDD+. It could be seen as a way of showing 'political will' to international REDD+ partners, to generate financial support from donors. Local communities living in the REDD+ pilot areas have continued to be critical of the ban which restricted access to forest resources and threatened their local livelihoods (Asiyanbi et al., 2017). As such, the local wood markets were blocked by the state which indicates the ability of the state to delimit access to benefit from these resources. The wood industry has been disrupted which poses a hardship on many livelihoods for forest-dependent communities. The study of Henshaw and Fyneface (2014) show that the wood markets were totally blocked, something that has been verified by Idris who said the following:

"I visited the timber market and all the shelves were empty. I spoke to these timber dealers and they said that ever since the Task Force came that they have been hungry because there has been no timber for them to sell. When there is a movement of wood it gets confiscated and they also come to the market and confiscate it" (Idris, personal communication, July 10, 2020).

Besides, the ban proved to be inadequate in halting the exploitation of timber. Idris argued as such that:

"The truth of the matter is that through the backdoor they [the ATF] allow this logging to take place" (Idris, personal communication, June 24, 2020).

The ban enforced by the ATF indeed encouraged a corrupt system. Against this background, it even exacerbated deforestation which doubled each year since 2012 (see figure 7). The (official) revenue flows generated by the ATF are moreover depicted in table 6. Besides the subvention from the state, the fines paid by forest 'offenders' generate a major source of revenue for the ATF. Another source of revenue is that seized wood is auctioned off. Omitted from official documents, there is an additional estimation of 40% of revenue flow derived from illegal timber deals which end up in the hands of the ATF and their allies (Asiyanbi, 2016). Idris (personal communication, June 24, 2020) explained that with the introduction of ATF, the control of ownership of logging permits shifted from the communities and the local contractors to the people working for the ATF. David (personal communication, July 28, 2020) said that there have been allegations of the involvement of village chiefs and youths in illegal

[12] The collection of NTFP has normally been arranged via the issuing of permits.
[13] This amount is equal to 26 times the national minimum monthly wage of 2014.
[14] This amount is equal to almost 2 times the national minimum monthly wage of 2014.

timber harvesting. However, he said that it is for certain that the big timber dealers from outside are the ones funding and making the most gains from the process.

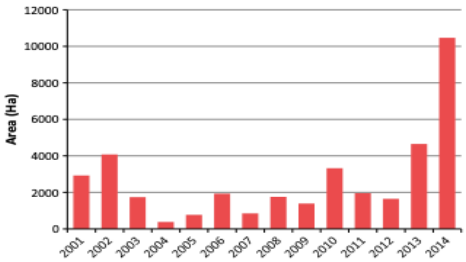

Figure 7. Tree Cover Loss in CRS between 2001 – 2014

Source from (Asiyanbi, 2016, p.153).
Note: this figure is based on 30% canopy density.

Table 6. *ATF cashflow 2013-2014*

Items	Amount in Naira (NGN) *12-month period (2012 -2013)*	Amount in US Dollars (USD) *12-month period (2012 -2013)*
ATF revenue (A; from sales and fines)	83,253,280	520,333
ATF Subvention (Upkeep allowance) from the state (B)	67,200,000	420,000
ATF revenue remitted to state purse (C)	20,311,920	126,950
ATF-controlled capital =(A+B)-C	130,141,360	813,384

Source from Asiyanbi (2016, p.153).

The inadequacy of the ban was also emphasized by William (personal communication, July 28, 2020). He stressed that civil society is encouraging the government to review the ban as it is not working well for halting deforestation, and the communities are not happy about it. David (personal communication, July 28, 2020) explained that part of the recommendation in the REDD+ strategy is to review the moratorium and to put in place mechanisms for sustainable forest management with a focus on strengthening community forestry and building equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms.

In the meantime, the enforcement of the moratorium is still in place, which means that the exclusion of local communities from accessing forest resources continues.

Summary

British colonialism in Nigeria left a system of legal pluralism whereby stationary and customary land rights overlap. The current forestry policies are also a legacy of colonial regulations which strengthened the power of state governments. The Land Use Act of 1978 is an important forestry policy in place. It gives the Governor the power to overrule customary land rights when needed for 'development purposes', thereby leaving customary authorities with insecure land rights. REDD+ in this case serves as such a development purpose wherefore this act applied. In preparation for REDD+, the forestry laws have been reviewed and the New Forestry Commission Law in 2010 came in place which does recognize forest communities as stakeholders but considers the state as the holder of statutory rights. It, therefore, does not defer significantly from the Land Use Act of 1978, thereby sustaining the issue of land tenure.

The REDD+ readiness proposal of 2013 does stress the importance of secure land tenure rights for local communities. However, it later changed from land rights to a reluctance of 'forest use rights' which indicates a lack of significant dedication to foster secure land rights. Despite the issue of land tenure, there is also the question of carbon tenure. There is no legal status of carbon tenure in Nigeria but the proposal for an unequal carbon credit sharing formula, in favour of the state, indicates who contains and controls the rights to carbon. Another indication that suggests that the state owns the carbon is how they can exclude others from the forest. The state has, when referring to Ribot and Peluso (2003), access control which implies that it contains the ability to mediate others' access as it has the power to direct and regulate free action.

With the logging mortarium in place, communities stopped receiving pre-established logging royalties, which has been an important source of income. Also, the timber markets have been blocked, thereby imposing difficulties on those local actors working in this sector. The ATF would eventually restrict the entire movement of wood. There are indications that the ban did extend to NTFP given the cases presented by Asiyanbi, although contrasting opinions on this do exist. It has anyway resulted in a corrupt system that even exacerbated deforestation which doubled each year since 2012. With such activities taking place, forest-dependent people experience difficulties in maintaining their access rights.

So, in answer to the second sub-question; *What is the role of legal mechanisms in the access for forest-dependent communities to natural resources?* It can be argued that the insecure land tenure arrangements in place play a significant role in restricting the access to forest resources for forest-dependent communities in REDD+ pilot areas. Illegal activities undertaken by the ATF, which allegedly include the fining of confiscated NTFP, are not tackled by the government. It becomes thereby hard for communities to continue their livelihood survival. This section thus shows that besides the insecure land rights in place, that illegal activity, when not being sanctioned, can add an extra layer of access restrictions upon the communities. Moreover, although this statement could not be cross-checked, there have been allegations of the involvement of village chiefs and youths in illegal timber deals. A more solid statement is the main involvement of big timber dealers from outside the forests that are making the illegals timber deals with the ATF. This shows that access, when not being sanctioned, can also be determined by illegal activities. The unequal carbon credit sharing formula moreover indicates that the state would eventually hold the right to sell, trade, and purchase carbon credits, which provides little chance to outweigh the restrictions for communities.

The ability to benefit from the forest is further examined under the following section which covers the structural and relational mechanisms of access.

Relational and structural mechanisms

This section aims to provide an answer to the third sub-question of this thesis: *What is the role of structural and relational mechanisms in regulating access for forest-dependent communities to natural resources?* To do so, it provides an elaboration on the access to authority which is divided under, Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC), community representatives, complaints, and alternative livelihood sources. To provide context to the alternative livelihood sources, discursive practises introducing the context in which they were brought up are discussed. This section ends with a conclusion whereby the answer to the sub-question is being provided.

Access to authority

Free Prior and Informed Consent

In the Nigeria REDD+ report, it is said that the programme secures the right to FPIC to foster full participation of forest-dependent communities in the activities and policymaking processes undertaken (UN-REDD Programme, 2017). Within the official channels of REDD+, Michael (personal communication, September 14, 2020) explained how representatives of the communities, who attend REDD+ meetings, communicate information about REDD+ with community members. Besides, NGOs are according to him actively involved in channelling information between REDD+ and the forest communities. David (personal communication, July 28, 2020) said that communities are sufficiently included in the programme and that all relevant information has been shared with them. The community representative explained in addition:

"The engagements with communities emphasize respect for community values. That is the reason why Free Prior and Informed Consent is a major component of the REDD+ programme" (William, personal communication, July 28, 2020).

Such statements are however at odds with the study of Henshaw & Fyneface (2014) that shows how REDD+ in CRS lacks the procedure of FPIC and that most of the community members lack information on the initiative. To include a section of drivers of deforestation in the REDD+ report, for example, project officials conducted forest monitoring and carbon measurements without the knowledge and confirmation from the communities. Isyaku (2017) shows moreover how communities critiqued such exercises as communities were not consulted, did not have knowledge on the programme, and did not provide their consent. Despite officials arguing that prior consent has been secured as they have communicated the plan with specific non-elected representatives of communities at workshops in Calabar, Isyaku (2017) argues that the REDD+ programme has been pursued without prior consent from including communities. Such statements are contrary to the general procedure of REDD+ which says to guard for transparent information sharing to all stakeholders who should be able to fully understand the interventions (R-PP, 2013).

Isyaku (2017) revealed that communities mainly derived information via researchers and different NGOs, but that people were still not sufficiently aware of the programme because of incomplete and conflicting information flows. Besides NGOs that were included in the REDD+ projects, there were workshops organized by Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria whereby potential drawbacks of REDD+ were being discussed for example (UN-REDD Programme, 2017).

The insufficient compliance to FPIC does reflect a general issue of REDD+ implementations (see Gebara et al., 2014; Kenfack, 2016; Lasco et al., 2013). Pham et al. (2015) argue, for example, that

political authorities can undermine the compliance of FPIC when they interpret its elements differently. Their study on Vietnam shows that political authorities can undermine the compliance of FPIC according to their interpretation and interest. It outlines that political elites did not want to transfer decision-making power which, according to the authors, has "*strong implications for access to and control over resources and the understanding of what FPIC means*" (Pham et al., 2015, p.2418). Carodenuto and Fobissie (2015) argue that mainly the non-binding nature of the FPIC guidelines is an issue.

Representatives

To have access to authority, it is of importance to have a broad-based public representation that speaks for a certain community, instead of undemocratically chosen elites or certain representatives from sub-groups (Ece et al., 2017). Idris argued that the selection of representatives to speak on behalf of the communities does not truly represent the needs of the communities. Idris argued that representatives from communities are selected according to certain preferences:

"*What the government did was that they chose the people within a community that were willing to speak their language. So, they just select them and appoint them as representing the people. Now, when I went to the… [community] to interview the Chief, he said that they haven't got a representative in the REDD+ process and that the elected representative from the village is not representing the people, but the people in Calabar that appointed him*" *(Idris, personal communication, June 24, 2020).*

When I spoke to this elected community representative, he admitted that he has indeed been selected for at least understanding the REDD+ 'language':

"*I have been selected because I have been working with the REDD+ communities because of my work in development. I happen to come from … [this community], I know the people and the culture. So, they found it very resourceful that I would coordinate this part of the programme*" *(William, personal communication, July 27, 2020).*

This aligns with Nuesiri (2015) who argues that the representatives from local communities were selected because officials themselves considered them to be a good representative of the larger group that they would represent.

This links to REDD+ literature raising questions about the extent to which affected communities have adequate access to authority. A study on REDD+ in Tanzania for example shows that selected representatives were not responsive to their members but instead to external actors and donor ideas (Mustalahti & Rakotonarivo, 2014).

Complaints

In terms of the ability of forest-dependent communities to have access to authority when issues occur, there are different opinions out there. Michael explained that REDD+ has different mechanisms in place to secure access to authorities for forest-dependent communities when experiencing issues related to the programme. He explained:

"*They [the communities] have free access to reach out to the government. They can write to the political representatives, or they can write to the general legislative house, or they can write straight to the*

executive of the case and then possibly book an audience with the Governor or the representative of the Governor to have that level of discussion" (Michael, personal communication, June 26, 2020).

Asiyanbi (2016) on the contrary argues that local communities have sent several petitions to the Governor of the CRS to complain about the limited access to the forest because of the activities undertaken by the ATF, without receiving any response. Isyaku (2017) also says that Kanyang II people wrote a protest letter to the state government, because of REDD+ officials having a meeting in Calabar about the programme without the Kanyang II people being informed, without receiving any response.

To let the complaints of the communities being heard, William (personal communication, July 27, 2020) explained how civil society is currently lobbying on behalf of communities to demand the state government to halt the logging moratorium as this is not beneficial for both the communities and the forest. However, this has not been achieved yet. Nuesiri (2017) says that NGOs cannot speak up against actors in the forestry sector, including the state. He argues that the UN-REDD model holds the belief that NGOs in theory can hold the government to account, as NGOs are considered to be important actors in the whole process. NGOs in Nigeria are according to Nuesiri (2017) however not able to hold the powerful state government to account on behalf of communities. Some NGOs are, according to a respondent in his study, even contractors of the government. The reference is here with the NGO Pandrillus that was appointed by the state to enforce the logging ban.

Alternative livelihoods

Community discourse

To understand the context in which the alternative livelihoods for communities are being offered, it is of importance to reflect on the arguments that legitimize this in the first place. It seems that there is, what I would call, a community discourse observable. This discourse considers communities as prominent drivers of deforestation and as such focuses on these people for livelihood interventions. A discourse in general reflects according to Brockhaus et al. (2014) the following features: key state officials and central actors adopt the discourse, and institutional practices act upon the discourse. This is to be observed in the case of REDD+ in CRS.

The importance of Nigeria's 'last remaining forest' is often being used to highlight the importance of environmental intervention in the case of REDD+ in CRS. In combination with the community discourse, it legitimizes the intervention in these forests. These two things were used simultaneously by Imoke at the Copenhagen Summit on Global Warming. He hereby highlighted the importance of tropical forests in CRS which are "*one of the richest for biodiversity in Africa and need to be protected from threat*". Communities were hereby considered to form a threat to these forests as Imoke argued how the rainforests in Nigeria are under attack by small scale loggers, subsistence farmers, and those collecting firewood, in other words: many forest-dependent communities (ACF, 2010). In a report from CNN, Imoke moreover said that "*there are communities that are relatively undeveloped and backward*" and pointed the blame for deforestation towards the forest-dependent communities (CNN, 2010).

The report of the UN-REDD Programme in CRS of 2017 also states that communities are among the main drivers of deforestation in the state. The drivers of deforestation include, respectively in order of magnitude: subsistence and commercial agriculture, logging, the consumption of fuelwood, infrastructural development, and the exploitation of minerals. It says that the main driver of deforestation in the state is characterized by shifting agriculture which is conducted by smallholder farmers and large-scale conversion of land for commercial agricultural purposes (UN-REDD Programme, 2017). The

underlying reason for the communities to engage in unsustainable land-use practises, as being argued, relates to poverty, "*which [forces] many local communities to over-exploit the nearest and available natural resources for subsistence and income generation*" (ibid., p.42). Also, the use of slash-and-burn done by communities in CRS is considered to play a huge role in deforestation. Daniel (personal communication, August 1, 2020) however argued that the government is mainly to blame for forest degradation and said that forest-dependent communities are more committed to sustainable forest management than many assume. Striking in the case of CRS is that the commercial plantations for palm oil are considered to be an important investment as it has the potential to create jobs and to foster the economy of the state (ibid.). Although corporate actors are among the prime driver of deforestation, thereby acknowledging that such plantations contribute to deforestation, they are also seen as an opportunity to the state. It is against the backdrop of this kind of argumentation that such drivers are omitted from REDD+ interventions.

This reflects what Mia (personal communication, September 7, 2020) told me about what she identifies as the main challenge within REDD+ initiatives. She argued that many projects cannot generate the necessary change at the larger policy level as the investment claims often come into the game. There is as such a general issue noticeable which is the lack of ability to tackle large-scale drivers of deforestation according to her.

Michael also omitted the corporate drivers of deforestation and solely referred to the discourse of local communities as being the prime driver of deforestation. He argued that the main focus of REDD+ should be on local communities as they pose the main threat to the forests. He said:

"*One of the key issues that the forest communities have is that they execute a lot of pressure on the forest. So, they do slash and burn agriculture and because of that, it affects the forest stock*" *(Michael, personal communication, September 14, 2020).*

Studies on PES projects – including REDD+ pilot projects- that restricted this type of agricultural show how restrictions on these practises could limit the access to forest resources which poses a hardship for the poorest households as it is hard for them to access alternative livelihood resources (see Corbera et al., 2007; Peskett et al., 2011; Poudel et al., 2015).

Idris argued that the communities are wrongly depicted as the main driver of deforestation:

"*The government created a narrative that the local communities are unsustainable just to justify the policy. However, communities have done fantastic jobs, much better than the government. For example, what was under the government control was almost finished, but what was under the Ekuri community control was still for 80-90 percent intact*" *(Idris, personal communication, June 24, 2020).*

Proposed options

It is against the backdrop of the community discourse that the alternative livelihood sources are offered to communities which, according to the REDD+ proposal, can "*improve the livelihoods of participating communities – increase food security and provide alternative income-generating activities – while restoring ecosystems services*" (R-PP, 2013, p.84). Besides potential benefits derived from carbon credits, Erin Sills, a research associate at the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), said that REDD+ developers often support alternative livelihood projects at the community level as a way to reduce the pressure on forests (Day, 2014). Such alternative livelihood sources could then thus generate alternative income flows.

It is of importance that such alternative livelihood sources fit the local context in order for it to be sustainable. William, therefore, argued that:

"REDD+ supports conservation activities in the communities through the provision of alternative livelihoods according to the demands of the communities through a democratic process" (William, personal communication, July 28, 2020).

David moreover highlighted how REDD+ engages with communities for the development of alternative livelihoods sources:

"REDD+ supports civil society to engage with communities to develop and implement community-based actions to build sustainable livelihoods and to improve natural resource management" (David, personal communication, July 28, 2020).

Michael inline explained how the decision to come up with suggestive alternative livelihoods would come about:

"The approach is that REDD+, through the help of NGOs, introduce livelihood options to the people. It is a participatory process. So, we do not impose our ideas on communities but rather we talk with them to identify livelihood options that they are comfortable to work with and then we work with them to define the ideas and then advise them on how to make it better and to make it more income-generating" (Michael, personal communication, June 26, 2020).

Michael (personal communication, September 14, 2020) moreover explained that the Forestry Commission is a stakeholder in this process who identifies options and facilitates the provision of some of the livelihood options that they have a budget to cover for.

The quote from Michael mentioned above indicates a bottom-up approach as it reflects a collective process whereby the community has a say in how policies concerning their own future would look like. Such a bottom-up approach does not fully reflect the following line of argument of William where he referred to communities that are included in the REDD+ projects:

"There is the need to improve the knowledge of the communities, they know the resources are good for them, but that is not adequate, there is in it so much that the people need to know, to maximize the gains of REDD+. REDD+ at least assumes that the use of the forest can be reduced if proper knowledge is impacted on them" (William, personal communication, July 27, 2020).

On the contrary to what is being said in the above-mentioned statement of Michael, this last quote indicates a rather top-down approach whereby assumptions about good policy implementation rely on external actors who seem to hold the 'right' kind of knowledge. Critique relating to top-down development interventions is that there is an insufficient consultancy with affected community members (Abakerli, 2001). This is something that has been implicitly highlighted by Idris as well. He explained that:

"The head of the Forestry Commission mentioned alternative livelihood sources such as snail farming, bee farming, and mushroom farming. But the communities are not accepting that. The Chiefs said we don't need snail farming, we need concrete social empowerment: concrete empowerment in many different aspects of our choice" (Idris, personal communication, June 24, 2020).

The study of Isyaku (2017) as such shows how community members have expressed their criticism for not being involved in the decision on how such alternative livelihood sources would look like. The Ekuri explained how such proposed alternative livelihood sources conflict with their opinions about economic diversification strategies. They explained how they rather desire to develop skills like carpentry and welding which would also benefit those community members who did not enjoy education. This indicates that community members have their own ideas about how they can use some kind of guidance in their own proposed diversification strategies.

Such a discrepancy relates to what Grieg-Gran (2012) says about REDD+ initiatives. REDD+ initiatives are according to her are often based on limited knowledge among policymakers with decision-making power about the local context and the challenges and wishers of local community members. The study of Scheba (2018) shows that REDD+ in Tanzania encountered difficulties concerning delivering successful results deriving from the alternative livelihood projects such as beekeeping and butterfly farming. Difficulties ranged according to the community from relevance and adequate support, to market linkages. The study of Duchelle et al. (2017) moreover highlights how the alternative livelihood projects under REDD+ in Indonesia, Cameroon, and Tanzania came about without sufficient say of communities on how these would look like.

Summary

This section has had the main purpose to answer the third sub-question of this thesis: *What is the role of structural and relational mechanisms in regulating access for forest-dependent communities to natural resources?*

The general procedure of REDD+, which strives for transparent information sharing to all stakeholders who should fully understand the initiative, is embraced by those in favour of REDD+ that I spoke to. However, such procedures do not match the studies that show how community members lack information and the provision of their consent on REDD+. This indicates a violation of the safeguards under the UN-REDD+ principles. Besides the voiced issues around FPIC, there seems to be a lack of democratic representatives of community members as representative of communities are rather picked according to their understanding of the REDD+. This puts in danger the contact between authorities and community members. The contact with authorities is moreover limited since there is a lack of responsiveness to complaints.

The last component covered under access to authority were the alternative livelihood sources. The importance of these became clear after the previous section of this chapter showed how restriction to access natural resources poses difficulties for community members. In favour of the communities, NGOs work with the government to lobby for lifting the logging moratorium which could increase access to natural resources. However, this has until now not resulted in fruitful outcomes. This shows the power that the state holds.

To understand the context in which the alternative livelihood sources are brought up, I looked at the community discourse. This discourse is observable in this case as it fits the discourse criteria outlined by Brockhaus et al. (2014). It showed as such how the state, NGOs, and the alternative livelihood options being offered all reflect the belief that communities form the main threat to the forests. This implicitly implies that the solution is also in their hands by shifting to other livelihood sources. This is in line with the statement on how certain scientific narratives, which draw the line between human activities and ecological changes, frequently help to legitimize the control of the state over natural resources (Ribot and Peluso, 2003). However, the decision to come up with certain alternative livelihood sources are

being critiqued for not meeting the needs of the communities. Despite proponents of REDD+ arguing that the communities are being sufficiently involved, the statements on imposing 'proper' knowledge on them seem to hold a certain bias in it, thereby reducing the openness for other sorts of 'knowledge' or wishes.

In answer to the sub-question of this section, it can be said that the limited access to authority reduced the ability to derive benefits from natural resources for communities under REDD+. The lack of FPIC, democratic representation, and receptiveness to complaints indicates the limited abilities of communities to influence decisionmakers to change the direction of the programme. The restrictions being imposed on communities to access natural resources shows the necessity to come up with alternative livelihood sources where communities could benefit from. However, the options being decided on illustrates communities being insufficiently heard in the design of alternative livelihood sources as it does not seem to match the local context.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This section elaborates on the main findings in relation to the existing literature to show insights that emerged as a result of this thesis. It also makes suggestions for further research to elaborate on findings that laid beyond the scope of this thesis. It ends by reflecting specifically on the interviews that were being held and the applied theoretical framework.

The concern of forest-dependent communities losing out on their ability to derive benefits from natural resources under REDD+ has drawn a wide range of discussions and researchers into the topic. The overall aim of this thesis was to widen the debate on access for forest-dependent communities under REDD+. This has been done by applying A Theory of Access from Ribot and Peluso (2003) on the case of CRS in Nigeria, which has already drawn attention because of restrictions being imposed upon the communities in the context of REDD+.

The literature review in chapter 3, focusing on the issue of access in other REDD+ cases, has shown how this issue has mainly been linked to property rights. This link is present in projects and programmes that are in the starting phase, but also in those further down the line. Concerns were mainly on how insecure property rights for communities, which is often the case in many tropical developing countries, could lead to harmful restrictions. This thesis does acknowledge the importance of looking into property rights when discussing and trying to understand access, to see how restrictions may come about. Land tenure is thus acknowledged as a continuous point of tension in REDD+ planning, and studies that consider such factors are certainly important.

Contrary to what was found in the literature review, this thesis has shown that a sole focus on legal mechanisms under the REDD+ regime is insufficient. This fits the main argument of Ribot and Peluso (2003) of moving beyond debates solely focusing on legal rights in order to understand the broad issue of access. This thesis has widened its scope to access to authority mainly. Ribot and Peluso (2003) explain that access to authority is important as it often implies the possibility to be in contact with those people or institutions with the power to make and implement policies that have a strong influence on people benefitting from forest resources. By looking into this access mechanism, it has become clear that communities in CRS under the REDD+ projects find themselves in marginalized positions with limited ability to let their needs and wishes known. An interesting finding was the discrepancy in answers provided about the alternative livelihood sources for the communities.

First, to explain the context in which such alternative livelihood sources came about I looked at the, what I called, community discourse. It appeared that there was a prime focus on communities as they were considered among the main source of forest degradation. It is interesting to note that the focus on corporate drivers of deforestation was only being mentioned in the readiness proposal, without any plans to limit the effects they had on the forest. On the contrary, these drivers were instead considered to function as an important financial stream for the state. At the same time of the support for REDD+, i.a. palm oil companies were being welcomed. This limits the credibility to change business-as-usual and hereby fits within the debate on the limited ability of REDD+ to confront big corporate drivers of deforestation. Future studies on determining which grounds such contrasting policies are legitimized are suggested and could fill this current scientific gap. This is especially important given the urgency for conservation in Nigeria; its forest cover by 2016 was estimated to be under the 10 percent threshold for sustainability.

It is against the backdrop of the community discourse that the communities are seen as both the problem and the solution to forest conservation and that alternative livelihood sources are being offered. Such

alternative livelihood sources could, in theory, outweigh the restrictions being imposed upon the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities. The NGO and REDD+ workers I spoke to seemed to argue that by taking away one type of access under REDD+, which showed in restrictions being imposed upon the communities, that REDD+ can come up with a new type of access by the provision of alternative livelihood options. They used the same rhetoric as the UN-REDD Programme which said on the process of REDD+ in CRS the following: "*the design of the various CBR+ projects provided a platform for community engagement and empowerment for active participation in the national REDD+ processes*" (UN-REDD Programme, 2016). The NGO and REDD+ workers also did not comment negatively about the alternative livelihood ideas (limited to being disappointed because of the impasse and lack of direct benefits). They rather emphasized the importance of the projects and how they follow the UN-REDD guidelines. However, by further analysing these conservations I found underlying top-down ideas by the use of particular sentences such as "imposing the proper kind of knowledge". This indicates the danger of omitting the ideas and values of communities when designing livelihood alternatives. In accordance with what researchers explained about the idea of a new type of access, I understood how the options for access did not fit the local context from a community perspective. They explained how this idea of a new type of access did not fit the local context and would not benefit them. This indicates a certain disconnect in terms of access. The findings show that in theory certain restrictions could easily be outbalanced by a new type of access, but that this can be hard to realize in practice.

This disconnect is, however, based on a few interviewees only, so more research should be done to cross-check such findings and to see the potential differences between and within communities. I have tried to cross-check this information with a community Chief but did not receive a response. Such a finding is, however, not unique as it fits other findings on alternative livelihood projects that did not fit the needs and wishes of local communities involved under REDD+ initiatives (see Duchelle et al., 2017; Scheba, 2018). These findings also reflect wider concerns within conservation initiatives (as elaborated on in the following section). Since there is consensus on these findings, the importance of dealing with this issue is highlighted.

Since the 1980s, conservation initiatives include both conservational and developmental purposes for communities to generate a win-win situation (Wright et al., 2016). The importance to provide alternative options for community livelihoods derives from the underlying presumption that their pressure on natural resources is often linked to poverty and too little other options (Brown, 2002). The alternative livelihood sources are offered to reduce the necessity to exploit natural resources for survival and to compensate for such losses or restrictions. Such compensation initiatives need to fully understand the losses and restrictions imposed on livelihoods and must also compensate in such a way that it adequately reflects the needs and wishes of people. Wright et al., (2016) argue that the construction of many alternative livelihood projects is generally built upon incorrect presumptions about the social context wherein they are implemented. Such incorrect presumptions are often derived from the beliefs and values of managers and policymakers from external contexts.

NGOs often have a role to play in the process of the implementation of conservation efforts. Studies on NGOs that work on local development projects however show that they often face hardship to make projects fit the local context and needs and wishes of people. An underlying explanation for this is the competing funding environment in which NGOs 'move'. This implies that NGOs have to tailor their projects and strategies according to the priorities of the donor organizations (Banks et al., 2015; Ebrahim, 2003; Elbers & Arts, 2011; Levine, 2002). Elbers and Arts (2011) moreover explain that donor organizations often work within fixed periods which often spans between one and three years. They also show how the demands from donor organisations influence the orientation of the projects which undermines local ownership and local needs.

In summary, this thesis has shown how using a wide perspective of access can contribute to an all-encompassing understanding of how forest-dependent communities could be influenced on their access under REDD+. This case shows that in theory certain restrictions could easily be outbalanced by a new type of access, but that this can be hard to realize in practice. Nigeria appears not to be a unique case in the sense that restrictions are being imposed with inadequate compensation outcomes. The militant nature by which REDD+ has been implemented in CRS, however, does make it a more extreme although not unique case compared to other REDD+ initiatives that share issues of access. As REDD+ in CRS is currently at an impasse, such findings offer the possibility to reconsider the place given to communities under the programme for when it would be picked up again. Although the findings are thus contextual, general shared issues show the importance to take them into account. It is therefore suggested for REDD+ projects and programmes to look beyond the REDD+ rhetoric and reconsider the place given to communities to make sure they are well-considered. This to make sure their access is at least not negatively influenced, and ideally, to ensure they can obtain substantial benefits. This is especially important against the backdrop of the rise of similar carbon offset schemes across the globe.

Reflections

A limitation of this study is the relatively few responses that were received from the request to engage in an interview. One interviewee mentioned that a lot of their time was preoccupied due to COVID-19, and this could be a reason why others did not respond to a request for an interview. The interviews were all conducted via Zoom or Skype. With three of them, I have engaged in a second conservation because of findings that later on came up during other interviews. Two interviews had to be conducted via email since the reception was insufficient to pursue via video call. This limited the possibility to ask as many follow-up questions. Another limitation is the fact that I have not been able to interview state officials. This is a gap in the responses that were received. When being physically in that context, it might have been easier to set up an interview. I have tried to fill this gap by using Budget Speeches of the Governor and news items.

It is also important to mention is that I did not elaborate in-depth on the alternative livelihood projects as some of these interviews took place at the beginning of my thesis when I did not have a full grasp on the situation. As such, I did not ask specifically how many projects they tried to initiate (on the UN-REDD Programme it mentions 12) for example. Idris talked about the projects in the Ekuri pilot site specifically, which were also mentioned by the REDD+ worker, NGO practitioner, and the community representative. Therefore, the discrepancy is mainly about this site. However, the NGO practitioner and REDD+ worker also mentioned initiatives like cassava cultivating and animal husbandry in the other pilot site, but I have not been able to ask about these proposed projects in-depth to either community representatives or researchers. However, the overall limited inclusiveness of communities in the programme in general still indicates the likeliness that the discrepancy could also occur in other project initiatives. All the interviewees I spoke to mentioned that no benefits are coming to the communities yet, which indicates that I did not miss a successful or outstanding project in the analysis.

The position of the interviewees that engaged in my research, should be further reflected upon also. Since interviewees occasionally held conflicting views on REDD+, it is important to reflect on their position. More critical information about the REDD+ programme has been given to me by the researchers. Idris, for example, often engages with the school of political ecology which in itself is critical of such programmes in general. Despite his potential bias, other studies have shown the same concern. Proponents of REDD+ (Michael, William and David) held more positive attitudes towards the program. They often used the sort of language that is also found in official REDD+ documents. However, issues as voiced by the researchers were hereby largely omitted. Their support for the

programme could be due to the fact that they are included in the REDD+ programme, attend the official meetings, and hold a certain belief in how the programme can bring conservational changes to CRS.

In addition, it is important to reflect on the theoretical framework that steered my research. Vayda and Walter (1999) critiqued political ecology studies that focused on access to natural recourses for not sufficiently taking into account the ecological environment. Many pay little attention to how the natural recourses itself affects access. Accordingly, Ginger et al., (2012) critique Ribot and Peluso's Theory of Access for paying too little attention to the environment. They argue that Ribot and Peluso inadequately assume a priori existence of a natural resource. Therefore, they miss the inclusion of biophysical factors that can influence the quality of resources and thereby influence the access to use the natural resource. Their study demonstrates how environmental conditions such as the existence of toxins, influence the interest in accessing certain fauna and flora in the region. In the case of REDD+ in CRS, more logging had taken place, but the influence of this on access to natural resources for local communities has not been elaborated on in this thesis. It is for example possible that due to the logging increases, soil quality has been reduced which potentially influences access to other natural resources as homegrown crops. This could be researched in future studies.

Another note on the applied theoretical framework is that it has proved to be difficult to make a clear distinction between the different access mechanisms. The finding on actors making illegal timber deals with the ATF was divided under the section of legal mechanism which indicates that access, when not being sanctioned, can also create access. However, it can be argued that this is also about engagement in social relations. This shows that it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the different access mechanisms. However, the main argument that the authors make proved to be of importance and the framework does provide some broad understanding of how to look at access. However, it might be difficult to 'tick all the boxes' of the different access mechanisms.

Important to discuss also are the studies that did apply A Theory of Access in studies on Payment for Environmental services, including REDD+-initiatives (see Bolin & Tassa, 2012; Corbera & Brown, 2010; Hein, 2014; Howson & Kindon, 2015). These studies show that access to natural resources might not only be influenced by property rights, but also by access to technology, capital and labour, and the ability to establish relationships. These studies thus also show how access extends property rights, as access to social relations within the REDD+ initiative explained how some community members were able to pursuit project benefits, while others did not. However, these studies mainly focused on how some community members could access some *benefits* from REDD+ but omitted how REDD+ might pose restrictions on the use of the forest and what this would imply for those who could not access the benefits. This thesis created a broader view on access as it looked at restrictions being imposed upon communities, but also analysed the ability to outweigh the restriction by deriving benefits from natural resources under REDD+.

Finally, it is important to reflect on the way that this thesis has considered communities as largely homogenous entities. The study from Johnson (2003) shows how women in communities in Nigeria play an important role as they do the majority of the farming and the harvesting of NTFP. However, these women are often politically subordinated. It is thus important, with the implementation of REDD+, that special attention is given to sufficiently include them in the programme. Although A Theory of Access mentions gender under the access mechanisms of social identity, there is not much elaboration on it. As such, some researchers have extended the theoretical framework of Ribot and Peluso (2003). Sultana (2011) for example researched access to household water in Bangladesh by extending A Theory of Access. She hereby introduced 'emotional geographies' to show how struggles over access to water are also about gendered power relations. This thesis lacks such an inquiry into gender differences. The data from where I derived my findings also did not distinguish between gender. The data that have been

derived from the PhD study from Isyaku played an important role in this thesis. His position of being a male, as he argues, made the engagement of interviews with women difficult. The other literature studies that have been used in this study are all conducted by men, who potentially encountered the same issue. Gender is an important area of study but was beyond the possibilities of this thesis. Further research should be done to see to what extent REDD+ might influence men and women differently. In this line of argument, did I also not make a clear distinction within and between communities and thus considered them to be homogenous entities. The theory of Ribot and Peluso (2003) is fruitful in discovering how certain individuals can access benefits or not, but as I considered them as rather homogenous entities this could not be discovered. I do acknowledge their differences, but due to a lack of information available, it has not been possible to distinguish between such differences.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

REDD+ entered the global stage over a decade ago as a relatively simple way to ease the climate impacts of land-use change in tropical developing countries. However, REDD+ has not evolved as first was expected by those who had high expectations on the initiative. Critical studies have not only indicated how the conservation programme encountered difficulties in terms of efficiency in reducing forest degradation but also how it can have reverse impacts on access for forest-dependent communities. The case study of this thesis on the REDD+ readiness phase in CRS, which was about to enter the next implementation phase, aligns with such findings.

The section on the first sub-question showed that the forest-dependent communities derive enjoyment from the forest, wish for future generations to be able to still enjoy the forest, but mainly showed how the forest and its resources are vital to their survival. It has become clear, however, that the state mainly considered REDD+ as a way to generate capitalistic benefits. Against the background of a financial crisis, the Governor of CRS during that time, Liyel Imoke, sought for 'creative funding strategies'. These included both carbon financing and the attraction of agricultural, mining, and industrial investments. This already explains why the programme mainly focused on communities but omitted such big drivers of deforestation.

The section on the second sub-question showed that insecure land tenure arrangements in place played a significant role in restricting access to forest resources for forest dependent-communities in the REDD+ pilot sites as the state can take control of the area. The Land Use Act of 1978 is an important forestry policy in place as it gives the Governor the power to overrule customary land rights when needed for 'development purposes'. The state has, when referring to Ribot and Peluso (2003), access control as it has the power to mediate others' access by directing and regulating free action. The ATF functioned as militant forest surveillance, under which corruption and forest degradation have increased. Also, the unequal sharing formula on carbon credits shows the limited ability for communities to derive benefits from such a new type of access.

Furthermore, this thesis has also shown how limited access to authority reduced the ability to derive benefits from natural resources under REDD+. The lack of FPIC, democratic representation, and receptiveness to complaints indicates the limited abilities of communities to influence decisions on the direction of REDD+. The section on the third sub-question also included a section on the alternative livelihood sources, which in theory could outweigh the losses from restrictions being imposed on accessing natural resources by providing another type of access. However, a discrepancy has appeared in the options being decided upon which illustrated communities being insufficiently heard in the design of alternative livelihood sources.

Based on the three sub-questions outlined in this thesis, an answer to the main question of this thesis: *How has REDD+ influenced the ability of forest-dependent communities to derive benefits from natural resources in Cross River State, Nigeria?* can be given. It can be said that REDD+ under Governor Imoke has been characterized by a militant forest control whereby forest-dependent communities experienced a reduction in access to natural resources. The insecure land tenure played an important role as it allowed for the increase of the power of the state and showed the limited rights for communities to demand access. The power of the state also limits the likeliness for communities to benefit from carbon credits to outweigh the restrictions. Deriving benefits from natural resources were also made nearly impossible given the lack of access to authority, showing in the limited ability to steer the programme in the direction of the needs of communities whereby alternative livelihoods are not likely to serve as a successful new type of access.

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Appendix

1. Literature used for effects of REDD+

(Bayrak & Marafa, 2016; Brockhaus et al., 2014; Brown & Schreckenberg, 1998; Carodenuto & Fobissie, 2015; Corbera, 2012; Corbera et al., 2007; Day, 2014; Dehm, 2016; Duchelle et al., 2018; Duchelle et al., 2017; Dutschke, 2013; Ece et al., 2017; Gebara et al., 2014; Grieg-Gran, 2012; Ickowitz, 2006; Kalabamu, 2019; Karsenty et al., 2014; Kenfack, 2016; Lasco et al., 2013; Mustalahti & Rakotonarivo, 2014; Peskett et al., 2011; Pham et al., 2015; Scheba, 2018; Sills et al., 2014; Skutsch & Turnhout, 2020; Thrupp et al., 1997; Weatherley-Singh & Gupta, 2015).

2. REDD+ in the readiness phase

(Agyei, 2012; Bernard et al., 2014; Beymer-Farris & Bassett, 2012; Corbera et al., 2011; Dokken et al, 2014; Leggett & Lovell, 2012; Paudel et al., 2015; Sunderlin et al., 2014).

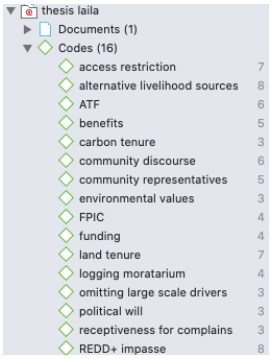
3. REDD+ further down the line

(Barbier & Tesfaw, 2012; Broegaard, et al., 2017; Kansanga & Luginaah, 2019; Larson et al., 2013; Samndong & Vatn, 2018; Sunderlin et al., 2018).

4. Selected literature for the case study

(Abua et al., 2013; ACF, 2010; Asiyanbi & Massarella, 2020; Asiyanbi, 2016, 2017; Asiyanbi et al., 2017; Asiyanbi et al., 2019; CNN, 2010; Cross River State of Nigeria, 2010; Ece et al., 2017; Fadairo et al., 2018; the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011; Isyaku, 2017; Isyaku et al., 2017; Nuesiri, 2016; Nuesiri, 2017, 2018; R-PP, 2013; Sheng, 2017).

5. The total code names



6. The subgroupings of the codes