

Regulating Timber Commodity Chains: Timber Commodity Chains Linking Cameroon and Europe

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Abstract

This article provides an overview of commodity chain analysis and access benefits, highlighting the role of power. The research draws upon commodity chain analysis and access mapping to explore the mechanisms of access and timber production processes within *ventes de coupe* and community forests, both of which can be located only in the non-permanent forest zones of Cameroon. Commodity chain studies can assist with evaluations of the distributional equity effects of natural resource policies and broader economic governance policies and examine factors that undermine policy implementation and corporate accountability. The article presents data on the functioning of these logging rights, analyses problems actors have accessing the forest, timber and markets, and discusses how current policies and regulations contribute to this situation. The article also examines conflict and corruption in these chains and determines a regulatory conflict between *ventes de coupe* and community forests have contributed to incidences of corruption and illegality.

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Introduction

While most timber and wood products sold into the international market from Cameroon are derived from large scale industrial concessions, or *unités forestières d'aménagement*, wood from *ventes de coupe* and community forests also makes its way into international timber commodity chains. *Ventes de coupe* are small industrial concessions of up to 2,500 hectares while community forests are areas of up to 5,000 hectares intended explicitly to involve rural populations in the management of their forests (Brown and Schreckenbergh 2001). It would seem that actors involved in wood flowing from these areas should have access to benefits associated with use of these forest areas. The research presented in this article asks three key questions related to this hypothesis. Do existing forestry laws and regulations actually provide access routes for national companies and local villages to participate effectively and gain access to forests, timber and benefits? How do laws and regulations interact with political and economic factors, to restrict or enable access to international timber commodity chains? What type of mechanisms do actors use to manipulate the rules in order to obtain access to timber and its benefits?

In order to answer these questions, the research draws upon commodity chain analysis and access mapping to explore the mechanisms of access and timber production processes within *ventes de coupe* and community forests, both of which can be located only in the non-permanent forest zones of Cameroon. Commodity chain studies can assist with evaluations of the distributional equity effects of natural resource policies and broader economic governance policies and examine factors that undermine policy implementation and corporate accountability (Ribot 2005). Commodity chain studies thus help us locate outcomes within the local, national and global context. This analysis is important, especially within the context of an international focus on sustainability and governance of tropical timber commodity chains, with various actors demanding changes to the regulatory frameworks in Europe and producer. To contribute to this dialogue, this article attempts to address the above three research questions by answering the following operational questions: How are *ventes de coupe* and community forests allocated? How do existing policies and regulations shape the production of timber and access to resources/benefits? What types of mechanisms do actors use to gain or maintain access outside of the law?

The first section provides an overview of commodity chain analysis and access benefits, highlighting the role of power. It also describes in more detail the analysis carried out for this research. The second section describes two case studies in Cameroon: the allocation, timber production processes, and the types of costs associated with *ventes de coupe* in the Nguti and Tombel area in Southwest Province and with community forests in the Lomié-Messok region in East Province. The second section discusses problems actors have accessing the forest, timber and markets, and analyses how current policies and regulations contribute to this situation. The final section examines conflict and corruption that have occurred, analysing the types of mechanisms actors use to control access to the forest and how a regulatory conflict between *ventes de coupe* and community forests have contributed to incidences of corruption and illegality.

Methods: Commodity Chains and Access Mapping

A large body of literature in geography and other social sciences explores the complex and varied connections between goods, people, and places, between sites of production and sites of consumption. This literature is actually a diverse set of literatures that take different perspectives on production and consumption processes within commodity chains, and includes studies on commodity chains, value chains, systems of provisions and commodity networks. Useful reviews are available that compare various elements of the literature (for example, see Hughes and Reimer 2004; Leslie and Reimer 1999; Raikes, Jensen, and Ponte 2000). This section briefly reviews the literature on commodity chains, highlighting issues of access and power, the need to include a range of actors in commodity chain studies, and types of mechanisms used by these actors to gain and control access. The objective is to set out a framework for analysing how forestry policies affect access to resources and benefits within timber commodity chains in Cameroon and elsewhere.

In general commodity chains are ‘series of interlinked exchanges through which a commodity and its constituents pass from extraction or harvesting through production to end use’ (Ribot 1998: 307-308). Most commodity chains consist of sets of inter-organisational networks around one commodity, linking households, states and companies, which are ‘situationally specific, socially constructed, and locally integrated, underscoring the social embeddedness of economic organization’ (Gereffi, Korzeniewicz, and Korzeniewicz 1994: 2). Tracing commodity chains or networks is defined as a means of examining ‘the ongoing division and integration of labor processes and ... the constant development and transformation of the world-economy’s production system’ (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1994: 17). Ribot (1998) identifies commodity chain analysis as a tool for analysing how and for whom market conduits operate and how patterns of benefit distribution might be changed.

Central concerns throughout the range of literatures on commodity chains are power and differentiation in access to resources and benefits. Access mapping involves evaluating the distribution of benefits along the chain and tracing the mechanisms used to maintain access to those benefits. Global commodity chain and value chain studies are concerned with the embedded nature of power relations in the chain (Kaplinsky and Morris 2001: 8), focusing on the issue of ‘who controls global trade and industry’ (Gibbon 2001: 346). Value chain studies can provide useful insights into determinants of global income distribution and identification of effective policy levers to ameliorate trends towards unequalisation (Kaplinsky and Morris 2001). These studies aim to examine power relations in global manufacturing industries and ‘the opportunities and constraints presented by the forms of global integration of production and trade in specific commodities’ (Gibbon 2001: 345).

It is important, however, not to use the approach ‘merely to trace the physical movement of a commodity, with no acknowledgement of the social relations of production and exchange and their crucial bearing on the commodity chain’ (Rammohan and Sundaresan

2003: 905). The focus should not be on the means of production at the expense of individual nodes in the chain (Leslie and Reimer 1999). The creation of the value of the commodity itself and the multiple power relationships that operate within and about the commodity chain to ensure the flow of value are also important considerations (Le Heron and Hayward 2002). Territoriality of a chain is an important factor in that various activities, nodes, and flows within a chain are geographically situated and have implications for actors at different locations (Gereffi 1994). The specific location of a social group, country, or zone in a commodity chain 'influences its relative share of value' (Rammohan and Sundaesan 2003: 903). It is thus important to examine the full range of actors involved in the chain.

In general, however, the actors considered in commodity studies answer depends on the research questions and not all studies consider a full range of actors. Global commodity chain studies often overlook non-producer agents as active participants in commodity production in creating consumer demand, focusing on firms to the detriment of other actors, such as the state (Smith *et al.* 2002). Some leading proponents of this approach see governments as having limited power to 'get the institutions right' and focus instead on 'how firms can use their participation in global commodity chains to pursue development goals' (Bair and Gereffi 2001: 1900). Others argue, however, that if one goes beyond the global level of analysis the state becomes a more significant agent of governance, as it regulates specific sites along the chain and sets other policies impinging upon the structuring of commodity chains and the overall political economic context (Le Heron and Hayward 2002; Smith *et al.* 2002). Other levels and actors are also important as trade agreements have extended the powers of transnational companies and production networks, and constrained national powers. Unfortunately, the literature does not always adequately deal with regulation at national and international levels (Raikes, Jensen, and Ponte 2000).

Some studies, combining the concept of commodity networks and an actor-network approach, recognise that relations between producers and retailers and consumers 'are the product of complex flows between a whole host of interconnected actors that have become enrolled in the network' (Hughes 2000-179). The inclusion of other actors therefore 'expands the network of governance relationships as it introduces agents that can affect commodity value but which themselves are motivated by non commercial objectives' (Le Heron and Hayward 2002: 2234). The linear nature of the production chain is embedded, therefore, within the related concept of networks, which integrates both vertical and horizontal dimensions of commodity movement (Barrett, Browne, and Ilbery 2004). Thus it is important to trace 'changing lines of power, precisely because it never remains fixed in one site' but that this should not privilege one site as locus of reality as 'power relations are differentially established across spaces of the chain' (Leslie and Reimer 1999: 403). Commodity chains are embedded in much wider networks of social actors and practices than the production of the commodity itself (Le Billon 1999). This concept of social embeddedness emphasises the role and construction of power in the commodification process (Rammohan and Sundaesan 2003).

So what mechanisms do actors use to capture available benefits? The literature on access mapping helps to answer this question. Access mapping encompasses a very broad understanding of the range of mechanisms and social relations involved in the creation of access to resources and to value generated along the chain. In 'A Theory of Access', Ribot and Peluso (2003) define access as 'the *ability* to derive benefits from things' and as 'a bundle of powers' rather than as a bundle of rights. This definition emphasises a wider range of social relationships that constrain or enable benefits from resource use and involves 'understanding the multiplicity of ways people derive benefits from resources, including, but not limited to property relations' (Ribot and Peluso 2003: 154). Analysing access provides insights into why some people benefit from resources even though they do not have the right to them. Ability is akin to power, which they define, after Weber and Lukes, as 'the capacity of some actors to affect the practices and ideas of others' (Ribot and Peluso 2003).

Actors use a wide range of mechanisms – structural and political economic – to control and maintain access to resources and different people and institutions hold and draw on bundles of powers located and constituted within 'webs of power' (Ribot and Peluso 2003: 154). As with the perspective of commodity chains, actors occupy different positions 'in relation to resources at various historical moments and geographical scales. The strands thus shift and change over time, changing the nature of power and forms of access to resources' (Ribot and Peluso 2003: 154). Access is all the possible means by which someone can capture benefits. Access analysis requires 'attention to property as well as illicit actions, relations of production, entitlement relations, and the histories of all of these' (Ribot and Peluso 2003: 157). Some people control resource access while others maintain their access *through* those who have control. Ribot and Peluso make a distinction made between access control and access maintenance. They define 'access control' as the ability to mediate others' access while 'access maintenance' requires expending resources or powers to keep a particular type of resource access open. They are complementary and both are 'constitutive of relations among actors in relation to resource appropriation, management, or use' (Ribot and Peluso 2003: 159). Access analysis is thus 'the process of identifying and mapping the mechanisms by which access is gained, maintained, and controlled' (Ribot and Peluso 2003: 160).

This analysis involves three steps: identifying and mapping flow of benefits of interest, identifying mechanisms different actors use to gain, control and maintain benefit flow and distribution, and analysis of power relations underlying those mechanisms. Access mechanisms include both rights-based access and structural and relational access mechanisms. The latter include technology, capital, markets, labour, knowledge, authority, identities and social relations (Ribot and Peluso 2003). In work on charcoal commodity chains in Senegal, Ribot found that access to the charcoal resource and its benefits was only partially based on property rights and that access depended upon a range of mechanisms, including direct control over forest access, as well as access to markets, labour opportunities, capital, and state agents and officials (Ribot 1998).

Discursive and ideological manipulations can also profoundly shape patterns of benefit distribution. Le Billon (1999; 2000) examined timber commodity chains in Cambodia on

a discursive level, examining not only the actors in the chain but also the meanings constructed through forestry discourse as influenced by external agents, including donors and environmental groups. In his deconstruction of the ideal model of forest management implicit in the recommendations of donor agencies, he determined that this model actually resulted in exclusionary forms of forest management. While the ideal model was perhaps appropriate in democratic, market-economy states, it did not make sense in Cambodia, where the shift from ‘anarchy’ to ‘order’ did not benefit the local people or the forests (Le Billon 2000).

Examining the broader network of relationships and mechanisms of access is especially important in the context of consumer and NGO driven campaigns to address social justice and environmental issues within the commodity or supply chains. A growing subset of commodity chain literature examines the impacts of certification, fair trade and standards on the functioning of chains (Crewe 2004; Hughes 2004). This is especially important given there are ethical connections between actors at different locations in the chain (Whatmore 1997) and given there ‘is a connection to be drawn between this tight retailer control over global commodity networks and the emergence of particular consumer campaigns for ethical trade’ (Hughes 2001: 391). For example, a number of studies focus specifically on the production and consumption of forest products and impacts of codes and certification processes. In a study on the furniture industry, Kaplinsky, Morris and Readman (2002: 1165) note how standards are becoming increasingly important for the forest industry, including global furniture buyers and that one of the frontiers in global buying is the ‘growing role required of producers to conform to an increasing variety of codes and standards’. Thus buyers, who tend to be located in major importing countries, play a pivotal role in connecting producers and consumers. Morris and Dunne (2004) identified important changes in the operations of specific firms in South Africa in response to market demands for sustainable wood through processes such as Forest Stewardship Council certification.

Building upon these types of studies, this research is part of a larger doctoral study that focused on examining the regulation of timber commodity chains in Cameroon. The research for my doctoral dissertation combines a commodity chain approach with political ecology concerns. Rather than focusing, however, on mapping the profits, I have focused on analysis of policy regulations through extensive ethnographic fieldwork that focused on the mapping of access through analysis of issued access rights, illegality within the chain, and how the regulatory structures structured access to forests, timber and markets. This paper draws from fieldwork conducted in Cameroon during 2003 and 2004 where I conducted extensive interviews and direct observation in various locations. I conducted well over 200 interviews and discussions with actors in the chain, as well as site visits to logging concessions, mills, checkpoints, and the port in Douala. As noted, this paper focuses on two case studies, one in the Southwest Province and the other in the Lomié region in East Province (see Map 1). The first case focuses on an area that has had a number of *ventes de coupe*; the second case study has had only a few *ventes de coupe* but the longest history of community forest development in the country. I restrict my discussion in this paper to allocation and timber production processes. Throughout the article, the descriptions and analysis draw from field notes and interviews, unless

otherwise stated, as well as existing forest sectoral studies and previously published work. The next section describes the two cases.

Case Description and History

Cameroon is an importer producer and exporter of tropical hardwood and timber flowing from Cameroon to Europe represents a high value, international commodity. This chain is regulated at a number of levels and there is currently concern about illegality of wood entering the international market. The timber commodity chains leaving Cameroon are heavily reliant on European market conditions and are thus open to impacts from changing regulations and market demands in Europe. As I review in more detail elsewhere, various regulatory and consumer/buyer demands in Europe are undergoing changes that have the potential to impact timber commodity chains in countries like Cameroon (Smith 2006, In prep). In fact, the current regulatory framework in Cameroon is the outcome of extensive input from international organisations such the World Bank (Burnham 2000; Ekoko 2000). Within Cameroon, timber exploitation takes place throughout the forest zone. Located at almost opposite ends of the country, the contexts in Southwest Province and the Lomié region are quite different. The rest of this section describes briefly the two areas, the allocation of logging rights, production processes involved in extracting timber and the range of actors involved.

Ventes de Coupe in Southwest Province

The Southwest is densely populated and is quite diverse, with agriculture playing a significant role in the economy. The region is fairly mountainous and the forests are located within the Guinean forests, which are known to have high species richness and high endemism in many taxa (Diangha 2001; Oates and Bergle 2001). The region includes a number of important conservation areas, including Banyang-Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary and the proposed Bakossi National Park (see Map 2). Commercial timber exploitation has been occurring in the Southwest since at least the 1940s, with logging increasing in the late 1950s (Government of the Southern Cameroons 1960; Sharpe 2005). Companies were operating in Tombel in the 1940s and in Southern Bakossi in the 1950s through 1960s (Wild *et al.* 2004) and in the Nguti area since the 1960s (Diangha 2001). There is currently one active *unité forestière d'aménagement* and another that is not yet attributed. There is also a community forest is located in Ndisse-Ekep (Smith 2005). Most logging in recent years, however, has taken place in a number of *ventes de coupe*, attributed during the course of the past ten years (see Table 1). Wood from these sources is sometimes processed at sawmills in Kumba and Nguti, or transported to processing mills in Douala or exported in log form.

In Cameroon, industrial logging rights are issued through a public tendering process (GFWC 2000, 2001). While a similar process applies to both *ventes de coupe* and the large *unités forestières d'aménagement*, the former process is slightly more complex. During December 2002, MINEF issued an order that fixed the procedures for a *droit de pré-emption* or pre-emption right to enable communities to indicate their desire to pursue a community forest rather than it being targeted for a *vente de coupe*.¹ This regulation requires that the government inform communities of its intention to allocate a

¹ *Droit de pré-emption, Arrêté 518/MINEF/CAB du 21 Décembre 2002.*

logging right in their area and provide the communities with the opportunity to submit a letter indicating their desire to pursue a community forest (Djeumo 2001). The community then has two years in which to proceed with the application process for the community forest. If they do not, the government can offer the forest right to logging companies as part of a *ventes de coupe* bidding process.

Once an area is made available for a *vente de coupe*, the government issues an *Appel d'Offre*, which lists available rights, the criteria for decision-making including both financial and technical factors and a deadline for submission of bids. Competence and technical ability counted for 30% and financial aspects counted for 70% during the September 2003 *ventes de coupe* allocation. Companies then have forty-five days to submit sealed bids, which include a proposed royalty per hectare in excess of the basic 2,500 FCFA/hectare set by the Ministry of Finance.² For the most recent allocation of September 2003, companies had to pay 150,000 FCFA as an application fee. Any bidder that does not possess its own mill is required to present a contract with an industrial partner who has one. The bidder must commit to sending at least 75% of the timber from a *vente de coupe* to the mill, but in doing so, must not supply more than 75% of the mill's annual capacity.

A Ministerial Commission reviews the bids for concessions and determines the winner. This commission consists of the Director of Forests from MINEF and a number of representatives from other government departments, as well as from companies. The approach is supposed to help ensure that the rights to logging concessions are attributed in a fair and straightforward manner, without political interference (GFWC 2001). Once the Commission reaches its decision, it informs the companies of the result of the process. MINEF issues an *arrêté* for each *vente de coupe* that it awards and each *arrêté* specifies the *vente de coupe* number (for example, 11-06-17), the area and department location, the description of the area, and the annual royalty payment (which equals the bid amount multiplied by surface area) by level of government. The document also specifies there will be a felling tax and a surtax on logs intended for export. Companies are required to pay the *redevances forestières annuelles* (or royalty fees) within a given period; if they do not pay, the government gives the *vente de coupe* to the second highest bidder. The company must also submit a road-building plan. The *arrêté* also notes that exploitation cannot commence until a company has obtained a *certificate de vente de coupe*. The company can only obtain this certificate after paying the *redevances forestière annuelle*, registering a *cahier de charges*, completing an inventory, and producing a certificate from the appropriate Provincial Delegate that attests to the demarcation of the boundary of the *vente de coupe*. The certificate specifies the termination date of the right, the total surface area and the species that can be harvested, including number of stems and total volume per species. A company must also have an *attestation de mesure de superficie*, which specifies the location and boundary of the cutting area.

Once a company has the documents verifying its right to log in a *vente de coupe*, the company must submit notice of their intent to begin operations. They are then able to

² *Avis au Public No 1133 MINEF/SG/DF/SDIAF/SI, 15 septembre 2003.*

begin logging, which can happen very quickly. For example, TRC was logging in the forest south of Nguti during February 2004, within a few weeks of obtaining their *vente de coupe* documents. There is no requirement to develop a management plan for logging in *ventes de coupe*. Most other regulations governing logging operations are the same as for *unités forestière d'aménagement*, including minimum felling diameters for each species and recording of felled timber on DF-10 sheets (see Smith 2006).

Timber production in these *ventes de coupe* operates on the same principles as in the *unité forestière d'aménagement*. Companies build roads and logging ponds, fell trees with chainsaws, and skid logs to the logging ponds using large engines. They transport logs to the port for export or to mills on *grumiers* (logging trucks) for processing and export as sawnwood or further processed wood products. As *ventes de coupe* are short-term rights, initially allocated for one year, and renewable for up to three years, the companies tend to log timber within these areas quickly. For example, TRC wanted to complete logging in *vente de coupe* 11-06-17 by the end of 2004.

Companies have a number of costs related to logging in *ventes de coupe*. As noted, companies pay *redevances forestière annuelle* based on their bid and area. These fees go directly to the government, of which 40% should be paid to the municipal council and 10% to the directly affected communities.³ In addition, they pay 1,000 FCFA/m³ for wood directly to the community. This payment is based upon a *lettre circulaire* developed during 1999 for one *vente de coupe*, but has become an accepted part of the payments required by villages affected by a *vente de coupe* (Fomété 2001). For example, seven villages were receiving money from TRC for logging in *vente de coupe* 11-07-17 during 2004. In general, the cost of production for wood in an industrial site ranges from 27,000 to 35,000 FCFA/m³ for logs, to 160,000 FCFA/m³ for producing sawnwood. Individual items of equipment can be prohibitively expensive, such as tractors and caterpillars (the most expensive items can cost upwards of 50 million FCFA).⁴ Meanwhile, prices on the market vary by species and by the nature of the product, with sawnwood and further processed wood products selling for much higher values than logs (Smith 2006).

Lomié-Messok and Community Forests

Across the country in Lomié Division and Messok sub-division, the forests are part of the humid, evergreen Cameroon-Congolese forest (Letouzey 1985). The Lomié division includes a portion of the Dja Reserve, a 5,260 square kilometres Biosphere Reserve inscribed on the World Heritage Site list (Sayer, Harcourt, and Collins 1992). The region has extensive biodiversity and has fourteen primate species, elephants, leopards, and pangolins. Additionally, the region is now part of a tri-national conservation program, TRIDOM, which includes the Dja Reserve and Boumba Bek-Nki Proposed National Park (CARPE 2005). There are two main ethnic groups: the Nzime and the Baka pygmies (Graziani and Burnham 2005). Lomié also has a number of immigrants to the area.

³ There are significant problems with the distribution and spending of the *Redevances Forestières Annuelles* in Cameroon (Human Technology Resources 2005; Nzoyem, Sambo, and Majerowicz 2003).

⁴ These figures are derived from a combination of field notes, interviews, and a few forest sector studies such as Cheteau (2002).

Poverty was made worse in this area by the economic crisis (Oyono 1998) and this may be negatively impacting on the biodiversity (Mertens and Lambin 2000; Oyono 1998).

This region is one of the last areas of Cameroon to be logged (Graziani and Burnham 2005). The first logging licenses for the area were granted in the 1970s, with logging accelerating during the 1980s (GFWC 2000). Lomié and Messok contain a number of *unités forestières d'aménagement* (see Table 2 and Map 3). The *Interactive Forestry Atlas of Cameroon* (GFWC 2005) shows only one expired *vente de coupe*. One sawmill is located in Lomié; it has been operated by *Ingeniére Forestière* since late 2003. Small-scale sawmills, or portable sawmills, have operated at various times. Most wood from the area is transported to sawmills to the north and northeast, as well as to Yaoundé, Douala, and Europe. For example, wood from the Pallisco and Assene Nkou *unités forestières d'aménagement* is transported to the Pallisco sawmills in Mindourou and Messamena. Wood from the Kieffer *unité forestière d'aménagement* goes to the J.P. Prennant sawmill in Kagnol, part of the Vicwood-Thany group.

In contrast to *ventes de coupe*, community forests are intended primarily for the benefit of local villages and are specifically aimed at involving locals in forest management (Auzel *et al.* 2001; Burnham 2000). Most communities in the Lomié-Messok region have opted for community forests rather than *ventes de coupe*. Lomié was a pilot area and the subject of an intensive education and capacity-building program after the enactment of the law.⁵ A number of the first community forests were formed here and the area still boasts a significant number relative to other areas of the country. Five forests were active in Lomié during 2003-2004, with a further nine authorised in Ngoila division to the south of Lomié during 2004 and more projects underway.

In order to exploit timber and other forest products from a community forest, members of a community must first apply to the Ministry of Environment and Forests for the right to manage and use a given area of forest. The government developed a Manual of Procedures with support from the Community Forestry Development Project, funded by the UK Department for International Development (Fomété and Vermatt 2001). Various agencies implemented projects on the ground to assist communities with the process. There are very well defined stages to follow for the creation of a community forest, each with a number of steps. The first stage involves the development of an application file to reserve the forest and the second stage involves the preparation of a Simple Management Plan, which needs to be approved before a Management Agreement can be signed (Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001). The entire process can take one to two years to complete.

The first stage includes the development and registration of a community group that will be responsible for the community forest. During this first stage, applicants must develop a community forest committee or association⁶ and identify the forest plot they wish to use

⁵ SNV implemented a project in Lomié with the financial support of DFID. Mboké, a village in South Province, received financial and technical assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

⁶ Communities can choose one of three main legal entities: associations, common initiative groups, and co-operatives or economic interest groups (Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001).

and manage, which often involves a trip to the cartography office in Yaoundé. Identification of the forest plot usually involves the technical assistance of a cartographer (Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001). The Manual of Procedures requires that all community members be consulted before a community forest be legally established (Brown, Vabi, and Nkwinkwa 2003). Thus, once a community has all its papers in order, they must have a consultation meeting, which require the attendance of the sub-prefect (or divisional officer) or Prefect, the mayor and the Head of Post, who is responsible for education and technical assistance. After the consultation meeting, the authorities will issue of *proces verbal* which is attached to the application for the community forest. The community submits the application to MINEF and government bureaucrats review and reject or approve it. If approved, the MINEF Minister issues a reservation for the forest and the community receives a letter to that effect.

The next stage involves the development of a *plan simple de gestion*, or simple management plan. This stage includes demarcation of the forest on the ground and collection and analysis of various data, including a forest inventory and a socio-economic survey (Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001). Once the government approves the *plan simple de gestion*, the community association and the government sign a convention or management agreement. This agreement is a ‘contract by means of which the Administrative body in charge of forests entrusts a part of the national forest estate’ to a community to be ‘managed, conserved and used in the interests of the community.’⁷ The first one was actually signed in Lomié on August 10, 2001 (Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001).

Once a community has obtained its forest, it can begin to implement the activities of the *plan simple de gestion*. Various species are exploited in the community forests, although species such as Moabi and Sapelli are in great demand in the Lomié area. Unlike industrial logging operations, production processes in community forests are now required to be labour intensive and non-industrial, for reasons described later. In the Lomié region, community forests are logged using chainsaws and wood is processed by various methods in the forest. For example, during November 2003, a company was logging and transforming Moabi, or *Baillonella toxisperma*, in the Eschiambor-Melen community forest, east of Lomié. A path cut through the dense forest from the road through to a clearing not far from the road. A logger was cutting a recently felled Moabi tree into smaller sections for sawing. Local labourers were clearing away brush, while the logging chief from a Douala-based company, directed the activities. While some men, cleared the area, others set up the Lucas Mill, or portable sawmill, which consists of a steel frame and a saw. Once a company has finished sawing a log into planks, community members - men, women and even children – carry planks out to the road. The company and the community forestry association’s *cubeur* then scale the wood before the company transports it by truck to markets in Cameroon or to the port in Douala for export.

In the nearby village of Djebe, local youth were operating village-owned equipment in order to transform a log into sawn wood. Djebe is one of four villages that co-own and manage the CODEVIR community forest, located on the road from Lomié to Mindourou, created with the technical assistance of SNV and the organisational support of an

⁷ 1995 décret, Article 3 (16).

expatriate elite who lives in Douala. Like Eschiambor, these communities are producing timber *in situ*, but they are using a process that is even more artisanal and labour-intensive than a Lucas Mill. Choosing to work on its own, CODEVIR opted to invest in equipment and training for local youth. CODEVIR purchased a few chainsaws, safety equipment, and a *gruminette* system, a small steel frame which is used with a chainsaw (or two) to turn a log into rough planks.

Communities spend considerable amounts of money obtaining a community forest. One government Head of Post estimated the entire process costs somewhere between 2 and 5 million FCFA. Others estimate that even if the community relies as much as possible on local capacity, the costs range from 1.5 to 2.5 million FCFA to establish a community forest (Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001), and could reach 14 to 29 million FCFA (figures cited in Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001). The costs include preparing an application file (between 181,000 and 533,000 FCFA in 2001) and the development of the *plan simple de gestion*, which can range from 1.1 million to 1.8 million FCFA for a 3,500 hectare community forest with local capacity to 3.5 million FCFA where external consultants conduct the forest inventory (Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001).

Even once a community forest is acquired, the costs of various equipment to log the forest can be prohibitive. These costs range from 800,000 to 1 million FCFA for a chain saw, to 15 to 20 million FCFA for a Lucas Mill. The *gruminette* system purchased by the CODEVIR communities cost 3 to 4 million. In addition, there is a need to train staff including *cubeurs*, or scalers, and loggers if the community decides to proceed as CODEVIR did. The returns vary considerably. In general, prices for wood in the community forests do not go higher than 40,000 FCFA/m³. Four community forests near Lomié, members reported receiving 30,000 to 40,000 FCFA/m³ directly from the logging companies working with them. Prices elsewhere, however, are much lower. The Ndecuda community forest received only 1,000 FCFA/m³, as did a community forest in the South Province. The companies are usually responsible, however, for paying for other costs such as transportation and labour but communities have to obtain the weigh-bills from the Government.

Access to Forests, Timber and Markets: Knowledge and Power

For someone wanting to gain benefits from timber production directly, as a producer, the first step is to gain access to the timber rights. This requires, however, access to capital and technical knowledge, as well as access to officials and decision-making processes, as the next section will discuss. Access to timber and forest resources is restricted by the categories of rights in the 1994 Forestry Law. The zoning plan put the best forest, the most productive forest, into the permanent forest zone while the non-permanent forests are located along the roads (Burnham 2000). *Ventes de coupe* and community forests cannot be located in the permanent forest zone. The non-permanent forests are usually those most affected by past logging and by clearance for settlements and agriculture. In some cases, villages have access to forests that are so timber poor they are hardly worth pursuing in the eyes of some government officials. This imposes certain limits on the

value of the forests from a commercial timber production perspective. Thus, right from the outset, companies vying for *ventes de coupe* and communities can only access the least rich, most disturbed forests, limiting their access not only to timber, but also to benefits associated with it.

The *unités forestières d'aménagement* tend to go to large companies who have substantial resources in terms of capital, equipment and labour force. Both large multinationals, or their subsidiaries (e.g. TRC) and small national companies, however, obtain *ventes de coupe*. The financial demands are not as great for these rights as for the large concessions. Despite this fact, however, all national companies operating in the Southwest in the past decade seem to have worked directly in conjunction with a larger, multinational, as evident in Table 1 (Smith 2005). A determining factor appears to be the high cost of equipment outlined in the last section. Sometimes, the company leases equipment from a multinational to log timber in their *vente de coupe* and then sells the wood directly to that company, who has a mill and can process the wood. For example, Wijma has leased their equipment to CAFECO, who then used this equipment to log timber in its own *vente de coupe*, as well as acting as a sub-contractor and logging Wijma's annual operating area in their concession for them. Other times the multinational company is directly involved in the logging activities. For example, TRC staff were based in a village by *vente de coupe* 11-05-04 during December 2003 and were overseeing logging activities. Thus, for nationals, gaining access can be difficult given the costs, knowledge and networks required to participate fully in the international timber commodity chains.

Despite the difficulties national companies face, however, these can seem insignificant in comparison with the challenges faced by local villages trying to gain and maintain access to forests and timber markets. The last section outlined the steps involved in gaining access to a community forest, which is a long, difficult and expensive process. Because of costs and current regulations, communities have no choice but to work in an artisanal manner. Unfortunately, this affects their production and their potential profits. While a grumnette is relatively inexpensive, compared to a Lucas Mill, it can produce only 0.5 to 1 m³ per day, the wood is of lower quality, and is consequently difficult to sell beyond the local market. While a Lucas Mill can produce export quality sawn wood at a rate of approximately 2 m³ per day or approximately 2,000 m³ per year (Prosper *et al.* 2004), it is expensive and means the community must work with a company. The Lucas Mill has its limits as well and cannot saw extremely hard woods, such as Azobé, which has been an excuse used to justify industrial logging in some community forests (Smith 2006).

Gaining access to a community forest can be difficult due to a lack of knowledge about the community forest concept and the legal process for obtaining one. Many elites in the Southwest expressed ignorance about the concept of community forests and the benefits they could bring. For example, one individual stated he would choose a *vente de coupe* over a community forest as he did not 'know any advantage of a community forest' nor anything about 'how a community forest operates, and what the village will get when they make that community forest.' A chief in another village asked 'How do I apply for something I don't know?' He added that the community requires more information to

make a choice because ‘if we are informed then can we know which of the two might benefit the population, the local population.’ There is often considerable confusion over ownership of the forests and community members sometimes wonder why they need to apply to have access and control over the forests they thought were always theirs. There are significant differences between the communities in the Lomié region and those in the Southwest and South. During interviews, most community elites near Lomié stated that they thought community forests were better for the community. Education about policy options obviously can make a difference.⁸ In the Lomié-Messok area where people have had more education regarding the benefits of community forests, they have tended to choose this option.

Even if a community does get access to knowledge about the processes involved in obtaining and managing a community forest is very long and expensive as noted earlier.⁹ Given these costs, communities have often not had the resources to apply, making it difficult for them to access this right. Exceptions have been the Lomié region and cases like the Mboké forest in the South Province.¹⁰ The existing administrative structures can create further potential categories of exclusion. The costs of Administrators are not covered through the budgets and terms of reference of the Administration and decentralised departments. As a result, authorities often request contributions towards their travel costs (Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001). For example, it can cost approximately 50,000 FCFA in Lomié to have the Sub-Prefect and his ‘entourage’ attend a consultation or approval meeting, essential steps if the process is to be official and since the prefect needs to sign the required documents.¹¹ While this may not be illegal, it increases the difficulty of communities gaining access, especially for communities furthest from administrative centres since costs will escalate with distance (Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001). People in villages are reliant upon MINEF authorities to provide information, education, and authorisation for their forests. They are reliant upon NGOs, development agencies, elites, and companies for financial capital to fund the creation of their forest.

In addition to a regulatory framework that makes access more difficult for villagers, communities often lack the capacity, technology, and knowledge of production and market processes required to produce and to market timber. Organisational capacity and skills are frequently lacking in the communities (Auzel *et al.* 2001) and there are individuals who manipulate the system to gain advantages for themselves. Assuming

⁸ One of the benefits that people see out of the community forests is that everyone has a chance to gain something. As one community forest association vice-president said, ‘But to go carry, there are maybe 500 pieces where each one can find something that they can carry. Therefore, in the community forest, everyone can find their share, everyone can find their work.’

⁹ For example, companies with a provisional contract for a *unité forestière d’aménagement* can begin to build roads, log ponds, and fell timber. Not only can they continue to operate for three years without finalising a management plan, but they have been allowed to do so far much longer since it has taken many more years than that for management plans and permanent contracts to be developed and/or approved.

¹⁰ Mboké had funding from the Canadian International Development Agency while Lomié communities had technical and financial assistance through SNV and the UK Department of International Development (Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001).

¹¹ Other values for these meetings identify potential costs of 27,000 to 57,000 FCFA for an information meeting and 7,000 to 160,00 FCFA for a consultation meeting (Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001).

timber resources are there, communities usually do not have the capacity or resources to cut timber themselves. There are a number of expenses including labour and equipment. As discussed, economic operators usually bring in the equipment with them in order to do the work and then carry it away with them once the work is done. As a result, community forest associations are usually reliant upon companies for the technology and money to exploit the timber for external markets and usually work in conjunction with economic operators, who often fund the application process, fell the trees, transform the log into rough sawn wood, and sell the wood for export (Prosper *et al.* 2004). As of mid 2004, at least three of the four operating community forests near Lomié were working with small-scale companies from Douala, Yaoundé, or elsewhere. These companies come to the region explicitly to log, and bring their own chainsaws and portable sawmills, such as a Lucas Mill. But working with companies leaves communities open to abuse. Companies can treat communities unfairly, leaving without paying their royalty, under-reporting on the amount of timber felled and processed, or not paying labourers. Most of the community forests in Lomié have had these types of problems. Similar experiences have occurred in Southwest Province (Smith 2005).

Where communities do go it alone, they can face long periods of no income as they need to build capacity and large bills to finance equipment and training. The CODEVIR approach requires extensive capital investment and training. The communities took advantage of a program SNV set up, with financing from ECO in the Netherlands, and took a loan to invest in equipment and training for logging in community forests. Even with all of these investments, there is no guaranteed access to markets or benefits. Their costs of production are higher than what they can sell the wood for in the local market and they cannot gain access to the external market, as they do not have the resources.

Once they have the forest and the wood, communities also usually have problems accessing markets. The issue of access to markets relates partly to the capacity of communities, as communities do not have the finances, or usually the personnel to do the work in Douala and elsewhere of finding buyers. The communities are located far from the markets and usually do not have the knowledge of market needs and changing requirements. Communities are thus reliant on economic operators – whether companies wanting to do actual exploitation or just timber buyers – coming to their regions looking for wood. Thus, communities usually do not log without having a partner or a buyer. Some large companies indicated they are willing to consider buying from community forests. It is debatable, however, whether the extra demands of the international-European market on timber sourcing and chain of custody would make this access route harder or easier for local communities.

The issues are complicated by the imbalances in power within communities. Local village elites may use their position of respect and knowledge to gain control of the forest. If they end up as a president of the community forest association, and deal with the logging company, they may negotiate a deal that is not transparent and not necessarily the most beneficial for their community. Local community forest association members can be in the position to – and have – absconded with money that was intended for the entire community or for the members of the association. Lack of knowledge of the rules of the

game, and organisational or capacity problems, can be compounded or result from corruption and self-serving behaviour. In terms of the Ndecuda case, where locals lost a battle in court, one village chief stated that this was possible in Cameroon as 'it is the survival of the fittest' and 'those who have the money can fight and win a legal battle' (for further details see Smith 2005).

Conflict and Corruption

Many types of illegal logging activities and social conflicts have occurred in the logging industry in Cameroon, which raises questions about legitimacy as well as mechanisms that people use to circumvent rules. *Ventes de coupe* and community forests are no exceptions, unfortunately. Illegal logging activities in the Southwest have included companies logging outside of their legal area, over-exploitation of various species, and unauthorised road building (Global Witness 2002a, 2002b; Greenpeace, Forests Monitor, and CED 2003). Other problems have included false declarations of species and/or volumes harvested and exploiting beyond the expiration date of the contract. In some cases, the circumstances surrounding a logging right are very confusing and raise questions about the overall legality of operations. This section discusses types of illegal and corrupt practices that have occurred in rights allocation and during operations and analyses why these situations occur, including regulatory tension between *ventes de coupe* and community forests.

The allocation of *ventes de coupe* often results in conflict and suspect activities. In the Southwest, one of the most interesting and confusing cases involved *vente de coupe* 11-05-14, which was initially authorised during 1996 (Global Witness 2002d, 2003).¹² It apparently overlapped with the Banyang Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary, however, and the right was moved during 1998, upon request of the MINEF Provincial Delegate. Logging supposedly occurred during 1999-2000 (Global Witness 2002d). Despite a three-year limit for a *vente de coupe*, however, logging operations were still taking place during December 2003. To complicate matters, Zangem Albert also obtained an *autorisation speciale d'enlevement des bois* or special recuperation permit to remove logs from the area during 2002. Based on a field investigation by Global Witness during December 2002, Zangem Albert appeared to have used the special permit beyond its expiration date, to take more timber than authorised, and to log timber rather than just removing previously felled timber (Global Witness 2002d). In total, the overall use of these permits is suspect given the long timeframes involved in the operation of the *vente de coupe* and the questions about the source of logs within log ponds marked with ZA for Zangem Albert.

The relocation of *ventes de coupe* between the date of the tender announcement and the final awarding of the logging right and the issuance of the contract to the winner appears to happen on a regular basis. There have also been at least two other cases of relocation of *ventes de coupe* after the bidding and allocation process was complete but before the issuance of documents (Smith 2005). For example, *vente de coupe* 11-06-13 was

¹² Ministerial Order No. 1141/MINEF/DF/SDEIF/BLA of 30th July 1996.

relocated by twenty-one kilometres from the area shown in the tender process to the area actually awarded on the *mesure de superficie* (Global Witness 2002c, 2003). During September 2003, *vente de coupe* 11-06-16 was advertised as available for an area located just to the southwest of the Nguti-Tombel area but was moved to another location by the time the award was issued (Global Witness 2004).

The practice of relocation of *ventes de coupe* is problematic on a number of levels. When a *vente de coupe* is moved illegally at the end of the attribution process, it effectively removes the community's *droit de pre-emption* since the community loses the opportunity to decide whether it would choose whether to have a community forest or *vente de coupe*. Similarly, it deprives other companies of the opportunity to bid on that particular patch of forest. In addition, if officials move the area because the original patch of forest was not very productive, the state could be losing significant amounts of revenue as the bids might have been lower than could be expected for more timber rich forest.

These cases of relocation of *ventes de coupe* after the bidding process are only one type of problem encountered with the attribution process. A number of different company representatives throughout Cameroon interviewed spoke about attribution problems for *ventes de coupe* and how the legal process was not always followed properly, ranging from allegations of unfair practice to outright corruption. One company owner felt there was a lack of clarity in how technical capacity was judged. He was upset as Ministry officials told him his company was not successful in their bid for a *vente de coupe* since they did not have sufficient technical capacity or equipment, a fact he disputed as he gestured to the mill and trucks beside the office. The head of one sawmill said decisions are 'very political' and that while they were originally denied a *vente de coupe* during the September 2003 process, the council Mayor and other elites wrote letters to Yaoundé, saying the company was important to the region and required a *vente de coupe* to stay in operation. After this political interference, the company was awarded the *vente de coupe*.

Other indications of potential abuse of the allocation of these rights include the size of many *ventes de coupe*. For example, many *ventes de coupe* are issued for an area greater than the maximum limit of 2,500 hectares, with many being up to 3,000 hectares (GFWC 2005). Even if they are restricted to 2,500 hectares, some claim companies will cut 3,000 hectares anyway. In addition, government record keeping of *ventes de coupe* has been abysmal during the past ten years. While over 300 *ventes de coupe* have been tendered and issued in Cameroon since 1996, Global Forest Watch was only able to obtain legal documents and files on half of these concessions (GFWC 2005). At least two of the *ventes de coupe* in the Nguti-Tombel area are not in the current GFWC database listing, including *vente de coupe* 11-05-04 and 11-03-14 although Map 2 includes them to provide a more complete picture of logging rights in the area. It is not clear, however, whether missing and poor data sources are purely cases of bad record keeping or whether files disappear deliberately. One NGO staff member related stories of files taken by Ministry staff and passed onto people who paid for the information. The incentives for illegal and corruption actions are discussed in more detail below.

Community forests are also subject to conflict and abuse on access rights. Existing studies indicate that while community forests have potential to contribute to rural livelihoods, they have been the objects of conflict and other problems, ranging from elites abusing the concept to gain access to forest resources to conflict between members of villages or between villages (Burnham 2000; Djeumo 2001; Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001).¹³ On a return visit to the community forest in Eschiambor, the company was long gone, 'chased away' by villagers, according to one elder. The head of the community forest association had departed to the Congo for work, as he was a driver for Hazim, the company that ran the Lomié sawmill until 2003. The community forest member who was responsible for overseeing local activities in the forest had supposedly been wandering around Lomié with his pockets full of cash, trying to decide whether to open a bank account at the credit union or the post office. The young men, who were working as labourers in November, were still waiting for wages. The situation in Eschiambor is not unique, however, and there are many allegations of manipulation of the community forest regime in Cameroon (see, for example, Djeumo 2001; Nguiffo 1998; Prosper *et al.* 2004).

During the first years after the law, community forests were the source of intense conflict. In many cases, local elites and unscrupulous companies were using community forests to gain easy access to forest areas and were logging intensively and gaining the economic benefits (Fomété and Vermatt 2001; Prosper *et al.* 2004). A staff member of one development agency said elites only reared their head when the initial stages of organisation and development were over. Various versions of conflict in one of the community forests south of Lomié highlighted the conflict and tension that can be generated in these situations. While a local elite blamed the problems and lack of success in the community forest on the Dutch agency, SNV, a representative of the agency blamed local elites and lack of community capacity. A similar situation took place in the Ndecuda community forest in Southwest Province, as described elsewhere (Smith 2005).

The 1994 Forestry Law specified that three types of harvesting rights could apply to community forests: *ventes de coupe*, exploitation permits, and individual authorisations. Based on wide-spread concerns about the use of community forests as easy access to timber, the government made changes during 2001 and road construction and the use of industrial machinery was prohibited to cut down on perceived abuse.¹⁴ Consequently, communities and the companies, with whom they partner, are supposed to access the forest on footpaths and use only chainsaws and portable sawmills as described previously. Many of those I interviewed felt that MINEF staff and local administrative officials did not welcome the concept of the community forests as they interfered with the ability to maintain control of the resources (see also Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001). The transfer of power to local people or communities reduced the ability of local officials to use these resources for patron-client purposes (Djeumo 2001; Fomété and Vermatt 2001). But it also led to breakdowns in traditional decision-making processes and generated community conflict (Djeumo 2001). In terms of community groups or associations,

¹³ There is considerable analysis of lack of definitions of 'community' in Cameroonian law (Burnham 2000) and issues related to the nature of communities and identity (Oyono 2004; Oyono, Mala, and Tonyé 2003; Sharpe 1998, 2005; Vabi *et al.* 2000).

¹⁴ *Ministry of Environment and Forests (MINEF) circular of 23 February 2001.*

conflict often arises when money (real or potential) emerges (see Klein, Salla, and Kok 2001).

Further analysis reveals a complex set of factors contributing to the conflict and desire to manipulate access to the forests and benefits, especially as pertains to the choice between *ventes de coupe* and community forests. The current regulatory framework means that these rights compete for space in the same forest areas. As this paper has discussed, the two types of exploitation rights have different objectives, are subject to different regulatory requirements under completely different timeframes, timber production processes are very different, and economic returns operate very differently. As described, however, the regulations make the *ventes de coupe* easier access routes to forests, timber, and profits and they are generally considered one of the more lucrative logging rights (Fomété 2001). In the words of one MINEF Head of Post, 'as soon as there is a standing volume, there is money.' As discussed, companies are not required to do management plans and are able to operate on a quick turn around, felling and removing timber often within a few months of obtaining their legal documentation. The money forthcoming from both *redevances forestières annuelle* and the 1,000 FCFA/m³ payment makes this type of logging even more desirable. Thus, the various forestry revenues from the *ventes de coupe* create incentives for actors not to implement existing rules and people at different levels have interests in promoting the former. For example, the payment of 1,000 FCFA/m³ of timber felled has been used by officials and powerful people to convince villagers that *ventes de coupe* are preferable to community forests (Fomété 2001). In other words, the 1,000 FCFA/m³ appears to have been created as a mechanism to provide benefits to the communities as an incentive to allow logging (Karsenty 1999; Milol and Pierre 2000).

As a result, the *droit de pré-emption* of communities is often not implemented in practice, or at least is not applied on a transparent or consistent basis. As discussed by Smith (2005), chiefs from villages around *vente de coupe* 11-06-17 near Nguti, stated that the first they knew of the *vente de coupe* was when TRC arrived in their village with a government order showing they had the right to log. Additionally, neither the Nguti Mayor nor the chiefs appeared to be aware that *vente de coupe* 11-06-18 would soon be in operation. It is not clear, however, whether the problem lies with government officials or local chiefs and elites, or a combination of the two, whether the problem is the result of incompetence or corruption. But it is certain that *ventes de coupe* symbolise get-rich quick opportunities, especially for local elites and government officials. This problem reflects more general criticisms and complaints about land selling for profit by chiefs and other elites in the Southwest.¹⁵ Regulations thus threaten the viability of community forests and limit access to this right.

¹⁵ Ndengu Francis Epie, 'S.W. Forest Going! Focus on World Environment Day in Kumba,' *Detective*, 16 June 2004.

Conclusion

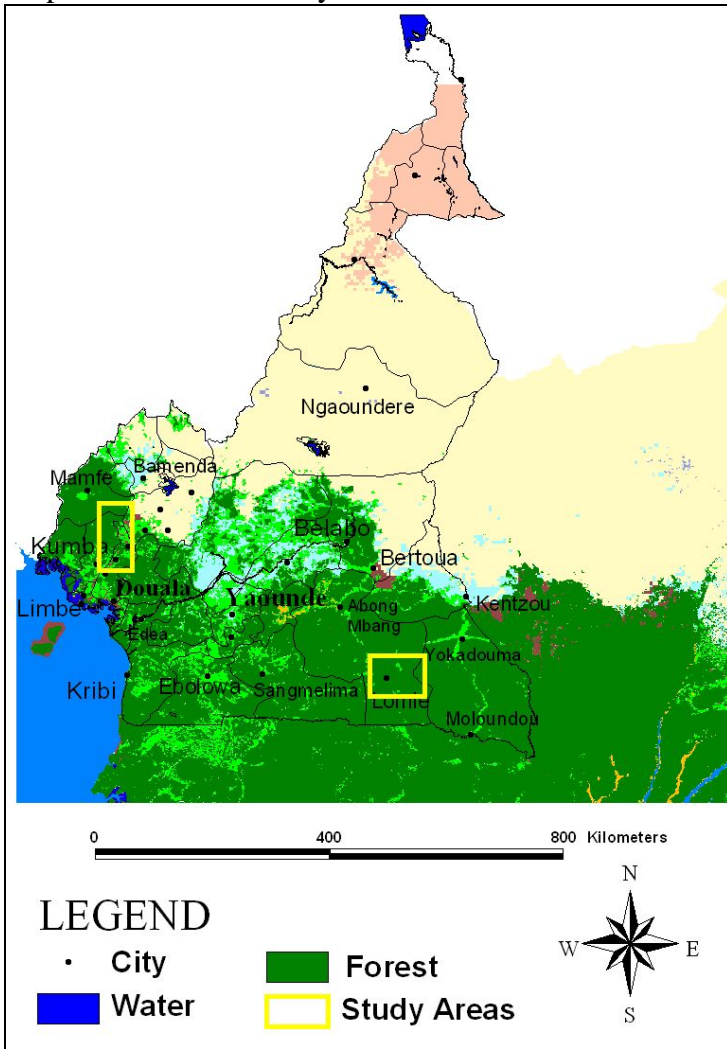
Wood from the non-permanent forests of Cameroon enters the international timber commodity chains flowing from Cameroon to Europe and elsewhere. Timber production varies depending upon the category of logging right, as well as by access to other elements. This paper has analysed access within commodity chains originating within *ventes de coupe* and community forest to provide much needed information on whether current forest policies are helping to reduce poverty, or whether they are instead actually contributing to inequity in Cameroon. The analysis shows that the current regulatory framework is in fact contributing to inequity in many ways, curtailing access for small scale companies (in relation to larger companies), but for villagers most of all. Similar to what Le Billion (2000) found in Cambodia, a rational legal forestry framework does not necessarily work in different cultural conditions and political economic structures from where the original law was designed.

In Cameroon, where corruption is systemic and legitimacy of a World-Bank imposed law, implementation has not followed the letter of the law. *Ventes de coupe* are short-term, offer quick logging profits, and a number of incentives for village elites and government officials to bend the rules. In the first days of community forests, they were frequently abused for short-term gains by actors who had the connections or decision making ability to profit. The incentives for quick profits often resulted in illegal relocation of rights that deprives both communities and other companies of the opportunity to apply for access rights to specific timber rights.

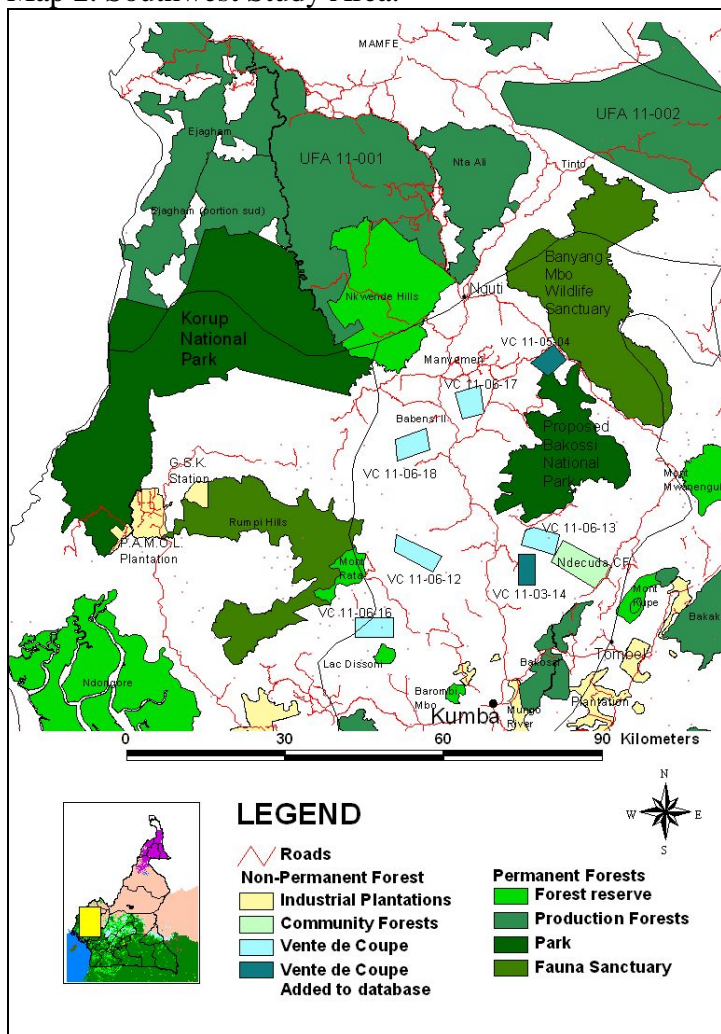
In addition, many of the policies and regulations restrict access for those who need it most. Communities must invest large amounts of time and money before they can ever obtain access to a forest area. Regulations restrict access to timber and markets by requiring that timber is harvested in a labour-intensive way, restricting the wood yields and quality that communities can derive from the forest. A lack of institutional and technological capacity further limits the access of communities and makes them reliant on companies that can mistreat or mislead them. Access to markets is also problematic given a need for market knowledge and the capacity to find buyers. Thus communities have problems obtaining access – to forests, to wood, to benefits and to the external markets that are supposed to help alleviate their poverty. This seems to penalise local actors, excluding them from access in ways that even small companies and certainly the larger companies are not.

Finally, the regulatory framework creates space for corruption and fraud. Numerous cases of relocated *ventes de coupe* attest to this fact. The creation of rules that juxtapose the community forests to small-scale industrial operations created space for competition for land, and for conflict over both resources and benefits from those resources. Thus, not only do the regulations contribute to the exclusion of communities from the forest, the wood, and the benefits, they also contribute to conditions that foster corruption and breaking of the rules. Commodity chain and access mapping helps to illustrate that the design of forestry policies require far more refinement than simply applying the same formula to all conditions and locations.

Map 1. Location of Study Areas in Cameroon



Map 2. Southwest Study Area.



Map 3. Lomié and Messok Area.

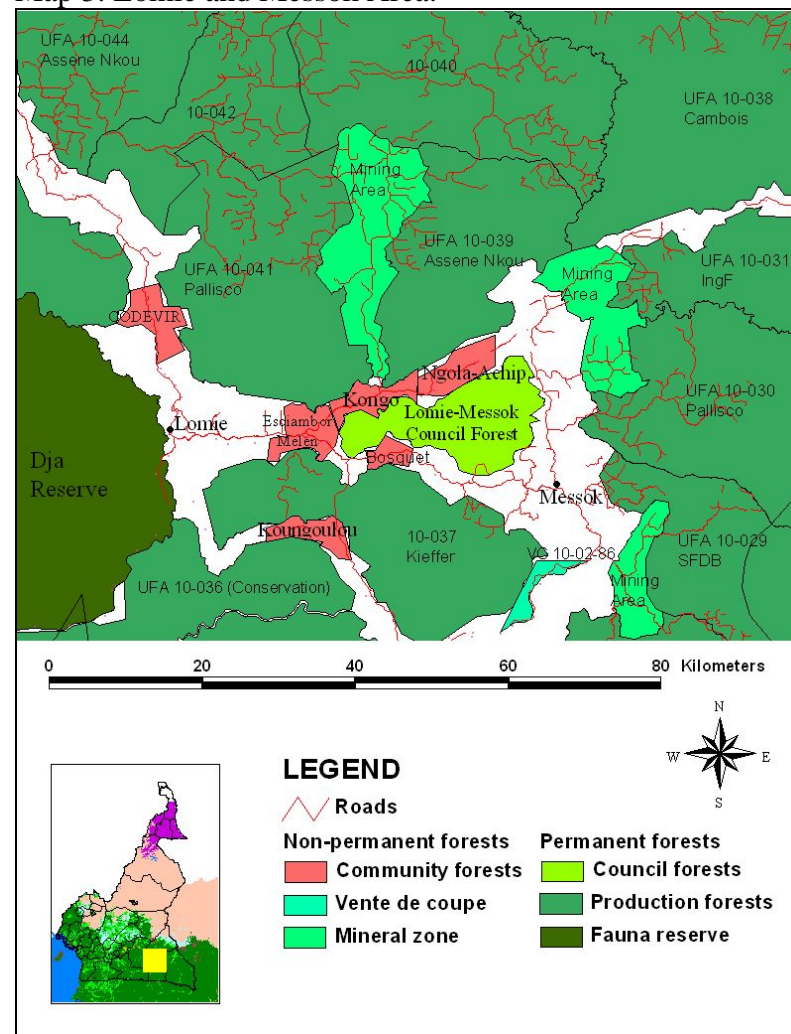


Table 1. List of current and recent logging rights, Southwest Province

Year	Logging Right	Area	Winner	Partner/ Purchaser
2002	UFA 11-002		Wijma	
2003	VC 11-06-16		TRC	
2003	VC 11-06-17		TRC	
2003	VC 11-06-18		CAFECO	Wijma
2001	VC 11-06-13		PMF-Wood	TRC
2001	VC 11-03-14		PMF-Wood	TRC
2001	VC 11-03-15			
2000	VC 11-06-12		SEPCO	TRC
1999	VC 11-05-04		Zangem Albert	TRC
1997	VC 11-05-01		SSCTM	Unknown
1997	VC 11-03-05		Enoumedi	Unknown
2001	ASEB 2252		Zangem Albert	TRC
2002	Community Forest		Ndecuda	Helena Bois and CIBEC

Source: Compiled from Government notices, legal documents, Global Witness reports, Greenpeace reports, interviews, and direct observation.

Table 2. Industrial rights in Lomié and Messok as of June 2004.

Year	<i>Unité Forestière d'Aménagement</i>	Area (ha)	Company	Parent Company or Partner
2001	UFA 10-044	66,851	Assene Nkou	Pallisco
2001	UFA 10-047	47,080	Fipcam	
2001	UFA 10-030	79,757	Pallisco	
2000	UFA 10-031	41,202	<i>Ingeniere Forestière</i>	
2000	UFA 10-037	51,685	Kieffer	Vicwood Thanry
2000	UFA 10-039	46,481	Assene-Nkou	Pallisco
2000	UFA 10-038	145,585	Cambois	Rougier
1998	UFA 10-041	64,961	Pallisco	
1998	UFA 10-029	46,922	SFDB	TIB

Source: MINEF, *No 1068/MINEF/CAB, Communiqué Portant publication de la liste officielle des titres d'exploitation forestière valides au 28 août 2003*, 15 Septembre 2003, *Cameroun Tribune*; Interviews; GFWC (2005).

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