

Times of Change

*Local responses to REDD, deforestation and
climate change in Paraguay*

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Times of Change - Local Responses to REDD, Deforestation and Climate Change in Paraguay

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Abstract

Drawing on six months of fieldwork in Paraguay, this thesis explores how deforestation, climate change and the global climate-initiative, ‘Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation’ (REDD), was perceived, understood and acted upon at the local level. In 2007, the Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg announced that the Norwegian government would give 3 billion NOK on an annual basis to the global climate-initiative, REDD. This was considered to be a pioneering new initiative to combat climate change. REDD is based on the idea that developed countries will pay developing ones with tropical forest to conserve their forest to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Even though the idea may sound simple, implementing the REDD ideology at local levels - where REDD meets challenges such as weak governance, corruption and violation of human rights - has turned out to be problematic.

This thesis is based on a multi-sited fieldwork, where one part was spent at the national level with the Secretariat of the Environment (SEAM), and the other part in the indigenous community Pykasu, which is remotely located in the largest remains of continuous forest in the country.

Empirical examples in this thesis illustrate that REDD faces many challenges in Paraguay; it also shows how deforestation and climate change is a living reality for the people in the indigenous community Pykasu. People there are clinging to hope and the promise of change made by the left-winged President Fernando Lugo in 2008. Their surrounding environment no longer provides what is necessary for their survival, and new alternatives are needed. At SEAM, a new political leadership representing the new political course in the country struggles towards democracy and an including socio-environmental policy. This ideology confronts limited political support and powerful resistance - something that makes SEAM’s job of implementation nearly impossible. This is the backdrop in which REDD was presented.

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List of central names and acronyms

Alter Vida - The NGO working in Pykasu

FAPI - Federation for Indigenous Peoples' Self Determination

FPP - Forest Peoples Programme (NGO)

INDI - The Paraguayan Institute of Indigenous Affairs

INFONA - The National Forestry Institute

NGO - Nongovernmental Organization

Pykasu - The indigenous community

PWAs - Protected Wildlife Areas

REDD - Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation

SEAM - The Secretariat of the Environment

SINASIP - The National System of Protected Wild Areas

UN-REDD - REDD project of the United Nations

Table of contents

Chapter I: Introduction	13
Research questions	14
Fields of study	18
Methodology.....	23
Ethical considerations.....	25
Analytical Perspectives	27
Indigenous/traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge	27
Globalization and transnational cooperation	29
Friction	29
Social Interface	30
Power theory.....	32
Historical perspective	32
Thesis statements.....	33
Some structural constraints on successful implementation of REDD in Paraguay.....	34
Powerful elite.....	34
Land tenure	35
Laws and rights.....	37
Free, Prior and Informed Consent	37
Challenges and limitations of the material	38
Mapping myself.....	39
Structure of thesis	39
Chapter II: Political changes	41
Lugo’s powerful resistance.....	42
Political changes in SEAM.....	44
Pykasu and politics	52
Conclusion.....	56

Chapter III: Forest vs. Development in the Oriental Region.....	59
SEAM - Limited capacity.....	61
National Parks and other Protected Wild Areas (PWAs).....	62
Conclusion.....	68
Chapter IV: Deforestation and climate change in the Chaco region	69
Coping with a drier climate	71
Resilience	72
Carnival	75
Mapping – a mean to cope with external pressure	80
Pykasu’s affection for their environment	83
Conclusion.....	88
Chapter V: REDD in Paraguay.....	91
SEAM and REDD	94
INFONA and REDD	95
FAPI and REDD.....	96
PYKASU and REDD	100
Reforestation project: A todo pulmon – Paraguay respira	103
Guyra Paraguay and Paraguay Forest Conservation Project.....	104
Forest Management Plan in Pykasu	106
REDD-progress at national level.....	108
Conclusion.....	109
Chapter VI: The importance of trust	111
The battle of legitimacy and economic means	112
An unknowing student in a web of delicate relations.....	115
Pykasu - Projects, trust and betrayal.....	119
Cases of social interface	123
Conclusion.....	128

Chapter VII: Conclusion.....	131
Bibliography	133

Chapter I: Introduction

At the Climate Summit in Bali, December 2007, the Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg announced that the Norwegian government would allocate up to 3 billion NOK on an annual basis for Reduced Emissions for Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) projects. REDD was considered to be a pioneer initiative to combat climate change and was considered to be the most effective and cost-efficient initiative against global warming. The Norwegian government wanted REDD to be a part of an international climate agreement. The whole world was by this encouraged to mobilize, act and cooperate to get an international forest conservation and climate policy on place. This announcement in 2007 turned Norway into a leading global forestry donor and a powerful actor in climate negotiations overnight. By its donation Norway encouraged other developed countries to follow its example. By paying developing countries with tropical forest to conserve their forests rather than cut them down, developed countries would not only help to decrease greenhouse gas emissions, but also to ensure sustainable management of forests and improved livelihoods for the local populations. How these payments should be realized, however, is one of the many uncertainties connected to the initiative. One option that has been discussed and often criticized is that REDD should be a part of a carbon market, funded through sales of carbon credits. Another alternative is payments through international funding.

The basic idea of REDD sounds simple: Developed countries will pay the developing ones to conserve their tropical forests rather than to cut them down. The goal is to make the forest more valuable preserved than cut down. The pioneering idea that was presented with such enthusiasm in international negotiations has proved to become much more complicated to implement at local levels. Here REDD meets challenges like weak governance, corruption and violation of human rights. The implementation of REDD projects faces many challenges: Who should be paid and who should pay? How to ensure transparency and accountability in money transactions? How to measure, report and verify emission reduction from deforestation and forest degradation, and to make sure that REDD leads to 'real' and 'additional' emissions that would not have happened without REDD? How to guarantee that reduced deforestation in one place will not cause increased deforestation in another, and that REDD will protect forests permanently? And how to ensure that REDD will not affect the livelihoods and rights of all the people who live in and around the forest in a negative way?

Even though Norway has been an outspoken defender of indigenous people's rights in the climate negotiations, it has shown unwillingness to make recognition of these rights a condition of its REDD funding. Although REDD initially was a discussion about forests, REDD has increasingly become a discussion about people; people who live inside forests and derive their livelihood from them. Heavy lobbying by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and forest peoples has placed awareness of human and indigenous rights on the REDD agenda. Many forest people fear that REDD will be another project based on the market-orientated mindset of the industrialized world that will end up violating their rights and expelling them from their territories. This opposition has led to a commitment to ensure Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in all cases where REDD projects are introduced.

In New York, 2008, the UN-REDD Programme was launched by the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, and the Prime Minister of Norway, Jens Stoltenberg. The UN-REDD programme was to be carried out by three United Nations agencies and Jens Stoltenberg announced that the Norwegian government would finance the initial phase of the programme with 35 million US dollars. The UN-REDD was just one out of several REDD projects that were going to emerge after the Bali conference in 2007. The initiative - and the enormous amount of money involved in it - received great international attention and interest, and the number of planned REDD projects in developing tropical forest countries soon expanded.

Research questions

In this thesis my aim is to see how an overreaching global idea like REDD functions at a local level. I will direct my focus on Paraguay and the UN-REDD programme there. Paraguay is one of the nine initial pilot countries of this programme. **I wish to see how deforestation, climate change, and the UN-REDD programme is perceived, understood and acted upon at local level; nationally and in an indigenous community.** The thesis is based on a multi-sited fieldwork of six months where one part was spent at a national level with the Secretariat of the Environment; the institution in charge of UN-REDD in Paraguay. The other part was spent in the indigenous community Pykasu which is located within the largest remains of continuous forest in the country. Since REDD still was something unknown for the great majority at the time of my arrival, I also focus on REDD-related issues such as local understandings and perceptions of forest conservation, deforestation and climate change.

I have found that a number of factors challenge forest conservation and an implementation of UN-REDD in Paraguay. This proposition will be discussed in more detail throughout the thesis.

One of the dangers of the REDD initiative, as developed so far, may lie in overlooking regional and cultural details. Anthropological knowledge can contribute significantly in this field. The long-lasting fieldwork characterizing anthropological method provides a unique opportunity to collect in-depth information based on learning, seeing, observing and participating as well as building friendships and relations of trust. The anthropologist is often able to detect deviations between what people say and what they do, commonly overlooked by other sciences. Kay Milton argues that anthropologists can unmask ill-founded and inconsistent political arguments used in the debate about environmental issues (1996:354).

Even though my focus is directed on the UN-REDD programme, I will use the expression REDD¹ when talking about the idea and concept in general terms.

REDD in Paraguay

In 2008, Fernando Lugo became president in Paraguay with his centre-left alliance, Patriotic Alliance for Change (APC). He represents a new trend within Paraguayan politics that characterizes the country today. At the time of my arrival, REDD to a large extent did not exist outside the offices of the Secretariat of the Environment (SEAM). During my time with SEAM, I witnessed its environmental policy and UN-REDD-strategy change in line with the new political possibilities created by the election of Lugo. SEAM was working for inclusion of- and cooperation with the local population. From being overlooked and overrun indigenous people were now being included and respected in the UN-REDD negotiations. When I began my fieldwork with SEAM, they were working on the third draft of the UN-REDD National Joint Programme, a document needed to be able to pursue further UN-REDD activities in the country. The new Minister at SEAM, chosen by President Lugo, wanted this third draft to be approved by the indigenous population, and did therefore invite the indigenous organization,

¹ Even though I will use the term 'REDD' when talking about REDD as an idea in more general terms, the term 'REDD+' may appear in quotes throughout the thesis. The plus includes 'enhancing forest carbon stocks in developing countries' to the REDD definition. When I talk about REDD as an idea I do also consider the meaning of the 'plus'.

Federation for Indigenous Peoples' Self Determination (FAPI)², to participate in the UN-REDD technical team. The UN-REDD technical team is the team in charge of the UN-REDD programme in Paraguay; now consisting of FAPI, SEAM and INFONA (The National Forestry Institute).



Representatives from FAPI, SEAM and INFONA discussing UN-REDD

My task is twofold: To follow the implementation process of REDD by study intentions and values of the Paraguayan authorities and relevant NGOs, and to study the socio-cultural situation of a real community that might be selected as a REDD community. My two fields of study are placed on the two opposing ends of the social ladder and differ from each other both in structural organization, values and social interests. On one side, you have SEAM, which is the most influential institution regarding environmental policy and matters in Paraguay; whereas on the other side is Pykasu, where the indigenous inhabitants are fighting to preserve their ancestral territories, without any other means to do so than their own oral claims and the occasional help from different NGOs. The NGOs occupy a middle position, trying to mediate between the two extremes. I have also studied some NGOs in order to understand their perceptions, values and practices in connection with REDD.

Paraguay

The forests of Paraguay have been cleared in high rate at the expense of the indigenous population and other local communities. After years of heavy deforestations, many of the

² Earlier known as CAPI (Coordinating Committee for Indigenous peoples' Self-Determination).

forest-covered areas left in Paraguay are the territories of indigenous people. In Paraguay, as in other parts of the world, indigenous and other local forest people have been expelled from their territories or experienced severe environmental destructions caused by national or international companies producing for the world market and trying to satisfy the consumption needs of the industrialized world.



Field of soy and cattle on the Paraguayan countryside

Paraguay is situated in the heart of Latin America and has about 6,400,000 inhabitants. Ninety-five percent of the population are mestizos, mixed Spanish and Amerindian, while about 2% are indigenous peoples. Paraguay is 406,752 km² and, at present time, the forests in Paraguay cover an area of approximately 11 million hectares (UN-REDD National Joint Programme/NJP, 2010:7). Until 2004, Paraguay was counted as the country with the second highest deforestation rate in the world. Still, the deforestation rate in Paraguay is one of the world's most elevated (Naumann&Coronel, 2008:76). This deforestation is mainly caused by massive land use changes as a result of an expanding agricultural frontier. Among other things, Paraguay exports cotton, meat, corn and wheat and is the sixth largest soy producer in the world. Soy and meat production are the main causes of deforestation, while forest degradation mainly is caused by removal of second-rate forests for fuel-wood, charcoal production and/or other commercial reasons (NJP, 2010:8). Paraguay confronts various environmental challenges. The rapid deforestation and destruction of soils leads to degradation of the natural ecosystems, loss of biodiversity, erosion and salination. Contamination of superficial and subterranean water recourses from mining or fertilizers used in intensive agriculture is also a significant environmental problem. In the more urban zones,

lack of sufficient garbage recollection services and the elimination of sewage liquids is a substantial problem (Neumann&Coronel, 2008:66).

Fields of study

The great river, Río Paraguay, divides Paraguay into two very different regions: the Oriental region southeast of the river, and the Occidental region/the Chaco region northwest of it. I spent the first part of the fieldwork in the Oriental region with SEAM, and the second part in Pykasu, which is in the Chaco region.



Northwest of Río Paraguay: The Chaco region
Southeast of Río Paraguay: The Oriental region

Besides from being two very different eco-regions, the two regions of Paraguay also vary significantly ethnographically. While the Oriental region houses 98% of the total population, only 2 % lives in the greater Chaco region, which covers 60.7% of the country's total area (NJP, 2010:6). Despite its low population density, the Chaco region is also the most cultural diverse, housing a variety of ethnicities: Mennonites arrived from Germany, Canada and the former Soviet Union; Spanish, Argentinean, and Brazilian ranchers, among others; and 13 different ethnic indigenous groups which are divided into five different linguistic families. Ecologically speaking, the Oriental region is characterized by a humid climate, while the

climate in the Chaco is arid. Both ecoregions are recognized as regionally and globally important, each with an incredible biodiversity. However, each region is confronting environmental problems and high deforestation rates (NJP,2010:7).

The Oriental region has been very much affected by massive land use changes. From having a forest cover of 55% in the 1940s, the region was reduced to having just 24% in the 2000s, a loss of 6.7 million hectares (NJP, 2010:7). With the fact that the Oriental region also houses 98% of the total population, this leads to great pressure on its natural resources.

The biggest reservoirs of forests left in Paraguay are in the Chaco. The Paraguayan Chaco is part of the South American Gran Chaco, which is the second largest forested ecosystem in South America after the Amazon, and is shared between Paraguay, Argentina, Bolivia and Brazil. In the Paraguayan Chaco, 1,15 million hectares of forest were lost between 1990 and 2000, a reduction of 7% of the regions' forest covered lands (NJP, 2010:7-8). Together with a unique ecosystem and an incredible biodiversity, the Chaco also houses the last uncontacted indigenous tribe in Paraguay.

The Secretariat of the Environment (SEAM)

SEAM depends on the President of the Republic, and was created by law in 2000 together with the National Environmental System (SISNAM) and the National Environmental Council (CONAM), with *“the objective to create and regulate the functioning of the organisms responsible of the elaboration, normalization, coordination, execution and supervision of the national environmental politics and administration”* (Legislación Paraguaya, 2010:108).

SEAM formulates, executes, coordinates and supervises the management and execution of the plans, programmes and projects about preservation, conservation and environmental improvement (Legislación Paraguaya, 2010:111). The present vision of SEAM is to get Paraguay among the best countries in the region regarding environmental quality and to be an efficient and participative institution. SEAM aims to contribute to improving the quality of life among Paraguayan citizens by emphasizing the natural resources and the conservation of biodiversity (Sistema Nacional de Areas Silvestres/SINASIP, 2009:37). The only SEAM office is in the capital, Asunción, which is in the Oriental region. This strongly limits their institutional presence and possibilities for control in the countryside.

In addition to political and policy changes, SEAM also underwent environmental changes during my stay, which included new buildings and renovation of old offices. When I talk about SEAM as an institution, I am referring to its official outlook and policy. This outlook and policy is characterized by a new political ideology headed by the Minister, Oscar Rivas, and his team, which represents the government of Fernando Lugo. Even though SEAM had changed after the election of Lugo, several other institutions, like the Paraguayan Institute of Indigenous Affairs (INDI) or the Paraguayan Land Agency (INDERT), remained their former profile and policy to a higher extent. SEAM does not receive a lot of willingness, help or support - either from these institutions or the Executive and Legislative Power. The minority government of Lugo confronts powerful resistance from both private and public sectors, and SEAM is standing relatively alone in its attempt to change the environmental policy.



Renovation at SEAM

Even though this new political course characterizes SEAM's public profile, SEAM itself is an institution with employees with a myriad of different opinions and ideas of how to manage things. In other words, internally, the institution was far from united.

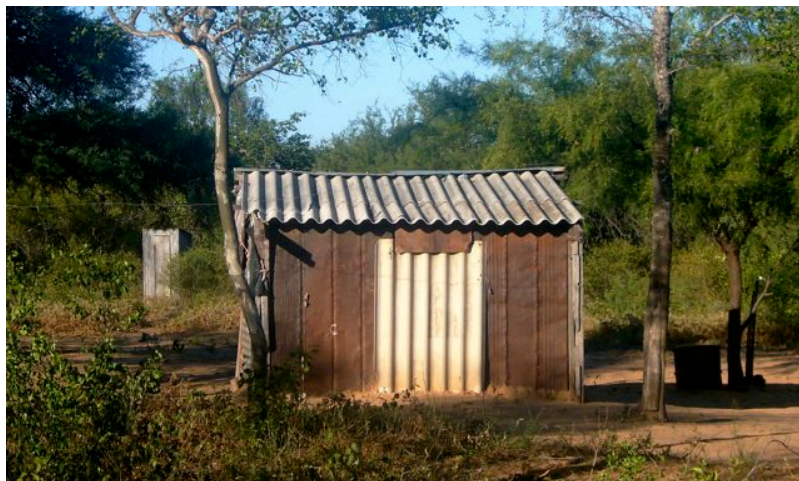
Pykasu

Pykasu is situated in the municipality of Boqueron in the Paraguayan Chaco, about 770 kilometres away from Asunción. The ecosystem in which Pykasu is placed is called the Dry

Chaco (Chaco Seco), covering 17,269,825 hectares of Paraguayan soil. Within the Dry Chaco, you find seven Protected Wild Areas (PWAs) which are considered to be relatively well preserved compared to other ecosystems in the country (SINASIP, 2009:14). Pykasu is located about 30 kilometres from the Bolivian border between the National Parks *Teniente Agripino Enciso* and *Médanos del Chaco*. *Médanos del Chaco* is partly Pykasu territory and is the second largest national park in Paraguay. Both of the parks, and Pykasu itself, are part of the “*Reserva de Biosfera del Chaco*” (4,707,250 has) established in 2001.



The forest covered landscape in and around Pykasu



A typical house in Pykasu

Most of the forest in Médanos del Chaco is characterized as open forest of low density, herbaceous vegetation and bushes and shrubs with median or elevated heights. The PWAs in the Chaco represent the only governmental presence in the area, and the indigenous

communities, together with some military posts, are the only institutional referents of the state (SINASIP, 2009:51).



Tanks of water derived from *Yrenda*



A household garden of corn ruined by sun and drought



The result of a successful wild boar hunt



The community church/gathering house

The people living in Pykasu are part of the ethnic group called Guaraní Ñandeva, earlier known as Tapiete or Tapy'ete. The Guaraní Ñandeva had their first encounter with the non-indigenous society during the Chaco War in 1932-1935 (see Richard, 2008). Even though the Spaniards came to Paraguay hundreds of years earlier, nobody made their entrance into Ñandeva territory because this was considered to be a very hostile part of the Chaco. The Guaraní Ñandeva of Pykasu are hunter-gatherers and have traditions of small-scale slash-and-burn agriculture where they cultivate, among other things, watermelons, gourds and sorghums. Even though the majority are now sedentary, they used to have a semi-nomadic lifestyle. The society is divided into patrilinear family clans. In 2010, the community suffered

from the result of severe drought and lack of nutrition, and was completely dependent on external help and water from deep motor-driven wells taking water from the great subterranean water resource, *Yrenda*.

The community consists of more or less 50 households - about 400 individuals - and has a local health post visited by a doctor once a month, a church/gathering house, a community house for visitors with a community storage, and a school building for children from 1st to 6th grade. Compared to many other indigenous communities in Paraguay, Pykasu still has a lot of its territory intact but is experiencing increased outside pressure on its natural resources. A lack of communication possibilities, infrastructure and distance from the general public leaves Pykasu relatively isolated from the outside world.

Methodology

In addition to my fieldwork with SEAM and Pykasu, I also attended some meetings and reunions held by the indigenous organization FAPI, of which Pykasu was member and the NGO *Alter Vida – Centro de Estudios y Formación para el Ecodesarrollo* working in Pykasu. During my time with SEAM I met representatives from FAPI at meetings both at the offices but also while out travelling, visiting indigenous communities. I did also spend about one week with FAPI in February when FAPI was holding two REDD workshops (See Chapter Five). I spent the first three months of my fieldwork with SEAM. The second three months I spent in Pykasu and with Alter Vida who labels itself as a socio-environmental NGO. Representatives from Alter Vida had gotten to know Pykasu well and had worked in the community for about two years in 2010 (See Chapter Six). I travelled back and forth to Pykasu with Alter Vida. The travels were long, at least a two days travel, and were often filled with other appointments along the way. I attended meetings and observed their work while they were in the community. I spent about two and a half months in Pykasu, and with Pykasu representatives at meetings and events outside the community. The rest of the days were spent travelling and attending other meetings with Alter Vida. I will come back to the meetings between my different fields of study, and the work of FAPI and Alter Vida using a social interface perspective throughout the thesis.

While with SEAM, I spent time at the offices observing peoples' work and the institutional life. I spoke to, and got to know, various employees and visitors, did interviews and spent time reading books and documents from SEAM's archives and library. I participated in

different seminars and meetings, mostly about UN-REDD or REDD-related themes. While not at the offices, I was out travelling in the Oriental region with different employees and got to witness SEAM's work in the field. Here, I assisted meetings between SEAM and indigenous representatives, governors, mayors, park guardians, small farmers and different organizations. The travels normally lasted for 3-7 days each. During this first part of my fieldwork, I had my base in Asunción where I lived with a Paraguayan family who introduced me to Paraguayan daily life and customs.

While in the indigenous community, Pykasu, there was one family that I spent much time with during the day, while I spent the nights with 1-6 community children in the community house. I wanted to live with a family but because of limited space and the fear of not having enough to offer led to an agreement saying that I could be staying with a family during daytime but sleep in the community house. On my first night alone in the community house a couple of women showed up with their children and offered them to stay with me in case I would feel alone or afraid. Even though I said it was not necessary the women friendly ignored my modesty, and from this evening on the same group of children stayed with me at the community house at night. Each evening I cooked food for us to eat, we played cards or drew drawings with paper and colours I had bought in Norway, they taught me words in Guaraní Ñandeva and helped me killing the rats who frequently entered the community house.

I was able, to some extent, to witness how the people were coping with environmental and social changes. Because of the difficult times they had experienced before my arrival - with drought that made agriculture difficult, the migration of wild animals and lack of wild fruits and berries - that had led to shortage of food, people experienced poor nutrition. This in turn led, in some extent, to reduced energy, and the greater parts of the days were by many spent outside the houses conversing and drinking tereré - a drink of herbs and water. They claimed this eased the hunger. Instead of working in the fields or foraging in the forest, they preferred to watch village life, philosophy about life, observe the children play or visit each other.

While not with "my" family, I spent time visiting different households, conversing or doing interviews, or just observing the community life. I went to community activities like church meetings and occasional volley- and football matches, took walks in the forest with friends, played with the children and talked to and observed the work of different outsiders who every now and then came to the community.

Ethical considerations

Due to the wishes of my informants I have chosen not to anonymize the names of my two fields of study. Some informants wanted to be mentioned by name, but I have chosen not to mention them out of ethical considerations. Many, both at SEAM and in Pykasu, saw an anthropological study as important and as a mean to draw attention to their difficult situation. By difficult situation at SEAM I mean the institution's struggle to make the political changes the new leadership considered as necessary to improve the environmental situation and to defeat the old system of corruption and ineffectiveness while facing both internal and external resistance. By difficult situation in Pykasu I mean the community's challenges in a time of draught and lack of sufficient nutrition.

When I arrived in Pykasu for real the third time at the end of April (I had already paid two shorter visits to the community beforehand in March, when trying to find residence for the second part of my fieldwork). I soon realized that I would not be able to carry out my fieldwork as I had planned to do. The extreme heat and the effects of the drought especially this year had left the inhabitants in an even more difficult situation than in the previous years that also were characterised as drier than normal. The area has always been characterized as dry, but I was told by the inhabitants in Pykasu that the climate had gradually started to worsen (becoming drier and warmer) in the beginning of the 1980's. Especially the last seven years had been worse than before, and the community had experienced increased lack of food. In 2010 there was hardly any rain at all in Pykasu, and even at the time of harvest, food had been scarce. When I arrived the community the third time to live there, almost every adult male had left for work at a cattle ranch several miles away from Pykasu to earn money and buy food to their families. The drought led to failing crops and lack of forest fruits and berries. The shallow ground water resources had disappeared and as a consequence there were fewer birds to hunt and to eat. Birds were a central part of the diet of the Guaraní Ñandeva in Pykasu. The lack of rain also led to skinnier wild animals, and surrounding deforestations and forest clearings (see Chapter Four) made the wild animals as roe dears and wild boars migrate out of the traditional hunting areas. Since most of the men who normally went hunting were away working, and since hunting had become even more time- and energy consuming than normal, getting enough meat to satisfy the hunger was not an easy task either. The men often left their homes for work for several months, leaving mostly the women, children and elders behind. About a week before the men returned with supplies when I was in the community,

the food situation in Pykasu got severe. As the community storage came to an end the last couple of days before the men returned, and before the emergency packages with food and other basic supplies arrived, the children were the ones prioritized. The school meal during these days consisted of only flour, sugar and water. Because of this temporary lack of nutrition, the activities in the community were limited. Because of this I did not get as much data from observations of forest usage as I had hoped to. Besides gathering firewood with my family I did not observe much of how people used the forest. I was shown some places where they could gather honey, which trees had fruits or berries, their traditional exploitation of non-timber forest products (NTFP) both for sale and for own use, and which plants could be used for medical purposes etc. On the other hand, because of the tranquil community life, I got a lot of time to converse, ask questions, and listen to stories and other experiences. Much of my material from Pykasu therefore consisted of oral data. I have tried to stick to the material I was able to confirm with my own observations, and the oral statements that were coherent among several inhabitants in the community. Some of the uncertainties regarding my material I asked about again at the end of my stay when doing interviews with both men and women representing different age groups. Written material about the Guaraní Ñandeva of Pykasu did not exist, and literature on the Chaco region – anthropological and other - was very scarce. Therefore I do not have much literature to support my findings.

When it comes to REDD, few people besides the community leaders had knowledge about the initiative. Because of the limited community activity, I chose to focus more on how people related to outsiders and community projects initiated by them (e.g. by observing the work of Alter Vida and another NGO working there with a temporary project, or the community's fight against the Oil and Gas Company CDS, etc., See Chapter Five and Six) and to learn about earlier project experiences. I have tried to relate REDD to these observations on a more theoretical level.

Even though Pykasu found itself in a difficult situation I chose to continue my fieldwork there. I sponsored my family, the children who watched over me in the community house and occasionally other friends, with food and other commodities, but as getting in and out of the community to buy food was impossible without outside help and transportation, I did not have a lot to spend or give away. When someone from Alter Vida dropped by, they often left me the food they did not eat, which I also shared with my family and the children staying with me. At the end of my stay when the emergency packages with food arrived, people were eager to show their hospitality and often offered me something to eat when I came to visit.

In Pykasu I got the impression that the inhabitants saw me as who I was, an independent student not connected to any NGO or other institution. I think, and also felt, that the inhabitants did not see me as a person with much influence or importance. Many hoped my stay and my thesis could contribute to make Pykasu more known to the outside world in the future, and many saw it as important to draw attention to the injustice and difficulties they felt they were facing. As I, like the other inhabitants in Pykasu, did not have access to external goods or contact with the outside world, I do not think people acted differently towards me than local populations generally do towards anthropologists in fieldwork situations. Apart from feelings of sympathy with their situation and trying to assist in any way available to me, the situation did not affect my project. The situation of lack of nutrition was, on the other hand, a serious concern and something they saw as important to inform the outside world about. For this reason, the introduction of REDD in the community may be beneficial – if planned and executed in ways that build on local experience and needs.

Analytical Perspectives

Even though REDD is a new initiative, its theme and content touches already existing discussions in the anthropological climate debate. These discussions evolve from issues like the humanitarian aspect of climate change, *“political and security risks, conflicts over resources, border disputes, tensions over energy supply, migration, political radicalization, structural violence, and tensions between different ethnic and religious groups”* (Crate & Nuttall, 2009:12). Crate and Nuttall argue that the anthropological gaze needs to settle on the governance of national and international security issues. REDD debates and discussions have shown that the security issues are many. I think REDD may bring different kinds of risks and opportunities, and as Crate and Nuttall write about climate change, it can threaten cultural survival and undermine indigenous and human rights (2009:12) if not managed the right way.

Indigenous/traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge

I suggest my informants represent different knowledge traditions. While my indigenous informants represent what might be called Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) or Indigenous Knowledge (IK), my non-indigenous informants represent Western Scientific Knowledge (WSK). TEK can be defined as *“a cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural*

transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment” (Berkes, 2008:7). IK is used as the broader category of the local knowledge held by indigenous peoples within which traditional knowledge fits (Berkes, 2008:9). In TEK/IK, knowledge is embedded in the local cultural milieu: It is bounded in space and time, representing a commitment or attachment to the environment as a unique and irreplaceable place, and no separation is made between nature and culture. WSK, on the other hand, is characterized by individualism, disembeddedness, a nature/culture dichotomy and an instrumental attitude toward nature. This way of seeing nature has contributed to environmental problems in the contemporary world, as many people are surrounded by a built landscape that has led to an alienation from nature, which again, for many, has led to difficulties relating to the environment (Berkes, 2008:7-11).

The two forms of knowledge constitute complex and various different traditions, so one should be careful about making generalizations. Still, I find these concepts useful to highlight differences between the indigenous and non-indigenous informants of my study. The two forms of knowledge often represent different political agendas that relate differently to the resource in question (Berkes, 2008:12-3).

Whereas IK was seen as inferior and an obstacle to development in the 1950s and 1960s, this knowledge was later viewed as the best development strategy (Agrawal, 1995:413). Much of the interest in IK has focused on the environment and the management of natural resources (Dove, 2006:196, see also Nazarea, 2006). But indigenous people are not necessarily natural conservationists (Ellen, 1986 & 1998, Conklin&Graham, 1995, Dahl, 1993). This will be further discussed later in this thesis. Using IK as an argument in defending indigenous communities may lead to an inappropriate, romantic and naïve way of defending them (Dove, 2006:196). Some IK theorists claim indigenous people may possess the answers to many of the problems that Western development strategies have failed to solve (Agrawal, 1995). Agrawal recognizes the positive contributions of IK theorists, but finds the division of indigenous and scientific knowledge problematic. Since there exists numerous versions of indigenous and scientific knowledge with specific histories and distinctive patterns of change, relying on the idea that that a small and set number of characteristics can define the elements within each category, is doomed to fail (Agrawal, 1995:414,421, Brosius,2000). I think it is important to have in mind the complexity and diversity of such knowledge systems in the construction of an international forest conservation initiative like REDD.

Globalization and transnational cooperation

REDD can, in many ways, be seen as a result of globalization. It is an international cooperation to prevent climate change by saving the remaining rainforest of the world and is a result of increased interconnectedness. Punttenney writes:

The linking of people and nations globally through a vast information network is creating a shared understanding of the world as a whole. As a consequence, there is a growing impetus to create new platforms of dialogue from local to national to regional to global levels and more that will lead to the development of sustainable systems through mutual sharing of knowledge and mutual cooperation, albeit contentious at times (2009:316).

I think this quote may serve to illustrate REDD, where REDD can be seen as a result of globalization. It is a new platform of dialogue between actors at local, national, regional and global levels, aimed at developing a common strategy. REDD discussions and negotiations create a mutual sharing of knowledge and cooperation, but, as Punttenney says, this sharing of knowledge and cooperation can be problematic at times.

REDD involves the whole planet and calls for transnational and multilayered cooperation. Eriksen emphasizes that, even though powerful economic and technological forces drive globalization, it is a phenomenon taking place between people. He claims that the transnational webs of the world, in the end, depend on interpersonal trust (2007:10). Even though REDD may appear to be negotiations between powerful international and national negotiators, it is, in the end and as demonstrated in this thesis, based on interpersonal relations of trust at the local level.

Friction

Anna Tsing claims that cultures are “*continually co-produced in interactions called “friction”: the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference*” (2005:4). Even though I find Tsing’s concept of friction confusing and complex I think parts of its significance, like I understand it, might be useful in this thesis. Through Tsing’s explanations, I understand friction as a concept that points out a concrete way to study global processes. What is perceived as global flows can be studied as a result of separate and concrete interactions between different actors representing different levels or parts of globalizing flows and processes. According to Tsing, friction is created where “*the rubber*

meets the road" (Tsing,2005:6). In my thesis friction is created when the global idea 'REDD' meets the ground - e.g. where REDD meets representatives from the UN, SEAM or in a local community. Each meeting represents different levels of interaction of the global idea 'REDD'. 'Deforestation' is another example of a global phenomenon. Friction makes the phenomenon possible to study by focusing on the meetings that take place on the ground – meetings between local communities, loggers, international companies and/or consumers in the industrialized world. All of these actors represent different levels or parts of the global phenomenon 'deforestation'. The content of the term is an outcome the “*interconnection across difference*” in these meetings (Tsing, 2005:4). Tsing writes: “[W]ithout even trying, friction gets in the way of the smooth operation of global power”(Tsing, 2005:6). I see my field of study as consisting of several friction situations that make complex and abstract themes, like REDD, deforestation and climate change, manifest and thereby possible to study.

In his book ‘Territories of Difference’ Arturo Escobar (2008) is trying to build bridges between political-intellectual conversations in social movements about environment, development and so forth and conversations in the academy about corresponding issues. He writes:

“This book is about many diverse yet closely interrelated aspects of social, cultural, and biological life at present. It is, above all, about place-based and regional expressions or articulations of difference in contexts of globalization; this implies setting place-based and regional processes into conversation with the ever-changing dynamics of capital and culture at many levels” (Escobar, 2008:1).

Even though Escobar does not use the term friction himself, I understand his study to be coherent with what Tsing calls friction. The quote further illustrates how I understand this concept, and how the global initiative REDD became possible to study as a result of several concrete place-based friction situations.

Social Interface

During my fieldwork, I participated at many meetings between stately representatives, NGOs and local populations. In addition to find Tsing’s concept of friction, I found Norman Long’s concept of social interface, useful when analyzing these meetings. I understand the concepts social interface and friction to be comparable, but, as I understand it, globalization is not a

prerequisite when talking about social interface. Long defines social interface as “*a critical point of intersection or linkage between different social systems, fields or levels of social order where structural discontinuities, based upon differences of normative value and social interest, are most likely to be found*” (1989:2). In this way Long’s concept of social interface helps me to analyze different kinds of social meetings and interactions I observed during my fieldwork.



Representatives from Alter Vida and Pykasu being filmed by a foreign film team



A meeting between Alter Vida and inhabitants in Pykasu



A visit from a dentist in Pykasu



SEAM discussing unsecure land tenure with indigenous representatives, Mennonites from the Chaco etc.

Long writes, “*Interface analysis focuses on the linkages and networks that develop between individuals or parties*” (2004:29). He claims the concept of social interface helps to focus on the production and transformation of differences in worldviews or cultural paradigms.

Friction and social interface will be the basis of my approach and analysis in the following chapters.

Seeing UN-REDD, deforestation and climate change as arenas of friction and of social interface, I tried to study the presence of knowledge and power aspects in the interplay and the blending or segregation of opposing discourses between indigenous representatives and governmental employees (SEAM) taking place in the Paraguayan debate about forest conservation (see Long, 2004:31).

Power theory

“[Social interface] implies some kind of face to face encounter between individuals or units representing different interests and backed by different resources. The interacting parties will often be differentiated in terms of power” (Long, 1989:2). I see my informants as differentiated in terms of power. To highlight this uneven disposition in my analysis, I will use Bugge’s interpretation of Bourdieu. In his discussion about power and power relations, Bugge sees Bourdieu’s term of capital as power: *“Capital [Power] can be seen as limited social resources ascribed a certain value by a social fellowship and which in power of its scarceness is able to create, enforce or maintain differences between social actors”* (my translation, Bugge, 2002:226). I find this interpretation useful when discussing how the different actors involved in my study were differentiated in terms of cultural, social and economic/material power (capital).

Historical perspective

In her ethnography about the Nuers, Hutchinson shows how historical processes have contributed to form the Nuer society as it is today (Hutchinson, 1996:25-30). Peter Wade finds it useful having a historical approach to be able to understand the current dynamic in a society (1997:1). Similar to Hutchinson and Wade, I find having a historical perspective just as useful - in terms of being able to explain and understand today’s situation in Paraguay, as well as understanding peoples’ thoughts about deforestation, climate change and REDD. SEAM and President Lugo represent a new political ideology, and to highlight the changes this new ideology represents, a historical perspective becomes necessary. Old and recent history was seen as significant for my informants both at SEAM and in Pykasu.

Thesis statements

Tsing argues that friction reminds us that heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power (2005:5). I argue that encounters between indigenous representatives and governmental agents (SEAM) in Paraguay today may contribute to facilitating new arrangements of power: by acknowledging forest on indigenous territories as a value (capital/power) rightfully owned by the indigenous people, respecting indigenous rights and seeing indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge as an important resource in forest conservation projects. Acknowledging indigenous rights and seeing their forest covered territories as valued capital when preserved and not cut down may empower the indigenous people in future international negotiations, such as UN-REDD. Yet, the majority in the Paraguayan parliament, and the majority of other ministries and institutions, do not share the new political will of SEAM (SEAM confronts a lot of opposition that makes their job difficult). If the present political leadership at SEAM is changed, or if the conservative Colorado Party resumes power at the next election, this socio-environmental policy might be changed back into its former way of being. When the government does not show real interests in forest conservation and does not acknowledge indigenous rights, UN-REDD could easily become a failure.

I argue that an observable willingness to cooperate with - and understand each other - has led to a fruitful mapping of opposing discourses, constructing a more solid ground for future negotiations between indigenous representatives and SEAM regarding UN-REDD and other forest conservation projects. I suggest this mutual understanding of what a project involves - based on the knowledge the negotiating parties have of one another - will be crucial in realizing REDD projects. I suggest the UN-REDD-negotiations, and other project negotiations mentioned in this thesis, emerged as a product of interaction, dialogue, reflexivity and contests of meaning (Long, 2004:30). I suggest that globalizing processes, like REDD, in the end consist of interpersonal relations where trust becomes an important factor (see Eriksen, 2007).

For indigenous communities like Pykasu, deforestation and climate change is a living reality. They hope the present government indeed will improve their situation. Due to the difficult situation of Pykasu, as other indigenous communities in the Chaco, I think REDD might become an attractive alternative for many - if managed the right way.

Some structural constraints on successful implementation of REDD in Paraguay

Paraguay confronts various problems regarding an eventual implementation of a REDD-scheme; some of the most severe being: unclear land tenure, ignorance of environmental and indigenous rights, weak institutions and a powerful elite that wants to do little to change the present situation. In Paraguay, a vast gap exists between rich and poor, and according to Transparency International (2010) the country is the second most corrupt in South America.

Will REDD-resources help arrange and settle the confusing situation of land tenure? Will REDD-resources go to where they are directed to, or fall into the fixed system of corruption? Will REDD benefit the lower classes, or increase the gap between rich and poor? These are all questions that can be asked when it comes to implementing REDD in Paraguay. As we will see, some representatives at SEAM hope REDD will become a mechanism that helps enforce democracy, empower the lower classes, help redistribute land as well as conserving forests and biodiversity. Yet, the government has a tradition of violating and disrespecting indigenous rights in the name of development. Paraguay has one of the most unequal land distributions in the world, and a powerful agricultural elite shows little interest in land reform where indigenous peoples gain rights to their traditional territories.

Powerful elite

Even though there has been a change of president, a wealthy elite still maintains power in Paraguayan political life, while counteracting opposition to their positions. The elite of Paraguay constitute only a few percent of the population and consist, among others, of great agriculturalists and big landowners. President Lugo sees agrarian reform as completely necessary. In Paraguay, the richest 10% have forty times the income of the poorest 10% of the population. The richest 1% of the landowners are sitting on 80% of the land (O'Shaughnessy & Diaz, 2009:9). Over thirty-five percent (35.6%) of the total population is considered to live in poverty, while 19.4% - 1.2 million - is considered to live in extreme poverty (NJP, 2010:7).

For some at SEAM, the great soy and meat industries, most often owned by foreign investors, were seen as shameful. Some believed these contributed to worsened livelihoods for Paraguayans themselves, as Paraguay did not gain much from their environmental destructions: *“They are just using up the lands in Paraguay, destroying the soils with*

intensive cultivation, and leaving them deserted when the soil are not capable of producing more” (SEAM representative). Several considered it to be a tragedy that these businessmen - instead of investing in the country - used the obtained capital produced in Paraguay abroad. In 2006, the state’s income from taxation was a mere 12% of the gross national product. In most developed countries, the taxation is three times that proportion (O’Shaughnessy & Diaz, 2009:9).

There exist many different stakeholders with different motives and interests in the forestry sector in Paraguay. A coordinated effort among different stakeholders, such as agriculture and forestry ministries, is required if REDD is going to succeed: Reducing deforestation from agricultural expansion is a great challenge in Paraguay. If stakeholders share a common understanding of appropriate forest and land use, if they have a shared and trusted way of negotiating agreements about REDD, and if local users derive co-benefits, REDD can succeed (Forsyth, 2009:122). In 2010, the different stakeholders were far from having a common understanding of appropriate forest and land use, leaving SEAM relatively alone in its wishes to conserve the forests and respecting indigenous rights.

Land tenure

Insecure land tenure makes local people vulnerable to dispossession. Having secure land tenure would give them more leverage in relation to the government and the private sector (Cotula & Mayers, 2009:v). The Paraguayan state has shown a remarkable resistance to carrying out serious land reform for the benefit of the indigenous population (Blaser, 2004:58), a land reform that will be needed if REDD will be able to succeed. A land reform may help to empower the local population and contribute to increased equality.

In 1957, Paraguay, for the first time, legally acknowledged the humanity of its indigenous population (Horst, 2007:36), but still, it was seen as an obstacle of the country’s economic progress. Due to the public policies’ lack of respect of the indigenous cultures and territories, indigenous people have been displaced and many have found themselves needing to degrade the forest and to rent their lands to big agricultural and livestock producers. In 2002, the Indigenous Census identified 185 out of 412 indigenous communities without a resolved land tenure situation, meaning the land is owned by a third part, and/or the land is untitled (NJP, 2010:9). More than 75% of the land titles in the Chaco region are estimated to be legally incorrect, most of these concerning lands that were handed out or sold illegally under the

former dictatorship (Hall, 2010:18). Ninety-three percent of Paraguayan territory is private property (SINASIP, 2009:73). In 1958, the former president and dictator Alfredo Stroessner presented his first plan for an agrarian reform. At this time the rural problem in Paraguay was said to be “*one of the most scandalous in Latin America in terms of the concentration of land in the hands of a few*” (Horst, 2007:53). An agrarian statute promised to break up large landholdings, but its enactment led to little actual reform and rather increased the already very inadequate land distribution. In the 1990s, large landowners began to deforest their land in order to protect their property rights. In Latin America in particular, deforestation has traditionally served an instrument to claim, and to obtain, legal title to the land (Streck, 2009:154). Today, there exists severe confusion concerning land and territorial claims in Paraguay, where you have several actors claiming legitimate ownership to the same piece of land. REDD has led to increased focus on resolving land tenure issues (Sunderlin & Atmadja, 2009:149) but implementing REDD before such land claims are clarified could lead to serious and potentially violent conflicts (Hall, 2010:18).

Article 64 of the Paraguayan Constitution of 1992 introduces a ‘way of life’ criterion when determining the amount of land an indigenous community is obliged to be given by the state. This article says the indigenous communities have the right to own “*lands enough, in size and quality, to assure the preservation and development of their idiosyncratic (...) way of life*” (Constitución Nacional de Paraguay/CNP, 1992, Blaser, 2004:55). Because of this criterion, a radical side and a conservative side have emerged in the debate around indigenous rights to land, especially in the Chaco (Blaser, 2004). Both groups are non-indigenous and operate with the same definition of *indigenusness* that involves traits as having harmonious relations with nature. While the radical side uses this definition to promote indigenous peoples’ rights - including rights to land - the conservatives use the same definition to argue that the contemporary indigenous peoples in Paraguay do not display these traits of indigenusness and, therefore, are not authentically indigenous. Among the conservatives are the powerful landowners who use this argument to change what they see as a flawed policy framework, particularly the laws pertaining to the land rights of indigenous peoples. While the radicals argue a profound reform of land structure is needed, the conservatives argue the land tenure structure should not be touched and that development must pursue as usual (Blaser, 2004:56).

Laws and rights

There exist a good legal framework in Paraguay respecting both the environment and indigenous rights. Paraguay has ratified the ILO 169 Convention, which recognizes the ‘rights of ownership and possession’ of indigenous peoples, and voted for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). In 2004, a law of zero deforestation was adopted in the Oriental region. From a loss of 20,000 hectares of forest in 2005, deforestation went down to 9,503 hectares in 2008.

Despite this good legal framework, rights and laws are continuously broken and disrespected. Effective sanctions do not exist to prevent lawbreaking, and many local communities are not able to defend their rights. Viable enterprises and self-determination processes surrounding secure rights are required, and effective sanction against, and disempowerment of, those that can abuse and override the local populations are needed (Cotula & Mayers, 2009:5).

Institutions in Paraguay have failed and have proved to be weak, corrupt and inefficient. The Paraguayan Institute of Indigenous Affairs (INDI), supposed defenders of indigenous rights and to ensure land tenure, has been accused of working against the indigenous communities’ struggles to reclaim land. As acknowledged in the UN-REDD National Joint Programme of Paraguay, this lack of institutional capacity can cause problems for REDD mechanisms (NJP, 2010:12). The reigning sense of disrespect of indigenous rights and the favouring of deforestation will be problematic for an eventual implementation of REDD.

Understanding tenure requires an understanding of the extent, and the ways in which, national legislation is actually applied on the ground (Cotula & Mayers, 2009:6). In Paraguay, many of my informants claimed the national legislation was not applied on the ground at all. This will be further demonstrated in the upcoming chapters.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent

The right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) has become increasingly important in REDD negotiations, and, even though there is broad agreement of the necessary elements of a FPIC process, it has been debated and many uncertainties exist about what exactly FPIC means and how it should be obtained (Anderson, 2011). This principle gives the indigenous peoples and local communities the right to give or withhold their FPIC to developments affecting their resources. The legal status of this right was strengthened through the adoption

of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Anderson, 2011:i). In Paraguay, FPIC seemed to be an argument in negotiations, rather than something established and observable. What was meant by FPIC and how they visualized it in practice was not discussed. Many indigenous representatives were aware of this right; the indigenous organization, FAPI, used it as a tool in the UN-REDD negotiations, and it was well known by some in Pykasu. Alter Vida, the NGO working in Pykasu, seemed to recognize the right to FPIC in their work, and the new administration of SEAM acknowledged the right to FPIC in the UN-REDD National Joint Programme. Yet, as we will see in upcoming chapters, this central right in REDD, among many others, was continuously violated. Paraguay's UN-REDD National Joint Programme, as well as SEAM, claims the REDD mechanism could ease the execution of laws needed for indigenous peoples and peasants to conserve and restore their forests on their ancestral territories (NJP, 2010:9).

Challenges and limitations of the material

While the anthropological literature on REDD is next to nonexistent, the anthropological or other social scientific literature on Paraguay is also very scarce. Moreover literature from the indigenous community Pykasu was lacking. This meagre amount of relevant literature, together with a tight time schedule, made it challenging to collect the information that I felt necessary, having no other material to lean on than my own.

In the Paraguayan countryside people tended to speak Guaraní, which is the second official language in Paraguay together with Spanish. I speak Spanish and managed well with just this when with SEAM. In Pykasu, however, people spoke their own dialect of Guaraní, and very few spoke Spanish. Even though I had a one-month introduction course in Guaraní, this complicated my fieldwork.

I used non-professional interpreters from the community when making interviews or visiting families where none spoke Spanish. Thus I have to take into consideration that my interpreters may have affected the answers of my interviewees by adding their own values and opinions to the answers. On the other hand, even though we did not communicate easily, I still tried to spend time also with those who did not speak Spanish. On many of these occasions, I felt that verbal communication was not necessary to grasp what was going on and how people felt and coped with their present situation.

I presented myself as an independent student of social anthropology that did not represent or act in the interest of any NGOs or other institutions. Even then, my 'moving around' - making new acquaintances in a controversial political landscape - may have led some people to be cautious and selective in what they chose to tell and involve me in. I did not feel this was a big problem, though, and rather felt that the distrust and scepticism I met increased my insight in the social processes that were going on.

Mapping myself

My presence as an observing participant may have affected the behaviour, actions and statements of my informants. Norway has, as already mentioned, become a powerful actor within international environmental politics and have supported REDD with a great deal of money. My role as a Norwegian student writing about REDD, deforestation and climate change may therefore have affected the way representatives at SEAM presented themselves and their institution to me. In Pykasu I felt that people recognized and accepted my role as an independent student. Yet my ties especially to Alter Vida, the NGO working in the community, may have affected some of my informants' behaviour towards me since the community was dependent on the help given by this NGO.

I tried the best I could to act as neutral as possible by not taking sides and to be understanding and open-minded towards all of my informants. Rather than to stress my own views and opinions, I tried to emphasize to them my role as a student, wanting to learn and acquire knowledge of them and their society. If I was asked directly about my opinion, however, I always gave an honest answer.

Structure of thesis

In the next chapter I will try to explain how the wealthy elite maintains a strong grip on Paraguayan political life. I suggest that SEAM shows a new political will, a political will Sunderlin and Atmadja believe is the key to resolving tenure rights (2009:145). In Chapter Three, I discuss how my informants in the Oriental region, especially SEAM, experienced deforestation and climate change, while I in Chapter Four, bring this discussion further to the Chaco region and Pykasu. In Chapter Five, I will give an introduction to the history of REDD in Paraguay, and how UN-REDD was understood, discussed and negotiated among my

informants. In the last chapter, I will discuss the importance of trust in REDD negotiations, and how trust and interpersonal relations can be crucial in situations where cooperation is necessary.

Chapter II: Political changes

The last dictator of Paraguay, Alfredo Stroessner, governed the country with an iron hand from 1954 to 1989. Using military forces, he oppressed possible opponents of the regime, and several persons in Paraguay today carry memories of the rigid control during the time of that dictatorship - or how themselves, friends or family were tortured or disappeared during this period (see Amnesty, 1984, Reed, 1995:65). During the regime of Stroessner, a system of corruption and clientelism was structuralized, a system that characterizes Paraguay today (Neri, 2003:275, O'Shaughnessy & Diaz, 2009:82). After the fall of Stroessner, the country never experienced great political changes, and, in many ways, the ensuing democracy was just an extension of the policies of the dictatorship (see Horst, 2007, Romañach, 2007: 31-50). This policy favoured the wealthy elite and contributed to maintaining the great gap between rich and poor; additionally, indigenous and other basic human rights were constantly violated. The Colorado Party, the political party of Stroessner, maintained in power until 2008. This is why many claim the real democracy in Paraguay did not start until the presidential election of Bishop Fernando Lugo in 2008. Known as the "Bishop of the Poor", Lugo came to power with his Patriotic Alliance for Change (APC), which is a gathering of parties from the centre-left, after 61 years of autocracy of the conservative Colorado Party. President Lugo promised changes in the Paraguayan society, setting the previously ignored indigenous population at the centre of his attention in the way of working towards enforced democracy, land reform and equality. The promise of change characterizes today's Paraguay and led to great expectations by many of the Paraguayan public. Many Paraguayans talk about their present as being *los tiempos de cambio* (the times of change).

How were the times of change experienced by my informants at SEAM and in Pykasu? How did the new political will in Paraguay affect forest conservation policy, UN-REDD and the livelihoods of people in Pykasu?

I will try to answer these questions by taking a historical perspective to explain the changes introduced by SEAM and on how the people of Pykasu experienced these political changes. I argue that SEAM shows a new political will that opens up for a possible redefinition of power relations between the indigenous population and SEAM. Still power relations between my informants remain highly uneven because of unequal possession of social and economic capital(see Bugge,2002); also, the powerful elite and the Colorado Party retains a strong grip

on Paraguayan political life, controlling an entrenched system of corruption and client relationships, making the job of President Lugo and SEAM difficult.

Weber defines power as “*the chance of a person or of a number of persons to realize their own will in a communal action, even if other participants of the communal action should resist*” (Bugge, 2002:226, my translation). I find this definition useful because it highlights the power relations between my informants at SEAM and in Pykasu and helps explain the Colorado Party’s dominating position. Krohn-Hansen argues that power is relational. Power should be seen as an exchange rather than a thing, and the parties in such an exchange can often be tied together in a highly differential, or asymmetrical, relationship (Krohn-Hansen, 2001:11). In this chapter, I will see power as a relation - an exchange - between my informants a relation that differs depending on the situation and the parties involved.

Lugo’s powerful resistance

The Colorado Party has contributed to maintain the great gap between rich and poor in Paraguay and has many followers from the Paraguayan elite who are benefiting from its policy. The Paraguayan elite possesses great economic resources and social capital. Social capital means a legitimate membership in a social group not accessible for all members of a society, or rather, exclusive social relations or networks an actor can use to assure different forms of returns (Bugge, 2002:241). Both forms of capital assure/uphold the power held by the elite and the Colorado Party.

Since the Colorado Party had contributed to maintain vast social differences in the country, I found it stunning to witness its widespread support. A poor small farmer, not benefitting from the policy of the party, could be as convinced of voting for it as the great cattle rancher with great economic capital in his possession. Dictator Stroessner and the Colorado Party gained popularity among peasants through an extensive land reform adopted in 1963 (Hetherington, 2009:225), but many said they voted for the Colorado Party because of family traditions or because the party knew how to rule after so many years in charge. Opponents believed many Colorado Party voters feared what would happen to them if they voted against them. Linda Green discusses the effect of fear as a political mean in her ethnography about Mayan widows in rural Guatemala. She writes: “*Fear is the arbiter of power: invisible, indeterminant, and silent*”, “[o]verwhelming empirical evidence demonstrates that state-sponsored violence has been standard operating procedure in numerous contemporary societies(..)” (Green,

1999:55,58). Referring to Brecht (1976) she writes: “Fear rules not only those who are ruled, but the rulers too” and then continues: “The elite, dominant classes are driven by racist fears of [indigenous people] and in more recent decades by the red menace of communism to perform the most brutish acts to protect the status quo” (1999:66). I think these quotes point at important features of Paraguayan power relations, history and contemporary society.

Today, Lugo’s government struggles to live up to peoples’ great expectations of the promised changes. Several of my informants spoke of how the Colorado Party had given peasants, or indigenous communities, immediate benefits (such as money or material goods) in return for their votes or threatening them if they chose not to vote for them. Some of my informants in Asunción and at SEAM thought it would be difficult for Lugo to win support in the countryside by his promise of better life quality sometime in the future. I was told people living far away from the political centre, Asunción, needed immediate results to continue believing: “A newly painted fence is better than nothing, if people do not see results they will vote for the Colorado Party. At least the Colorado Party gave them something” (Statement earlier small farmer living in Asunción). As we will see later in this chapter, people in Pykasu also missed some tangibly visible results.

Adherents of Lugo fear people do not realize that the promised changes will need time, as they demand a reorganization of an entire political structure. Lugo meets little support in the parliament and has difficulties getting his suggestive changes through. The national media frequently accuses him of being as corrupted as his predecessors, having various children outside marriage, having special relations to the guerrilla group Ejército del Pueblo Paraguayo (EPP) or building bonds with President Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, which leads to scepticism and disappointment among many of his voters. People had expected and hoped for more visible results of Lugo’s regime of change, and many believe the Colorado Party will win the next presidential election.

As we will see in this and in following chapters, the environmental and UN-REDD policy of SEAM changed with the election of President Lugo. It is argued that REDD-mechanisms will need to integrate with, and/or encourage, forest governance reform processes that aim to clarify and secure the rights to forest-dependent communities, facilitate the equitable sharing of benefits, and promote sustainable forest management at national and sub-national levels (Bond et al., 2009:22). I argue this is the aim of the new political leadership at SEAM. If the Colorado Party wins the upcoming presidential election, this policy might be changed back

into its former way of being, something that again may affect the future management of UN-REDD. The weak forest governance that characterizes the country today suits those who benefit from it, and changing the status quo will be very difficult.

In the next section of this chapter, I will explain how the political changes became visible at SEAM, and how changing the status quo was a demanding and difficult task.

Political changes in SEAM

I argue SEAM shows a new political will of good governance. Good governance can be defined as:

“(..) a form of political decision making that emphasises legality (rules to resolve conflicts), legitimacy (acceptance and trust by the public that create accountability) and participation (inclusiveness within decision making). Good governance includes and enhances participation of both citizens and governments in formulation and implementing policies, such as for REDD+” (Forsyth,2009:114).

With good governance at SEAM, I see SEAM as striving towards transparency, accountability, empowerment of local populations, protection and improvement of rights, responsibilities and participation as well as decreased levels of corruption (see Vatn & Angelsen, 2009:63). This becomes clear in its new strategic plan for the National System of Protected Wild Areas (SINASIP). Here, SEAM reveals that the management of the parks are going to include social and economic objectives, not just being units destined to conservation. The knowledge and lifestyle of indigenous and other local communities living in the park will be valued and respected, and SEAM will work towards decentralization and open up for participation by local communities, as well as respecting their rights to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (SINASIP, 2010). NGOs and other cooperative partners noticed an increased will of participation from SEAM. A representative from the Agency of Spanish cooperation in Paraguay, a collaborative partner of SEAM, told me their present close relationship and cooperation with SEAM would not have been possible just two years ago. Before this, SEAM had not showed much interest in neither cooperation nor their work and activities.

As a representative chosen by President Lugo, the present Minister of SEAM, Oscar Rivas, represents this new trend within Paraguayan politics. Oscar Rivas, as President Lugo, has the

indigenous population as one of his main concerns. After many years of working in the NGO environment with socio-environmental questions, he knows the ongoing situations and conflicts in the political landscape well and has worked closely with different indigenous communities. He has been working for the NGO Sobrevivencia/Friends of the Earth Paraguay, a NGO that focuses on environmental issues of indigenous, peasant and marginalized urban communities living in poverty and defends as well as promotes cultural values and ways of life. Friends of the Earth has been active in the REDD debate regarding the respect of indigenous peoples' rights (see Hall, 2010). SEAM's opinions on UN-REDD will be further discussed in Chapter Five.

When I arrived SEAM, almost two years had passed since the presidential election, but Rivas had only been Minister for some months. In 2009, Oscar Rivas replaced the former Minister from 2008, José Luis Casaccia, whom I was told, by representatives of SEAM, was replaced because "*he didn't show results and people were not satisfied with his work*". Many of my informants had the impression of Rivas watching his steps closely, trying to act as correct and careful as possible. Rivas was admired for his excellent speeches both in Spanish and Guaraní; still, many claimed his words did not result in actions. To find a common platform to point out the direction of the new political course was not easy, and people thought the Minister looked exhausted after just a few months in his position. The Minister and his entrusted retinue (see Chapter Six) worked to get rid of the old system of corruption and ineffectiveness.

Many of my informants at SEAM operated with the categories "new" and "old" employees, where the new employees often were those supporting the new political course of the new Minister. According to some of the new employees, SEAM, at the national level, was considered to have an extremely bureaucratic administration with an unnecessary high number of inefficient, corrupted, and poorly managing public functionaries. According to Romañach (2007), the public administration of the national government does not need more than 80,000 functionaries to maintain a good level of management. Today, the Paraguayan state has more than 200,000 (Romañach, 2007:74). Some at SEAM saw having such a high number of inefficient functionaries as a problem when it comes to fighting the various levels of corruption, while the number of educated technicians was considered to be too limited. Some saw it as problematic when new- and old-type employees were put to work together, as their different opinions often led to disagreements and unpleasant working conditions. Communication problems - both from the top-down and between the different sections of

SEAM - were also seen as problematic. Some had hard times understanding what those at the very top actually wanted and had a hard time interpreting the messages they were given. The fact that SEAM was divided into several small buildings, responsible for their own sub-sections of environmental concern, and with limited communication between different sections contributed even further to internal divisions between the employees. The work-environment at SEAM was tense, a tension made visible through demonstrations, private meetings, exclusions, lack of cooperation between the workers, gossip, bad talk and chatting in the hallways.



Employees gathering outside the offices to the new political leadership to demonstrate

Some of the new employees were continuously trying to figure out how to handle the complicated situation at the institution and how they should be able to prevent resistance from the old system. Some explained they could very well understand why it could be difficult for many that things were changing, but that these changes were necessary. The new political leadership would no longer tolerate working under corrupt conditions. Some were concerned about the fact that Lugo seemed to act as if he had plenty of time to make these changes - an amount of time, some argued, they did not have. Some expressed their worries about the continuation of the old system. They were concerned that the changes necessary would be too demanding. Some argued SEAM, as an institution, was too weak to handle this kind of changes and were worried people did not understand the extent of the great political and structural changes they were going through.

While some employees were satisfied with the new course of the institution, others dreamt about the “old” times when things had been much better; better often meaning the times when things had been “*like it used to be*”. Several employees called the present situation at SEAM a disaster. Neither opponents nor adherents denied the present chaotic situation at SEAM. Not just were they redecorating and building new offices, they were also making internal structural reorganizations. My informants taught me soon after my arrival that SEAM was *todo un kilombo* – a total mess. Some employees who had been working there for several years defined the situation as worse than ever. Many felt excluded from the Minister and his team’s actions while others felt increasingly more responsibility and need to participate. By trying to get corruption down to zero, some employees felt blamed or excluded, while others simply disagreed with SEAM’s new political profile. More rarely, some decided to quit, or thought about quitting their job, as they did not agree or believe in the new way of managing things.

I think SEAM reflects many aspects of the ongoing political situation in Paraguay: small parties trying to change an ingrown and well-established political situation based on corruption and clientelism. Internal disagreements, limited means and internal corruption accusations made SEAM, for many, an unpleasant place to work. Huge changes - trying make the institution’s profile to a more socially including one, from environmental to socio-environmental - meant great changes both on the theoretical plan and the administrative and practical one. As one of those working close to the Minister once said to me: “*There is no way to work with the environment if you don’t include the persons living in it.*”

I will now emphasize a social interface situation where SEAM signed a new agreement with the indigenous group, Aché of Ypetimi, to demonstrate how the changes became visible in practice. This event serves to describe things happening in Paraguay today that would not have happened before the election of Lugo.

Signing of a new agreement with the Aché of Ypetimi

SEAM and the Aché people of Ypetimi were signing an agreement about cooperation to preserve and to conserve the natural and cultural environment in the National Park Caazapa in the Oriental region, partly Aché ancestral territory. By signing this agreement, the Aché were, together with SEAM, going to cooperate on the protection, defence and work for the restoration of the ecosystems, the biodiversity and the forests. With this agreement, the Aché

were going to be included in the park management plan made in accordance with their traditional norms and practices. The management plan would contribute to the conservation of indigenous communities' culture and way of life (see Secretaría del Ambiente/SEAM, 2010). The Minister saw this as an event that promoted the complete respect of the indigenous communities, the original owners of the land within the park. The Aché shared SEAM's concern about the illegal logging and deforestation in the national park and were now given the rights to work as safeguards and park guardians defending the forest in the park area.



SEAM driving through fields of soy on former forest covered land on their way to the Aché community

Just 35 years previously, increased surrounding pressure from farmers and the national state led to the Aché coming out of the forest, abandoning their traditional way of living (see Clastres, 1972, Horst, 2007:16-31, Ache Djawu, 2010). During the dictatorship of Stroessner the Paraguayan state was accused of being behind organized genocide of the Aché (see Arens, 1976). The Aché, who at that time still lived their traditional lives in the forest, were feared

because of their attributed temper, aggressiveness, skills with bows and arrows and a lack of will to adapt the greater Paraguayan society. Forced into contact with the outside world, they were hunted, killed and captured as slaves (Horst, 2007: 16-31). The Aché are traditionally hunter-gatherers, with meat as the basis of their diet. As well as providing their subsistence, the forest also plays an important role in the Aché's religious and spiritual life (Zanardini & Walter, 2006). Today large plantations of soy threaten their remaining territories, which are part of the National Park Caazapa, and the Aché themselves are concerned about the continuous illegal deforestation on their ancestral homelands.

Driving through the Oriental region, my travel company was excited to show and to explain to me the passing surroundings. For the first time, I witnessed the tremendous fields of soy. The small, lean roads leading us into the community were made by Brazilian small farmers to guard the fields of soy surrounding the Aché community. The big machines used to fumigate left clouds of fertilizers hanging in the air, and, once you opened the window of the car, you could smell the chemicals. Water contamination and other related problems connected to this heavy use of fertilizers were severe and often led to sickness and sometimes even death in the surrounding local communities (see Neri, 2003:118-20).

As we arrived the community, we were welcomed with warm handshakes from Aché representatives. A gathering of men had painted their faces black, as their warriors do, and stood in two lines facing each other with their bows and arrows, making a passage leading to the community house where the meeting was going to take place. Mostly youth, children and some elders from the Aché community were the audience, along with the community leaders, representatives from SEAM, the Paraguayan Institute of Indigenous Affairs (INDI) and the Native Federation of the Paraguayan Aché (FENAP).

During the meeting, the Aché representatives told about their history of persecutions, hunger and thirst, their respect for Mother Earth and how painful it had been losing the forest. They had doubted their possibilities of further existence through such rough times but noticed and believed in the changes happening with President Lugo. After assuming office in 2008, Lugo named Margarita Mbywangi, a senior figure among the Aché people, who was an earlier slave and mother of three, as minister of indigenous affairs. Even though she was not minister for a long time, this marks a significant change for the Aché, who, for just some years ago, were hunted and persecuted. The Aché leaders expressed faith in the new course of cooperation with SEAM and believed in a better future, together with biodiversity conservation in the

name of their forefathers. One Aché leader promised hard effort from their side because, with or without money, the Aché would need help to stop deforestation and forest degradation in the park. By this agreement, the National Park Caazapa would receive a new spark, he said, and thanked President Lugo for making the fulfilment of dreams now a possibility. The Minister of SEAM emphasized the indigenous people being the original owners of the land and stressed the need to preserve and maintain indigenous rights.



The Minister of SEAM listening to an Aché representative



Some of the elders of the Aché community listening to what being said



SEAM representative with Aché children



Inside the Aché community house where the meeting took place

The Minister listened carefully to what the different Aché representatives had to say and responded to them in Guaraní. He talked about the political changes with Lugo, and how important these changes were after many years with dictatorship and "coloradismo". "Lugo as

a person does not matter”, the Minister said, “but the changes he represents do. These changes represent new possibilities and without Lugo the signing of the present agreement would not have been possible”. He expressed his gratefulness of cooperating with the Aché, who possessed such great knowledge about forest conservation and biodiversity. The Minister



SEAM representative



The Minister of SEAM and an Ache leader signing the agreement



Ache representative



Ache representative with his face painted in black

of SEAM, the President of FENAP and the three Aché leaders signed the agreement after it had been read out loud. It was an emotional event for everybody present, especially for the

Aché. Several Aché representatives cried in silence during the reading and signing of the agreement. Afterwards, a bow and arrow competition was held outside of the community building and food was prepared. People were laughing during the bow and arrow competition, as people made mistakes and celebrating when the arrows hit the target. Representatives from SEAM also made a few unsuccessful attempts, which was appreciated by the watching crowd.

I think this example shows that, even though many are disappointed of the few visible results shown from Lugo's government, some important steps indeed have been taken towards participatory democracy. This interface situation demonstrates the changes SEAM wishes to do and its new political will. Khron-Hansen argues "*political life in our time means processes that implies that humans create and recreate social categories (gendered, economic, ethnic, etc)*" (Khron-Hansen, 2001:14, my translation). I argue the new political will of SEAM shown in this part of the chapter demonstrates a recreation, or redefinition, of the indigenous population position, seeing them as collaborative partners rather than actors without agency. This will to include the indigenous population is promising, having future REDD-projects in mind. REDD might help enforce the new political leadership's will of good governance; if not the powerful fixed system of corruption and clientelism may avert it by preventing REDD-means to reach their intended destination.

Even though the political changes at SEAM became visible for some indigenous groups, the changes were far from being reached out to others. In Pykasu, people felt forgotten and had not experienced much of the promised changes.

Pykasu and politics

Change is nothing new for the Guaraní Ñandeva of Pykasu, who since ancient times have been used to adapting to different seasons and cultural influences. The Guaraní Ñandeva are organized around egalitarian principles and are not founded on hierarchical order. Before the encounter with the whites, leadership among the Guaraní Ñandeva was decided out of shamanistic wisdom, age, goodness and/or charisma. The present leaders are chosen by elections, and anyone could, in practice, become a leader. The leaders are the community's voice outwards, and, besides being in charge of the community meetings, they are also the first ones consulted with by external actors regarding projects or other deals. A good leader in Pykasu was considered to be a leader who included and consulted the community in his decisions. Leaders making decisions without the community's consent were considered bad

leaders. Being a leader was not seen as something especially desirable, and the position did not lead to any significant advantages. Both the first and second leader of Pykasu had tried to resign their positions earlier but had to resume since the need for a leader had been too great due to external threats. People in Pykasu dreamt of assuring a secure life for their children with education possibilities, health services, better life quality and not having to worry about hunger or the future.

During the Chaco-war (1932-1935, see Richard, 2008), the Guaraní Ñandeva and the Paraguayan soldiers found a common ground in their language, Guaraní. Even though their dialects were different, they could understand each other. Some believe that the name Guaraní Ñandeva, which can mean “Guaraní like us” (see Schaden, 1998:17), was given to this indigenous tribe by the Paraguayan soldiers during the Chaco-war. The Guaraní Ñandeva helped the Paraguayan soldiers survive the battle and win the war against Bolivia by guiding and teaching them how to find food as well as plants with roots containing lots of water.



An abandoned building at the Military base *Nueva Asunción*

When the war ended, many of the Guaraní Ñandeva were promoted with military titles. Because of their assistance and lifesaving help, President Stroessner, who had been an active soldier during the war, established good bonds with the Guaraní Ñandeva, paying them regular visits, where they, among other things, went hunting together. He renamed the area to New Asunción, a name still in use for the military base situated only a kilometre away from Pykasu. This base received planes of supplies sent by Stroessner, consisting of basic needs

such as clothes and food. Today, the base houses only 5-8 soldiers, leaving most parts of it abandoned and ruined. The material help given by the regime of Stroessner was by no means unique to Pykasu; it was part of a national integration strategy of the indigenous communities to the greater society (Horst, 2007:30-65).

This may help to demonstrate how people in Pykasu went from feeling prioritized and included to feeling abandoned and forgotten. In Pykasu, many remembered the times of the friendly and giving dictator, but few signs of his friendship were still visible in Pykasu. A few wooden houses were easy to separate from the other ones made of a gathering of sheet metal, wood and fabrics. The wooden houses had been part of a gift of total thirty houses, but only seven had reached the community before the dictator's fall. Many claimed that all help had vanished after the fall of Stroessner.

Hopes with Lugo

The Guarani Ñandeva talk about the former dictator as "*pro-indigenous*". According to the Ñandeva, President Lugo is considered to be the first president after Stroessner to be pro-indigenous. Lugo had shown concern for the indigenous population in the country and came to visit Pykasu himself for half an hour in 2009, promising changes and better times. During this meeting with the President, an elder woman in the community cried in front of him saying she was afraid of dying of hunger. As a response, Lugo took his arm around her, promising her that she would never have to worry about dying of hunger again. But, Pykasu has still not noticed any tangible changes after he won the election. Still many believe this centre-left-winged government will improve their situation and hope the changes of Lugo will be for the better. Some knew by gossip and news on the radio that opposition in the parliament stopped Lugo and made his job difficult; others suspected him to be one of those promising better times but then never to see them again. Since politicians had been in the community earlier selling votes, threatening those who did not vote for them, or promising improvements and development without results, many feared Lugo would not be any better.

In the last section of this chapter, I will describe an interface situation where my two fields of study (Pykasu and SEAM) met. This example demonstrates that, even though people in Pykasu still not witnessed much of the political changes promised by Lugo, they were offered an opportunity to be seen and heard by the new government: an opportunity they never had been given before.

Día del Gobierno

On my return from Pykasu to the capital, I dropped by *el día del Gobierno* (The Government's Day) in Filadelfia, the capital city of the municipality Boqueron. The Government's Day was an initiative of the new government where President Lugo himself participated. The government was holding this arrangement in every municipality in the country, where every citizen wanting to could come discuss selected topics of interest with central representatives of the state. The place of the meeting was divided into different sections, each discussing a certain topic of interest, like education, health care or indigenous affairs. Each theme had its own discussion room, and the participants could choose in which room and in which discussion they wanted to participate in, and thus choose which minister or other central representative they wanted to confront or to listen to. At the end of the day, each



Día del Gobierno – President Lugo second from the right



Inside one of the discussion rooms

room should present, in front of the President and the Governor, among others, the results of the discussion, with concrete suggestions of initiatives needed to improve the situation. These suggestions were handed over to the President. The leaders of Pykasu present at this event were lobbying, participating in the discussions, and following the President's speech with interest. Lugo said that the reason behind this reunion was to look for solutions together with the people and to govern with the people. He stressed the need of "*walking together*" and to "*play on the same team*", while using terms such as "*brothers and sisters*" when he directed himself to the audience.

I participated in the discussion room labelled “*environment*”, where SEAM was in charge. At this meeting, representatives from SEAM, indigenous communities, cattle ranches and Mennonite colonies, among others, were present, and the direction of the discussion was in great parts decided by the local representatives. Even though the participants often did not agree, they managed to negotiate themselves towards a document of shared accord to be delivered to the President. For the indigenous population and other regular citizens, this event offered a possibility to affect national policy in a way that had never been possible before.

Conclusion

The times of change were experienced differently for my informants at SEAM and in Pykasu. While the new administration at SEAM struggles towards a more participative and transparent environmental policy, people in Pykasu still wait for the changes they had been promised by Lugo. We have seen how my two fields of study – SEAM and the people in Pykasu- are located on opposite ends of the social ladder: the former, as a stately institution implementing national policy with great economic and social capital, and the latter, without significant means for social mobility or improvement of their present situation, which leaves them dependent on SEAM’s or other institution’s “good will” and are left to wait - wait for others to fulfil their promises. Even though SEAM is in possession of more material and social power than Pykasu, SEAM struggles against the greater power of the Colorado Party and the Paraguayan elite representing different political interests than themselves. The elite and the Colorado Party remain such a concentrated amount of power that they severely limit the capacity and new will of President Lugo and SEAM.

While the new political will of SEAM has affected indigenous peoples like the Aché, it has not affected the livelihoods of the inhabitants in Pykasu. The new political will of SEAM is more coherent with indigenous rights and forest conservation, something that is promising for UN-REDD. If the indigenous population become legitimate and recognized owners of their forest covered territories, and indigenous rights will be respected, REDD might help empower the indigenous population by seeing forests as valued capital in their possession. Yet, powerful interests show little interest in this redistribution of land and power. Fighting this opposition is - and will be - extremely hard. As we have seen, the Colorado Party maintains a powerful grip on the country’s population and politics, making the job of Lugo’s regime of change difficult. The new political will of good governance demonstrated by SEAM today

may change if the Colorado Party wins the next presidential election, or if changes are made in the new political leadership of SEAM. This will affect the future forest conservation policy and management of UN-REDD in Paraguay.

In the next chapter, I suggest that many of my informants in the Oriental region have an ambiguous view on forest conservation.

Chapter III: Forest vs. Development in the Oriental Region

A severe drought in 2008 and an ensuing global economic crisis led to a decline in Paraguayan economy. In 2010, however, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) reported significant economic growth, leaving Paraguay at the top of the statistics in the region. Economic growth and development were important for many of my informants, and many were proud that Paraguay - for once - headed the statistics for things other than corruption. The companies providing this economic growth are massive deforesters producing soy, cotton, meat and grain. This production often affects both the environment and the communities within the production areas in a very negative way. As recognized in the National UN-REDD Programme of Paraguay, I was told forests in Paraguay had been seen as an obstacle to highly needed development. For some people, the forest has been considered to be a green mass that could not be used for anything; it was considered as unproductive or unused land. Limited knowledge and information of the forest's value led to national standards promoting vast clearing of forest-covered areas to make the land into productive fields for agriculture (NJP, 2010:8). Even though Lugo has the indigenous population as his main concern, his government also has a vision of progress and development. A part of this vision is to open for oil prospecting activities in the biggest remains of untouched forests in the Chaco, which houses various indigenous communities.

In this chapter, I will focus on SEAM and the Oriental region, which is the most urban region with the highest population density. How did my informants at SEAM and in the Oriental region relate to development, deforestation and climate change? And how will REDD fit into this picture?

By focusing on SEAM and its job protecting the national parks I suggest limited means and political support make SEAM's job difficult. I suggest that many of my informants in the Oriental region had an ambiguous relationship towards deforestation and environmental degradation. Limited interests in forest conservation can make an implementation of REDD problematic.

Environmental education

In Asunción, outside of SEAM, I noticed little interest in, or concern about, the environment, deforestation and climate change - even though several complained about the changing climate, especially the weather getting progressively warmer. When asked explicit questions about deforestation, some did at times express that it was a pity the ancient forests were almost long gone. At the same time, they did not show great concern about the increasing deforestation rates in the Chaco. At SEAM, maybe as a natural consequence to their profession, the environmental concern among many was greater. Yet, many did not see forest conservation and development as conflicting. SEAM wanted to promote sustainable development mechanisms, and, to be able to promote this, they considered education of the people to be an important step. SEAM, as an institution of the state, is in charge of the UN-REDD programme working for conservation of the remaining forests. At the same time, SEAM is formed by the government's wishes for economic growth and oil and gas explorations in the Chaco region.

The streets in Asunción were often filled with garbage as the garbage collection service failed to arrive when it was supposed to; people seemed to throw their garbage everywhere but in garbage containers. Outside of the iron gates of SEAM, people living in *Cateura*, the main garbage dump in Asunción, were demonstrating; living under a temporary shelter of plastic outside of SEAMs offices, which protected them from the burning sun. They were yelling their claims through speakers to be heard by the people walking on the other side of the fences. For many, burning was a way of getting rid of their garbage. Only 33.6% of the population in Paraguay has garbage collection services (Neumann & Coronel, 2008:16). The lack of fire management practices and limited capacity to control wildfires contributes to deforestation and degradation of forest and has become a substantial problem for SEAM (NJP, 2010:10). Big companies, as well as small farmers, often start, by accident, uncontrollable forest fires primarily aimed at agricultural and livestock purposes.

Some of my informants at SEAM claimed many in the countryside acted environmentally destructive because they did not know any better or did not have any other options than to do so. About 10% of the population in Paraguay is considered to be illiterate, and higher education is not an integral part of Paraguayan society. The average Paraguayan has a total education of about 7 years (Naumann & Coronel, 2008:38-9). Some at SEAM considered environmental education as an important and vital measure in order to ease SEAM's job and

improve the environmental situation in Paraguay. They meant that greenhouse gasses, the greenhouse effect and climate change did not make much sense for many living in the countryside. For many in Paraguay, providing for their families and having food for the day were more urgent worries than climate change and forest conservation. Yet, forest destructions have led to worsened livelihoods for many people living in rural Paraguay (see Clastres, 1978, Reed,1995).

Environmental education is just one of many ideas of SEAM aimed at improving the environmental situation in Paraguay. But, as we will see, SEAM's actions were restricted because of limited means.



People working on an illegal garbage dump on the Paraguayan countryside



On his way to school? On the Paraguayan countryside

SEAM - Limited capacity

“People in many places, even when they are aware and willing to protect the natural environment, find it impossible to do so because of economic, political or cultural dislocations. Eliminating these pressures calls for good governance, organizing people through democratic processes. But it also requires proper coviability or convivencia, that is, reorganizing cultural allegiances to enable human beings with different ideals of a good life to live together compatibly in a living biosphere” (Arizpe, 1998, in Puntenney, 2009:315-16).

I think this quote demonstrates SEAM's present goal and ideology of protecting the natural environment in Paraguay. SEAM does not get a lot of resources by the state in order to handle environmental responsibilities, and claimed this was because of the lack of political will and support in the parliament. An example of fishing prohibition was given to me to demonstrate this. In Paraguay, fishing is prohibited for more or less a month every year to assure future fishing possibilities. In 2010, the government gave subsidies of approximately 12,600 million Guaranies (about \$3,200,000US) to about 14,000 fishermen affected by this prohibition. SEAM, on the other hand, got 17,000 million Guaranies (about \$4,300,000US) in its disposition in 2010 to cover all of its environmental responsibilities on a national basis (see ABC, 2010). For the 2011 budget, an amount of 24,000 million (about \$6,100,000US) was suggested. This was still considered by some to be a meagre amount, but it may show a modest - but increased - interest in environmental matters in the parliament. In the first instance Paraguay will receive about 4,7 million dollars from UN-REDD.

Even though SEAM wanted to make great changes, their ability to do so, and to cover all their responsibilities, were severely limited. The limited means led to SEAM having a difficult time protecting the national parks and other protected wild areas. As we have seen in the previous chapter, SEAM is changing their park policy from exclusion to inclusion of local communities.

National Parks and other Protected Wild Areas (PWAs)

Most of the forests left in Paraguay are indigenous territories and/or National Parks or other Protected Wild Areas (PWAs). Since 2000, SEAM has been the governmental agency in charge of the national parks and the PWAs in Paraguay. With a focus on the national parks, I will try to highlight some of the problems SEAM faces in trying to fulfil the environmental responsibilities ascribed to them. I suggest policy of the former political leadership at SEAM to a higher extent was characterized by a nature/culture divide (see Descola, 1996:98). This divide still affects attitudes towards environmental conservation in Paraguay.

National parks and other PWAs are defined as *“areas of land and/or water especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of associated natural and cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means”* (Clark, 2006:9). PWAs are by some considered to be a good formula for providing guarantees for nature conservation but can have various social effects, as it is a way of seeing and governing the

world (West, Igoe & Brockington, 2006:255). Such a system of protected wild areas has been created in Paraguay to protect the natural and cultural patrimony. Six million hectares - 15.04% of the country's surface - of the estimated 11,000,000 hectares of forest left in Paraguay are included within protected areas (NJP, 2010:7). The main objectives of the PWAs are considered to be, among other things, scientific research, tourism, education, maintenance of cultural and traditional features, protection of nature, wilderness and diversity (Clark, 2006:9).

Many of the protected areas came as a result of the Western way of thinking: operating with a clear nature/culture divide that characterized the policymaking. Local populations have been forced to migrate from their traditional homelands because of the policymakers' vision of human activity (culture) as something separate from nature - which threatens the natural biodiversity. Dove & Carpenter stress that in the hands of policymakers, this division, especially the belief that people necessarily threaten and degrade nature, has negative political consequences (2008:3). Local people traditionally living in the protected areas had to move away or stop using the area in the way they had done for ages. Parks were cut from human areas of activity to maintain and conserve the park's natural, "untouched" biodiversity and forest. Through this environmental policy, the protected areas imposed a distinction between nature and culture where it previously did not exist. The creation of protected areas often leads to restricted access and use for local people through legislation, enforcement, and privatization (West et al., 2006:257). This is what many local people fear REDD will turn into. Partly because of clumsy top-down approaches by national governments, conflicts about or within the protected areas are uncommon, as the governments fail to appreciate and collaborate with the local population (West et al., 2006:260). This has also characterized Paraguay's forest conservation policy. The creation of protected areas has led to violence against indigenous peoples rights, and the creation of "empty" spaces without people has resulted in areas without governmental control - at times leading to occupations of guerrilla forces or to drug trafficking (West et al., 2006: 260). In Paraguay, one suspected that the parks could be housing both drug plantations and settlements of the national guerrilla group, Ejército del Pueblo Paraguayo (EPP).

Between 2000 and 2008, Paraguay went from having 1,618,551 hectares to 6,167,022 hectares within the PWAs (SINASIP, 2009:11-2). SEAM had sizable problems guarding and protecting the protected areas; illegal logging, forest fires and suspicion of drug cultivation

were common themes of discussion and concern regarding the parks. SEAM saw the need to make changes because, as we are about to see, the former park policy had not been a success.

The National System of Protected Wild Areas (PWAs)

The National System of Protected Wild Areas (SINASIP) was drafted into law in 1994 (Legislación Paraguaya, 2010). In the second SINASIP strategic plan from 2009, the new administration of SEAM strongly criticizes the former park management plan made in 1993 and condemns the fact that only 3 out of 26 goals in it were met.

The new plan divides the present management status of the parks into five categories: very satisfactory management, satisfactory management, moderately satisfactory management, slightly satisfactory management and unsatisfactory management. None of the 29 PWAs under the public subsystem reach the level of “very satisfactory management”. Neither do any of them reach the category of “satisfactory management”. Only 3 parks reach “moderately satisfactory management”, among them being the park Médanos del Chaco, which is partly Pykasu territory. The great majority of the parks (20) are placed at the level of “unsatisfactory management”, meaning *“the area lacks the minimum of resources necessary for its basic sustenance, therefore, it does not exist guaranties for its permanency in the long run. The objectives of this area can not be achieved under these circumstances”* (SINASIP, 2009:43).

There are many threats working against the functioning of the SINASIP, such as the high costs of land for establishment of conservation units, limited technological resources and limited political support from the Executive and Legislative Powers (SINASIP, 2009:46-7). Many of SEAM’s concerns are concentrated around the PWAs in order to prevent deforestation and loss of biodiversity in the remaining forests in Paraguay. I will give an example from one of my trips with SEAM to give an impression of how the problems are experienced by the different actors involved in the task to protect the parks.

Witnessing illegal deforestation

On a trip in the Oriental region, we visited the national park, *Caaguazu*. Here, we were going to visit the park guardians employed by SEAM. The national parks are supposed to be guarded by park guardians, seldom more than two or three in each park, even though the need is much greater. As well as guarding the park, the park guardians’ job is to take care of the

visitors, clean the park houses, and show them around in the park area. Because of lack of infrastructure, accessing the parks is often difficult - at least without a 4X4 vehicle, a motorcycle or a suited animal. It is easy to see the calculable impossibility of one to three park guardians guarding an area of sometimes several hundreds of thousands of hectares from illegal logging and deforestation.

Getting enough park guardians is a problem for SEAM. Loneliness, boredom and alcoholism are all often negative side effects of the park guardian's job, and several park guardians told me stories about incidents where lonely park guardians had gone crazy from the loneliness in the massive forests surrounding them. The darkness of the forest, alcohol, stories and mystique of these places demands a strong-hearted person to survive this relatively low paid, dangerous job and livelihood without one's family and loved ones.

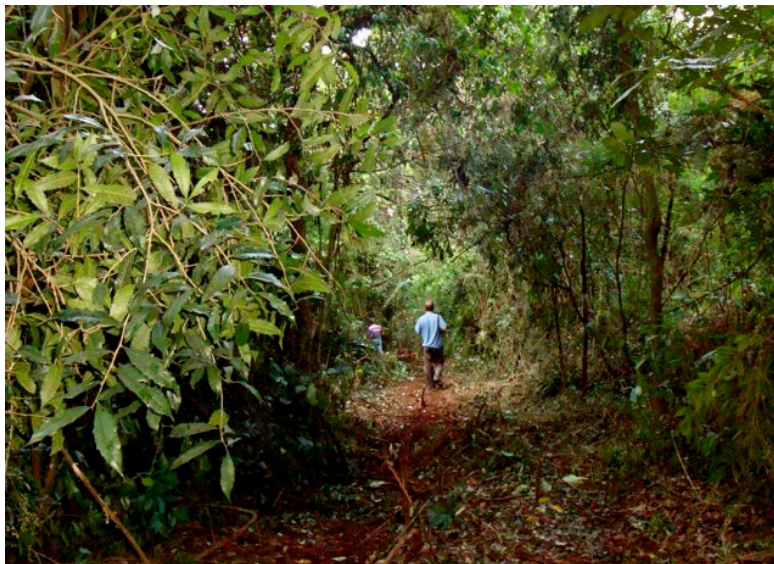
This day, my travel company decided to go visit a park-guardian house in Caaguazú - without anybody knowing its exact location. The tremendous fields of soy surrounding the parks seemed infinite and were, at times, more eye catching than the park itself. I found it hard to separate the plantations of soy from the park area, as the park's welcoming sign was planted in the middle of a field of soy itself. We had been looking for the house, driving back and forth, when we found it at last. The house was completely overtaken by the surrounding nature, making it hard to discover. The abandoned park-guardian houses had not been used for quite some time, and their only settlers were bees making the houses dangerous to enter. As we drove further down another road, we soon discovered a newly cut path leading into the forest. The path continued further into the forest and soon became wider. When we turned off the engine and stepped out of the truck, we could hear ongoing motor saws further away. We followed the path a few hundred meters, walking with the high dark green trees way above our heads - but turned back again realizing the danger of the situation. We were close to illegal loggers, and, as they often are heavily armed, we returned to find the closest police station.

Illegal timber activities can be a good opportunity for small farmers, indigenous people and even park guardians to earn good money. The payoff from cutting and selling tropical wood is overwhelmingly better than their own income, if they have any. SEAM often discovers illegal logging from satellite photos, and, as the loggers know, they will be able to escape long before SEAM and the police get to the place of crime. If the law-breakers are caught, they get a fee that obviously hurts but which is not enough to keep them away from the benefits of

logging. The low-paid police force that catches a crime can easily be convinced - with the right amount of money handed over - to let the crime pass. Due to foreign investments and big-scale agricultural expansion, many people can no longer provide for themselves by using just the means of the nature surrounding them. An increasingly number of people in the



The abandoned park guardian house



Entering a path newly made by illegal loggers in the National Park Caáguazu

countryside are getting dependent on additional monetary income. As Reed illustrates, the indigenous people Chiripá was for a long time able to enter the regional commercial society by integrating commercial activities with horticulture, hunting, and fishing without being

dominated by it, but this was becoming harder and harder because of increased deforestation and pressure on their territories (Reed, 1995:124).

It was already late, and the sun had already set as we reached a small village called Tito Finco, apparently unknown from anyone besides its own villagers. We headed directly to the tiny local police office where a representative from SEAM reported what we just had witnessed, and the park guardians nearby were called and asked to come. Both the closest park guardians and the local police officer claimed they were not aware about the situation of illegal logging. When the case was reported and discussed, we all went back to get some sleep. There was nothing more we could do about the situation.

I think this example highlights what many of my informants claimed to be a problem: there exists many good environmental laws in Paraguay, but few of them are followed. The law of zero deforestation in the Oriental region, as the example shows, is often broken. SEAM was concerned about the alarming rates of illegal logging, and spoke of disturbing stories about how they had discovered roads made by loggers as wide as freeways inside some of the parks. The consequences for the lawbreakers are few, and the risks are low. As the park guardians are too few, the resources too limited, and the area too tremendous, the loggers are long gone by the time somebody gets there. This is one of the reasons why SEAM sees the need for cooperation with local communities.

REDD

The successful implementation of a REDD scheme depends upon the will and ability of the state to govern its forests effectively. Failures in governance are underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, and deforestation and degradation rates tend to be highest where governance is weakest (Bond et al., 2009:20,34). The weak governance in Paraguay has contributed to the high deforestation rates in the country. REDD could help SEAM in their work towards strengthening governance and developing a more efficient forest conservation strategy, as SEAM saw its limited means as one of its greatest hurdles preventing proper execution of all their environmental responsibilities.

Conclusion

Visions on deforestation and climate change among many of my informants in the Oriental region were ambiguous. At the same time as worrying about increasing temperatures and wanting to conserve the remaining forests, many see the need for development of the country as a greater concern. For others, deforestation and forest degradation was a mean to provide a highly needed monetary income. SEAM recognizes the need for change in a park-protecting system that has proved to be inefficient. The challenges to create a more efficient system are many; corruption and lack of institutional legitimacy being two of them. SEAM's new political will of inclusion and respect of local peoples and their rights is suitable for REDD, yet the government's wishes to open up for oil and gas prospecting activities in the biggest remains of continuous forest in Paraguay and its urge towards economic growth might be conflicting with this socio-environmental ideology.

I will now turn to my experiences from the Chaco region, a region very different from the Oriental region - both environmentally and socially.

Chapter IV: Deforestation and climate change in the Chaco region

The Chaco region houses only 2% of the total population in Paraguay. In the Oriental region the great majority of the non-indigenous society was not aware of what was happening in most parts of the Chaco and did not have, as a following consequence, any opinion on the matter (see International Workgroup for Indigenous Affairs/IWGIA, 2010). Some claim the law of zero deforestation in the Oriental region has contributed to make the population increasingly aware of the importance of stopping the massive deforestation (Neumann & Coronel, 2008:76). But, while one observes increased concern about the environmental consequences of deforestation in the Oriental region, one also observes increased deforestation in the Chaco region. Lugo suggested passing a law of zero deforestation in the Chaco region - where there is supposed to be oil and gas - but his suggestion was dismissed. Oil and gas extraction in the Chaco is considered to be an attractive source of income. For some of my informants in the Oriental region, this was believed to be a great opportunity for progress and development, as well as the continuously expanding areas destined to cattle industry.

Many of my informants in the Oriental region characterized the Chaco as hostile. The drought, sandy winds, high temperatures, lack of water and food made it easy to understand why. Despite all this, the Chaco I got to know, in and around Pykasu, also offered a tremendous richness by its cultural diversity, mysterious atmosphere, archaeological treasures, incredible biodiversity and undocumented history. Many indigenous peoples in the Chaco fight for the law of zero deforestation to be passed in this region and worry about the increased deforestation rates.

How did people in Pykasu experience and relate to deforestation and climate change? And how will REDD fit into this picture?

Drought was the greatest challenge for the people in Pykasu during my stay. I suggest massive social and environmental changes, like deforestation and climate change, affect the ability of people in Pykasu to be resilient. I argue that many in Pykasu have an ambiguous view on deforestation.

To demonstrate this, I will discuss some of the ways the Guaraní Ñandeva of Pykasu handled the increased pressure on, and the changes in, their surrounding environment. I will discuss this by using *resilience*, *mapping* and *development* as analytical concepts, and I will use a carnival celebration and a social interface situation between Pykasu and the British company, CDS Oil & Gas Limited, to demonstrate the relationship the people of Pykasu had to their surroundings.

Surrounding pressure

The Guaraní Ñandeva of Pykasu were traditionally indigenous peoples living in the field (*indígenas del campo*). They said the landscape had changed during the last hundred years. What earlier had been *campo natural* were now covered with dense and high shrubs. The Guaraní Ñandeva had preferred the *campo natural* but had always lived from and of the forest. Now, their surrounding habitat composes a unique and extremely vulnerable ecosystem, where changes may lead to drastic and catastrophic destructions (SEAM, 2006:11-12).

In 2010, an area of 240,549 hectares, an average of 769 hectares daily, was registered deforested in the Gran Chaco. The Paraguayan Chaco counted for 87% of the deforested area (Guyra Paraguay, 2010). The Guaraní Ñandeva in Pykasu are experiencing massive changes in their surrounding ecosystem, and there is a danger of an increasingly devastating resource exploitation of their environment. Great deforesting companies and other actors interested in mineral, oil and gas exploitation are continuously searching for opportunities to settle in the area.

The surrounding habitat of Pykasu is victim of increased pressure from the non-indigenous world. According to an IWGIA report, this increased pressure is caused by;

“1) expansion of cattle farming, accompanied by extensive and irrational deforestation, often in contravention of the country’s laws or with environmental permits granted without fulfilling the necessary legal requirements(..). 2) Large scale sale and illegal allocation of land in Agrarian Reform colonies to the military, cattle ranchers, Mennonites (institutionally and individually), foreign investors (many of them from Brazil), and agro-industrial companies(..). 3) Oil prospecting and seismic testing by companies granted concession by the government without prior consultation with the indigenous peoples

affected(..). 4) Clandestine activities by missionaries promoting and seeking to force contact(..). 5) Illegal harvesting and sale of precious wood and wild animals(..). 6) Violation of territories by disrespectful scientists, adventurers and sports enthusiasts- sport hunters, car rally participants and their fans – and others(..)” (IWGIA, 2010:24-25).

On my way from Asunción to Pykasu, I watched the landscape gradually change. In a discussion about REDD some weeks earlier, one indigenous representative had said: *“In the Chaco the cows live better than the indigenous people”*. Along the road, we saw huge livestock ranches that had eaten their way into the country’s biggest remains of “untouched” forests. We had already passed landless indigenous people living side by side with hundreds of cows grassing on their ancestral lands. The dry air, the tremendous heat and sandy soils made it hard to understand how green trees and bushes could grow there at all. The image of the hostile and dry Chaco I had been given by my informants in the Oriental region did not match this image of endless green covered plains.



On the way to Pykasu

Coping with a drier climate

“Everywhere, from high-latitude taiga and tundra regions, to high-altitude mountain ecosystems, from tropical rain forests to near sea-level coastlines, there are compelling similarities in the narratives, accounts, and experiences of indigenous and local peoples who are already seeing and experiencing the effects of climate change. For them, climate change

is not something that may happen in the near or far future but is an immediate, lived reality that they struggle to apprehend, negotiate, and respond to” (Crate & Nuttall, 2009:9).

This is the case for the people in Pykasu who, for especially the last seven years, have experienced severe difficulties brought on by climate change. Increased heat and drought have led to, among other things, failing crops, loss of superficial water resources, and decreased amounts of forest commodities. Climate change magnifies already existing problems for the Guaraní Ñandeva: poverty, deterritoriality, marginalization, and noninclusion in national and international policy-making and discourses (Crate & Nuttall, 2009:12).

Resilience

In Pykasu, people were no longer able to live as they once did from natural resources, and were completely dependent on the greater society. The political organization of the Guaraní Ñandeva, like the neighbouring Ayoreo people, has been dynamic and characterized by constant social mobility, and not founded around centralizing principles (see IWGIA, 2010:6). The earlier semi-nomadic Guaraní Ñandeva could divide themselves into different political autonomous groups - temporarily separate - but then join together again later on. These groups were not permanently established but flexible and subject to change. This way of political organization gave them an extraordinary capacity to adapt to changing circumstances in life. Today, the Guaraní Ñandeva are sedentary as a result of external pressure and changes.

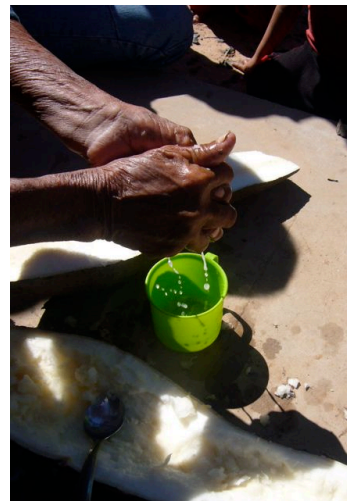
Resilience can be defined as *“the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks“* (Walker et al. in Nuttall, 2009:298). As Nuttall argues, the ability of being resilient in the face of change depend on a strong sense of community, kinship and close social associations. When the surroundings are characterized as unpredictable, changing and uncertain, social relations can offer a source of constancy, safety and belonging. If these networks of kin and social relationships are broken or weakened, one can experience an increased feeling of insecurity in their social world (Nuttall, 2009:298). In Pykasu, people told me they had not only experienced environmental changes, but also political and social ones, as will be further discussed later in this chapter. As Nuttall argues, such changes can, by threatening the social cohesion of community, endanger peoples’ livelihood and separate people from their fundamental relationship with people, animals, and place (Nuttall, 2009:300).

“What’s Pykasu without water? Nothing”.

When I arrived Pykasu, almost every adult male had left because of work opportunities at a ranch (*hacienda*) further south, leaving mostly just the elders, women and children behind.



Extreme draught has left Pykasu without access to surface water



Retrieving water from the root *sypovy*

There had always been periods of drought, and the Guaraní Ñandeva are used to living in a harsh habitat; but never before could they remember periods of so little rain. The heavy rain had once again not come this year, and the drought, heat and absent water led to cultivation problems and lack of food. The forest did not have much to offer, and even wild animals were skinnier than before. I was told that the four previous years had been the worst in history, and

it just got drier and worse each day. When the food supplies at the community storage almost came to an end, the children at school were the ones prioritized. Since none of the male workers had come back with supplies, and the emergency packages supposed to arrive to the areas most affected by draught were delayed, the children at school were fed with a soup made of water, flour and sugar the last couple of days before any external provisions arrived. People expressed their worries about the absent rain. “*If it just rains everything will grow here*”, people kept telling me. Now the root of the plant *sypovy* (*Yvy’a*), that rescued them during the dry periods earlier, had also become thinner and smaller, containing less water than before, which served as proof of a drier climate.



Preparing the school meal



Emergency packages with food and other basic supplies arriving

I will exemplify the environmental and social changes experienced by the people in Pykasu by a carnival celebration that was held during my time in the community. I will start off with telling how the carnival used to be celebrated before, by then giving a demonstration of how the carnival was celebrated in 2010. I will bring out the differences between the two celebrations; differences I suggest demonstrate both the environmental and social changes that have taken place in the community.

Carnival

The carnival was an ancient tradition. Originally, it was a tradition from the Guaraní Occidental/Guarayo, another Guaraní speaking tribe in the Chaco, but since some Guaraní Ñandeva were of Guarayo heritage, this was a tradition the Guaraní Ñandeva of Pykasu had adopted. The Ñandeva also used to have fiestas and dances where drums and flutes were played; yet, these traditions were neither practiced nor remembered any longer. During the times of moving, the Guaraní Ñandeva often met other indigenous groups, and exchange of goods as well as persons between them was common. This probably led to linguistically as well as cultural influences from other ethnic groups that characterize the Ñandeva today.

The carnival was a feast held during the time of harvest. It was a celebration of having enough to eat and drink - a celebration to thank God for the passed year and to ask for wishes and good times for the year to come. It was an event where one danced, sang and laughed to show God they were happy, but, at the same time, it was also an event where one remembered and felt closer the ones who had passed away. From the family gardens, people made alcohol drinks from watermelons, pumpkins or sorghum. Flutes and drums were used as instruments, and they had various songs with different meanings that were played at different stages of the carnival. People prepared masks long before the celebration and covered themselves as well as they could so that no one would recognize them. This was found amusing, and the girls were excited not knowing who asked them to dance. This feast could last until no one had the energy to continue - often several weeks or over a month - and people did not rest unless they had to. At the end of the carnival, the field was cleared and cleansed and the masks hidden in the forest never to be used again. This cleaning marked the end of the carnival and the beginning of the New Year. The carnival was like a renewal of the body, an exorcising of bad spirits and the marking of the beginning of a new year. This was a way of satisfying God, so he would provide another good year.

Carnival in times of drought

“Every day it gets dryer, there is no more food, and it is not the same thing to celebrate the carnival on empty stomachs” (Pykasu representative).

In 2010, it had been four years since the Ñandeva celebrated the carnival, and the upcoming celebration was going to be somewhat different than explained above. The carnival had not

been celebrated because of the last years' dryness. Normally, the carnival is planned long before the actual celebration, so this carnival was considered impulsive, just showing certain



Carnival instruments



Children dancing; some with improvised masks



Children enjoying the festivities



Playing the drum is an important task during the carnival

parts of the celebrations. The watermelons that were usually used for making *chicha* (alcohol beverage) were too scarce and small, and since making *chicha* is a time-consuming activity, it was replaced with “*tres leones*”: liquor bought from the closest store some hours drive away. The music was played from a traditional drum made of cactus and roe deer skin, a self-made

flute of metal, and smaller temporary drums of empty metal or plastic cans. The children, mostly girls, started to dance in a circle holding hands, while some of the boys had dressed up with improvised masks and ran around the girls in circle while screaming. Some of the youths and more grownups accompanied the dance later on. Two representatives from the NGO Alter Vida were present and sponsored the carnival with some essentials during the celebration. We had a good time, dancing, laughing, and some people crying under the starry sky. One of those crying confessed to a representative from Alter Vida that it was tears of joy. It had been such a long time since they had celebrated the carnival, and he remembered his loved ones that had passed away.

Far from everybody participated in the celebrations. Most of the men were out working, and I was told several women kept some distance from the festivities out of respect for their absent husbands or the lack of energy. I was also told many were not present because of religious beliefs. Some in Pykasu are attached to the Mennonite movement that has its origin in the reformed protestant tradition, called evangelism by many in Pykasu. The ones that had converted to this form of religion now saw the carnival celebration as sin. Singing, dancing and drinking were not seen as proper behaviour for a good evangelic. Before, I was told, there was singing and dancing outside the houses every night. Now everything is silent. Just a couple of elders still know songs in their own language.

Religion and changes

The increased contact with the Paraguayans after the Chaco-war led to various changes for the Guaraní Ñandeva of Pykasu. Missionary influence led to the conversion to Christianity, but Catholic and traditional practices and beliefs melded together and coexisted apparently without severe conflicts. Increased contact with the Paraguayan society gradually led to the fading of old traditions and to the mixing of cultural practices. During my stay in Pykasu, all seemed to acknowledge that a lot of traditional knowledge and practices had been lost, and many feared to lose even more since none of their practices were documented by texts, pictures or recordings.

In many ways, the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s was a milestone in the Ñandeva society and lifestyle. In the end of the '70s, a wise, good shaman predicted that, after his death, a lot of spirits would leave Pykasu, with bad times coming. About the same time, evangelic missionaries from the Mennonite colonies further south in the Chaco, made their

entrance in Pykasu and convinced many to convert to this form of Christianity. This religion, as the example of the carnival demonstrates, forbade many old traditions, beliefs and practices and considered many of them as sins. While some had embraced these new religious practices, others resisted. Many of those that do not consider themselves to be evangelic define themselves as catholic, with stronger faith in ancient wisdom and beliefs in natural forces. Many did not want to adopt “*the culture of the Mennonites*”. Some connect the bad times to this change of religion and the abandoned traditional practices.

Some connect today’s misery to the death of the good shaman, who predicted the bad times coming. Some blamed the loss of shamanistic practices, like knowing how to call on the rain. Shamans still existed, I was told, but, because of evangelism, they had abandoned their practices since it was considered to be a sin. Contemporary children’s lack of respect for the elders and their traditional knowledge could also contribute to this. All the changes made, in addition to disrespect of their forefathers, could have made God angry. Others saw the bad times as those predicted in the bible. The surrounding deforestation and destruction of nature were also seen as crucial to the climate and environmental changes, as trees created humidity and nature should be treated with respect.

Even though many inhabitants of Pykasu had abandoned many of their old traditions and beliefs, the forest maintained importance for many. The forest contained memories of their history, families and forefathers, and, besides the fruits, berries, honey, medical plants and animals, the environment also contained rich spiritual life. Every plant, tree and animal had a guardian/chief (*cuidador/dueño*) who took care of it. This was one reason why nature had to be respected. Overuse and disrespect may lead to negative consequences, as the chiefs get angry. An angry chief could make a hunter get lost in the woods or have bad luck in hunting. The pregnant women should not eat jaguar meat because it could make the jaguar chief angry, and make the baby and its mother vulnerable to jaguar attacks. Some still ask for good luck or permission from a chief before hunting. The chiefs could come to you while sleeping and say their names. Many shamans carry names given to them by a certain chief while they slept. The chief can also sing his song to you while sleeping. Knowing songs like this recognizes a shaman and give him powers. In ancient times, the shaman knew many songs, now they only know a couple. The shaman could call on the rain but also communicate with God. God was the guardian/chief of the humans; therefore, it was important to pray and do good things to keep him satisfied so he did not get upset. Before, when there were shamans, the Guaraní Ñandeva did not lack things the way they do now. The shaman could ask for rain, good

cultivations, food for tomorrow and give the hunters advice where to go so they would have a successful mission. For some, this loss of knowledge increased the feeling of no longer being able to control their surroundings.

The situation of the Guarani Ñandeva of Pykasu can be compared to the San people of the Kalahari Desert in Southern Africa (Hitchcock, 2009). Like the Ñandeva, the San are familiar with environmental and socioeconomic challenges like serious droughts, hot spells, outbreak of diseases³ that affect their livelihoods. The San have employed a variety of strategies to cope with environmental changes. Like the Ñandeva, they have tried diversifying their subsistence bases, depended on, among other things, other groups, governments or international agencies for food and support. The San, like the Ñandeva, live a life in poverty heavily dependent on natural resources, and employment opportunities are limited and wages are low. Like the Ñandeva, the San recognize the climatic and environmental change and have various theories about the sources of that change. While some San said the changes were due to natural oscillations in the ecosystem, others said the present conditions were worse than ever before. Similar to the Ñandeva, the San lack surface water and confront water difficulties. Some San suggested that people needed to engage more in ritual activities to improve the health of the land and the people living on it. Others felt the environmental problems exist because many people were no longer following traditional customs of reciprocity and collective burden sharing. Like the Ñandeva, the San claimed that the custom of sharing of goods and services was breaking down in part as a result of the occurring social, demographic, and natural changes. Some San did say - also like the Ñandeva - that the environmental changes were due to external factors; in the Ñandeva's case, the surrounding deforestation leads to a drier climate (Hitchcock, 2009).

Many in Pykasu, like the Kalahari San, seek explanations for the environmental changes and challenges they are experiencing. The changes made are not necessarily based on what the Ñandeva themselves wanted but are changes that have come as a result of external pressure, decisions and influences. The people in Pykasu, like the neighbouring Ayoreo people, experience increasing impoverishment, loss of autonomy and dependence on the system of life of the surrounding society (see IWGIA, 2010:14). The possibilities of social mobility are limited. Some people search opportunities like occasional employment near the centres of the

³ In the case of the Guarani Ñandeva in Pykasu, diseases include, among others, diarrhea, stomach pains, tuberculosis, and chagas.

greatest concentration of non-indigenous population, where they live in severely disadvantaged conditions.

People in Pykasu are incorporated to the modern society and were not able to live of what nature could provide them. New ways and alternatives were therefore needed. REDD could offer one such alternative.

The drawings of determined borders after the Chaco-war led to restrictions on the moving patterns of the Guaraní Ñandeva. Before this, they had moved freely between Paraguay, Bolivia and Argentina. As Nuttall argues, such institutional, political, and social changes do not provide “*room to move freely in a changing world and to navigate it with reference to the experience of an intimate relationship with one’s local environment*” (Nuttall, 2009:298). As we are about to see, the Guaraní Ñandeva of Pykasu, like other indigenous groups, saw an increasing need to transforming their claims into a language recognized by the greater society.

Mapping – a mean to cope with external pressure

“On the white men’s maps, no one has ever mentioned the Ayoreo territories. It is as if they had erased our history, as if the Ayoreo people had never been there, and as if no Ayoreo continued to live there(...). We cannot show a land title, but there are still signs of our presence from the past and from today, which prove that it is our territory” (Ayoreo representative, neighbouring tribe to Pykasu, IWGIA, 2010:4).

The ILO 169 Convention recognizes the basic principle of the distinction made between ‘land’ and ‘territory’ by the indigenous peoples themselves (Art.13 in Prieto, 2009). The concept of land refers to the special relation the indigenous have to their land and the collective aspects of this relation. Territory, on the other hand, includes the totality of the habitat, which is considered to be not only the land, but also the water, the air, the environment, the sacred places, the ceremonial centres, the roads and places of habitual camp in addition to other places of historical importance. It also includes the subterranean resources, even though this is conditioned by the actual regime of each state (Prieto, 2009:70). Pykasu itself was about 57,000 hectares in size, but the whole territory of the Guaraní Ñandeva, called Ñu Guasu (Great Land), was estimated to be about 300,000 hectares (IWGIA, 2010:12). The community had obtained title to its land, but the documents and formal ownership were still in the hands of The Paraguayan Institute of Indigenous Affairs

(INDI). When I left, Pykasu still waited for the title to be transferred, making Pykasu the legal claimants to their land. They had no legitimate document stating their ownership to their territory except from their own oral claims: *"We don't know how to make our moves. We don't know how to write, we don't know how to apply for our territory. We know exactly what is ours and so do our indigenous neighbours. Our forefathers showed us"* (Pykasu representative).

As with the Maratus Dayaks in Indonesia, the Guaraní Ñandeva experienced problems in the battle to make their territorial claims acknowledged. Tsing (2003) stresses the need for recognizing forest-living people's territorial claims (see also Peluso, 2003), writing about the Meratus Dayaks who became nomads with no political rights or land claims in their encounter with the Indonesian state. She argues commodity standards for resource claims are taken for granted by most environmentalists, scholars and policymakers. "Commodity-property" claims, she argues, divorce claimed objects from social context and personal aura that often characterize the "charismatic" claims of forest people. "Commodity-property" claims are "bureaucratic" and have to be impersonal, passive, context-free, and transferable in order to be enforced by the state. She demonstrates how a timber company and the Meratus people saw two different forests, metaphorically speaking. While the timber company saw Meratus territory as a "wild" place and therefore not claimable, the Meratus saw a social landscape, with claimed trees and a forest seen in relation to their memories and history (Tsing, 2003). I think this example of the Meratus Dayaks and the timber company is similar to the situation of the people in Pykasu confronting external actors who have market-orientated interests in their territory.

Alter Vida helped the Guaraní Ñandeva of Pykasu to map their territory, accompanying them with a GPS while local representatives showed and guided them alongside the undrawn borders of their territory. The GPS measures were made to make a map. Having concrete, definable borders would enforce the "charismatic" territorial claims of the Guaraní Ñandeva by making their claims more "bureaucratic" (Tsing, 2003).

A local representative in the community was also working on mapping their territory: a map that was going to include local names as well as historical and important sites seen through Ñandeva eyes. He would fill in the empty spaces on the map made by Alter Vida, a map not showing the richness of their great territory Ñu Guasu. Nancy Peluso calls such mapping

efforts by local representatives and NGOs ‘counter-mapping’ (Peluso, 2005). About counter-mapping she writes:

“The goal of these efforts is to appropriate the state’s techniques and manner of representation to bolster the legitimacy of “customary” claims to resources. The practical effect is far-reaching: the use of maps and a highly “territorialized” strategy redefines and reinvents customary claims to standing forest resources and harvestable products as claims to the land itself” (Peluso, 2005:273).

Many in Pykasu considered maps of territory to be of great importance. As for the Temiar of Malaysia who mapped their territory through songs (Roseman, 1993), the “untouched” and “unmapped” territories of the Guaraní Ñandeva had long been mapped, not in written form, but through foot trails, history and memories.



Honey tree – Ñandeva land mark



Ñandeva foot trail

This demonstrates problems similar to those indigenous peoples faces in REDD. It shows how indigenous people try to get their world as they see it respected and understood by the non-indigenous world. Maps are important for REDD in order to be able to monitor progress (see p.94). Having a documented title to their land and/or territory will help ease an eventual implementation of REDD in Pykasu.

In the following section, I will emphasize an interface situation where different Ñandeva communities and other actors as SEAM met to discuss CDS's (the oil and gas company) further activities on Ñandeva territory. This example demonstrates Pykasu's affection for their environment but also the communities' wishes for improvements and development.

Pykasu's affection for their environment

A report from IWGIA (2010:29) recognizes the area of Pykasu, the Médanos del Chaco area, to be under extreme threat as a result of the oil and gas prospecting activities. Various companies have throughout the past years cut lines through the forest to open trails or for seismic testing. This change of the forest has had serious effects on the last uncontacted indigenous tribe in the area as well as on wildlife and biodiversity. Pykasu's concern about their environment became clear through their opposition to the oil and gas company, CDS. CDS was formed in 2003 to pursue oil and gas exploration in the Paraguayan Chaco Basin.

In and around Pykasu territory, one could witness several wells and cleared roads made by this and earlier companies. Different companies have been active in the area since 1947, but their projects were not, according to CDS, continued because of technical and economic reasons. CDS has identified 5 oil leads and 4 natural gas leads they define as "*worthy to follow up*". CDS defines the exploration in Paraguay during the last 30 years as "*narrow*", meaning only 27 "*discrete exploration wells*" were drilled between 1947 and 1996 (CDS, 2010). Pykasu had made deals with CDS earlier; in the latest one, CDS had promised 25 cows to the community for the permission to "explore" on their territory. People in Pykasu remembered how they had stopped the company from entering their community with great bulldozers to make roads for drilling without their Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

With help from Alter Vida, Pykasu arranged a meeting with the other Ñandeva communities to discuss the matter of further CDS-activities on their territory. There were about 60 people present at the meeting. CDS was invited as a coincidence from the day before the meeting, as they accidentally met Alter Vida in the park. Two representatives from CDS were therefore present, even though they watched the whole meeting from a safe distance without stepping inside the room where the meeting took place. Some representatives from SEAM were also present. While representatives from *Minas y Energía* stressed the fact that no damage would be done on Ñandeva territory, that the oil activities in the Bolivian Chaco had been a success, and that the company would contribute to development, improved life quality and educational

and health services. This, they said, was an opportunity they could not afford to miss. The promises of health services, education and work opportunities sounded tempting for many - especially for the other communities that did not get all the help Pykasu was getting from Alter Vida - and since many did not have access to such great forest areas as Pykasu did.



The leader of Pykasu standing up for his community



Clearings done by CDS



A representative from CDS keeping safe distance

A representative from SEAM tried to grasp the perspectives of the different parties without taking sides. CDS needed a license from SEAM to continue their explorations and then again

if to begin oil and gas extraction. SEAM would consider what the indigenous representatives said and then consult the *Recursos Hidricos* at SEAM about the potential danger that may be posed to the subterranean fresh water resources that made Pykasu's existence possible. In Pykasu people were totally depended on water pumps, made by Alter Vida, which collect water from the subterranean water resource *Yrenda*. Contamination of this subterranean water resource, which is a possible consequence if the oil and gas company are allowed to pursue and start planned extractions, was one of the main concerns at the meeting. Such a scenario would be fatal to Pykasu.



At the meeting about further activities of CDS Oil and Gas

SEAM wanted an approval from the affected Ñandeva communities before deciding to say yes or no. Another reason for having the meeting was that SEAM had received a written approval from the Ñandeva communities giving CDS permission to continue their explorations. Pykasu claimed the signatures of the leaders of Pykasu on this paper were falsified, and that it was an attempt to go behind Pykasu's back. This attempt may show the desperate situation of the other indigenous communities. Whereas representatives from Pykasu talked about their territory as a supermarket, and their frustrations about how the roads made by CDS made the animals migrate, other Ñandeva communities saw the promises of CDS as a good opportunity to escape their difficult situation. Not all Ñandeva communities were lucky enough to have access to subterranean water, something making their situation

even more troublesome. CDS and certain Ñandeva leaders were blamed for making deals with each other without consent from the rest of their unknowing community members. Various deforesting actors knew very well that approval from the community leader - and not the whole community - was sufficient and did therefore try to make deals with the leaders directly. *“They [CDS] promised us 25 cows, but even if they promise us 1000 it won’t be worth it”*, a representative from Pykasu said. They did not want any more false promises or destruction to their territory. Pykasu said no to further CDS activities, something SEAM noted down to consider. Representatives from Pykasu told SEAM that *“even though the state has rights to the underground they have to get through the surface first, and the surface belongs to the Ñandeva”*. The Paraguayan Institute of Indigenous Affairs (INDI), whose responsibility is to fight for the indigenous’ case and rights, was invited but did not find time to be present at the meeting. INDI has been accused for being an institution that works against, rather than for, the indigenous population (see Horst, 2007:1). REDD was not mentioned during this meeting. The communities that were still situated within the forest and said yes to further explorations might not have said yes if they knew they had another alternative like REDD, which included the conservation of the surrounding environment.

As the Dayaks in Indonesia, the Guaraní Ñandeva have also been seen simultaneously as both a target of, and a hindrance to, development (Fried, 2003). Like the Dayaks and other forest people, the Guaraní Ñandeva of Pykasu were trying to figure out the best way of how to protect their territory and forest resources from massive destruction carried out by private actors and backed up by the government. As we have seen in earlier chapters, the forestry sector is often corrupt, and powerful companies often have a lot of power. The Kalhold Utama Company in Indonesia serves as an example to show how a logging company can be more powerful than ministries and the country’s whole legal system. In the spring of 1995, the company moved two hundred families into tiny huts that had been hastily built in the newly bulldozed forest territories of the local population, breaking the laws and going against the minister of transmigration. This example shows, as in Paraguay, that a well-meaning minister and a good legal framework often is not enough when facing the powerful actors involved in the forestry sector. In February 1996, the minister of forestry in Indonesia declared to the local population that he would excise their traditional territories from the logging concession areas, but they are still waiting for the provincial government of East Kalimantan to fulfil the minister’s promise (Fried, 2003:178).

Even though Pykasu went against CDS despite the promises of development and improved livelihoods, people in Pykasu were used to external goods and wished for development and better life quality in the community. Development (*desarrollo*) was considered to be needed and important by some in Pykasu, yet many wanted to combine this with maintaining and recovering former ways of life. Many in Pykasu want to conserve their natural habitat at the same time as they want development and economic growth for the community.

Dreams of a safer future combining the old and the new

There existed many disagreements in Pykasu. I understood the religious opinions as the most conflicting, but they also criticized each other on how they were coping with their present difficulties. Despite the decline of forest products caused by drought, some were also criticized for being lazy without the will to work. Even if the forest did not offer much at present time, many did not bother to plant seeds or gather forest products during the right seasons either: *“People do not want what is in the forest anymore, only in emergency”* (Pykasu representative). People wanted other, more modern goods such as rice and pasta, and many had limited interests in using forest products. Many children were no longer taught by their parents how to use or gather forest goods.

There were still people who remembered life without today’s modernities: the times when they just ate meat from wild forest animals, honey, fruits and other forest products without needing salt, sugar, rice and pasta as they do now. The Ñandeva are proud of their environmental knowledge, even though it is declining among younger generations. Many still possess the knowledge of how medicinal plants can be used, but people mostly prefer the modern medicines. The local health post visited by a Paraguayan doctor from Mariscal (see map p.18) once a month has a storage of some medicines for cold or pains. This health station is run by a hard-working man in the community who can call on the doctor in Mariscal in severe cases through the health post radio. Besides this health post held open on a daily basis, there is a local doctor. The local doctor possesses vast knowledge of the different medicinal plants, and, even though he claims he is not a shaman, he knows some chief-orations he uses to cure. If someone is ill, the doctor will be contacted. He cures or eases the ailments of the sick person by discovering their source of illness and then by using his orations and medicinal plants as well as spitting on the affected area. All seemed to have great faith in him, and sometimes he also assisted other communities to cure those suffering from illness.

I was once told by a Pykasu representative: “*today many don’t want to live as we used to, but gradually people are changing their opinions and are beginning to see the advantages of that life*”. Even though many dreamt of new things and the modernities of electricity, mobile phones and TVs, many also seemed to stress the importance of recovering their ancestral knowledge. Their forefathers should be respected, and their knowledge should not be lost. Many looked forward to the power lines supposed to reach the community at the end of the year, bringing with them electricity and new possibilities.⁴ Many dreamt about progress and development, better houses and job opportunities but did still appreciate Pykasu for its qualities: complete silence, starry skies, incredible sunrises, an incredible biodiversity, plus the fact that Pykasu houses their identity, memories and history.

Some found Pykasu to be suited for ecological tourism and had great plans and dreams of how they could realize such a thing. They could let the tourists see how the indigenous in Pykasu live, and they could prepare a house to show how they used to live, where they could exhibit traditional weapons, clothes and stuffed forest animals. Visitors could live in the community house or a hotel they would build on the community’s highest peak, and people from Pykasu would serve as local guides in the forest. In the forest, the tourists could witness archaeological treasures from the Chaco-war or other unsolved riddles, like unidentified skeletons or mummies hidden in ceramic jars under earth; they would see exotic animals and be introduced to the universe of medicinal plants. At present time, the closest park guardians employed by SEAM in the national park, *Teniente Agripino Enciso*, got all the profits from the tourists arriving. The tourists stayed in the park house and were shown the area by the park guardians who did not know the area as well as the inhabitants of Pykasu. Pykasu had applied to SEAM once, telling them about their plans, but had never received an answer. This example, as in the case deciding yes or no to CDS, further demonstrates the uneven possession of power between SEAM and Pykasu discussed in Chapter Two.

Conclusion

Many people in Pykasu have an ambiguous view on deforestation. At the same time as they find the surrounding deforestation disturbing, deforesting industries give them possibilities to handle the difficult times of severe drought by offering work possibilities and an additional,

⁴ Pykasu has still not seen anything of the power lines they have been promised.

highly needed monetary income in times where nature no longer provides for what is needed for their subsistence. Due to the difficult situation of many indigenous communities in the Chaco region, REDD might become an attractive offer. Religious changes, the abandoning of traditional practises and changes in their social organization have led to a more restricted ability to be resilient for people in Pykasu, and new methods and alternatives to cope with their present are needed. REDD could pose one such alternative, yet the government's interests in oil and gas may prevent an eventual implementation of REDD in this area. The rejection of the law of zero deforestation shows limited will to preserve the forest in the Chaco region.

In the next chapter, I will directly focus on how REDD was received, worked with, negotiated and understood by the different actors involved.

Chapter V: REDD in Paraguay

As argued in previous chapters, powerful interests show very limited interest in stopping deforestation and respecting indigenous rights in Paraguay. This makes SEAM's job difficult. Sunderlin and Atmadja argue "*the future history of REDD+ will be the story not just of political will, but of a contest between opposing wills, and of the way in which popular mobilisation and new alliances succeed or fail in guiding the course of this rivalry*" (2009:53). REDD might be seen as a threat for many of the powerful stakeholders who gain on deforestation, and the initiative might meet powerful resistance from this part. Yet, if managed the right way, REDD does also have the potential to improve the quality of life of many local communities, as well as contribute to forest conservation. Even though SEAM shows a new political will, it faces several other wills working against its vision. Implementing a REDD scheme in Paraguay faces many challenges, and it is still too early to see if the new political will of SEAM fails or succeeds in guiding the course of Paraguay's forest conservation rivalry.

In the international negotiations, Paraguay appeared to be stagnated in the UN-REDD process. While other pilot countries of the UN-REDD programme had moved forward, Paraguay had been left behind in their attempt to work out a proper UN-REDD National Joint Programme. I argue that even if Paraguay appeared to be stagnated in the UN-REDD process at an international level, the country experienced significant progress on a national level. I suggest that the interplay of different knowledge traditions in the REDD discussions led to a fruitful mapping of opposing discourses, ideas and values.

REDD can be seen as an arena of social interface. In understanding social interface, ideas about oneself, other people and institutions in different contexts become important (Long, 2004:30). FAPI (Federation for Indigenous Peoples Self Determination), SEAM and INFONA (the National Forestry Institute) formed the UN-REDD technical team responsible for preparing the UN-REDD National Joint Programme.

How was REDD negotiated and understood by the actors involved? How did the political changes at SEAM change the REDD strategy? Could Pykasu be an attractive REDD area? This chapter highlights some of the ideas the parties involved in REDD had about each other, and the different knowledge traditions they represented. I argue such information can be useful to take into consideration when handling REDD projects. I suggest that a lack of will in

forest conservation may prevent implementation of REDD in the Chaco region, even though REDD, if managed the right way, could offer an attractive and much needed alternative for many indigenous communities living there.

In the first part of this chapter, I will - by having a social interface perspective - focus on the meetings between some of the different parties involved with UN-REDD, and highlight how they received, perceived and understood the programme. There were no ongoing REDD projects in Paraguay, but, in the second part of the chapter, I will give a short introduction to three different forest projects that might become REDD projects later on. First I will give an introduction to the history of REDD in Paraguay.

REDD history

The Payment for Environmental Services (PES) policy of the former government was characterised by a market-oriented approach that lacked consultation with indigenous people's or small farmer's organizations (Hall, 2010:17). That government initiated discussions with the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) of the World Bank and the UN-REDD-programme. Even though both the World Bank and the UN explicitly asked for consultation of indigenous peoples and other local communities, the government failed to comply with this. In the Readiness Project Information Note (R-PIN) Paraguay sent to the World Bank, it was claimed that the indigenous population had been consulted. This was later discovered and disproved by the leader of the indigenous organization, FAPI. The leader of FAPI sent a letter of complaint to the World Bank, where he asked: "*Why do you [the World Bank] ask who was consulted if it is not necessary or relevant?*" The leader of FAPI explains "*until the present date we [the indigenous population] do not have the ideas or full knowledge of what REDD means, or what impact it will have on our lives*". The leader of FAPI reminded the World Bank about their right to be consulted and asked them to respect both their nationally and internationally recognized human rights from now on (Letter to the World Bank, 2008). The FCPF process in Paraguay was, by this, put on hold.

The REDD policies changed with the new political leadership of SEAM. During my stay in Paraguay, the new Minister of SEAM offered FAPI to be part of the UN-REDD technical team together with SEAM itself and INFONA. The different parties in the technical team had different perspectives and visions on REDD, and how it should be managed. The representatives from SEAM saw UN-REDD as a great opportunity to enforce forest

conservation and democracy. They saw participation of the indigenous population, here represented by FAPI, as necessary and claimed REDD could contribute to improving the livelihoods of the indigenous population. The members of FAPI were neutral towards REDD and had not decided if they were for or against it. They entered the UN-REDD negotiations as members in the UN-REDD technical team - not because of the money involved - but to be an active part of the process, to defend their collective indigenous rights and to acquire information. FAPI stressed they represented just themselves and by no means the views and opinions of the whole indigenous population in Paraguay.

I did not have the same opportunity to get to know representatives from INFONA in the same way I got to know representatives from FAPI and SEAM. I got the impression that INFONA had a more market-orientated approach towards REDD. Some of my other informants claimed that INFONA saw the forest as more important than the persons living in them.

It is important to mention that even though the persons in the interface situations presented in this chapter represent a specific group or institution, it might not be that these persons represent, or act in the interest of, his or hers fellows (Long, 2004:29). (E.g. the Minister of SEAM represented a different view on REDD and forest conservation than many of the employees at SEAM). I have tried to take this into consideration and stick to the statements of SEAM, INFONA and FAPI that were consistent with how the institutions/organizations were perceived by others inside and outside of them.

As discussed in Chapter One, my informants represent different knowledge traditions: Western scientific knowledge and indigenous knowledge. Long argues:

“Knowledge is present in all social situations and is often entangled with power relations and the distribution of resources. But in intervention situations it assumes special significance since it entails the interplay or confrontation of ‘expert’ versus ‘lay’ forms of knowledge, belief and value, and struggles over their legitimation, segregation and communication” (Long, 2004:30).

The indigenous peoples in Paraguay struggle to get their forms of knowledge and ways of life recognized and respected among the Paraguayan public. In this case, Western scientific knowledge represents what he calls ‘expert’ forms of knowledge, beliefs and values characterizing parts of the non-indigenous society of Paraguay. Indigenous knowledge represents what Long calls ‘lay’ forms of knowledge, beliefs and values. As we will see in

this chapter, the interplay, or confrontations, between the different knowledge traditions of my informants became clear in discussions about REDD.

SEAM and REDD

To meet all the requirements needed for REDD was a great challenge for SEAM. Paraguay started from scratch at almost every level: education rates were low, infrastructure was limited, new technology was missing and the new democracy was extremely fragile.

Independent monitoring of carbon and governance is seen as a key element to enable the policy and institutional frameworks for planning and implementing REDD at national and sub-national levels (Bond et al., 2009:22-23). A reliable, credible system of measuring, reporting and verifying (MRV) changes in carbon stocks is necessary in any national REDD scheme. Each REDD country will have to develop a MRV system to meet REDD requirements (Herold & Skutch, 2009:85,91). The Japanese government had offered SEAM a donation intended for the instalment of monitoring antennas aimed at the MRV of environmental conditions in forest covered areas. After a visit to Paraguay to make sure their investment would be effective and well worth the effort, they decided to withdraw the offer. Very few countries have the bare minimum capacity needed for measuring and monitoring (Herold & Skutch, 2009:85-6). This was the case for Paraguay, and the Japanese did see neither the infrastructure nor the technological knowledge necessary for the management of the antennas as being present. Neither did they see Paraguay's mechanisms to prevent further deforestation as being very promising⁵. This example demonstrates that Paraguay has a long way to go before it will be ready to fully participate in an international system that provides compensation for REDD actions based on results (see Herold & Skutch, 2009:85-6).

Even though many representatives at SEAM considered UN-REDD to be a complicated project, they found it highly interesting. UN-REDD could be a helping hand in times of limited means and support, political changes, reorganizations and severe forest conservation problems. Some thought UN-REDD could help the present government enforce participatory democracy by giving the new administration, representing the new political course, economic support. For most of my informants at SEAM, UN-REDD was seen as a great opportunity,

⁵ In March 2011, the Japanese Government decided to donate more than 7 million US dollars to SEAM destined to MRV systems after all.

and some found it frustrating that the UN-REDD process was going so slow. Many felt UN-REDD had stagnated, and they had a hard time accepting the Minister's demand to be patient and to respect the *indigenous time*. FAPI expressed the need for more time on behalf of its indigenous members in order to be able to understand what REDD really was and how it would affect them. The Minister acknowledged that this would slow the UN-REDD negotiations but argued it was a completely necessary process to go through: "*If we do not have our friends [the indigenous people] with us, there will be no UN-REDD at all*". He argued the slow UN-REDD-process in Paraguay just showed the new will and effort of the new government to enforce participatory democracy.

Several at SEAM considered REDD to be unfair in its present shape. It was unfair in that the developing countries should limit their possibilities for income by protecting their forests, while the developed countries could continue making money and consuming as they used to do; the industrialized world had to make changes as well. Some argued the developed countries wanted to limit the possibilities for economic growth and development in developing countries.

INFONA and REDD

In opposition to SEAM, which stressed the need to respect indigenous time, INFONA made the technical team aware of how urgent it was to get a well-functioning conservation system in place for the remaining forests in the country. One representative from INFONA often told devastating facts of illegal logging and thousands of hectares disappearing at high speed. In a meeting with the UN-REDD technical team, INFONA complained about how the new members of the technical team from SEAM and FAPI failed to see all the things already done with UN-REDD. The representative from INFONA seemed to have been part of the UN-REDD-negotiations from the very beginning: "*There is already a lot done with UN-REDD. I don't see the need to start all over again*". This was said just after FAPI entered into the negotiations. She said the UN-REDD document had been presented to various institutions - indigenous- and other local organizations - through information meetings, and that the concepts and contents in the document had already been discussed. INFONA doubted FAPI's understanding of REDD and stressed the need to be on the same page.

FAPI and REDD

FAPI has about 14 indigenous member organizations throughout the country and was established in 2001 to prevent the weakening of the law of indigenous people in Paraguay. When I entered my study of the UN-REDD negotiations, FAPI did not feel they had the knowledge necessary to understand REDD or evaluate it in a critical way. As FAPI's lawyer once said, while talking in front of FAPI's members: "*We may not understand climate change and REDD at the moment, but we are going to. People at the top need to respect this being something new for us and that we need time. They cannot approve REDD without our consent*". Information had been given at reunions held by INFONA and SEAM, but these representations had been filled with difficult terms and conditions as well as topics the indigenous representatives did not understand. By now, FAPI had been given the third rough draft of the UN-REDD National Joint Programme by SEAM and felt the need to get REDD properly explained. FAPI wanted to be able to make a professional evaluation of REDD and develop their point of view.

As a result, FAPI asked for help from the international NGO, Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), to hold two workshops where REDD would be explained in a basic and easily understood way. FPP is a NGO that bridges the gap between policy makers and forest peoples. FPP helps forest peoples deal with the outside powers that shape their lives and future by using advocacy, practical projects and capacity building (FPP, 2010). The representative from FPP said their aim was to give a neutral presentation of REDD so that the indigenous peoples could make their own assumptions and choices about saying yes or no to the UN-REDD programme and other eventual REDD projects. FPP would help FAPI to make a critical evaluation of the third draft of the UN National Joint Programme. FAPI gathered the leaders representing its member communities to go through the draft in unison. The two REDD workshops were held in February 2010, each a duration of three days. One workshop was held in the Oriental region and the other in the Chaco region. Here, different indigenous leaders and other representatives met to get REDD and climate change properly explained to them. For many, this was the first time they heard about REDD.

REDD workshops

At each workshop there were about 30 indigenous representatives present. Here FPP explained basic themes, such as oxygen, forest, photosynthesis, global warming, greenhouse

gasses, as well as greenhouse effects and clarified the differences between the Spanish terms *carbón* and *carbano*. In Spanish, *carbón* means charcoal, while *carbano* means CO² - a difference many of FAPI's members were unaware of. REDD was explained as well as the advantages and disadvantages connected to the UN-REDD programme. FPP said the governments often “forgot” to say anything about the disadvantages and dangers of the initiative, and did often have a tendency to glorify and facilitate REDD when they talked about it. FPP stressed that REDD could be a real danger and threat to indigenous peoples if not managed in the right way.



Explaining and discussing deforestation, CO₂, greenhouse effect and REDD

The days were long, stuffed with loads of new information, but the participants followed the presentations and discussions with patience throughout the three days, apparently with attention and engagement. Afterwards, many participants said they had appreciated the illustrative drawings and explanations made by FPP. Now, they understood things better and

planned to go home to their communities to explain to the other community members what they had been taught and told. They did not know how to explain everything they had been told throughout the three days at just one village meeting. Some told me stories about their communities, the problems they were facing and how they feared their present situation. Something needed to be done, but they did not know if it was going to be REDD.

Until now, the indigenous representatives felt they had not been given sufficient information to understand REDD. They saw being well-informed as important, especially since these projects could affect their territories: *“during this workshop we can get a better understanding of what is change and what is climate”*, one representative stated. The representatives expressed much concern for their present situation and a strong desire to conserve and protect the remaining forest from external interests: *“we cannot talk about a distant future without having territories. Our traditional practices are disappearing because the great cattle ranchers are approaching our territories”*.

SEAM did not show up at the workshop in the Chaco, to the participants' disappointment but not to their surprise. Some thought SEAM did not show up because of their fear and inability to respond if asked questions. At the workshop in the Oriental region, on the other hand, SEAM did show up an hour or two.

The indigenous representatives in the Oriental region used the short time SEAM was present effectively, telling the Minister about their situation, frustrations and hopes. They expressed concern about the violation and disrespect of their rights. This was seen as a genuine threat regarding REDD: *“The whites don't respect indigenous rights, that's why we can't trust them. They are talking about selling the wind but we know that the wind have no price because the chief of the wind is of another being that gives us life. That's why we can't sell it”*. People expressed great interest in conserving and recuperating the remaining forest: *“Now our families have to live like the whites because they don't have any other option because it doesn't longer exist forests. The forests are peeled and we need to recuperate them”*.

In front of the assembly, the representatives from SEAM stressed the importance of working together and acknowledged INFONA's other vision of UN-REDD - a vision of commercializing CO²: *“We have to tell them [INFONA] how to change this project in a profound way according to what you [the indigenous people] see as necessary”* (SEAM representative). The Minister said it now was their mutual responsibility to correct the wrongs

from the past. Concerning the UN-REDD process, the Minister said, *“I said to señor Lorenzo from the UN that this [the UN-REDD process] is not a failure but a success because we are constructing a participatory democracy”*. After SEAM held their discourses and before they left, the leader of FAPI thanked them for having arrived and listening to what had been said.



The Minister of SEAM and a representative from FAPI talking at the REDD-workshop in the Oriental Region

Both workshops resulted in a document later used in the UN-REDD negotiations with numerous conclusions and recommendations based on the workshops' discussions. Here, the members of FAPI agreed, among other things, that the third rough draft of the UN-REDD document had to be not only annulled and profoundly reformulated, but also had to maintain a section dedicated to the indigenous population and their rights. The members of FAPI wanted

an efficient and transparent UN-REDD process and stressed the need for clarification of the present chaotic land tenure situation, arguing that, in this clarification, it would be important to keep in mind international indigenous rights concerning land, territory and their natural resources. They claimed the government had to respect the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of the indigenous population, and future REDD projects had to acknowledge the indigenous knowledge, culture and relations to the forests and nature. The members of FAPI criticized the language of the present UN-REDD document and decided to read the document closely, word for word, and replace *if, may, could* and *should* with *will, shall* and *are going to*.

After REDD had been discussed with the members of FAPI, FAPI felt safer to work further with the UN-REDD technical team and did, therefore, accept to be part of it.

I argue the interplay, or confrontations, of different forms of knowledge, beliefs and values became clear at the workshops. This interplay led to the present UN-REDD National Joint Programme, in which indigenous knowledge is respected and represented to a higher degree than in the former drafts.

PYKASU and REDD

For the great majority in Pykasu, REDD was still something unknown. The two leaders of Pykasu had been present at the REDD workshop in the Chaco but found REDD confusing and hard to understand. During the workshop, the leaders expressed an interest in knowing what REDD was about and one of the leaders claimed: *“the indigenous peoples don’t deforest. Their knowledge derives from conservation. It may be so that we don’t have technicians (técnicos) but our ancestral knowledge helps us use the forest in a sustainable way”*.

A future REDD area?

There were neither established REDD projects in Paraguay nor any prescribed project areas at the time of my arrival in Pykasu. Pykasu may be an attractive REDD area because it is situated within the largest continuous forest system in Paraguay. Pykasu does also hold its own land title and is not only partly situated in the national park, *Médanos del Chaco*, but also placed within the *Reserva de la Biosfera del Chaco*. Another thing that makes the area attractive for a future REDD project is the fact that the last remaining uncontacted indigenous group is said to be living just some kilometres away from Pykasu. As we have seen, prevalent

interests in development and economic growth in the country may prevent Pykasu becoming a REDD area. As well as being threatened by a rapidly expanding cattle industry and also some of soy, Pykasu is also threatened by oil and gas prospecting activities. As explained in Chapter Four, the government is interested in an eventual oil and gas extraction. President Lugo tried to pass a law about zero deforestation in the Chaco region, but his attempt was rejected. This shows the government's lack of interest in conserving the Chaco forests and leaves the Chaco region extremely vulnerable for further deforestation.

Project-offers attractive

As we saw in the previous chapter, people in Pykasu are used to living in a harsh climate and know better than anyone how to survive the dry periods in the area. Yet, the dryness, especially in the last two years, had been worse than ever before, and the extreme drought leaves Pykasu totally dependent on help from the outside. Their difficult situation makes project-offers attractive in many of the inhabitants' eyes. People in Pykasu had several bad experiences with project-promises and felt betrayed by many who arrived their community, saying they were going to help them by starting "projects", but then never to return again (see Chapter Six).

The dependence on external help was not unique to Pykasu; it was a feature shared by many indigenous communities in the Chaco. Indigenous peoples, wanting to preserve their forest, were often left with no other option than to deforest in order to get an alternative form of income. During a discussion held at "The Government's Day" (see p.55) an indigenous representative said:

"If you [SEAM] think we want to destroy our forest you are wrong. It's just that our territories are already destroyed by others and we are left with too little to be able to provide for ourselves just using the forest in the traditional way. We have to have an alternative income. If you don't want us to produce charcoal cutting our forest down then give us an alternative. It is wrong what some say about the forest being our supermarket. Our supermarket is empty".

Some Paraguayans give the indigenous communities in the Chaco work opportunities by starting charcoal production. By deforesting and producing charcoal on their own territories, the indigenous communities earn money on it by further selling the charcoal to the project

managers. After having received the charcoal from the indigenous communities, the project managers sell it abroad and make money of it as a “fair-trade” product, claiming that by buying the product, you are supporting the indigenous communities. Many indigenous are left with no other option than to deforest. Their actual forest-covered lands are too limited for self-sufficiency. The animals migrate away from their territories because of surrounding deforestation. The drought makes it nearly impossible to cultivate the soil,⁶ and causes lack of forest commodities and failing crops. The indigenous communities are often left without power to resist and fight the large surrounding landowners and the international companies because they lack titles and papers making them the rightful owners to their traditional lands.

Concluding comments from the first part of the chapter

REDD could be an attractive offer for many of the indigenous communities in Paraguay. Yet limited political interest constitutes a serious threat for REDD. Even though the REDD negotiations were initiated as early as in 2008, the indigenous representatives of FAPI and of Pykasu knew little about it. I argue the new political will of SEAM is being reflected in the UN-REDD negotiations by offering FAPI membership in the UN-REDD technical team and by respecting - and showing interest in - the indigenous population. A new political course becomes clear if we compare the former and the present UN-REDD-negotiations in Paraguay. FAPI, having experienced, and still experiencing, serious violations of indigenous rights, handled REDD with caution and ended up as a strong negotiation partner in the UN-REDD technical team.

In the next part of the chapter, I will introduce three ongoing, or planned, forest projects in Paraguay that might become REDD projects later on. I argue these projects highlight three very different ways of working towards forest conservation. While the first seeks active participation from all the country’s citizens in reforestation, the second project is criticized for disrespecting and violating indigenous rights. The last one wants to involve an indigenous community in a community-based forest management plan.

⁶ In many areas soil erosion and salination caused by environmental destructions contribute to this.

Reforestation project: A todo pulmon – Paraguay respira

As mentioned in Chapter Three, concerns about the environment, or deforestation, did not become very evident to me during my time in Asunción. Yet, a project many proudly mentioned in conversations about deforestation was the reforestation project, “*A todo pulmon- Paraguay respira*” (With the whole lung – Paraguay breathes). This was a reforesting campaign started by a director of a radio channel called *Radio Ñanduti* and was aimed at reforesting the Atlantic forest in the Oriental region. With help from the civil society, NGOs and other organizations, the goal of the campaign was to reforest 15,000 hectares, meaning 14,000,000 trees in the Oriental region (WWF, 2009). For the first time in Paraguayan history, an environmental project had received this kind of attention and support from the Paraguayan public. This project claimed to help preserve *el Acuífero Guaraní*, which is a reserve of subterranean fresh water shared between Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil. To preserve the clean water resources of Paraguay was seen by many to be of great importance. The project left open the possibility to acquire carbon credits for the landowners, meaning they are having mechanisms like REDD on mind.

Some at SEAM were worried about the fact that too small trees were being planted in this reforestation project. The majority of the trees would fail to grow up if they were too small from when they were planted. In Asunción, and from travelling around in the Oriental region, many outside of SEAM seemed positive to the idea of using the foreign species of eucalyptus in these kinds of projects because of its rapid growth. SEAM was positive to the project but emphasized the importance of planting native species and not eucalyptus. Eucalyptus is a species known to consume much ground water - which affects soil fertility - and does not provide good protection against soil erosion. As well as being used in monocrop plantations, eucalyptus does not provide good habitat for the natural wildlife. Planting native species, on the other hand, would not have these negative impacts; SEAM stressed that, while native species may grow slower, they are, in the longer run, more favourable for the soil, the natural habitat and the biodiversity. Outside of SEAM, many did not seem to be aware of - or, if so, denied - the negative effects of the eucalyptus. Many powerful actors responsible for the deforestation are trying to form REDD into a win-win situation: Large palm oil- or eucalyptus companies want their plantations to become legitimate REDD projects, as their plantations consist of trees favourable to the climate. Both rainforests and monocrop plantations, like those of palm oil or eucalyptus, are included in UN’s present definition of forest. Many forest

peoples, as well as many others, see this as one of REDD's many disturbing factors. In Paraguay, where development by many is seen as highly needed and biodiversity and indigenous rights are not considered to be of great importance, planting eucalyptus might be an attractive alternative to forest conservation.

This example may reveal an increased environmental concern in the Oriental region. As the concerns of SEAM express, it may also exemplify how lack of environmental knowledge may affect the effectiveness and quality of a project.

Guyra Paraguay and Paraguay Forest Conservation Project

Guyra Paraguay is a conservationist NGO working for the defence and protection of Paraguay's biological diversity. Guyra mentions community participation in rural areas as one of their most valuable tools in their work on, and study of, conservation (see Guyra Paraguay, 2011) but was seen as one of the worst by FAPI, as regards consultation with the local population and respect for indigenous rights in its work and projects. Several blamed Guyra to having only birds on their mind, as the name Guyra means "bird" in Guaraní. Guyra was accused of tricking the local population into bad deals and of buying up land within indigenous territories without consent and consultation with the indigenous population. While I experienced great scepticism of Guyra Paraguay at meetings with FAPI, several officials within SEAM seemed to be fond of the NGO. Guyra Paraguay has a fully developed land-use and biodiversity monitoring system, and SEAM appreciated the close cooperation with Guyra regarding their disposition of satellite photos and monitoring capacities. This was very valuable and important for SEAM if they should be able to get an overview of deforestation, forest fires and illegal logging. Guyra Paraguay monitors deforestation on a national scale through analysis of satellite imagery and provides monthly updates for interested parties, among them being SEAM (Project Design Document/PDD, 2010:11).

Guyra Paraguay, together with Swire Pacific Offshore and the World Land Trust, is involved in a private REDD project called *Paraguay Forest Conservation Project*, which still waits for certification and approval from the *Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance* (CCBA). The project area covers areas both in the Chaco and in the Oriental region. In the Oriental region, it affects the territory of the indigenous group Mbya Guaraní, while in the Chaco, it affects the indigenous groups Ishir and the Ayoreo. According to *Friends of the Earth International* (Hall, 2010), alarm bells regarding this project should be ringing extremely

loud. This project has been criticized by both Friends of the Earth Paraguay/Sobrevivencia - the NGO where the present Minister of SEAM worked - and Paraguayan members of the Global Forest Coalition (GFC) for violating Paraguayan law on indigenous rights and ignoring the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Hall, 2010). The plan of Paraguay Forest Conservation Project does not seem to see the lack of Free, Prior and Informed Consent as problematic. As a matter of fact, they see Free, Prior and Informed Consent as a possible delay, to which they write:

“In practice, however, the Mbyá [an affected indigenous group] seek a full process of consultation and understanding of the concepts involved prior to any engagement, which does not fit the decision making schedule the project must adhere to. A similar situation has also delayed implementation of UN REDD-readiness initiatives” (PDD, 2010:28).

The project plan openly informs CCBA of the project’s perception of Free, Prior and Informed Consent as being too time consuming and also express worries about how land, when first transferred to an indigenous community, is inalienable and without any restrictions on how it may be used (PDD, 2010:28). Still, it claims that the project areas will benefit both the biodiversity (by helping to maintain a continuous landscape in a rapidly fragmenting ecosystem) and the local populations (by securing lands).

Some of the affected indigenous communities in the project are members of FAPI. FAPI is criticized in the project plan because of its policy of needing more time to get information about, and understanding, REDD and REDD-related themes before any commitment or support of the initiative. This time frame is seen as inadequate for the project (PDD, 2010:84). Since the Ishir - another affected indigenous group living in the Chaco - are not members of FAPI, they are considered to be *“more flexible in considering practical actions based on current realities specific to their territories”* (PDD, 2010:85). One of the strengths of the project is the already fully developed land-use and biodiversity monitoring system of Guyra Paraguay. The project plan also takes into account for locally recruited specialist expertise in carbon inventory and social, legal and economic issues for project development, as well as an established system of collaboration with SEAM, the University of Asunción Forestry School and other partners, including United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

This project may serve as an example of how certain actors involved with REDD try to avoid including the indigenous population. By doing this, they violate the indigenous rights.

Forest Management Plan in Pykasu

Alter Vida was about to start a new project in Pykasu by the time I left. They wanted to make a forest management plan in cooperation with the people in Pykasu by including their traditional use of the forest, mapping their territory through the eyes of the inhabitants and taking their traditional use of flora and fauna into consideration. Later on, this could probably lead to the implementation of Payment for Environmental Services (PES): paying the inhabitants of Pykasu in some way or another to take care of and to protect their forest. Even though this could easily appear to be a REDD project, REDD was never mentioned to me by Alter Vida when they talked about the project.

The usage and perception of ‘community’ in plans like this have been debated. The concept ‘local community’ is increasingly challenged and should be seen as more historically contingent and less as homogeneous, harmonious and integrated than previously thought (see Dove, 2006). Community-based resource management is a hegemonic global discourse that has helped develop this concept of community (Dove, 2006:199-200). Alter Vida argued the forest management plan would help the case of Pykasu by documenting the inhabitants’ use of the forest as sustainable, helping them define and mark their territories, and supporting their efforts to keep external threats out.

There has been a shift in development strategies aimed at ensuring the participation of indigenous communities in their own development as, for example, local mapping and forest management plans. Yet, critics have questioned how participatory these procedures really are (Dove, 2006:200-1). The relations between NGOs and indigenous communities have especially been focused in on. Tsing (1999 in Dove, 2006:162) claims that such collaborations offer possibilities for building environmental and social justice in the countryside. Others lay more emphasis on the insecurity of such collaborations (Conklin & Graham, 1995). Alter Vida saw the realization of this project in Pykasu as relatively simple. Pykasu was fairly well organized, calm and stable compared to other communities where there existed great discord between leaders, problems with internal organization and disputes over territorial borders. Alter Vida had also been working in Pykasu for quite some time - something they themselves saw as an advantage. They had gotten to know the community and established a relationship with the people living there.

Writing down and mapping indigenous knowledge as planned in such a management plan could be difficult since this knowledge often is not easily accessible and is not something that can be picked up in a few weeks. Transforming the values, contextuality and richness of such knowledge down to paper is very problematic (Brosius, 1997:378, Nazarea, 2006:323).

Brosius tells how the rich and generally ordinary knowledge of the forest landscape by the Penan in Borneo is being transformed into something sacred, valued and needing to be saved, and thus constructed into categories of Western origin. This transforms Penan-knowledge into something that it is not, and the essential and diverse qualities of indigenous knowledge are lost along the way (Brosius, 1997:380). While working out the forest management plan, Alter Vida would take care of the paper work, but it was the indigenous people, and not Alter Vida, who should decide and work out what the plan should contain. If the traditional practices included slash and burn or charcoal production, this should be included in the plan. If these practices were intended at producing products for sale, this would not be considered a part of their traditions and could, therefore, not be included in the management plan.

Many in Pykasu were tired of outsiders trying to prohibit their traditional slash and burn habits. While outsiders often saw this practice as environmental degradation, the people in Pykasu knew it was favourable for the biodiversity, and that human activity was a natural part of the ecosystem. They could tell how the burned areas attracted birds and other animals, and how the burning was favourable for the soil. SEAM, among other actors, had wanted to forbid these actions in fear of ruining the “natural” state of the forest. Many in Pykasu knew that it was not favourable to biodiversity to leave the forests without human influence. Many of the birds and animals they traditionally hunted had disappeared during periods they had abandoned their slash and burn practices.

“No one knows better to conserve the forest than the indigenous people”, Alter Vida stressed to the inhabitants when they presented the idea of the management plan to the community for the first time. It has been debated if any indigenous people anywhere have ever practiced anything that can be called conservation, where natural resources were intentionally conserved (Dove, 2006, Conklin & Graham, 1995, Dahl, 1993, Ellen, 1986 & 1998). Even though many indigenous peoples live in harmony with nature, many would claim that the picture of indigenous people in the environmental conservation debate is glorified and naïve. Incidents where indigenous people and project managers want different things becomes clear in the example of the Kayapó Indians in the Amazon (see Conklin & Graham, 1995). Forest conservation is not always in the greatest interest of the indigenous communities involved in

such projects. The Kayapó saw greater benefits derived from logging than of conserving their forests. But, as Dove shows referring to Zimmerman et al. (2001), this project reported more optimistic results when the Kayapó were presented with better economic alternatives than logging (Dove, 2006:198-199).

As we have seen, the strategies from these forest projects vary significantly. The different parties involved in such projects may have very different understandings of how such projects should be managed and what the projects should include and consider. As demonstrated in international REDD debates, something sounding so simple as ‘forest conservation’ may very well be extremely complicated at local levels. What a local community wants and what a NGO wants can be two strikingly different things, even if they have reached a common consensus. The same agreement might mean different things for the negotiating parties, as the example of the Kayapo Indians in the Amazon shows. In a global project like REDD, interpersonal relations and knowledge about each other becomes important (see Tsing, 2009, Long, 2004, Eriksen, 2007).

REDD-progress at national level

During my stay, a lot of achievements were made in the UN-REDD negotiations. SEAM invited FAPI to become members of the UN-REDD technical team, and a new UN-REDD National Joint Programme was made, where FAPI assured a whole section dedicated to the indigenous people of Paraguay and their rights. Having a whole section in the UN-REDD National Joint Programme dedicated to indigenous peoples was unique to Paraguay and was a result of the new political course discussed in Chapter Two. Here FAPI, among other things, demands compliance with Free, Prior and Informed Consent and other indigenous rights regarding every decision that may affect the indigenous communities, and participation and respect during the whole UN-REDD process (NJP, 2010:13-5). FAPI had been given time to inform all their members, obtain knowledge about REDD as well as develop a shared strategy.

Before I left Paraguay, an indigenous representative from FAPI was also offered a seat in the National Environment Council (CONAM) as the first indigenous person in history. Having a representative in CONAM was seen as a great opportunity for FAPI to influence national environmental policy and prevent violations of indigenous rights.

Conclusion

The actors involved with REDD had different understandings and visions of the programme. The political changes at SEAM led to a more including REDD strategy where indigenous rights to a higher extent were respected. The final UN-REDD National Joint Programme of Paraguay can serve as an example of how interaction and dialogue between indigenous people and governmental representatives led to a fruitful mapping of opposing values and beliefs. This becomes visible particularly in the third section of the UN-REDD National Joint Programme dedicated to indigenous peoples.

Even if Paraguay appeared to be stagnated in the UN-REDD process at an international level, Paraguay experienced significant progress at national level. An indigenous person represented in CONAM for the first time in history shows that there are things going on in Paraguay that would not have happened just a few years ago.

Pykasu would be a suitable REDD area but the lack of interest in conserving the Chaco-forests leaves the future of REDD in this region uncertain. The lack of respect of indigenous rights is a very disturbing factor, also when it comes to REDD.

Due to increased pressure on their territory, Pykasu made the decision of becoming members of FAPI. With encouragement from Alter Vida, Pykasu felt they had a stronger claim with FAPI backing them up, as FAPI is a well-known and internationally recognized indigenous organization. As we will see in the next chapter, choosing one's allies in the fragile democracy in Paraguay is not an easy task.

Chapter VI: The importance of trust

In previous chapters, we have seen examples on how institutions have failed to fulfil their tasks and responsibility, and how corruption in Paraguay is a great problem. In these times, many are carefully trying to manoeuvre in a changing political landscape, figuring out whom to trust and to choose their right allies. How do - or may - this affect REDD negotiations or other project agreements?

I suggest that even though great parts of the REDD negotiations take place at a macro level, they are, in the end, dependent on a set of interpersonal relations where trust is an important factor (see Eriksen, 2007). In this chapter, I wish to highlight the importance of trust in negotiations and encounters between different social groups and actors. I wish to see, as Long argues, how *“interface situations often provide the means by which individuals or groups come to define their own cultural or ideological positions vis-à-vis those espousing or typifying opposing views”* (Long, 2004:29). I will refer to how I entered an arena of interactions, where people were coping with their own battles and problem-solving activities, trying to negotiate a role, or a combination of roles, for myself as a participant observer (see Long, 2004:32).

“Various types of knowledge, including ideas about oneself, other people, and the context and social institutions, are important in understanding social interfaces” (Long, 2004:30). I argue it is important to understand, and be aware of, the various types of knowledge different actors involved with REDD possess, and also the ideas they have about oneself, other people, the context, NGOs and other institutions. Having such information might be very important if implementing a REDD-scheme in Paraguay is going to succeed.

During my first time in Asunción, trying to localize myself and make new acquaintances, I became aware of the existence of unspoken but very much established ideas between my informants about the different actors involved with REDD or other projects. I suggest the previous experiences with discrimination, violation of rights, and disrespect of indigenous knowledge and rights caused by certain NGOs, institutions, politicians and other social actors, have led to distrust among the indigenous representatives in FAPI and among the people in Pykasu. This has led to scepticism of who to trust that colour their strategy. Furthermore I suggest that characteristics of the Paraguayan society, such as discrimination, clientelism and corruption makes the new political leadership at SEAM careful of whom to trust while trying

to enforce its new political strategy. As Long argues all “*actors articulate notions about relevant acting units and the kinds of knowledgeability and capability they have vis-à-vis other social entities*”, which again “*raises the question of how people’s perceptions of the actions and agency of others shape their own behaviour*” (Long, 2004:33). I suggest that my informants’ reactions on my movements between different NGOs and institutions highlighted how people perceive and behave towards each other. I argue that having such knowledge can ease a successful implementation of REDD.

Hylland Eriksen argues that trust, reciprocity, humiliation and marginalization are central aspects of globalization, which contribute to explaining some of its dynamics and resultant patterns. He claims the motivations behind people’s engagement and investments in the increasing connectedness in globalization are overlooked dimensions (Eriksen, 2007:1). As we have seen, people had different motivations behind their investments and engagement in REDD. Eriksen addresses the need to direct attention towards the webs of trust and reciprocity that create trans-nationalism at the micro level “*and towards the situations where reciprocity fails, creating unpayable and humiliating debts of gratitude, silencing at the receiving end of unidirectional systems of exchange, exclusion from dominant circuits, and a lack of respect*” (Eriksen, 2007:14). Such systems of unidirectional exchange will be highlighted later in this chapter.

The battle of legitimacy and economic means

As explained in Chapter One, the dominant debate surrounding indigenous peoples in Paraguay has centred on whether or not they are hunter-gatherers because of the ‘way of life’ criterion made in Article 64 of the Paraguayan Constitution of 1992. The argument made in this article has functioned to gaining public support for land claims. Some radical indigenists - even though they acknowledge the argument has shortcomings - argue it is the only argument that will allow large forest areas to be saved from destruction (Blaser, 2004:66). Indigenists are non-indigenous people acting on the indigenous peoples’ behalf, and they are distrusted by many of the indigenous representatives in FAPI, as well as in Pykasu. As we are about to see, some of the indigenous representatives of FAPI were tired of being represented by outsiders and wanted the indigenous peoples to represent themselves. Radical indigenist NGOs “*claim a virtual monopoly on the ‘legitimate’ representation of indigenous peoples and the decisions made regarding their future*” (Blaser, 2004:59). An argument I frequently heard

by indigenous representatives was that the indigenist NGOs acted on the indigenous peoples' behalf to assure the means destined to the indigenous communities to themselves. Some had heard talk about money from international funds directed to the indigenous peoples in Paraguay that never reached their destination. In Pykasa, some argued this was a reason why foreign means could not be sent to the capital, Asunción. Because of corruption and lies, the assets disappeared along the way and never got to the people who needed them. A foreign NGO representative close to President Lugo once said to me: "*In Paraguay people don't know how to make money. In Paraguay you can do a great deal to improve the indigenous peoples' life quality and still make great money on it yourself. You could become rich here in Paraguay by helping others*". This statement matched the image I had been given by FAPI about NGOs taking a great deal of the money destined to the indigenous communities for themselves. NGOs has been criticized for imposing their own agendas and becoming self-interested actors at the expense of the people they in theory are supporting (Lewis & Kanji, 2009:18).

During my meetings with FAPI, I witnessed many examples of indigenous representatives having bad experiences with governmental institutions like INDI and INFONA as well as conservationist or indigenist NGOs - especially the NGO Guyra Paraguay (discussed in Chapter Five). While the conservationists, like Guyra Paraguay, were blamed for excluding the indigenous population in their work aimed to conserve forest and biodiversity, both indigenists and conservationists were said to, among other things, not speak the indigenous' language, fail to invite indigenous peoples on important gatherings, make important decisions on behalf of them without their concession. The indigenous communities were getting better organized themselves and disliked not being consulted. The indigenous representatives in FAPI had plenty of bad experiences with, for example, corruption, people taking their resources and violations of their rights and, therefore, did now prefer to act on their own behalf, decide for themselves and choose on their own who they wanted to trust and cooperate with.

Some at SEAM resented the battles and competitions over economic means between environmental organizations, NGOs and institutions: "*If people would rather cooperate and stand on the same side fighting for a common cause the whole environmental picture would be much more effective*" (SEAM representative). Some of these also argued that it would be better if all economic means aimed at environmental matters went to SEAM because none of the other NGOs or institutions could cooperate and manage such big and comprehensive

projects as good as SEAM could. The vast number of competing NGOs could therefore be seen as an obstacle for an effective environmental strategy.

Trust at SEAM

At SEAM, trust had a lot to say when it came to the distribution of work responsibilities. The ones trusted by the Minister - mostly new employees - were given a lot of responsibilities. As explained in Chapter Two, SEAM was far from united, divided as it was into those who were for the political changes, against them, or somewhere in-between. Some employees said they were not only physically, but also mentally tired because of the demanding working environment where corruption suspicions flourished.

The entrusted employees often joked about the heavy burden of work responsibilities and their lightweight wallets. Even though the salaries had not changed with the increased amount of responsibility, many were willing to dedicate themselves to work. Others complained they could not manage the high amount of additional responsibilities without an increase of salary. At times, some were given the tasks of the 'old' employees because of distrust. Some in the new political leadership claimed they did not trust any of the 'old' employees used to the old way of managing things at SEAM; they themselves, on the other hand, were there "for the right reasons". This careful selection of whom to trust was noticed among those who were not trusted. At times, the old employees gathered to plan demonstrations and discuss the situation. Some felt excluded and found the favouring of such a small group by the Minister discouraging: "*except from the nine entrusted, the rest of us are just put to move paper around*" ('Old' employee, SEAM). Payments and other declarations rightfully claimed by the employees were delayed, sometimes leading to impatience, annoyance and insecurity. During a demonstration by the old employees, the new political leadership held a speech where they admitted that mistakes had been made in their attempts to make things right. They were sorry for the delays and warned that it would take some time until SEAM was up and running as it was supposed to.

In the next section, I will explain how my movements across unknown, but established, social borders led to distrust, suspicion, exclusion and doubts around my mission in Paraguay and whose side I was on.

An unknowing student in a web of delicate relations

Before my arrival to Paraguay, the Norwegian Rainforest Foundation (RFN) had helped me get in touch with some of their Paraguayan collaborative partners. The first couple of weeks I had introduced myself to three of them - three NGOs - among them being FAPI. One of the other NGOs I introduced me to, may be called an indigenist NGO acting on indigenous peoples' behalf. FAPI label itself to be an indigenous organization where indigenous peoples represent themselves. The other NGO did soon after our first meeting invite me to participate in a meeting they were holding about indigenous land and territory rights. The meeting took place at Santa Inés, a catholic complex run by nuns. I arrived with the leader of this NGO and met many indigenous representatives when we arrived there. Some of them I recognized from FAPI, so I sat down with them to chat in the dining room. A representative from the other NGO informed me when the meeting was about to start, and it was not before I sat down and the meeting started that I figured out there had to be two separate meetings taking place at Santa Inés that day. None of the members of FAPI I had talked to in the dining room earlier were present at this NGOs meeting. During the break, the NGO confirmed that FAPI was holding its own meeting. Since I had imagined RFN's partners to be close and collaborative, I found it surprising that they were holding separate meetings when first in the same building. During lunch, the dining room was already filled with participants from FAPI's meeting. I smiled to the persons catching my eyes out of fear of overlooking people I had already met. This time I sat down with different participants from the other NGOs meeting and stayed, chatting a little bit longer with a foreign representative who was planning to establish his own NGO. As we will see, my presence at Santa Inés this day - talking to various NGO-representatives and participating at the meeting of this other NGO - affected my later relationship with FAPI.

Of the three NGOs I had visited the week before this meeting, FAPI was the one who had sparked most of my interest. I liked the down-to-earth profile of their meeting place in Asunción, unlike the two other NGOs I had been seeing that had bigger offices of way better standard. I left my first meeting with FAPI with the impression that they seemed positive in trying to help me. We agreed they would send me more information to my e-mail address.

The Good and the Bad

I did not hear anything from FAPI after this first meeting, and after the meeting in Santa Inés, I wondered why the other NGO, and not FAPI, had invited me. I soon started my fieldwork with SEAM, as I was given this opportunity. In February, RFN was invited to a workshop held by FAPI about REDD, and I called my main contact in FAPI to ask for permission to participate. I noticed that his earlier helpful tone was gone, but I was given the permission and did not give it any further thought. I could not help to think about this again when I approached to greet him, and he rejected my attempt to start a conversation. I hoped it was because he was busy, but my suspicions soon were confirmed when I met the Norwegian RFN representative, also present at this workshop. He told me that FAPI had expressed certain worries about my agenda, and that they told him about the meeting at Santa Inés, where I had been seen together with untrustworthy persons and had failed to greet them. My suspicions were confirmed. I had not recognized central members of FAPI, and I had been talking to several actors participating on the other NGOs meeting. I thanked the Norwegian representative for making me aware of this and tried to get a chance to talk to my main contact. After being told “*we talk later*” that day, I fortunately met him during breakfast the next day. I apologized for not having greeted them at Santa Inés, as I had failed to recognize them among all the new faces, and I tried to explain to him how I thought we were all going to be part of the same meeting. I tried to explain my role as an independent student who was failing to see the already existing norms and relations within the NGO environment unknown to me, and that I was not connected to the NGO they had observed me with or any other NGO. He seemed to understand and accept the apology and started to explain some things about the Paraguayan NGO-environment. He told me I could not go around talking to everybody. The foreigner I had talked to during lunch at Santa Inés was one of the worst, as he tried to create for himself a NGO, and, in this attempt, tried to split FAPI up. “*In Paraguay you have the good ones and you have the bad ones*”, he told me, by then again emphasizing how FAPI was an indigenous organization where the indigenous people represent themselves. I was told that, in Paraguay, you have many NGOs taking resources directed to the indigenous population for themselves, making business out of indigenous people’s problems. He told me to be careful of whose side I picked. FAPI had apparently not been given a proper invitation by the other NGO to its’ meeting at Santa Inés that day. It had been an informal and accidental invitation that did not respect FAPI’s need for time to gather all of its members; this invitation had left them with the feeling that the other NGO did not really want to have

FAPI present. I thanked him for the information and hoped we had sorted out the misunderstandings.

At the next REDD workshop some days later, I asked FAPI for their help finding an indigenous community where I could do the second part of my fieldwork. We agreed I would send some written information about my fieldwork via e-mail and, once again, I was warned to be careful of whom to talk with. When I got home, I sent FAPI an e-mail, but it was never answered. I also tried to make some calls but without results. I hoped it was because they had a lot to do since they were busy with a lot of responsibility and things to do.

Back with SEAM, I was invited to participate at the UN-REDD meetings, including the meetings of the UN-REDD technical team. I was surprised that when I was about to participate at my second meeting with the UN-REDD technical team, I was asked to leave the room. Later, I was told by one of SEAM's members of the technical team that the Minister did not want me to participate on any further REDD meetings. I tried to get an explanation of why but the person delivering the message claimed not to know why; it could be because I was seen as unqualified because of my young age, that I was suspected to be FAPI's assessor, or because I could be a spy from the Norwegian government, he did not know. The Minister unfortunately did not find time to talk to me after this event.

Accepted in Pykasu

Even though several NGOs had offered me the opportunity to do my fieldwork with them, I wanted to be sure I collaborated with someone trusted by FAPI. As well as wanting FAPI's trust, I saw having this trust as important because of the central role FAPI had in the UN-REDD negotiations. Since I did not receive any response from FAPI, I decided to find another residence for the second half of my fieldwork by my own. The NGO, Alter Vida, did not fall into either of the categories of indigenists nor conservationists but defined itself as a socio-environmental NGO, which worked for the improvement of the environment as well as for the improvement of the livelihoods of the persons living in it. Since becoming a socio-environmental institution was a goal of the new political leadership at SEAM, I saw this NGO as interesting. Alter Vida appeared to have a good relationship with FAPI, and was present at both of their REDD workshops. This is where I got to know them and was invited to come visit the people in Pykasu. After having visited Pykasu, I decided to contact the leader of the community directly to ask for permission to do my fieldwork there. Alter Vida did not give

this permission on the behalf of the community like other NGOs I had talked to suggested. The leader recognized me from my earlier visit to the community and said yes. Some people in Pykasu wanted an anthropologist helping them make a dictionary preserving their ancestral language and documenting old cultural practises they feared would be lost. Even though I could not help them with all of this, we agreed I would do what I could do.

Trust once again established

After the leader of Pykasu gave me his permission, I called my main contact in FAPI. I told him that they did not have to worry about me anymore as I had arranged my stay with the leader of Pykasu. I thanked them for their help and said I was sure they had been busy and probably had enough to deal with to begin with. To my surprise, he answered by apologizing for what he saw as a great misunderstanding. He now understood I was on the right side, but as the other NGO I had been observed with at Santa Inés also was the first NGO to respond to the e-mail from RFN regarding my arrival, he believed this NGO had been ‘in charge’ of me. Therefore, he had been so sceptical. He said he was sorry we did not figure this out before and ended the conversation by inviting me to a meeting they were having some days later.

Given that I did not get any further explanation for my exclusion from the UN-REDD meetings, the reasons behind the why will just be speculations. I assumed it was because of FAPI’s distrust. The Minister did not agree to meet me for an interview before I left, but I was asked to send my questions by e-mail - an e-mail that was never responded to. Neither did he want to sign a confirmation paper of my stay with SEAM. I was never explained why he did not want to sign this paper, but a friend working at SEAM told me as a response to my question that “*the Minister is afraid of signing certain things*”. I do not know why curiosity and excitement about my work went to my exclusion from the REDD-negotiations but I assume it has to do with problems coping with the fragile democracy in Paraguay as well as distrust. I learned a lot of these webs of trust and distrust that had not become visible to me had I not experienced it personally.

I think this example demonstrates how my presence made people’s apprehension of each other clear in a way that would not have been visible for the outsider’s gaze. I think this example shows how former history and distrust affects how the different social actors proceed in their encounters with others and selectively choose their network. Seeing REDD as a result of globalization, I argue this example demonstrates, as Eriksen writes, how moral

commitments in relationships, cultural conservatism and coercive pressures to conform remain extremely powerful despite globalization (2007:14). It also demonstrates how difficult it may be for an outsider to gain trust and how easy lack of knowledge can lead to hasty conclusions: something important to have in mind in REDD negotiations and when managing REDD projects.

Pykasu - Projects, trust and betrayal

Also in Pykasu, I experienced that some had a hard time trusting me. When I visited the different families, I often carried with me my notebook with words and phrases I had learned in Guaraní Ñandeva. While the majority seemed to find it funny and entertaining that I tried to learn their language, others showed more caution. When using my survival phrases as “*what’s your name?*” or “*where do you live?*”, some people had doubts about answering me. Several times I was given the response “*Why do you want to know?*”, and some even told me that they did not want to ‘share their information’ with me and preferred to be left alone. Once I was told: “*If we are going to tell you something, you should pay us*”. It did not take me long before I learned that many in the community had bad experiences with people from the outside not fulfilling their promises, taking advantage of them or, as some said “*making money on our knowledge by never to give anything in return*”. The inhabitants in Pykasu were suffering from drought and the lack of food and trying to make the ends meet in one way or another. Several had a hard time understanding what I really was doing in their community and feared I would be another of those taking advantage of them or never keeping what they promised. The lives of the people in Pykasu’s were filled with waiting and hopes, but, unfortunately, betrayals and disappointments seemed to be more the rule than the exception. After having being let down so many times, people were careful of whom to trust and rely on.

In several ways, the people in Pykasu felt abandoned. Their location was far away from government institutions and administrative centres, and the great majority of Paraguayan inhabitants did not know about their existence at all. The inhabitants of Pykasu had no other means to communicate with the outside world but with a radio at the local health post. Few NGOs and other institutions showed interest in working with Pykasu, as it was so far away and travel costs expensive. Implications of not being seen and respected are underestimated difficulties in the contemporary world (Eriksen, 2007:14). In this section, I wish to highlight the factors of trust and dependence in interface situations I witnessed between people in

Pykasu and NGOs (or other institutions). Eriksen argues that the centrality of humiliation as a (de)motivating force directing action and shaping ideology in many of the situations influenced by globalizing processes has been overlooked (2007:7). Considering Pykasu as part of globalizing processes, like climate change and project offers, I suggest that the community's earlier bad experiences with different actors from the outside have led to demotivation and may influence some of the inhabitants attitude towards outsiders and their project promises.

As explained in Chapter One, different visions of development based on dominant notions of indigenusness – meaning, as living in harmony with nature - are promoted by competing Paraguayan radical indigenists. Often, the life projects of the indigenists based on this notion of indigenusness do not fit the indigenous peoples' own ways of seeing themselves and their being-in-the-world. Blaser (2004) demonstrates this through his study of the Yshiro peoples in the Paraguayan Chaco. He argues that the life projects of the Yshiro leader did not fit within ready-made definitions of indigenusness but were instead often just used to justify outsiders' own visions of development. He argues indigenous life projects are thoroughly historical, consider immediate political conditions and always in the making, and that the indigenous experiences of dealing with colonialism cannot be disregarded in the struggle to make indigenous and non-indigenous life projects workable in the middle of very unfavourable material/discursive structures of power (Blaser, 2004:54,68). As discussed earlier, the parties involved in such interface situations are often backed by different forms of power. The NGOs often possesses greater material and social power than the indigenous people. Unfortunately, it is hard for many indigenous peoples to see the offers of the NGOs with a critical gaze. For many, this offers an opportunity to get highly needed help. Many are illiterate, making it difficult to read agreements critically, and many lack a precise understanding of the monetary value of things.

No cumplen – they don't fulfil

“*No cumplen*” was a statement that often came up in my conversations with Paraguayans in general, not just in Pykasu. The President, the new government, the police, the NGOs, among others, were said to not fulfil their promises. Many things were said to be done but never happened. Pykasu had various experiences with outsiders not keeping their word. For eight years, Pykasu had waited for a promised project from The Secretariat of Social Action called

Programa Propais 2, and still they had not seen anything of it. The emergency help from the emergency office was delayed, the school equipment for the children had also been months delayed, the doctor supposed to come once a month had not been there for a long time, the Governance (*la Gobernación*) sometimes tricked them with numbers and measures and did not come when they said they were supposed to, the oil and gas company CDS had not given them the cows they had promised them a long time ago for permission to further investigate in the area, they had been promised a handicraft project which never had happened, politicians had come to the community several times promising improvements against the votes of the community members without results, President Lugo had promised that nobody was going to die of hunger, but yet, nobody had received help and people lacked food. Despite their earlier disappointments, many seemed to have a positive attitude towards new project offers. People seemed to want outsiders to invest in their community: “*we need help to get through these difficult times until we get our “chacras” (fields), animals and production up on its feet again*” (Pykasu representative). Due to their difficult situation, I think it was hard for many of the inhabitants to look at project suggestions with a critical eye. There was either some help or no help at all.

Alter Vida – a trusted NGO

Even though many had a hard time trusting outsiders, some were indeed more trusted than others. Of the two NGOs I witnessed working in the community, Alter Vida was the most trusted. I think Alter Vida had gained this trust by spending time in the community and working for a relatively long basis, often spending several days - at times, also weeks there - working on community projects. During the project CERAI, a name derived from the sponsoring Spanish NGO *Centro de Estudios Rurales y de Agricultura Internacional*, they had spent long time in the community using time to converse and listen to the inhabitants needs and desires as well as enjoying friendly conversations together. They had participated in parties and other events, eaten together and showed interest in the inhabitants’ knowledge and traditions. During my observations at the community meetings held by Alter Vida, I got the impression of them having the will to listen to the inhabitants and involve them from the early stages in the project management. The projects developed from wishes and needs uttered by the community, and new strategies and suggestions seemed to be discussed with them. Representatives from Alter Vida were also present when the community celebrated the carnival. They were also known to show up at the time they said they were supposed to,

unlike many other institutions and organizations. This is a factor that becomes appreciated in a community without communication possibilities.

The other NGO, among other institutions making their entrance in Pykasu every now and then, was not as trusted as Alter Vida. I think a great deal of this was because they had not gotten to know the people in Pykasu in the same way as Alter Vida and had not spent as much time as Alter Vida had in the community. Other reasons will be discussed later in this chapter.



Alter Vida and Pykasu representatives working together to fix a flat tire



A representative from Pykasu and Alter Vida discussing the success of and future work with an agricultural project



A representative from Alter Vida and Pykasu handing out refreshments



A representative from Alter Vida dancing at the Pykasu carnival

I argue that Alter Vida, unlike many other institutions, was more trusted by the people in Pykasu because they had gotten to know each other and gained and exchanged information

about what they understood about the current projects. I think this mutual understanding of what a project involves - based on the knowledge the negotiating parties have about each other - will be crucial in realizing REDD projects.

Alter Vida defines itself as a non-profit NGO, whose aim is to promote investigation, education, formation and training within an environmental theme. They work towards sustainable development and see the local citizens' participation as crucial in their work (Alter Vida, 2011). In Pykasu, Alter Vida was considered to be a NGO that actually fulfilled (*cumple*) their promises. Alter Vida had worked in Pykasu for about two years in 2010, and people in Pykasu seemed to be very satisfied with their work. Alter Vida worked on a project called CERAI, aimed to improve the habitants of Pykasu's life quality and giving them access to potable water and nourishments. Beside giving each household potable water and installing showers and sinks, they had also started several agricultural projects by giving each household a small garden with vegetables and fruit trees, as well as, among other things, creating a community garden. In the Chaco, many development projects have failed in their attempts to transforming hunter-gatherers into agriculturalists (Blaser, 2004:54), yet this project had shared success based on both the difficult cultivation conditions, and peoples limited experience in using vegetables. The households had also been given iron stoves for cooking based on the wishes of the women in the community. I got the impression that the representatives from Alter Vida working in the community on a regular basis were liked, trusted and respected. The representatives that had not spent so much time there were not as trusted, and neither was Alter Vida completely free of suspicions of corruption and lies.

Cases of social interface

Before starting the discussion of why the other NGO and institutions were not as trusted as Alter Vida, I will use two cases of interface situations I witnessed during my time in Pykasu. By demonstrating disappointments and frustrations, I think these examples highlight the importance and appreciation of trustworthy relationships in projects by people in Pykasu. The gift-giver has power over the gift-receiver (Eriksen, 2007:7, Mauss, 1995). Without means to communicate with the outside society (besides a radio on the local health post), people in Pykasu had no other option than to rely on outsiders' words and wait. Godelier (1999) distinguishes between agonistic and non-agonistic exchange. In agonistic exchange, return gifts make the parties 'even', while in non-agonistic exchange - where no payment or return

gift are given - a *“relationship of mutual trust and commitment is consolidated through delayed returns and vague obligations to reciprocate”* (Eriksen about Godelier, 2007:10-11). I consider the exchange between Pykasu and outsiders/NGOs/other institutions to be charity and therefore a non-agonistic type of exchange. With the following two cases, I wish to exemplify how bad experiences with a NGO and other institutions can lead to de-motivation, which may influence some of the attitudes of Pykasu’s inhabitants towards outsiders and their promises. I suggest these examples can demonstrate kinds of disappointments experienced by the inhabitants that may serve as sources of distrust affecting their relationship to others, and how being in a state of charity is not a pleasant situation to be in.

Case 1 – Health care and misunderstandings

This other NGO working in Pykasu, which can be labelled as an indigenist-NGO, had started a project of helping the third generation - a group of more or less 20 persons over the age of 50 – by offering them dental care, optical evaluation and medical controls. One of my friends who was a part of this age group was eager this day because he had been promised a new set of glasses to improve his damaged vision. He had been promised a new set of glasses from the NGO when they visited Pykasu some months earlier. Now he waited enthusiastically outside the health post asking for his turn. Not until the end of the last day he finally was called up. When I saw him again later that evening he was angry. He had not gotten the glasses he had been promised, as the NGO apparently had lost his former record: *“Six months I’ve been waiting. And for what? Nothing!”* His earlier excitement and good mood was long gone. One night, two days after this episode, he came by to visit me. I had made a sugar drink called *cocido* with some children in the community house. Sitting down by the table we enjoyed our cups of *cocido* with some crackers. To my surprise, my friend turned away my offer when I offered him some crackers. *“You probably noticed that I did not have many teeth to begin with”*, he said to me. He told me about his meeting with the dentist after his optical tests, where the dentist had left him without any teeth in his lower jaw but one. I remembered this story and nodded my head. *“Well, last night I lost the only tooth I had left down there too”*. He laughed. *“I’m like a newborn again. Not only did they rob my glasses, they took my teeth with them too”*. The NGO had told him they were coming back in about a month time, but it had been about 6 months since the last time he saw them, so he doubted their claim.

At the health post, the elder women had gathered outside on a bench waiting for their turn. At this post, there were communication problems, something I was told from both NGO representatives and Pykasu inhabitants: The health workers were frustrated about the ambiguous answers they had been given when they asked people questions in Guaraní jopará.



Optical tests

The answers and explanations of the inhabitants of Pykasu had led to several misunderstandings, and the health workers did not know if their real message had been understood. The woman running the optical tests had started out by testing the inhabitants' vision with letters, something that had worked badly since many in the community were illiterate. When this was discovered, she started to run the tests with drawings of animals. The inhabitants I could communicate with told me they had found the experience somewhat scary, and some had become disappointed, as they had expected other things. Some blamed the NGO for not keeping their promises, having an attitude of superiority without really caring for them: *"They only come here when they feel like it themselves"*. The NGO was accused for taking the means directed to Pykasu for themselves. I think communication problems leading to misunderstandings was a big obstacle between this NGO and the community.

Case 2 - Empty parking lot

Alter Vida was having a closure of their project, CERAI. For this event, they had invited about 50 people from different institutions and NGOs, hoping someone would continue working and helping the community. By doing this, the inhabitants of Pykasu would have the

opportunity to explain their situation to the visitors representing diverse institutions. Among the invited guests was the Minister of SEAM, who explicitly had asked for an invitation. A couple of days before the closure, I saw the whole community in activity for the first time during my stay, working to make their community the most presentable. People did really



Women cleaning and preparing the community before the great day



Welcoming sign for the visitors



Preparing the feast

look forward to get an opportunity to show their community at its best, impressing the visitors and maybe be able to get some more highly needed help. They had invited the neighbouring Ñandeva community to participate at the party, and the two community leaders in Pykasu had prepared speeches to present to the visitors when they arrived at the closest park the day

before. The closure was starting in the national park, *Teniente Agripino Enciso* where the guests would be staying the first day before visiting Pykasu. On the second day of the meeting, they all would visit Pykasu, where the inhabitants had planned a programme containing sightseeing, speeches, football and volleyball matches and then having a party, where the community was going to show traditional dances and music.

Only five visitors showed up at the meeting in the park apart from the representatives from the two NGOs already working in the community and the two park guardians. Neither the Minister of SEAM showed up as he had said he would. When I later asked some at SEAM why the Minister and other invited representatives from SEAM had failed to come, I was given the answer “*Why on earth should we (SEAM) go all the way up there for?*”

The day of the visit to Pykasu the next morning, only three of those five new visitors were left; a local journalist, a representative from INDI, and an electrician. I became deeply disappointed, and did not want to think of how the people in Pykasu would feel. When we arrived Pykasu, one man had the responsibility for guiding all the arriving cars to the newly created parking lot. It was an easy job. They had killed two cows for the feast, one of them a gift from Alter Vida, and, for once, they at least had a lot to eat. The visitors, except from those already working there, left after the sightseeing and speeches and did not even eat the food the community had prepared. After the barbeque, the rest left as well, leaving just two representatives from Alter Vida and myself as the only ones staying for the football and volleyball matches and the party. Since it was my last day in the community, I really wanted to be there. It was never a party that night since all the visitors had left. I spent my last night in Pykasu walking from house to house in the complete silence under the starry sky, saying goodbye to my friends, who, at the end of it all, seemed satisfied with the day. Still, it was not the goodbye we had hoped for.

These cases may serve as examples of how the people in Pykasu are continuously being let down making it hard to trust peoples' words. The first case may demonstrate why the other NGO was not as trusted in the same way as Alter Vida, and how distrust and lack of communication may lead to misunderstandings and consequently limit the success of a project. As demonstrated, communication problems can lead to even further obstacles in the interaction between outsiders and the community.

“I know better” – attitude

The other NGO, as well as other outsiders, including Alter Vida at times, was accused of having an “I know better” attitude. Non-indigenous people from the outside, wanting to implement or start projects, often talked to them as if they did not know anything. I was told that many in Pykasu often had a hard time proving them otherwise because of communication problems: *“At times, even if we understand them, we cannot answer them in the way we want to because we don’t speak their language well enough. Many think they know better than us because some of us never went to school, but there are many things we know so much better than them”* (Pykasu representative).

The people of Pykasu felt many did not value or respect their knowledge about their surrounding environment and their management of it: *“We have always lived in this area, we know exactly to what extent we can do what without hurting and damaging the environment. We know exactly what the different species, birds and animals need”* (Pykasu representative).

Together with giving an offer for the third generation, as explained above, the other NGO had decided to help Pykasu with a new project with beehives and cattle, partly in cooperation with Alter Vida. The other NGO held a meeting with some of the men to teach them health care of the cattle and the protection forms and handling of the beehives. The handling of vaccination and bee equipment was illustrated to all the present men. The meeting was held in Guaraní, but illustrative explanations and a good deal of Spanish words helped me understand parts of what was being said. The NGO representative, together with a park guardian, explained and taught the participants what the tools were for and how it should be handled. Even if the Ñandeva were experienced honey gatherers, and also had experiences with cattle, the NGO did not seem recognize this. Only on few occasions did they ask about the knowledge of the inhabitants in handling bees or larger animals. The participants followed the one-way dialogue quietly and concentrated. This example may serve to illustrate what some in Pykasu meant by outsiders having an “I know better” attitude.

Conclusion

Having these examples in mind, one can imagine a project like REDD not just being a global initiative managed on macro levels, but a project that, at micro levels, may consist of interpersonal relations filled with trust and intimacy (see Eriksen, 2007:14). I think this

chapter demonstrates the importance of recognition- and respect of each other from all the negotiating parties. I think building a relationship of trust will be crucial for a project's success - creating shared expectations for all parties involved. As Long argues:

“Continued interaction encourages the development of boundaries and shared expectations that shape the interaction of the participants so that over time the interface itself becomes an organized entity of interlocking relationships and intentionalities” (Long, 2004:29).

I argue SEAM's incorporation of inclusion and participation into their new political ideology engenders trust and acceptance by different stakeholders. This may reduce the risks of conflict or failure of REDD projects (Forsyth, 2009:114). As shown in this chapter, indigenous peoples in Paraguay have many bad experiences of projects imposed from above by non-indigenous people, something that has affected their trust towards - and belief in - other project negotiations. If REDD proves to be just another project like this, it might take years to regain trust and gain full participation from the parties involved (Forsyth, 2009:122).

Chapter VII: Conclusion

There exist various weak and strong stakeholders in the Paraguayan forests. The conservative Colorado Party upheld an uneven distribution of power; leaving the wealthy landowners at the very top and the indigenous communities at the very bottom of the social hierarchy. I suggest ‘the times of change’ represented by President Lugo opens up possibilities for a redistribution of power. A new political will, where the indigenous population is seen as collaborative partners with their own rights, rather than an actors without agency, is reflected in the UN-REDD negotiations and in the forest conservation policy of SEAM.

On the other hand there are obstacles and uncertainties about the future. The laws of Paraguay are continuously broken and disrespected. Lack of institutional presence, and lack of political will to do anything about the situation, makes these transgressions hard to prevent. Even though deforestation rates decreased after the law of zero deforestation in the Oriental region was established, the deforestation rates in the Chaco province has increased. The people in Pykasu have not noticed much to Lugo’s promised changes. For them climate change and deforestation is an ongoing, constant threat. Because the forest no longer provides what they need for their self-sufficiency, alternatives are needed. REDD could offer one such alternative, but as we have seen, implementation is hindered by unwillingness and unclear land tenure. Moreover, corruption, battles over resources, bad experiences and a fragile democracy have created a tense relationship between NGOs, governmental institutions, private landowners and local representatives.

I suggest that this situation makes interpersonal, intimate relations characterized by trust even more important in project negotiations like REDD. As demonstrated in the last chapter: trust between the negotiating parties, mutual knowledge and understanding about each other and about the projects on the agenda is crucial for a collaboration to succeed. The present UN-REDD negotiations in Paraguay are promising, showing respect of the indigenous population and their rights. Yet this strategy may easily be changed if significant changes are made in the political leadership of SEAM, or if the conservative Colorado Party resumes power at the next presidential election. Disappointments and impatience of Lugo’s regime of change among the Paraguayan population may easily lead to political changes at the next election.

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