



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Natural Resources and
Agricultural Sciences

The impacts of formal and informal institutions on a forest management project in Cameroon

Samuel Tabi Nkongho Ashu

Department of Urban and Rural Development

Master's Thesis • 30 HEC

Rural Development and Natural Resource Management - Master's Programme

Uppsala 2016

The impacts of formal and informal institutions on forest management in Cameroon

Samuel Tabi Nkongho Ashu

Supervisor: Oscar Jansson, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,
Department of Urban and Rural Development.

Assistant Supervisor: Dil Bahadur Khatri, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,
Department of Urban and Rural development

Examiner: Kjell Hansen, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,
Department of Urban and Rural development

Credits: 30 HEC

Level: Second cycle, A2E

Course title: Master's thesis in Rural Development and Natural Resource Management

Course code: EX0681

Programme/Education: Rural Development and Natural Resource Management – Master's Programme

Place of publication: Uppsala

Year of publication: 2016

Maps and/or images: Samuel Ashu has obtained copyright approval to publish the BBCF maps; approved by Mor Achankap Bakia , GIS UNIT, Programme for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, MINFOF, S.W.R. Cameroon.

Online publication: <http://stud.epsilon.slu.se>

Keywords: institutions, values, rural development, community, forestry

Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences
Department of Urban and Rural Development

Abstract

The thesis explores how the implementation of a new forest law in Cameroon affects and interacts with the traditional authority system that previously regulated the forest use and forest management. The concepts of “Institutional Interplay”, “Cross scale institutional linkages” and “Institutional design (Ostrom 2005)” were used to analyse how interactions of local institutions and stakeholders influence community based forest management (CBFM) process in Bimbia Bonadikombo (BB) community. The Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework provided a descriptive and evaluation tool that examined formal and informal (rules) process and interaction in BB. The method of data collection was through interviews (mostly open ended), and focus group discussion. The research made use of primary and secondary sources of data. Participatory tools included transect walk with a target group and participant observation. Some key informants were interviewed and phone interviews were also used to obtain information. Data collected was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Institutional and stakeholder analysis was done using a Venn diagram. In this thesis, I argue that the interactions redefine forest governance and suggest risks of recentralization. Powerful actors especially the government, Limbe III municipality, donor organisations have influenced the CBFM process, and have jointly marginalized the voices of local farmer groups and other users. The implementation process of the law 94/01 takes precedence over customary tenure, which justifies the conflict between native and non-native farmers in Bimbia Community, and why a user group approach as an interplay management strategy is adopted at the operational level of decision-making for the farmers. To say that the implementation process of law 94/01 is very interactive and supportive of CBFM practice is simplistic and misses the point. The participatory forest management system could be described as a “contractual partnership” between the state and the village communities. The study reveals that farmers in BB, prefer to deal with institutions that have existed and successfully support community forest initiatives that offer control overland by local communities as part of a trade off in their interaction.

Keywords: Integration, Values, Collective decision-making level, Institutions, disenfranchised.

Acknowledgement

I wish to acknowledge all those who contributed in one way or the other to the realization of this work. My sincere gratitude goes to Dil Bahadur Khatri for his critical comments, timely responses and creating the necessary academic atmosphere to complete this thesis.

I equally want to thank Associate Professor Örjan Bartholdson for his consistent encouragement and comments and more especially for taking off time from his tight schedule to guide and re-examine this work. My sincere gratitude goes also to Dr Oscar Jansson for his contributions and insights, and all the lecturers in the Department of Rural and Urban Development, especially Emil Sandström, Lars Hallgren, Linley Chiwona-Karlton, Opira Otto, Torbjörn Rydberg, and Helen Arvidsson, Per Edenhamn (study adviser) for supporting me in diverse ways during my studies at SLU.

I will like to express my sincere gratitude to professor Kjell for taking time off his tight schedule to read this work, offer suggestions that made the work easier to understand, as well as serving as my examiner.

To my colleagues in the International Master's program me in Rural Development and Natural Resources Management, I say "merci" for your ideas and group contributions. Special thanks go to Wondmagegn Tafesse and Josefin Egerlid for their academic and moral support.

I wish to thank also the Swedish Government for their support in terms of tuition and making provision for my field trips. I am grateful also to the various institutions in Cameroon, especially the Ministry of Secondary Education for granting me this opportunity to improve my educational knowledge and skills necessary for the development of the nation. I am equally thankful to some workers in the Ministry of Secondary Education in Yaoundé for their valuable guidance, suggestions, criticisms, understanding, exercising delays and mal-treatment of my files especially during those tough times. Without their professional support and actions, this work will not have taken the structure and approach it took. Special thanks go also to Mr Wotany Philip, Mr Kenneth, Mola Ngale and members of the Bimbia Bonadikombo Natural Resource Management Council for providing technical facilities and research opportunities for my field work.

Special thanks go equally to my family for their support and prayers throughout my studies. Finally, I wish to thank God almighty for his grace in my life.

Table of contents

Table of figures	7
Abbreviations and Acronyms	8
1 Introduction.....	9
1.1 Disposition.....	11
1.2 Problem Statement	11
1.3 Research Objective and Questions	12
2 Theoretical Framework and Concepts	13
2.1 <i>What are Institutions?</i>	13
2.2 <i>Enabling Conditions: Prerequisites for Institutionalizing Community based forest management</i>	13
2.3 <i>The Role of Institutions in Forest Resource Management</i>	13
2.4 <i>Institutional Interplay</i>	14
2.5 <i>Institutional Change: Northian View</i>	15
2.6 <i>Rules for Governance of Commons</i>	16
2.7 <i>Theoretical Approaches Used in the Governance of Forest Resources</i>	17
2.8 <i>The Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework</i>	18
3 Methodology and Methods.....	20
3.1 Interviews	20
3.1.1 <i>Interviews at the Council (BBNPMC) Head Office</i>	20
3.1.2 <i>Key Informants</i>	21
3.1.3 <i>Focus Group</i>	21
3.2 <i>Participant Observation and Transect Walk with Farmers</i>	22
3.3 <i>Data Presentation and Analysis</i>	22
3.4 <i>Limitation</i>	23
4 Background and study area.....	24
4.1 <i>Context of forest Act and its Implementation</i>	24
4.1.1 <i>Institutional History and Development of Forestry Legislation in Cameroon</i>	24
4.1.2 <i>Institutional Description of the Implementation process of law 94/01</i>	25
4.2 <i>Study Area</i>	30
4.2.1 <i>The Limbe III municipality</i>	30
4.2.2 <i>Bimbia Bonadikombo Community Forest (BBCF)</i>	32
4.2.3 <i>History of Bimbia</i>	33
4.2.4 <i>Bimbia Bonadikombo Natural Resources Management Council (BBNPMC)</i>	35
5 Findings.....	38
5.1 (1) How does the implementation process of forest law 94/01 affect forest management in Bimbia Bonadikombo Community (BBC)? (2) How do the farmers react to and perceive the implementation of law 94/01?	38
5.1.1 <i>Clearly Defined Boundaries</i>	38
5.1.2 <i>User Rights</i>	40
5.1.3 <i>Congruence between Appropriation and Provision Rules and Local Conditions</i>	41
5.1.4 <i>Minimum Recognition of Rights to Organize</i>	42
5.1.5 <i>Collective Choice Arrangements</i>	43
5.1.6 <i>Monitoring</i>	43
5.1.7 <i>Graduated Sanctions and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms</i>	44
5.1.8 <i>Nested Enterprises</i>	45
5.2.1 <i>Institutional and stakeholder relationship of Power</i>	46
5.2.2 <i>Institutional relationship of control</i>	49

5.2. 3 Social and environmental relationship	50
6 Analyses and Discussion.....	54
7 Conclusion	62
References.....	63
Internet	64
APPENDIX.....	65
Appendix 1: Semi- structured questions (Interview guide used in both Interviews, and Focus Group Discussions for both registered and non- registered farmers (Natives and non-natives)	65
Interview guide with forest manager and forest extension workers.....	66
Assessment of outcome of the management process at the operational level.	66

Table of figures

<i>Figure 1</i> The IAD framework based on Ostrom et al 1994.....	19
<i>Figure 2</i> Interview at the office (Author, 2011).....	21
<i>Figure 3</i> Interview with farmers during transect walk (Author, 2011).	22
<i>Figure 4</i> Map shows BBCF boundaries with land cover showing dense forest, open forest, mangroves, farmland, settlement, plantations, water. (Source: Mor Achankap Bakia GIS UNIT, Programme for sustainable management of Natural Resources, MINFOF, S.W:R Cameroon.).....	29
<i>Figure 5</i> Map showing BBCF boundaries with contours 20m interval, showing farmland, open forest, dense forest, settlement, rivers, mangroves, (Source: Mor Achankap Bakia, GIS UNITS: PSMNR, MINFOF, S.W.R, cameroon.	33
<i>Figure 6</i> Venn diagram showing institutions charged with power. (Land-tenure and resource control) This institutions are represented in two ways. Firstly from the size of each circle and secondly from the distance of the institution to the problem (Source: Author;2012.).....	47
<i>Figure 7</i> Demographic information of respondents in Bimbia Bonadikombo Community.	50
<i>Figure 8</i> Summary Description of BBCF Actors and their strategies (Source: Author, 2014)	53

Abbreviations and Acronyms

BBC	Bimbia Bonadikombo Community
BBCF	Bimbia Bonadikombo Community Forest
BBNRM	Bimbia Bonadikombo Natural Resource management Council
BBSMP	Bimbia Bonadikombo Simple Management Plan
BLCC	Bakweri Land Claims Committee
C.D.C.	Cameroon Development Corporations
CBM	Community Based Management
CATWOE	Customers, Actors, Transformation, Weltanschauung or world view, Owners, Environment
CF	Community Forest.
CFM	Community Forest management.
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIPE	Center for International Private Enterprise
CPR	Common Pool Resource
CPR	Common Property Resource
ECP	European Colonial Powers
EPHTA	Eco-regional Program for the Humid and Sub-Humid Tropics of Africa
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCC	Federal Communications Commissions
FEP	Farmer Education Program
FRMP	Forest Resource Management Power
FUG	Forest User Group.
IAD	Institutional Analysis and Development
LBG	Limbe Botanical Garden
MC	Management Committee
MCP	Mount Cameroon Project
MINEF	Ministry of Environment and Forest.
MINFOF	Ministry of Forest and Fauna
MoP	Manual of procedures and Norms for the acquisition and Management of community Forests.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIE	New Institutional Economics
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RCDC	Regional Centre For Development and Conservation.
RUAF	Resource Centre on Urban Agriculture and Forestry
SANDEE	South Asian Network for Development and Environmental Economics
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management.
SLU	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
SMPBBCF	Simple Management Plan For Bimbia Bonadikombo Community Forest
SSM	Soft System Methodology
VARCIG	Victoria Area rainforest Common Initiative Group.
VLFC	Victoria Lands and Forest Conservation committee

1 Introduction

Institutions are the formal and informal rules and norms that organize social, political and economic relations (North, 1990). Examples of informal institutions are customary or traditional rules and others which are not created under the formal system, whereas the formal rules are the opposite. “Whereas institutions are sets of rules of the game or codes of conduct defining social practices, organizations are material entities possessing offices, personnel, budgets, equipment and legal personality” (Young, 1996). These definitions of institutions and organisations, formal and informal rules, are often misinterpreted by scholars, but the rule-like character of institutions is consistent with my definition in this thesis.

The success of formal and informal institutions depends not only on their own performance, but also on their interaction with other arrangements that have overlapping jurisdiction (Young et al, 1999: 49). Interaction between institutions can reinforce their effectiveness on management. On the other hand, inadequacy of institutions, can lead to disruption in the achievement of agreed management objectives, diminishing or even offsetting gains from cooperation between entities. In both cases, coordination is necessary to consolidate rules and reduce conflict, or to exploit synergies in implementation (Young, 1999).

The Bimbia Bonadikombo Natural Resource Management Council (BBNRMC, manages 3735 of community forest in the Mt. Cameroon forest area, a biodiversity area in the South West Region of Cameroon (Myers et al., 1999, Olson and Dinerstein, 2002).¹ It is an outcome of the Cameroon government’s 1994 decentralized forestry law, which allowed for the creation of community forest not exceeding 5000 hectares (Forbes and Besong, 2002; Djeumo, 2001; Egbe, 2001). The farmers in Bimbia Bonadikombo Communities (BBC), mostly produce subsistence crops for their families and market a very small part of their surplus.²

Mengang (1982), explains that before the arrival of the colonial administrators in the country, natural resources were managed according to the “*People’s law*” (that is family law).³ He argues that, the village chiefs were the main administrators when it comes to resource management. ⁴So with the arrival of the colonial administrators, natural resources which had belonged to the people became the property of the first colonial administration and a formal administrative structure evolved (Ibid).⁵ In his opinion, the colonial

¹ BBNRMC is a local group that manages the community forest.

² In this thesis, the farmers are mostly peasant and produce in small scale. A small-scale farmer is described as a person who owns or works on a farm, or operates an agricultural entity either commercial, or to sustain himself and family. Farmers earn their living through farming, but the additional income may vary substantially

³ (1) There is no accepted definition of family law. Family law is seen as the law governing the relationship between children and parents, and between adults in close emotional relationship. See Murphy (2005) and B, Stark (2005) on the growing significance of international family law. (2) It consists of a body of statutes and case precedents that govern the legal responsibilities between individuals who share a domestic connection. Most often the parties are related by blood or marriage. Egbe (2007, page 32).

⁴For example, before Cameroon nation -state came into being tribal, or ethno-cultural, entities or groups existed as Nationalities with territorial limits and powers over land and resources. Such seemed to have been the case with bakweri people who in their claim of landed patrimony got into conflict with German/British colonialist with respect of CDC occupied land. (See letter No 1178/MINAGRI/CAB/IG3 Of 6th June 2003) www.blcc.org.

⁵ According to Mengang (1982), when a hunting party returned to a village after a hunt, all the animals killed were brought to the chief whose duty within the village council was to distribute the meat to all the villagers. Under customary regimes, land is overseen by

administrators then started the development or creation of protected areas and reserves, and this created tension between rural communities and the newly created administrative structures.⁶ A good example is the Limbe Botanical Garden (LBG) which was created after World War I, following the German colonization of Cameroon. This garden is an example of bio-diversity conservation in Cameroon (Mengang, 1982). As time went on, according to Ngwasiri (2001), colonial policy on natural resources was essentially hegemonic in character, and intended to guarantee regular supply of agricultural and forestry resources to Germany. Such policies generated conflicts especially from indigenous population, as exemplified by the (BLP) Bakweri land problem⁷ (Ngwasiri 1995; Tumnde 2001; Lambi 2003). Having gone through three colonial reigns namely, German, French and English, Cameroon disregarded the customary or traditional tenure systems and favoured a statutory system, through expropriation of community controlled land and forests and imposition of state ownership (ADB, 2009; USAID, 2010). The laws governing land and forest in Cameroon are the 1974 Land Ordinance governing national lands and the 1994 forestry law. However, implementation of these laws was not without challenges.

Agrawal and Clark (2001) argue that due to poor outcomes associated with government centred policies, many conservation policies in some African countries failed, because the traditional approaches and local authorities that once controlled these resources were disenfranchised.⁸ According to Agrawal and Clark (2001), if local communities are not involved in active management of natural resources, it is likely that they will harvest resources at an unsustainable rate. In this regard effective decentralisation⁹ and devolution of power and control of resources from centralised state to local communities has become a pressing policy issue throughout the world today (Brown 1999). The involvement of local communities and approaches in the management of forest resources takes several forms, depending upon the environment and the degree of involvement. According to Alden Wily (2002) depending upon what is actually agreed in terms of management agreements or contracts between the government and the community, with over- simplification participatory forest management in Bimbia Bonadikombo community may broadly assume the following typology: “*Contractual Partnership*”, where the roles are more substantial but still inequitable.

The 1994 forestry law, introduced Community based forest management in Cameroon, and was supposed to be based on a decentralized management system. The aim was to improve the legislative framework and promote community participation in forest management

traditional local leaders or chiefs who ensure management and community based control (fisiy, 1992; ADB, 2009).

⁶ Environment, [research.yale.edu/documents/downloads/0-9/102 Mengang.pdf](http://research.yale.edu/documents/downloads/0-9/102_Mengang.pdf).

⁷ The Bakweri Land Problem is the expropriation of over 400 square miles of fertile bakweri land by some 23 German Plantation developers and then later, the Cameroon Development Corporation (C.D.C.) united all the plantations and used them for commercial purposes without payment of royalties for the use of the land to the bakweri natives (considered as owners of the land). See 1922 British Annual Report to the League of Nations. <http://www.blccarchives.org>.

⁸ Disenfranchised in this thesis describes a person or group of people who are stripped of their rights or power.

⁹ Decentralization can take different forms (Rondinelli, Cheema 1983): (1) Deconcentration- dispersing decision making authority to reach the entire territory. (2) Delegation –allocating decision making authority to local governments. (3) Devolution- financial and legal establishment of government bodies at the sub-national level (4) divestment- transfer of planning and administrative responsibilities from government to private or non-governmental institutions.

(Brown, 1999).¹⁰ The inhabitants of Bimbia (mainly subsistence farmers)¹¹ dependence on farming and the heterogeneous population structure have posed great difficulties to the implementation of sustainable and participatory forest management (Nuesiri, 2008).¹²

As the government enters into agreement with the local community in Bimbia, questions arise about the interplay or overlap of jurisdiction and membership of this form of collaborative forest management. This thesis aims at encouraging policy experts to pay as much attention to how this interplay of formal and informal institutions at the management phase, especially at operational level of decision making, affect the activities of registered farmers and other stakeholders.

1.1 Disposition

The thesis is structured in the following manner. Part one discusses the problem statement, the objectives and research questions. Part two focuses on the theoretical framework and concepts. Part three describes the methodology and methods. Part four presents the background and study area. Part five presents the findings, while part six presents the analysis and discussion. The conclusion as well as the implications are drawn from the analysis and presented in part seven. .

1.2 Problem Statement

There has been commendable effort in promoting Community Forest Management by government institutions, traditional institutions as well as development organisations, in order to implement good governance of forest resources at local level and ensure food security for village communities in Bimbia Municipality of the Southwest Region of Cameroon. In spite of this fact, there has been little study on the potential effects of law 94/01 for the management activities of farmers in village communities. Little attention is directed also to farmers' perception of the law. The significance of farmers' perception has been ignored mainly by excluding them from the designing and implementation processes at the operational level of decision making as well as assessment of the outcome of the law. This neglect is important for it affects the success of the aim of Community Forest Management, especially in Bimbia Bonadikombo Community (BBC), composed of mainly farmers and fishermen.

An understanding of farmers' perception is relevant for it could explain the problems relating to the encroachment (Illegal expansion) of farms within the community forest, as well as reasons for: (1) failed adopted formal and informal processes, (2) insufficient participation by farmers targeted by the council (BBNPMC), (3) using inadequate enforcement mechanisms by the management of the council (BBNPMC).¹³

¹⁰ Improve the legislative framework in terms of designing good constitutional, collective choice and operational rules. These rules are to be used in defining boundaries geographically and in terms of membership, used in control and ownership of resources, monitoring of resources, conflict resolution, graduating sanctions, as well as users rights to resources.

¹¹Subsistence farming is the type of farming that provides for family needs with little surplus for marketing.

¹² Many ethnic groups and migrants from within Cameroon(Northwest and West, Littoral Regions) and foreign nationals (From Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Togo, Gabon etc) who depend on the forest for their livelihood. Topa *et al.* (2009, p.36) note that "management of the Bimbia Bonadikombo community forest occurs in a complex setting- the margin of urban development...it is feared that this model is not sustainable" without external support..

¹³ Formal and informal institutions are often hampered by personal vested interest of the actors who created the institution, ineffective implementation or inadequacy of the rules.

The different stakeholders within the village communities in Bimbia have “vested interest” which they want to uphold, and as such they are often pulled in opposing camps. The study explores the interaction of the rules and the effect on management,¹⁴ finding out (the extent to which outputs satisfy actor objectives, and forces influencing the management process) what has worked and what has not worked, and makes suggestions on how they could be improved.

1.3 Research Objective and Questions

The first aim of this research is to explore the impact of the implementation process of law 94/01 on the management phase, on the operational level of decision making, and how it affects the concerned farmers' perception (with regards to access, ownership, and control of forest resources). These are the research questions:

- (1) How does the implementation process of forest law 94/01 affect forest management in Bimbia Bonadikombo Community (BBC)?
- (2) How do the farmers react to and perceive the implementation of law 94/01?

The second objective is to describe the type of relationship that emanates from the interaction of the formal and informal rules with actors within BBC.

- (3) What sort of relationship exist (in terms of power, control, social and environmental) between the management council (BBNPMC), the registered farmers and other local organizations, and how do the local farmers perceive these relationships?

¹⁴ Institutional effects looks at that external or indirect impact an institution may have on a wide range of behaviours and outcomes that the institution does not normally target (Young and Levy, 1999, 3-16).

2 Theoretical Framework and Concepts

2.1 What are Institutions?

North (1990, 3), defines Institutions as “*the humanly devised constraints that shape interaction. In consequence, they structure incentives in human exchange, whether political, social or economic*”. His definition of Institutions comprises implicit constraints, formal rules and enforcement mechanisms. Apparently, any formal rule is at least partially backed, supplemented or contradicted by a number of implicit rules that can take the form of taboos, customs, traditions, code of conduct, routines, conventions (North, 1990; 6, 43, 83). Riker (1982; 4) defines institutions as “rules about behaviour, especially about making decisions”. Charles Plott (1979; 156), also defines institutions to mean “the rules for individual expression, information transmittal, and social choice”. I used the “*rule approach*” in defining institutions. North insist that rules must be “clearly differentiated ...from the players” in spite of ambiguities in the definition. North (1994, 361) argues that interaction between institution and organisation shapes the institutional evolution of an economy.

2.2 Enabling Conditions: Prerequisites for Institutionalizing Community based forest management.

There are enabling conditions (prerequisites) for institutionalizing Community based forest management. A community with identifiable membership is important for community organization, decision-making and benefit sharing, control and regulation of behaviour, sharing of responsibilities and accountability (Ostrom, 1999). In Cameroon, for communities to be able to engage in forest management, they must be recognized by the government as a legal participant in the management of the forest. (Heermans, J and Otto, J.,1999; AFORNET, 2005). ¹⁵ These communities have farmer organization (for example, BBNRMC in Bimbia) which are considered robust in that, the day- to- day operational rules have been devised and modified overtime according to a set of collective –choice and constitutional –choice rules (Shepsler, 1989). Given the variation in operational specific rules in use, the sustainability of these organization is based on specific attributes of related physical system, cultural views of the society, and economic and political relationships that exist in the setting (Ostrom, 1999). In these thesis, Ostroms `s (1991) “designed principles” are used, which are characteristics of resource governing institutions, required for a system such as BBCF to be successful. ¹⁶ They include clearly defined boundaries; Users rights; Agreement between appropriation, provision rules and local conditions; Collective choice arrangements; Monitoring; Graduated sanctions; Conflict resolution mechanism; and Nested enterprises.

2.3 The Role of Institutions in Forest Resource Management

The interaction between people who apply formal rules and those that rely on informal rules shapes the use of forest resources in different communities Anne (2008). Generally, “operational rules” comprise both formal and informal rules, and these rules are being used by communities in making decisions regarding land and forest resource.¹⁷

¹⁵ To be the legal participant, they need to be defined, with clearly defined boundaries which delineate limits of their jurisdiction (FAO, 2002).

¹⁶ A “designed principle” is defined as a conception used consciously or unconsciously by those constituting and reconstituting a continuing association of individuals about a general organized principle.”

¹⁷ The task of a manager is to shape formal and informal rules, influencing the operation of the organization or enty.in such a way as to increase the functionality. Functionality here means, the capacity to coordinate task, achieve levels of cooperation or respond to changing conditions (Chacance, B., (2008).

According to Pacheco, P. (2008), formal and informal rules affect how communities control, allocate, legitimize, and enforce land and forest tenure rights. Secondly, by imposing formal regulations and models, it affects the local system's way of using and managing forest resources. Thirdly, formal regulations are sometimes constraints or opportunities to individuals, and this affects community interaction with markets.

Weber (1921) observed that the relationship between informal behavioural regularities and formal rules is complex and reciprocal. Pejovich (1999, p.170) puts forward different instances of relations: 1) Formal institutions suppress, but fail to change informal institutions; 2) Formal rules directly conflict with informal rules; 3) Formal rules are either ignored or rendered neutral; and 4) "Formal and informal rules cooperate"- as in cases where the state institutionalizes informal rules that had evolved too spontaneously. Pejovich observes: "When formal rules conflict with prevailing informal rules, the interaction of their incentives will tend to raise transaction costs and reduce the production of wealth in the community" (Pejovich 1999, p. 171).

North's theory of Institutional change distinguishes between formal and informal institutions and underlines the inertial character of the latter. North talks about alteration produced by discontinuous institutional change such as revolution and conquest. North defines Institutions as *constraints*. He notes that "*informal constraints that are culturally derived will not change immediately in reaction to changes in the formal rules,*" leading to "*tension between altered formal rules and the persistent informal constraints*" (North 1990, p.45)¹⁸

2.4 Institutional Interplay

Institutional interplay refers to the relationship of an institution to, and interaction with one or more other institution. Interplay refers to the phenomenon where one institution intentionally or unintentionally affects another (King, 1997). Young identifies four types of linkages (Young et al. 1999: 62-64). Functional linkages are when the operation of one institution directly influences the effectiveness of another through some substantive connection among activities involved.¹⁹ The problems could be linked in bio-geophysical or socio-economic terms. Political linkages are involved when actor actively seek to link and/or integrate two or more institutions. These are subject to deliberate manipulation by the actors concerned with particular problem.²⁰ Young et al, also showed that interplay occur along horizontal and vertical axis. ²¹Vertical linkages cut across levels of social

¹⁸ Informal constraints are linked to cultural inheritance while changes in formal rules are made and enforced by the policy.

¹⁹ Interplay may be as a result of the politics of institutional design and management deriving from a common interest and goal. For example in BBCF, sometimes the council (BBNRMC), municipality, or delegate for forestry issues permits to exploit timber, leading to conflict of responsibilities. Interdependency and mutual interest sometimes leads to competition or collaboration (both formal and informal) amongst institutions at various administrative and geographical scales (Berkes, 2002). Berkes (2002), takes a perspective from the bottom. In BBCF, I look at linkages on the operational level of management. Young (2002) approaches the problem by linking the constitutional level to global. The marriage of these two complementary approaches helps us to look at the linkages from the operational level of management to the constitutional level of management and vice versa.

²⁰ Note that "Politics of institutional design and management" come into play when actors forge linkages between issues and institutions intentionally in the interest of pursuing individual or collective goals (Young et al. 1999: 60-65, Young 2002).

²¹ Key actors involved in the institutional design to create BBCF are, the Mount Cameroon Project Limbe (MCP), funded by British Government through the Department for

organisation, whereas horizontal linkages are found among institutional arrangements operating at the same level of social organisation. Young differentiates when arrangements are embedded in principles and practice, arrangements are nested by design within functionally or geographical broader regimes, arrangements are as a result of deliberate clustering of several regimes across functional or geographical borders, and when arrangements simply overlap largely unintentionally (Young, 1999: 165-172).²²

2.5 Institutional Change: Northian View

According to North (1990), Institutional change is assumed when net benefit from change out weight's the cost (Menard et al., 2001). North's 1973 book with Robert Paul Thomas "The Rise of the Western World. A New Economic History" accords organizational and institutional change a greater role in determining growth. North asserts that "*efficient economic organization is the key to growth*". Efficient economic organization entails "*the establishment of institutional arrangements and property rights that create incentives to channel individual economic efforts into activities that bring private rate of return close to the social rate of return*" (North and Thomas, 1973, p.1). In his breakthrough book "*Structure and Change in Economic History*", he dismissed the assumption that institutions were efficient (North 1981). North's (1990) book, "*Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*", he abandoned neo-classical assumptions about efficiency and rationality (1990a). In this book he argues that "*Third world countries are poor because the institutional constraints define a set of payoffs to political, economic conditions that do not encourage productive activity*" (Ibid, p.110). North equally uses the concept of transaction cost to address the question why some countries are rich and others poor. This concept can be used to address the question why some farmers are rich and others poor.²³

International Development (DFID), the Global Environmental Facility, and the Cameroon government (Forbes and Besong, 2002). These actors interacted vertically with indigenous institutions (the Limbe Traditional Council, the Victoria Land and Forest Conservation Committee (VLFC), and Victoria Area Rainforest Common initiative Group (VARCIG) (Oji and Tekwe, 1998). Vertically, the MCP helped non-indigenous forest users to form farmer groups, charcoal producers, timber exploiters and fuelwood users groups within BBNRMC (Tekwe and Percy, 2001).

²² For example, Law 94/01 recognizes two types of forest landscapes. Permanent (State forest and council forest) and Non- Permanent (Private forest and community forest) (Government of Cameroon, 1994). State forests are protected forest (national parks, wildlife reserves) and production forest. Council forests are managed in a decentralized manner by elected local councils on the basis of management plans approved by MINFOR. Private forest belongs to individuals and community forest is managed by communities. So interplay of formal rules with other existing governance institutions occur at different management levels (Operational, collective-choice, constitutional level). Cameroon has diverse modes of forest management. Examples are Leasehold forestry, Collaborative forest management, Community based regimes, and Government managed forest and Protected areas and Private forest. These regimes have distinct governance mechanisms with respect to forest management responsibilities and benefit distribution. With respect to Community –based management regimes in Cameroon, the degree of community autonomy and the level of benefits to communities vary. For example, in BBCF, management is through the BBNRMC (see constitution of board). So local communities do not enjoy full autonomy of management and use of forest products, and income from the forest resources is invested in community forest. Sometimes management arrangements are embedded under collaborative forest management in which communities have limited rights over management and use of forest products and a percentage of income remains for local level or government.

²³ In BBC, the interaction of certain rules has brought about changes in land scape management. There is a link between tenure and land use change due to some social institutions that have influence land cover dynamics, for example the conversion of forest to farm land. Also conflict between state rules and customary rules has brought about changes in settlement patterns, and land appropriation strategies. For example when it was announced that BBCF is under" state protection" and the local people noticed the expansion of control in what they considered as their land, some reacted by clearing more forest to

North (1990) argues in this book that institutional change occurs when those economic or political entrepreneur who have the bargaining strength to change institutions perceive that “they could do better by altering the existing institutional framework by some margin. But their perceptions depend on both the information the entrepreneur receives and how they process that information” (Ibid. 8). But their information is often incomplete, their models imperfect and their reforms constrained by existing set of institutions and incentives. North argues further, that reforms are also constrained by societies’ inherited belief system.

2.6. Rules for Governance of Commons.

Three types of rules have been identified that directly or indirectly affect people’s behaviour in a given society. They include: Operational rules, collective decision-making rules and constitutional rules (Ostrom et al. 1997). Each of these rules in turn affects different types of decisions.

Operational rules are rules that are commonly used on a daily or regular basis and they directly affect individual behaviour and perceptions. According to Thomson and Freudenberg (1997), these might be considered “*surface level*” since they are closest to the behaviours affecting the resource base. On the other hand, collective decision-making rules are mostly experienced at an intermediate level. These rules determine how rules are defined, and they influence emerging regulations used at operational level. Lastly constitutional rules are rules that are used to determine who can participate in the political system, what powers and authority they exercise, and how collective decision-making rules are created (Ostrom et al. 2001; Ostrom 1999a). The operational rules according to Ostrom (1999a), are those that individuals use in making decisions or “the set of rules that participants will make reference to if asked to explain and justify their actions” (p.51).

Thomson and Freudenberg (1997) are of the opinion that for a rule to be considered operational, it must actually affect the way people behave towards their resource. They suggest that working rules have different sources ranging from informal agreements (written or not) on traditional practice by communities to written rules created by governments. Operational rules can be formal or informal, and could be rooted in customs or defined by externally imposed formal laws.

Some scholars refer to informal rules or customary property rights as pre-existing rules for community forest management that have not been codified in law (Otsuka and Place 2002), while others refer to activities developed outside of formal law as “informal sectors” or “informal economies” (Guhakhasnobis et al. 2006). It is challenging therefore to assess informal institutions giving these multiple concepts and frame work. Some scholars separate formal and informal institutions by placing state regulations enforced by an external authority on the formal side and customary or community rules that are self-enforced on the informal side (Eriksson 2004; cousins 1997). Helmke and Levitsky (2004, p.725) define informal institutions as socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are “...created, communicated and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels”. Sometimes, informal rules are classified outside the scope of the formal legal frameworks at any scale of decision making, and that are crafted outside of officially sanctioned , or recognized by the state. In this regard, customary rules are not always synonymous with informal rules, as they are sometimes recognized by the state. The state may decide not to intrude into areas governed by customary law (Fitzpatrick, 2005), or it may attempt to codify customary practices into formal law. Institutional change has made it possible for

assert customary control over such forest land and resources for themselves and their descendants..

customs to survive through change and adaptation in response to social realities and particularly in relation to the dominant society.

With regards to evaluating the performance of the interaction of rules, based on governance ²⁴literature reviewed (UNDP; 1997a, Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999, JICA; 1995) some key dimensions could be identified and defined. Some include competence, respect for rights and indigenous knowledge, equity, participation, and empowerment. Participation ²⁵as an example could enhance interaction of the rules as well as interaction of the actors.²⁶

On the other hand, effectiveness and efficiency of the interactions of rules could be assessed in terms of relationships, and farmer's perception of the forest management process. When an economy or process works efficiently, no reallocation of a resource will improve the welfare of some person or group without making someone else worse off (that is Pareto- efficient).²⁷

With regards to equity, this criterion considers whether formal and informal rules are designed to make decision-making process and its implementation fair,²⁸ and if it results in an equitable distribution of resources and power. The management process should consider certain sensibilities (such as gender, age, religion, cultural heritage and practices of the community) when drafting rules and access to information and responsibilities (Minang, 2003).²⁹

2.7. Theoretical Approaches Used in the Governance of Forest Resources.

In order to understand the governance of forest resources, some major theoretical approaches are used. These approaches include the Common Pool Resources Approach, and the Socio-historical Approaches.

The Common Pool Resource Approach (CPRA) takes its point of departure in challenging Hardin's notion of "*the tragedy of the commons*" (1998). According to Hardin, individuals are selfish and have this tendency to free-ride, and most commons are unstable, hence should be privatized. Most commons have institutional arrangements, a tendency to be over exploited. With Common Pool, individuals can cooperate and create institutional arrangements so as to avoid the "Tragedy of the Commons" ³⁰situation. (C.F: Ostrom,

²⁴ Governance is defined by FAO (2007) as the process of governing: "It is the way in which society is managed and how the competing priorities of interests of different groups are reconciled. It includes the formal institutions of government but also informal arrangements for achieving this ends".

²⁵ Participation can be defined as "empowering people to mobilize their capacities, be it social actors rather than passive subjects, manage the resources, make decisions and control the activities that affects their lives" (LIED, 1994). Local participation is "a strategy of devolution of authority and power, resources, distribution of rights and duties from state to local level of governance and from public to civil society". (Vedeld, 2002:13)

²⁶ If the formal and informal institutions are designed in such a way that special attention is given to disadvantaged groups (in the case of BBCF, women groups and youth groups), this could have an effect on the incentives of the actors, the nature and level of interaction, as well as the impact on management.

²⁷ If formal and informal rules are properly shaped, for example by communicating them to the stakeholders on time, or properly coordinating and considering them for use by management, interaction functionally/horizontally/vertically could be evaluated as efficient or effective.

²⁸ Fair in this case of good governance implies that every stakeholder be given equal opportunity to contribute to decision making. Disadvantage groups should be given special attention to get them participate.

²⁹ These factors have an effect on the nature, level and impact of the interaction.

³⁰ Tragedy of the Commons by Garrett Hardin (1968), argues that shared resources tend inevitably to be over used and ruined. He proposed Privatization or state regulation based on information available as solution (Geof Glass, 2011). www.youtube.com

1990, Baland and Platteau, 1996). In the case of BBCF, the forest is meant to serve the interest of the village communities within Bimbia municipality, who are mainly registered and non-registered farmers and fishermen within their village councils or quarters, or registered groups within the Management Council. . With this approach, it is costly to exclude any community member from using the resource, and the benefits consumed by one individual, subtract from the benefit available to others. This is why the government and the village communities in Bimbia have set up institutional arrangements so as to avoid the “*Tragedy of the commons*” situation.³¹

The socio-historical approach uses historical narratives to network and context to explain natural resource management arrangements. It emphasizes institutional processes as manifestation of negotiated social processes embedded in wider contexts of history and politics (C. F Hansen, 2007, Cleaver and Toner, 2006, Lund, 2006, Johnson, 2004, Cleaver, 2000 and 2002, Berry, 1993 and Long, 1992).

In the case of BBCF, the Cameroon government drew lessons from the colonial administration and some informal institutions in Bimbia. Based on history and culture of the bakweri people (the Isubu), the village communities within Bimbia, could make legitimate claim in respect of their land and forest.³²

2.8 The Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework

.This frame work introduces the context in which the local actors interact to create the institutional arrangements that shape their collective decisions and individual actions. Regardless of how the implementation processes of forest resources at regional and national level might change, the ultimate effects are filtered through the local context. I made use of the IAD framework because Common Pool Resources are compatible with the IAD framework. ³³ The local actors for example, the chiefs and heads of quarters , the municipal council officials, government representatives who work in the locality, non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), and private business representatives, and village elites will interpret or perceive these policy processes according to the specific institutional context as shaped by biophysical and socioeconomic and historical attributes. In summary, this framework conceptualizes the outcomes of the implementation process of law 94/01, as the result of how the traditional governance actors within BBCF, organize the institutional arrangements to respond to farmer requirements, opportunities and constraints

³¹ The BBNRMC has been set up to regulate the use of forest products.

³² Historically, ethno-cultural entities or groups in Cameroon existed as nationalities with territorial limits. Such seemed to have been the case with the bakweri people who in their claim of landed patrimony got into conflict with German and British colonialist with respect to Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) occupied land. This history empowers the bakweri-man`s fight for his rights.

³³ Common Pool Resources (CPR) are resources (such as forest or fisheries) that benefit groups of people but provide diminishing benefits to every one if each individual pursues his or her selfish interest. So the IAD framework identifies key variables within the CPR which can be used to evaluate the role of institutions in shaping the interaction and decision making processes.

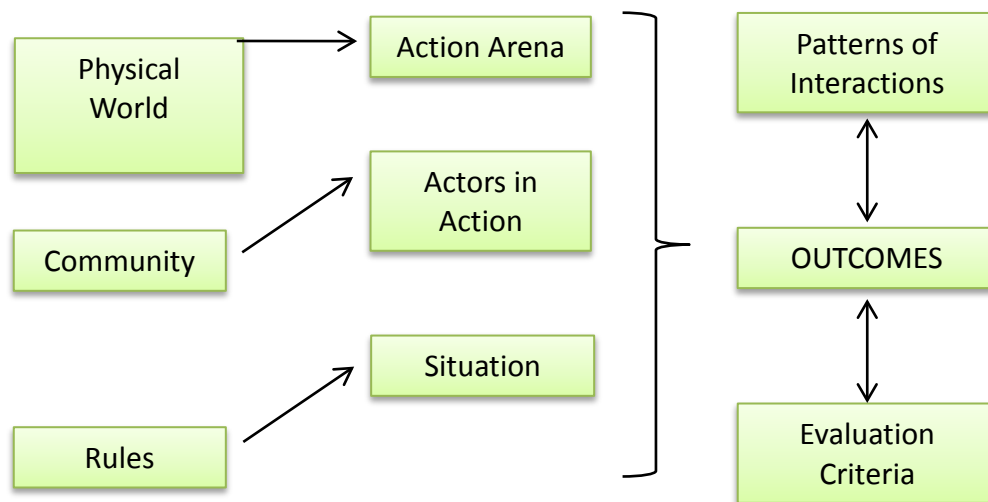


Figure 1 The IAD framework based on Ostrom *et al* 1994.

Figure 1, describes the IAD framework developed by Elinor Ostrom *et al*. According to this framework, policy processes and outcomes are assumed to be affected to some degree by variables external to individuals. These include attributes of the physical world, attributes of the community ³⁴ within which actors are embedded, rules that create incentives and constraints for certain actions, and interaction with other individuals (see Ostrom *et al*.1994).

³⁴ The “Community” is an important context that affects individual actions, including things like “generally accepted norms of behaviour, the level of common understanding about actions arenas, the extent to which preferences are homogeneous, and distribution of resources amongst members” (p.45).

3 Methodology and Methods

This thesis makes use of a case study design. Case study research is concerned with the complexity, the totality of social organization and its interconnected practices of a case (Bryman, 2008). The research is qualitative. I used the method of interviewing (structured and semi-structured), focus group discussion and review of relevant literature from books and journals and Annual Reports. In line with ethical guidelines, I assured the participants on the respect of anonymity of information at all levels for respondents who wished it to be so. However, there were instances in which anonymity became justifiable. For example, I was tempted to mention the names and duty post of some individual or institution in order to answer my research question, but in other cases only the duty post of individual or institution is mentioned, without attributing any particular point of view or comment, thereby allowing the case itself to be identified. This will mean protecting the confidentiality of the specific individual or institution. Information obtained through interviews, participant observation, and empirical study was used to answer my research questions.

Data was collected and presented using a Venn diagram. . The analysis of the data was interpreted based on what the various actors had been saying, in both interviews and documents and participant observation of the level of participation of the various stakeholders.³⁵ The thesis applied the necessary prerequisite for institutionalizing Community based forest management (CBFM) in Cameroon relevant to the case study, by using Ostrom's (1990) "Designed Principles". Information relevant to the interaction of the governance processes, (at operational level), as well as the perception of the concerned farmers and stakeholders was evaluated.

3.1 Interviews

Given the resources available and the constrain on time, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were used to obtain primary source data, and processed data was obtain from secondary sources. The unit of analysis was registered farmers who were beneficiaries of the community forest and lived within the village communities. A purposive sampling method was used to choose the informants from the targeted population in Bimbria. In purposive sampling, you decide the purpose you want informants to serve, and you go out to find some (Bernard, 2006:189).

The sample size comprised 22 registered farmers and 15 non- registered farmers in Bimbria. The non-registered farmers were mainly family members who lived with the registered farmers and equally benefited from the community forest. The reason for targeting them is to understand their views regarding awareness of the purpose, rules, and management process of the community forest. Out of the 37 farmers, 7 were females. The sample was small and non-representative, and it was difficult to verify who actually was a registered farmer with the council. The study cannot be considered representative of the entire population of interest because the aim was not to make generalizations, but to find out the farmers awareness, and perceptions about the management process of the community forest. Processed data was through books, articles, and journals.

3.1.1 Interviews at the Council (BBNPMC) Head Office

The Forest Manager, the Field Extension Officer, and a Volunteer worker were interviewed. This was done in the month of February 2011. Subsequent interviews were made by telephone in November 2012 and November 2013 to update data collected. I made the selection of interviewees based on the circumstances on the field. I used open ended

³⁵ Interpretative Approaches are approaches in which you treat social action and human activity as texts. Interviews and observational data can be transcribed into written text for analysis (Huberman, 1994).

questions. It ensured flexibility in the nature and type of questions and the data obtained is much more difficult to analyse than with the case of close questions.



Figure 2 Interview at the office (Author, 2011).

3.1.2 Key Informants

I interviewed the Sub-delegate for forestry, and the Sub-divisional officer for Limbe III Sub-division.³⁶ I started by going to their offices and then booked an appointment to see them. Arranging for a time and day was not easy because of their busy schedule and after failing to see them once; I successfully arranged to see them after normal working hours the following day. The aim was to obtain some important information which I could not get from a group, taking into consideration the fact that the villagers in Bimbia municipality are made up of natives and non-natives. The selection of the interviewees was done by me based on their availability and the circumstances on the field. In all the cases I was requested to come back the next day. Arranging for the time of the meeting was not easy after one failure. But I succeeded to do the interviews after normal working hours. These interviewees are represented during management board meetings held by the council (BBNRMC). Generally it was difficult to obtain clear, updated, and documented information about the activities carried within this village community from state administrators.³⁷

3.1.3 Focus Group

The technique involved the interviewer (the researcher) and more than one person. It is often interactive, having some common interest. The aim was to explore the attitude and feelings of the farmers. Also I had to corroborate certain facts which I think had already been established (but not to ask about other topics of a broader, open-ended nature). It is very flexible interview form. The council (BBNRMC) has a number of farmer-groups, amongst which include Feed the Nation, Mile 4; Unity Sisters, Mile 4; Good friends

³⁶ Limbe III Sub-Division is an administrative /geographical location in the Fako Division, South-West Region, of Cameroon, West Africa. It stretches from Mbonjo, through Mandoli Island, Man O' War Bay, Chop Farm, and the three Bimbia villages (Bonangombe, Bonabile, and Dikolo), to Mabeta Fishing Port, Bamukong on the mainland and the Creeks.

³⁷ This is partly due to the absence of a proper documentation system, and the fact that the administrators need to get your questions on time and prepare their answers before an interview.

Livestock Farmers, Motowo; Limbe Farmers Association, Towe. ³⁸The choice of group for the focus group interview was decided by the forest manager. The focus group interview composed of five registered farmers of the council. Three other farmers were part of the group, but had not registered with the council (BBNRM). I observed that the farmers had made their group leader a spokesperson, which limited the idea of getting the opinion of the group. Another issue I observed was the fact that some of the farmers, who kept silent during the focus group discussion, provided some valuable contributions during light refreshment. During this period, there was no dominance caused by power struggle among participants. The focus group interview was conducted in “*Pidgin English*” (language) and I did the interview manually, without the use of a recorder. . At the end of the interview session, I kept the floor open for suggestions from the interviewee(s), on other persons to be interviewed as well as other sources of evidence. All the interviews were conducted in the month of February 2011 to March 2011 as well as June 2014. Phone interviews were made when I came back to Sweden in the month of November 2012 as well as November 2013 and October 2014.

3.2 Participant Observation and Transect Walk with Farmers

A transect walk was made with a guard on a bike. This permitted me to identify the boundaries of Bimbia village and to get an on the spot assessment of the resources in the forest. It was a moment also to share in the experiences of the farmers. I was able to see what the people do, rather than rely on what they say they do (Evaluation Brief, 2008).



Figure 3 Interview with farmers during transect walk (Author, 2011).

3.3 Data Presentation and Analysis

I did a demographic presentation of the sampled population in order to explore relevant relationship. I categorized, analysed using percentages and labelled major themes. For qualitative data analysis, I used content analysis and direct quotations of selected remarks from the interviewees`. Findings were reported based on the research questions and objectives. The analysed data are the basis for discussion and conclusion.

I used a Venn diagram ³⁹to represent social relationships among stakeholders and where desired, power differences and influences between them. I used it to illustrate the extent to

³⁸ Farmer- groups are a collection of farmers within their quarters, forming a union with the aim of promoting the interest of farmers.

³⁹ Venn diagrams represent structures or relationships amongst organizations and how they are perceived in communities. The different circles indicate the importance of each

which the different institutions within the village communities interact with each other or overlap in power struggle. It is a visual tool that helps participants to explore social relationship between stakeholders (Pretty *et al*, 1995). The Venn diagram was arrived at after carrying out interviews and focused group discussion with some of the workers of the council (BBNRMC).

3.4 Limitation

The study emphasized the agreement between the management council (BBNRMC), and the state contained in the Simple Management Plan (2002 to 2027) All key informants were interviewed, and the study was restricted to one focus group interview out of 11 farmer group. It was difficult on the field to identify registered farmers, so I had to rely on the sincerity of farmer group leaders.⁴⁰ Most of the respondents spoke in “Pidgin English” which required that I translate into English. In spite of the challenges got on the field, I was able to get responses to research questions, which formed the basis for my conclusions.

organization to the community. The proximity of the circle illustrates how much interaction between the actors is going on. It was developed by John Venn.

www.sswminfo/content/venn-diagram.

⁴⁰ The circumstances of the meeting with the farmers did not permit me to verify proof of registration, though some had registered but were not regular with their dues judging from the registers in the BBNRMC office.

4 Background and study area

4.1 Context of forest Act and its Implementation.

This section discusses the institutional history and development of forestry legislation in Cameroon.

4.1. 1. Institutional History and Development of Forestry Legislation in Cameroon.

Cameroon forestry reform started during the German colonization (1884-1914) period, and it was shaped during the joint British and French mandate (1919-1960), and later extended into the period after independence. During this periods, the forestry reforms was characterised by a legal and absolute control of the state over the country`s forest lands (Achu, 2009). The local communities living within the forest lands were in some way, excluded by an ownership system and property regime that only recognized their right of extraction (Diaw, 2005; Oyono, 2005; Jum and Oyono, 2005) During the German rule, the forest lands were managed and exploited by a tenure system based on collective ownership, by the family lineage and clan (Diaw et al, 1997) Later, the land tenure system was different in British and French zones. (Diaw and njomkap, 1998). In British Cameroon, the local people were considered as owners of land and the reserves were managed by the colonial authorities through the traditional councils, while in French Cameroon, the colonial authorities controlled both lands and reserve and were considered as state ownership (Diaw et al, 1997); Bigombe, 1996). Both cases had different management systems, and the local population had only limited rights of use (Diaw et al, 1997).

After independence (1960-1985), the government of Cameroon introduced successive laws governing forest and land (Forest Order No 73/18 of May 25, 1973, Land Tenure and State Lands order No 74-1 and 74-2 of July 6, 1974; Forestry law No. 81/13 of December 27, 1981) (RoC, 1994, 1981).

During the 1980s, the forestry law lacked an adequate legal framework for planning land use, integrating forest protection, and production activities as well as agriculture. Under the land tenure law (1974 land Ordinance), usufruct rights permitted anybody to clear and cultivate land in state forests, since by planting crops, a settler obtained a right to remain on the land for the thirty or so years of the life of his crop, and as such gained de facto possession of the land.

Under this forestry law, the Prime minister had sole discretion over the allocation of logging concession, while the minister in charge of forests was responsible for granting smaller “cutting rights”. Life concessions were given for periods of five years, renewable on the basis of request submitted by the forest industry. Allocation of concessions was done by mutual agreement between the timber companies and the government authorities (Brown et al, 2002). This resulted in rent seeking by the public and private sectors. During this period, forestry laws were not fully respected because forestry was a small component of a bigger Ministry of agriculture and its impact could not be appreciated by the legislation. With all these inconsistencies, the government recognized that the situation in this sector was becoming unbearable. In an effort to improve the management of the forests and protect natural resources, and with full support of the World Bank, it decided to handle the forest policy reform by improving forestry concessions and taxations policies (Ekoko, 2000, Brunner et al, 2000). It was evident that, if the way forestry concessions were awarded, taxed and enforced, the government could prevent the worst environmental damage and reap enough revenue to deal with its most pressing social and economic problems. (Ekoko, 2000).

In 1987, there was a review of the Cameroon forestry legislation as part of the Tropical Forestry action Plan (TFAP).⁴¹ The adoption of a new forestry law was considered as part of the conditionality for the structural adjustment loan made by the World Bank to Cameroon.

A new forestry law was established by presidential Decree 94/436/PM in January 1994, as the main law that governs the forestry sector in Cameroon. The objective was furthermore to decentralize forest management and establish a tenurial right of communities over the resource. The 1994 forest law was also intended to regulate the relationship between the state and other stakeholders groups such as the concessionaries,⁴² private forest owners, communes, forest communities, and industries involved in the management, harvesting processing and commercialization of forest products (FAO, 2003).

Associated to this law is the 1995 decree no 95/531/PM, to determine the conditions for the implementation of forestry regulations (GoC, 1995) In addition , in 2002, the creation of the digitalized Forest Management Information System (SIGIF) also plays an important role in the implementation of the law. The finance law determines the annual basis, the tax rate for different activities (such as Felling Tax, Royalty for forest Area9 (Amariei, 2005).

4.1.2. Institutional Description of the Implementation process of law 94/01.

The action arena⁴³ in this study area is Bimbia Bonadikombo community forest (BBCF). This is the unit and focus of investigation. This is where the farmers and the local authorities are experiencing the spread of the farms. The arena stretches to the BBNRMC, Limbe III municipality, and village communities. The actors ⁴⁴ who participate in the management process interact through the council (BBNRMC) which has a management board. The village communities participate also in the management process during general assembly meetings. During such meetings, discussions on institutional processes, governance strategies, participations of different user groups, conflicts and vested interest of different stakeholders are analysed and evaluated. External actors in this action arena include Non- Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as Mount Cameroon Project (MCP). This NGO, in connection with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, empowers and strengthens the skills of the council (BBNRMC) members on sustainable forest management. MCP organises training workshops in key areas such as leadership skills, institutional restructuring, and negotiation skills.

The action situation ⁴⁵ in the following villages (Bonadikombo, Bonabile, Bonagombe, Lawanda and Dikolo) are (the management board of the council (BBNRMC), general

⁴¹ TFAP was formulated to conserve tropical forest. It was devised in 1987 by UN agencies, the World Bank, and the World Resource Institute in response to the crisis of tropical deforestation (FAO, 1985, World Resources institute, 1985).

⁴² A forest concessionary is a person or a firm with a contract or license or permit to extract and market timber or other produce commercially from a defined area of forest within a given period. <http://dictionaryofforestry.org>.

⁴³ The action arena exists in the home, the neighborhood, local, regional, national and international councils, in firms and markets. The arena interacts with others.

⁴⁴ An actor is the individual or group functioning as a corporate actor, who takes action. They include the forest manager, mayor, chiefs, government officials, village elites, donor organizations. Actors are characterized by the following features, “the preference evaluations that actors assign to potential actions and outcomes, the way actors acquire, process, retain and use knowledge contingencies and information, the selection criteria actors use for deciding upon a particular course of action, and the resources that the actors bring to a situation” (p.33).

⁴⁵ An action situation is the “social space where individuals interact, exchange goods and services, engage in appropriation and provision activities, solve problems, and fight”. It

assembly meetings, farmers and others user groups unions, Limbe traditional councils, the family, and the courts) where interactions in formal and informal rules and behaviours of the actors in the working environment are evaluated. The interactions in rules and decisions sometimes overlap with other arrangements, or disrupt agreed objectives, or offset gains from cooperation. The peaceful stability experienced in these communities is thanks to the efforts of the Divisional officers, the mayors, the chiefs and their collaborators, in maintaining law and order in these different villages. Within the BBCF, the different actors have vested interest in the forest resources and land, so they try to integrate their different powers and values at different decision making levels. For example, the farmers have a representative at the management board. So the farmers rate the interactions of rules based on their involvement during management meetings as well as the adequacy of decisions taken in their favour.

The action situation here is that, due to the heterogeneous increase in population in this locality, there is a high demand for farms. The spread of farms has become a threat to the sustainable use of the forest, as well as to power holders involved in decision making. While officials of the municipality believe that the forest manager and the Operation Committee Members, have not enforced the right rules or mechanisms to check the spread of the farms and protect the conservation zone, the Operations Committee Members believe that, the process of creating a municipal council without adequate provision for livelihood options, has attracted population settlement. As a consequence, there is a higher demand for livelihood needs such as food and shelter. The registered farmers within the BBNRMC also believe that the traditional governance approach to farming in their respective villages (where access rights to forest resources is free) should be similar to that practiced within the community forest.

In the process of implementing Law 94/01, the central government devolves responsibilities to the Limbe III municipality partly because they are believed to perform these responsibilities more efficiently. The municipality designs a plan of action to ensure that BBNRMC carries out its activities according to the Simple Management Plan. As at the time of writing, there were conflicts amongst the municipality officials, the management council (BBNRM) staffs, the Delegate for forestry, and the Sub-Divisional Officer for Limbe III Sub-Division, over roles and responsibilities. It was necessary to clearly define boundaries and forest property rights. The behaviour of each of the actors in BBCF can be explained in terms of a set of contextual factors that the IAD framework classifies as follows: 1) Physical conditions, 2) Community attributes 3) Local institutional arrangements.

4.1.2.2. .1 The Biophysical Environment⁴⁶ showing the nature of the good.

This community forest is a Common Pool Resource⁴⁷ with individuals reaping benefits and incurring cost to get outcomes. As a CPR, human institutions are needed to prevent a “*Tragedy of the commons outcome*”, in which individual forest users pursue their narrowly defined self-interest which ultimately destroys the resource (Geoff Glass, 2001).

includes the following elements, “*participants in positions who must decide among diverse actions in light of the information they possess about how actions are linked to the potential outcomes and cost and benefits assigned to actions and outcomes*” (p.29)

⁴⁶ The physical world varies from setting to setting and for forest ecosystems might include elements such as rate of growth, diversity of species present, climate and weather, and other physical factors that impact the state of the forest ecosystem and humans that interact with it. Other elements include the size of the resource, temporal and spatial variability of resource units, current condition (Ostrom, 1990.p. 197)

⁴⁷ Common Pool Resources have attributes that make them easy to deplete and difficult to protect (Mc Kean, 2000).

4.1.2.3. . Socio economic conditions and association of actors in forestry.

Initially logging was carried out, destined for export by timber exploiters, and later small scale timber exploitation by chainsaw owners.⁴⁸ The timber is used for furniture, building and roofing of houses in the various villages. Examples of trees species exploited include Iroko, Mahogany, whitewood and Arafa. Presently the forest is under serious threat by farmers and timber exploiters due to exploitation and poor land use practice.

The indigenes argue that before the community forest was established, the non-indigenes exploited the forest without permission from the traditional authorities. So the indigenes viewed the non- indigenous forest users as illegal squatters, and were desperate to regain control of forest lands (Nuesiri, O., 2014). So their motivation to cooperate with MCP Limbe, to form BBNRMC was to gain control of the lands.⁴⁹ On the other hand, the non-indigenous forest users argue that their involvement in the management is because of livelihood survival. One of the non-indigenous forest users argued that: *“Actually we do not have a voice, before and after the community forest was created...we go to the board meetings to hear what the bakweri authorities and some government representatives will say. We use the forest for farming, timber exploitation, firewood collection, and charcoal production in order to survive....and if they stop us, life will be very difficult”* (Pa Philip, personal communication, 26th May 2014).

One of the indigenous elite and a member of the management board made the following remarks: *“When the idea of creating a community forest was introduced, what immediately came to our minds was control of the forest land on behalf of ourselves, our children and grandchildren. We did not have the means to oust the non-indigenes from illegally using our land. So control was our priority, and we will do everything not to lose the land again.”* (Mola Luma, personal communication, 13th march 2013)

In an effort to control the forest resources and prevent deforestation, the council carries out the following activities as stated by Mr Ngale, (the coordinator for the farmers) :

“Our implementation process is in consistent with the Simple Management Plan (SMP) and it is for five years. For example in the agro-forestry sector in Luanda, we identified degraded areas, identified tree species to be planted, developed the tree nursery, and maintained the nursery. Our aim is to maintain the soil and water for sustainable production of forest” The functional linkage in this process is that, rules contained in the SMP are applied to prevent deforestation within the community forest.

⁴⁸Recently the administration has raised worries over the alarming rate of the unauthorised and unsustainable exploitation of the Bimbia forest by some unscrupulous individuals. According to the Mayor (while addressing councillors of the Limbe III council during the budgetary session to examine and adopt the 2015 budget), this illegal exploitation of the forest is carried out through organised net-work using the names of some prominent personalities in the municipality to cover their actions. Based on this fact, the mayor stated that the excuse for cutting down trees to construct houses will not be tolerated as there has not been any significant infrastructural development in Bimbia in recent years. He lamented that the council does not benefit from forest royalties. He pointed out that, the Bimbia forest is under state protection and has been earmarked under UNREDD Programme as a potential forest to receive funding.

⁴⁹ The Bakweri interest in land control is related to the negative impact of the slave-trade, the history of protest and struggles against forceful land expropriation from the Bakweri for commercial plantations from the colonial era to date (Bakweri Land Committee, 1948; Ardener, and Warmington, 1960; Kofele-Kale, 2007; Baye and Epo, 2012; Oyono, 2013).

Another challenge with regards to the management process is the fact that there is some high degree of social differentiation amongst the actors in Bimbia Bonadikombo community, which is embedded in inequalities of power, status, and wealth. This has influenced the allocation of farmland, fishing resources and opportunities within the community forest. This social differentiation is based on ethnicity (Natives and non-natives). This differentiation is as a result of the mentality, lifestyle, level of exposure, education, and the capacity to farm. During the focus group discussion, one of the farmers tried argued that *“the inequality in power relations and status is because some of the villagers and farmers have relatives working with the government, holding prominent positions that exert power in their favour with regards to decisions concerning uses of forest resources. Some of the village elites are politicians with the ruling party (CPDM) in Cameroon, and this gives them power at the local level (Focus group discussion, 2011).*



Figure 4. Map shows BBCF boundary with land cover showing dense forest, open forest, mangroves, farmland, settlement, plantation, water. (Source: Mor Achankap Bakia, GIS UNIT, Programme for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, MINFOF, S.W.R. Cameroon.)

Beekeeping is practiced by farmers as a way of diversifying farming activities. In some parts of the forest, Bee hives have been constructed and installed and monitoring is in process. The council (BBNPMC) also carries out restoration of degraded areas and reforestation of the forest. Trees are planted to prevent landslides and to increase the soil fertility. The operations committee members also carry out regular monitoring of the conservation zone. In the process regular seizure of illegally harvested and distributed timber, firewood and charcoal is collected. The workers destroy wildlife traps and they prevent farm encroachment and poor farming practices. The BBCF is equally used for touristic purposes (Eco-tourism). The forest has a mangrove, a rain forest and some historical sites which are very interesting touristic attraction.

4.1.2.4. Rules-in- use within the local institutional arrangements.

The rules⁵⁰ applied in the village community include constitutional laws enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of Cameroon, law No 94/01 on forestry, wildlife and fisheries regulation, collective decision-making rules implemented by the municipality (Here decision makers create rules to impact the operational level activities), Operational level

Figure 4 Picture extract taken by researcher, showing BBCF compartments and activities e.g illegal and timber exploitation, illegal charcoal exploitation, farm encroachment (Source: GIS UNIT, LIMBE TOTANICAL GARDEN; 2005).

respected. These rights include mainly the customary and logging user rights. As stated in the management plan of 2001, members of the community have the following rights with permission from the council: (1) Single tree felling rights for local construction. (2) Commercial fuel wood exploitation rights. (3) Rights for all types of hunting. Without seeking permission from the council, the members of BBCF have : (1) The right to use fuel wood for subsistence. (2) The right to fish. (3) Traditional rights, rights for village harmony, sacrifices. (4) The right to collect NTFP's for consumption. It should be noted that the community must inform the council of any activity carried out in the forest (BBNPMCP, 2001)

Recently the Limbe III council through the Mayor raised worries about illegal exploitation of the forest carried out through organised net-work. Based on this fact, the administration curtailed certain rights of forest users by stating that the excuse for cutting down trees to construct houses will not be tolerated as there has not been any significant infrastructural development in Bimbia in recent years. The mayor lamented that the council does not benefit from forest royalties. He pointed out that, the Bimbia forest is under state protection and has been earmarked under UNREDD Programme⁵¹ as a potential forest to receive funding. Thus, it is incumbent on the council to sustainably manage the forest.⁵²

⁵⁰Rules as earlier mentioned, are statements about what actions are "required, prohibited, or permitted and the sanctions authorized if the rules are not followed" (p.38). Rules are created by humans, and are used to solve problems. In BBB, formal and informal rules and enforcement mechanisms are the rules in use.

⁵¹ UNREDD Programme is the United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation. It is an effort to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forest, offering incentives to developing countries to reduce emissions from forested land and invest in low carbon paths to sustainable development. www.UN-redd.org.

⁵² Illegal forest exploitation increase in Bimbia. Cameroon Tribune, Regional News, 7th January 2015.

4.2 Study Area

This research was carried out in Bimbia Bonadikombo Village Community, in the Limbe III municipality in Cameroon. Cameroon is found in Central Africa and has a total Surface area of about 475440 sq. km. Close to 70% of the population are involved in agriculture (Minang, 2007).

4.2.1. The Limbe III municipality

This municipality has its headquarters in Bimbia, a small colonial coastal village, which was formerly along a slave -trade route. The municipality is located in Limbe III Sub-Division. The boundaries of the municipality stretch to the East and North by Tiko Council and Ombe River, to the west by Limbe-One Council, and to the south by the Atlantic Ocean. The municipality is headed by a mayor,⁵³ and assisted by a secretary general who is appointed by the state, to be in charge of staff and general administration of the council.⁵⁴ Some of the villagers in this municipality are plantation workers with the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC), others are “Petit traders”⁵⁵, but most of the villagers are farmers and fishermen. The majority are involved in forest extraction activities such as timber exploitation, charcoal burning, fuel wood collection, hunting and collection of NTFP.

Important actors in this municipality are the “traditional authorities”. The village chiefs are custodian of the tradition. The chieftaincy system is hereditary, although the local population often contest the legitimacy of successors.⁵⁶ In this municipality, the Sub-Divisional Officer for limbe III is a key actor, who represents the state and is equally appointed by the central administration.⁵⁷ During my visit to the municipality, he commented:

“My ministry is the Ministry of Territorial Administration. So I deal with all aspects of management of natural resources, Infrastructure, local economic development, and security. I equally liaise with the local population through the traditional chiefs. I supervise elections (Municipal, Legislative and Presidential). I do not directly manage the community forest. The council (BBNPMC) is in charge of the management, through the forest manager and the management council. But where there is incompetence or lack of capacity on the part of the council (which is often the case) to take decisions on time and enforce them, or in case of conflict or violation of the law, the administration has to step in

⁵³ The mayor is elected by the population and is responsible for the management of local finances and the collection of taxes within his municipality.

⁵⁴ The municipality stretches from Mbonjo, through Mondoli Island, Man O war Bay, Chop farm, Bonangombe, Bonabile, Dikolo, to Mabeta fishing port, Bamukong on the mainland and the creeks. It is believed that, this council was created to depend solely on revenue from BBNPMC. The municipality has 21 elected councilors. . www.limbe3council.org.

⁵⁵ In this thesis, “Petit Traders” refer to small scale buyers and sellers of goods or small scale providers of services, such as hairdressers,

⁵⁶ Some narratives are of the opinion that, Bimbia originally consisted of three villages, namely Dikolo, Bona ngombe, and Bona bile. Dikolo had six quarters, namely Mbeng`a Liwoka, Bali, Wona Wonanya, Wona ngowe and wona mbimbi and mabetefutu with their family heads and traditional chiefs. Some of these quarters today have grown into villages. Other villages have developed with migrant population. For example, Chop- farm or “Mbofi” village, made up mostly of people of the Meta tribe of the North West region of Cameroon. The Batangas from kribi came to Bimbia to fish with their families and were also given a beach called “Livo la Vatanga” meaning Batanga beach. In Dikolo, the Ekum`a Makunda family have the chieftaincy, in Bona ngombe it is the Musuka family, and in bona bile it is the Billa Lozenge family who have it, the descendants of king William of Bimbia (Auntie Clara, personal communication, 7th January 2013).

⁵⁷ The Sub-Divisional officer is directly supervised by the Divisional Officer for Fako Division. These officers are responsible for the implementation of administrative decisions within the Limbe III sub-Division.

to rectify the situation. So very often, we liaise with the traditional authorities, and the forces of law and order, then harmonize decisions by preparing a "Prefectural Order" or a service note to enforce decisions. These are measures that we take to harmonize the law with the traditional authority system of governance" (The D.O., Limbe III council).

With regards to what challenges he faces as an administrator, the Sub-D.O. said stated: *"My major challenge is in the area of constantly changing laws that sometimes, are in conflict with traditional norms and customs within the administrative locations, and frequent transfer of administrators, which makes it difficult for us as administrators to resolve village disputes over land and resources during our tenure of service in the Sub-Division".*

Another respondent contacted within the municipality was the Sub –Divisional Delegate for forestry. With regards to the management of the forest, he limited his argument to law No 94/01, section 37 which refers to *village communities* and management. He said:

" I do not manage the forest. The state simply has a supervisory role to see that the forestry law is implemented in line with the management agreement between the parties concern. But the cosmopolitan nature of limbe town and the nature of the population (natives and non-natives) make it difficult to regulate the use of forest resources for village communities that depend on farming as a major source of income. He emphasized cooperation amongst the different villages in Bimbina and the state services in charge of forest. He argued that according to the agreement signed between the council (BBNPMC) and the state, the service in charge of the forest (MINIFOF) is expected to promote the management of the forest by providing free technical assistance to all the village communities.

With regards to who should benefit from the forest resource, he used section 38 (1) which states that *"Management agreement shall specify the beneficiaries and boundaries of the forest allocated to them"*.He went further to say:

"I face a lot of challenges because the council (BBNPMC) lacks some technical, legal and financial capacity to enforce the law. We have trained forest guards who offer assistance in the area of monitoring." With regards to technical challenges, he added that, "Some agricultural products are equally NTFP, and the law does not clearly make this distinction. But my office is aware that farmers face harassment by our forest guards who try to regulate the use of forest resources. We are often described as corrupt, but that is not always the case. We have to deal with inconsistencies and deficiencies in systems, but we must not neglect the human elements in governance. In addition what the law defines as protected species varies with time".

The distinction (between agricultural products and NTFP) is necessary because section 8 of the law 94/01 defines customary right as the right which is recognised as being that of local people to harvest all forest, wildlife and fisheries products for personal use except the protected species. With regards to the beneficiaries of the forest resources within the community, he referred me also to the Simple Management Plan for BBCF for the period 2002-2027, chapter 1, section III, that spells out the villages (Bonadikombo, Bonabile, Bonangombe, Lawanda, Dikolo) in which the community legal entity is located. ⁵⁸

⁵⁸ During creation, the management agreement mentioned five villages as beneficiaries of the community forest. The challenge of the BBNPMC was to extend the community legal entity to the other villages that have developed. According to Nuesiri,(2014), income generated from the community forest is used to pay its workers and to cover operational cost. There is little evidence to show that the institution has been able to fund collective social development projects. Revenue is raised from permits on forest operations, sales of forest products, projects, grants, and donations. The staff and forest management officer are paid from this money. See constitution of BBNPMC, article 8(ii).

4.2.2 Bimbia Bonadikombo Community Forest (BBCF)

The 1994 forestry law makes provision for village communities within forestry zones to establish community forest⁵⁹ under a decentralized forestry system. A community forest can only be set up in an area where the village communities have customary rights (Oyono et al, 2007). The BBCF is situated in the eastern part of Limbe town. The forest is 3735 hectares in size, and it is boarded to the north by Mandolin, through Mile four and Tomaton behind Moliwe-CDC palms plantation.

Yearly rainfall is between 4000mm to 5000mm per annum. A short dry-season is normally experienced in the months of December and February. Humidity in the area is usually between 75-80 degrees (Minang 2007). The forest is dominated by six vegetation types. These are lowland rainforest, stream and riverside vegetation, fresh water swamp forest, mangrove coastal bar forest and littoral vegetation. The multiple vegetation type in Bimbia accounts for its rich diversity of plant species with high conservation importance. (Bimbia Bonadikombo Community Management Plan, 2001).

⁵⁹1995 forestry Decree defines a community forest as “a forest forming part of the non-permanent forest, which is covered by a management agreement between a village community and the forests administration”. Management of such forests is the responsibility of the community concerned, with the help or technical assistance of the forest administration” (Egbe, 2001). In this paper as well, “Community Forestry” is regarded as “those opportunities available for local communities to participate in the management, preservation and sustainable exploitation of forest resources upon which their livelihood is based

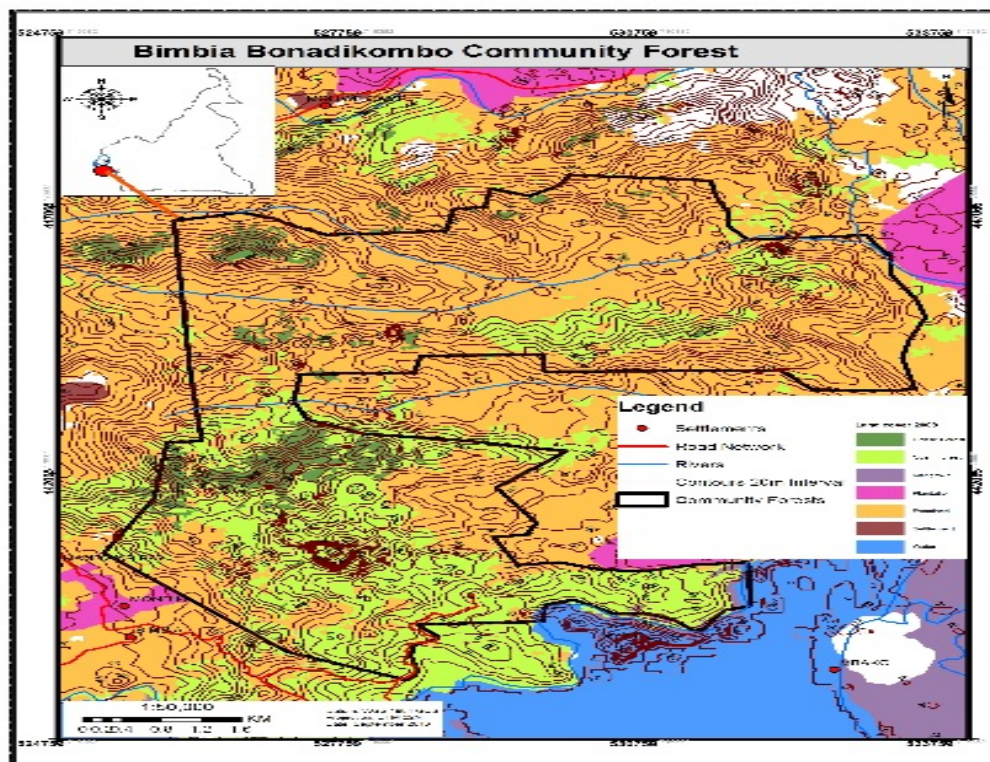


Figure 5 Map showing BBCF boundaries with contours 20m interval, showing farmland, open forest, dense forest, settlement rivers, mangroves (Source: Mor Achankap Bakia, GIS UNIT: PSMNR, MINFOF, S.W.R. Cameroon)

The forest is experiencing loss of wildlife. Drills (*mandrillus Leucophaeus*) are said to have extirpated in the early 1980s. Wildlife species are under pressure from illegal hunters include; cane rat, viper, monitor lizard, squirrel etc. Species such as antelope, pangolin, tortoise African- rock, and python are considered locally extinct

Part of the land of the community forest is on long-term lease from the state. From 1988-1991, the Limbe Botanic and Rainforest Genetic Conservation Project (LBGRCP) demarcated the boundaries of the forest after a reconnaissance visit, and botanical inventory was done in 1992. Timber exploitation has evolved and species exploited include; Iroko, Mahogany, White wood, Afara. The demand for charcoal has increased since the past sixteen years and the community exploits Non-timber forest products (NTFP) for home use. NTFPs found in the forest include spices such as bush pepper, eru, biter cola (*Garcinia*), bush mango (*Irvingia gabonensis*).

Historically, traditional rites are carried out in certain parts of the forest. Certain places are used as burial grounds.⁶⁰ A variety of plants are collected from the forest, and used for treatment of common illnesses such as malaria, typhoid, epilepsy etc. Visiting research institutions (Smithsonian Institution and African Rattan research Programme) have undertaken scientific studies on tree growth in the forest.

4.2.3 History of Bimbia

In the 18th Century, the settlers around Bimbia were predominantly bakweri tribes (Watts, 1994). According to ethnographers, the indigenous tribes are known as Isubu. They settled primarily in the littoral region and shared a common ancestry with indigenous batoke, wovia and balongs. Being a coastal tribe, they were amongst the first tribes to be exposed to

⁶⁰The villager belief, sometimes having visitors pass by old gravesites may not be respectful to the ancestors of the village.

colonial rule.⁶¹ Due to rich volcanic soil in this area, it became an important German station after the establishment of the Kameron protectorate in 1884. Germans confiscated native lands for large scale commercial agriculture.⁶²

1914, the bakweri protested to the German imperial government against their confiscated land, but corrective measures were aborted by the outbreak of the First World War world. After the war the German planters returned to continue to exploit the land.

In 1939, World War II broke out. The ex-German plantations again became *Enemy Property*, and the British Colonial Government, under United Nations (U.N) Trusteeship, through the Governor –General of Nigeria, representing the British Government as Trustee (due to protest from Bakweri Land Claim Committee, both to the United Nations and the British Administrative Authority), bought back all German estates from the custodian of *Enemy Property*, and declared the land “*Native Lands*” under *Lands and Native Rights Ordinance*, and created the Cameroon Development Corporation (C.D.C) in 1946. This was after due consultations with indigenous bakweries, who had been dispossessed of their land.⁶³

Based on the Bakweri Land Claim (BLC)⁶⁴ petition (dated 24th August 1946) to the Governor of Nigeria requesting for the return of over 580 square miles of land which were alienated by German Government during their administration of the area, and sold or leased as plantations, or retained as Crown lands, the British Colonial Government reacted.

On 9th June 1948, the United kingdom observations on the BLC petition were forwarded to the Secretary-General of the UN, in which was pointed out that all lands had been declared native lands and had been placed under the Governor of Nigeria to be administered for the use and common benefit of the natives; that the Nigerian Government had repurchased 14,851 acres of plantation land for the benefit of the natives, and that CDC had been set up to administer and develop the plantations until such time as the bakweri people were competent to manage them without assistance.⁶⁵

In the 50s and 60s farms were opened in parts of the forest, especially Southern Bimbia.⁶⁶ Due to semi-urban and heterogeneous setting of this community, the native authorities had

⁶¹ There are conflicting narratives about the origin of the Isubu (also called Isuwu). It is generally believed that the settlement of Bimbia was founded by *Isuwu La Monanga*, a native of Womboko. Due to ancestral ties between the Douala and Isuwu this version which may be termed the “Douala version” rejects the Womboko connection. Dibussi, T.(2009).www.bakweri.com.

⁶² Germans used coercion, brute force and repressive laws to force local indigenous communities to give up vast natives lands without compensation. <http://www.blccarchives.org>.

⁶³ <http://www.blccarchives.org> Review *Principle of Derivation* incorporated in **Law No. 94-1**, followed by *decree No. 95/5317PM*. Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) pays land rents in conformity with the *HEAD LEASE AGREEMENT* of December 29, 1960 between the Commissioner of Southern Cameroons and the C.D.C. (Registered on March 15 1961 as No. 42 at page 42 in Volume 24 of Lands Registry at Buea). <http://wwwbakwerilands.org>.

⁶⁴ Bakweri land Claim Committee created since World War II, campaigns for compensation for the restitution of land expropriated by germans at the end of 19th Century and taken over by Cameroon Government after reunification in 1961. www.blccarchives.org.

⁶⁵ 1948 Petition of the Bakweri Land committee/ Cameroon under British Mandate. See AFRICA (Journal of the Royal African society), Vol. 18, No 4, October 1948, p.307). www.blccarchives.org.

⁶⁶ Since German colonization, main economic activity of the people of Bimbia has been fishing and farming. Communal labour was used by the men for it was not possible for one man to set up his fishing equipment. Fishing methods were namely “Ndemba, Ngoto, Mbuja, Efese and Moleke” and the raw material for the equipment came from the forest. Mangrove sticks were used to make “Ndemba” and building of canoes. The women

difficulties controlling and managing the forest.⁶⁷ In an effort to regulate exploitation of forest resources, his Royal Highness, late chief Ferguson Manga Williams, former Paramount chief of Limbe collaborated with other chiefs and the natives, created two institutions. The Victoria Lands and Forest Conservation Committee (VL FCC), to monitor developments in the forest, and the Victoria Area Rainforest Common Initiative Group (VARCIG) in an effort to control and protect the forest.. . This idea was then welcomed by the Mount Cameroon Project, who later came in to help improve conservation in the area.

In the 1990s, the country was in a crisis. The World Bank intervened with the Structural Adjustment Plan. The World Bank favoured Community Forest Management and the adoption of new forestry law, which was one of the conditions for receiving credits under the Structural Adjustments Plan (Etoungou, 2003, p.3).⁶⁸

In this process, Community forestry was introduced and the village community then worked with the Mount Cameroon Project (MCP) and Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MINEF) through the planning process until March 2002. (Minang, 2007).

The Paramount chief, Village chiefs and Quarter heads (Leaders who control quarters within villages) constitute the hierarchy today.

4.2.4 Bimbia Bonadikombo Natural Resources Management Council (BBNRMC)

The BBNRMC is an association created on the 20th November 1998. This association has offices in the following villages: Bonadikombo, Bonabile, Bonangombe, Lawanda and Dikolo (Minang, 2007). The council (BBNRMC) has a board, headed by a board chairman, with elected representatives, called Operations Committee Members (OCM). Some of them are elected and others appointed in the following categories. The paramount chiefs and other chiefs are honorary members. Other members of the board include farmer⁶⁹ representatives, charcoal union representatives, representatives of timber exploiters from the south and north of Bimbia. The board equally has some ex-official members composed of the Government Delegate for Limbe Urban Council, the chairman of Limbe Urban Council, the Divisional Delegate of the Ministry of forest and fauna, the Divisional Officer of Limbe, the Sub- Divisional Officer of Limbe III, and the Mayor of Limbe III municipality, Forces of law and Order and the forest manager. Other external actors could be representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) like Mount Cameroon Project (MCP).

grew yams, and used NTFP for cooking as well as to dry the fish (Clara, Y., personal communication, 7th January 2013).

⁶⁷ There are overlapping and complex land ownership claims to Bimbia forest. Most of the forest lies on CDC leasehold land. The local people too have ancestral claims to the land while most of the western part is being occupied by settler farmers with little or no claim to the land but believe it is government land so they have a right to access (Nuesiri, 2008)

⁶⁸ Etoungou (2003) argues that at this time the list of Cameroon's National Environmental Laws and Decrees had grown continuously since the signing of the conventions on climate change and biodiversity in Rio de Janeiro at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. These include: Decree No 92/069 of April 9th 1992, creating the Ministry of the Environment and Forestry; Law No 94/01 of January 20th 1994, establishing forestry, wildlife and fisheries regulation; Law no 96/12 of August 5th, 1996, establishing the framework for environmental management; Decree No 94/259/PM of May 31, 1994 creating the National Consultative Commission for the Environment and Sustainable Development; Decree No 95/466 of July 20th 1995, establishing the procedure for the application of wildlife regulations; Decree No 95/531 of August 23th 1995, establishing the procedure for the application of forestry regulations; Decree No 96/224 of October 1st 1996, establishing the reorganization of MINEF; Decree No 94/167 of August 29th 1994, ratifying the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biodiversity.

⁶⁹. These farmers live close to one another, have a similar heritage or culture and speak "bakweri" as their native language. Some of them are natives while others are non-natives from neighbouring countries such as Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon etc.

As regards specific actor experiences within the council, it was observed that the forest manger had not been installed and this gave a negative impression of the implementation process of the law. The perception of the council staff was that, the forest officer had not been fully empowered to carry out his functions. To the farmers, they believed they belong to a council that has a *weak leadership, and therefore does not merit their confidence*. I also observed that failure by the administration to empower (Install) the Forest Manager, *questions the real intentions of the legislative body and the administration with regards to community forestry*.⁷⁰ The forest officer equally stated in his comments that: *“The weak participation of farmers within the community forest council is partly because roles are not properly defined, and there is growing pressure by farmers, in need of farms, but most of the farmers do not respect the rules within the community forest”*.⁷¹ Article (4) of the constitution was cited, which describes the Management Council as having more representation of government officials as members. This to him does not give the farmers the *capacity and audacity to influence and share control* with other *authorities*.

The council (BBNRMC) emphasizes a bottom-up management system approach to forest resources within the community forest (BBNRMCM, 2001). The emphasis on community forest participation (CFP) in forest management at local level is a major challenge to power holders in the decision making process of forest management. ***“There are no relations of power without possible resistance”*** (Foucault, 1979). The BBNRMC has a composition that is 70% indigenous and 30% non- indigenous (Nuesiri, 2007).⁷² The BBNRMC in consultation with indigenous community members, stakeholder groups, the Ministry of Environment and Forest in Limbe, drew up the Management Plan. The Mount Cameroon Project (MCP) provided funding and technical support, and equally played a facilitator’s role in the drawing up of the Management Plan. All activities carried out by the BBNRMC must comply with the Management Plan. The management plan has duration of 25 years. The plan focuses on sustainable management objectives which include:

- To maintain bio-diversity and generate income through non-consumptive use of the forest for financial sustainability, and re-investment into forest management activities.
- To conserve bio-diversity and carry out research while providing sustainable livelihoods at subsistence level
- To enrich forest with useful species while providing fuel energy to the community.
- To carry out reforestation and maintain soil and water for sustainable production of forest products
- To raise income through sustainable timber exploitation, support livelihoods and enrich highly degraded areas.

⁷⁰ The Management Council of BBNRMC appoints staff on recommendation by the board. The Paramount chief and other chiefs are the chairmen and vice chairmen of the BBNRMC. The management council appoints a forest manager, subject to approval by the administration (Government). See constitution of BBNRMC Article 4.

⁷¹ The Limbe III council is responsible for democratic local governance within the community. Their elected councilors are often at logger-heads with BBNRMC staff over roles and responsibility. There is need for harmonization of authority and responsibilities between Limbe III council and BBNRMC.

⁷² According to Nuesiri, (2008), indigenes are comparatively over-represented in decision – making over community forest, while non-indigenes are under-represented. The management board is composed of Bakweri (30.8%), Bimbina ((38.46%), Northwest (15.38%), West (3.9%), government (11.54%). Indigenes are opposed to giving a stronger voice in decision making to North westerners due to historic relations of selfdom and contempory struggle for political supremacy in Anglophone Cameroon.

The law 94/01 stipulates that if the forest is poorly managed, the management agreement is suspended (Oyono, 2005).⁷³ In the course of implementing law 94/01, the outcomes of decisions are a reflection of interactions with norms and traditional governance approaches of the actors.

⁷³ Note that, the law does not state the criteria for accessing the performance of the management process.

5 Findings

5.1 (1) How does the implementation process of forest law 94/01 affect forest management in Bimbia Bonadikombo Community (BBC)? (2) How do the farmers react to and perceive the implementation of law 94/01?

In this section, I describe my findings using designed principles for governance of successful Community –Based Natural Resource Management by Ostrom (1990). The choice of principles were selected based on review of law 94/01 and its 1995 Decree of Application, review of the Simple Management Plan (SMP) with regards to the forest management process, and their interaction with registered farmers of the council (BBNRM).

5.1.1 Clearly Defined Boundaries

According to the findings from the field, the implementation process of 1994 law on Community Forestry Policy (CFP), fails to define what constitute a “community” (Egbe, 2001; Nuesiri, 2008).⁷⁴ *It is not known if a community is a tribal or ethnic group, a village or the inhabitants of an administrative unit such as a sub- division* (Egbe, 2001). This socio-political concept has been left to local interpretations who view community as an ethnic group (Nuesiri, 2008). The impact has been negative for the structuring of the BBCF farmer-registration and farm-rent problem. During the focus group discussion, the farmers asked the following questions; *“What farmers are targeted first for the registration process? Natives or non-natives?”⁷⁵ Where do the registration fees go? What steps make up the farmer registration process? For how long are we (farmers) going to farm? What type of technology are we going to use? How do we get material?”*

Section 38 of the law states that *“the management agreements provided for in section 37 shall specify the beneficiaries, the boundaries of the forest allocated to them, and the special instructions on management of areas of woodland and/or wildlife, formulated at the behest of the said communities”*. A transect walk conducted by me, as well as analytical study of the Simple Management Plan (SMP) for the period 2002-2027, permitted identification of some physical boundaries of the community forest.

According to the Simple Management Plan for BBCF (2002-2027),⁷⁶ a demarcation and survey of the proposed Community forest boundary was done originally by Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MINEF), and Mount Cameroon Project (MCP) after consultation with the natives. The core forest was demarcated with red paint, and demarcation of parts of the outer boundaries with yellow paint. The Simple Management Plan also states that, the community is composed of the following villages, Bonadikombo,

⁷⁴ Forest Governance Challenge on Mount Cameroon. IHDP update. February 2008. Section 37(5) of the 1994 law states that, “Forest products of all kinds resulting from the management of the community forests shall belong solely to the village communities concern” (Nuesiri .E, 2008).

⁷⁵ In this thesis, the term “natives” refer to the indigenous tribes known as Isuwu or Isubu. Non-natives are non-indigenes of Isubu, and do not have ancestral ties with the Isubu, but are settlers in Bimbia Bonadikombo community from other parts of Cameroon and out of Cameroon.

⁷⁶ Simple management Plan (SMP) for BBCF is a document that describes the community, its location and priority use. It equally describes the forest and the action program for 2002-2027.

Bonabile, Bonangombe, Lawanda, and Dikolo.⁷⁷ During the focus group discussion, Mola Ngomba (Quarterhead and farmer at Dikolo village) commented that:

“Prior to the law and mapping of boundaries, there was conflict between native farmers and non-natives over forest resources and land use plan. We were ready with our chiefs to fight for what we believed was our right. But now we can discuss and negotiate boundary issues within the BBNRMCs located in each of our villages..”

I observed that prior to the law; there was no democratic institution that permitted both natives and non-natives to participate in negotiations in conflict resolution over boundaries and forest resources. According to Mr Ngale (Coordinator for the farmers) on the issue of boundaries, he said:

“The boundaries of the forest are clearly defined, but I think there is still illegal occupation of farm land, and it is difficult to trace the roots. According to the Simple Management Plan (SMP), the core areas of the community forest are for eco-tourism and research.”

With regards to membership to the community, Mr Philip (one of the farmer group leaders) made the following remarks:

“We (farmers) have our Union, and each farmer is supposed to have at least one hectare of farm land. Each farm has a boundary, even though; we do have conflict sometimes, over boundaries. We are united as a group, both natives and non-natives”

He went on to say in “pidgin English” that, *“Your neighbours fit cross, enter your farm, and steal your chop (food). When this happen, we report to the union, or council (BBNRMC), or to the chief or sometimes to the Divisional Officer (D.O) who will try to solve the problem”*

What he meant is that sometimes there are conflict due to theft or encroachment into farms of other farmers and when this happens, the cases are either solved within the farmers union, or reported to the village councils or sometimes to the Divisional officers .

Mr Ngale further stated that, *“Based on farmer registration, over 80% of the registered farmers within the council (BBNRMC) are non-natives. There are private lands (with farms) owned by some private individuals (e.g. the Burnley`s and the Martin`s), then there is native lands (with farms), under the leadership of the chiefs, and there is the community forest under the leadership of the council (BBNRMC).The lack of clear-cut definition is an obstacle to implementing certain projects because of difficulties in constituting farmer groups and distinguishing them from other stakeholder groups for resource management.”*

I observed that the registered farmers of the council (BBNRMC), within their village communities, face the challenge of identifying and classifying farmers within their farmers` unions (composed of natives and non-natives). *It was difficult to resolve contradiction (between traditional family rights for example and a new but challenged organization?)*⁷⁸

During the focus group discussion, the farmers expressed the view that, the persons responsible for management and use of the forest resources were known “*families lineage*”, *segments of lineage* (which are often indistinguishable from the village, the neighbourhood or group of villages) and *clans who were traditional bearers of authority, important persons who guarantee the respect of rights of access, allocation and succession in matters of land tenure or the use of forest resources* (see Diaw et al., 1997). They did not know *what place they will have in the present process? What institutional arrangements need to be made to neutralize any conflict of competence?* I found out based on interview with the

⁷⁷In this thesis, the composition of a community does not define the “nature of a community” according to Cameroonian law. Bimbina Bonadikombo Community Forest Management Plan (2002-2027), 2001-08-30, p.4.

⁷⁸ When a farmer who is a member of a Union dies, there are traditional family rights with respect to sharing of property which may not be in conformity with the rules of the newly formed organization.

farmers that they still believed in an *unsolved land tenure contestation* and they did not understand the fact that *community forestry is non-permanent*.⁷⁹ In 1999, the Minister of environment clearly stated, “*Lack of a clear cut-definition of community, is an obstacle to implementing 1994 forestry law*” (MINEF, 1999).

5.1.2 User Rights

According to Mr Ngale (coordinator for farmers), *User Rights* is a big problem. He stated:

“Farmers are supposed to pay their registration fee for farming in the community forest depending on what they (farmers) cultivate, about sixteen thousand francs per annum.. (That is 32 dollars). The farmers have their union. So farmers who are members of their union and have complied by paying their farmer registration dues and land rents do not face this problem. But some of the farmers bring in their relatives and friends who do not respect the rules of farming in the community forest. Traps that are recognized and the owners have complied with the rules are not destroyed. Also farming in the core area of the community forest is a breach of the Management Agreement.”

When contacted by phone, Mr Philip (a farmer) commented that one of the reason for mis-use of forest resources was because “*information about the use of forest resources, especially protected species around the “core area “was not open and available to all the farmer groups and that most farmers are not frequently updated about farming activities.”*

Community User Rights provisions are respected more in their breach than in their observance (Egbe, 2001). Section 37(5) of the 1994 law states that, “*Forest products⁸⁰ of all kinds resulting from the management of the community forests shall belong solely to the village communities concern*”. The 1994 forestry law has nationalized all genetic resources in the national territory.⁸¹ Without attempting any definition, section (11) of the law states: “*The genetic resources of the national heritage shall belong to the state. No one may use them for scientific, commercial or cultural purpose without prior authorization*”.⁸²

Farmer’s interest in the community forest is mainly “*customary rights*”, clearly stated in the Simple Management Plan for the period 2002-2027. This includes the rights to freely harvest all forest, wildlife and fisheries products for their “*personal use*”, except protected species (SMP for BBNRMC, 2002-20027).

I observed that all the law requires is *justification for personal use*. The law fails to state the ways and means by which such justification can be furnished and the period required showing proof of justification. This provision has been a source of confrontation between farmers and Operations Committee staff or forestry officials of the BBNRMC. This confusion serves as an instrument of indiscipline by some over-zealous Operations Committee members of BBNRMC, and even forestry officials, including protected area conservators.

During focus group discussion, two other farmers complained as follows, “*Sometimes the Operations Committee Staff will seize our crops as “bush allowance” or even destroy our crops for offences committed without proper explanation and due compensation is not paid to the farmers after providing evidence to justify their case. Added to this is the fact that*

⁷⁹ Forest Governance Challenges on Mount Cameroon. IHDP update.2.2008. p.29 (Nuesiri .E, 2008).

⁸⁰ s (9)1. “Forest products shall comprise mainly wood and non-wood products as well as wildlife and fishery resources derived from the forest.”

⁸¹ Genetic resources are defined by the s.5. of the Environmental Code of 5th August, 1996, as “animal or plant material of real or potential value”.

⁸² The 1994 forestry law, s.11.

farms are not distributed equally amongst natives and non-natives and between men and women”. In response to this situation Mr Ngale explained that, “Some of the farmers do not actually understand the purpose of the Community Forest, and the need to regularize their situation with the chiefs and the council (BBNPMC), that for farmers, who are not registered in the council (BBNPMC), the customary tenure system does not give uniform protection to natives and non-natives”.

The Operations Committee staffs of BBNPMC argue that, *“The villagers’ dependence on farming, and the heterogeneous population structure of Limbe, is the greatest threat to the implementation of sustainable and participatory forest management principle”.*

5.1.3 Congruence between Appropriation and Provision Rules and Local Conditions.

The study found out that there is some agreement in the rules with regards to local, social and ecological conditions, especially with regards to distribution of benefits and cost. The agreement between the state and the villages is stated in a Simple Management Plan (SMP).⁸³ Section 37(5) states that “forest products of all kinds resulting from the management of the forest shall belong solely to the communities concern”.

I also observed that technical assistance offered the village communities by the forestry administration ought to be free (Section 37(1)). According to Mr. Ngale:

“We are still expecting technical equipment (Compass, GPS, motorbikes)⁸⁴ which we applied for (through the Delegation for forestry) from the administration to be supplied to us (BBNPMC) free of charge. The Motorbike we got from Mount Cameroon Project is not useable again. Sometimes MINFOR is not responsive to our technical needs and the procedures to make requests and feedback is often not clear or too long”.

I observed that the farmers are faced with the challenge of agreement between certain rules and local conditions. For example, Mr. Philip (one of the farmers) clearly stated:

“We (farmers) need a road to the market, so as to transport some of our crops from our farms”.

Mr Ngale’s opinion to this statement was that:

*“The purpose of the community forest is for conservation and research, and the products from the farms are for personal consumption. If we take a look at the level of education of the farmers, habits and mentality, a farm to market road will be a breach of the purpose of farming within the community forest”.*⁸⁵

When contacted on phone, Mr Ngale the coordinator for the farmers) describe the procedure to obtain a farm in the community forest. He said that:

“Farmers are expected to make an application to the council, providing the relevant identification information and fee. Selection is based on first –come-first –serve, and after assessment of your file. If the application is granted, the farmers are expected to pay annual rents and an inspection fee called “Chu-ku-chu-ku” during boundary allocation.”

I observed that some customary practice is applied in the farm allocation process, for example, the payment of “chu-ku-chu-ku” and involvement of competent council staff vested in the tradition and custom of the people during farm allocation. He stated further that, *“The procedure is known by the registered farmers groups and other stakeholder groups within the*

⁸³ SMP defines activities to be conducted in the community forest (CF), and conditions under which the rights of use are to be exercised.

⁸⁴(1) A compass is an instrument for finding direction with a needle that always points to the north (Definition from the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary). (2) GPS means Global Positioning System. It can be used to store data for use in Geographical Information System (GIS) and map making. It is a satellite navigation system used to determine ground position and velocity (location, speed, and direction).

⁸⁵ I observed that the farmers need a road to facilitate movements to and from their farms, but not a farm to market road.

council (BBNPMC). *The procedure is not made public, but the tenure practice protects the farm (Land) rights of the registered farmer groups and their families.*

5.1.4 Minimum Recognition of Rights to Organize

The concept of community forest as conceived by the legislature is not a wholesale transfer of rights in property, but a transfer of management, that is *droit usage*, since the state still remains the *de jure* owner of the forest resources and retains the rights of forfeiture in case the community fails to fulfil their obligations.

Section 64 (1) states that “*forest management shall be the concern of the ministry in charge of forests working through public body. It may sub-contract certain management activities to private or community bodies*”. This new law recognizes “*customary rights*”, even though non-permanent. Section 8(1) states that “*logging or customary rights means the right which is recognized as being that of the local population to harvest all forest, wildlife and fisheries products freely for personal use, except the protected species.*”

I observed that there are legal limits to customary user rights. According to one of the farmers: “*Certain items such as bush-meat, firewood, honey, palm-wine, eru (gnetum africanus) are normally commercialized by us farmers, and these items constitute a source of our livelihood. Even though these activities are illegal, the state collects business tax (Impot liberatoire) from us, the “buyam sellers”,⁸⁶ and we are mainly farmers*”.

The reaction of the operations committee staff and some forestry officers (sometimes for the purpose of conservation) towards these activities has been frustrating resulting in seizure of arms and products. The result has been an atmosphere of bitterness and suspicious of the real intentions of the officers or administrators since the confiscated products are rarely sold either by public auction as required by the law.

One of the Operations Committee Members (O.C.M.) who is equally a farmer (names withheld for security reasons) clearly stated, “*The Delegate for Forestry issues permits for exploitation of timber. When they (O.C.M.) apprehend illegal timber, the Delegate will call them by phone and threaten them. He collaborates with the D.O. and the Commissioner of Police easily since they all come from the same region*”.

Another farmer, Mr. Mbah, complained bitterly by stating, “*Sometimes our traps are being destroyed illegally and our charcoal or timber seized and locked-up. When the case is brought to the sub-Divisional Officer, he calls us up for a peaceful settlement or negotiation for the release of our goods. After such settlement, our goods disappear in the night*”

I observed that there is the absence of a *robust traditional regulatory framework to protect the rights of some farmer groups*. This is because farmers are governed by *chiefs installed and controlled by the central administrative bodies*; very often these local authorities have little internal recognition (Biyong et al., 2008). With the transformation of community rights to forest and resources, management powers were transferred instead to *management committees* of the councils (BBNPMC), and not to *village chiefs* (see fig 4). There is need for the farmers to fight for their rights through this the council management committees.

I observed that even though the farmers are the largest user group within their villages as indicated by the council (BBNPMC), they are not powerfully represented (numerically and democratically) within the Management Council.⁸⁷ So the farmers are experiencing a

⁸⁶ Buyam sellers are people who buy goods to re-sell the goods. They are often known as “petit traders”.

⁸⁷ Constitution of Bimbia Bonadikombo Natural Resource Management Council (BBNPMC), 1998. Article 4(b).

situation of “*elite capture*” in management through the council (BBNPMC) which is creating bitterness in the minds of farmers with regards to management and exploitation of the community forest.

5.1.5 Collective Choice Arrangements

Most individuals affected by operational rules (working rules) can participate in modifying the operational rules (Ostrom, 1990).⁸⁸ The Simple Management Plan (SMPBBCF, 2001) entitles the farmers to be mostly involved in the establishment of rules within the council, especially the customary user rights. According to Article 4 of the constitution of BBCF, the Management Board of BBCF shall comprise representation from all stake holders:

- Honorary: The Paramount Chief and all chiefs within the Community Forest Area.

- Elites voted by each village within the forest area.

- Elites of Bimbila community appointed by the Paramount Chief in consultation with other chiefs and councillors in the area.

- Farmers’ Representatives from Southern and Northern Bimbila Bonadikombo.

- Charcoal Union Representatives voted by charcoal burners

- Representatives from timber exploiters from Southern and Northern Bimbila Bonadikombo.

The council (BBNPMC) shall elect the board and its executives, make policy, guide and direct actions of the board, ensure discipline, lobby and raise funds.⁸⁹ The constitution of the management board shows the level involvement of the community members in the community forest management process. It equally shows that farmers are involved in the appointment of leadership.

According to Mr Ngale, while describing the participation of farmers collectively, he stated that, “*We work with groups of farmers, and the farmers have their union*”⁹⁰. *So the farmers are involved in the choice and use of community resources as a group. So farmers express their views in decision making through their groups. .”*

I observed that the registered farmers in BBCF are not much involved in collective decision –making rules and constitutional rules.⁹¹ There is an absence of a climate of confidence and partnership between the farmers and the council (BBNPMC) staffs. This is because the farmers, who constitute the largest user group, are not fully involved in evaluation, monitoring, of the community forest.

5.1.6 Monitoring

With regards to monitoring, the Operations Control Committee (O.C.C.) does the “*Policing*” of timber, fuel-wood, charcoal exploitation and Non- Timber Forest Products (NTFP). Mr Ngale stated, “*About 35% of farmers assist the Operations Committee in identifying and locating boundaries of farms. There are plans to organize patrol on a daily basis and equally to divide the farms into zones, to be shared amongst Operations Committee Members for efficient monitoring.*”

⁸⁸ Some of the members of the Management Board who can modify operational rules equally have farms within the community forest.

⁸⁹ Constitution of BBCF, Article 4.

⁹⁰ Farmer’s union are small associations of farmers with a common interest e.g to promote sustainable agriculture. Farmers union is not an organ of BBNPMC, but the union cooperates with the council (BBNPMC) in control and protection of farmers interest.

⁹¹ Collective decision- making rules are rules experienced at intermediate level. They determine how rules are defined and they influence emerging regulations used at operational level. Constitutional rules determine who can participate in the political system, what powers and authority they exercise (Ostrom et al. 2001; Ostrom 1999a).

My observations reveal that monitoring within a community forest is incumbent on communities, who chose their means and keep the forest administration informed. In case of an offence by a community member or an outsider, the matter is reported to the forest officer who proceeds to prosecute the offender (Egbe, 2001)

According to Mr. Philip in "Pidgin English", *"We no sabi who di do weti sometimes? The Sub-Divisional Officer, the Commissioner of police, the Delegate for forestry, Operations Committee Members, all man di run after we (farmers) for catch timber and charcoal. All man di find na money"* (Meaning the Divisional officer, the Commissioner of police, the Delegate for Forestry, Operations Committee Members are all interested in checking illegal timber exploitation and charcoal, to enrich themselves).

During the focus group interview, the farmers complained by stating that, *"During monitoring, in case of infraction, sometimes our crops are destroyed without proper communication. It pains..... Because we cannot go back into the bush to show where we harvested our crops, and we are not involved in the monitoring exercise sometimes"* The farmers requested the need to build a working relationship with (the OCM), instead of destroying their crops or taking them home as *"Bush Allowance"*. Contending parties in any situation should be given equal opportunity to provide evidence to prove their case. Therefore collaboration and coordination with between the council and the farmers is a priority.

5.1.7 Graduated Sanctions and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

According to BBCF Bi-Annual Report (2005), between January and June 2005 for example, 94 monitoring patrols were carried out, and 29 chainsaws were seized, 721 boards of timber seized, 85 logs of fuel wood seized, and 9 charcoal bags seized. This statistics makes the researcher to assume that the staff or guards of the council are vigilant in spite of the limited resources to carry out monitoring and sanctioning of defaulters.

The state as the guardian of the forest is partly responsible for conflict resolution. The state retains exorbitant powers of suspension and annulment of the unilaterally drafted management agreement with the village communities. Art 31 stipulates that, the administrative department in charge of forestry may at any time suspend the activities of the community, when the community fails to comply with the requirements of the Simple Management Plan (SMP). During my phone interview with Mr Ngale (the coordinator for the farmers), his response was that:

"Our activities are carried out as stipulated in the Simple Management Plan, but there is need for an inventory of the forest resources to be carried out in order to ascertain the level of our compliance with the SMP. This needs approval by the MINFOF, and it is expensive to be carried out within the (BBNRM) council budget. The procedure and methods to evaluate failure or success of our compliance with the requirements of the SMP, is what I do not know"

Another farmer contacted on phone was Mr Ngombe who spoke on the sanctioning mechanism within their farmers union. He said:

"Most of our conflicts are treated within the union. We handle minor cases, and quarrels, and the major cases are reported to the council (BBNRM), or the chiefs, or the Sub-Divisional officer or other relevant authority"

I could not get clear responses on the mechanisms put by the law for conflict resolution or methods for evaluating "failure by the council to comply" as stipulated in SMP, whether of minor or major importance, whether deliberate or accidental, in cases brought to court? It was not also clear, what form of arbitration or appeal exists if agreement between the state

and the communities cannot be reached? These questions needed to be clarified to the village communities.

I observed that the system of sanctioning in BBCF is *mixed*. In some cases it is *graduated*, while in others it is *un-graduated*.⁹² Breaking of rules is not *properly recorded*. It was difficult for me to access the rate of rule- breaking. But the most effective impact to the farmer is the loss of reputation connected with breaking of rules, because this leads to humiliation. One of the Operations Committee Members (names withheld) stated:

⁹³, “*The law is not clear on what constitute a minor and a major offence. We do not also know why the Delegate for Forestry will issue permits for exploitation of timber without our knowledge, and when we apprehend illegal wood, we are instead intimidated? The victims are called later by the commissioner of police or Divisional Officer for negotiation and the seized wood disappears in the night. This is the real conflict.*”

According to Mr. Philip (a member of the union) the common conflicts are over boundaries and missing food crops within the farms. He stated:

“*Our sanction depends on the nature of the offence. If it involves illegal charcoal or timber, sometimes the matter is taken to the D.O. of Limbe III who will either order for the arrest of the said person and the products confiscated. Later the parties will come and negotiate. For minor offences within the union, we apply fines in the form of cash, crates of beer, of food items*”

5.1.8 Nested Enterprises⁹⁴

As required by the 1994 forestry law, a community must constitute *a legal entity*, to avoid rendering implementation of the law redundant (Egbe, 2001).⁹⁵ Village communities were not legal entities before the 1994 forestry law. This associative model includes restriction concerning economic activities and profits. Money generated by community forest can only be invested in community forest.⁹⁶ This has a negative impact on the livelihoods of the farmers.

I could not get clear answers regarding this concept of legal entity from Mr. Ngale (the coordinator for farmers) , but in a phone conversation with Mola Ngomba (another farmer) on how the user group approach is implemented in BBCF, he said:

“*This use of a group approach (as an entity) is partly the reason for the conflict between the council (BBNPMC) management and the Municipality, because revenue generated from the community forest activities, is shared amongst the group members in the form of unpaid salaries. So the municipality perceives this act as bad governance or a poor benefit sharing mechanism for the village communities*”

⁹² In this thesis graduated sanctions means that (the higher the contravention of the rule, the the higher is the sanction, and vice versa, and ungraduated sanctions means (the sanction is not proportionate to the contravention of the rule).

⁹³ This O.C.M. who is equally a farmer was very bitter regarding what the Delegate for forestry, the D.O. for Limbe III and the commissioner are doing with regards to sanctioning of farmers and other defaulters for illegal offences committed within the community forest. He didn't want his name mentioned but hoped to tell them his mind someday.

⁹⁴ Nested institutions are sets of rules that are hierarchically nested at several different scales to address problems or challenges confronted at different temporal and special scales. www.stockholmresilience.org.

⁹⁵ A community forest group or community must form an organization, with a legal entity in order for Law 94/01 to be enforceable. Income from the community forest can only be used for the purpose of the community forest, and not for other public utilities.

⁹⁶ (See Annual budgets, 2008 Annual Report) Oyono *et al.*, 2012. Beyond the Decade of Policy and Community Euphoria: The State of Livelihoods under New Local Rights to Forest in Rural Cameroon.

The BBCF (includes the five villages, Bonadikombo, Bonangombe, Lawanda, Dikolo, and Bonbile) is the only community forest with a Management Plan and a Management Convention.⁹⁷ . Therefore in terms of decision-making, respect for rules, the user group approach is more relevant and the impact is direct. But in terms of benefit sharing perspective of forest resources, the equal representation on a village by village basis might be more acceptable, but both approaches can promote good governance if properly implemented (Minang, 2003; Oyono, 2012).

5.2 What sort of relationship exist (in terms of power, control, social and environmental) between the management council (BBNPMC), the registered farmers and other local organizations, and how do the local farmers perceive these relationships?

In this section, data is presented in the form of themes. This is done to match the structure of the research question. I will first of all examine power relationship, then control, then social and environmental relationships of the management council, the registered farmers and other local organisations.

5.2.1 *Institutional and stakeholder relationship of Power.*

In this analysis, I explored the different institutions (laws, formal and informal rules, behavioural norms and enforcement mechanisms) involved in the management of the community forest. The presentation and analysis made use of *law* No 94/01, the Constitution of BBCF, the Simple Management Plan for the BBCF for the period 2002-2027, interviews and participant observation of the level of participation and involvement of stakeholders who have the capacity to influence and share control with other authorities over development initiatives and decisions which affect the farmers of this community. Issues observed were *control, access and management of the Community forest resources*. The organisations and other actors involved in the management of the community forest are: the Ministry of forestry and wildlife, the Bimbila Bonadikombo Natural Resources Management Council, the Traditional rulers (chiefs), the Conservation Agencies, the Limbe III municipality and the Public. The various Institutions are represented in a Venn diagram as shown below.

This analysis was developed mainly from interviews, participant observation and secondary data and validated with key informants. The researcher equally made certain assumptions with regards to the influence of Institutions within this community as at the time of conducting the field work. This consideration was due to the geographical, socio-economic and political situation and its impact on the people within this community. These assumptions were based on the fact that institutions are not static and the world is in continuous change.

Going back to the Venn diagram in Fig 6, for example the Bimbila Bonadikombo Natural Resources Management Council has a big circle. This big circle means their policy (rules and enforcement mechanisms) has a great influence on decisions that influence the livelihood of the farmers of this community. Equally, the diagram is close to the resource control (Power). This means, the policies (rules and enforcement mechanisms) of the council (BBNPMC), can easily influence the livelihood of the people of the community. The BBNPMC is threatened by losing influence and power because of the creation of Bimbila municipal council. The BBNPMC is losing power due to decreasing access and use of forest resources due to conflict.

⁹⁷ Oyono *et al.*, 2012, p.178.

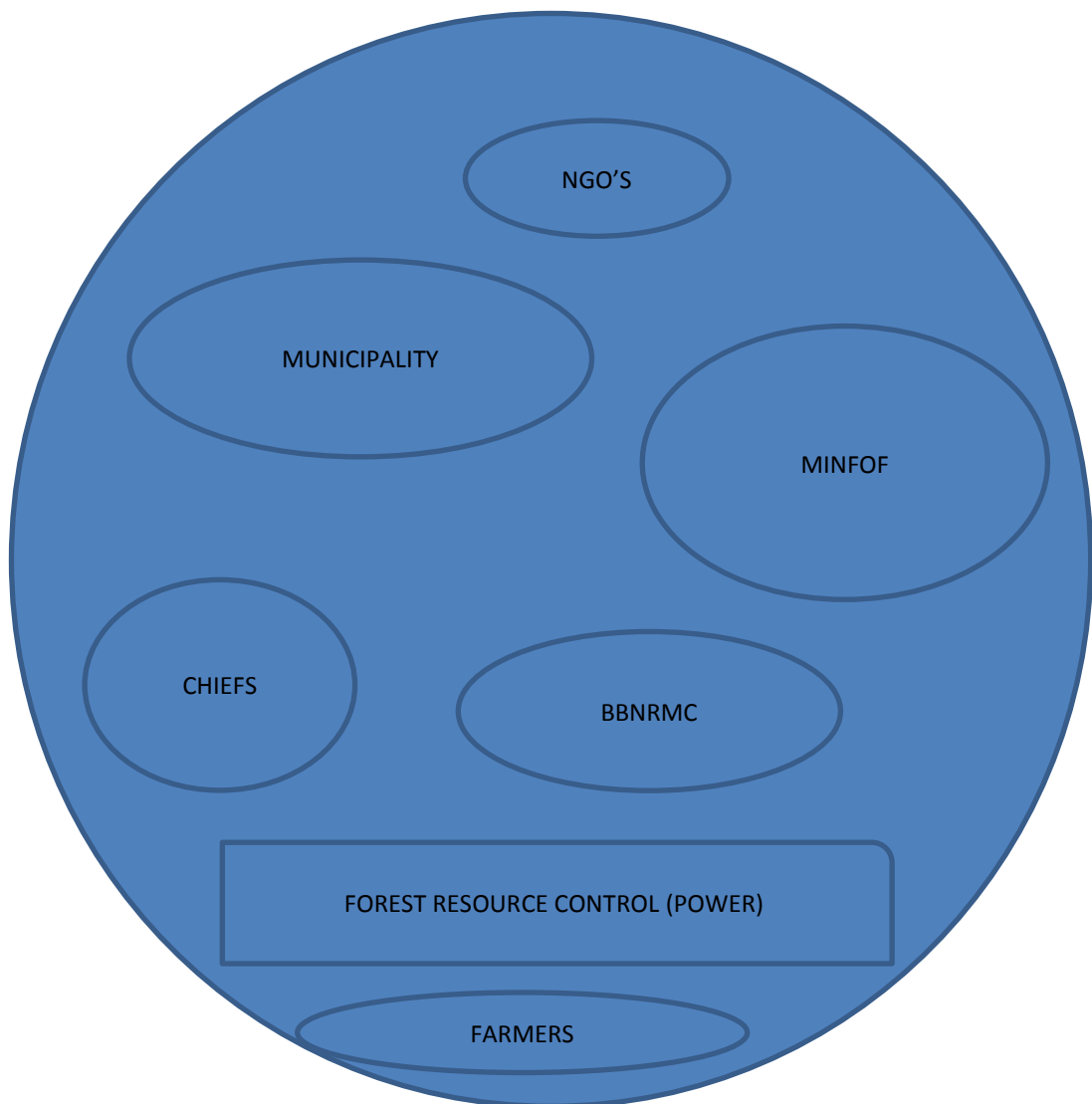


Figure 6 Venn diagram showing institutions charged with power. (Land-tenure and resource control) These institutions are represented in two ways. Firstly from the size of each circle and secondly from the distance of the institution to the problem (Source: Author;2012.)

Also the circle of the farmers' looks smaller, compared to that of the council (BBNRM). This means their policies (rules and enforcement mechanisms) cannot easily influence the livelihood of the village community. After community Based Mapping was done and land use allocation, the farmers' lost unconditional access to forest, for game and NTFP. The farmers needed to respect restrictions set by the council (BBNRM). The farmers need to be empowered so that they can have a "Voice" that can compete with the other institutions so as to have influence on decisions that influence the livelihood of the people of the community.

The Ministry of Forestry and wildlife are in a big circle. They are powerful institutions (in terms of constitutional and operational rules and enforcement mechanisms) with much power, but are further away from the resource control or power when compared to the council (BBNRM) and the farmers. MINFOF have political power (See table 6). They take advantage of the conflict in roles and responsibilities in BBCF. This means the influence of the MINFOF decisions does not affect the farmers' livelihood very positively. This explains the reason why these institutional frameworks are said to be *constraints*. The

challenge is therefore, for the state to decentralize her power structure on forest management.

The Mount Cameroon Project ⁹⁸ a conservation agency is presented in a small circle. It possesses power and is further away from the centre of power. This means that their policy can influence decisions that influence the livelihood of the people of the community. But in terms of strength of their policy, it is smaller than that of farmers, the council, and MINFOF to influence livelihood of the poor rural community.

The Municipal Council (Limbe III Council) has a circle larger than that of the NGO's, but they are further away from the centre of the problem. Their policy comparatively, does not have a great influence on decisions that can influence the livelihood of the poor rural farmers in the community. Due to inappropriate definition of roles and responsibilities, the council is gaining some powers from the BBNRMC with regards to access and use of forest resources.

The chiefs on the other hand, are represented as powerful institutions, especially traditionally, and are closer to the resource or the center of the problem. This means their policy have a greater influence on decisions that can influence the livelihood of the local farmers in the community.⁹⁹ There is equally the existence of traditional Institutions (For example village councils for decision making and resource management.), in most of the villages in the community.¹⁰⁰ The activities of the village council are functionally linked and they influence the effectiveness of the management process (Young, 1999). North argues that informal constraints that are culturally derived will not change immediately in reaction to changes in formal rules, leading to tension between altered formal rules and the persistent informal constraints (North, 1990). This is evidence in the long struggle for power amongst the members of the management council. This struggle is partly linked to the paramount chieftaincy tussle in Limbe Traditional Council, and the need to reclaim part of the community forest land from the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC). These institutional arrangements are nested by design within functional and historical broader regimes. The paramount chieftaincy tussle is as a result of deliberate clustering of several traditional regimes across functional, geographical and historical borders, and sometimes the arrangements of rules and the customary laws overlap largely unintentionally (Young, 1999).

The use of the Venn diagram is mainly because it shows how the registered farmers perceive the structure and relationship or interaction of the different institutions within the community forest. According to Pretty et al. (1995), the tool itself reveals causal

⁹⁸ The Mount Cameroon Project (MCP) is a multilateral biodiversity conservation project working directly within MINEF, on Mount Cameroon and surrounding villages. The Goal of the MCP is to maintain the biodiversity in the Mt. Cameroon region. www.undp.org.

⁹⁹ Chiefs are heads of clan or group. Traditionally, chiefs are auxiliaries of the state. The local community names a person they want to become chief based on the candidates bond to the community. Traditional chiefs are chosen from families customarily called upon to carry out traditional leadership role. Chiefs can equally be appointment by the government according to Chieftaincy law Decree No 77/245. Kingmakers can set aside these rules and select a candidate they believe can serve the people better. The decree defines family as a group of people sharing the same bloodline and lineage from same father.

¹⁰⁰ There is a traditional council with honorary members. The traditional authorities are the the paramount chief and other chiefs who are the chairmen and vice-chairmen of the BBNRMC. They appoint influential elites or notables to represent them during meetings (See BBNRMC constitution).

relationship among entities, but it can be used to encourage participants to explore and analyse causal links.

5.2.2 Institutional relationship of control

This section describes control relationship of the actors. Generally, rules change from time to time, and different land tenure perceptions and rules in this case study, have affected actor relationships. In terms of perception, one of the farmer`s explained:

“Now that we have a municipality with councillors, more strangers¹⁰¹ will want to come and live in Bimbia. So we will have to build houses on our farm land and demand more farms from the council (BBNPMC). As a farmer, I may lose my native farmlands, which will mean less food for my family” (Interview respondent).

In Bimbia, it was initially agreed with the representatives of all the actors during the land Use Plan and the Simple Management Plan phases, that each farmer within the forest will pay a registration fee of about 25000 FRS (About 50USD). After which his or her farm will be assessed and annual rents determined. This was considered too high. Most farmers outside BBCF pay about 5000 FRS (10 USD). Less than 200 of the estimated 2000 farmers have registered. The farmers think registration is only a pretext and that rents will eventually be abolished, there-by kicking them out. They emphasize that, the spirit of pre-community forest indigenous organizations such as the Victoria Lands and forest Conservation and the Victoria Area Rainforest Common Initiative Group that aimed at ejecting “non-native settlers” from their forest still prevails.¹⁰² Due to this land tenure perceptions and issues of trust, there exists poor relationship between the management council (BBNPMC) and the registered farmers groups or fuel wood collectors, mainly because many users of the forest are non-natives.

According to results of focus group interview, there has been poor working relationship between MINIFOF and the municipal council. This could be attributed to lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities. When contacted, the Secretary General of the Bimbia municipality clearly stated:

“The Delegate for forestry does not have the right to issue logging permits within our community forest. It is the council (BBNPMC) that has the power to control the forest resource, and the council reports to the municipality. If the BBNPMC cannot address this issue, then we as a municipality must step in” (Interview respondent)

While the Bimbia community accuses MINIFOF of illegally issuing logging permits within their forest, and lack of transparency with auction sales from joint seizures, MINIFOF argues that Bimbia has no right to sanction defaulters. On the other hand, Bimbia community insists, the law allows them to deal with minor offences. Therefore the line between major and minor is not clear even for the neutral interpreter of policy.

Such disagreement has created conflicts between the local farmers of the community and the forest administrative staff (Minang, 2007).

I observed that the relationship between (MINIFOF) forestry officials and the locally registered farmers has not been very cordial. State officials are not well paid sometimes,

¹⁰¹ In this thesis, the term strangers simply means non-natives.

¹⁰² Bimbia Bonadikombo Community Forest Agroforestry Intern Final Report. Prepared by: John Antill, CIDA Youth Agroforestry Intern. April 2005. See also interview with Moki, a farmer in Bimbia village. 2011.

and they face the challenge of working with local farmers and workers of the (Council) BBNRMC, who are mostly volunteer workers who comparatively, lack funds, equipment, knowledge, skills (in community forest management). Building a working relationship has been a challenge.¹⁰³ During the focus group discussion, one of the indigenous farmers remarked that:

“I was a trader, buying and selling fish....when in 2001, the opportunity came to work as monitors of the forest in BBNRMC. It was motivating, and we earned about five dollars (2500 FRS) per day. There was money and work, as well as many illegal exploiters around. But the situation is no longer the same today. Payment for patrols is about three dollars (1500 FRS) per day, and exploiters complain that timber is scarce; there is frequent harassment by officials from MINIFO”.

On the other hand, the relationship between the village communities and NGOs, especially the Mount Cameroon Project, has been very good. NGOs or bilateral projects have provided the support communities need for forest management. For example, in Bimbia Community, the Mount Cameroon Project (GTZ-DFID funded) has funded and facilitated workshops on community forestry regulations. They have equally helped with the establishment of a legal entity. The GTZ has equally assisted by providing funds for hired expertise to train community members. Funds were also provided for implementation of Mapping, forest inventories and the development of a Simple Management Plan.

5.2. 3 Social and environmental relationship.

The figure below is a demographic representation of the sampled population in Bimbia Bonadikombo village community.

Characteristics		Total Number.	
		N=22	%
Gender	Male	19	86.36
	Female	3	13.64
Age Range.	21-30	3	13.6
	31-40	6	27.3
	40 and above	13	59.1
Occupation	Farmer/Fisherman	15	68.2
	Farmer/Civil servant	1	4.5
	Farmer/Trader	6	27.3
Education	Primary/Vocation	13	59.1
	secondary	4	18.2
	Above secondary	5	22.7
Duration in Community (BBC).	11-20 yrs.	4	18.2
	20 and above	18	81.8
Family size.	≤ 3	8	36.4
	≥ 4	14	63.6

Figure 7 Demographic information of respondents in Bimbia Bonadikombo Community.(source, Author, 2014).

¹⁰³The Operations Committee workers are volunteers, and they need to be motivated. Focus group interview with farmers and personal observation by researcher (2011).

Based on findings from the field, it was realised that individual characteristics of the actors are liable to influence social and environmental relationship (Ngendakumana et al). A demographic study of the sampled population in (Fig. 12) is relevant in explaining these relationships. The characteristics show that, more male respondents ((86.36%) than females (13.64%), participated in the study. More than 55% of the respondents were above 40 years, and had lived in the community for more than 20 years. This means they lived in the community before the creation of the community forest. Also all the respondents were registered farmers within the community and had farms in the community forest. All the respondents had a family size (36.4% had 3 or less than 3 children, and 63.6% had 4 or more than 4 children) and were either working with the local government or self-employed. In addition all of them had attended at least primary education. These characteristic could be evaluated depending on how well the interviewees are informed about the concept of community forest and their rights and benefits. These characteristics could be classified into four themes. (1) Awareness about the concept of community forest (2) Awareness about the management process (3) Awareness about rights (4) Awareness about benefit sharing.

Out of the 22 farmers selected in the study, all of them knew about the existence of BBCF. 65% of the farmers had little knowledge of the persons that facilitated the formation of the community forest. One of the farmers commented that:

*“This community forest came into existence thanks to efforts of the management council and some elites like Madame Burnley, but I do not know most of the members of the management committee.”*¹⁰⁴. (Interview respondent).

40% of the farmers could explain that the formation of the community forest was around 1998, but did not know the facilitation role played by Mount Cameroon Project (MCP) and some influential elites of the community. When asked *“Who are the persons involved in the management of the community forest?”* their responses were limited to Mola Ngale (Coordinator for the farmers) and the Operations Committee Members (OCMs). But in general, the farmers were aware that the community forest was managed by the chiefs, the management council, the Limbe III council, and some selected elites of the council. However, the farmers knew their group representative and Union leaders but were not aware of the persons representing the interest of all the groups, or knowledge of the management process. One of the interviewees from the municipality reported, *“There is often conflict about who is the right person to issue permission for the exploitation of resources in the community forest. Sometimes the president of the management council may sign permissions for exploitation and the Limbe III council will refuse to recognize the permissions. Sometimes council permissions are not recognized by the chiefs. This has been a main source of management conflict in BBCF”*. .

Because the local farmers are less informed about the main persons involved in the management, as well as the management process, they are unable to participate meaningfully to the implementation process. I observed that about 40% did not quite understand their benefits and rights as users of the forest, within their village communities, but felt that they needed to be protected as an entity, to carry out their activities as farmers. One of the farmers argued that, *“access to explore income generating resources like timber, charcoal burning, NTFP, (particularly Prunus Africana) is not by merit, but base on “Man- know-man ”*¹⁰⁵ Meaning the process is characterised with a lot of favouritism, nepotism, tribalism , and only those who could pay or had connections, or were in high administrative positions were given access to resource exploitation”.

¹⁰⁴ Madame Burnley is the current Board Chairman of BBNRMC.

¹⁰⁵“Man- know –man “in this context means friendship or close relationship with one another.

In terms of local knowledge, all the farmers who participated during the focus group discussion and those interviewed testified that they were aware of certain principles applied in the governance of the community forest. Mr Philip (a farmer at Chop farm) stated that: *“I have heard about the law, but I do not have good knowledge or a copy of the law. But our group had been sensitized and educated about some of the rules contained in the law, for example the need to respect clearly defined boundaries, which we do apply as a guide in our activities. This was done by the management committee members during our village meetings, and during our farmers’ union meetings.”* (Focus group interview)

With regards to farmers’ rights, one of the farmer group leaders remarked that: *“Local people like us cannot fight for our rights and benefits of the community forest because we do not even understand what the law says about it”*. 70% of the interviewees noted that most often their groups were not invited for meetings, or training programs. One of the farmers was eager to know why this happens very often. He said, *“Are we excluded from many meetings or group activities because we cannot speak and write good English?”*

With regards to benefit sharing from the forest resources, another farmer responded that, *“Yes I benefit when tourist and researchers visit us and they buy our foodstuffs. Some of our children serve as porters and field assistants. We equally get our medicinal plants and timber to construct our canoes from the forest”*

I observed that the farmers had different views about benefit sharing mechanism of the council (BBNPMC). This was partly because the law requires that benefits in the form of revenue should be used for only community forest projects. Review of Annual Reports for 2008; show that revenue is distributed in the form of unpaid salaries, since the staffs are working as volunteers. One of the farmers, who had a contrary opinion to the practices of the staffs of the council (BBNPMC) regarding benefit sharing, suggested by saying that: *“I think it will be better if funds from sale of timber are used by the management council to build schools or clinic, or improve water supply in the villages, or provide loans to improve farming practices in the villages. This will improve our lifestyle and relationship with one another”*¹⁰⁶

During the focus group discussion, I observed that those who had a positive perception about the implementation process of the law and benefits were mostly the natives (Bakweries), who actually had direct benefits, or a member of their household.¹⁰⁷ Such direct benefit included employment in the council (BBNPMC) or involved in some rural development project around the municipality.

The other objective of this study is to describe the role and strategies of the management council (BBNPMC) and other stakeholders in improving institutional performance. The table below is a description of the responsibilities and strategies of community forest actors.

¹⁰⁶ Nuesiri, E., (2014) argues that income generated from community forest is used to pay workers and cover operations cost. The institution has not been able to fund collective social development projects.

¹⁰⁷ The term natives in this thesis refers to indigenes of the Bimbila- Bonadikombo community (the Bakeries or Isubus) a vocal minority group in Cameroon (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 2003).

Description of the responsibilities and strategies of community forest actors.

Actor	Role/Responsibility	Interest	Resources	Remarks
BBNRM	Represent the community and coordinate CF activities. Has an elected board, a management council.	Implement the SMP. Has forest management in charge of day-to-day operations.	Office, Allowances, Training, revenue from sale of forest products and permits, fees etc.	Implements BBCFMP on all 9 compartments.
Chiefs	Custodian of tradition. Village heads. Authorise access to all resources. Monitor.	Establish and reinforce claims to traditional lands. Members of BBNRM board.	Fees, gifts and limited political power.	
Farmers.	Register with BBNRM.	Access to land for increased food production.	Income from crop sales.	Want implementation of Farmer Education Program
Timber exploiters.	Exploitation of the CF.	Access to tree resources.	Direct income from activity.	Difficult to identify them, because they come from out of the CF.
Charcoal Burners	Take part in CF activities	Access to tree resources	Income from activity.	
Fuel wood collectors	Take part in CF development activities.	Access to tree resources	Income from activity.	
MINEF	Supervise forest management. Provide technical support to CF.	Support SFM. Collect forest revenue.	Political power. Technical knowledge on forestry. Sales revenue.	Staff and material shortages.
Municipality.	Democratic local governance. Support CF development.	Local government development. Land use plan.	Financial and workshop facilities. Meeting facilities.	
Local Administration. (Sub-Divisional Officer).	Ensure peaceful resolution of conflict. Local governance.	Peace. Rural development.	Political power.	
Mount Cameroon Project (MCP).	Facilitate CF planning and management.	Development of models for participatory biodiversity conservation.	Finance, technical knowledge in forestry. Lobby strength. Facilitating skills.	Want Bio-diversity conservation.
Fisher men	Participate in CF development	Users rights	Fishing nets, small canoe.	
Elites[1]	Promote CF development. Lobby and mobilize support.	Establish and reinforce claims to traditional lands.	Political power and financial resources.	
Women	Interest is access rights and farm land.			
MINFOP (Ministry of Forest and Fauna.	Ensure sustainable forest management	Conflict resolution. Provide technical support.	Political power.	

Figure 8 Summary Description of BBCF Actors and their strategies (Source: Author, 2014)

6 Analyses and Discussion.

In this section, the patterns of interaction in the course of the implementation process of law 94/01, are presented and analysed. The focus of the analysis of the variables is viewed at the operational level of decision making. These variables include: Unintended discrepancies in the institutional design of the 1994 law, Group representation in the management process, Discrepancies in the management regimes, Access to resources and users rights, Community empowerment, Use of user- group approach in management, Dominance of the policy process by powerful actors, Emergence of new collaboration amongst civil society and the management, Redefinition of forest governance and Benefit sharing mechanism etc. The outcomes of the interactions are evaluated as perceived by the farmers, and recommendations made.

The context of the Cameroon forest Act and its implementation as envisaged in policy documents, exhibit interplay of several governance regimes. The analysis reveal that, for the government of Cameroon to have adopted community forestry as part of its decentralization forestry policy of 1994, simply means the ministry in charge of forest sub-contracts certain management activities to communities for a period (MINEF, 1998a; Egbe, 2001)¹⁰⁸ Within BBCF, the management process exhibits interplay of state forest regimes, council forest regime and private forest regime. These regimes have distinct governance mechanisms with respect to forest management responsibilities and benefit distribution. Even among different community-based forest management regimes, the degree of community autonomy and level of benefit to community varies. For instance, in BBCF, the local authorities are expected to enjoy full autonomy of management and use of forest products (except protected species or areas), and all the income from the community forest is invested in the community forest or shared to beneficiaries. On the contrary, several government and council decisions have been taken which curtail community rights to forest resource use in BBC. Furthermore, under collaborative forest management system as is the case between the state and the traditional authority system in BBC, communities are expected to have limited rights over the management and use of forest products and only a portion of income remains at local level and the balance goes to government. Such discrepancies and their unintended consequences have not been widely discussed and analysed while devising the institutional design of the 1994 forestry law.

Also in spite of horizontal interplay of these regimes in BBCF, there is evidence of inadequacy in the formal and informal rules in use, in the institutional design of BBC. Topa *et al.* (2009, p.36) note that “*management of the Bimbia –Bonadikombo community forest occurs in a complex setting....the margin of urban development...and it is feared that the model is not sustainable*” without external support. One of the challenges for management within this setting will be how to identify the right strategies for combating the drivers of deforestation that fit with the existing mixture of - management regime in BBCF. There are many options for deciding among management regimes based on their effectiveness in enhancing forest conditions. There is equally contestation among actors supporting different management regimes. For example, community forestry has been highly contested on the grounds that, failure to properly define the “*nature of a community*”, has excluded some non-indigenes residing close to the community forest from participating in the management process, even though it has been recognized as an effective mechanism for restoration of degraded forest in Bimbia- Bonadikombo community. Community policy experts argue that any regime selected should vigorously promote the potential non-monetary benefits, like formal recognition of community land claims offered

¹⁰⁸ Decentralized forestry policy involves the transfer of subsidiary powers over forest management from central government to lower level institutions in society, including local government and community-based organizations (Ribot, 2002).

local communities alongside its monetary benefits (Nuesiri, 2014). Conversely supporters of community forestry have criticised collaborative forest management in the past as they see it as an excuse for not handing over more forest to local communities.

As regards group representation, a good number of the farmers acknowledge positively the inclusion of all stakeholder groups in the management process within the council (BBNPMC), as a means of reducing conflict. (See constitution of BBNPMC and focus group discussion). The ability of the council (BBNPMC) to promote its intended goal (Improving communication and participation amongst different ethnic groups) through this action is an aspect of institutional effectiveness (Young, 1999). Before the creation of BBNPMC, the indigenes had three elite institutions namely the Limbe Traditional Council, the Victoria Land and Forest Conservation Committee (VLFCC), and the Victoria Area Rainforest Common Initiative Group (VARCIG) with the primary aim of establishing control over land. (Oji and Tekwe, 1998; Minang, 2003). Meanwhile the non-indigenous forest users had no such structures and their incentive for forest use was livelihood survival. So Mount Cameroon Project (MCP) Limbe assisted them to create farmer- groups, charcoal producers, timber exploiters, “fuelwood sellers” users groups (Tekwe and Percy, 2001). Initially, the indigenes strongly opposed the inclusion of non-indigenes in the Bimbia – Bonadikombo (BB) management board (Brown, 1999; Tekwe and Percy, 2001), but a consensus was reached and the BB management board was created with a composition of about 75% indigenes and just 25% non-indigenes. So, this action actually put a stop to the consistent marginalisation of voices of the non-indigenes within the local communities, while powerful actors particularly the state and donor organisations still prevailed.

With regards to access to resources and users rights, they vary across different management regimes. Legally, the government of Cameroon retains the ownership of the land in all types of regime, except for private forest. Though community –based regimes are endowed with certain rights to manage and use forest resources, such rights are severely restricted in government controlled forest including protected areas. One of the threats of the Bimbia-Bonadikombo (BB) management is a perpetual lack of secure tenure over land that their forest stands on. The BB community has clear rights to trees and forest products (except protected species), but not to the land itself. This situation where the rights of owners remain ambiguous can be problematic in any agreement involving parties, for example in the context of carbon-trading, since carbon is contained not only in trees, but also in the soil, roots and organic debris (Khatri D.B, 2012).

There are indicatives also of potential hindrances for an effective implementation of the management process.¹⁰⁹ Several government decisions and directives towards curtailing community rights also provide evidence for this. I believe that to transform the forest from degraded to a sustainable forest; the existing institutional framework ought to be altered to some margin. I argue that based on the Simple Management Plan for BBCF, the *council (BBNPMC) has bargaining strength (See composition of BBNPMC in constitution) and can perceive that they can do better by altering the existing institutional framework by some margin.*¹¹⁰ *But their perception should depend on the information that the state receives and how the Ministry of forestry and wildlife, process that information.*¹¹¹ (North, 1990). *The creation of Limbe III council in 2007 is an outcome of the need for institutional*

¹⁰⁹ Technical assistance (S (37)1.), offered by MINIFOF ought to be free. Use BBNPMC nursery seedlings of NTFP for re-forestation and as a source to generate revenue. See EMP for BBCF, 2005.

¹¹⁰ Before reforms, the state preserved all rights. New legal status of rights to forest and resources relates to the allocation to village communities of management rights and market rights to forest located in the Non-permanent community forest. <http://www.conservationandsociety.org>, p.174.

¹¹¹ Government faces difficulty to regulate the use of resource if she lacks enough and correct information.

change, and both Limbe III council and BBNRMC must adopt a citizen oriented type of cooperation in order to respond to the challenge of value-pluralism in decision making process. Also cooperation and commitment has to go beyond information and power sharing. ¹¹²

I also observed that efforts are being made by the management council to transform registered farmers from less productive farmers to more productive farmers.¹¹³ To achieve this, the Farmer Education Program (FEP) was adopted by the council and the technical services of (MINFOR) forestry department. A review of the 2008 Annual Report showed that several meetings had been held to sensitize farmer groups and assist them in their activities. For example Good Friends Livestock farmers' group was assisted in the construction of their nursery. 20 farmers attended a workshop on Project writing organized by the council in collaboration with Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Interns, to give them skills in writing proposals for funding farming related work. But based on my focus group discussion with the farmers, not all farmer groups registered within the council (BBNRMC) are being contacted during meetings or training workshops organised by the council. I took note of the fact that the procedure to notify them or register most of the farmer groups for such meetings is not clear. The effect has been a high level of ignorance and illiteracy amongst the farmers. North asserts in his 1973 book "The rise of the western world. A New Economic History" that "Efficient economic organization is the key to growth" Inefficient economic organization is partly the reason for the inability of the council to transform registered farmers to be more productive. For formal rules, informal norms and enforcement mechanism to work in a particular community, that community or council *must understand the local context*.¹¹⁴ In spite of this challenge, there is still evidence of ¹¹⁵empowerment of the farmers, which could be seen through the decision by the management council to initiate land reclamation process from the state plantation company (CDC). This act can be considered as a direct result of community empowerment.

With regards to the approach taken towards participation, the council (BBNRMC) applies a forest user group approach in which all stakeholder groups are considered as entities alongside chiefs, and constituted institutions like MINEF, MINFOR, MCP, the municipality and others. Even though these users come from different villages, they are not considered to represent villages. These users are seen as villages only in the case of representation in BBNRMC Operations Committee. ¹¹⁶This has been adopted for all meetings (Minang, 2003, Oyono, 2005). This conscious effort by groups of actors in whatever form (for

¹¹² For example, the Mayor of Limbe III warns against the cutting down of trees to construct houses as an excuse that will not be tolerated, because of unauthorized and unsustainable exploitation of BBCF, and the fact that the forest is under state protection (Roland, M.; 2015)

¹¹³ By promoting public participation through Eco-tourism, Agro-forestry, and Beekeeping. Eco-tourism is "Respectful travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improve the wellbeing of local people"-The International Eco-tourism Society, 1990. See Ecotourism Marketing Plan for BBCF. Prepared by CIDA/Camosun College International Ecotourism Intern, Craig Paulson. April 2005.

¹¹⁴ Most farmers do not own their farmlands and this affects their motivation to work on their farms, and they detest the nature and concept of privatization of their lands (Focus group interview with farmers, 2011).

¹¹⁵ Rules are adaptable over time. In the 18th century, Bimbia was a Slave Trade Port, but this Slave Trade Port today is of cultural, historical, and touristic importance to Cameroon and the farmers in particular. So the management process is adaptable to this positive change. .

¹¹⁶ I know this through complains from non-indigenous forest users who complain of not having a voice before and after the creation of the community forest. In their own words, "We go to the board meeting only to hear what the bakweri authorities will say" (Personal communication, 2012)

example, considering stakeholder groups as nested enterprises or entities) to address and improve institutional interaction and its effects is an aspect of interplay management¹¹⁷ (Stokke, 2001; Oberthur, 2009). Minang (2003) also argues that the user group approach is more relevant for its impact is direct. Bimbia-Bonadikombo community possesses some characteristics that favour “*Collective Choice Principles*,”¹¹⁸ such as well-designed boundaries for resources and to a lesser extent, for members of the community as well. Hence they have some relevant experience when it comes to staying as a group

There is equally the dominance of the policy-making process by powerful actors. The forestry bureaucracy and the associated policy-making process in Cameroon are dominated by entrenched interest, with a strong influence on policy outcomes. This domination materialises through the involvement of a few powerful actors, namely the BBNRMC, the Limbe III municipality, the Limbe traditional council, the ministries in charge of forest represented by (MINEF) and (MINIFOR), the government (represented by Sub-Divisional Officers), donor organisations and powerful elites. While some elite members such as Mrs Burnley have played an active role in the policy dialogues and processes, they reflect the interest and voices of only a couple of stakeholder groups (e.g. indigenous groups), whereas, the participation of more marginalized groups such as women and youths have been very limited.

The implementation process has brought about new collaboration among civil society and institutions, though the longevity and effectiveness of these collaborations remains to be seen. This is evident in changing standards and functions of the Limbe III municipality as they respond to the spread of farms and illegal and unsustainable exploitation of the forest. In the process of decision making by the BBNRMC, some actors lost their resource access rights or power to control, while others gained power, influencing a change in the power structure of forest resource governance. So, new democratic structures emerged, charged with responsibility for the management of the community forest. These structures gave some disadvantaged groups, such as women a chance. The Limbe III municipality is one of these structures and some of the women are councillors who take decisions regarding the management of the community forest. I observed that women participate more in village meetings than during forest activities. Records of Bimbia Bonadikombo Community show that women constitute more than half of the users of the forest (RCDC, 2002; Minang, 2003). Yet from the list of participants at key meetings, less than a quarter was women. This is disadvantageous for conflict management in the future, should they violate agreed management rules made in their absence or without a legitimate group representation (Minang, 2003).

The interactions redefine forest governance in Bimbia –Bonadikombo community (BBC). Vertical interplay between the law 94/01 and the traditional authority system, as well as horizontal interplay amongst existing rules of forest governance and interactions amongst actors has redesigned the institutional structure in BBC. The recent efforts by the government to reassert control over the BBCF through legal and policy mechanisms (For example, earmarking the forest to be under “state protection”) suggest a recentralization of forest governance. As a result of centralisation of powers, the approach to community forest management at constitutional level is top-down, and not bottom-up as perceived by some farmers and stakeholders.

¹¹⁷ Institutional interplay may occur even without the knowledge of the actors concerned; interplay management requires awareness of reflection on the interaction. The user groups improve institutional interaction and its effects (Young, 1999).

¹¹⁸ In this paper collective choice principle are principles accepted together as a group with the aim of enhancing the status of the group or attaining the common objective of the group.

It was difficult to get clear answers from the respondents and more especially the registered farmers on how benefits from the forest resources in BBCF were shared. The reason was partly due to ignorance and also due to the fact that different interest groups had different motives (financial and non-financial) for farming in the community forest. While the indigenous interest is land and livelihood, the interest of the non-indigenes in the community forest is their livelihood. A review of the 2005 and 2008 Annual Reports show that revenue from community forest activities were used for community projects, mainly payment of unpaid salaries to workers and to cover operational cost. There has been no evidence of the BBNRMC, funding collective social development projects. This study and other studies by Vabi, Njankoua, and Muluh (2002) have found out that indigenous elites view control over land as the key expected benefit from community forest. Therefore in communities like BB where elites support community forest as part of a trade –off for control over land, community forestry advocates should use this trade-off option to devise a land ownership process that would secure long-term commitment of local people to community forestry for livelihoods (Nuesiri, 2014).

In terms of competence, the interaction between the formal and informal rules in management process provides a platform for meetings, and this builds relationship and institutions. The composition of (BBNRM) board shows that communication structure and actor relationships change through the process (See figure 8) . In addition the management process makes use of some customary practices in farm allocation, such as the payment of “Chu-ku-chu-ku”, and the tenure practice protects the rights of registered farmers of the council (BBNRM).

While using the “*rule approach*” in defining institutions. I explored in this thesis the fact that implementing law 94/01 without a clear consideration of the consequences of the interaction with historical processes, experiences, and the practices of the village communities (mostly local farmers and fishermen), may not reflect outcome of the law according to the registered farmers of the council (BBNRM).¹¹⁹ I regarded informal norms not only as norms of behaviour, but equally as rules which have different enforcement characteristics with formal rules. In BBCF, formal rules are enforced by the courts and other forces of law and order such as the police, while informal norms are enforced usually by peers or other customary groups who will impose cost on the individual if you do not live up to them. However, the terms “formal” and “informal” institutions have been used misleadingly and in different ways. Some scholars see formal laws to mean legal, written, explicit, codified (North, 2002). The idea that there is a dividing line between institutions that are entirely “formal” on one hand and entirely “informal” on the other is false, because “formal” institutions (in the case of BBCF) always depend on non-legal rules and implicit norms in order to operate. I argue that institutions that are adopted by farmers, within Bimbia Bonadikombo Communities (BBC), should not be only those codified in writing (formal ones). Some customary laws and traditions of the local farmers too should be adopted. .

I identified two major problem areas which encourage unsustainable Community Forest Management and need immediate attention in BBCF: A weak institutional and legal framework adopted by the BBNRM and the newly created Limbe municipality, in

¹¹⁹ North (2002) differentiated rules from players. He considers organization as players. Organizations “are made up of groups of individuals bound together by some common purpose to achieve certain objectives” North (1994, 361). He argues that it’s the interaction between institutions and organizations that shapes the institutional evolution of the economy.

combination with weak interplay management skills¹²⁰, and mis-directed political, historical, ecological and economic incentives. I observed that due to differences in objectives of both councils, there are some conflicting roles and responsibilities which constrain the enforcement of decisions that affect farmers. I realised the need for the Limbe III council and BBNRMC to review the institutional and legal framework adopted from law 94/01, then prepare a working document that consolidates the objective of the BBNRMC (which is, the protection of bio-diversity and sustainable management of forest resources on behalf of the village communities), and that of the Limbe III council (which is principally to ensure democratic local governance within the village communities in Bimbia).

Another challenge is the fact that law 94/01 permits community forest management only on Non-Permanent Forest Estate? According to the land- Use Plan, a Non-Permanent Forest may be converted into Non-forest land at any time. This uncertainty in the status of the forest may likely be the case in BBCF. This seems to be a political linkage that creates an unsustainable existence of functional linkages (Young et al. 1999). The state remains the exclusive owner of land,¹²¹ with powers to revoke the communities Usufruct right at any moment? The state actors may have decided to link these institutions for reasons of managerial efficiency that are not linked in functional terms in the long-run (Young et al. 1999: 64-65). I equally observed that the council (BBNRMC) is facing the challenge of implementing the agro-forestry program it has designed on a non-permanent land. As an option, law 94/01, section (30) provides for the creation of a council forest as a permanent forest which can then reflect the country's ecological diversity. This will depend on the political will of the municipality, administrators, as well as the local farmers in BBCF. Brown (2002), calls on government to be committed to sustainable forest management (SFM). He argues that "Political will" is not a *static concept* and therefore can be changed overtime.¹²²

With these clustering of several regimes, I propose the *Northeast View* which tries to eliminate those institutional constraints in the forestry sector which define a set of pay offs to political, economic conditions that do not encourage productive activity. For example, in the case of BBCF, the *execution of forestry policy, arbitrary decision making, at operational level is being constrained by some Ministry of Forest and Fauna (MINFOF) officials*. The solution will be the "*establishment of Institutional arrangements that will create incentives to channel individual economic efforts into activities that will bring private rate of return close to social rate of return*".¹²³ That is to say, direct economic pressure can be used by Government Agencies, International Donor Communities, or Pressure Groups to change the views of decision makers. In Bimbia for example, there are plans to restore the 18th century Slave Trade Port as well as protect the Core-area of the community forest. The ports as well as the core-area have great cultural, historical and touristic and ecological importance to community.¹²⁴ Also the activities of the relevant

¹²⁰ Institutional interplay may occur even without the knowledge of the actors concerned, but inter play management requires awareness of and reflection on the interaction.

¹²¹ Land Tenure Act of 1974 abolished customary land tenure and nationalized all land. Local people are only granted User rights to meet their domestic needs e.g. firewood, and these rights can be overruled by the state at any time.

¹²² David Brown, Director of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London; Email: d.brown@odi.org.UK

¹²³ Rate of return is the gain or loss on investment over specific period of time, expressed as a percentage increase over the initial investment cost. In BBCF, Private rate of return refers to cost and benefit that flow to farmers and their families based on use of community forest. Social rate of return refers to cost and benefit borne by the rest of the community. Institutional arrangements should focus more on assisting the local community, rather than individual farmers or their families.

¹²⁴ <http://bamendaonline.net>.

ministries (Ministry of Territorial Administration and Ministry of Forestry and Fauna) responsible for forest management should be re-examined to ensure that conflicting responsibilities are streamlined in order to eradicate the current overlap.

I observed that the farmers need a “voice or a more *democratic institution or organization that can represent their collective interest as farmers (Both natives and Non-natives)*.”¹²⁵ The BBNRMC, as well as the Limbe III Municipality is now faced with the challenge of adopting a citizen¹²⁶ type of cooperation especially with farmers, in order to attain integration of values and decisions as demanded by law 94/01. Both councils (BBNRMC and the Bimbia municipality) may need to respond to value pluralism in decision making process. As democratic local community forest institutions, cooperation and commitment has to go beyond information sharing and power sharing, to a more pluralistic approach (North, 2008)

Before the Cameroon nation-state came into being tribal and/or ethno-cultural, *entities* or *groups* existed as *nationalities* with territorial limits.¹²⁷ There is a belief amongst some farmers and elites that a *bottom- up approach* (management system) will instigate the Bakweri people (farmers) in their claim of landed patrimony, against the state of Cameroon. The question to ask is:

“*Are the farmers` value and power fully integrated within the management process, and if so, are the farmers benefiting from the process?*” These questions could be answered in the positive or negative. The feeling I had based on participant observation is that the registered farmers of the council (BBNRMC) need a “voice” to air out their grievances. Their participation and interaction within the BBCF is seen as an “*opportunity*” and not a “*right*”.

But it is important to understand the fact that Forestry Policy throughout the developing world originates from *European “scientific” traditions* exported during the colonial period (Anne and Larson, 2006). These policies were implemented by foreign and local elite whose interest was to maximize and extract profit. In spite of reforms since the end of colonial period, policies on the environment *usually remain biased against rural communities*. Even when more recent policies are fair, the rural poor (mainly farmers), face severe biases in implementation. Forest based communities still live in disabling environment of policy and practice that overrides some positive effects of increased “*participation*” and ownership. Forestry and broader regulatory policies, continue to favour urban-based and local elite access to forest resources or resource benefit at the expense of the smallholders (farmers) and the poor (Ribot 1998). This policy backed marginalization of rural population is deepened even by so called “*neutral*” or seemingly “*fair*” policies because of *unequal access to capital, labour, and credit rooted in class, identity and social relations* (Ribot and Peluso, 2003, Larson et al 2006a)

In this case study, therefore I argue that, the factors mentioned above have slanted the access playing field, filtering farmer (community) competition with more powerful actors.

¹²⁵ This Opinion is arguable because the Limbe III council created in 2007 by presidential Decree No115, has 25 councilors, 5 senior councilors at the Limbe city who are democratically elected that can represent the collective interest of the farmers. Law 94/01 contradicts with customary law with regards to User Rights. It is believed the new councilors can resolve this tension. Also BBNRMC has a management council comprising a board, elected representatives of operations Committee, as well as other executives to take care of the collective interest of farmers. www.limbe3council.org.

¹²⁶ As citizens in Community Forest management (CFM), different actors should consider themselves as agents of transformation for the common benefit of society, as opposed to stakeholders with different stakes for individual or group benefit.

¹²⁷ BLCC against the State/Government of Cameroon. Letter No 1178/MINAGRI/CAB/IG.3 (2003-12-23). From the Minister of state in charge of Agriculture, to the Minister of state in charge of External Relations. <http://www.blccarchives.org>.

Forestry authorities use many *exclusionary strategies* in their management process even at operational level. For example, in the case study, the composition of the board or the management council in terms of representatives has not taken into consideration the fact that the largest user groups in BBCF are farmers. Therefore farmers' representatives from southern and northern Bimbia Bonadikombo according to the responses of the registered farmers and other stake holders, needs to be given extra-attention.

I rap up by arguing that in this case study, the success of the implementation process of law 94/01, at the management phase, at operational level, does not only depend on the performance of the rules, but also on their interactions with other arrangements that have overlapping jurisdiction. The interactions have reinforced the effectiveness of traditional institutions and relationships, as well as the behaviours and outcomes that other institutions (formal and informal) do not normally target. On the other hand, the interactions have disrupted agreed objectives in certain circumstances, and even off-set gains in cooperation in other situations. In all the cases, coordination is necessary to consolidate rules and reduce conflict, or exploit synergies in implementation.

7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis explored the impact of a new forest law on the traditional authority system that previously regulated the forest use and forest management in Cameroon. The thesis combined the concepts of “Institutional interplay”, “Cross scale institutional linkages” and “Ostrom’s 2005, Institutional design”, in line with the IAD framework, to analyse and evaluate the forest management at the operational level, and the interactions with various stakeholder within the Bimbia Bonadikombo community. .

The analysis reveal that community based forest management (CBFM) in Cameroon is highly influenced by the adequacy of formal and informal processes, powerful domestic actors, particularly amongst government, community groups or civil society as well as donor organisations. Such influences have posed some challenges to the institutional design process of CBFM. The implementation process of law 94/01 takes precedence over customary tenure, which justifies the conflict between natives and non-natives farmers in BBCF, and why a user group approach in management is adopted at the operational level for the farmers.

Furthermore, the implementation process of law 94/01 suggests risks of recentralizing the current decentralized model of forest governance. There has been consistent marginalization of the voices of local farmer groups and other users (both indigenes and non- indigenes, especially women and youths), while powerful actors, particularly the government, the Limbe III Municipality, and donor organisations prevail. Several government and council decisions and directives towards curtailing community rights over forest resources also provide evidence for this.

In addition, the formal and informal rules do not exist in isolation, but frequently overlap and influence each other in their operation. The thesis suggest the need for the legislative body and administrators to provide the right kind of network, social security, norms needed by registered farmers, and then improve the interplay management process at the operational level. This will improve relationships and outcomes. To say that the interaction is very supportive of Community Based Forest Management practice, is simplistic and misses the point. The participatory forest management system in Bimbia Bonadikombo could be described as a “*Contractual Partnership*” between the state and the village communities. So in communities like Bimbia Bonadikombo, farmers prefer to deal with institutions that have existed and are successful in supporting community forest initiatives and control over land by local communities as part of a trade off in their interactions.

A policy implication of this study is how the inhabitants of Bimbia Bonadikombo (mostly farmers and fishermen) take the challenge of institutional design for agro-forestry in the future? The study suggest that any institutional design should appreciate the history and culture of the indigenous bakweri (Isubu) village communities, the external or indirect impact that the slave trade institution may have had on a wide range of behaviours and outcomes, then redesign rules and norms that improve governance of agro-forestry development in Cameroon, especially interactions of land policy and tenure reforms.

The study also suggests the need to review the adequacy of formal and informal rules in order to prevent ambiguities in terms of ownership of forest resources and land.

References.

- Agrawal, A. (2005). *Environmentality: technologies government and the making of subjects*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Alan Bryman, (2008). *Social Research Methods*, 3rd edition: Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Anne, M. (2007). The poverty of forestry policy: double standards on an uneven playing field. *Sustain Science* (2007) 2:189-204.
- Arnold, K. (1991) *Environmental Legislation in Cameroon. Land forestry and wildlife, Report Submitted to Canadian Volunteers Assistance top Cameroon, London: Living Earth*.
- Amungwa, 2009. *Agrarian Crisis and the Management of Rural Inter-ethnic Conflicts. Some Cases from the North-west Region of Cameroon*. University of Buea, pp. 79-99.
- Bimbia Bonadikombo Natural Resource Management Council Bi-annual Report on Project Implementation, January 2005- June 2005.
- BBNRM, (2007). *Bimbia Bonadikombo Natural Resource Management Council Annual Report on Project Implementation*. Limbe.
- Bimbia Bonadikombo Natural Resource Management Council *Management Plan* (BBNRMCMP), 2001.
- BLCC (Bakweri Land Claims Committee), 2006. *Africa Human Rights Commission rules on Bakweri Vs Cameroon Land Case, Buea*. Bakweri land claims committee online
- Chavance, B., (2008), *Institutional economics*, London, London, Routledge (forthcoming).
- Cleuren, H. (2001). *Paving the Road for Forest Destruction. Key Actors and Driving Forces of Tropical Deforestation in Brazil, Ecuador and Cameroon*. University of Leiden, Center of Environmental Sciences.
- Decree No. 95/ 531/PM of 23 August, 1995, *Laying down the Procedure for implementing the Forestry Law (here in after referred to as the "Decree of Application")*, s. 3 (11)
- Djeumo A., (2001). *The Development of Community Forests in Cameroon: Origins, Current Situations and Constraints*, Rural Development Forestry Network Paper 25b, UK: ODI
- Egbe S. E. (1997). *Forest Tenure and Access to Forest Resources in Cameroon: An Overview*, IIED Forest participation Series No. 6, pp.1-25.
- Egbe, S.E. (2001). *The Concept of Community Forestry under Cameroonian Law*. Journal of African Law, Vol. 45, No. 1, pp.25-50, Cambridge University Press, London.
- Available at URL: [http:// www.jstor.org/stable/3558967](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3558967) (2013-04-19).
- Etoungou, P. 2003. Decentralization viewed from inside: The implementation of community forest in East Cameroon. Washington: WRI Working Paper no. 12es.
- Ekoko F., (2000). Balancing Politics, Economics and Conservation: The case of Cameroon Forestry Law Reforms, *Development and Change* 31(1):131-154.
- FAO, 2003, a. Forestry Outlook Study for Africa. Sub-regional Report Central Africa.
- FAO, (2003). State of the world's forest.
- FAO (2007), Good Governance in Land Tenure and Administration: FAO Land Tenure studies 9.
- Gaventa, J. (2004, p.8.), *Developing Participation, Challenges for Policy and Practice in Approaches to Poverty Reduction and Democratization*.
- Joseph Mewondo Mengang, (1982). *Evolution of Natural Resource Policy in Cameroon*. Yale University (environment.research.yale.edu/102 Mengang). <http://www.yale.edu/sangha/PDF-Files/ENGLISH>.
- Kaimowitz D. 2003. Forest Law enforcement and rural livelihood. *International Forestry Review* 5(3), 199.
- Legal Compliance in the forestry sector*. Case study: Cameroon. Final Report 07-01-2005.
- MINEF (Ministry of Environment and Forest), 1998. *Manual for the Attribution of Community Forest*. Yaoundé: MINEF.
- MINEF, Cameroon Ministry of the Environment and Forestry, 2004. www.minef.cm.
- Minang, P. 2000. Base line Survey Report for the South West Province, Cameroon Community Forestry Support Project. Living Earth Cameroon, Buea.
- Monono, M. (2001) *Dancers of the Doomed Forest*. Paper Presented at the University College London (UCL) Institute of Archaeology Public Lecture Series.
- North, D. (1990). *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge University Press.

- North, D.(2008).*The Foundations of New Institutional Economics*. www.cipe.org.
- Nuesiri, E.O. (2007). *Political Ecology of Forest Governance in Cameroon*. (Unpublished Report). Oxford UK: Oxford University Center for Environment (OUCE).
- Nuesiri, E.O.,(2014) Monetary and non-monetary benefits from Bimbia-bonadikombo community forest, Cameroon: policy implications relevant for carbon emissions reduction programmes, Community Development Journal, Oxford University Press, England.
- Ostrom, E. (1986). "An Agenda for the study of Institutions" Public Choice 48:3-35.
- Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Ostrom, E. (2007): *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*, 20th Printing (First published 1990), Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Oyono.P.R.(2009a). *New niches of community rights to forest in Cameroon: Tenure reform, decentralization category or something else? International Journal of Social Forestry* 2(1): 1-23.
- Pacheco, P.; Barry, D.; Cronkleton, P.; & Larson, A.(2008a). *The role of informal institutions in the use of forest resources in Latin America*. Jakarta, CIFOR. Forest and Governance Programme, No 15/2008.
- Pacheco, P. et al. (2008b, p. 5). *The role of informal institutions in the use of forest resources in Latin America*. Http: //www.cifor.cgiar.org. (2013-02-15).
- Pascal, M. A. O. (2013). *Chieftaincy, Development and Democratization: A Case Study of the Bayang and Ejagham Ethnicities of Southwest Cameroon* (Doctoral dissertation, Central European University).
- Pejovich (1999), The Effects of the Interaction of Formal and Informal institutions on Social Stability and Economic Development.
- RCDC, (2002). *The Viable Resource Management Model for Participatory Bio-diversity Conservation in the Bimbia- Bonadikombo Area, Limbe*.
- Republic of Cameroon, (1994). *Law No. 94/01 of 20th January 1994. To lay down forestry, wildlife and fisheries regulations*. Official Journal of Cameroon. January 1994.
- Saskem, D. F. (2003). Institutional Perspective of Forest Management. The case of Kilumn Ijim Forest, North West Province, Cameroon, M. Phil Thesis. University of Oslo.
- Sieböck, G. (2002). *A Political, Legal and Economic Framework for Sustainable Forest Management in Cameroon. Concerted Initiatives to Save the Rainforests*. MSc. Thesis, Lund University.
- Silva, E. et al. (2002). Making the Law of the Jungle: the reform of forest legislation in Bolivia, Cameroon, Costa Rica, and Indonesia. *Global Environmental Politics* 2:63-97.
- Simple Management Plan for Bimbia Bonadikombo Community Forest for the period 2005-2012.
- UNDP . 1997a. Democratic Governance (Online). Available by UNDP Management and Governance Network [http://magnet.undp.org/docs/TTF-democratic Governance.pdf](http://magnet.undp.org/docs/TTF-democratic%20Governance.pdf) (Verified June 24, 2002).
- UNDP. 1997b. Defining Core Characteristics of Good Governance. United nations Development Programme, management Development and Governance Division. New York.
- Van den Berg.J.(2001). Promotion, Recognition and Report of Customary Claims in Forest Resources In :Foahom, B; Jonkers. W.B. J;Nkwi, P.N.; Schmidt, P.; Wageningen. Pp 221-235.

Internet

www.ecologyandsociety.org /vol 12/ iss1/arts.
www.cipe.org.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Semi- structured questions (Interview guide used in both Interviews, and Focus Group Discussions for both registered and non-registered farmers (Natives and non-natives)

Awareness, attitude and perception. Of the farmers towards the forestry legislation, logging within the community forest, and protected area.

Are you aware about the existence of the new forest legislation? Yes.....No.....

If yes, how were you informed?

1) Village meeting	2) council (BBNPMC) officials
3) MINFOF officials	4) Others.

If yes, how do you perceive it?

1) Very good	2) Good	3) Bad	4) Very bad.
-----------------	------------	-----------	--------------

If bad or very bad, why is it so?

Corruption	Restricted user rights	Limited access to forest resources	Unclear boundaries?	Not involved in the design?	Takes precedence over customary laws?	Others
------------	------------------------	------------------------------------	---------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------------------	--------

Are you aware about the existence of a protected area around the community forest? Yes

...No.....

If yes, how do you perceive it?

1) Very Good	2) Good	3) Bad	4) Very Bad
--------------	---------	--------	-------------

If bad why is it so?

It limits access to resources.	2) Restricted user rights within the core	3) Do not benefit from conservation	4) Others (specify).
--------------------------------	---	-------------------------------------	----------------------

Are you aware about any local development projects carried out by the council (BBNPMC) in your community? Yes....No.....

If yes, how do you perceive it?

Very good	Good	Bad	Very Bad?
-----------	------	-----	-----------

Why is it good or bad?

We are not involved	No benefit	No cooperation	No education /sensitization about the project.	Others (specify).
---------------------	------------	----------------	--	-------------------

Do you get any benefit from the forest as a result of the forestry legislation?

Yes.....No.....If yes what are the these benefits? if more than one, then rank them.

employment	Income from state	User rights	Revenue from forest.	Access to forest resources	Others (Specify).
------------	-------------------	-------------	----------------------	----------------------------	-------------------

How do you perceive the forest legislation in terms of benefit sharing of forest resources?

Very good	Good	Bad	Very bad	Depends on implementation.
-----------	------	-----	----------	----------------------------

If bad, why is it so?

Corruption	Embezzlement	Tribalism	Others
------------	--------------	-----------	--------

Do you get benefits from the protected area around your community? Yes....No....If yes, what are the benefits?

Employment	Recreation	Income from tourist	Conservation	Access to resources	Rural development	Others
------------	------------	---------------------	--------------	---------------------	-------------------	--------

How do you perceive benefit received from the protected area?

Very good	Good	Bad	Very bad
-----------	------	-----	----------

If bad, why is it so?

Interview guide with forest manager and forest extension workers.

- 7.1.1.1 What duties do you carry out in this community area? And for how long have you worked in this area?
- 7.1.1.2 In the area, how was the management of the community forest before the implementation of law 94/01.
- 7.1.1.3 Did you know anything about the law before it was implemented?
- 7.1.1.4 How does the law interact with your functions?
- 7.1.1.5 What are your general thoughts about the implementation process of the law?
- 7.1.1.6 Are there strengths or weaknesses with regards to the implementation process?
- 7.1.1.7 Do you perceive the implementation process at the operational level very sustainable or reliable?
- 7.1.1.8 What have you learnt about the implementation process in the Bimbila Bonadikombo community forest?

Assessment of outcome of the management process at the operational level.

PARTICIPATION

- 1) Are farmers involved in the use of community forest resources? If yes, what category of farmers? Natives, non-natives, registered or non-registered farmers?
- 2) What is the level of involvement of farmers in farm allocation process?
- 3) Are farmers involved in the appointment of group leadership?
- 4) Are farmers represented in meeting to empower forest manager?
- 5) What is the level of collaboration and coordination with municipality, local government authorities and Non-governmental Organisations?
- 6) How often do the customary tenure institutions interact with farmers?

EQUITY

- 1) Does the customary tenure give equal opportunities to natives and non-natives, or registered farmers and non-registered farmers of the council (BBNPMC) within the village communities?
- 2) Is land equally distributed amongst farmers within their unions?
- 3) Are contending parties in conflict given equal opportunities to provide evidence and prove their case?
- 4) Are farmers given equal opportunities to express their views on decision-making on the use of community resources?

ACCOUNTABILITY.

- 1) Is there evidence of the presence of mechanisms for accountability?
- 2) Are the mechanisms for questioning and explaining adopted by the farmers?
- 3) Are financial records open for external audit?

COMPETENCE

- 1) Are the procedures for farm allocation, monitoring and conflict resolution clear and simple?
- 2) Does the tenure practice protect land rights of farmer groups?
- 3) Are there appeal mechanisms for conflict resolution?
- 4) Are competent people used in farm allocation process?
- 5) Are land conflicts solved on time? How responsive is the institutions to the needs of village communities?
- 6) Are procedures for registration of farmers groups clear?