2017

Global Neoliberal Agendas and Local Livelihood Realities of Carbon Trade: Whose Interests, Whose Benefits in Nepal's Community Forest Governance

Bastakoti, Rishi Ram

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Global Neoliberal Agendas and Local Livelihood Realities of Carbon Trade: Whose Interests, Whose Benefits in Nepal's Community Forest Governance

by

Rishi Ram Bastakoti

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN GEOGRAPHY

CALGARY, ALBERTA

January, 2017

Abstract

Forests are an important component of climate change governance for their function of carbon sequestration. Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) in developing countries has become a global approach to combat climate change through carbon trade. Treating carbon as a commodity has created economic pressures for locals' livelihoods in competition with global conservation efforts to increase carbon stocks. The REDD+ framework is adding complexity to an already complex framework of rights and resources which might jeopardize past successes of decentralized forest governance.

Nepal offers a fitting case study for an exploration of how global policy has affected forest governance and community forestry practices through the commodification of forest carbon. With a history of devolution towards community-level forest governance, Nepal represents a prime example of successful community forestry governance practice prior to the onset of carbon trade. Recently, Nepal started REDD+ policy preparations with the support of global donor agencies, which are anticipated to change the national forestry framework considerably. This research aims at gaining insight on the multi-level policy dynamics between global and local interests which often find themselves in conflict. Using political ecology approach on multi-scale forest governance from local forest communities to national policy actors, this research identifies critical concerns for forest tenure security, state-community power relationships, forest governance of local commons, and local rights. The findings highlight challenges to REDD+ as it should not alter but complement existing rights and community governance, and as its goals need to be carefully negotiated vis-a-vis local non-monetary livelihood needs and expectations to ensure long-term viability and justice. Overall, this dissertation helps to broaden our understanding of the global-local links of carbon trade politics, contribute to careful and sustainable policy implementation of new climate change mitigation efforts, and help build a stable future of community forestry governance in the Global South.

Preface

This thesis is based on the work contained in the following papers:

1. Bastakoti, R. R., & Davidsen, C. (Under review) Framing REDD+ at national level: Actors and discourse around Nepal's policy debate. *Forests*
2. Bastakoti, R. R., & Davidsen, C. (2014). REDD+ and forest tenure security: concerns in Nepal's community forestry. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology*, *21*(2), 168-180.
3. Bastakoti, R. R., & Davidsen, C. (2015). Nepal's REDD+ readiness preparation and multi-stakeholder. *Journal: Journal of Forest and Livelihood*, *13*, 30-43.
4. Bastakoti, R. R., & Davidsen, C. (In press).Optimism, hopes and fears: Local perceptions on REDD+ in Nepalese community forests. *International Forestry Review, XX(XX),* XX-XX.

All the papers are reproduced with the permission of the respective publishers.

Contributions

Rishi Bastakoti was the primary author of all chapters in this thesis, supported by the guidance of his supervisor, Dr. Davidsen, whose co-authorship of the four journal manuscripts also reinforced the quest for academic clarity in the preparation of the manuscripts. This research was approved by the Research Ethics Board (REB13-0865) University of Calgary, Canada.

Additional contribution

Bastakoti, R.R. (2014). Discussion on REDD+ and Carbon Rights in Nepal (in Nepali: नेपालमा रेड्प्लास र कार्वन अधिकारको बहस). हाम्रो वन सम्पदा, 11(1), 1-7.

Acknowledgements

This PhD work has been far from a lonesome journey. This collective work could not possibly have been completed without the support from many people and institutions. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Conny Davidsen for her support, patience and guidance during these years. I have many things to be grateful for with Dr. Davidsen. I have learnt a lot from her. She has provided endless support and dedication in reviewing my research proposal, manuscripts and dissertation drafts. Her reviews are thoughtful, insightful and have nurtured my intellectual growth. She has been an inspirational academic supervisor and mentor, and without her patience, support and trust, it would have been impossible for me to come this far. I would also like to thank my committee members Dr. Dianne Draper and Dr. Chui-Ling Tam for their support and feedback which strengthened the quality of this research, and to Dr. Edna Einsiedel and Dr. Randolph Haluza-DeLay for their external review.

This research was possible due to the funding provided by the following sources: the government of Canada for providing the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship (Vanier CGS) and the Canada-Graduate Scholarships-Michael Smith Foreign Study Suppliant (CGS-MSFSS), University of Calgary for the Queen Elizabeth II Scholarships, the Department of Geography for Teaching Assistantship, and the Government of Alberta for the Graduate Citizenship Award. I also received Travel Grants from the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Calgary, and the Global Diversity Foundation to present the initial findings of my research in different conferences.

I was also fortunate to attend the Global Environmental Summer Academy course in July, 2012 organized by the Global Diversity Foundation and the Rachel Carson Center in Munich, Germany. There, I had the great privilege of being able to discuss and gain insights on my research with Dr. Gary Martin, Dr. Susannah McCandless, Dr. Emily Caruso, Dr. Xavier Basurto and peer group. In a similar vein, Dr. Krishna Kumar Shrestha (University of New South Wales, Australia) and Dr. Lila Sharma (University of Bergen, Norway) deserve my thanks for sharing their ideas and providing critical comments on the Chapter 5 of this thesis. My local supervisor Dr. Narendra Raj Khanal (Department of Geography, Tribhuvan University Nepal), Dr. Indra

Sapkota (Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Nepal), Mr. Shambhu Dangal (REDD+ and Natural Resource Management Expert, ERI, Kathmandu) deserve special thanks for helping me out in improving research tools and identifying relevant national level policy actors and events for this study.

In Kathmandu, I would like to thank several institutions and their leaders not only for allocating their time for interviews but also for sharing their documents and giving me access to participate in different meetings, workshops and policy events. I specially acknowledge the REDD+ Implementation Center and its former Head Mr. Resham Bahadur Dangi, the Policy Theme Manager Dr. Narendra Chand, RECOFTC's Nepal country representative Mr. Bishnu Hari Poudel, ForestAction and its coordinator Dr. Naya Sharma. Other colleagues include Dr. Rabindra Roy, Mr. Rahul Karki, and Mr. Dil Khatri, Mr. Rajesh Bista. I am equally thankful to Mr. Ram P Acharya from Practical Solution Consultancy Nepal Pvt. Ltd and the entire team of REDD+ Strategy consulting group who supported me in this journey.

This study would not have been possible without the participation of numerous research participants in my three case study sites. I also wish to thank all the interviewees, focus group participants and other informants for their efforts and time. Hospitality of the community members and the company of my friends Mr. Krishna Kattel, Mr. Shraban Basnet, Mr. Suman Ghimire made my field stay most memorable. Cooperation and logistic support provided by RIMS Nepal in one of the research sites is also highly acknowledged. Thank you Mr. Bishnu Tripathi, Director of RIMS Nepal for providing space and accommodation.

I have been fortunate enough to be surrounded by very supportive friends at the University of Calgary. A special thanks goes to my friends Dr. Armando Preciado Babb, Dr. Gabriela Alonso-Yanez, Kalpana Ghimire, Asraf Siddique, and Samuel Agblorti who gave me valuable feedback and insights at different stages of my research. I thank other graduate students at the Geography Department for their friendship: Ryan, Susan, Carla, Jeremy, Nicole and Ana. I also wish to thank faculties and staff members of the department for their assistance in navigating through the University of Calgary System. The support and care I received from Nepalese community and

other friends in Calgary are priceless: Binod-Nisha, Bharat-Kalpana, Prasanaa-Rashmi, Prem-Pancha, Man-Sabita, Dibya-Neera, Karen Strachan, Poonam Kumari and Arvind Kumar.

I have attended several academic conferences over the past years and presented parts of my research findings. During these conferences, I met a great deal of people who share common research interests and got insightful feedback on my work. Different media outlets have helped me disseminate preliminary research findings through interview and media coverage. I would like to thank Vicki Barbett and UToday for the wonderful coverage on my research. I am equally grateful with *Vyakti, Vishesh ra Visaya* Program of Avenues Television, Kathmandu, *Samaya Samiksha* Program of Nepal FM network, and the Climate Conversion Program of Radio Makalu, Dhankuta for featuring my interview on REDD+ policy issues. I am thankful to Chris Lang for highlighting my research findings through his popular site REDD-Monitor. Chapters of this thesis were published in different journals. Special thanks is also owed to the anonymous peer-reviewers of the papers for constructive feedbacks and to the editors for their support in disseminating my research findings through the Journals. Ms. Kathleen McWilliams (Writing Support Center, University of Calgary) deserves special thanks for her tremendous support in editing some portions of the manuscripts.

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the encouragement and support of my family. I know my family has a lot of compromise and hope on my academic career. I would like to thank my parents, siblings, in-laws all the extended family members for their never-ending support. I am deeply grateful to my wife and fellow colleague Kalpana for her unfathomable belief, commitment and emotional support. In addition to taking care of family to release me for this writing, your extra bit of energy to proof read my chapters at the end of a long day counts a lot for me. Thank you for your loyalty and company, I feel uniquely fortunate. Abhi and Albert, you guys helped me a lot to prepare the visual representation of this thesis and fixing the grammatical issues. You guys are the most powerful source of inspiration and energy for this "never-ending PhD".

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures and Illustrations

List of Abbreviations

ACOFUN	Association of Collaborative Forest Users of Nepal
CF	Community Forestry
CFUG	Community Forestry User Group
COFSUN Nepal	Community based Forestry Supporters' Network Nepal
DANAR	Dalit Alliance for Natural Resources
DfID	Department of International Development
DFO	District Forest Office/Officer
DNPWC	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation
DOF	Department of Forest
ER-PIN	Emission Reductions Program Idea Note
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FECOFUN	Federation of community Forestry Users Nepal
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
GACF	Global Alliance of Community Forestry
HIMAWANTI	The Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
MPFS	Master Plan for the Forestry Sector
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification
MSFP	Multi-Stakeholder Forestry Program
NAFAN	National Forum for Advocacy Nepal
NEFIN	Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
PES	Paying for Ecological Services
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries, and the role of conservation, sustainable

	management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
REL	Reference Emission Level
RIMS	Nepal Resource Identification and Management Society Nepal
R-PP	Readiness Preparation Proposal
RRI	Rights and Resources Initiatives
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

Forests and carbon sequestration have become a fundamental factor in climate change governance. Consequently, community forestry (CF) needs to be understood not as a localized isolated practice, but rather as the outcome of an intricate policy interface among local, national, and international actors. Community-based resource management systems have become complex administrative and political structures, shaped by a form of neoliberal hybridization (McCarthy, 2005) where governments, industry, NGOs, and communities share responsibilities for conservation. Institutional and bureaucratic problems have often compromised the initial hope that CF would guarantee equitable poverty reduction and conservation outcomes (Dressler et al., 2010). The agenda has shifted away from the local forest sphere towards the powerful agendas of national and international actors (Fogel, 2004; Boyd, 2009). This has created new scalar levels of entanglement of global forests with stronger national and international agendas, which is the focus of this research.

1.1.1 Research gap and research opportunity

Community Forestry is currently facing challenging new dimensions of global environmental and economic interests which have led to simultaneous and multi-level (local to global) ‘tragedies of commons' (Hardin, 1968) from local to global, all at the same time. One important example is the question of global carbon ownership currently emerging through emission trading schemes. In line with current neoliberal approaches, developing countries are envisioned as open markets and able to promote foreign investment through carbon trade mechanisms (Humphreys, 2006). The new commodification of forests creates new scales of political and economic interests, which need to be examined as they radically alter CF as an increasingly complex system of rights and responsibilities.

Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+) has emerged as a new climate change mitigation mechanism as part of the post-Kyoto arrangement. Within the United Nations Framework Conservation on Climate Change

(UNFCCC), REDD+ has become a key strategy for forested areas, with efforts focusing on deforestation and forest degradation as well as the conservation and sustainable management of forest carbon stocks. REDD+ is anticipated to mobilize billions of dollars in multilateral funding for developing countries. It seeks to address the problem of climate change via a range of state and non-state market-based mechanisms by placing value on standing forest (Hufty & Haakenstad, 2011). By monetizing forest carbon, REDD+ has substantially increased the market value of standing forests (Phelps, Webb, & Agrawal, 2010). Although the architecture of REDD+ offers considerably a new avenue to address global climate change and it has been portrayed as a cheaper, quicker than other technological solutions and win-win strategy to halt land use change, reduce deforestation and degradation and increase carbon sequestration (Angelsen, 2008; Toni, 2011), it is founded upon a highly top-down model. Critics of REDD+ argue that it is too hooked on forest carbon failing to acknowledge the linkage of deforestation on the prevailing political, economic, ecological and social issues (Peskett & Brodnig, 2011; Thompson, Baruah & Carr, 2011). Without considering its impacts on local communities and the lessons learned from the successes of participatory forest resource management, REDD+ cannot succeed (Hufty & Haakenstad, 2011). Decentralization reform in forestry has shown increased benefit and rights of local actors, contributed to greater carbon storage and improved the livelihoods of the local community (Chhatre & Agrawal, 2009).

REDD+ has been framed as the world's largest payments for ecosystem services (PES) (Corbera, 2012). PES follows the market logic meaning, saving the ecosystem by selling them (McAfee, 1999). According to the PES principle, the beneficiaries of the ecosystem services voluntarily transfer the benefits to the service providers based on the contractual agreement. REDD+ program has proposed to channel hundreds of millions of dollars through PES schemes for forest emissions reductions. REDD+ aims to transfer economic resources from carbon offset buyers to sellers for the avoided or sequestered carbon dioxide emissions provided that the sellers fulfill the agreed condition of sustainable land-use practice. The economic valuation of the ecosystem services in PES has been commonly informed by expert-driven calculation of opportunity costs for alternative land-use management options (Corbera, Kosoy, & Martinez-Tuna, 2007). PES is

often described as superior to traditional conservation approaches by claiming them economically more efficient. Considering the potentiality of PES in mobilizing new financial resources for forest conservation, governments, donors and conservation organizations have shown strong interest on PES (Corbera, 2012). More recently, PES have entered into climate change discussions as an important mechanism with the potential to provide incentives for reducing emissions. Proponents argue that REDD+ as a PES scheme, transforms the conservation logic and configures livelihoods strategies without significantly altering justice at the local level. However, critiques argue that ecosystem service-driven conservation approach adds further complexity, and PES have already exposed the limitations of "selling nature to save it" (McAfee, 1999; Brockington & Duffy, 2010; Büscher, 2013). Local livelihoods and governance especially, power sharing among multiple stakeholders at different levels, tenure arrangement, contract design, and justice are some of key areas that REDD+ can learn from past and present PES schemes and can be informed for future initiatives (McAfee & Shapiro, 2010; Corbera, 2012; McAfee, 2012; Mahanty, Suich, & Tacconi, 2013; Pascual et al., 2014).

A review of relevant literature reveals that the primary focus of REDD+ to date has been the technical and financial issues of carbon trading. Issues of governance and the social impact of commodification of carbon have received little attention. As a performance based payment mechanism, REDD+ has increased the fear of the carbon commodification of local forests (i.e. the forests become important exclusively for their carbon value), as a process which will result in the other fundamental functions and meanings of forests being dismissed or disregarded (Brown, Seymour & Peskett, 2008; Visseren-Hamakers, Gupta, Herold, Peña-Claros, & Vijge, 2012). Forests are an important source of livelihood for many people around the world.

Proponents of REDD+ see carbon trading as an opportunity to both strengthen forest governance, and institutional capacity, and as an opportunity to bring additional benefit to local communities (Olander, Boyd, Lawlor, Madeira, & Niles, 2009). However, others have questioned the capacity of REDD+ to produce co-benefits (Bullock, Childs, & Picken, 2009; Hall, 2008; Livengood & Dixon, 2009). Research has shown that forest-dependent communities do not prefer carbon

payment over the use of forest products and they will not be willing to leave forest unused (Karky, 2008). Furthermore, as value of standing trees increases, already powerful actors stand to gain more power over the carbon based assets often to the detriment of the less powerful ones (Cotula & Mayers, 2009). The incentive of carbon forestry has increased the risk of recentralization of forest resources (Phelps et al., 2010, Agrawal, Nepstad, & Chhatre, 2011). Critics further argue that carbon focused nature of REDD+ is likely to coincide with prominence of high-tech methods and scientific knowledge, leaving little room for local knowledge and local participation in the REDD+ governance (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2006). A recent review of REDD+ readiness proposal from 25 countries shows that the proposal has not adequately addressed governance challenges such as tenure, benefit sharing, and local engagement, which are crucial for the success of REDD+ (Davis, Daviet, Nakhooda, & Thualt, 2009).

It is important to understand how different actors' interests are currently shaping the REDD+ negotiation at different levels. There is a gap in existing knowledge which needs a detailed understanding of relation between these issues and the interests at play in governance of REDD+ and climate change policy, particularly in terms of North/South dynamics (Bumpus & Cole, 2010) and its impact on shaping the policy and practice for local resource management.

Nepal provides a particularly dynamic and interesting setting for this research with the political, strategic, legal, and operational framework for community based forest development (Mahapatra, 2000). Nepal's CF is touted as a successful model of participatory resource management in the global South (Charnley & Poe, 2007). Around 1.8 million forest hectares are now managed as local commons by nearly 19,000 CFUGs all over the country, involving 2.4 million households or about 35% of Nepal's population (Department of Forests, 2015). Due to its long history of multiple stakeholders' involvement at different levels, it offers a multi-scale case study of CF for examining the links between global paradigms and local practices over a long period of time. Nepal's government has engaged with UNFCCC for REDD+ negotiation since 2007. Since 2008, the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and other donors have provided financial and technical support to the government to develop its Readiness Preparation Proposal.

In 2010, Nepal joined the UN-REDD Program as an observer and now it belongs to both FCPF and UN-REDD global initiatives (Bushley & Khatri, 2011). International donor communities view Nepal's forest as an opportunity to tackle emission reduction and sequestration through carbon trading in the global market (USAID Nepal, 2010). These dynamics have created pressure for forests to deliver global environmental services alongside resources for local livelihoods and have added a new layer of global stakeholders. There is wide speculation that carbon forests represent a threat to a new form of colonialism (Humphreys, 2006) undermining the capacities of local communities to organize themselves effectively (Grandia, 2007). Moreover, the policy and practice of climate change and mechanisms to pay for environmental services are rather new, largely unknown, and relatively untested in Nepal, which can pose many challenges if not designed carefully. Currently Nepal is moving forward from REDD+ readiness phase and it is important timeframe to understand how the REDD+ is rolling out, how it is perceived among different stakeholders, whose voice and concerns are being influential in the policy debate, and how REDD+ discourse has been shaped at the national policy arena.

1.2 Research Objective

The overarching objectives of this thesis are to understand how neoliberal commodification of forest carbon influences the power relationships of multi-level forest governance, how global carbon emissions trading affects local forest governance and community forestry practices in Nepal, and to provide timely policy input for the improvement of local governance in light of these new market-based conservation strategies.

1.2.1 Central research question

How do Nepal's emerging carbon trade arrangements affect community forestry governance and its power relationships between national and local levels?

1.2.2 Research sub-questions

- How have the actors and their relationships changed in Nepal's forestry institutions from the local to the national level since the 1990s?

- How does the global interest in carbon commodification affect community forestry policies and practices at the national level in Nepal?
- To what extent are local communities represented in Nepal's carbon trading deliberations and forest-related policy development?
- What are the potential socio-economic impacts of monetizing carbon on Nepal's local forest communities?

1.3 Theoretical Framework and Strategy of Inquiry

This research is informed by a social constructivism worldview which recognizes the central political roles of meanings and interpretations that individuals ascribe to their surroundings, actions, and practices. The constructivist worldview argues for the importance of culture and context in forming understandings about the world. The meanings that participants ascribe to the world are subjective and are based on their personal experience (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, constructivists claim that truth is relative and dependent on individual perspectives. Working from this worldview, my methodology involves close collaboration with policy actors to enable the participants to tell their story (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Through these stories, the participants are able to describe their constructed reality enabling the researcher to better understand the participants' actions (Lather, 1992). Furthermore, social constructivism acknowledges the role that researcher has in the research process (Creswell, 2007). Social constructivism is an appropriate worldview to understand the global-local interface of policy actors and the influence of neoliberal policy at the national and local levels in Nepal. Implementing a social constructivist worldview, I interpreted the responses of semi-structured and open-ended questions that describe the participants own personal experiences. The responses came from a diversity of participants ranging from local poor and wealthy elites, to NGO activists, government officials, and representatives from international agencies. During the entire research, I also considered the specific context in which the respondents live and work. In

addition, my own decade-long experience as an advocate and policy practitioner in Nepal helped to interpret the responses based on cultural and local experience.

Political ecology was used as a framework of this research. Political ecologists share common assumption that politics and power are at the heart of conservation and resource degradation. They study human-environment relationships with a focus on the political factors that influence resource degradation, viewing the environment as an arena determined by conflict between elite and poor, state and community, or outsider and local communities. Political ecology research has proven that natural resource conservation should be understood as a social process with significant political ramification (Escobar, 2008; Vaccaro & Beltran, 2010). Thus political ecology helps to understand and interpret the social construction created by the vertical and horizontal interplay of the actors. Political ecology framework was used in this research to understand how the current natural resources policies, institutional frameworks and practices are influenced by the historical context and the interests of various actors with varying agendas; how the new discourse of carbon trade has gained priority in forest policy and is reconfiguring the relationship between environmental conservation and livelihoods; and the extent to which policy derivatives of this discourse represent local realities and interests surrounding local livelihoods and global environmental services. The questions that arise through this framework include who the actors involved in natural resource policy processes and management are; what the power they hold is; and how they shape local access to natural resources. This power includes the power to create or modify rules and regulations; the power to make decisions about how a particular natural resource should be used; the power to implement the policies, rules and regulations and ensure compliance; and the power to adjudicate disputes that arise in the implementation and enforcement of rules (Barr, Resosudarmo, McCarthy, & Dermawan, 2006). Thus, political ecology focuses on how some of the interests are marginalized and how others are facilitates by the state and other powerful actors (Barrow, Clarke, Grundy, Jones, & Tessema, 2002; Jones, 2006). Dealing with marginalization and inequalities, political ecology is committed to contribute the goal of environmental and social justice (Forsyth, 2003; Blaikie, 2008).

1.3.1 Strategy of inquiry

This research is qualitative in nature. It aims to understand the meanings that people ascribe to their experiences, how they make sense of their world, and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 1998). The case study can be an ideal strategy of inquiry for holistic, in-depth study (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). The case study approach was chosen for this inquiry as the researcher intended to understand an intensive, detailed examination of the contemporary issue of carbon trading, and local resource management, within the real life setting. This approach allows for the use of multiple sources of data to elicit a greater understanding about the case. As Yin (2014) suggested, the case study approach is preferred when "how" and "why" questions are being asked. As such, the case study approach was adopted and which is consistent with a constructivist worldview (Appleton, 2002). The case study identifies how a complex set of circumstances come together to form a particular manifestation.

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Unit of analysis

This study used Nepal's community forestry program as a single case with three Community Forest User Groups (FUGs) from three ecological regions of Nepal with diverse exposure to REDD+ and carbon trading issues (Figure 1.1) as embedded units of analysis (Yin, 2014). One CFUG was selected from the middle mountain region[1] where community forestry is one of the most successful programs and has no direct exposure to REDD+, however the group is strong and cohesive in collective action. The second group was chosen from the Inner-Terai region where forests are more productive with huge economic potentiality but a history of CF and practice of collective action is not comparable with the mid-hills. This group has experience with REDD+ piloting for the first time in Nepal through NORAD funded project. The third group was

[1] Nepal has been divided into five Physiographic regions based on the elevation:

a. Terai (<300 m)
b. Siwalik (300-700 m)
c. Middle Mountain (700-2,000 m)
d. High Mountain (2,000-2,500 m)
e. High Himalaya (2,500-8,848 m) (Source: Topographic Survey Branch, Department of Survey, Government of Nepal, 1983)

chosen from the Terai region where CF practice is not as mature as the mid-hills. However, forest is economically potential and most of the community members are immigrants. The third group has some experience with carbon measurement through Plan Vivo supported Himalayan Community Carbon Project for voluntary carbon market (For detail of the selected CFUGs refer Table 5.1). Thus, this study is about the potential impact of REDD+ in community forestry program of Nepal with the embedded case of three CFUGs as sub-units. The data were analyzed by first examining each sub-units separately, then looking for similarities and differences across all the sub-units. The ability to engage in such rich analysis serves to better illuminate the case. However, if too much attention is given to the sub-unit failing to return to the global issue that initially was set out to address, the case study itself will have shifted its orientation and changed its nature (Yin, 2014). Cautionary measures was taken to balance between the sub-unit and the program as a whole.

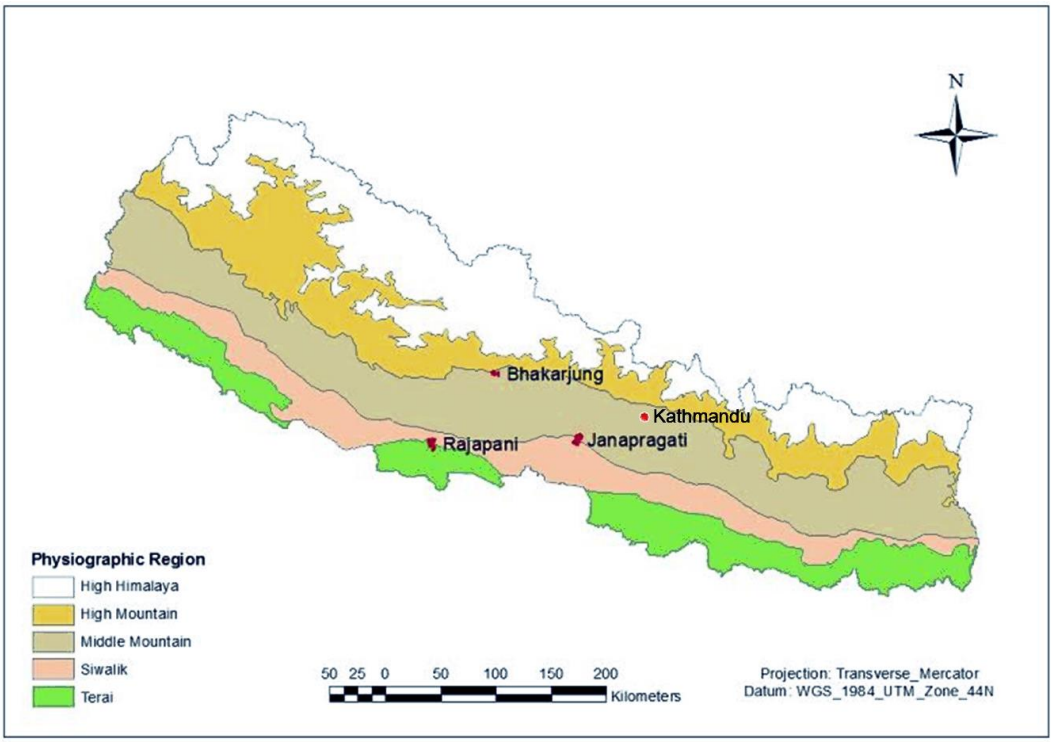

Figure 1.1: Map of Nepal showing three study sites

(Data source: Forest Resource Assessment Nepal, 2015)

1.4.2 Research participants

This research follows the actor-oriented approach which acknowledges the complexity of interactions that occur between different political interests and actions (Bryant & Baily, 1997; Brenner & Job, 2011). The key basis of an actor-oriented approach is that actors who operate at broader political-economic structure (non-place based actors like NGOs, donor agencies etc.) and those at the micro-level (local actors at the site of the resource) play an important role in shaping livelihood-environment relation in developing countries. Considering this fact, participants were be selected from multiple levels covering vertical and horizontal interplay of policy process. Forest-dependent poor and CF leaders were the principal research participants from the local level. Representatives from government forest offices, civil society organization, educational/ research institutions, NGOs and bilateral/ multilateral organizations were selected as the respondents from the national and international level.

1.4.3 Methods of data collection

This research used different sources of data to provide an in-depth understanding of the participants` perspective. In-depth interviews, observation, focus groups and document review were utilized as principal methods of data collection.

1.4.3.1 *Interview*

Semi-structured, in-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted with selected respondents as the primary source of data collection. Semi-structured interviews keep the format flexible allowing the researcher to pursue relevant emergent themes and ensure that the key themes and research questions are addressed (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). This allows the participants to express personal feelings and provide a more realistic picture of their experience in comparison to the structured traditional interview methods. In addition, observation and notation of body language, and verification of participants' responses during the interview are also important elements of data collection (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

Statistical representation was not considered as important for participants selection for interview as the focus was on intensity and depth of information rather than breadth. So, the selection of interviewees was purposive rather than random. Two sets of interview guides were developed: one for community level actors (Appendix I) and another for policy level actors (Appendix II). All the interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants and transcribed using digital media.

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with 20 individuals in each CFUG from various perspectives (For detail refer Table 5.2), identified through purposive sampling focusing on socio-economic class, livelihood options, ethnicity and assigned responsibilities in the CFUG. The Interactions commenced with introductory conversations about key terms to examine knowledge and awareness, and to eliminate conceptual misunderstandings between participant and interviewer regarding process or terminology. An interview guide was used to make the interviews thematically comparable which helped to understand the local peoples' perspective on how community forestry policy and practices have changed since the 1990`s as well as how, and if, the roles of different actors have changed. The participants were also asked to share their vision of community forestry after adding the new layer of carbon commodification. In addition, they were also asked for their perception on the potential impacts of REDD+ on local socio-economy, ecology, and governance; willingness for forest products tradeoff; and policy recommendations. All interviews were conducted on site in the local language (Nepali) by the researcher between 2013 and 2014. The interviews were audio-recorded with consent.

A second set of interview guides were developed for policy actors including government officials, civil society organization representatives, educational/ research institutions, NGOs and bilateral/ multilateral organization representatives. Based on my own prior knowledge and connection, a list of potential interviewees was prepared and it was updated based on the new contacts developed during policy events observation and the list was further verified with experts before recruiting 22 different individuals from national and regional level for face-to-face interview. Most respondents were approached in their workplace during their office time, except

for some NGO and civil society representatives that were flexible regarding the time and venue of the interview. Some participants were further followed-up via telephone, Skype, and email. The interviews broadly focused on the influence of global neo-liberal policy on community forestry policy and practices at the national and local level, the changing role of actors, and their experiences with the representation of different stakeholders in carbon trading deliberation, and their opinion on how to improve the market-based conservation strategy. Participants were also asked for their opinion on some controversial statements on REDD+ and forest carbon trading. The interviews were audio-recorded with consent.

1.4.3.2 *Focus groups*

Focus groups are considered as an efficient way of gathering information in a short amount of time because of their synergetic nature and the fact that they capitalize on group dynamics (Kamberelis & Dirmitriadis, 2013). Focus groups are also a means for data triangulation. Focus groups were conducted with CFUG members to produce the shared meaning of the changing context of CF policy and practices in connection to carbon trading and neoliberal global influences. Two focus groups were conducted in each CFUG. Two focus group discussions were conducted in each CFUG, particularly for specific interest groups such as women, *dalit*, and indigenous Chepang. Approximately seven to ten participants were` invited to join the focus group as this is an ideal group for participatory discussion. Each focus group discussion began with an introduction of the researcher and the participants followed by a brief presentation of the research purpose and any ethical issues surrounding the study. The discussion was facilitated by the researcher based on the checklist of guiding points (Appendix III). These discussions centered on issues of forest resource access, local resource management and knowledge, and power on local forest management and REDD+. The focus group discussion was audio recorded with the consent of participants.

1.4.3.3 *Participant observation at meetings and policy events*

Observation was conducted carefully to understand the context more profoundly and complement the data collection by other means. It represents as a "first-hand encounter with the phenomena of interest" (Merriam, 1998) and the researcher become an ‘observer-as –participant’

where the researcher has a peripheral membership in the context observed (Alder & Alder, 1994). A number of policy related events and debates were underway during this field study. The authorities were requested to give permission for the researcher to participate in different policy dialog forums during the fieldwork (December, 2013- September, 2014). With the primary goal of gaining first-hand information on discussion dynamics, type of language used, meaningfulness of actors' participation and adherence of decision-making process, I observed both the directly REDD+ related and other associated events from national to sub-national level. The attended events include: government organized public consultation meetings to solicit comments on Emission Reduction-Program Idea Note (ER-PIN), Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), and REDD+ Strategies, National Forestry Strategies; Community Forestry National Workshop, REDD+ related discussion events organized by NGOs and civil societies. Data collection at the meetings and events included note-taking and recording with consent and formal and informal discussions with the participants. These event observations allowed me to cover the event in real time and capture the context of the event. Through this process I developed greater understanding of the behavior of people and processes, in a context that is more natural than interviews. Furthermore, these events were useful to identify important actors for further interview.

1.4.3.4 *Document review*

In addition to directly interacting with research participants, a document review was undertaken throughout the research process. A review of the academic and theoretical literature was complemented by a review of documents from a wide range of relevant organizations around the world. Policy documents from organizations including the World Bank, the UN, REDD Implementation Center, FECOFUN, NEFIN, RECOFTC, DANAR HAMAWANTI were reviewed. In addition, accessible project documents from donor agencies such as meeting minutes, management plans amongst other documents from CFUGs were reviewed with due consideration to the commodification of environmental services and pressure on local policy and practices.

1.4.4 Data analysis

Throughout the process of conducting qualitative case study, a large amount of data is collected. Therefore it is important to maintain the data in an organized and timely manner (Yin, 2014; Stake, 2010; Merriam, 1998). Data analysis for this study were considered as an ongoing process throughout multiple stages of research rather than a single separate component.

The preliminary data analysis was started simultaneously with the data collection which helped me to organize the data in a timely manner and it also allowed me for triangulation and member checking (Stake, 2010). In addition, on-going data analysis provided the opportunity to reflect on any gaps in the data collection and to focus on the next exercise. The monthly field activity experiences, initial impressions of the research techniques, and preliminary interpretations were shared with the research supervisor in order to refine the process through supervisor feedback.

Following the preliminary analysis that occurred throughout the data collection phase, a formal data analysis and interpretation was done manually following the steps as illustrated in Figure 1.2. Interview transcripts, focus group reports, observation notes, and reflexive journals were organized and coded according to the emergent themes and answers to procedural questions. Content analysis was done using table matrices in MS Excel. Interpretations were logically presented in the final report based on the sub-units and unit of analysis of the case study and illustrative quotes. A Likert scale was used to gauge views of respondents (as used in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013) on REDD+ and its potential impacts. Cross-tabulation followed to examine the relationships between socio-economic variables (class, ethnicity, livelihood options, involvement in CFUG executive committee, and CFUG's experience on REDD+ piloting) and the respondents' perceptions towards REDD+. A Chi-square test of association in SPSS 22.0 as well as Fisher's exact test, where Chi-square is not appropriate (Cochran, 1954), were conducted to determine the statistical association of the variables.

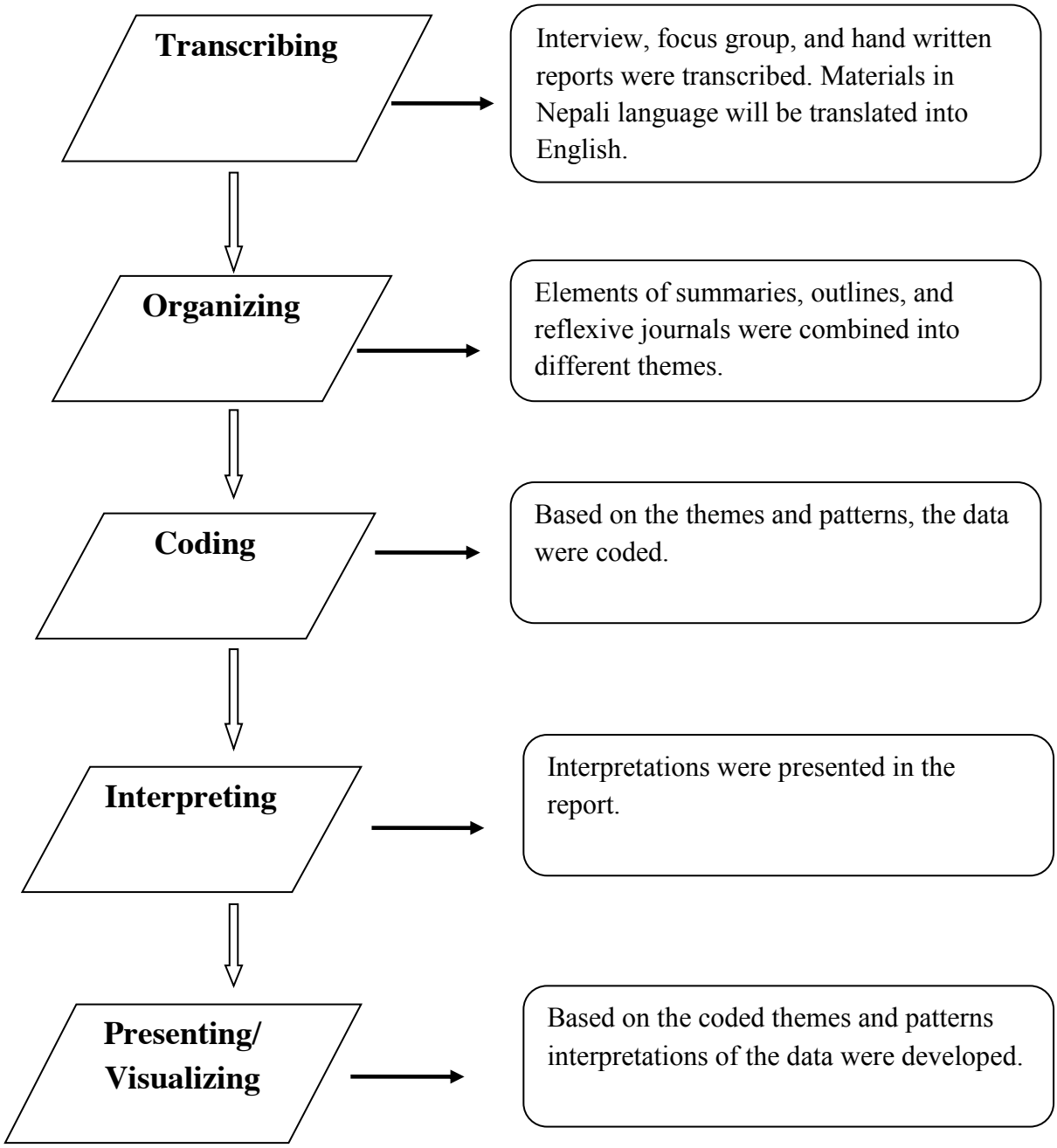

Figure 1.2: The data analysis process

(Source: Own illustration)

1.4.5 Ethical consideration

This research deals with human beings as the research subjects so prior consideration of ethical issues is an essential parts of the research process. Ethical issues were addressed at each phase of the study. The field study was started only after the ethics proposal approval from the University of Calgary, Research Ethics Board to ensure ethics compliance. In order to address the ethical issues in the field, three major strategies were followed.

First, prior to data collection, research participants were informed about the researcher and the purpose of the research and at the end of each interview and focus group discussion, key points were shared with the participants for their approval. The second strategy implemented was voluntary participation. Participants were consulted to determine their level of interest in participating in the research and they were provided with all necessary background information and afforded the opportunity to ask the researcher any questions they may have concerning the research process. All of the research participants were adults who can decide on their own whether to participate in the process. Data collection was preceded only after their consent. The third strategy employed was confidentiality. Confidentiality was maintained to minimize the harm to the participants from the research process. Confidentiality of participants was maintained assigning a numerical code to each interview participant and keeping the responses confidential. All the study data including audio and transcribed records were stored securely by the researcher and no one except the researcher and his supervisor had the access to it.

1.4.6 Major validity issues and strategies

Validity can be defined as how accurately the findings represent participants' reality of social phenomena (Schwandt, 1997). Fundamentally, this is a qualitative research which brings different paradigm assumptions and lens including researcher's own, study participants' and individuals' external to the project to establish the validity in the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). All these assumptions and lens determine the validity issues and the strategies. It also depends on the ability and efforts of researcher, placing the researcher at the core of the success of qualitative research. A social constructivist paradigm has been chosen for this study which

enables a pluralistic, interpretative, open-ended and contextualized perspective towards reality (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Credibility, transferability and confirmability are the key validity issues considered for this research. First, this research targeted multiple stakeholders from multi-scale forest resource governance as research participants. Diversified actors have their own belief systems, perspective and priorities on the carbon trading and forest management. As a researcher, I recorded and interpreted the participants' experiences and insights. Now, the issue comes how to make the research credible among multiple participants. Second, this research being policy relevant research, the ultimate goal is to come up with policy recommendations for the improvement of market-based conservation strategies. So, the generalization of the research findings to the national policy context is important part of this research. At this point, it is critical to describe the context and assumptions of the research to make this case study transferable in the national context. Third, having the background of policy practitioner and advocate of participatory resource management and now doing qualitative research in the same country, my own assumptions, beliefs and biases might influence me to shape my inquiry. At this point, validity issue is to which degree the research could be confirmed or corroborated by others.

Choice of validity strategies is governed by the paradigm assumption and the lens of researcher chosen to validate the research. Triangulation, member-checking, prolonged engagement in the field, thick description and peer-review are the major strategies adopted to insure the validity in this research.

Using the case study approach as a strategy of inquiry, I utilized multiple methods of data collection including interview, focus group, observation and document review. It helped me to find common theme on the research issue and to corroborate the evidences collected through multiple sources. This strategy was helpful to increase both the internal and external validity in my research.

Member checking is the most crucial technique to establish credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) in a study. To make sure whether I have interpreted the participants' perspective accurately, I verified my interpretation with the participants. I used several procedures to facilitate this process. I summarized the participant responses at the end of each interview. For the respondents from government, NGOs and international agencies, interpretation of their interview were emailed for feedback to insure that the interpretations are correctly done. Finally, I incorporated participants' comments into the final narrative which is expected to increase the credibility of the research.

Prolonged period of exposure during the fieldwork is necessary for ethnographic research, it is equally valuable for the case study to win the belief of gatekeepers and get access to people; and to build the rapport with participants for data collection. Longer stay in the field helps to understand the context of participant's view from pluralistic perspective. Furthermore, it also minimizes the researcher bias and also ensures match between findings and participants reality (Bashir et al., 2008).Therefore, I spent almost one year in Nepal and stayed one month in each case study site to solidify the evidences from the field.

The internal validity of the findings was further increased by peer-review. Prior to start of the research, the research proposal was reviewed by several reviewers and their inputs were incorporated. It helped me to check the biases that I may bring in the research challenging my assumptions, asking questions about methods and interpretation, and providing constructive feedback on methodology. Research design and findings were discussed with and commented by supervisor and colleagues during the entire research period. Peer-review is anticipated to add the credibility and conformability of the research. In addition, the preliminary findings were presented and discussed in different international conferences, workshops and summer schools. Finally, validity of the research was checked by reviewers and the editors of the journals and the manuscripts were revised based on their comments. Out of four major chapters included in this thesis, three of them have been already published in established journals of the field with rigorous peer-review process and the fourth is in the process of review.

Since the generalizability of case study is generally limited and cross-country study was beyond the scope of this thesis, the analysis were complemented and corroborated with the theoretical and empirical literature in order to increase the generalizability.

1.4.7 Critical reflection of the positionality

In the qualitative research, researcher is closely involved in the research process and research product (Horsburgh, 2003). Researcher has crucial role in the qualitative research from the formulation of research question, collection and analysis of data, and drawing conclusions (Bradbury-Jones, 2007; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Therefore, it is important to consider researcher's positionality including personal characters, such as gender, race, affiliation, personal experiences, linguistic tradition, belief, biases, preferences, theoretical, political and ideological stances and emotional responses to participants (Bradbury-Jones, 2007; Padgett, 2008; Hamzeh & Oliver, 2010) that might affect research process.

Before returning to academic research, I worked for more than a decade in Nepal in the field of participatory resource management, rural livelihoods and indigenous rights as policy practitioner and advocate. I have to admit that in addition to the theoretical knowledge gained from the University of Calgary, my prior experience, knowledge and social constructions have probably had a significant influence in framing the research question. I share similar culture, linguistic, ethnic, national and religious heritage with the research participants. Being an "insider", I had considerable advantages as well as risks for this research. Being considered as an insider, I had relatively easy access to people and texts. People from local communities and national policy arena showed generous hospitality and willingness to participate in my research. Because of this, I was able to interview many leading figures in the local community as well as at the national level. I was able to ask more meaningful questions and read non-verbal cues and most importantly, be able to project more truthful, authentic understanding of the culture under the study. I also got easy access to observe the national and regional level policy events. It would have been difficult for someone without prior involvement in the local context to gain the

confidence and access that I gained in such a short time. Finally, coming from the 'shared experience' position, I was better equipped with insights and the ability to understand implied content and was more sensitized to certain dimension of the data. Understanding of culture and both verbal and non-verbal communication helped me to analyze the data in the meaningful way. In addition to the relative benefits being 'insider', I also faced couple of challenges during the data collection and analysis. As indicated by Drake (2010), blurring the boundary between the participants and researchers, imposition of researcher's values, beliefs and perception during the data collection and projection of biases were some of the potential risks. To minimize these risks, I tried to be self-reflective to maintain myself in the role of researcher and distancing from own previous roles. Due to the personal relation, some participants were too open beyond their organizational responsibility and some others especially from the higher level of government authority were a bit skeptical to put their views on the controversial issues of REDD+ and acknowledged the issues as matter of scholarly debate rather than accepting them as policy issues. In both cases I had to respect the confidentiality and organizational limitation of the respondents. During the content analysis and reporting, I tried to alert myself from 'unconscious editing' because of own sensitivities and engage with data for more comprehensive analysis. In the entire process of research, I tried to make my position more fluid rather than being static in order to balance the emic-etic relation (Eppley, 2006). I captured the viewpoint of the person who actually lived the experience (emic) and in the meantime, I tried to understand from the perspective of an outsider (etic). In order to avoid personal biases due to the positionality I constantly updated my own position relative to the study and discussed with peers and supervisor about the current position and how it may affect the research.

1.5 Overview of Papers/Outline of the Thesis

This introductory chapter provided an overview of the topic of the thesis, together with the research objective, questions and methodology. The following four chapters are each comprised of peer-reviewed journal article manuscripts; three of them already published (appearing here with permission by the journals), one (Chapter 2) still in the publication process. Table 1.1 shows how each chapter links with the four outlined research questions of the overall dissertation.

Table 1.1: Overview of research questions and contributing papers

Research Questions	Paper	Status
How have the actors and their relationships changed in Nepal's forestry institutions from the local to the national level since the 1990s?	Framing REDD+ at the national level: Actors and discourses around Nepal's forest policy debate (Contributed to RQ1 &2)	Manuscript submitted to *Forests*
How does the global interest in carbon commodification affect community forestry policies and practices at the national level in Nepal?	REDD+ and forest tenure security: Concerns in Nepal's community forestry (Contributed to RQ 2 &3)	Published in *International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology* (2014)
To what extent are local communities represented in Nepal's carbon trading deliberations and forest- related policy development?	Nepal's REDD+ readiness preparation and multi-stakeholder consultation challenges (Contributed to RQ 3)	Published in *Journal of Forest and Livelihood* (2015)
What are the potential socio-economic impacts of monetizing carbon on Nepal's local forest communities?	Optimism, hopes and fears: Local perceptions on REDD+ in Nepalese community forests (Contributed to RQ 4)	Accepted to publish in *The International Forestry Review* (2017)

Chapter 2 addresses the first research question on actors and their relationships in Nepal's forest governance, and it uncovers how actors and their relationships have been changed in Nepal's forestry governance due to the global paradigm shift. This chapter also highlights the interest and influences of different actors in REDD+ policy process. The second part of this chapter

addresses the second research question on how global forest carbon commodification affects community forestry governance. In doing so, this chapter further illustrates the storylines employed by different actors to influence their discourse around the REDD+ policy debate in Nepal. The chapter concludes by emphasizing the value of collaborative approaches in REDD+ for multiple benefits of healthy forests, strong communities and effective climate change mitigation.

Chapter 3 further investigates the second research question and emphasizes how the commercialization of forest carbon has added new layers of economic and political interests to local forest management agendas. In particular, this chapter discusses key concerns for forest tenure security from Nepal's current governance changes as REDD+ has introduced carbon rights in the existing forest governance framework. It raises the issue of missing definitions of forest carbon rights: whether it should be considered a separate proprietary interest or linked with existing categories of ownership related to forest rights and land title. This chapter further presents three alternative scenarios for a REDD+ oriented tenure reform within the existing framework and identifies critical concerns for forest tenure security, state-community power relationship and effective local institutions of the commons.

Based on all collected interviews as well as observations of policy events in Nepal, Chapter 4 addresses the third research question and highlights the challenges of multi-stakeholders engagement in Nepal's REDD+ policy deliberation process. This chapter identifies an urgent need to improve the design and practice of Nepal's consultation process in order to ensure a sound multi-stakeholder process, meet the demands of local forest realities as well as those of the international REDD+ requirements.

Chapter 5 investigates the fourth research question related to potential socio-economic impacts of REDD+ on Nepal's local forest communities. This chapter finds positive expectations of REDD+ to varying degrees on the local level, paired with key concerns arising throughout REDD+ implementation. In particular, this chapter identifies that forest products needed for

livelihood practices cannot be fully replaced by monetary benefits of REDD+ for forest harvesting restrictions. Further, this chapter argues the increased elite capture, corruption, and upward shift of accountability through the alliance of local elites with external actors for carbon increment create threat to local livelihoods. Therefore, the chapter makes strong recommendation to carefully avoid adverse effects on existing community governance, and to reconcile the REDD+ objective with the local non-monetary livelihood needs.

Chapter 6 offers a conclusion and outlook based on the findings and larger context of the thesis. In this chapter, I revisit the four research questions introduced in Chapter 1 and discuss them in relation to the findings of all papers. This chapter also discusses the relevance and implications of the findings to broader debate of forest and REDD+ governance both in academia and policy. Finally, the chapter admits some limitations of this research and provides a future outlook.

CHAPTER 2 : FRAMING REDD+ AT NATIONAL LEVEL: ACTORS AND DISCOURSE AROUND NEPAL'S POLICY DEBATE

Abstract

Forests and carbon sequestration have become fundamental themes of climate change governance. The idea of REDD+ has generated significant interest in forest governance from the UN climate strategies over the past decade. REDD+ was initially hailed as a smart and cost-effective way to mitigate climate change. As it is rolling out, ambiguities and controversies are increasingly surfacing to the stakeholders at different levels. Taking the forest governance of Nepal as a case, this research examines how the relationships between national and local forest actors have changed and how REDD+ discourses have evolved among them -- at the interface between global interests in carbon commodification on one hand, and local realities of community forestry on the other hand. To better understand these competing positions, the study uses a post-structural political ecology perspective with elements of discourse analysis. This paper highlights how global forest carbon commodification has been affecting community forestry governance. It also illustrates different storylines that stakeholders employ to influence their discourse around REDD+ policy debates, showing how various problem definitions and policy solutions of climate change exist among the actors. The findings call for a more open and transparent dialogue across Nepal's forest governance and management levels to ensure actual benefits for healthy forests, strong communities, and effective climate change mitigation.

Keywords: Carbon trade; discourse; forest governance; livelihoods; Nepal; policy process; REDD+

2. 1 Introduction

Forests and carbon sequestration have become a fundamental factor in climate change governance. The idea of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) has generated significant interest in forest governance. Since Bali Action Plan, REDD+ has gained significant influence on how forests are approached in developing countries (Angelson et al., 2012) and REDD+ has been considered as a game changer shifting forests into the center of global climate change politics (Buizer et al., 2014). The inclusion of REDD+ in a post-Kyoto framework has provided a way for developed countries to offset carbon emissions and enabled forest-rich developing countries to receive payment for conservation. The Paris Climate Agreement signed in December 2015 has further cemented its role in the future of global climate governance. Though general guidelines on how to operationalize REDD+ have now been agreed upon by UNFCCC, REDD+ is still heavily debated regarding its conceptualization, required political and economic architecture and potential impacts (Pasgaard, Sun, Müller, & Mertz, 2016). REDD+ is based on a simple and appealing idea, however, turning the idea into action is much more complex (Angelsen, 2008). REDD+ was initially hailed as a smart and cost-effective way to mitigate climate change. As it is rolling out, ambiguities and controversies are increasingly surfacing to the stakeholders and actors at different levels.

Forests are valued for wide range of products and services they provide, ranging from their role in providing livelihoods for an estimated 1.6 billion people --including 60 million indigenous people and many poor and vulnerable communities (Gilmour, 2016) to maintaining major terrestrial ecosystems and providing global environmental services. For REDD+ to have a significant impact on emissions reduction, it must bring incentives to forest-dependent communities and transform the forest governance from local to global level. However, initial reporting shows that reconciling the primary goal of REDD+ --reducing emissions through deforestation and forest degradation-- with that of poverty reduction can be difficult in practice. Although REDD+ appears to offer a new way to address global climate change, it remains highly

top-down. Offsetting carbon through REDD+ was developed as a way for developed countries to avoid carbon emissions at home, but it has increasingly been critiqued for the potential risk of recentralization of forest governance (Phelp et al., 2010) and negative social and livelihoods impacts due to unclear tenure and lack of adequate recognition of indigenous rights (Seymour & Angelson, 2012; Bastakoti & Davidsen, 2014).

Although there is not yet consensus on the 'best' or final design of international REDD+ mechanisms, many tropical countries are currently preparing national strategies for their own implementation of REDD+. REDD+ policy has been debated at national arenas among wide arrays of actors including national and international, state and non-state actors with varying level of power to influence the policy (Brockhaus, Di Gregorio, & Carmenta, 2014). Many new actors have been entered into the policy field and old actors have gradually changed their interest, belief, role and relationships alongside these changing dynamics. It is important to understand how different actors with sometimes contradictory goals and different degrees of social, economic and political power are contributing to the design of REDD+ architecture (Bourdieu, 1986). Considerable research has been done at the global level specially focusing on the technical implementation of REDD+ and a global context (Nielsen, 2014; Vijge et al., 2016; Di Gregorio et al., 2015; Van der Hoff et al., 2015). Much less literature has analyzed the discourses of actors involved in REDD+. As the analytical understanding of these national and local levels remains very limited, scholars are starting to express concern about the large gap in the existing knowledge (Brown et al., 2011; Mulyani & Jopson, 2013; Bluffstone, 2013). In this light, this research focuses on how the actors emerged at national and local levels and how the REDD+ discourses have evolved among them at the interface of global interest in carbon commodification and local reality of community forestry. In order to understand REDD+ policy prospects at national and sub-national levels, this paper highlights Nepal as a particularly interesting case for an overview of a range of actors and their diverse perspectives in challenging, and reviewing, fundamental issues of REDD+.

Nepal provides a particularly important and timely case to study the above-mentioned aspect. Due to its long history of multiple stakeholder involvement in forest management at different levels, it offers a multi-scale case study of forestry governance for dynamic links between global paradigms and local practices over a long period of time. International communities have identified Nepal's forests as an opportunity to tackle emissions reduction and sequestration through carbon trading in the global market while local communities are managing forests for their livelihood and cultural needs. Nepal is one of the early adopters of REDD+ and it is developing policies, legal framework and organizational structure for its implementation (Bastakoti & Davidsen, 2015; Khatri et al., 2016). As the country is moving forward from its announced REDD+ readiness phase, it is important to understand how REDD+ is perceived among different actors, whose voices and concerns are influential in the policy debate, and how the REDD+ discourse has been shaped and received in the national policy arena.

In responding to the knowledge gap with respect to national REDD+ policy discourses, the next section presents the theoretical perspective to the political construction of REDD+ discourses and storylines among different actors. Section 3 describes the study design and methods which includes interviews with policy actors and forest-dependent community representatives, observation of policy events, and analysis of discursive materials. Section 4 presents actors and their changing roles in Nepal's forestry sector. Section 5 explores policy actors' views around the conceptualization and operationalization of REDD+ at national and sub-national levels. Then, the discussion chapter reflects how REDD+ storylines are connected with broader meta-discourses and how these discursive dynamics could influence the REDD+ policy process at the national level.

2. 2 Theoretical Perspective

Environmental problems such as climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation and degradation are often considered *ecological* objectives, while also being inherently socially constructed. They

are complex and systemic interdependencies as they often build upon lengthy time intervals and large spatial areas. Therefore, environmental policy making is recognized as being highly contested where multiple perspectives in environmental problems and their potential solutions come into play (Hajer, 1995; Leach, & Mearns, 1996; Dryzek, 1997).

To understand the competing positions within climate change mitigation, carbon trading, and forest governance, this paper adopts a post-structural political ecology perspective (Watts & Peet, 2004) that draws on elements of discourse analysis (Arts, & Buizer, 2009; Hajer, 1995). These two theoretical perspectives place relations of power on center stage and help us understand how environmental knowledge shapes the responses and behavior of citizens and how human-forest relationships are governed. In the following section, we briefly define the concept that has been central to the analysis.

2.2.1 Discourses

Discourse is a "shared way of apprehending the world" (Dryzek, 1997). The concept of, and analytical interest in, discourses has gained an ever-increasing role across the social sciences, but there is not a single discourse theory. Building on different ontologies, epistemologies, theories and methodologies, several approaches to discourse analysis are built (Arts, & Buizer, 2009; Wagenaar, 2011; Keenoy, Oswick, & Grant, 1997). Fairclough (2003) posits the three dimensions of a discursive event, that is, (i) text— relating to the language analysis of text; (ii) discourse practice—examining the type of prevailing discourses; and (iii) socio-cultural practice—dealing with the institutional and organizational context within which discourse has evolved and been maintained. Going beyond linguistics analysis, the third dimension looks at how power and ideology operates within society (Chaliganti & Mueller, 2015). Keenoy et al. (1997) identify two distinctive takes on the term "discourse analyses." The first one is considered as a device used in a linguistic sense of organization, which has a narrow focus on the text per se. The second one broadens the view to the context of revealing ambiguities of social constructions

and the indeterminacy of organizational experiences, focusing on the social and political dimension beyond the analysis of text. In the same vein, Arts and Buizer (2009) distinguish between "thick" and "thin" approaches to discourse analysis. A thin approach considers discourse as one among other factors such as agency, resources, and rules to explain politics. This approach generally makes an explicit distinction between discourse (language) on the one hand and social action, institution, and practice on the other hand (Arts & Buizer, 2009). In contrast, a thick approach does not distinguish between a discursive and non-discursive approach. This approach considers that all reality is discursive and therefore socially constructed. It is inclined towards a post-structuralist philosophy, which defines discourse in a broader manner as being *social practice* that emphasizes how discourse and social practices including institutions, the economy, and power process are intertwined. For them, both the physical and social worlds are considered as discursive practices. Hence, there is no distinction between discursive and non-discursive objects, and all realities are discursive and socially constructed (Arts & Buizer, 2009).

This research draws on a thick discursive approach to understand how discourses have emerged and been shaped by historical, cultural, and social contexts. As suggested by Bacchi (2009), discourses form the context in which phenomena are understood frame the problem in particular ways to distinguish some aspects of a situation over others. Therefore, discourse favors certain descriptions of reality and empowers certain policy tools while marginalizing others (Litfin, 1994). Discourses represent the dominant representatives, understandings, and knowledge regimes present in governance debate, and they are deeply embedded in the formation of knowledge. Discourses are produced based on the perceptions and roles of the actors (Keller, 2011). Discourses influence how policy problems are conceptualized and what solutions are considered appropriate (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). Discourses also emphasize certain aspects of reality while neglecting others (Hajer, 1995).

Different discourses favor different understandings of reality. They promote specific conceptualizations of environmental problems, including the causes of the problems and their

solutions through a particular narrative (Roe, 1991) or storyline (Hajer, 1995). For instance, a discourse that views forests as an important carbon sink could be different from one that views the forest as a source of local livelihoods or a source of biodiversity. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the different constructions of meaning of forests by different actors to better understand the various arguments, rationales and discourses they develop based on their particular construction of meaning. Policy making can be seen as a struggle of discourses where actors attempt to gain support for their definition of reality (Hajer, 1995). A discourse becomes hegemonic when it becomes institutionalized by translation into policy decisions (Hajer, 1995).

Current international debates about climate change are shaped by different and often conflicting but also partly overlapping environmental discourses (den Besten, Arts, & Verkooijen, 2014). Authors such as Dryzek (1997, 2005), Hoffman (2011), Bäckstrand & Lövbrand (2007, 2016) and Grist (2008) have traced how discourses of sustainability, neoliberalism, and ecological modernization have emerged, arguing that these discourses have come to structure global environmental governance. Dryzek (2005) identifies seven discourses of environmentalism (survivalism, promethean response, administrative rationalism, democratic pragmatism, economic rationalism, sustainable development and ecological modernization). Hoffman (2011) offers science-oriented discourses, specifically "skeptical", "convinced" and "bridge-building" as a typology. Bäckstrand & Lövbrand (2007, 2016) identify three meta-discourses to solve climate-related problems: "green governmentality" that focuses on expert-driven reform at a multi-lateral level; "eco-modernization" that focuses on market-driven reform with economic rationality, and "civic environmentalism" that focuses on people-driven reform which is subdivided into two versions (reformist and radical) relying on the third sector rather than on markets or states to tackle climate change.

2.2.2 Storylines

Storylines act as political devices through which actors try to impose their views and perception of interests regarding a policy problem on others, and to critique and constrain competing views (Hajer, 1993). They are essentially narratives of reality as constructed by social actors. Storylines frame issues by arguing how they should be understood and tackled: they represent the intentional mobilization of discourse. The concept of storylines can be used as a device for analyzing how policy actors construct meanings around problems and act upon them (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). Storylines simplify components from broader discourses and integrate them into meaningful and compelling accounts of public issues (Hajer, 1995). Storyline holders may not be clear about the theoretical aspect of using certain storylines to promote their argument; they may consciously use storylines to order their experiences and construct reality, but by using storylines they tap into overarching discourses (Wagenaar, 2011).

Storylines are seen as being capable of changing the actors' interpretation of what their interests are (Hansen, Langhelle, & Anderson, 2008). Analysis of storylines helps to identify and analyze how the actors make use of a certain discourse. Hajer argues that shifts in storylines drive policy development and are an important factor in explaining policy change (Hajer, 1995; Schmidt, 2001). Once the storylines gain wider acceptance, such shared storylines can help to reduce fragmentation and approach problem closure (Hajer, 1995). Storylines serve as the building blocks of discourses, and a coalition of actors with wider storylines helps to institutionalize discourse (see Figure 2.1).

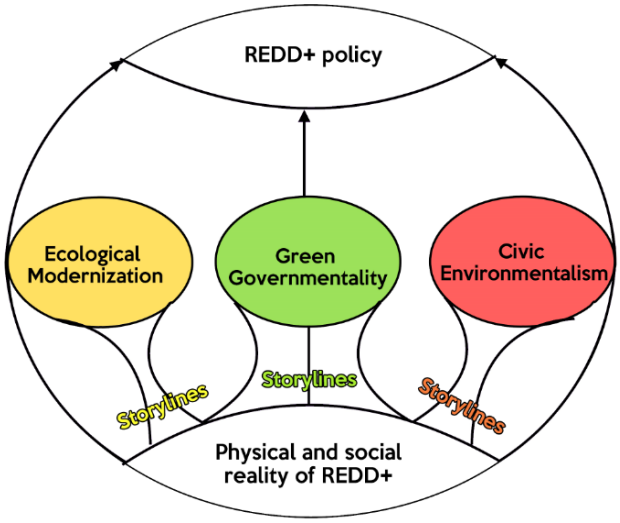

Figure 2.1 Schematic representation of storylines and discourses on REDD+ policy

(Source: Authors' own illustration)

Note. The colored yellow, green, and red circles in Figure 2.1 represent different discourses. The threads underneath the circles represent the different contributing storylines that actors develop to support certain discourses, based on their physical and social realities.

Within the framework of REDD+ as the international forest governance mechanism for climate change mitigation, there are different actors at different levels with diverse interests and priorities. While the exact character of the REDD+ mechanism under UNFCCC has not yet been finalized, there is wide agreement that it should encompass a performance-based payment that compensates for the opportunity cost of avoiding deforestation. In many countries including Nepal, REDD+ is currently at a preparatory stage of governance and is just rolling out into the readiness phase. At this point, every actor has his/her own constructed reality of forestry and REDD+. They have their own interpretation, storylines, and alliances at different levels. They may participate in different discourses to favor certain policy preferences, which ultimately contest or complement the RDDD+ policy debate. Although the climate governance literature does not have a commonly accepted typology of climate discourses and storylines, the framework we developed as shown in Figure 2.1 will help to illustrate important storylines and

discourses and their contribution to the contemporary climate policy debate at different levels. It also helps us to understand which framing of REDD+ gains dominance and how this is operationalized in the policy process, and which actors have the power to determine how REDD+ should finally be designed.

2. 3 Methodology

This paper builds on a combination of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, observations and document review from Nepal's national policy level to local forest communities. The field work was conducted during a particularly important time window (December 2013 to September 2014) when public consultation to solicit comments on Emission Reduction- Program Idea Notes (ER-PIN), Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) and National REDD+ Strategy were underway. 82 face-to-face interviews were conducted across national and regional government, national and international non-profit organizations and research organizations, civil society representatives, and community individuals in three local forest communities in order to capture the full range of issues and concerns regarding REDD+ and its consultation process. The interviews consist of 22 with policy actors, and 60 with local community forest user group members of three community forests of mid-hills, inner Terai and Terai. Two focus group discussion with special interest groups including poor, women, indigenous communities were conducted in forest user groups. The interviews and focus group discussions were recorded, transcribed and analyzed using simple coding methods.

During the preliminary analysis, the codes were regrouped in order to reflect the individual actors' positions with respect to REDD+ elements, which yielded a matrix representing the extent to which each actor adheres to particular forms of storylines and discourses. The results from interview and focus group analysis were complemented with and supported by observation notes and a body of secondary data. Firstly, this research paper derives from a collection of

governmental report documents and brochures, such as the National REDD+ Strategy, the National Plan for Climate Change, as well as publications, brochures and websites from NGOs, as complementing research data that underscores the research results and enhances understanding of REDD+ implementation in Nepal. Secondly, during field visits, it was possible to collect observations related to the *de facto* implementations of workshops, national dialogues, and project meetings by government actors, civil society, research institutions, and series of consultations meetings organized for the preparation of Nepal's National REDD+ Strategy. Finally, this study also benefited from the academic peer-reviewed and 'grey' political literature in order to identify research gaps and new avenues of critique.

The empirical findings from primary and secondary resources are represented in a narrative description, which captures the central discourse features with respect to problem definition of deforestation in Nepal, the proposed strategy for reducing deforestation and the consequent construction of REDD+.

2. 4 Actors and their Changing Role in Nepal's Forestry Sector

Nepal's forest policy and the role of actors in it have been shaped mostly by global political and environmental waves, as well as national experiences (Ojha, Cameron, & Kumar, 2009; Ojha et al., 2014). Specifically, news of Himalayan degradation in the 1970s, the structural adjustments of the 1980s, and the carbon forestry wave after 2007 constituted major global waves that affected forest policies and (re)shaped the political landscape of Nepal's forest governance. In addition, major political changes in the country and learning from experience have been also reflected in Nepal's forest policy development and in defining actors' roles in the deliberation process. Figure 2.2 (see below) gives a broad overview about global and national drivers that affected Nepal's forest policies and its actors throughout different phases of forest governance. The evolutionary process is roughly simplified here and depicted as a linear pathway, but in practice these processes were interconnected and overlapped in complex ways (Ojha et al., 2014).

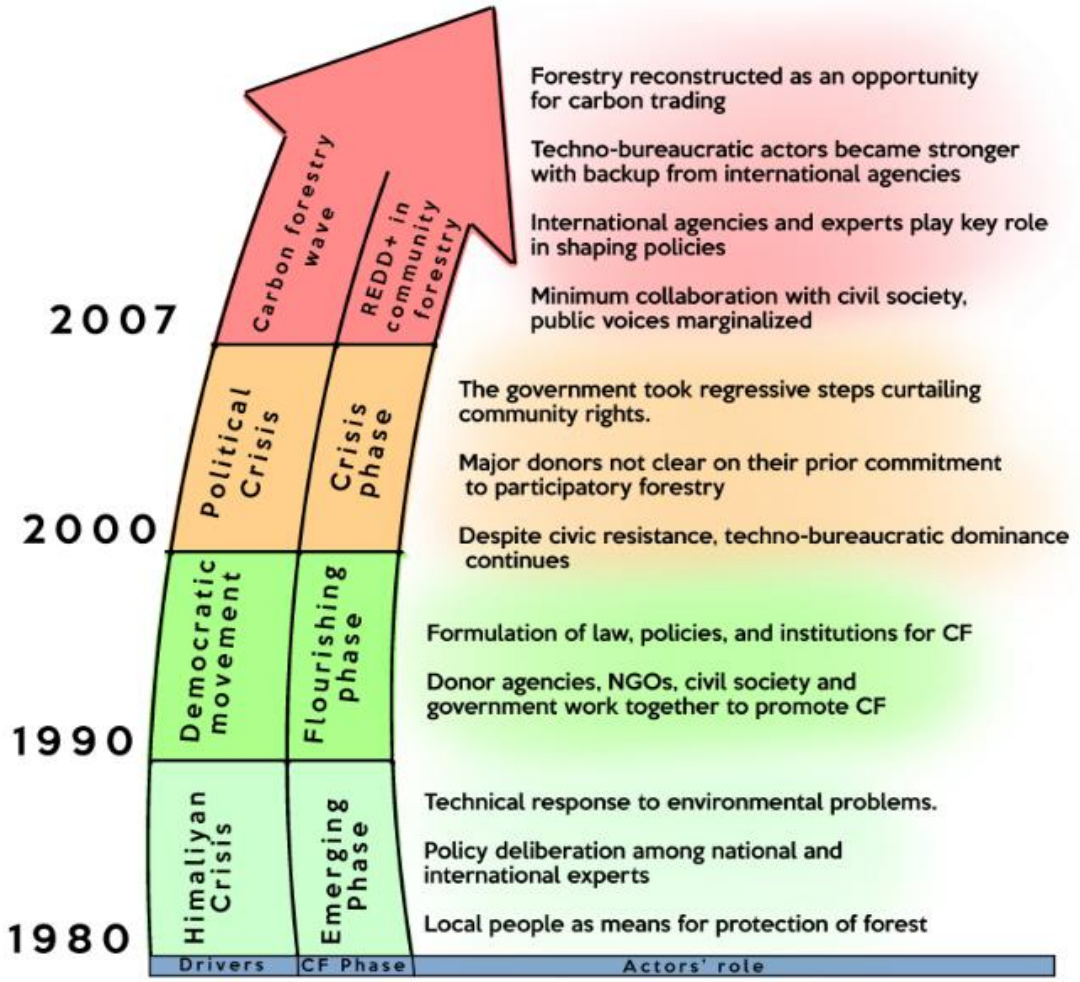

Figure 2.2: Drivers of paradigm shift and actors' roles in different phases of community forestry

(Source: own illustration based on own data analysis)

Nepal's forest governance was mainly controlled by the state centric techno-bureaucratic power that excluded the people from forest management until the late 1970s. The news of Himalayan degradation and subsequent failure of a technical response to this environmental degradation through large scale plantation awoke techno-bureaucrats and donors, and opened the door for participatory reforms in the forestry sector. Consequently, Nepal's government introduced the Panchayat Forests and Panchayat Protected Forests Act in 1978. However, the involvement of the local community in these programs was just seen as a means to protect forests and restore

degraded forest lands. Local political leaders and elites took this as an opportunity for themselves to seek donor funds, manage group accounts, and hire and fire forest workers (Malla, 2001). As a result, due to the fragile environmental conditions and the strategic geopolitical situation, Nepal became an attraction for bilateral and multilateral funding agencies to support integrated conservation and development projects (Malla, 2001; Ojha, 2013; Rutt & Lund, 2014). In the 1980s, the global wave of structural adjustment policies was growing stronger and Nepal could not be removed from this movement. Donors pressurized the government for its explicit commitment on decentralization and devolution of resource management to be reflected in the Master Plan of the Forestry Sector, 1989. The Master Plan strongly advocated for the participation of communities in forest management and emphasized the need for reforms in government policies, institutional structures, and a legal foundation for supporting community forestry (Kumar, 2002). Thereafter, the government formally introduced community forestry programs and recognized community forestry as the largest program of the forestry sector. However, policy deliberation during the preparation of the Master Plan took place only among national and international experts without consulting the affected local people. The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector was a milestone in initiating a formal policy of participatory forest governance in Nepal, although only experts were involved in the design of the plan. As in many other developing countries, this step principally challenged the previous paradigm of "the government knows best," and a wide range of actors gradually became involved in meaningful dialogue and decision making (Walpole & Soriaga, 2009). This phase can be categorized as an *emerging* phase of community forestry in Nepal.

Following the revolution of 1990, and the restoration of multi-party democracy in the country, civil society was empowered and demanded the devolution of forest rights to the local communities. The global wave of supporting environmental activism at the local level initiated at the Rio conference also had certain levels of influence through donor communities. Nepal's government promulgated the progressive Forest Act of 1993 and the Forest Regulation of 1995 to pave the way for pluralistic approaches in forest governance, thus giving the local people a greater sense of ownership in local forests. Consequently, state forest lands were increasingly

handed to local forest users for management and use. With the increased number of community forest user groups, a national network of forest users—FECOFUN—was established in 1995 to safeguard the users' rights. Gradually, community forestry became the most successful program by going beyond the protection-oriented forestry regime. Forests were considered to be for local livelihoods and governance, and for biodiversity conservation. Now, FECOFUN has emerged as a strong civil society network. Multi-lateral and bi-lateral agencies, NGOs, civil society, and government agencies have worked together to promote community forestry in the hills. This stage can be considered as the *flourishing* phase of community forestry in Nepal.

During the Maoist-led civil war, local forestry groups practiced *de facto* self-governance in the absence of locally elected governments. The government was, however, reluctant to speed up the forest handover to the local communities; instead, it imposed stricter techno-bureaucratic control over the local forest users. The government banned the harvesting of green trees and proposed taxes on the community forestry products and imposed complicated forest inventory system (Hull, Ojha, & Paudel, 2010; Ojha, Timsina, & Khanal, 2007). In the meantime, the 2000 Forest Policy was formulated without public engagement. This policy document was highly criticized by FECOFUN for the process as well as its content as it undermined the potentiality of community forestry in the Terai. As the war amplified, local communities were victimized by both warring parties. The military occupied forest areas in several parts of the country as strategic vantage points to fight the Maoist rebels while the rebel groups also captured local community forestry resources in the war. Forest officials who were not in favor of devolving rights to the local community used this political instability as an opportunity to develop informal axes of power and exploitation with the local elites and timber traders to channel the forest revenue from community to personal benefit. Local interviews indicate critical views that this phenomenon still continues in the community forests in the name of technical support by the District Forest Office for silvicultural operations, as described here by a CFUG executive member in the inner Terai:

Whatever is written in our forest management plan, we are allowed to extract only 700 cft timber and that should be extracted from the dead and fallen trees. In addition, the group has to pay the

DFO staffs for tree marking and other technical works. This is not a government tax but all the money goes to the personal benefit of the staff. It is not a good practice to pay the government employees for their service but without paying we don't get permission for timber extraction. This shows how community forest is under the control of forest officials.

Executive committee member of a CFUG in the inner Terai

The Royal takeover of 2005 further increased techno-bureaucratic control over the local forests. Despite intense civic resistance, techno-bureaucratic dominance continued even after the abolition of Monarchy in 2006. Repeated threats to revise the Forest Act of 1993 in order to curtail the local authority and expansion of new protected areas without adequate community consultation were some of the examples of techno-bureaucratic dominance. Even though donor communities had crucial roles in the earlier stages of community forestry, during the crisis major donors could not come up with clear positions to continue their prior commitments. Overall, the political turmoil and increased bureaucratic control undermining public deliberation pushed the community forestry further into crisis.

After the Bali Convention of 2007, global climate change entered Nepal's forest management agenda with strong commitments toward climate change mitigation. Now, forestry has been reconstructed as an opportunity of carbon trading for climate change mitigation, establishing REDD+ as the new form of forest governance. As commented by an environmental policy expert (see below), the agenda, policies and priorities of community forestry have been changed according to this global paradigm shift. All the actors are attracted to the agenda of forest carbon and climate change. During the early stages of REDD+, all Nepalese actors including the techno-bureaucratic actors, civil society and the community networks were more or less equally involved in REDD+ seeing it as more beneficial than traditional forestry. Techno-bureaucratic dominance backing from the international donor agencies has gradually created an additional layer over the national policy deliberation, putting priorities on the carbon agenda over local rights and livelihoods. Bilateral and multilateral donors support the piloting, knowledge generation and capacity building of various aspects of REDD+. However, interviews indicate that their collaborations with civil society networks remain minimal and community people have largely remained unaware of REDD+ and its discourses.

The role of actors in Nepal's forest policy arena is somehow linked with global context. Before the community forestry, the state was the only power. During the preparation of Master Plan, donors dominated the process. Local communities had important roles in the forest conservation during the initial days of community forestry. Now, their role is not as strong as it was in the 1990s. Our policies and priorities are gradually shifting towards globalization and capitalization. The issue of global climate change has already entered our forest policy debate.

An experienced environmental policy expert from civil society

As REDD+ is still rolling out, different actors are coming in the policy arena and trying to shape their space and influence the policy process. The Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation has established a REDD Implementation Center in order to implement the REDD readiness activities in Nepal. The center is leading the country's policy and program development; monitoring, reporting and verification; coordination among various stakeholders; disseminating information; capacity development; and ensuring benefit-sharing. At the higher level, the government has formulated an inter-ministerial policy steering agency called the REDD+ Apex Body, chaired by the Minister for Forests and Soil Conservation. This committee includes eleven different ministries within and beyond forestry, reflecting how the interests and concerns of REDD+ have grown beyond the Forest Ministry. At a civil society level, forestry as well as non-forestry groups and alliances are attracted in the REDD+ process. Community based forest user groups networks, women networks, *dalits*, Indigenous groups and their networks, private tree growers, research and development NGOs, and private consultant groups are other non-state actors observed in Nepal's REDD+ policy landscape.

Developed based on the field observations and document review, Table 2.1 outlines an overview of the major actor categories, their broader interests and influences as found in the analysis. Individual actors within these broad categories have stronger, weaker or different interest and powers in the REDD+ policy arena. For example, the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation is especially interested on the exercise of power and authority, retaining leadership and control over national REDD+ mechanisms. Non-forestry ministries, on the other hand, have lower stakes and less influence in REDD+ activities. Donor agencies and international NGOs have increased

their interests in the REDD+ policy process. Continuing their longstanding involvement, they are deeply invested in maintaining public policy influence through funding, technical support, knowledge generating, up-scaling, and seeing their lessons incorporated in the national policy process. FECOFUN and NEFIN have secured their political space in the REDD+ policy debate in Nepal, but other civil society networks are struggling to be counted in the process. These civil society networks are interested in retaining the local people's trust and confidence on REDD+ related issues and empowering their own constituencies.

Local communities are the only place-based actors in these REDD+ networks that are tied to local forest governance in practice. They are deeply invested in ensuring sustainability of their forest, reaping private and collective benefits from forest resource management and participating in the decision making process to ensure maximum benefit from REDD+. The local elites are particularly interested in --and capable of-- influencing local decision making toward expanding alliances with non-place-based actors for their personal benefits.

The private sector is another category of policy actors in REDD+ but their presence is relatively weak. Private tree growers have been observed in some policy debates on the regional and local level, but they were not found to be as visible in the national policy arena. Having said that, private national and international consultancy companies have been found to play key roles as knowledge brokers in strong alliance with international donor communities and the REDD+ Implementation Center.

Table 2. 1 Actors, their interest and influence in Nepal's REDD+ policy landscape

Actors	Interest	Influence
Government (MSFP, REDD Implementation Center, DOF, DFRS, DNPWC, DFOs)	Exercise of power and authority, retain leadership and control over national REDD+ mechanism, benefit from REDD+	Influences potential funding sources, payment mechanism and market; lead national policy for low-carbon strategy
Community Groups (Community based forest management groups, collaborative forest management groups, Buffer zone groups)	Focus on private and collective benefits from forest resources, engage in decision making process, ensure maximum possible benefits from REDD+	Local forest protection, sustainable flow of forest products, local elites are more dominant in decision making and seeking opportunity
Civil Society (FECOFUN, ACOFUN, NEFIN, NAFAN, HIMAWANTI, DANAR and others)	Retain local people's trust and confidence on REDD+ related issues, institutional building and empowerment, incentives as salary and wages	Capable to advocate on behalf of their constituency, mobilize them on REDD+ related issues
International Development Agencies (World Bank, UNDP, USAID, DfID, SDC, WWF, CARE, ICIMOD etc)	Maintaining public policy influence, scaling up and institutionalizing own project initiatives, addressing the threats posed by environmental degradation and climate change	Capable of influencing policy process and outcomes by funding, technology and political power
Private Sector (Business Companies, Private tree growers, consultancy firms)	Other private actors not significantly interested in REDD+ while consultants are interested in knowledge brokering	National and international consultancy firms are influencing the policy process

Network interaction and power of the policy actors depend on their resource ties, information ties and shared interests (Brockhaus, Di Gregoria, & Carmenta, 2014). The government has great influence in potential funding sources, payment mechanism and market for forest carbon and it is

the main authority to lead national policy for low carbon strategy. The REDD+ Implementation Center is the main source of information for all the other actors. Donor agencies and international NGOs are also counted as powerful actors due to their policy influence through funding, technical support, knowledge generating in the national policy process. World Bank, USAID, DfID, NORAD, WWF, Care are the primary international agencies observed as active and powerful in Nepal's REDD+ policy process. Given their dominant positions in resource and information power, government and international agencies seem to share more common interest and platforms. Civil society organizations, especially from the community forestry network, indigenous people's network, women's network and *dalit* networks share common interests with each other for advocacy and empowerment. However, they mostly remain dependent on international agencies for funding, and on the government for detailed and timely information regarding REDD+ developments. As one of the critical respondents pointed out in the interviews (see below), the role of civil society networks in critical policy issues has been frequently weakened due to their increased dependency on external donors, tying them to their agendas instead of their own.

FECOFUN is a good example how the civil society organizations deviate from advocacy to project-sponsored agenda. Now, FECOFUN has become almost a sword without sharpness while it has been expected to challenge the critical power relation with donors and state. Donors want to engage the civil societies in their own agenda. In my twenty-year long observation, most of the actors in forestry sectors are engaging in the projects rather than sticking on their own agenda.

An experienced environmental policy expert from civil society

2. 5 Storylines around REDD+

Since the inception of REDD+, different actors have entered into the REDD+ policy arena at different levels with different interests and influences (see Table 2.1). Based on the underlying rhetoric observed in the REDD+ debates, this section aims to identify major storylines among these diverse actors in Nepal's REDD+ policy arena. These storylines provide symbolic

references to develop common understandings which ultimately work as political devices to define the national REDD+ discourse and to influence its policy.

2.5.1 Win-win

As in the global policy arena, some actors in Nepal are excited about REDD+, and they perceive REDD+ as a win-win solution for climate change mitigation, poverty reduction, and conservation. They consider REDD+ as means for the greening of development coupled with a strong belief that carbon trading, local forest use, and conservation can go hand-in-hand. According to the proponents of this storyline, REDD+ will bring additional benefits to the local people without limiting their livelihoods and cultural rights. Some respondents who believe this storyline focus on forest carbon whereas others see REDD+ as compatible with existing forest management practices. They anticipate some changes in access and benefits sharing at a local level, but they believe that with some harmonization, it can bring win-win outcomes. Most of the actors in this category are from conservation organizations, donor agencies, government and local elites. A sample of their comments are noted below.

REDD+ will bring additional benefits to the local people without limiting their livelihoods and cultural rights.

Respondent from a conservation organization

Carbon trade can bring more money than the sale of forest products. If we sell forest carbon, there could be certain limitations on forest products use, but we will have other alternatives. Due to the increasing impact of climate change, the scope of the forest will increase in the near future.

Local elite from REDD+ pilot area

However, according to a respondent from a policy research institution, at the beginning, all of the stakeholders were excited about REDD+ and perceived it as a win-win solution. Gradually,

however, some of them have expressed declining interest in REDD+ while others have changed their perspective.

2.5.2 Cost-effective

As a result of Stern's (2006) report, REDD+ has been proposed as a cost-effective solution to climate change mitigation at the global level. Proponents of REDD+ from developed countries advocate REDD+ against other technological innovations. This became the dominant storyline during the early stage of REDD+ discussion. However, the cost-effective storyline is not very strong among the Nepalese actors—only a few respondents believe in this storyline. The following comment is from a government actor:

REDD+ will definitely be cheaper than the technological solution. It is more viable especially in developing countries where there is the issue of deforestation and forest degradation. It can be done with relatively less investment.

Official from REDD+ Implementation Center, Government of Nepal

Some others also perceive REDD+ as cost-effective measure, however, they believe it will only work if there is a global consensus, as noted by this international agency representative:

If we reach a global consensus, REDD+ will be a cost-effective solution for climate change.

Representative from an influential international agency

2.5.3 Carbon commodification

Carbon commodification presents a way in which to govern forest carbon, namely through market-based approaches. Respondents agree that a global priority for REDD+ is carbon and it is bringing market rationality by giving value to standing trees. Respondents consider REDD+ as an instrument for a low carbon economy. During the interviews and interactions at the workshops, national level policy actors revealed that a global agreement for REDD+ will be

done on carbon, and other issues such as socio-economic and environmental benefits will be a secondary issue. This storyline carries the notion of neoliberal conservation to achieve synergy between economic, ecological, and social aspects (Nielsen, 2014). A view from this group from a conservation organization is noted below.

The global priority of local forest management is to reduce emissions through deforestation and forest degradation and to enhance forest carbon stock. Based on the global priority, the national priority is shaped. Our national priority is to keep the forest intact by maintaining 40 % forest cover and, of course, poverty reduction is our national priority. Mechanisms like REDD+ are important to reduce global emissions and to bring benefits at the national and local level.

Respondent from conservation organization

Performance-based payment during the piloting phase also reflects that REDD+ is based on market logic and it brings value when there is a large amount of carbon in the forest. Strict conservation of the forest, with the goal of obtaining carbon money, indicates the commodification of carbon. However, the local reality reveals the controversy about carbon commodification, as noted by an indigenous community leader:

REDD+ Project tells us not to cut the trees. We should not touch the plants inside the boundary pillar of the plots. If we cut the trees, we will lose the carbon payment.

A Chepang community leader from REDD+ pilot area

After the first phase of REDD+ readiness work, the Nepalese government prepared an Emission Reduction Program Idea Note (ER-PIN) and presented it to the FCPF Carbon Fund for a further carbon finance operation. The payment in the project will be made based on the verified emission reductions resulting from curbed deforestation and enhanced forest carbon stock through better forest management (MoFSC, 2014). This project also promotes the carbon commodification storyline.

2.5.4 Techno-managerial

Implementation of performance-based REDD+ projects hinges on the accurate and detailed accounting of emission reductions (UNFCCC, 2014). This promotes the techno-managerial storyline that expert knowledge is essential for understanding and managing REDD+. Stocks and flows of carbon are therefore constructed as administrative domains responsive to certain forms of political rationality such as government regulation (Lo¨vbrand & Stripple, 2011). The proponents of this storyline see forests as carbon pools and carbon sink, and consider forests as governable units for carbon. The ways in which carbon can be measured, quantified, demarcated, and statistically aggregated lead to a specific rationality, thereby placing a strong need on the role of institutions' "good governance" and effective laws to protect the environment and human well-being (Nasi, Putz, Pacheco, Wunder, & Anta, 2011).

During the REDD+ readiness phase, the projects lead by WWF, ICIMOD and DFRS were focused on carbon measurement, monitoring, and verification (MoFSC, 2010). These projects support the techno-managerial storyline. The interaction with local communities from the ICIMOD-led pilot site reflects how the REDD+ is being interpreted at the grass-root level, as stated by the chairperson of a REDD+ piloted CFUG:

We can protect the forest but we need experts and highly educated people to measure the carbon in our forests.

Chair Person of REDD+ piloted CFUG

Nepal's recently submitted ER-PIN has revealed a high level of commitment to adhere the FCPF methodological framework and IPCCC guidelines for measuring, verifying and reporting of forest carbon (MoFSC, 2014). This requires a high level of expert knowledge and the engagement of multi-level stakeholders. Observing these realities, stakeholders at the national level admit the technical and managerial complexity of REDD+ that might threaten local forest

management towards recentralization in the name of technological requirements. This viewpoint is expressed below by a civil society leader:

REDD+ is a technical and managerial issue and local actors, especially from civil society, do not have the capacity to understand the issue. This puts REDD+ under the control of techno-bureaucrats.

Secretary, FECOFUN

2.5.5 Safeguards

This storyline recognizes the tradeoff between economic growth, sustainable forest management, the social and cultural value of forests, and carbon sequestration. Although carbon benefit is seen as the main objective of REDD+, this storyline considers safeguards as a necessary condition to prevent risk. After the Warsaw Framework, safeguards have become a pre-requisite for REDD+ funding. Our data indicates that this storyline has become stronger among the REDD+ actors at all levels.

Based on the policy research and learning from pilot projects, the coordinator of REDD+ pilot project led by ICIMOD—an organization working in the policy issues at the Hindu-Kush region—highlights the need for a strong safeguard mechanism:

Government should redefine the forest management objectives. Scientific forest management can be reconciled with REDD+. REDD+ has already defined five different activities but the social and environmental safeguard is very important and need to be considered seriously.

REDD+ policy researcher

The safeguards storyline recognizes that building robust safeguards helps to prevent negative impacts on non-carbon benefits while working for carbon benefits (Vijge et al., 2016). The respondents who believe in the safeguards storyline contend that REDD+ can be compatible with existing community forestry if strong safeguards are put in place, as noted below:

If we focus on climate change mitigation, we should only emphasize on carbon. However, if we add a safeguard to REDD+, it can be compatible with community forestry. Nepal's R-PIN, R-PP and ER-PIN indicate the importance of safeguards.

Representative from an influential international agency

The Nepalese government's R-PP document, which was submitted to the FCPF/ World Bank in 2010, did not use the term "safeguards," however, it fully supports the safeguards storyline. The document promises Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) to both avoid negative impacts and to ensure positive and additional REDD+ benefits in terms of securing livelihoods and the rights of local forest-dependent communities, and for promoting the conservation of biodiversity.

However, some respondents are skeptical about this storyline as the meaning of "safeguards" depends upon who uses it and in what context. During the workshops and interviews, civil society representatives—especially those from indigenous communities—perceive safeguards as a means for the effective implementation of REDD+ through minimizing the social and environmental risks inherent in REDD+ activities. Nonetheless, they argue that without promoting opportunities for local communities to improve livelihoods, REDD+ is not likely to succeed.

2.5.6 Non-carbon benefit/ Beyond carbon

This storyline goes beyond the minimum set of safeguards and advocates for the promotion of co-benefits in REDD+ policies and practices (Rowe et al., 2013). It emphasizes the social dimensions of REDD+ governance in terms of capacity building and in addressing the social drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (Agrawal & Angelsen, 2009; Lyster, 2011; Vijge, 2015). This storyline argues the need for incorporating non-carbon benefits in the REDD+ payment scheme to enhance the interest of the local community for the effective and sustainable

implementation of REDD+. Civil society representatives especially advocate for this storyline and want to see REDD+ as a vehicle for generating non-carbon benefits. During recent years, the priority of the Nepalese government has also shifted from a carbon focus to a co-benefit mechanism on REDD+ framing. The vision of Nepal's national REDD+ strategy gives equal importance to carbon and non-carbon benefits and reads:

Optimize carbon and non-carbon benefits of forest ecosystems for the prosperity of the people of Nepal.

Vision of National REDD+ Strategy of Nepal, 2015

Civil society actors perceive REDD+ as one among many other climate change mitigation solutions, and they advocate for co-benefit and additional opportunities for local people from REDD+. Local people cannot imagine any situation that does not provide their full use-rights to local forests for timber, fuelwood and fodder. They do not see any rationale to protect forests only for carbon and argue that financial compensation cannot fulfill the need for their forest products forever.

RECOFTC—a regional organization working for the capacity building and rights of local people over forest resources—considers REDD+ benefits as an extra benefit for local people without compromising existing rights:

REDD+ benefits for the community is like 'top of the cake'. It should bring extra benefits for local communities. For this, the first and foremost point is the safeguards. Safeguards can motivate local people, but the safeguard mechanism should go beyond the preventive one to ensure extra benefits for local people. However, too radical views cannot work for REDD+.

Nepal Country Representative, RECOFTC

The actors who believe in this storyline consider that the success or failure of REDD+ will be determined not only by carbon emission reductions, but also by equity and access to non-carbon

benefits for local and indigenous peoples (Jaung & Bae, 2012). During the interview with the spokesperson for the Ministry of Forests, he admitted that Nepal cannot benefit by focusing only on carbon, therefore, the carbon benefit should be considered as an additional benefit for countries such as Nepal. He further argued for the need of international negotiation to secure non-carbon benefits from REDD+. Nepal has identified six non-carbon benefits associated with REDD+. However, it is yet to be clarified how they will be monitored and how the benefits will be shared (MoFSC, 2014). Therefore, respondents speculate that this may pose further challenges in implementation:

It is said that our country position is for non-carbon benefits. But, the question is 'who is going to pay?' and 'how can monitory value be given for non-carbon benefits?' International buyers might not have interest in paying for non-carbon benefits.

REDD+ policy expert from civil society

2.5.7 Governance reform

The governance reform storyline recognizes REDD+ as a new layer in the existing forest management system and urges governance reform to redefine the role, responsibilities, and rights of stakeholders at multi-layers in the changing context. This storyline recognizes both the opportunities and challenges with REDD+. The global interest in local forest management under REDD+ is for curtailing deforestation and forest degradation, and sequestering carbon for climate change mitigation. However, this study shows that Nepal's position for REDD+ is to focus on both carbon and non-carbon benefits. Nepal's R-PP document emphasizes participatory and inclusive processes with multi-stakeholder collaboration, capacity building, respecting the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples, and mainstreaming gender and equity concerns at all levels (MoFSC, 2010).

The supporters of this storyline urge simplification of the MRV, REL and safeguard mechanisms. Otherwise, these supporters suspect that technical hegemony gives space to the globally powerful actors to manipulate these technical aspects for their own benefit, thus

marginalizing the local actors. During the interview, a senior official from the Community Forestry Division, Department of Forests, expressed that:

If MRV, REL and safeguards are too technical, developing countries will not benefit from REDD+. Technology should be friendly for the local people and transferrable. Otherwise, complicated technology gives space to the developed countries for power plays.

A senior official from Department of Forests, Nepal

Despite the government's commitment, the believers of the governance reform storyline see a huge challenge in receiving international attention for payment of the non-carbon benefits. Respondents from conservation organizations like WWF have raised the issue of premium payment for wildlife conservation.

Representatives from community forestry networks and the indigenous people's alliance view the area for governance reform at the national level as defining carbon rights, respecting cultural rights, and maintaining transparency and downward accountability. They commend changing the one-dimensional "West is the best" model in conservation and development into a multidimensional approach that also includes local actors in decision-making:

Community forestry, forest certification, biodiversity conservation or REDD+—whatever the program—all are top-down in nature and they follow a unidimensional "West is the best" model. However, these models will not favor the local forest-dependent people as the procedures are not good. In order to make the REDD+ successful at the ground level, the proponents should fully respect the concept of free, prior, and informed consent, and the policy should be perceived from a multi-dimensional perspective.

Official from Climate Change Program, NEFIN

Managing the forests as local commons for local livelihoods and the global commons for carbon at the same time adds complexity, and some policy actors who are in the research and knowledge development fields urge for policy action to resolve this issue:

We need to marry the community forestry and REDD+. There should not be a negative impact on livelihoods at the local level. If there are any negative consequences, they should be compensated for. Furthermore, there is always a risk of rampant deforestation in developing countries after getting access to the market. If we cannot improve the governance right away, I see the chances of deforestation, corruption, and mismanagement of resources after the intervention REDD+.

REDD+ policy researcher

Even though the priority of actors are different according to the constituency they represent, most of the actors currently support the governance reform storyline. Some advocate for conservation premium in carbon payments while others focus on broader governance reform and implementation of community-driven and right-based approaches to REDD+ implementation. Others ask for simplification of carbon and non-carbon measurement technology and processes. Moreover, REDD+ is not a poverty-reduction program and international investors might not care about such issues. However, the actors see the room to plug other priorities with REDD+ resources, according to a local context. Researchers and advocates also indicate the possibility of non-market based REDD+ financing.

2.5.8 Carbon surrogacy

This storyline perceives REDD+ as a North-South divider (Cadman & Maraseni, 2012) and a new form of colonization (Okoh, 2015). It criticizes REDD+ as a cost-effective measure for the Global North in transferring the burden for carbon emission reduction to the Global South. According to this storyline's believers, REDD+ does nothing at all to reduce the world's emissions. Rather, it shifts the burden of mitigating climate change onto the places and people not responsible for it, and least able to cope with it (McAfee, 2012). But, there are not many in this critical mass who resist REDD+, and their voices are not strong in Nepal's policy arena. However, some respondents from civil society, especially from the indigenous community, some of the leftist-leaning political followers, and some critical researchers raise the issue of

community rights. They are skeptical about REDD+ and see the fear of Global North dominance in forest governance in the name of REDD+:

REDD+ seems beneficial for global and local elites. However, there is a fear that REDD+ might divide our society at the local level and divide developed and developing countries at the global level. In the name of financial benefits, there could be politics to ban forest-use rights and make us dependent.

Local political leader from a left leaning party

Thus, the supporters of this storyline perceive REDD+ to be a controversial issue. Like other offsetting mechanisms, REDD+ might give control to developed countries and the polluters. In the changing geopolitical context, the believers of this storyline consider the commodification of carbon as unavoidable due to global pressure, however, they emphasize being more cautious at the local level. For them, REDD+ is becoming a necessary evil:

Offsetting has been used as license for developed countries to continue emissions. So, if we only depend on REDD+, it will not be a sustainable solution. There should be shared but differentiated responsibilities to fix the climate change problem.

REDD+ policy expert from civil society

The strong believers of this storyline compare the market-based REDD+ mechanism to a surrogate mother and see no benefits at the local level from REDD+:

We are importing timber from Malaysia, while our timbers are decaying in the forest. In the name of carbon increment, we are not extracting any timber from our community forests. I feel like we are playing the role of surrogate mother to conserve carbon for developed countries and getting only a negligible amount from it.

Respondent from a REDD+ pilot CFUG

2.6 Discussion: Connecting the Storylines to Broader Climate Change Discourses

REDD+ is meant to achieve diverse purposes for various groups of people in different contexts. The storylines in the previous section demonstrate multiple ways of identifying the climate change problem and conceptualizing REDD+. Some of these storylines conflict with each other, whereas others are overlapping. In a broader spectrum, some storylines advocate for commodification and technocretization of forests carbon. Some others put forward more reformist agenda and urge for the incorporation of learning from participatory forest management, and to secure the local rights while conserving the forests for global climate change mitigation. On the other end, some storylines are very radical towards REDD+ and consider REDD+ as a false solution to climate change mitigation imposed by global north.

Below, linking with the storylines described in the previous section we adopt three meta-discourses that arguably underpin both policy practice and academic debate in environmental governance, particularly on the emergence of REDD+, as outlined also by Backstrand & Lovbrand (2007).

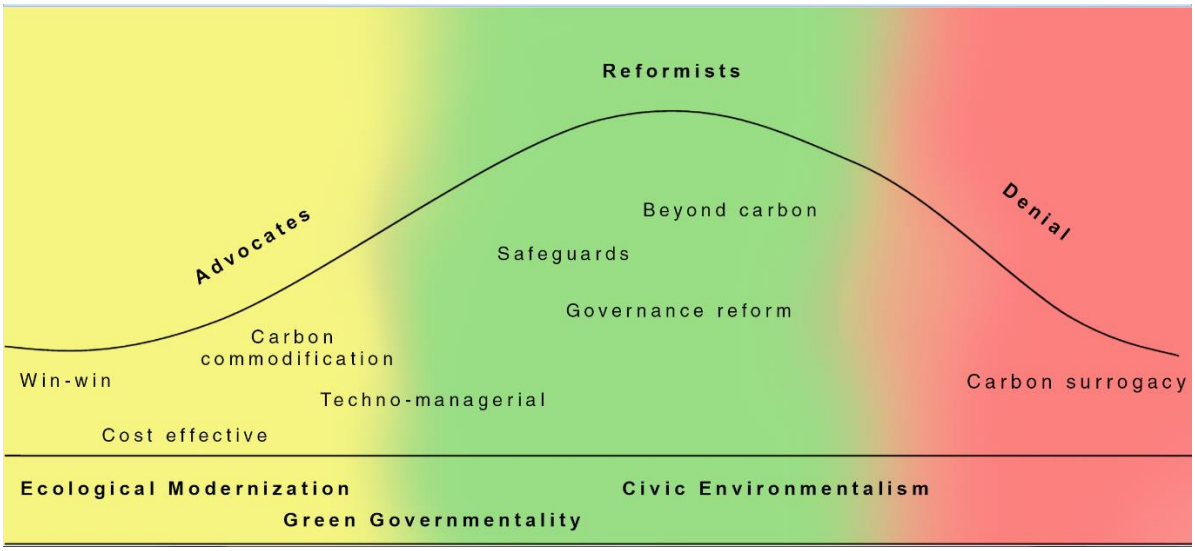

Figure 2.3 Major REDD+ storylines and policy discourses in Nepal's REDD+ policy arena

(Source: Authors' own illustration)

The first group of storylines frames REDD+ by the commodification of forests as a cost-effective approach to bringing a win-win solution. The commodification of forests goes further than timber to carbon, by putting a price on carbon and making it tradeable. In REDD+, forests are seen to yield carbon sink ecosystem services that can be quantified, verified, and compensated for (Gupta, Vijge, Turnhout, & Pistorius, 2014). These storylines basically consider forests as instruments for low-cost climate change mitigation and for maximizing synergies. This group of storylines focuses on the monetization of carbon to combat climate change, to conserve the forests, and to secure local livelihoods. These storylines arose as the idea of REDD+ fundamentally emerged to keep tropical forests standing and carbon sequestered. The notion of "result-based payment" (UNFCCC, 2015) in REDD+ is that developed countries pay money to developing countries to lock the forest carbon by reducing deforestation and forest degradation. Measuring the carbon, and paying for the increased volume of carbon is basically a neoliberal and technocratic rationale that falls under "ecological modernization" meta-discourse (Backstrand & Lovbrand, 2016). Storylines including "win-win", "cost-effective," "carbon commodification," and "techno-managerial" favor the ecological modernization meta-discourse in REDD+ policy that confirms the tendency of REDD+ policy actors to favor measurable market solutions without questioning the socioeconomic tradeoffs. However, the protection of local rights and the participation of local people in policy deliberation, which are considered to be key for success (Bastakoti & Davidsen, 2015; Larson et al., 2013; Phelps et al., 2010 etc), remain marginal in this meta-discourse.

The second group of storylines also focuses on the carbon constituted in the forests, but they emphasize the managerial and technical aspects of forest carbon measurement which falls broadly under the "green governmentality" meta-discourse (Backstrand & Lovbrand, 2016). For them, carbon content, sequestration, and emissions are essential concepts for defining forests and forest management (Melo, Turnhout, & Arts, 2014). This group of storylines renders nature and the environment measurable and calculable by setting quantitative standards, indicators, and criteria and by designing and implementing monitoring, reporting and verification systems (Gupta et al., 2014). Carbon accounting has been portrayed as a key aspect of REDD+, which

includes measuring and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions as well as setting the benchmarks against which performance is measured and payment for REDD+ is made (FCPF, 2013). This group of storylines seeks precise and internationally reliable technical expertise for calculating the carbon content of forests and their value. It privileges scientific knowledge and expertise as an authoritative basis for governance and regulation, including markets (Hajer, 1995). Field observation and interaction with the community people in the REDD+ piloting site reveals that the "techno-managerial" storyline has been strongly used at the grassroots level by the project proponents. Developing countries fear that calls to regulate forests under an international climate regime will increase the pressure for a *de facto* internationalization of tropical forests, given their role in climate protection efforts. The success of REDD+ as a post-Kyoto regime depends upon the willingness of developed countries to accept differentiated responsibilities to provide adequate resources for REDD+, and to give compensation to developing countries for their acceptance of the obligation to reduce emissions through deforestation and forest degradation. Initially, REDD+ focused on the single function (either the storage of carbon or the emission of carbon) of forests and privileged the expertise of economists and remote sensing specialists (Rowe, 2015). However, now the global debate has gradually deviated into safeguards and compensation mechanisms (UNFCCC, 2011). Internationally, REDD+ emphasizes "do no harm" and contributing to improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people. The program aims to prevent and mitigate harmful activities within program development and implementation (McDermott, Coad, Helfgott, & Schroeder, 2012). The safeguards storyline has been increasingly popular, but it still places its emphasis on carbon. Yet, there is a lack of agreement about the relative priority of carbon versus non-carbon values and the appropriate level of safeguard standards (McDermott et al., 2012). "Governance reform" and "beyond carbon" storylines also support some elements of green governmentality.

The third group of storylines critiques both commodification and techno-bureaucratization of forests. This group disagrees with oversimplification of deforestation and calls for a sustained discussion on various issues such as tenure, the rights of indigenous peoples, and biodiversity instead of focusing solely on financial incentives for carbon (Nielsen, 2014). These storylines

focus on co-benefits, non-carbon benefits, human rights, and transformative change in governance through the management of forests which falls broadly under "civic environmentalism". Supporters of this group of storylines consider that treating forests as global commons increases the pressure for *de facto* internationalization of tropical forests, given their role in the global carbon cycle and importance in climate protection efforts (Adelman, 2015). These storylines believe that simply paying for not cutting down trees is not sufficient, but that REDD+ should empower local stakeholders and offer livelihood activities in order to address the underlying causes of deforestation (Agrawal & Angelsen, 2009; Ezzine-de-Blas et al., 2011; Fry, 2011; Hajek et al., 2011; Lyster, 2011). Therefore, the idea of non-carbon benefits has recently been internationally introduced which has also been reflected in Nepal's policy debate. The recent National REDD+ Strategy of Nepal has emphasized the non-carbon benefit aspect (GoN, 2015). However, this idea is still clearly underdeveloped (Rowe, 2015). This group of storylines also urges for governance reform. Otherwise, REDD+ becomes merely another means by which the Global North rules the Global South, in the name of carbon trading. "Non-carbon benefit/beyond carbon" and Governance reform" storylines support the reformist and soft category of civic environmentalism meta-discourse, which suggests increased multilateral, democratic and a bottoms-up approach to make accountable institutions recognizing the multiple functions of forests, going beyond carbon. This group offers pragmatic and collaborative solutions for complex and multilevel climate change problems. However, at the extremist level, "carbon surrogacy" storyline supports the discourse that views REDD+ as a new form of colonization, or carbon-colonization. It also critiques REDD+ as carbon surrogacy by which developed countries are avoiding costly mitigation efforts at home while transferring the responsibility to developing countries at a low cost.

In a nutshell, this study broadly examined three meta-discourses in the Nepalese REDD+ policy discourse, each of which consists of several storylines. The first one supports a market-based approach to solve the climate change problem and treats forests as commodities. It conceptualizes carbon as a resource that can be traded. The second meta-discourse believes that science plays a central role in defining climate change problems. This discourse renders nature as

measurable and calculable by setting quantitative indicators (Gupta, 2012) and it privileges scientific knowledge and expertise as the authoritative basis for governance, including the market (Hajer, 1995). Both of these are top-down discourses in nature, and both confirm that REDD+ operates in the carbon commodification and the technicalization of forest governance (Vijge & Gupta, 2014; Vijge, 2016). In contrast, the third discourse is skeptical of market-based mechanisms as a primary design for the REDD+ program (Nielsen, 2014). This discourse adopts a bottom-up approach and believes in participation and stake-holding. This meta-discourse mostly urges for forestry governance reform and calls for a sustained discussion on various issues of social justice, including tenure and the rights of indigenous peoples, rather than solely focusing on financial incentives. However, the radical form of civic environmentalism takes a more critical style storyline rather than offering pragmatic solutions.

The political landscape that surrounds REDD+ in Nepal shows that there is a diversity of actors in the REDD+ policy arena (see Table 2.1), and it supports different storylines based on the actors' social constructs. As the policy process emerges, the actors change their position and one actor carries more than one storyline in order to understand the problem and perceive the solution from their own institutional and/or personal reality. At the beginning, the REDD+ storylines were focused on the carbon commodification and technocratization of forests, and they were mostly led by international agencies including the World Bank, USAID, WWF and the Nepalese government. These actors advocated for performance-based REDD+ payment. However, unlike in other developing countries, private carbon market developers have not yet been seen in Nepal. In the early stages, civil society and indigenous groups were also optimistic about REDD+, seeing it as an opportunity for economic growth while offering a cost-effective and efficient solution to deforestation. However, once the discussion on the pros and cons of performance-based and market-led REDD+ governance took place at different levels, the stakeholders gradually changed their position from REDD+ advocacy to a having more reformist line.

Globally, safeguards entered into the REDD+ policy debate in 2010, which influenced all of the actors at national and local levels. Now, the strong advocates of REDD+ have also shifted their storylines towards safeguards, realizing the fact that REDD+ should "do no harm" and should prevent risk to the local people. However, the observation of the FCPF supported program shows that the program is more focused on a risk-based approach, and does not go beyond preventive and mitigative safeguard measures. In contrast, the documents of Nepal's national government reveal that the state government focuses beyond carbon. Nepal's R-PP reflects the beyond carbon/co-benefits storyline in the framing of REDD+. Nepal's recent REDD+ strategy focuses on non-carbon benefits which support governance reform for REDD+ implementation. The programs led by conservation NGOs such as the WWF and Winrock emphasize the scientific and technocratic storylines. However, national NGOs, civil society organizations, and international NGOs such as RECOFTCS, who work on capacity building, believe that REDD+ policy and measures should respect international laws and conventions on human rights, and that social and environmental safeguards should be implemented. ICIMOD opines that REDD+ should not be an alternative to community forestry, but that both can go hand-in-hand to ensure community rights. However, it indicates the potentiality of non-market-based financing mechanisms as an alternative to the proposed market-based REDD+ approach. Actors from community forestry and indigenous peoples' networks are more concerned about local and indigenous peoples' rights, tenure security, and respect for their free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) when policies, programs, and projects are developed. Their storylines reflect that international agencies and governments are not serious about capacity building and deliberative policy process (Bastakoti & Davidsen, 2015). They also reveal their suspicions about the proper implementation of international commitment at the local level. However, REDD+ denial groups at the institutional level are not observed in Nepal, despite some critical individuals from indigenous communities and some on the far political left, who portrayed REDD+ as a divider between developed and developing countries by carbon surrogacy.

2.7 Conclusions

This article first analyzed how the actors and their relationships have been changed in Nepal's forestry governance due to the global paradigm shifts. Then, it uncovered different perspectives, understandings and views on REDD+ and forest governance. The study shows that Nepal government follows pluralistic policy approach and new actors are emerging in the policy field. Government, community groups, civil society organizations, international development agencies and private sectors are major categories of actors in Nepal's forest and climate change policy landscape. Each and every actor has their own interests and power in REDD+ policy process. This research indicated that although there are vast array of actors interested in REDD+ policy process, it is mainly dominated by small group of experts, and limited number of NGO and civil society representatives, and most of the community people are not aware on it.

REDD+ discourse in Nepal is being evolved like in other parts of the world and it is diverse in nature. One category of actors carries more than one storylines and they do not stick in the same position. Some storylines complement each other whereas others contradict. These storylines broadly support three different global meta-discourses. First group of storylines support commodification of forest carbon as cost-effective and win-win solution of global climate change problem; second group still supports the commodification of forest carbon but focuses on technical and managerial aspect of carbon at multiple scale. Third group opposes the oversimplification of REDD+ on the name of carbon and urges for governance reform focusing on tenure, rights of local people and multiple function of forest at multiple level.

Actors make different storylines and support respective discourses according to their social constructs. International donor agencies are more on REDD+ advocates side, state government still prefers technical and managerial dominance with some governance reform. However, civil society actors and grass-root communities favor governance reform for social and environmental

security over the market and technological dominance. Small voice of REDD+ denial was also recorded during the study but it is not strong at institutional level.

As REDD+ developed, its focus has been changed from entirely market-oriented climate change mitigation to the livelihoods and environmental concerns leading to the adoption of safeguards at UNFCCC level. Agenda of critical and reformist actors were also heard at global level which also helped to change the perspective of actors at national and sub-national level. The analysis of discourse indicates that there is not a single universal way of defining the problem of climate change and proposing the policy solution, therefore one should embrace the complexity of the issue and welcome the sense of openness for dialogue at multiple levels. Bringing local narratives together with national and global narratives helps to broaden out the knowledge and offers policy solution going beyond the economic-centric narratives. Therefore, this paper urges to adopt collaborative approach in REDD+ design for multiple benefits of healthy forests, strong communities and effective climate change mitigation.

CHAPTER 3 : REDD+ AND FOREST TENURE SECURITY: CONCERNS IN NEPAL'S COMMUNITY FORESTRY

Abstract

As one of the dominant large-scale mechanisms proposed to combat climate change, biodiversity loss, and rural poverty, REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) has added further complexity to the challenging governance of rights and resources in global forests. As REDD+ is commodifying carbon, concerns emerge about how carbon ownership and its rights can be accommodated into the existing framework that governs local forest resource rights. The Nepalese government has formally entered into REDD+ policy preparations, but it lacks clear legal provisions regarding key forest tenure rights such as carbon ownership, benefit sharing, and the political participation of community forest user groups from national to local. As a result, Nepal's policy process points toward performance-based carbon forestry in a way that may undermine and weaken existing community tenure rights and forest tenure security.

This paper discusses Nepal's potential impacts of new REDD+ and carbon ownership arrangements on forest tenure security and community-based forest governance. In a threefold methodological approach, the paper presents three scenarios for a REDD+-oriented tenure reform within the existing framework and assesses their concerns through in-depth qualitative interviews with key stakeholders, representatives, and advocates of Nepal's community forestry system, complemented by a review of government documents and academic literature of REDD+ lessons so far. The analysis identifies critical concerns for forest tenure security, state-community power relationships, and effective local institutions of the commons, and suggests that Nepal's REDD+ process is taking place at a particularly consequential time for structural changes of the forest governance framework.

Keywords: Carbon trade, community forestry, livelihoods, Nepal, REDD+, tenure rights

3.1 Introduction: REDD+, Carbon Rights and Forest Tenure

Decentralized resource management has become one of the most significant and visible shifts in national forest policies over the past two decades (Agrawal & Ostrom, 2008). An estimated 200 million hectares of forest land were transferred from state ownership to forest communities between 1985 and 2002 (White & Martin, 2002) and up to 27% of forests in the Global South are now managed by local forest communities (Sunderlin, Hatcher, & Liddle, 2008). Community-based forest management has become an integral part of international forest regimes to help address forest loss, environmental degradation, and negative impacts on rural livelihoods (Gilmour, Malla, & Nurse, 2004). It has also reduced the costs of protection and provided opportunities for biodiversity conservation and other environmental services (Agrawal & Ostrom 2008; Phelps, Webb, & Agrawal, 2010).

Carbon as a resource commodity shifts the notion of forests from those of places of local livelihoods to forests as zones of productivity for global environmental services. With carbon becoming a commodity, the question of related benefits, control, and ownership over carbon–in other words, the allocation of carbon rights–will be critical (Basnet, 2009; Fairhead, Leach, & Scoones, 2012). The commercialization of carbon adds not only layers of economic interests, but also of political interests and problems which need to be carefully examined. Current preparations for REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation plus conservation, the sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks) around the world have already expressed considerable concerns about the ways in which carbon rights can or will be incorporated into existing forest governance frameworks (Brockhaus, Obidzinski, Dermawan, Laumonier, & Luttrell, 2012; Huettner, 2012; Leggett & Lovell, 2012; Macintosh, 2012; Mustalahti & Tassa, 2012; Yasmi, Kelley, Murdiyarso, & Patel, 2012).

The concept of carbon rights as being partially related to, but yet quite distinct from, land and forest rights is relatively new and will require time to consolidate an overall system of forest

rights (Fairhead, Leach, & Scoones, 2012). The translation of carbon processes (services) into resources and commodities remains unclear and difficult, particularly the ways in which formal ownership of its various components can be translated into forest governance frameworks and the legal composition of forest rights. Accordingly, most countries have not fully defined carbon rights.

If REDD+ is turned into an operating market-based system, this issue may quickly become urgent as problems develop. The link between stored carbon and the ownership or management of land and forests may make REDD+ mechanisms susceptible to unfair practices and inequitable distribution of benefits (Vhugen, Aguilar, Peskett, & Miner, 2012). In situations where land resources are already subject to multiple or unclear forms of use, stewardship, and ownership, newly added revenues from carbon may aggravate uncertainties and tension among resource users even further.

More importantly, REDD+ is anticipated to reverse the former decentralization trend of the past decades in forest governance. By offering new economic interests in international carbon trade, it creates incentives for the state to revert forest authority back to the state (Sandbrook, Nelson, Adams, & Agrawal, 2010) based on the argument that they are the rightful entity to govern and protect national economic interests, thus bypassing communities and undermining formerly granted local forest rights (Phelps et al., 2010).

Ironically, the process therefore has the potential to undermine the efforts of the past decades by leaving unaddressed one of the key institutional foundations of community forestry success: forest tenure security. Community-based resource management research has found–after decades of research and difficult lessons from forestry practice–that forest rights and tenure security are

particularly central components for successful collective forest governance and need careful attention for success (FAO, 2002; Pagdee, Kim, & Daugherty, 2006; World Bank, 2007; Sunderlin, Hatcher, & Liddle, 2008). Forest tenure security concerns the long-term reliability and validity of community forest user rights, for example, whether the government may reclaim previously granted community rights at a later date for economic benefit: have the rights been granted permanently; can they be altered or withdrawn; and if so, under what conditions and timelines? The continuity of these forest tenure rights is now in the process of being fundamentally altered through additional layers of carbon rights, ecological services, and new forms of commodifying forests.

In an analysis of a number of Readiness Preparation Proposals (R-PPs) to the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), Dooley, Griffiths, Martone and Ozinga (2011) found that although the World Bank has identified the recognition of tenure rights as crucial to the effectiveness of REDD implementation, questions of tenure were not addressed in the R-PPs. Even where carbon rights and environmental services were discussed, land and territorial rights remained insufficiently addressed. Knox, Caron, Goldstein and Miner (2010) argue that the lack of straightforward policies regarding tenure has further led to a systemic neglect of tenure risks in R-PPs due to complexity; even where risks are mentioned, there are no real commitments to deal with them. Similar concerns were identified by the World Resources Institute's review of R-PPs (Goers-Williams, Larsen, Lupberger, Daviet, & Davis, 2011).

Globally, Nepal has become an outstanding example of participatory forest management through a large structural forest reform program which deeply embedded community-based forest governance into the country's institutional framework. Community forests encompass about 16 million hectares of land across the country, managed by more than 17,808 community forest user groups (CFUGs) which encompass an estimated 2.19 million households and approximately 40% of the country's population (DOF, 2012, August). Nepal's community forestry is part of a

collective traditional system for domestic and small-scale forest use, which constitutes a broad and significant forest tenure category across the country with substantial importance for forest regions. Recently, Nepal has begun preparing for the inclusion of carbon trade into its forest framework since it ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 2005. As an Annex II country, Nepal is now eligible to receive financing from individuals and countries seeking carbon credit. The government declared REDD+ a national priority as its strategy against climate change and poverty, and is in the process of redesigning its entire forest governance framework around carbon trade (NPC, 2010), which calls for a careful understanding of the possible consequences.

This paper discusses key concerns for forest tenure security from Nepal's current governance changes as REDD+ and carbon rights are introduced into the existing forest governance framework, suggesting profound changes regarding carbon ownership arrangements, state-community power relationships, changing rights for local forestry institutions, and livelihood security of forest-dependent people. Our theoretical approach views REDD+ as an already practiced form of governance, from a perspective in which all social and political interaction can be analyzed by the means of governance in the context of state, society, environment and market (Cadman & Maraseni, 2012). As Thompson, Baruah and Carr (2011) describe, REDD+ constitutes a form of governance 'that validates and legitimizes specific tools, actors and solutions while marginalizing others' (p. 100), as well as 'a means of aligning a diverse set of stakeholders around agreed-upon objects to be governed, tools of governance, and forms of environmental, economic and social knowledge' (p. 102). This governance approach of REDD+ is embedded in a political ecology perspective which allows us to focus especially on unequal power structures among the actors of forest- and livelihood-related management and governance processes (Bryant, 1992; Peluso, 1992), and its more fundamental questions on the constructions of nature, its social and ecological consequences and political solutions (Escobar, 1999; Castree, 2010) as these may arise as issues of conflict in the social and political interaction of stakeholders of emerging REDD+ systems.

3.1.1 Methodological approach

The research uses a qualitative approach focusing on the perspectives of those who may be among the most affected and the most familiar with the system from forest governance to tenure security: community forestry stakeholders (from local forestry practice to national governance planning), community forestry advocates, and activists, as well as the national head organization for Nepal's most prominent community-level organizational unit in forest governance, the local CFUGs. Based on a social constructivist framework, the stakeholders' views are understood not as objective or absolute, but are rather to be understood within their positionality, time, and context (Blaikie, 2001).

The analysis builds upon three main methodological elements: (1) a legal exploration of possible tenure scenarios; (2) semi-structured qualitative interviews with Nepalese community forestry representatives, collected over a time period of two years (Table 3.1); and (3) a literature analysis of Nepalese government documents as well as academic studies for related lessons worldwide, complemented by personal observations of the first author from his own professional experience of Nepal's policy process over the past 10 years.

Table 3.1: List of interviewees

Interviewee	**Affiliation**	**Interview date**
Ghan Shyam Pandey	Coordinator of the Global Alliance of Community Forestry (GACF), and former national chair of FECOFUN	First interview in February, 2012, with several follow up through email and Skype.
Shambhu Dangal	REDD+ Expert and Executive Director of Kathmandu based research NGO Natural Resources Institute (NRI)	First interview in February, 2012, with several follow up through email and Skype.
Eak Rana	Project Coordinator at a REDD+ pilot project led by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)	February, 2012

Bhola Bhattarai	Civil Society Organization representative observer for FCPF REDD+ process, World Bank and Chair Person of National Forum for Advocacy Nepal (NAFAN)	First interview in February, 2012, with several follow up through email and Skype
Bhola Khatiwada	Chairperson of the Community-Based Forestry Supporters' Network Nepal (COFSUN Nepal) and Secretary of newly declared Gaurishankar Conservation Area Struggle Committee	February, 2012
Indra Sapkota	Former District Forest Officer, Chitwan (Currently Planning Officer at the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation)	December, 2013

3.1.2 Structure of the paper

The paper first addresses the challenges of carbon rights vis-à-vis Nepal's community forestry tenure system in general (Section 2), then the country's current policy process and politics specifically related to REDD+ (Section 3). The analysis outlines three potential scenarios for ways in which carbon rights may be incorporated into Nepal's existing forest governance framework (Section 4). From there, we present in-depth interview data from our community forestry interviewees (Section 5) as they identify their specific concerns for forest tenure security from clashing agendas between global and local, from REDD+'s local benefits in practice, and regarding impacts on hierarchical decision-making. Section 6 addresses the current challenges arising from the timing of these policy changes and their structural implications for the national forest governance framework, leading to Section 7 with a brief overview assessment of the threats of REDD+ to Nepal's forest tenure security in light of the current policy context.

3.2 Nepal's Forest Tenure System, Devolution, and the Challenge of Carbon Rights

Community forestry has come to constitute the most important tenure category in Nepal's forest governance system. Prior to its emergence, the country's forests had been locked into a strongly centralized forest regime during the *panchayat* years since the 1960s, in a system which could neither save the forest nor benefit the local communities. Nepal's deforestation rate then became one of the highest among many tropical countries of South and Southeast Asia (Thapa & Weber, 1990), culminating in a Himalayan ecological crisis (Ives, 1989; World Bank, 1979).

Tenure reforms in the 1980s attempted to reverse this trend through participatory forest governance that sought to reconnect forest communities with local user rights, stewardship responsibilities, and the long-term benefits of sustainable forest use. A new Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS), approved in 1989, particularly marked a new era when it officially prioritized the devolution of key forest tenure rights to local communities, as long as these were willing and able to manage them (Bartlett, 1992).

The 1993 Forest Act established different forest tenure categories and management arrangements between the state and the forest users, a system which remains largely in place (see Table 3.2). Since then, as much as about 30% of the total area of Nepal's national forests has been transferred into various forms of local forest tenure (Martin, 2011).

Table 3.2: Tenure categories, their share and forest use rights

Tenure category	Total area (ha.)	Tenure period	Forest use rights
Government Managed Forests	3,673,981 (58.65%)	• Tenure period – unlimited • Management-defined by state	State
Community Forests	1,664918 (26.58%)	• Tenure period - not defined by law • Management- defined by 5 or 10 years plan	100% to CFUGs, 25% of the forest income spend in forest development activities
Protected Forests	887,000 (14.16%)	• Tenure period – unlimited • Management-defined by state	State
Leasehold Forests	26,900 (0.43%)	• Tenure period- 40 years with possibility of extension for another 40 years • Management defined by 5 or 10 years plan	100% to local leasehold group
Collaborative Forests	10,676 (0.17%)	• Tenure period- unlimited • Management- through annual scheme or 5 years plan	75% to state, 25% to community
Private Forests	NA	• Tenure- unlimited • Management- defined	Private owner
Religious Forests	NA	• Tenure period-unlimited • Management- defined by 5 years plan	100% to local religious group

Sources: Forest Act 1993, Forest Regulation 1995, Collaborative Forest Management Guidelines 2003, National Park, Wildlife Conservation Act 1973.

Community-held tenure, leasehold forestry and local monitoring have been identified as significant drivers of forest regrowth in Nepal (Nagendra, 2007). The country's forest product supply was increased and ecosystems services sustainably improved, indicated for example by an ecological improvement from a slowdown of deforestation per hectares to increased biomass per unit area (Branney & Yadav, 1998; Gautam, Shivakoti, & Webb, 2004), and a positive social effect through the mobilization of forest community members for rural development and institutional building at the grassroots level (Kanel, 2004).

Research over the past two decades indicates that Nepal's community forestry has been relatively successful in international comparison to other community forestry attempts (Kanel, 2004; Kanel & Dahal, 2008; Tachibana & Adhikari, 2009). Especially clear, secure and devolved forest tenure have come to be regarded as fundamental requirements for the sustainability of the forest and the livelihoods of local populations, making it an issue that needs to be carefully treated in terms of modifications and amendments. Unsecured, unclear and unrecognized community tenure rights can be the cause of conflict and deforestation, not least because forests may be destroyed due to short-run games (De Konig, Capistrano, & Yasmi, 2008). Studies from Nepal's central Terai region, for example, found that illegal felling and forest encroachment are more common in collaborative forest or national forest area because they grant less forest rights to the local population and offer less motivation to control the area effectively (GoN/MFSC, 2008).

By profoundly reshaping local forest benefit and livelihoods in rural Nepal, CFUGs have grown into one of the most influential and widespread institutions in Nepal's land and resource governance system. As a result of their strong establishment on the local level and beyond, CFUGs have turned into crucial local points of departure for resource conservation, community development initiatives, institutional capacity building and rural poverty alleviation efforts (Kanel, 2006). They have also become a powerful organizational tool for state–community

interaction and policy implementation. For better cross-scale political representation and access, the Federation of Community Forest Users in Nepal (FECOFUN) was created as their national umbrella organization, which now ranks among the largest civil society organizations in the country and holds a key role in the advocacy of civic rights on natural resources and their sustainable use. Through this local-to-national network, CFUGs have become a powerful potential vehicle for strategic efforts toward millennium development goal, as an entry point for neoliberal approaches toward biodiversity conservation, and most recently for carbon trading mechanisms such as REDD+.

In this regard, climate change mitigation and global carbon frameworks pose significant challenges for existing national forest governance regimes. Carbon-related rights increase the complexity of forest rights which require new conceptualizations and legal mechanisms to address the emerging bundles of forest rights and ramifications for forest tenure. Even without the additional difficulty of carbon, forest tenure rights are already difficult to delineate because they are integral components of complex resource systems that are affected by local, national and global processes, and reach across various types such as material good, non-extractive forest activities and ecological services. Tenure rights are often subject to further uncertainty on the ground as differences arise between *de jure* (formal regulatory framework) and *de facto* rights (customary rules, enforcement practices).

Multilayered conflicts can emerge between stakeholders if benefit sharing and governance are not properly addressed from the beginning. Payments for environmental services (PES) pose new challenges for forest rights because they need to translate previously external, non-market environmental values into real financial incentives to provide environmental services (Wunder, Engel, & Pagiola, 2008). They create new economic mechanisms for ecosystem conservation and restoration across local and global scales by enabling external beneficiaries of environmental services to channel direct contractual and conditional payments to the forest owners and users

(Wunder, 2005). Poorly designed and underfinanced PES have been found to create livelihood risks and external dependencies (Smith & Scherr, 2002). Especially long-term forest dwellers – for example indigenous groups and local farmers – often have *de facto* access to forests, but face difficulties in forest tenure and livelihood security as their practical authority over trees, timber and forest management remains often limited in scope and unrecognized in law (World Resources Institute, 2005).

3.3 Nepal's Policy Future: Carbon Rights, Forest Governance Framework and REDD+

The Nepalese government has declared REDD+ to be the new strategic cornerstone of its national forest policy framework (GoN, 2008; GoN, 2010; NPC, 2007). The most recent three-year National Interim Plan (2011–2013) explicitly promotes low-carbon development strategies and the possibility of carbon trading. The forestry sector plan also identified carbon trading as means toward sustainable development. The government is now trying to define carbon governance links with community forestry and other community based forestry programs with emerging global carbon policy for the post-2012 period (GoN, 2010).

The flurry of activities surrounding REDD+ preparations has formed a pivotal potential change particularly because it coincides with a larger federal restructuring of the Nepalese forest governance framework. The last MPFS (stemming from 1989) recently expired in 2009, and current plans point toward a larger redesign of forest governance as an integral part of a new constitution. This may enable major framework changes toward carbon trading through REDD+, structural changes to the 1993 Forest Act–the legal cornerstone of the past devolution shift in forest governance–and as a result changes to the roles of community forests in the existing tenure regime. In short, the current period marks a larger forest governance revision in Nepal, which is now dominated by the structural demands and economic opportunities of REDD+. The future governance framework will therefore–in all likelihood–be fundamentally influenced by the

conceptual understanding of carbon rights and their legal interpretation into potentially altered state-community relationships.

How and to what extent these new requirements will translate into policy changes is unclear, particularly concerning the integrity of complex bundles of rights such as forest use and long-term tenure security. The government of Nepal acknowledged in a forest policy review that the lack of secure tenure for local communities is a major driver of deforestation in many developing countries (GoN, 2008). However, even where national REDD+ proposals acknowledge the need of tenure security, strategies to achieve these goals are typically not clearly laid out. Where unclear local arrangements meet strict international requirements, REDD+ may add hardship to local forest populations by imposing new limitations on forest use (Larson, Barry, & Dahal, 2010). As a result, REDD+ has caused significant concerns about the future of community rights, for example: how will community rights under REDD+ be administered? Will they be further limited in the future? What rules for resource use will be developed to meet carbon targets under REDD+? Who will create and enforce these rules and how might they limit community access to forests for livelihoods? If communities carry new burdens of carbon stock increment limiting forest use, will they be fairly compensated (Larson, 2011)? For example, how to incorporate PES into Nepal's forest governance remains unresolved. The structural implications of environmental services – especially forest carbon – are new to Nepal, and no provisions have yet been made under legislation to clarify the emerging rights and consequences on existing bundles of forest rights. Even within a REDD+ system, global environmental services can only work if the forest rights continue to be clearly defined and if the payment mechanism is directed to the local people who hold these rights (Cotula & Mayers, 2009).

Based on Nepal's ongoing REDD+ pilot phase vis-à-vis existing community forestry practice across the country, our analysis finds several structural as well as practical concerns, which are outlined in the following sections from the possible tenure scenarios (Section 4) to the perspectives of community forestry interviewees (Section 5).

3.4 Policy Options and Three Scenarios: Legal Design of Carbon Rights vis-a-vis Forest Rights

Spanning across five carbon pools, carbon processes can be linked to all ecological processes in the forest, categorized by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2006) as aboveground biomass, belowground biomass, dead wood, litter and soil organic matter. Nevertheless, due to the interconnectivity of these ecological flows, carbon is not a resource that can be delineated as clearly as other forests products; instead, it depends on the legal definition of specific attributes in order to measure and trade carbon as a commodity. Questions also emerge over concepts of carbon ownership, such as whether it could (or should) be considered a separate proprietary interest, or whether it should become linked to existing categories of ownership related to forest rights or land title.

As a result, carbon rights can be implemented in various ways into the overall forest governance framework and with varying consequences; for example, they could be defined explicitly by creating new laws, or they could be implicitly incorporated by extending existing laws on forests and land rights (Vhugen et al., 2012). One option is that carbon rights could be added into the existing land and tenure system according to the way in which the physical matter that holds the carbon is captured under different forms of ownership. This may reduce potential conflict, confusion and erosion of the commons that might otherwise arise from the new system of ownership arising from the commodification of carbon. If carbon is understood as a forest product, existing benefit-sharing mechanisms based on currently prevailing practices could apply and be extended from the existing system. At the same time, a mere extension of carbon rights into the existing system may not adequately represent the complexity of its ecological processes nor its scales and relevance from a benefit sharing perspective. Moreover, this approach could even result in unpredicted interest mechanisms–between communities and the state, for example–which would undermine forest governance as a whole. Based on these considerations, we explore three potential scenarios for the incorporation of carbon rights into Nepal's existing forest framework.

3.3.1 Differentiation between surface and subsurface rights

This scenario follows the existing framework of the 1993 Forest Act the most closely. Aboveground carbon rights are passed on to the communities, while belowground carbon is regarded as part of the land, i.e. under state ownership. This would loosely follow Nepal's existing 1993 Forest Act in how it distinguishes between the forest as a livelihood sphere (community rights) and the land as state-owned territory which provides for its population. Moreover, this approach would implicitly allocate carbon rights in line with their carbon-related resources and their legally determined ownership. The Forest Act contains basic delineations of forest rights for each specific tenure category, which may guide the interpretation of carbon-related forest rights beyond their original scope. Table 3.3 summarizes the resulting ownership of carbon rights if these were indeed directly linked to their ecological counterparts in the existing forest tenure categories in Nepal's tenure system.

Table 3.3: Current carbon ownership within existing tenure categories

Tenure regime	**Ownership on carbon pool**				
	Above ground biomass	**Below ground biomass**	**Litter**	**Deadwood**	**Soil organic matter**
Government managed forest	State	State	State	State	State
Protected forest	State	State	State	State	State
Collaborative forest	Joint ownership of state and collaborative forest user group	State	Collaborative forest user group	Joint ownership of state and collaborative forest user group	State
Community forest	CFUG	State	CFUG	CFUG	State
Leasehold forest	Leasehold forest user group	State	Leasehold forest user group	Leasehold forest user group	State
Religious forest	Religious forest user group	State	Religious forest user group	Religious forest user group	State
Buffer zone forest	Joint ownership of state and buffer zone forest user group	State	Buffer zone user group	Joint ownership of state and buffer zone forest user group	State
Private forest	Private owner	Private owner	Private owner	Private owner	Private owner

Source: Forest Act 1993, Forest Regulation 1995, Collaborative Forest Management Guidelines 2003, National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973.

3.3.2 Differentiation between livelihood rights and ecological rights

The 1993 Forest Act defines forest products as 'all the products available in the forest including timber, leaf, branches, sand, soil, minerals, wild animals and water.' This definition suggests a broad and comprehensive coverage of all potential resources found within the forest, but carbon arguably transcends their intended focus on physical elements, while ecological services or values are not mentioned. This would thus allow the state to treat carbon rights as a new legal category independently from the existing framework. Instead, carbon rights can be allocated independently from resource ownership as defined by the Forest Act. Given this definition, the second scenario does not regard carbon as an inherent extension of forest activities, but rather distinguishes between livelihood rights–the conventional forest rights of the communities–and a separate, explicitly new set of ecosystem rights related to carbon (Vhugen et al., 2012). Within this new framework, all carbon rights are separated from forest user rights and fall under state control because they are not part of the livelihood rights which were granted to the forest communities, but rather constitute a new and different component beyond the previous system. In this approach, the ownership of carbon is not automatically derived from the forest resources that hold or process the carbon. Moreover, the state could even define carbon as an entirely new and separate natural resource, which would decouple carbon from any established ownership notions of previously defined forest commodities (Osafo, 2010). The above scenario would enable the state to maintain all control and benefit rights over carbon, or to offer joint ownership with forest communities in some cases. This scenario would not offer any REDD+ benefits to the forest communities, but instead recentralize all forest carbon benefits to the state, thus eroding the existing community forest tenure security due to a loss of actual benefits and control authority.

3.3.3 Devolution of all carbon rights as forest rights

This scenario extends, to their fullest extent, the assumptions of current community-level forest rights (forest management benefits) to carbon rights (ecosystem services). All carbon rights are

treated as an inherent component of existing forest benefits, based on the view that the ecological 'production' of carbon results from community-based forest management. Here, carbon is treated as an inherent component of forest activities. It is recognized as an ecological process and the result of management of forest resources; in other words as an inherent ecosystem service provided by the forest as an interdependent system as a whole. This approach would also consider carbon successes the result of community forest management decisions and thus the direct or indirect product of community-based efforts. This scenario implicitly merges all carbon rights with the current forest rights of forest communities (Vhugen et al., 2012) and therefore implies devolution of full carbon rights to the community level, in line with Nepal's strong community forestry framework. Community forest users would receive full carbon rights and, consequently, full benefit from the carbon trade, which would strengthen the Nepalese community forestry user groups and allow for the strongest forest tenure security vis-à-vis REDD+ carbon trade efforts.

Between these different scenarios, the Nepalese government has not confirmed yet on how carbon-related solutions will be operationalized, and what implications they anticipate for the affected local forest communities. Nepal's 2010 R-PP, however, emphasizes a commitment to build upon the existing institutional structures, and that 'the framework for REDD+ implementation will establish the regime for carbon rights based on the principle of linking it to the existing resource rights' (GoN, 2010). Similarly, the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation announced plans to build upon the 1993 Forest Act in order to accommodate REDD+. This emphasis may suggest the government's preference for implicit legal rights derived from existing laws that do not specifically mention carbon rights but nonetheless could govern rights to benefit from REDD+. This would point toward the first option in which carbon rights represent extensions of government's respective forest rights and follows their differentiation between surface rights (community) and subsurface rights (state).

3.5 Concerns and Local Perspectives: Interviews with Community Forestry Representatives

3.4.1 Clashing agendas: fortress conservation versus livelihood needs

One of the most central concerns that soon became evident throughout our interview data is the clash of objectives and agendas between forest conservation and livelihoods. REDD+'s carbon stock increases can result in conflict when the livelihood needs of poor forest dwellers may become of secondary importance, pushed into the background by the dominant agendas of the Global North (Griffiths, 2009; Mustalahti, Bolin, Boyd, & Paavola, 2012). Ghan Shyam Pandey, Coordinator of the Global Alliance of Community Forestry (GACF), and former national chair of FECOFUN, for example, reports from his close engagement with REDD+ preparations in Nepal that the current process does not reflect or support the interests of the country's forest-dependent people, and has instead been imposed primarily by international investors and conservation agencies for their own benefit. Other interviewees also emphasized concerns that the national government may align with foreign carbon investors to maximize economic profits by focusing on high-level agreements between international donors and the national government of Nepal. Current FECOFUN chair Apsara Chapagain is similarly skeptical there will be local REDD+ benefits for the community from stricter forest protection requirements for climate change mitigation (Chapagain, 2012). Even where forest conservation would increase the overall forest value, on short-time scales it may have a diminishing effect on the user value because harvesting restrictions undermine the local subsistence economy and livelihood security (Peskett, Huberman, Bowen-Jones, Edwards, & Brown, 2008).

Another concern is that policy will become more restrictive toward extractive activities in order to increase the carbon stocks and services of the forests (personal interview, Global Alliance of Community Forestry Coordinator–Ghan Shyam Pandey; and REDD+ expert and Executive Director of Kathmandu based research NGO Environment Resources Institute–Shambhu Dangal, February 2012). For example, a study from two REDD+ pilot project sites in the Ludikhola watershed (Gorkha) and Kayarkhola watershed (Chitwan) indicates that the life of the forest-

dependent population was affected by new restrictions that were prompted by REDD+ pilot efforts (Uprety, Luintel, & Bhandari, 2011; Patel et al., 2013). Their findings suggest that REDD+ may encourage restrictions once it enters into performance-based (market-based) mechanisms. Our interview with Eak Rana, Project Coordinator at a REDD+ pilot project led by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), revealed that even though pilot projects are typically not market-based nor require specific restrictions, CFUGs' executives have already initiated stricter extraction limits in pilot project areas to increase their forest carbon stock for a more positive future record (personal interview, February, 2012). The former District Forest Officer of Chitwan and current Planning Officer at the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation Indra Sapkota also has the same observation from REDD+ pilot area. Sapkota criticizes that REDD+ benefits to the local level were presented in a very fabricated way by its proponents at the beginning of the project. As a result to the flawed process, local forest executives set harsh forest extraction limits in order to increase their economic returns from the carbon stock higher (personal communication, December 2013).

Rana further indicated that the first disbursement of most of the ICIMOD-led pilot project funds was used abundantly on forest conservation and carbon emission reduction-related activities, but barely spent on direct livelihood-supporting activities (personal interview, February, 2012). This follows a protective carbon sequestration strategy which often keeps land off-bounds for livelihood activities, as opposed to a multi-use strategy which would allow for more local diversity from livestock, shifting cultivation or firewood harvesting (Meinzen-Dick, Markelova, & Moore, 2010). REDD+ only pays a small portion to the communities for increased carbon stocks, but at the same time the project guidelines forbid alternative livelihood initiatives of the CFUGs beyond 10 explicitly listed activities. These are insufficient in scope and flexibility to cover the immediate needs of the forest population, let alone to reduce their dependency on forest extraction in the long run (Skutsch et al., 2012).

On top of harvesting restrictions, interviewees also raise concerns over zero-use conservation efforts. In light of an increasing global market for environmental services, the Nepalese government has declared a commitment to increase forest cover to 40% of the total land (NPC, 2010). Although community forestry activists are not *per se* against such conservation efforts, skepticism continues against the government's recent steps that have also been criticized as 'accumulation by dispossession'(Harvey, 2003, 2005).

Given the emerging revenues of REDD+, the government and environmental NGOs may have an incentive to favor the creation of protected areas over the interests of local forest communities. For example, the Nepalese government hastily declared three new protected areas just before the 2009 Copenhagen Summit to demonstrate its level of commitment to conservation (Paudel, Khatri, Khanal, & Karki, 2013). Large parts of the newly declared protected areas had, however, either previously been established community forests or were part of potential future community forests that had already been under consideration by the forest authorities (personal interview, Ghan Shyam Pandey and Bhola Khatiwada, February, 2012). The government's declaration even ignored international legal provisions for the local communities and indigenous peoples (personal interview, Ghan Shyam Pandey, February, 2012) and, overall, gives an example of how vulnerable community rights may be as outside interests increase (Chapagain, 2012). FECOFUN, several community forestry activists and policy analysts strongly condemned the Nepalese government's decision, arguing that it undermines the national role and international credibility of Nepal's community forestry as a successful sustainability instrument (Suman, Paudel, & Paudel, 2013).

3.4.2 REDD+ in practice: local benefit flow and implementation

Studies around the world found that PES, despite their program objectives, offer mixed outcomes for small and poor land owners (Boyd, May, Chang, & Weiga, 2007; Pagiola, 2008). Local people are offered limited economic incentives to participate, and their involvement is often

driven only by donor priorities and project financing (Kandel, 2007). Often, forest-reliant communities are unable to benefit from PES particularly due to the lack of legal recognition of land claims (Boyd et al., 2007) high transition costs, poor governance and corruption (Sunderlin, Larson, & Cronkleton, 2009; Dermawan et al., 2011). Griffiths (2009) further showed a South American case that environmental payments and carbon forestry even indebted the communities and locked them into in legal obligations which favored carbon forestry companies. Overall, REDD+ appears to achieve local success only if it offers clear financial benefits, full and reliable compensation for the loss of extractive forest benefits. This includes non-marketed goods and intangible assets of local forests which would be affected under stricter regulations, otherwise it is difficult to motivate a change in local forest use behavior in the long run (McNally, Sage, & Holland, 2009).

The Nepalese government has also promoted REDD+ as a tool for poverty alleviation, but whether or not and how REDD+ benefits will actually reach local forest communities remain unclear (Bleaney, Vickers, & Peskett, 2009). Market-based conservation initiatives are relatively new in Nepal, and the country has already experienced top-down pressures during the pilot phases of PES and sustainable forest management certification processes (Kandel, 2007). Environmental and social NGOs are particularly wary of potential for funding to subvert safeguards for indigenous people and good governance from REDD+ (Cadman & Maraseni, 2012). Even though Nepal has entered into the REDD+ SES (Social and Environmental Standards) Initiative and the government has announced it would conduct a Strategic Social and Environmental Impact Study in its R-PP document, the implementation has lagged far behind and the government is still in the process of outsourcing (Khatri & Paudel, 2013). The ICIMOD-led pilot project tried to incorporate some social indicators beyond carbon sequestration in its fund distribution, but it failed to properly address the needs of forest-dependent people. According to the Baseline Report 2010 of the ICIMOD's Nepalese REDD+ pilot project, demand for forest products such as firewood in many cases already exceeds the supply in many CFUGs, and they do not have alternatives to resort to. This situation may be further aggravated

as REDD+ could complicate local pressures; our interviewees jointly emphasized that considerable danger exists from local elites imposing stricter rules to gain more benefit from the local carbon stock, thus affecting poor people's livelihoods even more. Some CFUGs have already tightened their forest product-harvesting rules, which do not affect the rich families, but the poor forest-dependent families even more so (Uprety, Luintel, & Bhandari, 2011; Patel et al., 2013).

3.4.3 Top-down decision-making structures

Further critical issues arise not only from expected outcomes but from the process itself. The scope of carbon trading and PES brings a new layer of nationally and internationally important objectives, due to which our interviewees express fears that these will overrun local forest management priorities and introduce stronger top-down decision-making. Participation and representation are, however, considered central in order to avoid current gaps and marginalization which would negatively affect forest tenure security (personal interview, Ghan Shyam Pandey, Shambhu Dangal, Bhola Bhattarai and Bhola Khatiwada, February, 2012). Even if a large amount of funding flows from the Global North, it is crucial that these resources effectively reach the forest-dependent communities without undermining local institutions (Phelps et al., 2010; Doherty & Schroeder, 2011), for example, even suggest a global REDD+ framework as a mechanism to warrant the participation and influence of local forest communities in the establishment of tenure arrangements at the national level.

In principle, the Nepalese government declared that it is committed to respecting the rights of forest-dependent people, to maintaining downward transparency and accountability, and to clarifying the link between carbon ownership and land/forest tenure before entering into active carbon trade (GoN, 2010). However, community forestry and policy activists are not convinced that this commitment can be implemented in practice. Across our interviews, many recent activities and projects were criticized as being top-down, donor-driven, and dominated by

government techno-bureaucrats and foreign donor organizations (personal interviews, Shambhu Dangal, Ghan Shyam Pandey, Bhola Bhattarai, February 2012). Global Alliance of Community Forestry coordinator and former chair of FECOFUN Ghan Shyam Pandey, for example, particularly expresses concerns that international conservation NGOs have become overly influential in Nepal's policy formulations, while civil society and media are too weak to provide a local counterbalance of voices and interests. Accordingly, he argues, Nepal's national REDD+ policy-making needs to become more proactive in careful regulatory planning and implementation of tenure rights, benefit sharing and political participation structures. Otherwise, he argues, the country's forestry framework may lose consistency and relevance in its national future for livelihood security and sustainable development.

REDD+ guidelines stipulate that existing forest governance systems be used as a foundation for its efficient, effective and equitable implementation (Petkova, Larson, & Pacheco, 2010). However, a review of REDD+ plans submitted to the World Bank in 2008 by various national governments shows that most plans were prepared with little or no consultation with forest-dependent people (Griffiths, 2009). The review further warns that although REDD+ itself is not a governing instrument, it does affect governance as it becomes part of key decision-making structures of forest-related priorities, authority and power (Griffiths, 2009). Similarly, although the Nepalese government claims that their REDD+ R-PP documents were prepared in a consultative process (GoN, 2010), our observation as well as interviewee reports indicates that local forest communities' level of knowledge and consultation about the emerging forest carbon offset mechanism, its process and consequences, is very low, and most likely has been throughout the policy formulation process. According to the REDD+ R-PP document:

Altogether 3,180 individuals were consulted through workshops and meetings. 57 workshops were held at national (17), regional/district (13) and community (27) level with participation from a range of stakeholders including indigenous people and local communities, forest-

dependent people *dalit*, women, civil society organizations, government department, political parties, media, academia, international organizations, development partners and private sectors. Separate workshops were held targeting indigenous people (4), *dalit* (1) and women (3). (GoN 2010, p. 5)

Although it appears that the government conducted a consultative and participatory process, in fact, most of the workshops and consultations were held either in the capital or in other major cities, far from resource users. As Bushley (2010) for example reports, about 30% of the workshops and 87% of consultations took place in Kathmandu, and participants were counted double if they attended more than one workshop. As a result, the number count does not necessarily represent wide participation by forest-dependent stakeholders and the process instead worked in favor of the interest of powerful actors in the capital. NGOs and civil society representatives engaged in the REDD+ policy planning events, but their participation did not result in much influence because they were not proportionately represented in the policy forums (personal interview, former General Secretary of FECOFUN and Civil Society Organization representative observer for FCPF REDD+ process, World Bank, February 2012). For example, the official REDD+ working group developing the governance framework is comprised of nine member organizations: four government agencies, two international donor agencies and three from civil society and federations representing local groups. As our interview comments and observations suggest, local interests are typically outweighed by the shared interests and policy goals of the national and international actors with their stronger share of votes.

Several Nepalese policy actors criticized various difficult points in which the power and funding of external carbon trade allies may have an eroding effect on community collective action. For example, a REDD+ alliance of powerful global and national actors with local community leaders could shift the local power balances of the community profoundly, favor allied interests over those of the marginalized poor and undermine the communities' established forest management,

local governance, internal power structure and balance of local decision-making processes (personal interviews, Shambhu Dangal, Ghan Shyam Pandey and Bhola Bhattarai, February 2012). REDD+ expert Shambhu Dangal goes on to add that due to the power and access to new resources, local elites also support the agenda of powerful actors, thus leaving the local poor more vulnerable. Unless international negotiations protect local user rights, REDD+ would not bring any benefit for forest-dependent people – rather it would centralize power and marginalize the local people (Personal communication, February 2012).

Further, he explains that the complex REDD+ standards often need to rely on international experts, and this requires considerable funds for external consultants, leaving less funds for local conservation activities. He argues that these high transaction costs may even exceed REDD+'s benefits in current market prices. Global Alliance of Community Forestry Coordinator Ghan Shyam Pandey adds that REDD+ illustrates how the politics of climate change serve to drive a new culture of external consultancy and ultimately encourage a new form of colonization.

3.6 Recentralization Strategy and Timing of Larger Forest Framework

A growing number of scholars warn that if the national government chooses to protect the forest for carbon credit, it could pose a threat to decentralized forest governance and diminish its contribution to local autonomy, community livelihoods and development (Phelps et al., 2010; Sikor et al., 2010). Globalized market measures also pose a threat to forest people because they create strong economic interests for the state to recentralize land and resource rights (Shiva, 2000). The changing role and position of the state vis-à-vis tenure rights, benefit sharing and governance decision-making in recent forest carbon trade designs indicates that REDD+ enables the same centralization trend (Lyster, 2011). A large-scale analysis of forest carbon trends and partnership facilities from 37 countries including Nepal indicates similar trends of increased state control over resources (Dooley, Griffiths, Martone, & Ozinga, 2011).

Our interview data suggest not only a strong centralization trend, but also deliberate strategy on the part of the Nepalese government to push their own agenda. Several key policy actors in Nepal agreed that the government is believed to be using the current REDD+ preparations and forest governance restructuring–with its political instability and power imbalances–as a political opportunity to a recentralize forest tenure rights–away from the people, and back to the state (e.g. personal interviews, Ghan Shyam Pandey and Bhola Khatiwada, February 2012).

To illustrate, as part of the pending revisions to the 1993 Forest Act, the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation threatened to shift forest management from autonomous local forest decision-making back into co-management with the state with a number of restrictions on the autonomy and benefits of forest-dependent communities (Bushley, 2010; Sunam et al., 2010). This proposed amendment bill would claim 50% of the CFUGs' forest benefit income as national revenue and prohibit forest harvesting for two years after the establishment of new community forests. As a result, the bill has been highly criticized as a regressive strategy that has raised fears and the Nepalese government may attempt to reverse its previous devolution process into a centralized forest regime catering to the needs of others away from the local forest population.

Current forest policies and laws have clearly defined the rights of forest management and use within different management regimes, as discussed in the previous section. Under community-based forest management regimes, local communities have clear rights over forest resources, but the ownership of the land remains with the state. The best option to define carbon rights is based on the ownership of carbon pool resources, if the state does not want to fully grant carbon rights to the communities. However, existing practices show that the government repeatedly challenges the clearly granted rights of communities by issuing different directives (Ojha, 2008). For instance, past directives have restricted the harvesting of live trees and local forest officials have exercised considerable discretion in interpreting the laws outlining management and use rights. In this connection, some regard REDD+ as a new source of funding for their existing forest

policy, as well as an opportunity to add carbon stock to their protected areas (Griffiths, 2009). Government forestry officials consider carbon rights as complex issue to define under REDD+ scheme. In an interview, the Planning Officer of Ministry of Forestry Indra Sapkota stressed that carbon is an entity that should not be owned by a particular community like other forest products, and that its ownership should instead remain associated with the national or at least at the sub-national level (personal interview, December 2013). This highlights considerable tension among the different actors on the understanding of carbon rights. As many interviewees indicate and our analysis suggests, it would come as no surprise if the government treated carbon as public goods and centralized the rights over carbon separate from forest use right during policy reform.

3.7 Conclusion

Although carbon trade preparations are underway around the globe, the implications for people whose livelihoods depend on forests have not yet been fully examined. REDD+'s focus on performance-based and incentive-oriented mechanisms poses numerous risks to local communities as it could encourage a recentralization of forest land and tenure authority with stronger state-and-expert control mechanisms and top-down governance, impose exclusionary carbon-focused forest conservation approaches on previously livelihood-oriented forests, increase land speculation and land grabbing by reversing decentralization and violate customary rights by introducing formal restrictions on new forest-related rights. This may jeopardize the outcome of REDD+ for local forest communities in the Global South as the community and the state may, in the long run, be driven by very different interest mechanisms that could ultimately boost or erode existing community forestry.

Our paper examines the case of Nepal for the potential impact of REDD+ on forest communities and suggests that its community forestry success is now at stake because forest tenure security is jeopardized, the factor that the local commons most critically depend on. While Nepal's forest

communities have been thriving successfully over the past three decades and established highly successful social and ecological outcomes, their forest tenure security is set on brittle grounds. The state has never fully transferred land ownership (devolution) to the communities but merely transferred the execution of land rights (decentralization) for decision-making and harvesting benefits.

Nepal's community-based forest regime is now facing pivotal risks at a critical time. Nepal has entered into a process of fundamentally revising its forest governance framework to accommodate the requirements of forest and carbon-related rights for carbon trade. Despite significant efforts through Nepal's National Strategy Plan and REDD+ R-PP, no legal provisions have yet been made toward the most critical issues such as carbon ownership, benefit sharing and political participation at the sub-national and local level. The paper examines these possible changes for state-community power balances under three potential scenarios of comprehensive tenure reforms, and identifies several key concerns from conceptual to practical from the perspectives of community forestry stakeholders, local forest management institutions and political activists for sustainable forest livelihoods.

CHAPTER 4 : NEPAL'S REDD+ READINESS PREPARATION AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION CHALLENGES

Abstract

Nepal is currently undergoing a Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, sustainable management of forest, and conservation and enhancement of carbon (REDD+) Readiness process. The Government of Nepal has announced a high level of political commitment, willingness and preparedness to attract diverse interests in policy deliberation for its REDD+ process. This paper examines Nepal's REDD+ policy deliberation process from a political ecology perspective, focusing on expressions of discursive power and representation within Nepal's ongoing multi-stakeholder REDD+ preparation. The analysis is based on interviews, policy document reviews and observations of public consultations to solicit comments for REDD+ strategy during the year 2013-2014. The analysis found that Nepal's institutional REDD+ planning structure is highly dominated by techno-bureaucratic top-down practices representing government interests and international donors' requirements, while sub-national and non-governmental stakeholders often find themselves to be merely used to legitimize the policy process rather than to actively shape it. A considerable share of policy preparations is left to the outsourced experts, and the multi-stakeholder consultation meetings have proven to be ineffective to bring the weak actors' perspectives that actually participate in those meetings. Both the 'geographical space' and 'political space' offered in the consultations are not favourable for the local actors, but are controlled by the dominant actors. Overall, our analysis highlights important challenges and an urgent need to improve design and practice of the consultation process in order to ensure a sound multi-stakeholder process so as to meet the demands of local forest realities as well as those of international REDD+ requirements.

Keywords: Consultation, institutions, policy process, REDD+, stakeholders

4.1 Introduction

As the international Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, sustainable management of forest, and conservation and enhancement of carbon (REDD+) architecture is being negotiated as a part of post-Kyoto climate agreements, many bilateral and multi-lateral initiatives are already underway to support developing countries to be ready for the same (Angelsen & McNeill, 2012). Public discourse on Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) has triggered many debates on how REDD+ mechanisms should be designed and implemented, particularly regarding benefit sharing (Costenbader, 2011; Noordwijk, Pumono, Peskett, & Setiono, 2008; Peskett & Brodnig, 2011), social and environmental benefits (Schroeder & Mcdermott, 2014; Somorin, Visseren-Hamakers, Arts, Sonwa, & Tiani, 2014), participation (Lawlor, Madeira, Blockhus, & Ganz, 2013; Paudel, & Karki, 2014; Pham, Gregorio, Carmenta, Brockhaus, & Le, 2014) and rights of local and indigenous people (Bastakoti & Davidsen, 2014, Larson et al., 2013).

Nepal is among those countries that are currently undergoing a REDD+ Readiness process, with considerable amount of multi-lateral and bilateral international support. REDD+ "roadmaps" determine required interventions, institutional and policy arrangements (UN-REDD, 2012). Stakeholders' participation and engagement are considered critical for viable REDD+ strategies and implementation frameworks (Daviet, Mabel, & Halverson, 2011). The United Nation's Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) further specifies that parties must promote education, training and public awareness that encourage the participation of a wide range of stakeholders including indigenous people, women and non-governmental organizations. As a prerequisite, national REDD+ process needs to represent multi-actors and multi-level governance in action, which demands more inclusive, participatory form of policy formulation moving away from government-centered policy process (Forsyth, 2009). However, the actors involved are likely to differ a great deal in their interests and understanding on different issues regarding the REDD+ policies. The extent to which the actors are heard and their issues and choices are reflected in the policies depends on how they are represented in the policy fora, their

socio-political hierarchy and the institution that define the rules of game for the policy process (Arts & Buizer, 2009; Peskett & Brockhaus, 2009).

The Government of Nepal (GoN) has announced a high-level political commitment, willingness and preparedness for its REDD+ process (GoN, 2010). The REDD+ implementation centre has been implementing REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) whose milestones are summarized in Figure 4.1.

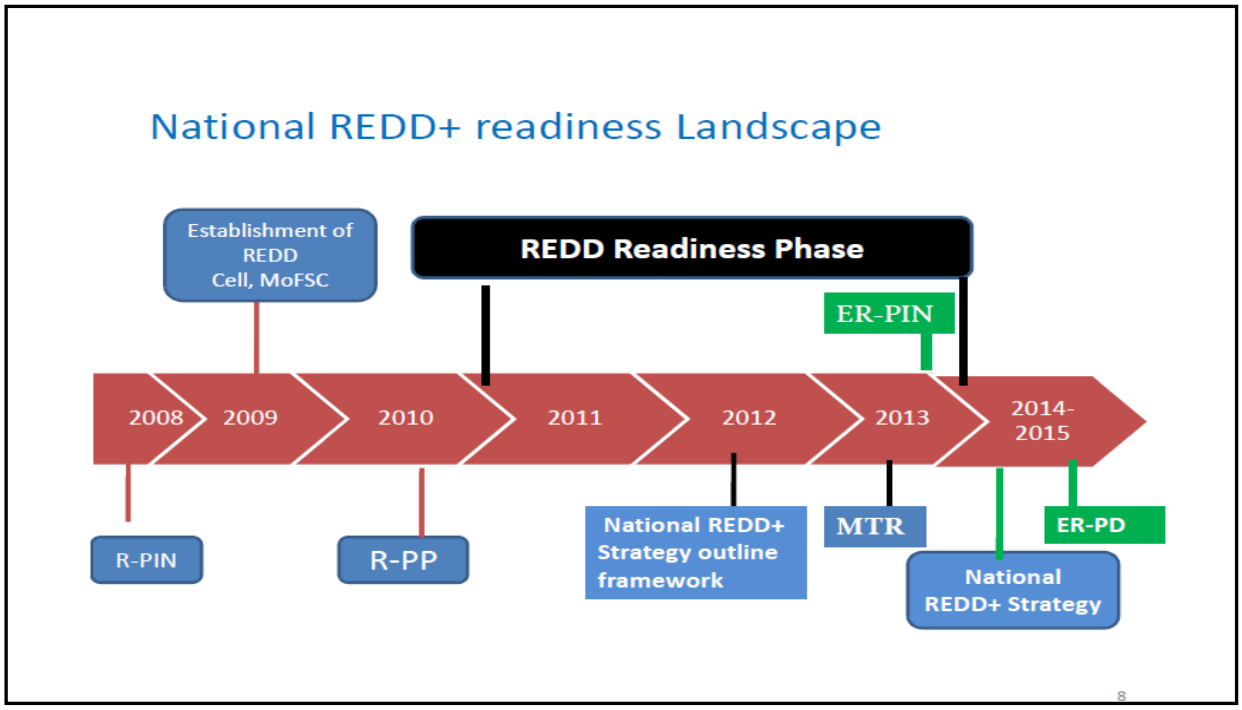

Figure 4.1: National REDD+ Readiness Landscape

Multi-stakeholder consultation is explicitly emphasized in the roadmap as an important contributor 'to promote a transparent, inclusive, accountable, equitable and ecologically sustainable implementation of REDD in Nepal' (GoN, 2010). However, recent research on REDD+ implementation processes in practice indicates that central governance issues such as tenure, benefit sharing, and local engagement are often not adequately addressed, despite their

crucial roles for the success of REDD+ (Davis, Daviet, Nakhooda, & Thualt, 2009; Bushley, 2010). Furthermore, the local forest communities' level of knowledge and consultation about forest carbon offset mechanisms, its processes and consequences often remains very low (Bastakoti & Davidsen, 2014), and forest actors including government and other project implementers lack the strategies and responsibilities to make REDD+ initiatives more inclusive (Khadka, Karki, Karky, Kotru, & Darjee, 2014.). Subsequently, it has been suggested that the views and interests of the weak and marginalized actors have been repeatedly hampering the effective implementation of REDD+ in the country (Bushley, 2014).

This paper examines the above-mentioned issues of Nepal's ongoing policy deliberation process through a political ecology perspective[2]. It is focused to help understand the actors and the power they hold; and how the historical contexts and the interests of various actors with varying agendas shape the current natural resource policies, institutional frameworks and practices. It also looks at how they affect local access to natural resources and how some interests are marginalized and others enhanced by the state and other powerful actors (Barrow, Clarke, Grundy; Jones, & Tessema, 2002; Jones, 2006). It provides insights about the extent to which policy derivatives of REDD+ discourse represent local realities and interests surrounding local livelihoods and global environmental services. It further offers deeper insights about how the new discourse of carbon trade has gained priority in forest policy, and how it has managed to reconfigure the relationship between environmental conservation and livelihoods (Bastakoti & Davidsen, 2014).

The analysis in this research centers on a Foucauldian notion of power that enables a focus on expressions of discursive power and representation within the ongoing REDD+ preparation and

[2] Political ecology research has long called for a deeper engagement with natural resource conservation as a social process with significant political dimensions driven by the vertical and horizontal interplay of actor. It is further determined by conflict between elite and poor, state and community, or outsider and local communities (Escobar, 2008; Vaccaro & Beltran, 2010). It focuses on the role of power relations, resource interests and societal norms in order to scrutinize policy processes for their influence on, and by environmental issues based on an understanding that the nature-society interface is inevitably political (Davidsen, 2010).

multi-stakeholder consultation. Power in this context is not understood as a fixed entity, structure or institution, but is instead, relational, i.e. a result of social processes and realized through the social institutions. As such, the study examines institutional settings and the actor-related policy process within the dynamic policy arena in practice. REDD+'s institutional setting is captured here as the related set of formal and informal regulations, rules and norms that are established over time (Baumgartner, Jones, & Wilkerson, 2011; North, 1990; Ostrom, 1990; Scharpf, 2000). The 'policy arena' of the process, in comparison, encompasses the larger platform created by the institutional setting, but shaped by its actors ranging from individuals, communities and organizations to larger networks which can foster or prevent certain policies and influence policy formulation (Arts, 2012; Scharpf, 1997). This approach builds on the idea that a country's specific mix of actors and its institutional contexts are critical for the success of REDD+. It allows this analysis to examine the participation of stakeholders in Nepal's ongoing policy process and REDD+ debates at national and sub-national levels with a particular emphasis on the quality of multi-scale and *de facto* interaction among actors.

The analysis is based on interviews, policy document reviews and personal observations in Nepal from Kathmandu to several local forest communities from December, 2013 to September, 2014 (fieldwork conducted by the first author). These were conducted when public consultations to solicit comments on Emission Reduction- Program Idea Notes (ER-PIN), Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) and National REDD+ Strategy were underway. A total of 77 interviews were conducted across national and regional governments, national and international non-governmental organizations and research organizations, civil society representatives and individuals within local forestry groups. All the interviews were conducted using a semi-structured or unstructured conversational approach in order to allow for a deeper probing on the important issues, and concerns regarding REDD+ and its consultation process. The data is complemented by a literature analysis of the extensive documentation of Nepal's REDD+ policy process, describing in detail required procedures and *de facto* implementations of workshops, national dialogues, and project meetings by government actors, research institutions,

and series of consultations meetings organized for the preparation of Nepal's National REDD+ Strategy. Additionally, journal papers and 'gray' literature were also reviewed.

4.2 Stakeholder Engagement, Power and Consultation: The Challenges

4.2.1 Governmental REDD+ structures

National governance on REDD+ refers to all institutions, processes, and decision-making mechanisms that enable the country to channel resources from the international to the local level while addressing the drivers of deforestation (GoN, 2010) and ensuring the social and environmental safeguards (UN-REDD, 2011). The Nepal government has established a three-tiered structure to govern REDD+ in this regard:

(1) The Apex Body is the highest entity, and the one in charge of policy-making power. It consists of an inter-ministerial, governmental stakeholder committee chaired by Nepal's Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) for the coordination and monitoring of REDD+ related policy planning process across eleven national ministries and the National Planning Commission. Each ministry is further able to invite two representatives from the private sector, and civil society organizations, making the Apex Body a total number of 49 members.

(2) The REDD+ Working Group (RWG) formed under the chair of MoFSC secretary supports the Apex Body on the operational level. The Working Group has 12 individuals that are selected by the MoFSC, with nine from governmental agencies, one from a donor agency, and two from civil society backgrounds.

(3) Furthermore, the REDD Forestry and Climate Change Cell (recently re-named REDD Implementation Center – REDD-IC) is the administrative support body within the MoFSC that coordinates and implements REDD+ management, consultation and research activities at the national and sub-national levels among diverse stakeholders across the country. It consists of four sub-sections: a) the Policy and Program Development section that develops REDD+ related forestry policies and monitors their implementation; b) the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification Section that develops reference baselines, a monitoring and verification system, and

a carbon accounting system; c) the Extension and Outreach Section that takes the lead in designing and disseminating REDD+ information, extension and capacity building activities for stakeholders and also provides feedback to the REDD-IC throughout the process; and d) the Financial and Administration Section that leads the budget management including control and approval of financial plans and support to program planning and implementation.

4.2.2 Apex Body: Challenges

The Apex Body has not been fully using its potential and assigned role for Nepal's REDD+ preparations. Instead, it has been criticized for lacking proactive leadership, funding support, and interest due to its internal composition, limited activities and communication. The Apex Body is formally supposed to meet twice a year, but it has in fact only met twice in total since its formation in September, 2010 (MoFSC, 2013). In our interviews, government officials explained the reason for it is because of the lack of focus on the urgent issues on the agenda, but non-governmental REDD+ experts have criticized the effectiveness of the Apex Body as insufficiently proactive and unable to lead and provide direction on the REDD+ policy process.

Even when there are meetings scheduled, our data indicates that the Apex Chair's attendance is not regular. It is the same case with the representatives from outside the MoFSC and also non-forest ministries. As the non-forest ministries seem to be less interested in REDD+, rather cross-sectoral impacts of climate change would be a better interest for them. As Paudel, Khatri, Khanal and Karki (2013) found that the high-level institutional representative heads on such a committee can be counter-productive in a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral forum as they often do not have the time and detailed engagement in the ongoing REDD+ process. This may result in faulty consensus across institutions without the sufficient understanding about the issues at hand, and it may even reduce the role of such a policy forum to one of the political legitimacy rather than the actual policy merit.

4.2.3 REDD Working Group: Challenges

By design and in practice, the RWG has a much higher level of activity than the Apex Body, to whom it reports. Its role is to work on the innovative recommendations, monitor program activities and overall, facilitate the detailed development of a comprehensive REDD+ strategy (MoFSC, 2013). The RWG meets every two months and its members are expected to allocate fifty days per year to it (GoN, 2010).

Our data suggest a few major challenges or concerns for the RWG: First, the MoFSC dominates representation (representing 9 out of 12), with very few non-governmental stakeholders and none from the private sector. More marginalized and forest-dependent groups such as lower-caste *dalits*, women and landless groups are left out on this process. Our review of the Working Group meeting minutes shows that other external observers have been invited to the selected meetings in the past, but they are usually further bureaucratic experts, influential donors, international organizations and consultancy agencies. Interviews have raised the issue that the process of inviting observers and selecting consultants for key contributions often remains very ambiguous and non-transparent, to the extent that any existing alliances and dependencies with government bodies, donors and influential international non-governmental organizations remain hidden. Furthermore, even the two national forests and indigenous civil society organizations that are members have found themselves unable to make their voice heard effectively. Our interviews indicate that these civil society members were in several cases not involved in–or not even informed of- the crucial decisions, and instead appeared to be used in retrospect as 'multi-stakeholder' instruments on paper to endorse decisions that had already been made. In fact, as observed in the previous studies (Khatri & Paudel, 2013), the forum has been an instrument for legitimizing government's policy decisions rather than a functional multi-stakeholder forum.

4.2.4 REDD Implementation Center: Challenges

Similar to concerns identified for the RWG above, our interviews and other data reviews indicate that REDD-IC has considerable limitations resulting from its design, due to its highly bureaucratic composition that usually favors a top-down and technocratic worldview. Secondly,

institutional embeddedness has been found to severely hinder its effectiveness and range of activities. The REDD-IC was created as a separate wing of the MoFSC, making it largely isolated within the ministry's institutional structure and excluding it from the Ministry's existing administrative channels of communication, authority and accountability with the Ministry's regional and District Forest Offices (DFO). As a result, structurally and functionally, the REDD-IC is limited to the national level and, even within the national level, to a relatively small number of people among the government bureaucracy, development agencies and few civil society federations (see also Paudel et al., 2013). Our data shows that although capacity building of external stakeholders as well as local forestry staff is one of the major programs of REDD-IC, its program has not reached down to the district level. During our field visits, we noticed that the front line of forestry officials such as Assistant Forest Officers (AFO) at the district level who are responsible for the implementation of REDD+ showed a lack of basic knowledge and training with respect to REDD+ and its mechanisms.

4.3 Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Consultation Process

Stakeholder participation has been identified as vital in the REDD+ policy process in search of finding more effective solutions; mitigate risks with regards to potential conflicts, and ensure the rights of the impacted groups (Daviet, 2011). This focus on stakeholders explicitly acknowledges that developing and implementing REDD+ strategies is complex and is likely to impact the rights of numerous groups.

The GoN claims that its RPP was prepared in a participatory and consultative process involving local community groups, forest-dependent poor, local government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), community networks and professional groups (GoN, 2010). However, several studies have found that consultation during the process was not effective (Bushley, 2010; Paudel et al., 2013; Khatri, 2012; Bastakoti & Davidsen, 2014). Instead, government agencies have remained dominant in policy formulation and implementation to the extent that stakeholder participation was rather rhetoric than a reality.

Following the preparation of RPP, Nepal's REDD+ landscape of policy actors changed. Some withdrew or declined interest in further participation, while new actors emerged (Paudel et al., 2013). As part of the REDD+ readiness process, state and non-state actors had been implementing different capacity building, research and policy formulation activities. The REDD-IC hired consulting firms to establish Reference of Emission Levels (REL) and a Monitoring Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems, conduct a SESA and Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and work on the National REDD+ Strategy. In this context, our data review strongly suggests that Nepal's REDD network is dominated by the entrenched interest of powerful actors especially forestry bureaucracy, consultants, experts and donor agencies (Khatri & Paudel, 2013; Khatri, 2012), largely excluding the interest of marginalized groups and forest-dependent people. Described below is a selected anecdotal account of limited actual actor engagement during the SESA preparation and National REDD+ Strategy.

4.3.1 SESA process

The Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) represents the central framework of requirements and procedures regarding social and environmental safeguards and their effective implementation on the ground. Developing SESA is usually embedded in the process of developing the overall REDD+ strategy, constituting an in-depth process that assesses possible social and environmental risks once the planned REDD+ strategies and interventions are known.

In Nepal's case, the national SESA process was pushed before the preparation of national REDD+ strategy that limit the offer in guidance on the actual activities that could cause social and environmental impacts. It was started in September 2013 and is already completed; based on merely hypothetical REDD+ and developed under immense time pressure to fulfill donor requirements before the full national REDD+ strategy could be commissioned (as clarified by government authority, World Bank representative in the second National Consultation Workshop March 12, 2014). During this time, the SESA process consultation was highly limited in scale.

The consulting team has admitted that they had to limit public consultations to Kathmandu and three other nearby districts due to limited budgets (MoFSC, 2014, p.8). Our interviews and personal observations at the national consultation workshop in March 2014 indicate considerable dissatisfaction of stakeholders with the process and outcome of the SESA. Most of the civil society participants did not clearly understand the purpose and nature of SESA, and the workshop coordinators and administrators could not clearly communicate and educate its purpose, scope and possibilities to the stakeholders. Participants also raised the issues on the transparency and the ethics of public consultation, illustrated below (Box 1).

The timeline and budget limitations of the SESA process were heavily critiqued throughout the interviews, especially by civil society actors and experts from Nepal's Forestry Association who raised issues on validity of the process, describing an iron triangle of donor-consultant-bureaucracy alliances that were wasting already limited funds on costly foreign consultants and excluded local interests and the voices of civil society.

Box 1

"The organizers did not respect our rights to the information. They invited us for consultation without any prior information. We don't know what to contribute. Are we coming here just to legitimize the consultants' work? Even we (as forestry experts; added by the authors) *are lost in the discussion and our role is just to listen what the consultants say, I wonder how the ordinary people from rural communities understand what is going to be in store for them in the name of REDD+ and how they can assess the potential harms and benefits of this SESA"*

-Workshop Participant; FECOFUN Representative during SESA National Workshop, March 12, 2014

4.3.2 National REDD+ strategy process

Recently, the GON has commissioned a consultation team to develop the national REDD+ strategy. The GON has prepared a plan to make the national REDD+ strategy process more inclusive and consultative so as to comply with the international commitments. According to the REDD+ strategy inception report, it has planned to conduct three national, five regional, and fifteen local workshops.

The Table 4.1 provides an overview of participants' attendance in six different consultation workshops at national, regional and local levels. Usually, either the forest administration or Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN) was the local hosts for the consultation, which seemed to affect the number of attendees from their respective circles. The participant selection criteria were not clear. However, the government and community forestry network were well represented whereas a diverse range of rights-holders[3] including women, *dalits*, indigenous, landless, forest-dependent groups and private forest growers were under-represented (Table 4.2). Our attendance data and observation indicates that the workshop participants mostly reflected the planners' professional 'field of vision' rather than the real stakeholders (Box 2).

Box 2
Within limited time, we had a good discussion and collected feedbacks from different perspectives. However, important right-holders have been left out of today's discussion. It seems, we could not differentiate between stakeholders and rights-holders. Now, the main concern is how to bring the issue of right-holders in the national strategy.
-Dr Dilli Raj Khanal (REDD+ strategy consultancy team member, commenting after attending the district level workshop in Sunsari) August 31, 2014

[3] 'Rights-holders' are those whose existing rights, whether formally recognized or granted based on customary law, are potentially affected by the REDD+ program and 'stakeholders' are those whose interests are potentially affected by the program or who can affect and influence the program.

Table 4.1: Stakeholders participation in REDD+ strategy consultation workshop

Workshop, hosts and date of consultation	**Total**	**Government**	**NGOs**	**Forestry User Groups and Networks**	**Indigenous***	**Media**	**Research**	**Consultants**	**Other****
National Inception Kathmandu REDD Cell August 15, 2014	38	17	7	2	2	1	4	5	0
Regional, Biratnager Eastern Regional Forest Directorate September 1, 2014	51	21	8	13	0	1	1	4	3
Siraha, DFO, August 31, 2014	20	7	3	5	1	2	0	2	0
Sunsari FECOFUN August 31, 2014	25	5	1	10	1	4	1	2	1
Dhankuta FECOFUN September 2, 2014	26	4	5	8	2	2	1	2	2
Sankhuwasabha, DFO September 3, 2014	20	8	4	5	1	0	1	1	0

*Indigenous community members representing other constituencies like forest user group, NGO, etc. are not included in this column
**Other includes political party, civil society and private sector representatives

Table 4.2: Women and *dalit* representation in consultation workshops at different level

Workshop	**National**	**Eastern Regional**	**Siraha**	**Sunsari**	**Dhankuta**	**Sankhuwashabha**
Total	38	51	20	25	26	20
Women	3	5	0	1	4	1
Dalit	1	1	0	0	2	0

(Source: Compiled field observation, 2014)

The commissioned consultancy team for these consultations from Kathmandu would ask a local host to invite participants for the workshop on a short notice. We found that neither the local host nor the participants were well informed about its agenda, context or intended goals before the workshop. These meetings usually lasted half a day, over which the consultancy team sought feedback and comments following an introductory presentation. The participants were asked for feedbacks on five major areas: guiding features of REDD+, strategic options, institutional arrangement, social and environmental safeguards, and MRV. Ideally, the workshops were organized to engage local actors in analyzing the issues on REDD+, and negotiation and consensus-building around the problems defined, priority setting, REDD+ process, social and environmental impact assessment and monitoring, benefit sharing and grievance resolution mechanism. We noticed shortcomings about the way the workshops were planned and conducted, and the roles that were assigned to the local participants. Interviewees at several workshops reported that they felt overwhelmed and dismissed because insufficient information had been provided to them before the meeting, concerning the general background of Nepal's REDD+ plans as well as concerning the current status of the process. Some participants added that these meetings were unable to go beyond basic information sharing and capacity building of stakeholders and right-holders (Box 3). Some of the workshop participants had never even heard the term REDD+ before, which turned the workshop into what it seemed like first-contact events for public outreach and capacity building for them.

Box 3

Today we learnt what REDD+ is and why and how government is preparing for REDD+ implementation. A half-day program is not enough even for being informed about things. How can we contribute without knowing the context? It would be good if we had understood the context before you had asked for our input today.

-District FECOFUN leader during the workshop, Sunsari August 31, 2014

Many of the more informed and engaged participants interviewed at the workshops further criticized that, while welcoming the general idea of a consultation process toward a multi-stakeholder forum for feedback and input for Nepal's REDD+ strategy, the current workshop practices would violate the consultation principles of free prior and informed consent (FPIC) because participants were not provided adequate time and information to truly participate in the consultation, and were not given the chance to prepare for an actual exchange of opinion with the planning authority. Without FPIC, neither it is possible to minimize the negative impacts or possible to harness the benefits from REDD+ (Sherpa & Rai, 2013). As a possible way forward, several interviewees urged for additional efforts toward local stakeholder engagement through a two-way dialogue on REDD+ strategy development. They also emphasized that interested stakeholders should have the right to see the final draft report of the consultation workshops to make sure that the stakeholders' voices had been adequately reflected. Others suggested that the consultations should not be organized as a means for fulfillment of donor requirements. Rather they should be designed to bring the real voices of forest-dependent groups including marginalized and less informed groups (Box 4).

Box 4

"*Awareness has not reached the general public; even forestry officials from the district and local level are not familiar with REDD+ issues. REDD+ discussion has remained centralized only in Kathmandu. FECOFUN and Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) have done capacity building programs in some districts, but they have not reached beyond the executive level. Without adequate awareness, right-holders cannot defend their stakes nor can they contribute to the policy deliberation process.*"

District Forest Officer, Morang during a regional workshop in Biratnagar, September 1, 2014

‘Space’ is another interesting perspective to examine the dimensions of power relationships and ineffective interaction here. The locations of consultation workshops were mostly based on a brief geographical sample and easy access from Kathmandu, rather than accommodating specific regions and interest groups of relevance; the meetings were also mostly held in larger city centers away from forest communities (Box 4). Observations during the SESA and National REDD+ strategy consultations suggest that most of the consultations were organized at the convenience of the project and participants only from the vicinity get a chance to participate. This ‘geographical space’ restricts the participation for communities who live far away from the district headquarters or city centers. Moreover, the ‘political space’ they are invited to is not conducive for local actors due to the associated power relationships. The dominant actors such as government officials, donor agencies or experts often strategically controlled the workshop discussions (Ojha, 2014; Cornwall, 2008). While theoretically it seems that spaces are opened for dialogue, representatives from local communities have been observed to barely speak up in the presence of strong actors. Such ‘invited spaces’ (Cornwall, 2008) are inconvenient for community people for several reasons. First, the heterogeneity of participants and power relations made them feel mostly suppressed. Second, the chosen language is not generally compatible to follow and provide input for them. The first author has also observed several consultation meetings in Kathmandu that were conducted in English, which signaled a clear priority of the foreign experts while ignoring the participants (rights-holders) from the local communities. In other words, the "invited spaces" had limited scope for local communities for effective participation. Indigenous leaders and advocates indicated the need for a different space for homogenous groups who have little power or voice in society in order to bring their voice into the policy debate.

4.4 Critical Reflection and Conclusion

This study presented an analysis on the challenges of multi-stakeholder engagement in Nepal’s REDD+ preparations, based on the qualitative interview, workshop observation and policy document review. By taking a political ecology perspective, it particularly focused on the influences of the institutional setting and the *de facto* actor-related policy interactions in the

REDD+ policy process that allows for a particular focus on the power relations between the actors in both institutional designs as well as in governance practice.

The national R-PP document announced stakeholder participation as crucial in the planning process in order to identify more effective solutions, mitigate risks with regards to potential conflicts, and specifically to ensure that the rights of affected groups are adequately taken into account (GoN, 2010). The analysis however found that despite all 'political' declarations of public consultation and an open deliberative process, Nepal's institutional arrangement for REDD+ planning continues to be highly dominated by techno-bureaucratic top-down practices. Furthermore, the analysis also found that the representation of the government and the requirements of international donors were strong while the sub-national and non-governmental stakeholders often find themselves being used to legitimize the policy process in retrospect rather than provided space to actively shape it. Moreover, the non-state actors are used as mere recipients of basic information, rather than as active and well-informed participants consulted in a proactively and considerately planned process. As Cornwall (2008) summarized earlier, participation does not necessarily lead to influence in the process.

Furthermore, a considerable share of Nepal's REDD+ readiness is being conducted through the outsourced consultancy experts and related requirements formulated by international funding agencies such as the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which have shaped the agendas, networks, timelines and tone of the consultation process as well. The national government and international donors seem compelled to adopt a participatory governance process in order to comply with REDD's international procedural requirements. However, most of the REDD+ policy events and consultation meetings have proven to be ineffective and inadequate for engaging multi-stakeholders and incorporating their suggestions and opinions in the policies. Our review of the actor identification and mapping process, a foundation for the recent consultation phase, suggests that the informal, marginalized and less-informed stakeholders have been largely disregarded throughout the process, and systematically been shifted out of sight while large formal institutional actors and the forest

administration were favored and emphasized. The vulnerable forest communities, marginalized groups and even actors associated with major drivers of deforestation such as landless people, forest-dependent communities, timber processing companies, mining companies and local governments who are heavily involved in the infrastructural aspects like road construction and irrigation (UN-REDD, 2014) are mostly absent from national and sub-national level policy debates and consultations, and remain excluded from stakeholder recognition at the large influential forums.

Capacity building and FPIC on REDD+ among stakeholders are the other challenges that the consultation process is facing. Principally, REDD+ policy engagement requires capacity building of stakeholders to participate, identification of potential impacts of various decisions and recognition of potential conflicts (Daviet, 2011). Stakeholders can contribute only if they are familiar with the issues. Capacity building is, however, considerably lagging behind while the policy formulation process is moving ahead resulting into creation of a hypocritical situation in which the rights of forest-dependent groups are recognized only on paper instead of in practice (Jumbe & Angelsen, 2006; Blom, Sunderland, & Murdiyarso, 2010; Iversen et al., 2006; Dooley, Griffiths, Martone, & Ozinga, 2011). Largely, the participants were neither timely informed nor provided with adequate background information about REDD+ and the consultation process, which caused part of the problem.

Our findings indicate that Nepal's current challenges in stakeholder consultation processes, both in design and practice, do not deliver the purpose and benefit that the consultations are supposed to do as envisioned in the international REDD+ procedures and requirements. As the interests of the key stakeholders (e.g., forest managing communities) are neglected, Nepal's emerging REDD+ policy framework runs the risk of not being able to fully understand and address the main drivers of forest and carbon change (Pham et al., 2014). We strongly suggest that further researches on stakeholder participation and dynamics of power relation are necessary to strengthen the ongoing development of policies regarding the institutional design as well as policy deliberation practice for Nepal's emerging REDD+ framework, in order to identify the best-scenario options.

CHAPTER 5 : OPTIMISM, HOPES AND FEARS: LOCAL PERCEPTIONS ON REDD+ IN NEPALESE COMMUNITY FORESTS

Abstracts

This paper examines local views and experiences of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) in Nepal, using a mixed-method political ecology approach in three community forest user groups across Nepal's diverse forest ecoregions with varying levels of REDD+ experience. The study finds positive expectations of REDD+ to varying degrees, paired with key concerns arising throughout REDD+ implementation. In particular, forest products needed for livelihood practices cannot be fully replaced by monetary benefits of REDD+ for forest harvesting restrictions. Further, increased elite capture, corruption, and power shifts away from the community through the alliance of local elites with external actors in response to increased upward accountability for carbon increments. The findings urge that REDD+ should carefully avoid adverse effects on existing community governance, and its goals need to be carefully reconciled with the local non-monetary livelihood needs.

Keywords: Carbon, climate change, deforestation, forest governance, livelihood

5.1 Introduction

Recent international policies have put emphasis on the value of forests in climate change mitigation (Stern, 2007; Corbera & Schroeder, 2011; Gupta, 2012). Within the United Nations Framework Conservation on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in developing countries (REDD+) has become a key strategy for forested areas, with efforts focusing on deforestation and forest degradation as well as the conservation and sustainable management of forest carbon stocks. REDD+ is anticipated to mobilize billions of dollars in multilateral funding for developing countries. However, studies on REDD+ implementations worldwide (Corbera, Estrada, & Brown, 2010; Maraseni, Neupane, Lopez-casero, & Cadman, 2014; Newton et al., 2015; Patel et al., 2013) are starting to issue

warnings that translating it into practice may negatively affect existing livelihoods and governance practices of forest communities.

Over the past decades, community forestry has become recognized as one of the most promising approaches for sustainable forest use and better livelihoods in developing countries (Ascher, 1995; Bray et al., 2003; Pokorny & Johnson, 2008). Although it is not without its own challenges and problems (Thoms, 2008; Agarwal, 2009; Gautam, 2009; Hajjar, Mcgrath, Kozak, & Innes, 2011; Shrestha, 2016) community forestry has in comparison to alternative regimes been largely found to be the most effective form of governance to improve forest management, environmental and socio-economic outcomes (Klooster & Masera, 2000; Gautam, Webb, & Eiumnoh, 2002; Agrawal & Angelsen, 2009). Globally, more than 513 million hectares of forests are either owned or managed by communities (RRI, 2014). According to the Rights and Resources Initiative report (2014), community managed/owned forests increased from 11% in 2002 to 15% in 2013 worldwide while in developing countries, it increased from 21% to 31% over the same period. Community forestry provides livelihood benefits to an estimated half a billion poor people (Chhatre & Agrawal, 2009).

As an additional benefit beyond livelihoods and ecological resilience, community forestry is now also gaining interest for its roles in carbon sequestration, and as a vehicle for implementing REDD+ at national and local levels (Larrazábal, Mccall, Mwampamba, & Skutsch, 2012). Both programs share goals with respect to maintaining forest covers, limiting land-use conversion and maintaining forest intact (Newton et al., 2015). However, REDD+'s focus on forest carbon stands in an often stark contrast to community forestry's emphasis of local livelihoods, culture and ecological services for the local population. As a result, scholars have already raised concerns that REDD+ may alter the socio-economic, institutional and ecological equilibrium of local forest governance if it fails to harmonize community forestry goals (Benneker & McCall, 2009). REDD+ might marginalize forest-dependent communities by imposing limits on user rights and access to forest resources, thereby restricting their local livelihoods (Griffiths, 2007; Bushley & Khatri, 2011). The financial incentives provided by the REDD+ may shift forest management

priorities from forest product use to strict conservation, creating a considerable threat of partial recentralization of forest rights (Phelps, Friess, & Webb, 2010; Sikor et al., 2010) or slowing the continuing process of decentralization and local empowerment in forest governance (Ribot, Agrawal, & Larson, 2006).

Across their various views on REDD+, scholars have reiterated that local communities are key for the success of any conservation projects and REDD+ (UN-REDD & FCPF, 2012). The UN-REDD Programme itself explicitly requires local views, knowledge, skills and expectations to be respected and recognized from the very beginning of every project. However, while a number of REDD+ options in design and technical implementation have been studied, little attention has been given to local perceptions and realities as they affect the opportunities, challenges and concerns that REDD+ is dealing with (Brown, Smith, Sonwa, Somorin, & Nkem, 2011; Mulyani & Jepson, 2013). Scholars are starting to express concern about the large gap of research in this particular area, even more so given the tremendous pace at which REDD+ is being rolled out (see, for example, Bluffstone, Robinson, & Guthiga, 2013).

This study examines local expectations and experiences of REDD+ with respect to its benefits and prospects in three forest communities with different levels of previous exposure to REDD+. The analysis identifies key opportunities, (mis-)conceptions, concerns and challenges that REDD+ and the communities face, and discusses ways forward for possible strategies and policy concerns. The article first outlines the recent community forestry and REDD+ policy process in Nepal (Section 2) and introduces the methodological approach for this study (Section 3). Section 4 presents findings on community awareness of environmental services, climate change and REDD+; perceived potential impacts of REDD+ at the local level; community willingness for tradeoff; and options for REDD+ fund mobilization at community level. The article then discusses whether, or how, REDD+ can go hand-in-hand with community forestry, and offers policy recommendations for forest governance and beyond.

5.2 Community Forestry and REDD+ in Nepal

Nepal's community forestry has gained international recognition as a particularly successful model of participatory forest management in the Global South (Mahapatra, 2000; Charnley & Poe, 2007). Many studies have concluded that Nepal's community forestry has promoted the recovery of degraded forests, reduced forest firewood extractions (Edmonds, 2002), improved governance and supported the socio-economic development of rural communities (Nagendra, 2007; Kanel & Dahal, 2008; Pandit & Bevilacqua, 2011 etc.). The program was originally developed in an effort to mitigate rampant deforestation and soil erosion in Nepal's Middle Hills during the 1970s (Guthman, 1997; Gilmour & Fisher, 1991). Community forests in Nepal are national forests handed over to the local community groups for community-based protection and management. Each community group could now develop its own constitution and forest operational plan and get approval from the District Forest Office. This approval grants the CFUGs rights of access, use, exclusion and management, while the ownership of the land remains with the government. CFUGs have collective funds that, according to the current legal provision, should be used for forest management activities (by law at least 25% of CFUG funds), livelihoods of poor and marginal communities (35% of funds should be spent for the welfare of poor, *dalit* and women) and community development. Around 1.8 million forest hectares are now managed by nearly 19,000 CFUGs all over the country, involving 2.4 million households or about 35% of Nepal's population (Department of Forests, 2015).

In addition to its prior commitments toward global sustainable development, Nepal has now adopted REDD+ as its new strategy to advancing sustainable forest management and improving forestry sector governance (REDD+ Implementation Center, 2015). Nepal has engaged with the UNFCCC for REDD+ negotiation since 2007. Since 2008, the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and other donors have provided financial and technical support to the government to develop its Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP), which defines key components of a technical, institutional, and policy framework for REDD+. Following the approval of the R-PP in October 2010, the government moved to develop a national strategy for REDD+ implementation after 2013. In 2010, Nepal joined the UN-REDD program as an observer and now it belongs to both FCPF and UN-REDD global initiatives (Bushley & Khatri,

2011). Government, civil society and international donor communities are interested in Nepal's REDD+ program. In the meantime, local communities are considered as key for the future of REDD+ (UNREDD, 2010). However, a crucial issue is whether REDD+ will also strengthen the well-established system of local resource management fulfilling the aspiration of local people or the forest-dependent communities should work for REDD+ curtailing their rights and authorities. Therefore, the concerns of local communities should be taken seriously (Bluffstone et al., 2013).

Despite the success of community forestry in ecological restoration and some contribution on local livelihood, Nepal's community forestry remains relatively inexperienced in forest commercialization (Gilmour, 2016; Paudel, 2016) and the concept of ecosystem services is very new. Carbon management is an entirely new territory for Nepal's forest governance system; for example, the rights over carbon have not been legally defined yet, leading to considerable uncertainties for local communities with respect to resource rights and tenure security (Bastakoti & Davidsen 2014). Forest justice and equity have already long been critiqued (Ghimire-Bastakoti & Bastakoti, 2006; Mahanty, Fox, Nurse, Stephen, & Mclees, 2006; Agarwal, 2009; McDermott & Schreckenberg, 2009; Shrestha, 2012; Shrestha, 2016), on top of which REDD+ mechanisms may further jeopardize not only the benefits of poor forest-dependent people, but also affect the larger structure of participation, democratization, and recognition of forest-related rights and needs (Neupane & Shrestha, 2012; Ribot & Larson, 2012; Rutt & Lund, 2014; Bastakoti & Davidsen, 2015). Several scholars warn that this process could threaten the devolution of community forestry (Agrawal, Chhatre, & Hardin, 2008; Phelps, Friess & Webb, 2010) others argue against an oversimplification of REDD+ as forest carbon trading in the name of global climate change (McGregor et al.,2014; Shrestha & Ojha, 2016). Overall, a larger consensus exists that REDD+ should certainly not impose excessive constraints on local livelihoods or governance, or even forcibly take away existing community rights (Bluffstone, 2013; McGregor et al., 2014; Saito-Jensen, Rutt & Chhetri, 2014).

5.3 Methodological Approach

This research examines the perspectives of local forest-dependent communities in rural Nepal through a mixed-method political ecology approach, emphasizing an understanding of the actors'

views within their own positionality, time, and context, as shaped in particular by their power relationships (Blaikie, 2001). Understanding current forest policies, institutions and practices as results of their historical context and interests of numerous actors with varying agendas, this lens allows for a broader perspective on the current carbon trade plans into Nepal's local forest governance, and the extent to which carbon trading policy discourse represent local realities and interests, expectations and fears.

5.3.1 Study sites

The study analyzes three CFUGs across three different physiographic regions of Nepal (Figure 5.1) as a case study with embedded units of analysis (Yin, 2014). The CFUGs were specifically selected to include different forest ecosystems, socio-political diversity, different forest governance activities, and different local experiences regarding prior exposure to REDD+ (Table 5.1). The data was analyzed within and across the CFUGs, and returned to the larger context of the interface of local Nepalese forest communities with REDD+.

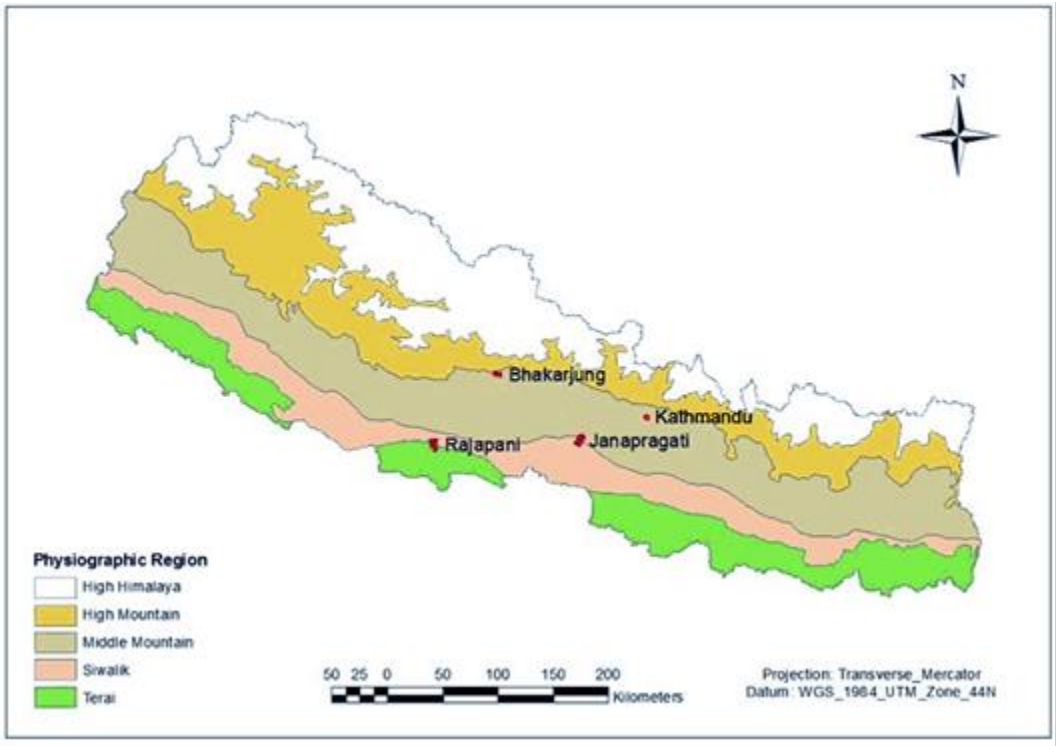

Figure 5.1: Location of the study sites

Table 5.1: Overview: Key characteristics of the local study sites

Name	**Bhakarjung CFUG**	**Janapragati CFUG**	**Rajapani CFUG**
Location	Dhikarupokhari VDC # 5 Kaski district	Shaktikhor VDC # 1,5, Siddhi VDC #2, Chitwan district	Saljhandi VDC # 5, Rupandehi district
Physiographic region	Mid-hill	Inner-Terai	Terai
Total area	107.75 ha	150 ha	266 ha
Year of handover	1993	2003	1998
Total household	143	250	250
Dominant tree species	*Rhododendron arberium, Myrica esculenta, Alnus nepalensis, Macaranga indica*	*Shorea robusta, Terminalia tomentosa, Terminalia belerica, Adina cordifolia, Schima wallichii, Michelia champaca*	*Shorea robusta, Terminalia alata, Terminalia belerica, Adina cordifolia, Syzygium cumini, Anogeissus latifolia*
Use of forests	Timber, fuelwood, fodder, charcoal (mostly for local use)	Timber, fuelwood, fodder, charcoal, wild edibles. Timbers have high economic potential for local and national market.	Timber, fuelwood, fodder, charcoal. Timbers have high economic potential for local and national market.

Ethnicity	Brahmin-Chhetri (majority from single clan Poudel), *Dalit*	Bhramin-Chhetri, Tamang, Gurung, Magar, Newar, Chepang and *Dalit*	Hill immigrant-Brahmin Chhetri, Thakuri, Magar, *Dalit*; Traditional indigenous Tharu, and Indian immigrants
External support	USAID funded *Hariyo Ban* Project for building resilience to climate change in communities and ecosystems by restoring and conserving forests.	NORAD funded REDD+ pilot project for design and establishment of a governance and payment system for community forest management under REDD+.	Plan Vivo supported Himalayan Community Carbon Project in order to assist rural communities in accessing additional financial resources from Payments for Environmental Services in the form of Plan Vivo credits.
Intervention	Community based anti-poaching, income generation for poor, community learning and action center, community adaptation plan of action, promotion of alternative energy.	Periodic carbon measurement and capacity building; carbon seed grant distribution to the communities based on carbon enhancement (40%); ethnic diversity (25%); poorer households (20%) and female population (15%)	Carbon inventory was done. Now the certification process is pending. Community have received nothing from the project.
Exposure to REDD+	None	Yes	No but carbon measurement

5.3.2 Data collection

In-depth interviews, observations, focus group discussions and document review formed the data foundation of this study. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with 20 individuals in each CFUG from various perspectives (Table 5.2), identified through purposive sampling focusing on socio-economic class, livelihood options, ethnicity and assigned responsibilities in the CFUG (Palinkas et al., 2015). Interactions commenced with introductory conversations about key terms to examine knowledge and awareness, and to eliminate conceptual misunderstandings between participant and interviewer regarding process or terminology. An interview guide was used to make the interviews thematically comparable covering potential impacts of REDD+ on local socio-economy, ecology, and governance; willingness for forest products tradeoff; and policy recommendations. Participants were also asked multiple choice questions related to perceptions within each theme. All interviews were conducted on site in the local language (Nepali) by the first author between 2013 and 2014. Two focus group discussions were conducted in each CFUG, particularly for specific interest groups such as women, *dalit*, and indigenous Chepang. These discussions centered on issues of forest resource access, local resource management and knowledge, and power on local forest management and REDD+. The interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded with consent.

Table 5.2: Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of interviewed individuals

	Bhakarjung	Janapragati	Rajapani	Total	Remarks
Total respondents	20	20	20	60	
Well-off	8	10	10	28	Data were adapted from CFUG records with verification. For this study purpose well-off and medium were categorized as well-off and poor and very poor were considered as poor.
Poor	12	10	10	32	

Executive community members	5	10	8	23	Both advisers and executive members were included in executive members' category.
General community members	15	10	12	37	
Subsistence income	18	15	9	42	Households with supplementary income from employment, business or remittance are shown as agriculture+
Agriculture + income	2	5	11	18	
Higher caste	9	8	14	31	Higher caste included Brahmin, Chhetri, Sanyasi; Indigenous people except Chepang were grouped as *Janajati* for this study; Chepang are highly marginalized indigenous group who depend on forests for livelihood; *Dalits* are group of people who are discriminated as untouchable under Hindu caste system.
Janajati	2	3	2	7	
Chepang	0	6	0	6	
Dalit	9	3	4	16	

5.3.3 Data analysis

Data from the interview and focus group discussions was transcribed and coded using table matrices for content analysis, drawing out themes and illustrative quotes. A Likert scale was used to gauge views of respondents (as used in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013) on REDD+ and its potential impacts. Cross-tabulation followed to examine the relationships between socio-economic variables (class, ethnicity, livelihood options, involvement in CFUG executive

committee, and CFUG's experience on REDD+ piloting) and the respondents' perceptions towards REDD+. A Chi-square test of association in SPSS 22.0 as well as Fisher's exact test, where Chi-square is not appropriate (Cochran, 1954), were conducted to determine the statistical association of the variables.

5.4 Findings and Discussion

5.4.1 Community awareness on environmental services, climate change and REDD+

The study found considerable activity on the national level regarding workshops, training and meetings in Kathmandu related to REDD+, climate change and environmental services in general. Locally, however, CFUGs have remained relatively unaware of Kathmandu's increasing environmental efforts. Most of the participants in all three study sites were unfamiliar with the term and concept of 'environmental services'. They did, however, express a strong non-monetary sense of appreciation for traditional ecosystem functions such as erosion control, sustained water, biodiversity and clean air. As two central functions among these, biodiversity and watershed quality were reported by more than two thirds of the respondents as having improved since the onset of community forestry. Half (30) of the respondents in the study showed no knowledge of the notion of carbon stock though (Figure 5.2). Some CFUG members have limited knowledge of climate change, but they are not aware of carbon sequestration processes and its role in climate change mitigation. Most of those who had some knowledge were relatively educated executive committee members, or they had already been directly involved in measuring carbon in ongoing projects.

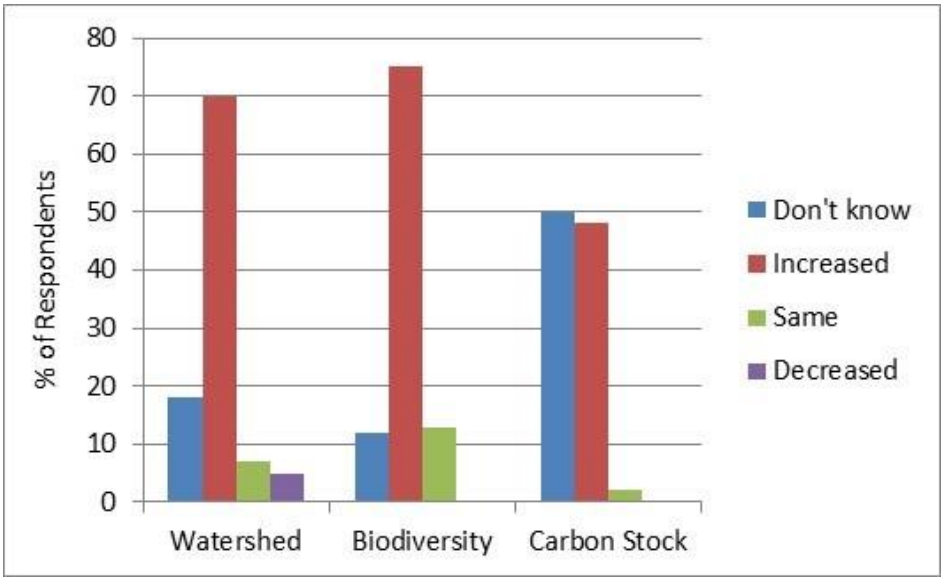

Figure 5.2: Interviewee responses to the question what changes they had noticed for watershed, biodiversity and carbon stock after the forest management rights had been transferred to the community

(Source: Field work, 2013-14)

As expected, forest users in Janapragati−an active REDD+ pilot site− were more knowledgeable than in the other two less REDD+-experienced forest communities. Their local observations so far summarized in basic terms:

We have 50 m X50 m carbon plots in our forests, and every year we measure carbon in the plots. We noticed that if we conserve the forest, carbon increases and it decreases if we cut the trees.

Executive member, Janapragati CFUG

As another response from the same community points out, livelihood struggles of the poor translate particularly often into knowledge barriers:

If someone goes for labor work, he/she will get 600 Nepalese Rupees per day; in the training they get knowledge but not the money, so people who have to work hard to manage to put food on their table cannot spend their time in the training.

Executive member, Janapragati CFUG

Across all three communities, the study found such awareness gaps among the poorest families which were particularly often unable to attend training and workshops due to livelihood

pressures, thus staying behind on climate change, REDD+ related knowledge, and its related decision-making.

Some interviewees also report knowledge and participation barriers due to misinformation and rumors related to carbon trading, as described here by a local community mobilizer for REDD+:

I noticed misconceptions of the Chepang people regarding REDD+. They saw REDD+ as a business to kill forest-dependent people like them. They thought that the air from their village will be pumped out and they would not have fresh air to breathe and survive. I told them several times that it is not true, nobody will come and pump the air out from our atmosphere, rather they will get support from the project. Believe me, they are still skeptical about REDD+ and they are not confident about getting any benefit from the project.

Local community mobilizer, Janapragati CFUG

Even among the more informed community members, doubts about future benefits are common. Many of our respondents admit that they anticipate forest carbon to add another layer of complexity to their local forest management system, especially since the latter evolved mostly from within based on their own traditional needs and realm of experience. Fears and anxiety now arise from the lack of certainty toward the pending changes that are tied into global and complex issue of climate change beyond the local control.

Like other youths in the village, I was active in felling trees and selling lumber in the market. No one could stop us at that time. We competed in cutting the trees and making money. We started to protect the forest only after we felt the scarcity of forest products in the village. Now, I am the president of the CFUG. Recently, people from NGO came and measured our carbon for Plan Vivo. However, we are still not clear how carbon trading works. We have not heard back from them.

President of Rajapani CFUG

We protected the forest for ourselves for timber, fuelwood and fodder. We never thought of the complex vision of selling forest carbon. After entering into carbon market, we will not be the sole actor to manage forest, we have to listen other actors. People from outside, even from abroad might have strong say on our forests.

Advisor, Rajapani CFUG

Unlike forest product sale, carbon trading is complicated; we need foreign experts to measure forest carbon, and international buyers to buy it. If the buyers are not interested, we don't have use value of carbon.

Executive member, Janapragati CFUG

5.4.2 Potential impacts of REDD+

The local respondents were interviewed about their perceptions of REDD+ prospects with respect to its perceived socio-economic and ecological prospects; impacts on governance and power; and benefits for poor and marginalized people. The perceived impacts were loosely classified as (a) worse than the current practice, (b) same (or minimal change), or (c) better than without REDD+.

5.4.2.1 *Socio-economic impact*

Parallel to current community forestry practice, most respondents indicated a belief that the biggest share of the benefits from REDD+ will go to the group as a whole, rather than to create benefits for the individual household. Most respondents anticipate that their group will get some socio-economic benefits if REDD+ is implemented in their CFUG. Considerable differences emerge though between the expected forms of socio-economic benefits, ranging from individual income to community support, individual training or broader development of the community.

Participants from Bhakarjung, the CFUG with a relatively homogeneous community and traditionally based collective governance that has had the least exposure to REDD+ among the three study sites, had the highest expectations stating better or at least equal benefit to the community as a whole. Janapragati and Rajapani–more heterogeneous communities with respect to income and status, and with more experience regarding carbon trade–indicate a higher number of negative responses with more people having come to suspect that REDD+ may deteriorate their situation.

Asked about their personal prospects, most respondents overall anticipate new knowledge, training and leadership development, but not necessarily direct monetary benefits. Only 10% of our respondents anticipate better individual income gains from REDD+ whereas another 75% respondents think REDD+ will only result in minimal changes (Figure 5.3).

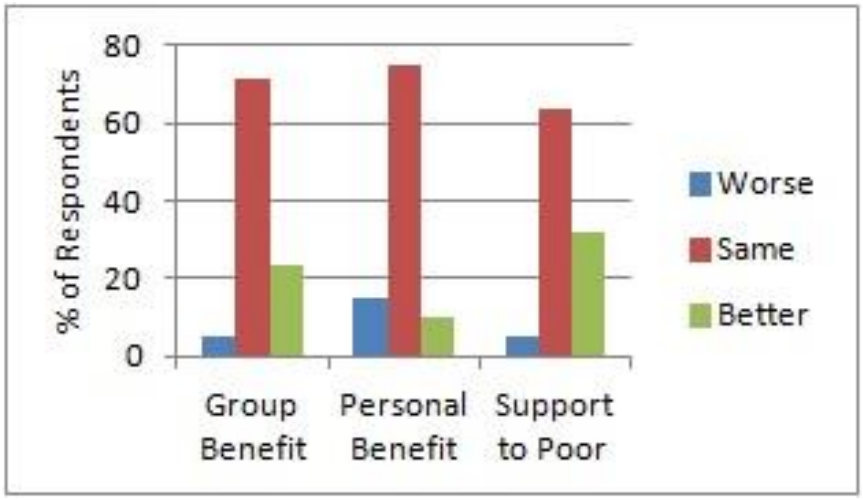

Figure 5.3: Local perception of socio-economic impacts after REDD+

(Source: Field work 2013-14)

Participants across all three sites are not optimistic about the extent and reliability of these benefits in comparison to their pre-REDD+ livelihoods. Only 23% respondents believe that REDD+ will provide better overall group benefits than the existing community forestry (Figure 5.3), while 72% expect the overall benefits to be fairly similar to their existing incomes. More importantly though, many respondents share concerns that REDD+ will create overarching conditions that could affect the current productivity of community forestry in the long run, if not jeopardize its practicability in the long run:

REDD+ might bring some money to the community but it will limit other benefits from the forest. I am not sure whether the REDD+ benefit will outweigh the existing benefit.

General member, Bhakarjung CFUG

So what do executive members think, those with the most knowledge and decision-making authority related to REDD+? Overall, the interview data indicates that CFUG executive committee members tend to have significantly more positive beliefs regarding REDD+ group benefits than general members (X^2=12.579, df= 2, p = 0.002). Nearly half (48%) of the CFUG executive committee respondents express strong optimism regarding REDD+ group benefits, compared to only 8% among the general community members. Our interview data suggests that expectations of community benefits may show particular personal optimism among the leaders as

they are the ones who get first-hand information from the project and stand the most to gain from its capacity building and exposure. General members, especially the poorest families of the community, barely have prospects of benefitting from these programs, except for activities that specifically target the poor. In fact, a member of the REDD+ network based at the active Janapragati community pilot site reported confidentially in the interview that, in contrast to the continued optimism about REDD+, the CFUG has recently found that its income has actually decreased since REDD+ was launched, as an effect of the program's forest extraction limits.

Marginalized groups, forest restrictions and pro-poor benefits

Whether REDD+ will be beneficial for the poor is a hotly debated issue among the study participants. REDD+ is not in itself a poverty alleviation program (Shrestha, Karky, & Karki, 2014) but its activities are focused on carbon enhancement. One third of the respondents expect that REDD+ will bring new potential benefits for the poor with new resources and a special focus on the poor, while two thirds of the participants expect REDD+ to bring minimal additional support to the poor, or keep conditions as usual (Figure 5.3).

Many participants reported in agreement that their local forest use restrictions have already created palpable hardship for poor forest-dependent people in the past, and REDD+'s additional forest restrictions are now anticipated to make local livelihood conditions more difficult. In the REDD+ active community of Janapragati, forest-dependent poor, indigenous, and *dalit* respondents gave a strong responses that their personal situation has been becoming worse with REDD+. One of the issues concerns livelihood flexibility and resilience mechanisms for the poorest forest dwellers, which strict forest rules often do not accommodate for, as this respondent illustrates:

Our agriculture production supports us only for 4-5 months. For rest of the year, we need to go find labour work or collect wild edibles or sell the dead wood in the market to buy food. I used to sell dead branches and chips collected from the forest, but this year, the forest watcher did not allow me. He said, "if you want to take it home, you can, but you are not allowed to sell it in the market." I can't eat fuelwood, I need food. We are not forest destroyers, but the committee doesn't understand us. Such rules make our life hard.

Low-income indigenous Chepang member, Janapragati CFUG

Expectations of the practical realities of REDD+ funds flowing into the communities differ across the three sites, probably also related to their levels of experience. Respondents from Janapragati, for example, have already witnessed REDD+ benefits arriving from the pilot project's seed money, while the other two CFUGs have so far only seen local activities directly funded through their pre-REDD+ forms of fund mobilization. The latter may therefore assume that new social efforts under REDD+ would be decided upon, and mobilized, in the same way as their community forestry fund in the past, thus basing new assumptions on old patterns and rules.

The poor will not get benefits from REDD+ money. Our community forestry funds are mostly used for community development activities. The poor barely get benefits from such activities.

Focus group discussion: Women's group, Rajapani CFUG

Community leaders from the REDD+ pilot area state that they have fund mobilization guidelines, but that the enlisted activities do not necessarily address the need of the poor. Even if some poor households do receive benefits, not all can be reached out to. Furthermore, rules of matching contributions between community and individual households create barriers for poor households who cannot afford to match community funds for eligible activities, thus excluding the poor while enhancing financial privileges for more affluent households. An executive member of REDD+ pilot area sums up their experience:

We have a pro-poor program. So, well-off members complain that REDD+ is for the poor but not for them. However, the poor cannot fulfill the criteria of matching contributions for biogas and livestock support. Some of the support activities offered to them are not even of their choice.

Executive committee member, Janapragati CFUG

Statistical data indicates that the views on whether REDD+ will offer pro-poor benefits are significantly different between CFUG executive committee members and general members (X^2 =8.463, df=2, p = 0.000), as well as between affluent and poor households (X^2 =12.949, df=2, p= 0.002). 61% respondents from executive committee consider REDD+ as poor-focused, compared to 14% respondents from general members. Likewise, 54% respondents from well-off classes opposed to 13% from poor classes perceive REDD+ as pro-poor program. Observation shows

that some respondents from well-off class backgrounds in the pilot area Janapragati do not want higher privilege for poor, arguing they are all contributing the same to conserve the forest. Having said that, however, unequal access continues as poor members have less alternatives of forest livelihood activities and products. As a result, local perceptions and reports so far suggest considerable concern that REDD+ might dedicate well-meaning money to the group, considerably limits forest activities and benefits in the process, and with its monetary benefits still fails to reach those whose livelihoods are the most in jeopardy.

5.4.2.2 *Ecological impact*

Local perceptions of biodiversity conservation prospects seem positive overall, with more than half of the respondents (52%; see Figure 5.4) reporting significant expectations, the others (47%) still expressed neutral or slightly positive views. When reviewing the data by community, however, local perceptions of biodiversity conservation prospects suggest significant differences between pilot and non-pilot study sites (X^2=4.038, DF=1, p=0.041). In particular, our data indicates that positive expectations decrease with REDD+ experience. For example, 58% of the respondents from the pre-REDD+ community Bhakarjung expect substantial ecological improvements of their forest, while only 30% of the respondents from the REDD+ pilot area Janapragati see substantial biodiversity improvement coming. Asked in our interviews and focus groups, the latter often pointed out they see no further room for improvement in practice, given the high standards that their community forestry system had already established before.

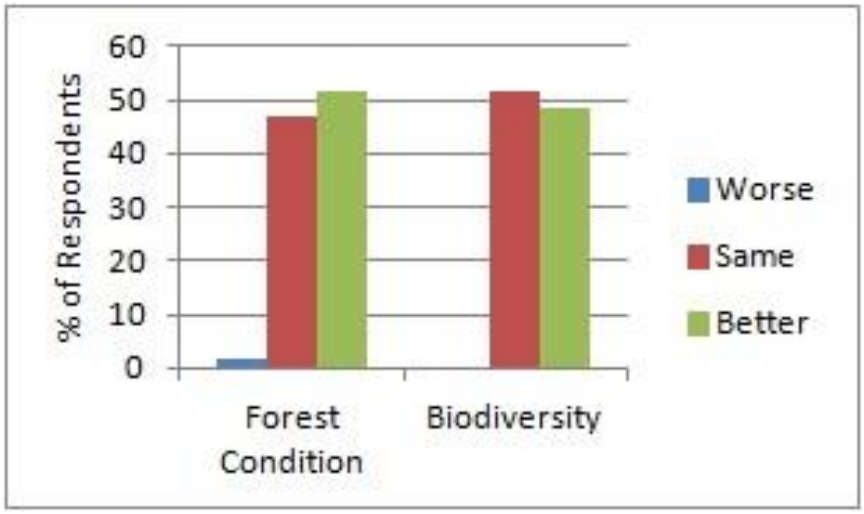

Figure 5.4: Local perception on forest condition and biodiversity after REDD+

(Source: Field work 2013-14)

As another interesting finding, higher and lower income respondents gave significantly different responses (X^2=8.527, df=2, p=0.014) regarding ecological benefits of REDD+. 71% of the higher-income respondents expected improved forest condition after REDD+, as compared to 34% of the lower-income respondents. Interviews suggest that what drives this difference is that the lower-income respondents see the current restrictions as much closer to the possible –in other words, bearable for their livelihoods-- maximum for forest conservation, while higher-income respondents have more leeway in accepting stricter forest rules. This important aspect will be explored further below.

5.4.2.3 *Governance and power*

Across all three sites, 53% of the respondents expect minimal changes of local governance through REDD+, while 37% expect substantial improvements (Figure 5.5). Similar to the aspects examined above, however, the three communities suggested different expectations with growing REDD+ experience, shifting from very optimistic to slightly positive or neutral. 45% of the respondents from Bhakarjung and Rajapani CFUGs express strong optimism that when they receive extra resources from REDD+, the community would become very conscious of the financial flows in order to maximize its value. Another 50% from Bhakarjung and 40% from

Rajapani expect minimal change in governance after REDD+. In contrast, 70% respondents from the active REDD+ implementing Janapragati CFUG report only minimal changes in group governance after REDD+.

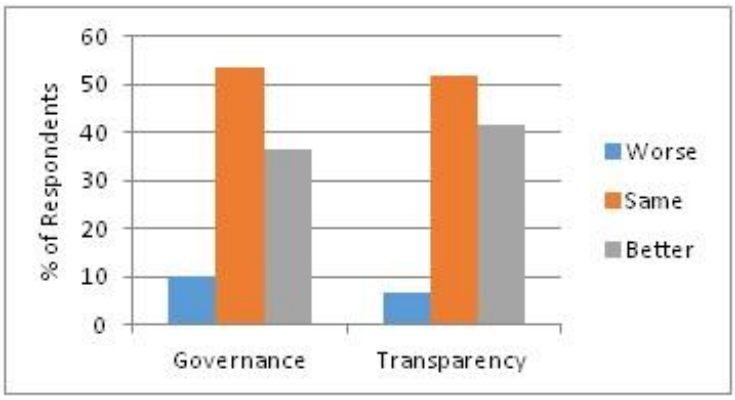

Figure 5.5: Perception on local governance after REDD+

(Source: Field work 2013-14)

Higher-income respondents (54%) showed more optimism that REDD+ would substantially improve the quality of governance in the community, compared to only 22% of the lower-income respondents (Chi-square test results X^2 =7.342, df=2, p=0.025). Slightly even more pronounced was the difference between rich and poor with respect to responses on increased transparency and accountability (61% compared to 22%; X^2 =8.463, df=2, p = 0.015).

Interviews and focus groups responses highlight these differences as challenges ahead for the community, as well as for potential effects on governance. For example, we found that the less the respondents knew about REDD+, the more they assumed that their pre-existing community forestry governance practices would automatically remain affected, such as their internal accountability mechanisms of community reporting, annual general assembly, and auditing.

A smaller number of respondents (7%) who critically follow the shift toward carbon forestry emphasized concerns that REDD+ may increase upward accountability pressures on the executive members, thus shifting interest from community reporting to catering the demands and interests of carbon buyers and the government. They warn that REDD+ threatens to increase the

invisible overhead expenses due to its technical complexity, thus creating more grey area for local leadership to manipulate expenses and negotiate goals.

Our interviews and focus group discussions with marginalized low-income community members mirror these concerns. Poor people expressed their dissatisfaction that neither the outsiders nor the CFUG executive members clearly communicate with them about the programs, and that they would barely get chance to be selected when there are openings for leadership. They argue that if the community is not fully aware about financial flows, decision processes and rights, lack of transparency and accountability gaps will tend to move power and benefits away from the broader community to those in charge:

There is high chance of corruption and financial mismanagement in REDD+ if the group is not aware about the external support mechanisms and the rights of local people. We can't ignore the potential threats of an alliance between local elite and bureaucrats just to reap the REDD+ money.

General member, Rajapani CFUG

5.4.3 REDD+ and willingness for forest products tradeoff

Fundamentally, all three local communities seem to regard REDD+ primarily as a strict protection framework of forests for carbon. They believe that forest protection will definitely improve forest condition, biodiversity, and watershed. However, the key concern is whether REDD+ will promote sustainable forest use for local livelihoods. As scholarly critics of REDD+ argue (Ribot, 2011; Godden & Tahen, 2016) and as this study illustrates above, community people are worried about REDD+ curtailing their rights from the existing use regime. They ponder that the quantitative focus of REDD+ on carbon sequestration might detract attention from local realities, thereby emphasizing the inevitability of difficult tradeoffs. Our interviews and observations suggest that, regardless of REDD+, the communities already acted to modify their forest use in order to protect the forests.

Despite expected monetary benefits, local people feel a threat arising from REDD+. Among participants across three study sites, carbon commercialization is becoming perceived as increasing inequalities, favoring outsiders' interests over those of local communities. This phenomenon has been widely reported elsewhere (Ribot & Oyono, 2005; Larson & Ribot, 2007; Nayak & Berkes, 2008; Poteete & Ribot, 2011), and is repeated here by a local participant in our interviews:

In the name of financial benefit, there could be a politics to ban forest use and there could be a game to make us dependent. REDD+ might divide our society on the local level, and divide developed and developing countries on the global level. REDD+ appears to be beneficial for global and local elites.

Local political leader of left wing party, Janapragati CFUG

Out of 60 respondents in this study, none of them support a complete ban of fuelwood extraction for the sake of carbon sequestration (Figure 5.6). For them, forest products and services related to local livelihoods are likely to be far more important than the money from REDD+. Over the past decade, local forest community members have adopted alternative energy like biogas, improved cook stove and LP gas, with numbers on the rise. Interview participants state they are ready to reduce their fuelwood consumption further, provided that they have easy access to the reliable alternatives. The USAID-funded *Hariyo Ban* project in Bhakarjung, for example, has a special focus on improved cook-stoves. The REDD+ pilot project in Janapragati has adopted alternative energy as one of the major programs. The members of Rajapani who are in the vicinity of market infrastructure have been gradually switching to LP gas. Corroborating the findings of Kandel, Chapagain, Sharma, & Vetaas (2016), people from relatively well-off families especially from Bhakarjung CFUG, who have private trees, express that they can limit fuelwood extraction to their own tree supply. However, the poor people who do not have private trees or other alternatives will have to continue to extract from the forest. Similarly, families with cattle explain that they need to prepare their cattle's food in traditional stoves, and money cannot compensate for this.

If we are asked not to collect fuelwood and fodder from the forest, it will not be acceptable for us. We need to cook food and raise our cattle. We don't have money to buy stuff and even if we get money, we cannot buy all things from the market that we get from the forest.

Low-income indigenous Chepang member, Janapragati CFUG

Not all the members are equal. Some members have trees in their private lands, some others can purchase timber to build a house and LP gas for cooking. But, we poor have no other option than the forests.

Focus group discussion, *Dalit* community, Rajapani CFUG

Unlike the day-to-day consumption needs of fuelwood, timber is used mainly for new construction and maintenance of houses, furniture and agricultural appliances. Due to the increasing trend of building new houses in the study sites, timber demand is on the rise. If community members get reasonable compensation from REDD+, they are ready to minimize timber use (Figure 5.6). However, none of the respondents agree to completely ban timber extraction for the sake of carbon.

Money does not substitute timber, fuelwood and fodder which are the basic elements of our life. So, I do not agree to protect the forest only for the carbon money.

Dalit woman, Bhakarjung CFUG

If we are compensated timber with money, we cannot accept it. We don't destroy the forest, we don't smuggle timber but take it only when we need to.

Low-income indigenous Chepang member, Janapragati CFUG

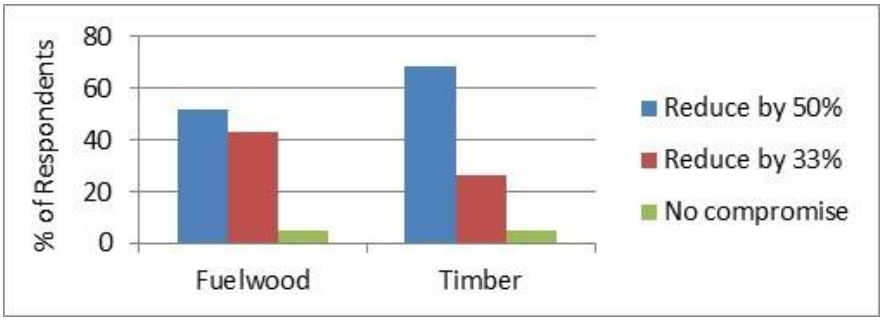

Figure 5.6: Willingness for forest product tradeoff in REDD+

(Source: Field work 2013-14)

Cattle grazing is an important traditional practice of farming communities in the study sites. Considering the impact of grazing in forest degradation, CFUGs have officially banned grazing

in all the three sites, but field observation shows that this has not been strictly followed. Some households nearby the forests still take their cattle into the forests for grazing, although others have successfully shifted to stall-feeding. In the interviews, 70% of the participants supported the continuation of grazing bans under REDD+, but 30% were in favor of partial grazing permits.

5.4.4 Collective funds mobilization under REDD+

Over 80% respondents in our study stated a preference for receiving REDD+ funds collectively as a group, which reflects the strong culture of collective-based governance and funds management that Nepal's community forestry program has long established for the success of conservation efforts. Similarly, all interviewed executive members are expecting that their past CFUG governance practice will translate into an equitable management of the new funds. Only 12% of respondents propose using half of the REDD+ revenues as a direct compensation payment to the individual households for their affected forest incomes. About 5% of the respondents, primarily from poor and forest-dependent backgrounds, further call for a more direct distribution of REDD+ funds specifically to those member households whose cut-back forest income would result in particular livelihood hardship.

While the communities largely seem to favor the REDD+ funds to be used collectively, our respondents also carefully commended the need of separate policy and guidelines for fund mobilization. Even though 35% of the CFUG funds are --by mandatory legal provision of the Community Forestry Guidelines-- dedicated to the poor, women and *dalit*, our field observations and focus group discussions show that the implementation performance has been mixed. If this is not done properly, as our respondents warn, the money will be under the control of powerful elites and the discretionary funds will not necessarily be used for the welfare of the poor and marginalized.

If the government does not make clear rules on REDD+ fund mobilization at CFUG level, we poor people will hardly get benefits from the REDD+ funds.

Dalit member, Bhakarjung CFUG

5.4.5 Compatibility of REDD+ with community forestry

Interesting discussions emerged with local respondents reflecting on the conceptual premises of REDD+ and community forestry and how they may be reconciled. Community forestry follows a bottom-up approach of community-governed sustainable forest use driven by local interests in a sustainable livelihood, whereas REDD+ emerged as a top-down administered forest conservation mechanism driven by global interests in carbon sinks to combat climate change. As described above, our data indicates considerable local concern about possible governance changes, which are continued for discussion here. Previous research clearly shows that top-down approaches do not necessarily favor or even accommodate local needs, priorities, and goals (Bolin, Mustalahti, Boyd, & Paavola, 2012; Balooni & Lund, 2014; Mustalahti & Rakotonarivo, 2014). International studies on the effects of market-based approaches such as REDD+ have long warned that impoverished, forest-dependent communities rarely benefit from such an approach in conservation (Fortwangler, 2007; Igoe & Brockington, 2007; McAfee, 2012).

The majority of our respondents express some level of concern that REDD+ will not only let external actors into their community forestry governance, but in a way that allows them to play influential roles toward their own agenda. As shared by the respondents and observed in the field, it has already been hard for the local poor in the past to obtain leadership positions in the resourceful CFUGs, without the backing of major political parties. And now, they report noticing an upward shift of accountability away from the community level, with CFUG leaders focusing increasingly on external actors. Instead of addressing local needs, CFUG executives and local elites are attracted by the potential monetary gain from REDD+. For similar reasons, some indicated concern over a risk of recentralization by the government in order to secure and control REDD+ benefits, which adds to similar findings by Phelps, Friess and Webb (2010).

After REDD+, the government might have interest in our forests, and we will be restricted to collect forest products. The decisions from [the] local [people] alone might not work in REDD+.

Community Women's Group Member, Bhakarjung CFUG

Forest-dependent people—especially the Chepang in the Janapragati REDD+ pilot area—experienced forest harvesting restrictions (also reported in Patel *et al*., 2013). According to the respondents from the Janapragati CFUG, the local people were asked not to extract any forest

products from the demarcated plots. Community members fear that if such rules are imposed for the entire forest, they will not have alternatives for fuelwood and timber. They reported that CFUG leaders are not serious about this issue because they view it as not their problem. Rather, CFUG executives and local elites are attracted by the potential monetary gain from REDD+.

If we fell green trees, we lose the amount of carbon from the forest. There are several ways to fulfill the forest products' demand. We can collect deadwood for fuelwood, promote alternative energy like improved stoves or biogas and plant trees on private land.

Local elite, Janapragati CFUG

In contrast to the described anticipation of incoming revenue and its effects on the local elites, some executive members from the Janapragati pilot area reveal in our interviews that they do not actually expect the community's REDD+ revenues to be significant in comparison to the lost timber sales, especially as these amounts may depend on floating international carbon prices. Also, they suspect that external donors would not consider the local CFUGs as capable or trustworthy enough to measure carbon correctly, therefore requiring expensive external experts which will further decrease the local benefit from REDD+. Furthermore, some respondents are very critical towards the market-orientation of REDD+. According to them, the process could make the local people dependent on the international community in the name of REDD+ and restrictions on forest product use could be imposed for a global benefit. They do not see the REDD+ benefit as significant compared to the potential risk and inevitable cost for it. These respondents, only few but all very informed, summarize critically that the government shows a high level of commitment for REDD+, without being serious about sustainable forest management, and they are cynical that the situation may further deteriorate with REDD+ implementation: The government is reluctant to allow for a forest management that works within the local reality, while over-matured trees are dead and decayed in the forest because of international money, and the local economy is scarce in timber while potentially creating spillover effects to foreign timber extraction.

At the beginning, I was excited about REDD+, but now I found the reality is quite different. We have lots of dead and fallen trees in the forest, but we are not using them just to receive a negligible amount of carbon money. Rather, we are importing timber from Malaysia.

Local political leader and advisor of Janapragati CFUG

Several respondents pragmatically argue that a better balance can be achieved by facilitating, and managing multiple functions of forests, rather than focusing only on carbon.

We should not make the forest management objective solely for carbon. We would be better to focus on the sustainable management of forests for the supply of multiple products and services to local people. While doing so, we can still claim extra benefits from forest carbon.

Executive member, Rajapani CFUG

5.5 Conclusions and Policy Implications

This paper examined REDD+ related perceptions, expectations and concerns of local forest users in three community forests in different bioregional zones in Nepal, and with varying levels of REDD+ experience. The analysis found decreasing levels of optimism with increasing experience, as well as considerable concerns across all three communities regarding forest user rights restrictions and REDD+ related governance impacts on the future of their community forests.

Our finding highlights how much the local community members fear a potential loss of irreplaceable forest products for their livelihood practices. It is commonly agreed among the local respondents that the carbon focus of REDD+ will need to impose a certain level of restriction on the harvesting of forest products, which will potentially improve forest conditions and the community will receive some benefits for not using the forests. However, the extent of related compensation is unclear, including the translation into collective and individual benefits.

In agreement with earlier warnings also issued for example by Peskett, Huberman, Bowen-Jones, Edwards and Brown (2008), our study reiterates that it is essential to consider livelihood resilience aspects under REDD+. Disagreements over small-scale extraction rights could become a significant point of contention between communities and project implementers if not accounted for during REDD+ project design (see also Blom, Sunderland, & Murdiyarso, 2010). Respondents expect the continuation of good practices of community forestry in REDD+. There is strong local interest in an equitable and livelihood-supportive policy that honors, or even expands, past 'pro-poor' commitments to forest-dependent households. However, as the REDD+

implementation slowly unfolds and reveals its numerous ties into international, national, and local processes, our respondents note concerns of increased elite capture, corruption, and the alliance of local elites with external actors resulting in increased upward accountability for carbon increment, thus contributing to the vulnerability of the local people by limiting local user rights in order to increase the carbon stock and its monetary benefit rather than securing sustainable forest livelihood levels. As a consequence of shifts of power and money, respondents regard REDD+ benefits as a new but potentially damaging source of income that may accelerate a marginalization of the forest-dependent poor, and local management priorities in general. REDD+ could erase the success of community cohesion and solidarity by contributing to new social tensions through the centralization of resource management, if local people are not properly heard, and their needs and aspirations are not appropriately reconciled in REDD+ design and practice.

Our findings lead us to make several recommendations for REDD+ policy formulation and implementation. First, given the complex technical subject with a top-down approach, REDD+ proponents should provide a broader understanding of the REDD+ approach that also discusses structural risks and benefits at the local level, rather than focusing on the possible monetary gain from carbon, which has increased unrealistic expectations among community members and caused anxieties. Second, REDD+ should be treated as a complement to and integrated with existing community forestry, and community rights should not be overridden by REDD+. The learning and experience of community forestry—especially in local governance and equity—should be integrated into REDD+ policy and practices. Third, REDD+ proponents and national level actors should work closely with the local communities, ensuring that local aspirations and needs are reconciled in REDD+ policies, programs and projects. To summarize the hopes of many of our local respondents, REDD+ should enhance the well-functioning of their community forests, rather than destabilizing or jeopardizing them in any way.

CHAPTER 6 : CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes important findings and their significance in contributing to the debate on forest carbon trade arrangements and their effects on community forestry governance and the accompanying power relationships between the national and local level through considering Nepal's community forestry program as a case study. The main aim of this thesis is to understand how the neoliberal commodification of the environmental services of forests influences the power relationships in multi-level forest governance, and how global carbon emissions trading schemes are affecting local forest governance and community forestry practices in Nepal. Informed by political ecology and discourse analysis, an embedded case study was undertaken in three community forest user groups of Nepal that covered three different ecological regions and different exposures to REDD+. Drawing on the empirical findings, this research provides theoretical and empirical insights into Nepal's REDD+ policy process and its effect on local forestry governance and power relations.

As such, the research questions that guided this research are as follows:

- How have the actors and their relationships changed in Nepal's forestry institutions from the local to the national level since the 1990s?
- How does the global interest in carbon commodification affect community forestry policies and practices at the national level in Nepal?
- To what extent are local communities represented in Nepal's carbon trading deliberations and forest-related policy development?
- What are the potential socio-economic impacts of monetizing carbon on Nepal's local forest communities?

The rest of this chapter is structured as follows. The next section draws on the empirical findings in this thesis to answer the four research questions (noted above) and covers a summary of findings. Then, Section 6.2 assesses the wider implication of the thesis both in scholarly debate and in the REDD+ policy process. The final section discusses the limitations of the research and provides recommendations for the future.

6.1 Summary of Findings

How have the actors and their relationships changed in Nepal's forestry institutions from the local to the national level since the 1990s?

As discussed in Chapter 2, Nepal's forest policy process was mainly controlled by the state centric techno-bureaucratic power until the late 1970s. This empowered the representatives of the state bureaucracy to assume the role of managers as well as technical experts, thus excluding the local people from forest management and viewing them as forest destroyers (Ojha, 2013). The subsequent news of Himalayan degradation during the 1970s (Eckholm, 1975) and the global wave of structural adjustment policies during the 1980s also challenged the techno-bureaucratic confidence of the government and resulted in opening the agenda for participatory reform in the forestry sector. As a result of its fragile environmental condition and strategic geopolitical situation, (Malla, 2001, Ojha, 2013, Rutt & Lund, 2014 etc), Nepal became a "donor darling" (Rutt & Lund, 2014) and received bilateral and multilateral funding for integrated conservation and development projects. International donors pressurized the government for its explicit commitment on decentralization and the devolution of resource management. These changes were then reflected in the Master Plan of Forestry Sector, the Forest Act of 1993, and the Forest Regulations, 1995. These legal instruments paved the way for a pluralistic approach to Nepal's forest management by giving the local people a greater sense of ownership of local forests. At this point, the forest management priority was set for meeting the basic needs of local people while conserving the country's forest resources. The post-1990 multi-party democratic movement in the country also empowered civil society demands for the devolution of forest rights to local communities. Thus, FECOFUN became one of the strongest civil society networks in Nepal. Gradually, community forestry became the most successful program in the forestry sector. Since then, community forestry in Nepal has moved beyond a protection-oriented forestry regime to consider that local livelihoods, governance and biodiversity conservation are also critical aspects of the forestry regime.

During the Maoist insurgency in the late 1990s, local forestry institutions somehow fulfilled the local government vacuum created by the civil war, and the absence of local elections. During that time, there was growing criticism about the role of the government, donor agencies and civil society, and some of this criticism continues today. As a result, the government became reluctant

to devolve forest use rights to local users and continued its techno-bureaucratic control in the name of a complicated forest inventory system (Hull, Ojha, & Paudel, 2010) and hesitated in handing over the forests to local communities in the Terai. Although aid agencies helped in Nepal forestry reform through providing money, human resources, expertise, ideas, and materials, they could not go beyond their own mode of thinking about forest governance (Also noted in Ojha, 2013). Even though sustainability, conservation, and resilience became their agenda, they did not pay adequate attention to resource rights and democratization. In this scenario, civil society— including community forestry networks— were empowered, however they were utilized for service delivery rather than to seek their role in political deliberation. As discussed in Chapter 2, civil society often failed to represent their constituencies or to present an independent voice due to their dependency on funding agencies.

After the 2007 Bali Convention, the global climate change issue has been entered into Nepal's forest management agenda with the strong commitment of the Nepal government for climate change mitigation through forestry. As a result, Nepal's forests have been perceived as a viable source of carbon sequestration and storage apart from their view as a conventional source of livelihood goods. Moreover, the community forestry program has been identified as an attractive means of implementing forestry-related climate change interventions. In addition, now all the pertinent actors are attracted to participating in the climate change agenda. Specifically, these include bilateral and multilateral donors such as The World Bank, the UN-REDD Program, USAID, NORAD, international NGOs including the WWF, CARE, Winrock International, The Centre for People and Forests, ICIMOD, and so on, are supporting the piloting, knowledge generation and capacity building of various aspects of REDD+.

Specifically, the MoFSC of the Government of Nepal has established the REDD Implementation Centre as an extended arm of the ministry to lead REDD readiness activities in Nepal. The centre is leading in REDD+ policy and program development; monitoring, reporting and verification; coordination among various stakeholders; disseminating information; capacity development; and ensuring benefit-sharing. At a higher level, Nepal's government has set an inter-ministerial policy steering REDD+ Apex Body that is chaired by the Minister for Forests and Soil Conservation. This committee includes 11different ministries including non-forestry ministries.

This demonstrates that the government's interests and concerns have now grown beyond forest ministry. At the civil society level, both forestry and non-forestry groups and alliances are attracted in the REDD+ process. Community-based forest user groups' networks, women networks, *dalits*, Indigenous people's groups and their networks, private tree growers, research and development NGOs, and private consultant groups are other non-state actors observed in Nepal's REDD+ policy landscape. However, each of these groups have very diverse interests and different levels of influence, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Nepal's government, particularly the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, is especially interested in exercising its power and authority over the national REDD+ mechanism, and in retaining leadership and control over it. As such, the government has great influence in potential funding sources, payment mechanisms and markets for forest carbon and it is the main authority in leading the national policy for a low carbon strategy. However, non-forestry ministries have low interest and weak influence in REDD+ activities while donor agencies and international NGOs have continued their interests in REDD+ policy process. Continuing with longstanding involvement, they are interested in maintaining their public policy influence through funding, technical support, knowledge generating, and up-scaling and replicating their learning in the national policy process. Consequently, these actors are capable of influencing Nepal's forest policy process and outcomes. Specifically, The World Bank, USAID, DfID, NORAD, WWF, and Care are observed to be among the powerful international agencies in the REDD+ policy process in Nepal. FECOFUN and NEFIN have also secured their political space in the REDD+ policy debate in Nepal.

However, other civil society networks are struggling to be counted in the process. These civil society networks are interested in retaining the trust and confidence of the local people on REDD+ related issues and empowering their own constituencies. Civil society, especially from the community forestry network, the indigenous people's network and the women's network are capable of advocating on policy issues and in mobilizing their members. However, their role in critical policy issues has frequently been weakened due to their involvement in service delivery in partnership with government and donor communities and increased dependency on donors.

Local communities are the only place-based actors in REDD+ and local forest governance. They are mainly interested in conserving the forest to reap private and collective benefits from forest resource management and in participating in the decision-making process to ensure they receive the maximum benefit from REDD+. Local communities are also more influential in conserving the local forests and in maintaining a sustainable flow of forest products and services. However, local elites are more interested and capable of dominating local decision- making and in expanding alliances with non-place-based actors for their own benefit. Moreover, unlike other REDD+ countries, the private sector is not very interested nor influential in Nepal's REDD+ policy process. Some private tree growers are observed in some policy debates at a regional and local level, however, they are not very visible in the national scenario. Only private firms and consultancy companies from within and outside the country are playing a key role in knowledge brokering in alliance with donor communities and the REDD+ Implementation Center.

How does the global interest in carbon commodification affect community forestry policies and practices at the national level in Nepal?

Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 attempt to explore the answer to this research question. As discussed in Chapter 2, REDD+ was initially promoted as a straightforward win-win discourse by international agencies and the state government. However, within this milieu, politically contested issues of resource conflicts, power struggles, and potential trade-off issues were not brought to the forefront. Consequently, almost REDD+ actors involved in these discussions appeared to be optimistic on the proposed REDD+ mechanism, and they actively participated and collaborated in the R-PP development phase. However, once the REDD+ process rolled out, REDD+ literacy increased at multiple scale from donors and international NGOs to state government and civil society. As a consequence, multiple ways of understanding the climate change problem and of conceptualizing REDD+ entered into the REDD+ discourse at the national level and the global REDD+ debate has also helped shape the debate at Nepal's national and sub-national level. In Nepal, actors have conceptualized REDD+ in a variety of ways ranging from a win-win solution for the areas of climate change, biodiversity conservation and local livelihoods to a cost-effective approach to climate change mitigation to a false solution and carbon surrogacy. Consequently, with the evolution of the REDD+ process, national and local actors have changed their opinion and carry more than one narrative as described in Figure 2.3 in

Chapter 2. For most of the actors, REDD+ is neither a market panacea as proposed initially, nor is it a neoliberal Trojan Horse rather, they agree that REDD+ adds complexity to the existing forest governance regime with multiple interests and priorities.

The major findings of this research show that carbon as a resource commodity has shifted the notion of forests from those places of local livelihoods to forests as zones of productivity for global environmental services. As revealed in Chapters 2 and 3, the current REDD+ readiness initiatives have not adequately focused on the role of local stewardship. International supports are mostly focused on the technical issues of REDD+, but carbon ownership, benefit sharing and the political participation of local communities have received relatively less attention. The findings in Chapter 3 indicate that REDD+ could encourage a recentralization of forest land and tenure authority with stronger state and expert control mechanisms and top-down governance. As a result, this could impose an exclusionary carbon-focused forest management approach challenging the previously established livelihood-oriented forest management regime. Additionally, the omission of tenure as a theme in the REDD+ readiness process has added a challenge to the accountability, transparency, and responsiveness of the state authority. This may jeopardize the outcome of REDD+ for local forest communities in Nepal as the community and the state may be driven by very different interests that could ultimately boost or erode existing community forestry.

Similarly to many other countries, forest carbon has neither been defined as a forest product nor as an environmental service in Nepal[4]. The ownership rights to carbon and arrangements relating to benefit sharing are not yet defined. As discussed in Chapter 3, carbon ownership may either be a separate proprietary interest or it can be linked with forests or land ownership. Carbon ownership could be defined explicitly by creating new laws or it could be implicitly incorporated by extending existing laws on forest and land rights. This study has proposed three different

[4] The recent Bill to amend the Forest Act has categorized carbon as an environmental service, however, ownership has not yet been defined but left to the more ambiguous saying that: "management, utilization and benefit sharing of the environmental services obtained from the forests will be as defined."

carbon-oriented tenure reforms with major assumptions and potential consequences (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Carbon-Oriented Tenure Reforms, Major Assumptions and Potential Consequences

Option	**Assumption**	**Implication in Community Forestry**
Differentiating surface and sub-surface rights	Implicitly defines carbon pools based on rights over the carbon-related resources and their legally determined ownership.	The community owns the above ground carbon and the state owns the below ground carbon as the community has use rights on the forest products, but the land belongs to the state, according to The Forest Act, 1993.
Differentiating livelihood rights and ecological rights	Explicitly defines carbon rights as a new legal category separating carbons with forest resources and considering them as a new and separate ecosystem resource.	Decouples carbon from any other established ownership notions of previously defined forest commodities.
Devolution of all carbon rights as forest use rights	Implicitly defines carbon as an inherent component of existing forest benefits.	Devolution of full carbon rights.

Clarifying tenure rights is central to an efficient, effective and equitable REDD+ mechanism as it can help in identifying who the key stakeholders of REDD+ are, who should participate in REDD+ decision-making processes, and who should obtain benefits (Sunderlin et al., 2014). However, the Nepal government has not confirmed yet about how a carbon-related solution will be operationalized and what would be the local implications. This study has examined the possible changes for a state-community power balance under three potential scenarios of comprehensive tenure reform as outlined in Table 6.1.

To what extent are local communities represented in Nepal's carbon-trading deliberations and forest-related policy development?

The government of Nepal has announced a high level of commitment, willingness, and preparedness to attract diverse interests in policy deliberation for the REDD+ readiness process. The government has established a three-tiered institutional mechanism consisting of a high level inter-ministerial REDD+ Apex Body; a multi-stakeholder REDD+ Working Group with representation from government, experts, donors and civil society; and the REDD+ Implementation Center as a coordinating entity. Despite the high level of commitment for a multi-stakeholder process under REDD+ readiness, this study's analysis (see Chapter 4) found that Nepal's REDD+ planning structure is highly dominated by techno-bureaucratic, top-down practices representing government interests and international donor agencies' requirements, while non-state and local stakeholders often find themselves merely used to legitimize the policy process. Thus, civil society and the private sector have a weak presence in the forums. These problems are observed both in the governance structure and in the process of engagement in consultations.

The research findings also show an increasing trend of government dominance in the decision-making bodies. For example, the REDD+ Working group was initially formed with some balanced representation with four government representatives, three civil society representatives, and two donors/ international NGO representatives. However, the group was reconfigured in 2010 with increased government domination and decreased civil society representation. The new REDD+ Working Group has 12 members comprised of nine members from government, one from the donor agencies, and only two from civil society representing the forest user's network and indigenous network. There is also no representation from women as a constituency, or from *dalits* or landless groups. Moreover, the voice of the private sector is almost nil in this forum. This new configuration has thus increased techno-bureaucratic domination in the decision-making process. Likewise, the REDD+ Implementation Centre faces considerable limitations due to its placement within the organization structure of the government where it "hangs" by itself as a separate wing of the ministry, largely isolated from the vertical institutional structure of the Department of Forest bureaucracy that works with the local community. While the Department of Forest is the key agency in managing forests, the current REDD+ structure excludes having a

direct administrative channel of communication, authority, and accountability with the regional, district and local level of the Forest Department. In other words, the REDD+ Implementation Centre is not linked at all to the Forest Department. This structure will clearly pose a huge challenge to implementing the program in a comprehensive way at the local level. In the same vein, the Apex Body is criticized for lacking pro-activeness in leadership to provide direction on REDD+ policy process. Due to its inter-ministerial structure, the high level institutional representatives have neither a detailed engagement in the ongoing policy process nor have adequate time and interest, especially with non-forestry members. Therefore, critics have suggested this may result in faulty consensus without sufficient understanding about REDD+ policy issues.

Apart from these structural issues, there are other pertinent issues that hinder the effective participation of non-state actors, especially the local community and their representatives, in the deliberation process. Generally, non-state actors are ill-informed about the agenda, context, and the goal of the meetings and public consultation. As discussed in Chapter 4, this case was recorded both at the national and local level consultations. Even the civil society members of the REDD+ Working Group also reflect this issue. Civil society actors become just recipients of basic information rather than playing a role as well-informed participants. This proves that participation does not necessarily mean influence in the process. The reliance on technical experts at the expense of inclusive stakeholder engagement is another challenge to Nepal's REDD+ policy process, although stakeholder engagement is considered critical for REDD+ strategies preparation and UNFCCC also urges the parties to promote education, training and public awareness. However, a considerable share of REDD+ readiness activities is being conducted through outsourced consultants in order to meet the agendas, timelines and tones set by international donor agencies. Consequently, capacity building is lagging behind and the principle of free, prior, and informed consent is poorly reflected in the REDD+ implementation.
Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 4, coordination among the donor agencies and harmonization of capacity-building activities and the policy formulation process is extremely weak, which badly affects the quality of participation. The findings of this research have also noted that mostly the large formal actors and forest administration are favoured during consultation, while informal, marginalized and less-informed stakeholders have largely been

disregarded throughout the consultation process. Furthermore, most of the consultations are organized in the capital city, district headquarters, or other convenient places for the consultants and organizers. Such geographical spaces mostly restrict the participation of local communities who live far away. In the meantime, most of the "invited spaces" (Cornwall, 20008) are inconvenient for community people who live in rural, outlying areas and often face difficulties travelling to urban centers. They also face challenges in being heard and also in understanding what is being said at these consultation meetings because highly technical language that only experts understand is often used in such meetings, and many of the donors speak and present only in English, which local actors often do not understand. Power relations between the educated, technical elites versus the local population is also often a barrier.

What are the potential socio-economic impacts of monetizing carbon on Nepal's local forest communities?

Chapter 5 makes contributions to the ongoing debate about the potential impacts of REDD+ at the local level. As REDD+ is still in its readiness phase and most of the debates are held at the national and international level, the issue of carbon trading is quite new to local people. The architecture of REDD+ at an implementation level is also yet to be crafted and full implementation is still a long way ahead in the future. To assess the perceived socio-economic impact of REDD+, case studies were conducted in three community forest user groups from diverse ecological regions with varying levels of exposure to REDD+. Comparing REDD+ with the existing community forestry program, local communities agreed that the carbon-focus of REDD+ will impose a certain level of restriction on the harvesting of forest products, which will potentially improve the condition of local forests and result in communities receiving a certain amount of money for not using the forests. However, they do not expect a substantial improvement in the forest condition as community forestry has already adopted a high standard of forest conservation and there is little room for further improvement. Local communities also believe that the compensation will not be significant and will be better for collective, rather than individual benefits. However, at a personal level, local communities expressed their expectations about the opportunity to gain knowledge, training, and leadership development as opposed to direct monetary benefits.

Nonetheless, communities across all three sites are *not* optimistic about the extent and reliability of the benefits they will receive compared to their pre-REDD+ livelihoods. For example, due to the restriction on timber harvesting, communities from REDD+ areas reported the decreased income after REDD+. Poor indigenous and *dalit* peoples have also experienced hardship due to the restrictions on forest use in community forestry and this situation has worsened with REDD+.

Thus, whether REDD+ will be beneficial for poor and marginal forest-dependent community members is a hotly debated issue among the communities themselves. Specifically, two thirds of local participants believe that REDD+ will either offer minimal benefits to the poor or will not make any changes. Even though the CFUG executive members of the REDD+ pilot area and the project proponents claim that REDD+ is pro-poor, due to budget limitations all the poor households cannot be covered in the program, and the provision for matching grants for major livelihood support activities make it infeasible for the poor to participate. Poor and *dalit* community members are also concerned about the communication mechanism and leadership opportunity in the CFUG. Findings in Chapter 5 revealed that the executive committee members and outsiders are not clearly communicating with the poor and marginal community members, nor are these groups favored for leadership positions. When community members are not fully aware about community activities, financial flows, or decision-making procedures, a lack of transparency and gaps in accountability will tend to move power and benefits away from the broader community to elite capture.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the quantitative focus of REDD+ on carbon sequestration might detract attention from local realities to inevitable difficult tradeoffs. Despite the expected monetary benefits, local people feel threatened by REDD+ due to what they view as increasing inequality and the favouring of outsiders' interests over those of local communities. Consequently, this study's findings suggest that the monetary benefits communities receive from REDD+ cannot compensate for the need for forest products. However, local communities are willing to accept a certain level of tradeoffs for REDD+ upon the availability of reliable alternatives. Nonetheless, poor and subsistence members of the forest communities have already faced hardship due to the protection-oriented policy approach of community forestry and further

restrictions due to REDD+ could adversely affect their livelihoods. Moreover, the collective benefits received from REDD+ might not address these communities' individual household level problem. Therefore, this research suggests the establishment of an equitable and poor-friendly REDD+ policy that ensures the pro-poor obligations of community forestry.

6.2 Research Contribution

6.2.1 Scholarly contribution

This thesis has added an empirical case study to the literature critiquing neoliberal approaches to the commodification of nature (Castree 2010, McCarthy & Prudham, 2004 etc.). Using a political ecology approach, this work has made a contribution to advancing the understanding of REDD+ governance and the influence of global agendas at the local forest governance level in a Nepalese context. This study reveals that REDD+ is not (nor should be) a simple and straightforward one-way street of turning forests into commodities for the profit of a few people from elsewhere; instead, the concept is continuously being contested, reshaped, and 'lost in transition' (see also Steinberg, 1998) as the international environmental agenda and the local political environment meet. The discussion in the analysis chapters of this thesis shows that the tension between global policy agendas and power present at different scales can gradually change policies contained in the original ideas into something quite different with unintended and unforeseen consequences. There are also conflicting expectations of REDD+ at the local and global level. Specifically, local expectations of REDD+ lie more in improved livelihoods while the expectation of global REDD+ funding is clearly to achieve credible carbon credit. At this point, the interface between global carbon interests versus local livelihood priorities is the key source of conflictive consequences of REDD+ negotiations. As previously cautioned by other scholars including Brown et al. (2011), Pokorny, Scholz & de Jong (2013), Phelps et al., (2010); Sandbrook et al., (2010); Wunder, (2010); Agrawal et al., (2010), this thesis illustrates an in-depth example of tension points to the recentralization of power and a restriction on forest-based livelihoods, thus leaving local voices overshadowed by global and national interests.

This thesis has also made contribution to advancing the understanding of tenure security and carbon rights in connection to forest policy reform for the commodification of ecosystem

services. Tenure and rights over the forests in many forest-rich countries is unclear (Unruh, 2008; Larson, 2011; Sunderlin, et al., 2014), and REDD+ has added another level of complexity to the already difficult and layered system of ownership and rights. This lack of tenure clarity has direct and significant implications for REDD+ implementation, as it is associated with the identification of stakeholders, benefit sharing, and political participation in program and strategy development and implementation. Employing some theoretical and empirical basics, I have proposed a framework to define carbon rights with different alternatives, which is helpful for addressing a pertinent issue around tenure aspects of commodification of environmental services. To better contribute to the success of REDD+ in implementation, this research has identified the need to better reconcile a new awareness of tenure security and carbon rights for forest-dependent local communities. This thesis further provides empirical support for careful forest tenure reforms worldwide to ensure the confirmed rights of forest-dependent communities, which are shown to be one of the key issues in moving REDD+ forward in the post-Paris Agreement era.

Capacity building, communication, and knowledge exchange among the actors —especially in the local community—are crucial to strengthen them to access and influence the national-level policy process. However, the political participation of weaker actors—especially local communities—in institutional design and policy deliberation are hindered by the existing power-relations. Hence, their interests and ideas have remained mostly absent in the national policy process. Therefore, this thesis emphasizes the need for understanding the unique local socio-cultural and political context within which the REDD+ policy process is unfolding. This research has further highlighted the value of using a political ecology approach and aspects of discourse analysis to understand how global neoliberal commodifications of forest carbon influence power-relationships in multi-scale forest governance scenarios. This thesis has also indicated the risk of increased elite capture, corruption and upward accountability in the name of increasing global environmental services from the local forests.

6.2.2 Policy contribution

From a policy perspective, this research has contributed to a better understanding of the nature of emerging REDD+ governance at a national level. Even though REDD+ was initially proposed as a market solution for climate change mitigation, the evolution process has proven that REDD+ cannot stand alone without recognizing the existing governance system and non-carbon value of forests. Therefore, REDD+ should be considered as a complement to and integrated with existing community forestry governance.

The discourse analysis presented in Chapter 2 has contributed a better understanding towards a diverse REDD+ perspective. The analysis shows the changing perspective of actors on REDD+ as it is unfolding. Some actors are still advocating for a market-based REDD+ mechanism while another minority consider REDD+ to be a means of carbon colonization; however, most actors are urging for governance reform and the incorporation of non-carbon benefits in REDD+. This scenario indicates the need for a pluralistic approach in the policy formulation process that incorporates the diverse perspectives on REDD+. Without this, local aspirations and needs could not be reconciled in REDD+ policies programs and projects.

The analysis of policy discourse in chapter 3 indicates that local forest-dependent people should be recognized and empowered as key actors of REDD+ governance, rather than being treated merely as implementers of externally designed and imposed policies. Yet, engaging forest-dependent communities is not easy: training, policy formulation, and implementation are likely to require policy processes that are guided by principles of deliberative, discursive democracy (Dryzek, 2005). However, this study's findings suggest that Nepal's institutional arrangement for REDD+ planning is highly dominated by techno-bureaucratic top-down practices.

Mainly absent from national and sub-national level policy consultations are the forest communities' vulnerable marginalized groups and even the actors associated with the major drivers of deforestation such as landless people, forest-dependent communities, and timber processing companies. Even though they have participated, they are not informed in a timely manner nor provided with adequate background information about REDD+, its consultation process, and its potential impacts at the local level. Furthermore, this study found that capacity-

building activities are considerably lagging behind while the policy formulation process is moving ahead. Therefore, the study suggests that the design and practice of the consultation process needs to improve, fully respecting free, prior and informed consent, and that capacity building and policy deliberation should proceed hand-in-hand.

REDD+ has also added a new layer complexity into local forest governance by giving economic value to forest carbon. It has similarly added key concerns for forest tenure security by introducing carbon rights into the existing forest governance frame. Thus, this research has indicated the chance for profound changes regarding carbon ownership arrangements, state-community power relationships, and local livelihood security for forest-dependent communities. The research further analyzed three potential scenarios for incorporating carbon rights into Nepal's existing forest governance framework as discussed in Chapter 3. This provides guidance to define carbon rights in the interface of REDD+ in the existing forestry regime.

Based on the findings in the previous chapters, this research offers following policy recommendations for the policy actors:

- While formulating the policies, plans, and strategies for REDD+ implantation, social, cultural, economic and ecological aspects should be carefully considered both at national and local levels. An inclusive and equitable approach should be followed in the policy process.
- REDD+ should be considered complementary to the existing community forestry. It should not override community rights, rather it should strengthen the community forestry institutions.
- Institutional representation of all concerned right-holders and stakeholders should be ensured for the deliberative governance and long-tern ownership of the actors in the program
- The ongoing REDD+ policy process in Nepal indicates a lack of coordination among funding agencies. Therefore, this research recommends that the government needs to take lead to harmonize the initiatives and programs in order to contribute to the national goal.

- Capacity building and critical discussion on the pros and cons of REDD+ mechanism among the stakeholders is the key for policy deliberation. Therefore, REDD+ capacity building and policy deliberation should go hand in hand.
- The national state government and the project proponents should follow the principle of free, prior, and informed consent and work closely with the local communities ensuring that local aspirations and non-monetary livelihood needs are reconciled in REDD+ policies, programs and projects.
- Indigenous and traditional practices should be fully respected while defining the forest tenure and carbon rights in connection to the forest policy reform for REDD+ implementation.

Although the research was conducted in Nepal, the timely findings and learnings are applicable to most developing countries that have significant areas of community- managed forests and a strong willingness and commitment to participate in the REDD+ mechanism.

6.3 Research Limitations and Future Outlook

This study was an exploratory and embedded case study carried out during one period of time to understand how Nepal's carbon trade arrangements affect community forestry governance and its power relationships at a national and local level. As with most research involving case-studies, this research also has several limitations, some of which provide interesting avenues for future research.

This research was carried out during the prime time of REDD+ strategy preparation, during which I tried to capture the perceptions of a wide range of actors from the local community to the national policy field. As much as possible, I have sought to support the findings of each chapter by corroborating with existing literature and theory and also had the findings reviewed by the subject experts during the writing and peer-review process. Hopefully, this has strengthened the external validity of the research. The application of multiple methods and sources of information was also helpful in increasing internal validity. However, if time and resources had allowed, revisiting the communities and research participants to validate the study findings would have

been ideal to increase internal validity. It would have also helped in teasing out any subjectivity on the part of the researcher during data analysis and interpretation.

This research adopted qualitative methodologies (with very few complementary elements of quantitative research in Chapter 5) in order to develop an in-depth understanding of the REDD+ policy process and its impacts at a national and local forest governance level. Participants were purposively selected from each category of policy actors at the national level, and varieties of socio-economic and demographic groups were chosen at the community level to capture a broader picture of the case; however, a formal stratified sample was not sought. Therefore, unlike in quantitative research, the findings of this research study present the limitation of not being able to extrapolate the results to the entire community of forest user groups in Nepal and developing countries who are adopting the REDD+ process at large. However, a cross-country comparative analysis applying the same methodological approach would increase the generalizability of this research.

REDD+ is still in an evolutionary stage and, by and large, the infra-structure of REDD+ is pre-assumedly based on a performance-based, carbon-focused approach. Given this background in the piloting and readiness phase, the potential socio-economic impact of REDD+ at a local level was assessed through community perceptions. However, much uncertainty exists about whether REDD+ will be entirely performance-based and market focused or will choose another approach in considering the many non-carbon ecosystem services, and in empowering local communities for sustainable forest management and in supporting local livelihoods, in addition to the original focus on carbon. As REDD+ gains momentum in full-fledged implementation with clear institutional architecture, it would be worthy to carry out a rigorous study to assess the local socio-economic impact of REDD+.

This study has clearly indicated the threat of REDD+ to undermine or even erode the local forest commons due to the commodification of forest carbon and delocalization of livelihood forests for global climate change mitigation through forests. At this point, an important aspect of policy research will be to understand how community resilience develops at the interface of global REDD+ expectations and the local reality of community forestry.

REFERENCES

Adelman, S. (2015). Tropical forests and climate change: a critique of green governmentality. *International Journal of Law in Context, 11(02),* 195-212.

Agarwal, B. (2009). Rule making in community forestry institutions: The difference women make. *Ecological Economics, 68*(8–9), 2296-2308.

Agrawal, A., & Angelsen, A. (2009). Using community forest management to achieve REDD goals. *Realising REDD: National Strategy and Policy Options, 1*, 201-212.

Agrawal, A., & Ostrom, E. (2008). Decentralization and community-based forestry: Learning from experience. *Decentralization, Forests and Rural Communities: Policy Outcomes in South and Southeast Asia*. *SAGE, New Delhi, India*, 44-67.

Agrawal, A., Chhatre, A., & Hardin, R. (2008). Changing governance of the world's forests. *Science, 320*(5882), 1460-1462.

Agrawal, A., Nepstad, D., & Chhatre, A. (2011). Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources, 36*:373–96.

Alder, P. A., & Alder, P. (1994). Observational techniques. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln, *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 377-392). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Angelsen, A. (2008). *Moving ahead with REDD: Issues, options and implications*. CIFOR.

Angelsen, A., & Wunder, S. (2003). *Exploring the forest–poverty link: key concepts, issues and research implications* (No. CIFOR Occasional Paper no. 40, pp. viii-58p). CIFOR, Bogor, Indonesia.

Angelsen, A., Brockhaus, M., Sunderlin, W. D., & Verchot, L. V. (Eds.). (2012). *Analysing REDD+: Challenges and choices*. CIFOR

Appleton, J.V. (2002).Critiquing approaches to case study design for a constructivist inqury . *Qualitative Research Journal*, 2(2), 80-97.

Arnold, J. E. M. (2001). *Forestry, poverty and aid*. (Occasional Paper No. 33 (E)). Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR, Bogor, Indonesia. doi:10.17528/cifor/000884

Arts, B. (2012). Forests policy analysis and theory use: overview and trends. *Forest Policy and Economics*, *16*, 7-13.

Arts, B., & Buizer, M. (2009). Forests, discourses, institutions: A discursive-institutional analysis of global forest governance. *Forest Policy and Economics, 11*(5), 340-347.

Ascher, W. (1995). *Communities and sustainable forestry in developing countries*. Ics Press San Francisco.

Bacchi, C. (2009). *Analysing policy* Pearson Higher Education AU.

Bäckstrand, K., & Lövbrand, E. (2006). Planting trees to mitigate climate change: Contested discourses of ecological modernization, green governmentality and civic environmentalism. *Global Environmental Politics*, *6*(1), 50-75.

Bäckstrand, K., & Lövbrand, E. (2007). Climate governance beyond 2012: competing discourses of green governmentality, ecological modernization and civic environmentalism. *The social construction of climate change: Power, knowledge, norms, discourses*, 123-147.

Bäckstrand, K., & Lövbrand, E. (2016). The Road to Paris: Contending Climate Governance Discourses in the Post-Copenhagen Era. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning,* 1-19.

Balooni, K., & Lund, J. F. (2014). Forest rights: The hard currency of REDD. *Conservation Letters, 7*(3), 278-284.

Bandiaky, S., & Tiani, A. (2010). Gendered representation and participation in decentralized forest management: Case studies from Cameroon and Senegal. *Governing Africa's Forests in a Globalized World,* 144-159.

Barr, C., Resosudarmo, I.J., McCarthy, J. & Dermawan, A. (2006). (eds*) Decentralisation of Forest Administration in Indonesia: Implications for Forest Sustainability, Economic Development and Community Livelihoods*. Jakarta: CIFOR.

Barrow, E., Clarke, J., Grundy, I., Jones, K., & Tessema, Y. (2002). *Analysis of stakeholder power and responsibilities in community involvement in forest management in Eastern and Southern Africa*. Nairobi: IUCN.

Bartlett, A. G. (1992). A review of community forestry advances in Nepal. *The Commonwealth Forestry Review*, 95-100.

Bashir, M., Afzal, M. T., & Azeem, M. (2008). Reliability and validity of qualitative and operational research paradigm. *Pakistan Journal of Statistics and Operation Research*, *4*(1).

Basnet, R. (2009). Carbon ownership in community managed forests. *Journal of Forest and Livelihood, 8 (1)*: 78-84.

Bastakoti, R. R., & Davidsen, C. (2014). REDD+ and forest tenure security: Concerns in Nepal's community forestry. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology, 21*(2), 168-180.

Bastakoti, R. R., & Davidsen, C. (2015). Nepal's REDD readiness preparation and multi-stakeholder. *Journal: Journal of Forest and Livelihood, 13*, 30-43.

Baumgartner, F. R., Jones, B. D., & Wilkerson, J. (2011). Comparative studies of policy dynamics. *Comparative Political Studies*, 0010414011405160.

Baviskar, A. (2001). Forest management as political practice: Indian experiences with the accommodation of multiple interests. *International Journal of Agricultural Resources, Governance and Ecology, 1*(3-4), 243-263.

Benneker, C., & McCall, M. (2009). Are existing programs for community based forest management and conservation suitable REDD strategies? A case study from mexico. *EFTRN News, 50*, 1-8.

Blaikie P. 2001. Social nature and environmental policy in the South: views from verandah and veld. In: Castree N, Braun B, editors. *Social nature: theory, practice, and politics*. Oxford: Blackwell; p. 133–150.

Blaikie, P. (2008). Epilogue: Towards a future for political ecology that works. *Geoforum*, *39* (2), 765-772.

Bleaney, A., Vickers, B., & Peskett, L. (2009). REDD+ in Nepal: Putting community forestry at centre stage. *REDD Net, Bangkok*.

Blom, B., Sunderland, T., & Murdiyarso, D. (2010). Getting REDD to work locally: Lessons learned from integrated conservation and development projects. *Environmental Science & Policy, 13*(2), 164-172.

Bluffstone, R. (2013). Economics of REDD and community forestry. *Journal of Forest and Livelihood, 11*(2), 69-74.

Bluffstone, R., Robinson, E., & Guthiga, P. (2013). REDD+and community-controlled forests in low-income countries: Any hope for a linkage? *Ecological Economics, 87*, 43-52.

Bolin, A., Mustalahti, I., Boyd, E., & Paavola, J. (2012). Can REDD reconcile local priorities and needs with global mitigation benefits? Lessons from Angai forest, Tanzania. *Ecology and Society, 17*(1)

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education (pp. 241–258).

Boyd, E. (2009). Governing the clean development mechanism: Global rhetoric versus local realities in carbon sequwstration projects. *Environmentand Planning A , 41* (10), 2380-2395.

Boyd, E., May, P., Chang, M., & Veiga, F. C. (2007). Exploring socioeconomic impacts of forest based mitigation projects: Lessons from Brazil and Bolivia. *Environmental science & policy*, *10*(5), 419-433.

Bradbury-Jones, C. (2007). Enhancing rigour in qualitative health research: exploring subjectivity through Peshkin's I's. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *59*(3), 290-298.

Branney, P., & Yadav, K. P. (1998). Changes in community forests condition and management 1994–1998: analysis of information from the forest resource assessment study and socio-economic study in the Koshi Hills. *Nepal-UK Community Forestry Project Report G/NUKCFP/32, Kathmandu*.

Bray, D. B., Merino-Pérez, L., Negreros-Castillo, P., Segura-Warnholtz, G., Torres-Rojo, J. M., & Vester, H. F. (2003). Mexico's community-managed forests as a global model for sustainable landscapes. *Conservation Biology, 17*(3), 672-677.

Brenner, L. & Job, H. (2011). Challenges to Actor Oriented Environmental Governance: Examples from Three Mexican Biosphere Reserves. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*.

Brockhaus, M., Di Gregorio, M., & Carmenta, R. (2014). REDD policy networks: Exploring actors and power structures in an emerging policy domain. *Ecology and Society, 19*(4)

Brockhaus, M., Obidzinski, K., Dermawan, A., Laumonier, Y., & Luttrell, C. (2012). An overview of forest and land allocation policies in Indonesia: is the current framework sufficient to meet the needs of REDD+? *Forest policy and economics*, *18*, 30-37.

Brockington, D., & Duffy, R. (2010). Capitalism and conservation: the production and reproduction of biodiversity conservation. *Antipode*, *42*(3), 469-484.

Brown, D., Seymour, F., & Peskett, L. (2008). How do we achieve REDD+ co-benefits and avoid doing harm? In: A. Angelsen (ed.) *Moving ahead with REDD+: Issues, options and implications*, (pp.107-118). Bogor: CIFOR.

Brown, H. C. P., Smith, B., Sonwa, D. J., Somorin, O. A., & Nkem, J. (2011). Institutional perceptions of opportunities and challenges of REDD+ in the Congo basin. *Journal of Environment & Development, 20*(4), 381-404.

Bryant, R & Bailey, S. (1997) .*Third World Political Ecology*. New York: Routledge.

Bryant, R. L. (1992). Political ecology: an emerging research agenda in Third-World studies. *Political geography*, *11*(1), 12-36.

Buizer, M., Humphreys, D., & de Jong, W. (2014). Climate change and deforestation: The evolution of an intersecting policy domain. *Environmental Science & Policy, 35*, 1-11.

Bullock, S., Childs, M., & Picken, T. (2009). *A dangerous distraction: Why offsetting is failing the climate and people*. London: Friends of the Earth.

Bumpus A. G., & Cole J.C. (2010). How can the current CDM deliver sustainable development? *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change 1*(4), 541-547.

Büscher, B. (2013). *Transforming the frontier: peace parks and the politics of neoliberal conservation in Southern Africa*. Duke University Press.

Büscher, B., & Dressler, W. (2012). Commodity conservation: The restructuring of community conservation in South Africa and the Philippines. *Geoforum, 43*(3), 367-376.

Bushley B. R. (2010). Governance challenges of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in Nepal. *Reconsidering Development 1 (1).*

Bushley, B. R. (2014). REDD+ policy making in Nepal: toward state-centric, polycentric, or market-oriented governance? *Ecology and Society*, *19*(3).

Bushley, B. R., & Khatri, D. (2011). REDD: Reversing, reinforcing or reconfiguring decentralized forest governance in Nepal. *Forest Action,*

Cadman, T., & Maraseni, T. (2012). The governance of REDD+: an institutional analysis in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, *55*(5), 617-635.

Castree, N. (2010). Neoliberalism and the biophysical environment 2: Theorising the neoliberalisation of nature. *Geography Compass*, *4*(12), 1734-1746.

Chaliganti, R., & Müller, U. (2015). Policy Discourses and Environmental Rationalities Underpinning India's Biofuel Programme. *Environmental Policy and Governance*.

Chapagain, A. (2012). Forests can't survive without communities. Down to Earth. [Internet].[Cited 2013 January 30].Available from

Charnley, S., & Poe, M. R. (2007). Community forestry in theory and practice: Where are we now? *Annual Review of Anthropology, 36*, 301-336.

Chhatre, A., & Agrawal, A. (2009). Trade-offs and synergies between carbon storage and livelihood benefits from forest commons. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 106*(42), 17667-17670.

Christy, L. C. (2007). *Forest law and sustainable development: Addressing contemporary challenges through legal reform*. World Bank Publications.

Cochran, W. G. (1954). Some methods for strengthening the common X2 tests. *Biometrics, 10*, 417-451.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2013). *Research methods in education,* Routledge.

Corbera, E. (2012). Problematizing REDD+ as an experiment in payments for ecosystem services. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, *4*(6), 612-619.

Corbera, E., & Schroeder, H. (2011). Governing and implementing REDD+. *Environmental Science & Policy, 14*(2), 89-99.

Corbera, E., Estrada, M., & Brown, K. (2010). Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries: Revisiting the assumptions. *Climatic Change, 100*(3-4), 355-388.

Corbera, E., Kosoy, N., & Tuna, M. M. (2007). Equity implications of marketing ecosystem services in protected areas and rural communities: Case studies from Meso-America. *Global Environmental Change*, *17*(3), 365-380.

Cornwall, A. (2008). Unpacking 'Participation': models, meanings and practices. *Community Development Journal*, *43*(3), 269-283.

Costenbader, J. (2011). REDD+ benefit sharing: a comparative assessment of three national policy approaches. Forest Carbon Partnership Facility - UN REDD.

Cotula, L. & J. Mayers. (2009). Tenure in REDD – Start-point or Afterthought? Natural *Resource Issues* No. 15. London: IIED.

Crabtree, B., & Miller, W. (Eds.). (1999). *Doing qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into practice*, *39*(3), 124-130.

Davidsen, C (2010). Political Ecology. In: Barney Warf (ed.) Encyclopedia of Human Geography, p. 2209-2214. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks/CA

Daviet, F. (2011). A Draft Framework for Sharing Approaches for Better Multi-stakeholder Participation Practices. *Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and UN-REDD Programme*.

Daviet, F., Mabel, M., & Halverson, E. (2011). A draft framework for sharing approaches for better multi-stakeholder participation practices. *FCPF & UN-REDD*, *1*.

Davis, C., Daviet, F., Nakhooda, S., & Thualt, A. (2009). Getting Ready. *A Review of the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility Readiness Preparation Proposals*. WRI Working Paper. World Resources Institute, Washington DC. Retrieved from: http://www.wri.org/gfi.

De Konig R., Capistrano D., Yasmi Y. (2008). Forest related conflict: Impacts, links, and measures to mitigate. Washington D.C: Rights and Resources Initiative.

den Besten, J. W., Arts, B., & Verkooijen, P. (2014). The evolution of REDD: An analysis of discursive-institutional dynamics. *Environmental Science & Policy, 35*, 40-48.

Department of forest.(DOF).(2015). The community forestry database. Retrieved from http://dof.gov.np/image/data/Community_Forestry/Summary.pdf

Dermawan, A., Petkova, E., Sinaga, A., Muhajir, M., & Indriatmoko, Y. (2011). *Preventing the Risks of Corruption in REDD+ in Indonesia* (Vol. 80). CIFOR.

Di Gregorio, M., Brockhaus, M., Cronin, T., Muharrom, E., Mardiah, S., & Santoso, L. (2015). Deadlock or transformational change? Exploring public discourse on REDD across seven countries. *Global Environmental Politics*.

Doherty, E., & Schroeder, H. (2011). Forest tenure and multi-level governance in avoiding deforestation under REDD+. *Global Environmental Politics*, *11*(4), 66-88.

Dooley, K., Griffiths, T., Martone, F., & Ozinga, S. (2011). *Smoke and mirrors*. *A critical assessment of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility*. Forest Peoples Programme.

Drake, P., & Heath, L. (2010). Practitioner research at doctoral level: Developing coherent research methodologies. Routledge.

Dressler, W., & Roth, R. (2011). The good, the bad, and the contradictory: Neoliberal conservation governance in rural Southeast Asia. *World Development, 39*(5), 851-862.

Dressler, W., Buscher, B., Schoon, M., Brokington, D., Hayes, T., Kull, C. A., McCarthy, J., & Shrestha, K. (2010). From hope to crisis and back again? A critical history of the global CBNRM narrative. *Environmental Conservation, 37*, 5-15.

Dryzek, J. S. (2013). *The politics of the earth: Environmental discourses* Oxford University Press.

Eckholm, E. P. (1975). The deterioration of mountain environments. *Science*, *189*(4205), 764-770.

Edmonds, E. V. (2002). Government-initiated community resource management and local resource extraction from Nepal's forests. *Journal of Development Economics, 68*(1), 89-115.

Eliasch, J. (2008). *Climate change: financing global forests: the Eliasch review*. Earthscan.

Eppley K (2006) Defying insider-outsider categorization: one researcher's fluid and complicated positioning on the insider-outsider continuum. Forum: Qualitative Social Research 7(3): Article 16. Available at: www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/3-06/06-3-16-e.htm

Escobar, A. (1999). After nature: steps to an antiessentialist political ecology 1. *Current anthropology*, *40*(1), 1-30.

Escobar, A. (2008) *Territories of Differences: Place, Movements, Life, Redes*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research* Psychology Press.

Fairhead, J., Leach, M., & Scoones, I. (2012). Green Grabbing: a new appropriation of nature? *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *39*(2), 237-261.

FAO (2002). Land tenure and rural development. Land Tenure Study 3. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

FCPF (2013). FCPF Carbon Fund Methodological Framework. Retrieved from https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2014/MArch/March/FCPF%20Carbon%20Fund%20Methodological%20Framework%20Final%20Dec%2020%202013.pdf

FCPF (2013). FCPF Carbon Fund Methodological Framework. Retrieved from https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2014/MArch/March/FCPF%20Carbon%20Fund%20Methodological%20Framework%20Final%20Dec%2020%202013.pdf

Feagin, J.R., Orum, A.M., & Sjoberg G., (1991). *A case for the case study*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Fogel, C. (2004). The local, the global and the Kyoto Protocol. In E. P. Governance, S. Jasanoff, & M. L. Martello (Eds.), *Earthly Politics: Local and Global in Environmental Governance* (pp. 103-125). Cambridge: MIT Press.

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. (1994). Interviewing: The art of science. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln, *The handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 361-376). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Forsyth, T. (2003). *Critical political ecology: The politics of environmental science*. London and New York: Routlege.

Forsyth, T. (2009). Multilevel, multiactor governance in REDD. In *Realising REDD+: National Strategy and Policy Options,* eds. A. Angelsen, M. Brockhaus, M. Kanninen, E. Sills, W. Sunderlin and S. Wertz-Kanounnikoff, Bogor Indonesia: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR).

Fortwangler, C. (2007). Friends with money: Private support for a national park in the US virgin islands. *Conservation and Society, 5*(4), 504.

Fry, B. P. (2011). Community forest monitoring in REDD+: the 'M'in MRV?. Environmental Science & Policy, 14(2), 181-187.

Gautam, A. P. (2009). Equity and livelihoods in Nepal's community forestry. *International Journal of Social Forestry, 2*(2), 101-122.

Gautam, A. P., Shivakoti, G. P., & Webb, E. L. (2004). A review of forest policies, institutions, and changes in the resource condition in Nepal. *International forestry review*, *6*(2), 136-148.

Gautam, A. P., Webb, E. L., & Eiumnoh, A. (2002). GIS assessment of land Use/Land cover changes associated with community forestry implementation in the middle hills of Nepal. *Mountain Research and Development, 22*(1), 63-69.

Gilmour, D. (2016). *Forty years of community-based forestry: A review of its extent and effectiveness*. (No. FAO FORESTRY PAPER 176). Rome: FAO

Gilmour, D. A., & Fisher, R. J. (1991). *Villagers, forests and foresters: The philosophy, process and practice of community forestry in Nepal* (First ed.). Kathmandu, Nepal: Sahayogi Press.

Gilmour, D., Malla, Y., & Nurse, M. (2004). Linkages between community forestry and poverty. *Bangkok: Regional Community Forestry Center for Asia and the Pacific*.

Godden, L., & Tehan, M. (2016). REDD+: Climate justice and indigenous and local community rights in an era of climate disruption. *Journal of Energy & Natural Resources Law, 34*(1), 95-108. doi:10.1080/02646811.2016.1121620

Goers, L., Williams, A., Larsen, G., Lupberger, S., Daviet, F., & Davis, C. (2011). Getting ready with forest governance: A review of the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility readiness preparation proposals and the UN-REDD national programme documents. *Washington DC: World Resources Institute*.

GoN.(2008). Readiness Programme Idea Note (R-PIN) for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). Kathmandu: Government of Nepal / Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation.

GoN.(2010). Nepal's Readiness Preparation Proposal REDD 2010-2013. Kathmandu: Government of Nepal Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation.

Grandia, L. (2007). Between Bolivar and bureacracy: The mesoamerican biological corridor. *Conservation and Society, 5*, 478-503.

Greener, I. (2011). *Designing social research: A guide for the bewildered*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Griffiths, T. (2007). *Seeing 'RED'? 'Avoided deforestation' and the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities*. Forest Peoples Programme.

Griffiths, T. (2009). Seeing 'REDD'? Forests, climate change mitigation and the rights of indigenous peoples. Forest Peoples Program.

Grist, N. (2008). Positioning climate change in sustainable development discourse. *Journal of International Development, 20*(6), 783-803.

Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and "ethically important moments" in research. *Qualitative inquiry*, *10*(2), 261-280.

Gupta, A., Vijge, M. J., Turnhout, E., & Pistorius, T. (2014). Making REDD+ transparent: The politics of measuring, reporting and verification systems. *Transparency in Global Environmental Governance: Critical Perspectives*, 181.

Gupta, J. (2012). Glocal forest and REDD+ governance: Win–win or lose–lose? *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability, 4*(6), 620-627.

Guthman, J. (1997). Representing crisis: The theory of Himalayan environmental degradation and the project of development in post-rana Nepal. *Development and Change, 28*(1), 45-69.

Hajek, F., Ventresca, M. J., Scriven, J., & Castro, A. (2011). Regime-building for REDD+: Evidence from a cluster of local initiatives in south-eastern Peru. *Environmental Science & Policy, 14(2),* 201-215.

Hajer, M. (1993): Discourse Coalitions and the Institutionalization of Practice: The Case of Acid Rain in Great Britain. Page 43-67. In: Fischer, Frank/Forester, John (Editors): *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*. Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, USA.

Hajer, M. A. (1995). *The politics of environmental discourse: Ecological modernization and the policy process*. Clarendon Press Oxford.

Hajer, M., & Versteeg, W. (2005). A decade of discourse analysis of environmental politics: Achievements, challenges, perspectives. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning, 7*(3), 175-184.

Hajjar, R., McGrath, D. G., Kozak, R. A., & Innes, J. L. (2011). Framing community forestry challenges with a broader lens: Case studies from the Brazilian Amazon. *Journal of Environmental Management, 92*(9), 2159-2169.

Hall, R. (2008). REDD myths: A critical review of proposed mechanisms to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in Developing countries. Issue 114. Amsterdam: Friends of the Earth International.

Hamzeh, M. Z., & Oliver, K. (2010). Gaining research access into the lives of Muslim girls: Researchers negotiating muslimness, modesty, inshallah, and haram. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, *23*(2), 165-180.

Hansen, O. H., Langhelle, O., & Anderson, R. B. (2008). Framework and methodology: Regulation and discourse analysis as a research strategy. *Social Issues and Sustainable Development in the Arctic: Challenges for the Emerging Oil and Gas Industry,* Taylor and Francis, Routledge,

Hardin, G. (1968). The tragedy of the commons. *Science, 162*, 1243–1248.

Harvey D. (2003). *The new imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harvey, D. (2005). *NeoLiberalism: A brief history*. Oxford University Press.

Hoffman, A. J. (2011). The culture and discourse of climate skepticism. *Strategic Organization*, *9*(1), 77-84.

Horsburgh, D. (2003). Evaluation of qualitative research. *Journal of clinical nursing*, *12*(2), 307-312.

Huettner, M. (2012). Risks and opportunities of REDD+ implementation for environmental integrity and socio-economic compatibility. *Environmental science & policy*, *15*(1), 4-12.

Hufty, M., & Haakenstad, A. (2011). Reduced Emissions for Deforestation and Degradation: A critical review. *Consilience: The Journal of Sustainable Development,* 5(1), 1-24.

Hull, J., Ojha, H., & Paudel, K. P. (2010). Forest inventory in Nepal–technical power or social empowerment. *A.Lawrence, Taking Stock of Nature: Participatory Biodiversity Assessment for Policy, Planning and Practice,* 165-184.

Humphreys, D. (2006). *Logjam: Deforestation and the crisis of global governance*. London, UKéSterling, VA, USA: Earthscan.

Igoe, J., & Brockington, D. (2007). Neoliberal conservation: A brief introduction. *Conservation and Society, 5*(4), 432.

IPCC. (2006). Good practice guidance for national greenhouse gas inventories. Volume 4: Agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU). Geneva: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Iversen, V., Chhetry, B., Francis, P., Gurung, M., Kafle, G., Pain, A., & Seeley, J. (2006). High value forests, hidden economies and elite capture: Evidence from forest user groups in Nepal's Terai. *Ecological economics*, *58*(1), 93-107.

Ives, J. D. (1989). Deforestation in the Himalayas: the cause of increased flooding in Bangladesh and northern India? *Land Use Policy*, *6*(3), 187-193.

Jaung, W., & Bae, J. S. (2012). Evaluating socio-economic equity of REDD+ in a rights-based approach: rapid equity appraisal matrix. *Environmental Science & Policy*, *22*, 1-12.

Jones, S. (2006). A political ecology of wildlife conservation in Africa. *Review of African Political Economy*, *33*(109), 483-495.

Jumbe, C. B. L., & Angelsen, A. (2006). Do the poor benefit from devolution policies? Evidence from Malawi's forest co-management program. *Land Economics*, *82*(4), 562-581.

Kamberelis, G., & Dimitriadis, G. (2005). Focus groups: Strategic articulations of pedagogy, politics, and inquiry. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd edition, pp. 887-907). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kamberelis, G., & Dimitriadis, G. (2013). Focus groups: From structured interviews to collective conversations. Routledge.

Kandel, P. N. (2007). Effects of forest certification towards sustainable community forestry in Nepal. *Banko Janakari*, *17*(1), 11-16.

Kandel, P., Chapagain, P. S., Sharma, L. N., & Vetaas, O. R.(2016). Consumption patterns of fuelwood in rural households of Dolakha district, Nepal: Reflections from community forest user groups. *Small-Scale Forestry,* 1-15.

Kanel, K. R. (2004). Twenty-five years of Community Forestry: Contribution to Millennium Development Goals '. In *Twenty-five Years of Community Forestry*. *Proceedings of the Fourth National Workshop on Community Forestry* (pp. 4-6).

Kanel, K. R. (2006). Nepal's forest policies on community forestry development: The government perspective. In P. Gyamtsho, B. K. Singh, & G. Rasul (Ed.), *Capitalisation and sharing of experiences on the interaction between forest policies and land use patterns in Asia: Linking people with resources* P. 2, (pp. 35-52). Kathmandu: SDC and ICIMOD.

Kanel, K. R., & Dahal, G. R. (2008). Community forestry policy and its economic implications: An experience from Nepal. *International Journal of Social Forestry, 1*(2), 50-60.

Karky, B. S. (2008). The economics of reducing emissions from community managed forest in Nepal Himalaya. (Doctoral Dissertation) Centre for Clean Technology and Environmental Policy, University of Twente, Enschede, The Netherland.

Keenoy, T., Oswick, C., & Grant, D. (1997). Organizational discourses: Text and context. *Organization, 4*(2), 147-157.

Keller, R. (2011). The sociology of knowledge approach to discourse (SKAD). *Human Studies, 34*(1), 43-65.

Khadka, M., Karki, S., Karky, B. S., Kotru, R., & Darjee, K. B. (2014). Gender equality challenges to the REDD+ initiative in Nepal. *Mountain Research and Development*, *34*(3), 197-207.

Khatri, D. B. (2012). Is REDD+ redefining forest governance in Nepal. *Journal of Forest and Livelihood*, *10*(1), 74-87.

Khatri, D. B., & Paudel, N. S. (2013). *Is Nepal getting ready for REDD+? An assessment of REDD+ readiness process in Nepal*. Discussion Paper Series 12.2. Kathmandu: Forest Action Nepal.

Khatri, D.B., Pham, T. T., Di Gregorio, M., Karki, R., Paudel, N. S., Brockhaus, M., & Bhushal, R. (2016). REDD+ politics in the media: a case from Nepal. Climatic Change, 138(1-2), 309-323.

Klooster, D., & Masera, O. (2000). Community forest management in mexico: Carbon mitigation and biodiversity conservation through rural development. *Global Environmental Change, 10*(4), 259-272.

Knox, A., Caron, C., Goldstein, A., & Miner, J. (2010). The interface of land and natural resource tenure and climate change mitigation strategies: Challenges and options. In *Expert Meeting on Land Tenure Issues for Implementing Climate Change Mitigation Policies in the AFOLU Sectors*. FAO, Rome.

Koning, R. D., Capistrano, D., Yasmi, Y., & Cerutti, P. (2008). *Forest-related conflict: impacts, links and measures to mitigate*. Washington D.C: Rights and Resources Initiative.

Kumar, N. (2002). *The challenges of community participation in forest development in Nepal*. Operations Evaluation Department (OED), the World Bank, Washington, DC.

Larrazábal, A., McCall, M. K., Mwampamba, T. H., & Skutsch, M. (2012). The role of community carbon monitoring for REDD: A review of experiences. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability, 4*(6), 707-716.

Larson, A. M. (2011). Forest tenure reform in the age of climate change: Lessons for REDD+. *Global Environmental Change*, *21*(2), 540-549.

Larson, A. M., & Ribot, J. C. (2007). The poverty of forestry policy: Double standards on an uneven playing field. *Sustainability Science, 2*(2), 189-204.

Larson, A. M., Barry, D., & Dahal, G. R. (2010). New rights for forest-based communities? Understanding processes of forest tenure reform. *International Forestry Review*, *12*(1), 78-96.

Larson, A. M., Brockhaus, M., Sunderlin, W. D., Duchelle, A., Babon, A., Dokken, T., & Huynh, T. B. (2013). Land tenure and REDD+: The good, the bad and the ugly. *Global Environmental Change*, *23*(3), 678-689.

Lather, P. (1992). Critical frames in educational research: Feminist and post-structural perspectives.*Theory into Practice, 31* (2), 87-99.

Lawlor, K., Madeira, E. M., Blockhus, J., & Ganz, D. J. (2013). Community participation and benefits in REDD+: A review of initial outcomes and lessons. *Forests*, *4*(2), 296-318.

Leach, M., & Mearns, R. (1996). Environmental change and policy. *The Lie of the Land: Challenging Received Wisdom on the African Environment,* 440-475.

Leggett, M., & Lovell, H. (2012). Community perceptions of REDD+: a case study from Papua New Guinea. *Climate Policy*, *12*(1), 115-134.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry* (Vol. 75). Sage.

Litfin, K. (1994). *Ozone discourses: Science and politics in global environmental cooperation* Columbia University Press.

Livengood, E., & Dixon, A. (2009). REDD and the effort to limit global warming to 2 C: Implications for including REDD credits in the international carbon market. *Wellington, NZ: KEA*, *3*, 33.

Livesey, S. M. (2002). Global warming wars: Rhetorical and discourse analytic approaches to Exxon Mobil's corporate public discourse. *Journal of Business Communication*, *39*(1), 117-146.

Lyster, R. (2011). REDD+, transparency, participation and resource rights: the role of law. *Environmental science & policy*, *14*(2), 118-126.

Macintosh, A. (2012). The Australia clause and REDD: a cautionary tale. *Climatic Change*, *112*(2), 169-188.

Mack, N., Woodsong, C., MacQueen, K., Guest, G., & Namey, E. (2005).*Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide*. Family Health International. North Carolina, USA.

Mahanty, S., Fox, J., Nurse, M., Stephen, P., & McLees, L. (2006). Hanging in the balance: Equity in community-based natural resource management in Asia.

Mahanty, S., Mahanty, S., Guernier, J. & Yasmi, Y. (2009). A fair share? Sharing the benefits and costs of collaborative forest management. *The International Forestry Review, 11*(2), 268; 268-280; 280.

Mahanty, S., Suich, H., & Tacconi, L. (2013). Access and benefits in payments for environmental services and implications for REDD+: Lessons from seven PES schemes. *Land Use Policy*, *31*, 38-47.

Mahapatra, R. (2000). Community forest management: The Nepalese experience. *Down to Earth,* 30-47.

Malla, Y. (2001). Changing policies and the persistence of patron-client relations in nepal: Stakeholders' responses to changes in forest policies. *Environmental History,* , 287-307.

Maraseni, T., Neupane, P., Lopez-Casero, F., & Cadman, T. (2014). An assessment of the impacts of the REDD pilot project on community forests user groups (CFUGs) and their community forests in nepal. *Journal of Environmental Management, 136*, 37-46.

Martin, M. (2011). *Reforming forest tenure: Issues, principles and process*. FAO, Rome (Italy).

McAfee, K. (1999). Selling nature to save it? Biodiversity and green developmentalism. *Environment and planning D: society and space*, *17*(2), 133-154.

McAfee, K. (2012). Nature in the Market-World: Ecosystem services and inequality. *Development*, *55*(1), 25-33.

McAfee, K. (2012). The contradictory logic of global ecosystem services markets. *Development and Change, 43*(1), 105-131.

McAfee, K., & Shapiro, E. N. (2010). Payments for ecosystem services in Mexico: nature, neoliberalism, social movements, and the state. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *100*(3), 579-599.

McCarthy, J. (2005). Devolution of woods: Community forestry as hybrid neoliberalism. *Environment and Planning, 37*, 995-1014.

McCarthy, J., & Prudham, S. (2004). Neoliberal nature and the nature of neoliberalism. *Geoforum 35*, 275–283.

McDermott, C. L., Coad, L., Helfgott, A., & Schroeder, H. (2012). Operationalizing social safeguards in REDD+: actors, interests and ideas. *Environmental Science & Policy*, *21*, 63-72.

McDermott, M., & Schreckenberg, K. (2009). Equity in community forestry: Insights from north and south. *International Forestry Review, 11*(2), 157-170.

McGregor, A., Weaver, S., Challies, E., Howson, P., Astuti, R., & Haalboom, B. (2014). Practical critique: Bridging the gap between critical and practice-oriented REDD research communities. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint, 55*(3), 277-291.

McNally, R., Sage, N., & Holland, T. (2009). *Understanding REDD: Implications for Lao PDR, Nepal and Vietnam*. Kathmandu, Nepal: SNV.

Meinzen-Dick, R., Markelova, H., & Moore, K. (2010). The role of collective action and property rights in climate change strategies. *CAPRi Policy Brief*, *7*, 1-4.

Melo, I., Turnhout, E., & Arts, B. (2014). Integrating multiple benefits in market-based climate mitigation schemes: The case of the Climate, Community and Biodiversity certification scheme. *Environmental Science & Policy, 35,* 49-56.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). Qualitative research and case study applications in education. Revised and expanded from. Jossey-Bass Publishers, 350 Sansome St, San Francisco, CA 94104.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case studyapplications in eduction*. Sanfrancisco: Jossey-Bass.

MoFSC (2010). *Nepal's Readiness Preparation Proposal (RPP) for REDD*. Kathmandu: Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC), Government of Nepal.

MoFSC (2013). Mid Term Report: World Bank FCPF Grant on REDD Readiness. A Report submitted to The World Bank/ Forest Partnership Program(FCPF) by REDD Forestry and Climate Change Cell, Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation.

MoFSC (2014). REDD+ SESA and ESMF *Nepal REDD+ Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment*. REDD Forestry and Climate Change Cell, Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation.

MoFSC (2014). Emission Reductions Program Idea Note (ER-PIN). Kathmandu: Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC), Government of Nepal.

MoFSC (2014). Emission Reductions Program Idea Note (ER-PIN). Kathmandu: Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC), Government of Nepal.

Mulyani, M., & Jepson, P. (2013). REDD and forest governance in Indonesia: A multistakeholder study of perceived challenges and opportunities. *The Journal of Environment & Development, 22*(3), 261-283.

Mustalahti, I. & Rakotonarivo, O. S. (2014). REDD+ and empowered deliberative democracy: Learning from Tanzania. *World Development*, *59*, 199-211.

Mustalahti, I., & Tassa, D. T. (2012). Analysis of three crucial elements of REDD+ in participatory forest management. *Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research*, *27*(2), 200-209.

Mustalahti, I., Bolin, A., Boyd, E. & Paavola, J. (2012). Can REDD+ reconcile local priorities and needs with global mitigation benefits? Lessons from Angai Forest, Tanzania. *Ecol Soc*. 17:16.

Nagendra, H. (2007). Drivers of reforestation in human-dominated forests. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 104*(39) 15218-15223.

Nasi, R., Putz, F. E., Pacheco, P., Wunder, S., & Anta, S. (2011). Sustainable forest management and carbon in tropical Latin America: the case for REDD+. Forests, 2(1), 200-217.

National Planning Commission (NPC) (2007).Three Year Plan:2007/08-2009/10.National Planning commission, Nepal: December 2007.

National Planning Commission (NPC) (2010).Three Year Plan:2010/11-2012/13.National Planning commission, Nepal: July 2010.

Nayak, P. K., & Berkes, F. (2008). Politics of co-optation: Community forest management versus joint forest management in Orissa, India. *Environmental Management, 41*(5), 707-718.

Neupane, S., & Shreatha, K. K. (2012). Sustainable forest governance in a changing climate: Impacts of REDD program on the livelihood of poor communities in nepalese community forestry. *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development, 4*(1), 71-82.

Newton, P., Schaap, B., Fournier, M., Cornwall, M., Rosenbach, D. W., DeBoer, J., Agrawal, A. (2015). Community forest management and REDD +. *Forest Policy and Economics, 56*, 27-37.

Nielsen, T. D. (2014). The role of discourses in governing forests to combat climate change. *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics*, *14*(3), 265-280.

North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*. Cambridge university press.

Ojha, H. (2013). Counteracting hegemonic powers in the policy process: critical action research on Nepal's forest governance. *Critical Policy Studies*, *7*(3), 242-262.

Ojha, H. R. (2008). *Reframing governance: Understanding deliberative politics in Nepal's Terai forestry*. New Delhi, India: Adroit Publishers.

Ojha, H. R. (2014). Beyond the 'local community': the evolution of multi-scale politics in Nepal's community forestry regimes. *International Forestry Review*, *16*(3), 339-353.

Ojha, H. R., Banjade, M. R., Sunam, R. K., Bhattarai, B., Jana, S., Goutam, K. R., & Dhungana, S. (2014). Can authority change through deliberative politics?: Lessons from the four decades of participatory forest policy reform in nepal. *Forest Policy and Economics, 46*, 1-9.

Ojha, H. R., Cameron, J., & Kumar, C. (2009). Deliberation or symbolic violence? The governance of community forestry in Nepal. *Forest Policy and Economics*, *11*(5), 365-374.

Ojha, H., Timsina, N., & Khanal, D. (2007). How are forest policy decisions made in Nepal? Journal of Forest and Livelihood, 6(1), 1-16.

Okoh, A. I. S. (2015). Greenhouse gas reduction schemes and the re-colonization of nature in Africa. *Journal of Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Africa (JGGSDA)*, *2*(4).

Olander, L.P., Boyd, W., Lawlor, K., Madeira, E.M., & Niles, J.O. (2009). *International forest carbon and the climate change challenge: Issues and options*. Nicholas Institute Policy Brief. Duke University.

Osafo, Y. (2010). *REDD-net case study*. *A review of tree tenure and land rights in Ghana and their implications for carbon rights in a national REDD+ scheme*. REDD-net.

Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Padgett, D. K. (2008). *Qualitative methods in social work research* (Vol. 36). Sage.

Pagdee, A., Kim, Y. S., & Daugherty, P. J. (2006). What makes community forest management successful: a meta-study from community forests throughout the world. *Society and Natural Resources*, *19*(1), 33-52.

Pagiola, S. (2008). Payments for environmental services in Costa Rica. *Ecological economics*, *65*(4), 712-724.

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, 42*(5), 533-544.

Pandit, R., & Bevilacqua, E. (2011). Forest users and environmental impacts of community forestry in the hills of Nepal. *Forest Policy and Economics, 13*(5), 345-352.

Pascual, U., Phelps, J., Garmendia, E., Brown, K., Corbera, E., Martin, A., ... & Muradian, R. (2014). Social equity matters in payments for ecosystem services. *Bioscience*, biu146.

Pasgaard, M., Sun, Z., Müller, D., & Mertz, O. (2016). Challenges and opportunities for REDD+: A reality check from perspectives of effectiveness, efficiency and equity. Environmental Science & Policy, 63, 161-169.

Patel, T., Dhiaulhaq, A., Gritten, D., Yasmi, Y., De Bruyn, T., Paudel, N. S., ... & Suzuki, R. (2013). Predicting future conflict under REDD+ implementation. *Forests*, *4*(2), 343-363.

Paudel, D. (2016). Re-inventing the commons: Community forestry as accumulation without dispossession in Nepal. *The Journal of Peasant Studies,* 1-21. doi:10.1080/03066150.2015.1130700

Paudel, N. S., & Karki, R. (2014). *REDD+ readiness in Nepal: In search of effective stakeholder participation* (Vol. 74). CIFOR.

Paudel, N.S., Khatri, D.B., Khanal, D.R., & Karki, R. (2013). The context of REDD+ in Nepal: Drivers, agents and institutions. Occasional Paper 81. CIFOR, Bogor, Indonesia.

Peluso, N. L. (1992). *Rich forests, poor people: Resource control and resistance in Java*. University of California Press.

Peskett, L., & Brockhaus. M. (2009). When REDD+ goes national: a review of realities, opportunities and challenges. Pages 25-43 *in* A. Angelsen, M. Brockhaus, M. Kanninen, E. Sills, W. D. Sunderlin, and S. Wertz-Kanounnikoff, editors. *Realising REDD+: national strategy and policy options*. Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Bogor, Indonesia.

Peskett, L., & Brodnig, G. (2011). Carbon rights in REDD+: exploring the implications for poor and vulnerable people. *World Bank and REDD-net*.

Peskett, L., Huberman, D., Bowen-Jones, E., Edwards, G., & Brown, J. (2008). Making REDD work for the poor, poverty and environment partnership (PES) policy brief. *London: ODI*.

Petheram, L., & Campbell, B. M. (2010). Listening to locals on payments for environmental services. *Journal of Environmental Management, 91*(5), 1139-1149.

Petkova, E., Larson, A., & Pacheco, P. (2010). Forest governance, decentralization and REDD+ in Latin America. *Forests*, *1*(4), 250-254.

Pham, T. T., Di Gregorio, M., Carmenta, R., Brockhaus, M., & Le, D. N. (2014). The REDD+ policy arena in Vietnam: Participation of policy actors. *Ecology and Society*, *19*(2).

Pham, T. T., Di Gregorio, M., Karki, R., Paudel, N. S., Brockhaus, M., & Bhushal, R. (2016). REDD politics in the media: A case from Nepal. *Climatic Change,* 1-15.

Phelps, J., Friess, D. A., & Webb, E. L. (2010). Win-win REDD approaches belie carbon-biodiversity trade-offs. *Biological Conservation, 154*, 53; 53-60; 60.

Phelps, J., Webb, E. L., & Agrawal, A. (2010). Does REDD+ threaten to recentralize forest governance? *Science, 328* (5976), 312-313.

Pokorny, B., & Johnson, J. (2008). *Community forestry in the Amazon: The unsolved challenge of forests and the poor*. ODI London, UK.

Pokorny, B., Scholz, I., & de Jong, W. (2013). REDD+ for the poor or the poor for REDD+? About the limitations of environmental policies in the Amazon and the potential of achieving environmental goals through pro-poor policies. *Ecol. Soc, 18(3)*.

Poteete, A. R., & Ribot, J. C. (2011). Repertoires of domination: Decentralization as process in botswana and senegal. *World Development, 39*(3), 439-449.

Ribot, J. (2011). Seeing REDD for local democracy: A call for democracy standards. *Common Voices, 3*, 14-16.

Ribot, J. C., & Oyono, R. (2005). The politics of decentralization. *Toward a New Map of Africa*, 205-228.

Ribot, J. C., & Peluso, N. L. (2003). A theory of access. *Rural Sociology, 68*(2), 153-181.

Ribot, J. C., Agrawal, A., & Larson, A. M. (2006). Recentralizing while decentralizing: How national governments reappropriate forest resources. *World Development, 34*(11), 1864-1886.

Ribot, J., & Larson, A. (2012). Reducing REDD risks: Affirmative policy on an uneven playing field. *International Journal of the Commons, 6*(2)

Riege, A. M. (2003). Validity and reliability tests in case study research: A literature review with "hands-on" applications for each research phase. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, 6*(2), 75-86.

Rights and Resources Initiative. (2014).What future for reform? Progress and slowdown in forest tenure reform since 2002. *Rights and Resources Initiative, Washington, DC,*

Roe, E. M. (1991). Development narratives, or making the best of blueprint development. *World Development, 19*(4), 287-300.

Rowe, E. W. (2015). Locating international REDD+ power relations: Debating forests and trees in international climate negotiations. *Geoforum, 66,* 64-74.

Rutt, R. L., & Lund, J. F. (2014). What role for government? The promotion of civil society through forestry-related climate change interventions in post-conflict Nepal. *Public Administration and Development, 34*(5), 406-421. doi:10.1002/pad.1699

Saito-Jensen, M., Rutt, R. L., & Chhetri, B. B. K. (2014). Social and environmental tensions: Affirmative measures under REDD carbon payment initiatives in Nepal. *Human Ecology, 42*(5), 683-694.

Sandbrook, C., Nelson, F., Adams, W. M., & Agrawal, A. (2010). Carbon, forests and the REDD paradox. *Oryx*, *44*(03), 330-334.

Scharpf, F. W. (1997). *Games real actors play: Actor-centered institutionalism in policy research*. Westview Press.

Scharpf, F. W. (2000). Institutions in comparative policy research. *Comparative Political Studies*, *33*(6-7), 762-790.

Schmidt, V. A. (2001). Discourse and the legitimation of economic and social policy change in Europe. *Globalization and the European Political Economy,* 229-272.

Schroeder, H., & McDermott, C. (2014). Beyond carbon: enabling justice and equity in REDD+ across levels of governance. *Ecology and Society*, *19*(1), 31.

Schwandt, T.A. (1997). Qualitative inquiry: A dictionary of terms. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Seymour, F., & Angelsen, A. (2012). Summary and conclusions: REDD+ without regrets. In *Analysing REDD+: Challenges and choices*. Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Bogor, Indonesia.

Shapiro-Garza, E. (2013). Contesting the market-based nature of Mexico's national payments for ecosystem services programs: Four sites of articulation and hybridization. *Geoforum, 46*, 5-15.

Sherpa, P. D., & Rai, T. B. (2013). Experience of Nepali Indigenous Peoples on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). *Journal of Forest and Livelihood*, *11*(2), 82-86.

Shiva, V. (2000). *Tomorrow's biodiversity*. Thames & Hudson.

Shrestha, K. K., & McManus, P. (2008). The politics of community participation in natural resource management: Lessons from community forestry in Nepal. *Australian Forestry, 71*(2), 135-146.

Shrestha, K.K. (2016). *Dilemmas of justice: Collective action and equity in Nepal's community forestry*. Adroit Publishers, New Delhi, India.

Shrestha, S., Karky, B. S., & Karki, S. (2014). Case study report: REDD pilot project in community forests in three watersheds of Nepal. *Forests, 5*(10), 2425-2439.

Sikor, T., Stahl, J., Enters, T., Ribot, J. C., Singh, N., Sunderlin, W. D., & Wollenberg, L. (2010). REDD-plus, forest people's rights and nested climate governance. *Global Environmental Change, 20*(3), 423-425.

Skutsch, M. M., Karky, B. S., Rana, E. B., Kotru, R., Karki, S., Joshi, L.... & Joshi, G. (2012). Options for payment mechanisms under national REDD+ programmes. *ICIMOD Working Paper*, (2012/6).

Smith, J., & Scherr, S. J. (2002). *Forest carbon and local livelihoods: assessment of opportunities and policy recommendations* (No. CIFOR Occasional Paper no. 37, p. 45p).

Somorin, O. A., Visseren-Hamakers, I. J., Arts, B., Sonwa, D. J., & Tiani, A. M. (2014). REDD+ policy strategy in Cameroon: Actors, institutions and governance. *Environmental Science & Policy*, *35*, 87-97.

Stake, R. (2010). *Qualitative research: Studying how things work*. New York, NY, USA: Guilford Press.

Steinberg, M. K. (1998). Political ecology and cultural change: Impacts on swidden-fallow agroforestry practices among the Mopan Maya in southern Belize. The Professional Geographer, 50(4), 407-417.

Stern, N. H. (2007). *The economics of climate change: The stern review* Cambridge University press.

Sunam, R. K., Banjade, M. R., Paudel, N. S., & Khatri, D. B. (2010). Can bureaucratic control improve community forestry governance? An analysis of proposed Forest Act amendment. *Forestry Nepal*. *Discussion Paper Series*, *10*.

Sunam, R. K., Paudel, N. S., & Paudel, G. (2013). Community forestry and the threat of recentralization in Nepal: contesting the bureaucratic hegemony in policy process. *Society & Natural Resources*, *26*(12), 1407-1421.

Sunderlin W.D., Larson A.M., Cronkleton P. (2009). Forest tenure rights and REDD. *In:* Angelsen, A. (ed.). *Realising REDD+: National strategy and policy options*. CIFOR, Bogor, Indonesia.

Sunderlin, W. D., Ekaputri, A. D., Sills, E. O., Duchelle, A. E., Kweka, D., Diprose, R., ... & Torres, J. (2014). *The challenge of establishing REDD+ on the ground: Insights from 23 subnational initiatives in six countries* (Vol. 104). CIFOR.

Sunderlin, W. D., Hatcher, J., & Liddle, M. (2008). *From exclusion to ownership? Challenges and opportunities in advancing forest tenure reform*. Rights and Resources Initiative.

Tachibana, T., & Adhikari, S. (2009). Does community-based management improve natural resource condition? Evidence from the forests in Nepal. *Land Economics*, *85*(1), 107-131.

Thapa, G. B., & Weber, K. E. (1990). Actors and factors of deforestation in 'Tropical Asia'. *Environmental conservation*, *17*(01), 19-27.

Thompson, M. C., Baruah, M., & Carr, E. R. (2011). Seeing REDD+ as a project of environmental governance. *Environmental science & policy*, *14*(2), 100-110.

Thoms, C. A. (2008). Community control of resources and the challenge of improving local livelihoods: A critical examination of community forestry in Nepal. *Geoforum*, *39*(3), 1452-1465.

Toni, F. (2011). Decentralization and REDD+ in Brazil. *Forests*, *2*(1), 66-85.

UNFCCC (2011). The Cancun Agreements Dec 1/CP.16. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2011) pp. 1–31

UNFCCC (2013). Work programme on results-based finance to progress the full implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70 retrieved from: http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=24

UNFCCC (2014). Report of the Conference of the Parties on its nineteenth session, held in Warsaw from 11 to 23 November 2013. Retrieved from : http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=24

UN-REDD, F. (2012). *Guidelines on stakeholder engagement in REDD+ readiness with a focus on the participation of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities*. Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and the UN-REDD Programme.

UN-REDD. (2011). The UN-REDD Programme Strategy (2011-2015). United Nations REDD Programme.

Uprety, D.R., Luitel, H., & Bhandari, K. (2011). REDD+ and conflict: A case study of the REDD+ projects in Nepal. *Kathmandu: The Center for People and Forest and ForestAction Nepal*.

USAID Nepal. (2010). *Hariyo Ban (Green Forest) Program*. *Request for Application (RFA-367-11-000001)*. Program document issued in November 19, 2010.

Vaccaro, I. & Beltran, O. (2010). Conservationist governmental technologies in Western European Mountains: The unfinished transformations of the pyrenees. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 17 : 28-41.

van der Hoff, R., Rajão, R., Leroy, P., & Boezeman, D. (2015). The parallel materialization of REDD implementation discourses in Brazil. *Forest Policy and Economics, 55*, 37-45.

van Noordwijk, M., Purnomo, H., Peskett, L., & Setiono, B. (2008). Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) in Indonesia: options and challenges for fair and efficient payment distribution mechanisms. *Bulletin of World Agroforestry Centre: Bogor, Indonesia*, 29.

Vhugen D., Aguilar S., Peskett L., Miner J. (2012). REDD+ and Carbon Rights: Lessons from the Field. Property Rights and Resource Governance Project. Landesa, Seattle, WA: USAID.

Vijge, M. J. (2015). Competing discourses on REDD+: Global debates versus the first Indian REDD+ project. Forest Policy and Economics, 56, 38-47.

Vijge, M. J. (2016). *Carbonizing forest governance: analyzing the consequences of REDD+ for multilevel forest governance* (Doctoral dissertation, Wageningen University).

Vijge, M. J., & Gupta, A. (2014). Framing REDD+ in India: Carbonizing and centralizing Indian forest governance? *Environmental Science & Policy*, *38*, 17-27.

Vijge, M., Brockhaus, M., Di Gregorio, M., & Muharrom, E. (2016). Framing REDD in the national political arena: A comparative discourse analysis of Cameroon, Indonesia, Nepal, PNG, Vietnam, Peru and Tanzania. *Global Environmental Change*.

Visseren-Hamakers, I. J., Gupta, A., Herold, M., Peña-Claros, M., & Vijge, M. J. (2012). Will REDD+ work? The need for interdisciplinary research to address key challenges. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, *4*(6), 590-596.

Wagenaar, H. (2011). Meaning in action. *Interpretation and Dialogue in Policy Analysis.ME Sharp Inc, New York, 6*

Walpole, K. K., & Soriaga, R. (2009). Where is the future for cultures and forests? (Working Paper No. APFSOS II/WP/2009/23). Bangkok: United Nations Regional Office.

Watts, M., & Peet, R. (2004). Liberating political ecology. *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements, 2*, 3-43.

White, A., & Martin, A. (2002). *Who owns the world's forests? Forest tenure and public forests in transition*. Forest Trends or Washington DC: Forest Trends & Centre for International Environmental Law.

World Bank. (1979). Forestry in Nepal. Nepal Development Performance and Prospects. Washington DC: World Bank.

World Bank. (2007). Forest law and sustainable development. Washington (DC): World Bank.

World Resources Institute (Ed.). (2005).*The Wealth of the Poor: Managing Ecosystems to Fight Poverty*. World Resources Institute.

Wunder, S. (2005). *Payments for environmental services: some nuts and bolts* (No. CIFOR Occasional Paper no. 42, p. 24p).

Wunder, S., Engel, S., & Pagiola, S. (2008). Taking stock: A comparative analysis of payments for environmental services programs in developed and developing countries. *Ecological economics*, *65*(4), 834-852.

Yasmi, Y., Kelley, L., Murdiyarso, D., & Patel, T. (2012). The struggle over Asia's forests: An overview of forest conflict and potential implications for REDD+. *International Forestry Review*, *14*(1), 99-109.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods. Pages: Xxviii, 282 pages:* (5th ed.) SAGE Publications, Inc.

APPENDIX

Appendix I. Interview guide for CFUG members

Name: Name of CFUG:

Participatory Wellbeing Rank: Main Occupation:

Involvement in CF program: Years:

1. What are your family's major livelihood assets and strategies?
2. How do you see the changes in forest condition and forest supply in the community forests within last 20 years?
3. What are the causes of these major changes? Are there any changes in management system? What types of changes? How are these changes being occurred, internally evolved or externally imposed? Who are mostly heard? Who are most influential?
4. Have you heard about REDD and carbon trading? Have you ever participated any REDD related programs? How is carbon trading different from timber and non-timber trading? Are there any differences in forest management system after REDD especially in forest use right, forest ownership, decision making procedure?
5. What do you expect from REDD? Will it bring additional benefit or limit the existing benefit? Who will be benefited more from this reform?
6. Who makes the rule on REDD scheme at different level. How do the interests of local people incorporate in REDD negotiation/design? Have you ever participated in such decision making forums? What was your role? Who was the most influential in that forum?
7. Given the current scenario of REDD piloting, how do you see the prospect of local forest management within next 10 years?

Appendix II. Interview Guide for Policy Actors

Name: Position: Organization:

Scope of organization:

1. Major changes in forest policies within last 20+ years? Major actors in policy process? Changes in the role of the actors, changes in relationship of state (forest Department) with local communities?

2. Causes of policy shifts? Are they evolved from good practices from the field or influenced by global paradigm?

3. REDD Policy Process:

4. Who are the involved actors in REDD process? Why are they necessary to be involved? What are their roles in the process? What are the bases of choosing particular actors in the process? What are their communication mechanism with the people they represent?

5. Institutional Arrangement of REDD at different level:

   - At national level?
   - At sub-national level?
   - At local level?
   - Are all the relevant actors involved in the REDD process?
   - Is the representation of local community adequate in this process?
   - Which groups of actors sit together in these institutions and how do they exercise the power?
   - How were these representatives selected and how to ensure that they are accountable to the group they are accountable to the group they represented?
   - How is the dispute management mechanism at different level?

6. Your Organization's Role

- What is the interest of your organization on local forest resource s management?
- How active is your organization/ group in REDD process? What role is your organization is playing in REDD?
- Are you happy with your role / contribution in REDD process?
- Are you happy with the role / contribution by other actors in REDD process?

7. Community Forestry and REDD

- What are the global, national and local priorities of local forest management under REDD?
- Is existing Community Forestry policy and practice compatible with REDD scheme? What could be the (expected) major policy changes in CF program at national and local level (especially in governance system, tenure system, access and use rights of local people and benefit sharing mechanism)?
- Do you think REDD could reconcile local priorities and needs with global mitigation benefits?
- What could be the policy solutions to represent local priorities and needs in global REDD+ program?

8. Could you please give your opinion on the following controversial statements?

- REDD will strict access to forests for livelihoods and cultural practices
- Forests need to be protected but not commodified.
- REDD project forces subsistence communities into cash economy.
- REDD creates perverse incentives.
- Carbon offsets are a false solution to climate change.

Appendix III. Checklist for Focus Group Discussion

Issues of Resource Access

- Do your group have access to forest resources? Which group of people have access to certain types of forest resources and why? What factors hinder/ mediate access to particular resource by certain group?
- Issues of Local Resource Management
- Which resources and services are held as very important for your group and why?
- What kind of management system has been adapted for these resources and services?
- Are there any conflicts as a result of this system? What is the notion of degradation of resource and why?

Knowledge and Power

- Are the indigenous/ traditional knowledge and practices considered for policy making and conservation? Do members of this particular group have the ability to negotiate rights and entitlements and fulfill responsibility over resource governance? Who is involved in decision making regarding participation on resource conservation and extracting benefits from the forests? What types of powers/ resources are used by your group to challenge the decision of powerful actors?

Appendix IV. Certification of Institutional Ethics Approval

Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board
Research Services Office
3rd Floor MacKimmie Tower (MT 300)
2500 University Drive, NW
Calgary AB T2N 1N4
Telephone: (403) 220-4283
cfreb@ucalgary.ca

CERTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS APPROVAL

Ethics approval for the following research has been renewed by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) at the University of Calgary. The CFREB is constituted and operates in compliance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS 2).

Ethics ID:	REB13-0865_REN3
Principal Investigator:	Conny Davidsen
Co-Investigator(s):	There are no items to display
Student Co-Investigator(s):	Rishi Bastakoti
Study Title:	Global neoliberal agendas and local livelhood realities of carbon trade: whose interests, whose benefits in Nepal's community forestry governance?
Sponsor (if applicable):	Vanier

Effective: November 30, 2016 **Expires:** November 30, 2017

Restrictions:

This Certification is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described in the application.
2. Any modification to the approved research must be submitted to the CFREB for approval.
3. An annual application for renewal of ethics certification must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date.
4. A closure request must be sent to the CFREB when the research is complete or terminated.

Approved By:	**Date:**
John H. Ellard, PhD, Chair , CFREB	November 18, 2016

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system).

Appendix V. Copyright Permission I

From: Anderson, Lee-Ann
Sent: Monday, September 19, 2016 3:10 AM
To: Rishi Bastakoti
Subject: RE: Request for copyright permission to use in PhD Thesis

Our Ref: LA/TSDW/P8629

19 September 2016

Dear Rishi R. Bastakoti,

Material requested: Rishi R. Bastakoti & Conny Davidsen (2014) REDD+ and forest tenure security: concerns in Nepal's community forestry, International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology, 21:2, 168-180

Thank you for your correspondence requesting permission to reproduce the above mentioned material from our Journal in your printed thesis entitled 'Global Neoliberal Agendas and local livelihood realities of carbon trade: Whose interests, whose benefits in Nepal's community forest governance?' and to be posted in the university's repository - University of Calgary.

We will be pleased to grant permission on the sole condition that you acknowledge the original source of publication and insert a reference to the article on the Journals website: http://www.tandfonline.com

This is the authors accepted manuscript of an article published as the version of record in International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology © 24 Jan 2014 http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13504509.2013.879542

This permission does not cover any third party copyrighted work which may appear in the material requested.

Please note that this license does not allow you to post our content on any third party websites or repositories.

Thank you for your interest in our Journal.

Yours sincerely

Lee-Ann
Lee-Ann Anderson – Senior Permissions Executive, Journals
Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group
3 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN, UK.
Tel: +44 (0)20 7017 7932, Fax:+44 (0)20 7017 6336

Appendix VI. Copyright Permission II

www.forestaction.org/publications/jfl/183

ForestAction

HOME ABOUT US PUBLICATIONS PROGRAMS COLLABORATORS MEDIA GALLERY CONTACT US

JOURNAL OF FOREST AND LIVELIHOOD

Home / Publications / Journal of Forest and Livelihood

2015 - SPECIAL ISSUE ON REDD+. VOL 13(1)

Special issue on REDD+, 2015

Chief Editor: Naya Sharma Paudel
Managing Editor: Rahul Karki and Shweta Manandhar
Guest Editor: Harisharan Luintel
ISBN: 1684-0186

Like Share 2 Tweet G+1 0 Share

OPEN ACCESS

RECENT ISSUE

CALL FOR PAPERS New

Read more

JOURNAL INFORMATION

- Editorial Advisory Board
- Reviewers
- Guidelines
- Peer Review Policy

Cover

Bluffstone, R., Somanathan, E., Jha, P., Luintel, H., Bista, R., Toman, M., Paudel, N.S. and Adhikari, B. 2015.Collective Action and Carbon Sequestration in Nepal. *Journal of Forest and Livelihood*, 13(1):1-7.

Dissanayake S.T. M., Jha P., Adhikari, B., Bista, R., Bluffstone, R., Luintel, H., Martinsson, P., Paudel, N. S., Somanathan, E. and Toman, M. 2015. Community Managed Forest Groups and Preferences for REDD+ Contract Attributes: A Choice Experiment Survey of Communities in Nepal. *Journal of Forest and Livelihood*, 13(1): 8-19.

Sherpa, D.T. and Brower, A. 2015. Equity in Sharing the Potential Benefits of REDD+ in Nepal. Journal of Forest and Livelihood, 13(1): 20-29.

Bastakoti, R.R. and Davidsen, C. 2015. Nepal's REDD+ Readiness Preparation and Multi-Stakeholder Consultation Challenges. *Journal of Forest and Livelihood*, 13(1): 30-43.

Poudel, D.P. and Aase, T.H. 2015. Discourse analysis as a means to scrutinize REDD+: An Issue of Current Forest Management Debate of Nepal. *Journal of Forest and Livelihood*, 13(1): 44-55.

Bajracharya, R.M., Shrestha, H.L., Shakya, R. and Sitaula, B.K. 2015. Agro-forestry Systems as a Means to Achieve Carbon Co-benefits in Nepal. *Journal of Forest and Livelihood*,

PREVIOUS ISSUES

2016 - Special issue on Protected Areas and People. Vol 14(1)

Read more

2015 - Special issue on REDD+. Vol 13(1)
Special issue on REDD+, 2015

Read more

VIEW ALL