

The social life of pilot projects
Insights from REDD+ in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Pilot projects are used as tools to test new solutions to global environment and development concerns including climate change and natural resource management. They are framed as mechanisms that provide evidence of 'what works' in order to improve policy and practice. However, despite the widespread use of pilot projects, their dynamics, impacts and implications are not well studied. Drawing on political ecology, social anthropology, science and technology studies, social justice theory, and policy studies literature, this thesis critically explores the phenomenon of pilot projects using a case study of REDD+ in Tanzania. An interpretivist-constructivist, actor-based approach to research is taken, using ethnographic data that includes over 150 narrative interviews with conservation and development professionals and actors involved in district and village-level pilot projects.

Findings are presented in three analytical chapters. The first unpacks the relationship between pilot projects, policy and practice. A contradiction is identified between the design of the pilot projects as experimental and outside of the constraints of existing institutions, and the ability of the projects to have meaningful, longer-term influence. The second analytical chapter explores the complex dynamics and implications of expectations in pilot projects, identifying a trade-off between fully piloting new initiatives and raising expectations. The final analytical chapter uses a recognition justice lens to explore pilot project evaluations, finding that the ways of knowing, values and perspectives of some actors are discursively reproduced through the process, excluding and delegitimizing alternative perspectives.

These results contribute to critical debates on international environment and development policy and practice by arguing that rather than delivering innovation and learning, pilot projects reproduce and reinforce the status quo. As such, this thesis reconceptualises pilot projects as agents of social change that cannot be contained within project objectives and timelines. This has significant implications for the continued use of pilot projects and raises questions about responsibility and accountability for their outcomes.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Modified versions of one of the analytical chapters has been submitted as a publication and is listed below. I can confirm that as lead author of this paper, I was responsible for developing the theoretical framing, designing the methodology, carrying out all data collection and analysis, developing arguments, and writing and revising the manuscripts throughout the review process. As supervisors and co-authors, Susannah Sallu, Jonathan Ensor and Rob Marchant provided guidance and commented on drafts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why pilot projects?

Search through the websites of international agencies, such as the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and you will find reference to thousands of pilot projects. Pilot projects are framed as being an important tool in the early stages of development of new international policies, programs, technologies and management initiatives (Sanderson 2002; Li 2007a). They are seen as being a method through which international agencies can experiment with new initiatives and a tool to generate quick and tangible results on how these new initiatives might behave in real-life settings (Jowell 2003; Gonsalves and Mendoza 2003). ‘Pilot project’ can therefore be framed as ‘an umbrella term for projects that are undertaken in the spirit of experimentation’ (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2012: 152). It is this focus on experimentation, an emphasis on generating learning and evidence, and an ambition to scale-up post-pilot that characterises pilot projects and differentiates them from other types of environment and development projects (Vreugdenhil and Slinger 2008). Pilot projects are considered to be particularly useful in the context of complex social and environmental challenges, including health, water, climate change and natural resource management, where interactions between new initiatives and reality can be unpredictable (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2010). As such, pilot projects have been used extensively during the early stages of international environment and development initiatives including wildlife management areas (WMAs), community based natural resource management (CBNRM) and, most recently, reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhancing forest stocks through improved conservation and management (REDD+).

However, during a scoping trip in the early stages of my PhD research, which was about impacts of REDD+ in Tanzania more broadly, I was struck by the many concerns that actors from international to local levels had about the use of pilot projects, particularly as a result of their experiences with REDD+. My trip coincided

with the final stages of the country's \$80 million REDD+ pilot phase and there was little activity happening around REDD+, aside from work being done on establishing the National Carbon Monitoring Centre (NCCM). There were few plans for continuation of the seven pilot projects that had reached completion, and practitioners and policy-makers were in the process of moving on to new projects and programmes. And yet it was also clear that the pilot projects had had a huge impact on the country, particularly in the districts and villages in which they were implemented where consequences were still being felt. My attention therefore turned onto the pilot projects themselves; asking questions about what they are, why their use is so prolific in international environment and development, and what happens when the initiatives don't continue post-pilot, as is the case with REDD+ in Tanzania.

I found that research and information on the outcomes of pilot projects abounds, both academically and through reports and documents generated by implementers, international agencies and donors. This body of work is largely instrumental (Mosse and Lewis 2006), focusing on what happened and 'what worked' within the boundaries of project objectives and project timelines, and what findings might mean for future iterations of the initiative that was being piloted. Despite the widespread use and perceived importance of pilot projects in relation to international and environment and development concerns, there is very little engagement with the pilot projects themselves as units of analysis. Questions about what pilot projects are and what drives their widespread use by actors working on international issues such as climate change and forest conservation are rarely asked. Nor is there extensive engagement with the 'social life' (Appadurai 1988) of pilot projects: the ways in which pilot projects interact with complex social and political realities and lead to change, outside of project boundaries. It is from this knowledge gap that this thesis has emerged and through it I aim to address some of these important questions about pilot projects and thus contribute to our understanding of them as a social phenomenon.

1.2 Why REDD+ pilot projects?

REDD+ pilot projects provide a timely and highly relevant instrumental case study through which to explore international environment and development pilot projects as a social phenomenon. REDD+ is an ambitious mechanism instigated by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and designed to tackle climate change, biodiversity conservation and human development issues through improved forest conservation and management. The origins of REDD+ can be traced back to UNFCCC COP 11 when the mechanism emerged under the acronym RED and with a focus on reducing emissions from deforestation (Pistorius 2012). RED subsequently became REDD to include efforts to reduce forest degradation, before becoming REDD+ in 2009 to broaden the scope and include improved forest management, and extend the focus to include poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation.

REDD+ is a form of payments for ecosystem services (PES) (Corbera 2012). The guiding principle of REDD+ is that predominately low-income, tropically-forested countries will be financially rewarded for conserving forests and increasing carbon stocks, through carbon markets or donor funds (Vatn and Vedeld 2013). Large amounts of funding and resources has been employed to facilitate preparation or pilot phases in order to get countries 'REDD+ ready' (Lund *et al.* 2017; Sunderlin *et al.* 2014). Over 500 pilot or demonstration projects have been implemented globally (Fletcher *et al.* 2016). The goal of the pilot projects has been to test how the REDD+ mechanism would work on the ground and to generate evidence and lessons for use in wider REDD+ policy and practice (Madeira *et al.* 2010). Vast amounts of evidence has come out of these REDD+ pilot projects, implemented across Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-REDD 2016), via 'lessons learnt' documents, reports, conferences and academic books and papers.

However, as the REDD+ ready phase and associated pilot projects continue, it has become evident that the mechanism is harder to implement than anticipated and that the expected levels of global REDD+ funding has not materialised (Lund *et al.* 2017). As such, many projects have stalled, been abandoned, or have evolved into

more traditional conservation and development projects that no longer focus on monetary incentives for carbon storage and sequestration (Sills *et al.* 2014). This thesis comes at a time where criticism of REDD+ mechanism and carbon forestry more broadly, is increasing (e.g. Fisher *et al.* 2018; Lund *et al.* 2017; Dressler 2017; Dzingirai and Mangwanya 2015). Yet at the same time REDD+ is being labelled a success and more pilot projects continue to be implemented (e.g. Angelsen 2016; UN-REDD 2018). The gap between expectations and realities of REDD+ has also led to the mechanism being framed as the latest in a long line of ‘conservation fads’, which are defined as ‘approaches that are embraced enthusiastically and then abandoned’ (Redford *et al.* 2013: 437). Previous conservation fads have included participatory forest management (PFM), integrated conservation and development programmes (ICDPs), and ecotourism (*ibid.*). As I will explore in detail in chapter five, conservation fads and pilot projects go hand in hand, and so by using a case study of REDD+ I am able to contribute to knowledge about conservation fads, and international environment and development policy and practice more broadly.

The REDD+ pilot phase in Tanzania provides a timely and relevant country-level case study for exploring the social phenomenon of pilot projects. Tanzania was chosen as one of nine global pilot project countries by the UN-REDD programme and the pilot phase was active from 2009 to 2014, with the evaluations completed and delivered in August 2015. The pilot phase was supported by \$80 million of bi-lateral funding from the Norway’s Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI), managed by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Dar es Salaam (Kaijage and Kafumu 2016). Around 40% of the Norwegian funding was used to implement nine pilot projects (Kaijage and Kafumu 2016), seven of which were completed. The pilot projects were implemented by conservation and development NGOs and framed as being a critical component of the early stages of REDD+ in Tanzania; designed to test the REDD+ mechanism and generate lessons for policy design and successful future implementation (Burgess *et al.* 2010). The remainder of the funding was used to support a range of national activities, which will be discussed further in chapters three and four. The expectation was that Tanzanian state institutions would continue with REDD+ once the pilot phase had been completed (Lund *et al.* 2017).

The National Carbon Monitoring Centre (NCCMC) was established to try and facilitate this, however it was not operational at the time of pilot project completion (Blomley *et al.* 2016). On completion of the pilot phase, Tanzania's REDD+ programme stalled and the required conditions (both internationally and nationally), such as funding and political will, were not in place to continue with a national REDD+ second phase, nor to expand or scale up the pilot projects (Lund *et al.* 2017). By conducting research after the pilot projects had finished, I was able to look at the full life-cycle of the pilot projects, as well as what happens after pilot projects have ended and international and national actors have moved on. More detail on REDD+ in Tanzania and the two project case studies can be found in sections 3.5 and 3.8.

1.3 Researching pilot projects as a social phenomenon

Using a case study of Tanzania's national REDD+ pilot phase and in-depth exploration of two individual pilot project case studies, this thesis explores international environment and development pilot projects as a social phenomenon. I bring together diverse bodies of literature including political ecology, social anthropology, science and technology studies (STS), social justice theory and policy studies to examine pilot projects through different conceptual lenses. My aim is not to contribute to the large body of literature on the outcomes of pilot projects, nor is it to pass judgement on whether particular pilot projects worked or not. Rather, I follow the approach of Li (2007b) and take a broad and critical view of pilot projects in order to ask questions and highlight issues that actors working within international environment and development policy and practice may otherwise not engage with. I take pilot projects themselves as the unit of analysis, exploring their social life (Sampson 1996; Appadurai 1988) and their role in international environment and development policy and practice. In this pursuit, I follow the discipline of political ecologists and development anthropologists in conducting research *on* conservation and development as opposed to *for* conservation and development (Sandbrook *et al.* 2013). It is argued that this type of research is crucial in order that professionals working on environment and development issues better understand the social and political contexts in which they work and thus

better understand the consequences of their missions (ibid.). This thesis contributes to our understanding of pilot projects, as well as contributing to broader understanding of international and environment and development intervention as social and political process (Breachin *et al.* 2002).

1.4 Research aim and questions

The aim of this thesis is *to critically explore international environment and development pilot projects as a social phenomenon*. I do so by addressing the following questions:

1. *What are pilot projects and why are they used in international conservation and development?*
2. *How do pilot projects interact and intersect with other actors, institutions and processes?*
3. *What are the impacts and implications of pilot projects (beyond project timelines and objectives)?*
4. *How can studying pilot projects increase our understanding of international conservation and development intervention?*

1.5 Main argument

My thesis argues for a reconceptualisation of pilot projects. They are currently framed as an essential tool for facilitating experimentation, innovation and learning. In order to facilitate innovation and learning, attempts are made to contain pilot projects by framing, implementing and evaluating them as discreet and bounded experiments, thus reducing engagement with complex and messy political realities. However attempts to contain pilot projects actually limits the amount of innovation and learning they are able to generate and in reality they reinforce and reproduce certain characteristics, discourses, narratives and practices. In addition, pilot projects interact with the complex contexts into which they are introduced, which contradicts the illusion of containment and results in unintended consequences. These impacts continue beyond project timelines and are often not considered within project objectives and evaluations. Negative

consequences, often linked to expectations driven by pilot projects, are felt most by project recipients, such as poor farmers in Tanzania. However the framing of pilot projects as contained experiments reduces the emphasis on responsibility and accountability for these consequences. As such, this thesis reconceptualises pilot projects as agents of social change that cannot be contained within project objectives and timelines. This has implications both for the continued use of pilot projects as well as for conservation and development policy and practice more broadly.

1.6 Key terms

1.6.1 International conservation and development

This thesis is about international environment and development pilot projects and findings are applicable to a wide range of initiatives, including those that are designed to tackle climate change mitigation and adaptation, forest conservation and poverty reduction. However, I will use the term *international conservation and development pilot projects* going forward as a term of reference. I also use *international conservation and development* as a broader term to encapsulate the actors, interventions and systems as a whole. I do so for three reasons. Firstly, conservation and development are terms that encapsulate both the 'issue' that is being addressed and the action that is being done to address it, or what Li (2007b) refers to as both the will to improve and the improvement schemes themselves. The terms also refer to the configuration of actors and institutions who take conservation and development as an 'object or end to which they devote time, money and professional competence' (Olivier De Sardan 2005: 24). Secondly, much of the literature I draw on is framed within the general terms of 'conservation' (e.g. Adams and Sandbrook 2013; Fletcher *et al.* 2016), 'development' (e.g. Long 2003; Mosse 2005) or even conservation-as-development (West 2006). Using the term conservation also brings REDD+ in line with other large international conservation and development initiatives, or fads, such as WMAs and ICDPs (Redford *et al.* 2013), thus enabling broader thesis contributions.

1.6.2 Pilot projects

As I have begun to establish and will elaborate on further throughout this thesis, there is a lack of critical engagement with what conservation and development pilot projects are and why they are used. As such, one of the questions that this thesis aims to answer is *what are pilot projects and why are they used in conservation and development?* In pursuit of this and in order to frame my research, I use as a starting point the conceptualisation of *pilot project* as ‘an umbrella term for projects that are undertaken in the spirit of experimentation’ (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2012: 152). As will be discussed throughout this thesis, pilot projects are framed as being different from traditional conservation and development projects in three main ways: that they are experimental, that they have a heightened emphasis on learning, and that there is an expectation of diffusion of the leanings into broader policy and practice (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2012; Sanderson 2002).

1.6.3 Narratives

I use the term *narratives* in two ways throughout this thesis. Firstly, I use the term *narratives* in relation to refer to *conservation and development narratives*. These are shared stories about international conservation and development that have a beginning, middle and end and establish a problem, possible consequences and then a logical solution (Roe 1994). As I elaborate throughout this thesis, these narratives, which include pilot project narratives, can be extremely powerful, mobilise a great deal of activity and have far-reaching consequences (Adger *et al.* 2001; Svarstad and Benjaminsen 2017). Secondly, I used the term *narratives* to refer to *actor narratives* within my research. As discussed in detail in chapter three, narrative research played a central role in my research methodology and many of my arguments are built on in-depth analysis of these narratives.

1.6.4 Actors

Following the tradition of Long (2003), I take an actor-oriented approach to research. In this tradition the term *actor* refers to those ‘who can meaningfully be attributed with the power of agency’ in conservation and development intervention (Long and Long 1992: 23). This concept of agency, however, is not limited to those

with decision-making capacities, such as politicians. Rather, *actor* refers to all people involved in social relations and contexts into which the pilot projects under study are implemented, and so have agency in relation to how it plays out on the ground (ibid.).

1.7 Thesis and chapter structure

Chapter two sets out the conceptual framing for this thesis by bringing together key concepts, theories and literatures. I do this first by reviewing different approaches to social research and identifying the space in which I am working. I then discuss some of the core features of the international conservation and development system by defining the system and its players, and characteristics and processes. Finally, I explore what happens when international concepts and ideas interact with complex actors and social and political contexts.

Chapter three outlines the approach I have taken to research design and methodology, using the five stages of research framework of Denzin and Lincoln (2011a) as a guide. I first consider my position as researcher and multicultural subject, looking at core issues such as positionality and the interface between myself as researcher and research participants. I then unpack the paradigm in which this thesis is located before providing an outline of the overall research strategy. I then delve into methods of data collection and analysis, which includes discussions on working with research assistants and data collection challenges, and information on the pilot project case studies. Finally I consider the practices and processes of interpreting and writing-up my research. I consider and discuss limitations of my approach throughout.

Chapters four, five and six are the main analytical chapters of this thesis. I have written these three chapters in such a way that they sit as standalone pieces of research, which can be easily adapted to become academic papers. However, they also work together as building blocks that develop the thesis story and the arguments I put forward. They follow the structure of academic papers, beginning with an introduction section that frames the research problem and identifies the gap. In line with my approach to research design, each analytical chapter uses a

different conceptual lens and so this is unpacked next through a literature review. The specific methods taken in each chapter are then outlined, along with case study information where required. This is followed by results and discussion, done both in relation to the chapter's conceptual lens and also the conservation and development literature discussed in chapter two, to ensure that research question four is continually addressed and contributions made. A short conclusion then brings the main themes together. The three analytical chapters act as layers that build the thesis by focusing on different actor groups, different stages of pilot project implementation and different research questions.

Chapter four, *the hidden assumptions and messy realities of pilot projects, policy and practice*, focuses primarily on research questions one and two, and on conservation and development professionals at international and national levels. I ask what pilot projects are and why they are used, and how they interact with broader conservation and development policy and practice. I use a conceptual lens that draws primarily on policy studies literature, including debates about evidence-based policy-making and practice. Using this lens, I explore the framings, narratives, assumptions and objectives that drive the use of pilot projects in Tanzania, and look at the way in which they are designed. I then compare the realities of the REDD+ pilot projects to project assumptions and designs, focusing on the relationship between the projects and wider policy and practice in Tanzania.

Chapter five, *the dynamics of expectations in pilot projects*, focuses primarily on research questions two and three and looks at actor perspectives from international to local levels, focusing on two pilot project case studies. The focus is on expectations, which emerged as a central issue for actors involved in REDD+ in Tanzania and has been highlighted as an issue in other REDD+ contexts. I specifically ask what the relationship is between pilot projects and expectations at different stages of project implementation. I use concepts from science and technology studies (STS) on the sociology of expectations as a lens through which to analyse expectations in two very different pilot projects. I look at the drivers of expectations in the early stages of pilot projects and the functions that expectations perform. I then look at the social dynamics of expectations in pilot projects and look

at some of their impacts and implications. I compare and contrast the two pilot project case studies throughout in order to provide insights on pilot projects and international conservation and development more broadly.

Chapter six, *recognition in pilot project evaluations*, looks predominantly at research questions two and three, and focuses on project evaluation using one REDD+ pilot project as a case study. I ask whose knowledge, values, perspectives and framings are included in pilot project evaluations, whose are missed out and how these perspectives differ. I use a recognition justice lens, drawing on concepts from social justice theory in order to explore pilot project evaluation. I look at the ways of knowing, values, perspectives and governance and perspectives on justice of village-level actors and compare them with those found in the official project evaluation documents. I then draw out three main themes for discussion and look at the implications for pilot project evaluation.

Chapter seven brings the findings from chapters four, five and six together and discusses them in order to address research question four. By combining the findings with core concepts explored in chapter two, I identify seven themes and through them I critically explore pilot projects as a social phenomenon. By doing so I set out the main thesis arguments and reconceptualise international conservation and development pilot projects. Finally, in chapter eight I make some conclusions and recommendations. I summarise the thesis and my main arguments and discuss how it answers the overall aim. I then go through the thesis contributions and reflect on the process as a whole and its limitations. Finally I make recommendations in relation to future research and policy and practice, both in Tanzania and beyond.

2. RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

This thesis aims to critically explore the social phenomenon of pilot projects in international conservation and development. This aim is driven by the identified need for more research *on* conservation and development, as opposed to *for* conservation and development (Sandbrook *et al.* 2013). This is particularly important in relation to pilot projects, which have received limited critical exploration. This chapter sets out the conceptual approach taken in this pursuit and outlines the core bodies of literature and theories used to build the arguments in this thesis. I first introduce different approaches to research in international conservation and development and identify the approach I take in this thesis: an actor-oriented approach to social research *on* conservation and development, which explores both interventions and the messy consequences of interventions (Li 2007b; Sandbrook *et al.* 2013). I then explore some of the core concepts and terms related to international conservation and development intervention and the systems driving those interventions, in order to situate my work in wider environment-development literature. Finally, I unpack core concepts, theories and empirical knowledge on the messy realities and consequences of international conservation and development intervention. I do not specifically focus on pilot projects in this review for two reasons. Firstly, as I have established in chapter one, specific exploration of pilot projects as a social phenomenon in relation to international conservation and development is limited. Secondly, the aim of chapter four is to unpack what pilot projects are, and to investigate how and why they are used in international conservation and development. As such, rather than here, the literature review in chapter 4 explores what we already know about pilot projects specifically.

2.2 Social research in international conservation and development

There is now broad agreement about the relevance of social science research to conservation and development (Mascia *et al.* 2003; Mosse 2005). Social science research into conservation and development is wide-ranging, driven by different

paradigms, objectives and conceptual approaches. Sandbrook *et al.* (2013) make a distinction between two broad (and not always mutually exclusive) categories: social research *for* conservation and development, and social research *on* conservation and development. Research *for* conservation is primarily instrumental and is conducted in order to improve policy and practice, towards the ultimate goal of environmental protection and/or human development (Mosse and Lewis 2006; Sandbrook *et al.* 2013). Knowledge is developed for the purpose of application or facilitating action (Long and Long 1992; Olivier De Sardan 2005). Much of this research is conducted by social scientists, who are enrolled as experts, consultants or researchers and embedded within conservation and development systems (Mosse and Lewis 2006). The result of this instrumental research is typically what Mosse (2004b: 81) refers to as 'knowledge products' that can be generalised and packaged into technical concepts, such as 'empowerment', and used by large conservation and development organisations. Critiques of this instrumental approach to research abound, highlighting issues such as a lack of self-reflection and critical engagement, which results in a perpetuation of dominant narratives, knowledge and world views (Tvedt 2006).

There have, however, been challenges to this instrumental approach to social research. One of the most significant is what is categorised as the populist approach (Mosse and Lewis 2006). Populism in this sense is most closely associated with the work of Robert Chambers, who advocates for the prioritisation of local and indigenous knowledge and bottom-up, participatory approaches to research (Chambers 1990; Chambers 1994; Chambers 2013). Although populist approaches to social research were originally championed by grassroots organisations and activists, they have since become an important part of the toolbox of research *for* conservation and development and are used as knowledge products in large international organisations such as the World Bank (Mosse 2004b). Olivier De Sardan (2005) challenges what he calls ideological populism, such as that of Robert Chambers. He argues that it is naïve and acts to over-inflate the agency and abilities of local actors, undermine the significant role of the experienced researcher,

particularly anthropologists and sociologists, and does not adequately account for the influence of power relationships and the wider political economy.

Social research *for* conservation and development, undertaken for the sole purpose of action and application, also ignores a wide range of theories and issues and fails to deliver understanding of intervention as a powerful agent of social change (Long and Long 1992). Research *on* conservation and development provides an alternative approach that tackles this knowledge gap. Research *on* conservation and development aims to improve knowledge about international conservation and development policy and practice by studying it as a social phenomenon (Sandbrook *et al.* 2013). The aim is to understand *how* the system works as opposed to making judgements about *whether* it works (Mosse 2005). This approach is also referred to as fundamental anthropology, taking conservation and development as an 'object that deserves scientific attention, methodological vigilance, and conceptual innovation' (Olivier De Sardan 2005: 3). The focus of instrumental and populist research on local actor groups, such as poor farmers or forest-dwelling communities, expands to incorporate wider actors, institutions, systems and processes of development, such as NGOs and international conferences (Sandbrook *et al.* 2013). Fundamental research *on* international conservation and development provides invaluable outsider insights to conservation and development professionals, which they would otherwise not see due to their embedded positions within the system (Li 2007b; Sandbrook *et al.* 2013). In addition, ethnographic investigation can uncover hidden values, assumptions and beliefs that drive policy and practice, and uncover impacts and implications that would not normally be seen or understood (Mosse 2005; Mascia *et al.* 2003). In this way, research *on* conservation and development can open up 'possibilities for thinking critically about what it is and what it might be' (Li 2007b: 2).

Some researchers engaging in social research *on* conservation and development take a critical, deconstructive approach that focuses on the discourse of development (Olivier De Sardan 2005). Drawing from the work of Foucault and Marx among others, the emphasis is on the hegemonic control of the Global South by the Global North via conservation and development discourse and intervention,

often with a focus on the role of global capitalism (Mitlin *et al.* 2007; Mosse and Lewis 2006). This approach, favoured by Escobar (2011) and Ferguson (1994), is often associated with a post-development agenda, and has been described as ideological and reductionist (Olivier De Sardan 2005). As such, alternative approaches to social research *on* conservation and development have emerged. They aim to understand conservation and development without being driven by an agenda to provide knowledge for the purpose of application, nor to condemn, nor to suggest other instrumental alternatives (Mosse 2005; Li 2007b; Olivier De Sardan 2005). Rather, the objective is to unpack the complexities of international conservation and development, including systems, institutions and actors, and the interactions between them, as well as its impacts and implications (Li 2007b; Long 2003; Tsing 2011; West 2006).

This alternative approach to social research *on* development comes in different forms and is labelled and framed differently by different scholars and research traditions. Olivier De Sardan (2005) refers to it as the entangled social logic approach, Long (2003) takes an actor-oriented approach to research, and Lewis and Mosse (2006) focus analysis around the concept of development brokers and translators. Many political ecologists also take this approach to research *on* conservation, conservation and development and also conservation-as-development (e.g. West 2006; Leach and Scoones 2015), with political ecology defined as a field that aims to unpack the social and political forces and implications of 'environmental access, management and transformation' (Robbins 2012). Despite there being differences between these approaches, many similarities between them can be identified. Firstly, they draw heavily on discipline of anthropology and ethnographic methodology. For example, Tsing (2011) uses multi-sited ethnographies, which include Indonesian villages and the offices of Wall Street investors, to explore the varied and often conflicting social interactions and their implications. Secondly, these approaches provide a bridge between populist and deconstructive approaches to social research, but as methodological approaches as opposed to ideologies (Olivier De Sardan 2005). The agency of local people is therefore not overstated, as it can be in idealist populist approaches, nor is it

dismissed as in some ideological deconstructive approaches. It is argued, however, that much of the work done by these political ecologists and development theorists is driven by normative agendas, such as social justice and poverty reduction (Forsyth 2008; Leach *et al.* 2010; Mosse and Lewis 2006).

Another characteristic of research *on* conservation and development is the interpretive nature of research. Intervention is not treated as a given object. Rather it is framed as multiple; based on the different framings, realities, experiences and understanding of different actors involved, from poor farmers to international conservation and development professionals (Leach *et al.* 2010; Long 2003).

Through this, the aim is to examine the phenomena of interventions, what drives their implementation, and the messy realities and consequences (Li 2007b; Long 2003). Attention is given to what Long (2003) refers to as interfaces and Tsing (2011) refers to as zones of awkward engagement between different world-views, perspectives and knowledge systems and how different actors respond in these circumstances. The actor-oriented approach to research of Long (2003) and Long and Long (1992) has received criticism for not sufficiently addressing broader structural issues and for being too rigid, however it is argued that the work of development anthropologists and political ecologists that builds on the actor-based approach overcome these issues (e.g. Mosse 2005; Leach and Scoones 2015).

Finally, in pursuit of better understanding of conservation and development intervention and its outcomes, anthropologists and political ecologists alike draw on other disciplines. Leach and Scoones (2015), for example, draw on science and technology studies (STS) to explore political ecologies of carbon in Africa. Using STS enables deeper exploration of the ways in which knowledge is produced and circulated, and enables critical investigation of the political and social issues related to knowledge production and the role of science and technology in conservation and development. Social justice theory (e.g. Forsyth 2014) and critical policy studies literature (e.g. Adams and Sandbrook 2013) are also drawn on to better unpack issues that are uncovered by ethnographies of international conservation and development intervention. In this thesis I follow this alternative approach to research *on* conservation and development; investigating international

conservation and development pilot projects as social phenomena, as well as exploring the messy consequences of pilot projects. Conceptually, I draw on a range of disciplines in addition to political ecology and development theory; most prominently sociology (including STS), social justice theory and critical policy literature. Methodologically, I take an actor-oriented approach that combines methodological populism and deconstruction. Chapter three of this thesis will discuss the methodological approach in more detail, and chapters four, five and six will be theoretically and conceptually framed by diverse literatures. The rest of this chapter explores some of the features, characteristics and processes of the international conservation and development system that are relevant to pilot projects and the arguments within this thesis.

2.3 The international conservation and development system

2.3.1 Defining the system and its players

In order to better understand international conservation and development interventions as social phenomena, it is necessary to explore and unpack the system from which they originate. In this thesis, I use the term ‘international conservation and development system’ as a sub-category of what has been called the ‘international aid system’ (Tvedt 2006; Rogerson *et al.* 2004), in order to make both analytical and empirical distinctions. The rationale for the framing of ‘international conservation and development’ can be found in section 1.6.1. The international aid system can be described as a ‘policy field’ that has ‘gradually developed into a complex mix of development aid, emergency assistance, financial institutions and instruments, and foreign policy initiatives’ with the stated aim of providing assistance to the Global South (Tvedt 2006: 681). The international aid system offers an alternative approach to what are often framed as weak, state-led development initiatives (Mosse and Lewis 2006; Bebbington *et al.* 2008). Using the term international aid system reflects the complexity that contradicts an assumed linear relationship between donor funds (from governments in the Global North, either directly or via institutions such as the World Bank) and national governments in the Global South, and carries fewer negative connotations than the frequently-

used term 'aid industry' (Tvedt 2006). The international conservation and development system can therefore be defined as the international policy field that incorporates a complex mix of financial support, policy initiatives and interventions that aim to address both environmental issues (such as biodiversity conservation and climate change) and development issues (such as poverty reduction). Both REDD+ and pilot projects can be seen as products of this system: REDD+ as a mechanism or programme that aims to deliver multiple benefits that address climate change, biodiversity conservation and rural development (Phelps *et al.* 2012); and pilot projects as policy tools that aim to provide knowledge on how such interventions might interact when implemented in real-life contexts (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2010).

The international conservation and development system incorporates a wide range of actors, actor groups and organisations. Scoones (1998: 12) refers to both actors, such as conservationists, consultants and researchers, and organisations, such as the UNFCCC, World Bank, donor organisations as 'players'. In his analogy, Scoones (1998: 12) refers to institutions as 'the rules of the game'. Institutions can be described as 'systems of established and prevalent social rules that structure social interactions' (Hodgson 2006: 2). In relation to REDD+, key institutions include the Bali Action Plan (UNFCCC 2008) and the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC 2016), which have been instrumental in the development of the REDD+ mechanism, as well as local-level institutions such as village natural resource committees (VNRCs). I use these definitions as a guide throughout this thesis when referring to organisations, actors and institutions. However, I refer to individual actors as international conservation and development professionals. These international conservation and development professionals can also be conceptualised as brokers, whose role is one of intermediary between international aid, and its associated concepts (including policies and interventions), and the various contexts in which they are applied (Pasgaard 2015; Lewis and Mosse 2006). The term brokers, which comes from an actor-oriented approach to research *on* conservation, is useful as it avoids the depiction of international conservation and development professionals as either wholly positive (as champions of civil society) or wholly negative (as unscrupulous

beneficiaries of mismanaged aid) (Bierschenk *et al.* 2002; Mosse and Lewis 2006; Mitlin *et al.* 2007).

International conservation and development aid has become a dominant reality in many 'developing' countries in the Global South, in relation to social, political and economic development, environmental issues such as forest conservation, conservation and development programmes, and climate change initiatives (Bierschenk *et al.* 2002; Miller 2014). As such, the influence and prominence of these international conservation and development professionals, or brokers, has also risen, particularly in relation to environmental issues (Koch 2016; Tvedt 2006; Jasanoff 1997). They have assumed the role of trustees, who are tasked with developing capacity to improve actors and organisations in recipient countries (Li 2007b). NGOs and consultants working in recipient countries play an important role in this system of trusteeship, and are expected to fulfil multiple roles and responsibilities. They are seen as being knowledge brokers (Meyer 2010), transferring and translating knowledge, new technologies and specialist skills from international actors into complex contexts characterised by different knowledge systems and world views (Jasanoff 1997; Pasgaard 2015). These professionals are also expected to bring about meaningful change, finding 'best practices and institutionalising them' (Büscher and Dressler 2007: 595). NGOs and experts are increasingly being framed as the only actors with the ability and legitimacy to transcend bureaucracy, navigate complexity and modernise policy and practice (Kothari 2005; Escobar 1997). This has resulted in an increase in what Kothari (2005: 425) calls 'the professionalisation of conservation and development', away from State-led interventions towards international and often market-based solutions.

2.3.2 Characteristics and processes of the international conservation and development system

2.3.2.1 *Framings and narratives*

By categorising and framing the system and actors in this way, researchers focusing on conservation and development have been able to identify core features and

processes that characterise it. This includes the identification and significance of certain framings and narratives. Framings are defined as ‘the particular contextual assumptions, methods, forms of interpretation and values that different groups might bring to a problem, shaping how it is bound and understood’ (Leach *et al.* 2010: 5). Framings can often contain what Leach and Mearns (1996) refer to as received wisdom: assumptions that are so prevalent that they take on the status of common. Framings also often become the basis for powerful conservation and development narratives (Leach *et al.* 2010). These narratives are structured in a way that first establishes a problem and its potential consequences before offering solutions (Roe 1994). Framings and narratives drive international conservation and development policy-making and practice, as well as evaluations and value judgements about what ‘works’ and what counts as ‘good practice’ (Adams and Hulme 2009; Adger *et al.* 2001). However, framings and narratives differ between different actors, and actor groups. This can be in relation to fundamental issues such as what is defined as a forest (Forsyth and Sikor 2013) and what causes forest degradation (Homewood and Brockington 1999), the meaning of, and values attributed to, terms such as social justice and what constitutes just natural resource management (Martin *et al.* 2014). Disconnects between framings and narratives of international actors and those of local actors are often identified (Martin *et al.* 2014; Campbell 2007; Boyd 2009), however values may also differ between individual actors working in the same conservation and development organisations (Sandbrook *et al.* 2011). As such, one of the objectives of research *on* conservation and development is to identify, challenge and encourage critical thinking around these framings, received wisdoms and narratives.

2.3.2.2 Changing narratives and fads

Dominant conservation and development narratives, however, do not remain static but instead shift and change over time (Mace 2014). This can be seen clearly in the way in which the primary purpose of conservation is framed: from nature as wilderness in 60s and 70s to conservation being a form of poverty alleviation, and most recently what is termed as neo-liberal conservation (Mace 2014; Igoe and Brockington 2007). International conservation and development policy thus

changes over time, reflecting shifts in narratives, paradigms and ideas about the purpose and priorities (Sikor *et al.* 2013). For example, the framing of nature as wilderness drove the proliferation of protected areas and the framing of nature being for people driving the growth of the ecosystem services approach and CBFM policies (Mace 2014). International conservation and development policies are what social anthropologist term 'representations' of dominant narratives and framings at the international level (Sampson 1996). Thus the REDD+ mechanism and its associated policies are representatives of current conservation narratives; including the green governance discourse and its focus on the protection of tropical forests as a method of mitigating climate change, and the ecological modernisation discourse that legitimises market-based mechanisms and the monetisation of natural resources (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand 2006; Fletcher *et al.* 2016). When these new policies, or representations, emerge they are often framed as offering win-win solutions, or silver bullets, that will solve global conservation and development challenges (Lund *et al.* 2017). This has led to such policies being referred to as fads in the critical literature (Redford *et al.* 2013; Fletcher *et al.* 2016).

Fads have long been studied in different guises by sociologists and are highlighted as a common and inevitable feature of a wide range of fields, including medicine, technology and management (Pinch and Bijker 1987; Abrahamson 1991; Sturdy 2004; Borup *et al.* 2006). In relation to forest conservation, these fads have included ecotourism, community-based forest management (CBFM) and PES, and most recently REDD+. In addition to changing narratives, conservation and development fads can also be seen to be representations of broader characteristics of the international conservation and development system. They provide a vehicle through which actors and organisations are able to secure funding, as they offer the promise of a new, win-win solution that erases past mistakes (Igoe and Brockington 2007; Redford *et al.* 2013). This is significant in a field that is largely driven by donor agendas and characterised by fierce competition for funding (Mosse 2005; Dressler 2017). As well as being driven by the conservation and development system, fads drive change and reshape the conservation and development system. NGOs, for

example, are experiencing ever-greater challenges with responding to donor fads while maintaining their legitimacy among local actors in recipient countries (Dressler 2017). It is also argued that international, market-based mechanisms such as REDD+ are exacerbating this issue, as well as creating broader tensions between different actors in the system (Büscher and Dressler 2007). These tensions include the polarisation of actors, between those advocating the need for more protected areas and those supporting community-based approaches to natural resource management (ibid.). Pilot projects are often a feature of the early stages of fads; used as a way of testing and nurturing these new approaches (Li 2007a), however little is known about their role, and this will be addressed within this thesis.

2.3.2.3 Conservation and development projects

If policies are representations of the international conservation and development system and its changing narratives, interventions – by way of programmes and projects – are termed ‘apparatus’ (Sampson 1996). They are the means by which knowledge brokers are able to translate international concepts, ideas and policies into reality within recipient countries in the Global South (ibid.). However, among practitioners, policy-makers and instrumental researchers, conservation and development projects are framed as a rational and logical sequence of events that have been derived from normative policy models, in pursuit of achieving a set of stated objectives (Hulme 1995). Projects are designed by international conservation and development professionals to fulfil a range of different objectives and therefore vary in scope, but they often share key characteristics in their design (Hulme 1995; Cusworth and Franks 2013). They are temporally and spatially bound, involve the introduction of new activities, and are designed to deliver specific outcomes; for example creating a new management institution or constructing assets such as a well in a rural village (Cusworth and Franks 2013). These features differentiate projects from programmes, which tend to be much broader in scope and are not focused on one location and a certain time frame (ibid.). For example the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility is an ongoing programme (based on international REDD+ policy), within which are multiple projects that are

implemented in specific locations over specific time frames in the pursuit of specific objectives.

Among conservation development professionals and within the instrumental literature, projects are typically framed as linear, following what is termed as a project life cycle (Mosse 2005; Hulme 1995). This project life cycle implies a 'step by step' progression: identification of the problem, development of a policy to tackle this problem, implementation, outcomes and evaluation of outcomes (Long and van der Ploeg 1989: 227). The policy development and implementation steps are therefore perceived as being distinct and separate from one another (*ibid.*). However, both representations (policies) and apparatus (projects) require the bounding and simplification of complex social and political issues in order to make them solvable and therefore implementable (Ferguson 1994). This process is referred to as 'rendering technical', as complex issues are transported from the social and political realm into the technical, scientific realm (Li 2007a; Myers *et al.* 2018). Through this process, projects are framed as being discreet entities separate from the social and political worlds in which they are implemented (Long and van der Ploeg 1989). Projects therefore become apolitical or anti-political in their design, despite the complex, messy and highly political realities in which they operate (Myers *et al.* 2018).

As conservation and development narratives change over time and new policies (and fads) emerge, what is perceived to be good or successful approaches to project design also changes. In the 1970s, traditional or 'orthodox' projects that follow the aforementioned project cycle were considered to be innovative and progressive in design, and effective apparatus through which to implement international conservation and development policy (Hulme 1995). However, during the 1980s and 1990s, conservation and development professionals began to question the use of individual projects in favour of broader programmes of intervention (Mosse 2005). This was in response to what has been termed 'projectitus', or a proliferation of short-term projects that were judged to be limited in their success (Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen 2003: 49). During this time, instrumental scholars also established a need for a redesign of

traditional projects in favour of more experimental and less rigid approaches (Hulme 1995). As one of the most prominent scholars advocating this approach, Rondinelli (1993) proposed a move towards what he terms 'development projects as policy experiments'. He argues that by taking an experimental approach to design and implementation, projects become instruments for the facilitation of learning and innovation and are able to be more adaptive than traditional projects. The use of smaller and more focused pilot projects are key to this prescribed approach, which are less costly and can be 'allowed to fail' if they don't deliver on objectives (Rondinelli 1993: 180). Pilot projects are differentiated from demonstrations primarily in the ability of the former to be more experimental, with demonstrations framed as the next step in policy innovation, implemented once pilot projects have shown project success (Rondinelli 1993).

Experimental projects, such as pilot projects and demonstrations, are framed as a new and more effective approach to development project design. As I will explore in more detail in chapter four, pilot projects are therefore framed – both in the instrumental literature and by international conservation and development professionals – as being different to traditional projects. The main differences are the aforementioned focus on experimentation, an emphasis on learning and an expectation of diffusion of this learning into policies, programmes and projects (Rondinelli 1993; Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2010). It is also argued that pilot projects should be 'designed to protect their staff from undue political interference or pressure to show quick results' (Rondinelli 1993: 138). This lack of engagement with political realities has been identified in critical exploration of intervention more broadly: referred to as anti-politics (Ferguson 1994; Myers *et al.* 2018; Li 2007b). The ability for new approaches to project design to deliver on their promises is, however, challenged by critical scholars. Hulme (1995) argues that 'new' project design approaches do not take into account the politics and messy realities of project implementation and thus questions their ability to deliver desired outcomes and provide a robust alternative to traditional project models. Mosse (2005) also argues that project realities rarely reflect new project design and policies, highlighting an inevitable gap between policy and practice. Project

design is subject to fads and trends in the same way that conservation and development policy is, and evidence suggests that despite the framing of fads as new and innovative, they often manifest as business as usual (Cleaver 2012; Lund *et al.* 2017). This thesis contributes to this critical discussion by both unpacking the framings, narratives and rationales for using pilot projects, and exploring their realities on the ground.

2.4 The social life of projects

When representations, such as REDD+, become realities through the apparatus of projects implemented in the Global South, they take on what is termed as a 'social life' (Sampson 1996). This is in line with sociologists' claims that in the same way that people and animals have social lives, so do things, concepts and actions (Appadurai 1988; Sampson 1996). They take on value and meanings, interact with social and political realities and as such become agents for social change (*ibid.*). The logical, linear and often technical framings of many programme designs and policies sits in contrast with the realities of their social lives, which are characterised by messiness and the social and political struggles of the actors they interact with (Long and van der Ploeg 1989; Myers *et al.* 2018). As such, Long and van der Ploeg (1989) called for a demythologisation and re-conceptualisation of planned development interventions in order to reflect these messy realities, and a number of concepts have emerged to this end. The concept of 'interfaces' focuses on the interactions between different actors involved in planned development interventions, arguing that these actors use the projects to 'create room for manoeuvre in pursuit of their own projects' (Long 2003: 26). In analysis of global-local processes related to rainforest destruction, Tsing (2011: xi) calls these interfaces 'zones of awkward engagement' in which a wide range of actors from global to local engage in connections, or 'friction', which ultimately shape outcomes and realities. Actors and their connections will therefore determine the social life of a project: how it is implemented, how global concepts such as carbon and REDD+ are translated and what the outcomes of that project are (Brockington and Scholfield 2010; Nel 2015).

The messy social life of projects also has an impact on the translation of global concepts and knowledge, by brokers such as NGOs and experts. Knowledge is itself a social construct and as such can never be seen as static, objective or neutral (Long 2003). Latour (1986) identifies an expectation that 'tokens', such as objective facts about nature and its conservation, go through a process of diffusion. Diffusion describes the process by which these tokens remain intact and move in one direction, in this case from the international policy-making level to the national, regional, district and village levels where projects are implemented, being accepted or rejected by different actors. In reality, however, the process is one of translation, whereby different actors interpret, modify, appropriate and deflect the token as a result of their own world views, values, perspectives, interests and priorities (ibid.). For example, Pasgaard (2015) finds that when REDD+ policies circulate, they transform, split and reform in many different ways. Similarly, Kijazi (2015) finds that the concept of carbon is interpreted, modified, contested and used as a bargaining tool by different village-level actors in Tanzania. Carbon dioxide has been socially constructed as a commodity that can be traded between people and across projects in order to facilitate market-based mechanisms such as REDD+ (Leach and Scoones 2015). By looking at the relationships between knowledge (representations), projects (apparatus) and their social life in this way, the existence of a dichotomy between expert and local knowledge is challenged (Agrawal 1995). It also challenges the idea of there being an irrefutable gulf between actors who have and exercise power, and actors who are subordinated by it (Foucault *et al.* 1980), which is assumed in some ideological-deconstructive approaches to research *on* development.

Just as international conservation and development professionals frame issues in a certain way, so do all the different actors and actor groups in the recipient countries. This can be in relation to factors such as the different values that diverse actors hold, different perspectives of what counts as good forest management, or different judgements about what 'works' (Sikor *et al.* 2014). These different values and perspectives can be seen to be a product of a range of different social, cultural and historical factors, and they are also underpinned by what in cultural studies and

sociology define as ‘imaginaries’ (Leach and Scoones 2015; Taylor 2004; Jasanoff *et al.* 2007). People’s lives are guided by the way in which they imagine their social surroundings, their social existence and their relationships (Taylor 2002). As such, different societies may have different ideas, or imaginaries, of what is right and wrong, expected and unexpected, and even what constitutes modernity, which in countries such as Tanzania may differ significantly from the Western imaginaries of modernity (*ibid.*). For example, West (2006) finds that villagers in Papua New Guinea who engage with conservation and development projects do so with the expectation of long-term, reciprocal, social relationships that are part of their shared social imaginary. This differs from the short-term, bounded way in which projects are framed, or imagined, at the international level and as I will explore in this thesis, this difference is even more acute in relation to pilot projects. This highlights the importance of recognition of different actor perspectives when addressing issues of justice in international conservation and development intervention (Sikor *et al.* 2013; Martin *et al.* 2016).

As a result of many of the issues discussed within this conceptual review, international conservation and development interventions can lead to a wide range of unexpected and unintended consequences (Ferguson 1994; West and Brockington 2006). These often occur despite the good intentions on the part of implementers and brokers, such as NGOs and consultants. For example in the case of REDD+ and other PES interventions, a wide range of efforts have been made to promote social justice and implement safeguards (Sikor *et al.* 2013; McDermott *et al.* 2012). Nevertheless, cases of REDD+ projects leading to conflict and other negative social consequences have been highlighted (e.g. Scheba and Rakotonarivo 2016; Cavanagh *et al.* 2015; Sikor 2013b). To quote Foucault ‘people know what they do, they frequently know why they do what they do, but what they don’t know is what what they do does’ (quoted in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 187). That is to say that within projects, the representations take on a social life of their own, which is both attached to and separate from the intention of the actors from whom they originate (West 2006). A gap can therefore be identified between intentions and outcomes of international conservation and development interventions and yet

understanding of why this gap exists is often limited. Issues such as local corruption and technical flaws are blamed for failure of projects (which leads to the requirement for new interventions) and the interventions themselves remain understudied (Li 2007b). By taking intervention, and in my case pilot projects, as the issue of concern, research *on* conservation and development can begin to unpack the gap between intentions and outcomes in more detail; exploring social processes and opening up discussions on issues such as accountability and responsibility.

2.5 Conclusion

Within this chapter I have set out the core conceptual, theoretical and analytical framing of this thesis. Although I will use specific conceptual lenses to frame each analytical chapter, this literature review provides the building blocks from which the thesis has emerged and will also be used to develop analysis throughout the analytical chapters and the discussion. This process will enable this thesis as a whole to contribute key insights into the international conservation and development system, as well as contributing knowledge on pilot projects themselves. The review of approaches to social research in international conservation and development in section 2.2 also provides the basis for my research design and methodology.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGY AND CASE STUDIES

3.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on the conceptual framing presented in chapter two and provides an overview of the thesis research design and methodology. I discuss my research design in sections, following the five stages of qualitative research design by Denzin and Lincoln (2011b). Limitations and challenges of the chosen research design, methodology and methods are discussed throughout.

3.2 The five stages of research

Denzin and Lincoln (2011a: 12) argue that in order to produce robust and insightful research, the ontology, epistemology and methodology must be thought through in detail and the 'biographically situated researcher' be considered. They suggest following a five-stage process in order to do this. In the first stage the 'researcher as a multicultural subject' is considered (ibid.). The framing of social researchers as objective actors, who are able to gather facts and remain removed from the research context has been widely contested (Hammett *et al.* 2014; Denzin and Lincoln 2011a). Researchers, and research participants, engage in research as multicultural subjects; viewing the world through different lens that are modified by factors including history, language, gender and ethnicity (ibid.). This is particularly significant in international development contexts due to the lasting impacts and implications of colonialism (Hammett *et al.* 2014). Research that is critical about power and positionality, reflexive and 'produced through negotiated spaces' becomes more ethical and better grounded in the realities of participants (Sultana 2007: 375).

In the second stage of the research process, theoretical paradigms and perspectives are considered (Denzin and Lincoln 2011a). Paradigms, or worldviews, can be described as a 'basic set of beliefs that guide action' (Guba 1990: 17). Paradigms reflect certain philosophical assumptions, which include ontological (the nature of reality), epistemological (the relationship between the researcher and that being researched) and methodological (the process of research) (Creswell 2012). The third stage of the research process is research strategies, which focuses on the

methodology, or the overarching approach to research (Creswell 2012; Denzin and Lincoln 2011a). The fourth stage considers the methods used to both collect and analyse data. Finally, stage five is the ‘art and politics of interpretation and evaluation’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2011b: 563). This stage involves consideration of the quality of the research, the ways in which researchers interpret their analysed data, the way in which they choose to present it and what they do with it once written up (Denzin and Lincoln 2011a: 14). Table 1 summarises the approach I have taken to research in this thesis in relation to the aforementioned five stages.

Table 1: Summary of research approach

| Stage of research | Overview and important considerations |
|--|---|
| 1.The researcher (see section 3.3 for more detail) | Core issues include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The historical context of colonialism (and race) in Tanzania in relation to the researcher and researched • Contemporary issues of race, gender, ethnicity, social class and language in Tanzania • The historical and current context of multiple interventions that have aimed to address environmental concerns and human development • The context of REDD+ in Tanzania and engagement between previous researchers and people involved in the projects • Consideration of the beliefs and values of the researcher and research assistants, including the normative social justice agenda of the conceptual approaches discussed in section two |
| 2.Paradigm (see section 3.4 for more detail) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This research sits within the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm (Schwandt 1994) • The ontology of this paradigm is relativist, as it recognises multiple realities; the epistemology is subjectivist in that the researcher and the researched are seen to co-create knowledge and understanding; and the methodology is naturalistic in that it is linked to the contexts in which the research is done and the respondents exist |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigour in constructivist research is judged in relation to its trustworthiness, as opposed to traditional positivist categories of validity, reliability and objectivity (Lincoln and Guba 1985) • An ‘interpretive community’ (Creswell 2012: 23) of actor-oriented approaches to research <i>on</i> conservation and development as social process can also be identified and is discussed in chapter two (e.g. Long 2003; Mosse 2005; Li 2007b; West 2006) |
| <p>3. Research strategies (see section 3.5 for more detail)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the selected research paradigm and interpretive community, this research takes a qualitative approach to research, in which the researcher adopts a naturalistic methodology and allows the phenomenon under study to unfold without intentional manipulation from the researcher (Golafshani 2003; Patton 1990) • To do so, the research draws on different research approaches including ethnography, narrative research and case study research (Creswell 2012) |
| <p>4. Methods (see section 3.6 for more detail)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following methods of data collection were used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrative interviews - Semi-structured interviews, informal discussions and key informant interviews - Observations and field notes - Document collation - Focus group discussions • Data analysis used a combination of inductive and deductive processes (Blaikie 2007), drawing primarily on thematic narrative analysis techniques (Mishler 1986) • Data selected and process of analysis differed between analytical chapters |
| <p>5. The art and politics of interpretation (see section 3.7 for more detail)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of different conceptual lenses from different academic disciplines, in line with the approach discussed in chapter two • Using the first-person pronoun, includes the words of participants extensively to illustrate points and uses the language of sociology to interpret data • Intentions to engage and influence policy-makers and practitioners and the stylistic consequences of those intentions • Desire to reflect the voices of participants as accurately as possible, ensuring that marginalised voices are heard |

Adapted from Denzin and Lincoln (2011a)

3.3 More on stage one: the researcher as multicultural subject

In chapter two I discussed the concept of interfaces between international intervention, such as pilot project, and the complex contexts into which they are introduced (Long 2004). This concept is relevant here too, as the interface between me as a researcher, and what I brought as multicultural subject, entering into complex social and political contexts determined the social life and the outcomes of my research. This was influenced by my positionality as a young, white, female, English-speaking researcher in an ex-British colony and a patriarchal society in which elders tend to hold more power. The researcher-researched interface was also influenced by the social life of the REDD+ pilot projects. For example in one of the villages that had been involved in piloting, I was greeted with *'have you come to buy our carbon?'*, which likely reflected assumptions linked to recent experiences of REDD+ as well as factors including the fact I am a *mzungu* (white person). In line with my thesis aim and the interpretivist-constructivist approach to research, one of my objectives was for interviewees to reconstruct their experience of the pilot projects through story-telling in order to understand how they made sense of their experiences (Guba and Lincoln 2004). However, these stories were influenced by these interfaces. One example is the process of claims-making, whereby people use the interview process to make claims over things that are at stake (West 2006). This was a consideration in Kilosa where there was ongoing conflict over land and money in relation to REDD+ pilot projects, as well as at the national level where competition for status and funds can be identified among conservation and development organisations. Another example was the challenge of getting young men to speak to me and Harriet (my female research assistant), in the first village we stayed in.

The research experience therefore required a continuous process of reflexivity and negotiation (Sultana 2007). This included desk research on the national and project district contexts before leaving for fieldwork, and conducting key informant interviews in Tanzania. Conducting a one-month scoping trip and spending six months in Tanzania studying Kiswahili prior to fieldwork provided an excellent opportunity to do so. I also positioned myself as a 'learner' as opposed to an

'expert' (Blaikie 2007: 12), which is to say that I let myself be guided by the research as opposed to going in with specific hypotheses. Blaikie (2007: 12) also highlights the choice that researchers make to situate themselves as 'outsider' or 'insider'. During my research and in line with my reflexive approach to research (Sultana 2007), I moved between these two extremes and often occupied a grey area in between. For example, with many international and national actors I positioned myself more as an outside learner: curious about the pilot project process and not an expert in REDD+ or forests *per se*. I found that this helped me and the respondents to feel more comfortable and open up. In the villages, however, I move more towards an inside learner positionality in order to immerse myself and to fully understand social processes. Choices were made to facilitate this, which included learning Kiswahili, spending extended periods of time in two of the villages and in Tanzania in general, and positioning myself as interested student researcher (as opposed to expert or someone working for a governmental or non-governmental organisation). I then took a flexible approach to fieldwork: discussing interviews and meanings with my research assistants Harriet, Isack and Rose, changing my team to adapt to different contexts and continually reflecting on what I was bringing to interpretations of interactions with different people. One example of how this influenced my research process is that in Rungwe, I found that young men were reluctant to speak openly to myself and Harriet and so I brought in Isack and the situation quickly improved.

3.4 More on stage two: paradigms and perspectives

I have situated this research within the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm for a number of reasons. Firstly, within this paradigm, the focus is on 'understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it' (Schwandt 1994: 221). Interpretivist-constructivist researchers assume that there are multiple ways of knowing and therefore multiple truths, which aligns with the research aim and the conceptual framing identified in chapter two. Secondly, the goal of the research is to contribute insights *on* the social phenomenon of pilot projects, developed through interpretations of different actors' perspectives (Creswell 2012). This is in contrast to other paradigms in which the goal of the

research is to find truth (as in post-positivism), to use the research to enact reform (as in advocacy), or to provide evidence of what works (as in pragmatism) (ibid.). Finally, the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm recognises the researcher as a multi-cultural actor and encourages ongoing reflection, which is discussed in section 3.3. Forsyth (2001) challenges the interpretivist-constructivist approach to research in political ecology. He argues instead for a critical realist approach that combines ontological realism with epistemological scepticism: biophysical issues such as climate change are real but knowledge about them are at least partially constructed. However, as outlined in chapter two, the conceptual approach of this research is such that it aims to question all knowledge by putting actors at the centre of enquiry (Long 2003). This includes concepts of what carbon is, what climate change is and what constitutes a forest (Leach and Scoones 2015). Although this approach to research is most fitting for the research aims and conceptual framing, there are limitations to its use. One of the main limitations is the fact that among conservationists, there is a preference for positivist enquiry and so the significance of my findings, presented as ‘perspectives’ rather than ‘truth’ may be challenged. I discuss this further in section 8.4.

Rigour in social science research can be described as the ‘means by which we demonstrate integrity and competence, a way of demonstrating legitimacy of the research process’ (Tobin and Begley 2004: 390). The criteria by which rigour is judged, however, differs between different paradigms. Trustworthiness is highlighted as the goal of interpretivist-constructivist enquiry (Denzin 2004). Three core components of trustworthiness can be identified: credibility, transferability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Denzin and Lincoln 2011a). These replace the more conventional criteria of validity, reliability and objectivity used in positivist and post-positivist research. Credibility relates to the truthfulness of the research in the sense that it accurately represents the realities of the actors and contexts being presented. Transferability pertains to the depth of study, or the richness of the thick description (Geertz 1994). Unlike external validity, the aim of transferability is not to create research that can be transferred to another context, indeed within the naturalistic approach to enquiry this is deemed impossible.

Rather it is to provide enough depth and therefore the tools that would allow others to make judgements on transferability to other contexts. Finally confirmability pertains to the ability of the researcher to provide evidence of the data collected and prove that the findings are grounded in the data (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and confirmability will be discussed throughout this chapter where appropriate.

3.5 More on stage three: research strategies

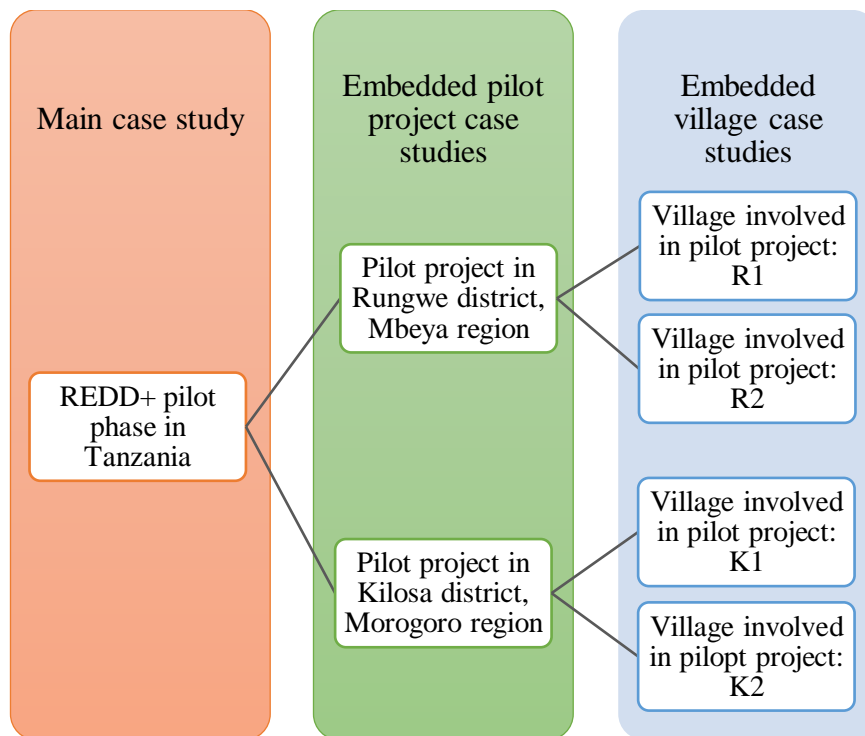
3.5.1 Case studies

The interpretivist-constructivist paradigm assumes a naturalistic methodology. The researcher thus spends time immersed in the phenomenon under study without attempts to manipulate it (Golafshani 2003; Patton 1990). A qualitative methodology was therefore adopted in order that themes could emerge from participants as opposed to being pre-defined as a hypothesis or in the form of standardised questions devised from the perspective of the researcher (Williams 2002). This aligns with the actor-oriented approach to development, which focuses on unpacking lived experiences from the perspectives of individual actors and actor groups, and emphasizes the interplay between outside influences such as internationally-led interventions, and the different realities, perceptions, social interests, and relationships of actors involved (Long 2003). The research was therefore designed to provide transferable and credible data through thick description of the experience of being involved in an international conservation and development pilot project (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Geertz 1994). In order to achieve this, I drew on different qualitative research strategies. Creswell (2012) highlights five main qualitative research strategies: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. Case study research is used when an in-depth description and analysis of a certain programme, activity or phenomenon is needed (ibid.). Providing thick description of one or more bounded case studies enables detailed analysis that enables the researcher to identify and illustrate issues of concern in relation to the broader phenomenon (Stake 1995). Case study research is challenged for not being generalizable and

therefore not contributing to scientific theory (Flyvbjerg 2006). However Flyvbjerg (2006) contests this view, arguing that case studies are able to produce robust social science theory due to the depth of understanding they generate.

The national REDD+ pilot phase in Tanzania provides an instrumental case study through which to explore the social phenomenon of international conservation and development pilot projects (Stake 1995). Although the pilot projects themselves are the main focus, it is important to understand the context in which the pilot projects took place: the REDD+ pilot or readiness phase and the interactions between the actors, institutions and organisations involved. As part of Tanzania's REDD+ pilot phase, nine different NGOs were commissioned to implement pilot projects in geographically diverse parts of the country. They were managed and implemented by well-established conservation NGOs including African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) Tanzania, Wildlife Conservation Fund (WCS) and Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG). To try and study all pilot projects at the sub-national level would have limited the depth of understanding I could have achieved. As such I selected two pilot project case studies to act as embedded units within the single case study of REDD+ pilot phase in Tanzania (Baxter and Jack 2008). Each embedded pilot project case study involved between 10 weeks and three months of fieldwork with actors from regional, district, ward and village scales. Within each pilot project case study, I also selected two villages (R1 and K1) to act as further embedded case studies, conducting ethnographic fieldwork in one village in each site for between six weeks and two months. I then conducted a smaller case study in the second village from each pilot project case study (R2 and K2), focusing on narrative interviews. Figure 1 shows how these embedded case studies fit together. Baxter and Jack (2008) argue that using embedded case studies, or sub-units, in this way can deepen analysis and strengthen both the case and the arguments that are drawn from it.

Figure 1: Case study and embedded case studies design



When selecting the two pilot project case studies, I used what Yin (2014: 62) refers to as a ‘two-tail’ design. This is where two cases are selected as representations of two extremes of certain theoretical conditions, as opposed to two cases that share many similarities. I chose this strategy in order to better understand what counts as a pilot project and also to learn how different approaches taken by the different NGOs might impact the social life of the pilot projects. I therefore spoke to key informants and reviewed project documents in order to identify the two most different pilot projects; selecting the pilot projects run by TFCG in collaboration with their sister organisation MJUMITA (translated as Community Forest Conservation Network of Tanzania) as the project that most fully piloted REDD+. TFCG/MJUMITA implemented pilot projects both in Lindi in Southeast Tanzania and in Kilosa, Morogoro. They followed a similar protocol in both pilot sites and so I chose the Kilosa pilot project for logistical reasons. I then chose the Rungwe pilot project, run by WCS Tanzania in the Southern Highlands as the contrasting case study, in which the NGO trialled the fewest elements of the REDD+ mechanism. Figure 2 shows the location of Kilosa and Rungwe pilot projects, section 3.8 contains more detail on the project contexts and the project strategies and

engage with a wide range of actors and to try and understand different processes at play, thus increasing the credibility of the research (Lincoln and Guba 1985). This included a scoping trip in October 2014 during which I observed a REDD+ workshop organised by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Tanzania and had many informal conversations with key informants that contributed to my research design. I then spent 14 months in Tanzania between March 2015 and June 2016, learning Kiswahili and conducting fieldwork. This involved spending long periods in two villages and collecting data using a range of ethnographic methods. Other features of ethnography in my research includes taking an unstructured approach to data collection, working as an interpretive 'bricoleur' and drawing on different tools, methods and techniques as and when required (Denzin 1994: 15). I also used ethnographic methods, including observations, keeping a field diary and informal conversations (Hammersley 2016), which are discussed further in section 3.6.1.2. Triangulation of different data sources also improves the credibility of naturalistic research (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

3.5.3 Narratives

As I have discussed in chapters one and two, my research aim is *to critically explore international conservation and development pilot projects as a social phenomenon*. In order to fully achieve this aim, I conducted the bulk of my fieldwork from August 2015 to May 2016 after the pilot projects had finished and the official evaluation reports had been circulated. This approach to research has been used in sociology, organisational studies and medical research and is referred to as retrospective event history (e.g. Reimer and Matthes 2007; Van de Ven and Huber 1990). It is also a central feature of the narrative research approach to qualitative research (Creswell 2012). I chose a retrospective approach for three main reasons. The first reason links to the nature of pilot projects, which are characterised by a focus on learning and so final project evaluations are important (see chapters four and six for more on this). Taking a retrospective approach enabled inclusion of these important final project evaluations into the study, both from actors and in documents. Secondly, actor perspectives on an event such as a pilot project change continuously, and are mediated by what actually happened during and after the

event (Brown and Michael 2003). As such, conducting interviews and conversations retrospectively exposed the different ways in which actors made sense of the full pilot project experience. Finally, as I will demonstrate in the analytical chapters of this thesis, pilot projects are framed and evaluated within their timelines and yet they continue to have impacts and consequences well after the projects have been completed. As such, in order to get a fuller picture of the social life of pilot projects, I wanted to capture what happens beyond pilot project timelines, and the retrospective approach has enabled this.

3.6 More on stage four: methods of collection and analysis

3.6.1 Data collection

Table 2 lists all of the data collected for this thesis. As will be discussed in section 3.6.4 the data collaboratively informed the first stage of analysis. However, each analytical chapter (chapters four, five and six) uses a sub-section of this data, which is selected and analysed in detail to best fulfil each chapter's individual research questions. Chapters four, five and six all contain a short section outlining the specific data chosen and methods of analysis. Below is an overview of the data collection process as a whole, including sampling strategies and ethical considerations. Prior to collecting data, all of the necessary permissions were sought. This included approval of the fieldwork as a whole from Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH), and approvals at regional, district, ward and village level for each of the two pilot project case studies, in line with both law and customs.

3.6.1.1 Narrative interviews

Cooper and Pratten (2015) argue that where the goal is to understand lived experiences, individual narratives should play a central role in ethnography. People make sense and meaning out of their experiences by reconstructing it in narrative form (Gee 1985). As such, narrative interviews can enable a depth of understanding that surpasses that of normal semi-structured interviewing (Mishler 1986).

Table 2: Data collected

| Method | Data collection |
|----------------------|--|
| Narrative interviews | <p>National and international</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 international actors: consultants, donors (Norwegian Embassy), academics, UN • 25 national actors: government, representatives from seven of the implementing NGOs¹, academics. Included former members of the national REDD+ task force (NRTF), technical working groups (TWGs) and REDD+ secretariat <p>Pilot project case study one: Rungwe District, Mbeya Region²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine regional, district and ward actors: NGOs, government, business owners • 40 villagers in R1 – across all sub-villages and including a range of different actor groups from leaders to poor farmers • 16 villagers in R2 - across all sub-villages and including a range of different actor groups from leaders to poor farmers <p>Pilot project case study two: Kilosa District, Morogoro region³</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six regional, district and ward actors: NGOs, government, business owners • 35 villagers in K1 – across all sub-villages and including a range of different actor groups from leaders to poor farmers • 19 villagers in K2 - across all sub-villages and including a range of different actor groups from leaders to poor farmers |
| Ethnographic data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key informant interviews and conversations, including with academics, NGOs, villagers such as local café owners and dispensary nurses • Observations, including WWF REDD+ workshops in October 2014, presentation of official project evaluation results by consultants from NIRAS on behalf of Norwegian |

¹ This included representatives from WWF Tanzania, WCS Tanzania, TFCG/MJUMITA, African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) Tanzania Traditional Energy Development Organization (TaTEDO) and Mpingo Conservation and Development Initiative

² For more information on the Rungwe case study see section 3.8.2

³ For more information on the Kilosa case study see section 3.8.3

| | |
|-----------|---|
| | <p>Embassy, village meetings, Environment Committee meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussions where appropriate in villages (for example young women who were reluctant to be interviewed alone) • Field notes, reflections and ongoing theory development |
| Documents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project evaluation documents including Embassy-commissioned final reviews and NGO reviews • Reports, articles, reviews produced by NGOs running the two case study pilot projects (see section 3.8 for more details on the two projects) • Leaflets, videos, stickers etc. produced by NGOs to use in villages • Village documents and maps from Kilosa and Rungwe showing demarcations, protected areas boundaries etc. • Strategy documents from the start of the project |

The aim of narrative interviews is to get participants to speak at length about an experience to understand how they make sense of that experience (Riessman 2008). My role was therefore one of facilitation and I developed a list of guide questions and prompts for this purpose, which I adapted from the Intervention Histories/Futures method designed by the STEPS centre (STEPS 2011-2018). I include these guides in appendix II. The question/prompt lists were not used as interview protocols and in some cases were not used at all, particularly in later interviews. They were, however, very useful in the villages when interviewing less confident people, who were not used to being asked their perspectives or opinions on things. In these cases the interviews were a bit more structured but I worked hard to draw out narratives where possible. This is identified as a challenge in the use of narrative interviews in contexts such as rural Tanzania. To help overcome this, I trained my research assistants (who also helped with translations) in the purposes and processes of narrative interviews. Spending time in the villages before we started interviewing also helped people feel more comfortable, promising confidentiality and ensuring that Isack worked with me to interview men and Harriet or Rose to interview women were also strategies for making people feel

more relaxed and willing to share more. As a result, a number of marginalised people thanked us for listening to them and for allowing them to tell their story. This, I strongly believe, is one of the great advantages of narrative interviewing, as the process provides benefits as well as the outputs.

I used non-probability sampling techniques to identify interviewees: purposive sampling and snowball sampling (Blackstone 2012). I wanted to ensure I included as many different actor perspectives as possible and so I drew up an initial guide list based on desk research and key informant interviews (purposive sampling). This sample was guided by the case study boundaries: actors involved or impacted by the REDD+ pilot projects in a) Tanzania, b) the Rungwe and Kilosa pilot project case studies and c) the village case studies (see section 3.8 for more information on b and c). In line with my reflexive approach to research (Sultana 2007), I also used snowball sampling. This involved identification of participants through key informant conversations and other actor narrative interviews. By combining these sampling techniques, my research assistants and I were able to ensure that we did not just speak to the 'model' villagers that the leaders put forward. We were able to identify and interview marginalised actors, including those who were in conflict with village leaders over farm relocations (see chapter five for more on this). Although this sampling approach had very good results, it did have limitations. By relying heavily on key informant interviews, some actors and actors groups were potentially missed if they were not considered to be important by the informants. One significant example is pastoralists in Kilosa, who have had long been present in the region and have had a number of historical conflicts with farmers (Benjaminsen *et al.* 2009). This is discussed at length in section 6.3.3.

Strict ethics were followed with each participant interviewed, in line with the department ethics guidelines and my considerations of positionality. The ethics form was submitted and approved by the department ethics committee prior to commencement of data collection. Important considerations included only working with participants over the age of 18 and ensuring interviews were conducted in comfortable places. Time was taken at the start of each interview to explain who I was and to describe my research, encouraging participants to ask questions before

getting informed consent to progress. All conservation and development professionals signed consent forms and villagers gave us verbal consent (see appendix I for the consent protocols). We used verbal consent in the villages, as not everyone is able to read and write and we did not want to make anyone feel uncomfortable. I was also advised by key informants and my research assistants that asking people to sign something sets a formal tone, which is not conducive to flowing and relaxed narrative interviewing.

I took my time at the start of each interview to make participants feel comfortable, ensure they felt that they could say no to being interviewed, and ensure we were positioned as inside learners (see section 3.3). At the regional, district, ward and village levels I introduced us in Kiswahili at the start of each interview, which improved the connection I had with participants. I also promised confidentiality to all participants in line with the consent agreements in appendix I. I recorded interviews where permission was given, so that they could be fully transcribed and translated word for word. All participants were given the option of saying yes or no to being recorded. Some notes were taken during interviews, mainly to keep track of interesting participant statements or reflections to be asked about later in the interview. However, note taking was kept to a minimum, particularly in the villages, as we found this made participants more relaxed and open. I followed a strict protocol of information storage to maintain confidentiality. This included storing information in an encrypted folder, using code names to refer to people, and using code names for the villages so as not to indirectly identify participants. I continued conducting narrative interviews in R1 and K1 until I felt I had reached saturation in relation to narrative threads, themes, perspectives and framings (Fusch and Ness 2015), in order to ensure transferability and confirmability of the data (Denzin and Lincoln 2011b). Although every narrative was unique, I was able to organise them into broad 'perspective' groups as I went along, working to explain and understand unexpected perspectives within each group until I felt comfortable that no new themes were emerging.

3.6.1.2 Ethnographic data and document collection

Key informant interviews were an important part of the process. Key informants are described as people who provide expert sources of information and are often in positions in society that makes them natural observers to what is going on around them (Marshall 1996). Key informants included nurses at the local dispensary in village R1, *mamas* (women) who ran the local cafes in K1 and R1, village elders, leaders and religious heads, NGO outreach workers and academics interested in social issues related to conservation and development in Tanzania. All key informants were briefed on who we were and what we were doing so they were comfortable with giving information. They were also given the same levels of confidentiality as interviewees. Key informants gave us invaluable insights, enabled us to uncover hidden issues, and assisted in the identification of marginalised villagers. As advocated by Geertz (1994), conducting ethnographic observations and keeping field notes are important parts of the process of collecting rich data. We attended village meetings, environment committee meetings and spent time 'hanging out' in the villages R1 and K1 (and to a lesser extent R2 and K2) in order to observe village dynamics, which I included in my field notes. I also observed national-level meetings on REDD+. Group discussions and observations also supported the narrative interviews. Some people in the villages were more comfortable talking in groups and in these cases we organised group discussions. One example was with young women in R1, who were very busy juggling children, domestic duties and their businesses. In keeping with the researcher as '*bricoleur*' approach (Denzin 1994: 15), we decided to conduct a group discussion in the village hair salon so that the women could continue with their day and were able to gather some very interesting insights. I also organised some focus groups to delve a bit further into some of the issues raised in narrative interviews. Documents can also provide a huge amount of information about the perspectives, assumptions and motivations of the actors and organisations that produce them (Bauer 2000). Therefore I also collected a large number of documents, which are summarised in table 3.6. I ensured that I kept databases of all the different elements and kept a

note of decisions in order to maintain research confirmability (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

3.6.2 Working with research assistants and translators

I worked with three different assistants during my fieldwork (Harriet in Rungwe, Rose in Kilosa and Isack in both sites), all of whom also worked as translators, as my Kiswahili is not fluent enough to interview alone. In working with assistants I considered a number of ethical issues, highlighted by Hammett *et al.* (2014). This included agreeing a rate of pay and working conditions that everyone was happy with, signing contracts, and signing confidentiality agreements to protect participants. I also spent time briefing and discussing the project, and worked to develop narrative interviewing skills with my assistants, which was a technique that none of them had engaged with previously. We worked in a reflexive way, continuously discussing and negotiating in order to best facilitate the research (Sultana 2007). Working with Harriet, Isack and Rose had a number of benefits. Firstly, Harriet was local to Rungwe and Rose local to Kilosa and so they were familiar with the people, local languages and customs. Having Tanzanian nationals involved in the interviews helped to make people feel more comfortable.

However there were also challenges working with assistants. For example, I noted that the translated interviews did not flow quite as smoothly as national and regional interviews conducted in English and long sections of narrative sometimes had to be broken up for translation. We reduced the impact of this by Harriet, Isack and Rose having a notebook and listing key points to translate in order to allow participants to speak for longer. My intermediate grasp of the language also helped, as I could follow the interviews to a certain extent. As multicultural subjects (Denzin and Lincoln 2011b), Rose, Isack and Harriet also brought their own beliefs, values and histories to the process, which will have influenced their interpretation of the narratives. By getting all of the Kiswahili narratives fully translated and transcribed by a professional translator/transcriber meant that I had two different interpretations and so my process of interpretation was supported by being able to cross-check my field notes and the word for word transcriptions.

3.6.3 Data collection challenges

I faced many challenges during my time in Tanzania. In Rungwe, there were two main challenges. Firstly, the national elections fell in the middle of our time there. Although this was an extremely interesting experience, it slowed down data collection as many people in the villages were involved in campaigning and so were less available than normal. Secondly, while living in R1, we had very unreliable access to electricity and so we had to return to Mbeya city most weekends to charge my laptop and back up all the interviews and write up notes. This also slowed down data collection, but was also positive in that it gave myself and Harriet (and Isack when he joined us) a break from the intensity of living in the R1 and in each other's pockets. Otherwise, our time in Rungwe ran very smoothly. The villages are very accessible and are a short *bodaboda* (motorbike taxi) ride from the main tarmac road, which is accessible using public transport. We were also able to hire a small wooden house in R1 in which to live. We experienced many challenges in Kilosa. We were there in March, April and May 2016, which is peak rainy season, and this brought with it many challenges. The Kilosa villages are remote and hard to get to and we were not able to stay in the villages. We therefore had to travel early each day using a locally-hired small 4x4 vehicle. Some days the villages were not accessible as the road got flooded or trucks had got stuck. We too got stuck in the mud travelling to the villages on a number of occasions. As the villages are very spread out in Kilosa, we also had to hike in the rain to get to people, which was very time consuming.

I also came up against a big challenge in relation to reciprocity, which has, quite rightly, become a key issue in conservation and development research (Hammett *et al.* 2014). I did lots of research on different strategies prior to going to Tanzania, and discussed the issue with many key informants. I had planned not to pay participants, but to give a donation to a project in each village and also to return post-PhD to present findings to the villagers (which I am still planning to do). In Rungwe, where we went first, I discussed this with village leaders and they were very happy with it. Villagers also fed back frequently that what they wanted from the research was for me to return and present it to them and also to present it to

decision-makers. However, on arrival in K1, we found that due to the large numbers of researchers who had been to ask questions about REDD+ in Kilosa, they had written into their village constitution that all interviewees must be paid 2,000 Tanzanian shillings. This led to concerns about fairness to participants in Rungwe and people in the Kilosa villages, who were not interviewed. The risk of people agreeing to be interviewed just for the money also occurred, although we felt this only happened on a handful of occasions. At first I tried to negotiate this rule with village leaders because of the aforementioned issues. However it was non-negotiable and so each narrative interviewee received the payment. I also gave each village a project donation and plan to return to present my data, in order to fulfil my reciprocity strategy. A good discussion on the ethics of payments can be found in Hammett *et al.* (2014).

3.6.4 Data analysis

Glaser and Strauss (2017) describe the process of building theory as being a continuous comparison of concepts that emerge in the field. Throughout my fieldwork I continuously analysed data by making notes, discussing interviews and observations with assistants, developing themes and comparing and contrasting different pieces of data. These notes, themes and ideas acted as a base from which a more detailed data analysis process could be progressed. Denzin (2004) argues that good constructivist research requires inductive data analysis in order that theory is grounded and interpretations of findings are contextual. However it is also argued that by using different theoretical lenses to unpack social phenomenon, the credibility of research is improved (Lincoln and Guba 1985). I therefore used a combination of inductive and deductive analysis to unpack my findings and construct and test theory (Blaikie 2007). I also drew on thematic narrative analysis as analytical method, as it provides a way to 'better understand the ways in which individuals create and attach meaning to events, and subsequently express it' (Mishler 1986: 67). Narrative analysis requires detailed, quality transcriptions of spoken data (Jovchelovitch and Bauer 2000). Therefore, all narrative interviews were first transcribed and translated where required and then all data organised using NVivo, files and folders. I then went through two stages of analysis.

The objective of stage one was to identify the different ways that actors made sense of their pilot project experience and draw out key themes to be analysed further. I first organised the narratives in broad perspective groups. I then used the practice of phroensis to select 25 narratives that reflected these groups equally. Phroensis is use of wisdom and instincts developed during data collection to ensure the most significant and diverse stories are included (Frank 2012). I then went through the transcripts and inductively coded them for both indexical and non-indexical material. Indexical material is descriptive, focusing on 'who did what, when, where and why' and non-indexical material focuses on judgements, concepts, opinions and theories about events (Jovchelovitch and Bauer 2000: 69). I did this by hand as opposed to Nvivo in order that the narratives stayed whole and could be treated as such, a central tenet of thematic narrative analysis (Riessman 2008). I then compared and contrasted different narratives and, using fieldwork notes and analysis and coding of key documents, I inductively developed themes for further investigation; three of which became chapters. In the second stage of analysis I developed these themes, doing more detailed analysis of bigger data sets and zigzagging between findings and different social theories in order to develop theories relevant to the context (ibid.). By using these different theories, or lenses, I was able to triangulate my findings further and boost the credibility of the research (Lincoln and Guba 1985). The different social theories, data sets and methods of analysis used in stage two are discussed in more detail in chapters four, five and six.

3.7 More on stage five: the art, practices, and politics of interpretation

Denzin (2004: 447) argues that 'in the social sciences there is only interpretation. Nothing speaks for itself. Researchers can therefore be seen as interpreters, who are required to translate what is learnt from data collection and analysis into a story or narrative (Denzin 2004). A good interpretation and therefore a good narrative will bring the reader into the core of the actor experiences (Geertz 1973). In order to achieve this, I have tried to stay as close to the data as possible, while linking it to wider phenomena and concepts. Telling the story using the words of participants is one way I have tried to achieve this and I have used extended quotes where possible. I have also written in the first person pronoun to emphasise my

subjectivist epistemology. As was discussed in section 3.4, interpretation in the interpretive-constructivist paradigm must be trustworthy (Guba and Lincoln 1989). This requires triangulation of different empirical materials and continuous comparison and exploration of cases (Denzin 2004). Throughout the zigzagging process of induction and deduction described in section 3.6.4, the researcher is also required to link respondent experiences to wider phenomena, as respondents rarely do that themselves (Yow 2014). Interpretations would ideally be checked with participants to improve credibility (Denzin 2004; Lincoln and Guba 1985). However, due to strict visa restrictions on researchers in Tanzania, I was not able to go back and do this, which is a limitation of this research. My interpretations have also been impacted by the different conceptual lenses I have used in each analytical chapter and my writing style is influenced by how I have positioned myself as multicultural subject. Although I discuss some controversial issues raised by participants, I want to ensure that I engage with these issues in a way that does not cause practitioners and policy-makers to disengage. Based on the feedback from the paper in *World Development* modified from chapter five, it seems I am finding this balance.

3.8 More on the case studies

3.8.1 Tanzania, forests and REDD+

Over 38% of Tanzania's land area is covered by forests and woodland, which includes miombo woodland, montane forests and coastal forests (Burgess *et al.* 2004; Burgess *et al.* 2010). These forests provide the country with an important source of energy and building supplies, as well as supporting local livelihoods (Lund *et al.* 2017). Some of Tanzania's forests are also considered to have high biodiversity value, particularly the coastal forests, montane forests on the Eastern Arc mountain chain, and the Southern Highlands (FBD 2005; Menegon *et al.* 2011). Deforestation rates in Tanzania are considered high, which is largely attributed to local issues including agricultural expansion, charcoal making and livestock grazing (Burgess *et al.* 2010). A number of forest conservation interventions, driven by both national and international institutions and organisations and targeting forest-

dwelling communities, have therefore been implemented. This included government-led media campaigns in the 80s and 90s using slogans such as *kata miti panda miti* (cut a tree, plant trees) and *usikate miti ovyo* (don't cut trees carelessly) (Katundu and Mwaseba 2009). The global community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) narrative, which can be traced back to the 1970s (Dressler *et al.* 2010), gave rise to the internationally-backed and donor-supported growth of participatory forest management (PFM) interventions in the 1990s (Koch 2016). Since then, Tanzania has been hailed as a leader in Africa on PFM policy and practice (Blomley and Ramadhani 2006).

Although PFM is judged to have been successful in some areas, issues around governance, land tenure, social justice and efficacy have been raised (Brockington 2007; Persha and Blomley 2009; Lund and Treue 2008). It is in the context of the issues with PFM that REDD+ emerged as a new and exciting opportunity for Tanzania (Lund *et al.* 2017). REDD+ in Kiswahili, Tanzania's national language, is MKUHUMI: *Mpango wa Kupunguza Uzalishaji wa Hewa ya Ukaa kutokana na Ukataji miti ovyo na uharibifu wa Mimitu*. The pilot phase of MKUHUMI started in 2008, beginning with the development of a policy framework. The UN and World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility provided additional national-level strategic support for this, alongside the \$80 million Norwegian donor funds (REDD-Desk 2017). At that time, REDD+ was framed as being an opportunity for Tanzania to make significant steps towards achieving sustainable forest management, to improve local livelihoods and to address some of the past failures of PFM (Lund *et al.* 2017; Angelsen and Hofstad 2008).

3.8.2 The REDD+ pilot project portfolio in Tanzania

As will be unpacked in more detail in chapter four, the REDD+ projects in Tanzania were framed as pilot projects from the beginning; with a focus on testing, learning and informing subsequent REDD+ policy and practice in Tanzania and internationally. This framing came from the international level, with Tanzania selected as one of the UN-REDD pilot countries:

‘Programme implementation began in March 2009 with an initial nine-country pilot phase that was designed to experiment with tools and methodologies, and to draw early lessons for the development of a more sustainable strategy’ (UN-REDD 2014)

Although the REDD+ pilot projects were funded and managed by the Norwegian Embassy in Dar es Salaam on behalf of NICFI, they were implemented as part of a broader portfolio of REDD+ activity, which included development of a national strategy (supported by both UN-REDD and NICFI). In 2009, the first National Framework for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) was developed, which emphasises the need for ‘pilot activities’ in order to ‘generate a lot of lessons and experiences’ (URT 2009: 15). In 2009 a letter of intent was also signed between the Tanzanian and Norwegian governments, which involves ‘the establishment of pilot activities for the promotion of a national REDD process’ (URT/RNE 2008: 3). A call for concept notes was then released by the Government of Tanzania and the Royal Norwegian Embassy (RNE), asking for ‘demonstration projects to pilot and test different aspects of REDD’ (URT/RNE 2008: 1). A list of five areas to be piloted were then listed, including trialling incentive schemes and ‘approaches to organising REDD work at the local level’ (ibid.), with applicants asked to identify ‘*aspect(s) of REDD piloting the project will address*’ (ibid.).

Potential proposals were then shortlisted and asked to develop plans further, before nine NGOs were chosen by the Norwegian Embassy and NRTF to implement the pilot projects. Figure 2 in section 3.5 shows the geographical distribution of these projects, along with associated NGOs. A mix of international and well-established national NGOs were chosen. These were WWF Tanzania, WCS Tanzania, TFCG/MJUMITA, CARE International, African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), Jane Goodall Institute (JGI), Tanzania Traditional Energy Development Organization (TaTEDO), Mpingo Conservation and Development Initiative and Wildlife Conservation Society Tanzania (WCST) – not to be confused with the Tanzanian arm of WCS international, who implemented the Rungwe pilot project. The projects differed in context, length, scope and approach, with some aiming to meet all

objectives and fully test the mechanism and others choosing to focus on only a few elements⁴. Seven pilot project reached completion, with two ending early due to management issues: TaTEDO and WCST. The pilot projects were designed to be a ‘testing ground’ for REDD+ and objectives included experimenting with REDD+ mechanisms in community contexts, getting communities ready for REDD+, delivering widespread stakeholder awareness and involvement in REDD+, delivering REDD+ results such as emission reduction, and supporting national policy-making (Blomley *et al.* 2016: 1). Around 160 villages and 400,000 villagers were involved in the pilot projects (*ibid.*). A number of national level institutions were also set up during the early stages of Tanzania’s REDD+ pilot phase, which are discussed in more detail in chapter four.

The REDD+ piloting phase was designed, implemented and evaluated on two levels: the individual project level and the portfolio level. Through this design, it was hoped that lessons could be drawn and collated from the individual projects to deliver broader learnings at the portfolio level, in order to advise both Tanzanian stakeholders and the international community engaged with REDD+ (NIRAS 2015a). The portfolio was developed against four broad objectives, while ‘*placing an emphasis on testing key policy issues*’ (Milledge 2010, section 3.1), which is in line with the broader framings and stated objectives of pilot projects, which are discussed throughout this thesis. These four objectives were defined as ‘*Local REDD readiness*’, ‘*policy testing*’, ‘*REDD results*’ and ‘*broad stakeholder involvement*’ (*ibid.*). Each individual pilot project then developed its own objectives, working with the RNE and signing a contract stating the individual project objectives. All projects required ongoing assessment to establish lessons learnt. The NGOs were expected to self-assess projects on a semi-annual basis against the project outputs agreed in the contracts signed by the NGOs and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (e.g. MFA 2009; MFA 2010). The RNE also commissioned mid-term review (completed by Deloitte) and final review (completed by NIRAS). Both sets of reviews followed the same two-step process in relation to the pilot projects:

⁴ For detailed information on the NGOs and their approaches see NIRAS. 2015a. *Lessons learned from the implementation of REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania*. Finland: NIRAS.

1. Review of the individual pilot projects using a combination of OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, the four overarching pilot project portfolio objectives and the individual project outputs and indicators agreed between the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the individual NGOs⁵

2. Creation of an overarching report summarising the findings from the individual pilot projects in order to deliver lessons to Tanzanian policy makers and practitioners, and the global conservation and development community⁶

More information on the evaluation process is given in chapter six, along with details of the additional institutions established to gather lessons from the pilot project portfolio throughout the implementation process.

3.8.3 Rungwe case study villages and the WCS pilot project

Rungwe is one of eight districts in Mbeya region in Southwest Tanzania, close to the borders with Zambia and Malawi. It has a population of around 350,000 (URT 2016a). It is situated in the Southern Highlands and contains the second highest peak in Southern Tanzania: Rungwe Peak on Mount Rungwe, which stands at 2,981 meters above sea level (URT 2018). The district town, Tukuyu, stands at 1500 meters above sea level. The area around Mount Rungwe and Tukuyu receives high levels of rainfall. Rain predominantly falls November to May but, unlike the rest of Tanzania, can fall all year round (Davenport *et al.* 2010). The forests of Mount Rungwe, which include montane forest, upper montane forest, and smaller areas of bushland and grassland, therefore provide an important catchment service for the surrounding areas (URT 2018; De Luca and Mpunga 2018). As such, 13,652 hectares around Mount Rungwe was gazetted as a Catchment Forest in 1949 and then

⁵ The individual methodologies for individual projects can be found in: NIRAS. 2015b. *Making REDD+ and the carbon market work for communities and forest conservation in Tanzania*. Finland: NIRAS. And DELOITTE. 2012b. *Mid-term Review Report of Nine NGO REDD+ Pilot Projects in Tanzania: Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) "Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) Readiness in Southwest Tanzania"*. Deloitte.

⁶ The methodologies for the pilot project portfolio can be found in: NIRAS. 2015a. *Lessons learned from the implementation of REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania*. Finland: NIRAS. And DELOITTE. 2012a. *Mid-term Review Report of Nine NGO REDD+ Pilot Projects in Tanzania: Higher-level overview of NGO REDD+ portfolio*. Deloitte.

upgraded to Mount Rungwe Forest Nature Reserve in 2009 (URT 2018), and so is now a strict protected area. The Reserve is managed primarily by Tanzania Forest Services (TFS), the forest division of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT). WCS Tanzania have been present in the area since 2000 when they set up the Southern Highlands Conservation Programme (WCS-Tanzania 2016). They are involved in a wide range of conservation activities, including supporting national, regional and district governments, conducting research on the many endemic species in the forests, and providing education to local people (ibid.).

The two case study villages, R1 and R2, are both situated close to Mount Rungwe and Tukuyu and are both villages that WCS worked with before, during and after the REDD+ pilot projects. Agriculture is the main source of income, with climatic conditions enabling the production of a range of both subsistence and cash crops, including maize, bananas and vegetables. Many villagers also grow tea, which they sell to the Wakulima tea company near Tukuyu, and some grow avocados for the Rungwe Avocado Company. There is a thriving market just off the tarmac road between Tukuyu and Mbeya where many of the villagers from R1 and R2 sell produce twice a week. The majority of people in both R1 and R2 live in well-built brick houses with tin roofs and have access to social services including dispensaries (which in Tanzania are both clinics and places where medicine can be purchased) and primary and secondary schools. Due to the perceived high importance of Mount Rungwe and surrounding areas, Rungwe has been targeted by government-led conservation activity, as well as that done by WCS and the Wakulima tea company. Local people are also directly involved in the guarding of the forest and children are encouraged to join conservation clubs at the schools. Mount Rungwe and the surrounding forest is held in high regard amongst villagers, both in terms of its intrinsic value and the ecosystem services it provides, although many never enter it. Literacy levels are above the national average in Rungwe, and over 93% of primary school children are enrolled at school. Kiswahili is widely spoken, as well as Kinyakyusa: the language of the Wanyakyusa ethnic group, who make up the majority of the population of Rungwe (URT 1997).

The WCS pilot project in Rungwe was entitled *REDD Readiness in Southwest Tanzania*. The stated goal was to *‘develop the capacity and knowledge for Tanzania to participate in REDD activities in the Southern Highlands while establishing sustainable alternatives to forest resources use’* and the purpose *‘to design and carry out a robust baseline study to provide methods for estimating degradation, deforestation, carbon sequestration, emissions and leakage in southwest Tanzania’s four most important forests covering 52,680 hectares’* (MFA 2010: 9). The project was awarded \$1.3 million from the RNE (MFA 2010), making it the smallest project in the portfolio. It was implemented between 2010 and June 2014 and built on existing conservation activity that WCS had previously developed in the area, as well as introducing new community projects and conducting carbon monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) activities. This was done based on four project outcomes and corresponding activities, which provided a basis for project self-assessment and are summarised as:

1. Develop *‘background knowledge and resource allocation to implement project activities’*
2. Undertake *‘data collection, analysis and calculations to estimate degradation, deforestation, carbon sequestration and emissions’*
3. Address *‘local drivers and impacts of degradation and deforestation’*
4. Develop a *‘fire, forest degradation and leakage monitoring system’* (MFA 2010: 9)

Following project completion, WCS continued with a number of the activities as part of a USAID-funded project. Chapter five gives much more detail on the approach of WCS in Rungwe, the different elements of the project and the impacts and implications.

3.8.4 The Kilosa pilot project

Kilosa is one of six districts in the Morogoro region in Tanzania. Kilosa is around 300km inland from Dar es Salaam. Mikumi National Park, which is a strict protected wildlife conservation area, covers about 22% of Kilosa. The district’s highland areas

form part of the Eastern Arc Mountains. Kilosa is covered in a variety of vegetation types, including montane forests along the Eastern Arc Mountains in the western part of the district, which is where most of the TFCG/MJUMITA pilot projects were located (Kajembe *et al.* 2013). These forests are managed through a mix of centrally-managed forest reserves, community-managed forests and forests located on general land (*ibid.*). TFCG/MJUMITA had previously implemented projects in Kilosa. However for the MKUHUMI project, TFCG/MJUMITA opted to work with new villages, which were located close to forests that did not have existing forest management plans or restrictions and so were eligible for the establishment of CBFM (Vatn *et al.* 2017). Without management plans, laws or taxes protecting the forests, they were vulnerable to exploitation from outsiders for fuelwood and charcoal, particularly those coming from the district town of Kilosa (Kibuga and Samweli 2010). Kilosa can receive high levels of rainfall during the rainy season between October and May, and is susceptible to both flooding and droughts (Paavola 2008).

The two case studies K1 and K2 are both situated in the highland area of Kilosa and are two of 17 villages involved in the TFCG/MJUMITA pilot project (TFCG/MJUMITA 2014). Agriculture is the main livelihood activity in K1 and K2 and the farmers grow crops including maize, rice and beans (Kibuga and Samweli 2010). Over 90% of people are small-scale subsistence farmers and they sell crops only when they are able to produce a surplus (Kajembe *et al.* 2013). Charcoal-making is also done in both villages, for both local use and for supply to Kilosa town (Kibuga and Samweli 2010). In both K1 and K2, the villagers reported that those farming closest to the forest had the most fertile land. These villagers were able to grow fruit trees and vegetables, which they then sold to other villagers. Prior to MKUHUMI the villagers had not been involved in formal forest conservation projects, although some people had awareness of government campaigns and conservation activities in Mikumi National Park and nearby forest reserves. There is a mix of house types in K1 and K2, with some people living in pole and mud houses with grass roofs. Neither of the villages have a functioning dispensary so people have to travel to Kilosa town to see the doctor and get medicine, which takes over an hour to get to

by road (and sometimes much longer during the rains). The villages have access to primary schools, although they have very limited resources, but do not have easy access to secondary schools. Literacy rates in Kilosa are lower than in Rungwe at about 66%, and 75% of primary-aged children are enrolled at school (URT 2016b). People communicate mainly in Kiswahili, as a wide mix of different ethnic groups live in the villages (Kibuga and Samweli 2010).

The TFCG/MJUMITA pilot project in Kilosa was entitled *Making REDD Work for Communities and Forest Conservation in Tanzania*. TFCG established two sister projects; one in Kilosa and one in Lindi in Southwest Tanzania and were awarded \$5.9 million across the two projects (MFA 2009), making them one of the most generously funded projects in the portfolio. The stated goal was to *'reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and degradation in Tanzania in ways that provide direct and equitable incentives to rural communities to conserve and manage forests sustainably'* and the purpose was to *'demonstrate, at local, national and international levels, a pro-poor approach to reducing deforestation and forest degradation by generating equitable financial incentives from the global carbon market for communities that are sustainably managing or conserving Tanzanian forests at community level'* (MFA 2009: 7). The project was active between 2009 and December 2014 and everything was developed around testing REDD+ with communities not previously worked with and getting them verified in order that they could sell carbon on the international markets post-pilot. The project had four main outputs and corresponding activities, which it used as a framework for ongoing self-assessment. These are summarised as:

1. Develop *'replicable, equitable and cost-effective'* REDD+ models and test them at community level
2. Develop and test *'replicable, equitable and cost-effective models'* that reduce leakage and provide additional community benefits
3. Document, monitor and evaluate activities to evaluate the project impact and communicate these findings

4. Work with national and international actors to advocate for '*equitable and effective REDD benefit sharing mechanisms*' (MFA 2009: 7)

This involved a wide range of alternative livelihood activities, establishing plans and institutions to facilitate CBFM, gazetting village land forest reserves (VLFRs) and MRV activities. The project did not achieve its ambition of getting the communities prepared to access REDD+ funds but TFCG/MJUMITA have continued working with some of the villages through a sustainable carbon project. More detailed information on the NGO's strategy, project design and different elements, and its impacts and implications can be found in chapter five, along with the differences between the Kilosa and Rungwe project design and strategies.

4. THE HIDDEN ASSUMPTIONS AND MESSY REALITIES OF PILOT PROJECTS, POLICY AND PRACTICE

4.1 Introduction

Pilot projects are considered to be a means by which learning, evidence and insights can be generated through the testing of new initiatives in real-life contexts (Vreugdenhil and Slinger 2008). This is seen as being particularly important in cases where the initiative being tested is considered to be new and innovative (van Buuren and Loorbach 2009). By generating learning, it is hoped that pilot projects will fulfil multiple goals. These include influencing policy and decision-makers, improving practice and scaling up projects, thus establishing new and innovative approaches to the management of society and environment (van Buuren and Loorbach 2009; Sanderson 2002; Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2012). Pilot projects are considered to be a product of the evidence-based policy and practice movement (EBP), which has become a powerful global force (Sanderson 2002; Pawson 2006). The aim of EBP is to improve social and environmental policy-making and management practice through the provision and facilitation of better scientific evidence, in order to make decision-making more objective and impartial (Adams and Sandbrook 2013; Head 2010).

This growing emphasis on the generation of evidence to improve policy and practice can be seen in international conservation and development. It is reflected in an expanding body of literature advocating the need for evidence-based policy and practice (Adams and Sandbrook 2013), with authors arguing for conservation that is driven by 'systematic appraisal of evidence' as opposed to 'anecdote and myth' (Sutherland *et al.* 2004: 305). It can also be seen in the science-led approaches of many international conservation NGOs (e.g. WWF 2017), and the focus on evidence-based solutions of international donors such as the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD 2015). Pilot projects play an important role in the generation of evidence for international conservation and development policy and practice, which is reflected in the use of over 500 pilot projects during the early stages of REDD+ (Fletcher *et al.* 2016). At the global level,

the purpose of these pilot projects was broadly defined as being to demonstrate how REDD+ can be implemented at the local level and to generate lessons for use in wider REDD+ policy and practice (Madeira *et al.* 2010).

Huge amounts of instrumental information, lessons learnt and evidence about how to implement mechanisms such as REDD+ have emerged from pilot projects. However, few questions have been asked about why the use of pilot projects is encouraged and whether they are able to fulfil their goals in relation to policy and practice. In this chapter, I focus on this gap and ask what pilot projects are and why they were used during the early stages of REDD+ in Tanzania, and how they interacted with broader conservation and development policy and practice. In doing so, I aim to critically engage with pilot projects as a policy tool, both in relation to REDD+ and wider international conservation and development. I will first discuss some of the theory in order to establish a conceptual lens through which to explore the case study of REDD+ in Tanzania. I then identify the data I used and the specific methods I used to analyse it. I then discuss the results before making some chapter conclusions, which in turn build the arguments in this thesis. As well as contributing to the overall aim of this thesis, this chapter also contributes to debates on EBP and the role of pilot projects in policy and practice more broadly.

4.2 Theory

4.2.1 Pilot projects

Pilot projects are framed as tools that provide a rigorous method of testing whether new innovations will work in real-life social settings (Jowell 2003; Greenberg and Shroder 2004; Gonsalves and Mendoza 2003). Indeed, the Dutch word for pilot project is '*proeftuinen*', literally translated as 'experiment garden' (van Buuren and Loorbach 2009). As such, pilot projects are categorised as a form of social experiment (Campbell and Russo 1999). Greenberg and Shroder (2004) suggest four components to be included in social experiments. These are random assignments of groups of 'human subjects' to take part (including a control group); an innovative policy intervention to be tested; continuous data collection; and rigorous evaluation comparing the outcomes of the different groups. In order to enable

experimentation, efforts are made to give those implementing pilot projects free reign to innovate and develop creative solutions, often outside of traditional institutional arrangements (van Buuren and Loorbach 2009).

A number of different outcomes are expected as a result of piloting. Firstly, it is hoped that pilot projects generate extensive learning and knowledge about how the new policy, concept, technology or management solution will interact within certain contexts (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2009; Gonsalves and Mendoza 2003). This in turn will enable whatever is being tested to be modified, to develop and to mature (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2009). Secondly, pilot projects are designed and implemented in order to influence policy and decision-makers, and governance and institutional arrangements, breaking through old policies and practices and establishing new approaches to the management of society and the environment (van Buuren and Loorbach 2009; Sanderson 2002). In the case of new international conservation and development initiatives, pilot projects are used as a means to enable donors to 'tread carefully'; demonstrating and nurturing new ideas and practices without upsetting the political status quo, with the hope that State actors will be gradually influenced and bureaucracy reformed (Li 2007a: 281). Thirdly, there is often an expectation of what is referred to as pilot project diffusion, which describes the expansion, continuation or scaling up of the new policy, management approach once the piloting phase has finished (Greenberg and Shroder 2004; Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2012). Finally, the desired impact of pilot projects may also go beyond influencing policy-makers and practitioners, resulting in broader social learning among local communities, with the hope that projects become catalysts for societal change (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2009).

In reality however, pilot projects can take different forms, shaped by the actors and socio-political contexts in which they are designed and implemented (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2010). For example in the case of UK policy-making, Sanderson (2002) argues that pilot projects often manifest as prototypes; used to provide information on *how* to make new policies work. These pilot projects do not, in reality, ask *whether* the new policy will work and as such, the UK government has committed to new policies without fully questioning their ability to deliver in practice (*ibid.*). Pilot

projects can therefore become tools through which supporters of a new policy can demonstrate its success and encourage decision-makers' buy in and support (Di Gregorio *et al.* 2012). Pilot projects can also be used to fulfil additional functions. For example, Greenberg and Shroder (2004) argue that pilot projects are sometimes used as a stalling tactic in cases where decision-makers are reticent to commit to new policies. In these cases very little learning and evaluation takes place and as such, the legitimacy of the 'pilot project' label is questioned (Sanderson 2002; Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2010).

Even when pilot project are used to rigorously test *whether* a new policy, programme or innovation works in a real-life setting, their ability to do so can be limited. They may be faced with the challenge of what has been called the 'pilot project effect' (Pearse 1977; Palmer Jones 1981; Adams 1991). This describes how the attention given to new experiments and the high levels of funds, resources and management of the pilot project do not reflect reality, and so present a very misleading and often unrealistically positive set of results that cannot be replicated under normal, non-pilot conditions (Toye 1986). In addition, as pilot projects are typically implemented in small geographical areas and designed to encourage consensus on what constitutes best practice, they are often unable to deliver anything more than incremental change within the project sites themselves (van Buuren and Loorbach 2009). For these and other reasons, pilot projects frequently do not fully meet their goals of influencing policy and practice and so often fail to facilitate the introduction of new forms of social and environmental governance (Li 2007a; Sanderson 2002).

4.2.2 Evidence-based policy-making (EBP)

Jasanoff (2006) states that all experiments are the product of certain paradigms, which provide their rationales, structures and objectives. Pilot projects can be seen to be a product of the positivist paradigm driven by a 'modernist faith in progress informed by reason', which drives the evidence-based policy movement (Sanderson 2002: 1). Evidence-based policy (EBP) has emerged in the new millennium as a powerful global idea and narrative, attempting to bring together the *knowing* of

scientific evidence-generation and the *doing* of policy-making and management of society and the environment (Pawson 2006). The EBP movement seeks to use scientific evidence to better inform decision-making, thus making it more objective and reducing the influence of values and politics (Adams and Sandbrook 2013; Head 2010). The testing and evaluation of new policies and interventions facilitated by pilot projects is framed as an important source of this evidence (Sanderson 2000; Sanderson 2002). The paradigmatic thinking of EBP follows that of medicine, where rigorous testing of new drugs and interventions has resulted in improvements in medical treatments and programmes (Adams and Sandbrook 2013). As such, EBP is often presented as a linear narrative linking better evidence, and improved provision of evidence, with better decision-making. For example, Sutherland *et al.* (2004) argue for improved access to evidence for conservation policy-makers and practitioners via web-based databases, in order to support evidence-based practice. Within the EBP narrative, policy and management decisions that are not seen to reflect scientific knowledge on the issues involved are consequently framed as limitations (Cairney 2016).

However, through critical engagement with policy processes in contexts including public services, water management, conservation and international development, critics of EBP have challenged the link between better evidence and improved policy and practice (Head 2010; Mosse 2005; Sanderson 2002; Adams and Sandbrook 2013). The processes involved in gathering evidence, making decisions, and implementing new policies and practices are significantly different in social and environmental governance to those in medicine (Adams and Sandbrook 2013; Huitema *et al.* 2009). In reality, governance decisions are made based on 'bargaining, entrenched commitments, and interplay of diverse stakeholder values and interests' as opposed to the logical and rational process depicted in the EBP narrative (Head 2010: 77). In relation to issues such as REDD+, the policy-making process is extremely complex and the role of evidence is never neutral (Di Gregorio *et al.* 2012). As such, Cairney (2016: 1) describes evidence-based policy as 'an aspirational term, rather than a good description of the policy process' and argues for more policy studies and critical discussion on the concept of EBP.

4.3 Key case study information and chapter-specific methodology

4.3.1 Key institutions involved in learning and policy-making in relation to REDD+ in Tanzania

Alongside the development of the pilot projects, which I have introduced in chapter three, a number of national institutions were established to help prepare Tanzania for REDD+ (Dyngeland and Eriksson 2011). These included the National REDD+ Task Force (NRTF), which consisted of 12 representatives from different government ministries and one of the piloting NGOs and was chaired by the Department of Environment (DoE) at the Vice President's Office (VPO 2013). Five Technical Working Groups (TWGs) made up of academics and NGO representatives, along with government representatives, were set-up to support the NRTF. A REDD+ Secretariat was also established at the Institute of Resources and Assessment (IRA) at the University of Dar es Salaam, tasked with coordinating the other institutions towards the development of the National REDD Strategy and other associated policy documents (Koch 2016). In addition, around 25% of the Norwegian money funded research by academic and other research institutions (Kaijage and Kafumu 2016). Some of this money went to the Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation (CCIAM) project, which brought together scholars from Norway and Tanzania to work on issues related to climate change and REDD+. At the time of data collection, the National Carbon Monitoring Centre (NCCM) was in the process of being established at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), however it was not operational during the piloting phase (Blomley *et al.* 2016). As I will discuss further in section 4.4, one of the core objectives of these institutions was to ensure that learning and evidence from the pilot projects was captured and used to influence policy and practice, both in relation to future REDD+ plans and forest governance more broadly.

4.3.2 Specific chapter methodology

As the focus of this chapter is on the rationale behind using pilots and their relationship with policy and practice, I have drawn primarily on data collected with conservation and development professionals working at international, national and

district levels. I selected 30 narrative interviews from the overall data set for detailed analysis. I used a combination of purposive sampling (Blackstone 2012), to ensure all groups were represented and phronesis (Frank 2012), to ensure that a wide range of these perspectives were included. I used additional narratives to triangulate my findings (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Table 3 gives more detail on the data used for this chapter.

Table 3: Data analysed for chapter four

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Narrative Interviews | 7 international conservation and development professionals including consultants and representatives from the Norwegian Embassy staff and the UN |
| | 17 national conservation and development professionals including representatives from five of the implementing NGOs, the NRTF, the Secretariat, NCMC, and academics involved in CCIAM |
| | 6 project-level conservation and development professionals, including district forest officers involved in the Rungwe pilot project and the Kilosa pilot project |
| Other ethnographic data | Meeting observation at two national level events: REDD+ workshop October 2014 organised by WWF, and Lessons Learned presentations August 2015, organised by consultants who conducted project evaluations on behalf of the Norwegian Embassy |
| | Document reviews: official donor evaluation reports, NGO project documents, emails and notes to file |
| | Formal and informal non-narrative interviews and conversations with key informants and other conservation and development professionals |

For this chapter, I used theoretical, theme-led analysis, following a four-step process (Riessman 2008). I first identified the themes that I wanted to explore. This came from the first stage of analysis discussed in section 3.6.4 and an initial review of the literature discussed in section 4.2. I started with two broad themes in line with the research questions: what are pilot projects and why are they used, and

how do they interact with policy and practice? In the second stage I went through the narratives and identified sections of the narratives that dealt with these two questions. As part of this process I looked at how actors framed pilot projects and their use, including pilot project narratives that identified problems, possible outcomes and solutions (Roe 1994). I then used NVivo to go through these sections and summarised them with a code. Where possible I retained the words of the participant, coding *in vivo* where appropriate (Saldaña 2015). The third stage of coding involved comparing these different codes and sections of narratives to find similarities and differences between different actors and actors groups. This involved the use of what Miles and Huberman (1994) call pattern coding, in which similar codes are grouped into categories using NVivo, as well as working between codes and the narratives from which they came. At this stage I also brought in documents, field notes and notes from other interviews and conversations, identifying relevant sections and looking for more evidence of project framings and narratives. The final stage involves zigzagging between narratives and theory to develop my own theory in the context (Riessman 2008). I continually used the additional ethnographic data, as well as other narratives, to triangulate my findings and scrutinise emergent theory.

4.4 Discussion of key findings

4.4.1 Pilot projects, prototypes and hybrids

*'Piloting is important because when you are doing a pilot... you want to implement something later; a certain intervention. But then under piloting it's where you can understand whether this thing will work or it won't work.'*⁷

This quote exemplifies a dominant narrative around pilot projects among many of the conservation and development professionals involved in the REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania, with narrative in this sense described as a shared idea about a certain policy or approach to conservation and development intervention (Roe

⁷ Interview, academic and NCMC representative, 25 March 2016

1994; Hutton *et al.* 2005). When reflecting on the reasons for implementing the REDD+ pilot projects in the first place, and when discussing the motivations for piloting more generally, the framing is around testing whether a new policy or intervention will work or not, in order to make a 'go or no go'⁸ decision about it. As such, pilot projects can be seen as being a tool for testing whether new policies, interventions or other innovations will work in real-life settings (Jowell 2003). Within this dominant narrative, pilot projects are framed as being *the only thing to do*⁹ when introducing new policies and interventions and as part of the solution to the standardized problem of needing to improve conservation and development policy and practice (Adams and Sandbrook 2013). Within this narrative there exists an assumption that the implementation of pilot projects as a first step will reduce or even avoid the risk of failure associated with new policies or interventions:

*'Piloting is an important mechanism if you want to implement something, which you haven't implemented [previously]. You see, it's a mechanism to avoid risk or failure. It's like not carrying all the eggs in a single basket'*¹⁰.

A 'spirit of experimentation' can be identified within the pilot project narrative (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2012: 152), particularly among international actors such as consultants, diplomats and representatives from the UN. Pilot projects are framed as being a test and as being a process of 'trial and error'¹¹ and are therefore given the right to fail, because even 'if it doesn't work you've also learnt something'¹². These international actors framed the REDD+ pilot projects as a means of testing whether REDD+ would work or not, and emphasised that they should not have been seen as a promise or guarantee for a second phase, future donor funding or wider implementation.

⁸ Interview, academic and consultant, 23 February 2016

⁹ Interview, embassy representative, 7 March 2016

¹⁰ Interview, VPO representative and NRTF member, 7 March 2016

¹¹ Interview, UNDP representative, 18 March 2016

¹² Ibid.

Despite this strong pilot project ‘testing’ narrative, in practice the REDD+ pilot projects shared many characteristics and framings with prototypes, where the aim is to demonstrate the mechanism and gather learnings on *how* to implement it rather than to systematically test *whether* it will work or not (Sanderson 2002). The original project objectives focus on ‘*testing key policy issues*’¹³, which aligns with the pilot project narrative. However, the projects were also expected to prepare communities for future REDD+ implementation in Tanzania, and through this process deliver REDD results, such as ‘*measurable improvements in forest condition or benefits accrued from carbon markets*’¹⁴. As such, an expectation developed that the pilot projects were the first step in REDD+ innovation in Tanzania:

*‘Piloting in principle was specifically to see the way through on how a REDD initiative should be implemented successfully’*¹⁵

The pilot projects were seen as being part of the ‘*preparation phase*’¹⁶ for REDD+ in Tanzania, which aligns with the international discourse on REDD+ that frames pilot projects as a component of the readiness phase and does not consistently differentiate between pilot projects and demonstrations (Minang *et al.* 2014). Broader unintended consequences arose from assumptions of post-pilot continuation, which is explored in more detail in chapter five.

The pilot projects themselves were to a large extent designed like prototypes or demonstrations. They did not involve the use of control groups and the project sites were selected based primarily on geographical location as opposed to following the random sampling protocol of social experiments (Greenberg and Shroder 2004). Projects were also largely framed around demonstrating the ability for REDD+ to work in Tanzania and gaining support and legitimacy for certain approaches (Mosse 2005). For example, the aim of the TFCG/MJUMITA pilot projects was to:

¹³ MILLEDGE, S. 2010. *Status of NGO REDD project development and management considerations*. 'Note to file' circulated March 8th 2010.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Interview, VPO representative and NRTF member, 7 March 2016

¹⁶ Interview, national-level NGO representative, 24 May 2016

'Demonstrate a pro-poor approach to reducing deforestation and forest degradation by generating equitable financial incentives for communities that are sustainably managing Tanzanian forests'¹⁷

Similarly, a large body of literature was produced on best practices around benefit sharing and identifying and legitimising certain approaches (Campese 2012; Silas 2016). In reality, demonstrating how REDD+ could work in Tanzania and legitimising best practice was prioritised over testing and scrutinising whether REDD+ as a mechanism would work in Tanzania, thus contradicting the pilot project narrative. Therefore, in reality, the pilot projects aligned with the broader objective of international conservation and development intervention as a whole: 'finding best practices and institutionalising them' (Büscher and Dressler 2007: 595).

The pilot projects also served other functions in addition to testing and demonstrating REDD+. For the NGOs, the donor money from the REDD+ pilot projects provided them with much-needed funds to continue with the work and fund their operations:

'The NGOs who were wanting to do these projects, it was not just for learning. It wasn't just for pilots. Most of them had worked in the areas for many years, had established relationships and wanting to continue to achieve good results with communities they were working with as opposed to just doing a pilot for the sake of a pilot... In reality they were half pilots, half transforming existing work to include REDD.'¹⁸

The implementing NGOs drew on their existing practices, knowledge and formulae, and their bigger-picture objectives, to create hybrid projects, which only partially reflected the original ambitions of the donors. This process, termed institutional bricolage (Cleaver 2012; Benjaminsen 2017), is identified as a common pattern in conservation and development practice and one that limits the ability for

¹⁷ TFCG and MJUMITA. 2011. *Leaflet about the project 'Making REDD work for communities and forest conservation in Tanzania'*. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

¹⁸ Interview, international consultant, 22 February 2016

innovation to truly be realised on the ground. Thus the pilot project narrative that prioritises innovation and experimentation is challenged by the complex realities of the design, function and methods of implementation identified in the REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania. However by framing the projects as pilot projects as opposed to demonstrations, they are given a right to fail and so the lack of continuation post-pilot is justified and legitimised.

4.4.2 Pilot projects, NGOs and the learning agenda

The REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania were designed with an *'explicit focus'* on *'learning and information'*¹⁹ and central to this was the *'testing of different approaches'*²⁰. Actors highlighted the main difference between pilot projects and normal projects as the increased emphasis on, and role of, learning. The pilot projects were implemented primarily to learn lessons about all of the different aspects of REDD+:

*'So these pilots were collecting information, which could be used by the country so we can go now and do the actual implementation. So most of them now were developing methodologies on how we can account [for] this deforestation. Most of them were also collecting data on the drivers of deforestation in this country... collecting information on how these issues of safeguards could be taken care [of]...'*²¹

As this quote exemplifies, the framing of the learning agenda was technical, using the language of conservation and development professionals. By using this language, the complex social issues being dealt with by the pilot projects were able to be rendered technical; simplified and described in technical terms in order to make them more measurable and therefore solvable (Myers *et al.* 2018; Li 2007a). In order to facilitate this learning agenda, the donor took a project approach,

¹⁹ NIRAS. 2015a. *Lessons learned from the implementation of REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania*. Finland: NIRAS.

²⁰ MILLEDGE, S. 2010. *Status of NGO REDD project development and management considerations*. 'Note to file' circulated March 8th 2010.

²¹ Interview, academic and NCMC representative, 25 March 2016

whereby projects were selected as separate, bounded case studies (van Buuren and Loorbach 2009). Although the original call for proposals was technically open to state and private actors too, the decision was made to work with NGOs:

'I think one reason is the mode of operation of NGOs in terms of their speed, in terms of their independence, in terms of their community facilitation roles, in terms of their past experience, and also in terms of their mandate, has put them to become a natural selection for the pilots'²²

As this quote from the (donor) embassy representative exemplifies, the fact that NGOs are independent entities and less restricted by the bureaucratic institutions in Tanzania means that they are able to move quicker and deliver on project objectives. The NGOs reported to the donor directly and the donor paid the NGOs directly, without going through state structures. As such, they were able to avoid some of the challenges associated with working with the state actors and institutions in Tanzania (Li 2007a; Myers *et al.* 2018), or as another actor explained to *'bypass the government and make things happen on the ground'²³*. These challenges included the bureaucracy and slow pace of state institutions, as well as the misuse of aid funds that had happened as part of a previous agreement between the Norwegian Embassy and the MNRT (Koch 2016).

The selected NGOs are also all well-established in Tanzania and were seen as being best placed to implement the pilot projects. In addition, the *'past experience'* and *'mandate'* of NGOs also positioned them as best-placed to facilitate the highly technical aspects of the REDD+ mechanism. As such, part of the pilot project narrative, or received wisdom of piloting (Leach and Mearns 1996), is that you have to use NGOs to facilitate pilot projects. Piloting is framed as *'not the practice of district officers'²⁴*, even though they are responsible for much of the sub-national forest governance in Tanzania, nor are pilot projects framed as being the practice of

²² Interview, embassy representative, 7 March 2016

²³ Interview, academic and NCMC representative, 23 March 2016

²⁴ Interview, embassy representative, 7 March 2016

national government institutions. NGOs and the associated conservation ‘experts’ involved, such as consultants and researchers, are framed as being the only legitimate agents capable of transcending bureaucracy and navigating complexity in order to modernise policy and practice (Kothari 2005; Escobar 1997).

However, designing the pilot projects in this way resulted in challenges for both the learning agenda and the ambition for activity to continue in the pilot sites once the piloting phase was completed. Firstly, by rendering technical and avoiding the complexity or ‘messiness’ of the state actors and institutions in this way, the pilot projects became framed as anti-political (Myers *et al.* 2018; Li 2007a; Ferguson 1994; Kothari 2005). Through the NGOs themselves and through other institutions involved in generating pilot project learning²⁵, the pilot projects generated a huge amount of learning on a wide range of issues related to implementation, including participation, benefit-sharing, drivers of deforestation and safeguards (e.g. Kibuga *et al.* 2011; TNRF 2011). However, less attention was given to how the REDD+ pilot projects were interacting with the complex governance structures, policy environment and State actors related to REDD+ in Tanzania²⁶. As such, broader political issues, including barriers to national REDD+ implementation did not receive as much focus during the pilot project learning process:

‘...it was never clear from the government whether they understood it, whether they wanted to do it, whether they were just going along with it ‘cos it was 80 million dollars, whether they really had any interest in it at all. It was never clear. Maybe from our perspective

²⁵ This included Tanzania Natural Resources Forum (TNRF), who worked with some of the NGOs to gather lessons learned and produce literature; CIFOR who included Tanzania as part of a large global study on REDD+ pilot projects; IUCN who were commissioned to produce a document on learning; and NIRAS who were commissioned by the donors to do final lesson learning reports and policy briefs

²⁶ For more detail on the REDD+ policy and institutional context in Tanzania see KWEKA, D., R. CARMENTA, M. HYLE, I. MUSTALAHTI, T. DOKKEN and M. BROCKHAUS. 2015. *The context of REDD+ in Tanzania: Drivers, agents and institutions*. Bogor, Indonesia: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR).

*that didn't matter, but I think for the success of the overall project that has to have mattered.*²⁷

As this quote indicates, the NGOs were never given the mandate to provide learnings on these broader political issues outside of their project sites. Rather, the pilot projects were designed to deliver quick and tangible results on the technical and practical elements of REDD+ implementation. However, despite the pilot project learning agenda, questions have gone unanswered about how REDD+ can function as a national initiative in Tanzania, where the political context and governance structures remain unfavourable (Lund *et al.* 2017).

Secondly, some actors highlighted the fact that the pilot projects did not fully reflect reality. By focusing on discreet, bounded projects, donor funding was concentrated in seven sites, covering less than 100,000 ha of forest per site (NIRAS 2015a). These small areas in which the NGOs were working received resources and levels of management that were significantly higher than the norm:

*'You see under such a situation... managing a small forest reserve is very easy because you have everything that you need. You can afford to buy 4x4 vehicles... You can afford to hire consultants to do the assessments, evaluations of everything...'*²⁸

It is argued, therefore, that the pilot projects did not reflect the real-life contexts that they were trying to learn from. This process, referred to as the 'pilot project effect', results in a misleading set of learnings that do not reflect reality (Pearse 1977; Palmer Jones 1981; Adams 1991). This had implications for the continuation of pilot project activities once the donor funding and NGO activity was completed. There was an expectation that once the pilot projects finished, activities and management regimes introduced by the projects would be able to be continued by sub-national actors working in the project sites, including the district forest officers. However, the way that the pilot projects were designed (as bounded case studies

²⁷ Interview, national-level NGO representative, 18 December, 2015

²⁸ Interview, academic and member of secretariat, 17 March 2016

largely separate from existing institutions), along with the ‘pilot project effect’, meant that the ability for this to happen was limited:

‘But now, imagine a district forest officer which is actually managing other forests in a given district. He or she doesn’t have even a motorcycle, how do you expect that person to perform? To the level that could reflect the results that were seen, you know in these pilot sites? It’s impossible... They did quite a lot of good job but again you cannot transfer those lessons learnt from the pilot site and the experiments in the real world because the environments are completely different altogether.’²⁹

This viewpoint was echoed by a number of actors, including the district forest officers involved in the pilot projects in Kilosa and Rungwe, demonstrating a fundamental challenge with the way in which the pilot projects were framed, designed and implemented in relation to their learning agenda and its desired impacts.

Finally, one of the objectives of the pilot projects was to build experiential learning and knowledge among the actors and institutions involved³⁰. Framed using the term ‘capacity building’, this was broadly judged as being a successful outcome of the pilot projects:

‘These NGOs that were piloting these projects - they have also managed to gain knowledge on how to do things... So not only for the academic purposes, but also there’s awareness - the whole understanding now - we have generated that.’³¹

²⁹ Interview, academic and member of secretariat, 17 March 2016

³⁰ In addition to the pilot projects, the UNREDD programme ran in Tanzania between 2010 and 2013. The core objective of this programme was to build ‘institutional capacities’ on REDD+ at the National level. See UNDP. 2018. *Fact sheet: UN-REDD Programme - Tanzania Quick Start Initiative* [online]. [Accessed 26th April]. Available from: <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00073511>.

³¹ Interview, academic and CCIAM contributor, 9 March 2016

This capacity and knowledge building was part of the overall learning objectives of the pilot projects, as well as a means of fulfilling the objective of preparing Tanzania for future REDD+ activity. However, as the quote exemplifies, an issue that was raised was that much of this capacity in the pilot project sites was built among the NGO practitioners, who were delivering the projects, as opposed to the district government actors and institutions. This highlights another challenge for the design of pilot projects as discreet and bounded case studies led by donors and NGOs, if the objective is to scale up the pilots and for state institutions to continue post-pilot. This approach has therefore been challenged by government actors, arguing that although they see the benefits of piloting in this way in terms of *'quick results'* it is much better to *'use the existing structure.'*³² Conversely, some NGO actors suggest that NGOs should pilot but then be supported by donors to continue with the activity at a larger scale and grow things slowly, arguing that currently what happens is:

*'...you throw away all the management structures that led to a successful pilot and you lose those motivated staff, you lose the strategic focus, you lose the attention to detail, the quality control... Don't think you can just transplant it 'cos you can't.'*³³

These different perspectives reflect the contradictory approaches and viewpoints of different national-level actor groups in Tanzania in relation to REDD+ and forest governance more broadly. However although they disagree with how it should be done and who should do it, there is agreement that there should be continuation between piloting and ongoing conservation and development activity, particularly in relation to the organisations and institutions involved in their delivery. This highlights a contradiction inherent within the pilot projects. They were designed to function largely *outside* of many existing institutions in order that they were able to deliver quick and substantive lessons, yet this limited the ability for the projects to subsequently be scaled up or continued. Both state and NGO actors made claims of

³² Interview, government official and NRTF member, 14 March 2016

³³ Interview, national NGO representative, 21 September 2015

being the best organisations or institutions for the job of project continuation. It is likely that this process of claims-making (West 2006) reflects both actor opinions about piloting and the high levels of competition for donor funds that characterise international conservation and development (Mosse 2005).

4.4.3 Pilot projects and evidence-based policy-making and practice

The challenges with both the pilot project narrative and the approach taken to design and implementation discussed in the previous sections also has implications for the objective of influencing broader policy and practice, or the EBP agenda. The EBP agenda is built on an assumption of a direct link between good evidence – including that gathered from pilot projects - and improved conservation policy and practice (Sanderson 2002).

*'It's all about process learning and understanding how that experience in the field can feed into something concrete in the end in terms of setting out policy or setting out procedure to implement...'*³⁴

As this quote exemplifies, the ambition was for the REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania to gather learnings and influence both policy and practice, thus following the EBP rationale. Learning, or evidence, from the pilot project was intended to influence international policy discourse and to contribute to global understanding on how the REDD+ mechanism works in different country contexts. Within Tanzania, the pilot projects were designed to influence national policy and decision-making in relation to REDD+ and forest governance more broadly. In fact, it was argued that without piloting it would have been *'policy making in a void'*³⁵: a quote that demonstrates the strength of both the pilot project narrative and the EBP narrative. The pilot projects were also supposed to influence sub-national forest governance practices, which has been discussed in the previous section. At the national level the ambition was to *'mainstream the lessons learnt into the national policies and frameworks'*³⁶

³⁴ Interview, international consultant, 7 September 2015

³⁵ Interview, international consultant, 22 February 2016

³⁶ Interview, VPO representative and NRTF member, 7 March 2016

including to *recommend a way forward for the development of National REDD (+) Strategy and Action Plan*³⁷. The goal therefore can be seen to have been to find and then institutionalise best practice and link evidence and policy; highlighted as goals of much international conservation and development activity (Büscher and Dressler 2007; Mosse 2004a).

Many of the formal institutions established as part of the Norwegian REDD+ funding in Tanzania were tasked in part with facilitating links between the pilot projects and wider forest governance policy and practice. As part of their broader role of supporting the VPO with the development of the National REDD Strategy and Action Plan, the NRTF were involved in pilot project selection and had ongoing (albeit inconsistent, as reported by the members interviewed) visits to the sites themselves. The TWGs were partly established to strengthen the NRTF by enlarging participation in the learning and policy-making processes (Koch 2016; VPO 2013). The Secretariat was tasked with coordinating all of the different actors and institutions, including the NRTF, TWGs, piloting NGOs, and various academics in order to facilitate learning³⁸. A wide range of academic and other research institutions also received funding to produce learning and evidence from the pilot projects. This included the Norwegian-funded Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation (CCIAM) project (Redaksjonen 2016). Further external institutions were brought in throughout the process to strengthen the influence of pilot project learning and evidence and translate these learnings into meaningful action through policy and practice. These included IUCN (see IUCN-Tanzania 2013) and NIRAS (see NIRAS 2015a).

In reality, however, the ability for these learnings to influence and improve wider forest governance policy and practice was more challenging than the rational, linear process assumed within the EBP narrative. The concept of ‘messiness’ much better characterises the reality in Tanzania (Myers *et al.* 2018), characterised by

³⁷ Interview, academic and secretariat member, 2 March 2016

³⁸ For more detail on these institutions, their characteristics and interactions see LUND, J. F., E. SUNGUSIA, M. B. MABELE and A. SCHEBA. 2017. Promising change, delivering continuity: REDD+ as conservation fad. *World Development*, **89**, pp.124-139.

'bargaining, entrenched commitments, and interplay of diverse stakeholder values and interests' (Head 2010: 77). This includes institutional struggles or tensions (Lund *et al.* 2017). These institutional struggles included inter-governmental power struggles over resources (*ibid.*), which it is argued limited the ability for the government to make progress on REDD+ activities and decision-making (Ravikumar *et al.* 2015). The fact that funding, reporting and communication went directly between the donors and the NGOs and largely bypassed government institutions can be seen as being both the cause and outcome of '*mistrust between the development partners and the government*'³⁹. It also led to a perceived lack of ownership on the part of the NRTF and other State policy and decision-making actors:

*'You feel that is your, your baby, your thing. But if it is somebody else's and then [it's] put on you and said 'look at that one' then you become somehow, how do you say, you see this not mine, this is not my property.'*⁴⁰

As such, State actors began to disengage from the process, which limited their motivation to incorporate learning, or evidence, into broader policy and practice. Institutional tensions and struggles also affected the opening of the NCMC, which was designed to be a hub for all knowledge related to carbon in Tanzania. However as this was not operational until after the pilot projects and other activities were completed, it is argued that the centre's ability to consolidate data and learnings has been limited (Blomley *et al.* 2016).

The NGOs and the NTRF are also guided by very different 'entrenched commitments' and 'values and interests' (Head 2010: 77) that meant that the role of evidence was never neutral nor linear, thus limiting its evidence on policy and practice (Adams and Sandbrook 2013). One example is that the NGOs were advocating a '*nested approach*'⁴¹ to funding that would include a national REDD+

³⁹ Interview, academic and NCMC representative, 23 March 2016

⁴⁰ Interview, government official and NRTF member, 14 March 2016

⁴¹ Interview, national NGO representative, 29 February 2016

fund as well as direct project funding. Alternatively, state policy-makers advocate a fund-based approach in which all international REDD+ money would be collected in a national fund⁴². The NGOs involved in the pilot projects also had varying commitments and interests, as well as being geographically distant from one another, which limited their ability to coordinate findings and influence policy. As a result, the NGOs were said to be *'a bit each to their own.'*⁴³ This could in part be driven by the competition for funds and resources that characterises the international conservation and development system (Mosse 2005), which meant that the objective of the NGOs in communicating evidence was often more about demonstrating a good news story:

*'We compete for the same finances and so everyone's like "oh we're better, we've done this and that" and you know that X is claiming that they have solved this problem and it's splashed all over the international press.'*⁴⁴

Selling success is a core part of conservation and development practice in the highly competitive environment in which many conservation and development organisations find themselves (Büscher 2014). It is therefore in the interests of the organisations running the pilot projects to present positive stories, both to legitimise involvement in REDD+ and to maximise future funding opportunities (Svarstad and Benjaminsen 2017). This, therefore, is another factor driving the use of prototypes that demonstrate *how* new ideas can be implemented as opposed to pilot projects that test *whether* they work (Sanderson 2002).

These examples also demonstrate the contradiction identified in section 4.2: that by designing the pilot projects *outside* of many existing institutions, they limited their ability for the projects and their lessons to influence the *inside*. It is expected that pilot projects should develop new institutions in order to facilitate the

⁴² For more information on these different viewpoints and their implications see RANTALA, S. and M. DI GREGORIO. 2014. Multistakeholder environmental governance in action: REDD+ discourse coalitions in Tanzania. *Ecology and Society*, 19(2).

⁴³ Interview, international consultant, 22 February 2016

⁴⁴ Interview, national-level NGO representative, 18 December, 2015

development of new and innovative forms of governance (van Buuren and Loorbach 2009). In the case of REDD+ in Tanzania, this included the NRTF, the Secretariat (at IRA) and various external expert partners. However, as the evidence shows us, this caused issues with existing institutions, who felt excluded and lacked a sense of ownership. It also meant that the process could not continue without these new institutions, some of which were designed as temporary:

'I think the VPO had some hard feelings that the embassy and IRA, you know, communicated closely and then they became the third party. In terms of institutional set-up they expected to be at the forefront to push things... For me it was logical and practicable arrangement but I know for others... And that arrangement proved us wrong big time. Because the moment IRA stepped out the process ended'⁴⁵

As such, it was felt by many that even in cases where learning did influence policy, this did not transfer into practice. This was in part due to the lack of continued funding for REDD+, but the lack of momentum within, and buy-in from, the *inside* institutions was also highlighted as an issue:

'Unfortunately there is much more documentation than action... I think we are leading on good policies, good laws, but implementation is zero. Zero.'⁴⁶

This in turn challenges the assumed link between good policy and practice, which can be also found within the EBP narrative. Mosse (2004a) argues that what makes good policy – i.e. that which mobilizes support – is difficult to implement within the contexts and by the institutions it is supposed to be influencing. It is suggested that by using pilot projects to influence policy, this issue is exacerbated, particularly in cases such as REDD+ in Tanzania where new institutions were set up to facilitate policy development (e.g. the NRTF) and implementation (e.g. village committees).

⁴⁵ Interview, government representative and NRTF member, 26 May 2016

⁴⁶ Interview, government official and NRTF member, 14 March 2016

These gaps between intentions for the pilot projects to influence wider policy and practice and the realities was highlighted as a core challenge in the whole process. However, it was framed as being a failure of the actors and institutions involved to combine all of the lessons and translate them into policy and practice:

*'The coordination of knowledge was an area that I think is more technically challenging to fulfil than those who were supposed to do it – i.e. the Task Force and the Secretariat - could do.'*⁴⁷

As this quote exemplifies, this simplifies the issue of communication, framing it as a problem that requires a technical fix, to be solved by bringing in more experts. This technical fix would not, however, address the social and political messiness discussed within this paper and so we posit that even if more experts were brought in to facilitate communication, it would be unlikely to bring about the desired results. By framing the issue in this way, however, pilot projects drive a perceived further need for what Kothari (2005) calls the professionalisation of international development.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have used a critical policy analysis lens and a case study of REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania in order to unpack the phenomenon of pilot projects and their role in conservation and development policy and practice. I asked how and why pilot projects were used in Tanzania, identifying a powerful pilot project narrative, which is largely driven by international actors and institutions. I then looked at how the REDD+ pilot projects functioned in reality in Tanzania and how they interacted with broader actors and institutions involved in policy-making practice. Through this analysis, I have identified three contradictions between the pilot project narratives and realities. Firstly, pilot projects are framed as experiments (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2010); necessary to rigorously test new and innovative conservation and development policies and interventions (Greenberg and Shroder 2004). They are also framed by international actors as being allowed to

⁴⁷ Interview, embassy representative, 7 March 2016

fail; done to test *whether* this new policy or intervention will work and so not a guarantee of future funding. However, the REDD+ pilot projects were designed more like prototypes (Sanderson 2002), as a means of demonstrating and gaining support for REDD+, legitimising approaches to its implementation and trying to influence state actors (Li 2007a). In addition, some individual pilot projects manifested as hybrids, becoming a tool for the continuation of existing conservation and development activity (Lund *et al.* 2017). As such, a gap between pilot project assumptions and realities begins to emerge, questioning the paradigmatic logic and received wisdom driving their use.

Secondly, assumptions or received wisdom can be identified within the pilot project narrative. Central to this is the assumption that in order to deliver sufficient learning, pilot projects have to be designed to sit *outside* of existing state institutions so as not to be slowed down by their bureaucracy and other shortcomings (Li 2007a; van Buuren and Loorbach 2009). This is despite the desire for pilot projects to influence those same existing *inside* institutions. NGOs are framed as being the only institutions capable of piloting; able to solve technical problems, deliver innovation and modernise practices (Escobar 1997; Kothari 2005). In reality in Tanzania, this contradiction became problematic, as the lack of consideration of politics limited learning to technical issues while missing out critical political issues that may hinder the implementation of the policy or intervention in the real world context. Learning was also limited by the 'pilot project effect', whereby the high levels of management and resources utilised in the pilot projects did not reflect reality (Pearse 1977; Palmer Jones 1981; Adams 1991). These disconnects between the pilot projects and institutional realities reduced the possibility of continuation or scaling up of pilot activity, not least because capacity, knowledge and commitment is built up within the piloting organisations (NGOs), which could not easily be transferred to those expected to continue with activities (district actors and institutions).

Finally, pilot projects and the pilot project narrative can be seen to be a product of the EBP paradigm, in which a direct link between evidence and improved policy and practice is assumed (Adams and Sandbrook 2013; Head 2010; Sanderson 2003).

This further strengthens the powerful narrative of needing to pilot new conservation and development policies and interventions. However, the reality of decision-making around REDD+ in Tanzania was characterised by institutional struggles, competing agendas and interests, and political bargaining (Lund *et al.* 2017; Head 2010). The assumptions and received wisdom driving the pilot projects did not allow for the messiness and non-neutral realities of decision-making (Myers *et al.* 2018; Adams and Sandbrook 2013), thus limiting their ability to influence policy and practice in a meaningful way. This was further exacerbated by the fact that the pilot projects were designed to sit *outside* of the very institutions they were designed to influence.

These contradictions show that pilot projects are driven by a range of assumptions and received wisdom, which in turn support the powerful narrative of needing to pilot. As is the case within conservation and development more broadly, these shared ideas are on the most part unquestioned and therefore pilot projects are implemented without sufficient critical engagement with their realities (Roe 1994; Hutton *et al.* 2005). Pilot projects are also a means by which international agencies, such as the UNFCCC and donor organisations, are able to experiment with and try to legitimise, new conservation and development initiatives without having to engage with the messiness of political realities in countries such as Tanzania (Li 2007b; Li 2007a). The focus on testing, learning and evidence provides a right to fail and avoids the need to commit to long-term programmes or policies. The pilot project narrative – particularly in relation to the assumed need to use NGOs and the focus on the technical aspects of the intervention – also enables the ongoing professionalization of conservation and development activity (Kothari 2005). This chapter therefore establishes a gap between the assumptions and realities of pilot projects and their role in policy and practice and argues that if pilot projects are to be used, there is a need for methods that enable their deeper engagement with social and political realities. I will continue to explore this gap between assumptions and realities in chapters five and six by looking at pilot project realities outside of policy and practice.

5. THE DYNAMICS OF EXPECTATIONS IN PILOT PROJECTS

5.1 Introduction

As discussed in chapter two, pilot projects are often used during the early stages of the development of new initiatives, which are designed to tackle global challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss and poverty (Li 2007a). These new initiatives often come in the form of internationally-led programmes, which are typically framed as providing revolutionary solutions (Redford *et al.* 2013). ICDPs, PFM, PES and most recently REDD+ are examples of such programmes. These programmes are designed to deliver multiple-win solutions that tackle both environment and development issues (Corbera 2012). Issues such as climate change and biodiversity loss are defined in such a way that technical, multiple-win and increasingly market-based solutions are required to solve them (Igoe and Brockington 2007; Li 2007b). Such problem-solution narratives reflect wider global environment and development discourses, including the way in which the relationship between people and nature is conceptualised (Mace 2014). The early stages of these new programmes are characterized by large amounts of money, resources, attention and high expectations (Fletcher *et al.* 2016; Redford *et al.* 2013). The reality of these initiatives rarely lives up to the high early-stage expectations, and so subsequent solutions that require new policy models and technical programmes are sought (Li 2007b; Mosse 2005). This has resulted in the conceptualisation of these international, multi-win initiatives as 'fads' (Lund *et al.* 2017; Fletcher *et al.* 2016).

Discussion about the relationship between these international programmes and expectations is increasing amongst both practitioners and academics, with expectations defined as imagined ideas about the future that circulate through social interaction (Van Lente 2012; Konrad 2006). Most recently, the focus of this discussion has been on REDD+, which has stalled at the end of the pilot phase leaving many early expectations unfulfilled (Lund *et al.* 2017; Sills *et al.* 2014). It is argued that the early stages of REDD+ have led to the development of an 'economy of expectations', whereby local level processes, realities and visions for the future

are altered through involvement with global, market-based conservation programmes (Dressler 2017; Fletcher *et al.* 2016). As a result, expectations and the management of expectations have been highlighted as one of the biggest challenges of REDD+ pilot project implementation (Atela 2015b; Sunderlin *et al.* 2014), with practitioners now required to ‘develop strategies to deal with the backlash’ (Fletcher *et al.* 2016: 674). Despite this interest in expectations, there has been little detailed exploration of how they are produced, how they circulate and the impact they have throughout the different stages of conservation and development projects. Thus, more understanding is needed about what the science and technology (STS) literature calls the sociology, or dynamics, of expectations in this context (Konrad 2006; Van Lente 1993; Borup *et al.* 2006). Exploring the dynamics of expectations is necessary for a full understanding of social change (Borup *et al.* 2006). I posit that this is particularly relevant in relation to pilot projects, which are often used to test new international conservation and development programmes at the local level in order to generate quick and tangible results, to influence policy and to generate further donor funds (Garí 2013; Adams 2003; Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2010). As such, pilot projects require buy-in, engagement and action from all of the actors involved and so drive social change. Yet they rarely come with a guarantee of continued funding and activity post-pilot.

This chapter explores expectations in pilot projects in more detail, using theories about the sociology and dynamics of expectations, which comes primarily from the field of science and technology studies (STS). I first introduce these core concepts, building a conceptual lens through which to investigate expectations in REDD+ in Tanzania. I then introduce the specific data used in this chapter and give more detail on the specific methods of analysis. This chapter takes a cross-scale approach and uses actor narratives and other ethnographic data collected from international to village levels, including from the Rungwe and Kilosa case studies. I then present my findings and discuss them in relation to both the sociology of expectations literature and the broader conservation and development literature introduced in chapter two. I end the chapter with some conclusions. As well as contributing to the aims of this thesis, this chapter contributes to better understanding of the dynamics

of expectations in conservation and development practice, as well as the dynamics of expectations more broadly.

5.2 Theory

Expectations can be defined as imagined ideas about the future that are produced, circulated and mediated through social interaction, resulting in social change (Van Lente 2012; Konrad 2006; Berkhout 2006). Actors' actions and decisions are always made in relation to expected outcomes and consequences (Berkhout 2006; Van Lente 2012). Expectations can be both positive and negative, and both individual and collective, and are therefore both context-specific and related to broader shared or collective visions (Konrad 2006), or imaginaries (Taylor 2002; Jasanoff *et al.* 2007). New conservation and development programmes are developed from shared imaginaries of forest governance for the benefit of all, shared between international conservationists (Igoe and Brockington 2007). And it is argued that market-based solutions such as REDD+ heighten these dynamics due to their emphasis on future speculation and their transnational, abstract nature, which is less aligned with local contexts than previous programmes (Dressler 2017).

Early stages of new innovation or technological development both drive and are driven by hyper expectations, or hype, which can be defined as unreasonable and unachievable expectations of what the new innovation can deliver (Brown 2003). As such, a sense of urgency ensues, driven by both fear of environmental harm and the imaginaries of good and effective conservation (Brown and Michael 2003; Büscher and Dressler 2007). Newness is fetishized and as such ideas that are framed as being new, different and distinct are favoured over the advancement of existing solutions, not least because shortfalls associated with past solutions are erased (Brown 2003; Brown and Michael 2003). As such, Mosse (2004a: 640) argues that in development 'the intense focus on the future, on new beginnings, is rarely moderated by an analysis of the past'. These new beginnings often require the use of demonstrations or pilot projects to bring new policy to life (Igoe and Brockington 2007). Hype and expectations can therefore focus energy and attention on one new

solution, becoming a barrier to critical thinking, to alternative solutions and to approaches that favour incremental change (Brown 2003).

Expectations can be described as being performative in that their existence mobilises both actors and resources, and as such they provide an important function in the early stages of innovation (Borup *et al.* 2006; Brown and Michael 2003; Konrad 2006). They can coordinate and broker relationships between a wide range of actors – both horizontally (for example between policy-makers) and vertically across different levels from the global to the local (Borup *et al.* 2006). As collective expectations develop, ‘communities of promise’ build up around them (Brown 2003: 5) and actors join these discursive communities despite individual uncertainties and reservations, often to ensure that they do not get left behind (Konrad 2006; Van Lente 2012). In this sense, economies of expectation can develop in which new realities are created (Borup *et al.* 2006). Expectations have thus been defined as a ‘forceful presence’ (Van Lente 2012: 773). This forceful presence can be seen in the context of global, market-based conservation mechanisms that create new social structures, nature valuations and imaginaries that in turn encourage more activity and higher expectations (Dressler 2017; West 2006).

There is much discussion in both the STS literature and critical conservation and development literature about the level of intention of raising expectations in relation to their performative role. On the one hand, it can be framed as an inevitable and unavoidable outcome of social interaction and innovation (Konrad 2006). Once something is enacted, it becomes part of a reality that is both linked to the actor’s original intentions but also combines with other actors and contexts to take on a life of its own that often results in unintended consequences (West 2006). However, others argue that innovators and policy-makers deliberately raise expectations in order to mobilize resources and enrol actors into communities of promise (Sung and Hopkins 2006; Brown and Michael 2003), particularly in conservation and development where actors such as NGOs and government agencies have to compete for scarce resources, such as donor funds, legitimacy and reputation (Li 1999).

Elevated expectations, created by hype associated with early stages of innovation, result in hype and disappointment cycles (Borup *et al.* 2006). Actors' efforts to sustain expectations are overwhelmed by the reality of underlying issues and so communities of promise collapse (Brown 2003; Van Lente 1993). This results in what Mosse (2004a) refers to as an unintended but inevitable gap between international development policy and the realities of implementation. Repeated cycles of new international conservation and development programmes, or 'fads' (Redford *et al.* 2013) can lead to repeated hype and disappointment cycles. Disappointment can then lead to outcomes including apportioning blame, disillusionment, damaged credibility of innovators and policy-makers, and adverse effects on future innovations (Brown 2003; Brown and Michael 2003; Sung and Hopkins 2006; Van Lente 1993). Such outcomes could include conservation and development NGOs losing their legitimacy (Dressler 2017), resistance to future projects at the local level (Leach and Scoones 2015; Li 2007b) and environmental destruction by villagers whose expectations of project involvement have not been met (West 2006). However, in some cases new cycles of hype provide a protected space for new innovation and past disappointment is forgotten (Borup *et al.* 2006; Konrad 2006). Although cycles of expectation and disappointment can be conceptualized as inevitable, their impacts and implications are highly contextual, related to the social dynamics of expectations.

The initial framing of the innovation by those developing and/or selling it influences the development of collective and individual expectations (Sung and Hopkins 2006). However, expectations are continually mediated by actors' past experiences, social interactions, networks and activities, and social framings (Brown and Michael 2003; Sung and Hopkins 2006; Leach and Scoones 2015). For example, West (2006) finds that villagers engage with projects with the understanding that they are entering into long-term, reciprocal, social relationships with practitioners in line with imaginaries of development and progress. This results in disappointment once projects end and these expectations are not met. Expectations, uncertainty and disappointment can be conceptualized as dynamic: continually influencing and being influenced by social discourse and interactions (Konrad 2006). As such,

attempts by practitioners to manage expectations are unlikely to be successful (Weszkalnys 2008).

A relationship between actors' proximity to the production of knowledge, and their levels of uncertainty and expectations, can also be identified. Brown and Michael (2003) find that actors closest to the production of knowledge (such as innovators and policy-makers) have high levels of uncertainty about the success of the new idea or solution and, as a result, low expectations. Actors furthest away from knowledge production (such as medical patients and recipients of development projects) tend to have low uncertainty and therefore the highest levels of expectations. Those closest to knowledge are the source of raised expectations, yet disappointment affects the user groups furthest away from knowledge, highlighting the asymmetrical nature of negative impacts of unrealistic expectations (Brown and Michael 2003; Van Lente 2012). In Tanzania, evidence suggests that the REDD+ pilot phase fell well short of initial expectations and promises of change (Lund *et al.* 2017; Benjaminsen 2014; Svarstad and Benjaminsen 2017). As such, Brown (2003) argues that a reworking of economies of expectation is required in order that the uncertainties of those closest to knowledge become more transparent; particularly to those most negatively impacted by hype and disappointment.

5.3 Key case study information and chapter-specific methodology

5.3.1 The Rungwe and Kilosa pilot projects: key information

As I have discussed in chapter three, I chose two out of the seven completed REDD+ pilot projects as embedded case studies in order to achieve the depth of analysis required for this thesis (Baxter and Jack 2008). Contextual information on the two pilot projects and the regions in which they were implemented can be found in section 3.8 of this thesis. The two pilot projects took very different approaches to implementation, with WCS in Rungwe framing their involvement around building on their existing relationship with villagers around Mount Rungwe Forest National Park, and TFCG/MJUMITA in Kilosa fully trialling REDD+ with communities that had not previously been involved in interventions. Figures 3 and 4 provide key information about the Rungwe and Kilosa pilot projects.

Figure 3: Rungwe pilot project strategies and activities⁴⁸

REDD READINESS IN SOUTHWEST TANZANIA

- Active for four years between 2010 and 2014
- Implemented by WCS at Mount Rungwe Forest National Park and other forest and nature reserves in the Southern Highlands
- Post-pilot WCS continued with some activities with new funding

STRATEGIES

- Worked directly with village leaders and the village environment committee to implement activities
- Used the REDD+ money to continue with existing work, such as education and bee-keeping, as well as introducing new activities
- Focus on science, research and the ‘+’ of REDD+
- Steered clear of explicit references to carbon and financial rewards
- Main messages communicated to villagers: potential negative impacts of deforestation and forest degradation. Some information about REDD+ and carbon, but not carbon finance

ACTIVITIES

- Established carbon plots for monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) and gathered baseline data
- Established seedling nurseries for indigenous reforestation
- Developed woodlots to improve alternative fuelwood supply, and established management plans for sustainable use
- Environmental education programmes through films and meetings
- School-based education programmes including environmental clubs
- Established Mount Rungwe honey scheme, supporting villages to establish bee-keeping activities
- Trialled fuel-efficient stoves
- Established a fire monitoring system

⁴⁸ Compiled from own research, Niras (2015a) and WCS-Tanzania (2013)

Figure 4: Kilosa pilot project strategies and activities⁴⁹

MAKING REDD WORK FOR COMMUNITIES AND FOREST CONSERVATION

- Active for over five years from 2009 to late 2014
- Part of dual-site pilot implemented by TFCG/MJUMITA in Kilosa and Lindi in Southeast Tanzania
- Post-pilot introduced sustainable charcoal project to villages

STRATEGIES

- Developed strategies to enable full village participation, including going through a process of free prior informed consent (FPIC); communicating with sub-villages directly, organising village meetings to discuss decisions
- Engaged with new villages in order to fully test the REDD+ mechanism and the processes of setting it up
- Fully tested all aspects of REDD+ and aimed to get communities 'REDD ready'
- Followed global carbon standards and processes with the aim to complete a project document and gain verification for future carbon trading
- Main messages communicated to villagers: potential negative impacts of deforestation and degradation, information about carbon and REDD+ including potential benefits

ACTIVITIES

- Established Community Based Forest Management (CBFM), which involved village committees, land use plans and establishment of Village Land Forest Reserves (VLFRs) for protection under REDD+
- Tested benefit-sharing mechanisms by completing a trial carbon payment (two trial payments were planned but only one completed due to technical issues)
- Livelihood projects including conservation agriculture, micro-finance groups, improved stoves and bee-keeping
- Carbon measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) activities, including setting baselines and monitoring change through the project

⁴⁹ Compiled from own data, Niras (2015a) and TFCG/MJUMITA 2014

5.3.2 Specific chapter methodology

In order to answer the specific research questions in this chapter, I have taken a cross-level approach to data selection and analysis in order that the social dynamics of expectations (Borup *et al.* 2006; Konrad 2006) are fully explored. In relation to the actor narratives, I again used a combination of purposive sampling (Blackstone, 2012), to ensure all groups were represented, and phroensis (Frank, 2012), to ensure that a diverse range of perspectives were included. I used other ethnographic data to triangulate my findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), in particular the documents and materials from Kilosa and Rungwe. Table 4 gives more detail on the data used for this chapter.

Table 4: Data analysed for chapter five

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Narrative Interviews | 7 international actors: consultants, Embassy (donor), UN |
| | 15 National actors: NGO representatives from six implementing NGOs, national government (including Task Force members), academics (including REDD+ Secretariat) |
| | 24 actors in pilot project case study one (Kilosa): NGO field practitioners (TFCG), district government, cross-section of villagers from leaders to marginalized people (two villages) |
| | 24 actors in pilot project case study two (Rungwe): NGO field practitioners (WCS), regional and district government, cross-section of villagers from leaders to marginalized people (two villages) |
| Other ethnographic data | Meeting observations: national level (REDD+ workshop October 2014, and Lessons Learned presentations August 2015), village level (including village meeting and committee meetings) |
| | Document reviews: promotional material from WCS and TFCG, NGO project documents, official donor evaluation reports |
| | Formal and informal non-narrative interviews and conversations: from international to village-level actors |

The focus of the analysis for this chapter is on the experiences and sense-making of different actors involved in the pilot projects. As such, I used narrative content

analysis (Elliott 2005), which is a form of thematic narrative analysis (Riessman 2008). What differentiates thematic narrative analysis from other types of analysis, such as grounded theory, is the narratives are coded and analysed as a whole unit, or case, and not split up into themes (Mishler 1986; Riessman 2008). First, I analysed each interview individually and created a chronological account of their experience (Riessman 2008). I looked specifically for storylines that linked to expectations, with storylines defined as part of a narrative that allows actors to 'give meaning to specific physical or social phenomena' (Hajer, 1995: 56). I also looked for how actors were allocating meaning to experiences (Elliott 2005). I then used a table to compare and contrast different narratives. At this stage I also brought in the STS theory discussed in section 5.2 and used a zigzagging process of deductive and inductive analysis to interpret the data and establish the chapter themes (Blaikie 2007).

5.4 Discussion of key findings

5.4.1 The early stages of REDD+ in Tanzania: hype, urgency and expectations

When reflecting back on the early stages of the REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania, national and international actors identified high levels of hype or hyper expectations, which are highlighted by Brown (2003) as being a core characteristic of early innovation. International actors saw REDD+ as an opportunity for Tanzania to establish its position internationally as a leader in REDD+ knowledge and practice. Expectations of continuation post-pilot were identified among national actors, including government officials and NGOs. These expectations of continuation included more funding from donors, a national level REDD+ programme spearheaded by the government, and continued funding for communities via carbon markets, and were largely related to the '*opportunity for communities to benefit, to take carbon as one of the products of the forest*'⁵⁰. There were also expectations that REDD+ would provide a solution to forest conservation in Tanzania and become a source of much-needed, long-term financial support for the forestry department. One government official reflected that 'people thought

⁵⁰ Interview, national government official/project implementer, 3 March 2016

*'ah okay, the forests are now safe because of REDD'... even my director had that notion.*⁵¹ REDD+ was framed as a multiple-win solution to forest governance issues, producing collective expectations of a market-led solution that would also provide abundant resources and well-protected forests (Igoe and Brockington 2007; Leach and Scoones 2015; Lund *et al.* 2017). This was despite the fact that funding was secured for a pilot phase only, demonstrating the over-inflated expectations inherent in the hype during the early stages of new innovation (Brown 2003).

A sense of urgency (Brown and Michael 2003; Büscher and Dressler 2007) was also identified by national actors when reflecting on the early stages of the projects, which was cited by Embassy employees as influencing the decision to have NGOs lead the pilot projects (as opposed to Tanzanian state institutions). One of the actors involved in the development of the pilot projects reflected that *'the whole international thing'*⁵² driving REDD+ meant that the pilot projects began before key stakeholders such as NGOs and government officials were fully aware of what REDD+ involved. Part of the original donor strategy was to build on the existing PFM tradition in Tanzania but despite this, much of the emphasis was put on the new elements of REDD+, particularly in relation to carbon payments. The NGOs 'were encouraged to include front-loaded payments within their budgets to test payment and benefit sharing arrangements in the expectation of making longer-term carbon sales' (Blomley *et al.* 2016: 2). This aligns with Brown and Michael (2003)'s argument that by emphasising newness, innovation gains more traction, funds and attention, and that this in addition drives higher expectations. This also allowed the REDD+ project to be seen as a new beginning and so failures of past programmes could be overlooked (Mosse 2004a; Igoe and Brockington 2007).

This early-stage hype and associated expectations influenced and informed the activity of many of the national actors during the early stages of the REDD+ pilot projects. This included development of a national media campaign to raise awareness of REDD+, and the framing of the pilot projects by the NGOs:

⁵¹ Interview, government official/Task Force member, 14 March 2016

⁵² Interview, international consultant, 22 February 2016

*'...this forest will pay you [the villagers]. Not only for one year, but will pay you continuously! I mean this is a bank account. You are saving money and getting interest. So I think [there was] an expectation that OK by the time the project is ending, we will have our project document, we will have our process verified, and we've qualified to be paid.'*⁵³

In Kilosa, a range of actors including villagers, local leaders, district government and local NGO staff reflected on high expectations at the start of the process, during which they were visited by the Task Force, the Embassy and the NGO, and were involved in the FPIC process. These expectations were both in relation to outcomes of the pilot project itself, such as village education and development, and assumptions of future benefits of REDD+, such as ongoing carbon payments and improved local climate conditions. During the early stages, negative expectations related to the project were also identified among villagers in both K1 and K2. These included worries that *'these Europeans have come from their home countries to come and steal our land'*⁵⁴, that people would be moved from their farms and that wild animals would be introduced to the area. As such, strong positive and negative expectations existed alongside one another during the initial stages of the Kilosa pilot projects (Konrad 2006). Factors such as negative past experiences of government conservation programmes and proximity to strict national wildlife parks drove these negative expectations, or fears, illustrating the mediation of expectations by actors and contexts (Konrad 2006; Sung and Hopkins 2006).

Narratives of actors involved in the REDD+ pilot project in Rungwe reflect very different expectation dynamics at the start of the project. At this time, expectations in relation to carbon payments began to develop among regional, district and village government actors as a result of national media campaigns, attendance of meetings on REDD+ and visits from the Task Force. However, the implementing NGO decided not to focus on REDD+ specific mechanisms such as trial carbon

⁵³ Interview, embassy employee, 7 March 2016

⁵⁴ Interview, man in 50s, village leader, Kilosa, (K2), 6 May 2016

payments, preferring to focus on research and livelihood activities. This was largely as a result of concerns about *'making promises to communities that you can't deliver'*⁵⁵ and maintaining their legitimacy among communities with whom they have a longstanding relationship. The NGO did not go through a village-wide consultation process at the start of the project, gaining consent from village leaders, and did not focus on widespread participation in the livelihood projects. Broader village participation was encouraged in the education programmes, which framed the project and forest conservation as being about reducing the risk of *'drought, floods and rising temperatures'*⁵⁶, without directly focusing on carbon. As a result, awareness of and participation in the REDD+ pilot project among actors outside of village government and committees was low, and village level actors spoke of very few expectations of the pilot project. Expectations can therefore be conceptualised as a product of the framing of those who are 'selling' the new idea (Sung and Hopkins 2006); in this case the NGOs in Kilosa and Rungwe, who took very different approaches to the pilot projects.

5.4.2 The performative function of expectations

The performative function of expectations (Borup *et al.* 2006; Brown and Michael 2003; Konrad 2006; Sung and Hopkins 2006) can be identified through national level and Kilosa actor narratives, driving and being driven by the aforementioned international and national level hype, sense of urgency, and assumptions of a REDD+ future. Actors were enrolled into 'communities of promise' (Brown 2003: 5), both horizontally at the national level, and also vertically across regional, district and village levels in Kilosa. At the international and national level, these discursive communities of promise developed despite personal uncertainties of a number of actors. These uncertainties were largely related to the unknown nature of carbon financing mechanisms central to REDD+. Differences between lower personal levels of expectations and much higher collective expectations at the time were identified (Konrad 2006). Reflections of a number of national level actors suggest that collective expectations were performative in that they enrolled actors into

⁵⁵ Interview, national NGO representative, 18 December 2015

⁵⁶ Taken from promotional materials distributed by the NGO in Rungwe

communities of promise and project engagement despite their personal concerns. There were also suggestions that they resulted in an uncritical approach to piloting, as identified by Brown (2003):

*'I sometimes feel guilty that I was part of it. You know, some people [were] just preaching like priests, the way they preach about God and Jesus Christ and all those kind of things, but without having a critical analysis about what it really means.'*⁵⁷

At the international and national level uncertainty was in fact performative, acting as one of the driving forces behind the choice to pilot, in order to avoid '*policy-making in a void*'⁵⁸. The framing of REDD+ as new, unknown and filled with future possibilities mobilized a large amount of funding and activity and led to the aforementioned perceived need to pilot to bring this new policy to life (Igoe and Brockington 2007).

In Kilosa, expectations were also performative and can be seen to be both the cause and outcome of change within the district and the villages (Borup *et al.* 2006; Van Lente 2012). Communities of promise built up around the expectations of village development, ongoing carbon payments, and improvements to local ecosystem services (through better forest conservation). Actors within these communities of promise, which included the NRTF, district officials and local leaders, reassured villagers that they would not be moved from their farms, that wild animals would not be brought into the area, and that the '*future is bright and REDD*'.⁵⁹ Expectations were then in turn influenced by the early stages of project activity, which included villagers receiving their first trial payment, the building of the office and the establishment of some of the livelihood activities:

'What made me change [from objecting] is that I received education that they will not keep animals again, we will just conserve forest and

⁵⁷ Interview, Secretariat member, 17 March 2016

⁵⁸ Interview, international consultant, 22 February 2016

⁵⁹ Interview, national government official and Task Force Member, 3 March 2016

*water sources only... also another thing is after seeing that they were supporting the construction of this office and also they promised us they will sell the carbon dioxide and we can get money that will help to conserve our forest and do village developments.'*⁶⁰

Although village-level actors had been made aware of the project timescales during the FPIC process, longer term expectations related to village development and carbon payments began to rise. This in turn led to expectations becoming what Van Lente (2012: 773) calls 'forceful presence'. An 'economy of expectation' developed, with new social structures, discourses and activities emerging, further driving collective expectations of considerable change (Dressler 2017). As part of the CBFM land planning process, Village Land Forest Reserves (VLFs) were established, the size of which was decided by village committees. However, due to the requirements and promises of REDD+, the communities were encouraged to '*take on larger areas of forest under reservation than they would otherwise have done*'⁶¹.

Once the VLFR had been gazetted, committees and leaders in both villages asked people with farms in the reserve areas to leave (for more on this see Vatn *et al.* 2017). This illustrates the performative role of expectations in the displacement of villagers that has been highlighted in relation to other conservation and development programmes (Fairhead *et al.* 2012; Büscher and Dressler 2007). In K1, where the relocations affected more people than in K2, this has resulted in conflict between village leaders and people refusing to move from their farms in the VLFR. This conflict was a central part of many actor narratives in K1, with villagers split between those who support the moves and those who feel it was unfair. This conflict was continuing at the time of data collection (village leaders estimated about 25 farmers continued to farm in the VLFR), with threats of violence reported

⁶⁰ Interview, man in 30s, village leader, Kilosa, (K1), 2 April 2016

⁶¹ Interview, international consultant, 6 March 2016

by both parties and farmers being taken to court⁶². In contrast to the experience of Kilosa, very little changed as a result of the REDD+ pilot projects in Rungwe.

5.4.3 Were expectations raised intentionally?

Among policy-makers, project implementers and other national-level actors, different framings of intentionality in relation to expectations can be identified, which aligns with different arguments in the STS literature. Some non-NGO actors, who were not directly involved with implementation of pilot projects, reflect the arguments of Brown and Michael (2003) and Sung and Hopkins (2006) in suggesting that expectations were raised intentionally in order to change behavior among local actors, with one national actor claiming that:

'Some [NGOs] took the whole concept of carbon credit... as a way to encourage communities to engage in forest management, and to me that was a false promise'⁶³.

Conversely, other actors, including the implementing NGO in Kilosa, framed expectations as being an unintended but unavoidable consequence of piloting REDD+. For example, NGO practitioners reflected that it was hard to communicate the complex concept of REDD+ to communities in a way that ensured their full understanding but didn't raise expectations. This aligns with the argument of Konrad (2006) that expectations are an inevitable product of social interactions and processes. FPIC is one such process, which is intended to deliver full disclosure of all aspects of the project including benefits, challenges and information about carbon and the carbon markets, in order that communities are equipped and empowered to accept or reject the project (Kibuga *et al.* 2011). The final report commissioned by the donor claimed that FPIC 'generated many advantages, among which

⁶² It is noted that Vatn *et al.* (2017) reported less conflict related to the relocations. However, this could be explained by the fact that they did not include any of the displaced families in their sample. Data collection timings may also be a factor. They collected data in 2013 while the project was still underway and so the disappointments associated with the project ending, and the continued impact of the economy of expectations in the villages – including conflicts over farms – are likely to have impacted the way in which people frame their experiences.

⁶³ Interview, secretariat member, 17 March 2016

managing expectations and mitigating future risks were the most important' (NIRAS 2015a: 20). It is argued that the fact that some villages in Kilosa rejected the project demonstrates the effectiveness of FPIC (Vatn *et al.* 2017). However, a number of actors reflected that in reality despite its good intentions, the FPIC process actually increased expectations among villagers:

*'We studied one criteria called [free] prior informed consent. One is to be willing without being influenced based on what he sees in the village. But actually they were influenced by being told that REDD will bring you this money.'*⁶⁴

Some NGO practitioners raised concerns with FPIC, challenging its ability to be effective in communicating the complexity of REDD+, echoing broader discussions about the limitations of the instrument (Mahanty and McDermott 2013). These reflections on FPIC, along with other project elements implemented in good faith such as trial carbon payments, expose an inevitable link or trade-off inherent in piloting. This is a trade-off between fully piloting new initiatives, which involves securing high levels of awareness, engagement and participation, and raising expectations. The comparison between the Rungwe project where the NGO did not achieve high levels of awareness and engagement but experienced few of the negative impacts of expectations, and the Kilosa project, which was characterised by high levels of awareness, engagement and expectations, emphasises the need for recognition of this trade-off and its potential consequences for villagers.

This trade-off can be positioned as a product of the broader dynamics of the conservation and development. Actors such as NGOs are required to compete for scarce resources, which requires them to sell future success to donors and recipients alike (Li 1999; Dressler 2017; Mosse 2005), or as one NGO representative explains:

⁶⁴ Interview, national academic and consultant, 23 February 2016

'This is the way the system works - we always write overoptimistic proposals because you [the donors] demand it from us!'⁶⁵

Innovative projects that showcase the new mechanism fully and achieve high levels of awareness and involvement are judged to be a success (Büscher 2014; Igoe and Brockington 2007), with the final REDD+ pilot project evaluation reports judging the Kilosa project to have been more successful than the Rungwe project (see NIRAS 2015a). Raising expectations among villagers may not have been intentional, but it is nonetheless an inevitable consequence of fully piloting new programmes, particularly in relation to market-based mechanisms that are built around speculative future benefits (Dressler 2017).

5.4.4 Hype and disappointment

The actor narratives at the national level reflect a general pattern of rising expectations that then fell significantly over time as the reality of issues and challenges became clear. Lack of political will among government officials, lack of donor support post-pilot and low carbon prices were identified by national and international actors as the main causes of the decline in expectations. This pattern follows the hype and disappointment cycles identified in the STS literature (Brown 2003; Brown and Michael 2003; Konrad 2006). A number of national actors spoke about their disappointment that REDD+ had not lived up to its high expectations. Most of the disappointment however was expressed in relation to villagers. When data was collected between six and 18 months after the end of the pilot projects, only a few national actors spoke about continued expectations of REDD+, and none spoke about experiencing ongoing negative personal impacts. National and international actors had moved on to other projects and programmes, and many commented that they had not engaged with REDD+ for some time.

At the time of data collection in Kilosa, the pilot projects had been completed over a year previously and there were no plans for continuation of the REDD+ mechanism (e.g. carbon payments). The villagers received only one trial payment of

⁶⁵ Interview, national NGO representative, 21 September 2015

the expected two, largely as a result of issues with measurement, and the project had not got to a stage where it could be verified. One NGO employee explained that in regards to REDD+ '*Kilosa's luck has faded out.*'⁶⁶ Despite this, village level actor narratives did not wholly reflect a hype and disappointment cycle and different narratives could be identified. Firstly, some actors did not feel any disappointment due to their perception that the project had brought many benefits to them and the village as a whole. These actors were predominately those who had been heavily involved in the project, whether as village leaders, committee members or livelihood project participants. To them the project had '*woken up*'⁶⁷ the villagers and had brought much-needed development and education, and improved forest conditions. A second group of actors, comprised of those less involved in the project and those affected by the farm relocations in K1, expressed a strong sense of disappointment in the project:

*'I personally don't feel good... before I thought well of them, that maybe our village is going to benefit, but for now I see this MKUHUMI issue hasn't any benefit to me.'*⁶⁸.

This disappointment was largely in relation to the lack of continued carbon payments, a feeling of injustice that the project only benefitted a few people, and the continuing conflict over farm relocations. For some villagers these land issues were framed as a core part of the legacy of the project, especially when reflecting that '*if they told us they were taking farms away we would have said no [to the project]*'⁶⁹. The contrasting ways in which the project was framed within actor narratives reflects their contrasting experience, but may also be influenced by the way in which they perceived themselves in relation to the project, expectations and the researcher. By framing the project as highly successful, those who benefitted most from it were able to legitimise their roles within the economy of expectations,

⁶⁶ Interview, national NGO representative, 20 May 2016

⁶⁷ Interview, woman in 60s, village leader and committee member, Kilosa, 9 (K1), 5 April 2016

⁶⁸ Interview, woman in 30s, non-leader/non-committee member, Kilosa, (K2), 8 May 2016

⁶⁹ Interview, man in 40s, non-leader/non-committee member, Kilosa, (K1), 12 April 2016

shoring up their position in relation to future projects. Similarly, the narratives of those who felt they had not benefitted from the project reflect their experiences, including their struggles within the economy of expectations and the desire to benefit more in the future. These narratives were told in light of ongoing expectations with regards future carbon payments, which had continued despite the pilot project ending:

'...they [the villagers] haven't given up, but you find that when we go to the public meetings they normally discuss that we were told that we'd be paid every year. [They ask] what's going on? Therefore we normally answer them that after it is being measured it's taken to the world market there and they [MKUHUMI] have their process of discussing it so that the money can be paid... it takes time...'

(Interviewer) 'So are you still expecting the second payment?'

'Yes, that is our hope, because that is what they had promised us'⁷⁰

West (2006: 197) states that 'people make claims when something is at stake'. Through the process of narrative interviewing, village actors may have been making claims over any future carbon payments, thus positioning themselves in relation to the economy of expectations.

The negative impacts associated with hype and disappointment cycles can therefore be seen to be asymmetrical (Brown and Michael 2003), as one national NGO representative reflected:

'For NGOs it's annoying when you lose money and maybe have to lay off some staff but they're professional and they'll go off and get another job somewhere else. This is the way the world works. But those communities that we went out to and said 'hey this is a new

⁷⁰ Interview, man in 40s, village leader, Kilosa (K1), 14 April 2016

*opportunity - and now we can't make it happen for you.' That I think is really bad.'*⁷¹

Although some Kilosa villagers felt they benefitted throughout the project through things such as trial payments, per diems (for attending meetings) and training, sacrifices were made in anticipation of future benefits via carbon payments. These sacrifices included people being relocated from farms and being prohibited from continuing with certain livelihood practices in the VLFRs. It is also worth noting at this point, that by not piloting the carbon payments, the NGO in Rungwe were able to avoid many of the negative impacts of the hype and disappointment cycle, with one village leader reflecting that *'if everybody [in the village] would have known about [potential carbon payments] it would have been a problem. It's a good thing they didn't know this'*⁷². This is not to say that the approach taken by the Rungwe NGO was without issue, in fact a number of concerns were identified by the villagers, including in relation to low levels of project participation. Nonetheless, within this analysis of expectations, the case of Rungwe provides an interesting contrast in which donor funds were used largely to expand existing activity. This comparison brings up issues of responsibility and accountability for expectations and disappointment, which will be discussed in more detail in sections 5.4.6 and 5.5.

However, hype and disappointment cycles can have further impacts, including the apportioning of blame to certain actors, damaged credibility and resistance to future innovations (Brown 2003; Sung and Hopkins 2006; Van Lente 1993). At the national level, actors directed their disappointment in a number of ways. Some blamed the fact that the donors *'walked away'*⁷³. Other actors blame the *'top-down'* approach of REDD+ *'convincing people to do what they want them to do'*⁷⁴, which for some actors included criticism of a lack of resources allocated to district and local government. Perspectives on project resources and the district and local

⁷¹ Interview, national NGO representative, 21 September 2015

⁷² Interview, man in 40s, village leader, Rungwe, (R1), 19 October 2015

⁷³ Interview, national NGO representative, 21 September 2015

⁷⁴ Interview, national government official and Task Force member, 24 May 2016

government are discussed in detail in section 4.4.2. A number of national actors, including national government officials, NGOs and academics, were critical of the use of pilots in the future and some reflected that maybe the NGO implementing the Rungwe project took the right approach, avoiding expectations and using the money to continue existing work. However (Borup *et al.* 2006) argue that criticism and disillusionment following hype and disappointment can quickly be pushed aside in the face of a new innovation and new hype. In the future-oriented world of conservation and development where actors have to compete for scarce resources, the hype of new programmes that come with promises of multiple-win solutions and donor support may override the critical learning from the REDD+ pilot process (Mosse 2005; Redford *et al.* 2013). This points to a need for longitudinal research on expectations and pilot projects, which is discussed in chapter eight.

In Kilosa the longer-term impacts of the hype and disappointment cycle of the REDD+ pilot projects were still not fully evident at the time of data collection. However, actor narratives indicated that the experience of the REDD+ pilots had not led to resistance to future projects, although there was a desire for future projects to be done differently among those who felt disappointed. As one K1 farmer still in dispute with village leaders over farming in the VLFR explained:

*'It's not that we [would] refuse the projects, we [would] accept the projects to come. They should come but we must make sure we've sat down and plan for that project, together with the village government.'*⁷⁵

This perspective may to some extent be a product of the fact that this was the first large international forest conservation project implemented with these villages. In situations where multiple previous projects have come and gone, and more hype and disappointment experienced, more evidence of resistance can be found (Leach and Scoones 2015; West 2006). In relation to electronic technology, Konrad (2006) finds that hype and disappointment can lead to damage to the credibility and legitimacy of innovators. In Kilosa, those most disappointed with the project largely

⁷⁵ Interview, man in 30s, non-leader/non-committee member, Kilosa, April 9 2016

blamed local leaders for project failures, as opposed to the implementing NGO. As such it appears that the credibility of the NGO remains intact, which may be due to the fact that they have maintained a presence in the villages; following up on issues and introducing the new sustainable charcoal project. NGOs face a significant challenge in situations such as this, maintaining their credibility and legitimacy among village level actors while engaging with uncertain global mechanisms such as REDD+ (Dressler 2017).

5.4.5 The social dynamics and ‘management’ of expectations

The way that different actors and actor groups framed and understood expectations in relation to the REDD+ pilot projects depended on their own individual circumstances, and factors such as their past experiences, social context, personal values and the different ways in which they view or know the world (Leach and Scoones 2015; Sung and Hopkins 2006). For example, actors in Kilosa framed project concepts with their own ways of knowing, for example the framing of the process of *‘harvesting the carbon air’*⁷⁶. This framing of carbon as tangible and sellable subsequently influenced ongoing expectations in relation to payments. Also in Kilosa, the villager narratives suggested that the fact that the REDD+ pilot project was the first major donor-funded project, and as such an unknown entity, influenced perceptions. This can be evidenced through the high expectations that surfaced for actors during the early project stages, as well as the fear that the *‘country had been sold’*⁷⁷. However, the proximity to other protected areas, particularly Mikumi National Park, also influenced the social dynamics of expectations. The aforementioned fear of wild animals being introduced to the forests is one example of how knowledge of protected areas increased the fears of land-grabbing for conservation and negative expectations. On the other hand, the fact that Kilosa villagers experience high levels of poverty also influenced the social dynamics of expectations. For some, REDD+ fed into imaginaries of social

⁷⁶ Interview, woman in 30s, non-leader Kilosa, 7 (K2), 8 May 2016

⁷⁷ Interview, woman in 40s, village leader and committee member, Kilosa, (K2), 6 May 2016

development through external intervention and so increased expectations about what the project could deliver:

*'So this brought a big challenge of people to receive MKUHUMI with both hands and know if they start selling the carbon dioxide their village will change a lot in development, because it will help them with development activities.'*⁷⁸

Conversely, in Rungwe where the villages had had a long history of external intervention, the pilot project activities were framed as the latest in a series of interventions and linked to WCS as opposed to MKUHUMI:

*'The first supporters were from Norway and their contract has finished and now others have come from America but they haven't started yet. But WCS are still here so we are continuing.'*⁷⁹

Engagement with a series of projects over time, and experience of them having little impact, affects uncertainty and expectations (Cooper 2015). Higher levels of wealth relative to Kilosa, access to facilities like schools and dispensaries, opportunities to get involved in different livelihood projects (there were agriculture-based projects being implemented by other international donors, the church and other organisations at the time of data collection and throughout the duration of the REDD+ project) and higher levels of education are also likely to reduce the emphasis and therefore expectations of projects such as MKUHUMI. This comparison therefore illustrates how the social life of both pilot projects and expectations can be markedly different in different contexts.

The experience that people had during the project itself also influenced the way they framed expectations and disappointment (Brown and Michael 2003). As I have previously identified, those most closely involved with the project put less emphasis on the lack of continued trial payments and as such experienced less

⁷⁸ Interview, man in 30s, village leader, Kilosa, (K1), 2 April 2016

⁷⁹ Interview, woman in 60s, village leader and committee member, Rungwe, (R1), 13 October 2015

disappointment. Conversely, those less involved in the livelihood projects or those who had experienced negative personal impacts focused more on the unfulfilled promises of the project. In K2, where the NGO had brought in a new sustainable charcoal project, MKUHUMI was framed by some as continuing under a different guise. This in turn impacted expectations, with one villager explaining that in the future he expected that *'this MKUHUMI will just be changing its name'*⁸⁰ but would keep going. Expectations are continually influencing and being influenced by social interactions and experiences (Konrad 2006). This evidence also shows that when reflecting on expectations and disappointment, actors re-frame their experience in light of what actually happened and in light of their personal experience (Brown and Michael 2003). Practitioners need, therefore, to be mindful that no matter how they frame pilot projects to communities, the social dynamics and economy of expectations will be unpredictable, making expectations hard to manage once raised (Weszkalnys 2008). NGO practitioners involved in the Kilosa pilot project described how they tried to manage expectations around REDD+ and carbon payments as the project developed. One NGO practitioner described how they tried to focus on *'the conservation parts and other co-benefits that they received'*, but noted that despite these efforts *'...we really could not control that [expectations] – there were a few members who... really had high expectations.'*⁸¹ This further emphasises the aforementioned trade-off between raising awareness and raising expectations.

5.4.6 Knowledge, uncertainty and expectations

Brown and Michael (2003) argue that actors with close proximity to knowledge production have higher levels of uncertainty and lower expectations, while actors further away from knowledge production have low uncertainty and high expectations. Those closest to the production of REDD+ and pilot project knowledge reflected on low expectations and high uncertainty, which as I have discussed was cited by some as rationale for piloting, and low expectations. This

⁸⁰ Interview, man in 30s, village leader and former committee member, Kilosa, (K2), 6 May 2016

⁸¹ Interview, national NGO representative, 8 March 2016

included actors with international links, including from the UN, the donor (embassy), international NGOs, universities and consultancies:

'I guess like everybody I still really am not sure that I think [REDD+] is going to work at the national level. I think that it's a rather distant pipe dream and I very much thought so at that point [the start].'⁸²

Among government officials at national and district scales, who can be seen to be further from the production of knowledge around REDD+, there is some evidence of higher expectations and lower uncertainty, particularly in relation to continuation post-pilot:

'You can pilot and you can forget. But our idea was to do something and then... repeat from there... After knowing what really works you do something afterwards'⁸³

However despite this, members of the NRTF were concerned about the speed at which the pilot projects were unfolding, challenging the testing of benefits at the village level when there was uncertainty as to whether there would be REDD+ benefits long-term.

Local NGO project implementers reflected on their personal uncertainties and described how they tried to communicate them to villagers:

'Even us ourselves we were not sure about this carbon credit. We were explaining to [the villagers] that this is something new so we are not sure. Even myself, I have been asking that hmmm where will this lot of money come from. Where?'⁸⁴

However as I have discussed, expectations rose quickly among villagers, despite attempts to manage them. As such, the Kilosa villagers, who were furthest from the production of knowledge, had the highest expectations and the lowest levels of

⁸² Interview, international consultant, 6 March 2016

⁸³ Interview, government official and Task Force member, 3 March 2016

⁸⁴ Interview, NGO project implementer, Kilosa, 31 March 2016

uncertainty, thus aligning with the pattern identified by (Brown and Michael 2003). West (2006) finds that villagers engage with all conservation and development projects on the understanding that they are entering into long-term, reciprocal social relationships with practitioners. Even though the villagers in Kilosa were told that the project was time-limited, it appears that they did indeed perceive their involvement as longer term, which it is likely will also be influenced by the nature of the REDD+ mechanism and its emphasis on future benefits (Dressler 2017).

In light of the analysis in this chapter, issues of accountability in relation to expectations in conservation and development policy and practice are raised. This is particularly salient in relation to transparency, responsiveness and liability, which are defined as three of the five dimensions of accountability (Koppell 2005). In this context, transparency can be seen to be concerned with how project uncertainties (held by those producing the knowledge and leading conservation and development programmes) can be better communicated to those furthest away from knowledge production, such as Kilosa villagers (Brown 2003). This would require a significantly increased level of caution at the start of projects to reduce hype. The challenge for this, however, is that the 'success' of projects relies on hype, raising expectations and the enrolment of actors into communities of promise (Mosse 2005; Brown 2003; Büscher 2014). This again speaks to the need for the trade-off between piloting and raising expectations to be taken seriously by conservation and development policy-makers and practitioners, which includes challenging the discourse of 'needing' to pilot new programme ideas.

Responsiveness refers to whether stakeholder expectations have been met, and liability is concerned with whether consequences were faced by implementing organisations for any shortfalls (Koppell 2005). The NGO implementing the Kilosa pilot project (along with other implementing NGOs, as reported by their national representatives within this research), were responsive to the expectations of the donor by fully testing the REDD+ mechanism and delivering on project objectives. It can also be argued that the NGOs faced liability in relation to their donor accountability, which included analysis of their performance in relation to project objectives. As such, the NGO in Rungwe were criticised for not fully testing the

REDD+ mechanism and were challenged by the donors for their choice to use the money to continue with their '*core business*'⁸⁵ instead of pushing the REDD+ agenda; a choice the NGO took partly due to fears around village-level expectations. The fact that the NGOs have continued to work with communities after the REDD+ pilots through new funding and projects demonstrates their responsiveness to the needs and expectations of the villagers. However, broader accountability for the fact that the REDD+ pilot projects did not meet villager expectations has not been taken, or formally discussed, by the international conservation and development professionals, who have driven the REDD+ agenda internationally and in Tanzania. Similarly, liability for the disappointment of unfulfilled expectations at the village level has not been taken. This therefore highlights the need for more accountability to be taken by those closest to the production of knowledge for the (unfulfilled) expectations of those furthest away from knowledge production, such as villagers. This echoes wider calls for a shift in how accountability is dealt with in conservation and development policy and practice (cf. Jepson 2005; Campese 2009; Brechin *et al.* 2002). This will be discussed further in chapter seven.

5.5 Conclusion

By applying concepts from the sociology of expectations to the case study of REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania, I have contributed new insights into the dynamics of expectations in the context of international conservation and development pilot projects. By exploring expectations in this way I have also contributed new insights into the social life of pilot projects. The case of REDD+ in Tanzania demonstrates the important role of hyper expectations in new international conservation and development programmes, driving and being driven by a desire for new multiple-win approaches to forest governance, a perceived need for speed, and high estimations of future success. These expectations can be seen as being highly performative, mobilising resources and driving communities of promise among conservation and development professionals. I therefore add insights into the

⁸⁵ Interview, international consultant, 7 September 2015

growing critical discussion of conservation fads (Fletcher *et al.* 2016; Redford *et al.* 2013), by unpacking the performative role of expectations in this process. High levels of uncertainty existed among those closest to the production of knowledge, yet instead of promoting caution, this uncertainty contributed to a perceived urgency to test the mechanism and drove the 'need' to implement pilot projects. This process can be seen to be a product of what Lund *et al.* (2017: 133) refer to as the 'logic' that 'continuously produces and feeds off the development and testing of new policy models.'

Through exploration of the two very different pilot projects in Kilosa and Mbeya, I have identified a trade-off between fully testing pilot projects and raising awareness, and raising expectations at the village level. In line with the overarching thesis approach discussed in section 1.3, comparing these two NGOs is not done with the intention of judging or evaluating the NGO approaches or the projects themselves. Rather, it provides an interesting comparison in relation to expectations. In Kilosa, where the NGO achieved high levels of awareness, participation and change through the pilot project, an economy of expectations developed (Dressler 2017). Expectations were raised through project activity, including through well-intentioned activities such as FPIC and testing benefit-sharing mechanisms. Expectations then became a forceful presence (Van Lente 2012), leading to significant social change, including people being relocated from farms. Expectations interact and are mediated by local realities, and so are difficult to manage once raised. A hype and disappointment cycle was identified in Kilosa and expectations have continued to impact villagers after the pilot project finished and the international and national actors have moved on. Conversely in Rungwe, where the market-based aspects of REDD+ were not tested (due to uncertainty about the future of the mechanism and concerns about expectations), there were few expectations and so little evidence of disappointment. I posit that these different project characteristics reflect different approaches that the two NGOs have in relation to the challenge of maintaining legitimacy with village level actors while having to engage with ever more uncertain international programmes in the competition for funding (Dressler 2017).

The findings in this chapter therefore highlight some core issues for conservation and development and support calls for more critical reflection of how conservation is pursued, particularly in relation to how new international programmes such as REDD+ are managed (Fletcher *et al.* 2016; Lund *et al.* 2017). Expectation and disappointment cycles can be conceptualized as an unintended consequence of piloting new international conservation and development programmes, particularly in relation to future-oriented, market-based programmes such as REDD+ (Dressler 2017; Igoe and Brockington 2007). However, although they may be unintended, consequences of expectations are inevitable, which the trade-off identified in this chapter demonstrates. The negative outcomes of hype and disappointment cycles are asymmetric; originating from those closest to knowledge production and yet impacting those furthest away from knowledge production the most (Brown 2003). This is particularly salient in relation to pilot projects, which are framed as a short-term test by international actors but seen by local actors as being the start of a longer-term, reciprocal relationship (West 2006). Accountability for expectations is therefore needed in conservation policy and practice, particularly on the part of those closest to the production of knowledge, such as policy-makers and donors. This includes the need for more transparency around uncertainty from the start, more responsiveness to villager expectations and liability being taken for unfulfilled expectations. To this end, I begin to challenge the discourse of ‘needing’ to pilot, which prioritises awareness, impact and innovation without fully considering the potential negative impact of unfulfilled expectations.

6. RECOGNITION IN PILOT PROJECT EVALUATIONS

6.1 Introduction

As discussed in chapter one, pilot projects are implemented in many different contexts and driven by a wide range of goals and objectives, and as such take a variety of forms. Pilot projects are, however, typically used as a means of generating quick and tangible results around a new initiative, and so a great deal of emphasis is put on experimentation, testing and learning (Brandon *et al.* 1998; Garí 2013). These learning elements of pilot projects are further emphasised by the fact that pilots are often used to supply knowledge to decision-makers and to inform policy, practice and wider implementation (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2010). This increases the importance of evaluation in pilot projects, and this heightened learning is one of the characteristics that differentiate pilot projects from other short-term projects (Vreugdenhil and Slinger 2008). In the context of REDD+ in Tanzania, ‘policy testing’ and ‘REDD+ results’ were two of the original four project objectives, and a requirement was set for implementing NGOs to place ‘an emphasis on testing key policy issues’⁸⁶. In addition to the establishment of the institutions discussed in chapter five, which had learning as part of their remit, the Norwegian Embassy commissioned comprehensive mid-term and final reviews. The final reviews resulted in reports, policy briefs, academic papers and a presentation events in Tanzania and Norway (e.g. Blomley *et al.* 2016; NIRAS 2015a). In addition to this, the NGOs produced a number of reports, articles and other outputs documenting the progress of their pilot projects (e.g. TFCG/MJUMITA 2014; Ball and Makala 2014).

During the piloting phase of REDD+ both internationally and in Tanzania, emphasis was put on issues such as equity, safeguarding forest-adjacent communities, and recognising the views, rights and knowledge of local and indigenous communities. One of the recommended UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards specifies that activity must have ‘respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of

⁸⁶ MILLEDGE, S. 2010. *Status of NGO REDD project development and management considerations*. 'Note to file' circulated March 8th 2010.

local communities' (UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16). In Tanzania, one of the original four project objectives specified that 'pilot projects will help ensure sufficient diversity in terms of perceptions, experience and involvement during the REDD readiness phase'⁸⁷. Many of the NGOs also chose to take a 'pro-poor' and community-centric approach to piloting REDD+⁸⁸. There is evidence that some initiatives implemented in the REDD+ pilot or 'readiness' phase made progress towards these objectives (Atela 2015b; Blomley *et al.* 2016). However, other evidence suggests that in practice, many initiatives have fallen short of these objectives, following a similar technocratic, top-down format of previous international forest conservation initiatives and further marginalising certain actors and actor groups, such as local communities (Scheba and Scheba 2017; Corbera 2012; Sikor 2013b). In addition, it is argued that in some cases official evaluation documents do not sufficiently engage with the shortfalls of REDD+ pilot initiatives, in order that the projects are reported as being a success (Svarstad and Benjaminsen 2017).

This evidence aligns with exploration of development and environmental governance intervention more broadly, which finds that they prioritise the knowledge, values, perspectives and framings of powerful groups, such as policy makers and the international community, and marginalise others (Long 2004; Escobar 2011; Leach and Scoones 2015). This chapter contributes to this debate by looking at pilot project evaluations, which is a context not previously explored in detail, but significant as a result of the aforementioned importance of lesson learning through piloting. I ask the following questions: whose knowledge, values, perspectives and framings are included in pilot project evaluations and as such, whose perspectives are missed out? (How) do these perspectives differ? And what implications does this have?

In order to answer these questions, I draw on social justice, conservation justice and conservation equity literature, specifically the concept of recognition. Within

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ For more on all NGO approaches see NIRAS. 2015a. *Lessons learned from the implementation of REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania*. Finland: NIRAS. See chapters three and five for more on Kilosa and Rungwe approaches

conservation, recognition is concerned with ensuring the voices of all groups are heard, valued and respected, so that the knowledge, values, perspectives and framings of different groups are reflected in conservation discourse and practice (Sikor *et al.* 2013; Schreckenberg *et al.* 2016). There are two main reasons for choosing a recognition lens. Firstly, it explicitly positions the issue of whose perspectives count as a justice issue, bringing the work of political ecologists, critical development theorists and social justice theorists together within one normative agenda (Martin *et al.* 2015). Exposing and unpacking 'the mutual dependency of social values and environmental knowledge' has long been a normative objective of political ecology (Forsyth 2008: 756), but it isn't often discussed within an explicit justice framing. Thus using a recognition justice lens elevates issues around perspectives and framings among policy-makers and practitioners (Martin *et al.* 2015). Secondly, by engaging with recognition, justices and injustices in conservation are exposed and the domination of some individuals and groups and the exclusion of others becomes more visible and so potentially reduced (Isakyu *et al.* 2017), thus contributing to the pursuit of more just conservation intervention.

Within this chapter, I first unpack the concept of recognition justice and its role within the wider conservation justice agenda. I then identify four areas of concern that are relevant to conservation, and particularly pilot project evaluation, adapted from the work of Sikor *et al.* (2013). I use these four areas of concern as an analytical tool to unpack a case study of the REDD+ pilot project in Kilosa, Tanzania. I selected this case study due to the high levels of activity, awareness and involvement of the Kilosa village communities. I use document analysis, primarily of the final 'official' evaluation documents commissioned by the Norwegian Embassy, along with narrative interviews and observations from actors involved in the project from consultants to Kilosa villagers, to explore recognition in evaluation. I take a slightly different approach from chapters four and five in this analytical chapter. I analyse the results first in line with the recognition justice analytical framework and then discuss them in relation to the wider justice and conservation and development literature separately afterwards. I do this in order to ensure that

there is sufficient space to tease out the results in line with the analytical framework. Finally, I draw conclusions.

The aim of this research is not to develop a framework or set of indicators for measuring recognition in evaluation. Indeed this would undermine the pursuit of recognition justice, as the term in itself encompasses a wide range of understandings, definitions and approaches (Martin *et al.* 2016). My aim is to start to unpack recognition in the context of pilot projects and to expose recognition injustices that can occur during the process of evaluation (which can also reflect injustices that have occurred throughout the pilot project process). The aim therefore is both to contribute to academic understanding of recognition justice within this previously unexplored context, and to demonstrate the importance of recognition as a consideration for practitioners and policy-makers. It should also be noted that the purpose of exploring justice in conservation is not to suggest policy and practice that is perfectly just. In line with the work of Sen (2011), the aim is to find more pluralistic approaches to intervention and to expose and therefore reduce injustices.

6.2 Theory

6.2.1 Social and environmental justice: distribution, participation and recognition

Theories of justice have increasingly been used as lenses through which to explore environmental issues. Such issues include the relationship between different social groups and environmental risks, ills and benefits (Schlosberg 2007b; Walker 2009), climate change (Bolin and Tassa 2012; Bulkeley *et al.* 2014), and natural resource conservation and governance intervention (Martin *et al.* 2014; Sikor *et al.* 2013; Isakyu *et al.* 2017). Justice has become a powerful narrative that drives environmental policy decisions (Lejano *et al.* 2002). Drawing on the work of social justice theorists such as Nancy Fraser (2009) and Iris Young (2011), these lenses conceptualise justice as multi-dimensional. This means that in addition to the classic conceptualisation of justice as an issue of distribution of goods and benefits advanced by theorists such as Rawls (1971), consideration is given to factors and processes that result in maldistribution (Schlosberg 2007a). Participatory or

procedural justice is frequently incorporated as a key component of environmental justice lenses, focusing on the extent to which different actors and actor groups have meaningful involvement in policy and decision-making (Isakyu *et al.* 2017; Sikor *et al.* 2013). Participatory justice is framed both as a necessary requirement to facilitate distributional justice, and as an important justice outcome in itself as a determinant of social freedom (Sen 2011; Martin *et al.* 2014). It can be argued, however, that even when participation is considered, it is often done so from the perspective of certain actor groups, such as conservation practitioners, politicians or local elites (Bolin and Tassa 2012). Thus different actor perspectives on what counts as participatory justice may be missed out. In order to address these underlying factors, many theorists also consider recognition justice as the crucial third dimension of environmental justice.

6.2.2 Recognition justice

Recognition is more difficult to measure than distribution and participation but is primarily concerned with acknowledging, accepting and respecting different cultures and actor identities (Fraser and Honneth 2003; Martin *et al.* 2016). In social and environmental justice theory, recognition has largely been aligned with identity politics and used to examine how a lack of recognition of social differences, along with the devaluation and degradation of some groups' viewpoints, leads to marginalisation and social harm (Schlosberg 2007b; Young 2011). In the context of conservation justice, recognition is concerned with accepting and ensuring legitimacy of the rights, histories, values, interests, knowledge and priorities of different actors (Schreckenber *et al.* 2016). An important element of this, which relates to intervention and therefore this chapter, is the exploration of the extent to which knowledge, values, perspectives and framings of different actors and actor groups are reflected in conservation intervention discourse and practice (Sikor *et al.* 2013; Martin *et al.* 2016). As well as being an important consideration in its own right, recognition is considered to be an 'inherent precondition' for distributive justice (Schlosberg 2007b: 519). As such, scholars frame recognition as a critical component of conservation justice, both on its own and as a way of better understanding participatory and distributive justices and injustices in conservation

(Sikor 2013a; Martin *et al.* 2014; Isakyu *et al.* 2017). It is hoped that by engaging with recognition justices and injustices in conservation, the domination of some individuals and groups and the exclusion of others becomes more visible and so potentially reduced (Isakyu *et al.* 2017).

Within international conservation policy, practice and academic exploration, there is a growing discourse around justice and equity, particularly where the resources to be conserved are used, and in some cases governed, by a local population (Blaikie and Muldavin 2014). Considerable attention has been given to distribution and participation. In the case of REDD+ for example, benefit-sharing mechanisms and village-level governance procedures have received a large amount of focus in relation to their distributional equity and participatory inclusivity (Angelsen 2008; Luttrell *et al.* 2013; Vatn *et al.* 2013; Bolin and Tassa 2012). However, it is argued that even in cases where justice is considered, conceptions of what is just practice, as well as what is considered to be desirable outcomes of intervention, remain narrowly defined by one particular group of actors: policy-makers and practitioners (Sikor *et al.* 2013; Martin *et al.* 2016). This leads to recognition injustices and limits the ability for intervention to achieve participatory and distributional justice (*ibid.*). Evidence also suggests that even implicit consideration of recognition in conservation practice may not be enough. In the case of REDD+, although there has been international consideration of recognition issues, the inherent top-down design and technical language of interventions such as REDD+ means that it is likely to lead to recognition injustices (Sikor 2013b). This is supported by empirical evidence of carbon projects, in which significant differences are identified between the way that the international community frame concepts and processes, and how they are framed by different groups at the local level (Dzingirai and Mangwanyanya 2015; Kijazi 2015; Winnebaha and Leach 2015). The re-valuation of land and resources in relation to carbon contrasts with the perspectives and values of some local actors and actor groups, which has led to conflict (Lansing 2011; Leach and Scoones 2015). It is argued that explicit engagement with recognition justice reduces the likelihood of conflict as a result of conservation intervention.

6.2.3 Researching recognition justice

The aforementioned limited engagement with recognition may be largely as a result of the fact that it is more difficult to understand and harder to measure than distribution and participation (Martin *et al.* 2016). Some attempts have been made to identify recognition indicators for conservation policy (e.g. McDermott *et al.* 2013; Zafra-Calvo *et al.* 2017). However, other conservation justice scholars argue that the very nature of recognition, particularly in relation to its pluralistic agenda, means that it cannot and should not be reduced to narrow definitions (Martin *et al.* 2016). The aim of this chapter is not to establish a definitive set of recognition indicators, although the practical value of indicators for conservation practice is acknowledged. Instead I identify four areas of concern and use them as an analytical tool to explore recognition justice in pilot projects, and particularly in evaluation. These areas of concern are selected due to their emergence as significant through empirical exploration of recognition in conservation by Sikor *et al.* (2013), their relevance to pilot project evaluation, and their strong links to the work of political ecologists.

Through this analysis, and in line with political ecology approaches, conservation is conceptualised as a discursive invention that is framed differently by different actors (Bryant 1998). Framing is defined as ‘the particular contextual assumptions, methods, forms of interpretation and values that different groups might bring to a problem, shaping how it is bound and understood’ (Leach *et al.* 2010: 5). A recognition justice lens enables explicit pursuit of understanding whose framings are being prioritised over others, and to whose knowledge, values, and perspectives are legitimised and whose are marginalised in the process (Escobar 1998). These framings include ideas of what constitutes successful intervention, how resources such as forests are perceived and how different groups are categorised in relation to their role in environmental problems and solutions (Forsyth and Walker 2008; Brockington and Igoe 2006; Leach *et al.* 2010). This chapter therefore contributes to both political ecology and to social justice theory. In line with Martin *et al.* (2015), it is hoped that a more explicit justice framing of these issues will also make them more visible within international conservation policy and practice, particularly in

relation to REDD+ and the international debates surrounding the mechanism. It is also argued that engagement with recognition justice reduces the likelihood of conflict as a result of conservation intervention, and that interventions that incorporates justice framings of target communities will be more successful (Martin *et al.* 2014; Sikor *et al.* 2014).

Table 5: Analytical framework for chapter six

| Theme | Definition | Examples of core recognition issues in conservation |
|---|---|--|
| <i>Ways of knowing</i> | Processes of knowledge generation, accumulation and use | How do actors make sense of their project experience and frame project elements? Whose ways of knowing are considered in conservation practice? How is new knowledge brought by the project mediated and used? |
| <i>Value</i> | How people perceive what is desirable and acceptable to them | Whose notions of what makes 'successful' intervention are included in discourse and practice? Do project evaluations differ between actors and whose are recognised? |
| <i>Perspectives on governance</i> | Actors' ideas on what constitutes legitimate decision-making and management | Who decides what constitutes 'good' governance in conservation policy and practice? |
| <i>Perspectives on equity, fairness and justice</i> | Actors' notions of what is just and unjust | How are justice issues, including distribution and participation, framed in conservation policy and practice and who decides what is included and excluded? |

Adapted from Sikor *et al.* (2013)

6.3 Key case study information and chapter-specific methodology

6.3.1 Case study selection

In order to answer the research questions for this chapter most effectively, I selected one pilot project as an instrumental case study (Stake 1995; Creswell 2012). This enabled a more focused and detailed analysis of the recognition of the knowledge, values and perspectives of different actors and actor groups in evaluation. I chose the Kilosa pilot project as the case study for a number of reasons. Firstly, as discussed in chapter five, many international and national actors framed it as one of the most successful pilot projects, and in the final review documents it was judged to have achieved many of its objectives. Secondly, it was one of the most well-funded pilot projects in the Tanzania REDD+ pilot project portfolio (NIRAS 2015b). This is reflected in the high levels of engagement and awareness at the village level, which enabled sufficient investigation of different perspectives on the project and project experiences. As I have established in chapter five, the project in Rungwe did not achieve broad awareness and involvement and so would not have been a suitable case study. Finally, the NGO who implemented the pilot project took a 'pro-poor' approach and considered some issues related to justice, such as equity in benefit distribution and participation of marginalised actor groups, such as women and poor households (TFCG/MJUMITA 2014). This allows for further exploration of the relationship between recognition and distribution and participation.

6.3.2 Data collection and selection

In order to answer the research questions and explore recognition in pilot project evaluation, this chapter draws primarily on narrative interviews and document analysis. This approach allowed me to compare the official evaluation documents to the evaluations of the project recipients: villagers in K1 and K2 involved in the project. Table 6 presents the data sources used for this chapter. The sections in bold show the primary data I used and the italics sections shows the data used in support of his primary data. I selected 40 narrative interviews with villagers involved in the Kilosa pilot project, which I sampled to represent different ways of

knowing, values and perspectives in existence. I have chosen to focus on the perspectives of a wide range of villagers in K1 and K2 as they are considered to be the recipients of the pilot project. However, I have used narratives from a wider set of participants including local government officials in support.

Table 6: Data analysed for chapter six

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Narrative interviews | 40 narrative interviews across two villages (K1 and K2), reflecting a cross-section of actor groups and project experiences |
| <i>Supported by</i> | <p><i>Narrative interviews with other actors directly involved in the Kilosa pilot Project: project implementers (including the NGO), embassy representatives, NIRAS evaluation consultants</i></p> <p><i>Interviews with other actors indirectly involved in the project: e.g. national government officials, Task Force members and academics</i></p> <p><i>Field notes, observations, informal interviews</i></p> <p><i>Attendance and participant observation at the official ‘lessons learnt’ event in Dar es Salaam (Mäkel et al. 2015)</i></p> |
| Document review | Final review: Making REDD+ and the carbon market work for communities and forest conservation in Tanzania (NIRAS 2015b) |
| <i>Supported by</i> | <p><i>Review of NGO summary of project achievements document (TFCG/MJUMITA 2014); IIED document produced by the NIRAS consultants (Blomley et al. 2016); Lessons learned from the implementation of REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania (NIRAS 2015a)</i></p> <p><i>Training documents, videos, leaflets, newsletters used by NGO during implementation</i></p> |

I focus the document analysis on the donor-commissioned document *Final review: Making REDD+ and the carbon market work for communities and forest conservation in Tanzania*⁸⁹, which I will refer to as the ‘evaluation report’ from here

⁸⁹ NIRAS. 2015b. *Making REDD+ and the carbon market work for communities and forest conservation in Tanzania*. Finland: NIRAS.

on. I chose this document as the focus for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was commissioned by the donor (Norwegian Embassy in Dar es Salaam) and undertaken by international and national consultants working for NIRAS⁹⁰. The majority of these consultants are people who have long histories in Tanzania and have been involved in a wide range of conservation initiatives in the country. Secondly, the report was used as a basis for a range of policy briefs that were distributed to decision-makers in Tanzania, including government officials and NGOs. The report was also presented to such decision-makers as part of a formal 'lessons learnt' event in Dar es Salaam (Mäkel *et al.* 2015). I attended this event and gained permission (from the organisers) to record parts of it and use it in my research, as long as no names were mentioned. As such, I posit that the evaluation and associated framings presented in the document provide the most 'official' version that is most likely to influence policy.

6.3.3 Challenges with data collected and selected

The subjectivist epistemology inherent in the constructivist approach taken to this research also involves ongoing reflection on my role as multicultural subject (Denzin and Lincoln 2011b). In the context of this chapter this involves consideration of recognition in my research process. It can be argued that the inductive nature of this research facilitates more pluralistic and just research, in that the initial decision to focus on recognition emerged from the data, rather than being pre-conceived by me as researcher. The actor-oriented approach, which involved narrative interviews with a wide range of actors including marginalised groups living in remote sub-villages, also contributes to a more pluralistic and just research process, which recognises voices that may otherwise have been hidden (Long 2003). This opens up alternative framings and perspectives on intervention and challenges received wisdom and assumptions (Leach *et al.* 2010).

However, my fieldwork sampling approach may also have led to recognition injustices. The sampling process, which involved a mixture of purposive and snowball sampling (Blackstone 2012), along with my reflexive approach to research

⁹⁰ See <http://www.niras.com/about-niras/> for more information on NIRAS

that enabled me to follow issues judged to be important by participants, meant that my focus may have been on some actors at the expense of others. This was particularly the case in Kilosa due to the weather-related issues discussed in section 3.6.3. Kilosa has a long history of farmer-herder conflict (Benjaminsen *et al.* 2009) and so pastoralists could have been an important actor group that were impacted by the REDD+ pilot project. However pastoralists were not mentioned at all during my fieldwork and I did not see any evidence of them in and around the villages and the village forests. This could have been as a result of a number of factors, including the season (rains) and the fact that the village leaders told me that any keeping of livestock had been prohibited there. Nevertheless, a potential recognition injustice could have occurred through the research process, which must be acknowledged. This in turn highlights the challenges in addressing recognition while undertaking research – whether academic research or project evaluation.

The use of the final evaluation reports as the main source of document data must also come with a caveat. It was not clear how much this report, the event, and the policy briefs will directly influence policy, particularly as many national-level actors described themselves as having ‘moved on’ from thinking about REDD+. It should also be noted that the NGO implementing the Kilosa pilot also implemented a project in the Lindi region. The NIRAS (2015b) report therefore summarises both projects. Although the consultants have endeavoured where possible to split the sites and discuss them separately, there are some generalisations across the sites. The Lindi project was largely framed as being much more of a success by national and international actors, as they managed to achieve more of the project objectives, including getting verified by an international carbon scheme, and managing to distribute a second trial payment based on carbon sequestration results. Although extensive analysis of this evaluation approach is beyond the scope of this chapter, I acknowledge its recognition justice implications. However, I further posit that these limitations do not unduly affect my analysis as the report nevertheless represents the ‘official’ evaluation of the Kilosa REDD+ pilot project.

6.3.4 Data analysis

As in chapter five, I used thematic narrative content analysis to analyse the actor narratives (Elliott 2005; Riessman 2008). I used the analytical framework identified in section 6.2, along with values coding (Saldaña 2015) to code each narrative. The focus of analysis was therefore on sense-making and judgements of the pilot project experience as opposed to the experience itself. I then undertook a detailed document review of the evaluation report, coding for embedded ways of knowing, values, perceptions on governance and notions of justice. I again used a table to analyse across narratives. I then compared actors' narratives and framings with those of the evaluation report, using the additional data (such as consultant interviews and other documents) to further explore and triangulate findings (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Although this has produced some interesting findings that are discussed in the next section, I acknowledge the fact that this approach has some limitations. This includes the fact that there is a delay between the production of the report (completed 2015) and the timings of my Kilosa fieldwork (March – May 2016). Between these dates, things will have changed that mean that the framings of all actors will change, as they are dynamic and reflect a person's perspective at one moment in time only (Brown and Michael 2003).

6.4 Results and analysis

6.4.1 The evaluation process

The final evaluation process was done over a period of around six months. The evaluation was undertaken by a team from NIRAS, made up of experienced consultants and included both Tanzanian and international personnel. Care was taken to ensure that the foreign consultants had considerable experience of working in Tanzania and so were already very familiar with the context and the national language of Kiswahili. As discussed in section 3.8.2, the evaluation was done at two levels: at the level of the individual projects and then at the level of the pilot project portfolio. The outputs from the evaluation process were individual project evaluation reports for six of the seven completed pilot projects, along with a report summarising the main lessons learnt and associated policy briefs on key

messages identified by the consultants. The findings were also presented at stakeholder meetings in Dar es Salaam and Oslo, the former of which I attended. The Norwegian Embassy specified two frameworks to guide the evaluation methodology:

*'The review was guided by the standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria as specified in the overall terms of reference for the project evaluation. In addition, the review team used four cross-cutting result areas of REDD+ readiness, policy testing, REDD+ results and broad stakeholder involvement to review project outcomes which were also defined in the terms of reference to be key evaluation considerations.'*⁹¹

The 'OECD/DAC evaluation criteria' refers to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee OECD/DAC evaluation framework (OECD 2017). This framework consists of five criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability (ibid.). These criteria were developed in 1991 and have become the most prominent and widely by donors and practitioners, adopted by donors and NGOs alike to evaluate conservation and development projects (Chianca 2008). The 'four cross-cutting result areas' were the four original objectives set by the Norwegian Embassy at the start of the project, which are discussed in more detail in section 3.8.2. This framework, which '*was the framework into which we collected data as well*'⁹² structures the evaluation report. The five OECD/DAC criteria provide five headings, with the four objectives and the individual project purpose, goals and outputs used to complete the analysis under the headings (where applicable).

The results of the individual pilot project evaluations were then collated and discussed by the consultants, and a core 'lessons learned' document produced: *Lessons learned from the implementation of REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania* (NIRAS 2015a). This document also follows the guidelines of OECD/DAC by way of

⁹¹ NIRAS. 2015b. *Making REDD+ and the carbon market work for communities and forest conservation in Tanzania*. Finland: NIRAS.

⁹² Interview, international (evaluation) consultant, 8 September 2015

their definition of what lessons learned documents should consist of, and to this end aims to answer two questions:

1. *'What unique aspects of Tanzanian political, legal or situation provide valuable lessons/experiences that are of use to both Tanzanian as well as international audiences engaged in REDD+?*
2. *What unique aspects of the Tanzanian pilot project experience provide useful lessons and experiences to other REDD+ practitioners working on similar initiatives but in different countries?'* (NIRAS 2015a: 4)

This focus on lessons is in alignment with the framing of pilot projects in Tanzania and beyond, discussed at length throughout this thesis. In this case, such lessons are viewed to be of critical use to both Tanzanian policy makers and practitioners, and the international conservation and development community. Providing these lessons through the collation of individual pilot project experiences was at the heart of the evaluation process:

*'...it was in our terms of reference to contextualise it nationally and internationally. We were very much aware of the COP that is going to take place in Paris this year, and they're very much hoping that this document will be used by the Norwegian government for the COP and by the Tanzanian government for the COP. Inputs into both those delegations.'*⁹³

As laid out in section 3.8.2, the pilot project portfolio was designed along four broad objectives, with a stated focus on testing and learning. This loose and flexible design, which aligns with the framing and design of the pilot projects, presented challenges for the evaluating consultants:

'...it depends on the objective of the pilots as well... sometimes I think the objectives are not necessarily that clear at the beginning in some of the ones I've been involved in and I'm not so clear they were not that clear in the case of Norway actually. One of our feedback to Norway – NICFI - was actually you know, you didn't, they didn't really set any kind of frame except for the four broad objectives

⁹³ Interview, international (evaluation) consultant, 8 September 2015

*we talked about in the beginning. And so comparing across, regular monitoring or thinking about lessons learnt across the projects... they didn't set a learning, a log frame in the beginning.*⁹⁴

6.4.2 Ways of knowing

The emphasis throughout is on the REDD+ mechanism, which in its essence involves the use of many technical terms that relate to carbon sequestration and emissions, carbon markets, and carbon measurement. For example one indicator of the relevance of the projects reads as follows:

*'The relevance of project actions has been validated by the development of PD according to VCS and CCBA accreditation systems'*⁹⁵

The PD refers to project design (document), which is required to satisfy international carbon standards and schemes: Verified Carbon Standards (VCS) and Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA). Evaluation has also been conducted and framed with international standards and requirements in mind, using terms such as *stakeholder engagement*, *FPIC* and *capacity building*⁹⁶. By using the OECD/DAC criteria, which were not developed specifically for pilot projects, the sustainability beyond the piloting phase is considered within the evaluation document, with the evaluators critical of the project's ability to continue without further investment. Otherwise the evaluation report is based on, and framed around, the fact that this was a pilot project that it had a specific role in wider national and international REDD+ policy development:

*'It's all about process learning and understanding how that experience in the field can feed into something concrete in the end in terms of setting out policy or setting out procedure to implement...'*⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Interview, international (evaluation) consultant, September 7 2015

⁹⁵ NIRAS (2015b): p.4

⁹⁶ NIRAS (2015b)

⁹⁷ Interview, international (evaluation) consultant, September 7 2015

The way in which the villagers framed the REDD+ pilot project and made sense of their experiences differs significantly to the evaluation report. Although the project was spoken about as MKUHUMI, the term was not loaded with the assumptions and knowledge found in the evaluation document. Among villagers, MKUHUMI is used simply as a label for the project or to refer to the NGO and *wazungu* (white foreigners) who introduced the project. Indeed, the villagers in K1 and K2 framed the project in relation to local issues, including social development, the ecosystem services and microclimate provided by the forest, forest management, and the changes that had come to the village as a result of involvement in the project.

*'[MKUHUMI] saw our level of development was a bit poor, I think they came to improve our situation a bit.'*⁹⁸

*'The forests are good, because they are natural resources, they give us good weather, they bring us rain. Therefore, we found out that the forests are good to us.'*⁹⁹

Those in leadership positions were much more conversant on what carbon is, how the MKUHUMI mechanism works, and what is required to measure it and fulfil international carbon standards, than those who had not been involved in the project. This led to a range of misinterpretations of REDD+ concepts, mediated by and made sense of using local ways of knowing. For example, carbon was framed by some as a product of the forest, similar to other sellable forest products, such as timber:

*'They said that if we would've taken good care of the forest they would be coming to harvest carbon air. That meant they would have taken it, gone to sell it and in return they would have sent us some money later.'*¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Interview, woman in 20s, non-leader/non-committee member, Kilosa (K1), 15 April 2016

⁹⁹ Interview, man in 20s, non-leader/non-committee member, Kilosa (K1), 11 April 2016

¹⁰⁰ Interview, man in 30s, village leader and former committee member, Kilosa (K2), 6 May 2016

Therefore, from the perspective of many villagers, internationally-developed concepts, such as carbon, hold a very different meaning to that in the evaluation report. In fact, carbon and the carbon payments were often framed as a separate issue to the rest of the project elements, as opposed to its central position among the consultants, donors, NGOs and international community, which is reflected in the evaluation report.

Although there was widespread awareness that the project would last for five years, it was not framed by any of the villagers as a pilot project. Rather, it was framed as being a catalyst for significant and continuing change at the village level. For some this was judged as negative and for others as positive, which will be discussed in more detail in section 6.4.2. Much of this perceived continuation of the project was driven by changes in knowledge and perceptions brought by the project itself. In fact, one of the biggest impacts of the project from the perspective of villagers, is the change in the way that they view the forest and forest governance, credited to the education element of the project.

'Before we received [the] project, we had not understood the meaning of the forest... As the education keeps spreading, we are reducing our level of destruction'¹⁰¹

The forest has taken on additional meaning and significance in the villages. Among those who were most positive about their project experience, which included village leaders and committee members, pre-project deforestation was framed as a crisis, with MKUHUMI as the solution.

'Had they not introduce MKUHUMI... the forest would not have a single tree by now... All trees were being cut down randomly, small ones were being cut, big ones were being dropped, and there was no regulated way of doing things'¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Interview, woman in 50s, village leader and committee member, Kilosa (K1) 4 April 2016

¹⁰² Interview, woman in 40s, leader and committee member, Kilosa (K2), 7 May 2016

This framing aligns with many of the early project materials used in communications with the villagers, which presented deforestation as a serious issue that if left unchecked could have disastrous outcomes, such as desertification. Within this narrative, there is a strong sense that there is a right and a wrong way to behave towards, and think about, the forest, which in turn has impacted the way in which different groups in the village are framed in relation to it. This will be discussed in more detail in section 6.4.3. The impact that the project has had on the framing of the forest and its conservation is not recognised in the evaluation report. Instead, the report focuses on the impacts that the pilot project activity had on pre-determined factors: *changes in forest condition and biodiversity, improvements in livelihoods and improvements in governance*¹⁰³. As such, only impacts that fit within these headings are recognised, and so others are excluded.

6.4.3 Values and valuing the project

As part of the evaluation process the consultants visited actors involved in the Kilosa project, including those within some of the participating villages, in order to establish their '*perception and knowledge of the project*'¹⁰⁴. At the village level, this primarily involved meetings with the village leaders, members of the village committees, and some actors from the pilot project's alternative livelihood projects. Attempts were made to enable other, marginalised groups to have an input, but as a result of reported budget and time constraints, only half a day to a day was spent in each village, which limited the breadth of actor engagement. It is unclear from the report how much the villagers' perspectives have driven broader conclusions that the report makes. However, in relation to individual project elements, such as trial carbon payments, land planning and conservation agriculture education and training (known locally as *shamba darasa*), the report attempts to directly represent villager evaluations. The representations of these villager evaluations, however, largely frame the villagers as one homogenous group, who valued the project positively:

¹⁰³ NIRAS (2015b): p3

¹⁰⁴ NIRAS (2015b): p4

'The review team was able to verify the very high level of popularity of REDD+ payments across all villages visited'¹⁰⁵

In reality, a wide range of project evaluations could be found between different actors and actor groups in the villages. In fact, within both villages, a divide is identified between those who frame MKUHUMI as positive and those who frame it as negative:

'There are two groups. There are those who agree and those who disagree... Half see the benefit of MKUHUMI and half think there's nothing'¹⁰⁶

Among many of the village leaders, committee members and other actors, who have been heavily involved in the livelihood projects, the project as a whole was very highly valued. This positive overall valuation was directly linked to the health of the forest, mainly framed around the forest's ability to provide ecosystem services to the villagers. However, the way that the report is organised, particularly in the way that it splits out *forest condition and biodiversity* and *livelihoods*¹⁰⁷, means that this important village-level valuation of the forest in relation to the local ecosystem services it provides is not recognised in the report. Others in the village, particularly those who had not been involved in the project and who had perceived that they had lost out as a result of it, attached much less value to the project as a whole due to its impact on their ability to farm freely. The evaluation report does not recognise these polarised voices, nor does it recognise the conflict that has emerged in conjunction with these evaluations of the project. Instead the village level perspective is limited to generalised comments, which most closely reflect the framings and evaluations of the first (positive) actors. Alternative, negative project evaluations are largely excluded from the report.

¹⁰⁵ NIRAS (2015b): p17

¹⁰⁶ Interview, woman in 50s, committee member and former village leader, Kilosa (K1), 4 April 2016

¹⁰⁷ NIRAS (2015b): p3

As part of the project, the NGO introduced a range of livelihood projects, including conservation agriculture (*shamba darasa*), village saving and loan associations (VSLA) and bee-keeping. Within the evaluation report, these are referred to as non-carbon benefits (NCB), which discursively positions them as secondary to the carbon benefits (carbon payments) and other core elements of REDD+ that are related to carbon. Within the village actor narrative however, *shamba darasa* and the VSLAs were highly valued and were framed as central to the project experience. The evaluation report recognises the '*strong support for most of the project activities*'¹⁰⁸ among villagers. However when talking about NCBs, the evaluation report focuses its analysis on *shamba darasa* due to its perceived direct influence on conservation, and frames VSLA as less valuable, stating that:

*'VSLAs are popular but it is unclear whether this activity contributed to reducing deforestation'*¹⁰⁹

In short, the VSLAs are evaluated based on their link to forest conservation, which reflects the underlying values of the consultants, donors and dominant international conservation and development discourses. Among villagers, however, the VSLAs were highly valued, and for very different reasons. They have enabled people to improve their personal situations, which in some cases has been life changing. They are also valued for their sustainability even after the project ended:

*'There are some that are successful, for example VSLAs. Now almost half or three-quarters of the villagers are investing their money. They don't take it to the bank, they put it in the VSLAs. That education, I see that almost half of the entire village is practicing it.'*¹¹⁰

The VSLAs aligned with the imaginaries of development in the villages. This is further emphasised by the fact that forest conservation is largely valued for its link to supporting local livelihoods.

¹⁰⁸ NIRAS (2015b): p5

¹⁰⁹ NIRAS (2015b): p18

¹¹⁰ Interview, woman in 60s, village leader and committee member, Kilosa (K1), 2 April 2016

Other project elements that emerged from a wide range of villager narratives as highly valued included education and the village office, both of which also fit with social imaginaries of what development should and would look like. In both villages, actors framed education as a core element of their project experience, whether in relation to *shamba darasa*, their involvement in committees and governments, or as part of wider village education efforts:

*'MKUHUMI, I really like it, because if you look at it it's nice, that they are educating us. You know education is really nice. Someone is teaching you something which is not bad, it's good in the community, which bring hope, and it brings life. Because forests are a life therefore we shouldn't destroy'*¹¹¹

It was particularly noticeable that positive perspectives on the education elements of the project could even be identified among actors whose livelihoods had been directly affected by the establishment of the VLFRs, demonstrating the significant value put on education. This further emphasises the strength of the development imaginary and the role of education in this. Those who felt they had been left out of the education element of the project had very negative feelings about this and as a result the wider project, again demonstrating the high value put on knowledge at the local level. The building of the office was also a central element in village actor narratives, as was the work being done on a village dispensaries (these were unfinished at the time of data collection). Things like the office and dispensaries that have a physical presence are central to village imaginaries of development. As with education, the office was highly valued by those who perceived that they had been negatively affected by the project, such as one of the farmers who was still in conflict with the village leaders about his farm in the VLFR.

*'What makes me happy is the building of the office. That is what makes me really happy'*¹¹²

¹¹¹ Interview, man in 20s, non-leader/non-committee Kilosa (K1), 11 April 2016

¹¹² Interview, man in 30s, non-leader, non-committee member, Kilosa (K1), 9 April 2016

Neither education nor the building of the office is explicitly mentioned in the report. As such, neither the underlying values of villagers nor their evaluation of the project are fully recognised. Visible signs of development such as the village office, sustainable projects such as the VSLA, and being involved in education programmes are valued among villagers, but are not a focus of the report because they are not directly attributed to forest conservation and carbon sequestration.

6.4.4 Perspectives on governance

As I have already established, a divide can be identified within both villages between those who largely supported the pilot project and those who didn't. Within K1 one of the biggest issues that divided people was in relation to the project's approach to forest governance, specifically the restriction on people farming in the gazetted VLFRs. On one side of this divide, strict protection of the VLFR is framed as the only way, even if that has led to people being moved from their farms and resulted in conflict. As such, those still farming in the VLFR and refusing to move are framed as being polluters, their actions causing harm to the rest of the village.

'Now, in the protected forest, there is no entry. And the bylaws have been prepared. And when someone violates the laws, then he or she is fined 50,000 shillings or taken to court. And that is why you can see that the condition of the forest is better...

...There are a few who are still polluting the conservation area... if you tell them about this project they say "We don't want it. If it's possible it shouldn't exist"'.¹¹³

For others, this approach to governance is problematic particularly as the farms in or close to the forest can be more productive.

'[MKUHUMI] doesn't want us to work in our farms in... the slopes, it stops us farming. It tells you if you farm in the slopes you cause carbon

¹¹³ Interview, man in 60s, village leader, Kilosa (K1), 5 April 2016

*air so you need to move to the valley. Now in the valley is where there are very small farms. That is why the citizens don't want MKUHUMI.*¹¹⁴

Sympathy for the farmers, who had been asked to move from the VLFR was expressed, and framed as unfair and unnecessary. Alternative views on forest governance were suggested, with some villagers arguing that those still farming in the VLFR could improve conservation due to their ability to see and report illegal activities. Alternative methods of conservation, including fencing the farms that were already established in the VLFR prior to the start of the pilot project were also suggested. Sustainable harvesting of trees in line with the national *kata mti, panda miti* (cut a tree, plants trees) were also suggested.

In the evaluation report, the establishment of VLFRs is framed as being good governance, which is in line with international REDD+ policy and views expressed by the NGO actors (at the national and local level), consultants and other national and international actors. Value judgements on land planning and by-laws, agricultural expansion and the need for VLFRs can be identified:

*'...villagers recognise the importance of a land use plan for regulating appropriate land use. In some villages there are, however, examples of continued expansion of agriculture land and cultivation within VLFRs. It has been challenging for some village natural resource committees and village governments to enforce the bylaws and collect respective fines.'*¹¹⁵

As such, perspectives on governance of some village level actors are recognised in the report and others are excluded. Many of those who support strict protection are those who have most benefitted from the project, such as village leaders and committee members, while those with alternative perspectives are more often marginalised community members.

¹¹⁴ Interview, woman in 20s, non-leader/non-committee member, Kilosa (K1), 15 April 2016

¹¹⁵ NIRAS (2015b): p12

Despite the issues of expectation and disappointment outlined in chapter five and the resultant anger directed at MKUHUMI among some villagers, they largely supported NGO-led forest governance over that of the government, whether local, district or national. There was support for NGO's ability to implement project elements more quickly and effectively, which aligns with the perspectives of many national and international actors. In some cases, even people who did not feel that they benefitted from the project felt that MKUHUMI should continue to manage the forest due to their ability to better conserve it:

'Me personally, I would ask MKUHUMI to be close to the villagers, so that they can work together, for the good of the forest... because, if it's handed back the environment will deteriorate'.¹¹⁶

This quote also reflects a misunderstanding that the forest is being managed by MKUHUMI (in this case referring to the NGO), as opposed to the villagers themselves. In K1 people mainly blame the aforementioned disagreements over the VLFR on local government rather than MKUHUMI, especially as the issues have escalated since the end of the project. In village K2, there is widespread mistrust of the local government and committees and suggestions of corruption abound. As such, failures in the project are more likely to be blamed on mismanagement (by non-leaders) or the failure of the villagers as a whole to continue what MKUHUMI started (by leaders). This example also demonstrates how project evaluations differ between the two villages, as a result of their unique histories and their unique socio-cultural and spatial characteristics (Leach and Scoones 2015). Using NGOs to implement the project has had broader impacts than those discussed in the report under the *governance* heading; changing local perceptions of who should be responsible for forest management.

6.4.5 Perspectives on equity, fairness and justice

The Kilosa REDD+ pilot project was designed to be 'pro-poor' and so equity in distribution and participation were considered during implementation (see

¹¹⁶ Interview, woman in 20s, non-leader/non-committee member, Kilosa (K2), 7 May 2016

TFCG/MJUMITA 2014 for more details), although not explicitly labelled as such. Distribution focused on the fact that all individuals in the village received the carbon incentive payment. In relation to participation, the core elements were the use of FPIC to gain initial project agreement and encouragement of village-wide meeting attendance during the early stages, enabling equal opportunity among all villagers to participate in the livelihood projects, and placing a specific emphasis on gender balances in groups and committees. The evaluation report does not explicitly talk about justice or equity, but it does evaluate the project's achievements against their pro-poor approach. It considers these objectives to be largely fulfilled, but challenges whether the gender components had been fully satisfied due to a lack of evidence and whether the relatively small trial carbon payments truly benefitted the poorest in the village and reduced their vulnerability. In addition, the evaluation report considers and challenges whether the trial carbon payments have '*met the opportunity costs*' of those who were previously conducting '*unsustainable harvesting*'¹¹⁷ in the VLFRs. In this respect, the evaluation report considers the fairness of the project towards those whose livelihoods were most affected by it. The policy briefs that came out of the evaluations also talk about rights and inclusion in relation to REDD+ pro-poor approaches, equity in relation to carbon payment sharing, and participation in relation to gender. They encourage more consideration of processes of all of these issues and make recommendations.

Among villagers, there were different perspectives on equity and justice in relation to the project. Some framed the project as positive and fair, benefitting everyone in the village, citing involvement in VSLA or *shamba darasa*, improved forest conditions, the offices and dispensaries, better governance, and education for all. These perspectives typically came from actors who had a lot of involvement in the project, such as village leaders, committee members and those involved in the livelihood projects. Other village level actors, often those who were less involved in the pilot project, framed the project as unfair. The focus was not on the trial carbon

¹¹⁷ NIRAS (2015b): p8

payments, but on other aspects of the project, with land and access to the forest central as a central issue.

'It has affected me tremendously, because we are not free anymore. And it could have been Ok if it was for our benefit, but it's for the good of the few. Therefore, it can't help you'.¹¹⁸

Other actors highlighted the unfair distribution of other project benefits, such as getting education through training events (some of which were limited to committees and groups) and getting tangible benefits from involvement in groups such as VSLAs and *shamba darasa*. This further reflects the high value placed on these project elements discussed in section 6.4.2. In K2 there were accusations of corruption; that the village natural resource committee (VNRC) were not distributing the benefits from fines that had been collected from those engaged in 'illegal' activity in the new VLFRs. There was also speculation among some villagers in K2 that more carbon payments had been received by the village committees but that they had not distributed them.

'Today people embezzle money, nobody does anything. They just tell you we got so and so from these projects but there's nothing to show. They just fatten only themselves'¹¹⁹

From the village perspective, distribution injustices were much more complex and far-reaching than the focus on equal carbon payments focused on in the evaluation reports. These injustices are also perceived to be continuing, beyond project timelines.

Many of the leaders and committee members framed participation in a similar way to the evaluation report, focusing on the fact that all decisions related to MKUHUMI had to be passed at the village general meetings, which involved all villagers. This

¹¹⁸ Interview, man in 30s, non-leader, non-committee member, Kilosa (K2), 7 May 2016

¹¹⁹ Interview, man in 60s, non-leader and non-committee member, Kilosa (K2), 9 May 2016

fact is used by some in K1 to justify the decision to relocate people from farms in the forest:

'Some people thought that [the decision to relocate people from the VLFR] was not good because some were used to those areas and now they were obligated to leave. But it was not bad because it was a by-law that we ourselves created'¹²⁰

Some villagers less involved in the project, however, told me that they felt that they had to go along with what the majority in the village and particularly the village government decided, challenging the genuine participation sought by FPIC and other processes, and reported positively in the evaluation documents:

'Most of our people here are obedient; when they are asked to do something they obey'.¹²¹

Those who felt they had experienced high levels of participation in the project were also more likely to communicate a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for the project and the forest itself, with one committee member explaining that *'this work is ours – firstly the forest is ours, as villagers¹²².'* But not everyone felt like that, in fact some people communicated a strong sense of feeling left out by the project and its processes.

'We see guests coming there at the office. They meet with members of the council, they discuss what they want. Therefore us small guys we only get bits of information on conserving the forests but we haven't been given enough education'¹²³

Education is, again, an important factor here. People wanted to better understand the project and to gain more knowledge from it. A desire for more influence in the

¹²⁰ Interview, man in 40s, village leader, Kilosa (K1), 14 April 2016

¹²¹ Interview, man in 70s, committee member and former village leader, Kilosa (K1), 11 April 2016

¹²² Interview, woman in 60s, village leader and committee member, Kilosa (K1), 2 April 2016

¹²³ Interview, man in 30s, non-leader/non-committee member, Kilosa (K2), 8 May 2016

planning of the project and to have their thoughts and opinions included in processes communicated by a number of those less involved in the project also reflects the local sense of recognition injustice, further contributing to the feeling of being left out of the project.

*'It hasn't changed me in any way. They did not involve me. Had they done so maybe I could have contributed my thoughts.'*¹²⁴

As with distribution, perceptions of equity and justice in participation were far more complex than those that were focused on in the evaluation report. Conceptions of justice within the village were less likely to be framed explicitly as issues such as gender or income. Rather they were framed in terms of the difference in experience between the *wakubwa* (literally translated as big people, meaning the important few in the village), who were most involved in the project, and the normal citizens.

6.5 Discussion

By using a recognition lens to analyse the evaluation of the REDD+ pilot projects in Kilosa, Tanzania, I have investigated whose knowledge, values, perspectives and framings are recognised in the evaluation process and whose are missed out, and how these perspectives differ. This has uncovered a range of recognition justice implications. These recognition justice implications can be organised under three broad, interlocking themes. These themes contribute to our understanding of recognition in pilot project evaluation and have implications for conservation and development policy and practice, both in relation to pilot projects and beyond. These themes are the technical framing of international forest conservation (and particularly REDD+); the domination and discursive reproduction of certain perspectives; and the expectations of and approaches to project evaluation.

¹²⁴ Interview, man in 60s, non-leader/non-committee member, Kilosa (K2), 9 May 2016

6.5.1 The technical framing of international forest conservation

Conservation can be conceptualised as a discursive invention, which takes on a wide range of meanings and is bound and understood (or framed) in a variety of ways by different actors (Bryant 1998; Leach *et al.* 2010). Among international actors, such as donors and the evaluation consultants, the framing of REDD+ encapsulates certain ways of knowing, which involve highly technical concepts and complex methodologies, and places carbon as the central concern (Leach and Scoones 2015). The Kilosa REDD+ evaluation report reflected this international framing, focusing the analysis on REDD+ and pilot project objectives, using a wide range of technical terms and placing carbon as a central concern of forests and forest conservation. Among village-level actors, however, both the project and the forest were framed differently. Carbon was often framed as a separate issue (linked to potential future payments) and forest conservation and the project itself was often framed around local ways of knowing and local values; namely local ecosystem service provision, such as a favourable micro-climate, and the positive link between a healthy forest and livelihood provision. This echoes other explorations of local-level framings of carbon projects (Atela 2015a; Mickels-Kokwe and Kokwe 2015), and reflects different actor framings of nature-society relations (Escobar, 1998). By contrasting these different actor perspectives, implications for recognition justice are highlighted, both in terms of the REDD+ and the pilot project evaluation process. The particular ways of knowing embedded in the REDD+ mechanism itself crowds out alternative ways of knowing, which results in the marginalisation of the experiential knowledge and the priorities of villagers (Sikor 2013b; Lansing 2011). The analysis in this chapter highlights the role of evaluation reports in this process; discursively reproducing the ways of knowing and framings of certain actors, and so further marginalising others. In the context of pilot projects. This is particularly significant as the evaluations are used to inform future policy and practice (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2010).

The inclusion of certain concepts in the evaluation report, such as REDD+ itself, which are loaded with assumptions, values and ways of knowing, also has recognition justice implications. At the local level, MKUHUMI encapsulated a very

different set of knowledge, values and assumptions. Villagers used the term in a wide variety of ways; for some it was simply used to refer to the project, for others the term it reflected positive or negative framings of the project and actors' experience of it. As such, the report does not consider or recognise what REDD+ (or MKUHUMI) *means* to villagers and so a core aspect of their experiential knowledge is missed out of the discussion of the pilot project experience (Martin *et al.* 2016). Global concepts are mediated by local ways of knowing, which can lead to a wide range of misinterpretations (Kijazi 2015; Winnebah and Leach 2015). For example, in Kilosa some actors made sense of carbon by framing it in line with local ways of knowing: as a good that could be harvested and then sold. Actors involved in village leadership and REDD+ committees had much more access to technical knowledge and were able to talk about the expectations of the project in relation to concepts such as carbon and carbon measurement. Sikor (2013b) argues that technical language and the use of technical concepts in conservation cements the position of technocrats in policy and practice. The case study of REDD+ in Kilosa suggests that this is also the case at the village level, where those with the most authority over village forest governance gained a fuller understanding of the technical aspects of REDD+. In fact, access to, and understanding, of technical knowledge was framed by marginalised villagers as a source of distributive justice.

6.5.2 The domination and discursive reproduction of some perspectives over others

International conservation policy and practice encapsulates certain, culturally-driven ideas around what works in conservation and as such what counts as desirable outcomes of activity are assumed (Martin *et al.* 2016). As a result, alternative ideas about what works and what is desirable are excluded (*ibid.*). The analysis within this chapter provides empirical evidence to support this claim, in relation to values, perspectives on governance and perspectives on justice. One such example in relation to values is the VSLAs. These were extremely highly valued among a wide range of villagers involved in the project, due to their ability to aid personal development and improve livelihoods. Within the evaluation document, however, little value is attached to the VSLAs, as they cannot be directly linked to

improved conservation. This reflects the values of consultants, donors and other policy-makers and practitioners involved in the evaluation process, who frame conservation as the ultimate goal of activity (Carrier and West 2009; Kaimowitz and Sheil 2007). This analysis advances the work of Martin *et al.* (2016) and Sikor *et al.* (2013) by demonstrating that project evaluations discursively reproduce ideas on what works and what counts as desirable outcomes of activity. It is suggested therefore that the process of project evaluation contributes to further recognition injustices, and may have a role in building received wisdom and narratives that drives conservation practice (Leach and Mearns 1996; Forsyth and Walker 2008). This is particularly significant in the case of pilot project evaluations due to their role in informing policy, practice and wider implementation (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2010).

Recognition injustices can also occur as a result of assumptions in policy and practice about what constitutes good governance (Sikor *et al.* 2013). One such assumption is that gazettement areas of forest for strict protection is good practice that will lead to improved forest conservation (Brockington *et al.* 2008). This is despite mixed reviews on whether village forest reserves lead to improved forest conservation (cf. Brockington 2007; Blomley *et al.* 2008). This assumption is recognised within the Kilosa pilot project evaluation report in relation to the VLFRs, and was also reflected in interviews with policy-makers and practitioners involved in the project's implementation and evaluation. However, as the analysis of villager narratives shows, certain actors and actor groups do not share this perspective, particularly among those less involved in the project and more marginalised as a result of it. The fact that the evaluation was conducted and written on the assumption that the VLFRs constitute good governance resulted in alternative ideas and perspectives on forest governance not being recognised. This in turn masks further injustices at the village level, where village leaders framed those who did not fully support the VLFR policy as 'polluters', and people who want to continue with activities such as charcoal-making as morally inferior (Neumann 2004; Martin *et al.* 2013). It is argued therefore, that hidden assumptions on what constitutes

good governance can delegitimise the perspectives of those who disagree, particularly in relation to those involved in disputes over farming in the VLFRs.

It is suggested that while the international discourse around justice and equity in conservation is increasing, what constitutes just, fair and equitable conservation practice is also subjective (Blaikie and Muldavin 2014; Martin *et al.* 2014). Although justice was not explicitly referred to in the Kilosa pilot project evaluation report, equity in distribution and participation were considered in relation to specific criteria including poverty levels and gender (in line with the 'pro-poor' focus of the project). However, the way in which justice was conceptualised among villagers varied considerably from this, taking into consideration a much wider range of complex factors and identifying perceived injustices that had far-reaching consequences in the villages. This in turn reflected the underlying values of villagers, such as an emphasis on education as a major project benefit, and the resulting perceived injustices of who received it and who didn't. By using a recognition justice lens, I identify the fact that even though justice was considered within the project and the project evaluation, it remains narrowly defined by a small group of policy-makers and practitioners, built on their ways of knowing and values around conservation (Martin *et al.* 2016; Sikor *et al.* 2013). This is not to say that a focus on gender, participation through FPIC and equal benefit-sharing are not important, and it should be noted again that the consultants have raised and attempted to address such issues. Rather, the analysis shows that the definition of what is just and fair from the perspectives of the villagers is much broader and more complex. As such, the analysis in this chapter advances the call for recognition to be included alongside distribution and participation in pursuit of a more pluralistic conception of justice (Fraser and Honneth 2003; Schlosberg 2007b; Sen 2011; Martin *et al.* 2016). By engaging with recognition in conservation, the domination of some perspectives and the exclusion of others becomes more visible and therefore has the potential to be reduced (Bolin and Tassa 2012; Isakyu *et al.* 2017), which is demonstrated by the analysis in this chapter.

6.5.3 The expectations of, and approaches to, project evaluation

Sikor (2013b) argues that the methodology of conservation, particularly in relation to frameworks such as REDD+ and other PES schemes, has implications for recognition justice. The analysis in this chapter advances this argument by highlighting some of the recognition implications of the evaluation process itself; namely the data collection methods and the report methodology. The consultants who undertook the Kilosa REDD+ pilot project evaluation attempted to consider and recognise the perspectives of villagers. However, only one week was spent at each pilot project site and only a limited range of actors and actor groups could be consulted. This was primarily village leaders, committee members and those who had been involved in the livelihood schemes such as *shamba darasa* and VSLAs. The evaluation report presents these largely positive villager perspective as one single narrative, thus framing village populations as homogenous (Hiraldo and Tanner 2011). In reality, however, a wide range of project narratives, containing different ways of knowing, values and perspectives could be found in the villages. Those that differed from the dominant narratives of village leaders and committee members were therefore not recognised in the report and so their ways of knowing, values and perspectives did not become part of the project narrative within broader discourses around REDD+ in Tanzania (Martin *et al.* 2016). These actors and actor groups are not always immediately accessible – whether as a result of geographical (such as those who lived away from the village centre closer to the forest) or social marginalisation (which is particularly significant when village leaders nominate villagers to be consulted).

The evaluation methodology used by the consultants also had justice implications. This includes the measurement criteria used, as the choice of what to measure and how to measure it reflects certain judgements, such as what is valued as ‘good’ conservation practice and what constitutes ‘good’ governance (Sikor *et al.* 2013). By using the standard, internationally-generated OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, the project was judged based on the conceptions of good conservation and good governance, amongst other things, of the international community. For example the *relevance* of project activities is measured against the priorities of the donors,

policy-makers and wider international community, as opposed to the needs of the villagers involved in the project (Chianca 2008). This also applies to the way in which fairness and justice are measured. The report uses opportunity cost as a measure of distributional justice; i.e. whether the carbon payments provided an acceptable alternative to those who had previously relied on the forest for their livelihood. However, as I have discussed in section 6.5.2, local perceptions of fairness and justice are much more complex than the opportunity cost approach. This raises questions over whether internationally-defined conceptions of justice are sufficient in measuring fairness, which in turn contributes to discussions about the use of the opportunity cost approach (Gregersen *et al.* 2010; Martin *et al.* 2014). Similarly, measuring participation based on actors attending meetings and going through the FPIC process does not account for complex social issues related to participation (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Reed 2008). For example, in Kilosa some actors reported that they felt like they could not say no or voice alternative opinions in group situations, creating what Cooke (2001: 112) calls a 'dysfunctional group consensus'.

Using pre-defined evaluation criteria also has recognition implications in that it constrains the judgement of the value and success of certain project elements. For example, the education elements of the Kilosa REDD+ pilot project and the building of a village office were highly valued by many villagers in both villages. The villagers therefore judged these elements as successes of the project, but the narrow criteria used within the report means that these were not recognised as project successes. Following this evaluation methodology also limits the report's ability to capture unintended consequences, which inevitably occur during any type of intervention (Ferguson 1994). The report measured impacts in relation to *forest condition and biodiversity, livelihoods and governance and tenure*¹²⁵. This left no space in the report for reflections on anything outside of these categories, which could have significant future impacts. This included changes in perspective among villagers in relation to forest governance, such as the preference of NGOs to continue with forest management as opposed to local government institutions. A need to re-

¹²⁵ NIRAS (2015b): p3

consider approaches to project evaluation is therefore highlighted, particularly in the case of pilot projects where the evaluations are designed to influence future policy.

As highlighted by the consultants, the way in which the pilot projects would be evaluated and would deliver on their core objective of providing learning was not thought through at the beginning of the process. As such, the standard OECD/DAC framework was used, which was not designed for pilot projects per se. We can therefore see that although pilot projects are framed as being different to traditional projects – offering an opportunity for experimentation, learning and diffusion (Vreugdenhil and Slinger 2008; Rondinelli 1993), in the case of REDD+ in Tanzania the reality of evaluation did not fully reflect this framing. Rather, a standard approach to evaluation was taken, which supports arguments highlighting a disconnect between changes in policy and realities on the ground (Mosse 2005). In order to truly learn from a pilot project (if learning is the central objective), more space needs to be created to incorporate the ways of knowing, values and perspectives of a wider range of actors into conservation practice (Sutherland *et al.* 2018). This will require a move beyond instrumental research into more ethnographic, interpretive approaches to research so that unintended consequences and local perspectives are fully recognised (e.g. Li 2007a; West and Brockington 2006). In addition, by incorporating a recognition justice lens into pilot project evaluation, evaluators could better unpack whose knowledge is valued and whose is marginalised through the process of conservation, and to scrutinise the way in which global constructs such as REDD+ subdue difference (Martin *et al.* 2013; Sikor *et al.* 2013; Escobar 2011). This is discussed further in chapter seven.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have used a recognition lens and a case study of Kilosa REDD+ pilot project evaluation to answer the research questions: Whose knowledge, values, perspectives and framings are included in pilot project evaluations and as such, whose perspectives are missed out? And (how) do these perspectives differ? I have also explored the implications for policy and practice. The evaluation report largely

recognises the ways of knowing, values and perspectives of the consultants and dominant international conservation and development discourses and in some cases the most powerful villagers such as leaders and committee members. This has a number of justice implications for conservation and development policy and practice. Firstly, the fact that only a narrow range of ways of knowing, values and perspectives are included means that only a small part of the project experience is recognised in the evaluation. This results in recognition injustice, as the ways of knowing, values and perspectives and project experiences of some groups become invisible and delegitimized. It may also limit the ability for pilot project evaluations to effectively inform future policy and practice, as alternative (and possibly more locally-appropriate) approaches to conservation and development intervention are rendered invisible. Secondly, without consideration of recognition, project evaluation reports can discursively reproduce, and so therefore potentially exacerbate, recognition injustices that occur through the process of conservation policy and practice. This can happen even when, as in the case of the Kilosa REDD+ pilot project evaluation, issues of fairness are considered and a pro-poor approach is taken to implementation and evaluation. As such, the third implication is that focusing on distribution and participation as indicators of project fairness and justice is not enough. As such this chapter demonstrates the need to include recognition in pilot project evaluation, as well as wider conservation and development policy and practice.

This chapter therefore makes a number of contributions. Firstly, it contributes new knowledge to the fields of conservation justice and political ecology by exploring the case study of pilot project evaluation and adding new insights. The investigation of pilot projects is particularly important due to the role of pilot project evaluations in influencing future policy and practice. I identify three themes of technical framing of international forest conservation (and particularly REDD+); the domination and discursive reproduction of certain perspectives; and the expectations of and approaches to project evaluation. These themes offer a starting point for further research on recognition justice, in pilot projects and beyond. Secondly, by using an explicit recognition justice lens to explore these issues it

highlights a methodological approach to better understanding justice and fairness in conservation and development, supporting the call by Martin et al (2015) for a more explicit justice framing in conservation.

Finally, it highlights a range of issues for policy-makers and practitioners to consider in the pursuit of fairer and more just conservation policy and practice. Perhaps the most significant findings for policy-makers and practitioners are the justice implications that this work identifies in relation to evaluation methodology. It raises questions around what counts as evidence in international conservation and development, highlighting the need for a broader conceptualisation of evidence from evaluation that allows more space for alternative ways of knowing, values and perspectives (Adams and Sandbrook 2013). To this end, alternative approaches to evaluation are discussed in chapter seven. Recognition justice is hard to understand and hard to measure but, as this analysis has demonstrated, it is a crucial element in the pursuit of more pluralistic and just conservation and development policy and practice. Furthermore, evidence shows that when projects align with the framings of targeted communities, conflict is reduced and projects are perceived to be a success by a wider group of actors (Martin *et al.* 2014; Sikor *et al.* 2014). As such, the findings in this chapter present an opportunity for policy-makers and practitioners in relation to plot project evaluation: that by recognising the ways of knowing, values and perspectives of a village level actors, future policy and practice may become more just and perhaps even more effective.

7. RECONCEPTUALISING PILOT PROJECTS

7.1 Introduction

In the previous three chapters I have used different and distinct lenses, drawn from policy studies, the sociology of expectations and recognition justice, to analyse and discuss core areas of concern in relation to the social phenomenon of pilot projects. In this chapter I draw together key findings and identify and discuss seven cross-cutting themes, which build a reconceptualisation of pilot projects and fulfil the thesis aim. I introduce each theme with a statement, before unpacking key issues and concepts; building on the synthesis of the empirical and conceptual contributions from chapters two, four, five and six and discussing them in relation to the thesis research questions. Findings are also discussed in relation to the broader literature, thus identifying knowledge contributions. New concepts are brought in where necessary to expand the analysis, discussion and thesis contributions.

7.2 Engagement with international conservation and development pilot projects as social phenomenon has been limited

Pilot projects have been engaged with in the instrumental literature *for* conservation and development, often being advocated as a better approach to intervention (e.g. Rondinelli 1993; Gonsalves and Mendoza 2003). Pilot projects have also been engaged with on a more critical level - as social phenomenon - in contexts including water management (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2010; Vreugdenhil and Rault 2010; Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2012) and state policy-making in the Global North (Sanderson 2010; Sanderson 2002; van Buuren and Loorbach 2009; Jowell 2003). Political ecologists and development anthropologists have also touched on the role of pilot projects as a form of social experiment when conducting ethnographies of conservation and development intervention (e.g. Li 2007a; Adams 1991; Mosse 1999). A myriad of research has also been done into the outcomes and impacts of REDD+ pilot projects (e.g. Vatn *et al.* 2017; Blomley *et al.* 2016; Mustalahti *et al.* 2012; Benjaminsen 2014), as well as instrumental research on pilot project typologies in REDD+ (Madeira *et al.* 2010). However, research *on* international

conservation and development pilot projects (Sandbrook *et al.* 2013), which unpacks them as a social phenomenon, has been limited.

During my fieldwork, I had a number of conversations in which actors, particularly those working at the national level, were challenging the use of pilot projects going forward, as a result of their experiences of REDD+. However, there was limited engagement with why the pilot projects did not fulfil their objectives and why they resulted in some negative impacts. In addition, as the empirical data presented in chapters four, five and six of this thesis shows, the rationale for using pilot projects remains, particularly among international conservation and development professionals. For some, it is seen as being irresponsible *not* to pilot a new idea, policy, mechanism or concept, such as REDD+. Without pilot projects, it would be '*policy making in a void*¹²⁶. The need, therefore, to better understand international conservation and development pilot projects, to engage with them as a social phenomenon, and to conceptualise them, is clear.

7.3 Pilot projects are driven by unquestioned framings and narratives

In pursuit of answers to research question one (*what are pilot projects and how are they used in international conservation and development?*), the analysis in chapters four, five and six demonstrates that the pursuit of pilot projects is underpinned by certain conceptualisations, or framings, shared by international conservation and development professionals. Chapter four shows how pilot projects are framed as an important tool to test whether new international mechanisms such as REDD+ work, and learn about how they behave in real-life contexts. A 'spirit of experimentation' (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2012: 152) is central to this framing, with pilot projects seen as tools that deliver learning; learning that can be used to better further policy and practice, and mitigate risk of future failure. Chapters four and five also reveal the typical linear problem-potential consequences-solution format found in conservation and development narratives (Roe 1994; Leach *et al.* 2010). The problem is the 'need' to introduce new approaches to international forest governance in order to solve the significant global issues. The potential

¹²⁶ Interview, international consultant, 22 February 2016

consequences of doing so without first testing with pilot projects is that risk of failure is increased and policy-making and practice is done blind (chapter 4). As such, the solution becomes the use of pilot projects, which are framed as being a quick and effective way of testing mechanisms like REDD+ and gathering useable lessons (chapters 4 and 5). Thus, pilot projects are framed as being different from other types of conservation and development projects, and the emphasis on learning is established (chapters four and six). These framings can also be identified within some of the instrumental literature on pilot projects, which positions them as an alternative to traditional conservation and development projects due to their ability to be more experimental, more flexible and a less risky investment for donors (Gonsalves and Mendoza 2003; Rondinelli 1993).

As is the case with other powerful and enduring conservation and development narratives, the pilot project narrative is presented as a 'self-evidently correct solution to a standardized set of problems' (Adams and Sandbrook 2013: 329), in this case as a viable alternative to traditional projects. The narrative is therefore not questioned, and it becomes a form of received wisdom (Leach and Mearns 1996). However, the analysis in this thesis shows that pilot projects are in fact much more complex than this and are better conceptualised as a 'reflection of a paradigmatic confluence of ideas' (Sikor *et al.* 2013: 195). Chapter four demonstrates how the use of pilot projects in international conservation and development aligns with the broader evidence-based policy and practice (EBP) rationale. Both narratives are driven by a positivist paradigm and a belief that better decisions, and ultimately modernity, can be achieved through rational scientific knowledge and evidence-based intervention (Sanderson 2002; Adams and Sandbrook 2013; Head 2010). Chapter six also demonstrates how pilot project processes and practices originate from the worldviews, values and perspectives on what constitutes good governance and just intervention of the actors designing and implementing them.

Social anthropologists refer to mechanisms like REDD+ as representations (Sampson 1996). In this sense, REDD+ can be conceptualised as a model that represents and brings to life different worldviews, values and perspectives on good governance, such as the establishment of protected areas of forest (chapter six).

The representation of REDD+ and other international conservation and development mechanisms, policies and programmes have been explored in critical environment and development literature (e.g. Leach and Scoones 2015; Corbera 2012). In this sense, pilot projects can be seen as the apparatus through which representations can become reality (Sampson 1996). However, through the analysis in this thesis, it is evident that pilot projects themselves can also be defined as representations. Their use, whatever mechanism they are testing, represents certain worldviews and assumptions, such as the need for evidence-based policy and practice, and perspectives on what constitutes good and effective intervention. This runs through all of the processes and practices involved in piloting, including in relation to project evaluation (chapter six). As will be explored further in this chapter, pilot projects themselves can be seen as being a fad or a trend: reflecting certain ideas and narratives about how intervention should be done and how it can improve on failures of past projects (Mosse 2005).

7.4 Pilot projects are framed as, and designed to be, 'contained'

This theme gives further insight into the question of what pilot projects are and also helps to unpack research question two; *how do pilot projects interact and intersect with other actors, institutions and processes?* In the late 80s, Long and van der Ploeg (1989) argued that international development projects are conceptualised as being discreet, isolated, localised activities that take place between facilitators and recipients, and are limited to a certain time and space. Since their paper was published, social anthropologists including Li (2007b), West (2006) and Long (2003) have shown that this is not the case and that intervention is, in fact, a complex set of social processes that result in unexpected consequences outside of project sites and project timings. However, I have found evidence that pilot projects are still, to a large extent, framed as being discreet and isolated activities (chapter four). This framing can also be found in some instrumental literature on pilot projects, which argues that pilot projects should be 'designed to protect their staff from undue political interference' (Rondinelli 1993: 138). An experimentation and testing narrative is identified in relation to REDD+ in Tanzania, and the use of pilot projects more broadly, which existed among international conservation and development

professionals. Within this narrative, a 'right to fail' was identified, with the donors being clear that the pilot projects did not come with a guarantee of continuation and were done as a means of testing the REDD+ mechanism through diverse, but isolated, case studies. The pilot projects were evaluated against project objectives and within project timelines. This further emphasises the framing of pilot projects as discreet and isolated, as the evaluation is seen as being the completion or end of the project (chapter six). So instead of overcoming issues of project isolation identified by Long and van der Ploeg (1989), 'new' forms of projects, such as pilot projects further isolate the intervention from the social and political realities into which it is implemented.

The evidence in both chapter four and chapter six suggests that the design of pilot projects as discreet and isolated is driven by the pilot project narrative discussed in section 7.2, and specifically the focus on experimentation and learning. The analysis in chapter four shows us that the origins of this can be found in the EBP movement and the associated paradigm, assumptions and received wisdom. EBP has its roots in medicine and as such, the concept of containment is useful here (Jasanoff 2006; Jasanoff and Kim 2013). In relation to biomedical experiments, Jasanoff (2006) identifies an assumption that if you stick to a set of rules when conducting the experiment, it will remain contained within certain conceptual, physical, political and ethical boundaries and so not result in negative impacts outside of these boundaries. Evidence of these assumptions around containment can also be identified in relation to the REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania, which guided their design and implementation. This includes the choice of the donors to work directly with NGOs in order to implement pilot projects quickly and effectively and to avoid political messiness (chapter four). The process of rendering REDD+ technical (Li 2007a) can also be seen as a method of containment, transplanting pilot projects from the social and political realm into the scientific and technical realm (chapter four). Guidelines, such as those around gender and fair and equal distribution of benefits, used by the NGO in Kilosa and can also be seen to be a method of ethical containment (chapter six). The framing of pilot projects as social experimentation

therefore leads to more containment than in traditional conservation and development projects.

Jasanoff (2006) also identifies assumptions that biomedical experiments can be controlled in such a way that means that they can selectively break through containment. The case of the REDD+ in Tanzania shows us how this assumption can be identified in the conceptualisation, design and implementation of international conservation and development pilot projects. Although the pilot projects were framed as experiments, some were implemented more like prototypes (chapter four). In these cases, such as with the Kilosa project, the pilots were used to demonstrate the ability for the REDD+ mechanism to work in Tanzania, which in turn follows the broader objective of international conservation and development of 'finding best practices and institutionalising them' (Büscher and Dressler 2007: 595). The Kilosa pilot project was also driven by expectations of continuation of REDD+ post-pilot (chapter five), which is identified by sociologists as being necessary for developing momentum and mobilising resources during the early stages of new initiatives (Brown and Michael 2003; Borup *et al.* 2006; Konrad 2006). However, it was assumed that in relation to Kilosa these expectations could be managed, or selectively contained, to avoid negative impacts among villagers (chapter five). Chapter four also shows how it was assumed that the pilot project learning could selectively break through the containment of the project design in order to influence policy-makers and practitioners in Tanzania.

The choice of using a two-tail approach to embedded case study selection (Yin 2014) and the comparison between Kilosa and Rungwe case studies also adds additional insights here (chapter five). The Rungwe pilot project was not designed to be contained, rather it was framed by the NGO as being a continuation of work that they were already undertaking with villagers living around Mount Rungwe Forest National Park. The Rungwe pilot project could therefore be conceptualised as a hybrid (chapter four). However, as the analysis in chapter five showed, the approach taken in Rungwe was criticised by the consultants conducting the evaluations and by international and national conservation and development professionals more broadly. The Rungwe pilot project was seen as not being a true

pilot and therefore not fulfilling expectations of what a pilot project should deliver, including learning on issues such as benefit-sharing. This reflects the pilot project narrative among conservation and development professionals and expectations of what they should look like and deliver.

7.5 Containment within pilot project boundaries is not possible

This theme gives further insight into research question two, as well as starting to unpack research question three: *What are the impacts and implications of pilot projects (beyond project timelines and objectives)?* Despite the framing of pilot projects as contained identified in the previous section, exploration of the piloting of REDD+ in Tanzania shows us that these assumptions are contradicted by project realities. The analysis in chapter six tells us that the diverse actors involved in the pilot projects framed the projects very differently, as a result of a wide range of factors including ways of knowing, values and perspectives. This can be linked back to the concept of imaginaries, which describes how different actor groups have different ideas of what is right and wrong, expected or unexpected and what constitutes modernity (Taylor 2002). Local level imaginaries of pilot projects differed from those found within official project reports and among international conservation and development professionals (chapter six). As such, pilot projects do not stay contained within the imaginaries of those designing the projects and they take on different forms, which are shaped by imaginaries of different actors and actor groups. For example, building on the findings of West (2006), an imaginary of continued, longer-term reciprocal social relationships can be identified among local actors (chapter five). This contrasts with the international imaginary of contained, bounded pilot projects designed to deliver short-term learning. Containment itself can therefore be seen as an imaginary (Jasanoff and Kim 2013).

The ideas, concepts, assumptions and knowledge inherent within what Sampson (1996) terms the 'representation' of REDD+, do not stay contained and that they are altered and shaped by different actors and social contexts (chapter six). For example, the concept of carbon was mediated by the ways of knowing of some village actors and became framed as a tangible product of the forest that could be

traded in the same way as timber. The concept of carbon became modified and reinterpreted, demonstrating that knowledge itself is a social construct and so cannot be seen to be static or contained within parameters of a project (Long 2003; Leach and Scoones 2015). By combining the analysis in chapters four, five and six we can see how 'tokens', such as the concept of carbon and evidence of 'what works' in international conservation, are conceptualised as following a pattern of diffusion: remaining intact and being accepted or rejected by different actors (Latour 1986). However in reality, the process is one of translation in which tokens are interpreted, mediated and modified as different actors engage with them, becoming different things entirely (Pasgaard 2015; Latour 1986).

Thus we can see how, at even the most fundamental level, pilot projects do not remain contained within the boundaries of their official framings, thus challenging assumptions of conceptual containment (Jasanoff 2006). This is further exacerbated in relation to highly technical concepts such as REDD+ and the challenges faced by conservation and development brokers, such as village-level NGO staff, in translating complex concepts such as carbon (Pasgaard 2015). Local NGO actors involved in the Kilosa pilot project struggled to translate REDD+ in a way that village-level actors would fully understand (chapter five). Subsequent misunderstandings then had a knock-on effect of raising expectations, further challenging assumptions of pilot project containment, which I will continue to discuss in this chapter.

These processes of interpretation, mediation and translation can also be identified in relation to what Sampson (1996) refers to as the 'apparatus' of the pilot projects themselves. The REDD+ pilot projects were framed as, and intended to be, tests or experiments through which learning could be generated, which were also to be used to get communities ready for REDD+ and deliver conservation results (chapter four). However, in reality they manifested more like prototypes or hybrid projects, through the process of institutional bricolage (Clever 2012). The pilot projects were shaped by the implementing NGO organisations, the actors within them, and their differing values, objectives, knowledge and formulae. This is evidenced through the comparison of the Kilosa and Rungwe pilot projects, which showed the

vastly different approaches to piloting that the two NGOs took (chapter five). In Rungwe, WCS re-shaped and re-framed the pilot projects as a means of both generating learning on REDD+, and as a mechanism through which to generate additional funding and to align with existing and future plans for conservation activity in an area they are invested in long-term. Conversely in Kilosa, TFCG/MJUMITA followed the pilot project objectives much more closely, focusing on innovation, learning and testing, as well as trying to get the communities' carbon certified and therefore ready for REDD+. As such, we can see that the pilot projects took on a social life of their own, which in varying degrees was both attached to and separate from the intentions of the donors (West 2006; Sampson 1996).

In the same way that pilot projects are shaped by implementing NGOs, who assumed the role of brokers (Mosse and Lewis 2006), they are also reshaped at the interfaces between the projects themselves and their intended recipients (Long 2003). This thesis presents evidence of the way in which the REDD+ pilot projects had a complex and messy social life, taking on different values and meanings and interacting with different social and political realities (Appadurai 1988; Sampson 1996). The pilot projects in Kilosa became a promise of development and social change, resulting in high expectations for REDD+ activity post-pilots (chapter five). In fact, among most village-level actors the projects were not framed as pilots or tests at all, rather they were seen as a first step. This resulted in a wide range of unintended consequences (Ferguson 1994; West and Brockington 2006).

Consequences included the relocation of farmers living in the newly gazetted village land forest reserves, caused by the forceful presence of expectations (Van Lente 2012). Thus, the pilot projects became agents of social change (Sampson 1996), with their impacts continuing well past pilot project completion.

By comparing the two pilot projects, chapter five demonstrates how the project that most fully tested the REDD+ mechanism, and therefore fulfilled expectations of what a pilot project should deliver, resulted in much higher expectations and more extensive unintended consequences. As such, the framing of pilot projects as conceptually and physically contained within the boundaries of their framings, activities, timings and objectives is shown to be inaccurate in reality (Jasanoff

2006). The Kilosa pilot project was also designed to be 'pro-poor', with a range of mechanisms put in place to facilitate this such as equal distribution of trial payments (chapter six). However, the negative impacts of the projects were most acutely experienced by some of the poorest and most vulnerable in society (chapter five). As such, the concept of ethical containment within well-meaning parameters of 'pro-poor' projects is also challenged.

Chapters four and five also challenge hidden assumptions that pilot projects, like other experiments, can be controlled in a way that means that they can selectively break through containment (Jasanoff 2006). Chapter five highlights the assumption within the pilot project narrative that expectations can be managed once raised. In the case of Kilosa, expectations played a performative role in the facilitation of pilot projects, gaining support for their implementation and driving activity at the local level. Efforts were made by NGOs to manage expectations of next steps, but as the case of Kilosa demonstrates, expectations cannot be managed once raised (Weszkalnys 2008). Expectations can be seen to become part of the social life of the pilot project, interacting with the imaginaries of village level actors and so becoming separate from the intentions of the implementing NGOs as well as the donors from whom the projects originated (West 2006; Taylor 2004; Sampson 1996). Assumptions can be identified within the pilot project narrative that the learning from the REDD+ pilot projects would influence forest governance policy and practice in Tanzania, even though the projects were designed and implemented to exist outside of these institutions in order to avoid bureaucracy and therefore better facilitate the learning agenda of the pilot projects. This selective containment was not possible, as the institutions excluded from the pilot projects lacked ownership, did not generate experiential learning and did not feel sufficiently engaged (chapter four).

These findings therefore both support and provide new contributions to critical scholarship on conservation and development intervention, which I discuss in chapter two. Critique of traditional projects highlights the issue of unintended consequences, which are not always accounted for or even acknowledged in the linear framing of projects (Ferguson 1994; Li 2007b; Long and van der Ploeg 1989).

These unintended consequences can also be identified in pilot projects, as this research demonstrates. The REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania also took on a social life (Sampson 1996) and were interpreted and experienced very differently by diverse actors involved (Pasgaard 2015; Latour 1986). However, what is interesting here is that pilot projects are framed as being different from traditional projects. They are framed as being experiments and sites for learning, which leads to a stronger perception of containment, even though in many ways they result in similar issues to those found in traditional projects. This therefore adds new insights to the arguments by Hulme (1995) and Mosse (2005) that changes in policy do not necessarily translate to changes on the ground. Moreover, what this analysis has shown is that the framing of projects as pilot projects has additional implications – most strikingly the raising of expectations, thus leading to more unintended consequences.

7.6 The pilot project framing, design and evaluation means that they do not fully engage with the complexities outside of the project boundaries

Within this section and section 7.7, I discuss how the imagined and operational containment of pilot projects limits their ability to fully engage with realities and complexities outside of the project boundaries, thus continuing to address research questions two and three. Analysis in chapters four, five and six highlight three main ways in which this happened in the context of REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania. The first is in relation to the messiness of policy-making and practice in natural resource governance. A number of factors including the ‘rendering technical’ of the projects (Li 2007b), and perceived need for NGOs to facilitate the projects as the only institutions capable of doing so (Kothari 2005) meant that the pilot projects sat outside, or separate from, many existing forest governance institutions (chapter four). As such, they did not engage with social and political messiness and institutional struggles that characterises natural resource governance in countries such as Tanzania (Myers *et al.* 2018; Lund *et al.* 2017). They also did not take into account the realities of actors such as district foresters and their struggles with funding and equipment.

Secondly, the pilot projects did not engage with realities beyond the pilot project timings and objectives. Through exploration of the performative nature of expectations, chapter five shows how the unintended consequences of piloting continue to have impacts, particularly at the village level, well beyond the completion of the project. This included ongoing disputes over planned relocations from farmland in Kilosa, which continued even though the projects ended and there is little prospect of future REDD+ activity in the area. As discussed in section 7.5, the pilot projects took on complex and messy social lives, which interacted with different social and political realities in many unintended and unanticipated ways and led to significant social change (Appadurai 1988; Sampson 1996). However, the complex social life of pilot projects and their myriad of impacts and implications outside of project boundaries were excluded from the process of evaluation (chapter six). The evaluation methodology was developed from international standards, along with the project objectives, enforcing strict boundaries on the process. As such many actor experiences, which reflected the social change caused by the pilot projects, were excluded from the evaluations. This was further exacerbated by the fact that villagers were represented as a homogenous group and so even when their perspectives were included it was those of the most powerful in society.

Thirdly, and linked to the previous discussion, the pilot project processes and practices were contained within the imaginaries and framings of certain actors and actor groups, and so did not fully reflect alternative imaginaries and framings. The processes and outputs of evaluation reflected the world views, values and perspectives of international conservation and development professionals, which often differed from those found among actors at the village level (chapter six). This included perspectives on what worked, which reflected the prioritisation of conservation by the consultants and other international conservation and development professionals working in Tanzania. It also included perspectives of what constitutes just intervention, which differed significantly from the perspectives of some of the villagers. As such, the evaluation process was contained within the 'paradigmatic confluence of ideas' that constitute the international

conservation and development system and the rationale for using pilot projects (Sikor *et al.* 2013: 195).

7.7 Pilot projects' ability to deliver learning and change is limited, and instead they act to reproduce and reinforce the existing system

I have argued in the previous section that the imagined and operational containment of pilot projects limits their ability to fully engage with realities and complexities outside of the project boundaries, highlighting three examples of this. Here I look at some of the implications of this, which further addresses research question three as well as starting to consider question four: *how can studying pilot projects increase our understanding of international conservation intervention?* By separating from and not fully engaging with the social and political realities of natural resource governance policy-making and practice in Tanzania, the pilot projects did not accurately represent how REDD+ would function on a wider scale in Tanzania (chapter four). This resulted in, among other things, disengagement by state actors and the 'pilot project effect' (Palmer Jones 1981). This was then exacerbated by the project evaluation processes, resulting in documents that reflect only part of the pilot project story and excludes the experiences of many of the actors, particularly the most marginalised at the village level (chapter six). Myers *et al.* (2018) argue that mechanisms such as REDD+ are limited by their technical design and the resultant lack of engagement with social and political messiness. These findings are particularly significant in light of the framing of pilot projects as delivering innovation, learning and diffusion, thus differentiating them from traditional projects (Vreugdenhil and Slinger 2008). However in reality, the ability of pilot projects to deliver on their learning objectives is actually limited by the way in which they are designed, implemented and evaluated.

The analysis and discussion in this thesis also develops this argument further, finding that rather than being a vehicle for experimentation and change, pilot projects can act to reproduce and reinforce the existing system. The focus on experimentation, testing and learning means that pilot projects come with a right to fail and as such avoid the need to commit to long-term programmes or policies

(chapter four). This right to fail is one of the ways in which pilot projects are differentiated from traditional projects, which are judged against clear objectives set at the start of the process. As such, pilot projects can be conceptualised as vehicles through which international agencies and donors can try and legitimise new conservation and development mechanisms, or fads, without committing or engaging with political and social messiness (Li 2007a). Thus pilot projects can also be conceptualised as mechanisms that facilitate the proliferation of international conservation and development fads. The fact that the evaluation process did not reflect the initial framing of the pilot projects as vehicles for experimentation, learning and diffusion (chapters four and six) also limits the ability for pilot projects to bring about the desired change. In short, the framings, narratives and policies of pilot projects are not reflected in the realities of their implementation (Mosse 2005).

Implications of these links between pilot projects and the wider international conservation and development system has implications for different actors. NGOs implementing pilot projects can find themselves in a difficult position, having to be experimental and deliver quick results while maintaining their legitimacy with local actors (Dressler 2017). Choices must be made by NGOs between following donor objectives, such as fully piloting the new mechanism, and minimising negative impacts at the local level, such as raising expectations (chapter five). Pilot projects have significant and long-lasting consequences, particularly among local actors (chapters five and six). However, the pilot project framing, including the right to fail, side lines issues of responsibility, accountability and liability. Upward accountability, for example from the NGOs to the donors is easy to identify in relation to Tanzania's REDD+ pilot projects. However, downward accountability to the recipients and the unintended consequences of pilot projects received much less attention. This is often a characteristic of contexts in which competition for funding is high and donors are looking for success stories (Baur and Schmitz 2012; Bebbington 2005). Pilot projects therefore run the risk of causing or exacerbating social justice issues, as marginalised local actors are most heavily impacted by unintended consequences (chapter five).

A focus on experimentation and learning in the pilot project narrative can be identified, showing the various institutions that were included in the piloting phase in order to facilitate this (chapter four). Project evaluation is key to this, which in the case of REDD+ in Tanzania was implemented by consultants on behalf of the donors. The approach taken by the consultants when evaluating the Kilosa pilot project discursively reproduced the worldviews, values and perspectives of international conservation and development professionals (chapter six). As such, the evaluation process itself reduced the ability for in-depth learning and reinforced the status quo of the international conservation and development system. This is in contrast to the framing of pilot projects as a means by which innovative new approaches to governance can be identified (van Buuren and Loorbach 2009). The suggested solution to learning limitations of the pilot projects was to bring in more technical expertise (chapter four). However in reality this would serve only to further reinforce the containment of pilot projects, as it would likely result in further professionalisation of international conservation and development (Kothari 2005), as opposed to more engagement with social and political realities. Yet it is argued that in fact engagement with social and political messiness is required in order to facilitate social justice in conservation and development interventions (Myers *et al.* 2018).

7.8 Pilot projects are better conceptualised as agents of social change

As I have already highlighted, the experience of REDD+ in Tanzania has led to some actors, particularly at the national scale, challenging the use of pilot projects and advocating instead for longer-term approaches to conservation and development. Yet new pilot projects continue to be established and the narrative of needing to pilot, test and innovate remains strong in the international conservation and development system (Angelsen *et al.* 2017; UN-REDD 2018). In order to challenge and improve pilot projects, they must first be demythologised and reconceptualised in the same way that traditional projects have been (Long and van der Ploeg 1989). This discussion, and this thesis as a whole, contributes to this goal by conducting research *on* conservation and development pilot projects, treating them as social phenomenon and studying their social life (Sandbrook *et al.* 2013; Li 2007b). Using

the empirical chapters from this thesis, I have begun to reconceptualise pilot projects in international conservation and development and so contributed insights into our understanding of pilot projects and the international conservation and development system more broadly. The intention of this thesis is not to dismiss the work of conservation and development organisations, nor is it to suggest further technical fixes to improve the use of pilot projects (Li 2007b). However, by engaging with the pilot projects as social phenomenon and drawing together the findings, I am able to put forward some recommendations.

Pilot projects can be conceptualised as representations of the international conservation and development system. They are framed as being a tool for facilitating experimentation and learning. However, attempts to contain them as experiments away from social and political realities, and the resultant way that they manifest in reality, contradicts these goals by reinforcing and reproducing characteristics of the international conservation and development system, including discourses, narratives and practices. What can be termed the social life of pilot projects occurs at the interface with and between actors, which results in a wide range of impacts and implications (Sampson 1996; Long 2003), thus contradicting the illusion of containment (Jasanoff 2006). Negative impacts, or unintended consequences (West and Brockington 2006), are experienced most acutely by project recipients, such as farmers in rural Tanzania. These impacts continue beyond project timelines and objectives and pilot projects can therefore be conceptualised as agents for social change. However due to the framing of pilot projects as experiments that should be allowed to fail (Randinelli 1993), and without engaging with the social life of pilot projects outside of project timelines and objectives, there is little emphasis on the responsibility and accountability for negative consequences. In order to address some of these issues and mitigate some of the unintended consequences, international conservation and development pilot projects must be re-engaged with as social process and agents of social change. This follows arguments for a re-framing of conservation and development intervention more broadly (Brechin *et al.* 2002; West 2006).

In relation to pilot projects, one of the ways in which this can be achieved could be by focusing on the trade-offs that are inherent in the process of piloting, thus reconceptualising them away from the linear problem-solution framing. Hirsch *et al.* (2011) argue that by focusing on trade-offs a more complete understanding of conservation initiatives can be developed, ensuring that different actor perspectives of the trade-offs are considered. One such trade-off is between the design of pilot projects to be contained, while at the same time hoping that they will a) influence those existing institutions and b) produce results that are reflective of reality (chapter four). It is argued that more engagement is needed with social and political messiness in order that conservation can be better understood (Myers *et al.* 2018; Adams and Sandbrook 2013). I build on this in relation to pilot projects, arguing that in order to fully understand how a new mechanism might work in reality, pilot projects must be designed differently and conceptual and operational containment be reduced (Jasanoff 2006). This would require more consideration of which actors and institutions are expected to continue the initiative post-pilot, whether that is NGOs, state institutions or private companies, and ensuring that they have sufficient involvement in the process of piloting (chapter four). A different approach to pilot project learning and evidence generation could also facilitate engagement with messiness and reduce perceived containment. This could include more emphasis on the social life of pilot projects at the interfaces between different actors through ongoing qualitative research programmes and broader acknowledgement of what constitutes evidence (Adams and Sandbrook 2013).

Another significant trade-off is between fully piloting a new initiative and raising expectations (chapter five). Pilot projects lead to assumptions of next steps and so cycles of hype and disappointment ensue, which have the most negative impacts on project recipients at the local level (Brown 2003; Brown and Michael 2003; Konrad 2006). Linked to this are trade-offs between different perspectives of what works and what is valued in relation to pilot projects. Within the process of evaluation the needs of the donors were prioritised, which included the desire to be experimental and to gather lessons about the REDD+ mechanism in context (chapter six). As a

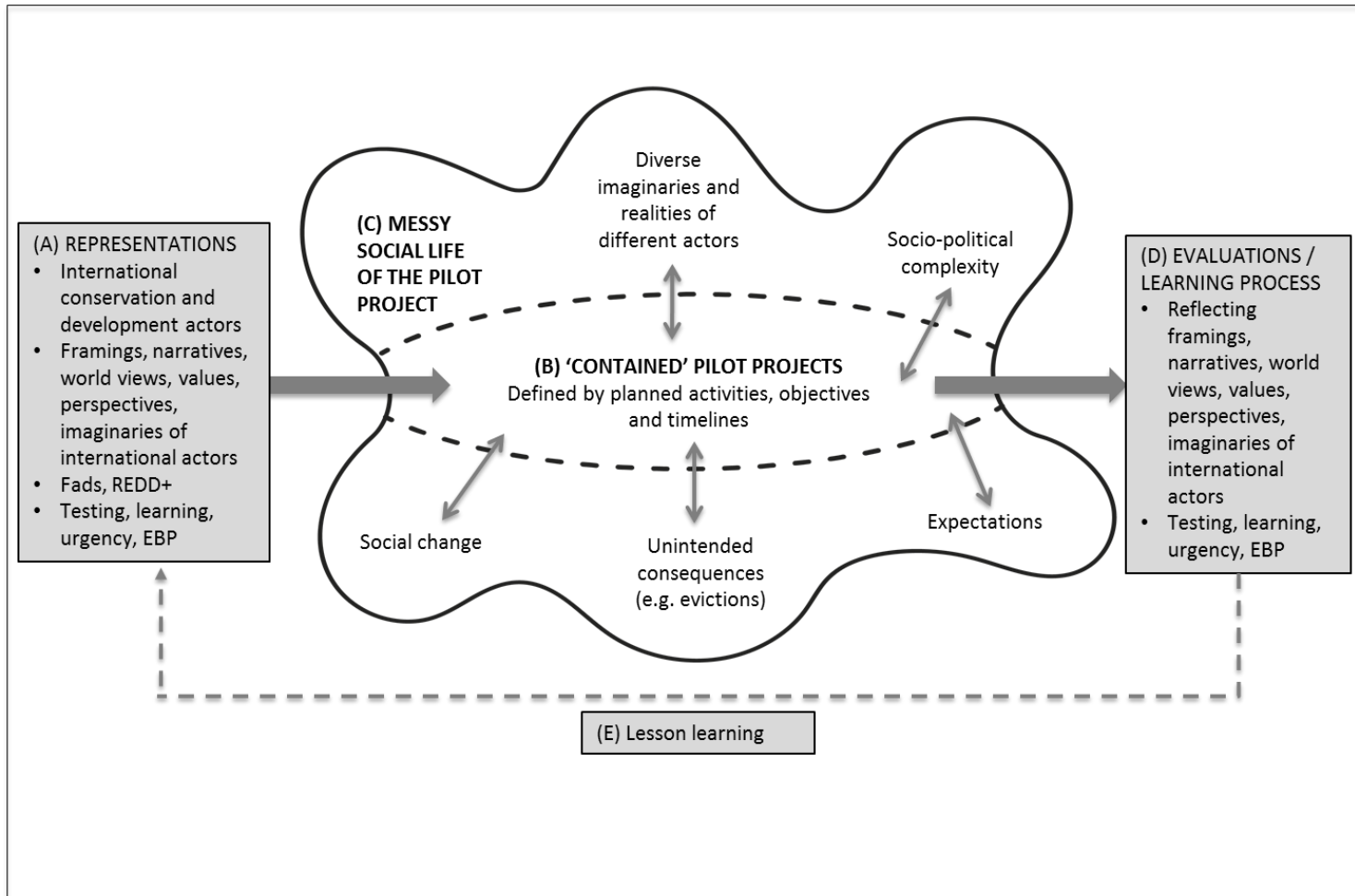
result, local perspectives were not fully considered and the Kilosa pilot project was commended, while the Rungwe pilot project was criticised for not generating enough learning and not fully piloting the mechanism (chapter five). This in turn leads to another trade-off between learning and accountability (Regeer *et al.* 2016; Groves Williams 2016). Regeer *et al.* (2016) argue that when conducting social experiments, evaluation needs to reconcile learning and accountability. This could be facilitated by broadening learning and taking into consideration the impacts and implications outside of project objectives and timelines, so that the identification of unintended consequences, such as expectations, becomes part of the evaluation process. I consider how this might be done in section 8.5.

7.9 Summary

Within this chapter, I have drawn together the findings from the analytical chapters and discussed them in relation to the wider conservation and development literature, discussed in chapter two. In doing so I have argued that pilot project realities differ from the way in which they are framed among international conservation and development professionals and within some of the instrumental literature. I also reconceptualise pilot projects as agents of social change. Figure five provides a visual summary of the arguments I have made in this chapter. It demonstrates how certain representations, which originate from international conservation and development actors, drive the use and design of pilot projects (box A). It also demonstrates how pilot projects are designed to be contained in order to facilitate fast and effective learning (B). However in reality, pilot projects interact with social and political messiness and complexities and are shaped and altered by the diverse imaginaries and realities of different actors. This results in what can be termed as the social life of pilot projects (C) and leads to consequences including social change and expectations. However, the way in which project learning and evaluation is approached means that this social life and the resultant impacts and implications are not sufficiently engaged with and captured (D). Where learning does get fed back into the international conservation and development system (which as this thesis has shown is not always the case), the fact that it is done from within the contained boundaries of the pilot project framing and

evaluation means that it reinforces the status quo of the system (E). This in turn reduces the likelihood of pilot project use, narrative and framings being challenged and unintended consequences being explored.

Figure 5: Conceptualising international conservation and development pilot projects



8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to critically explore international environment and development pilot projects as a social phenomenon. In this chapter, I summarise the thesis chapters and show how they contribute to this aim as well as to the individual research questions. I then lay out the broader contributions of this thesis, before reflecting on the research process and its limitations. I finish this chapter with recommendations and suggestions for future research.

8.2 Chapter summaries

In chapter one I identified the research gap by finding that although instrumental research into the outcomes of international conservation and development pilot projects abounds, engagement with them as a social phenomenon is limited. The importance of conducting this type of research *on* conservation and development is also established (Sandbrook *et al.* 2013): asking questions and highlighting previously unknown or misunderstood issues in order to better understand the social and political contexts and consequences of international policy and practice (Li 2007b). I also introduced the case study of REDD+, arguing that it is timely and relevant due to the proliferation of pilot projects and the increasing framing of REDD+ as the latest in a long line of international conservation fads. I then highlighted Tanzania's REDD+ pilot projects as a relevant country case study, due to the large amount of attention, funds and resources allocated and the fact that I was able to conduct fieldwork at the end of their implementation period. Chapter one thus provides the knowledge gap and the case study from which this thesis is built.

In chapter two I introduced the academic disciplines, concepts and theories that I drew on in developing this thesis. I did this by further discussing the importance of research *on* conservation and development, differentiating it from other approaches to research. I then established some of the key features of the specific approach I took to research: drawing on the actor-based approach of Long (2003) and the work of political ecologists and development anthropologists, including West (2006), Leach and Scoones (2015) and Mosse (2005). The focus of this

approach is two-fold: first looking at international conservation and development intervention and its origins as a social phenomenon and then looking at the messy realities and consequences of intervention at the interface with different actors (Long 2004; Li 2007b). I then introduced some of the key concepts that have framed the analysis in this thesis. I did so first by unpacking the international conservation and development system and its players (Tvedt 2006; Scoones 1998; Mosse and Lewis 2006). I then explored some of the core concepts related to this system and its processes, finding that REDD+ can be framed as a fad (Redford *et al.* 2013), which represents dominant international framings and narratives and is brought to life through the apparatus of interventions, including pilot projects (Sampson 1996; Li 2007a). I also unpacked discussions around the use of projects more broadly, and identified the main ways in which the literature differentiates traditional projects and pilot projects. I also introduced the concept of the social life of intervention (Appadurai 1988); characterised by social and political messiness (Myers *et al.* 2018; Long 2003) and often resulting in unintended consequences (West and Brockington 2006). The social life of interventions is influenced by the actors involved and their social imaginaries (Taylor 2004; Leach and Scoones 2015). These concepts provide a conceptual frame for the thesis by establishing the key components that enable the investigation of international conservation and development interventions as social phenomena.

In chapter three I outlined my research design and methodological approach, which was driven by the research gap, my aim and research questions, and the conceptual framing explored in chapter two. Using the five stages of research design suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (2011a), I discussed my approach. I looked first at myself as researcher and my positionality in the Tanzanian context, framing my research as an ongoing process of reflexivity and negotiation (Sultana 2007), which includes flexible positioning as outside and inside learner (Blaikie 2007). I then established the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm (Schwandt 1994) and considered how to achieve rigour through trustworthiness (Denzin and Lincoln 2011a). I then established my research strategies: using an embedded case study approach to research (Baxter and Jack 2008) supported by ethnography and narrative research. I

then detailed my data collection methods and highlighted some key challenges, before describing my two-stage data analysis process and discussing some key reflections on the interpretive process. Finally, I introduced the case study of REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania, further establishing it as an ideal case study for this research. I also introduced the two pilot projects used as contrasting, or two-tail, case studies (Yin 2014) for more detailed exploration. Although these embedded case studies have informed the whole thesis, insights gained from comparing the two cases is central to chapter five's analysis and arguments. The Kilosa case study was also central to the analysis in chapter six.

In chapter four I used a critical policy studies lens, with a focus on evidence-based policy-making (Adams and Sandbrook 2013; Head 2010; Sanderson 2010), to unpack pilot projects at the policy level. In line with the two-fold approach to investigating interventions as social phenomena, I first looked at how pilot projects are framed and what motivates conservation and development professionals, in Tanzania and internationally, to use them. I then started to unpack the social life of pilot in relation to wider policy and practice, comparing the messy realities of Tanzania's REDD+ pilot projects to the often linear narratives driving pilot project use. I identified three contradictions between narratives and realities. Firstly, pilot projects are framed as being experimental, innovative and as having the right to fail. However, in practice the pilot projects manifested as prototypes that were designed to demonstrate and legitimise REDD+ as a mechanism (Sanderson 2002; Li 2007a), or as hybrids and used to continue with existing activity. Secondly, the assumed need to keep pilot projects outside of existing state institutions contradicted the ambition for the projects to influence those same institutions. Finally, a contradiction between the evidence-based policy and practice narrative and the complex and messy realities of policy-making and practice was identified (Head 2010; Adams and Sandbrook 2013). These three contradictions limited the ability for the pilot projects to deliver on their objectives of learning, scaling-up and influencing key actors in Tanzania, with pilot projects instead being a way of facilitating short-term approaches to international conservation and development. This chapter therefore contributed to research questions one (*what are pilot*

projects and why are they used in international conservation and development) and two (*how do pilot projects interact and intersect with other actors, institutes and processes*). By identifying the contradictions between the narratives and the interactions and intersections, a key characteristic of the social phenomenon of pilot projects was also revealed.

In chapter five I looked at pilot projects and expectations in the context of conservation and development fads, such as REDD+. I drew on science and technology studies literature on the sociology and dynamics of expectations to create a conceptual lens through which to explore expectations in Tanzania's REDD+ pilot projects, using on actor perspectives from the international level to the pilot level in the case study sites of Rungwe and Kilosa and the four case study villages. The first part of the chapter analysis focused on research question two, finding that characteristics associated with fads, expectations and pilot projects interact to drive each other forward and become a forceful presence (Van Lente 2012). The rest of the chapter contributed to both research questions two and three (*what are the impacts and implications of pilot projects, beyond project timelines and objectives?*) by looking at the social life of expectations at the interface between the REDD+ pilot projects and different actors involved. I identified a trade-off between fully piloting a new initiative such as REDD+ and raising expectations. Once expectations are raised they interact with different actors and actor imaginaries and so take on their own social life (Konrad 2006). Expectations are therefore hard to manage (Weszkalnys 2008), which contradicts the framing of expectations being manageable among some professionals. The high initial expectations of the Kilosa (and other) pilot projects were not met, resulting in a hype and disappointment cycle and unintended negative consequences at the village level (Brown and Michael 2003). Expectations are therefore identified as being a core component of the social phenomenon of international conservation and development pilot projects, influencing and being influenced by the pilot project's social life.

In chapter six I focused at the project level, critically exploring the process of evaluation in the Kilosa pilot project, the recognition of different actor perspectives

within that process and some of the implications of the approach taken. As such, this chapter contributed primarily to research questions two and three, although it also addressed research question one in its acknowledgement of the learning objectives of pilot projects. I used a recognition justice lens and an analytical framework that I have adapted from the work of Sikor *et al.* (2013). I found that the evaluation process used by the consultants in Kilosa represents the worldviews, values and perspectives of international actors, while rendering those of many of the villagers invisible. This delegitimises alternative perspectives and provides a very narrow perspective of what works and what counts as evidence (Adams and Sandbrook 2013). The process of evaluation therefore discursively reproduces and therefore exacerbates recognition injustices within the conservation and development system. This significantly reduces the ability for pilot projects to facilitate innovation by delivering learning and insights from the project recipients.

In chapter seven, I drew together insights from the previous chapters in order to answer the research aim and all of the research questions, with a focus on question four (*how can studying pilot projects increase our understanding of international conservation and development intervention?*). By drawing on key themes from the different chapters, I was able to reconceptualise international conservation and development pilot projects. I found that pilot projects act as apparatus through which representations like REDD+ are brought to life (Sampson 1996; Mace 2014). However, I also argued that pilot projects themselves are representations; reflecting dominant narratives such as the need for evidence-based policy and continuous innovation. I also identified different ways in which pilot projects are designed to remain contained and not to engage with social and political messiness (Jasanoff 2006; Li 2007a). This containment is, however, not possible due to the unpredictable and complex social lives of pilot projects. Attempts to contain pilot projects also limit their ability to deliver on project objectives, such as learning and innovation. As such, I reconceptualised pilot projects as agents of social change and argue for engagement with the trade-offs, impacts and implications associated with pilot projects. I also argued for more emphasis on recognition justice, responsibility

and accountability if pilot projects are used. I finished the chapter by presenting a visual that summarises my arguments.

8.3 Thesis contributions

This thesis is structured so that the three analysis chapters (four, five and six) make individual academic contributions, as well as combining to enable the thesis as a whole to make contributions and fulfil the aim of exploring pilot projects as a social phenomenon. Individually, chapter four contributes new knowledge to critical policy studies literature. By situating pilot projects as a core phenomenon in the centre of debates on the efficacy of evidence-based policy, chapter four also challenges the received wisdom associated with evidence-based policy and practice. This will be of interest to academics working in the policy studies field, as well as to international conservation and development professionals. Chapter five contributes new insights to the literature on the sociology of expectations. The focus of this literature has historically been on medicine and technology, primarily in the developed world, so looking at expectations in the context of international conservation and development pilot projects adds a diverse case study. Expectations is an issue that is gaining attention among conservation and development policy-makers, practitioners and academics. By unpacking expectations in detail, chapter five has brought up some important issues and contributed to our understanding of expectations as a social phenomenon. Chapter six contributes to literature on social justice and in particular recognition justice. The analytical framework and the elements within it built from the work of Sikor *et al.* (2013), providing a starting point for the potential future application of a recognition justice lens in international conservation and development. Chapter six also contributes to critical debates on project evaluations by highlighting limitations of a formulaic approach that fails to consider the diverse ways of knowing, values and perspectives of actors involved.

The thesis as a whole provides further contributions, which were unpacked in chapter seven. Firstly, the thesis reconceptualises pilot projects and through doing so exposes some of their challenges, weaknesses and issues. As Li (2007b) argues,

this is important as conservation and development professionals are too close and too involved in day to day implementation to be able to identify such issues. I also emphasise some of the implications of the framing of pilot projects as being different to traditional projects. In doing so I contribute to a broader understanding of intervention and the ways in which changing trends in intervention design can deliver change in some ways and business as usual in others. By reconceptualising pilot projects and highlighting some key issues, this thesis enables and encourages more critical engagement with pilot projects as a social phenomenon, from practitioners, policy-makers and academics. And thus, this thesis has the potential to influence policy and practice both in Tanzania and beyond. Strategies to increase the impact on policy and practice are discussed further in section 8.5. The analysis in this thesis has also contributed to broader debates in international conservation and development. This includes contribution to debates on conservation fads (c.f. Fletcher *et al.* 2016; Angelsen *et al.* 2017; Fletcher *et al.* 2017). Through analysis of pilot projects I have identified some key factors that contribute to the rise and fall of conservation and development fads, including the gaps identified between assumptions and realities. Findings from this thesis also contributes to knowledge on international conservation and development more broadly and highlights some core issues, including narratives, the role of evidence, responsibility and accountability and social justice.

The findings in this thesis therefore highlights the importance of research *on* conservation (Sandbrook *et al.* 2013). The appropriateness of this thesis's methodology to the pursuit of research *on* conservation is also highlighted. The use of the actor-oriented approach (Long 2003) and the focus on gathering a wide range of actor perspectives has uncovered matters of interest that traditional research strategies (including those taken by the consultants to evaluation) would not uncover. The worldviews held by villagers in Kilosa that contrast with those in the evaluation report is a good example of this. The analysis in this thesis has also demonstrated the advantages of using different conceptual lenses to unpack a social phenomenon, such as pilot projects. For example by using a science and technology studies lens in chapter five and a social justice lens in chapter six, a

range of different, and previously unexplored, consequences of pilot projects were uncovered. This enables deeper analysis than would be the case using one lens, it increases our understanding of the social life of pilot projects, and it has increased the contributions delivered by the thesis. The advantages of collecting data after a project has been completed are also highlighted, which came about as a result of the framing of pilot projects as the unit of analysis. Therefore, as well as contributing theoretically and practically, this thesis contributes methodologically, demonstrating the value of alternative approaches to research that work within the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm, and draw on case study, thick description (Geertz 1994) and ethnographic methodologies.

8.4 Reflections and limitations

As part of my reflexive approach to research that involves continuous consideration of myself as multicultural subject (Denzin and Lincoln 2011a; Sultana 2007), it is important to consider the research process and its limitations. Throughout my analysis I have highlighted instances whereby my positionality is likely to have influenced the narratives. One example of this is claims-making (West 2006), which was a factor in Kilosa as a context in which MKUHUMI-related issues related to land and benefit distribution were still being contested. In assuming a relativist epistemology (Denzin and Lincoln 2011a) issues such as this are expected and framed as part of the research. However, I am left wondering whether these narratives might have been as different as they appeared, particularly in Kilosa, if I had not been so obviously physically different and seen by some as a link to the NGOs and donors. One way of overcoming this would be for Tanzanian researchers to conduct the narrative interviews. This would likely have positive impacts such as increasing the 'inside' positionality of the researcher (Blaikie 2007). However, there would also be limitations, for example the fact that the primary researcher would miss out on the considerable experiential knowledge gained from conducting the narrative interviews.

In reflecting on my thesis research, I also consider the normative social justice agenda that is central to political ecology, science and technology studies, social

anthropology and social justice theory (Forsyth 2008). Maintaining awareness of this agenda while not being overly influenced by it was a challenge throughout the research process. During data collection it would have been easy to make simplistic differentiations between villains and victims, particularly in relation to relocated farmers in Kilosa vs the village government. This was also emphasised by the fact that two of my research assistants were also passionate about social justice. At the same time, however, I sometimes felt I was going too far the other way and holding back when highlighting social injustices and calling for more accountability. This was further exacerbated by wanting to avoid alienating conservation and development professionals. This meant that the interpretation process on issues related to social justice, particularly in chapters five, six and seven, became a longer and more reflective process. This is not a bad thing, particularly as all research goes through a process of interpretation, which is often unacknowledged. The advantage of taking an interpretivist-constructivist approach to research, and its subjectivist epistemology is that it is discussed more openly, considered in more depth and therefore becomes less restrictive.

I also came across some methodological challenges. During data collection, this included issues with sampling and the fact that some actor groups were not included. As I have discussed at length in section 6.3 this included the exclusion of pastoralists from the study in Kilosa, as they were not considered a part of the pilot projects, were not referenced at all by villagers, and were not visible during the weeks I was in and around the villages. I would also have liked to have spoken to more actors involved in 'illegal' activities such as charcoal-making but ran out of time (largely due to issues with rain detailed in section 3.6.3). Taking a reflexive approach to research has many advantages, however by being guided by realities the researcher runs the risk of missing less visible issues. In the case of Kilosa, the focus on conflict over resources and farm relocations potentially overrode other issues. I would also have liked to have been able to check my interpretations with participants in order to ensure to maximise research credibility (Denzin 2004), however due to visa restrictions this was not possible. One way of overcoming this issue would be to take a constructivist grounded theory approach to research

(Charmaz 2014), which zigzags between data collection and data analysis. Finally, by conducting the research after the pilot projects had finished, I missed some insights that I would have gained by doing a real time ethnography. I could then have spent more time with the national and regional actors, perhaps trying to shadow them during meetings and project implementation and conducting a multi-sited, multi-scale ethnography (Falzon 2016). This could be overcome going forward by conducting longitudinal research, which is discussed further in section 8.5.

One of my ambitions is to return to Tanzania to present my findings, in pursuit of both impact outside of academia and reciprocity (Hammett *et al.* 2014). Part of this process would involve workshops in which I hope to work with conservation and development professionals to consider some of the issues raised in the research and co-create some policy briefs. I will also present posters to the villagers, and organise workshops at the district level. However, I do anticipate challenges with achieving impact due to the potential disconnect between my research approach and expectations of research and researchers in Tanzania. Having discussed my research with many conservation and development professionals and having attended a number of meetings in Tanzania, including research presentations, it is clear that positivist, quantitative approaches to research are valued over interpretative, qualitative research. The latter is seen by some as anecdote, particularly by Tanzanian nationals and many actors working in academic institutions in Tanzania. Steps to overcome include extensive consideration of the trustworthiness of the research, pre-empting scepticism and introducing research with reasons why research *on* conservation is important and presenting research in person so any questions or issues can be dealt with.

8.5 Recommendations and future research

When presenting the work from the thesis or discussing the World Development paper with practitioners, I have frequently been asked for recommendations on ways to improve pilot projects, or to suggest alternative ways to test new conservation and development initiatives. I have also been asked to recommend frameworks that can be used as checklists, such as how to incorporate recognition

justice in project evaluations and means of better managing expectations. However, the aim of this thesis is not to recommend new 'knowledge products' (Mosse 2004b: 81) nor to 'suggest a recipe for how improvement can be improved' (Li 2007b: 2). Rather, I hope that this thesis will act as a catalyst for more critical conversations. With this in mind I make two broad recommendations and suggest future research that could contribute knowledge and further inform these critical conversations.

8.5.1 More engagement with pilot projects as a social phenomenon

This thesis both identifies and contradicts a dominant narrative in which pilot projects are framed as contained tools of experimentation, and argues that in fact they are agents of social change. This prevents a fundamental challenge to the way in which pilot projects are currently used. As such, the first recommendation is for more engagement with pilot projects as a social phenomenon; both among international conservation and development practitioners and policy-makers, and within academia. On the part of international conservation and development professionals, this requires a reframing of pilot projects and much more detailed engagement with some of the trade-offs that have been highlighted in this thesis. Questions need to be asked about why pilot projects are being used and whether they really are the right tool for the job, particularly in relation to expectations of generating learnings that can then be used to improve policy and practice. To this end, this research supports existing calls to consider how development can be done differently, particularly in relation to challenging the short-termism that is central to donor-driven projects (Andrews et al. 2014).

However, the arguments about pilot projects in this thesis are based on one case study at one moment in time, based on the interpretations of one researcher. As such, my second recommendation is for more research to be conducted on pilot projects, following a similar approach to the one I have taken in this thesis (interpretive, qualitative, reflexive, using multiple lenses). By investigating the social phenomenon, social life and impacts and implications of pilot projects in different country contexts and in relation to different intervention types, the arguments

presented in this thesis could be tested and expanded and broader theoretical claims about pilot projects be made. This in turn could support the critical conversations recommended among policy-makers and practitioners. Climate-smart agriculture could be a good intervention case study through which to further explore pilot projects. In a similar way to REDD+, climate smart agriculture is being promoted as a win-win solution to climate change and poverty (Kimaro *et al.* 2016). Pilot projects are being widely used to test different approaches (e.g. Aggarwal *et al.* 2013) and issue with upscaling 'successful' pilot projects abound (e.g. Westermann *et al.* 2015).

Conducting longitudinal research on pilot projects would also be beneficial and improve our understanding of the longer-term impacts of the social life of pilot projects. Longitudinal research is utilised in sociology to add new insights to the exploration of social phenomena and their characteristics over time (e.g. Emmel 2017). Gaining this knowledge will be particularly beneficial in the study of pilot projects due to their framing as contained within project timelines. Longitudinal research could be conducted in relation to the REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania, which would require revisiting the actors involved in the research for this thesis and using the narrative interview technique to find out what their experiences have been like since the last round of data collection. It would also be interesting to see if these more recent experiences have influenced the framing of the project experience itself, in line with the assertion by Brown and Michael (2003) that outcomes influence the sense-making processes central to storytelling. Unpacking what has happened over time to the evidence generated by the pilot projects (both experiential and physical) and whether it has informed subsequent policy and practice would also deepen the analysis conducted in this thesis. Future longitudinal research could also be conducted throughout the project timeline – from start to perhaps two years post-project – in order to add even more depth to our understanding of pilot projects as a social phenomenon.

8.5.2 Research *on* conservation and development and project evaluations

My second recommendation relates to the way in which learning and evidence is generated through pilot projects, and in international conservation and development more broadly. The findings in this thesis demonstrate the usefulness of actor-based, interpretive, case study research (Long 2003; Mosse 2005; Denzin and Lincoln 2011a). By taking this approach to research, issues that were not captured in the project evaluation documents have been uncovered. Although this has been done as an academic exercise, it is clear that this sort of research would provide useful insights to policy-makers and practitioners and as such, I support arguments for the incorporation of more research *on* conservation in order to contribute directly to policy and practice Sandbrook *et al.* (2013). This would require a re-framing of the types of research that count as evidence, to include more ethnographic and interpretive research (Adams and Sandbrook 2013).

In relation to pilot projects, project evaluations would be a good place to start, particularly in relation to their perceived importance in generating lessons for policy and practice. This thesis has identified a number of challenges related to the way in which project evaluations were conducted in Tanzania, and it is therefore recommended that new approaches are explored. Such approaches have been suggested, including realist evaluation, which asks 'what works for whom in what circumstances and in what respects, and how?' (Pawson and Tilley 2004: 2), thus broadening investigation outside of project objectives and the worldviews, values and perspectives of those conducting the evaluations. Recommending such approaches as policy tools is beyond the scope of this research. However it is clear that instrumental approaches to project evaluation have limitations and that an actor-based, interpretive approach could offer an alternative that would provide more in-depth and socially just results.

In addition, further research on the process of evaluation is suggested, following a similar approach to that taken in this thesis. International conservation and development pilot project evaluation would be taken as the unit of analysis: investigating it as a social phenomenon by drawing on a range of conceptual lenses and using ethnographic research in order to better understand the social and

political processes involved. It is hoped that this thesis has demonstrated the value of such research, which questions assumptions, improves learning and opens up spaces to see things from different perspectives. However the challenge remains of how to get this type of research *on* conservation and development incorporated into international policy and practice in a sector that is governed by short timescales, limited budgets, fads, and ingrained framings, narratives and assumptions.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: CONSENT FORMS

a. Consent form in English (for all conservation and development professionals)

N.B. This was presented on a two-sided sheet of paper with a Kiswahili translation on the back to ensure all respondents fully understood

Introduction and overview

My name is Kate Massarella and I am a PhD researcher from the Universities of York and Leeds in the UK. I am interested in the use of pilot schemes to test forest conservation and development programmes. I am using the REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania as a case study. I want to understand the ways in which different people involved in pilot schemes experience, perceive and understand them, and what their personal opinions and reflections of pilot schemes are. I am an independent researcher and am not working for the government or for any other organisation except for my universities in the UK.

Further details and confidentiality

- The interview will consist of a few open-ended questions about your experience of the pilot projects and I will ask you to elaborate on things as we go through. I am specifically interested in your personal experience and perspective.
- Involvement in the interview is completely voluntary. If you do not want to answer a question, or wish to stop the interview at any time please feel free.
- Notes and the recording of the interview (if permitted) will be stored in a password-protected computer file. Only the researcher and research assistants/translators will hear the recordings and/or see the interview notes.
- Data will be analysed and used to write academic papers/thesis, for presentation to the stakeholders involved in the research, for meeting and conference presentations and potentially for non-academic publications, policy briefs and press releases.
- Individual names will not be used in any of the publications or other outputs. However the name of your organisation, or the type of organisation that you are from, might be referred to.

Declaration

I have understood the nature of the research and am happy to take part.

Sign (and date):

Print name:

I am happy for the interview to be recorded.

Sign (and date):

Thank you very much for agreeing to be involved in this research.

b. Verbal consent list for villagers

N.B. This is the basic verbal consent. We added additional bits of information as we went along and learned what people wanted to hear and what helped facilitate a good interview. Some examples of these additions are in brackets after each statement.

- *My name is Kate Massarella and I am a PhD student from the University of York in the UK and this is my research assistant Harriet/Rose/Isack.*
- *Ninaitwa Kate Massarella na mimi ni mwanafunzi kutoka Chuo Kikuu York Uingereza na Harriet/Rose/Isack ni msaidizi wangu*

- *I am an independent researcher and am not working for the government or to any other organisations except for my university in the UK.*
- *Utafiti wangu, ni utafiti huru na sifanya kazi na serikali au kampuni yeyote.*

(We emphasised this and also added that I do not work for MKUHUMI. This was very important in Kilosa to ensure people didn't think I was here to buy carbon).

- *I am researching the use of forest conservation pilot projects and development programmes in Tanzania and I want to ask you questions about them, for example about REDD+*
- *Ninafanya utafiti juu ya matokeo ya miradi ya majaribio ya kimaendeleo ya utunzaji wa hifadhi za misitu, kwa mfano MKUHUMI.*

- *I am interested in how different people involved feel about pilot schemes and what their experiences have been like*
- *Ningependa kujua juu ya uhusika wako, mtazamo na mawazo yako binafsi kuhusiana na miradi hii ya kimaendeleo na hifadhi za misitu*

(We added in that there are no right/wrong answers – we want to know your opinion. This was especially important in the case of younger people and women, who we realised early on wanted to tell us the 'right' answer).

- *We will be asking you to tell us about your involvement in these projects using a few questions. We would like to gain as much information as possible about your experiences and opinions.*
- *Tutauliza maswali machache ambayo hayato husika na kua mtihani bali ni kupata mawazo, mtazamo wako na uhusika katika miradi hiil.*

(We added in that people should speak at length and tell us as much information as they thought was relevant. This helped get past the one word answers that people in Tanzania are used to giving to researchers as part of surveys).

- *The things we discuss in this interview will be used in my university reports and publications but I will not use your name.*
- *Katika mzungumzo yetu nitatumia mawazo na mtazamo wako katika riporti zangu na machapisho mbalimbali, lakini sitatumia/kutaja jina lako popote, mazungumzo haya ni huru na siri.*

- *If you feel uncomfortable at any point during the interview, or if you don't want to answer any questions, just tell us. Also if you would like to stop the interview at any point please just say.*
- *Unapo jisikia haupo huru, kujibu swali/maswali au kuacha kuendelea na mahojiano haya wakati wowote, unaweza kutuambia.*

- *Is there anything you would like to ask me before we start?*
- *Una swali lolote kwangu kua huru kuuliza?*

- *Are you happy to take part?*
- *Ungependa kuendelea?*

- *We would like to record the interview. Only the research team will hear the recordings – it will not be made public. Are you are happy to continue?*
- *Ningependa kurekodi mahojiano haya. Timu ya utafiti tu itasikia rekodi - haiwezi kufanywa kwa umma Ungependa kuendelea?*

(Show recording device and discuss how it works and explain why we want to use it – to translate from Swahili into English).

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW PROMPTS AND POTENTIAL QUESTIONS

a. Conservation and development professionals

N.B. I did not use this as a protocol/list of questions. I had it as a reference only. See section 4.6.1 for more information on my approach to narrative interviewing.

Reminder: interested in your experience and perspectives.

Opening topics / ice breakers

1. Tell me a bit about yourself and how and why you got involve in conservation and development in Tanzania
 - *What is it like working in forest conservation in Tanzania?*
 - *Have you worked in other countries / in other fields?*
2. Can you tell me about experiences of being involved in pilot projects (in any field) aside from REDD+?
 - *If have not had experience of pilots, reflect on interventions more broadly...*
 - *Can you reflect on examples of impacts that pilots have had – both positive and negative?*
 - *When are pilots useful and when are they not – tease out this in relation to environment/development?*
 - *Under what circumstances are pilots typically used?*
 - *Who is typically involved in pilots studies – focusing on forests in Tanzania if possible...*

REDD+ pilot projects

3. *Moving on to REDD+, can you cast your mind back to the first time you heard about REDD+.*
 - *How did you hear about it?*
 - *What did you think about it?*
 - *How did you get involved?*
 - *Why did you / your organisation get involved?*
 - *What did you hope would come of it? / Objectives?*
 - *Ask about design of projects – what done, how, who involved and why?*
4. What happened next? / Talk me through your experience of the project

- Clarify sequence of events throughout and clarify respondent's role
 - Build on all points that respondent gives particularly energy do (positive or negative).
 - Keep asking what did you think / how did you feel about that?
 - How / why did you do that?
 - What was the impact of that?
 - That's interesting – can you tell me more about that? (Do not ask why!)
 - Let me see if I have understood this correctly (and repeat back)
 - So what you're saying is...
5. And then what happened next? Get participant to talk through whole process and give them space to do so at own pace and focusing on own priorities
- See above prompts

Reflections and the future

6. Project reflections and evaluations

- Refer back to objectives if mentioned previously. What actually happened / were objectives achieved?
- In your opinion, were there any unexpected outcomes – good or bad?
- What do you feel worked and what didn't?
- Can you tell me about any challenges that you experienced throughout the process and how you handled them?
- What do you think is the most important outcomes / lessons you have learnt through the REDD+ piloting programs?
- Who do you think benefitted from the pilots and who – if anyone - lost out?
- Can you reflect on how your experience with the REDD+ pilot schemes compares with experiences of other pilots/interventions?

7. The future

- Can you reflect on whether involvement in the REDD+ projects has impacted your perspectives on the use of pilots in the future?
- What do you think will be legacy of the REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania?
- How do pilot projects fit into wider conservation/development efforts and programmes that you are involved in?

- *What is next for you / your organisation?*
- 8. Always end with these
 - *Do you have any other things you would like to talk about that we may have missed?*
 - *Is there anything you would like to ask me?*

b. Ward and village level participants

Opening questions / ice-breakers and fact finding

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself and what your life is like here in R1 / R2 / K1 / K2
 - *How long have you lived here?*
 - *What livelihood activities are you involved in?*
 - *Are you involved in any committees in the village?*
 - *Tell me about how it feels / what life is like living close to this forest?*
 - *Do you use the forest and forest products and if so what for?*
 - *What do you think about the forest (and the nature reserve)?*

Broader questions on conservation

2. Are you aware of any forest conservation projects in the area and/or any other associated activity? (If say REDD+ make a note and ask if any others)
 - *Tell me about this. What is it for? Who is leading it?*
 - *Talk me through your experience from start to finish*
 - *What is involved? Who is involved? How does it affect you – positive and negative?*
 - *What do you think about forest conservation: general / projects?*
3. Can you remember any past conservation and development projects in your village?
 - *Tell me about this. What was it for? Who was leading it?*
 - *Talk me through your experience from start to finish*
 - *What was involved? Who was involved? How did it affect you – positive and negative?*

MKUHUMI

(Go back to it if they have already mentioned it)

4. Are you aware of the MKUHUMI project in this area?
 - *If not – try and uncover if they are aware of any recent activity by the government or WCS or any other organisation recently – mention bee-keeping, tree-planting, stoves etc.*
 - *Can you talk me through what you know about it?*
5. Can you remember when you first heard about MKUHUMI?

- *How did you hear about it?*
 - *What did you think?*
6. After that, what happened with MKUHUMI? Talk me through your experience.
- *Clarify sequence of events throughout and clarify respondent's role*
 - *Build on all points that respondent gives particularly energy do (positive or negative).*
 - *Keep asking what did you think / how did you feel about that?*
 - *How / why did you do that?*
 - *What was the impact of that?*
 - *Who was involved?*
 - *What was supposed to change?*
 - *That's interesting – can you tell me more about that? (Do not ask why!)*
 - *Let me see if I have understood this correctly (and repeat back)*
 - *So what you're saying is...*
7. What happened next?
- *Prompts as above*

Reflections and the future

8. Project reflections and evaluations
- *What actually changed?*
 - *What was good and what was bad?*
 - *Who do you think benefitted from the pilots and who – if anyone - lost out? In what ways?*
 - *Were there any problems?*
 - *What do you think is the most important outcomes / lessons you have learnt through the REDD+ piloting programs?*
 - *Can you reflect on how your experience with the REDD+ pilot schemes compares with experiences of other pilots/interventions?*
 - *Have you/has your life changed as a result of MKUHUMI?*
 - *What is happening now with MKUHUMI?*
9. The future

- *What do you think will be legacy of the MKUHUMI project?*
- *What do you hope for in the future: conservation / projects / development?*

10. Always end with these

- *Do you have any other things you would like to talk about that we may have missed?*
- *Is there anything you would like to ask me?*

LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|---|
| AWF | African Wildlife Foundation |
| CBFM | Community based forest management |
| CBNRM | Community based natural resource management |
| CCIAM | Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation research programme |
| CIFOR | Center for International Forestry Research |
| EBP | Evidence-based policy and practice |
| FPIC | Free, prior, informed consent |
| ICDP | Integrated conservation and development programme |
| IRA | Institute of Research Assessment at the University of Dar es Salaam |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| JGI | Jane Goodall Institute |
| MJUMITA | <i>Mtandao wa Jamii wa Usimamizi wa Misitu Tanzania</i> (Community Forest Conservation Network of Tanzania) |
| MKUHUMI | <i>Mpango wa Kupunguza Uzalishaji wa Hewa ya Ukaa kutokana na Ukataji miti ovyo na uharibifu wa Misitu (REDD+ in Kiswahili)</i> |
| MNRT | Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism |
| MRV | Carbon monitoring, reporting and verification |
| NCB | Non-carbon benefits |
| NCMC | National Carbon Monitoring Centre (Tanzania) |
| NGO | Non-governmental organisation |
| NICFI | Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative |
| Norad | The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation |
| NIRAS | International, multidisciplinary consultancy company focusing on environmental issues, who conducted the final evaluation of the REDD+ pilot projects in Tanzania |
| NRTF | National REDD+ Task Force (in Tanzania) |
| PES | Payment for ecosystem services |

| | |
|--------|---|
| PFM | Participatory forest management |
| RED | Reducing emissions from deforestation |
| REDD | Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation |
| REDD+ | Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhancing forest stocks through improved conservation and management |
| RNE | Royal Norwegian Embassy in Dar es Salaam |
| STS | Science and technology studies |
| SUA | Sokoine University of Agriculture (in Morogoro, Tanzania) |
| TaTEDO | Tanzania Traditional Energy Development Organization |
| TFCG | Tanzania Forest Conservation Group |
| TFS | Tanzania Forest Services |
| TNRF | Tanzania Natural Resources Forum |
| TWG | REDD+ technical working groups |
| UN | The United Nations |
| UNDP | The United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEP | The United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| URT | United Republic of Tanzania |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| VLFR | Village land forest reserve |
| VNRC | Village natural resource committee |
| VPO | Vice President's Office |
| VSLA | Village savings and loans association |
| WCS | Wildlife Conservation Society |
| WCST | Wildlife Conservation Society Tanzania (different organisation to WCS international) |
| WMA | Wildlife management area |
| WWF | World Wildlife Fund |

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