

## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

### **The Multiscalar Constructions of Climate Justice in REDD+ Policy Discourse A Case Study of the Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ Partnership**

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# **The Multiscalar Constructions of Climate Justice in REDD+ Policy Discourse: A Case Study of the Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ Partnership**



**By**

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**PhD**

**September 2017**

***A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's  
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy***

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Project Title:

The Representations of Climate Justice in REDD+ Policy on a Multiscalar level

This is to certify that the above named applicant has completed the Coventry University Ethical Approval process and their project has been confirmed and approved as Medium Risk

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## **Abstract**

Through a multiscalar, justice-led framework and a critical discourse analysis, this thesis assesses and examines the underlying (climate) justice norms present in the Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) partnership. Here, I explore the extent to which constructions of climate justice and wider conceptions of justice align or diverge across and between scales of REDD+ discourse, including the multilateral institutions, state actors, environmental NGOs and communities in South-west Ethiopia associated with the REDD+ partnership. In this thesis, I argue that REDD+ policy practices, strategies and preferences are underpinned and justified by fundamental norms and values. By empirically examining the REDD+ policy framework through a multiscalar and justice lens, which I operationalise through document analysis and in-depth interviews, this research responds to gaps in the extant literature on climate justice and contributes to debates on REDD+ and surrounding community-level challenges. The research also seeks to investigate the extent to which justice issues in REDD+ are (de)politicised in the policy discourse. Following an in-depth and critical analysis, the findings suggest that the REDD+ policy discourse is (i) primarily driven by the interests of the Global North, emerging through a cost-effective, carbon-centric and globalising narrative (ii) formulated as a top-down framework through an international-national political interface (iii) embedded within fundamental divergences in justice norms between policy and community actors (iv) disengaged with the fundamental, deeper issues of justice associated with international climate action and sustainable forest governance in the tropics, pertaining to socio-political, cultural and ethical dimensions. This research acts as an evidence basis for better understanding the climate justice implications of REDD+ and broader tropical forest governance strategies.

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## List of Acronyms/Abbreviations

**AFOLU**- Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use

**BCF**- Bio Carbon Fund

**CBDR**- Common but Differentiated Responsibilities

**CDA**- Critical Discourse Analysis

**CDM**- Clean Development Mechanism

**COP**- Conference of Parties

**CRGE**- Climate Resilient Green Economy

**EPRDF**- Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

**EWNRA**- Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association

**FAO**- Food and Agriculture Organisation

**FCPF**- Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

**FDRE**- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

**FIP**- Forest Investment Programme

**FOE**- Friends of the Earth

**GHGs**- Greenhouse gases

**GDR**- Greenhouse Development Rights

**INDCs**- Intended Nationally Determined Contributions

**IPCC**- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

**LULUCF**- Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry

**MoANR**- Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources

**MoE**- Ministry of Energy

**MoEFC**- Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change

**MRV**- Monitoring, Reporting and Verification

**NICFI**- Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative

**NGO**- Non-governmental Organisation

**NORAD-** Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

**ODA-** Overseas Development Aid

**PES-** Payment for Ecosystem Services

**PFM-** Participatory Forest Management

**REDD+-** Reduced Emissions for Deforestation and Forest Degradation

**RFN-** Rainforest Foundation Norway

**SESA-** Strategic Environmental and Social Assessments

**UN-** United Nations

**UNDP-** United Nations Development Programme

**UNEP-** United Nations Environment Programme

**UNFCCC-** United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

**UN-REDD-** The United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

*“...conflict is not between just and unjust solutions but between different conceptions of justice” (Harvey 1996: 398).*

### **1.1 Introduction to the Topic**

In this thesis, there is an exploration of the ways in which climate justice is discursively constructed in REDD+ policy on a multiscalar level. This engages with specific theorisations of climate justice and conceptions of justice more broadly. These are often idealistic and abstract in nature. Here, the aim is to improve understanding of how (climate) justice narratives and norms, formulated in scholarly literature, are represented in climate governance and climate change mitigation policies, using critical discourse analysis.

This research specifically examines the case study of the REDD+ partnership between Norway and Ethiopia through a justice lens. It makes use of a multiscalar framework in interrogating the REDD+ discourse in this context, whereby multiple actors on international, national and local levels of REDD+ governance are analysed. In doing so, this research is able to critically assess and examine the synergies and divergences in (climate) justice norms across and between scales of REDD+ governance and to better understand how these may explain conflicts in the design and implementation of REDD+ and how these may underpin existing REDD+ strategies and preferences.

To begin, this chapter contextualises the climate crisis, initially by summarising the existing scientific evidence for climate change and the unequal burdens of climate change. The emergence and development of the international climate regime is subsequently outlined, incorporating in-depth discussions of the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement and international carbon trading. Following this, there is an outline and discussion of the definition, historical emergence and significant components of the REDD+ policy framework. Subsequently, the climate justice framework for this research is introduced and explained. The section proceeds by outlining the gaps in the extant research on climate justice, REDD+ and depoliticisation, and the project's formulated research aims and objectives. Finally, the structure of the thesis is highlighted and mapped out.



## **1.2 Climate Change Scientific Evidence and Consensus**

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the primary international climate research body, defines climate change as “a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g. using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer” (IPCC 2013). However, this thesis makes use of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change’s (UNFCCC) definition, which distinguishes between ‘climate change’ as anthropogenic and ‘climate variability’ as encompassing naturally occurring climatic change; thus, climate change is defined as: “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods” (UNFCCC 2015).

Anthropogenic climate change refers to the emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs), including CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and nitrous oxide, that have risen as a result of human activity since the industrial revolution. There is broad consensus among climate scientists (97%) that increasing concentration of these emissions has led to an overall warming effect in the Earth’s atmosphere, which is likely to increase over the current century and beyond (Gupta 2014, Chakrabarty 2009). Since the IPCC’s first assessment report in 1990, the evidence for anthropogenic impact on climate systems has become increasingly compelling. In the latest assessment report, the IPCC (2013) states that, “human influence on the climate system is clear, and recent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are the highest in history. Recent climate changes have had widespread impacts on human and natural systems”.

Climatic warming is identified to be “unequivocal”, with the previous three decades being successively warmer than the previous, while evidence sustains that “the period from 1983 to 2012 was likely the warmest 30-year period of the last 1400 years in the Northern hemisphere” (IPCC 2013). Here, there is a clear identifiable link between this warming and an unprecedented concentration of GHGs in the upper atmosphere, as a driver of the climatic system: the IPCC (2013) observes that the GHG emissions “are extremely likely to have been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century”. Given the anthropogenic drivers of

climate change, the concept of the 'Anthropocene' has been put forward, which proposes that we have entered a new geological epoch (beyond the Holocene) in which humanity itself has become a global geophysical force in terms of climate change and earth system functioning since the industrial revolution (Steffen et al. 2011, Chakarabarty 2009, Collard, Dempsey and Sundberg 2014).

Based on scientific predictions, the IPCC (2013) estimate a "global mean surface temperature increase of 0.3°C-0.7 °C between 2016 and 2036". Although there is broad consensus over the anthropogenic driver of climate change, it is unclear how sensitive the Earth may be to the concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere and the specific effects that this may have on global temperatures and multiscale climates (Gupta 2014, Chakrabarty 2009). While exact timescales are unclear, scientific estimates predict that GHG emissions remain in the atmosphere for at least 100 years after having been produced. Thus, even if all global GHG emissions were to stop immediately, there would still be warming over the next century due to what has already been emitted.

However, the severity and extent of future climate change will be driven by the scale of present and future GHG emissions. The IPCC (2013) predict that if GHG emissions continue to rise, we may reach "tipping points". These describe non-linear, irreversible changes to the climate, which may include the weakening of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), due to the introduction of freshwater into the current system from melting Northern Hemisphere ice sheets (Gupta 2014). A disruption of this system could have impacts on local and regional climates worldwide, including a potential overall cooling effect in Northern Europe (IPCC 2013, Gardiner 2004). It is partly for this reason that Gardiner (2004) recommends the use of the more holistic, systemic term 'climate change' instead of 'global warming', which defines the crisis singularly as an issue of rising temperatures.

### **1.3 Unequal Distribution of Climate Burdens**

The IPCC (2014a) observes and predicts a number of impacts from climate change, on both natural and human systems (See Table 1.1 below). These impacts will not be geographically uniform, whereby the prevalence and severity of climate burdens are distributed unevenly across the globe (Samson et al. 2011). The most severe effects of climate change are generally predicted to be in the lower latitudes (IPCC

2014a, Samson et al. 2011). Notably, the IPCC projects: increased likelihood of drought frequency, food insecurities and water stress in sub-tropical regions; increased fluvial and coastal flooding in Asia; the loss of livelihoods and the large-scale displacement of populations in small-island states.

**Table 1.1 The Projected Impacts of Climate Change on Human and Natural Systems (IPCC 2014a)**

<u><b>Natural Systems</b></u>	<u><b>Human Systems</b></u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in the occurrence and severity of extreme weather events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undermining of food security (reduced crop yields and declines in fish populations)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A rise in global mean sea level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submergence of coastal and low-lying areas</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melting of the polar ice caps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compounded stress on water resources</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in coastal flooding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large-scale displacement of populations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in precipitation patterns (affecting the prevalence and severity of droughts and flooding)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased risks for human health (e.g. greater spread of malaria, increased heat-related illnesses)</li> </ul>

The geographical unevenness of climate vulnerability is partly driven by the make-up of the climatic system; it also arises from the instabilities, inequalities and poverty in regions of the Global South whereby people have less capacity to adapt to, and protect themselves from, changes to the climate system (IPCC 2014a, Samson et al. 2011, Giddens 2009). The impacts of climate change are likely to exacerbate currently existing stressors in developing countries: increasing food insecurity, greater instability and displacement of people, worsening human health and amplifying poverty risks. Thus, climate vulnerability is entangled with current, non-climatic factors, most pertinently multi-dimensional, socio-economic global inequalities (Sachs 2008, Gupta 2014).

#### **1.4 The International Climate Regime: From Rio to Paris**

As awareness of anthropogenic climate change grew, international and national policy bodies began to conceptualise solutions to address the climate crisis. The IPCC formed in 1988 to bring together leading scientific research on climate change as part of regularly produced reports, acting to support international climate policy and negotiations. The first significant step towards international collaboration and consensus on climate actions was the formation of the UNFCCC in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (Gupta 2014), an international environmental treaty designed to facilitate the generation of climate action and agreements among its 197 members. The stated objective of the convention is “to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system” (UNFCCC 2016).

Broadly, there are two main forms of climate action: ‘*climate change mitigation*’, interventions which attempt to limit the release of GHG emissions, as well as enhancing GHG sinks; and ‘*climate change adaptation*’, directives which aim to adjust natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climate change impacts, in order to reduce the potential severity of these (e.g. building sea walls) (Gupta 2014, Page 2016, Caney 2012). While the former can occur on multiple levels, the latter tends to be more localised in nature. It is broadly proposed that there needs to be a balance of mitigation and adaptation measures as part of an integrated approach to climate action (Moellendorf 2009, Caney 2009).

Since 1994, the parties (primarily national governments) who are signed up to the UNFCCC treaty meet annually at the Conference of Parties (COP), to assess current progress on climate action and to discuss the implementation of international climate change mitigation and adaptation mechanisms (Gupta 2014). The most significant of the early COP meetings was at Kyoto, which resulted in the formulation and adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 (later initiated in 2005). The Kyoto Protocol set globally-agreed, legally-binding GHG emissions reductions targets for Annex I countries (Okereke and Coventry 2016, Dooley and Gupta 2017).

In the UNFCCC’s climate regime, a distinction is made between the identified ‘developed’ countries (Annex I) and ‘developing’ countries (Non-Annex I), whereby the latter was initially exempt from meeting emissions reductions targets, as part of

the 'common but differentiated responsibility' (CBDR) principle (Okereke and Coventry 2016, Gupta 2014). The CBDR principle has played a key role in the development of international negotiations and agreements since the formation of the UNFCCC; however, its strict, non-flexible and non-dynamic duality has been critiqued by climate change scholars, e.g. insufficiently accounting for the role of 'emerging economies' in the climate debate (Maljean-Dubois 2016, Okereke and Coventry 2016).

The Kyoto Protocol comprised of two 'commitment periods'. The emissions reduction targets agreed for the first commitment period (2005-2012) were an average of 5% below 1990 levels; for the second commitment period (2013-2020), this increased to at least 18% below 1990 levels. The Kyoto Protocol allowed the Annex I countries to achieve these emissions reductions through their own national measures, but it does offer additional 'flexible mechanisms' which can aid the countries in meeting their targets. These are, primarily: International Carbon Trading, Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Joint Implementation (JI) (Savaresi 2016, Kill et al. 2010, Gupta 2014).

### **1.5 International Carbon Trading, the CDM and Offsetting**

These three mechanisms are ideologically aligned, forming part of an identified dominant market-based approach to climate change mitigation (Kill et al. 2010, Savaresi 2016). Market-based forms of climate governance are understood to achieve more flexible and cost-effective outcomes (Ervin 2012, Okereke and Coventry 2016). The flexible mechanisms were included in the Kyoto Protocol due to the influence of the Umbrella Group countries (US, Canada, Norway, Russia, Iceland), which has left a market-based legacy in subsequent climate change agreements and negotiations (Kill et al. 2010).

Emerging from the Kyoto Protocol, international carbon trading refers to the commoditisation of the atmosphere, or the parcelling up of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions into permits. Following the initiation of the Kyoto Protocol, each country was granted a number of permits, or credits, to emit CO<sub>2</sub>, which can be bought and sold on a regulated market (Savaresi 2016, Bachram 2004). International carbon trading has incorporated 'cap-and-trade', the idea that an absolute limit is set on aggregate emissions over a specified period of time by a national or international body (which

theoretically reduces over time), but within which participating entities can trade allocated permits (Savaresi 2016, Kill et al. 2010).

Additionally, it was agreed at the Kyoto negotiations that Annex I countries could meet their climate targets by 'offsetting' their GHG emissions reductions to Non-Annex I countries, through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) (Okereke and Coventry 2016, Bachram 2004, Ervine 2013). The CDM allows industrialised nations to purchase Certified Emission Reduction (CER) credits and thereby expand their emissions quotas, through funding the operationalisation of projects in the Global South, which aim to reduce local GHG-emitting activity, e.g. increasing energy efficiency of industrial sites, technology transfer (McAfee 2012, Savaresi 2016, Gupta 2014).

### **1.6 Post-Kyoto Climate Landscape**

Following the Cancun COP in 2010, a formal commitment has been made to restrict overall global warming to 2°C above pre-industrial levels by 2100. At the 2015 Paris negotiations, it was also proposed to "pursue efforts" to limit global increases in temperature to 1.5°C if possible (Dooley and Gupta 2017, Okereke and Coventry 2016). The 2°C temperature target acts as the long-term mitigation goal for international climate action and as the over-arching framework under which other targets are set (Dooley and Gupta 2017).

Since 2009, 'pledge-and-review' architecture has defined the new climate regime, referring to the unilateral, voluntary setting of emissions reductions targets by each country. In contrast to the Kyoto Protocol, which set top-down, multi-laterally negotiated, specific emissions reductions targets and timetables for parties, the 'pledge-and-review' system is a bottom-up approach in which affiliated parties of international climate negotiations decide on their own contribution to global climate action through Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) (Dooley and Gupta 2017, Savaresi 2016). Savaresi (2016: 187) notes that the 'pledge-and-review' architecture has now been "enshrined in treaty form" in the 2015 Paris Agreement (COP21).

The current post-Kyoto climate regime has been critically interrogated by a number of climate change scholars on three broad levels. Firstly, although it may offer

flexibility, the non-binding, voluntary nature of the patchwork ‘pledge-and-review’ architecture means that there is inherently little consistency or continuity between countries’ pledges and contributions (Okereke and Coventry 2016, Gupta 2014). Equally, there is a lack of accountability for countries not meeting their own proposed targets. In such a set-up, it remains difficult to ensure and monitor that countries are making commitments to GHG emissions reductions which are ambitious enough to meet the globally agreed 2°C target (Savaresi 2016, Maljean-Dubois 2016). Indeed, this issue is exemplified by the calculation that despite the level of ambition shown at the Paris negotiations, the aggregation of each country’s INDCs (if fully implemented) would lead to warming of between 2.7°C and 3.7°C (Okereke and Coventry 2016).

Secondly, a large ambition gap is proposed in international climate agreements, between the pledges that parties make and the actual, implemented climate action. While the Paris negotiations were praised for the levels of ambition shown, they lacked formal, concrete commitments (Okereke and Coventry 2016). Indeed, insufficient and unreliable recent financial flows highlight the ambition gap: notably, the disparity between the \$14bn of pledges for the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the \$4bn actually transferred into the funds (Okereke and Coventry 2016).

Thirdly, tensions continue to exist between different negotiating blocs of countries in international climate negotiations, which are often driven by national interests, rather than global concerns, limiting both the effectiveness and equity of outcome (Okereke and Coventry 2016, Gupta 2014, Roberts and Parks 2010). This has led to a proposed ‘impasse’ in the negotiations, broadly between the developed and the less developed countries, on how responsibility for climate change should be attributed to different parties (Okereke and Coventry 2016).

### **1.7 Negative Emissions and Land-based Sinks**

‘Negative emissions’ have been increasingly integrated into international climate change mitigation strategies and agreements. These refer to the removal of GHGs from the atmosphere, as opposed to the reduction in ‘pure’ GHG emissions (Karthi and Dooley 2016, Caney 2012). Negative emissions strategies include both technological and non-technological means. The generation of negative emissions

through technological development and deployment tends to form part of the 'geoengineering' discourse (Gupta 2014, Buck 2012). Most notably, 'carbon capture and store' and 'bioenergy' have been widely debated in scientific and policy discourse. As Anderson and Peters (2016) have noted, existing international strategies to meet the 2°C target, and associated Integrated Assessment Models, assume the future large-scale implementation of speculative negative emissions technologies, despite the economic or scientific viability of them being as yet unclear.

Meanwhile, at the forefront of non-technological negative emissions strategies in international climate change agreements and negotiations has been the removal and sequestration of GHGs through land-based sinks, primarily through reducing deforestation rates. In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the role of forests in stabilising the Earth's climate, unique in that they act as a source of GHG emissions as well as a land-based carbon sink (Dooley and Gupta 2017, Savaresi 2016). Its prominence in recent climate agreements has been driven by the proposed key role that Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) plays in climate change, which, according to the IPCC (2014), accounts for roughly a quarter (24%) of total anthropogenic GHG emissions. Around half of this is deemed to derive from land use change (i.e. LULUCF- Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry).

However, the accuracy and reliability of this figure has been contested by climate scientists. Indeed, through a more refined and comprehensive analysis of the data, Tubiello et al. (2015) asserted that AFOLU instead accounts for around 21% of global GHG emissions. Their analysis suggested that the emissions shares from AFOLU have declined over time since 1990 (10% in 2010 compared to 16% in 1990). Additionally, it was found that emissions from land use now comprise a lower proportion of total AFOLU emissions than in 1990. Notably, the analysis from Tubiello et al. (2015) indicated that deforestation was responsible for 8% of total anthropogenic emissions in 2010, compared to 17% in the 1990s.

It was at the Kyoto negotiations that land-based sinks were first formally integrated into the international climate regime. The inclusion of LULUCF in the Kyoto protocol was much contested and a compromise was ultimately reached in the form of the CDM (Dooley and Gupta 2017). The CDM included the implementation of reforestation and afforestation projects in the Global South in exchange for offsetting



‘credits’ to allow developed countries to meet their Kyoto targets (Pistorius 2012, Dooley and Gupta 2017). Part of the compromise incorporated a cap on the use of LULUCF by parties in meeting their climate targets and the exclusion of ‘avoided deforestation’ projects for perceived technical barriers (Krug 2018).

Although these projects had the potential to result in a ‘win-win’ by reducing global GHG emissions while simultaneously instigating sustainable development in the Global South, the CDM faced challenges in achieving either of these in practice. Indeed, a number of climate change scholars have critiqued the ability of the CDM to lead to actual or significant cuts in global GHG emissions, notably amid concerns over ‘additionality’, whereby the emissions-reducing activity from the projects may have taken place anyway (Ervine 2012, Kill et al. 2010). Alongside the technical barriers in calculating the contribution of offsetting projects to GHG emissions reductions, the CDM projects have generally been viewed as a bureaucratic ‘gaming’ of the system, in which funders selected the ‘low-hanging fruit’ (i.e. projects with low overall costs) that did not lead to significant GHG emissions reductions or sustainable development (Ervine 2013, Gupta 2014).

Nevertheless, the role of land-based sinks has increased in recent climate change negotiations and agreements (Krug 2018). In the Paris agreement, as Dooley and Gupta (2017: 13) propose, “...land-based sinks have moved from being a politically contested add-on to occupying center stage in the long-term mitigation goal”. Indeed, Article 4.1 of the Paris agreement explicitly states that the mitigation goals are to be achieved through a “balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks (UNFCCC 2015), as part of a focus on ‘net’ emissions (i.e. emissions minus removals).

As with negative emissions technologies, the mitigation targets set at the Paris COP assume significant land-based mitigation (Dooley and Gupta 2017, Krug 2018). Accordingly, concerns have been raised that land-based mitigation has the potential to postpone and divert attention away from ‘pure’ reductions in GHG emissions, given the assumed fungibility between removals of emissions from the land sector and industrial emissions (Dooley and Gupta 2017, Agrawal, Nepstad and Chhatre 2011). Aligned with broader critiques of offsetting, it has been argued that the reliance on negative emissions in achieving the 1.5°C and 2°C targets allows

weakened commitments to be made by parties in reducing domestic emissions (Anderson and Peters 2016).

The extent to which the expansion of terrestrial sinks can counter industrial emissions has been much contested, largely on the basis of technical barriers. Notably, there is a lack of permanence in storing carbon in land-based sinks that are vulnerable to a number of threats, including climate change itself (Kantha and Dooley 2017, Kill et al. 2010). Additionally, there is a risk of ‘carbon leakage’, whereby the carbon sequestered through afforestation, reforestation or avoided deforestation in one geographical area may be countered by increased deforestation activity elsewhere, resulting in no overall effect on GHG emissions (Angelsen 2008, Gupta 2014). In light of this, Krug (2018: 9) argues that, “LULUCF can at best contribute to emissions reductions but not facilitate climate neutrality”. Thus, a reliance on land-based mitigation, and negative emissions more broadly, has been viewed as a highly risky strategy in meeting the ambitions of the Paris agreement (Krug 2018, Dooley and Gupta 2016, Anderson and Peters 2016).

### **1.8 REDD+ and the Role of Deforestation in Climate Change Mitigation**

Out of the failures of the CDM, a new approach to integrating forests in international climate change mitigation strategies has prominently emerged in recent years: REDD+, or ‘Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation’, an international policy framework that aims to mitigate against climate change through reducing tropical deforestation and forest degradation levels, conserving and enhancing forest stocks and improving the sustainable management of forests (Angelsen 2012, Savaresi 2016, Corbera and Schroeder 2011). These processes are seen as integral to climate stabilisation, whereby tropical forests are made use of as ‘carbon sinks’ (Page 2016).

Since 2007, the REDD+ agenda has gained high-profile and significant momentum in the international policy community and is considered to be one of the essential components for effectively addressing climate change (Dooley and Kantha 2017). Unlike the CDM, REDD+ accounts for ‘avoided deforestation’ (Agrawal, Nepstad and Chhatre 2011, Pistorius 2012). Here, by reducing deforestation rates, climate change policy-makers and practitioners seek to curb GHG emissions from the forest sector while simultaneously expanding the space for carbon sequestration.

The pronouncement of REDD+ in the post-2012 climate regime has been driven by an assumed higher-end contribution of deforestation, particularly in the tropics, to global GHG emissions (Kantha and Dooley 2016). Indeed, much of the REDD+ debate continues to be based on the findings of the Stern Report (2007): that deforestation accounts for around 20% of global GHG emissions, despite this being much contested in more recent scientific evidence (Tubiello et al. 2015).

Aligning with a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) set-up, REDD+ works by rewarding and incentivising tropical-forested nations for verified reductions in deforestation and forest degradation levels below a given baseline and for conserving and enhancing their forest stocks (Angelsen 2016, Savaresi 2016, Corbera and Schroeder 2011). REDD+ was initially raised by the Coalition for Rainforest Nations in COP 11 in 2005 as a way of incorporating forests, and ‘avoided deforestation’ more specifically, into the global climate regime, but was not formally integrated into the UN’s climate regime until COP 13 in Bali in 2007 (Angelsen 2016, Agrawal, Nepstad and Chhatre 2011, Gupta 2014).

REDD+ acts as a voluntary and fragmented approach to international climate action that Savaresi (2016) suggests is “the first ripe fruit” in the ‘pledge-and-review’ architecture of the new climate regime. As detailed further in Chapter 2, REDD+ is an evolving assemblage, comprising of a diverse set of practices on multiple levels of governance. REDD+ funding structures are not globally unified and vary according to the specific agreements (Savaresi 2016, Dooley and Gupta 2017). Funds for REDD+ derive from both bilateral and multilateral sources. The bilateral funding is intended to be the primary funding channel, with the multi-lateral sources providing support to the implementation and development of national REDD+ strategies in tropical-forested countries. NGOs also play a not insignificant role in the implementation of local-level REDD+ projects (Gupta 2014, Angelsen 2016). There are three proposed phases to REDD+, by the UNFCCC (see Table 1.2 below). Most countries remain in the first or second phase, with funds being directed towards preparation for REDD+ interventions and the payments for verified emissions reductions that are expected to follow (Turnhout et al. 2017).

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**Table 1.2: The Three Phases of REDD+ (Angelsen 2016)**

Interest in REDD+ has been driven by an understanding that the initiative can offer synergistic social and environmental benefits in tropical-forested nations (Angelsen 2016, Pistorius 2012, Okereke and Dooley 2010). The REDD+ agenda has evolved and broadened in scope since its original conception. Notably, in a drive to ensure basic environmental and social protections in tropical-forested nations, a number of safeguards have been increasingly integrated into the REDD+ framework following the Cancun COP in 2010 (See Chapter 2 for a full discussion of these) (Agrawal, Nepstad and Chhatre 2011, Jagger et al. 2012). However, concerns have been raised in REDD+ scholarship that the initiative may have negative implications for the rights, needs and interests of marginalised forest-dependent communities, and the extent to which the ‘safeguards’ framework can adequately address these issues (Forsyth and Sikor 2014, Paladino 2011).

**Table 1.3: Timeline of the Key Events in International Climate Change Policy and Negotiations**

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Event</u></b>
<b>1988</b>	James Hansen’s scientific assessment that the current warming was anthropogenic in nature
<b>1988</b>	Establishment of the IPCC
<b>1992</b>	Formation of the UNFCCC at the UN conference on the Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro
<b>1997</b>	Agreement of the Kyoto Protocol

<b>2000</b>	Organisation of the first 'Climate Justice' summit
<b>2005</b>	Call for a funding mechanism to include 'avoided deforestation' raised by the Coalition for Rainforest Nations
<b>2007</b>	The formal integration of REDD+ into the UNFCCC agreement in Bali
<b>2009</b>	Climate justice-led protests against the UNFCCC negotiations at Copenhagen
<b>2010</b>	Formal commitment to restrict warming to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels at the COP in Cancun
<b>2010</b>	People's World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Cochabamba
<b>2015</b>	Signing of the Paris agreement

### **1.9 Climate Justice Framework**

In this thesis, a climate justice framework is used to examine REDD+ policy and its implications, on a multiscalar level. *Climate justice* is a concept that critically responds to the unequal, asymmetrical causes and burdens of climate change. A climate justice scholarship that has developed in recent decades recognises that climate vulnerabilities are not geographically uniform. Here, the most severe impacts of climate change are projected to occur in the Global South, despite having contributed least to climate change, while simultaneously, the highest GHG emitters are in the Global North and likely to be those least affected by future climate changes (IPCC 2014, Samson et al. 2011). Subsequently, the underlying basis for climate justice can be proposed: those least responsible for the identified causes of climate change and those least able to adapt to, and protect themselves from, its effects, are those who are most likely to be burdened with its worst impacts (Samson et al. 2011, Shue 1999).

A climate justice framework considers GHG emissions historically and on a per-capita basis. While emerging, middle-income economies are linked with rising aggregate GHG emissions, it remains the Global North which is responsible for the highest *per-capita* levels of GHG emissions. Indeed, Samson et al. (2011: 1) identified a negative correlation between national per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and national average CDVI (a vulnerability index): "...populations contributing the most to

greenhouse gas emissions on a per capita basis are unlikely to experience the worst impacts of climate change, satisfying the conditions for a 'moral hazard' in climate change policies".

This distributive disparity between the drivers of climate change and the severity of its impacts has been challenged on a moral basis by climate justice scholars since the early 1990s (Agarwal and Narain 1991, Roberts and Parks 2007, Caney 2010a, Shue 1999). There is an identified 'double inequity' here between responsibility and vulnerability, where the global poor is excluded from the majority of the benefits arising from environmental degradation, yet must share its burdens (Fussler 2010, Pogge 2004). Climate justice scholars highlight close linkages between climate change and poverty, whereby climate change acts to exacerbate, as well reflect, currently existing global inequalities (St. Clair 2010, Caney 2010b, Harris 2003).

The notion of climate justice has gained traction among NGOs and political activists, where campaigners argue for a fairer, more inclusive outcome and process in the COP negotiations (Burnham et al. 2013). In particular, climate justice-led activism was found in opposition to the lack of commitments made by powerful parties at the UNFCCC negotiations in Copenhagen in 2009 (Hicks and Fabricant 2016). In addition, the Bolivian government has been the state entity which has made the most explicit use of climate justice in the international climate change negotiations, as well as convening the 'World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth', in which an alternative institutional framework was proposed (Hicks and Fabricant 2016).

In scholarship, the use of a climate justice framework has enabled a moral and critical examination of the causes, effects and politically-led processes of climate change, in line with normative assertions from political philosophy. Climate justice scholars have highlighted the importance and urgency of equitably responding to the climate crisis (Klinsky et al. 2017, Sikor et al. 2014, Schlosberg and Carruthers 2010). In this thesis, the climate justice framework employed is multi-dimensional, in line with Schlosberg's (2004) conceptualisation, comprising of distributive, procedural and recognition elements of justice.

## **1.10 The Gaps in Current Research**

There are three key gaps which can be identified in the extant research on climate justice, REDD+ and (de)politicisation. Firstly, there is a need for an enhanced understanding of how notions of climate justice are constructed in climate change mitigation and adaptation policy discourses. While there has been significant theorisation of climate justice on an abstract level (e.g., “ideal” distribution of climate burdens), it has been less considered how such abstract concepts map onto currently existing climate change policy initiatives, such as REDD+. There is a need to better understand how climate justice ideals and norms underpin or justify policy discourse and practice (Okereke 2008, Sikor et al. 2014).

The dominant conceptions of (climate) justice in policy discourse has implications for the ways in which policy actions and outcome are configured, as well as highlighting whose interests are being served in the policy design. With notable exceptions (Di Gregorio et al. 2015, Sikor et al 2014, Okereke 2008, Okereke and Dooley 2010), there is a dearth of empirical analysis that has extrapolated the underlying norms of climate change governance. In addition, existing research has tended not to make use of a specific climate justice framework.

Given that particular justice dilemmas emanate from the protection and conservation of tropical forests, as an international climate change mitigation strategy, there is urgency to better understand REDD+ through a justice lens. With notable exceptions (Page 2016, Armstrong 2016), current REDD+ policy analyses have lacked specific engagement with a climate justice theoretical framework. This research builds upon previous justice-centric analyses of REDD+ and international forest conservation initiatives (Okereke and Dooley 2010, Page 2016).

Secondly, there is currently insufficient research which engages with climate justice on a *multiscalar* level, whereby the international, national and sub-national levels have thus far been examined in isolation. There exists a disconnect between the implicated scales of (climate) justice in extant literature. It is proposed to be vital to enhance understanding of the interrelations between the micro, meso and macro-scales of climate justice (Sikor, et al. 2014, Barrett 2013, Edwards, Reid and Hunter 2015). With REDD+, existing analyses have not generally understood community-level issues in relation to broader contexts and structures. A multiscalar analysis of

REDD+ is necessary given its fundamental structure, which interconnects actors on multiple levels of governance (Korhonen-Kurki et al. 2012, Schroeder and McDermott 2014).

Accordingly, a number of researchers have highlighted the need for a more sophisticated and scalar understanding of climate justice (Barrett 2013, Burnham et al. 2013, Schlosberg 2004). Notably, Barrett (2013) calls for a refined, scalar analysis of climate justice which would explore the commonalities and divergences across and between scales of climate governance. Without knowledge of scalar interaction, Barrett (2013) suggests that climate justice research would be partial and limited. The multiscalar analysis of climate justice in this research is concerned with how justice norms align and diverge across and between scales of governance, how these are constructed in the policy and community discourses and how these may underpin, support and justify current REDD+ policy directives.

Thirdly, there is a dearth of research which examines the (de)politicisation of climate justice in policy discourse. Depoliticisation as a concept has been well-theorised and discussed in relation to the international climate regime (Swyngedouw 2010, De Goede and Randalls 2009, Berglez and Olausson 2013). Such research has tended to focus on the extent to which the ideological or systemic factors at the root of the climate crisis are masked and rendered technical by policy actors. This has tended to be almost entirely abstract or theoretical in nature, with a notable lack of empirical analyses of depoliticisation in climate governance research.

More pertinently, depoliticisation has yet to be explored in relation to climate justice specifically. This would consider the extent to which debates surrounding climate justice may or may not be depoliticised in the policy discourse. The concepts of 'climate justice' and 'depoliticisation' have largely been considered in isolation thus far in scholarship. Although some scholars have engaged with the ways in which the distribution of climate burdens has been depoliticised in policy discourse (Berglez and Olausson 2013, St. Clair 2010), these did not make specific, explicit use of a climate justice framework.



### **1.11 Aim and Research Questions**

Drawing from gaps in the extant research on REDD+, climate justice and depoliticisation, the following aim and research questions were formulated:

**Aim:** To critically assess and evaluate the discursive constructions of climate justice in REDD+ policy on a multiscale level and the implications of this for current and future REDD+ policy practices.

**Research Question 1:** How is climate justice constructed in the REDD+ policy discourse and what implications does this have for current and future REDD+ practices?

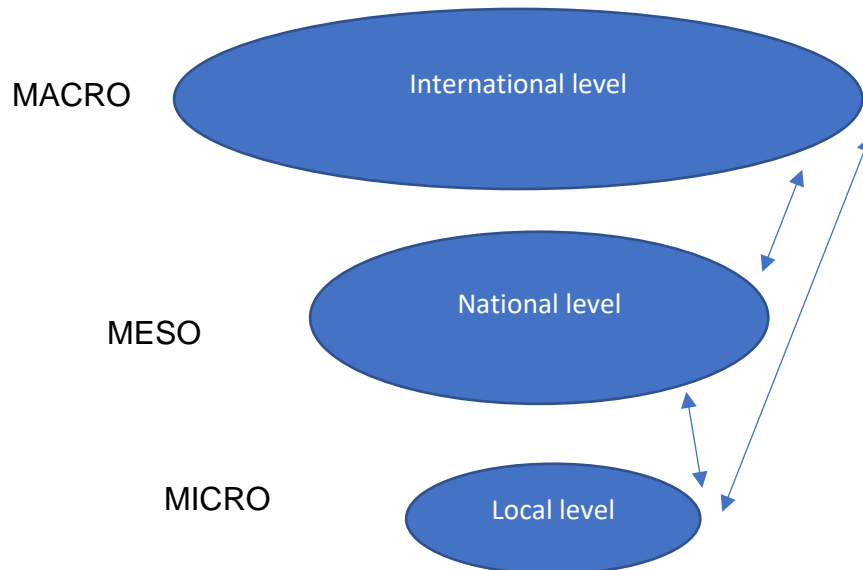
In this thesis, there is an examination of the ways in which notions of climate justice are constructed in REDD+ policy discourse on a multiscale level. Responding to the gap in extant research, this research carries out an empirical analysis of the climate justice norms present in the REDD+ policy discourse. Through a critical discourse analysis, I seek to examine and extrapolate the climate justice notions and narratives which underpin or justify REDD+ policy strategies and preferences and how these notions may align or diverge across scales of REDD+ governance. More specifically, this research aims to build upon previous analyses conducted by Okereke (2008).

**Research Question 2:** How are wider conceptions of justice constructed in the REDD+ policy discourse and what implications does this have for current and future REDD+ practices?

This research seeks to investigate the wider conceptions of justice (e.g. utilitarianism, libertarianism) present in REDD+ discourse. As with the first research question, the aim is to examine and extrapolate the underlying justice norms which justify, underpin and support current REDD+ policy directives. Here, I am interested in better understanding how the justice norms are constructed in the REDD+ policy discourse, how these may synergise and diverge across and between multiple scales and actors, including with those at the community level, and what implications these may have for current and future REDD+ practices.

**Research Question 3:** How do the identified (climate) justice constructions in REDD+ policy discourse synergise and diverge across and between multiple scales and actors?

Responding to Barrett's (2013) call, this research puts forward a specifically multiscalar analysis of REDD+. While there is not a specific chapter which addresses this objective, the analysis engages throughout with a multiscalar approach. Through a multiscalar analytical framework (see Figure 1.4), I seek to critically assess and examine the synergies and divergences across and between the multiple scales of climate justice in the REDD+ discourse. Considering justice to be intractably plural in nature (Martin et al. 2014, Schlosberg 2004, Sen 1999), this research is concerned with the dominant and marginalised (climate) justice norms in the REDD+ discourse, notably the extent to which the policy-makers' conceptions of justice align with the community-level norms, building on extant research (Sikor et al. 2014, Okereke and Dooley 2010).



**Figure 1.1: A Multiscalar analysis of climate justice**

**Research Question 4:** To what extent, and how, are the constructions of climate justice, and the debates surrounding them, de-politicised in the REDD+ policy discourse?

This research questions seeks to assess and examine the extent to which debates surrounding climate justice are depoliticised in the policy discourse and the extent to which the fundamental politics at the heart of justice concerns in REDD+. Building upon previous theorisations of depoliticisation and rendering technical in the sphere of climate governance, it aims to empirically and critically interrogate techniques of depoliticisation in the REDD+ policy discourse through a justice lens.

### **1.12 Thesis Structure**

To begin, in Chapter 2, a comprehensive literature review is conducted in the relevant research areas, whereby the key trends, insights and associated gaps in the extant literature are outlined and assessed. This is divided into four broad areas of concern. Firstly, there is an outline of the primary broader conceptions of justice which emanate from political philosophy and the debates surrounding these. Secondly, there is an in-depth discussion of the theoretical and abstract conceptualisations of climate justice that have arisen since the early 1990s. These two sections aim to provide a theoretical grounding for the analytical chapters that follow. Thirdly, there is an assessment and examination of extant research on REDD+. Fourthly, the concept of ‘depoliticisation’ is outlined and critically discussed in relation to climate governance.

Chapter 3 outlines the project’s methodological framework. Here, there is a theoretical justification for the use of critical discourse analysis as the project’s primary methodological tool and an outline of how it is used in this research. This seeks to build upon Okereke’s justice-led discourse analysis of climate change policy texts. Following this, there is a detailed discussion of the case study approach that is adopted in this research, as well as the data collection (in-depth interviews and document analysis) and analytical techniques used. In this chapter, I also reflect critically on my methodological commitments and the fieldwork I encountered.

In Chapter 4, I introduce the case study of this research: the Norwegian REDD+ partnership with Ethiopia. Given the multiscalar nature of the research enquiries, it is

necessary to outline and contextualise the multiple actors on multiple scales of governance that are implicated in the Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ partnership and their interconnections with one another. Primarily, these are: the Norwegian and Ethiopian governmental bodies, the World Bank and the UN, Norwegian and Ethiopian environmental NGOs and the forest-dependent communities which are affected by, and involved in, the project-level REDD+ activity in Ethiopia.

Chapter 5 is the first of the three analytical chapters. Responding to the project's first research question ('How is climate justice constructed in the REDD+ discourse and what implications does this have for current and future REDD+ practices?'), this chapter seeks to empirically and critically examine the constructions of climate justice norms in the multiscale REDD+ discourse and how these may underpin or justify REDD+ policy strategies and preferences. Notably, it considers the ways in which these constructions may align or diverge across and between the multiple actors existing on multiple scales which are implicated in the Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ partnership.

In Chapter 6, there is a critical assessment and examination of the broader conceptions of justice that are present in the REDD+ discourse across policy and community actors. Here, there is an in-depth analysis of the extent to which the community-level justice norms align with the policy-makers conceptions of justice, of the continuities and discontinuities across and between scales of REDD+. The emergence of a 'utilitarian-neoliberal' nexus at the policy level of REDD+ is proposed, existing alongside, and in contention with, the dominance of egalitarian norms at the community level in Ethiopia.

Chapter 7 assesses and examines the extent to which (climate) justice concerns are depoliticised or rendered technical in the policy discourse, responding to the fourth research question. Building upon previous theories of depoliticisation, this chapter empirically interrogates 'anti-politics' practices and techniques of depoliticisation in REDD+ through a justice lens. This includes an exploration of the Safeguards Framework and the ways in which fundamental political debates surrounding these issues of justice are masked or side-lined in the REDD+ policy sphere.

In Chapter 8, I critically reflect on the usefulness, strengths and value of the multiscale framework adopted in this thesis, considering what it has offered in the

context of a justice-led examination of REDD+ as well as its limitations.

Subsequently, I outline and discuss the key findings that emerged in the research across the three analysis chapters. I suggest that four main themes were dominant in the discourse analysis: (i) *A Formulation of REDD+ in the Interests of the Global North* (ii) *A Top-down, Statist REDD+ Framework and Limited Actual and Significant Community Participation* (iii) *Fundamental Divergences in Justice Norms Between Policy and Community Actors* (iv) *REDD+ Policy Disengagement with Fundamental Issues of Justice and Depoliticisation*.

Finally, in Chapter 9, I draw conclusions on the key messages and contributions from the research, as well as suggesting future research to explore and offering targeted policy recommendations. This includes the following: (i) a summary of the key findings that emerged from this research (ii) suggestions for future research on REDD+ through a multiscale and justice-led framework (iii) specific and targeted recommendations for the REDD+ policy-makers based on the findings of this research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the extant literature in the four relevant areas of concern for the inquiries of this research. Firstly, there is an outline of the main conceptions of justice which have emerged from political philosophy; these compete with and exist alongside one another. Secondly, there is an in-depth discussion of specific climate justice theories which have emerged since the early 1990s. Thirdly, there is an assessment of research which has specifically focused on REDD+ and deforestation policies thus far. Fourthly, the concept of ‘depoliticisation’ is defined and discussed, in specific relation to climate governance.

### **2.2 Wider Conceptions of Justice**

Justice is a non-absolute, multifarious notion, with a rich and diverse literature existing on the multiple conceptions of justice, particularly emanating from political philosophy (Kymlicka 2002, Okereke 2008). Indeed, there are numerous, varied ways of theorising justice, which are driven by one’s ‘world view’ (Clayton 1998). Policy-making is significantly influenced or governed by underlying justice norms. Okereke (2008) proposes that justice is a contested space in policy regimes, and what is important is to explore why and how particular conceptions of justice dominate a specific policy, while others are marginalised.

In the political philosophy literature, two broad approaches to reasoning about justice can be identified: *transcendental institutionalism* and *comparative approaches*. Transcendental institutionalism focuses its efforts upon establishing the nature of a perfectly just society. Philosophers who make use of such an approach therefore direct their enquiry towards identifying the components which are necessary for building such a society. Transcendental institutionalism is indicated to be the dominant approach in reasoning about justice in modern political philosophy, primarily due to the influence of John Rawls (1999).

In contrast, comparative approaches, favoured by philosophers such as Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill (1863) and latterly by Amartya Sen (1999), are driven not by a search for a perfectly just society, but instead by a desire to improve current societal conditions. These philosophers compare levels of justice and injustice across and

between societies that already exist or could feasibly emerge. The aim is to identify ways in which justices could be advanced and injustices could be combatted. Those favouring the comparative approach, such as Amartya Sen (1999), are concerned less with the fairness of institutions, but instead in how the institutional set-ups result in actual behaviours, experiences and social realisations.

Based on an assessment and examination of wide-ranging literature, a number of key conceptions of justice emerged: *Utilitarianism*, *Libertarianism*, *Justice as ‘mutual advantage’*, *‘Neoliberal Conceptions of Justice’*, *Egalitarianism*, *John Rawls’s form of Liberal Egalitarianism*, and *Amartya Sen’s Capabilities Approach*. Each of these is outlined and detailed below in the ‘Justice Framework’ that guides the analysis carried out in Chapter 6.

<b>Table 2.1: Justice Framework</b>	
<b><i>Utilitarianism</i></b>	A consequentialist form of justice devoted to maximising overall ‘utility’ in society (most notably conceptualised in terms of ‘overall happiness’). The maximisation of utility can be considered at various scales: global, national, institutional. It is concerned with the end result of an action, over and above its processes or history (Okereke 2008, Sen 1999). For utilitarians, policy is to be designed based on attaining the ‘greater good’ in society, i.e. the maximum happiness among the greatest number of people. Utilitarianism was originally seen to counter moral elitism; however, there are clear issues in defining what is ‘utility’ and whose interests the definition serves (Kymlicka 2002). Additionally, in aggregating overall ‘utility’, individual rights are necessarily sacrificed (Okereke 2008, Sandel 2009, Rawls 1999).
<b><i>Libertarianism</i></b>	Underpinned by Nozick’s (1974) theory of ‘entitlement’, it places individual liberty as the cornerstone of justice. Libertarianism would strongly contest utilitarianism for this reason; anything which attacks individual liberty is potentially an act of injustice (Varden 2011, Okereke 2008). Libertarians value freedom in all things, including in the market, over and above all other socio-political ideals. They would suggest that

	<p>people are entitled to wealth they generate as products of their labour and that anything which intervenes in this process (i.e. wealth redistribution) acts as a form of injustice (McAfee 2014). From a libertarian point of view, there is a just distribution of goods in society if everyone has legally and fairly acquired these, as part of a process-oriented conception of justice (Nozick 1974, Sandel 2009). Libertarianism is therefore put into direct conflict with egalitarianism, although the former encompasses a diverse range of views and there are those who would support wealth redistribution under certain conditions (e.g. Otsuka 2003).</p>
<i>Justice as ‘Mutual Advantage’</i>	<p>Originating in the work of Hobbes, it encompasses the idea that justice should be conceptualized based on agreements that have positive benefits for both parties (Okereke 2008). The theory posits that the world is in a state of perpetual anarchic conflict and that political actors are driven by national interests (Gupta 2014, Caney 2005). Here, there are no exterior, global moral imperatives for states, but rather the objective of international co-operation is to make gains relative to other states (Okereke 2008, Caney 2005). The implication is that justice should be conceptualised based on agreements that have positive benefits for both parties, as part of an agreed institutional framework (Sen 1999, Gauthier 1986). As with libertarianism, justice as ‘mutual advantage’ argues against wealth re-distribution and obligations to aid the economically disadvantaged (Okereke 2008).</p>
<i>‘Neoliberal Conceptions of Justice’</i>	<p>Okereke (2008) proposes that a combination of libertarian justice and justice as ‘mutual advantage’ collectively produces ‘neoliberal conceptions of justice’. The two can be understood as having similar philosophical bases (e.g. in their rejection of wealth re-distribution), as well as aligning with the growth of neoliberal governance and free market ideology in recent decades (Okereke 2008, Dryzek 1997).</p> <p>Neoliberal conceptions of justice value the primacy of the market in determining just and equitable outcomes. While the</p>



	<p>end-results of market processes may not be equal, they would be <i>fair</i> (Nozick 1974). However, the fairness of the free market has been challenged in critical climate governance scholarship, not least its proposed inherent conflict with the egalitarian aspirations of sustainable development (Okereke 2008, Woodward 2015). It is proposed that market-mediated conceptions of justice will inevitably lead to the strengthening of some and the weakening or marginalisation of others (Forsyth and Sikor 2013).</p>
<b><i>Egalitarianism</i></b>	<p>A justice norm which broadly seeks to ensure that the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable in society are met. However, there are multiple forms of egalitarianism that determines how this is specifically done: <i>pure egalitarianism</i>, <i>sufficientarianism</i> and <i>prioritarianism</i> (Crisp 2003, Meyer and Roser 2006). While pure egalitarianism values the reduction of the inequality gap in its own right, regardless of other consequences, the other two forms of egalitarianism more specifically give precedence to those below an attributed poverty threshold (Armstrong 2016). Thus, for theorists of sufficientarianism and prioritarianism, what is of significance is the eradication of poverty in and of itself, for absolute, rather than relative reasons (Crisp 2003, Frankfurt 1987). This highlights the continuing debate between minimalist and egalitarian justice theorists (Armstrong 2015). In contrast to sufficientarianism, the prioritisation of the poorest in society is not decided according to a morally arbitrary threshold, but instead is based on a continuum (Meyer and Roser 2006).</p>
<b><i>John Rawls and Liberal Egalitarianism</i></b>	<p>Influenced by Kantian thought, John Rawls (1999) sought to combine political equality and economic liberty. His theory of justice respects the intrinsic rights and liberties of all individual human beings and is seen to mark a paradigm shift away from the dominant utilitarian thought in political philosophy towards rights-oriented liberalism. However, in contrast to libertarianism, Rawls also supports increased social equality (Okereke and Dooley 2010).</p>

	<p>Rawls's theory of justice is based on two core principles. Firstly, he proposed the 'veil of ignorance', a hypothetical bargaining situation, in which participants would not know their own social position or that of the other party when making decisions, that Rawls argues would lead to a fair and bias-free process and equal opportunities arising.</p> <p>Accordingly, he supports a form of equality where each individual has the same opportunities to progress in their society and are not hindered by either class status or socio-economic disadvantage. Secondly, Rawls put forward a 'difference principle', a social norm that diverges from pure egalitarianism whereby economic inequalities are allowed for, but only if 'they are...of the greatest benefit to the least-advantaged members of society' (Rawls 1999: 303). For the latter, the idea is that people would be incentivised to reap the rewards of their talents, but in order to benefit society as a <i>whole</i>, or more specifically the least advantaged within that society (Okereke 2008, Sandel 2009).</p>
<p><b><i>Amartya Sen and the Capabilities Approach</i></b></p>	<p>As with egalitarianism, Amartya Sen's (1999) conception of justice is also concerned with meeting the minimum needs and rights of the poorest and most vulnerable individuals globally, i.e. a 'minimum universalism'. A framing of justice as 'meeting needs' aligns with the concerns of sustainable development and the Bruntland report (Okereke 2008). Sen is critical of Rawls's pursuit of political equality at the expense of ensuring that material goods are sufficiently distributed (Sachs and Santarius 2007). However, for Sen, what is of significance is the enhancement of people's capabilities to lead well-meaning lives. Sen seeks to shift the debate away from the distribution of goods <i>per se</i> towards what is being distributed and what these can enable (Nussbaum 2004). Capabilities are also proposed to incorporate obligations, which are not based on mutual benefits or social contracts, but rather having the power to take an action which has the potential to reduce an injustice.</p>

<i>Cosmopolitan Justice</i>	<p>A form of global justice, in which human beings, regardless of nationality, are citizens in one single, moral community (Pogge 1992). Cosmopolitan political philosophers challenge commonly-thought notions regarding persons' attachments to fellow citizens and their state, proposing that we have duties to each other regardless of nationality (Caney 2005, Fraser 2008, Nagel 2005). It is proposed that there do not exist normative differences between justice at the national and international levels, relating to the concept of 'universal human rights' (Nussbaum 2004). Driven by this, some cosmopolitans have proposed an extension of Rawls's 'difference principle' to the global arena (Beitz 1983, Caney 2002, Pogge 2005). However, cosmopolitan and universalist ideals have been critiqued for being culturally repressive and stifling of diversity (Sandel 2009).</p>
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### **2.3 Environmental Justice and the Emergence of Climate Justice**

The concept of environmental justice developed out of a socio-spatial examination of environmental policy in the United States in the 1980s. Here, there were proposed environmentally-driven injustices occurring in specific sites throughout the country (Walker and Bulkeley 2006, Dayaneni, 2009, Cutter 1995). The environmental justice movement identified locations within the US where toxic and polluting facilities were being, or had been, built, in the most socio-economically deprived areas. These tended to be areas largely inhabited by black or ethnic minority groups: hence the idea in the 1980s of 'environmental racism' (Walker and Bulkeley 2006, Cutter 1995). It was argued to be an act of grave injustice that environmental burdens were being disproportionately placed upon deprived communities, who were among the least able to cope with such burdens and least likely to benefit from the factories and facilities causing such burdens. Although environmental justice was initially a solely political or activist concern, it later developed into an academic and theoretically-driven project (Edwards, Reid and Hunter 2015).

Thus, for the first time, close linkages were made between socio-economic inequalities and environmental burdens. Environmental justice analyses indicated

the disproportionate social and geographic distribution of environmental burdens. From the early 1990s, parallel justice-led research began to be carried out in relation to climate change and its proposed impacts (Dayaneni 2009, Walker and Bulkeley 2006, Chatterton, Featherstone and Routledge 2013). However, while environmental justice theories tended to be locally focused, identifying specific pockets of injustice within the US, climate justice analyses were necessarily globally-encompassing in nature (Walker and Bulkeley 2006, Williams and Maudsley 2005). Indeed, Walker (2009) acknowledges the globalising and ‘vertical expansion’ of the scope of environmental justice, in which local-level concerns are increasingly being tied to the global sphere.

Since the early 1990s, climate justice has been theorised in scholarly literature, in which debates have emerged regarding how the climate crisis should be tackled in a fair and just way (Burnham et al. 2013, Walker 2009). Climate justice scholarship has sought to identify ways in which the most vulnerable and poorest globally can be protected from the impacts of climate change and can be given the space to develop, in light of their contributions to climate change. The developed nations are proposed to bear the brunt of climate change obligations (Gupta 2014). Indeed, considering the distribution of climate burdens and GHG emissions, Gupta (2014) labels climate change as a ‘classic rich-poor issue’.

The notion of ‘common but differentiated responsibility’, institutionalised in the UNFCCC’s principles, is seen to acknowledge the unfairness and injustices presented by climate change. The principle places climate burdens primarily onto the industrialised nations, in light of their respective (historical) responsibilities and capabilities (Maljean-Dubois 2016, Gupta 2014). However, the extent to which the principle is practised in reality has been questioned by climate justice scholars. In addition, the recent shift towards voluntary commitments from the Global North is seen to be problematic from a climate justice perspective (Maljean-Dubois 2016, Okereke and Coventry 2016, St. Clair 2014).

The focus of this review is directed towards the ethics of climate change *mitigation*. It is acknowledged that there is a thorough justice-led debate to be had around climate change *adaptation*, but the nature of this research project does not lend itself to such discussion. The balance of mitigation and adaptation in the international climate

regime is deemed to have ethical implications (Duus-Otterstrom and Jagers 2008, Okereke and Coventry 2016, Schlosberg, 2012). In international climate policy negotiations and agreements thus far, it is mitigation which has received the majority of the attention, with adaptation significantly under-represented; however, with concerns over current and future vulnerability to climate change, the majority of funding needs in the Global South are adaptation-oriented (Okereke and Coventry 2016). Thus, climate justice scholars generally stress the importance of using an integrative approach in international climate action, acknowledging the ‘moral obligations’ of both mitigation and adaptation needs (Okereke and Coventry 2016, Moellendorf 2015, Grasso 2010).

Furthermore, while it is acknowledged that there has been a significant amount of climate justice research carried out which has concerned the *intergenerational* ethics of climate change (particularly in relation to the concept of ‘discounting’) (Caney 2009, Moellendorf 2009), this review concerns itself primarily with the *intragenerational* implications of climate change, in line with the research enquiries of the project. These are considered using a multi-dimensional conceptualisation of climate justice (encompassing distributive, procedural and recognition concerns).

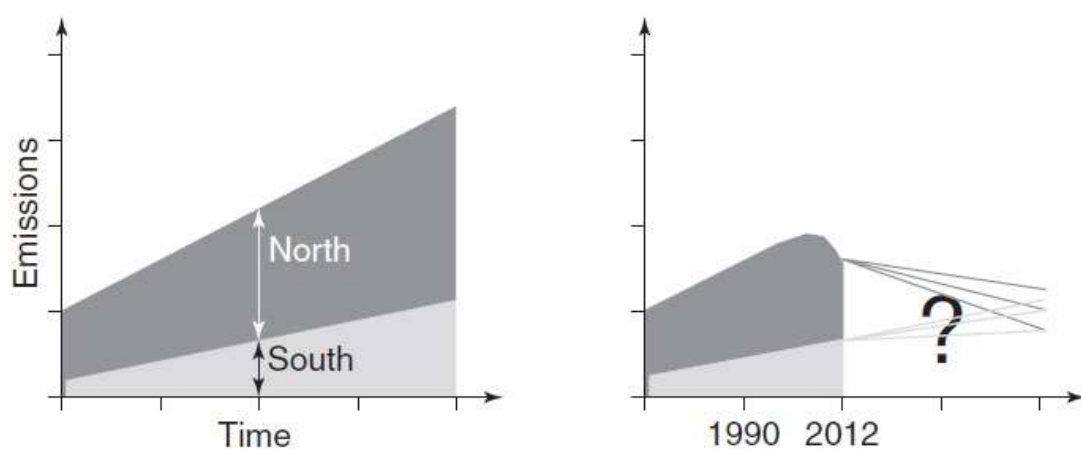
### **2.3.1 The ‘Carbon Budget’ and Distribution of Emissions Rights**

Since the early 1990s and the formulation of international climate change agreements, there have emerged a number of idealistic, theoretical conceptualisations of how a just approach to climate change may look (Caney 2005, Shue 1999, Harris 2010, Agarwal and Narain 1991). These have largely been driven by the idea of a ‘carbon budget’: that there is limited atmospheric capacity remaining for humanity to emit GHGs, if dangerous levels of climate change are to be avoided. The carbon budget notion has been solidified in the international climate regime, with the formal adoption of the 2°C target at the Cancun Conference of Parties (COP) in 2010 (Gupta 2014).

Climate justice scholars acknowledge the limits of the remaining 2°C carbon budget. Indeed, the setting of the global emissions targets raises questions of climate justice itself (Caney 2012, Cotton 2017). While a 1.5°C target was later given as a flexible target at the Paris negotiations in 2015, it is questionable the extent to which either of these fully address climate change in a just and fair manner. Will allowing the rise

in global temperatures by 1.5°C or 2°C not sacrifice some nations, lives or livelihoods? Accordingly, concerns have been raised over the ambitions of international policy agreements (Caney 2012).

However, climate justice research has generally tended to concern itself with the distribution of either emissions rights (i.e. the right to emit GHGs) or the burdens of climate change (i.e. the responsibility for the costs of climate change mitigation and/or adaptation) within the remaining carbon budget (Gardiner 2004, Vanderheiden 2011). The normative, ethical and moral arguments underpinning these idealistic distributive models have been much debated. Climate justice scholars consider the ‘rights’ of the Global South, in light of their need to develop and alleviate poverty, as well as their lower responsibility for climate change (Gupta 2014, Neumayer 2000, Kartha, Athanasiou and Baer 2012). It is generally argued that developing countries should be allocated a higher proportion of the remaining carbon budget (see Figure 2.1 below).



**Figure 2.1: The Remaining Carbon Budget and the ‘North-South’ Divide (Gupta, 2014)**

Grasso (2012) summarises the competing claims (or ‘paths’) for how the remaining emissions budget could be shared and their underlying moral bases; these are idealistic and tend to differ significantly from the reality of climate change politics (see Figure 2.2). These are divided into two over-arching categories: ‘broadly egalitarian’ and ‘non-broadly egalitarian’. Although the focus of this chapter is egalitarian distributive ideals of climate justice, it is worth firstly highlighting what

Grasso (2012) considers as 'non-broadly egalitarian': the 'grandfathering' mechanism.

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**Figure 2.2: Paths for Sharing the Emissions Budget (Grasso, 2012)**

The 'grandfathering mechanism' refers to the allocation of emissions rights according to countries' historic, 1990-levels of GHG emissions (Grasso 2012). While a number of climate justice scholars identify the accommodation of grandfathering in the Kyoto negotiations (Caney 2009, Grasso 2012), Knight (2013) instead suggests that the grandfathering principle was not strictly applied ('moderate grandfathering'). In allocating emissions rights in such a way, the grandfathering mechanism is

considered to systematically advantage the contemporary wealthy (and those who made their wealth through the burning of fossil fuels), and to punish late-developers. As a result, it acts as a consolidation of the status quo (Grasso 2012, Meyer and Roser 2006, Roberts and Parks 2007). For Grasso (2012), the distributive basis of the grandfathering mechanism is morally ambiguous, is rooted in power relations and does not have an underlying ethical justification, unlike the ‘broadly egalitarian’ emissions paths.

However, a libertarian-led justification for grandfathering can be identified, a perspective from which it could be argued that developed countries have a ‘right’ to access historic-level of emissions based on prior usage (i.e. emissions are essentially one’s private property) (Meyer and Roser 2006, Knight 2013). Support for grandfathering is often fuelled by a view that it is pragmatic and the only realistic way to gain the signatures of the wealthy, high-emitting nations (Knight 2013, Posner and Weisbach 2010).

### **2.3.2 Historical Responsibility and ‘Ecological Debt’**

Grasso (2012) outlines a number of distributive principles for climate justice, under the ‘broadly egalitarian’ category, which covers three overall headings: ‘egalitarian’, ‘prioritarian’ and ‘sufficientarian’. Under the prioritarian heading, a theory of historical responsibility is proposed to respond to the asymmetrical causes and burdens of climate change (Neumayer 2000, Roberts and Parks 2007). In particular, Shue (1999) argues that the nature of climate change and GHG emissions is inherently unfair, where the North has profited from such emissions historically without paying the full costs. Rather, developing nations have had these costs forced upon them, “contrary to their interests, and presumably, without their consent” (Shue 1999: 533). Consequently, given its historical contribution to climate change and a proposed ‘ecological debt’, the North is considered to have duties to bear the majority of climate burdens, on behalf of the South (Smith 1996, Roberts and Parks 2010, Kartha, Athanasiou and Baer 2012).

The ‘ecological debt’ concept is based on the premise that the atmosphere is a ‘global commons’ and that its capacity to absorb GHG emissions is a finite resource (Singer 2002, Gardiner 2004, Meyer and Roser 2006). Here, the Global North is considered to have disproportionately used their share of atmospheric capacity, as



well as exploiting the environment in the Global South, over the previous 200 years (Roberts and Parks 2010, Singer 2002, Blomfield 2016). Despite only comprising of 12% of the world population, it is estimated by the World Resources Institute that the US and the EU were together responsible for 55.8% of cumulative GHG emissions between 1850 and 2002 (Blomfield 2016).

Climate justice scholars therefore argue that the Global North has built up a 'debt' to the developing world, which needs to be 'repaid' (Blomfield 2016, Roberts and Parks 2010). Indeed, Smith (1996) compares the North's disproportionate use of their share of the atmosphere to financial debt, where the developed world has 'borrowed' capacity to develop from the atmosphere faster than it can be repaid. Accordingly, the North should now take responsibility for the ways in which they were allowed to develop: "just as with a financial debt, it does not seem unfair to ask nations to pay off their debt in the same proportion as it was borrowed" (Smith 1996: 427).

Climate justice scholars adopting a historical responsibility approach would make use of a cumulative carbon budget, calculating historical, as well as current, emissions when allocating emissions rights, considering the length of time in which GHGs stay in the atmosphere (Neumayer 2000, Kartha, Athanasiou and Baer 2012). Shue (1999: 533) asserts that, in order to effectively respond to the asymmetrical causes and burdens of climate change, "we are justified in reversing the inequality by imposing extra burdens upon the producer of the inequality". He uses the apt metaphor of a 'mess' to highlight this point, whereby the party responsible for creating the mess should be the one to clean it up. Additionally, those adopting a historical responsibility approach would generally advocate the enacting of adequate compensatory mechanisms for those unfairly impacted upon by climate change, on top of mitigation and adaptation mechanisms (Caney 2012).

However, Caney (2005) rejects the idea that historical responsibility should drive international climate change policies, through a critique of the Polluter Pays Principle (PPP). This is a key principle of international, environmental law in which those responsible, whether this be a nation, corporation or person, for an act of pollution should bear the brunt of the costs to pay for the damage caused. The applicability of PPP, and historical responsibility more broadly, to climate change could be deemed inappropriate in this context, as the bulk of GHG emissions causing climate change

was the result of previous generations' policies, at a time when the consequences of such emissions were unknown or not yet scientifically proven: we cannot draw an analogy between GHG emissions and pollution proper (Caney 2005, Miller 2008, Meyer and Roser 2006). However, most climate justice scholars would agree that, following the development of climate change science post-1990, a lack of awareness cannot be used in defence of the industrialised nations (Caney 2005, Baatz 2013).

In addition, the PPP has only traditionally been applied to an act of pollution, when the polluters are alive and when the pollution is direct. Caney (2005) asserts that due to the inherent nature of climate change, such acts are indirect, largely based in the past and difficult to trace to a specific, individual act of pollution, limiting the potential of historical responsibility as an explanatory tool in climate justice. Consequently, it is proposed that the industrialised nations have not caused direct harm *per se* (Baatz 2013, Miller 2008). However, despite such reasoning, Blomfield (2016) argues that the unjust nature of the majority of historical GHG emissions (i.e. colonial-era resource exploitation) and the key role that they have played in enabling current global inequalities offers adequate justification for a historical approach to climate justice.

### **2.3.3 'Ability to Pay'**

An alternative, prioritarian way of distributing the burdens of climate change has been proposed, where the advantaged, regardless of history, have the greatest responsibility for the costs of climate change mitigation: Ability to Pay (ATP) (Caney, 2005, Page 2008). This proposition does not consider whose *fault* climate change is, but rather who has the wealth and ability to take on its burdens. Additionally, responsibilities for the costs of climate change would also be allocated according to a country's development pathway, taking into account the broader institutional, social and economic conditions which underpin GHG emissions levels (Grasso 2010, Roberts and Parks 2007).

Thus, ATP is a 'forward-looking' approach, which attempts to distribute emissions rights based on the capabilities of those in the present, in contrast to the 'backwards-looking' approach of historical responsibility. Such an approach may be more effective in gaining the support of multiple parties in international climate negotiations (Miller 2008, Posner and Weisbach 2010). Those who would be burdened with the

costs of climate change under ATP may then, hypothetically at least, not be those who are *responsible* for its causes: “a wholly forward-looking approach, it might be argued, is out of kilter with some of our deepest moral convictions” (Caney 2010: 214). Thus, considering this, it is brought into question the extent to which this proposal addresses climate *justice* (Shue 1999).

However, despite their divergent reasoning, the obligations of ATP would involve many of the same nations or regions as the burdens of a historical responsibility approach would. Indeed, there is a demonstrably significant overlap between those countries which are historically responsible for climate change and those countries which are affluent today (Page 2015, Shue 1999, Paterson and P-Laberge 2018). Nevertheless, there is not a perfect correlation between historical GHG emissions and wealth (Caney 2005). Responding to this, Caney (2014) highlights the importance of attributing climate obligations to those with strong political, economic or social power, rather than necessarily implicating wealthy individuals *per se*.

### **2.3.4 ‘Beneficiary Pays Principle’**

The ‘Beneficiary Pays Principle’ (BPP) directs attention towards the overlap between wealth and historical GHG emissions in its theoretical conception: the idea that those nations which have generated a greater proportion of their wealth through GHG-emitting industrial activity have ultimate responsibility for the burdens of climate change. They are *beneficiaries* of historical GHG emissions (Page 2015, Neumayer 2000, Blomfield 2016). This approach thus distinguishes between ‘clean developers’ and ‘dirty developers’. Here, it is proposed that industrialised nations should bear the greatest climate change burdens on the basis that they are wealthier than they would have been had they not emitted such a high level of GHG emissions.

While all nations have profited to an extent from the use of fossil fuels, it is the Global North which has accrued a far greater proportion of their wealth from GHG emissions (Page 2015, Meyer and Roser 2006, Blomfield 2016). It is the uneven distribution of the socio-economic benefits of historical GHG emissions that is of concern here that goes beyond wealth, e.g. power relations. Indeed, many global inequalities can be traced back to an extent to historical GHG emissions and industrial activity (Page 2015, Blomfield 2016). Page (2008: 566) summarises: “BPP is distinct from ATP in being concerned with how a country’s wealth arose and

distinct from PPP in being concerned with the effects rather than the causes of climate change-inducing activities”.

Thus, it is proposed by some climate justice scholars that the benefits generated through GHG-emitting activities should be used to combat the threat of climate change (Baatz 2013, Page 2015). If not, it can be considered that there is an unfair and undue distribution of the benefits and burdens of climate change, whereby the industrialised nations are ‘free-riding’ in their obligations to international climate action, as proposed by Gosseries (2004). The BPP does not seek to place blame on the wealthy, industrialised nations, but rather acknowledge their obligations as high-emitters (Baatz 2013, Meyer and Roser 2010).

On the other hand, it has been argued that those in receipt of the benefits of industrial activity and historical GHG emissions could not have reasonably refused such benefits (i.e. the issue of ‘involuntary benefit’) (Page 2015, Meyer and Roser 2010). The contemporary wealthy are of a different generation to those who made conscious decisions to emit GHGs and to industrialise. Despite acknowledging its involuntary nature, Page (2008) notes that the current generation in industrialised nations has *nevertheless* received the benefits of historical GHG emissions. In addition, post-1990, the science of human-induced climate change has been well understood, a period in which industrialised nations have knowingly continued to enjoy the benefits of GHG emissions (Page 2015, Caney 2009). It can thus be questioned if the benefits of GHG-emitting industrial activity are truly ‘involuntary’, as Page (2015: 12) proposes: “The actual behaviour of beneficiary states since 1990 undermines claims that they would have declined the associated benefits had they been given the choice”.

The other point of contention for the BPP is Parfitt’s (1984) ‘non-identity problem’, which considers the dilemma that individuals from the contemporary era may not have come into existence without the actions of previous generations’ individuals. Applied to climate change, the ‘non-identity problem’ puts into doubt the extent to which current individuals can be claimed to have benefitted from GHG-emitting, historical industrial activity, as they may not have existed in the scenario where the industrial activity did not occur (Page 2015, Meyer and Roser 2006). However, Page (1999) proposes that, instead of conceptualising the benefits passed to individuals, it

should be considered the extent to which communities, groups or nations have benefitted from historical industrial activity, thereby circumventing the ‘non-identity problem’.

### **2.3.5 Hybrid Approaches**

Recently, there has been support for pluralist, or hybrid, approaches to burden sharing in climate justice literature, which synthesise aspects of the three prioritarian approaches already discussed: ATP, PPP and BPP (Page 2008, Grasso 2010). This is underpinned by the idea that historical responsibility is not enough alone in allocating climate change burdens: there also needs to be a consideration of country’s contemporary wealth and capacity to engage with climate action e.g. Caney’s (2010) hybrid approach to attributing emissions rights through a supplementation of the PPP.

The Greenhouse Development Framework (GDF) developed by EcoEquity is a key example of a hybrid approach to climate justice. Here, those above a given development threshold (i.e. the poverty line) are assigned varying climate change burdens, according to a proposed ‘Responsibility-Capacity Index’: comprising of a nation’s responsibility (cumulative emissions since 1990, excluding emissions that used for consumption below the development threshold) and capacity (the sum of each citizen’s income, excluding that which is below the development threshold) (Kartha, Athanasiou and Baer 2012). This approach allows for a consideration of both historical responsibility and ATP. However, the GDF’s hybrid approach is flawed in that it only considers post-1990 emissions and thus, from a climate justice perspective, is seen to be insufficiently engaging with historical responsibility and is likely to impose unfair burdens upon late-developers (Page 2008).

### **2.3.6 The ‘Equal Per Capita’ Approach**

An egalitarian path for sharing the emissions budget has been proposed with the ‘equal per capita approach’ (Roberts and Parks 2007, Agarwal and Narain 1991, Vanderheiden 2008). This approach considers the generally higher per-capita emissions of countries in the Global North. While the growth of markets and a consumption class in emerging economies (e.g. China) has meant that aggregate GHG emissions are shifting, the North is still largely responsible on a per-capita

level, i.e. considering the population density of nations, alongside emissions levels (Roberts and Parks 2007, Gupta 2014).

The 'equal per capita approach' proposes that rights to emit GHGs should be *equally* distributed to individuals globally (Vanderheiden 2008, Aslam 2002, Roberts and Parks 2007). Posner and Sustain (2008: 53) explain that, "the intuition here is that every person on the planet should begin with the same emissions right; it should not matter whether people find themselves in a nation whose existing emissions are low or high". Such a concept is based on the premise that the atmosphere is a 'common global resource' and is seen to be a way of addressing the current imbalance in GHG emissions distributions (Singer 2002, Gardiner 2004, Caney 2012).

Under the 'equal per capita approach', it is offered that those who currently emit a disproportionately large amount of GHGs would need to reduce their levels, and those who contribute little to climate change would be allowed the room to develop up to a threshold (Roberts and Parks 2007). This is the notion of 'Contraction and Convergence', where the GHG emissions levels of the Global South will eventually converge with those of the Global North, while the overall global carbon budget would simultaneously contract (Gardiner 2004, Lovell, Bulkeley and Liverman 2009).

Some critics have argued that the equal per capita approach is politically unfeasible and places unfair demands on the North (Miller 2008). However, in a similar way to ATP, the approach does not seek to place blame on any individuals or nations, but aims to simply equalise the distribution of emissions rights (Singer 2002). In addition, the equal per capita approach advocated in the political sphere is not one which allocates emissions rights individually, but instead on a nation-state basis, whereby the total number of national emissions is divided by population size (Paterson and Stripple 2007, Posner and Sustain 2008).

Indeed, Posner and Sustain (2008) reference the divide between the cosmopolitan origins of the equal per capita approach and its politically feasible conclusion. Thus, the theoretical basis on which institutions and scholars have argued for a per-capita approach is diluted in political reality, where population size becomes the primary, yet ultimately arbitrary factor in allocating emissions rights (Posner and Sustain 2008, Paterson and Stripple 2007).

Some climate justice scholars argue that this approach fails to consider a multitude of other contextual factors, such as the specific needs of people living in different areas, regions or nations, or countries' demographic profiles (Singer 2002, Caney 2012, Aslam 2002). It also inadequately takes the global distribution of the impacts of climate change into account (Posner and Sustain 2008). In addition, in distributing emissions rights based on population sizes, there is no guarantee that these would be fairly shared *within* the nations (Miller 2008).

### **2.3.7 A Sufficierarian Approach and the 'Right to Development'**

A sufficientarian approach to the distribution of climate burdens has been proposed by some climate justice scholars, in acknowledgement of the multiple and intimate linkages between international climate action and the development needs of the Global South (Agrawal and Narain 1991, Shue 1993, Roberts and Parks 2007). This is where those poorest or most vulnerable globally should not have to bear the burdens of climate responsibilities, but rather should be given the space to develop. This is what Shue (1993) identifies as a 'right to subsistence emissions', or the emissions necessary for a minimum quality of life. This is a threshold approach, where those below a given threshold (e.g. the poverty line) would not be assigned climate responsibilities.

A sufficientarian approach calls for a moral distinction to be made between the 'survival emissions' of the global poor and the 'luxury emissions' of the contemporary wealthy (Agrawal and Narain 1991, Gupta 2014, Shue 1993). Here, it is considered unfair for developing nations to have to significantly reduce their levels of GHG emissions, when they depend upon them for achieving a basic quality of life and subsistence (Caney 2010, Moss 2016). Indeed, Shue (1993: 202) identifies the importance of quality as well as quantity when considering emissions levels: "those living in desperate poverty ought not to be required to restrain their emissions, thereby remaining in poverty, in order that those living in luxury should not have to restrain their emissions". Arguably, the distinction between survival and luxury emissions acts as a key critique of the broad-brush 'equal-per-capita' approach (Miller 2008).

Relatedly, climate justice has been recently considered from a human rights perspective, in seeking to move beyond viewing climate change impacts as simply

economic and towards understanding how the rights of the global poor are impinged upon by climate change (Caney 2010, Shue 2010, Sinden 2007). This has included advocating the Global South's 'right to development', a principle that has been adopted in UN policy since 1986:

*"The right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized". (UNHR 2010)*

The IPCC (2014) concurs in advocating 'equitable access to sustainable development'. It is well-recognised by climate justice scholars that the Global South's development potential could be constrained by the disproportionate impacts of climate change, as well as the international interventions put into place to mitigate against climate change (e.g. CDM, REDD+) (Agarwal and Narain 1991, Calvert 1999, Gupta 2014). Roberts and Parks (2010) assert that climate action may not be concurrent with further growth in developing countries, where GHG emissions reductions could effectively place a 'cap' on development, or lead to what Wade (2003: 622) refers to as "a shrinking of development space".

In climate justice literature, the potential stalling of growth in the Global South which may result from climate change mitigation is seen to be morally unfair and an unjustified impingement on basic human rights (Shue 2010, Caney 2010). It is often argued that the Global South should be allowed the same 'right to develop' as the Global North had historically (Wade 2003, Calvert 1999). Considering the 2°C carbon budget, there is limited space for the Global South to develop; thus, climate justice scholars generally argue that there is significant moral justification in allocating a greater share of the remaining emissions budget to developing nations (Gupta 2014, Neumayer 2000, Kartha, Athanasiou and Baer 2012).

In responding to the Global South's 'right to development' in a climate constrained world, the Greenhouse Development Rights (GDR) Framework uses the global poverty line (\$7,500 per annum) as its 'development threshold', whereby those below this threshold are not obligated to contribute to climate action (Kartha, Athanasiou and Baer 2012). Thus, climate burdens are assigned to those above the poverty line, based on the previously defined 'Responsibility-Capacity Index'. The GDR



framework is dynamic: the idea is that, over time, as countries develop and alleviate poverty, they are assigned increasing climate change obligations. Additionally, the GDR framework aims to address income disparities *within* nations by assigning capacity based on the proportion of a country's income above the development threshold. In this way, unlike the equal-per-capita approach and its distribution of rights according to population sizes, the actual extent of a country's wealth and development needs can be captured (Kartha, Athanasiou and Baer 2012).

Subsequently, in theory, the GDR framework would allow the global poor the space to develop and place the greatest climate burdens on the contemporary wealthy. However, it is unclear how the assignment of climate change obligations to only those *above* the development threshold within nations would be policed or managed in reality (Kartha, Athanasiou and Baer 2012). Indeed, climate justice scholars have questioned the extent to which the development benefits deriving from an egalitarian or sufficientarian approach would necessarily result be fairly distributed within the country or effectively reach those most in need (Posner and Sustain 2008, Rayner, Malone and Thompson 1999). Here, the GDR approach may only benefit certain 'elites' of the Global South: "the so-called survival emissions of poorer countries may in practice translate into the luxury emissions of their elites" (Rayner, Malone and Thompson 1999: 22).

In addition, many rights-based conceptions of climate justice, including the GDR framework, often ignore the non-income aspects of development, such as well-being or equality; here, an increase in income is seen as synonymous with development (Schlosberg 2012, Page 2008). Schlosberg (2012) also argues that development rights approaches, as with the 'equal per capita' approach, do not sufficiently take into account the underlying contexts, and needs, of countries in the Global South, particularly in terms of the effects of climate change.

Meanwhile, Woodward (2015) highlights the intrinsic link between poverty and a 'climate constrained world'. It is offered that there are two broad ways to eradicate poverty: by increasing the *growth* of the global economy or by increasing the *share* of the global economy which is allocated to the poorest households. The former represents the current model, but its proposed inefficiency in achieving poverty alleviation (total poverty would not be eradicated until 2077 based on the \$1.25 a day

poverty line) conflicts with the 2°C emissions budget. Woodward (2015: 59) asserts that a growth-led approach to poverty alleviation is unviable “without irreparable damage to global ecosystems”. Thus, it is ultimately proposed that the distribution of global GDP needs to be fundamentally re-addressed in a world constrained by climate change (Woodward 2015).

Moreover, a recent report published by a number of environmental NGOs, refutes the common assumption that GHG emissions necessarily lead the global poor out of poverty (ODI 2016). As the majority of the global poor live in rural areas, which cannot be reached by the electricity grid, and may more likely benefit from the introduction of household-level renewable energy (e.g. solar panels), it is seen as a ‘myth’ that expansion of fossil fuel use will aid the most vulnerable and poorest globally. Indeed, the climatic changes and environmental damages caused by enhanced fossil fuel use are likely to most severely affect the global poor, countering any potential benefits received. Thus, the report proposes that increases in GHG emissions in the Global South are not only unnecessary in achieving poverty alleviation, but actually constraining to it (ODI 2016).

The importance of technology transfer in achieving low-carbon development in the Global South is highlighted in the report. It is likely that developing nations will pursue fossil-fuel dependent growth until clean energy becomes available to them and within their financial reach (Okereke and Coventry 2016, Kartha, Athanasiou and Baer 2012, St. Clair 2010). Technology transfer is potentially a key path through which the twin aims of development and climate change mitigation can be simultaneously addressed in the Global South. However, there remain issues with the implementation of large-scale technology transfer thus far, partly due to the power held by the private sector and the World Intellectual Property Organisation, underlining “the confines in which those seeking to act in the interests of the world’s poor and vulnerable are operating” (Okereke and Coventry 2016: 846).

### **2.3.8 The ‘Equal Burdens’ Principle**

A further egalitarian theory of climate justice proposes the distribution of climate change costs according to an ‘equal burdens’ principle (Traxler 2002). Here, Traxler (2002) suggests that climate burdens should be divided according to shares which are *equally* burdensome. Traxler’s proposal is somewhat similar to Miller’s (2008)

‘equal cost’ principle, in which it is argued that climate burdens should be allocated, ‘to each according to his ability’. Both of these approaches prioritise the capabilities of nations, in similar ways to the ATP, over and above backward-looking, historical responsibilities.

In line with a sufficientarian approach, the equal burdens principle understands the qualitative difference between luxury emissions and subsistence emissions. Here, each nation would be equally burdened with ‘opportunity costs’, a measure of human welfare, with subsistence emissions acting as the highest opportunity costs and luxury emissions as the lowest opportunity costs (Traxler 2002). Consequently, the approach would require developing countries to reduce their subsistence emissions only after the developed nations had cut back on their luxury emissions; however, “because these opportunity costs are aggregated by nation, this fair division scheme may well require cuts to near-subsistence for some before others” (Traxler 2002: 128).

### **2.3.9 Alternative Accounting of National GHG Emissions**

The theories of climate justice defined thus far assume a ‘production-based’ account of GHG emissions. This means that, when distributing emissions rights, they only consider the GHG emissions produced within a country’s border (Harris and Symons 2013). However, Harris and Symons (2013) has critiqued such a strict focus, proposing that *consumption-based accounting* should also be taken into account, where a country’s GHG emissions produced from *outside* their borders would also be considered as part of its own emissions budget.

A purely production-based accounting of GHG emissions is deemed to be ineffective, as well as inequitable, considering the significant shifts in emissions-intensive industries from the Global North to South that have taken place in recent decades (Harris and Symons 2013, Cotton 2017). In such a way, industrialised nations can be seen to reduce domestic GHG emissions, while simultaneously maintaining economic competitiveness and high levels of consumption. Indeed, a perceived process of relative dematerialisation in the industrial North is being at least partially achieved through the movement of production facilities to the South, suggesting that the de-coupling of GHG emissions with economic growth is argued

to be somewhat of a myth (Roberts and Parks 2007, Paterson and P-Laberge 2018, Cole 2003).

A postcolonial critique of industrial peripheralisation acknowledges historically exploitative North-South relations and an unequal distribution of environmental burdens, whereby the North maintains environmental standards domestically, yet exploits “high amounts of biophysical resources from the peripheral economies in the South...” (Giljum and Eisenmenger 2004: 14). This is understood as ‘unequal ecological exchange’, whereby ‘ecological capacity’ (e.g. through soil degradation, depletion of fish stocks, GHG emissions) is drained from the Global South to maintain growth in the Global North (Yu, Feng and Hubacek 2014, Paterson and P-Laberge 2018). The analysis seeks to interrogate the structural and unequal relations between the ‘core’ and ‘periphery’ and how these are embedded in climate change (O’ Hara 2009).

It is argued that a focus upon production-based accounting in the current climate regime actively encourages firms in industrialised economies to re-locate their production to more cost-effective locations, which may result in *increased* global GHG emissions (Harris and Symons 2013, Cotton 2017). Here, consumption can continue to grow in the Global North through imported, embodied emissions (Roberts and Parks 2010, Calvert 1999). This has clear implications for climate justice, considering the distribution of obligations and responsibilities for climate change (Cotton 2017). Subsequently, for enhanced effectiveness and equity, Harris and Symons (2013) propose a switch to consumption-based account of national GHG emissions and targets, where the responsible parties for climate change could be more comprehensively targeted.

Similarly, it has also been proposed by Moss (2016) that fossil fuel exports should be included in a nation’s GHG emissions calculation. The logic here is that the sale of fossil fuels by countries results in exported emissions elsewhere and the exporter has *responsibility*, at least in part, for such emissions. While the majority of climate justice research considers how to most fairly distribute emissions rights or burdens, Moss (2016) asserts that we need to first identify how GHG emissions should be attributed (i.e. whose emissions are whose). However, the current guidelines used by the IPCC do not allow for such an ingrained analysis; in a similar way to

consumption-based accounting, Moss (2016) proposes that exported fossil fuels should be included in a country's calculated emissions inventory.

However, it has been argued that it is unfair to penalise emissions-exporting nations, for the simple distributive luck of being naturally endowed with fossil fuel reserves (Cotton 2017). In addition, Cotton (2017) suggests that although the exporting nation may have sold the fossil fuels, it is ultimately the recipient country's responsibility to use them based on its GHG emissions targets. Nevertheless, the exporting nation made the conscious decision to sell the fossil fuels, in full knowledge of climate change and its associated harms. Subsequently, Moss (2016) argues that nations are complicit in the exportation of GHG emissions and have a responsibility to curtail such practices.

### **2.3.10 Application of Cosmopolitanism to Climate Justice**

While the majority of climate justice theories have concerned themselves with the obligations and rights of *states*, it is also necessary to consider cosmopolitan approaches to climate justice (Caney 2005, Harris 2010, Paterson and Stripple 2007). These adopt an individualist position towards climate justice, whereby responsibility is not restricted to nation states and is instead attributed to wealthy *individuals* globally. Cosmopolitan climate justice thinkers would advocate consumption-based accounting, but from an individualist perspective. This is seen to be an extension of Rawl's (1999) veil of ignorance to the international arena (who only applied his conceptions of justice on a national scale) where if 'nationality' were another morally arbitrary factor in negotiations, cosmopolitan climate justice thinkers envision an alternative global climate change agreement (Beck 2010, Paterson and Stripple 2007, Harris 2010).

It is proposed that a re-orientation of attention in international climate change agreements towards individuals would avoid the territorial trappings of current international climate negotiations, which are often defined in terms and responsibilities of states (Harris 2010, Paterson and Stripple 2007, Wainwright and Mann 2013). Harris (2010: 66) argues that, "by directing all responsibility to states, it has not discouraged consumption and pollution by affluent people". The cosmopolitan argument is that, as states are heterogeneous in nature, those poorest or richest in the labelled developed or developing world will be masked by the overall

statistics of the country in which they are residing (Harris 2010, Roberts and Parks 2007).

Similarly, Barnett (2007) proposes that the 'geopolitics of climate change' masks the more complex, local and regional factors implicated in climate justice. Critically, an argument is put forward which is under-explored in climate justice literature: that private affluence is the key issue, rather than a nation's status and history (Barnett 2007, Harris 2010). Indeed, Harris, Chow and Karlsson (2013) challenge the statist interpretation of China's role in international climate action, whereby in attributing responsibility to the entire Chinese state, the responsibilities of the rising numbers of affluent 'new consumers' in China towards climate change are masked.

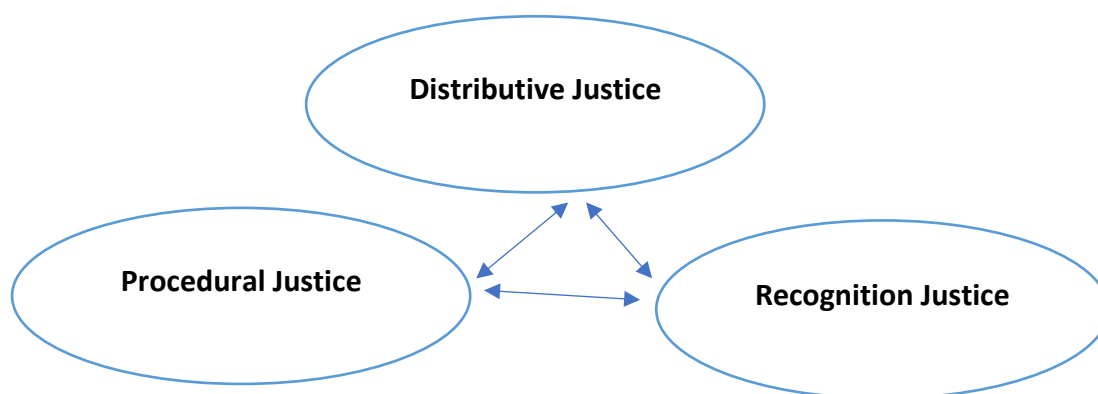
Thus, cosmopolitan climate justice scholars suggest that by assigning responsibility and costs to affluent *people* everywhere, we can find an equitable and effective solution to the current, state-led, political impasse (Harris 2010, Giddens 2009). Here, the wealthy elites in the Global South would not be exempt from contributing to the mitigation costs of climate change, whereas the poor residing in the Global North may well be, considering the small amount they are likely to profit from their nation's GHG emissions (Harris 2010, Harris, Chow and Karlsson 2013). However, despite such assertions, it can be questioned how a cosmopolitan approach to the distribution of climate burdens would be implemented in practice; indeed, much climate change research has highlighted the need to continue using nation-states as the primary scale of study, largely for pragmatic or politically sensitive reasons (Posner and Weisbach 2010, Fussler 2010, Miller 2008).

### **2.3.11 Multi-dimensional Conception of Climate Justice**

The previous discussions of climate justice theories relate to solely distributive concerns. Indeed, there is identified to be an over-whelming focus on the distributive elements of climate justice (and wider environmental justice) in the literature, i.e. the maldistribution of environmental 'goods' and 'bads' (Burnham et al. 2013, Schlosberg 2004). It is subsequently asserted that scholarly activity around climate justice has under-theorised non-distributive elements: primarily procedural and recognition concerns (Schlosberg 2004).

Thus, Schlosberg (2004) proposes a multi-dimensional conception of environmental justice, comprising of ‘procedural’ and ‘recognition’ dimensions alongside the ‘distributive’ dimension. This is argued to be a more comprehensive, robust theorisation of environmental justice that aligns with recent trends in the field of political philosophy, which has shifted towards non-distributive elements of justice, as well as the more holistic concerns of those in environmental justice activism (Burnham et al. 2013, Edwards, Reid and Hunter 2015, Schlosberg 2004)

There are clear linkages and overlaps between the distributive, procedural and recognition dimensions of justice which means that they cannot be considered in isolation (see Figure 2.3 below). Indeed, Schlosberg (2004: 527) asserts that justice claims borne out of the three dimensions are “intricately woven together”. For instance, while procedural concerns can be addressed independently, these also have implications for distributive justice. Indeed, Burnham et al. (2013: 2) argue that, “fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of climate change... can only be achieved if all affecting parties are involved in an equitable decision-making process”.



**Figure 2.3: A Multi-dimensional Conception of Climate Justice**

### **2.3.12 Procedural Justice**

Procedural justice refers to the fairness of the participatory process: who is included in decision-making and on whose terms (Martin et al. 2014, Grasso and Sacchi 2011). This form of justice recognises different parties’ ability to effectively participate in negotiations or decision-making around climate change (Grasso and Sacchi 2011). Myers et al. (2018: 3) suggest that procedural justice is “fundamentally about

meaningful participation in decision-making, including having a seat at the table, having a voice, and ultimately having power”. In the climate justice literature, participatory justice has primarily concerned two key elements.

Firstly, there is a proposed lack of participation from developing nations (both political and civil society actors) in international negotiations and policy-making, which may mean that their needs and interests are not prioritised (Grasso 2007, Okereke and Coventry 2016, Hicks and Fabricant 2016). The need for enhanced inclusiveness and participation in international climate action from the Global South is widely acknowledged (Okereke and Coventry 2016). This is not just in policy-making, but also climate research, such as the IPCC, where there is under-representation of authors from the developing world, potentially leading to a ‘Westernisation’ of climate knowledge.

Secondly, there is argued to be a lack of local-level participation in what is often top-down climate mitigation policy, meaning that affected communities in the Global South often lack a voice in how climate policy is conceived or implemented. While ability to effectively participate forms the crux of procedural justice, a deeper analysis needs to be informed by considering who sits at the table that defines a problem. Often, an issue may have already been pre-defined before the community has had a chance to participate in the activity (Finney 2009, Burnham et al. 2013, Myers et al. 2018). Despite the clear linkages between the two, Schlosberg (2004) argues that procedural justice should be considered as more than simply a ‘pre-condition’ for distributive justice, but rather as a distinct dimension of justice, as an end in itself (i.e. as a form of freedom).

### **2.3.13 Recognition Justice**

‘Recognition’ justice refers to the respect for cultural difference and the struggle for communities to avoid ‘domination’ by others, emerging from principles of self-determination and identity recognition (Fraser 2000, Schlosberg 2004). It is concerned with the ‘rendering invisible’ (socially and politically) of minority cultures (Figueroa 2005). In the climate justice literature, recognition justice theorists have often focused upon the claims of indigenous and local peoples to cultural respect and self-determination, considering the impacts of climate change, as well as the ways in which mitigation or adaptation policy is configured (Martin et al. 2014,



Schlosberg 2004). It is argued that recognition dimensions of justice have been under-prioritised thus far in climate justice research (Figueroa 2005, Schlosberg 2004, Sikor et al. 2014).

From a recognition justice perspective, climate change not only has material effects, but also poses a threat to cultural identities, which many communities derive from their landscape and way of life, e.g. through territorial dispossession, or loss of land (Heyward 2014, Whyte 2011, Figueroa 2005). Indeed, Adger et al. (2011) argue that there needs to be a greater focus on 'place' in climate change research. It is suggested that culturally-embedded environmental goods are 'non-substitutable', where even if adaptation strategies were successful in preventing negative economic and social impacts, there may still be a *cultural* injustice (Heyward 2014, Adger et al. 2011). Hence, the idea of 'loss-and-damage' has been well-discussed in recent climate negotiations: to compensate communities for the impacts of climate change, considering that there are some impacts that cannot be alleviated through adaptation (Okereke and Coventry 2016).

Simultaneously, recognition justice research encompasses responses to climate change, concerning the ways in which local communities are represented and how their (culturally-sensitive) needs are prioritised (Whyte 2011, Schlosberg 2004, Tolia-Kelly 2016). There is clear overlap here with procedural justice, in directing attention towards the participatory rights of indigenous communities in decision-making processes surrounding climate change and the extent to which their concerns are rendered visible or invisible (Whyte 2011, Adger et al. 2011). The dominant discourse in international climate change negotiations or policy sets the agenda and may ultimately suppress or ignore alternative worldviews and values. Thus, recognition justice theorists demand that climate change mitigation strategies sufficiently consider and represent the cultural values and needs of the affected communities (Whyte 2011, Schlosberg 2004, Martin et al. 2014).

Climate justice scholars have indicated interest in using Sen's idea of 'capabilities' as a pluralist theoretical framework for exploring the impacts of climate change, and responses to it, upon communities (Edwards, Reid and Hunter 2015, Schlosberg and Carruthers 2010, Martin et al. 2014). This would be inclusive of recognition dimensions of justice. As previously discussed, a Senian conception of justice

considers more than simply distributions of goods; what is of concern here is how maldistributions impact upon the ultimate well-being and functioning of people's lives, including cultural elements (Edwards, Reid and Hunter 2015, Schlosberg 2004, Schlosberg and Carruthers 2010).

Thus, it is argued that the use of the capabilities approach in theorising climate justice allows a more concrete examination of the realities of climate change and climate governance, moving away from abstract, idealist conceptions of justice (Schlosberg 2012, Edwards, Reid and Hunter 2015). However, Schlosberg (2012) asserts that Sen's individualist capabilities theory should be extended to take *community-level* concerns into consideration, directing attention towards the importance of the community's ability to function and to preserve cultural identity.

#### **2.3.14 A Multiscalar Conception of Climate Justice**

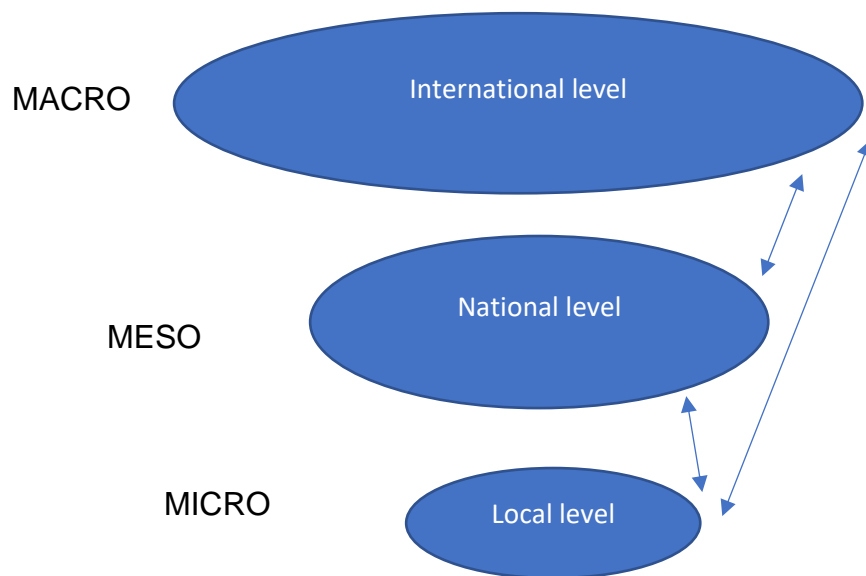
Alongside the calls for a broader conception of justice to be utilised, scholars have also recently highlighted the need for more refined, scalar understandings of climate justice (Barrett 2013, Edwards, Reid and Hunter 2015, Schlosberg 2004). While such scholars are not necessarily cosmopolitans, they have nevertheless critiqued the over-whelming statist focus and the 'developed state/developing state' binary in current climate change policy discourse. By strictly focusing on the national scale in responding to climate justice concerns, the sub-national and local diversities, inequalities and vulnerabilities can be masked (Burnham et al. 2013, Edwards, Reid and Hunter 2015).

Accordingly, it is proposed that understandings of climate justice need to be extended to the sub-national and local levels (Edwards, Reid and Hunter 2015, Schlosberg 2004, Bulkeley, Edwards and Fuller 2014). Climate justice scholars advocating a multi-scalar approach are keen to stress that a renewed focus on the local does not necessarily have to result in a perceived 'militant particularism', as Harvey (1996) suggested. Rather, a pragmatic, middle ground has been proposed, whereby in considering climate justice, we acknowledge the particularities of the local, while simultaneously being aware of global structural forces, ensuring to make linkages between the micro-scale and the macro-scale (Edwards, Reid and Hunter 2015, Caney 2005, Wainwright and Mann 2013). As Schlosberg (2004: 518)

proposed, “a thorough notion of global environmental justice needs to be locally grounded, theoretically broad and plural”.

Notably, Barrett (2013) proposes a ‘multiscalar analysis of climate justice’. This seeks to better understand climate across three global, national and local levels, in order to address a currently existing disconnect in climate justice literature between the three scales. Barrett (2013: 6) “understands climate justice as an accumulative multiscalar process”, whereby geographical scales are not considered in isolation from one another, but as part of a ‘continuum’. Barrett (2013) posits that without knowledge of these relationships, there is only a partial understanding of climate justice, a concept which necessarily implicates actors on a variety of scales. Accordingly, it is suggested that there is a need for a refined, scalar analysis of climate justice, which considers the commonalities and divergences across and between scales of climate governance.

In this research, I make use of a multiscalar conception of climate justice to critically examine REDD+ across international, national and local levels of governance. In responding to Barrett’s (2013) call and responding to a notable gap in existing climate justice literature, I can better consider the linkages and interconnections across and between scales of climate justice. A multiscalar conception of climate justice allows an exploration of the linkages, flows and interconnections between local, national and international scales when interrogating the constructions of climate justice norms in REDD+. In Section 2.4.5, I will draw out the specific mechanics and operationalisation of the multiscalar analysis of the REDD+ framework. However, it is firstly necessary to outline the background of REDD+ and the challenges that have been detailed in the extant literature on enacting an effective and equitable form of REDD+.



**Figure 2.4: A Multiscalar analysis of climate justice**

## **2.4 Current Concerns in REDD+ Research**

### **2.4.1 Evolution of REDD+**

The structure and implementation of REDD+ is significantly different to what was originally envisioned in the initial UNFCCC negotiations in multiple, interrelated ways (Angelsen 2016, Savaresi 2016). Angelsen and McNeill (2012) highlighted the four key ways in which REDD+ has evolved in its contemporary construction. Firstly, REDD+ policy is not solely carbon-focused as was originally suggested, but now attempts to simultaneously achieve perceived wider ‘non-carbon benefits’, including environmental sustainability, biodiversity, forest livelihoods, and indigenous people’s rights. Such ‘non-carbon benefits’ are proposed to be part of a ‘win-win-win’ solution for the climate, business and local, forest-dependent communities (Angelsen and McNeill 2012, Pistorius 2012, Gupta 2014).

Secondly, while the REDD+ architecture remains driven by performance-based funding, it has moved away from a purely Payments for Ecosystems Services (PES) based system. This is primarily due to the limited emergence thus far of a fully-functioning and regulated market-place for carbon (Turnhout et al. 2017). In the implementation of REDD+, payments for verified emissions reductions have largely stalled and yet to significantly commence. Consequently, REDD+ funding

agreements have been increasingly linked to more holistic, broader policy-based changes (Angelsen and McNeill 2012, Angelsen 2016).

Thirdly, a defining feature of the initial conception of REDD+ was its purely national focus, as, in contrast to the preceding project-based CDM strategy, this was seen to be more effective in addressing concerns over ‘carbon leakage’ and national sovereignty in the tropical-forested nations (Okereke and Dooley 2010, Korhonen-Kurki et al. 2012, Pistorius 2012). However, in practice, REDD+ activities and funding have tended to play out more often at the sub-national and local level, with a proliferation of unorchestrated multilateral and bilateral mechanisms managed by multiple actors (primarily NGOs), under the umbrella term of REDD+ (Angelsen and McNeill 2012, Corbera and Schroeder 2011). Despite this, it is likely that REDD+ (and its associated performance-based payments) will ultimately be co-ordinated by national actors (Angelsen and McNeill 2012).

Fourthly, and perhaps most pertinently for this research project, the funding sources for REDD+ have mainly been derived from international aid budgets, instead of, as initially proposed, carbon markets. As suggested in the Bali Action Plan (2007), funding was originally intended to come from REDD+ credits sold in an international carbon market. Indeed, it was initially presumed that capacity building in the short-term would be sourced from public funds, with results-based payments later coming from the carbon markets (Angelsen and McNeill 2012, Savaresi 2016). However, as an international carbon market has failed to come to fruition for a number of reasons, REDD+ has been primarily funded through public sources (90%), of which the majority has been sourced from Official Development Assistance (ODA) budgets (Turnhout et al. 2017, Angelsen and McNeill, 2012, Angelsen 2016).

It is as a result of such a shift in funding sources that Angelsen (2016) proposes an “aidification” of REDD+ where there have emerged similarities with results-based aid, in that payments are made to developing countries through the international aid budget based on performance or results. This idea is seen to be appealing to funders, who may be otherwise concerned with how finances are being spent (Angelsen and McNeill 2012). However, the future funding sources of REDD+ remain unclear and fragmented (Sunderlin et al. 2014, Corbera and Schroeder 2011, Gupta 2014). The exact arrangements surrounding the financing of REDD+ vary according

to specific bilateral agreements. While some countries, including the US, may favour the use of market-based mechanisms in REDD+ funding, it is uncertain how an international, regulated carbon market could be implemented in the context of the current 'pledge-and-review' framework (Angelsen 2016, Pistorius 2012, Savaresi 2016).

#### **2.4.2 REDD+ and International-level Climate Burden-sharing**

Considering international-level climate burden-sharing and the obligations of the Global North, REDD+ has the potential to act as a just form of climate governance. Here, developed countries would bear the greatest burdens of climate change mitigation and transfer funds to communities in the Global South who are maintaining tropical forests and reducing deforestation levels. The idea is that forest-dependent communities are compensated for the sacrifices they have made in maintaining the forests and are not burdened with the costs of doing so (Page 2016, Armstrong 2016).

However, critical climate justice scholars have contested the extent to which REDD+ achieves a fair and just distribution of the benefits and burdens of climate change in theory and in practice (Page 2016, Armstrong 2016, Blomfield 2013). While much of climate justice theorisation has prioritised the distribution of the burdens of GHG emissions reductions, emerging research has considered the distribution of the burdens of global carbon sink conservation, enabling normative, moral assessments of who should pay the costs of the conservation activity and who has the duty to protect the sinks (Blomfield 2013, Page 2016).

The argument made here is that while the majority of the benefits of forest conservation will be captured by the Global North (and thus those primarily responsible for cumulative GHG emissions), the costs will be placed primarily on the tropical-forested nations in the Global South (and thus who are least responsible for global GHG emissions), simply due to the uneven geographical reality of where tropical forests are located. Thus, there is a misalignment between the distribution of the burdens and benefits of REDD+: while all nations accrue benefits from REDD+ to some extent, it is primarily the Global North who benefit from forest conservation action, despite the costs falling upon the tropical forested themselves (Page 2016, Armstrong 2016, Blomfield 2013).

Climate justice scholars acknowledge that there are costs to implementing REDD+, which are both direct (the actual costs of policy implementation) and indirect in nature (the opportunity costs of 'avoided deforestation'). The latter cost may encompass the extent to which tropical-forested nations are foregoing development or income-generating opportunities in pursuing forest conservation policies (Page 2015, Armstrong 2016, Caney 2012). It is subsequently asserted that the international community needs to ensure that the burdens of forest conservation are not borne primarily by the communities, regions and regions in the Global South, which depend on forests for their livelihoods and economic development and who are unlikely to be able to bear the costs of REDD+ (Page 2016, Armstrong 2016). This would acknowledge the sacrifices made by the forest-dependent communities in maintaining the forests as carbon sink.

Climate justice scholars argue that industrialised nations engagement with REDD+ should be driven by paying a 'fair share' towards climate burdens and avoidance of 'free-riding' in their duties (Armstrong 2016, Gosseries 2004). Such 'free-riding' in the context of climate change duties refers to the receipt of benefits by actors, while others disproportionately bear the burdens. Without the adequate design and structure, REDD+ could act as a vehicle for free-riding for the industrialised nations (Armstrong 2016). This ties in with climate justice scholars' understanding of the BPP, which acknowledges the moral importance of ensuring the fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of climate change (Page 2016, Baatz 2013, Meyer and Roser 2010).

However, Page (2016) asserts that, while the BPP is apt in configuring a just formulation of REDD+ policy, it should be driven not by who benefits from the policy *per se*, but rather who has benefitted more broadly from the historical GHG-emitting activity responsible for causing climate change (what he labels as 'unjust enrichment'). From this perspective, the industrialised nations have duties to bear the brunt of the costs of REDD+ (and conservations of carbon sinks more broadly) due to their responsibility for generating cumulative GHG emissions and necessarily imposing burdens to protect carbon sinks upon others less responsible. Indeed, Page (2016: 10) asserts:

*“It is...unfair, and unjust, that the costs of avoided deforestation policies accrue wholly to impoverished states when so much economic benefit exists in other states that can be traced back to the activities that generated the need for such policies.”*

However, even if REDD+ were to be formulated in a way which fairly distributed the benefits and burdens of climate change, Armstrong (2016) offers two caveats to the role of REDD+ in realising a just transition. Firstly, bilateral and multilateral funding mechanisms are insufficient by themselves; there is a need to ensure that those making the sacrifices to protect and conserve the forests (i.e. the forest dependent communities) are those that are in receipt of the financial benefits of REDD+, or the climate justice argument loses its validity (See Section 2.44). Secondly, the nations in the Global South which have little responsibility for global GHG emissions but are without significant forest resources, also need to be taken into consideration. As such, REDD+ can only form *part* of a just response to climate change (Armstrong 2016).

#### **2.4.3 REDD+ as a Market-based Mechanism**

A key determinant of the fairness and justice of the REDD+ framework is its calibration: if it operates as an offsetting mechanism for the industrialised nations or if acts to serve wider justice aims (Armstrong 2016, Page 2016, Ribot 2010). In other words, this would consider whether REDD+ support from the industrialised nations is *additional* to reductions in domestic GHG emissions. In the absence of a unified and functioning carbon market and with the funding sourcing for the initiative fragmented, it remains unclear if REDD+ will ultimately be adopted as a market-based or offsetting mechanism. Nevertheless, if it were to do so, this would have clear implications for climate justice (Angelsen 2016). Subsequently, it is worth first reviewing current debates in climate justice scholarship around the idea of offsetting.

Offsetting has been broadly and critically examined by climate justice scholars, for both its underlying ideology and for the ways in which it has been implemented on the ground, with a particular focus on the impacts of the CDM (Ervine 2013, Bachram 2004, Paterson and Strippel 2007). It is argued that offsetting acts to shift climate burdens away from those historically responsible. Indeed, the inherent nature of offsetting is proposed to naturalise the idea that making GHG emissions cuts in



one place is fine, masking the obligations of the Global North (Ervine 2013, Lovera 2009, Lovell, Bulkeley and Liverman 2009). In offsetting GHG emissions, the North is lessening its responsibility to tackle climate change domestically, by effectively discharging its mitigation duties to the South (Paterson and Stripple 2007, Brunnengraber 2009, Page 2011).

In allowing Northern countries to expand their emissions quota and maintain high levels of domestic GHG emissions, offsetting fails to act as a *just* form of climate change mitigation, considering cumulative historical responsibility and current wealth distribution (St. Clair 2010, Grasso 2012). There is a risk that this may leave developing nations unable to satisfy their basic needs. With REDD+, a reliance on land-based mitigation in meeting the targets of the Paris agreement is risky and there are fears that it may be associated with a lessened commitment from the industrialised nations towards domestic GHG emissions reductions. Ultimately, such a strategy may impose unfair and unjust risks upon the most vulnerable and poorest communities globally. Thus, it is generally argued by climate justice scholars that offsetting is more likely to intensify, rather than reduce, global inequalities (Ervine 2013, Page 2011, Meyer and Roser 2006).

In addition, a number of critical climate justice scholars have critiqued the notion of offsetting from a postcolonial perspective, where it is argued to act as a form of 'environmental colonialism', imposing environmental burdens on areas of the world which have little responsibility for climate change (Ervine 2013, Burnham et al. 2013). Here, offsetting is considered as an imperialist form of land-grabbing, whereby the South is used as 'carbon dump' in order to maintain high-consumption lifestyles in the North (Ervine 2013, Bachram 2004). Indeed, Ervine (2013: 654) proposes that, "the carbon offset colonises Southern space and time, so that Northern production and consumption might persist and even flourish".

Other climate justice scholars have more broadly critiqued the ability of neoliberal forms of environmental governance to achieve equitable outcomes in international climate action (McAfee 2012, Okereke and Dooley 2010). Okereke (2008) suggests that the dominant market-led approach to climate action is underpinned by 'neoliberal conceptions of justice' and is driven by industrialised nations seeking cost-effective solutions to the climate crisis that involve minimal domestic GHG

emissions reductions (Harris and Symons 2013). Indeed, REDD+ has gathered support largely based on its ability to provide a source of cheap emissions cuts (Hermansen 2015, Turnhout et al. 2017, Chomba et al. 2016).

Climate justice scholars have proposed an 'equity-efficiency' trade-off, where market-based responses to climate change, driven by cost-effective logics, may lead to inequitable outcomes, intensifying inequalities at the national, sub-national and local level in the Global South (McAfee 2012, Roberts and Parks 2007, Okereke and Dooley 2010). Indeed, Okereke (2008) contends that the nature of neoliberal-led market-based forms of climate action is incompatible with the original conception of sustainable development, as defined in the Bruntland report. Key 'faultlines' are identified by Okereke (2008) between the two. Notably, market-based responses to the climate crisis are proposed to be in fundamental conflict with meeting the needs of the global poor and realising social justice, aspects which were emphasised strongly in the Bruntland report (Okereke 2008, Langhelle 2000, Hicks and Fabricant 2016).

Indeed, climate justice scholars propose that market-based mechanisms do not tend to align with broader aims to alleviate poverty and instigate development in the Global South (St. Clair 2010, Pokorny, Scholz and De Jong 2013, McAfee 2016). While a 'win-win-win' is proposed by REDD+ policy-makers, it can be questioned the extent to which this may occur in practice. It is suggested by climate justice scholars that it is more likely that trade-offs will occur, between the conservation of forests and the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities (McAfee 2014, Pokorny, Scholz and De Jong 2013). Such analysis suggests that a market-based approach to climate action is likely to primarily benefit 'big capital', in conflict with the rights, needs and interests of local-level actors in tropical-forested nations (Hicks and Fabricant 2016, Paladino 2011).

Market-based approaches to climate action are likely to result in 'winners' and 'losers' as with other neoliberal approaches, potentially placing further risks on those who are already vulnerable (Gupta 2014). With REDD+, the commodification of carbon may result in forests only being valued for their carbon content (what Turnhout et al. 2017 refer to as 'carbonification'), meaning that the livelihoods and values of forest-dependent communities are neglected. McAfee (2016) proposes that

the commodification of carbon (as the ‘latest tropical miracle crop’) in REDD+ is unlikely to benefit the poor, in the same way that other commodities have not in previous decades. In addition, it is worth noting that the very justification of carrying out cost-effective approaches to climate change mitigation is predicated on the nature of global inequalities themselves and differentiated ‘marginal costs’, suggesting a contradiction of sorts in the aspirations of ‘win-win-win’ (McAfee 2012, Paladino 2011).

However, other climate change scholars have argued against the view that neoliberal forms of climate governance will inevitably lead to unjust and unequal outcomes; rather, it is how the climate change policy is *calibrated* which matters (Caney and Hepburn 2011, Page 2011, Posner and Sustain 2008). Contrary to Okereke’s (2008) proposed ‘neoliberal conceptions of justice’, the market-based mechanisms are seen to act as a vehicle for achieving more fundamental normative ends, not the conception of justice itself (Edwards 2015). Notably, while the current international carbon trading system uses grandfathering as its *modus operandi*, this does not necessarily have to be the case: “rather, it draws our attention to ensuring that there is a fair distribution of resources, including a fair share of emissions permits” (Caney and Hepburn 2011: 217).

Thus, this school of thought suggests that there is nothing intrinsically unjust about market-based mechanisms, but rather it is the system’s underlying distributive approach which has implications for climate justice (Edwards 2015, Caney 2010, Page 2011). Subsequently, a number of climate justice scholars identify the necessity of directing climate action, including REDD+, to be pointedly, and from the outset, pro-poor in nature (McAfee 2012, St. Clair 2010, Ribot 2010). This would suggest that market-based forms of climate action can be shaped to meet the needs of the communities rather than the interests of capital (Edwards 2015).

#### **2.4.4 Safeguards and the Community-level Effects of REDD+**

While some scholars have engaged with broader discussions of the benefit/burden sharing implications of REDD+ and its potential as a market-based mechanism, the majority of research on REDD+ has focused upon the community-level effects of the initiative. Concerns have been raised in REDD+ scholarship that the initiative may have negative implications for the rights, needs and interests of marginalised forest-

dependent communities (Forsyth and Sikor 2014, Paladino 2011). This includes the community-level retainment of benefits from forest conservation practices and the extent of actual and significant participation from local-level actors in decision-making on REDD+. Early evidence suggests that REDD+ interventions are unlikely to be in the interests of affected communities without significant shifts in the design and implementation of REDD+ frameworks (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017, Paladino 2011).

Scholars have critically interrogated the extent to which the UN-REDD 'safeguards framework' can adequately respond to community-level concerns in REDD+ (Pistorius 2011, Agrawal, Nepstad and Chhatre 2011, Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012). Since having been adopted in Cancun (COP 10), safeguards have played an increasingly significant role in REDD+ policy and implementation (Angelsen 2016, Gonzalo et al. 2017). The safeguards framework sets a number of social and environmental protections in REDD+ that seek to minimise or mitigate against adverse environmental and social impacts of REDD+ activities (see Table 2.1 below) (Jagger et al. 2012, McDermott et al. 2012). Safeguards were largely inserted into REDD+ agreements as a result of significant civil society involvement in negotiations, who were concerned with the local-level impacts of the policy (Agrawal, Nepstad and Chhatre 2011).

Environmentally, the safeguards primarily concern the potentially negative implications that REDD+ could have for local biodiversity: the replacement of rich, native ecosystems with carbon-rich monoculture tree plantations (Agrawal, Nepstad and Chhatre 2011, Schroeder and McDermott 2012). Socially, the safeguards seek to ensure that the rights of forest-dependent communities are protected when REDD+ is being implemented. Primarily, such protection includes indigenous people's rights, addressing land tenure issues and enabling effective and inclusive participation of affected local communities (McDermott et al. 2012, Agrawal, Nepstad and Chhatre 2011).

Indeed, there is an underlying rights-based discourse in safeguards, which has been pushed forwards by civil society organisations (Jagger et al. 2012). Benefit sharing is discussed in the REDD+ policy literature but is not part of the official UN-REDD safeguards framework. In theory, safeguards also take into account the non-carbon

benefits of REDD+ and align REDD+ with a broader vision of sustainable development and poverty alleviation, in order to avoid a purely technical approach to reducing deforestation rates (Okereke and Dooley, 2010, McDermott et al. 2012).

**Table 2.2: Cancun Safeguards Framework (Gonzalo et al 2017)**

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However, it is worth noting that such social and environmental safeguards are a set of guiding principles, rather than enforceable rules, with no current sanctions for non-compliance (Jagger et al. 2012). It may prove difficult to ensure the implementation of safeguards at the local level in tropical-forested nations (Angelsen and McNeill 2012, McDermott et al. 2012, Okereke and Dooley 2010). There are growing concerns in the REDD+ literature that the policy mechanism may be in conflict with the rights, needs and interests of community-level actors in tropical-forested nations

and that safeguards do not go far enough in protecting these (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, Okereke and Dooley 2010, Paladino 2011).

Without adequate attention paid, it is feared that the forest-dependent communities may not receive sufficient benefits for maintaining the forest as carbon sink (Lovera 2009, Barbier and Tesfaw 2012, Burnham et al. 2013). The insufficient or inequitable distribution of funds from REDD+ in tropical-forested nations may serve to entrench or perpetuate existing inequalities in forest-dependent communities. A lack of attention paid to benefit-sharing in REDD+ policy is likely to lead to effectiveness, as well as equity, concerns: there is a “substantial risk that high expectations at the local level will not be satisfied, leading to disenchantment and perhaps even rejection of the scheme” (Angelsen and McNeill 2012).

It is argued that the multiple land-uses of the forest for the rural poor may be somewhat compromised, in pursuit of forest conservation targets (Beymer, Farris and Bassett 2012, McAfee 2014, Paladino 2011). Even if benefits are sufficiently and equitably distributed at the local and sub-national level, there remain concerns that financial mechanisms cannot adequately replace the communities’ multiple land-uses of the forests and forest resources (Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017). This becomes especially pertinent when considering the systemic poverty and food insecurity in many rural areas within tropical forested nations. Intensification of agriculture is seen to play a key role in resolving this conflict, but McAfee (2011) critiques the role of industrialised farming in contributing to global GHG emissions itself. If there is to be truly a ‘win-win-win’ in REDD+, alternative sources of income and livelihoods (i.e. non-timber forest products) will need to be introduced on a large-scale in forest-dependent communities.

In the most extreme cases, the conflict between REDD+ and human rights has resulted in local communities being forcibly removed or marginalised from the forested land (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, McAfee 2014, Lovera 2009). The potential for land-grabbing associated with REDD+ is proposed to be exacerbated by the poor land tenure rights often found in tropical forested nations (Schroeder and McDermott 2014, Burnham et al. 2013). REDD+ could also involve a more subtle, top-down control of resources, where although communities can remain on the forested land, they may be formally restricted in accessing resources which are

necessary for their livelihoods (Ervin 2012, Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017).

Due to the systemic design of REDD+, whereby funding, policy-formation and implementation is proposed to go through *national* channels, there are concerns that it will engender a more centralised approach to forest management in the Global South (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, McAfee 2014, Larson and Ribot 2012). This is likely to result in power and control of forests shifting from the local and sub-national levels to the national and international levels. The centralisation of forest management has led to concerns over 'elite capture' and limited flows of benefits from REDD+ to the affected forested communities (Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017, Larson and Ribot 2012, Turnhout et al. 2017). Indeed, state control over forest resources has often been associated with the perpetuation of local-level injustices and the marginalisation of local-level actors (Forsyth and Sikor 2013, Burnham et al. 2013, Ribot 2010).

The top-down formulation of REDD+ also ties in with procedural concerns of climate justice scholars. Indeed, current REDD+ research suggests that there is a lack of participation from affected local communities in decision-making, meaning that their interests and needs are not sufficiently recognised (Korhonen-Kurki et al. 2012, Burnham et al. 2013, Larson and Ribot 2012). While REDD+ seek to mitigate procedural concerns through protecting and supporting community rights to participate in decision-making, there are criticisms over the extent to which the communities sufficiently participate in the fundamental REDD+ decision-making in practice (Forsyth and Sikor 2013, Larson and Ribot 2012).

It is argued that local voices, expressing local concerns and viewpoints, may become "overshadowed by global and national interests" in a centralised REDD+ system (Larson and Ribot 2012: 9). Larson and Ribot (2012) highlight the strengths of 'democratic decentralisation' and the need for community-level engagement in the REDD+ decision-making process through representative local government or non-state institutions. Thus, it is advocated that there needs to be greater participation and inclusion from multiple actors in the REDD+ decision-making processes at multiple levels of governance (Korhonen-Kurki et al 2012, Burnham et al. 2013, Forsyth and Sikor 2013).

However, as previously highlighted, despite its centralised structures, REDD+ has tended to emerge more often at the project level in reality (Angelsen and McNeill 2012). This has aligned with a global trend towards decentralised and participatory approaches towards forest governance, notably Participatory Forest Management (PFM) (Lund et al. 2017, Corbera et al. 2017, Blaikie 2006). Indeed, in recent years, PFM has emerged as a local-level vehicle for REDD+ implementation (Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017). In contrast with government-owned forestry, PFM is a bottom-up, decentralised approach to forest management, which involves handing over enhanced management rights and responsibilities for the forests to the communities (Agrawal and Angelsen 2012, Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017). This tends to be implemented through local and international NGOs.

REDD+ scholars argue that PFM is more likely to result in the benefits of forest management being retained at the local level, while simultaneously increasing the participation and empowerment of community actors, highlighting the intimate link between procedural and distributive dimensions of justice (Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017, Ribot 2011). Thus, a decentralised and participatory approach to REDD+ is proposed to be conducive to a more equitable *and* effective approach, in which communities are more likely to protect the forests if they have greater control over the forested land and receive a higher proportion of the benefits from the forest resources. There is growing evidence that community-controlled forests can result in multiple benefits: environmental sustainability, alongside livelihoods improvement (Agrawal and Angelsen 2012).

However, it is debated by scholars the extent to which REDD+ is compatible with PFM (Agrawal and Angelsen 2012, Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017, Larrazábal et al. 2012). Despite the two clearly sharing key goals in relation to forest conservation, there are nevertheless concerns over whether PFM can be used as local-level vehicle for REDD+ (Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017). For one, there may exist fundamental conflicts between the carbon-centric aims of REDD+ governance, driven by global interests, and the livelihoods-based needs of PFM, driven by local interests. Although REDD+ activity has taken place more often at the project level, there are still expectations that the structures and funding flows of REDD+ will ultimately be national-based and top-down in focus (Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017, Angelsen and McNeill 2012).



Despite such seemingly inherent constraints, it is argued that PFM should be used as a REDD+ implementation channel (Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017, Agrawal and Angelsen 2012). This is primarily advocated in order to advance the needs, rights and interests of the forest-dependent communities in the outcomes and processes of REDD+ policy. In particular, to ensure that benefits effectively flow to local level, Agrawal and Angelsen (2012) highlight the importance of implementing community-led carbon monitoring as part of REDD+ results-based payments.

Safeguards in the international REDD+ architecture are expected to address procedural justice concerns; however, the extent to which there is actual participation in the significant elements of REDD+ is questioned by climate justice scholars (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, Ribot 2011, Forsyth and Sikor 2013). Despite reported increases in participation and enhanced community rights in REDD+ policy, it is suggested that local smallholders and poor often struggle to have any significant democratic power. Here, climate justice scholars offer that decentralisation *alone* may not necessarily lead to enhancement of community-level decision-making and empowerment (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, Ribot 2011). There are factors other than decentralisation which may impact on the distribution of REDD+ benefits at the local level, e.g. the checks and balances of sub-national or local government (Larson and Ribot 2012).

Moreover, where there is participation from forest-dependent communities on paper, the broader agenda of REDD+ may already have been set before the local people have any power in decision-making. Policy-makers may conceptualise forests as carbon sinks, rather than as necessary ecosystems for maintaining the community's livelihoods (Forsyth and Sikor 2013, Schroeder and McDermott 2014). This ties in with recognition concerns of REDD+ scholars, where REDD+ policy is argued to reflect the globalisation of forest management and represent dominant international interests, rather than the culturally-specific interests of the affected forest-dependent communities (Forsyth and Sikor 2013).

Accordingly, it is asserted that the globalised framings of tropical forest management mask the social constructions of the forest and the diversity of concerns at multiple levels of REDD+ governance (Martin et al. 2014, Forsyth and Sikor 2013, Sikor et al. 2014). Indeed, Martin et al. (2014: 173) assert that, "particular universal definitions of

forests reflect particular values and have historically been linked to the production of injustices, especially for more marginalised forest-adjacent communities”. Ribot (2011: 9) suggests that in order to enhance actual participation and ‘democratic representation’ in REDD+ decision-making processes, forest-dependent communities need to be handed “the discretionary power to make significant and meaningful choices”.

While justice is seen to be achieved through a fair distribution of the benefits among REDD+ policy actors, there is insufficient deliberation of ‘what’ is to be distributed, with communities’ perception of their environment effectively marginalised, i.e. ‘misrecognition’ (Forsyth and Sikor 2013, Moss 2016, Upton 2014). There has thus far been insufficient exploration of the culturally-mediated local-level perceptions, realities and impacts of REDD+, as well as the extent to which the dominant, policy-led understandings of the forest are appropriate for specific contexts (Martin et al 2013, Sikor et al 2014).

Indeed, more broadly, climate justice concerns in extant literature tend to be primarily distributive in nature, with procedural and distributive dimensions of climate justice often marginalised, perhaps reflecting tensions between local norms and globalised ethics (Schlosberg 2004, Martin et al. 2013, Sikor et al. 2014). Accordingly, there is an urgency to examine multiple understandings and values of forests, considering alternative viewpoints, as part of a pluralist conception of justice (Martin et al. 2013, Sikor et al. 2014). This aligns with calls from climate justice scholars for indigenous understandings of climate change to be greater appreciated and more culturally-mediated analyses of the Anthropocene to be conducted (Whyte 2017, Tolia-Kelly 2016).

#### **2.4.5 A Multiscalar and Climate Justice-led Analysis of REDD+**

Thus, REDD+ scholarship has emerged in recent years, seeking to better understand the implications and impacts of the framework on multiple scales of governance. The primary focus of REDD+ research thus far has been the effects of REDD+ at the community level in tropical-forested nations. Concerns have been raised over both the retaining of benefits at the local-level and the effective and actual participation of the forest-dependent communities in the design of REDD+ (Sikor et al. 2014, Martin et al. 2013, Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012).

However, there is a dearth of research which considers REDD+ specifically from a climate justice perspective. REDD+ is a complex and multi-faceted climate policy framework which is understood to be steeped in justice concerns, suggesting that analyses of REDD+ initiatives would be wise to take account of these (Schroeder and McDermott 2014, Okereke and Dooley 2010, Martin et al. 2014). Indeed, Schroeder and McDermott (2014: 6) assert that, “REDD+ has become inextricably entangled in fundamental debates about justice and equity from local to global levels”. The extent to which REDD+ achieves synergies at local, national and international levels will be largely driven by the ways in which justice is dealt with in REDD+ policy and negotiations (Okereke and Dooley 2010).

Scholarship has considered the climate justice implications which arise from the pursuit of climate change mitigation (Ervine 2013, Okereke and Dooley 2010, Burnham et al. 2013). It is understood that the responses to climate change have uneven responses and have as much potential to perpetuate injustices and inequalities as the impacts of climate change itself (Burnham et al. 2013, St. Clair 2014). However, with notable exceptions (Sikor et al. 2014, Okereke 2008, Okereke and Dooley 2010), there remains a lack of empirical research which explores the conceptions of justice which underpin and justify climate change policies.

The analysis in this research builds upon the community-centric critiques of REDD+ to put forward a specifically justice-led and multiscalar analysis of the initiative. It extends the previous justice-centric analyses of REDD+ and international forest conservation initiatives (Okereke and Dooley 2010, Page 2016, Armstrong 2016). The research questions whether REDD+ can form part of a ‘just transition’, through an empirical analysis of the Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ partnership. More specifically, I draw from Okereke’s (2008) justice-led discourse analysis of climate change policy texts, which I extend to incorporate the community discourse present in Ethiopia.

In this research, I make use of a multiscalar analytical model to critically examine and assess the discourse in the Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ partnership (see Figure below). In doing so, I respond to the broader calls for a multiscalar analysis of climate justice (Barrett 2013) and the dearth of multiscalar analyses in REDD+

research, which has thus far been driven by a focus on isolated, individual levels of study. Notably, the community-level issues in REDD+ have not generally been understood in relation to broader contexts and structures (Chomba et al. 2016). A multiscalar analysis of REDD+ is necessary given its fundamental structure, which interconnects actors on multiple levels of governance (Korhonen-Kurki et al. 2012, Schroeder and McDermott 2014, Okereke and Dooley 2010).

Empirical analysis of REDD+ discourse through a multiscalar and justice-led framework enables researchers to better understand the alignment or divergences of climate justice norms between and across scales of REDD+ governance (Sikor et al. 2014). Considering justice to be intractably plural in nature (Martin et al. 2014, Schlosberg 2004, Sen 1999), this research seeks to examine and extrapolate the justice norms that underpin and justify REDD+ discourses, across and between scales of governance, how these are constructed in the policy and community discourses and how these may underpin, support and justify current REDD+ policy directives. It potentially allows us to better understand the underlying reasons behind conflicts in international forest governance (Martin et al. 2013, Myers et al. 2018). As Harvey (1996: 398) notes, "...conflict is not between just and unjust solutions but between different conceptions of justice".

Accordingly, a multiscalar and justice-led analysis of REDD+ recognises the need to better understand the views and perspectives of multiple actors at multiple levels of REDD+ governance and seeks to respond to such questions as: *How are justice norms constructed in the REDD+ policy discourse and what implications does this have for current and future REDD+ practices? How do the identified conceptions of justice in REDD+ policy discourse synergise and diverge across and between multiple scales and actors? How and why have some conceptions of justice become dominant in policy discourse and others become marginalised? How appropriate are dominant viewpoints for particular contexts?*

A multi-scalar and justice-led analysis of REDD+ is operationalised using the following framework (see Figure 2.5 below). In seeking to interrogate the scalar dynamics of (climate) justice norms in REDD+, I build upon previous work by Schlosberg (2004) and Barrett (2013) to propose a multi-dimensional and multiscalar framework. Here, I seek to understand dynamics in procedural, distributive and

recognition dimensions of justice at local, national and international scales of REDD+ governance using a number of criteria that has emerged based on existing understandings of REDD+ and climate justice. For example, in interrogating distributive justice at the international level of REDD+, I am interested in the 'distribution of REDD+ benefits and burdens' and 'the apportioning of responsibility for climate change'.

Thus, using this framework, I seek to expand understanding of the multi-dimensional (climate) justice conceptions that emerge at the three scales of REDD+, incorporating state actors, multilateral institutions, NGOs working on REDD+ internationally and locally, and forest-dependent communities. The specific actors examined in this thesis will be outlined in Chapter 4. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that this task will be challenging given the complexity of interactions, funding flows and organisational forms across scales of REDD+ governance. Accordingly, I seek to reflexively recognise and confront these challenges and complexities throughout my fieldwork and analysis.

	International	National	Sub-national/Local
<b>Distributive</b>	The distribution of REDD+ benefits and burdens.	The distribution of REDD+ benefits and burdens.	The distribution of REDD+ benefits and burdens.
	The apportioning of responsibility for climate change.	The functioning of the payment distribution mechanism for REDD+.	The functioning of the payment distribution mechanism for REDD+.
<b>Procedural</b>	The participation of the Global South in the design of REDD+ policies and strategies.	The involvement of sub-national organisations and groups in national REDD+ decision-making.	The involvement of forested communities in REDD+ decision-making.
	The representation of tropical-forested nations' interests in REDD+ agreements and decision-making.	The representation of regional interests in national-level REDD+ policy design.	The representation of community interests in regional and national-level REDD+ policy design.
			The extent to which REDD+ strategies have been pre-defined prior to any sort of community participation.
<b>Recognition</b>	The prioritisation of sub-regional and community-level cultural, social and ethnic distinctions (and distinctive values and needs)	The prioritisation of sub-regional and community-level cultural, social and ethnic distinctions (and distinctive values needs)	The prioritisation of community-level cultural, social and ethnic distinctions (and distinctive values and needs).

**Figure 2.5: A Multiscalar Justice Framework for Evaluating and Assessing REDD+**

## **2.5 The Depoliticisation of Climate Change in Policy Discourse**

There is a consensus that climate change is an issue which is politically situated (Giddens 2009). Here, efforts to combat climate change do not occur in a political vacuum and are strongly contingent on North-South relations and “the highly disparate positions that countries occupy in the global hierarchy of economic and political power” (Roberts and Parks 2010: 68). In particular, the COP negotiations are often driven heavily by political bargaining and power relations. On the other hand, climate change is considered by critical scholars to be simultaneously *depoliticised* as an issue (St. Clair 2010, Berglez and Olausson 2013, Swyngedouw 2010).

The concept of depoliticisation has been theorised and outlined in recent critical literature on climate change policy (Swyngedouw 2010, St. Clair 2010, De Goede and Randalls 2009). Here, it is proposed that the underlying political tensions and debates of climate change (and its implications) are being veiled in current international agreements and policies, allowing climate change to become a technical issue, rather than one which is socio-politically or historically aligned (St. Clair 2010). The depoliticisation of climate change is proposed to have been carried out in multiple ways.

Firstly, current international climate change policy tends to be top-down, scientific and technocratic in nature, managed by multilateral institutions, such as the UNFCCC (Hulme 2009, Glover 2006, St. Clair 2010). Highly politicised issues in climate change, such as burden-sharing, are written about in neutral, technical language. The scientific nature of climate change discourse is seen as being not socio-politically, or culturally, embedded, as well as abstract, where its apparent neutrality acts as a form of depoliticisation (O’Brien, St. Clair and Kristofferson 2010, Okereke and Coventry 2016, Glover 2006).

However, it is the ‘apparent’ nature of the neutrality of climate science and policy which is crucial here; the depoliticising techniques often mask underlying deeply politicising and ideological stances. On the surface, there is an assumed clear demarcation between science and policy in climate change. Politically neutral, objective climate science is seen to inform, and make recommendations to policy-makers, evident in the separation between the IPCC and the UNFCCC (Lahn and

Sundqvist 2017). However, in reality, the relationship between climate science and policy is two-way, hybrid and intimate in nature (Kenis and Mathijs 2014, Lahn and Sundqvist 2017). Critical scholars have debated the emergence of 'post-normal science' in relation to climate change, whereby climate science can no longer be seen as the product of an objective, neutral process (Hulme 2009, Glover 2006).

Indeed, Lahn and Sundqvist (2017) note that the IPCC's scientific work is often shaped or driven by politically-motivated objectives, whereby the quantification and simplification of climate science for policy use may mask underlying contested political debates. Complex issues in climate change, including how to distribute emissions burdens globally, are often reduced to quantifiable, scientific language and data (e.g. the 2°C target), in order to mobilise policy and facilitate governance-building (Lahn and Sundqvist 2017, Okereke and Coventry 2016). For instance, specific emissions reductions targets were suggested for Annex I countries (25-40%) and a broader 'substantial deviation from the baseline' for Non-Annex I countries by the IPCC. There are clear political motives behind the IPCC's selection of these targets, acting as a deviation from 'pure science' (Lahn and Sundqvist 2017). Thus, here, the quantification and simplification of climate science acts to mask the true extent of the debate around climate burdens, which is complex, contested and steeped in justice implications.

Secondly, it is argued that climate change is depoliticised in the dominant policy discourse through the 'globalising' of the issue, in which climate change is framed as a borderless, universal-scale problem (Hulme 2009, Paterson and Stripple 2007, Adger et al. 2011). This is manifest in the international climate regime, considering its focus on building international frameworks and setting global targets, as well as in broader climate change research. Here, climate change is framed as a global-level problem, a 'shared catastrophe', which implicates *all* of humanity, in the Anthropocene (Chakrabarty 2009, Castree 2014).

A universal-level framing of climate change can serve to mask differentiation in terms of nation's climate burdens, responsibilities and obligations (Tolia-Kelly 2016, Adger et al. 2011). In utilising such a globalising discourse, it is implied that each person or nation has equal responsibility or vulnerability from climate change (Roberts and Parks 2010). Acknowledging the injustices of climate change, Smith (2007: 208)



responds that: “There is no ‘common future’. It is not global and equal; it is global and unequal”.

The globalising tendencies in climate change policy has been questioned by critical scholars (Smith 2007, Paavola and Adger 2006, Hulme 2009). Here, the ‘global’ is always tied up with power relations and dominant world views: “embodies a particular social order, complete with institutions and ways of doing things” (Smith 2007: 200). This forms part of a proposed ‘Westernisation’ of climate knowledge and discourse. The technical discourse often used in climate change policy is specifically Western in nature and marginalises other ways of thinking (Paavola and Adger 2006, Hulme 2009). Although presented as seemingly neutral and ‘global’ in nature, the dominant climate policy discourse is proposed to mask a particular underlying ideology: “neoliberal vulgate” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000).

In addition, a globalising climate change discourse acts to ‘delocalise’ the phenomenon, removing climate knowledge from its social and cultural settings (Brace and Geoghegan 2010, Hulme 2008a, Tolia-Kelly 2016). Here, the Anthropocene discourse is argued to erode the culturally-mediated and ‘lay’ understandings of climate change (Tolia-Kelly 2016). Critical scholars propose that the top-down nature of the global climate framework re-enforces the expertise and elitism of climate policy-makers and scientists, rendering the ‘lay’ knowledge of local regions inferior (Pokorny et al. 2013, Beck 2010, Barnett 2010).

Indeed, constructed ‘expert’ knowledge is argued to play a key role in the depoliticisation and decontextualisation of climate change policy discourse (St. Clair 2010, Gasper, Portocarrero and St. Clair 2012). Here, experts adopt a superior role in climate action, whereby purely technical matters can only be problematised and ‘corrected’ by those with relevant knowledge and expertise (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000). This aligns with Dryzek’s (1997: 63) understanding of ‘administrative rationalism’ in environmental policies: “the problem-solving discourse which emphasises the role of the expert rather than the citizen”, which “stresses social relationships of hierarchy rather than competition” and is argued to be antithetical to political discussion and debate.

There is subsequently a call by critics for geographical work to be re-located within climate change; for climate knowledge to be repositioned at ground level, where

*local* understandings of climate change can be greater valued (Brace and Geoghegan 2010, Hulme 2008a, Paavola and Adger 2006). This would incorporate an enhanced appreciation of the unique, culturally-mediated and localised place-based impacts of climate change, which tend to be side-lined in the current policy discourse (Tolia-Kelly 2016, Adger et al. 2011). Thus, critical climate change scholars argue that when formulating responses to the climate crisis, policy-makers should take increased consideration of community-level, place-embedded understandings of climate change, aided by the incorporation of local and indigenous voices into the policy arena (Barnett 2010, Smith 2007).

In the international climate regime, there is an acknowledgement that the Global South is both more vulnerable to, and less responsible for, climate change. This is primarily evidenced in the UNFCCC's established principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility' and the division of global climate obligations into Annex I and Non-Annex I countries (Okereke and Coventry 2016, Lahn and Sundqvist 2017). However, while differentiation is understood and accepted as part of the international climate regime, it is nevertheless depoliticised to an extent.

For one thing, there is a proposed homogenisation of parties within the two broad blocs of countries, which serves to mask and local and regional distinctions (Okereke and Coventry, 2016, Paterson and Stripple 2007, Maljean-Dubois 2016). Okereke and Coventry (2016) notes that China and small island states tend to have radically different views on climate change and climate action, despite both being collectively labelled as 'Non-Annex I' countries. A binary, territorial approach climate change results in climate knowledge and policy becoming somewhat divorced from local and regional realities (Paterson and Stripple 2007).

Moreover, differentiation and vulnerability in the climate regime are not critically understood in relation to the surrounding socio-political context or broader power structures (St. Clair 2010, Featherstone 2013, Burnham et al. 2013). Here, the Global South has become 'rendered vulnerable' from climate change impacts, whereby vulnerability is treated as a purely scientific concept, removed from its surrounding socio-political conditions, e.g. poverty, unequal resource access (Manzo 2009, Burnham et al. 2013, St. Clair 2010). Indeed, the act of 'rendering vulnerable' can be linked to colonial discourse, where the 'South' is constructed as "a

homogenised, culturally undifferentiated mass of humanity” (Bankoff 2001: 28). Manzo (2009) proposes that the underlying political factors of *why* there is vulnerability needs to be addressed to sufficiently understand the geography of climate change.

Thirdly, the revival of ‘climate determinism’ and the apocalyptic potential of climate change are identified as further ways in which climate change is depoliticised in policy discourse (Hulme 2011, De Goede and Randalls 2009). Here, climate becomes the overriding factor which predicts social, economic and political futures (e.g. through predictive models of climate) (Berglez and Olausson 2013). Hulme (2011: 249) explains that this is reductionist, marginalising broader socio-political factors, where “climate has regained some of its former power for ‘explaining’ the performance of environments, peoples and societies”.

Here, it can be proposed that an apocalyptic framing of climate change and fear of an unknown future has depoliticising effects (Kenis and Mathijs 2014, De Goede and Randalls 2009). Broader, more fundamental political debates (and implicated policy-based solutions) are obscured in order to put in place precautionary measures which tend to be technical and non-critical in nature (Badiou 2008). De Goede and Randalls (2009) argue that a climate-determined, depoliticised debate enables a “smuggling through” of policies which are left uncritically examined. Kenis and Mathijs (2014: 152) concur that, “when fear becomes the overwhelming sentiment, the space for asking fundamental political questions about our current society is strongly restrained”.

Fourthly, the depoliticisation of climate change is proposed to occur through the dominance of neoliberal-led, market-based forms of climate governance in the previous two decades (Swyngedouw 2010, Hajer 1995, Dryzek, 1997). This forms part of what Hajer (1995) identified as ‘ecological modernisation’, or the ‘neoliberalisation of nature’ (Castree 2008): a restructuring and reorienting of the neoliberal, market-led system, where the environment is integrated into production and consumption cycles. This is a reformist, rather than radical approach, which treats the climate crisis as a mechanistic fault that needs to be corrected (Dryzek 1997). As a result, economic growth is seen to be achievable alongside environmental sustainability, i.e. ‘green growth’ (Hajer 1995, Ervine 2012).

Critical climate change scholars propose that market-based responses to climate change are driven by entrenched interests and do not sufficiently question underlying systemic or structural factors. Solutions which embed themselves in a neoliberal ideology are arguably addressing the symptoms rather than the causes of climate change (Ervine 2012, Paterson and P-Laberge 2018, Charkiewicz 2009). Indeed, it has been broadly proposed that ecological modernisation or market-based responses to the climate crisis are paradoxical, given that climate change is understood to be deeply rooted in the expansionary logics and dynamics of capitalism (Felli 2014, O'Hara 2009, Klein 2014). Indeed, it has been suggested that we now exist in the 'Capitalocene', rather than the Anthropocene, a counter-concept which "specifically foregrounds capitalist modes of political economy (and their attachment to fossil fuels) as drivers of impoverished ecologies" (Collard, Dempsey and Sundberg 2015: 327).

Relatedly, Swyngedouw (2010: 217) proposes the notion of 'post-political populism', whereby climate change has become a "terrain beyond dispute". Here, the dominant neoliberal ideological underpinning in current climate change discourse is unquestionable and inevitable (Swyngedouw 2010, Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000). Indeed, it is argued that, rather than critical engaging with the relevant structural and socio-political factors, the 'enemy' in climate change is externalised as CO<sub>2</sub> in ecological modernisation discourse, which can be addressed using technical measures (Berglez and Olausson 2013, Swyngedouw 2010). Swyngedouw (2010: 222) summarises: "Problems therefore are not the result of the 'system', of unevenly distributed power relations...but are blamed on an outsider", for which the solution is internal e.g. international carbon trading.

The 'post-political condition' is characterised by manufactured consensus, in which contested spaces or debates, particularly those which are politically or ethically motivated, are somewhat notably absent in climate change policy (Kenis and Mathijs 2014, Swyngedouw 2007). The exclusion of complex debate and critical questioning is tied in with what Wade (1996) labels as "the art of paradigm maintenance". In addition, political considerations of power relations, conflicts or inequalities may be rendered invisible, leading to narrowly defined, bounded climate policy outcomes (Kenis and Mathijs 2014, Swyngedouw 2007). A technocratic debate in international climate change negotiations masks the prior political questions and "the critical

questioning of the predominant socio-political order” (Berglez and Olausson 2013: 57).

In the post-political era, it is proposed that disagreement remains possible in climate change policy debate, but only within the current *modus operandi*, where critical questioning is fixed within the contours of the status quo (Swyngedouw 2013, Berglez and Olausson 2013, Kenis and Mathijs 2014). Such bounded debate aligns with Ranciere’s (2004) concept of ‘the partition of the perceptible’, in which certain, radical ideas are rendered ‘unsayable’ inside the partition and are therefore ultimately excluded or silenced. In order to challenge the dominant discourse in climate change policy, it is argued that we need to make visible what is invisible and disrupt the ‘partition of the perceptible’ (Swyngedouw 2013: 2).

Concurrent with the idea of the ‘post-political’, there is considered to be a ‘rendering technical’ of climate change in policy discourse, in which contested debates and issues, are masked, or avoided altogether (Murray Li 2007, Myers et al. 2018, St. Clair, 2010). A technical construction of complex, fundamentally political issues shifts attention away from the underlying structural and socio-political conditions and acts to marginalise more radical viewpoints (McEwan and Bek 2009, Klooster 2005). In climate change policy discourse, this aligns with a reformist approach, enabling only marginal change to occur and diverting attention away from the underlying causes (St. Clair 2010, Hajer 1995).

As climate change is rendered technical, barriers to its responses in the Global South are seen to be internal to the relevant country (e.g. corruption, inadequate infrastructure), rather than considering wider power relations or inequalities (St. Clair 2010, Hajer 1995, Glover 2006). Indeed, St. Clair (2010) suggests that climate change has been constructed as a technical (rather than a human, political or ethical) problem in the same way that development has in the last fifty years, where obstacles to growth are defined as ‘internal deficiencies’.

The internalising and rendering technical of issues in the Global South emphasises the dominant role of the external expert (Murray Li 2007, McEwan and Bek 2009, Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000). Here, the problem and solution are intimately connected, as part of a technical assemblage (Murray Li 2007). Notably, critical development scholars argue that technical interventions enveloped in ‘anti-politics’

seek to remove poverty and development from their broader socio-political context, including the role of history, power relations and underlying development paradigms, as constructed 'experts' recast contested issues in neutral, scientific language (Murray Li 2007, Ferguson 1994, Lawson and St. Clair 2009).

Accordingly, Murray Li (2007: 7) asserts that "questions that are rendered technical are simultaneously rendered non-political", whereby a 'rendering technical' of climate change in policy discourse results in a dehistoricised and decontextualised approach, which does not question systemic values (St Clair 2010, Glover 2006). However, the success of schemes which depoliticise and render technical inherently political and contested issues in absorbing critiques is not certain and should not be assumed (Murray Li 2007).

### **2.5.1 Climate Justice and Depoliticisation of REDD+ Policy**

Current research on depoliticisation in the sphere of climate change has tended to focus on the masking of the socio-political, ideological and systemic conditions which are proposed to be at the heart of the climate crisis (Swyngedouw 2010, De Goede and Randalls 2009, Berglez and Olausson 2013). These scholars critically examine the causal factors behind climate change (among other perceived environmental crises) and the political sphere in which it is embedded. Scholarly work on depoliticisation has been critical of the manufactured consensus in climate change politics which has masked, and rendered technical, contested issues, particularly those which pertain to broader inequalities or climate burdens (Swyngedouw 2010, De Goede and Randalls 2009, St. Clair 2010).

However, depoliticisation has yet to be examined in specific relation to 'climate justice', a movement which has been partly driven by the need to challenge the established political order and critique neoliberal solutions to the climate crisis (Paterson and P-Laberge 2018). Indeed, as previously discussed (See section 2.4.3), a key strand of the climate justice drive has been a contestation of the inequalities and injustices tied up with neoliberal climate governance. Despite the significant overlap between the two, climate justice and depoliticisation have thus far been considered separately in extant literature. The distribution of climate burdens has been examined in limited work on depoliticisation (e.g. St. Clair 2010, Lahn and Sundvist 2017), but without specific connections made to climate justice theories.

Thus, this thesis aims to bridge the gap between the two bodies of literature by examining the extent to which the climate justice debates in REDD+ policy are masked or depoliticised.

Furthermore, current scholarly work on depoliticisation has been largely abstract or conceptual to date (e.g. Swyngedouw 2010, De Goede and Randalls 2009); there is a dearth of empirical research which examines how climate change policy in practice acts to veil contested political issues. This research responds to such a gap through a critical discourse analysis of the Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ partnership, enabling an empirical examination of the extent to which depoliticisation practices occur in the REDD+ policy texts. In doing so, the research builds upon scholarship that has critically examined the 'anti-politics' and technical frameworks that inhabit REDD+ and international conservation interventions (Myers et al. 2018, Buscher 2010).

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Philosophical, Theoretical and Epistemological Assumptions**

This project uses Critical Discourse Analysis as its primary methodological tool. This is detailed below, in terms of its design and implementation; however, it is first necessary to outline the philosophical, theoretical and epistemological assumptions behind the methodological approach and methods used in this thesis. In order for a research project to be fully comprehended, including its analysis and findings, it is crucial to make the reader aware of the underlying philosophies and theoretical approaches at the heart of the research (Crotty 1998). Here, differing philosophies or worldviews govern the nature of research and how knowledge can be accessed (Blaikie 2007, Creswell 2007).

This chapter takes the advice of Crotty (1998), in drawing links between the four elements of a research projects: the epistemology, the theoretical perspective, the methodology and methods. While epistemology refers to the multiple ways in which knowledge can be accessed, theoretical perspectives concern the philosophical assumptions that underlie one's methodology: "a way of looking at the world and making sense of it" (Crotty 1998: 9). Here, the divide is not between qualitative and quantitative research, but rather between competing epistemological and theoretical frameworks. Clear linkages can be made between the four elements of the research project (see Figure 3.1). The methodology chapter is broadly structured according to these four elements.



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**Figure 3.1: Links between the Epistemology, Theoretical Perspective, Methodology and Methods in this Research (Crotty 1998)**

### **3.2 Constructionism**

This project adopts a constructionist epistemology, which considers that meaning comes into existence not through discovery but *construction*. Constructionist scholars propose that the ways in which people understand the world are historically, socially and culturally mediated (Crotty 1998). Thus, in contrast with objectivism, this position assumes multiple constructions and interpretations of subjective, social realities. Crotty (1998: 35) defines constructionism as the following:

*“...the view that all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and the world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context”*

In this research, constructions of climate justice by the multiple REDD+ actors are examined, taking into consideration the view that different actors construct different meanings of (1) climate justice and justice more broadly (2) REDD+ and efforts to combat climate change and (3) forests and the value of them. Understandings of the value of forests and the role that they play are likely to vary dependent on the positionality of the actor, in line with their social, cultural and historical contexts.

Indeed, Crotty (1998) is keen to highlight that it is not just our social world which is constructed, imbued with multiple meanings, but our natural world, too.

Thus, in this thesis, it is assumed that, rather than there being universal ‘truths’ waiting ‘out there’ to be objectively uncovered, knowledge is partial, situated and embedded in subjective realities (Couzens and McCarthy 1994, Crotty 1998). In doing so, the research avoids the ‘God trick’, the notion that it is possible to conduct research at a ‘distance’ as part of a disembodied viewpoint, amid claims for objectivity and universality. Rather, it is advocated that researchers should self-reflexively consider their own positionality as socially-situated actors who are unavoidably imbued in power relations and clearly articulate these (Agger 1991, Dowling 2010, Rose 1997) (see Section 3.7.3 Methodological Reflections).

In this thesis, two theoretical perspectives are made use of in informing and driving the methodological bases of the project, which can be both seen as being driven by a constructionist epistemology and are complementary to a large extent: critical theory and postcolonial theory. These two perspectives are outlined and discussed in turn, considering their specific influence on the project.

### **3.3 Critical Theory**

Critical theory originated in the 1930s ‘Frankfurt School’ as a post-Marxist theory, aiming to challenge existing theoretical assumptions in the sciences and social sciences. Early critical theorists rejected the dominant, positivist forms of research which sought to uncover objective ‘truths’ that were perceived to simply reflect reality (Crotty 1998). Critical theory is largely driven by a constructionist epistemology, although there are elements of other epistemologies present, too (Morrow and Brown 1994, Blaikie 2007).

Although there is significant heterogeneity and incoherency among critical theorists and there has been evidenced a continual evolution of the theory in the ensuing years, there are nevertheless a number of key features of critical theory which can be identified (Crotty 1998). Critical theory evidences some elements which could also be attributed to interpretivist school of thought, whereby the social construction of reality and the partiality of knowledge is assumed, taking into account social, cultural and historical factors (Creswell 2007, Crotty 1998). The use of critical theory

allows an examination of climate justice within a wider, historical and socio-political milieu, appropriate considering the complexity of the subject matter. Similarly, the critical researcher adopts a subjective, socially-situated position in seeking knowledge (Agger 1991).

However, critical theory differentiates itself from interpretivist viewpoints, through its capacity to challenge existing, assumed truths and propensity to reveal power relations, as part of a self-reflexive, critical process (Habermas 1986, Rush 2004). As Crotty (1998: 56) states, the key divergence between interpretivism and critical theory is, “between a researcher that seeks to understand and one that challenges”. The ‘critical’ in critical theory reflects its underlying aims of not only challenging the status quo and unmasking existing power structures and ideologies in society, but also enabling social change, in offering alternative spaces and ways of thinking (Couzens and McCarthy 1994, Agger 1991). Thus, there is an emancipatory function for critical theory (Creswell 2003).

The broad aims of critical theorists align to a large extent with those of climate justice scholars: to challenge the existing institutional consensus on climate change and to enable and instigate the development of a more just and equitable international climate framework. In the same way as critical theory, a climate justice framework does not aim to simply critique, but also affirmatively envision alternative, emancipatory action (and ways of thinking). Indeed, critical theorists often specifically set out to achieve social justice of some sort (Anderson 2011, Crotty 1998).

In addition, in line with critical theory, this project takes account of the power relations inherent in climate change politics on a multiscalar level, whereby there is consideration of *whose* conceptions of justice dominate in international climate action and *whose* are marginalised. In contrast with a positivist approach, critical theory is a school of thought which views theory and practice as intrinsically linked, acknowledging the power of discourse in constructing or shaping material reality (Rush 2004, Blaikie 2007, Crotty 1998). Indeed, in this project, there are assumed real-world, material implications of the constructions of climate justice in the REDD+ discourse.

### **3.4 Postcolonialism**

This thesis is also informed by postcolonialism, a theoretical perspective that has developed since the 1970s, inspired by Marxism, as well as poststructuralism.

Postcolonialism refers to a study of the discourses, representations and practices about the world, which examine the temporal continuities of these from the colonial period (Said 1978, McEwan 2008). Indeed, McEwan (2008: 17) defines postcolonialism as, “a condition or a set of approaches or theories that have become ways of criticising the material and discursive legacies of colonialism that are still apparent in the world today and still shape geopolitical and economic relations between North and South”.

Postcolonial theory offers a challenge to dominant discourses and representations which emanate from the North and are bound up with power relations. Colonial discourses are seen to be imbued with unexamined and implicit assumptions about the nature of the world, specifically the relationship between North and South.

Postcolonial scholars argue that while it is implicitly assumed that there is a binary distinction between the ‘developing’ and ‘developed’ world (part of a discursive practice known as ‘worlding’), in practice, the two are intimately bound up with one another, often through unequal practices (Said 1978, McEwan 2008). Thus, postcolonialism acts as a critique of assumed representations of the North and South, as well as attempting to radically rebalance global power dynamics and provide a voice to marginalised and oppressed groups globally (McEwan 2008).

Postcolonial thought proves to be relevant to the enquiries of this research, whereby climate justice theories are informed by historic and current North-South relations. The emphasis in postcolonialism on the constitutive nature of discourse is apt for the inquiries of this thesis, which is driven by the material, policy-led manifestations of ideas. However, while North-South relations are evidently at the centre of climate justice concerns, these have yet to be viewed from a specifically postcolonial perspective. Thus, this thesis attempts to examine the constructions of climate justice in REDD+ policy discourse through a partially postcolonial sense, specifically in relation to depoliticisation.

### **3.5 Critical Discourse Analysis**

In this thesis, discourse analysis was used as the primary methodological tool, allowing an examination of the constructions of climate justice by the REDD+ policy actors in an in-depth, rich and contextually-aware form. Although the concept of discourse is vague and not conducive to a simple definition, it does have a number of broad, underlying features (Van Dijk 2001). Dryzek (1997: 8) refers to discourse as "...a shared way of apprehending the world", which "rests on assumptions, judgements and contentions that provide the basic terms for analysis, debates, agreements and disagreements". The subjective, constructed meanings in discourse are mediated by political, social and ethical contexts, as well as broader power relations (McEwan 2008).

It is appropriate to make use of discourse analysis as a methodological tool in this thesis, which concerns the constructions of climate justice in REDD+ discourse by multiple actors on multiple scales. This necessarily infers an examination of symbolic meaning and 'signifying practices' (Howarth 2000), as well as representations of climate justice which are contingent and context-dependent. In making use of discourse analysis in this thesis, I understand climate justice to be a concept which is historically, socially and politically situated, with multiple associated meanings and representations.

I adopt a specific form of discourse analysis in this thesis: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Indeed, there are a number of different strands of discourse analysis identified in the methodological literature; it is an approach, rather than a method *per se*, and the way in which it is used depends on the theoretical and epistemological framework being drawn upon (Graham 2011). Here, the form of CDA I used is heavily informed by my epistemological and theoretical commitments: namely, constructionism (and is thus, partially inspired by Potter and Wetherall's (1987) approach to discourse analysis), as well as critical theory and postcolonial theory, as is made clear in the outline of CDA below.

In CDA, texts are studied in order to examine how they construct representations of the world and social relationships (Van Dijk 2001, Taylor 2004, Pratt 1999). It is a form of textual analysis, which seeks out linguistic regularities and discursive structures, where language is constitutive and generative, in underpinning grounded,

material realities (Hajer 1995, Hammersley 2003). Rather than being simply a neutral vehicle of transmitting information, language “is the site where meanings are created or changed” (Wetherell, Taylor and Yates 2001: 18). Indeed, Van Leeuwen (1993: 193) asserts that, “Critical discourse analysis is, or should be concerned with...discourse as the instrument of the social construction of reality”.

However, there are limits to the extent to which CDA can aid understanding of the *material* effects of discourse, due to its inherently textual focus. Thus, in order to partly address this limitation of CDA, the emphasis in this research is placed upon examining the discursive construction of the phenomena of climate justice by REDD+ policy actors, as part of a *contextual* and *contingent* process. Indeed, Fairclough (2003) identifies CDA as a strand of discourse analysis which pays close attention to the linguistic features of texts, yet always links the textual findings with their broader, contextual implications. In contrast to a Foucauldian-based discourse analysis, which engages with more abstract understandings of discourse, CDA is ‘grounded’ in the linguistic particularities of texts (Bloor and Bloor 2007, Fairclough 2003).

Thus, the discourse analysis practiced in this thesis is *textual* and *contextual*: an in-depth study of the ways in which the micro-scale linguistic mechanisms in the text relate to the broader socio-political, historical and ethical context (Dittmer 2010, Gill 1996, Fairclough 2003). Here, in contrast to a quantitative, numeric discourse analysis, CDA allows rich, meaningful and contextual data to develop, which is appropriate when exploring the representations of climate justice in policy documents. For instance, an identification of the ‘silences’ and marginalised discourses in the texts necessarily depends on understanding the broader context (Waitt 2010, Gill 1996).

Underpinned by critical theory, CDA also engages with deconstruction of the implicit power relations in a text and is committed to demystifying or unmasking the linguistic mechanisms and discursive structures that enable certain ideas to appear as dominant and as unquestionable ‘truths’ (Van Dijk 1993, Dittmer, 2010, Cannella and Lincoln 2011). CDA is a form of textual analysis that considers language to be constitutive, to underpin grounded, material realities and to be embedded in contingent power relations (Fairclough 2003, Van Dijk 2001). In this research, CDA

is appropriate in uncovering the underlying dominant and marginalised justice norms in the REDD+ discourse, understanding these to be discursively constructed and performative. It is important to enhance understanding of the underlying justice-led assumptions in the texts as these underpin and justify actors' preferences and determine what may or may not be possible in REDD+ interventions.

In line with the enquiries of this research, Van Dijk (1993: 252) indicates the ability of CDA to challenge discursive practices that, "enact, sustain, legitimate, condone or ignore social inequality and injustice". As part of a strategy to reveal and challenge embedded power relations, CDA aims to affect progressive social change through its textual inquiries (Fairclough 2003, Van Dijk 2001, Hammersley 2003). Inspired by critical theory, CDA generally indicates a "commitment to 'social equality, fairness and justice'" (Bloor and Bloor 2007: 19). Such an approach towards discourse analysis is certainly appropriate for this research project, which is politically and ethically engaged with ways in which current REDD+ strategies can be formulated in a more just and fair manner.

In addition, postcolonialism informs the CDA practiced in this thesis, whereby dominant and marginalised discourses in policy narratives are closely bound up with North-South relations. The form of CDA used here is partially influenced by Said's (1978) method of postcolonial analysis. Said (1978) analysed a number of 'imperial' discourses, critiquing the dominant assumptions and essentialised, 'Westernised' representations of the world that they put forward. Indeed, in this project, the 'spatial imaginaries' bound up with climate change and the responses to it are examined, particularly in light of a potential depoliticisation of debates surrounding climate justice.

A strength of CDA is in critically evaluating policy, relevant for this project which is engaged with textual analysis of policy documents and transcripts from the policy-makers and policy bodies. Indeed, Taylor (2004: 436) asserts that CDA is:

*"...particularly appropriate for critical policy analysis because it allows a detailed investigation of the relationship of language to other social processes and of how language works within power relations. CDA provides a framework for systematic analysis- researchers can go beyond speculation and demonstrate how policy texts work."*

Accordingly, by using CDA, I understand policy texts to not be neutral artefacts of governance (Lund et al. 2017), but rather underpinned by contested political viewpoints, values and norms. The ways in which language or linguistic structures are used tactically by actors to implicitly declare a political viewpoint is important (Bloor and Bloor 2007, Janks 1997, Fulcher 1989). CDA allows an uncovering and contesting of dominant and marginalised political discourses (part of what Yeatman (1998), refers to as 'policy activism'), appropriate for this thesis which aims to reveal the underlying conceptions of justice in REDD+ discourses on a multiscalar level and how these relate to contextual power relations in international climate change policy.

However, although policy-led analysis necessitates a focus on 'elite' texts (and therefore 'elite' actors) and may suggest a somewhat skewed analysis in favour of Northern institutional bodies, I have partially countered this by analysing texts from governmental bodies, NGOs and CSOs in Ethiopia, as well as interviewing members of forest-dependent communities in the Oromia region. The latter tend to be marginalised and it is pertinent to allow their voices and perspectives to be integrated into the research findings. This is in line with a critical approach to research, which aims for it to be relational, decolonising and collaborative (Cannella and Lincoln 2011).

The use of CDA in this thesis responds to a methodological gap in the climate justice literature. Of the empirical research on climate justice, few have thus far specifically made use of discourse analysis in examining climate change policy. Where discourse analysis has been used in climate change policy research (Detraz and Betshill 2009, Hajer 1997, Oliver 2012), this has not tended to be in relation to climate justice concerns specifically; in addition, such research did not make specific use of CDA, apt for examining the contested climate justice sphere. In responding to this methodological gap, this thesis builds upon Okereke's (2008) discourse analysis of environmental governance and policy texts to incorporate the multiscalar dynamics of REDD+ and the community discourse.



### **3.6 A Multiscalar, Case Study Approach**

This research adopts a case study approach in its methodology, defined by Cresswell (2007: 54), as “the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system”. A case study approach aligns with a rich and qualitative study of the particular, driven by a constructionist paradigm (Cresswell 2007, Stake 1995). This allows specific contexts to be explored intensively and in depth, appropriate in responding to the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions at the centre of this research’s inquiries (Flyvbjerg 2011, Creswell 2007).

A case study approach enables the complexity of climate justice to be effectively examined in the necessary depth and detail, through a grounded, empirical and context-dependent analysis. The use of case studies is particularly apt when exploring phenomena such as climate justice, which is recent and relatively unexplored. Thus, as is well documented in the methodological literature, the adoption of a case study approach enables theory-building processes or shedding new light on current theoretical concepts (Yin 2014, Miles and Huberman 1994).

In line with a constructionist epistemology, this thesis makes use of Stake’s (1995) qualitative approach to case study research. In contrast to quantitative research which would be driven by the identification of universal or generalisable patterns in data, qualitative research is interested in the in-depth, subjective and rich exploration of emerging or complex issues, as well as giving prominence to the depth and nuance of the wider context, apt in considering the inquiries of this thesis (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey 2011, Mason 1996, Bryman 2004). Thus, considering its epistemological and methodological commitments, it is appropriate to adopt Stake’s (1995) approach to case study design.

Using Stake’s (1995) approach, two key features of the case study design can be outlined. Firstly, the approach is instrumental in nature, considering Stake’s (1995: 16) distinction between *instrumental* and *intrinsic* forms of case studies: in the former, “the issue is dominant”, while, in the latter, “the case is of highest importance”. Thus, in this research, the driving focus is the exploration of the issue of climate justice (i.e. the research questions), rather than the case itself. Although the specific context of the case is evidently crucial, it does not form the basis of the

research inquiry; rather, what is of concern is what the case can instrumentally evidence, in terms of the constructions of climate justice in REDD+ policy.

Secondly, as Stake (1995) suggested, I allowed flexibility in the design of my methodology. This meant that I went back and forth between the different stages of the research, in contrast to Yin's (2009) strictly linear approach. Notably, I carried out data collection and data analysis simultaneously, shifting between these as part of an iterative process. The data analysis conducted informed the continually evolving data collection processes in such a way. My research questions also evolved as my thesis progressed, as Stake (1995) suggested can be done.

Furthermore, the case study approach adopted in this thesis is *multiscalar* in nature. As previously outlined in Section 2.3.11, there is significant justification to carry out a multiscalar analysis of climate justice in REDD+, whereby I explored the discourses of multiple REDD+ actors on international, national and local levels, incorporating governmental institutions, multilateral organisations, international NGOs, national and regional-level NGOs. The synergies and divergences in climate justice representations between and across these multiscalar actors acts as one of the key inquiries of this research.

### Sampling Strategy and Case Study Selection

In order to select the specific case study, a purposive sampling technique was used, as suggested by Stake (1995). It means that the case selected has a specific purpose in relation to the research questions (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey 2011, Creswell 2007, Miles and Huberman 1994). Purposive sampling enables a more effective and comprehensive interrogation of the research inquiries. It is deemed appropriate to make use of purposive sampling in this thesis, whereby specific REDD+ funders and policy-makers on multiple scales can be targeted.

In this thesis, the case study selected for analysis was the Norwegian REDD+ partnership with Ethiopia. Norway was selected due to its prominent and leading role as an international REDD+ donor (McKinnon, Muttitt and Trout 2017, Angelsen 2016). Through both bilateral and multilateral channels, they are, by far, the largest financial contributor to the international REDD+ agenda (see Section 4.2 for further details). Given the key role that Norway plays in developing the REDD+ agenda

internationally, it is necessary to critically examine and assess the notions of justice and climate justice that underpin and justify its REDD+ policy discourse. Thus, Norway can be considered as a 'critical case' in REDD+, in alignment with Bernard's (1994) definition.

Furthermore, Ethiopia was selected as it acts as a somewhat stand-out case among REDD+ recipient countries. The government has integrated REDD+ within its broader Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy (outlined in Section 4.6) and has placed REDD+ centrally in meeting its green growth ambitions (Narita et al. 2017). In addition, given that the country has only recently launched its REDD+ initiative, there is a dearth of research which has examined Ethiopia's REDD+ engagement from a climate justice perspective thus far; of the few grounded, empirical, justice-led analyses of REDD+ policies, none have thus far concerned Ethiopia, presenting a gap in the extant scholarship.

Given the multiscalar nature of the research enquiries, there is an exploration in this thesis of the multiple actors on international, national and regional/local scales of REDD+ governance which are implicated in the Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ partnership. Primarily, these include: the Norwegian and Ethiopian governmental bodies; multilateral organisations which provide technical and financial support for REDD+ processes, notably the World Bank and the UN; Norwegian environmental NGOs which operate internationally (e.g. The Rainforest Foundation, Friends of the Earth Norway); Ethiopian civil society organisations (e.g. Farm Africa, Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association); the forest-dependent communities which are affected by, and involved in, the project-level REDD+ activity in Ethiopia. All of the relevant REDD+ actors are contextualised and outlined in Chapter 4.

### **3.7 Data Collection Methods**

The two primary data collection methods adopted in this research project were document analysis and in-depth interviews. These were used in tandem, in order to more effectively and comprehensively examine the climate justice discourses of the selected REDD+ actors. The textual forms of data which emerged from both of these two data collections methods were analysed using CDA. The analytical process is detailed in Section 3.9, but it is necessary to first outline the data collection process, detailing the use of document analysis and in-depth interviews.

### **3.7.1 Document Analysis**

A key part of the data collection process involved the analysis of policy documents from each of the indicated multiscale REDD+ actors. These documents were accessed either through the organisation's webpage, with their permission, or via email, sent by a network informant. The document analysis was primarily carried out between November 2015 and June 2016, although a number of supplementary texts were analysed following this period as they became available. Nevertheless, due to limited time and resources, March 2017 acted as my cut-off period for analysing REDD+ policy documents. Although determined by the availability of relevant documents, I generally aimed to analyse a balanced amount of texts from each organisation.

In line with Waitt's (2010) recommendation, I carried out purposive sampling of the policy texts. Acknowledging the large number of documents available for the majority of the policy institutions, I filtered these according to their relevancy to the enquiries of the research. For instance, I selected policy documents which dealt with the participatory rights of forest-dependent communities. Documents which indicated interaction between the REDD+ actors were also prioritised, due to the multiscale nature of the research design. Although the sample was restricted to policy texts, the genres of these varied, comprising of evaluations, reports, assessments, project papers and presentations. As an English speaker, I was limited in the texts that I could select for analytical purposes, necessarily omitting some policy documents, which could otherwise have been used (e.g. NICFI's Norwegian policy documents). I also examined some media sources to a much lesser extent, in order to get an enhanced understanding of background and contextual factors, particularly concerning Ethiopia's political situation.

As part of a critical and self-reflexive process, it is necessary to consider the power relations that derived from the document analysis. Here, it is less clear than with data collection methods that involve direct research-participant interaction (e.g. focus groups, in-depth interviews), where the power relations would manifest themselves in document analysis (Rose 1997). The power relations which may be evident in discourse analysis are not sufficiently discussed in the methodological literature, despite its focus on power relations in a broader sense. Are they between myself, as

the reader of the text, and the individual authors of the policy texts, or the organisations themselves?

In discourse analysis, texts are referred to in lieu of authors; nevertheless, the methodological literature would generally argue that the power relations exist between reader and author of text. However, due to the nature of policy texts, the contributing authors are constantly in a state of flux. In addition, the authors of a policy text likely reflect the institution's views and ideologies to a greater extent than the individual author's. This would perhaps suggest that power relations exist between researcher and policy institution. Here, it can be argued that there is somewhat of a distance between the researcher and participant (i.e. the examined institution) that there would not be with other data collection methods, which risks dislocating the examined text from its political and social context. In order to partially counter such distance, discourse analysts emphasise a focus on situating texts within its broader socio-political and historical context, as well as conducting background research on the texts themselves (e.g. the authorship, the intended audience) (Waitt 2010, Dittmer 2010).

### **3.7.2 In-depth Interviews**

#### **Methodological Justification**

To supplement the data gained through document analysis, in-depth interviews were carried out with representatives from the multiscale policy institutions, as well as with members of the forest-dependent communities. The use of in-depth interviews acts as a form of triangulation in the data analysis. Indeed, as Stake (1995) suggests, the use of multiple methods is a form of methodological triangulation, which can act to enhance the validity of the research. Although the concept of 'validity' (and by association, 'reliability') derives from a positivist epistemology and tends to be used in quantitative research, Golafshani (2003) nevertheless suggests ways in which it can be applied to constructionist, qualitative forms of research.

In qualitative forms of research, it is proposed that validity can be enhanced through various forms of triangulation, including methodological triangulation, by 'confirming' or 'disputing' the findings from other data collection methods (Stake 1995, Golafshani 2003, Creswell 2003). However, Denzin (1999) highlights the inherent

difficulties of methodological triangulation in qualitative research, where multiple methods often provide supplementary interpretations of phenomena, rather than necessarily 'confirming' the findings generated from the other methods. Indeed, in this thesis, the use of in-depth interviews primarily performed such a role: to provide additional interpretations of climate justice.

Additionally, to supplement the document analysis, interview transcripts provide a greater amount of textual material to analyse from the examined institutional actors. This is particularly important for the Norwegian NGOs and Ethiopian-based CSOs, which do not have a significant amount of official texts to explore. More pertinently, undertaking in-depth interviews allows a greater insight into the socio-political and institutional context surrounding REDD+ and the examined actors, vitally important when attempting to explore policy discourse. If there was a sole focus on document analysis, the critical discourse analysis employed in this thesis would be somewhat limited.

The in-depth interviews conducted were qualitative and semi-structured, deriving from a constructionist epistemology. Here, there is a recognised need to explore the multiple, subjective realities of the participants, within the broader historically-situated and institutional contexts (McDowell 2010). The knowledge generated by qualitative, in-depth interviews tends to be rich, detailed and subjective, from the perspectives of the participants (Mason 1996, Dunn 2010, Bryman 2004). For the interviews with the policy representatives, the perspectives of those with a key role in the governance of REDD+ could be accessed. A more structured approach to interviewing would not be as appropriate here in examining the complexities of climate justice, limiting what the respondent can say, as well as the topic's flexibility.

At the local-level, in-depth interviews and focus groups were carried out with members of forest-dependent communities. These took place in the Oromia region, the pilot region for REDD+ activity in Ethiopia (see section 4.6). Oromia was selected in this project, due to the high presence of REDD+ projects in this area, as well as the significant forestry management and REDD+ infrastructure in the region. Here, I examined the community-level impacts of the Nono Sele REDD+ project in Oromia that is being managed by a regional environmental NGO, Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association (EWNRA) (see Section 4.7).

As part of a multiscalar research project, the community-based interviews and focus groups act to interrogate the extent to which the discursive narrative in the policy texts aligns with the voices at the local level, i.e. how the text touches the ground. In such a way, these consider the ways in which community perspectives act to corroborate or challenge the policy-level discourse. This is a form of methodological triangulation, whereby the policy narratives are compared to the associated field realities of REDD+. In doing so, the community-level interviews attempt to counter the inherent limitations of a purely textual analysis. For example, this included an interrogation of the extent to which the participation 'narrative' in the safeguards framework aligns with the experienced realities of procedural justice and participatory empowerment on the ground in the forest-dependent communities.

For the focus groups more specifically, I carried out these following the one-to-one in-depth interviews in the two communities as a supplementary method in order to get a better sense of the group dynamics and to allow participants to express themselves in their own words (Longhurst 2016). Outside of the more artificial interview situation, a focus group can engender a more 'natural' conversational flow and can allow debates to emerge within the groups, unlike in one-to-one interviews where participants may not be challenged as such, as Bedford and Burgess (2001) have commented. In terms of group dynamics, I was interested in the extent to which the participants' views on REDD+ and sustainable forestry were homogenous. Thus, focus groups acted as a complementary method alongside the in-depth interviews in interrogating the multiple, rich constructions of REDD+ and conceptions of climate justice in the forest-dependent communities.

### Interview Sampling Strategy

For the selection of policy-based interviewees, a 'snowball' sampling technique was utilised. This is a strategy in which participants are recruited through referrals or suggestions from existing participants (Noy 2008). Snowball sampling is deemed to be an informal method of participant recruitment, which takes advantage of interviewees' social networks (Noy 2008, Atkinson and Flint 2001). It is an on-going and continual process, as Noy (2008: 5) describes: "Hence the evolving 'snowball' effect, captured in a metaphor that touches on the central quality of this sampling procedure: its accumulative (diachronic and dynamic) dimension."

For the recruitment of policy representatives, there were initially difficulties over establishing contact with interviewees. The participants in this research are primarily high-ranking professionals within the relevant institutions, who have little time to spare and are often difficult to reach, as suggested by Atkinson and Flint (2001). Noy (2008: 6) makes the point that such individuals are often 'hidden-by-choice'. However, once contact had been established with a suitable 'gatekeeper' within NICFI, an interview was set up with a NICFI representative, following which a relatively smooth process of participant recruitment ensued, through the 'snowball' technique.

The snowball sampling strategy involved asking each participant at the end of the interviews if they could recommend other potential, supplementary contacts who would be a reliable and relevant source of information on the research topic. These contacts could be from the same institution, or elsewhere. Contact details were either given immediately following the interview, or the researcher was introduced to the potential participant later by email. Rather than having these as two discrete processes, the participant recruitment overlapped with the data collection process, due to the inherent nature of snowball sampling.

The snowball sampling technique proved to be largely successful, allowing contact to be established with interviewees which may not have been otherwise possible, through the use of "organic social networks" (Noy 2008: 15). Here, a REDD+ policy community was identified, where certain individuals are more centrally located within the network and hold what can be perceived of as 'social capital' (Atkinson and Flint 2001, Bourdieu 1984). Indeed, snowball sampling is deemed to be particularly useful when accessing hard-to-reach groups, which may include 'policy professionals' (Atkinson and Flint 2001, Moyser and Wagstaffe 1987). It was found during the research that the potential participants were more likely to respond to emails or phone calls if the researcher had already been introduced to them by a third party (i.e. previous interviewee), rather than through 'cold-calling'.

Additionally, having been recruited through a social network, the participants appeared to be more open and more willing to provide a greater depth of information during the interview than they otherwise may have been, aligning with what some qualitative researchers have suggested (Noy 2008). Thus, use of snowball sampling



can allow social relationships and rapport to be built with the participants, useful when conducting qualitative, in-depth interviews.

Moreover, the participants' knowledge of, and recommendations for, network contacts helped to drive the direction of the research somewhat. Notably, at the beginning of the data collection process, it was not planned that Norwegian NGOs would form part of the research. However, after having interviewed NICFI representatives, it was recommended to speak with key NGOs in Oslo who were working on REDD+ projects, primarily Friends of the Earth, Rainforest Foundation Norway and The Development Fund. After having done more research into Norwegian climate change politics, it was identified that particular NGOs had played a key role in the design and implementation of REDD+ policy in Norway, and thereafter, these become part of the examined REDD+ actor network in this research.

For the sampling of the community-based interviews, I liaised with EWNRA on selecting appropriate villages in Oromia. Working with EWNRA's regional office in Metu, the field site was located in two villages in the Nono Selle district of Oromia: Gago and Yakama. These were selected based on the recommendations of EWNRA, due to the lengthy period that REDD+ projects have been running in the locality, as well as for more pragmatic purposes: e.g. the ease of access into the area, the availability of a translator, needed as the communities were non-English speaking.

Within the villages, the interviewees were sampled in co-ordination with EWNRA and the project-level workers who were working in locality. I requested to the NGO that the interviewees incorporated a mixture of genders, ages and backgrounds (e.g. coffee farmers, subsistence farmers), in seeking a diversity of viewpoints and perspectives. Following this, EWNRA arranged the interviews to take place in the two villages, based on availability and willingness of the participants. Accordingly, EWNRA acted as the gatekeepers for the community-based interviews and the intermediary between myself and the communities (See section 3.73 for methodological reflections on the community-level fieldwork).

## The Interview Process

The in-depth interviews took place in four discrete blocks of data collection. Firstly, in October and November 2015, policy representatives from NICFI, other relevant Norwegian governmental institutions and Norwegian NGOs were interviewed in Oslo. Secondly, in April 2016, representatives from the Ethiopia government, Ethiopian-based civil society organisations and the Norwegian embassy in Ethiopia were interviewed via Skype. Thirdly, interviews were carried out with officials from UN-REDD, UNDP and UNEP in Geneva, in May and June 2016. These were followed up, upon returning to the UK, with further interviews over Skype. Fourthly, participants from the forest-dependent communities were interviewed in Nono Selle district in Ethiopia in February 2017.

Sixteen in-depth interviews were carried out with representatives from each of the policy institutions (see Table 3.1). Following agreement to take part in the research, participants were contacted by phone or email to arrange the specific details of the interview, including its time and location. Before the interview, the participants were sent an email which detailed the aims and objectives of the research, the likely topics that were going to arise during the interview and their rights as participants. In general, the interviews lasted between 1 to 3 hours, depending on the participants' availability and willingness to discuss the research topic in more detail. As the interviewees' work involved REDD+, most of them were happy to discuss the subject in detail. Time was allocated, where possible, for the interviewee to ask questions beforehand and to build rapport with the participants.

At the community-level, I carried out twenty one-to-one in-depth interviews with community members in Nono Sele, evenly spread across the two villages, over a period of three weeks. These were followed by a focus group with the same participants. To communicate with a non-English speaking community, I worked with a translator who spoke the local dialect. Despite going through a translator, I also ensured that the participants were sufficiently made aware of their rights, the purpose of the research and were given space to ask any questions if they desired. Prior to the interviews, I went through the questions with the translator. On occasions, there were challenges in getting across the meaning of particular terms to the translator which are culturally specific or where there is not a direct translation,

notably 'climate justice'. In these cases, I needed to explain the terms and ensure that the translator understood what needed to be asked to the interviewees. Nevertheless, it may be that the meaning of particular words or terms are perhaps 'lost in translation', as Smith (2003) suggested, and it is worth considering this issue in the findings.

**Table 3.1: List of Interviewees**

<b>Norwegian government:</b> NICFI (3 representatives); Norwegian embassy in Addis Ababa (1 representative)
<b>Ethiopian government:</b> The Ethiopian REDD+ Secretariat (2 representatives)
<b>The World Bank:</b> 2 representatives
<b>The UN:</b> UN-REDD Secretariat (2 representatives); UNDP (2 representatives); UNEP (1 representative)
<b>Norwegian environmental NGOs:</b> Rainforest Foundation Norway (1 representative); Friends of the Earth Norway: (1 representative); The Development Fund (1 representative)
<b>Ethiopian environmental NGOs:</b> Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association (2 representatives); Farm Africa (1 representative)
<b>Forest-dependent communities:</b> 20 participants across two villages (Gago and Yakama)

All of the interviews were semi-structured in nature, meaning that flexible interview guides were used, in which a list of themes, rather than specific, pre-determined questions, was outlined. Qualitative methodological scholars consider semi-structured interviews to be akin to 'guided conversations', where there is a significant amount of flexibility and leeway given in the structure of the interview, as part of an informal framework, yet the interview process is nevertheless driven and directed by the enquiries of the research project (Bryman 2004, O'Connell and Davidson Layder 1994). The interview theme guides varied depending on the actor being interviewed and the background context of the institution or community.

An open-ended, semi-structured approach allowed participants to construct their own accounts of climate justice and views on REDD+ and enabled new, unexpected topics to emerge during the interviews, as methodological scholars have suggested (Valentine 2005, Robson 2011). Indeed, Bryman (2004) advocates interviewee-‘led’ interviews, where the researcher pursues what the participant believes is important. If the interviewee particularly discussed a certain topic, further follow-up questions were asked about this, although the subject matter always remained relatively aligned with the research aims and objectives (Kvale and Brinkmann 2014).

In this case, I needed to react quickly and flexibly to the interviewee’s responses. At the community level, the responses to each question were translated to me one-by-one, giving me the opportunity to formulate follow-up questions, if appropriate. For the community-level focus groups, although I adopted a facilitating role and allowed the discussions to be participant-led, I nevertheless needed to intervene on occasions to pose questions for the group to respond to, or to steer the conversation back towards the relevant topics of the research.

With the participants’ permission, the interviews were digitally recorded, a decision which is much debated in methodological literature. Practical advantages were found in using a digital recorder, aiding with transcription accuracy, as well as allowing the interviewer to focus on maintaining the conversational flow, rather than note-taking (Bernard 1994). Indeed, the recordings were transcribed verbatim as soon as possible following the interviews. However, a lack of willingness to contribute certain things during the interview could be attributed to the presence of the digital recorder. Recording the interview arguably increases its formality and intrusiveness, where it feels less like a ‘natural’ conversation and may mean that those in ‘official’ positions reveal less when the digital recorder is there (Bryman 2004, Bernard 1994, Rubin and Rubin 1995).

### **3.7.3 Methodological Reflections and Positionality**

Relatedly, it is necessary to reflect upon my positionality as a researcher and the multifarious power relations implicated in the in-depth interviews. As McDowell (2010: 10) states, “rather than being a transparent, straightforward exchange of information, the interview is a complex and contested social encounter, riven with power relations”. For the interviews with the policy-makers or officials, I encountered

such power relations on occasions. While methodological scholars generally focus on the power that the researchers may hold in interview situations, especially with vulnerable participants, this is problematised for interviews with perceived 'elite actors', who are seen to be better positioned to exploit, or exert power over, the interviewer (McDowell 2010).

The interviewees from the policy-making institutions could be conceptualised as 'elite actors', as they occupy expert positions within their respective fields or institutions. However, the participants here did not generally explicitly exploit their powerful position in the interviews. As Smith (2006) argued from a post-structural perspective, power is not necessarily wielded or exercised by perceived 'elite actors' in interview spaces. There is not necessarily anything inherently different about interviewing 'up', taking into consideration the heterogeneity of powerful, professional actors and the difficulties in defining who is and is not 'elite' (Smith 2006).

However, while the policy-based interviewees may not have explicitly or intentionally exploited their powerful status, power dynamics may nevertheless be evident in the interview situation. Notably, I encountered difficulties in disentangling the personal and institutional views. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) have noted, representative 'officials' often simply repeat the institutional stance on the matter in question, having a pre-prepared script, or 'talk tracks' ready. This is particularly troublesome when considering the subject matter, as officials necessarily wish to portray their involvement in ethical issues, such as climate justice, in a positive light. I partially dealt with this challenge by triangulating: comparing the interview transcripts with the organisations' documents could provide some insight into the overlap between personal and institutional views.

In addition, I found that during some of the interviews with the policy-makers that the participants held back somewhat in their responses. Considering their high-ranking position, the interviewees may feel restricted in what they can say. I attempted to counter such inclinations by putting the participants at ease, partly through assuring them that the data from the interview would be strictly confidential, anonymous and securely kept. Additionally, I attempted to put the interviewee at ease by allowing them to decide the choice of location for the interview. This tended to be in the participants' office or workplace environment, although a number of the interviews

took place in a public location, as requested. For Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), public locations act to reduce interviewee anxiety and stimulate them to provide richer, more revealing responses.

Moreover, with the community-based interviews, I also reflected upon my positionality and that of the participants, in light of the numerous challenges of conducting cross-cultural fieldwork in the Global South and the inherent power relations implicated in this, as development geographers have recognised (Skelton 2001, Smith 2003). In line with postcolonial theory (McEwan 2008), the local-level interviews were driven by a necessity to empower and give a voice to the marginalised forest-dependent communities, rather than speaking on behalf of them. Here, in writing up the fieldwork notes and analysis, I ensured that I used direct quotes from the participants where possible. I also gave the participants sufficient and unpressured opportunity to voice their views and perspectives. Nevertheless, geographers have problematised the extent to which researchers can effectively empower interviewees in the Global South context.

Additionally, a number of concerns emerge at the community-level from the sampling of the participants. Notably, I interviewed community members from two villages in Nono Selle, based on the recommendations of EWNRA. Being dependent on the time and resources of EWNRA in accessing the communities, as well as the availability of the translator and driver, I faced restrictions in the number of villages I could access. Accordingly, concerns can be raised over the representativeness of the findings and how localised they may be. In order to enhance the robustness of the findings, further fieldwork would need to be carried out in a widened sample of communities in the Oromia region over a lengthier period of time.

Furthermore, questions can be raised over the sampling of interviewees within the two villages. Despite requesting a mix of participants (in regards to gender, age, background, etc) when arranging the interviews with EWNRA, it nevertheless remains difficult to control the range of participants that I am interviewing. Driven by EWNRA's interests and agenda, it may be that those who were selected as interviewees tended to have positive views towards REDD+ interventions and sustainable forestry management in the villages. Questions can be subsequently raised, such as: Who did I not interview? Who is losing out as a result of this policy?

The findings from the community-level indicates somewhat of a consensus among interviewees and a lack of diversity in viewpoints and perspectives on REDD+, suggesting that those with more critical views on the sustainable forestry interventions were excluded from the interviews.

Relatedly, concerns can be raised over my positionality in the fieldwork and how this may have affected interviews' responses, considering how I may have been perceived by the communities. As I was introduced to the communities by EWNRA, it is likely that the communities considered me to be a close associate of the NGO and to harbour many of the same interests. The overwhelmingly positive nature of the interviewee responses and requests for further NGO support by the participants at the end of the interviews (as Le Mare 2007 similarly found in her fieldwork in Bangladesh) suggested that this was the case. Accordingly, it may be that the interviewees held back somewhat in their responses and were less critical than they otherwise would have been had I not been perceived to be associated with EWNRA.

I attempted to counter this bias in the field interviewing by making it clear at the beginning of the interview that, despite being introduced by the NGO, I was an independent researcher and did not represent the views of EWNRA. In introducing my research aims and focus, I aimed to distinguish myself from EWNRA and highlight my independence, as well as clearly indicating my positionality. At the same time, I did not indicate my views on REDD+ or the project, ensuring that I maintained a somewhat neutral stance in this sense. This meant that I phrased questions in an open and less critical way, as part of a strategy that excavated the communities' understanding of REDD+, the project and how these were implicated in their daily livelihoods.

Nevertheless, somewhat of a consensus built up in the interviewee's responses, with the EWNRA project largely positively framed in the interviews. As Skelton (2001) commented, it is often challenging to move beyond one's positionality as a white, Western researcher, conducting fieldwork in rural, marginalised communities that have often had previous prior contact with Westerners. It may be that in being perceived as an elite outsider with connections to EWNRA means that the participants are more likely to say what they think I want to hear and may feel uncomfortable in being overly critical of the organisation or the project.

Meanwhile, the positionality of the translator may have affected the responses of the participants and their willingness to take part in the interviews, as Smith (2003) has suggested. In this case, the translator worked as a local secondary school teacher and was well-known by the community members. They were evidently already well-respected by the villagers which may have influenced their responses. It may be that the participants felt comfortable in revealing their views to a translator with whom they were already familiar.

Thus, these experiences suggest that there were challenges in eliciting the views and perspectives of the community members. However, although there were limitations with the fieldwork, considering both access to the participants' views and perspectives and the length of the fieldwork, I was able to compensate for this by using multiple methods and interviewing a range of stakeholders. Through the multiscalar research framework, I was able to acquire a depth, richness and variety of material on multiple stakeholders working on REDD+ than would have been otherwise possible.

### **3.8 Research Ethics**

Throughout the thesis, I was aware of, and attempted to counter, the ethical issues which may arise in the research project. These are deemed to be particularly pertinent for qualitative research, where there is greater closeness between researcher and participant (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey 2011). For the in-depth interviews, I obtained informed consent from all participants before the interview commenced, via email, where they were made aware of their rights as participants, the overall purposes of the research and how the data would be used, through a participant information sheet. The participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw at any time. This information was reiterated verbally at the beginning of the interview, where the participants were given time to ask questions about the research or the ethical process, if they wished.

Additionally, I ensured that all participants were treated with strict confidentiality and anonymity throughout, where they could not be individually identified as part of the research. This was explained to the participants, both verbally and in writing. I used participant codes in the interview transcripts and the data analysis. When referring to interviewees' responses in the data analysis, I attempted to keep this as general as



possible and did not name specific individuals. The collected data was stored on a secure, password-protected computer, which others were not be able to access, ensuring privacy and security of data, as recommended by methodological scholars (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey 2011, Kvale and Brinkmann 2009).

Regarding the document analysis, I sought permission from the relevant organisation to use its online textual material in my research and did not assume that I could make use of publicly available documents (Edwards and Mauthner 2002). In addition, there was continual engagement with the relevant organisations throughout, as part of a collaborative, co-operative and non-exploitative relationship, aligning with a critical approach to ethics (Cannella and Lincoln 2011). I also plan to relay key research findings to each of the interviewees (and associated organisations) in order to ensure a lasting benefit to the REDD+ policy landscape from the fieldwork (Punch 1986).

### **3.9 Analytical Process**

Following the fieldwork, I transcribed the interviews in full. Both the interview transcripts and selected documents were examined using CDA. In preparing to do the discourse analysis, I found that there is little explicit outline or methodological template, for how to actually carry out the technique, with methodological scholars indicating the challenges of using discourse analysis (Van Dijk 2001, Dryzek 1997, Dittmer 2010). Indeed, Waitt (2010: 219) suggests that “discourse analysis is typically held to become intuitive”, as more of an art than a science, where “the methodology is often left implicit rather than made explicit”. Nevertheless, I attempted to follow the advice of other discourse analysts in how to carry out the technique in a grounded, systematic way.

I qualitatively coded the textual material, in accordance with thematic convergences. Coding is a qualitative process which does not enhance analytical understanding in itself, but aids in sorting, synthesising and organising the data (Charmaz 2006, Crang 2005). As Charmaz (2006: 86) explains, “coding is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain the data”. In accordance with a ‘bottom up’, inductive approach, codes emerged from, and were grounded in, the data itself, evolving as the project progressed. Here, I went back

and forth between the textual data and wider theory, as part of an on-going, reflective and iterative process.

The coding process was two-fold: *descriptive* and *analytical*, also known as emic and etic coding (Crang 2005, Rose 2001). Firstly, I assigned descriptive labels to segments of text, in accordance with emerging themes. In line with Fairclough's (2003) guidance, I examined the use of grammar by the policy actors (e.g. sentence structure, tense), inconsistencies or contradictions, semantics and the underlying assumptions or ideas which may underpin arguments. In addition, I identified the 'silences' and marginalised discourses in the text, where it may be that what is omitted in the text is as important as what is included (Waitt 2010).

Secondly, I carried out analytic coding. This involves a form of abstraction, where the particularities of the text are interpreted in relation to the wider theoretical context, (Dittmer 2010, Gill 1996, Charmaz 2006). Thus, I identified discursive trends or themes in the text and considered how these aligned with the broader climate justice-oriented concerns. The analytical interpretation was informed by the justice framework and the specific political contexts in which the REDD+ actors exist. I sought to identify the ways in which climate justice theories and wider conceptions of justice were constructed in the actual REDD+ policy discourse.

However, in practice, there were difficulties in discretely separating the descriptive and analytical coding. Indeed, Crang (2005: 219) states: "The separation of 'field' and 'theory' is more an artefact of books than a true portrait of research: no researcher refuses to think about the interpretation and significance of their research while they are doing it". Here, at times, it proved challenging to entirely separate existing preconceptions from the coding process, suggesting that purely inductive forms of analysis are difficult to carry out in practice.

## **Chapter 4: The Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ Partnership**

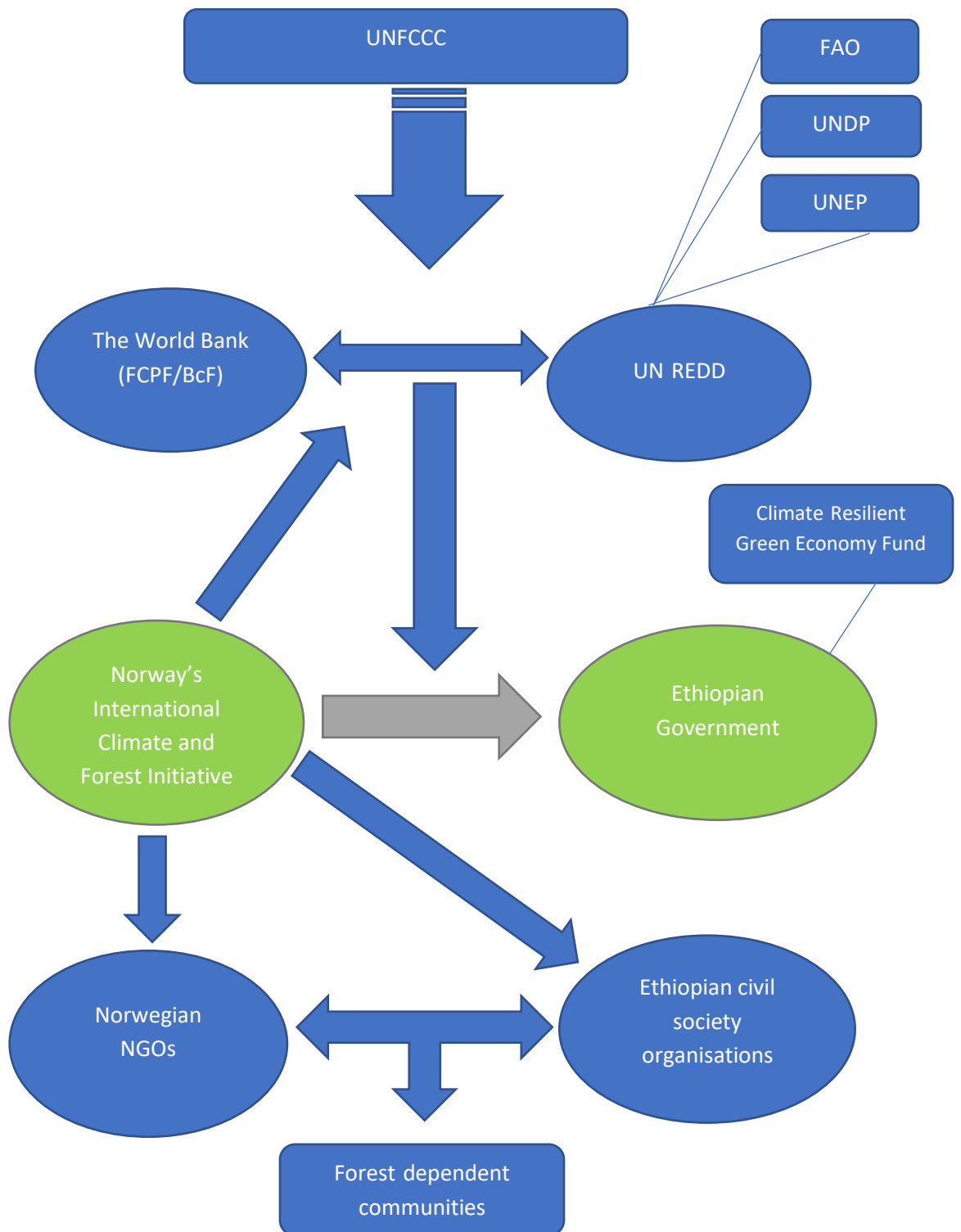
### **4.1 Introduction**

As outlined in the previous chapter, the constructions of climate justice in REDD+ policy are examined in this thesis through the case study of the Norwegian REDD+ partnership with Ethiopia. Given the multiscalar nature of the research enquiries, it is necessary to outline the contextual background of the multiple actors on multiple scales of governance that are implicated in the Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ partnership and their interconnections with one another (see Figure 4.1). Primarily, these are: the Norwegian and Ethiopian governmental bodies; the World Bank and the UN; Norwegian (e.g. The Rainforest Foundation, Friends of the Earth Norway) and Ethiopian environmental NGOs (e.g. Farm Africa, Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association) that play a key role in the local- and regional-level implementation of REDD+ projects; the forest-dependent communities which are affected by, and involved in, the project-level REDD+ activity in Ethiopia.

### **4.2 Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI)**

Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) is a governmental department within the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment, which is dedicated to funding and supporting the international REDD+ agenda. Since 2008, NICFI has played a prominent and leading role in REDD+ internationally.

As of 2016, it is, by far, the largest bilateral financial contributor to REDD+, accounting for around 73% of pledged global REDD+ funds, with the UK and Germany providing additional sources of funding for REDD+ (Climate Funds Update 2016, Angelsen 2016). Norway has pledged NOK3billion (approx. US\$500 million) per year for REDD+, initially for the 2008-2013 period, but later extended at the Paris COP until 2030 (Hermansen et al. 2017). Such REDD+ funding is delivered through both bilateral and multilateral channels.



**Figure 4.1 The Multiscalar Actors Interconnected in the Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ Partnership**

Bilaterally, Norway makes REDD+ agreements with tropical-forested nations, with support and funds pledged for all three stages of the REDD+ process. In the final stage, it is expected that Norway will make results-based payments to recipient countries for achieved REDD+ targets (i.e. according to verified reductions in deforestation and forest degradation). This is deemed to be attractive to Norwegian politicians, due to its tangibility (Hermansen and Kasa 2014, Angelsen 2016). Bilateral agreements were initially made with four countries (Tanzania, Brazil, Guyana and Indonesia), and then later extended to five other nations (Mexico, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Myanmar and Liberia) (Angelsen 2016).

Norway acts as a significant global contributor to a number of multilateral REDD+ initiatives, representing approximately 61% of total pledged multilateral funds (see Figure 4.2) (Climate Funds Update 2016). Notably, it helped to form the UN-REDD program and remains its largest donor (US\$217 million, by the end of 2014) (Climate Funds Update 2016). Substantial funding is also made available to the numerous forestry arms of the World Bank: the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) (\$70 million), the Forest Investment Programme (FIP) (\$143 million), and the Bio Carbon Fund (BCF) (\$115 million). In addition, Norway channels multilateral REDD+ funding through the Amazon Fund and the Congo Basin Forest Fund (Angelsen 2016).

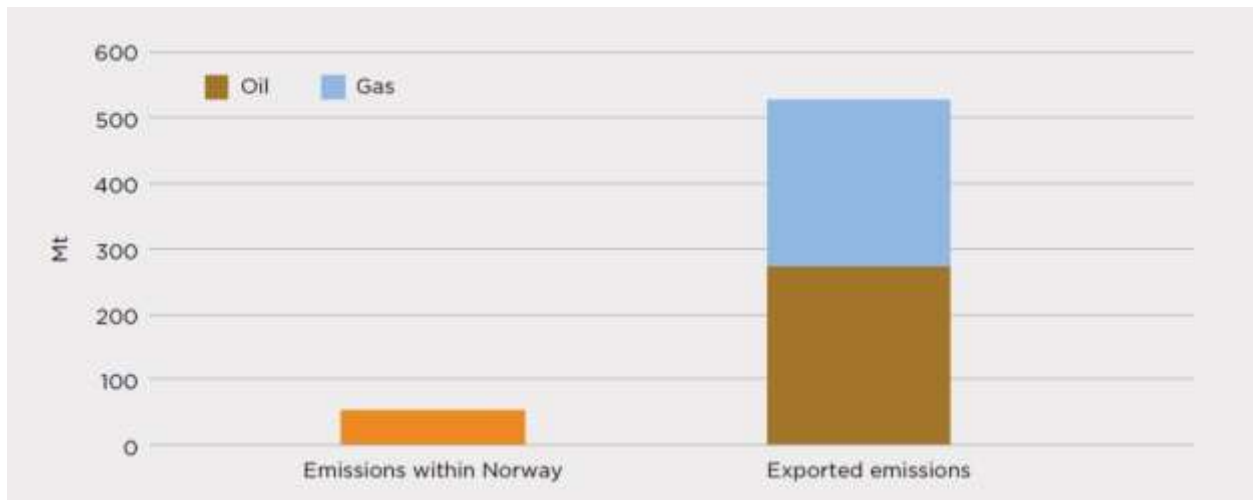
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**Figure 4.2: Pledges and deposits to REDD+ funds from 2008-2016 (Climate Funds Update 2016)**

The Norwegian government has set ambitious domestic climate change targets, notably at the Paris Agreement, to reduce its GHG emissions “at least 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 (Climate Action Tracker 2018). However, despite some progress, Climate Action Tracker (2018) considers that Norway’s currently implemented climate policies are “highly insufficient” and projected to decrease domestic GHG emissions by 6% in 2030. This is seen to be inconsistent with the ambitions of the Paris Agreement and limiting warming below 2°C.

The Norwegian government has sought to act as a ‘front-runner’ in international environmental policy-making and to take the lead on international climate action (Lahn and Wilson Rowe 2014). Indeed, NICFI acts as the centrepiece of Norway’s climate policy, broadly aligning with its approach to climate action since the early 1990s (Hermansen and Kasa 2014, Lahn and Wilson Rowe 2014). As Climate Action Tracker (2018) has documented, the Norwegian government’s ambitious climate change targets are dependent on offsets and emissions cuts through the land sector, primarily through REDD+.

However, Norway’s leading role in international climate action collides with the country’s continued dependency on a large petroleum industry, resulting in somewhat of a paradox in Norway’s approach to addressing the climate crisis (Angelsen 2016, Lahn and Wilson Rowe 2014, McKinnon, Muttitt and Trout 2017). As McKinnon, Muttitt and Trout (2017) detail, Norway, as the world’s seventh largest exporter of oil and gas, is exporting ten times more emissions than it produces at home (See Figure 4.3 below). Since the discovery of offshore oil in 1969, the Norwegian government has focused efforts on developing the petroleum industry, creating Statoil as a national oil company and managing the wealth generated by the oil and gas production through the world’s largest Sovereign Wealth Fund. Further, Norway has recently proposed plans to explore and develop new fossil fuel reserves, which could potentially result in 150% more emissions than from current oil and gas extraction (McKinnon, Muttitt and Trout 2017).



**Figure 4.3: Norway's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, domestic and exported (OCI 2017)**

As with Canada, Norway's large-scale production and exportation of fossil fuels conflicts with its ambitious climate action at an international level, indicating the "cognitive dissonance at the heart of Norwegian climate policy" (McKinnon, Muttitt and Trout 2017: 13). Since the early 1990s, the Norwegian government has consistently advocated its ambitions to reduce GHG emissions at source, while leaving the supply of oil and gas to the market, suggesting that it better for oil and gas to be produced in a country that is more environmentally progressive than elsewhere. However, McKinnon, Muttitt and Trout (2017) questions this logic and suggests that continued fossil fuel extraction undermines emissions reductions at the source and that by only focusing on demand-side climate policies, the 1.5°C and 2°C international climate change targets cannot be effectively met.

As a result, Norway has faced challenges in reconciling its ambitions in contributing to the international environmental agenda and its economic dependency on oil and gas extraction, with the petroleum industry currently accounting for around 12% of Norway's economy (Hermansen and Kasa 2014, Hovden and Lindseth 2004, Tellman 2012). There are entrenched and powerful political and economic interests in maintaining and expanding fossil fuel extraction and exportation (aligned with Paterson and P-Laberge's (2018) understanding of 'carboniferous capitalism') that simply do not align with Norway's environmental and climate change ambitions. With the Norwegian energy sector being almost entirely powered through hydropower, there are seen to be significant challenges in the country further reducing domestic GHG emissions without scaling back on the economically-important petroleum industry.

Subsequently, in order to 'square the circle', a broad consensus developed in Norwegian politics that in order to maintain its expansive petroleum industry while remaining an 'environmental pioneer', the Norwegian government had to act as a significant contributor to international climate action (Tellman 2012, Hovden and Lindseth 2004, Lahn and Wilson Rowe 2014). Since the 1990s, it is proposed that there has been a shift in Norwegian climate politics, from a focus on domestic action towards a commitment to cost-effective reductions in international GHG emissions, exemplified by Norway's support for flexible mechanisms in the Kyoto negotiations alongside other non-EU countries, including the US and Russia (Hovden and Lindseth 2004, Lahn and Wilson Rowe 2014).

Thus, Norway's leadership on REDD+ is largely in line with political efforts to resolve this conflict and a continuation of Norway's status-seeking in international environmental politics (Lahn and Wilson Rowe 2014, Hermansen and Kasa 2014). Amid mounting international pressure to take action on climate change, there were tensions within the Norwegian government over the country's responsibility for climate change in the mid-2000s. Heavily influenced by domestic environmental NGOs, as well as the increasing international attention being paid towards deforestation in international climate politics (including in the Stern Review), Norwegian political parties agreed upon REDD+ funding and the creation of NICFI as part of a 'climate settlement', signed in 2008 (Hermansen 2015, Hermansen and Kasa 2014).

The 'climate settlement' highlights the broad consensus in Norwegian politics that appears to have formed over REDD+, with public criticism of the policy generally muted (Hermansen et al. 2017, Angelsen 2016). Indeed, Hermansen and Kasa (2014: 23) propose that the use of NICFI as the centrepiece of Norwegian climate policy is unlikely to change in the near future, considering that it "meets so many of the climate policy needs of a wealthy exporter". It can be suggested that REDD+ funds are generated from Statoil and the wealth associated with fossil fuel extraction and exportation. As a result, it has been proposed that REDD+ serves to 'politically offset' Norway's continued economic dependency on its petroleum industry (Angelsen 2016).



McKinnon, Muttitt and Trout (2017) recommend that in order to be in line with the internationally-set 1.5°C and 2°C climate change targets, Norway needs to begin a managed decline of its existing fossil fuel extraction and must not develop new reserves. Given the finite nature of carbon budgets, it is asserted that Norway's continued expansion of its petroleum industry means that greater burdens are placed on the rest of the world in transitioning away from fossil fuels, including those in the Global South who have little responsibility for climate change. Additionally, in light of its diversified economy and careful management of its fossil fuel wealth, Norway is arguably well-placed to take the lead on scaling back on its extractive industries, at least in comparison to the other major oil and gas producers, such as Angola (McKinnon, Muttitt and Trout 2017). There is a need to empirically and critically investigate the underlying justice norms and assumptions of Norway's potentially paradoxical climate change profile, as is engaged with in detail in Chapter 5.

### **4.3 Norwegian NGOs**

Due to their perceived expert and specialised knowledge, Norwegian NGOs play a key role in the design and implementation of REDD+ alongside NICFI, as part of a close, co-operative relationship with the Norwegian government. Indeed, NICFI provides significant funding to civil society actors involved in international REDD+ activity (US\$208) through the Climate and Forest Funding Scheme (Angelsen 2016). This comprises of both environment and development NGOs, who prioritise differing and competing interests. To varying extents, Norwegian NGOs are involved in the design of REDD+ policy, as well as on-the-ground implementation of REDD+ in the tropical-forested nations, often working with local CSOs (Hermansen et al. 2017).

The two identified most influential and important NGOs for REDD+ interests in Norway are Friends of the Earth (FOE) and Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN). While FOE is focused on limiting climate change and ensuring global environmental protection, RFN is more specifically set up towards protecting the rights of indigenous peoples living in forested areas, while simultaneously protecting forested areas. Indeed, both FOE and RFN were heavily involved in the adoption of REDD+ in Norway and the inception of NICFI in 2008. Hermansen (2015) details how RFN and FOE seized the 'policy window' of the cross-party climate settlement in 2007 to propose the adoption of a large-scale rainforest initiative in Norwegian climate policy,

which appeared to meet the needs of all associated parties. In addition, the Development Fund, a Norwegian international development NGO supporting small-scale farming communities to eradicate poverty and hunger, is involved in project-level REDD+ projects, including one in the South-west of Ethiopia (See Section 4.8).

The close involvement of NGOs in REDD+ policy and practice has continued in the ensuing years, as REDD+ has become more 'project-based' (Okereke and Dooley 2010, Hermansen et al. 2017). This aligns with the strong relationship that NGOs generally have with the government in Norway. Indeed, a number of policy researchers have highlighted the 'active inclusion' that NGOs maintain in Norwegian society, in which they receive substantial funding from the government and regularly contribute to policy-making processes (Dryzek et al. 2003, Grendstad et al. 2006). For instance, RFN receives the majority of its funding from state sources (in 2014, 125 million NOK of RFN's total revenue of 151 million NOK was state-funded) (Hermansen et al. 2017).

The close relationship with the government means that the Norwegian NGOs have adopted an 'insider' role of sorts (Hermansen et al. 2017). Indeed, some critical policy scholars have argued that Norwegian NGOs are more likely to be 'co-opted' by the state and become less openly critical of state decisions (Dryzek et al. 2003, Grendstad et al. 2006, Tvedt 2007). Indeed, Hermansen et al. (2017: 5) assert that, "the Norwegian societal model has resulted in a tradition of Norwegian NGOs being more co-operative, pragmatic and less openly confrontational than their counterparts abroad". Nevertheless, in becoming an 'insider', Norwegian NGOs are allowed enhance influence upon shaping REDD+ policy; notably, they continue to advocate for a broader, more livelihoods-focused approach to REDD+ (Hermansen and Kasa 2014).

#### **4.4 UN-REDD**

The UN-REDD programme acts as one of the two primary multilateral support channels for REDD+. It is a partnership of three existing UN agencies: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) (Gupta, 2014). UN-REDD was made operational in 2008 and now supports the development of national REDD+

programmes in 64 countries. The programme is a multi-donor fund, with Norway currently acting as its largest contributor (NICFI 2015).

The UN-REDD programme supports the recipient countries to prepare for the implementation of REDD+ (i.e. the 'Readiness' process) both technically and financially (Gupta 2014). The financial support primarily relates to the national programmes and the Readiness Preparation Package, which attempts to meet the costs of the nation's 'Readiness needs'. For instance, this may involve providing the funding necessary for the enhancement of domestic REDD+ policy strategies. In other cases, UN-REDD may provide technical support to the recipient country, often to provide training to local and regional REDD+ staff on carrying out Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) activity. Depending on the contextual needs, any of the three UN agencies (UNDP, UNEP or FAO) can act as the delivery partner in the country.

In Ethiopia, UN-REDD provides mostly technical support, with the World Bank providing the multilateral financial support in the country. The UN-REDD's technical assistance in Ethiopia comprises of three key elements. Firstly, they provide advice on how the Ethiopian government can better design its national REDD+ strategy. Secondly, they are carrying out a number of evaluative studies concerning the economic value of Ethiopia's forests. Thirdly, the UN acts as a financial intermediary between Ethiopia and the REDD+ donor country, in managing a Multi-partner trust fund on behalf of the CRGE strategy (see Section 4.6).

#### **4.5 The World Bank**

The World Bank acts as the other primary multilateral institutional support for the international REDD+ process, working closely alongside UN-REDD. There are two sources of funding for REDD+ from the World Bank: The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the BioCarbon Fund (BCF). These are run essentially as trust fund mechanisms, with the World Bank often acting as the delivery partner on the ground in the recipient nations. The World Bank's funds are largely sourced from governmental institutions, with Norway currently the biggest donor to the two REDD+ funding mechanisms.

The FCPF funding is channelled in two ways: through the Readiness funding, which aims to enhance institutional capacity and instigate policy reform for REDD+ donor countries, and through the Carbon fund, which transfers results-based payments to the recipient countries, based on the amount of carbon sequestered from deforestation reductions. The BCF channels funds for technical assistance, as well as for results achieved, but has more of an overall focus on instigating private sector involvement. The World Bank, rather than a UN agency, acts as the delivery partner in Ethiopia. While the UN is often favoured by countries which require assistance with policy development, the World Bank can provide greater levels of financial support to the recipient countries. The recent strong economic growth and ambition in Ethiopia aligns with the World Bank's expertise and finance-based role. In addition, there is a long-term historical relationship between Ethiopia and the World Bank.

#### **4.6 The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**

It is estimated by the FAO (2015) that total forest cover in Ethiopia is approximately 12.49 million hectares, or around 11% of its terrestrial land cover. However, following a revised national definition of forests, the Ethiopia government suggests that forest cover is closer to 17.2 million hectares or 15.5% of land (MEFCC 2015). In line with its wide-ranging altitudes and associated climates and topographies, forests in Ethiopia comprise of diverse landscapes and vegetation types, from high tropical rainforests in the South-west to lowland scrubs in the East and North-East (Teketay et al. 2010). Forest resources in Ethiopia are primarily nature, though small-scale plantations have been increasingly established in recent years (FAO 2015).

It is well-documented that, alongside their critical environmental functions, forests provide a number of socio-economic benefits and livelihood functions in Ethiopia (Narita et al. 2017, Bekele et al. 2015, Gobeze et al. 2009). For instance, Narita et al. (2017) estimate that the value of the forests accounts for around 5-6% of Ethiopia's GDP, primarily through international coffee exports. Simultaneously, forests act as a source of social and cultural benefits (Narita et al. 2017). At the local level, forests are valuable in terms of supporting livelihoods, providing energy (in terms of fuelwood and charcoal) and acting as a source of food, medicine, food and constructions materials, among numerous other functions (Gobeze et al. 2009).

The forest cover in Ethiopia is under threat from continuing, long-term and acute deforestation. Since the 1960s, the country has faced challenges with documented significant losses in forest resources (Narita et al. 2017, FAO 2015). Although there are challenges in determining the exact annual rate of deforestation in Ethiopia and estimates vary according to source, forest type and location, it can be suggested that the current rate is around 1.0-1.5% annually (FAO 2015, FDRE 2011, Bekele et al. 2015). Accordingly, Bekele et al (2015) proposes that Ethiopia is at the early stage of the forest transition curve (or stage two of Angelsen's 2008 forest transition curve- see Figure 4.4 below): a period characterised by relatively high deforestation rates (more than 0.5%), but relatively low forest cover (less than 40%). The stage of forest transition that Ethiopia is at has implications for how the challenges of deforestation are addressed in the country (Dutschke and Wertz-Kanounnikoff 2008).

Ethiopia's changing forest cover and relatively high levels of deforestation have implications for climate change. Based on the assumption that the carbon content of the trees is 50% of the total biomass, WBISPP (2005) estimated that Ethiopia's forest resources contains around 2.76 billion tons of carbon stock (tons of carbon per hectare), although other more localised studies suggest lower carbon densities. The largest store of carbon in Ethiopia is the woodlands (46%), compared to 34% in the shrublands and 16% in the high forests (Moges, Eshetu and Nune 2010).

**Figure 4.4: Stages in Forest Transition (Angelsen 2008)**

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Based on Saatchi et al's (2011) estimates of carbon densities at the global level, it can be proposed that Ethiopia is one of the tropical-forested nations with relatively low carbon densities, e.g. compared to Indonesia (19-23 billion tons of carbon stock), Democratic Republic of Congo (22-24 billion tons of carbon stock) or Brazil (54-62 billion tons of carbon stock) (see Figure 4.5 below). A relatively low carbon density suggests considerable forest degradation in Ethiopia, aligning with Angelsen's (2008) theory that carbon-rich forests tend to be lost in the early stages of the forest transition. The forest sector is found to account for approximately 40% of domestic GHG emissions, primarily attributable to deforestation and forest degradation (FDRE 2011, Narita et al. 2017). In line with many other Sub-Saharan African nations, the contribution of deforestation to the country's GHG emissions is significantly higher than the global average (Moges, Eshetu and Nune 2010).

The policy literature suggests that the primary direct drivers of deforestation in Ethiopia are large-scale and smallholder agricultural expansion, unsustainable fuel wood consumption, illegal logging and forest fires, underpinned by underlying, indirect drivers of deforestation, notably population growth, governmental development strategy and weak institutional capacities. (FAO 2015, CRGE 2011, Bekele et al. 2015). Moges, Eshetu and Nune (2010) detail that the conversion of forests into agricultural land is the largest cause of deforestation in Ethiopia (around 50%), with 80% of the country's working population employed in the agricultural sector and dependent on natural resource-based livelihoods.

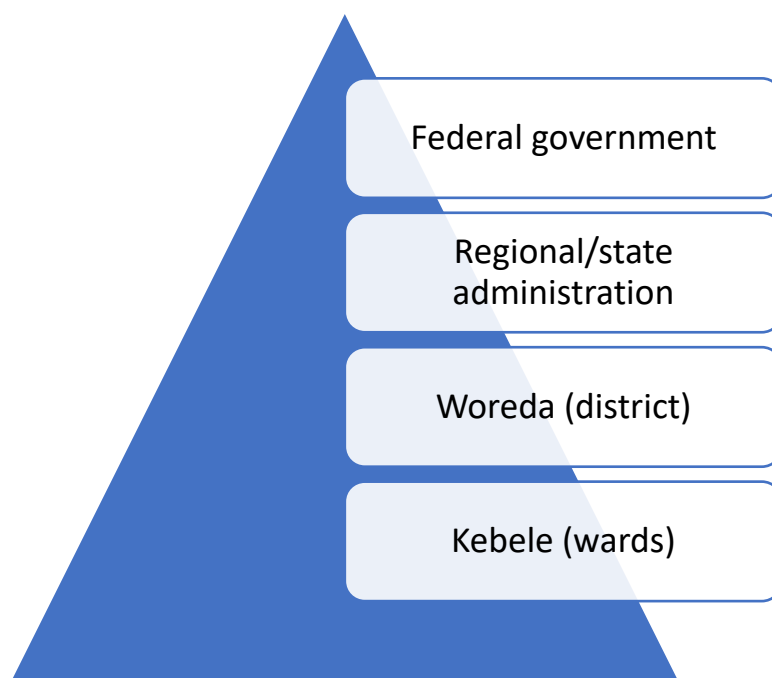
**Figure 4.5: Global Assessment of Forest Carbon Stocks (Saatchi et al. 2011)**

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## Ethiopia's Forest Governance Background and the Emergence of REDD+

Since the 1950s, Ethiopia has gone through significant political upheaval, which can be broadly categorised into three eras: (1) the feudal, imperial regime (pre-1974) (2) the socialist, military regime known as 'Derg' (1974-1991) (3) the federal regime, led by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which established the current Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (post-1991) (Bekele et al. 2015, Ayana, Arts and Wiersum 2012). Each of these relates to distinct ideologies and socio-economic organisation. Following the deposition of the centralised 'Derg' regime in 1991, the EPRDF quickly established an ethnic-based federal political system, comprising of nine semi-autonomous regional states and two chartered cities, a democratic political process and a market-oriented economic system. Approaches to forest governance in Ethiopia in recent decades have evolved in line with broader changes in the country's political economy (Ayana, Arts and Wiersum 2012).

The EPRDF's political regime has continued the state ownership of land from the Derg period. As with the Derg regime, all forested land remains under sole ownership of the Ethiopian government, with private ownership of forests legally outlawed (Bekele et al. 2015). However, the federalised nature of the Ethiopian state means that forest governance has become highly decentralised in the country, with regional states partially responsible for natural resource management within their jurisdiction (Ayana, Arts and Wiersum 2012, Teketay et al. 2010). These regions are further divided into administrative zones, districts (known as Woredas) and wards (known as Kebeles) at the village level (Bekele et al. 2015) (see Figure 4.6 below). Additionally, while the state retains control of the forests in law, an 'open access' situation has emerged, with de facto ownership of forested land, by individuals or communities, taking precedence in practice, as with many Sub-Saharan African nations (Bekele et al. 2015).



**Figure 4.6: Multi-level governance structure in Ethiopia (Adapted from Ayana 2014)**

Additionally, in line with the country's decentralising practices and global trends, a further significant change in Ethiopian forest governance has been the increasing use of Participatory Forest Management (PFM) practices within the country and the enhanced involvement of community and non-state actors in the management of forests (Ayana, Arts and Wiersum 2012, Gobeze et al. 2009, Teketay et al. 2010). The PFM approach was initially introduced by Environmental NGOs in the mid-1990s in a number of forested areas, as part of conservation projects (Bekele et al. 2015). The community management of forests is seen to respond to the long-term and persistent neglect of communities' rights, needs and interests associated with a centralised approach to forest governance; a PFM approach is purported to grant greater powers to forest-dependent communities as part of a devolved approach to forest governance, as well as addressing the root causes of deforestation and forest degradation (Gobeze et al. 2009, Teketay et al. 2010, Ayana 2014).

Since this period, PFM has become increasingly recognised, formally and informally, by the Ethiopian government as the preferred way of sustainably managing the nation's forest resources and is supported by a number of international donors and NGOs (see Figure 4.6 above). A number of recent studies have highlighted the environmental and livelihood benefits that the PFM approach has brought to



localised areas of Ethiopia and is seen to offer a promising solution to the country's deforestation challenges (Gobeze et al. 2009, Bekele et al. 2015). However, critics have argued that the introduction of PFM has yet to bring substantive or fundamental changes to the management of forests and the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities in Ethiopia (Ayana 2014, Abrar and Inoue, 2012).

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**Figure 4.7: The Distribution of PFM in Ethiopia (Bekele et al. 2015)**

In line with the country's increasing involvement in international environmental negotiations and treaties, the most recent shift in Ethiopia's forest governance strategy has been its engagement in REDD+ since 2008 (Bekele et al. 2015, Gonzalo et al. 2017). REDD+ has been embedded as one of the 'four pillars' of Ethiopia's 'Climate Resilient Green Economy' (CRGE) Strategy that the government has been committed to since 2011. The strategy represents Ethiopia's contemporary green growth ambitions, whereby the government has ambitions of becoming a middle-income country by 2030, while maintaining domestic GHG emissions at 2010 levels (NICFI 2015). Under a single policy framework, the Ethiopian government aims to significantly develop its economy, reduce GHG emissions and deforestation levels and improve resilience to climate change (IIED 2013).

The Ethiopian government has placed REDD+ centrally in financing its ambitious green growth strategy (Bekele et al. 2015, FDRE 2015, Ayana, Arts and Wiersum 2012). Since 2013, the Ethiopian government has been offered international support for the ‘readiness’ phase of REDD+, whereby capacity of the government is being built up to prepare them for the forthcoming results-based payment stage (Gonzalo et al. 2017). Funds for REDD+ in Ethiopia are sourced both bilaterally and multilaterally. Bilaterally, Norway acts as the largest REDD+ donor, with the UK government also providing a significant amount of funds for REDD+ (See Figure 4.7 below).

Norway and Ethiopia signed a REDD+ partnership agreement in 2013, incorporating financial and technical support for the ‘Readiness’ phase of REDD+, including the enhancement of institutional and MRV capacities (Bekele et al. 2015). Additionally, although the details are as yet unclear, the agreement includes the future purchasing of verified emissions reductions. The REDD+ collaboration between Norway and Ethiopia currently lasts until 2020, but may be renewed before then, depending on international climate agreements. Norwegian support for REDD+ is direct (i.e. government to government), but finance is also channelled through multilateral channels, including via the World Bank (NICFI 2015). The Norwegian government have also contributed funds (approximately \$60 million) to Ethiopia’s CRGE initiative.

**Table 4.1: Sources of REDD+ Funding in Ethiopia**

<b>Funding Body</b>	<b>Amount pledged (in USD)</b>
<b>NICFI (Norwegian Government)</b>	\$8 million
<b>DFID (UK Government)</b>	\$6.6 million
<b>FCPF (Forest Carbon Partnership Facility)</b>	\$3.6 million
<b>FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation)</b>	\$830,000

Given the relatively low forest cover and relatively low forest carbon densities in Ethiopia, the justification for Norwegian engagement in REDD+ in the country can be questioned. Although the rate of deforestation in Ethiopia is relatively high and is at an early stage of forest transition, there are numerous other forest landscapes globally that would offer larger gains in terms of GHG emissions reductions and carbon sequestered. Even on a regional level, Ethiopia's total forest cover (11%) is significantly lower than the average for East Africa (Bekele et al. 2015). The reasons for why Norway is pursuing REDD+ interventions in a low carbon density country such as Ethiopia will be explored critically in Chapter 5.

The primary multilateral support for REDD+ in Ethiopia comes from the World Bank, through both the FCPF and BCF funding mechanisms. Since 2012, the World Bank has contributed funds to the REDD+ readiness process in Ethiopia, with an initial grant of \$3.6 million (National REDD+ Secretariat 2015, Bekele et al. 2015). Here, the World Bank's support includes improving national-level, forest-related capacity and the formulation of a national REDD+ strategy. It is agreed that the World Bank will pay for verified reductions in deforestation levels and GHG emissions on a regional basis in the future following Ethiopia's progression through the Readiness stage (National REDD+ Secretariat 2015). Upon commencement, the World Bank's results-based payments for REDD+ is expected to last for ten years. Along with the UN (in the form of FAO, UNDP and UNEP), the World Bank also provides technical support in the country.

In line with the government's strong commitment to REDD+, forest governance has become increasingly strengthened and institutionalised in Ethiopia (Ayana, Arts and Wiersum 2012). While there had not previously been a dedicated forestry institution within Ethiopia, the government established the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) in 2013 (Gonzalo et al. 2017). Within the ministry sits the REDD+ secretariat which manages the co-ordination and implementation of REDD+ in Ethiopia. The secretariat is staffed by a number of relevant specialists (e.g. safeguards specialist) and is supported by three task forces: the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessments task force, the Strategy Task Force and the MRV task force (Gonzalo et al. 2017).

The national REDD+ programme in Ethiopia is supported by state administration at regional levels, as part of a nested approach to forest governance. State-level committees and technical working groups exist to support the implementation of REDD+ activity on the ground and act as intermediaries between the federal and local levels. Since 2013, Oromia has acted as the pilot state for REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia, with plans in motion for REDD+ to be rolled out to other forested states (see section 4.8 below). The pilot project has been put into place to test the on-the-ground field realities of REDD+ and to inform the development of the national REDD+ strategy in Ethiopia (BCF 2015).

However, there exist significant challenges in realising the ambitious aims of REDD+, as well as the CRGE more broadly, in Ethiopia, not least of which reconciling the government's large-scale plans for agricultural expansion with its aims of reducing the country's deforestation and forest degradation levels (Bass et al. 2013, Moges, Eshetu and Nune 2010). It has been well-detailed in the policy literature that the Ethiopia government intends to realise rapid economic growth through agricultural development (with targeted annual growth rates of 8.1% set for the sector), which would act as a catalyst for the subsequent expansion of other sectors, including the manufacturing industry (Bekele et al. 2015).

However, as highlighted in the previous section, agricultural expansion currently acts as the primary driver of deforestation in Ethiopia, including smallholder farming, but increasingly large-scale agriculture. While small-holder farming continues to act as the source of livelihoods for a predominantly rural population in the country, foreign investment in commercial large-scale agriculture has significantly increased in recent years, encouraged by the Ethiopian government and in line with its economic reforms (Lavers 2011). The expansion of large-scale commercial farms is likely to have the most significant impact upon the state of Ethiopia's forests (Bekele et al. 2015). Considering the economic importance of the agricultural sector for the country (accounting for 42% of GDP and employing more than 80% of the population), it is likely that this may be prioritised over the forest sector. Accordingly, scholars (Bass et al. 2013, Bekele et al. 2015, Ayana, Arts and Wiersum 2012) draw attention to the conflicting ideas, discourses and interests that are present within the Ethiopian government's green growth strategy

Additionally, the recent proliferation in commercial, large-scale agricultural investment in Ethiopia is proposed to conflict with the needs, rights and interests of communities, both smallholder farmers and those dependent on forest resources (Bekele et al. 2015). Bekele et al. (2015) identifies that large chunks of land depended upon by rural communities for generations has been leased away by the Ethiopian government to foreign investors. Indeed, while it is well-documented that significant economic growth has occurred in Ethiopia in recent years, recording a double-digit growth rate between 2005 and 2010 (IIED 2013), the evidence suggests that many communities are economically and politically marginalised and are not feeling the benefits of the strong national economic development (Gardner 2018).

Relatedly, the Ethiopian government has been condemned by a number of international organisations for human rights violations, including for forceful eviction of communities from their ancestral lands (Bekele et al. 2015, Amnesty International 2017). It is proposed that these violations and the evident socio-economic inequalities in Ethiopia are broadly tied up with the ethnic divisions in the country, with the rights of the Oromo people found to have been particularly violated in recent years. Such inequalities and human rights abuses can be seen to have laid the ground for recent ethnic-based instabilities and tensions in Ethiopia (Amnesty International 2017).

#### **4.7 Ethiopian Environmental NGOs**

As highlighted in the previous section, there is enhanced space for civil society in managing and developing Ethiopia's forest governance strategies, including REDD+, following the establishment of the decentralised federal system in the country (Ayana, Arts and Wiersum 2012, Bekele et al. 2015). A number of environmental NGOs have played key roles in initiating discussions surrounding REDD+ at the federal level, piloting REDD+ practices in the field and mobilising resources for on-the-ground implementation. These primarily include Farm Africa, SOS Sahel and Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association (EWNRA). Notably, Farm Africa and SOS Sahel co-launched and developed a Norwegian-funded REDD+ pilot project in Oromia in 2006, known as the Bale Mountains Eco-region project. When it launched, it was the only REDD+ activity in Ethiopia and it is deemed to have played

a key role in the government's subsequent national commitment towards REDD+ (Bekele et al. 2015).

Furthermore, environmental NGOs are also attributed with steering Ethiopia's approach to forest governance towards PFM. Since the 1990s, they have been responsible for introducing and establishing PFM projects in the country (Bekele et al. 2015, Gobeze et al. 2009). NGOs such as Farm Africa and SOS Sahel have significant knowledge and experience of working directly with communities on-the-ground to sustainably manage forests, including the Bale Mountains Eco-region project. In pursuing the PFM approach, Bekele et al. (2015) argues that environmental NGOs in Ethiopia seek to ensure that sustainable forestry interventions are not simply technical issues but tied closely with livelihood issues, social equity and enhanced community participation in forest governance.

The NGOS were eventually responsible for catalysing the formal insertion of PFM approaches into the Ethiopian government's forest policies in 2007. It is argued that the adoption of REDD+ into the government's environmental policy has further enhanced the role of PFM in the country (Bekele et al. 2015). In carrying out their operations, the NGOs work alongside regional governmental institutions, as well as international organisations. While the NGOs have had significant input into the adoption of REDD+ and PFM at federal level, their financial support derives primarily from international sources, channelled both bilaterally and multilaterally. Indeed, as part of its Climate and Forest Funding Scheme, the Norwegian government directly funds some of the NGOs in Ethiopia for their work on REDD+.

However, despite the enhanced role that non-state actors have played in steering forest governance processes in Ethiopia, scholars argue that the NGO-led reforms have nevertheless enacted limited substantive and significant changes in the government's strategies and approaches (Bekele et al. 2015, Stellmacher 2007, Ayana 2014). Given the closed policy-making tradition in Ethiopia, the lack of formal mechanism for the participation of non-state actors in state-level discussions and the continuing state-ownership of the forests, the extent to which NGOs and community actors have significant involvement and power in forest governance processes can be questioned. Additionally, the unevenness of economic development in Ethiopia and the human rights violations evident in the country, particularly in agrarian

regions, would imply a conflict with the aspirations of PFM and the actual devolution of forest management to the community level.

#### **4.8 Regional and Local-level Contexts in Ethiopia**

At the regional level, Oromia was selected as the examined Ethiopian state for this project. It is the largest (total area of 284,538km<sup>2</sup>) and by far the most populated (33,692,000) state in Ethiopia, stretching from the Somali region in the east to the border with South Sudan in the West and the border with Kenya in the South (Central Statistics Agency 2015). It is a predominantly rural region, with urban inhabitants making up only 11.3% of the Oromia population.

The FAO (2010) estimate that Oromia contains by far the most forest cover in the country: approximately 6,964,293 hectares. The forests in Oromia comprise primarily of high forests and high woodlands, with the region making up 61% of the high forests and 51% of the high woodlands in the country (Bekele et al. 2015- See Figure 4.8 below). The highlands of the country are the most populated areas, containing about 85% of the country's population as well as 95% of the cultivated land, as well as being one of the regions in the country where the most persistent and severe deforestation and forest degradation has taken place (Bekele 2015). Indeed, according to WBISPP estimates (2004), only the SNPPR state (3.30%) has recorded more forest loss than Oromia (1.47%) in recent years. Additionally, 36.9% of total GHG emissions from forest clearing for agriculture in Ethiopia comes from the Oromia region (FAO 2015).

Accordingly, the extent of the forest cover and the pressures from agricultural expansion on forested lands appear to be the largest and most acute in the Oromia region and worthy of further investigation, in light of REDD+ projects. Additionally, it also presents an interesting regional case from a socio-political perspective, taking into account the purported human rights abuses of the Oromo ethnic group, which makes up the majority of the state's population: how do the environmental and social aspects of REDD+ align or emerge in such an unstable political environment? Additionally, Oromia was selected in this project, due to its role as the pilot state for REDD+ in Ethiopia and the existence of significant forest governance and REDD+ institutional structures in the region (Aransa et al. 2013, BCF 2015).

The World Bank acts as the primary funder of the Oromia REDD+ pilot programme (known as the Oromia Forest Landscape Programme), through the BCF, with Norway and the UK providing additional financial support. Currently, the support provided is for the Readiness stage of the programme, with planned results-based payments set to be made by the World Bank, as part of a 10-year agreement (BCF 2015, Bekele et al. 2015). The programme acts as an umbrella and coordination strategy for multi-partner intervention into deforestation in the region, incorporating state-wide and project-based activities (BCF 2015).

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**Figure 4.8: Map of Land Cover Types in Ethiopia (Bekele et al. 2015)**

As part of the programme, the international funders work closely with the Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise (OFWE), a public enterprise that co-ordinates with



federal and regional-level government institutions, including those at grassroots level, and international and local environmental organisations, to conserve and sustainably manage forest and natural resources in the region using a PFM approach (Bekele et al. 2015, The REDD Desk 2017). Additionally, the pilot programme encompasses the on-the-ground, small-scale REDD+ PFM projects that are being implemented in Oromia by environmental NGOs to address deforestation and forest degradation in the region. Some of these are previously existing REDD+ interventions, such as the Bale Mountains Eco-Region project, that are being nested into the broader pilot programme, in order to mobilise and upscale future funding (BCF 2015).

The focus of this research is the Nono Sele REDD+ project that is being led by Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association (EWNRA) in South-West Ethiopia (forming part of its broader 'REDD+ Participatory Forest Management in South-west Ethiopia' project). EWNRA is a domestic NGO which works on natural resource and forest management at project level in Ethiopia, including small-scale REDD+ projects in Oromia and SNPPR. As with the other NGOs, they make use of PFM as its mode of apparatus and work directly with the forest-dependent communities. They also cooperate closely with local and regional institutions in Ethiopia, notably OFWE in the Oromia region. The organisation's financial support for the Nono Sele REDD+ project comes primarily from the Norwegian government, with funding channelled through the Development Fund, as the international partner organisation in the field.

In this research, I examined EWNRA's project in the Nono Sele woreda of Oromia, focusing on two villages in particular: *Gago* and *Yakama*. The Nono Sele district is located in the South-west of the Illubabor zone of Oromia (See Figures 4.9 and 4.10 below). Outside of Bale, the majority of Oromia's high-forested land is located in the Illubabor forested landscape in the South-west of the region (See Figure 4.8), comprising primarily of tropical montane rainforest (BCF 2015, Wood and Dixon 2000). Being part of the Ethiopian Western highlands, the altitude in the region ranges between 1500-2000m above sea level, with an approximate average annual rainfall of 2000mm (Wood and Dixon 2000). More specifically, the Nono Sele woreda comprises of 116, 648ha of forested land.

**Figure 4.9: Location of the Illubabor Zone in Ethiopia (Wood and Dixon 2000)**

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**Figure 4.10: Location of Nono Sele in the Illubabor Zone (UNOCH 2017)**

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unabridged version can be viewed in Lancaster Library - Coventry University.

In total, the 2007 national census reports that the total population for the Nono Sele district is 22,902, comprising primarily of the Oromo ethnic group (69.13%), but less than the regional average, due to the presence of the Mocha ethnic group (20.94%). The district's population is primarily made up of rural dwellers (92.38%), a higher percentage than the average for Oromia (88%) (CSA 2007). Illubabor is one of the zones in which forest loss has been the most severe in the state, with smallholder farming and extraction of firewood acting as the primary drivers of deforestation in the area (Hailu et al. 2000, BCF 2015). Such drivers reflect the dependency on agriculture in Illubabor, with only 14.7% of the population in 'non-farm related jobs', noticeably lower than the regional (24%) and national (25%) averages (CSA 2007). This includes both subsistence farming (dominated by maize cultivation) and export-oriented agriculture. Coffee acts as the primary cash crop in the area, with wild Coffee Arabica being native to Oromia's Western forests (BCF 2015, CSA 2007, Wood and Dixon 2000).

The EWNRA-led Nono Sele REDD+ project seeks to incentivise farmers in the district to reduce levels of deforestation levels and to maintain and enhance existing forest stocks. Currently, efforts are focused upon capacity-building, broadly forming part of the 'Readiness' stage of REDD+, with expectations of verified emissions reductions purchases at a later stage, incorporated into the broader Oromia pilot project program. Upfront support has been thus far offered to communities in Nono Sele in the form of financial, technical and infrastructural assistance for livelihoods and institutional development. This includes being offered relevant training for sustainable forest management techniques, improved infrastructure (e.g. roads, buildings) to enable the implementation of REDD+ activities and the provision of finances (approximately 100,000 Ethiopian Birr as of 2017) to support local farming cooperatives (12 in total) in selling coffee and non-timber forest products at local and regional markets.

In light of the dependency upon subsistence and export agriculture in Nono Sele, there are likely to be challenges in achieving the aims of the project and emergent conflicts in land-use and livelihoods. With the majority of income and employment in the district currently deriving from agriculture, the livelihoods of the largely rural inhabitants of Nono Sele are potentially at risk without sufficient support given for the conservation and sustainable management of the local forests. While the forests

remain controlled by the Ethiopian state, this PFM project seeks to devolve management rights to the communities in Nono Sele. At the community level, forest governance in the project is led by a REDD+ committee (a group of forest management 'experts' that operate across Nono Sele and the project).

## **Chapter 5: The Construction of Climate Justice Norms in the REDD+ Discourse**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, there is an empirical assessment and examination of the underlying climate justice norms present in the policy and community-level discourse of the Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ partnership. The chapter responds to the project's first research question: '*How is climate justice constructed in the REDD+ discourse and what implications does this have for current and future REDD+ practices?*' In doing so, the analysis in this chapter is driven by the need to empirically and critically interrogate the ways in which abstract theorisations of climate justice interact with the discourses of actual REDD+ policy and how climate justice norms underpin or justify REDD+ policy strategies. Additionally, in conducting a multiscalar examination, the analysis considers how the climate justice constructions in REDD+ policy discourse align or diverge across and between the multiple actors existing on multiple scales which are implicated in the Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ partnership.

The chapter is structured by the key arguments that emerged from the data in relation to climate justice constructions in the REDD+ discourse. Accordingly, it is divided into three broad sections: (1) *Trade-offs in REDD+* (2) *Constructions of responsibility for climate change* and (3) *Top-down approach to REDD+ policy design and formulation*.

### **5.2 Trade-offs in REDD+**

Proponents of REDD+ indicate the feasibility of a 'win-win-win' with the implementation of the initiative in tropical-forested nations, with much of the international funding for REDD+ amassed based on such a proposition (Lund et al. 2017). This is the idea that REDD+ will result in a 'win' for the environment, in terms of reduced deforestation levels and GHG emissions, a 'win' for the private sector, in that business can grow in a sustainable way, and a 'win' for poverty alleviation, whereby forest-dependent communities can develop and improve their livelihoods.

The realisation of synergistic livelihood and environmental benefits has been the source of much debate in the REDD+ literature, with critical scholars largely casting

doubt on the ease with which the ‘win-win-win’ can be achieved in practice and indicating the greater likelihood that trade-offs will occur with the implementation of REDD+ (Paladino 2011, McAfee 2014, Pokorny, Scholz and De Jong 2013). Nevertheless, there has been a noted transition in international REDD+ focus, away from a purely carbon focus towards a more integrated approach, driven by the implementation of a ‘safeguards framework’ (Angelsen 2016).

The findings in this research suggest that there is a clear and consistent emphasis by the policy-makers on the cost-effective and large-scale GHG emissions reductions potential of REDD+ over and above the livelihoods or development aspirations of the initiative. To varying extents, all of the REDD+ policy actors evidence the side-lining of livelihoods or development aspirations, as part of a cost-effective and carbon-centric narrative. Although a ‘co-benefits’ discourse is present, the REDD+ policy-makers nevertheless indicate an evident hierarchy of priorities.

In particular, Norway’s International Climate and Forest Initiative’s (NICFI) policy discourse demonstrates a clear and consistent prioritisation of the carbon benefits of REDD+. Throughout NICFI’s REDD+ policy documents, there is a significant emphasis upon the cost-effective and large-scale reduction in GHG emissions, with the developmental needs of the tropical-forested nation as distinctly secondary elements of its REDD+ policy focus. NICFI most explicitly demonstrates its primary motivations for REDD+ engagement in its stated ‘core objectives’:

- “1. To work towards the inclusion of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in a new international climate regime;*
- 2. To take early action to achieve cost-effective and verifiable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions;*
- 3. To promote the conservation of natural forests to maintain their carbon storage capacity.”*

Here, NICFI’S first two objectives explicitly and clearly position the reductions of GHG emissions and deforestation rates as the institution’s priority in designing and implementing REDD+. These promote the use of the forest sector in realising significant GHG emissions reductions as the key driver of REDD+, forming part of a “new international climate regime”. The core objectives suggest that the Norwegian

government's focus is upon the advancement of REDD+ as its primary climate change mitigation strategy. In all of the policy-makers texts, there exists a carbon-centric narrative, in which the cost-effective reductions of international GHG emissions are frequently discussed and emphasised.

However, in none of the NICFI's core objectives are the development, poverty alleviation or livelihoods benefits of REDD+ present. This is indicative of the policy-makers' texts more broadly, whereby these aspects of REDD+ tend to be discussed or highlighted to a significantly lesser extent than the carbon-oriented goals. Where they are discussed or highlighted, they are often rendered supplementary and side-lined in the policy discourse through a number of linguistic devices and discursive structures.

Notably, the poverty alleviation or development potential of REDD+ is often referred to by the policy-makers, particularly NICFI, as 'non-carbon benefits' or 'co-benefits', in line with broader international REDD+ discourse. Such labelling constructs these as *supplementary* benefits, defined in opposition to the primary intended outcomes of 'carbon benefits'. The use of 'non-carbon benefits' or 'co-benefits' in the policy discourse acts to implicitly marginalise or side-line the poverty alleviation or development potential of REDD+.

In addition, in one of its REDD+ evaluation reports, NICFI explicitly ranks the institution's priorities:

*"The primary purpose of the REDD+ mechanism has been to secure climate change mitigation in line with the objective of the climate change convention (to avoid dangerous climate change, and its associated economic costs). Within the negotiations, positive development outcomes have been always been considered as a potential co-benefit of REDD+ activities. Norway has tended to assert that development co-benefits will arise..."*

Here, there is further evidence of the hierarchical nature of NICFI's REDD+ objectives. While accessing the climate change mitigation potential of tropical forests is the stated "primary" purpose of NICFI, achieving development-based outcomes are framed as supplementary: co-benefits which may "arise" from the implementation of REDD+ activities, but are unlikely to be actively pursued in the first place. The

positioning of the 'development co-benefits' within the paragraph also acts to side-line its importance. This is consistent with the structure of much of the writing in NICFI's policy documents, at both the micro and meso level, whereby when the livelihood or development benefits of REDD+ are discussed, these tend to follow details of the carbon-based benefits. In doing so, NICFI act to elevate the importance of the emissions reduction potential of REDD+ and to position the 'co-benefits' as consistently secondary in nature.

Elsewhere, it is rarely discussed how the perceived 'co-benefits' of REDD+ may be achieved nor how they may be measured in the policy discourse. The detailed and concrete outlining of the monitoring and measurement of deforestation levels and GHG emissions through the technical Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) framework acts in contrast to the lack of clarity surrounding the wider potential development-oriented benefits of REDD+ in the policy-makers' texts. The realisation of 'verified' emissions reductions forms a part of NICFI's core objectives and, in line with this, there are considerable technical discussions throughout its policy texts of how to measure and monitor reductions in deforestation levels and GHG emissions in the recipient countries.

However, no criteria, metrics or measurement tools are put forward for how to monitor or realise proposed 'co-benefits', suggesting that these do not form a significant priority for the policy-makers and instead act as rhetoric in the policy discourse. Meanwhile, the prominence of the MRV framework in the policy texts indicates the ultimate priority for the policy-makers: the cost-effective and large-scale reductions in GHG emissions. Here, progress in REDD+ appears to be primarily determined by the metrics of deforestation rates and GHG emissions.

NICFI's priorities and side-lining of the livelihoods or development aspirations of REDD+ also emerge through the institution's cost-effective narrative. As well as being placed centrally in its 'core aims', cost-effectiveness forms a key component of NICFI's, as well as the multilateral institutions', policy discourse. The term is frequently used in reference to the key drivers of the initiative and the intended benefits and outcomes of REDD+. As with its broader aims, cost-effectiveness is often placed prominently at the beginning of statements or sections in NICFI's policy discourse, indicating its ultimate importance for the institution's REDD+ drive.



Additionally, the role of cost-effectiveness is almost entirely portrayed by NICFI in positive terms. Notably, on several occasions, it is indicated to play a “crucial” or “substantial” role in the design of REDD+ strategies in tropical-forested nations. A cost-effective narrative is also bound up with, and reflected by, NICFI’s construction of forests as ‘carbon stocks’ or ‘carbon sinks’. Throughout its policy discourse, NICFI describes forests more often as ‘carbon stocks’ or ‘carbon sinks’ to a much greater extent than as sources of livelihoods for the communities. In doing so, NICFI indicates its ultimate value of the tropical forests: as a cheap way of sequestering carbon and of reducing global GHG emissions, masking their role in meeting the livelihoods needs of the local communities or in alleviating poverty.

The cost-effective narrative evident in the policy discourse reflects an economic framing of, and justification for REDD+ that has existed since its origins. This orientation of REDD+ understands it as an international climate change mitigation initiative that seeks to reduce GHG emissions wherever these are cheapest. For NICFI, a cost-effective drive to its REDD+ discourse is closely aligned with its efforts since the early 1990s to act as a front-runner in international environmental governance and to direct its environmental initiatives towards cost-effective and international solutions and away from domestic targets (Tellman 2012, Hermansen and Kasa 2014).

A carbon-centric and cost-effective narrative in REDD+ can be considered to primarily serve the interests of actors in the Global North and potentially in opposition to the needs and rights of forest-dependent communities in the Global South. Indeed, a number of climate justice scholars have highlighted the negative implications that a cost-effective orientation of international climate change mitigation strategies may have for alleviating poverty and instigating development in the Global South (McAfee 2016, Okereke 2008). McAfee (2012) suggests that given that cost-effective climate change mitigation strategies are predicated on the distribution of global inequalities and differentiated ‘marginal costs’, it is unlikely that these would benefit the livelihoods of marginalised forested communities in the Global South.

There is evidence in NICFI’s policy discourse that the institution has become more development or livelihoods-oriented in its more recent REDD+ documents. Terms such as ‘poverty alleviation’, ‘livelihoods enhancement’ or ‘community benefits’ are

more frequently used in NICFI's more recent policy texts (from 2014-2017) compared to its earlier documents (2010-2014). While the institution maintains its overall and ultimate priorities throughout its chronology of policy discourse, there nevertheless exists a noticeable shift towards an enhanced willingness by NICFI to engage with the livelihoods or development aspirations of REDD+ in its latter documents, in line with the broader noted evolution in REDD+ policy narratives (Angelsen 2016, Savaresi 2016).

A shift in its REDD+ discourse is explicitly acknowledged by NICFI in its policy texts, with the emergence of a "new narrative" noted in the institution's REDD+ commitments. Here, it is put forward that NICFI has widened its initial carbon-centric focus for REDD+ towards a more holistic integration of development and livelihoods dimensions of forestry conservation into its policy design and implementation strategies. NICFI suggests that it now pursues REDD+, "as one part of efforts to create a socially inclusive green economy".

However, when NICFI engages in discussions of the livelihoods or poverty alleviation dimensions of REDD+, these tend to be framed in primarily instrumental terms. Here, when poverty alleviation is assessed, discussions relate most often to its implications for deforestation rates, as a purported 'key driver' of deforestation. To varying extents, all of the REDD+ policy actors engage in discussions of livelihoods and poverty alleviation from an instrumental perspective, frequently highlighting the fundamental role that poverty reduction plays in addressing deforestation rates in tropical-forested nations.

The frequent associations made between poverty alleviation and reductions in deforestation rates in the REDD+ policy discourse are strongly aligned with the linear notion of the Kuznets curve: the idea that that reduced poverty and greater economic stability is likely to produce enhanced environmental performance and protection. It is generally implied by the policy-makers that only through enhanced economic development and the capture of benefits from sustainable forest management at the local level can REDD+ succeed in its 'core aims' in the long-term. On occasions during discussion of 'community livelihoods' or 'poverty alleviation', NICFI highlights the necessity to "strengthen the economic value of forests".

Accordingly, it can be suggested that, while there is increased engagement in discussions of the poverty alleviation and livelihoods dimensions of REDD+ by NICFI, the motivation for doing so appear to be somewhat pragmatic, with debates on such issues tending to be driven by the institution's core objectives, i.e. how poverty alleviation or economic growth may positively impact upon deforestation rates and GHG emissions. It suggests that the primary motivation for the institution's engagement in 'co-benefits' and poverty alleviation in recipient nations is in order to drive forward the 'core' aims, i.e. for instrumental rather than intrinsic purposes.

It can also be suggested that NICFI's increased focus on the poverty alleviation or development potential of REDD+ in its policy discourse is partly influenced by power politics within the Norwegian governments. As NICFI's funding for REDD+ is sourced from Norway's Overseas Development Aid (ODA) budget, it is asserted on numerous occasions in the policy texts that their REDD+ strategies and activities need to align with the development-oriented goals of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). For instance, in one of their evaluation reports, NICFI states the following:

*“Sustainable development and poverty alleviation are overarching goals of Norwegian foreign and development policy. Thus, in addition to the climate-related goals, these are essential goals for NICFI. In pursuing the different goals, the climate policy and the development policy should be mutually supportive.”*

The use of 'thus' is crucial here: as poverty alleviation and sustainable development concerns act as “overarching goals” of Norad, it is implied that these must necessarily form key aspects of NICFI's REDD+ initiatives. The goals of the two government sectors “should” be “mutually supportive”. The language used by NICFI here suggests that, given the source of REDD+ funding, the institution is politically bound to integrate sustainable development and poverty alleviation goals in its REDD+ policy design and that if the decision had not been taken by the Norwegian government to source REDD+ funding from its ODA budget, development concerns may not feature in REDD+ policy design to the same extent. Accordingly, it can be suggested that the increased integration of development and poverty alleviation elements into NICFI's policy discourse is at least partly driven by its relationship with

Norad and the power that Norad has in Norwegian REDD+ politics, aligning with previous research on the politics of REDD+ in Norway (Angelsen 2016, Hermansen and Kasa 2014).

Accordingly, it can be suggested that the poverty alleviation or livelihoods dimensions of REDD+ tend to be discussed by NICFI either in relation in instrumental terms, in furthering its ultimate agenda, or in accordance with power politics. Despite the emergence of a 'new narrative', the poverty alleviation or livelihoods aspirations of REDD+ nevertheless remain distinctly secondary or supplementary in NICFI's policy discourse to its 'core aims'. It suggests that NICFI may celebrate if progress is made in realising these aspirations *alongside* the large-scale and cost-effective reductions in international GHG emissions but are unlikely to be actively prioritised initially. Taking this into consideration, livelihoods or poverty alleviation needs may only be considered by REDD+ policy-makers if they are symbiotic with achieving the 'core aims'. The lack of prioritisation of development objectives perhaps reflects the funders' confidence that these will occur organically when implementing REDD+ policy.

However, it is noticeable that there is a somewhat altered focus on NICFI's public-facing webpage. Here, when introducing REDD+, the emphasis is placed upon "saving the forests"; on reducing deforestation because of the inherent worth of the forests, of the biodiversity and livelihoods which are likely to improve as a result of having standing forests. The 'core objectives' of NICFI are later stated, but in the introductory segments, the livelihoods of the forest-dependent communities come first:

*"Tropical forests are among our most ancient ecosystems. Indispensable to the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people. They are the habitat of half to one third of the world's terrestrial plants, animals and insects. Crucial for global, regional and local water supply..."*

Here, the driving force behind REDD+ appears to be the value of the forests for its inherent economic, social and environmental worth. Forests are not simply carbon sinks, as NICFI's policy discourse would suggest, but something of value to the livelihoods of the affected communities. Thus, there is a clear divergence here in how NICFI promotes REDD+ in its *public-facing* discourse and the primarily carbon-

focused way in which NICFI frames REDD+ in its *policy* discourse. NICFI's emphasis appears to shift sharply, dependent on its audience.

In the Ethiopian government's policy discourse, the development or poverty alleviation potential of REDD+ is also side-lined, albeit to a lesser extent than NICFI and the multilateral institutions. The government's policy texts indicate that they more frequently integrate the development, poverty alleviation or livelihoods aspects of REDD+ into its policy discourse and to more explicitly highlight the potential of REDD+ to provide socio-economic benefits to the country. For instance, in its Social Evaluation and Assessment report, the government state that:

*“In addition, the SESA would contribute towards Ethiopia's overarching goal of environmental sustainability, climate change, economic growth, job creation and poverty alleviation programmes.”*

Here, the Ethiopian government clearly position the objectives of poverty alleviation, economic growth and job creation as central to its REDD+ ambitions. This is not the case throughout its policy discourse, which tends to be more carbon-centric in general, but nevertheless these aspects are more integrated into Ethiopia's REDD+ agenda than the other policy-makers. Notably, they are more likely than the international policy-makers to refer to forests as 'livelihoods sources' than as 'carbon stocks'.

Discussions of the development or poverty alleviation potential of REDD+ by the Ethiopian government tend to emerge in line with the country's Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy and green growth ambitions, rather than specifically in relation to forest-dependent communities. Although the Ethiopian REDD+ secretariat does, on occasions, refer to the potential of “livelihoods improvement” from the initiative, with specific attention paid to the community level, the development or poverty alleviation dimensions of REDD+ are generally framed by the government at the country scale.

The CRGE strategy dictates a drive towards agricultural expansion as the key element of Ethiopia's economic development alongside concentrated efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation rates in the country. However, as detailed in Chapter 4, current research suggests that large-scale and smallholder

agricultural expansion act as one of the key drivers of deforestation in Ethiopia (FAO 2015, Bekele et al. 2015, Moges, Eshetu and Nune 2010), suggesting a likely tension between the two in the implementation of REDD+ and the broader CRGE strategy in Ethiopia.

In line with this, the Ethiopian REDD+ secretariat emphasises the role that agriculture plays as a “major” or “primary” driver of deforestation in the country throughout its policy reports, to a much greater extent than other identified drivers. For instance, in one of the Ethiopian governments’ policy texts, it is stated:

*“Ever increasing scarcity of land resources for agricultural practices in the region has escalated the problem of encroachment for cultivation, grazing and settlement in and around forested landscapes in the region.”*

In this quote, the Ethiopian government highlights the role of ‘agricultural practices’ in accentuating deforestation rates in Ethiopia, while also framing land resources as ‘scarce’. The latter implies the limited capacity of land to manage the needs of both forest conservation and agricultural development in Ethiopia and an in-built or inherent conflict of land-use in the country. Due to limited land space, agricultural expansion necessarily reduces space for forested land and presents a challenge for forest conservation. Additionally, the use of “encroachment” here is significant, acting to somewhat negatively frame the increasing expansion of agriculture in Ethiopia.

However, simultaneously, the Ethiopian government do not frame the emergence of agricultural expansion alongside forest conservation as presenting an *inherent* or *fundamental* challenge to the success of REDD+ and the broader CRGE strategy in the country. Instead, it is frequently assumed that the multiple aims of REDD+ are complimentary and do not necessarily need to be traded-off. Thus, despite agricultural expansion acting as a key driver of deforestation in the country, a ‘win-win-win’ is seen to be achievable by the Ethiopian government, as part of a contradictory discourse.

Moreover, the tensions between agricultural expansion and forest conservation in the Ethiopian REDD+ secretariat’s policy discourse tend to emerge in discussions surrounding multi-sectoral coordination. There is consistent acknowledgement by all of the policy actors of the conflicts that exist between the relevant ministries in the

Ethiopia government concerning the management of REDD+, notably between the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MoANR), the Ministry of Energy (MoE) and the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFC). These tensions are strongly tied up with perceived land-use based conflicts. Accordingly, the Ethiopian government places importance on the strengthening of multi-sectoral coordination and policy coherence. For example, in an assessment report on the Oromia Forest Landscape Programme, the Ethiopian REDD+ secretariat asserts that:

*“There is a clear gap in cross-sectoral coordination in joint planning and implementation of projects and programs. This needs to be seriously looked at and synergy coordination office should be established and be accountable to a higher level of government.”*

Here, the notions of ‘synergy’ and ‘coordination’ are crucial. Rather than competing with each other for specific interests, the Ethiopian REDD+ policy discourse suggests it to be beneficial for the relevant government departments to work together, complement each other’s work and move together towards the common goals of the CRGE. Consistently pushed forward by the Ethiopian government is the argument that progress in REDD+ hinges upon the extent to which the different ministries and sectors work together, notably the MEFCC and the MoA. Multi-sectoral coordination is seen by the Ethiopian government to be a key in furthering the REDD+ agenda in the country, underlying its CRGE strategy.

While multi-sectoral tensions are highlighted by the Ethiopian government, these are not directly linked to the simultaneous framing of agricultural expansion as a key driver of deforestation. Indeed, the underlying reasons for such tensions are left unexamined by the Ethiopian REDD+ secretariat, with focus directed towards strategies for resolving them. The Ethiopian government generally places importance on enhancing inter-ministerial communication and coordination. However, these strategies do little to address the conflicts in land-use between agricultural expansion and forest conservation as underlying factors behind these tensions. Despite agricultural expansion being consistently identified by the Ethiopian government as a key driver of deforestation, this is not seen to form an inherent challenge to the

REDD+ agenda within the country. In doing so, the government avoids a challenge to the fundamental bases of its CRGE strategy.

Alongside agricultural expansion, the Ethiopian government highlight other factors that drive deforestation in the country, notably population growth and land tenure policy. These are frequently and consistently proposed by the Ethiopian REDD+ secretariat to be underlying factors of deforestation and, relatedly, of agricultural expansion in the country. Notably, the need to feed an expanding population base is seen to underpin large-scale agricultural expansion in Ethiopia.

From this perspective, agriculture *itself* is somewhat downgraded as part of a land-based conflict; rather, there are indirect drivers of deforestation which need to be addressed. In emphasising these drivers, the Ethiopian government shifts attention away from the idea that agricultural expansion in and of itself presents a fundamental challenge to REDD+ or that there may be an in-built conflict of land-use between agricultural expansion and forest conservation. Despite agricultural expansion being indicated as a 'key driver' of deforestation, it is *other* issues that present the fundamental challenges to achieving simultaneous agricultural expansion and forest conservation in the government's policy discourse.

The international REDD+ policy-makers are similarly reluctant to highlight inherent or contradictory challenges in meeting both agricultural and forest conservation needs, both more broadly and in the specific context of Ethiopia. For instance, the UN only once use the phrase 'trade-off' when discussing conflicts in land-use in one of the interviews:

*"When it comes down to readiness, when it comes down to all this preparatory work, there's no trade-off, because most of it is technical work, when it comes to implementation, you really have to change laws, you have to change policies, you have to work with private sector, you have to change the way land is being managed, there you are really getting into the nitty gritty, like are we really going to do this?"*

Here, the UN representative acknowledges the conflict of interests which may be present in the implementation phase of REDD+. Indeed, it is asserted by the interviewee that, "you have to change the way land is being managed", implying that



the protection of forests necessarily results in restrictions to *other* forms of land-uses. This is a rare, explicit use of the term ‘trade-off’ in the policy discourse. It is likely that a general reluctance to use the term in the policy discourse stems from its perceived implications: that something is being ‘lost’ in the REDD+ implementation process. Instead of using ‘trade-off’, the policy-makers tend to be more positive in their framing of multi-sectoral tensions, making use of terms such as ‘synergies’, ‘coordination’ or ‘collaboration’. These act to highlight the middle ground that can be found between competing interests and sectors and avoids conceptualising these as being tied up with underlying conflicts in land-use. As with the Ethiopian government, the international policy-makers also consistently put forward a ‘win-win-win’ strategy in its discourse.

Despite agricultural expansion being highlighted by all of the policy-makers as a key driver of deforestation, implying an in-built conflict of land-use, it is advocated that, without significant issue, the environmental and developmental goals of REDD+ can complement each other. It suggests that a contradiction exists in the policy discourse bound up with a seemingly unproblematic ‘win-win-win’ aspiration that does not consider agricultural expansion in Ethiopia to pose a fundamental or significant challenge to the progress of REDD+ interventions or require trade-offs in their implementation. Here, the on-the-ground challenges and realities of balancing agricultural needs and deforestation imperatives are not engaged with sufficiently by the policy-makers, e.g. the power of agribusinesses in Ethiopia.

In contrast to the other policy-makers, the Ethiopian and Norwegian environmental NGOs examined in this research were generally found to greater integrate the development or livelihoods-oriented aspirations into their REDD+ strategies. In general, it was identified that the NGOs referred to the development or livelihoods aspects of REDD+ in their policy discourse to a much greater extent than do the policy-makers. Additionally, they tended to place these aspects more centrally in their core objectives and in the design of their REDD+ strategies. This includes an explicit and clear focus on strengthening the rights of indigenous peoples in forested communities and enhancing communities’ livelihood strategies.

Pertinently, analysis of the policy discourse suggests that these NGOs pursue livelihoods or development-oriented aims in REDD+ for their inherent worth, rather

than for the benefits they can provide in facilitating the effective reductions of deforestation levels and GHG emissions. This is to be expected, given the core interests of the NGOs, which tend to livelihoods or development-oriented and aligns with what has previously been indicated in Norwegian REDD+ literature (Hermansen and Kasa 2014). Notably, Rainforest Foundation Norway's primary objective is to champion and strengthen the rights of indigenous peoples in tropical-forested countries.

In line with these core aims and motivations, a number of criticisms were raised over the orientation of NICFI's REDD+ strategy during the interviews with the Norwegian NGOs. It is well understood that NICFI's core REDD+ strategies remain overly carbon-centric and do not sufficiently place communities centrally in its interventions. Here, there were numerous suggestions by the interviewees that the livelihood or poverty alleviation needs of forested communities should be more closely integrated into NICFI's 'core aims' as part of a more positive approach to REDD+ that would encompass a "broader development agenda."

Thus, despite the proposals in the literature that the Norwegian government and the NGOs have reached a broad consensual agreement over REDD+ in domestic politics (Okereke and Dooley 2010, Hermansen et al. 2017), there are nevertheless key points of departure between the two in terms of focus. This largely reflects the foundational origins and motivations of the two, while also offering a reason for the proposed 'new narrative' in NICFI's REDD+ policy design. The emergence of increased engagement with the livelihoods or development dimensions of REDD+ may be partially a result of the continued domestic negotiations with participating NGOs and the typically close, 'insider' relationship that the NGOs tend to have with the Norwegian government, rather than a fundamental shift in the values of NICFI, as Hermansen and Kasa (2014) have previously suggested.

However, the examined NGOs in this research also do not significantly challenge or confront the challenges of realising a 'win-win' in Ethiopia. Although the livelihood and poverty alleviation elements of REDD+ are more closely integrated into the NGOs' core objectives and are more foregrounded in their policy discourse, it remains unclear how they would deal with trade-offs or manage the challenges of multiple land-use demands in Ethiopia. The debates surrounding trade-offs and

realising a 'win-win' are not actively engaged with by the examined NGOs, as with the other policy-makers.

Furthermore, the local-level interviews indicated that what is of primary importance for the communities in Nono Sele in managing the forests sustainably are the livelihood dimensions of REDD+. In contrast to the policy-makers, the community interviewees consistently highlighted the livelihoods-based and socio-economic benefits that can be gained from engaging in the REDD+ project. Such benefits are seen to derive from both the sustainable management of forests, encompassed by a distinct shift away from the previous destructive forest management practices, and the financial support provided by EWNRA for the project.

For instance, one of the community members in Gago asserted the following:

*“The advantage that we can get from protecting this forest- first, coffee, which can be planted under the trees, again firewood, and to construct the homes for our families, neighbours, communities. We don’t have disadvantages from protecting the trees.”*

while another interview stated that:

*“For example, protecting the trees is considered as our life. From this, we can get different profits, like coffee, firewood and extra. No disadvantages through protecting this forest; we can get a lot of advantages, like honey and coffee, home construction.”*

Here, the interviewees strongly emphasise the livelihoods-based advantages of engaging in the REDD+ project. Both of the interviewees portray a primarily positive image of engagement with Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association (EWNRA) and the REDD+ project, i.e. the idea that there are “no disadvantages” to sustainably managing their forests. The benefits that they can gain from engagement in REDD+ are considered by the interviewees to be primarily economic and social in nature: *economic*, in that, through the sustainable managements of the forests and the financial support from EWRA, the communities are now better positioned to gain enhanced profits from the sales of non-timber forest products, such as honey and coffee, in local markets (as access to these markets often requires an initial

investment), and *social*, in that the forests are used for domestic purposes, such as firewood or home construction, while also playing a communal role.

The environmental advantages of engagement in the REDD+ project are also highlighted by the interviewees, notably the perceived improvement in air quality. However, these are discussed by the community members to a much lesser extent than the livelihoods-based or socio-economic potential of the REDD+ project. Pertinently, if the environmental aspects of the projects are indicated, these are framed primarily in relation to the *local* environment only, e.g. the conditions of the forests, the local air quality. In other words, the interviewees rarely linked the sustainable management of the forests in the REDD+ project to climate change or a wider need to reduce deforestation levels or GHG emissions.

During the interviews, the participants were asked about their awareness of the carbon-sequestering ability of the forests and of the potential to sell 'carbon credits' as part of the REDD+ project. On almost all occasions, the interviewees indicated that they were aware of this potential and were pleased as it provided them with supplementary opportunities for financial support (e.g. one interviewee stated that, "...when we protect the trees, we can use the clean air for ourselves and we can be very profitable when we sell this to another country"). Indeed, of primary interest for the community participants was the socio-economic or livelihoods benefits that the carbon-trading or emissions-purchasing in the REDD+ project could enable. Outside of this line of questioning, when asked about the advantages, disadvantages or implications of the community's engagement with the project, on only two occasions did the participants indicate an interest in the carbon storage of the forests or of the emissions reductions potential of sustainable forest management.

Thus, the community interviews suggested a significant emphasis upon the livelihoods benefits of the REDD+ project, to a much greater extent than its carbon-sequestering potential, acting in contrast to the carbon-centric and cost-effective discourse of the REDD+ policy-makers. In other words, there is a clear and distinct divergence in the primary function of REDD+ (and sustainable forest management, more broadly) between the community members in Nono Sele and the REDD+ policy-makers. In advocating a more integrated and less carbon-centric orientation of

REDD+, the NGOs' vision fits closely with the livelihoods-based interests and concerns of the communities.

### **Summary/Discussion**

Overall, the findings indicate the consistent and significant prioritisation of the cost-effective and large-scale reductions of GHG emissions by the REDD+ policy-makers, alongside a side-lining and rendering secondary of the livelihoods or development aspirations of REDD+ in the policy discourse. Despite a proposed evolution in REDD+ interventions towards a more holistic and integrated approach, emerging as part of a 'new narrative' in NICFI's policy texts, the REDD+ policy discourse remains distinctly carbon-centric. If wider development-related benefits can be received by the recipient countries in their REDD+ engagement, alongside reductions in deforestation levels and GHG emissions, the policy-makers may be happy to celebrate this, but, crucially, are unlikely to *actively* pursue actions which enable the flow of such benefits in the first place.

While all of the policy actors indicated a carbon-centric vision of REDD+ and side-lined the development or livelihoods dimensions of the initiative, this emerged in distinct and contextual forms. For NICFI, its orientation of REDD+ tended to be underpinned and justified by a cost-effective narrative. This frames REDD+ primarily as a cost-saving initiative for reducing large-scale GHG emissions internationally outside of Norway's borders and largely aligns with the Norwegian government's environmental strategies and positioning since the early 1990s (Hermansen and Kasa 2014, Okereke and Dooley 2010, Angelsen 2016). The UN and World Bank's policy discourse broadly indicated similar narratives as NICFI. Given that UN-REDD primarily sources its funding from the Norwegian government, this is perhaps to be expected.

For the Ethiopian government, there exists a contradiction between the fundamental bases of its CRGE strategy and the positioning of agricultural expansion as the key driver of deforestation. While the scientific evidence suggests that small-holder and large-scale agriculture acts as a key factor behind deforestation in Ethiopia, the fundamental, on-the-ground challenges that this presents to the CRGE agenda (i.e. achieving economic growth through agricultural expansion, while also conserving forests and maintaining domestic GHG emissions) is not sufficiently engaged with by

the Ethiopian REDD+ secretariat's policy discourse. The idea that there may be in-built conflicts in land-use and trade-offs associated with REDD+ implementation is somewhat marginalised by the Ethiopian government.

A calibration of REDD+ that does not actively prioritise the livelihoods or development dimensions of tropical forest governance is unlikely to lead to the receipt of benefits at the community-level; if trade-offs occur in REDD+, which scholars suggest is likely (Paladino 2011, McAfee 2014, Pokorny, Scholz and De Jong, 2013), analysis of the policy discourse suggests that it is these dimensions which would be sacrificed. A carbon-centric orientation of REDD+ is likely to mean that forested communities, those who have little responsibility for climate change or capabilities to deal with its impacts, bear unfair and disproportionate burdens in their efforts to conserve tropical forests.

Indeed, these findings can be viewed in light of Page's (2016) argument that a just integration of tropical forest conservation into international climate change mitigation strategies demands that the burdens of such conservation do not fall unfairly onto those who are making the sacrifices to reduce deforestation levels. In Ethiopia, government-community relations are currently unstable, with many rural communities, particularly in Oromia, not feeling the effects of the nation's recent strong economic growth. The inequitable distribution of wealth and power in Ethiopia is not conducive to community receipt of benefits from REDD+.

Even if the communities are adequately financially compensated for forest conservation efforts, there are likely to be opportunity costs without sufficient attention being paid to the development or livelihood aspects of REDD+ (Page 2016, Armstrong 2016). Indeed, the existing orientation of REDD+ in the policy discourse may mean that the initiative works against the needs, rights and interests of rural communities in Ethiopia, as suggested elsewhere (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, Okereke and Dooley 2010, Paladino 2011). Rather, the findings suggest that a cost-effective-driven and carbon-centric REDD+ narrative would primarily serve to benefit the industrialised nations which, as REDD+ funders, can partially offset their climate burdens onto the Global South, in similar ways as to the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

The contradiction evident in the Ethiopian government's policy discourse marginalises and restricts debate surrounding REDD+ trade-offs and how to design and implement REDD+ in a just form. Without active and reflexive engagement of the immense challenges of meeting the needs of both agricultural development and forest conservation, it is unlikely that the issue will be organically resolved in a just way that acknowledges the multiple land-uses of the rural poor. Indeed, it has been argued in the climate justice scholarship that in absence of an active and pointedly pro-poor approach to REDD+, the mechanism is unlikely to meet the needs and interests of the forest-dependent communities (McAfee 2012, St. Clair 2014, Ribot 2010).

However, forming in contrast with the policy-makers' carbon-centric vision of REDD+, the communities in Nono Sele largely indicated a primarily livelihoods-based interest in engagement in the EWNRA-led REDD+ project. For the communities, what was of fundamental importance were the potential socio-economic benefits that could be gained from the project at a local-level, to a much greater extent than the wider, international concerns of climate change mitigation. In many ways, the community-level interests in REDD+ were closer to those indicated in the Norwegian and Ethiopian NGOs' discourse.

Indeed, the Norwegian and Ethiopian environmental NGOs offered an alternative conception of REDD+ than the policy-makers, placing the community-based livelihoods or development dimensions of the initiative more centrally in its core aims and strategies in their policy discourse. These findings align with previous research that has been carried out in Ethiopia which suggests that environmental NGOs operating in the field tend to more holistically consider the livelihoods and social equity implications of forest governance strategies, rather than treating them as simply technical issues (Bekele et al. 2015).

Accordingly, the findings suggest that the extent to which development or livelihoods-oriented ambitions form central components of REDD+ strategies is likely to be determined by the role that NGOs play in the REDD+ decision-making processes. As has been evidenced by the transition in the Norwegian government's REDD+ focus thus far, the significant role played by the Norwegian environmental NGOs in the formulation and design of REDD+ has helped to shift the terms of the

debate in Norwegian politics. On the other hand, research suggests that there are distinct barriers to significant engagement by Ethiopian environmental NGOs in the domestic REDD+ decision-making processes, particularly in its early stages (Bekele et al. 2015).

### **5.3 Constructions of Responsibility for Climate Change**

There has been much debate, theoretical and empirical, in the climate justice literature on how to fairly and equitably distribute the responsibilities and burdens of climate change (e.g. Caney 2005, Grasso 2012). Particular debates have emerged regarding the international management of forests as a form of climate change mitigation (e.g. Page 2016, Armstrong 2016), with it generally proposed that communities should not bear the burdens of conserving the forests. Thus, it is necessary to consider the ways in which the concept of responsibility for climate change is negotiated and framed in the examined REDD+ discourse. This section assesses and examines how framings of responsibility align or diverge across and between the implicated REDD+ actors and what this means for the formulation and implementation of REDD+ policy.

For Norway, its specific climate change responsibilities are based on the country's economic dependence on the extraction and exportation of fossil fuels, rather than what is typically discussed by climate justice scholars: responsibilities of industrialised nations based on their direct, domestic GHG emissions. Although it has initiated progressive measures to reduce and control domestic GHG emissions, partially enabled by its large-scale hydropower driven electricity in the country, Norway continues to maintain and even expand its petroleum industry. As outlined in Chapter 3, Norway exports ten times more emissions than it produces domestically (Oil Change International 2017). According to Moss's (2016) recent paper, the extraction and exportation of oil and gas should form part of countries' responsibilities for climate change and carbon budgets.

To varying extents, all of the REDD+ policy-makers demonstrate minimal engagement with notions of responsibility and burden-sharing. With NICFI, there are no indications in its policy documents that responsibility or burden-sharing is driving its REDD+ engagement. The sole allusions to the notion of responsibility emerged during the interviews with the NICFI representatives. Notably, one NICFI interviewee



vividly highlights the responsibilities of the industrialised nations for bearing the burdens of climate change:

*“...because they might say we are trying to combat climate change, the climate change that you imposed on us by your extremely consumerist societies and now you are meddling with how we deal with our internal affairs...”*

This quote demonstrates an explicit recognition of the idea that the Global North has historically over-used its share of atmospheric space, resulting in unfairly imposed climate change impacts in the developing world. The phrasing of ‘extremely consumerist’ is vivid and stark, while ‘imposed’ implies active agency on the part of the Global North in its role in producing GHG emissions, suggesting active, rather than passive, behaviour. However, the respondent simultaneously distances themselves from the assertion and avoids attributing themselves to such a viewpoint, by beginning the sentence with, “they might say...”. The use of such phrasing enables an ‘othering’ of the idea, whereby the suggestion that the Global North is responsible for climate change and imposes burdens on the Global South is shifted onto an anonymous ‘they, i.e. an opinion that ‘they’ might have, rather than a point that is necessarily valid. Thus, on a rare occasion that the idea of responsibility for climate change is intimated, it is also somewhat marginalised in the discourse.

The two other occasions on which the notion of responsibility is referred to by NICFI interviewees relate to Norway’s specific, petroleum industry-based form of climate change responsibility.

*“You also of course see consequences of the whole globalisation- I mean, Norway is earning itself filthy rich on selling oil to other countries and maybe destroying the world and then millions of people in Ethiopia are going to starve because of drought and possible climate change, so of course in many senses, it is easy to say that things are not fair, on the other hand, it is difficult to take the blame of things as well.”*

and

*“...because of course there is a tendency in G77 to, you know, blame the North and one can understand that from a historical perspective (.) but it doesn't necessarily solve the crisis that we are in at the moment”*

In the first quote, a direct link is intimated between the exportation of fossil fuels by Norway and the climate change impacts projected to be felt in Ethiopia. The NICFI interviewee emphasises the moral implications of such a set-up, as evidently “not fair”. Here, strong, emotive language is used to highlight the injustice at the heart of the climate crisis, such as Norway “destroying the world”, while Ethiopians may “starve”. The comment that Norway is getting “filthy rich” from global petroleum sales is particularly stark and vivid, implying that Norway is engaging in a ‘dirty’ or ‘impure’ way of earning money.

Nevertheless, the interviewee suggests that, “it is difficult to take the blame of things...”. Such difficulty implies that, while a climate justice agenda is valid, it is not necessarily conducive to effective progress in international climate change negotiations or decision-making. Similarly, in the second quote, the NICFI interviewee asserted that “it doesn't necessarily solve the crisis that we are in at the moment”. In addition, when addressing climate injustices, both of the quotes begin with the NICFI respondent stating “of course”. It implies a self-evident nature to the idea that there are injustices and unfairness implicated in the climate crisis and acts to dismiss both the strength of the climate justice argument and the extent to which it should impact upon international climate change policy; “of course” there exists injustices in climate change, and “of course”, the Global North is ultimately responsible for climate change, but this does not necessarily mean that the international climate action should be driven by such concerns.

The language and rhetoric used by the NICFI interviewees implies a ‘pragmatic’ interpretation of international climate change politics that has been invoked elsewhere (Traxler 2002, Posner and Weisbach 2010). Such an interpretation acknowledges the existence of climate (in)justices and the responsibilities of industrialised nations for climate change but does not consider that these normative concepts should necessarily drive international climate action. Rather, the above scholars would argue that an active and explicit responsibility-led approach to

REDD+ may present barriers to the progress of the initiative and of broader international efforts to mitigate against climate change.

The above three quotes are the only occasions on which Norway's responsibility for climate change is, explicitly or implicitly, engaged with in the NICFI policy discourse. These rare examples imply a weak, diluted engagement with responsibility that while acknowledging the injustice and unfairness at the heart of the climate crisis, shift the agenda away from claims that responsibility of the Global North should drive international climate action. Elsewhere, NICFI does not once mention Norway's role in extracting and exporting fossil fuels (and therefore GHG emissions) worldwide in its policy discourse.

In these findings, it was identified that, as suggested elsewhere (Hermansen and Kasa 2014, Angelsen 2016, Oil Change International 2017), REDD+ acts to 'politically offset' the inaction by the Norwegian government on scaling back its expansive petroleum industry. Alongside a minimal engagement with responsibility for climate change, NICFI's policy discourse shifts attention towards the Norwegian government's leadership on REDD+. Throughout its policy discourse, NICFI is keen to underline the 'substantial' commitments that Norway has made towards the international REDD+ agenda, including the significant bilateral and multilateral REDD+ funding that the country has provided. For instance, the following statement in their most recent evaluation report (2007-13) is typical of comments made throughout NICFI's REDD+ policy texts:

*"NICFI is the largest REDD+ donor globally, supporting all available multilateral channels and seven bilateral programmes across Africa, Asia, Central and South America. NICFI has pledged the majority of global funds for REDD+ and is a major donor to each of the multilateral REDD+ institutions."*

Here, the high level of funding provided for REDD+ by the Norwegian government is seen to be symbolic of its leadership in advancing the REDD+ agenda internationally. Throughout NICFI's reports, emphasis is consistently and continually placed upon the Norwegian government's role as 'major donor' in REDD+. However, critical scholars have suggested that Norway's high-level of spending on REDD+ is perhaps tied up with political pressures to meet the 1% aid spending target in the country (Angelsen 2016, Hermansen and Kasa 2014). By continuing to provide

significant levels of funding for REDD+ from its ODA budget, Norway can “maintain its position as a leading donor and ‘humanitarian superpower’” (Angelsen 2016: 256).

Moreover, emphasis is placed on the wider supporting role that Norway has played in the development of the international REDD+ agenda and architecture. For instance, it is stated in NICFI’s 2007-13 evaluation report that:

*“NICFI has contributed to the engagement of a large number of REDD+ and donor countries, has made a substantial contribution to the development of the operational architecture for REDD+, has been instrumental in the progress of the REDD+ negotiations under the UNFCCC, and has leveraged political support for REDD+ through its flagship bilateral agreements.”*

Here, strong language is used to place emphasis on Norway’s role in international REDD+ politics: making a “substantial” contribution to REDD+; enacting an “instrumental” role in the initiative; formulating “flagship” bilateral agreements. Norway is keen to highlight their position as a ‘pioneer’ in international REDD+ politics. NICFI’s policy discourse largely aligns with Lahn and Wilson Rowe’s (2015) understanding of Norway’s ‘status-seeking’ initiative in international environmental politics, whereby it is argued that the country’s political action on climate change is driven by a desire to be perceived as a ‘front-runner’ in international environmental politics.

It is proposed by Lahn and Wilson Rowe (2015) that Norway promotes itself as a ‘front-runner’ in international environmental politics in three key ways: as ‘generous economic contributor’, as ‘policy entrepreneurs’ and as ‘consensus-builders’. To varying extents, these can be located in NICFI’s REDD+ policy discourse. The first two of these were highlighted above, referring to NICFI’s consistent and frequent promotion of its position as the major donor of REDD+ and its detailing of the significant role that Norway has played in advancing the REDD+ agenda and in developing the REDD+ architecture.

The third role, ‘consensus-builders’, refers to Norway’s perceived key contribution to building alliances and establishing common ground among parties in the international environmental negotiations and agreement formations. In NICFI’s policy

discourse, there are frequent references made to the Norwegian government's superior ability to build bridges and alliances between disparate REDD+ actors, including other donor countries, recipient nations and civil society. For instance, it is proposed in one of the evaluation reports that the Norwegian negotiators are "highly regarded within the international community" and make "substantial effort to develop common ground". Throughout the policy texts, NICFI places significant emphasis on the importance on building relationships with other actors and institutions, in order to advance and strengthen the REDD+ agenda internationally and avoid Norway "becoming isolated as an exception". Lahn and Wilson (2015) suggest that Norway's role as 'consensus-builder' is enabled by its perception as a non-threatening and reliable party that other nations can trust.

While minimally engaging with responsibility for climate change and not once mentioning its significant role in extracting and exporting fossil fuels (and therefore GHG emissions) worldwide, the Norwegian government attempts to shift attention towards its leadership in REDD+, placing considerable emphasis on the multifarious contributions that it has made to the international REDD+ agenda, as its flagship environmental project. In doing so, NICFI masks and avoids discussion of the country's dependence on an expansive petroleum industry. This implies that, at least to a certain extent, NICFI's discourse on REDD+ seeks to 'politically offset' the Norwegian government's inaction on scaling back its petroleum industry.

The use of REDD+ by NICFI as a 'political offsetting' tool emerges as part of a cost-effective narrative that places importance upon *cheaply* realising significant cuts in global GHG emissions. In NICFI's policy discourse, attention is shifted away from Norway's domestic climate change commitments towards 'leading' in the reduction of international GHG emissions through the forest sector. Here, emphasis is directed towards the international gains that can be made through the Norwegian government's engagement in REDD+. For instance, the NICFI webpage on REDD+ in Ethiopia states the following:

*"The green development plan alone could give reductions of 4-5 times Norway's total annual greenhouse gas emissions. That is substantial."*

Here, NICFI emphasises the benefits for international climate action that can be gained from Norwegian engagement in REDD+, compared to domestic emissions

cuts. They make use of figures (“4-5 times Norway’s total annual greenhouse gas emissions”) and persuasive language (“substantial”) to highlight the importance of the government’s role in reducing international GHG emissions through the forest sector. Broadly, the idea of cost-effectiveness has justified REDD+ from the beginning, underpinned by the argument that emissions cuts from the forest sector in the Global South are cheaper and less disruptive to industrialised economies (Hermansen 2015, Di Gregorio et al. 2015).

Additionally, on a number of occasions, NICFI highlights its role in combatting climate change through more broadly ensuring cuts in GHG emissions in the Global South, sometimes referred to as “deep cuts”. Notably, it is stated in one of NICFI’s reports:

*“While recognising the need to limit its own emissions, Norway makes commitments in this policy to supporting continued development of a global climate policy framework including mitigation policies and measures for reducing emissions in developing countries.”*

The structure of this statement works to emphasise Norway’s contribution to “a global climate policy framework”. The use of “while” in the statement acts to acknowledge but simultaneously marginalise Norway’s responsibility to reduce its own emissions. Here, focus is directed away from such responsibility towards the Norwegian government’s contributions to international climate action and to making cuts in international GHG emissions that would include REDD+. This reflects a broader tendency in NICFI’s policy discourse to shift attention away from Norway’s domestic climate change commitments towards its role as a ‘front-runner’ in international environmental governance, underpinned by a cost-effective REDD+ narrative.

For NICFI, a cost-effective framing of REDD+ aligns with Norway’s broader environmental governance strategies since the early 1990s (Tellman 2012, Hermansen and Kasa 2014). The perceived global and long-term benefits of reductions of international GHG emissions through the forest sector act to underpin and justify the Norwegian government’s engagement with REDD+ and provides reasoning for the use of REDD+ as a ‘flagship’ policy initiative in domestic environmental politics. NICFI’s policy discourse indicates Norway’s ultimate

priorities: the pursuit of solutions to the climate crisis that are cheap and do not significantly disrupt Norway's economy, notably its dependence on an expansive petroleum industry.

As Norwegian scholars have previously suggested (Angelsen 2016, Hermansen and Kasa 2014), significant commitments to international environmental agendas allow the Norwegian government to 'square the circle' between its expansive petroleum industry and its high status in the hierarchy of international environmental politics. In failing to transition away from the petroleum industry, the Norwegian government is continuing to undermine its commitments to international climate action and is pushing its climate burdens onto developing nations in the Global South, which are less equipped to bear them (McKinnon, Muttitt and Trout 2017).

Moreover, constructions of responsibility in NICFI's policy discourse can be identified in its REDD+ recipient country selection. In its country profiles, NICFI seeks to justify the selection of partner countries, reflecting deeper motivations and ethical underpinnings. As of 2016, Norway has established bilateral REDD+ agreements with nine countries: *Tanzania, Brazil, Guyana, Indonesia, Mexico, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Myanmar* and *Liberia* (Angelsen 2016). It can be suggested that engagement with each of these is politically motivated and bound up with the Norwegian government's broader REDD+ agenda and orientation.

In particular, engagement with Brazil and Indonesia is justified primarily based on the large-scale and high carbon densities of their forests. As Saatchi et al. (2011) has indicated, these two countries contain the largest and most carbon dense forests globally. For NICFI, these were among the first countries targeted by the Norwegian government in seeking international bilateral REDD+ agreements. Throughout NICFI's policy documents, engagement with Brazil and Indonesia is underpinned by the contributions that these can make to maximising emissions reductions and making a strong impact on the climate goals.

For instance, in NICFI's 2007-13 evaluation report, it is stated that, "...through its partnerships in Brazil and Indonesia...NICFI aims to influence national governments responsible for 15% of the world's forested land area and some 55% of GHG emissions from deforestation". Here, through the use of statistics, NICFI directs the reader's attention towards the scale of impact possible through engaging with Brazil

on REDD+ interventions. This reflects the broader justification given to engagement with Brazil and Indonesia, whereby these countries become framed primarily in terms of the contributions that they can make to the effective, large-scale and long-term reductions of GHG emissions.

Additionally, NICFI frequently emphasises throughout its policy texts the need to establish close relationships with Brazil due to its considerable influence in the region. On several occasions, Brazil is indicated to be a country that is “instrumental” in the international climate negotiations, as one of the larger G77 states, which can play a key role “in engaging other Amazon basin countries in REDD+. It is implied that through establishing a REDD+ agreement and relationship with Brazil, NICFI can achieve greater influence in the region and will be better positioned to build REDD+ relationships with other Latin American nations.

Accordingly, for NICFI, there can be identified two political functions of the establishment of REDD+ agreements with Brazil: firstly, the targeting of the nations with the largest and most carbon-dense forest stocks, and, secondly, the building of international support and traction for REDD+ in order to ultimately strengthen and progress the REDD+ agenda in the international climate change arena. Both of these functions serve to ultimately enhance the effectiveness of the REDD+ agenda and to maximise the cost-effective and large-scale reductions of international GHG emissions through the forest sector.

Throughout NICFI’s policy texts, emphasis is placed upon the potential of “middle income countries”, such as Brazil and Indonesia, in effectively achieving the climate goals, partly due to the size of their forest stocks and partly resulting from their perceived strong governance and institutional capacities. In one of the interviews, a NICFI representative explicitly outlined the ultimate drive behind the selection of the REDD+ recipient countries:

*“It’s not the most deserving countries somehow but it’s the countries where we see the biggest potential to actually change deforestation and maximise the emissions reduction somehow.”*

Here, the key word is “deserving”, which appears to refer to the countries that are most in need of REDD+ support. This is likely to refer to nations that have the least



responsibility for climate change, bear unfair and disproportionate climate burdens or face significant struggles in seeking to reduce deforestation levels and GHG emissions. However, the specific basis for ‘deserving’ countries is left unspecified. Nevertheless, in this statement, the interviewee acts to distinguish between a ‘deserving’ or ‘just’ approach to REDD+ and the approach that NICFI has taken. Rather than seeking to address the injustices bound up with climate change, this statement explicitly highlights NICFI’s decision-making to be motivated by maximising the effectiveness of reductions in international GHG emissions from the forest sector.

Elsewhere, NICFI has also established agreements and relationships with recipient nations that have comparatively low-forest and carbon stocks, including Ethiopia, that does not easily align with its overarching ‘core aims’. As previously detailed, compared to Brazil and Indonesia, Ethiopia has relatively low carbon dense forests (Saatchi et al 2011), although the deforestation levels are relatively high (around 1.0-1.5% annual rates) for the region (Bekele et al. 2015). Given NICFI’s central objectives, the motivations for engagement with a country profile such as Ethiopia can be questioned.

Aligning with Hermansen and Kasa’s (2014) suggestions, it appears that NICFI has sought to establish REDD+ agreements with an eclectic variety of tropical-forested nations, including those with smaller forest stocks or that are based in ‘alternative’ geographic and political contexts. The discourse on Guyana notably implies such a motivation, with the country’s profile primarily framed in terms of its ability to ‘demonstrate’ the potential for REDD+ “in a country with high forest cover but low deforestation rates.”. On multiple occasions in the 2007-13 evaluation report, NICFI refers to the importance of Guyana as a recipient country based on a justification of demonstrability.

The framing of Guyana in NICFI’s policy discourse suggests that it has been primarily selected for its ability to evidence REDD+ interventions in an ‘alternative’ setting, as a high forest cover/low deforestation rate nation. Indeed, Hermansen and Kasa (2014) have argued that by establishing agreements with wide ranging profiles of REDD+ countries, NICFI can seek to demonstrate the ‘success’ of REDD+ interventions in multiple contexts. Thus, it can be suggested that the incorporation of

Guyana into NICFI's cohort of recipient countries is motivated by the institutions broader drive to strengthen the REDD+ agenda internationally.

For Ethiopia, however, the motivations for NICFI's REDD+ engagement are less clear-cut. In inspecting NICFI's webpage on REDD+ in Ethiopia, the motivations for selecting the country to form part of its cohort appear to be conflicting and inconsistent. Notably, NICFI frames the importance of REDD+ interventions in Ethiopia prominently in terms of its situation in Sub-Saharan Africa, with the context "somewhat different from REDD+ implemented in the Amazon region or Southeast Asia". In other words, although not explicitly stated, engagement with Ethiopia appears to be beneficial for NICFI in demonstrating the progress of REDD+ in an alternative geographic setting. Prior to establishing the REDD+ agreement with Ethiopia, the Norwegian government had only previously formally engaged with one other Sub-Saharan African nation (Tanzania).

Additionally, Ethiopia's influence in the African Union is also highlighted by NICFI on the webpage:

*"Ethiopia is active in climate negotiations, and has presented an ambitious national climate policy as Norway wishes developing countries to do. The country already has a leading climate policy role in Africa. The African Union (AU), the African Development Bank and other African institutions are headquartered in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa."*

Here, emphasis is placed on the 'leading' and 'active' climate policy role that Ethiopia has adopted in the African Union and in broader climate change negotiations. Although not made explicit, the implication here appears to be that Ethiopia's regional influence in climate change negotiations has influenced NICFI's decision to establish a REDD+ agreement with them, in similar ways as to Brazil's regional influence. Thus, the evidence on NICFI's webpage suggests that Ethiopia plays a strategic role for the institution, whereby partnership with the country is justified primarily based on its geographic location and political influence

However, other motivations for Norway's REDD+ engagement with Ethiopia are also present on the webpage. As with Brazil and Indonesia, NICFI highlights the emissions reductions potential of engagement with Ethiopia through a cost-effective

narrative. Most notably, it is stated at one point by NICFI that the CRGE strategy in Ethiopia could “give reductions of 4-5 times Norway's total annual greenhouse gas emissions.” This acts to frame motivations for REDD+ engagement with Ethiopia based on the size of their forest stocks, despite this being significantly smaller than those of Brazil and Indonesia and not particularly registering on the global distribution of carbon stocks.

Thus, there appear to be a number of motivating factors that underlie Norway's REDD+ engagement with Ethiopia. As well its strategic role in evidencing an alternative geographic profile and regional political influence, Ethiopia also appears to have been selected for similar reasons as to Brazil and Indonesia: the ability to provide cost-effective and large-scale GHG emissions reductions outside of Norway's borders. Although inconsistent and indicating a greater complexity than was previously suggested, all of these motivating factors for the selection of Ethiopia as a REDD+ recipient nation are ultimately derived from Norway's ambitions to strengthen the REDD+ agenda internationally.

Indeed, it can be suggested NICFI's selection across the board is driven by a similar REDD+ agenda: with Brazil and Indonesia, engagement with them, as ‘flagship’ tropical-forested nations, is underpinned by and tightly bound up with NICFI's pursuit of cost-effective and large-scale international GHG emissions reductions, while with Ethiopia and other low forest/low carbon dense nations, the motivation appears to be primarily instrumental in that these can demonstrate the effectiveness and usefulness of REDD+ in multiple, differentiated contexts. Both of these justifications suggest that NICFI's country selection is driven not by responsibility for climate change or the need to support vulnerable and marginalised forested communities, but rather the pursuit of the advancement and strengthening of the REDD+ agenda globally and to maximise the effectiveness of international GHG emissions reductions in the long-term.

For the other REDD+ policy actors, there is also limited engagement with responsibility for climate change and burden-sharing. Rather, a ‘shared responsibility’ discourse is prevalent in the policy discourse which suggests that that climate burdens should be shared among all countries; while these burdens may be differentiated according to countries' capabilities, the prevalence of the discourse

acts to shift the focus away from the Global North's responsibility for climate change towards a 'globalised' framing of international climate action.

Notably, while UN-REDD does not refer to responsibility of the Global North for climate change in any form in its policy texts, the notion of 'shared responsibility' was engaged with on several occasions during interviews with the UN representatives, as in the following statement:

*"I think that there needs to be a more diversified approach for paying for this that includes domestic developing country budgets...perhaps for the carbon credits that you mentioned or through the supply chains and it includes international financial support but that international financial support will always fluctuate and not all countries will have a bilateral agreement."*

On multiple occasions, the interviewee referred to the need to adopt a more 'diversified' approach to funding REDD+, which partially referred to a proposed enhanced role for the private sector in implementing the sustainable forestry management and partially to a greater contribution of resources and finance by the tropical-forested nations to the REDD+ agenda. There is a sense here that REDD+ cannot progress to a significant extent without enhanced contributions from the recipient countries, partly due to the fluctuating, unreliable and limited nature of international funding. Essentially, it implies that the success of REDD+ depends, at least partly, upon the contribution of greater financial resources from tropical-forested nations.

The 'shared responsibility' discourse is intimately tied up in the UN interviewees' responses with assertions that engagement in REDD+ (and climate change mitigation more broadly) is in Ethiopia's own interests, as evident in the following quote:

*"I think there's an obligation from the international community, but those forests also contribute to the well-being of people and to the economy of the developing countries themselves, so there should be a shared responsibility there...I think making sure that more forest is being protected to counter those risks is in the interests of everyone. There just needs to be a balanced*

*understanding of how do we balance the responsibility between developing countries and developed countries and the private sector, basically.”*

Given the socio-economic contributions of forests in the country, it is articulated to be in the interests of the Ethiopian government to protect the country's forests and to reduce deforestation levels in the country. In light of such benefits, the UN interviewee justifies enhanced contributions and responsibility from tropical-forested nations. Such argumentation was found throughout the interviews with the UN and the World Bank representatives. This acts to shift attention away from the *burdens* of REDD+ for Ethiopia towards its *benefits*, implying that the REDD+ agreements are akin to an equal deal, with both sides profiting from the arrangement.

The emphasis on Ethiopia as *beneficiaries* of REDD+ in the policy discourse conflicts with much of what has been outlined in recent climate justice research (Page 2016, Armstrong 2016, Blomfield 2013). Here, scholars propose that while the global community benefits from mitigating against climate change, it is the industrialised nations which are deemed to particularly reap the benefits of REDD+ initiatives, given that these facilitate the cost-effective reductions of GHG emissions through the forest sector, outside of its borders. It is proposed that, considering the actual and opportunity costs involved in conserving and maintaining the forest and carbon stocks, it is the forest-dependent communities and tropical-forested nations which bear the greatest burdens of REDD+ (Page 2016, Armstrong 2016).

The Ethiopian government is similarly keen to highlight the benefits that the country can receive from REDD+ engagement in its policy discourse. Throughout the policy texts, the Ethiopian REDD+ secretariat frequently emphasises the advantages of REDD+ engagement for the economic development of Ethiopia. REDD+ is integral to the government's CRGE strategy and, accordingly, the benefits of a green economy are strongly tied up with REDD+ engagement in the government's policy discourse. Much of the policy texts appear to be geared towards 'selling' the advantages of REDD+ to the Ethiopian population. On a few occasions, these include the community benefits of sustainable forest governance, but largely these refer to country-level economic development in Ethiopia or the 'greening' of the economy.

On no occasions in their policy texts or interviews does the Ethiopian government refer to notions of ‘responsibility’ or ‘burden-sharing’ on behalf of the Global North when justifying and explaining REDD+ funds. The industrialised nations’ responsibility for climate change does not appear to form part of the underlying REDD+ narrative in Ethiopia. Rather, as with the international REDD+ policy-makers, a ‘shared responsibility’ discourse emerges in the Ethiopian government’s policy texts. Notably, such discourse emerges in exploring the possibilities of ‘in-country funding’ for REDD+. For example, in the minutes of the Ethiopian REDD+ secretariat’s task force meeting, it is stated that:

*“In relation to the sustainable REDD+ funding, we should not fully depend on foreign finance and the strategy should look into alternative sources of in-country funding. As a long-term option, we should always depend on our own resources and the Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise and the Amhara Forest Enterprise are practical examples. We should always explore options to generate income sources.”*

Here, in-country funding is framed as a way for Ethiopia to take control of its REDD+ vision and strategy and of empowering the country, whereby it does not need to depend upon external sources of finance. Thus, its justification for funding diversification is driven by different factors to that of the UN, namely the sustainability of Ethiopia’s REDD+ and CRGE strategies. Nevertheless, it continues to feed into a ‘shared responsibility’ discourse that shifts focus away from the Global North’s obligations and duties. The Ethiopian government’s framing of responsibility does not largely align with that of the G77 (of which Ethiopia is a founding member), which generally advocates international flows of climate finance based on principles of historical responsibility for climate change (Okereke and Coventry 2016).

The ‘shared responsibility’ discourse invoked by the policy-makers feeds into a globalised framing of climate change, in which all countries have duties to combat climate change, but with varying capabilities. Under such a framing, obligations from the international community are drawn out based on the institutional and financial limitations of actors in the Global South. Thus, international funding for REDD+ initiatives is justified based on the insufficient institutional and financial capacities of Ethiopia, rather than responding to the injustices of climate change or a sense of

causal, historical responsibility for climate change on behalf of the Global North; in doing so, it aligns more with the 'ability to pay' principle. Traxler's (2002) 'equal burdens' can be located to an extent in the policy-makers' discourse, a pragmatic and globalised understanding of climate change that allocates climate burdens to each country in accordance with entailed opportunity costs.

At the local level, the communities are primarily motivated by REDD+ in terms of the socio-economic and livelihoods benefits that it can provide, as outlined in the previous section. Although being driven by interests at different scales, neither the communities in Nono Sele nor the governmental institutions in Ethiopia are driven by the Global North's responsibility for climate change, e.g. the burdens of Norway in funding REDD+ in the country. Notions of responsibility for climate change do not appear to be form a key dimension of the discourse on REDD+ in Ethiopia on a multiscalar level, instead being framed in terms of the benefits that the initiative can provide at both national or community levels.

In contrast to the other REDD+ policy-makers, the Norwegian NGOs examined in this research more clearly, consistently and explicitly express support for the idea of responsibility for climate change on behalf of the Global North. Rather than sidelining historical responsibility, the documents and in-depth interviews suggest that the NGOs wish to place it centrally in REDD+. Specifically, one of the Norwegian NGO representatives asserted in an interview:

*"...we kind of support a case, which is that Norway has to take its share when it comes to reducing emissions...We have also been discussing a lot on the whole net zero emissions discourse that is going on the table in Paris, where we believe that you have to go- that Norway has to take- that the countries with historical responsibility have to take their share of reducing emissions and also not paying for it."*

Unlike the other REDD+ policy-makers, the NGO interviewee makes a clear, bold case here for Norway to take their share of climate burdens, explicitly driven by historical responsibility. The language that is used is firm, emotive and moralistic in nature: "we believe", "Norway has to take its share". The use of "we" here acts in contrast to the use of "they" by the NICFI interviewee: the NGO participant place themselves clearly and firmly behind the view that responsibility should form a key

component of international climate action. There is a moral imperative highlighted here, which, according to the interviewee, cannot be dismissed as being unrealistic or incongruent with on-the-ground policy. In doing so, the NGO disassociates itself from a purely pragmatic approach to international climate politics and aligns itself with a responsibility-driven stance on responding to the climate crisis and mitigating against climate change.

In line with this, the Norwegian NGOs explicitly outlined on a number of occasions their opposition to the use of REDD+ by Norway as a way of offsetting its domestic GHG emissions or role in extracting and exporting fossil fuels. On one occasion, an interviewee from the Rainforest Foundation clearly stated that, “Our position has been that the obligation to finance forest protection comes in addition to reducing emissions at home for any rich country”. This aligns with what has been previously suggested in the Norwegian climate policy scholarship (Hermansen and Kasa 2014, Hermansen et al. 2017): that the participating NGOs in Norway have pushed for REDD+ to strictly not form part of an offsetting mechanism and that REDD+ funding should be distinctly ‘additional’ to Norway’s domestic climate change commitments, as part of its responsibilities for climate change.

Elsewhere, the Norwegian NGOs suggest that there are injustices bound up with Norway’s continuing economic dependence on the petroleum industry. Indeed, one of the NGO interviewees stated:

*“I think the world needs to look into new ways of getting energy and Norway is not a forerunner on that one. We are kind of a fossil fuels sink. We just want to do what we want to do and make a lot of money from it”.*

The immorality of Norway’s continued fossil fuel extraction and exportation is strongly emphasised here through evocative statements, where the country is perceived to be driven by economic factors in its environmental governance, rather than a sense of justice or responsibility towards climate change: “we just do what we want to do”. Unlike the Norwegian government, the NGOs are willing to tackle the paradoxical nature of Norway’s environmental ‘leadership’. As highlighted in the previous section, the underlying philosophies and motivational drivers of the Norwegian NGOs’ engagement in REDD+ appear to differ significantly from those of NICFI.



## **Summary/Discussion**

Overall, it can be proposed that NICFI, the multilateral institutions and the Ethiopian government do not place responsibility for climate change centrally in their design of REDD+ and engage minimally with the notion in their policy discourse. On the rare occasions when it is acknowledged, it is not seen to be feasible or practical that responsibility for climate change informs the design, management and implementation of REDD+ or wider international climate action. Accordingly, the policy actors appear to be driven in their REDD+ design and decision-making by factors other than responsibility, justified and underpinned by a cost-effective and carbon-centric narrative.

For the multilateral institutions, a minimal engagement with the responsibility of the Global north for climate emerges alongside a prominent discourse of 'shared responsibility'. Here, the obligations of the international community are justified based on the insufficient financial, institutional or technical capacities of the recipient nations to implement REDD+ rather than a sense of responsibility for climate change. The 'shared responsibility' discourse is also bound up with perceived benefits that the tropical-forested nations are likely to gain from their REDD+ engagement.

However, considering the evident priorities of the policy-makers, it appears more likely that the tropical-forested nations and forested communities in the Global South will bear the greatest burdens of REDD+, including significant indirect, opportunity costs, whereas the benefits are as yet unclear. Indeed, the idea that without sufficient focus and pro-poor orientation, forest-dependent communities in Ethiopia can act as the beneficiaries of REDD+ contradicts much of what has been outlined in recent climate justice research (Blomfield 2013, Page 2016, Armstrong 2016).

For Norway, NICFI's policy discourse acts to 'politically offset' its specific responsibility for climate change as a major fossil fuel exporter, as suggested elsewhere (Angelsen 2016, Hermansen and Kasa 2014). Here, by emphasising its leadership on REDD+ and simultaneously avoiding discussion of its role in extracting and exporting fossil fuels, the Norwegian government seeks to divert attention away from its economic dependence on an expansive petroleum industry. Under such a framing, Norway can take the credit for financially inducing REDD+ recipient nations

to reduce their deforestation and forest degradation levels while not scaling back its own role in extracting and exporting fossil fuels worldwide. Essentially, this allows the Norwegian government to partially discharge its climate burdens onto the Global South. As Røttereng (2018) suggests, REDD+ appears to perform political functions for industrialised nations.

Thus, it can be offered that the Norwegian government is complicit in the emissions of GHGs elsewhere in the world through its petroleum extraction and fossil fuel exportation. Norway continues to explore and develop new oil and gas fields which is incongruent with its ambitious domestic climate change agenda (aiming to reduce its GHG emissions by at least 40% below 1990 levels in 2030) (McKinnon, Muttitt and Trout 2017). Indeed, according to Climate Action Tracker (2018), Norway's currently implemented policy practices are 'insufficient' in delivering such an agenda.

Norway's climate change ambitions are highly dependent upon offsets and large-scale reductions in GHG emissions through the land sector, primarily through REDD+ (Climate Action Tracker 2018). However, without transitioning away from its expansive petroleum industry, Norway's actions are incompatible with global carbon budgets and the 2°C target established in the Paris agreement, rendering their engagement in REDD+ as ultimately ineffective in averting the climate crisis (McKinnon, Muttitt and Trout 2017). REDD+ funds are essentially financed by Statoil and Norway's economic dependence on the petroleum industry, raising questions over the 'carbon footprint' of a REDD+ dollar.

In continuing to maintain and expand its petroleum industry, Norway is failing to take on its responsibilities for climate change and is instead pushing greater burdens onto those in the Global South, who are less prepared and capable to bear them. As McKinnon, Muttitt and Trout (2017: 17) argue, "by continuing to explore for and develop new reserves, Norway is forcing a more difficult transition on other countries.... given finite global carbon budgets, each barrel of oil extracted in Norway is a barrel that cannot be extracted elsewhere". Additionally, the use of REDD+ and the land sector by the Norwegian government in meeting its climate change commitments is an inherently riskier strategy; if REDD+ is not rolled out at scale and is not successful in significantly reducing GHG emissions, as scholars suggest may

be the case (e.g. Lund 2017), the risks will be primarily borne by marginalised forest-dependent communities in the Global South.

A proposed first step for the Norwegian government is an acknowledgement and confrontation of the contradictions and paradox at the heart of its REDD+ engagement, which, these findings suggest, is not currently occurring. Considering Norway's vast wealth, developed over many years through its sovereign wealth fund and relatively diverse economy, it is well-placed to transition away from its fossil fuel industry and to avoid further squeezing of development opportunities elsewhere in the world. Currently, Norway's reliance on REDD+ and the 'politically offsetting' of inaction on scaling back its petroleum industry can be considered as a "moral hazard par excellence", as Anderson and Peters (2016) proposed more broadly in relation to negative emissions technologies.

More broadly, it can be suggested that a framing of REDD+ that insufficiently engages with notions of responsibility for climate change would primarily act to serve the interests of the industrialised nations. It may lead to further material and financial burdening for forested communities and tropical-forested nations in conserving and maintaining its forest stocks, despite their lack of responsibility for climate change and limited ability to manage its impacts (Neumayer 2000, Roberts and Parks 2007, Shue 1999). The inattention paid to responsibility and burden-sharing in the policy discourse alongside a side-lining of the livelihoods and development dimensions of REDD+ indicates that policy-makers are inadequately responding to the needs and interests of marginalised forest-dependent communities and the injustices at the heart of the climate crisis.

#### **5.4 Top-down Approach to REDD+ Policy Design and Formulation**

Although REDD+ was originally intended to be implemented and monitored on a strictly national basis, there has been a documented shift in its structure towards a more fragmented, project-based and decentralised state (Angelsen 2016, Savaresi 2016, Corbera and Schroeder 2011). Increasingly, domestic and international NGOs are implementing unorchestrated regional and local-level projects, under the umbrella of REDD+. Often, these work as pilot schemes for national-based REDD+ agendas.

In Ethiopia, a number of NGO-led REDD+ projects have arisen in recent years in the Oromia region, as a way of piloting the roll-out of REDD+ infrastructure and strategies in the country. This aligns with a broader observed shift towards a Participatory Forest Management (PFM) approach in the country since the 1990s that suggests movement of power from centralised structures to the community levels. As detailed in Chapter 3, forest management responsibilities and rights have devolved to lower-levels of governance, primarily at the regional-level, while communities have been given rights in some areas of the country to manage forests. Indeed, in Ethiopia, the adoption of REDD+ by the government was borne out of a broader shift towards PFM in the country.

The EWNRA-led REDD+ project is designed, managed and implemented as part of a PFM approach. The project is primarily funded by the Norwegian government, forming part of the Oromia REDD+ pilot scheme in Ethiopia. The Norwegian-Ethiopian REDD+ partnership is expected to ultimately include the purchasing of verified emissions reductions but currently, funding for REDD+ in Ethiopia is used to financially, institutionally and technically strengthen the country's 'readiness' for REDD+ (Bekele et al. 2015). The proliferation of REDD+ projects and PFM in the country indicate an increasingly devolved and participatory form of forest governance on the surface.

However, to a significant extent, the examined policy discourse suggests a fundamentally national or state-based orientation of REDD+. In particular, NICFI, the UN and the World Bank's policy documents and interviews promote and support the idea of the state being the primary conduit for the design, management and implementation of REDD+ policy in tropical-forested nations. The statist framing of REDD+ reveals itself in a number of ways, through varied linguistic and discursive mechanisms. Notably, phrasings such as *'national strategies'*, *'national mechanisms'*, *'national safeguard systems'* are frequently repeated throughout the international policy-makers discourse, indicating the emphasis and value placed upon the state level in devising REDD+ interventions.

Furthermore, for these policy actors, a national-level framing of REDD+ also emerges through a devaluing of projects, and through the consistent framings of projects as being ultimately limited in their effectiveness. On numerous occasions in

the policy texts and interviews, project-level REDD+ activities are discussed primarily in terms of their contributions to national strategies, approaches and development of frameworks. Notably, on one occasion, a NICFI interviewee asserted:

*“...well, there is a project but...a challenge of this work is of course finance; if you work in every village across a very big area, then you don’t have, we don’t have enough funding to do that...that is why the work at the policy level is important and to sort of address what’s in the way, what hinders more sustainable development...so, when we talk about projects and programmes, we tend to think about programmes that are large-scale.”*

Here, the interviewee emphasises the importance of ‘scaling-up’ project work on REDD+ to the national level. This is tied up with maximising the effectiveness of REDD+ interventions in Ethiopia; it is considered that given the limited funds available for REDD+, NICFI can achieve a greater reach of impacts by intervening at the state level. From this perspective, NICFI’s REDD+ funding is perceived to enable more holistic, longer-lasting change if directed towards policy enhancements and developments, rather than specific projects. Accordingly, REDD+ results are expected to be improved with large-scale programmes.

Similar language was used in both of the multilateral institutions’ policy discourse. For instance, the following is stated in a World Bank project information sheet:

*“Monitoring of forest cover and forest cover changes will follow methodologies established at the national level, and the data generated by this pilot project would feed into the national forest cover monitoring system. The project would test on the ground the main elements of the national REDD+ strategy, including policies and activities to address deforestation from forest conversion into cropland and wood collection for charcoal making. Finally, the project would adopt the national-level policies on REDD+...”*

While a UN interviewee stated the following:

*“...we are not interested in projects. We know that to implement policies for REDD+, governments are going to have to do projects, investment plans, maybe some policy reforms, maybe some fiscal reforms, so the project is sometimes an interest to do things, but when thinking about those problems*

*and addressing them, the scale we think is needed is the national level (.) and we make a lot of emphasis on that and the convention actually recognises that.”*

The first quote from the World Bank highlights the institutions’ understanding that the project-level REDD+ activity ultimately falls under the state-level REDD+ policy drive. Here, the constructed value of REDD+ projects is to serve the development of national-level REDD+ strategies and policies, evident through language such as “feed into”, “adopt the national-level policies”, “will follow”. In such a sense, the project-level activity is important to the extent that it can inform state-level policy formulation (as ‘testing grounds’). Throughout the policy documents, the World Bank and the UN are keen to clarify the retainment of a national-level focus in REDD+ policy design and structure when discussing local-level projects.

In the second quote, the interviewee explicitly highlights the scale at which the UN supports Ethiopia’s REDD+ strategy: through changes in *national* policies and measures. It is recognised here that, as with the previous World Bank statement, projects are valued, but primarily for their role in testing or support state directives. The national-level is clearly positioned as the scale at which actual and continued progress in REDD+ can be made. Importance is placed upon “fiscal reforms”, “policy reforms” and “investment plans” at the state-level, rather than project-level activity. Throughout, the UN and the World Bank explicitly define their role in REDD+ as supporting the development of national-level forest governance.

Tellingly, the interviewee refers to the “convention” in justifying the continued operation of REDD+ at the national-level. This is based on the original conceptualisation of REDD+ as a strictly state-to-state based initiative. While the REDD+ literature indicates a shift in the structure of initiatives towards a more bottom-up and project-based approach, the policy discourse does not reflect such an evolution and retains a strictly state-level orientation. In the policy texts and interviews, a positive distinction is made between the national-level orientation of REDD+ and the project basis of the CDM, with the former offering a more long-term, holistic and less fragmented approach to reducing deforestation levels and GHG emissions than the latter.

Moreover, the contexts of the recipient nations are often almost entirely outlined at

national levels in the REDD+ policy discourse. Notably, NICFI's country profiles lacks discussion of the specific, cultural or socio-economic contexts in different regions or localities of the recipient nations, e.g. where REDD+ projects are developing. In the Ethiopia country profile, discussion focuses on national level development and green growth as well as outlining the ecological profile of the country. There is minimal engagement with social, cultural or economic diversity in Ethiopia, a country which is divided into nine ethnically-based regional states and in which exists significant socio-economic inequalities and cultural diversity.

In line with this, the benefits of REDD+ and, more broadly, the CRGE strategy, for Ethiopia tend to be primarily deliberated at the country level. When examining NICFI's policy texts on Ethiopia, the proposed benefits for the country that emerge as dominant often include aspects such as 'green development', 'sustainable development', 'green growth', or 'clean energy'. All of these exists at a national scale, considering the extent to which Ethiopia can, as country, develop economically through sustainable paths. As an example, the following is stated in NICFI's country profile of Ethiopia:

*“Ethiopia is endowed with great potential to develop large amounts of clean energy, both for domestic use and for export to the region. Having access to energy will be vital in reducing poverty and for economic growth and development.”*

Here, NICFI frames the benefits that Ethiopia can gain from its CRGE strategy at a fundamentally country level. Through its evocative language (e.g. “endowed with great potential”; the “vital” role played by energy access in development and poverty alleviation), NICFI's policy discourse acts to direct attention towards the potential benefits that Ethiopia as a *nation* can reap from its green growth development plan. This is typical of NICFI's country profiles, whereby dimensions of REDD+ such as poverty alleviation, economic growth or development are framed almost entirely in terms of their national-scale potential. Accordingly, there is minimal engagement with the socio-economic or development benefits of REDD+ that may emerge at the regional, project or community levels in Ethiopia and the heterogenous nature of such emergence in Ethiopia. Notably, there is insufficient consideration by NICFI of how the REDD+ initiative may map onto existing distributive inequalities in Ethiopia.

While NICFI, the UN and World Bank evidence the retainment of a strictly state-based orientation of REDD+ in their policy discourse, the federal structure of the Ethiopia state and the emergence of PFM in the country since the mid-1990s presents a potential challenge to such an orientation. The increasingly decentralised form of forest governance in the country suggests that REDD+ is likely to work somewhat differently in Ethiopia to the ideals that are envisaged by the international policy-makers. However, in examining the Ethiopian government's policy discourse, the commitment to a decentralised and devolved form of REDD+ is only *partially* evident.

In the policy documents and interviews, the Ethiopian government frequently highlights the importance of devolving REDD+ governance to regional and local levels and “bringing the structure down to the lowest administration”. The establishment of Oromia as the pilot state for REDD+ in Ethiopia is justified not only based upon its ability to provide insight for national-based strategies, but also as part of a decentralising mission in Ethiopia's forest governance strategies. There are seen to be significant advantages in devolving forest governance in the country, primarily the “strengthening” and “empowerment” of regional and local-level institutions.

However, simultaneously, a state-based framing of REDD+ is present in the Ethiopian government's discourse. A ‘nested governance’ strategy is frequently signified by the Ethiopian government in both policy texts and interviews, in which the semi-autonomous regional and local-level administrations fall under the umbrella of the wider, state-level CRGE and REDD+ strategies. For instance, it is asserted by an Ethiopian REDD+ secretariat interviewee:

*“...So, I mean, they will have autonomy concerning which forest activities or REDD activities they wish to implement, but in terms of our accounting, our carbon accounting, I mean, nationally, you will have control... so, this is our plan and we will invest a lot on regions to deliver on MRV. We will equip them, we will start them, in many ways, but when it comes to reporting, to performance, I think it should be co-ordinated and very carefully managed by the national system.”*



Here, the interviewee uses language of positivity and certainty to highlight the government's continued commitment to a decentralised form of REDD+, e.g. "we invest a lot on regions"; "we will equip them". However, the statement nevertheless suggests that it is the state-level at which the fundamental decisions on REDD+ policy design and management are made. There is a sense here that the regional and project-level REDD+ interventions ultimately fall under national-level governance structures: "nationally, you will have control" and "...I think it should be co-ordinated and very carefully managed by the national system". Throughout the Ethiopian government's policy discourse, sub-national or project level REDD+ activities are consistently framed in terms of how these relate to broader, state-level strategies and policy-making.

Elsewhere, the Ethiopian government frequently acts to place importance and ultimate value on national-level REDD+ policy-making and management. As with the other policy-makers, the government's policy discourse suggests the priority in REDD+ to be changes in state-level 'reforms', 'legislations', 'policy instruments' or 'implementation mechanisms'. Relatedly, challenges in successfully implementing REDD+ in the country are often linked by the Ethiopian government to insufficient or limited "policy or legal frameworks or assessments".

Additionally, although to a lesser extent than the other policy actors, REDD+ benefits are also framed primarily at the national level, e.g. country-level 'economic development', 'green growth', 'sustainable development'. There do exist regional profiles in the government's policy texts; however, these tend to be primarily ecologically-based, e.g. the types of trees prominent in the region, the rates of deforestation. The profiles do not tend to engage with the socio-economic or cultural profiles of the regions or conceptualise the benefits which may emerge in specific localities or regions.

Accordingly, the findings suggest the presence of partially decentralised REDD+ structure in Ethiopia, in which despite the emergence of semi-autonomous regional states, the federal state continues to drive fundamental decisions on REDD+ and design of REDD+. Here, the national level continues to be put forward as the key conduit for REDD+ interventions in enacting long-term and holistic change but as filtered through Ethiopia's federalised structures. These findings can be understood

alongside claims in the literature that devolution is often well-espoused in Ethiopian political discourse, but limited in practice, or as Lavers (2012) suggests, “...establishing a formally federal structure while retaining strong central control of policy, encroaching on regional autonomy where necessary”.

Elsewhere, the Ethiopian government’s policy discourse indicates a greater valuing of community participation and empowerment in comparison with the other REDD+ policy actors. In line with its adoption of PFM in some parts of the country, the Ethiopian government engaged on a number of occasions with notions of ‘collaboration’ and ‘empowerment’. Indeed, terms such as “bargaining power”, “collaboration” and “local responsibility” are referred to occasionally in the policy texts when discussing strategies for local-level forest governance, to a significantly greater extent than the other policy actors. These, implicitly and explicitly, suggest a preference for enhanced participatory power at the community level. There are also occasions on which the Ethiopian government propose that the communities have rights to engage in the “formulation” of REDD+ policy, as well as its implementation, suggesting an expansive, more integral role for forest-dependent communities in REDD+.

The community interviews also indicated enhanced participatory power for the communities engaged in EWNRA’s REDD+ project. Here, the interviewees generally highlighted that they felt a greater sense of ownership and control over forested land after engaging with EWNRA on the PFM project. The majority of interviewees indicated an enhanced sense of empowerment, which was seen to be bound up with greater rights and responsibilities for maintaining the forests. Interviewees referred to participatory power both on an individual level in the community and on a broader level in terms of shaping the project.

On an individual level, the consensus in the interviews was that community members are able to better have their voice heard at regular village (or perhaps intra-village) meetings concerning REDD+ and the project. Here, it was indicated that they could express their needs, interests and concerns about forest-management and REDD+. The interviewees suggested that decision-making on the REDD+ project encompassed input from *all* community members. As outlined further in Chapter 6, importance was placed in the interviews on the egalitarian nature of the REDD+

participatory processes in the villages. The general sense from the community members is that each of them has a voice in the local-level decision-making practices, with no-one expressing feelings of marginalisation or exclusion.

On a broader level, the interviewees indicated the existence of regular consultations between EWNRA and the communities. Some interviewees noted their participation in decision-making on the PFM project and indicated significant engagement with EWNRA on further developing sustainable forest management techniques and strategies in the villages. The majority of interviewees suggest enhanced equality of participatory processes in forest governance following the introduction of the project and engagement with EWNRA. Meanwhile, almost all of the interviewees highlighted that their voice was heard by EWNRA in meetings and that they now felt empowered since working with EWNRA on the project.

Indeed, the interviews suggested that the communities' expressions of enhanced participatory rights and empowerment align with their generally positive outlook on the project more broadly and their relationship with EWNRA. Indeed, it can be proposed that the communities' responses on participation are tightly bound up with the values and norms of EWNRA, as an NGO that tends to champion community rights and places these centrally in their PFM strategies. In the community interviews, EWNRA's empowering and participatory approach is seen to contrast with local and regional state bodies. When engaging with these bodies previously, a number of interviewees highlighted that their voice tended not to be heard. This aligns with their broader mistrust of the state and the evidenced marginalisation of rural communities in Ethiopia.

The increased sense of participatory rights indicated by the communities in Nono Sele aligns broadly with other studies on PFM projects in Ethiopia, in which the enhancement of participatory empowerment and local-level decision-making has been documented following the introduction of PFM into communities (Gobeze et al. 2009, Bekele et al. 2015). It suggests that positive steps are being taken towards more procedurally just forms of sustainable forest management in Ethiopia. The interviewees frequently highlight the importance of participatory power and having a voice as being necessary for achieving a *fair* implementation of the REDD+ project.

Additionally, for the communities, participatory empowerment is also strongly linked to improved rights to access forest resources and benefits from their forestry management efforts. On numerous occasions in the interviews, enhanced participatory rights are explicitly tied to the increased profits that the community can gain from selling Non-Timber Forest Products (notably coffee or honey), as well as improved financial stability. Accordingly, for the communities, participatory empowerment and equality is intimately bound up with a more just distribution of benefits from sustainable forest management, aligning closely with the findings of Martin et al. (2013).

However, despite the greater sense of ownership and participatory rights felt by the forest-dependent communities in Nono Sele, there are indications that the communities' ultimate participatory power, both on individual and collective levels, may be somewhat limited in practice. This is reflected in the framing of fundamental disagreements with the nature of the REDD+ project. For instance, it was stated by one community member that:

*“Every community participates equally in this decision-making process...we are discussing together and agreeing on decisions...these principles are not made by an external body, they are made by us...it is our agreement...if somebody disagrees with these ideas, we are going to shape him, we are going to correct his ideas...after that, we can take the right direction”.*

Here, it is implied that disagreement within communities is primarily caused by lack of *awareness*, where it is assumed that once awareness of sustainable forest management has been spread and the REDD+ project is better understood, there will be ultimate agreement among all community members on how to proceed. In response community members who disagree with the REDD+ agenda, the interviewee asserted that, *“we are going to shape him...correct his ideas”*. The discourse of ‘correction’ supports the notion that the community member’s issues relate to a lack of knowledge and can be addressed through enhanced awareness, rather than indicating a fundamental problem with the REDD+ project.

The ‘agreement as awareness’ narrative and the sense that lack of awareness underpins disagreement is evident throughout the community interviews. It indicates that, despite enhanced participatory power being prominent in the community

interviews, the fundamental nature of the REDD+ agenda is already pre-set to some extent and that it cannot be significantly challenged at the local level. It may be that those who have alternative viewpoints to the basic REDD+ agenda are marginalised somewhat in the community until these viewpoints are changed (i.e. following 'awareness'), suggesting fundamental limits to actual and significant participatory empowerment in Nono Sele.

The REDD+ agenda at the local level in Nono Sele appears to be tightly bound up with the vision and values of EWNRA. This means that, as Ayana (2014) suggested, the communities' responses may form part of an 'adaptive strategy' in their engagement with REDD+. While claims of enhanced participatory empowerment were put forward by the community members, it may be that these brought up due to their alignment with EWNRA's vision and values. Given that I was perceived to be closely linked with the NGO, it is possible that the communities' responses in the interviews were driven by a need to stick closely to the NGOs' values (i.e. equality of decision-making), rather than these necessarily suggesting enhanced procedural justice in reality.

The idea of aligning with the NGOs' rhetoric as an 'adaptive strategy' is that communities may voice what they believe those in positions of power want to hear, given the material benefits associated with the project. Further evidence for the existence of the adaptive strategy is provided in Chapter 6. It suggests asymmetric power relations between the NGO and the communities and limited participation in reality for the community members in driving REDD+ processes, whereby the fundamental agenda of the project is already pre-set. Although the exact extent of the adaptive strategy is unclear, if understood accordingly, it would suggest that the communities have limited participatory powers in reality and little choice but to adhere to EWNRA's vision.

The existence of an 'adaptive strategy' would suggest that claims of enhanced equality of decision-making and participatory power are primarily rhetorical and that there is minimal engagement with diversity of viewpoints within the communities. Indeed, there is evidence in the NGOs' documentation that the communities' primary communication with EWNRA is through a REDD+ committee, a group of forest management 'experts' that operate across Nono Sele and the project. Despite claims

of participatory power for all community members in the interviews, it appears that community perspectives are filtered through a small group in Nono Sele, as Myers et al. (2018) found elsewhere.

An ultimately limited and technical form of participation can also be located in the REDD+ policy discourse. 'Participation' acts as one element of the REDD+ safeguards framework and is generally the most highlighted of the safeguards in the policy discourse. In the policy texts and interviews, it can be ascertained that the concept of participation tends to refer to two aspects of REDD+ governance: consultations and informing. While the Ethiopian government highlights the importance of 'collaboration' and 'empowerment', 'participation' is often closely bound up with 'consultation' in its policy texts.

In Ethiopia, consultations involve asking the communities for their opinions in local meetings on REDD+ projects and the extent to which these may impact, positively and negatively, upon their livelihoods and rights: "capturing their concerns". Throughout the policy discourse, the Ethiopian government place importance upon the significance of *consulting* communities on their views and opinions as a form of participation. 'Consultation' suggests that there is engagement and dialogue with the communities, but not necessarily participation *per se*; opinions of affected community members may be gathered, but not necessarily acted upon, or at least in relation to the fundamental drive of REDD+ in Ethiopia. There is no indication in the discourse that a formal mechanism will be enacted to enable community-led participation in the fundamental decision-making on REDD+, either in relation to the specific project or the initiative more broadly.

Additionally, for the Ethiopian government, participation acts as an *informing* tool, which involves making communities aware, through various outlets (primarily the media) of what the implementation of REDD+ projects locally means for them. In the government's REDD+ documentation, the idea of informing communities about local-level forest governance is well-detailed and forms part of a participatory discourse. It suggests that awareness in and of itself is sufficient for meeting the participatory rights of affected communities. This aligns with what was deduced from the interviews with the forest-dependent communities: once the community member is aware, they are likely to agree with and be content with the REDD+ project.

Accordingly, despite indications of greater valuing and prioritising of community participation and empowerment, the Ethiopian government's discourse nevertheless suggests a limited and technical form of participation, emerging through 'consultation' and 'informing' discourses. As has been suggested elsewhere (Murray Li 2007, Myers et al. 2018), it appears that the Ethiopian government seeks to meet minimum standards of participation, as part of the 'safeguards framework' that does not sufficiently suggest actual representation of the communities in decision-making on REDD+.

Analysis indicates that, alongside the rhetoric of 'participation', 'decentralisation' and 'community empowerment', there exists a top-down approach to community engagement in the government's REDD+ policy discourse. This suggests that there is a lack of actual and significant participatory power at the local level in Ethiopia, with the fundamental decisions on REDD+ taken at national level, perhaps reflecting the broader dearth of political and economic power felt by marginalised rural communities in Ethiopia.

These findings align to a significant extent with recent work on both REDD+ and PFM (Forsyth and Sikor 2013, Myers et al. 2018, Paladino 2011) which broadly proposes limits to the participatory rights of forest-dependent communities in reality. Here, concerns can be raised over the extent to which the basic premises and underlying assumptions of the REDD+ projects are already pre-determined (by the NGO, by the local or national government, by international actors) before the affected community members have any voice in project decision-making.

Community participation in forestry management is perhaps only allowed when it supports the broader REDD+ agenda: as "the recipient and objects of policy rather than seated at the table that defines it" (Paladino 2011). Indeed, Murray Li (2007) has made clear connections between the community assemblage that has emerged in PFM discourse and the responsibilities given to communities to conserve and protect forests as part of national and international agendas. In other words, the value of communities in the REDD+ discourse is perhaps conditional on performance and maintaining a pre-determined role in the REDD+ agenda.

It may be that 'participation' and 'community empowerment' are simply rhetoric that do not reflect the on-the-ground reality of REDD+ and PFM. Notably, Blaikie (2006:

1952) has argued that devolution of forest management and the emergence of participatory forms of forest governance form part of conservation narratives, but often have little substance, where “it is the discursive appeal rather than coherence and applicability which is more important”. Some REDD+ scholars have suggested that a PFM approach simply acts to increase local-level support and legitimacy for the project (Martin et al. 2014, Forsyth and Sikor 2013).

While the environmental NGOs in Ethiopia, such as EWNRA, as well as the international NGOs that they work in collaboration with, including the Development Fund, appear to generally advocate participatory rights and power for forest-dependent communities, in line with their broader ideologies, these nevertheless work within the structures of Ethiopian forestry and REDD+ governance. If the NGOs were to continue to lead REDD+ projects in the country, it seems likely that these would be more community-led and participatory than otherwise. However, the limited role of Ethiopian NGOs in state-level decision-making and the identified top-down nature of the government’s REDD+ policy discourse suggest significant challenges in the NGOs being granted enhanced power in REDD+ policy design and implementation.

Accordingly, there are significant political challenges in furthering the actual and significant participatory powers of communities in REDD+ decision-making in Ethiopia. The top-down and state-driven design and implementation of REDD+ suggests that the needs and interests of the communities are likely to be under-represented in the REDD+ policy agenda. Indeed, previous research on PFM has found limited emergence of socio-economic or livelihoods benefits at the community level, with costs for the communities more often documented, e.g. institutional time commitments, foregone forest use (Corbera et al. 2017, Blaikie 2006).

Currently, REDD+ in Ethiopia remains in its early stages; accordingly, there are few ground-level ‘results as of yet, e.g. the distribution of the funding from purchased emissions reductions. However, for when the payments do begin, the centralised structure of REDD+ in Ethiopia is likely to present challenges to the equitable distribution of REDD+ benefits, as Turnhout et al. (2017) have proposed more broadly. Under a strictly top-down orientation of REDD+, the distribution of funds may be calculated at the regional or national levels, bringing up issues of



aggregation and potentially working against the needs and interests of forest-dependent communities in Ethiopia, where those making the sacrifices in forest management may not necessarily be rewarded for them, as some climate justice scholars have argued (Larson and Ribot 2012, Barbier and Tesfaw 2012).

Furthermore, it was also identified in the findings that the REDD+ policy discourse is top-down in another sense, whereby significant elements of the Ethiopian government's REDD+ strategies and policy design are led or at least highly influenced by the international policy-makers. Notably, there are frequent assertions in the Ethiopian government's policy texts that their REDD+ policy and on-the-ground activity needs to be broadly in line with the guidelines and frameworks of the international bodies. This includes the outcomes of the UNFCCC negotiations, as well as the specific requirements and policy directives of the multilateral institutions.

It is explicitly outlined on several occasions in its policy reports that the Ethiopian government is obligated to align its REDD+ strategies and frameworks with that of the UN and the World Bank, notably its safeguards policies. For instance, the following statement from Ethiopia's FCFP project document is typical: "The preparation of safeguard instruments by the consultant has anchored to analysis of the country's existing safeguard policies and regulations aligned to on the seven Cancun safeguard principles and Warsaw Framework along with requirements of the World Bank safeguard operational policies".

The language used in this statement indicates a strict, formal obligations on behalf of the Ethiopian government to meet the requirements of the Cancun safeguard principles and the World Bank's safeguards policies: "anchored to", "aligned to" and "requirements". Such terms are common throughout the government's policy discourse. These imply a top-down imposition of power from the multilateral institutions upon recipient nations. Given that they are recipients of international funds and that REDD+ is becoming more akin to conditional or results-based aid (Angelsen 2016), it may be expected that the Ethiopian government has requirements to meet; nevertheless, it is notable that the relations between the multilateral institutions and Ethiopia is primarily one-way and top-down in structure, with the demands of the World Bank and the UN leaving little space for the recipient nations to steer their own REDD+ strategies.

## **Summary and Discussion**

Overall, the findings suggest a top-down orientation to the REDD+ policy discourse. Despite an identified evolution in the structure of REDD+ initiatives in recent years towards a more bottom-up, project-level structure, the examined REDD+ policy discourse retains a fundamentally statist orientation, particularly in NICFI and the multilateral organisations. Fundamentally, the policy-makers continue to be driven by the notion that the performance of REDD+ can be maximised if designed and implemented as a strictly national-level framework. This acts as largely a continuation of the powerful role of state actors in broader international climate change negotiations and decision-making (Okereke and Coventry 2016, Roberts and Parks 2010).

The findings also suggest that the framing of REDD+ is top-down in another sense too: the imposition of the values and agendas of the international institutions upon the Ethiopian government's REDD+ strategies and policy design. Here, there is significant evidence in the policy discourse that the fundamental REDD+ agenda is set at international levels, primarily through multilateral actors (e.g. the UN, the World Bank), notably the safeguards framework. Accordingly, it can be suggested that the interests and agendas of the international actors (e.g. a carbon-centric vision of REDD) filtrates through state-level actors in the recipient nations, as part of an international/national political interface in REDD+.

The recent emergence of a more devolved and participatory form of forest governance in Ethiopia presents a potential challenge to the top-down, state-oriented version of REDD+. However, the Ethiopian government's policy discourse indicates a partially decentralised form of REDD+, in which the ultimate agenda on REDD+ is set at both national and international levels. This is bound up with indicated limited and technical forms of participation in REDD+ decision-making for the forest-dependent communities in Ethiopia. While the Ethiopian government places greater attention on 'participation' and 'community empowerment' in its policy discourse, it nevertheless suggests that fundamental decisions on REDD+ governance is made at the state level.

At the community level, the findings from the interviews are generally positive in relation to participatory rights and power, following the introduction of the ENWRA-

led REDD+ project. However, the evidence suggests that participatory empowerment for the entire community in Nono Sele may be somewhat limited in reality, emerging as part of an 'agreement as awareness' discourse. Rather, it can be proposed that the interviewees' responses perhaps form part of an 'adaptive strategy' for the communities, in seeking to align with the norms and values of EWNRA. Both the community-level and policy-level discourse imply that fundamental decisions on REDD+ strategies and initiatives are made at higher levels and that the underlying assumptions of the REDD+ agenda have already been pre-determined by the time forms of participation arise at the community level.

Thus, despite the inclusion of 'participation' as 'core safeguard' in the REDD+ international framework and the prominence of the PFM agenda, participation emerges in the policy discourse at a largely rhetorical level, as scholars elsewhere have suggested (Blaikie 2006, Myers et al. 2018). Participation means different things for different REDD+ actors; for the policy-makers, the findings suggest that it is largely limited, technical and tied up with meeting minimum standards. The policy discourse largely suggests the existence of 'patrimonial' forms of participation (Blaikie 2006), in which a discourse of 'participation' is put forward in the REDD+ agenda by powerful international and national actors but fails to have a significant grounding in reality. The findings align to a large extent with climate justice research that has found participation from local actors in forest governance to be ultimately limited and technical, despite the increasing attention being paid to it by international policy-makers (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, Ribot 2011).

While there has been a shift towards a more devolved and participatory approach to forest governance in Ethiopia, there remain considerable political challenges to the realisation of actual and sufficient community participation in practice. While the community-level results are generally positive towards participation, these need to be viewed within the context of broader Ethiopian politics and political discourse. Indeed, the top-down approach to REDD+ appears to fit within the Ethiopian government's documented broader developmental strategies: East Asian-inspired 'developmentalism', which has delivered impressive rates of economic growth through large-scale infrastructure projects but has tended to economically and politically marginalise rural communities and to be insufficiently democratic or participatory (Gardner 2018).

Although a more decentralised approach to forest governance would imply enhanced participatory power of local-level actors (and, by association, their rights and needs), it is difficult to ensure this through devolving practices *alone*. Rather, scholars have suggested that local government is likely to simply reflect the interests of the national government and not necessarily their constituents (Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017, Ribot 2011, Larson and Ribot 2012). In these findings, the findings suggest that sub-national REDD+ institutions, governmental bodies and projects are either driven by, or reflect, the Ethiopian state's agendas.

Relatedly, there are concerns that some ethnic groups, particularly the Oromo people, are being marginalised and discriminated against in Ethiopia, both politically and economically (Amnesty International 2017). Environmental justice scholars have raised concerns over the extent to which the participatory rights and specific cultural needs of marginalised or indigenous communities are recognised in climate governance structures (Whyte 2011, Martin et al. 2014, Adger et al. 2011). Indeed, in the Ethiopian government's policy discourse, little indication is shown of engagement with sub-national or community-level politics, cultures or livelihoods. It appears unlikely that a primarily top-down and state-led formulation of REDD+ would adequately reflect the needs and interests of marginalised rural communities in Oromia, which have contributed little to climate change.

Climate justice scholars have well-discussed and emphasised the importance of strong and effective participation in formulating a just vision of REDD+ (Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017, Agrawal and Angelsen 2012, Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012). There are concerns in the scholarship that a top-down and state-driven approach to REDD+ may be antithetical to meeting the needs, interests and concerns of the forest-dependent communities (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, Paladino 2011, McAfee 2014). The limited and technical form of participatory power evident in the examined REDD+ policy discourse fits within these concerns and adds further weight to suggestions that the top-down nature of REDD+ clashes with the fundamental roots of PFM (Agrawal and Angelsen 2012, Larrazábal et al. 2012).

Concerns over a top-down formulation of REDD+ incorporate both procedural and distributive elements, whereby a centralised system not only limits the agency or voice of communities in formulation and implementation of REDD+, but also presents

challenges in ensuring that the financial benefits for REDD+ effectively and equitably flows down to the community-level (Larson and Ribot 2012, Korhonen-Kurki et al. 2012, Paladino 2011). Indeed, historically, state-led control over forest management has been associated with injustices at the local-level (Forsyth and Sikor 2013, Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017, Ribot 2010). Considered on an international scale, the establishment of a REDD+ agenda at a higher level with limited and technical participation from forest-dependent communities is likely to serve the interests and agendas of Northern actors.

The role and power of environmental NGOs, both domestic and international, in Ethiopian forest governance and politics is likely to be crucial in determining the shape and formulation of REDD+ in the country. The findings highlight the divergent values that the Ethiopian NGOs hold in regards to community participation and rights, in comparison to the other policy-makers, highlighting the historical association between NGOs and the emergence of PFM in Ethiopia (Bekele et al. 2015).

If NGOs such as EWNRA were to continue to lead REDD+ projects in the country, it is likely that these would be more community-led and participatory than otherwise; nevertheless, these exist within the structures of Ethiopian politics which have a closed policy-making tradition (Bekele et al. 2015, Stellmacher 2007). Indeed, while non-state actors have been granted ever-expanding roles in Ethiopian forest governance since the 1990s (Ayana, Arts and Wiersum 2012, Gobeze et al. 2009), there appear to be limits to the extent of NGOs' influence in decision-making processes, particularly from its early stages (Bekele et al. 2015). Power remains largely concentrated at the state-level in Ethiopia and this is reflected in its REDD+ strategies and policy discourse.

## **5.5 Chapter Summary**

In summary, this chapter suggests that the examined international REDD+ policy-makers are primarily driven by a motivation to cost-effectively reduce large-scale GHG emissions in the forest sector, acting to side-line the development, livelihoods-based or poverty alleviation potential of REDD+ in the policy discourse. Such prioritisation is likely to determine the present and future orientation of REDD+. In such a narrative, notions of responsibility for climate change tend to be marginalised

by the policy-makers. A REDD+ framework designed in such a way appears to primarily benefit the industrialised funding nations. For Norway, REDD+ is used as a tool to 'politically offset' its continued dependency on an expansive petroleum industry.

Accordingly, the findings suggest that the Norwegian government is insufficiently addressing its responsibility for climate change and, given the constraints of carbon budgets under the 1.5-2°C targets set in the Paris agreement, is pushing greater burdens onto communities and actors in the Global South, those who have little responsibility for climate change and have limited capacity to deal with its impacts. As would be expected given the significant funding provided by the Norwegian government to UN-REDD and international REDD+ processes, the discourses of NICFI and the UN policy bodies tend to largely overlap and align.

Despite an identified shift towards a more bottom-up and project-based structure, REDD+ is framed largely by all examined policy actors as a top-down and state-driven policy framework that insufficiently grants actual and significant participatory rights and powers to local-level community actors. Despite the formal adoption of PFM and a decentralising framework in Ethiopia, the fundamental design and make-up of REDD+ interventions appear to be made at the state and international levels. The Ethiopian government's REDD+ discourse emerges as part of the state-level CRGE framework that does not sufficiently acknowledge the rights, needs and interests of community-level actors nor critically interrogate the ease of realising a 'win-win-win' in its implementation of REDD+.

The findings indicated significant divergences in the underlying climate justice norms between the policy-makers and the community-level and NGO actors. For the community members, the primary value of engagement in REDD+ is in livelihood improvement and in enhancing socio-economic outcomes at the local-level, with ideas of responding to international concerns over industrialised nations' responsibility for climate change or the role that forests can play in sequestering carbon. Largely, the NGOs values are much closer aligned to the needs and interests of community actors than is present in the policy-makers discourse, with their objectives indicated to be generally more balanced and integrated. Accordingly, the role that the NGOs play in formulating and designing REDD+ is likely to

determine the orientation of the initiative and its underlying climate justice norms; while the environmental NGOs in Norway have increasingly driven the REDD+ agenda in the country as part of a close, insider relationship, those organisations in Ethiopia tend to find their participation in REDD+ decision-making processes ultimately limited.

## Chapter 6: The Constructions of Wider Conceptions of Justice in the REDD+ Discourse

### 6.1 Introduction

Building upon the previous chapter's exploration of the construction of climate justice in the REDD+ policy, this chapter seeks to critically assess and examine the wider conceptions of justice that are present in the REDD+ discourse across policy and community actors. The multiscalar analysis is driven by the need to understand the synergies and divergences in justice norms across and between the discourses of multiple REDD+ actors on multiple scales of governance.

The empirical analysis in this chapter indicates the emergence of a dominant 'utilitarian-neoliberal nexus' in the REDD+ policy discourse, whereby policy actors make use of market-based tools in order to achieve fundamentally utilitarian-driven objectives. This is challenged by, and exists alongside, the presence of egalitarian norms at the community level. In this chapter, the contours of utilitarianism are firstly outlined, considering the results-based, global and long-term focus of the policy discourse, followed by a discussion of the neoliberal forms of environmental governance at the heart of REDD+ policy discourse. Subsequently, the community norms are critically discussed and analysed.

### 6.2 Utilitarianism

In the REDD+ policy discourse, significant evidence of dominant utilitarian ethics was uncovered. Here, the policy-makers tend to be driven in their decision-making by a 'bigger picture' conception of justice. Primarily, utilitarian thought emerges in the policy discourse through three discursive constructions of REDD+: (1) *achievement of results in REDD+* (2) *a global framing of REDD+ outcomes and benefits* and (3) *a prioritisation of the long-term in devising REDD+*.

Firstly, there is indicated to be a results-based drive that underpins the REDD+ policy narratives, meaning that what the policy-makers primarily value is the achievement of *results*. As indicated in Chapter 5, the policy-makers are driven by and prioritise the cost-effective and large-scale reductions in international GHG emissions over and above all other outcomes, most pertinently those which are livelihood or development-based. Such prioritisation indicates the presence of



distinctly consequentialist ethics, whereby what is of primary importance is the achievement of results, rather than precisely *how* these are achieved.

Consequentialist ethics can be identified in NICFI's 'core objectives':

- "1 To work towards the inclusion of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in a new international climate regime;*
- 2 To take early action to achieve cost-effective and verifiable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions;*
- 3 To promote the conservation of natural forests to maintain their carbon storage capacity."*

In the latter two objectives, NICFI position REDD+ as a cost-effective and large-scale climate change mitigation strategy, indicating this to be the institution's key priority in designing and implementing REDD+. 'Cost-effectiveness' is a framing device that is utilised throughout NICFI's policy discourse when highlighting the benefits and outcomes of REDD+. The significant emphasis placed on REDD+ as a cost-effective response to the climate crisis indicates NICFI's ultimate priority: the reductions of international GHG emissions, wherever these may be the cheapest.

This aligns with Norwegian climate change scholars who have indicated the prominence of a cost-effective logic and justification in Norway's international approach to environmental governance (Tellman 2012, Angelsen 2016, Hermansen and Kasa 2014). Indeed, in relation to Norway's climate change policy stance, Tellman (2012: 12) suggested that "...whereas the costs of reducing emissions varies considerably across countries, the benefit for the atmosphere is technically the same, wherever action is taken". Cost-effective logics and motivations are intimately bound up with consequentialist ethics: by maximising the reductions in GHG emissions on a global scale, it can be proposed that the risk of dangerous levels of climate change are reduced.

Elsewhere, NICFI's core objectives also evidence the Norwegian government's aim to advance the REDD+ agenda in "a new international climate regime", through its role as 'policy entrepreneurs', as Lahn and Wilson Rowe (2014) noted. As described fully in Chapter 5, NICFI consistently promotes its role as 'bridge-builders', whereby

the government is perceived to promote consensus among negotiating parties and to facilitate agreements being reached on common goals in climate action.

NICFI's pursuit of consensus-building and of furthering the REDD+ agenda indicates a consequentialist agenda. Here, it can be suggested that NICFI's perceived role seeks to ultimately advance negotiations and agreements in the international climate change arena, thereby theoretically achieving greater reductions in international GHG emissions. In being underpinned by cost-effective logics and justification, NICFI's strengthening of the REDD+ agenda can be seen to meet the needs and interests of the industrialised nations (i.e. making large-scale reductions in GHG emissions outside of their borders).

In line with what some climate change scholars have suggested (e.g. Posner and Weisbach 2010, Traxler 2002), it can be argued that NICFI's pursuit of REDD+ advancement in a 'new international regime' is underpinned by an understanding that, by directing attention towards the needs and interests of the industrialised nations, it is more likely that global cooperation on climate change can be facilitated and international climate negotiations can progress. This indicates consequentialist ethics on behalf of NICFI, whereby the institution is driven by an ultimate pursuit of progress in international action on climate change and of maximising reductions in international GHG emissions.

Additionally, the use of 'verifiable' by NICFI in its 'core aims' is revealing, indicating the importance of 'results' for the institution. Indeed, all of the policy-makers refer consistently to 'verified' emissions reductions and place emphasis on measuring and monitoring the rates of deforestation in the recipient nation (i.e. the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) framework). This is often supported by concrete, detailed and highly technical frameworks, in contrast with the lack of clarity surrounding the wider potential development-oriented benefits of REDD+. Indeed, it is rarely discussed how the proposed "co-benefits" of REDD+ may be achieved nor how they may be measured, suggesting that these act as rhetoric for the policy-makers, rather than forming the thrust of their REDD+ interventions.

By focusing efforts on the metrics and results of REDD+ through a cost-effective narrative, less attention is paid by the policy-makers on precisely how these are realised and with what effects these have on the forest-dependent communities

involved in REDD+ practices. Indeed, a results-based orientation in the policy discourse aligns with the findings from Chapter 5, whereby the development or livelihoods aspirations of REDD+ tend to be discussed or highlighted to a much lesser extent than are the carbon-oriented goals. Thus, the policy discourse suggests a prioritisation of the 'end-result' of the cost-effective REDD+ agenda: the maximisation of reductions in international GHG emissions, which seeks to ultimately reduce the likelihood of dangerous climate change in the future.

Secondly, the global outcomes and benefits of REDD+ are consistently highlighted in the policy discourse. The idea is that REDD+ (and the sustainable management of tropical forests more broadly) is in the interests of everyone and produces global benefits, in terms of averting dangerous levels of climate change. A 'global' framing of the ultimate benefits of REDD+ interventions is evident in all of the policy discourse, but particularly that of the multilateral institutions. For instance, a UN representative stated the following in an interview:

*"...I believe that if we continue with the level of current deforestation, the earth will be worse off and the global economy will also be worse off. You'll simply see disruptions in agricultural production, you'll see disruptions that result in social and economic unrest, those are all very undesirable and I think making sure that more forest is being protected to counter those risks is in the interests of everyone."*

Here, the UN interviewee frames tropical deforestation primarily in global terms, with REDD+ interventions "...in the interests of everyone". It is put forward that continued high levels of tropical deforestation means that "the earth will be worse off", acting to construct environmental and developmental challenges primary at the planetary scale. Agricultural production, social and economic unrest and the economy more broadly are all viewed here through a global lens and in relation to the implications for the planet. The interviewee posits that by working towards REDD+, benefits related to addressing climate change and deforestation can emerge for all of humanity.

Throughout the policy discourse, a global understanding of REDD+ is emphasised over and above its specific regional or local implications. Notably, the profiling of REDD+ recipient nations by the policy-makers is consistently conducted at the

national scale, with limited recognition of regional heterogeneity or socio-cultural diversity. Here, limited discussions engage with the implications of REDD+ for specific regions, localities or communities of recipient countries, including Ethiopia. Compared to the other policy-makers, the Ethiopian government offers some insight into the regional contexts of tropical forest governance in the country. Nevertheless, these discussions often exist at a highly technical or ecological level, with little attention paid to the socio-economic, cultural or political contexts at the sub-national level in Ethiopia.

By subsuming the community-level benefits and burdens into the national and global levels, differentiated impacts of climate change mitigation policies can be masked. The effects of REDD+ policy upon marginalised groups are rarely explored by the policy-makers, evidencing the majority-focused ethics of utilitarianism. In framing REDD+ as primarily globally-oriented, attention is shifted away from the cultural and social dimensions of tropical-forest governance that Adger et al. (2011) raised concerns over in broader climate governance. Additionally, the global framing of REDD+ is evident in NICFI's country profiles. Here, its socio-economic analyses of recipient nations tend to incorporate elements that have implications for the global community (e.g. monitoring mechanisms, carbon stock densities) to a greater extent than those which specifically relate to local and regional levels.

A globalised framing of REDD+ policy reflects utilitarian ethics and the pursuit of the 'greater good'. In reducing the likelihood of future dangerous climate change for all of humanity, 'overall utility' can be considered to be maximised. From a utilitarian perspective, REDD+ could be morally justified based on its perceived global benefits, even if there may exist some localised, short-term 'pain' (Sikor et al. 2014). As Okereke and Dooley (2010) have previously argued, a utilitarian approach to REDD+ is based on the needs of the majority, which is likely to result in the marginalization of local or community-level issues, concerns and injustices.

In the REDD+ policy discourse, this is reflected by the insufficient attention paid to the specific local or regional level contexts of tropical forest governance, as well as the side-lining of the development or livelihoods aspirations of REDD+. This highlights the emergence of possible tensions between the globally-driven aims of the REDD+ policy-makers and the locally-driven interests of the forest-dependent

communities. A de-valuing of the 'local' in the policy discourse suggests an orientation of REDD+ that works against the interests and needs of the communities, in terms of both distributive and procedural concerns. Indeed, the top-down formulation of REDD+ that was described in Chapter 5 is ultimately bound up with globally-driven aims and interests.

A de-valuing of procedural justice and of the decision-making abilities of forest-dependent communities in the design and structure of REDD+ policy reflects the lack of consideration of *process* which is at the heart of utilitarian thought. Here, the policy-makers draw focus away from procedural concerns towards achievement of results. The limited nature of communities' participatory rights (see Chapter 5) in decision-making on REDD+ means that the fundamental design and structure of the initiative cannot be sufficiently challenged, and that the globally-oriented and globally-justified drives of the policy-makers dominate.

Additionally, a globalised framing of REDD+ does not engage with the injustices at the heart of the climate crisis. Here, by presenting REDD+ as a framework that responds to a distinctly global challenge and produces distinctly global benefits, attention is shifted away from the distributive dimensions of climate change and, by association, climate action. Indeed, this aligns with the findings of Section 5.4, in which the prominence of the 'shared responsibility' discourse was highlighted. Here, for Norway, its responsibility as a fossil-fuel exporter is significantly side-lined and 'politically offset' as part of its 'Thinking Globally' discourse (Hovden and Lindseth 2004).

Thirdly, throughout the policy discourse, REDD+ is framed in relation to its perceived long-term benefits and the ultimate aversion of future dangerous climate change. A long-term orientation of REDD+ is constructed through the consistent use of 'future'-driven language in relation to the benefits of the initiative, e.g. 'will be', 'going to be', 'set to'. It positions the beneficial outcomes of REDD+ as primarily being realised in the future and as long-term aspirations. For instance, it is stated in a UN report on REDD+ in Ethiopia that, "the REDD+ framework seeks to combat the most severe impacts of climate change that are set to emerge in the coming years".

Evidently, the long-term orientation of REDD+ is tightly bound up with the globalised understanding of the initiative and the cost-effective logics that underpin the policy

discourse. Here, it is understood by the policy-makers that a REDD+ driven by cost-effectiveness enables, and is justified by, the pursuit of an effective climate change mitigation strategy and the maximisation of the long-term reductions in international GHG emissions. Notably, NICFI's selection of recipient countries reflects the government's pursuit of long-term effectiveness in its REDD+ agenda. Its justification for selecting these in its policy texts is bound up with broader motivations and ethical underpinnings.

As described more fully in Chapter 5, NICFI's selection of recipient countries is driven by the pursuit of the advancement and strengthening of the REDD+ agenda globally and, ultimately, maximising the effectiveness of GHG emissions in the long-term, given its perceived cost-effectiveness. This encompasses engagement with Brazil and Indonesia, as home to the largest and most carbon dense forests globally, as well as with Ethiopia and other low forest/low carbon dense nations, in attempting to demonstrate the 'success' of REDD+ interventions in multiple contexts and in wide ranging profiles of REDD+ countries.

NICFI's selection of REDD+ recipient nations brings to light concerns over a balance between effectiveness and equity in climate change mitigation. With NICFI's REDD+ directive indicated to be primarily driven by the pursuit of an effective climate change mitigation strategy that is beneficial in the long-term, climate justice scholars may argue that the *equity* of the REDD+ agenda is compromised. Indeed, a number of scholars have highlighted potential tensions that may exist between effectiveness and equity in designing climate change mitigation strategies (McAfee 2012, Roberts and Parks 2007, Peskett et al. 2008).

With NICFI's REDD+ agenda appearing to be driven by the pursuit of effectiveness, the extent to which REDD+ forms part of a just response to climate change can be questioned. Indeed, concerns have been raised over the potential for REDD+ to 'crowd out' Norway's poverty alleviation or development programmes in the poorest or most vulnerable regions and to re-direct the ODA budget towards middle-income 'BRIC' countries (Hermansen and Kasa 2014). Although such criticism has been largely placated by governmental claims of the multiple benefit potential of REDD+, the findings from Section 5.2 suggest that with the development and poverty

alleviation aspects of REDD+ being side-lined in the NICFI policy discourse, ODA funding in Norway may be indeed re-directed away from needs of the global poor.

More broadly, the long-term drive to the policy-makers' objectives (in aiming to avert dangerous climate change) suggest a preference for protecting, and devoting resources to, future generations, which could be at the expense of the current generation. Indeed, there is much debate in the climate justice literature surrounding the extent to which priority should be devoted to future generations, as part of the 'discounting' discourse (Nordhaus 2007, Garner 2011, Caney 2009). Although sustainable, long-term visions are proposed, the majority of climate justice scholars have argued for a pro-poor approach to climate change mitigation, where the current generation is not 'sacrificed' for the security of future generations (McAfee 2012, St. Clair 2010, Ribot 2010).

However, by maximising the effectiveness of GHG emissions reductions strategies, it could be proposed that NICFI's REDD+ agenda forms part of an equitable response to the climate crisis. As Caney and Hepburn (2011) have argued, effectiveness can also be considered as an integral element of a just formulation of climate action. Given that the most severe impacts of climate change are likely to be felt by the poorest and most vulnerable worldwide, it can be argued that climate action which is effective is also, by its very nature, pro-poor.

Accordingly, considered as a long-term and effective strategy to mitigate against climate change, it could be proposed that the REDD+ agenda is indeed equitable and pro-poor in nature. However, there is little evidence in the REDD+ policy discourse that this is the case: the idea of benefitting a future global poor is not articulated at all and, in its absence, it cannot be assumed that this is what drives the policy-makers' agenda, considering the lack of priority given to the contemporary poor more broadly. Indeed, the policy discourse implies a side-lining of the needs, values and interests of marginalised, forest-dependent communities.

Rather, what is emphasised by the policy-makers is the *global* and *long-term* benefits that REDD+ will bring, rather than support which specifically targets marginalised and poor communities in the Global South. Additionally, analysis of the policy discourse suggests a REDD+ agenda that is driven by cost-effectiveness, as well as effectiveness. Under such a framing, REDD+ arguably acts to primarily serve

the interests of the Global North and potentially acts to place constraints on the development or poverty alleviation potential of REDD+. For Norway, this is bound up with 'politically offsetting' its economic dependence on an expansive petroleum industry.

### **Summary and Discussion**

Overall, analysis of the policy discourse suggests the significant presence of utilitarian ethics and a 'bigger picture' narrative as underlying and justifying the orientation of REDD+. Primarily, this emerges through a global, long-term and results-oriented framing of REDD+ outcomes and benefits. The dominance of utilitarianism in the REDD+ policy discourse aligns with what climate justice scholars have found in other contexts (Edwards 2015, Sikor et al. 2014), as well as what previous analyses of Norway's climate change policy has suggested (Hovden and Lindseth 2004, Okereke and Dooley 2010).

The presence of utilitarian ethics in the REDD+ policy discourse ties in with broader invocations of the 'Anthropocene' in recent climate change scholarship that understands climate crisis as a species-level phenomenon, or as Chakrabarty (2009) proposed, a 'shared catastrophe' for all mankind. By framing climate change as global crisis with global outcomes and responses, it can mask the distributive inequalities and the deeper injustices at the heart of the climate crisis; treating climate change as a 'shared catastrophe' implies that all of humanity are equally responsible for and equally vulnerable to climate change (Smith 2007, Tolia-Kelly 2016, McAfee 2015). Notably, Smith (2007: 202) confronted the nature of new planetary discourse, asserting that, "it (climate change) is not global and equal; it is global and unequal".

The dominant utilitarian ethics in REDD+ policy discourse may mean that forested communities bear an unfair and disproportionate climate burden in efforts to conserve tropical forests and that, as the findings in Chapter 5 suggested, it is the industrialised nations that are set to profit the most from REDD+ engagement. Considering this, Sikor et al. (2014) note that the current formulation of REDD+ policy may not result in utilitarian requirements being met. Due to diminishing marginal utility, securing basic needs is given the highest moral importance, meaning



that there are smaller gains to be made from a REDD+ framework that primarily benefits the Global North.

From this perspective, if global utility is to be maximised, the REDD+ policy process should be actively and explicitly driven by a *pro-poor* approach. Indeed, Sikor et al (2014: 537) assert that the dominance of utilitarian ethics in tropical forest governance is inappropriate in “a setting of pronounced economic inequality” in the Global South. Utilitarian thought may justify the displacement of forest-dependent communities from their land, the exclusion of local people from their key sources of subsistence and income in the forest and the benefits not reaching those most in need in the context of the Global South. Accordingly, a REDD+ framework that is globally, long-term and results-driven is unlikely to be in the interests of forest-dependent communities.

### **6.3 Neoliberal Conceptions of Justice**

Alongside utilitarian ethics, ‘neoliberal conceptions of justice’, as put forward by Okereke (2008) also emerged in the analysis of the REDD+ policy discourse. These were present in two primary forms that are unpacked in turn here: (i) *Aversion to Welfare-based Resource Redistribution* and (ii) *Emphasis on Free Market Solutions to Environmental Problems*.

#### **(i) Aversion to Welfare-based Resource Redistribution**

A key proposed dimension of ‘neoliberal conceptions of justice’ is a broad reluctance to redistribute wealth and resources (Okereke 2008). Underpinned by libertarianism, this notion considers it immoral and unjust for wealth to be redistributed (by governments, multi-lateral institutions, etc), as long as the wealth was acquired fairly and legally. This worldview was indicated by Okereke (2008) to underpin a number of global environmental regimes. Notably, progressive suggestions for international climate action, such invoking the use of per-capita emissions, have often been rejected by industrialised nations, particularly the US, for containing redistributive elements.

While REDD+ could theoretically recognise the sacrifices that the marginalised forest-dependent communities have made in conserving tropical forests in the Global South, analysis of the policy largely suggests that this is not the case and that the

existing REDD+ agenda is calibrated towards the interests of the Global North. A broad aversion to resource redistribution emerges through an orientation of REDD+ as a cost-effective mechanism that side-lines development or poverty alleviation aspirations and the Global North's responsibility for climate change.

The pursuit of cost-effective reductions in international GHG emissions by the REDD+ policy-makers is driven by neoliberal managerialist logics and economic rationality, a framing of REDD+ that has existed since Stern's (2007) report. International, cost-effective strategies have formed the cornerstone of Norway's environmental governance since the early 1990s (Angelsen 2016, Hermansen and Kasa 2014, Lahn and Wilson Rowe 2015). A cost-effective justification of REDD+ in the policy discourse is bound up with maximising reductions in *international* GHG emissions and reducing disruption to industrialised economies.

Understood accordingly, it can be suggested that cost-effective forms of international climate action primarily serve the interests of actors in the Global North. These facilitate the large-scale reductions of GHG emissions outside of the borders of industrialised nations which can maintain high levels of growth and consumption. For Norway, as outlined fully previously, the evidence suggests that REDD+ functions as a 'political offsetting' tool for the state, in seeking to shift attention away from its responsibility for climate change as a major petroleum exporter towards its 'leadership' in international environmental governance. More broadly, insufficient attention is paid by the policy-makers to responsibilities for, and burdens of, climate change.

Considering the disengagement with responsibilities for climate change and the side-lining of development or livelihoods aspirations in the REDD+ policy discourse, it can be suggested that, through a cost-effective narrative, the policy actors are inadequately responding to the needs and interests of marginalised forest-dependent communities and the injustices at the heart of the climate crisis. More broadly, an aversion to resource redistribution in the international climate change policy arena has often come under the guise of cost-effectiveness, including Norway's support for the compliance mechanisms at the Kyoto negotiations (Okereke 2008, Hovden and Lindseth 2004, Lahn and Wilson Rowe 2015).

Accordingly, given the prominence of a cost-effective narrative and the inattention paid to the livelihoods of the forest-dependent communities in the policy discourse, analysis of the policy discourse indicates an existing orientation of REDD+ towards the needs and interests of the industrialised nations and not those of marginalised communities in the Global South. It indicates a policy framework that is somewhat averse to resource and wealth redistribution, under which global inequalities and injustices connected to climate change may be perpetuated, rather than redressed. The implication of this framing is that forest-dependent communities in the Global South are likely to be unfairly and disproportionately burdened in their REDD+ engagement.

#### (ii) Emphasis on Free Market Solutions to Environmental Problems

International climate action has largely tended to be market-driven in nature and dominated by neoliberal economic ideology, resulting in the large-scale commoditisation and monetisation of the environment (Okereke 2008, Savaresi 2016, Ervine 2012). Most notably, this has emerged in the form of international carbon trading and offsetting in the international climate negotiations. The adoption of market-based solutions to climate change has formed part of the broader ecological modernisation narrative, as a number of climate change scholars have detailed (Dryzek 1997, Bachram 2004, Okereke 2008).

In the context of REDD+, an overarching framework has yet to materialise, bound up with the slower and costlier than expected process associated with the initiative (Lund et al. 2017, Sunderlin et al 2014). Thus, the sourcing of REDD+ funding is fragmented and remains unclear. However, the findings suggest that there is significant evidence of neoliberal logics and assumptions in the policy discourse, particularly that of NICFI. Here, the emphasis on free-market solutions in the policy discourse goes beyond the simple adoption of REDD+ as a market-based mechanism, but also incorporates a broader set of ideas and understandings about environmental governance. This indicates that even if REDD+ funding was entirely sourced publicly, the agenda would continue to be governed through market-based approaches and logics.

The cost-effective framing of REDD+ is indicative of a broader monetisation of international environmental governance, as Turnhout et al. (2017) suggested. As

previously outlined, analysis of the policy discourse suggests that the REDD+ agenda is driven by cost-effective assumptions and ideals. These assumptions and ideals reflect a market-oriented approach to environmental governance, in which “efficiency and cost-effectiveness has become the sole criteria by which the ability of a given environmental policy is assessed” (Okereke 2008: 145). It means that, under such a framework, REDD+ is likely to be driven by, and judged upon, cost-effective metrics, as part of a ‘carbon-centric’ conceptualisation of the initiative, rather than other non-monetised forms of REDD+, e.g. livelihoods objectives.

Indeed, climate justice scholars (Traxler 2002, Okereke 2008) have raised concerns over directing international environmental governance based on monetary framing and cost-benefit analyses. Given the associated lower costs, a cost-effective framing of REDD+ justifies a focus from Northern and international actors on GHG emissions cuts in the Global South. For NICFI, this reflects the evidenced shift in the Norwegian government’s discourse in climate governance, from a focus on domestic action towards its contribution to the international climate regime (Lahn and Wilson Rowe 2015, Tellman 2012).

A cost-effective orientation of REDD+ may justify those nations and communities with the least responsibility for climate change bearing disproportionate and unfair burdens, making cuts to their ‘subsistence emissions’, earlier than those with lower ‘opportunity costs’. Subsequently, Traxler (2002: 127) asserts that there should be a shift away from the use of financial-based assessments in climate change mitigation mechanisms towards “a measure of opportunity costs in terms of human welfare”.

For climate justice scholars, a key determinant of the fairness and equity of international climate change mitigation strategies is whether they are additional or not to domestic efforts to combat climate change in the Global North (Angelsen 2016, Paterson and Strippel 2007, Page 2011). There are fears that REDD+ could be used as an offsetting mechanism for industrialised nations in similar ways to the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), thereby pushing greater burdens onto developing nations in the Global South. Thus, the extent to which REDD+ acts to offset Norway’s domestic GHG emissions and role in extracting and exporting fossil fuels globally has significant implications for the underpinning climate justice norms in NICFI’s policy.

While REDD+ funding in Norway is currently channelled through its ODA budget (Angelsen and McNeill 2012) and the broader nature of REDD+ funding sources remains unclear and fragmented (Corbera and Schroeder 2011, Savaresi 2016, Dooley and Gupta 2017), analysis of the policy discourse indicates a broad favouring of the adoption of REDD+ as market-based mechanism and to be sourced from non-public sources of funding. There are few occasions on which 'offsetting' is specifically mentioned and, where there are, explicit commitments are not made by the policy actors to the adoption of REDD+ as an offsetting tool or as a compliance mechanism. For instance, on one occasion, a NICFI representative stated the following:

*"We don't know whether REDD will be part of a compliance mechanism like Kyoto has compliance...there's no compliance, because there's nothing to comply to, no legal element here. But we like the idea of REDD being market-based also because there is potential of engaging private sector."*

Here, the interviewee acknowledges that the current structure of international climate politics means that REDD+ does not act as a compliance mechanism ("there's nothing to comply to, no legal elements here..."). Nevertheless, they make a clear and explicit preference for the adoption of REDD+ as a market-based mechanism: "we like the idea of REDD being market-based". However, such a preference tends to be largely implicit in the policy discourse, emerging rather through a naturalised construction of market-based sources of funding for REDD+ as solutions to the progress of the framework.

Indeed, to varying extents, all of the policy-makers assume that REDD+ funding will inevitably and ultimately be sourced through neoliberal-led market-based mechanisms. This emerges in the policy discourse through a language of certainty and inevitability (e.g. "will be", "surely"), bound up with the seemingly inherent flaws and limitations of continued public funding of REDD+ that are consistently highlighted throughout the policy discourse.

There is considerable emphasis in the UN and the World Bank's policy discourse on the need to move beyond public sources of funding if REDD+ is to ultimately succeed; the implication is that public sources of funding constrain the potential of REDD+. In particular, the UN's policy discourse consistently highlights that while the

funding from the international aid budgets has been useful in the early stages of REDD+, the market-based mechanisms represents the future of REDD+. Notably, a UN representative stated that it is worth, “keeping in mind that the majority of funding in the future is going to come from the private sector”. There is an inevitability implied here concerning the adoption of REDD+ as a market-based mechanism: funding is “going to” come from the private sector. There is not another way to achieve future success with REDD+.

On other occasions, the policy-makers do not only suggest an inevitability, but also evoke a sense that it is unreasonable to expect results (i.e. significant reductions in deforestation levels) to be achieved in REDD+ through public funds. Indeed, a NICFI interviewee explicitly stated on one occasion that, “*obviously we cannot do it (achieve significant deforestation reductions) through public financing*”. The use of ‘obviously’ here acts to naturalise the idea that the adoption of market-based mechanisms is the most effective and efficient form of REDD+, with public financing inherently constraining to its ambitions.

Throughout the policy discourse, without sufficient debate or justification, the ‘involvement’ of the private sector in designing, managing and implementing REDD+ interventions is naturalised and seen to be fundamentally bound up with the success of such interventions. In particular, throughout NICFI’s 2007-13 evaluation report, emphasis is placed upon the importance of the private sector in REDD+ projects. It consistently constructs private sector ‘involvement’ as “inadequate” or “minimal” in some of its partner countries (e.g. Tanzania). The implication here is that private sector engagement is lacking and is something to aspire to enhance in order to ensure sufficient progress in REDD+.

Elsewhere, the multilateral institutions also consistently highlight the necessity of engaging with the private sector in REDD+, in order to address the current funding crisis. Throughout the UN’s policy texts and interviews, persuasive language is used in reference to private sector engagement in REDD+: that it indicates “unprecedented commitments” and sends “powerful signals”, which are “sent from the highest level”. These act to construct strength and power in association with private sector engagement in the UN’s policy discourse which is seen to enable progress in REDD+ that would not otherwise be possible.

More broadly, tied up with a cost-effective narrative, the findings suggest that the REDD+ policy actors tend to frame the forests in a commoditised sense. Throughout the policy discourse, forests are referred to as “carbon stocks” or “carbon sinks” to a much greater extent than as a source of livelihoods for the communities. In particular, the Ethiopian government consistently equate deforestation with the ‘loss of carbon stocks’ and forest conservation with the ‘enhancement of carbon stocks’ in its policy texts.

The framing of forests as ‘carbons stocks’ acts to commodify the forest, defining it primarily in terms of its ability to sequester carbon and its role as carbon sinks in international climate action. Here, forests effectively become carbon stocks, rather than having inherent value in and of themselves. Such a framing of the forests is bound up with the policy-makers’ broader carbon-centric aims and cost-effective narrative; under such a framework, forests primarily have value as ‘carbon stocks’. Such a framing is likely to mean that technical and carbon-centric solutions to deforestation are preferred and that the livelihoods and cultural value of the forests for communities are marginalised (Turnhout et al. 2017).

In other words, the commodification of the forests for REDD+ purposes may result in the ‘crowding-out’ of non-market values in favour of market values, as Sandel (2012) has argued elsewhere. Arguably, the emergence of the ‘carbon stock’ discourse in the REDD+ agenda reflects the commodification of the environment that is bound up with neoliberal economics and ideology (Turnhout et al. 2017, Buscher 2010). It is also intimately bound up with a carbon-centric vision of REDD+ (or, as Turnhout et al. 2017 suggest, a ‘carbonification’ of REDD+) and the promise of enabling the cost-effective reductions in international GHG emissions, acting to serve the interests of Northern actors. However, Turnhout et al (2017) have argued that, despite the emergence of a carbon-centric discourse, a large-scale commodification of forests as part of the REDD+ has yet to empirically materialise.

Accordingly, the adoption of neoliberal-led, market-based solutions to the climate crisis is naturalised and perpetuated in the REDD+ policy discourse, amid consistent claims that public funding would be insufficient in meeting the ambitions of REDD+. For Norway, a preference for a market-based formulation of REDD+ would largely align with, and act as a continuation of, the country’s ideological stance and forms of

environmental governance since the early 1990s (Lahn and Wilson Rowe 2015, Tellman 2012, Hermansen and Kasa 2014). The Norwegian government has tended to promote the use of compliance or offsetting mechanisms in international climate negotiations and policy-making, including their support for the CDM at Kyoto (Hovden and Lindseth 2004, Lahn and Wilson Rowe 2015, Tellman 2012). Although it is unclear if REDD+ will ultimately act as a market-based or offsetting tool in the Norwegian government's environmental strategies, analysis of the policy discourse suggests a broad preference for such an orientation of REDD+.

On the other hand, there are signs that the Norwegian government has shifted away somewhat from market-based dogma. In particular, it is explicitly asserted on a few occasions in NICFI's policy documents that the Norwegian government has been criticised by the EU and the US for its current position on the use of markets in REDD+, stated to be 'agnostic'. For instance, the following is asserted in one of NICFI's evaluation reports:

*"For the EU and US, this agnostic position was the only significant negative issue raised about NICFI's advocacy. The EU and US asserted that it is unrealistic to expect donor funding to address the scale of the problem and that there should be a greater emphasis on setting up the REDD+ framework in a way that allows markets to operate effectively."*

The 'agnostic' position officially adopted by Norway suggests a shift away from the explicit pro-market stance that they took in the Kyoto negotiations. The fact that they have been criticised (it is unknown if such criticism was public or private) by the US suggests a divergence in ideology between the two parties. Indeed, they had previously formed an alliance at the Kyoto negotiations, based on their support for a market-based approach and compliance mechanisms. Accordingly, it could be argued that, in contrast to the US, Norway has softened its ideological stance in environmental politics away from a market-based dogma, reflected in the current sourcing of REDD+ from its ODA budget (Angelsen 2016, Hermansen and Kasa 2014).

However, despite a potential ideological shift and the current adoption of ODA-based funding, NICFI is keen to make it clear that it is not ruling out a change of funding source in the future towards a market-based approach: "...the fact that the current



use of aid funds does not imply NICFI seeks an aid-based mechanism in the long-term...". NICFI appears to be somewhat defensive of criticism from the US and EU over this issue, suggesting that they ultimately retain a preference for the use of market-based mechanisms in its climate change strategies. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which Norway is perhaps less proactive in their pursuit of market-based approaches to environmental governance than they once were.

Throughout their policy discourse, the Norwegian NGOs make their position clear regarding offsetting: that they believe that REDD+ funding should be 'additional' to domestic action on climate change, rather than offsetting it. Additionally, there is broadly a scepticism evident in the NGOs' discourse towards the adoption of REDD+ as a market-based mechanism, as one Norwegian NGO representative highlighted:

*"...but I think that financing of REDD+ is also a big issue because if you do not have enough public funds, then you get a mix of private and public (.) then it goes into what are the private funds going to pay for (.) Then I think it's much easier that you mix REDD+ with carbon offsets (.) because private funds, normally you want to get something back. So I think if you get too many private funds, then it is a bigger risk that REDD+ is going to be confused with the carbon offset market..."*

Here, the interviewee suggests that while increased private sector engagement does not necessarily mean that REDD+ would become part of the offset market, it would nevertheless be a move in that direction. The implication is that the increased commoditisation of forests and sale of carbon credits may lead to the development of a REDD+ offset market. Thus, the policy discourse which advocates further market-based engagement can be seen to ultimately feed into an openness to adopting REDD+ as an offset mechanism.

Broadly, the findings suggest that, while there is a broad consensus on REDD+ in Norwegian politics, there are key points of departure between the values and interests of NICFI and those of the Norwegian NGOs, in relation to specific issues. As with the prioritisation of livelihoods and responsibility for climate change, the Norwegian NGOs appear to significantly diverge from NICFI in their broad views on the use of the market in REDD+.

Given the evident norms and motivational drivers for the Norwegian NGOs and the shifts in discourse present in NICFI's policy texts, it could be suggested that political pressure from the Norwegian NGOs has led to a softening of Norway's ideological stance towards environmental governance. This would align with Hermansen and Kasa's (2014) suggestions that the Norwegian government's evolving policy discourse is primarily as a result of a continued close relationship with NGOs in the domestic policy sphere, rather than a fundamental shift in their values.

Overall, while there is evidence that NICFI has shifted away from a market-based dogma and the funding source for REDD+ remains unclear, the findings indicate a broad preference in the policy landscape for the inclusion of market-based elements into the REDD+ framework. This emerges through a cost-effective narrative and a naturalisation of the inherent superiority of market-based funding for the continued progress of REDD+. The adoption of REDD+ as a market-based mechanism has specific implications for climate justice.

Indeed, climate justice scholars (McAfee 2012, Ervine 2013, Lovell, Bulkeley and Liverman 2009) have broadly critiqued the prominence of international carbon trading and offsetting mechanisms in the international climate regime, given that these allow actors in the industrialised nations to shift climate burdens towards the Global South, which has little responsibility for climate change and has minimal resources to combat its impacts. In the context of REDD+, a market-based formulation of the framework may mean that tropical-forested nations and forest-dependent communities make undue and disproportionate sacrifices in combatting climate change.

#### **6.4 Neoliberal-Utilitarian Nexus**

In this section, I uncovered significant evidence of 'neoliberal conceptions of justice' in the REDD+ policy discourse, primarily through two key discursive framings: *Aversion to Welfare-based Resource Redistribution* and *Emphasis on Free Market Solutions to Environmental Problems*. Despite the lack of clarity over the future sourcing of REDD+ funds, analysis of the policy discourse suggests the presence of broader neoliberal logics and assumptions that aligns with previous scholarly critiques of the initiative (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, McAfee 2014, Okereke and Dooley 2010)

A neoliberal-led, market-based orientation of REDD+ is likely to have clear and considerable implications for multiscale climate justice, taking into consideration distributive, procedural and recognition elements. Indeed, climate justice scholars have suggested that a market-driven formulation of REDD+ would fundamentally serve the interests of industrialised nations in the Global North and would conflict with the rights, interests and needs of the forest-dependent communities and devalue the multiple uses of the forests for the rural poor (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, Chomba et al. 2016).

It is generally argued in the climate justice literature that neoliberal forms of environmental governance are likely to lead to unjust and unfair outcomes and would be in fundamental opposition to a pro-poor or rights-based approach to climate change mitigation (Okereke 2008, Chomba et al 2016, McAfee 2012). More broadly, neoliberal ideology is seen to be intimately bound up with, and driven by, multiscale inequalities (McAfee 2012). Considered thus, a market-based formulation of REDD+ may act to exacerbate or entrench currently existing injustices and socio-economic disparities in rural Ethiopia, while not sufficiently engaging with the historical and procedural injustices with which climate change is embedded.

However, as a number of climate change scholars have suggested more broadly (Caney and Hepburn 2011, Page 2011, Posner and Sustain 2008), it may be that market-based elements of REDD+ do not necessarily preclude climate injustice in and of itself. Rather, it can be proposed that it is the *calibration* of REDD+ as a market-based mechanism that is crucial in determining its underlying justice principles and whose interests it serves, e.g. the distributive fairness of the system. In line with this, it is worth questioning the *fundamental* conceptions of justice at the heart of the REDD+ policy discourse.

In making sense of the REDD+ policy discourse, broad synergies can be identified between neoliberal forms of environmental governance and utilitarianism. Notably, the REDD+ policy-makers' consistent pursuit of cost-effective solutions to the climate crisis is grounded in neoliberal ideology and market-based logics but is fundamentally motivated by an underlying utilitarian narrative that understands REDD+ as an effective climate change mitigation mechanism in ultimately averting future and long-term dangerous climate change.

Additionally, a carbon-centric vision of REDD+ is driven by a global and long-term pursuit of averting dangerous levels of climate change and is ultimately embedded in consequentialist ethics and utilitarian norms. However, this vision is enabled through neoliberal forms of governance and market-based tools: cost-effective logics, a commoditisation of forests and seeking engagement with the private sector. It can be suggested that both utilitarian norms and neoliberal forms of governance in REDD+ are unlikely to serve the interests of forest-dependent communities in the Global South.

The complimentary and synergistic linkages between neoliberal environmental governance and utilitarian conceptions of justice can be viewed in light of recent theoretical work by Edwards (2015). Here, I argue that neoliberal forms of environmental governance act as the *means* rather than the *ends* of justice concerns in the REDD+ policy discourse. In other words, market-based mechanisms are the vehicles for realising more fundamental utilitarian outcomes, rather than, as Okereke (2008) proposed, underpinned by particular notions of justice.

Accordingly, it can be proposed that, despite the presence of market-oriented logics and rhetoric in the policy discourse, the REDD+ agenda is not driven by the realisation of neoliberal conceptions of justice *per se*, but rather how market-based mechanisms can enable the realisation of utilitarian outcomes. From this perspective, neoliberal environmental governance is not just or unjust in and of itself, but is rather underpinned by more fundamental justice norms, as Edwards (2015) has proposed elsewhere. Elsewhere, Buscher (2010) highlighted the intimate binding of utility-maximising, rational choice and neoliberal ideology in environmental governance.

Understanding the market-orientation of REDD+ policy in such a way helps to explain its contingency, whereby, despite the neoliberal rhetoric prevalent in the policy discourse, there is nevertheless ample evidence that it is public actors which remain in primary control of the REDD+ processes (e.g. governments, multilateral organisations) and that, the majority of REDD+ funds continue to be sourced from ODA budgets, including Norway (Turnhout et al. 2017). Due to a number of factors, a REDD+ market has thus far failed to materialise, despite the dominance of the

carbon narrative in the discourse (e.g. 20% of existing projects being engaged in actual carbon transactions, Turnhout et al. 2017).

The continued dominance of the public sphere in REDD+ suggests incomplete faith in the neoliberal project. The Ethiopian government's ideology and close control over the domestic economy is also likely to pose a challenge to the pure 'marketisation' of REDD+ (Vaughan & Tronvoll 2003). Inconsistent support for neoliberalism suggests alternative underlying norms to REDD+ policy: utilitarianism. In other words, as Edwards (2015: 488) stated, "both...direct involvement of government and marketization can be understood as tools to achieve utilitarian goals".

If neoliberalism is understood as 'means', rather than 'end', as a set of technical frameworks and mechanisms, rather than as an underlying ideology or conceptions of justice, it would imply that the consistent injustices that have been associated with neoliberal forms of environmental governance are not foreclosed or inevitable (Ferguson 2009, Collier 2005). Formulated as technical practices, a market-based orientation of REDD+ could be shaped to align with other justice norms, as more broadly proposed by Ferguson (2009). These can serve a variety of 'ends', including those which are 'pro-poor' in nature, or rather, "...interventions that create a situation where markets can arguably serve progressive ends, in ways that may require us to revise some of our prejudices that automatically associate market mechanisms with the interests of the well-to-do" (Ferguson 2009: 181).

Thus, despite the presence of market-oriented rhetoric and logic, a number of different conceptions of justice (e.g. egalitarianism) could theoretically underpin the REDD+ process, whereby the market mechanisms could be shaped and moulded to meet the requirements of a pro-poor approach and to meet the needs and interests of the forest-dependent communities. Nevertheless, while acknowledging the synergies between neoliberal environmental governance and utilitarianism, this research considers there to be identifiable conceptions of justice which are at the heart of market-oriented logics, even if these are not necessarily driving the REDD+ processes. As Okereke (2008) suggested, the market-orientation of REDD+ appears to be driven by libertarianism and 'justice as mutual advantage'.

Moreover, despite indications in the REDD+ policy discourse of the emergence of a utilitarian-neoliberal nexus, the extent to which the two conceptions of justice may be

complementary can be put into question. There may exist fundamental tensions between utilitarianism and neoliberal forms of environmental governance. Here, in orienting REDD+ towards a carbon-centric and cost-effective formulation, it may be that utilitarian requirements are not met. As Sikor et al (2014) highlighted, there are smaller gains in 'utility' to be made from a policy framework that primarily benefits actors in the Global North, due to diminishing marginal utility.

### **6.5 Egalitarianism**

Despite the proposed dominance of a Neoliberal-Utilitarian nexus in the REDD+ policy discourse, there is simultaneously evidence of challenges to this discourse at the community level, aligning with what Okereke (2008) referred to as 'resistance' or 'contradictions'. In the community discourse, egalitarianism emerges as prominent in discussions of the REDD+ PFM (Participatory Forest Management) project led by Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association (EWNRA). Here, a Rawlsian rights-based discourse at the community level exists alongside, and competes with, the consequentialist and results-oriented utilitarian conception of justice at the policy level.

During the interviews with the community members in Gago and Yakama, significant emphasis was placed upon the importance of equality. In this context, equality largely referred to the 'equal rights' of community members and the 'equal sharing' of the benefits of sustainable forestry management in the community. Concerning the latter, references to 'equal' or 'fair' sharing were made throughout the interviews, as in the following examples:

*"In sharing the profits, after we sold, the profit is equally shared between us after calculating the amount of money that we borrowed."*

and

*"Every community has equal rights in regards to protection, use and planting of this forest, as well as regarding sharing ideas with each other. This is based on the community's interest."*

The findings suggest that the priority for the communities is to equally and fairly distribute the benefits gained from sustainable forest management and REDD+

engagement. Elsewhere, interviewees made associations between the equal rights to make use of forest resources and equal responsibilities to protect the forest. Notably, one of the community members stated the following:

*“The rights of the community are equally protected in forest protection; we equally pay our responsibilities.”*

Here, a direct link is intimated between the strengthening of fair distribution of benefits and the greater responsibilities for forest protection that the community members are likely to take on. Indeed, the majority of those interviewed offered that by having equal rights in the community, and therefore access to the associated benefits, they were more likely to take equal responsibility for forest protection, as part of a communal sense of dependence. A similar relationship between equal rights and responsibilities was identified in the rural communities of Rwanda by Martin et al. (2014). From this perspective, a somewhat complementary relationship between equity and effectiveness can be suggested, whereby principles of ‘equal sharing’ can facilitate and strengthen collective action for the sustainable management of the forest.

Relatedly, injustice within the forest-dependent communities was partly characterised as arising from the unequal treatment of others. On a number of occasions, interviewees indicated the punishments that may be incurred for those who abused the forest governance system. Here, injustice is articulated in terms of the equal and fair treatment of others; everybody has the same responsibilities for sustainable forestry management and if they do not take these responsibilities, there are punishments.

Thus, if people are treated differently to others, this was indicated by the interviewees to be unfair, as part of a relational conception of justice. In the interviews, it was indicated that the community members generally highly valued the equal and fair treatment of people. This was seen to be in contrast with how the Ethiopian government operated. The communities’ high valuing of equal sharing of benefits and of the fair treatment of each person broadly aligns with Rawls’s prioritisation of equal access to opportunities in society.

In the community interviews, egalitarianism also emerged in the form of 'equal decision-making', albeit to a lesser extent. On a number occasions, the importance of 'equal decision-making' was highlighted by the interviewees, referring primarily to the value of equality and fairness in participation in the REDD+ project. Such participation is considered in relation to village or intra-village meetings or on a broader level in relation to engagements with EWNRA and regional authorities. Emphasis is placed upon the need for equality in decision-making and for *everybody* in the community having a voice.

For instance, in Gago, an interviewee asserted the following:

*"No disparities exist between us when we make decisions because we equally participate; we can freely share ideas when we come together. This can lead to improvement."*

Here, the importance of equal and fair participatory power within the community is clearly articulated: with "no disparities", each member of the community is able to express ideas freely that "can lead to improvement". There is seen to be an intrinsic value in facilitating equal decision-making and in enabling all community members to express their views. However, as well as this, the evidence from the interviews suggest that, for the communities, equality in decision-making leads to improved and fairer outcomes. More specifically, participatory equality and empowerment is understood by the interviewees to be intimately linked with the equal sharing of the benefits associated with the REDD+ project.

The community discourse also evidenced aspects of Rawls's 'difference principle'. This is the idea that, in lieu of 'pure' egalitarianism, inequalities can be allowed, as long as the wealth created benefits the *whole* of society and particularly those who are least advantaged. It was indicated in interviews that, while the profits gained from sustainable forest governance would be allocated according to 'participation' (i.e. those who actively carried out the forest management), these tended to be used to benefit the entire community.

For instance, in Yakama, multiple interviewees suggested that a number of community-wide benefits emerged from the PFM project. This included the purchasing of communal cooking oil or sugar from the profits that were tied to the



project. Elsewhere, the project was indicated by the majority of interviewees to be beneficial in funding the construction of small-scale infrastructure in the villages. In both Gago and Yakama, the erection of a project building was seen to be highly valuable by the community members, as indicated in this example from an interviewee in Gago:

*“We can get a lot of advantages from Ethio Wetlands. For example, as you have seen, this building which can pass from generation to generation, is one of the good things that this organisation is giving to us.”*

Here, the interviewee highlights the community-wide and inter-generational benefits that can be reaped from the infrastructural developments in the village associated with the EWNRA-led project. The building in Gago was indicated to perform multiple functions in the community, including village meetings or events, that could theoretically be in the interests of everyone. Meanwhile, in Yakama, multiple interviewees placed emphasis on the need for a new, more stable road to pass in and out of the village, as a way of facilitating further economic development in the community. It is hoped that the project may be able to provide funding for, or aid, the construction of a new road, which would likely improve the economic situation of many in the village and would provide community-wide benefits.

Thus, each of these benefits that have emerged from the PFM project thus far have been *community-wide* in nature. It indicates that some of the profits attached to the project are distributed based on ‘participation’ but are later used for the good of the entire community. In such a way, this provides evidence of Rawls’s ‘difference principle’ in actions, where the *whole* of society (including those least advantaged) can reap the benefits sowed by the efforts or skills of the most hard-working or talented in a community.

However, the egalitarian principles invoked by the interviewees can be largely understood as *communitarian* in nature, suggesting a conflict with Rawls’s individualist liberal notion of justice. Here, the interviewees articulated concerns and needs more often in relation to the community and community livelihoods, rather than to individuals. There is frequent use of “our” and “we” in the community discourse when referring to the management of the forest, e.g. ‘our’ forest, ‘our’ lives, ‘we need to pass the forest from generation to generation’. The rights,

responsibilities and benefits of sustainable forest management are primarily framed in communal terms.

On a number of occasions, the interviewees explicitly indicated that the forest is “tied in” or “related” with “our lives”, indicating the intimate linkage between the communities’ livelihoods and the forest felt by the interviewees. Accordingly, the value of sustainable forest management for the communities is for maintaining and strengthening inter-generational community livelihoods and functioning. In this context, the communities’ livelihoods appear to be symbolic and indicative of their identity.

This discourse reflects the high value ascribed by the communities to recognition justice and the cultural aspects of forestry management. In the community interviews, recognition justice emerges as bound up with community livelihoods and functioning, aligning to a large extent with findings in other contexts (Martin et al. 2014, Schlosberg 2012, Schlosberg and Carruthers 2010). Schlosberg (2012) specifically highlights the importance of community functioning and livelihoods in the formulation of climate change mitigation strategies.

The egalitarian and communitarian norms invoked by the communities in the interviews acts in contrast with, and poses a challenge to, the dominance of the utilitarian-neoliberal nexus in the policy discourse. While the REDD+ policy-makers prioritise the maximisation of ‘overall utility’ through a cost-effective narrative and market-oriented logics, the communities are driven in their REDD+ engagement by the equal sharing of benefits and of equal rights that specifically emerges as part of a community-wide discourse. As highlighted earlier in the chapter (Section 6.2), there is a distinct lack of engagement by the policy-makers with the specific cultural or sub-national contexts of REDD+, indicating a potential misrecognition by the policy actors of the communities involved in REDD+.

More broadly, the insufficient engagement with sub-national and cultural contexts by the policy-makers is indicative of a utilitarian-driven, globalised approach to REDD+. Critical climate change scholars have argued that the conceptual realm of the Anthropocene and the dominant framing of climate change as a ‘shared catastrophe’ (Chakrabarty 2009) acts to mask the specific cultural and non-material concerns of affected communities (Tolia-Kelly 2016 Adger et al 2011, Okereke 2008). In

positioning climate change as a phenomenon affecting all humans, as a homogenous species, the cultural dimensions of REDD+ are necessarily de-valued and de-prioritised.

Relatedly, the REDD+ policy discourse appears to be dominated by particular assumptions and values, acting to serve the interests of Northern actors, e.g. defining forests primarily as 'carbon stocks' rather than as source of livelihoods. Here, the basic, underlying assumptions of REDD+ policies reflect Northern values, interests and agendas, with community-level understanding and cultural appreciation of forests (and of forest management) side-lined and de-prioritised in the policy discourse. Such analysis aligns with scholarship that has critically questioned the masking of the 'what' in justice concerns in international forms of climate action (i.e. the definition of forests or forest benefits) and calls for policy-makers to adopt a more 'Senian' conception of local-level justice issues (Forsyth and Sikor 2014, Schlosberg 2012, Edwards, Reid and Hunter 2015).

Largely, the findings indicate a broad divergence between the communities' norms, interests and values and those of the policy-makers. However, emphasis was placed upon the importance of land rights in realising equitable and effective outcomes for both policy and community actors. It acts as a tentative point of convergence between the policy-makers and the forest-dependent communities in the REDD+ discourse. At the policy level, although not acting as an officially recognised 'safeguard', securing 'land rights' and 'land tenure' is consistently highlighted as crucial in realising local-level distributive justice in the design and implementation of REDD+.

In particular, the Ethiopian government emphasises the importance of land tenure in addressing the needs and rights of the forest-dependent communities throughout its REDD+ policy discourse. When discussing the distribution of benefits from REDD+ at the local level, land tenure and land rights are placed centrally and are highlighted to a much greater extent than any and all other factors. Similarly, when discussing local-level successes in the implementation of REDD+ thus far, NICFI is keen to highlight the community benefits that have been brought out through its engagement with Indonesia, primarily through helping to establish land reform. In both of these cases, securing land tenure and land rights for the forest-dependent communities is

constructed as integral to ensuring fair and effective distributive justice at the local level, perceived to be key in ensuring that the benefits of REDD+ flow equitably to the communities.

In the interviews, the communities in Nono Sele placed similar emphasis on land rights and land tenure in realising an equitable distribution of rights, responsibilities and benefits. The interviewees' responses can be understood in light of recent developments in Ethiopian political economy and forest governance. While the Ethiopian state remains in control of all land in the country and does not recognise the de facto customary rights of communities, PFM has begun to be adopted in parts of Ethiopia, often in collaboration with NGOs (Bekele et al. 2015). In the context of the EWNRA-led REDD+ project, a PFM strategy is seen to by the community members to be key in enabling the realisation of 'equal rights' and 'equal responsibilities'.

Throughout the interviews, the community members consistently highlighted the shifts towards a PFM strategy as being vital in engendering a movement towards a more sustainable and equitable form of forest governance. Without being specifically asked about it, the importance of 'land rights' and control of land emerged in almost all of the interviews. For example, an interviewee in Gago stated the following:

*“Previously, this forest was controlled by the government, but nowadays, the attitude has already changed because we are aware that we own the forests. We are keeping these trees as our own property.”*

Here, the interviewee associates community management and control of the forests with a perceived change in 'attitude' and enhanced responsibility for the forests. In "keeping these trees" as "property", it is implied that community members are more likely to sustainably manage and protect the forests and will now adopt more of a long-term outlook in understanding the relationship between livelihoods and forest management. Accordingly, close linkages are made by the communities between PFM and the effective sustainable management of forests that have been understood in environmental governance scholarship (Bekele et al. 2015, Gobeze et al. 2009).

Additionally, as can be observed in the quote above, the communities understand

PFM and the enhanced control of forests to be also beneficial in that it is associated with decreased state control. This reflects the community's broader distrust of the state and the suspicion that the Ethiopian government's control of forests would unlikely to be in their interests, which can be understood in the context of the deep and persistent rural inequalities that exist in Ethiopia. Accordingly, for the interviewees, community management of forests and enhanced community control of land is intimately bound up with the equitable distribution of benefits from REDD+ at the local-level.

Largely, such an association by the community members supports what was indicated in the policy discourse. However, while this is the case, the emphasis on land rights reflects divergent interests and norms at the community and policy levels. For the REDD+ policy actors, the focus on land rights is bound up with an individualist, 'property rights' discourse. Property rights are indicated to act as a significant element of neoliberal forms of governance, in which the fair allocation of property rights (according to claims and counter-claims to property rights) is closely associated with distributive justice (Okereke 2008, McAfee 2012, Chomba et al. 2016).

However, for the communities, the interviews suggested that land rights and control emerge through a communal discourse. As with the forests and forest-based livelihoods, the management of the forests was understood in a communal sense. "Our" and "we" is frequently used by the interviewees when discussing the management of land, e.g. "after we took greater control of our land". It indicates that land rights are fundamentally understood in relation to the community and often in opposition to state control. Given that land rights are at the epicentre of the political sphere in Ethiopia (Bekele et al. 2015), the control of the forests is indicated to form a significant component of the community's identity and their struggle in rural Ethiopia. Accordingly, it can be suggested that, while land rights are emphasised by both policy and community actors, they signify divergent meanings and norms for each party, with the communitarian ethics of the interviewees potentially posing a challenge to the individualist, neoliberal-led policy discourse.

It is also necessary to critically interrogate the extent to which the enhanced control of forests and the securing of land rights can enable the realisation of equitable

distributive justice for these communities in rural Ethiopia. Although community control of forests is bound up with equal rights and equal sharing for the interviewees, it can be questioned if there are those who have lost out, or may lose out, following the introduction of the EWNRA-led project and the resulting changes in the dynamics of forest governance.

Due to shifts in the control and management of the forests, there are likely to be those within the communities that now have reduced control, power or resources as a consequence. These sentiments did not emerge during the interviews, but this may be because those with genuine grievances with the introduction of the REDD+ projects were not selected for interview. The lack of explicit mentions of land rights or forest management grievances can be critically interrogated in light of the overall positive representations of the REDD+ project by the communities in the interviews.

Indeed, scholars (Forsyth and Sikor 2013, Chomba et al. 2016, Bekele et al. 2015) have questioned the extent to which land rights act to realise equitable distributive justice at the local-level in the implementation of REDD+. Forsyth and Sikor (2013) suggest that the inherent nature of land rights means that they are fundamentally exclusionary to an extent, whereby those without claims to land may be severely disadvantaged and may not have their rights met.

A distribution of goods, resources or power based on land rights is likely to produce winners and losers, strengthening some and disempowering others, in similar ways to other neoliberal forms of governance, or as Forsyth and Sikor (2013: 117) claim, “new boundaries of inclusion and exclusion”. Accordingly, scholars suggest that the formulation of REDD+ based on land rights is likely to reflect and reinforce broader power inequalities within the community and to shift attention away from other important aspects of realising local-level distributive justice, e.g. the right to use productive forest resources (Forsyth and Sikor 2013, Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, Chomba et al. 2016).

More broadly, the egalitarian principles which underpin the community discourse are tied up with the norms articulated by EWNRA, in the running of the REDD+ PFM project. Throughout the interviews, it is proposed that there is an enhanced sense of equality in the communities following the introduction of EWNRA and the project, as in the following two examples:

*“When we compare now with then, there is a great difference...we have awareness about equality, about an equal use of the forest.”*

and

*“There is no violation of human rights around here...the rights of every community are protected equally...this organisation has strengthened our rights.”*

These examples reflect a widespread consensus in the interviews that the introduction of the project has facilitated an enhanced sense of equality in the communities. On multiple occasions, the interviewees directly link concepts such as ‘equal rights’, ‘equal decision-making’ or ‘equal use of the forest’ to the values of EWNRA and the project. The entanglement of EWNRA with egalitarian norms and an enhanced sense of equality in the communities emerges in the interviews as part of a ‘before’ and ‘now’ narrative.

Almost all of the interviewees indicated a significant difference between the nature of forest management before and after the introduction of the EWNRA-led project. The interviews suggest that a greater sense of equality in the community has emerged from an enhanced ‘awareness’ raised by EWNRA, as well as a broader strengthening of community rights. Such ‘awareness’ largely refers to an enhanced understanding of sustainable management of the forests, communal sharing of benefits and of a fair decision-making process that has been brought about through training exercises and other community engagement with EWRNA. The exact specifics of the awareness are left unclear, but the clear message throughout the community interviews is of EWNRA’s fundamental role in engendering enhanced fairness and equality within the community.

Thus, it could be suggested that the egalitarian conceptions of justice indicated to be dominant at the community level reflect, or are bound up with, the underpinning norms and rights-oriented approach of EWNRA. Given that EWNRA is motivated by community empowerment, rights and livelihoods and places these centrally in its PFM strategies, the findings indicate that the interests and norms of the communities and of EWNRA appear to be broadly aligned and complementary. In the interviews, EWNRA is often pitched or understood in opposition to the state institutions, largely

related to the enhanced sense of equality, community rights and empowerment felt within the communities. Indeed, the positivity expressed by the communities in regards to EWNRA and the project appears to be in alignment with their broader mistrust of regional state authorities.

However, the extent to which the communities' norms align with those of EWNRA and the extent to which EWNRA has facilitated the emergence of an enhanced sense of equality in reality can be critically questioned. Despite the dominance of the 'before and now' narrative and the consistent portrayal of EWNRA as an instigator of egalitarianism and sustainable forest management, it may be that, as Ayana (2014) found elsewhere, the interviewees are expressing such sentiments as an 'adaptation strategy' of sorts. Given that, as the interviewer, I was perceived as being closely associated with EWNRA, it may be that the community members were saying what they thought I wanted to hear.

Considering the consistently positive image of EWNRA and their influence on community practices and beliefs that emerged from the interviews, the interviewees' responses could be considered as a performative strategy in seeking to align with the views and norms of EWNRA. The fact that none of the interviewees voiced critical concerns over EWNRA or the project more broadly suggests that this may be the case. On occasions, suggestions were made by the community members to improve the project or to highlight specific points where it may be lacking, but the fundamental strategy and underlying norms of the project (and, by association, EWNRA) were not questioned.

Additionally, inconsistencies and ambiguities are evident in the community members' responses, similar to what Ayana (2014) found. Here, on the one hand, interviewees suggested that the communities were previously 'ignorant' of sustainable or equitable forest management practices prior to the arrival of EWNRA and its awareness-raising strategy. In a sense, they suggest an enlightenment of sorts following engagement with EWNRA. On the other hand, however, the interviewees simultaneously portray themselves as traditional 'keepers' of the forest and refer consistently to 'our' forest that 'we' have maintained for generations.

These two discourses are conflicting and inconsistent with one another, suggesting ambiguities in whether there have been actual or significant shifts in the



communities' practices, norms or behaviour as a result of EWNRA' emergence. Indeed, the two conflicting narratives also simultaneously emerge in the Ethiopian NGOs' discourse, including that of EWNRA, suggesting a significant overlap between the communities' responses and the NGOs' narratives that requires further interrogation. Understood accordingly, these findings add weight to the suggestion that the community discourse may act as an adaptation strategy of sorts that serves to secure access rights, to enhance benefits from sustainable forest governance and to strengthen community rights. This suggestion can be understood in light of research that has indicated a temporary character to PFM strategies in Ethiopia that exist only as long as the NGO project timeline (Winberg, 2010, Abrar and Inoue 2012).

Relatedly, the dominance of egalitarian norms at the community level in Nono Sele can also be critically interrogated. In the community interviews, a consistently positive image is portrayed of the EWNRA-led project and its local-level impacts, with a broad consensus emerging that the project has facilitated an enhanced sense of equality in the community. The consensus often emerges as part of a communitarian discourse, i.e. "we are all moving in the same direction"; "we have similar attitudes in regards to the forest". On one occasion, an interviewee in Gago explicitly stated, "there are no challenges, as no-one is against the idea of protecting the forest".

Despite the consensus on the project that was generally presented in the interviews, there were indications of disagreements on occasions. As outlined more fully in Chapter 5, during discussions on equality of decision-making, an 'awareness' discourse emerged, in which it was highlighted on multiple occasions that if community members had alternative views, they would change these to align with the majority once they had 'awareness'. Here, the idea is that disagreement within the community is fundamentally due to a lack of awareness about how to sustainably and equitably manage the forests.

The 'awareness' discourse suggests a plurality of views that is otherwise not evident in the interviews and that may be somewhat masked in the design and management of the project. It also suggests that there is not a fundamental engagement with alternative views or livelihoods that does not align with the broader REDD+ agenda.

Accordingly, questions can be raised over the views of those who I did not interview during the fieldwork, as well as who is making the decisions within the community on the project and who is not. Given that there was no evidence of marginalisation or exclusion in the interviews and that the interviewees were selected in collaboration with EWNRA, it could be that those who have lost out, or will lose out, as a result of the introduction of the project were not interviewed.

The broader evidence from the community interviews does not indicate a form of 'elite capture' in the communities that was indicated in other REDD+ or PFM research (Myers et al. 2018, Corbera et al. 2017, Green and Lund 2015). Notably, the communitarian ethics present in the community discourse suggests that the project is run in the interests of the entire community. Nevertheless, concerns can be raised over the extent of actual equality of participation and decision-making, considering that the fundamental agenda of the project is already pre-set, and the extent to which 'hidden' minorities may be losing out as a result of the REDD+ intervention and may not have their voice heard in village discussions.

While the community interviews generally present the REDD+ project as benefitting the community as a whole, as part of a communitarian discourse, it may be that some sections of the community may lose out materially from the intervention. EWNRA focuses its efforts upon supporting local co-operatives and agricultural institutions in Nono Sele and providing finances to these in selling coffee, honey and other non-timber forest products in local and regional markets. The frequent mentions by the community members of EWNRA's support for coffee or honey farming suggests that those interviewed were primarily farmers, aligning with the broader prevalence of farming-based livelihoods in Illubabor (Central Statistical Agency 2007).

The material interests associated with EWNRA engagement for the farming communities is clear (enhanced access to markets, financial and institutional support), suggesting reasons for the largely positive representations of the project and its local impacts by the interviewees. However, for those engaged in other livelihoods, particularly loggers or those selling timber, the impacts of the project may be less positive. The evidence suggest that the needs and interests of these groups are not being fundamentally engaged with in the design and management of the

project, primarily through an ‘awareness’ narrative. These findings potentially align with broader research on PFM that has suggested the deliverance of benefits to local institutions (resource management, co-operatives) but not necessarily to local households (Corbera et al. 2017, Gross-Camp 2017).

However, it may also be suggested that the communities’ responses indicate the promise of the project, rather than the dominance of a particular group’s views or interests in the community. There may be genuine hope and expectations for the fair, equitable and sustainable management of forests that can be facilitated through the EWNRA project. However, at this stage of the project, with payments configured towards supporting livelihoods and institutional development and not yet being used for the conservation of the forests. It is possible that a later stage of REDD+, when the community can sell verified emissions reductions, the project can deliver wider and more encompassing benefits.

## **6.6 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, the analysis has highlighted the dominance of utilitarian conceptions of justice at the policy level, which primarily emerge through a construction of REDD+ benefits and outcomes as long-term and global. Utilitarian ethics underpin and morally justify the prioritisation of cost-effective and large-scale reductions in international GHG emissions and the marginalisation of the livelihoods or development aspirations of REDD+ in the policy discourse.

Simultaneously, we uncovered evidence of neoliberal logics and assumptions in the REDD+ policy discourse. However, we contend that, rather than the policy-makers being driven by Okereke’s (2008) ‘neoliberal conceptions of justice’, the identified market-based mechanisms act as the vehicles for the realisation of the more fundamental utilitarian outcomes, i.e. the ‘means’, rather than the ‘ends’ of REDD+ justice. Thus, in line with the assertions of other scholars (Caney and Hepburn 2011; Edwards 2015), we suggest that neoliberal forms of environmental governance are shaped to serve other conceptions of justice.

On the other hand, egalitarian norms were indicated to be dominant at the community-level in Nono Sele, posing a challenge to, and existing alongside, the utilitarian-neoliberal nexus at the policy level. Here, this emerged as part of a

discourse around 'equal sharing', 'equal rights' and 'equal decision-making', appearing to be in line with norms of EWNRA. The form of egalitarianism present in the community discourse is indicated to be communitarian in nature, with emphasis placed upon benefits for the entire community. However, the extent to which the norms indicated in the interviews represent actual and significant community-wide equality in relation to the project and the extent to which the views and norms of the community has shifted following engagement with EWNRA can be critically questioned in these findings.

In the REDD+ discourse, these two conceptions of justice exist alongside, and compete with, each other, as part of a plural understanding of notions of justice. Accordingly, these findings suggest significant conflicts between the values and interests of the REDD+ policy-makers and those of the communities, largely supporting what scholars have proposed in other contexts (Martin et al. 2014, Schlosberg 2012, Sikor et al. 2014, Myers et al. 2018). Here, universalist notions of justice prominent at the policy level are seen to be at odds with the needs, rights and norms of forest-dependent communities. These findings provide further supporting evidence that conflicts in REDD+ policy design, implementation and management are underpinned by, and reflect, more fundamental differences in actors' norms and ethics.

The competing conceptions of justice in the REDD+ discourse are intimately bound up with power relations, with the dominant ethics of the policy-makers directing present and future orientations of REDD+. As Sikor and Cam (2016: 225) argue, "the meanings and implementation of justice are critical elements of the relations between those seeking to govern and those whose conduct is to be governed". In this context, despite the evolution of REDD+ frameworks and the integration of safeguards into the REDD+ agenda, concerns can be raised over the extent to which the (culturally-oriented) needs and interests of the forest-dependent communities are to be actively considered and valued by REDD+ policy-makers.

## **Chapter 7: Depoliticisation of Climate Justice Debates in the REDD+ Policy Discourse**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter critically and empirically examines the extent to which (climate) justice concerns are depoliticised or rendered technical in the policy discourse, responding to the project's fourth research question ("To what extent, and how, are the constructions of climate justice, and the debates surrounding them, de-politicised in the REDD+ policy discourse?"). Building on previous research that has interrogated the depoliticisation and anti-politics narratives of climate governance, this chapter specifically analyses techniques of depoliticisation through a justice lens. This includes an exploration of the Safeguards Framework and the ways in which fundamental political debates surrounding these issues of justice are masked or side-lined in the REDD+ policy sphere.

Based on the key arguments that emerged from the policy analysis, the chapter is divided into the following three sections: (1) *The REDD+ Safeguards Framework and the 'Rendering Technical' of Multiscalar (Climate) Justice* (2) *The Emergent Narrative of 'Internal Deficiencies' and 'External Expertise'* (3) *The Presence of Multiscalar 'Anti-Politics' in the REDD+ Policy Discourse*.

### **7.2 The REDD+ Safeguards Framework and the 'Rendering Technical' of Multiscalar (Climate) Justice**

As outlined in Chapter 2, the Cancun safeguards framework has been established in the UN-REDD regime as the key channel through which the adverse environmental and social impacts of REDD+ can be mitigated and through which co-benefits of REDD+ can be realised (Gonzalo et al. 2017). It has become a binding requirement that safeguards are integrated into national REDD+ strategies and that tropical-forested nations' REDD+ activities are consistent with the safeguards framework, although the specific ways in which safeguards are delivered vary according to the particular institutional frameworks in recipient nations. The safeguards comprise of the following:

- "1. *National forest programmes under relevant international conventions and agreements*

2. *Transparent and effective forest governance structures*
3. *Respect for indigenous and local community knowledge and rights (UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, UNDRIP)*
4. *Effective stakeholder participation (particularly indigenous peoples and local communities)*
5. *Conservation of natural forests and biological diversity*
6. *Methods to address the risks of reversals*
7. *Methods to reduce displacement of emissions (or leakage that occurs when deforestation and/or forest degradation avoided in one forested area is 'displaced' to another forested area)."*

As Ethiopia is a participant in the FCPF, it is requested to conduct regular 'Strategic Environmental and Social Assessments' (SESA), in compliance with the World Bank safeguards framework as well as the Cancun accord. The Ethiopian government is also in the process of developing three other safeguards instruments: the Environmental and Social Management Framework, Resettlement Policy Framework and Process Framework (Gonzalo et al. 2017). Accordingly, driven by the SESA taskforce (comprising of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders), the Ethiopian government has produced a number of safeguards assessment reports as evidence of its response to the REDD+ safeguards requirements.

The 'safeguards' framework forms a significant component of all of the policy-makers' discourse in responding to the social concerns of REDD+, including the local-level receipt of benefits from REDD+, participation of communities in REDD+ decision-making and the rights of indigenous communities. Through analysis of the policy documents and reports, it can be identified that the policy actors almost entirely frame, and respond to, the social elements of REDD+ through a safeguards discourse.

Analysis of the policy reports suggests that the safeguards framework acts to *depoliticise* and *render technical* the underlying, multiscalar justice concerns of REDD+. In other words, fundamental, political justice claims in relation to REDD+ become embedded as part of a technical and apolitical framing of relevant issues.

This analysis builds upon Murray Li's (2007) understanding of 'rendering technical' in development and conservation interventions. The technical formulation of (climate) justice issues emerges in multiple forms in the REDD+ policy discourse.

Firstly, rather than seeking to progressively enhance benefits at the community level or expand community participation in REDD+ decision-making processes, the safeguards framework appears to reflect a 'minimum harm' discourse. The term 'safeguards' itself suggests *minimal* protections for forest-dependent communities against the potential adverse impacts of REDD+. Outside of this, all of the REDD+ policy-makers, to varying extents, refer frequently to the importance of minimising harm to communities when implementing REDD+, as part of the safeguards framework.

The minimal harm discourse emerges on multiple occasions in policy discussions of the safeguards framework. In particular, when outlining the aims and objectives of the safeguards in REDD+, the following terms are frequently used: 'mitigation', 'offsetting', 'minimising' and 'reducing'. In establishing the basic premise of the safeguards, the narrative is clear: a strategy for minimising harms and risks associated with REDD+ for forest-dependent communities. It is essentially framed as a form of risk management for the policy-makers. For instance, in its report on additional funding in Ethiopia, the World Bank established the primary purpose of the SESA study in Ethiopia:

*"...to identify social and environmental risks and devise proper mitigation measures taking into account good practices and guidelines established by the Government of Ethiopia and the World Bank....and will further facilitate the identification of underserved groups that deserve special attention due to their vulnerabilities and provide mitigation plans to preclude any social risk or negative impacts on them."*

The managerial language used in this statement steers the conversation clearly towards the framing of the socio-economic and environmental challenges of REDD+ as 'risks' that can be managed through 'mitigation measures' and 'guidelines'. This is a technical construction of the significant challenges that communities face in the implementation of REDD+, which are rooted in the state of Ethiopian politics. The World Bank's discourse on safeguards tends to imply that the socio-economic and

environmental challenges of REDD+, including for ‘undeserved groups’, are technical risks to be managed, as part of a managerial framework, appearing to operate outside of its social and political contexts.

The Ethiopian government’s policy discourse on safeguards largely aligns with that of the World Bank, in accordance with the demands of its agreement with the World Bank (as outlined in Chapter 5). In its SESA reports, the government refers frequently to ‘vulnerability’ and ‘risk’ assessments and the measures that can be put into place for ‘mitigating against’ or ‘minimising’ the ‘adverse environmental and social impacts’ of REDD+. As with the World Bank, when engaging in discussions of the social and environmental issues of REDD+ for communities, these are largely framed in technical, managerial terms that exist outside of the social and political struggles in rural Ethiopia.

For NICFI, ‘safeguards’ are similarly associated with doing ‘no harm’ throughout its policy documents. As with the other policy actors, the safeguards framework is intimately bound up with minimising harms and risks. In one specific context, NICFI suggests that its safeguards activities “go further than ‘do no harm’”. The phrasing implies that the majority of NICFI’s safeguards policy focuses primarily on minimising harm, with those which go beyond this the exception to the rule.

The language of ‘minimising’ and ‘mitigating’ the social and environmental ‘risks of REDD+ implies a *basic* level of protections for communities rather than actively promoting the interests of community actors or seeking to address local-level injustices. A risk management discourse does not suggest an active engagement to bring about positive change in forest-dependent communities. It acts to shift the terms of the debate towards managing the negative outcomes of REDD+ and away from initiating positive impacts of REDD+.

Throughout its reports, NICFI is keen to highlight the ‘leading’ role that it has played in developing international safeguards architecture and the significant extent to which it has pushed safeguards frameworks in recipient nations. However, there is rarely clarification of what the safeguards actually involve. Details are frequently lacking on what each of the safeguards incorporates. Among all of the policy actors, the safeguards framework appears to lack substance. Accordingly, it can be suggested that the framework functions primarily as rhetoric in the policy discourse,



acting to highlight the efforts being undertaken by international policy actors in working towards a more socially just REDD+.

Secondly, a technical construction of community-level justice concerns emerges in the REDD+ policy discourse through the quantifiable and measurable formulation of the safeguards framework. All of the policy actors broadly pitch the safeguards framework in terms of monitoring and measuring the community-level, socio-economic implications of REDD+. The Ethiopian government's policy discourse partly positions SESA as a way of quantitatively assessing and monitoring the socio-economic dimensions of REDD+ implementation in the country. SESA is consistently constructed as providing an evidence base for guiding decision-making on REDD+ in Ethiopia that aligns broadly with the international safeguards framework.

Additionally, the international REDD+ policy-makers (NICFI, the World Bank and the UN) all place significant emphasis upon the importance of support recipient nations, including Ethiopia, in the development of safeguards information systems. These make use of coded variables and indicators for measuring the progress of safeguards integration into the national REDD+ strategies. Notably, in its guide to the FCPF Readiness Assessment Frameworks, the World Bank stated the following:

*“This component specifies the non-carbon aspects prioritized for monitoring by the country (e.g., key quantitative or qualitative variables representing rural livelihoods enhancement, conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem services provision, key governance factors directly pertinent to REDD+ implementation in the country, and the impacts of the REDD+ strategy on the forest sector). The system should be capable, or at least in an early operational stage, of reporting how safeguards are being addressed and respected during the implementation of REDD+ preparation activities....”*

and in its project paper for additional funding in Ethiopia:

*“To ensure that the project maximizes its positive environmental and social impacts and benefits, and to avoid potential adverse impacts, the project has triggered the following safeguards policies of the World Bank, namely (1) Environmental Assessment (OP4.01); (2) Natural Habitats (OP4.04); (3) Forests (OP4.36); (4) the involuntary resettlement policy (OP4.12); and (5)*

*OP4.10, and these policies will provide the basis for robust safeguards mitigation measures.”*

In the first quote, the World Bank places importance upon the development of a monitoring and measurement framework for measuring the co-benefits of REDD+, incorporating both environmental and social elements, e.g. ‘rural livelihoods enhancement’, ‘ecosystem services provision’. Under the World Bank’s MRV system, these aspects of REDD+ become codified as “key quantitative and qualitative variables”. In the second quote, the multiple safeguards policies adopted by the World Bank are indicated by particular codes, e.g. “(1) Environmental Assessment (OP4.01)” or “(4) the involuntary resettlement policy (OP4.12)”. Accordingly, there is a consistent and clear move by the World Bank in its REDD+ policy discourse to represent and monitor the social implications of REDD+ through codes and quantifiable measurement tools.

There is a clear sense in the World Bank’s discourse, as well as that of the policy-makers, that the community-level justice concerns implicated in REDD+ are codified and re-formulated as measurable and technical entities as part of a bureaucratic and document-intensive organising framework. Given that these are measurable and technical, the justice issues can be ultimately rendered as ‘complete’, as part of a ‘box-ticking’ exercise. Such a technical formulation of community-level justice issues means that the critical politics of these are not engaged with; there is much debate in the Ethiopian government’s and the multiscalar institutions’ policy discourse about the specific measurement tools that should be used in safeguards monitoring, but little engagement with the contested politics that surround the justice issues themselves.

Thirdly, a bureaucratic, document-intensive and depoliticising safeguards framework is also reflected in the technical language that is frequently adopted by the REDD+ policy-makers. Here, when referring to the community-level social implications of REDD+, jargon and technical terminologies are frequently used in the policy discourse. In the Ethiopian government’s SESA reports, terms and organising frameworks such as ‘additionality’, ‘effective stakeholder participation’ and ‘grievance redress mechanisms’ dominate. These can be considered as similar to what Buscher (2010) refers to as ‘mobilising metaphors’: technical and bureaucratic terms in policy

discourse that can act to build up support and resources for REDD+ interventions yet offer little in regards to substantive political change. Through such terminologies, the Ethiopian government acts to technically bind and narrowly define contested political justice issues that relate to REDD+ at the community level.

Notably, the use of the term ‘effective stakeholder participation’ acts to render technical the procedural justice concerns of forest-dependent communities, indicating the existence of assumptions on the precise meanings of ‘participation’ and ‘stakeholders’. Here, marginalised communities living in rural Ethiopia are re-constructed as ‘stakeholders’ or as users or managers of the forest. As Murray Li (2007) suggested, forest-dependent communities become re-defined by technical forest governance policy as “an amorphous public” which are disenfranchised from their home and land.

The findings from Chapter 5 suggest that despite ‘participation’ forming a key component of the safeguards framework, the forms of participation evident in forest-dependent communities in Ethiopia are somewhat limited in reality. It can be argued that the construction of ‘stakeholder participation’ in the safeguards framework acts to frame procedural justice for the communities as being met through certain technical and managerial criteria, but that do not appear to offer substantive change in community participation and say little about the extent and quality of participation in REDD+ decision-making.

As Myers et al. (2018: 2) have argued, community participation should refer to more than simply top-down technical criteria and frameworks, but to enable communities to “have real mechanisms to elect their leaders and hold them accountable, ensuring that their interests, including material resource distribution and recognition of rights, are represented and backed by powers”. Indeed, through a technical, stakeholder-oriented framework, the procedural concerns and issues present in rural Ethiopia become removed from their inherently political sphere. The adoption of ‘effective stakeholder participation’ as a key element of the Ethiopian government’s safeguards discourse says nothing about the contested, tense relationship between itself and rural communities in Ethiopia, nor the deficit of democratic, local voices in Ethiopia politics. Instead, it implies a singularly technical intervention through a safeguards framework that can be applied outside of political contexts and across

societies and countries.

Fourthly, the Ethiopian government re-constructs the removal of communities from their land through REDD+ as a technical phenomenon devoid of its fundamentally political implications and origins, as part of a discourse of ‘community resettlement’. Although it is stated by the Ethiopian government that community resettlement should be avoided “as far as possible”, there are nevertheless considered to be occasions on which these may be inevitable and unavoidable, as highlighted in its ‘resettlement policy framework’ report:

*“Under OFLP, the World Bank safeguard policy; OP/BP 4.12 was triggered if any on the ground investments are found upon screening as per the ESMF and RPF of OFLP to involve involuntary resettlement, acquisition of land and/or reduced access to natural resources. The restriction and reduction of access to natural resources will be handled by a separate instrument, but part of the World Bank OP/BP 4.12 policy, the Process Framework (PF). In addition to the OP/BP 4.12 requirements, this RPF will also apply the national and regional laws, legislation and regulations governing the use of land and other assets in Ethiopia.”*

The consistent use of the term ‘involuntary resettlement’ by the Ethiopian government in its documentation is depoliticising in itself. It acts to mask the deep injustices and unequal power relations at the heart of resettlement, whereby the act of removing a community from its culturally and socio-economically valued home by powerful, international institutions becomes a neutral act of necessity. The injustices encompassed by community resettlement are framed by the government to be sufficiently managed by and resolved through a number of policy-based frameworks. Here, the involuntary resettlement of communities is referred to as a ‘triggering’ of “OP/BP 4.12”, suggesting that the injustice implicated in this action become subsumed as part of a managerial, bureaucratic framework.

Criteria are given by the Ethiopian government for measuring the sensitivity of a REDD+ site to “adverse impacts involving resettlement and compensations”. The implications of community resettlement are deemed to be significant if the activity “takes more than 20% of households’ land” or if it “displaces greater than 200 people”. This is a form of cost-benefit analysis that acts to quantify the extent of

involuntary resettlement considered to be unjust according to a given threshold. Here, community resettlement is repositioned as a managerial problem to be addressed using calculable, quantifiable solutions; as Dryzek (1997) highlighted, cost-benefit analysis is likely to legitimise the formation of policies which are underpinned by technical solutions.

Community resettlement for forestry conservation purposes has significant implications for distributive, procedural and recognition dimensions of justice in REDD+ (McAfee 2014, Lovera 2009). Land-grabbing and community resettlement is a long-standing political issue in Ethiopia, with successive Ethiopia governments having resettled vulnerable, marginalised rural communities for economic and political purposes (Lavers 2012, Bekele et al. 2015). Accordingly, potential resettlement of rural communities through REDD+ is embedded into a deeply unequal political landscape in which large rural populations are marginalised and disempowered. However, in the Ethiopian government's policy, community resettlement is constructed as managerial, technical issue that can be addressed through a bureaucratic and document-intensive safeguards framework, existing outside of the contested political context in which land rights and land-grabbing occurs.

### **Summary and Discussion**

Analysis of the policy discourse indicates that the community-level justice concerns implicated in REDD+ have become subsumed into a managerial, technical and measurable safeguards framework. This is seen to be the case across the multiscalar policy discourse. For the Ethiopian government, SESE is constructed as the primary driver of integrating "social considerations" into the government's REDD+ strategies and of establishing "principles, guidelines and procedures" for addressing the multiple and complex social concerns of REDD+. Elsewhere, on several occasions throughout the interviews with the policy-makers, the REDD+ safeguards are claimed to be "fundamental" for effectively responding to the social implications of REDD+ and the community-level equity considerations.

Subsequently, it can be offered that the REDD+ policy discourse constructs the safeguards as being equivalent to the social issues *themselves* in the REDD+ policy discourse. In other words, community-level justice concerns that emerge in relation

to REDD+ are positioned in the policy discourse as being intimately bound up with set of technical criteria in the safeguards framework. Accordingly, the act of intervening in community-level social justice issues becomes part of a box-ticking, document-intensive approach, whereby if the assessments are completed and if the guidelines are adhered to in a governable safeguards framework, it can be considered that the social justice issues have been sufficiently addressed.

The technical terminologies, standards and criteria embedded in the safeguards frameworks act to develop narrow understandings and definitions of community-level justice concerns. The safeguards principles and policies are fundamentally set-up as a 'box-ticking' exercise: to ensure that a number of criteria are met as part of standardised assessments in the REDD+ recipient countries. Critical questions can accordingly be raised over the extent to which the bounded sets of understandings developed in the REDD+ safeguards frameworks address fundamental and political justice issues in forest-dependent communities. As Myers et al (2018) argue, "technical governance perspectives seek legitimacy in rules, and sometimes narrow considerations of fairness".

The bureaucratic and document-led REDD+ policy discourse shifts community-level justice concerns into a managerial domain and marginalises more transformative, political debates in Ethiopian society. The disengagement with political justice in the REDD+ safeguards framework aligns broadly with Dryzek's (1997) understanding of 'administrative rationalism', in which societal challenges (e.g. reducing deforestation levels) are structurally bound and understood primarily as part of technical frameworks. Indeed, Dryzek (1997) argues that administrative rationalism as 'a problem-solving discourse' is largely antithetical to fundamental, political discussion and debate.

Additionally, the REDD+ safeguards framework can be understood as a depoliticising tool in similar ways as 'coding' has been in ethical certification schemes, e.g. Fairtrade (McEwan and Bek 2009, Klooster 2005). Here, the more fundamental social and environmental concerns in Fairtrade have become embedded into "standards, codes of conduct and certification schemes" that act to shift "the nature of the debate from the political to the technical, meaning that only marginal corrections can be made subsequently" (McEwan and Bek 2009: 263). It

can be suggested that the REDD+ safeguards framework has removed the community-level justice concerns from their more radical, broader and substantive origins. The integration of community-level social protections into REDD+ was campaigned for initially by environmental and development NGOs (Hermansen et al 2017, Lund et al 2017), but the political and justice-led origins of these campaigns have become ultimately subsumed as part of a depoliticising and bureaucratic safeguards framework.

It can be suggested that the dominance of a complex, bureaucratic and technical framing of local-level justice issues in REDD+ policy is underpinned by unequal power relations, when considering 'who' defines and outlines the principles and guidelines of the safeguards framework and 'who' is subject to them. Indeed, the international safeguards framework reflects the "corporate ethical discourse" that McEwan and Bek (2009) identified in regards to environmental certification, that forms in conflict with the "moral experience of workers". In this context, the divide between a 'corporate ethical discourse' and the 'moral experience of workers' emerges in the form of expert-led, managerial safeguards frameworks and guidelines that do not accurately reflect the lived experiences and concerns of forest-dependent communities.

Thus, the findings suggest that the REDD+ safeguards framework acts to render technical and depoliticise fundamental justice concerns, comprising of distributive, procedural and recognition elements, at the community level. As Murray Li (2007) offered, there is a structural and intimate linkage between the act of 'rendering technical' and of 'depoliticising' interventions in the context of REDD+ in Ethiopia. As a result, the contested community-level justice issues that underpin the safeguards are re-formulated as narrowly-defined, technical phenomena that occur outside of their specific socio-political contexts, with the policy-makers acting to 'extract' from the 'messiness' of the social world (Myers et al. 2018, Lund et al. 2017, Murray Li 2007).

### **7.3 The Emergent Narrative of ‘Internal Deficiencies’ and ‘External Expertise’**

The findings indicate the presence of a narrative of ‘internal deficiencies’ and ‘external expertise’ in the REDD+ policy discourse. Driven by a postcolonial reading of North-South relations, this section argues that the REDD+ policy actors frame Ethiopia as being ‘internally deficient’ in regards to the design, management and implementation of REDD+ that, given the technical formulation of the REDD+ framework, can only be addressed through the advice, input and expertise of external ‘experts’.

An identified ‘rendering technical’ of community-level justice issues in REDD+ through the safeguards framework is intimately bound up with a narrative of ‘internal deficiencies’ and ‘external expertise’. In other words, the technical complexity and formulation of the REDD+ safeguards framework is constructed to necessitate the input of external ‘experts’ and to render local, regional and national actors in Ethiopia as deficient in some aspect or other. While this narrative is present in all and every aspect of REDD+, this analysis focuses on justice issues within REDD+ and the ways in which a technical and depoliticised discourse is perpetuated that shifts attention away from the broader historical, socio-political and moral context of climate change towards one in which it is the internal factors within Ethiopia that primarily determine the (un)just nature of REDD+.

In the REDD+ policy discourse, barriers to addressing community-level justice issues and to successfully design, manage and implement the REDD+ safeguards framework are constructed as primarily *internally*-sourced, pertaining to the socio-economic, political and institutional landscape within Ethiopia (and other recipient nations). An internalisation of barriers and constraints to REDD+ acts to depoliticise the policy discourse, whereby the international, relational and broader socio-political factors necessarily become downplayed. The ‘internal deficiencies’ narrative emerges in multiple forms in the REDD+ discourse.

Notably, Ethiopia’s institutional capacity and governance is consistently framed by all of the REDD+ policy-makers as being ‘weak’ and ‘insufficient’. Here, ‘deficiencies’ in Ethiopia’s institutional architecture are constructed to be a key barrier in the management and implementation of REDD+ policies. While the robustness of the REDD+ policy frameworks, including the safeguards framework, is largely not



questioned in the policy discourse, there appears to be a lack of faith in the institutional structures in Ethiopia and the capacities of Ethiopian governance to implement the seemingly well-defined REDD+ policy.

The multi-lateral institutions place particular emphasis on the challenges posed by weak governance in achieving both an equitable and effective REDD+ on-the-ground in Ethiopia. For instance, the World Bank highlights the challenges in REDD+ implementation associated with both “weak law enforcement” and the absence of a “strong forestry institution” at the federal level, as in the following excerpts from its Project Information Document for Ethiopia:

*“Gaps and incoherencies in the regulatory and institutional environment, coupled with low empowerment of local communities and absence of clear and uniform benefit sharing and reward mechanisms, encourage an “open access” mentality and forest conversion to other land uses.”*

and

*“The absence of an institutional home within GoE has hampered improvements to law enforcement and made it more difficult to effectively monitor forest health and regulatory compliance.”*

Both of these quotes highlight the World Bank’s perceptions of ‘gaps’ in the Ethiopian government’s institutional capacity to effectively deliver the REDD+ policy goals. These excerpts suggest that ‘gaps’ in governance impede efforts to reduce deforestation in Ethiopia, through weak regulations, monitoring and management of the forests. Throughout the World Bank’s policy texts, emphasis is placed upon the importance of addressing the insufficient institutional capacities in recipient nations for REDD+ to effectively succeed in its aims. The implication here is that if these ‘gaps’ were to be filled and institutional capabilities were strengthened, the REDD+ processes could run smoothly and be implemented efficiently.

More specifically, in the first quote, it is suggested that poor institutional capacities act as barriers to the implementation of benefit-sharing mechanisms. The “absence of clear and uniform benefit sharing and reward mechanisms” is attributed to internal deficiencies in Ethiopian governance. In other words, the World Bank’s discourse constructs Ethiopia’s weak institutional capacities as the primary barrier to the

equitable flow of benefits from REDD+ to the community level. Despite the fact that benefit-sharing mechanisms are yet to be formally integrated into the REDD+ safeguards framework, the barriers to the equitable flows of REDD+ finance are largely related by the World Bank to ‘deficiencies’ in institutional architecture within the recipient countries.

In response to these constructed internal ‘deficiencies’ in governance, the multilateral institutions highlight throughout their policy discourse the significant role that they can play in strengthening Ethiopia’s institutional capacities, primarily through improving its knowledge bases, the provision of technical guidance and training stakeholders at multiscale levels. It is in the context of the highly technical and managerial formulation of REDD+ that the UN indicates its ‘expert’ role in assisting the Ethiopian government to develop its national REDD+ strategies, through both the UNDP and UNEP. Throughout its policy texts, when describing its role in Ethiopia, the UN makes significant use of terms such as ‘expertise’, ‘added value’ and ‘specialist knowledge’, while simultaneously highlighting the gaps in capacities and knowledge within the country.

For instance, in an interview with a UN representative, it is stated that “good consultants” can do “good analytical work and provide the government with a clear vision of what are the options, the risks of every option”. In other words, the UN can provide technical advice and knowledge that may be otherwise lacking in Ethiopia. Notably, it is stated by the interviewee that:

*“Yeah, well, they get the expertise of the UN... it’s like the experience of having witnessed changes in other countries, this is the know-how and intelligence that the UN has accumulated over years, how other countries have done reforms or peace processes. So, we know that certain things can fly well and other things that create a lot of controversy and other things sometimes, that might work, but let’s test it a little bit, so we can bring a little intelligence from other countries to that country and tell government, look, this idea that you have, it’s well-intentioned, but it’s not going to fly, because we have tried a similar approach in that country and in that country, and it didn’t work”*

Here, the UN representatives construct the ‘additionality’ of the institution’s role in Ethiopia in terms of the extensive knowledge and expertise that the institution has “accumulated” in other country contexts, both in regards to REDD+ and more broadly. There is an implication in the discourse that only the UN, as an institution with such vast experience, could sufficiently address the REDD+ governance needs in Ethiopia. Such a framing necessarily suggests a divide between the *expertise* of the UN and the *deficiencies* inherent in the Ethiopian government, whose gaps in knowledge and institutional capacities can only be fully addressed by the intervention of an external specialist institution.

To varying extents, all of the REDD+ policy actors specifically highlight the importance of expertise and specialism in the development, implementation and management of the safeguards framework in Ethiopia. The highly technical and complex construction of the safeguards agenda in REDD+ is seen to necessitate specific expertise from external actors, notably from the multilateral institutions. This aligns with a top-down structuring of REDD+ (as outlined fully in Section 5.4), in which the international and national policy actors continue to dominate and drive REDD+ processes. Indeed, a top-down formulation of REDD+ is bound up with the unilateral imposition of the multilateral institutions and the international funders’ safeguards frameworks upon REDD+ recipient nations. Justified by internal deficiencies in the country’s institutional structures and governance, the World Bank’s operational frameworks and strategies on safeguards are constructed as superior to domestic policies in Ethiopia, as part of an expert-led, managerial approach.

Throughout the World Bank’s policy texts, frequent references are made to the important and integral role played by a team of ‘safeguards specialists’ from the World Bank in the recipient nations. As with the UN, terms such as ‘expertise’, ‘specialist knowledge’ and ‘competence’ are prominent in the World Bank’s policy documents, seen to be in contrast with the insufficient capacities and knowledge bases in Ethiopian governance. It can be suggested that this constructs a justification for the World Bank to intervene and lead on the management of the safeguards framework in Ethiopia. Given the constructed deficiencies in Ethiopian governance, the World Bank’s input, advice and guidance is seen to be necessary in driving the safeguards processes.

Accordingly, a ‘safeguards taskforce’ operates in the Ethiopian government as domestic experts on the social dimensions of REDD+, but are structurally bound to work within the confines of the internationally-set REDD+ safeguards agenda. Training from external consultants and specialists, primarily from the World Bank, is seen to be necessary for those working on the safeguards taskforce at all levels of governance, including those intervening in REDD+ at the project level in Ethiopia. For instance, in the Environment and Social Management Framework document, the Ethiopian government stated:

*“If a team of woreda experts is opted, they have to be given the necessary trainings on ESIA procedures, safeguard policies, relevant policies and ESIA guidelines before conducting the environmental and social impact study”*

This quote highlights the highly technical nature of the safeguards framework and the expertise it is perceived to entail, which emerges at both international and national levels of REDD+ governance. The technical demands of safeguards ‘policies’ and ‘guidelines’ mean that local-level forest governance actors in Ethiopia are seen to require training from specialised and skilled safeguards ‘experts’ constructed as “necessary” and something that they “have to do”. Despite the likelihood that the regional or local-level forest governance actor already has significant knowledge that is relevant to REDD+, without intervention from external institutions, they are deemed deficient in addressing community-level social issues, among others. This acts to construct knowledge on safeguards as elite, expert-led and top-down oriented, necessarily excluding local-level voices.

Furthermore, throughout the multilateral institutions’ REDD+ policy discourse, there is an assumed prevalence of financial mismanagement and ‘weak financial capacity’ in tropical-forested nations, whereby corruption and misuse of REDD+ funds will occur in such nations without the oversight of international institutions. Without an apparent evidence base, there is an embedded assumption in the policy discourse that financial mismanagement or corruption will inevitably occur in tropical-forested nations. While rarely operating through the discourse of ‘corruption’, the policy-makers nevertheless frequently express concerns over “speed of disbursement” of funds in the REDD+ recipient countries. This again acts to suggest that there are

institutional barriers in tropical-forested nations to the effective and equitable sharing of benefits from REDD+.

Accordingly, both the UN and the World Bank are keen to highlight their intervening and mediating roles in the management of REDD+ funds. For example, it is stated in one of the interviews with a UN representative:

*“...a lot of the countries are where there is a lot of REDD+ and forest investment potential are countries which tend to have quite weak capacity and one of the capacities, weak financial capacity, sometimes leads to misuse or inefficient use of resources. This is why the donors, when they want to do commitments of scale, if they don’t see that the conditions are safe, then they request the UN to play a sort of mediating role and we play that role.”*

Here, the UN interviewee places emphasis upon the necessity to manage REDD+ funds on behalf of the donor, given the assumed deficiencies in financial management or capacities within the REDD+ recipient country. It is worth noting that such assumptions are spread across all REDD+ recipient countries, rather than focused on specific nations. In other words, tropical-forested nations as a ‘category’ are framed as closely linked to financial misuse or corruption for the multilateral institutions. These assumptions emerge in this quote through the use of phrases such as “a lot of the countries”, or “tend to”. Subsequently, those institutions with expertise in financial management can intervene and address the constructed deficiencies or ‘gaps’ in financial capacities.

Similarly, in its policy documents on Ethiopia, the World Bank places significant attention on the key role that it has played in assisting in the Ethiopian government’s financial management. On several occasions in the policy texts, the World Bank proposes that Ethiopia’s ‘weak financial capacities’ have now largely been ‘resolved’ as a result of the institution’s ‘proactive’ assistance’. The discourse here acts to imply that there is something inherently deficient in the Ethiopian government’s previous form of financial governance and that it is only through the World Bank’s perceived expertise that the situation has improved in the country.

Although rarely stated explicitly, the constructed financial mismanagement of the tropical-forested nations appears to be intimately bound up with, and feed into,

broader critiques of Ethiopian politics, governance structures and ideology, notably in relation to benefit-sharing. During the interviews, NICFI, the UN and World Bank representatives all raise concerns to some extent over the political orientation of the Ethiopian government.

NICFI's policy discourse contains frequent assertions that the Ethiopian government is making 'good progress' on REDD+ and is moving "in the right direction", notably because of the creation of a more focused and integrated Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. However, in the interviews with the NICFI representatives, the idea that community-level justice issues, both procedural and distributive, could not be adequately addressed through the existing political structures in Ethiopia emerged on a number of occasions. Indeed, one of the NICFI interviewees state the following:

*"But the government in Ethiopia has sort of different aims and (.) like I said because it's such a strong government type of state, nothing really happens without the government's knowledge....but they at least seem very open to community consultation (.) more than I thought they would be, given Ethiopia's history...So that's the other challenge, since you asked me about challenges earlier, in addition to finance, is that we are dealing with countries which are extremely vulnerable but also have governance systems which are (.) challenging in their own ways because of lack of democracy (.) ; there is not just an economic poverty (.) there are issues around power and control which are rather complex to deal with."*

In this quote, challenges to the effective and equitable implementation of REDD+, largely pertaining to the disbursement of funds for REDD+ and benefit-sharing, are constructed as being bound up with Ethiopia's political structures and ideology. Discursively positioned as a "strong government type of state" that has "challenging" issues around governance, there are seen to be inherent challenges in Ethiopia concerning the equitable disbursement of REDD+ funds, and therefore inherent challenges to the realisation of community-level justice in Ethiopia's REDD+ strategies.

The use of the phrases, "more than I thought" in the quote when referring to the Ethiopian government's engagement with community consultation reflects certain

assumptions in the policy discourse on the nature of Ethiopian's governance structures and ideology. Despite 'benefit-sharing' not forming part of the REDD+ safeguards framework, there is a constructed superiority from the international policy-makers on the equitable flow of funds from REDD+. Here, Ethiopia's perceived political orientation is framed as being in fundamental opposition to the equitable distribution of benefits from REDD+. Accordingly, this underpins and justifies future interventions by the international REDD+ policy actors.

Connected with the Ethiopian government's political ideology and structures is its political will. Throughout the policy discourse of NICFI and the multilateral institutions, 'political will' is indicated to be a key determining factor in the broad success of REDD+. In its evaluative reports, NICFI frequently highlights the significant role that lack of political commitment has played in "stalling" the REDD+ process in various recipient nations. For instance, the progress of REDD+ in Brazil is attributed to the political will of the government to reduce its deforestation levels. NICFI perceive themselves as having adopted the role of "strengthening voices within the country", where implementation of REDD+ policy would never have taken place, "unless there was a political will in Brazil to do it".

The political will of the recipient country is constructed by NICFI to be equally important in regards to the implementation of safeguards. It is suggested that while NICFI can aid the formulation and design of safeguards policies in the REDD+ recipient nations, "it can only go as far as the government is willing to implement it". Throughout its REDD+ discourse, NICFI is keen to highlight the strength of its own safeguards policies and interventions, while simultaneously suggesting that the implementation of these largely depends on the country's political will. In other words, NICFI uncritically assumes that its own safeguards frameworks are without issue and that the primary constraint to the success of these is the political structures and political will within the tropical-forested nations in actually putting them into place.

Moreover, the FCPF also specifically questions the commitment of the Ethiopian government towards REDD+. In one of the interviews, the FCPF representative suggested reasons why Ethiopia may not have met its target dates for REDD+:

*“I can also say maybe because they are prioritising other activities and they are not very focused on the preparation of the REDD strategy and all this stuff, and maybe it’s just because they are too busy, yeah, I think they are involved in several other initiatives, there are so many things going on in Ethiopia right now.”*

Here, the FCPF places emphasis upon lack of commitment or ‘focus’ as a reason why the Ethiopian government may have missed the deadline. Only underlying internal factors are taken into account; external reasons (including the actions of the FCPF themselves) which may have acted as barrier in Ethiopia meeting its deadlines are not considered at all here. At a later point in the interview, the Ethiopian government are also criticised for having a “somewhat weak” attitude towards participation. Again, the reason for failure in safeguards implementation is deemed to be due to ‘weak political will’. The safeguards policy itself, which has been imposed on the Ethiopian government by the FCPF’s requirements, is not questioned; thus, what must have acted as barrier in safeguards implementation is the commitment of those in the Ethiopian government.

Criticisms over recipient nations’ political will feed into an ‘ownership’ discourse by the REDD+ policy-makers: as Angelsen (2016) suggested, this is a term that is frequently used in the REDD+ political landscape to describe the idea that, while the international funders can aid the tropical-forested nations in developing REDD+ strategies and policies, success is unlikely to be achieved without commitment to carry out its goals within the country. This relates specifically to the safeguards framework, where, in spite of its top-down formulation, international REDD+ actors continually highlight their advisory rather than instructive role in the Ethiopian government’s formulation of REDD+ safeguards. Thus, while the external organisations consistently emphasise their expertise and their superior knowledge in comparison to the recipient countries, they simultaneously cede ultimate responsibility to those same recipient countries.

Indeed, while internal political commitment towards REDD+ is emphasised by the international policy-makers, the political will of the other institutions engaged in the REDD+ activity within the tropical forested nations is not mentioned at all. It is uncritically assumed that the bilateral and multilateral funders are fully committed to



REDD+. Similarly, the competence and fairness of the institutions' REDD+ policy is left unquestioned. Notably, this is evidenced with safeguards, where the key barrier to achieving equity in REDD+ (both in regards to distribution and procedure) is the political commitment and willingness of Ethiopia to implement them, rather than there being anything inherently problematic with the funders' frameworks themselves.

For the Ethiopian government, the political will of REDD+ institutions within the country are understandably not addressed in its policy discourse; nevertheless, it does frequently acknowledge the existence of weak institutional capacities and technical knowledge deficits in relation to REDD+. 'Governance' and 'institutional capacities' are consistently highlighted as key drivers of deforestation in the country in its policy texts.

However, in contrast to NICFI and the multilateral institutions, the barriers to achieving success with REDD+ for the Ethiopian government are technically-formulated in nature: if there were greater resources available in the country (e.g. under-staffing is often highlighted), REDD+ processes would run smoothly in Ethiopia; equally, it may be an issue of education that requires the advice of experienced and expert institutions such as the UN or the World Bank. Thus, for the Ethiopia government, there is nothing fundamentally lacking or deficient in the country, but rather it is resource poverty which underpins their weak institutional capacities which can responded to through increased financial flows or technical support from the international community.

### **Summary and Discussion**

Analysis of the REDD+ policy discourse indicates the presence of an 'internal deficiencies' and 'external expertise' narrative, whereby the barriers to the success of REDD+ are primarily internal in origin and the solutions to such barriers are necessarily external in origin. The 'internal deficiencies-external expertise' dichotomy exists in the policy discourse across a vast array of issues; however, this section specifically interrogated its emergence in relation to the complex, bureaucratic and technical nature of the REDD+ safeguards framework.

This section identified the ways in which 'external expertise' is intimately bound up with the rendering technical of fundamentally political issues of community-level

justice through the Safeguards framework. Here, only appointed ‘experts’ are constructed as having the required skills and abilities to ‘measure’ progress on safeguards, to advise on how to further develop and to rectify technically-framed ‘internal deficiencies’ in recipient countries. Such ‘internal deficiencies’ emerge in the policy discourse in the form of institutional capacities, financial mismanagement, political will and broader political structures of the country.

These findings align to a large extent with postcolonial readings of North-South relations that have emanated from recent international development studies. With REDD+ being re-formulated as results-based aid (Angelsen 2016), there are connections to be made between REDD+ and other forms of international development, in terms of the representations of ‘donors’ and ‘recipients’. Postcolonial scholars have critically engaged with the spatial imaginaries that have been invoked in international development discourse which tends to represent the Global North and South as distinct entities.

It has been argued that efforts to instigate development in the Global South, primarily through international aid, often construct the recipient nations as ‘deficient’ in something (e.g. insufficient knowledge, poor governance), which the Northern actor can install in the country (McEwan 2008, Murray Li 2007, Andreasson 2005). Notably, Murray Li’s (2007) analysis of development initiatives in Indonesia found that these tend to signify and frame divisions between the local actor who is lacking in necessary attributes and the external, international actor, who can provide the relevant expertise and knowledge. A similar discursive strategy can be identified in the REDD+ policy discourse, in which the ‘internal deficiencies-external expertise’ narrative is seen to implicitly guide and justify the format and design of REDD+ interventions, including the unilateral imposition of international safeguards frameworks in REDD+ recipient nations.

The constructed donor-recipient relationship in the REDD+ policy discourse can be seen to perpetuate a binary and uneven understanding of North-South relations, alluding to McEwan’s (2008) postcolonial interpretation of post-war development strategies: “the North is perceived to be the centre, the originator of development ideas and policies...the South is the periphery, to which development ideas and policies are exported”. It is noticeable in the policy discourse that the constructed

deficiencies of tropical-forested nations are framed as simultaneously *fundamental* and *rectifiable*; traits that are inherent and yet can be 'improved' through external input. This may reflect a key contradiction of colonial discourse in which the colonised were rendered as simultaneously inherently deficient and in need of external intervention to improve them.

As well as being embedded in postcolonial forms of representation, the 'internal deficiencies-external expertise' also performs a depoliticising function. In framing the barriers to an equitable and just form of REDD+ in Ethiopia as primarily internal in origin, justice issues in REDD+ become problematised in the policy discourse outside of their socio-political, relational and structural contexts. The political complexity of REDD+ justice issues is 'smoothed out' in the search for technical solutions, which only appointed experts can address. As Murray Li (2007: 7) suggests, international aid interventions tend to focus "more on the capacities of the poor than the practices through which one social group impoverishes another".

In these findings, neither the safeguards framework nor the roles that the international actors play in designing, managing and implementing the framework are sufficiently examined in the policy discourse. Here, attention is directed away from the actions, policies and frameworks of international actors towards the constructed 'deficiencies' of actors and institutions within Ethiopia in implementing them. There is a broad lack of self-reflection on behalf of the international REDD+ policy-makers, as McEwan (2008) suggested there is with international aid discourse: "...the need to insist on Africa's fundamental inadequacies, rather than the inadequacies of Northern models".

Broadly, these findings are aligned with current thinking on depoliticisation, whereby a technical construction of political phenomena is intimately linked with expertise (Murray Li 2007, Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000, Ferguson 1994). As both Murray Li (2007) and Dryzek (1997) highlighted, claims for expertise are strongly implicated with claims for power. Dryzek (1997) suggested that 'administrative rationalism', as an expert-led, problem-solving discourse, largely works within the current structural bounds, treats defined issues in purely technical terms and tends to be antithetical to political debate.

The analysis in this research suggests similar discursive and structural ties between the dominance of an expert-led and technically-framed narrative and the depoliticisation of justice issues in the REDD+ policy discourse. Depoliticisation in REDD+ is tightly linked to a top-down formulation of the initiative and underpinned by unequal power relations. The ‘internal deficiencies-external expertise’ narrative effectively justifies the top-down formulation of REDD+, whereby there is a constructed necessity for external input and externally-generated frameworks at the local, regional and national levels in Ethiopia.

This is reflected in the higher valuing and imposition of the international safeguards agenda in recipient nations and the side-lining of local knowledge in Ethiopia. The constructed boundary between the ‘expert’ and ‘non-expert’ in the REDD+ policy discourse emerges at both the international and national levels in Ethiopia among powerful actors that seek to depoliticise community-level injustices. Indeed, as Myers et al. (2018: 3) suggest, the emergence of global sources of authority in the REDD+ framework is tightly bound up with “rendering projects technical and advancing an anti-politics agenda”.

In Ethiopia, the policy discourse suggests that the depoliticisation and rendering technical of justice issues in REDD+ is strongly associated with a broader devaluing of local-level or lay knowledge. The prominence of top-down, expert-led narratives in REDD+ reflects broader critiques of international climate governance and the insufficient engagement with local-level contexts and knowledge bases (Brace and Geoghegan 2010, Hulme 2008a, Glover 2006). The ‘external expertise-internal deficiencies’ narrative and the de-valuing of local-level voices have emerged in a context of PFM in Ethiopia. Indeed, Blaikie (2006) has offered that, despite the promise of the PFM narrative, local and community-based knowledge consistently struggle to compete with the expertise and ‘official’ scientific knowledge put forward by international policy actors and present in international frameworks.

#### **7.4 The Presence of Multiscalar ‘Anti-Politics’ in the REDD+ Policy Discourse**

Outside of the technically-formulated, expert-led and depoliticising safeguards framework, there are other strategies in the policy discourse that attempt to depoliticise justice issues associated with REDD+. Here, these justice issues are largely constructed outside of their fundamentally political origins and contexts and

re-cast in technical terms. In other words, there is evidence in the policy discourse for the presence of what scholars refer to as ‘anti-politics’ in the REDD+ policy discourse in multiple forms and on multiple scales.

The concept of ‘anti-politics’ emerged initially through the work of Ferguson (1994), who critically examined international development discourse and proposed that it was a policy sphere in which there was a concerted effort to render issues technical and remove them from their contested political origins. In recent years, the concept has begun to be applied to international forestry conservation efforts, and specifically REDD+ (Myers et al. 2018, Buscher 2010, Murray Li 2007). Notably, Myers et al (2018: 2) define anti-politics in the context of REDD+ as “the process of separating direct technical objectives, such as conserving forests or increasing carbon sequestration, from social transformation and political change”. These findings suggest a limiting and binding of political debates by the REDD+ policy actors, which emerges in multiple forms in the policy discourse.

Analysis of dominant and marginalised justice norms can help to reveal the extent of anti-politics in the REDD+ policy discourse, specifically the extent to which justice concerns are (de)politicised by the policy actors. In previous research, it has largely been considered that REDD+ policy-makers tend to be primarily driven by distributive justice concerns which act in contrast to the understood dominance of procedural and recognition justice concerns in forest-dependent communities (Myers et al 2018, McDermott et al. 2013, Martin et al. 2014). This divergence in dominant justice norms is seen to reflect the policy-makers’ narrow and technical understandings of justice issues (as simply ‘who gets what’) and insufficient engagement with the more fundamental justice concerns present in the recognition and procedural dimensions and the ‘messiness’ of the political realities of REDD+ (Myers et al 2018).

However, in these findings, the opposite to what was expected emerged: procedural justice norms were dominant at the policy level, while the community discourse indicated a higher valuing of distributive justice. In the community interviews, procedural forms of justice were evident, but to a significantly lesser extent than distributive justice concerns. Primarily, procedural justice emerged at the community level through the value placed upon equality in decision-making and participatory

rights in the REDD+ project, both within the forest-dependent communities and on a broader level in engaging with EWNRA, as more fully outlined in Chapter 5.

However, although these aspects of procedural justice are valued and highlighted by the community members, these are nevertheless secondary compared to the distributive dimensions of justice, where much greater emphasis is placed. Notably, the community interviews indicated a prioritisation of the equal and fair allocation of responsibilities for the sustainable management of the forest and equal sharing of the benefits from the forest products. As argued in Chapter 5, the community norms are intimately bound up with egalitarian forms of distributive justice in the REDD+ PFM project.

An ultimate prioritisation of distributive justice by the communities is indicated by the intimate linkage between participatory equality and empowerment and the equal sharing of benefits associated with the REDD+ project evident in the community discourse. Throughout the interviews, it was articulated that an increased sense of empowerment and participatory rights is likely to lead to enhanced access to forest resources and the subsequent receipt of benefits. The interviewees understood the realisation of equal rights primarily in connection with enhanced equality of distribution of goods within the communities.

Thus, it appears that, for the interviewees, procedural justice is primarily valued for the extent to which it can enable the realisation of distributive equality within the communities, as Martin et al. (2013) in another context of REDD+. While the assumption that devolved decision-making processes necessarily lead to more just and equitable distribution at the local level has been critiqued by climate justice scholars (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, Larson and Ribot 2012, Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017), the two dimensions of justice are certainly bound up for the forest-dependent communities interviewed.

In contrast, the REDD+ policy-makers place the most emphasis on procedural dimensions of justice. As highlighted previously, 'effective stakeholder participation' acts as one of the 'core' safeguards in the international REDD+ framework, while benefit-sharing does not yet form part of the safeguards framework. Throughout the policy discourse, emphasis is consistently placed upon the importance of participation in REDD+ and the need to establish effective participatory rights at the

community level to a much greater extent than benefit-sharing and other distributive justice concerns.

The dominance of procedural justice norms in the safeguards framework has been previously highlighted by other scholars (Sikor and Cam 2016, Upton 2014). Indeed, Sikor and Cam (2016: 220) argue that, “text addressing distributive matters at the local and national levels is largely absent from the Cancun agreements, even though REDD+ at the global level is primarily conceived as a distributive mechanism”. Accordingly, these scholars suggest that the distributive and material needs of marginalised, forest-dependent communities are often inadequately reflected in international REDD+ frameworks.

Thus, there is a distinct, clear and consistent divergence in the findings between the dominance of procedural justice norms at the policy level and the dominance of distributive justice concerns at the community level. These findings act in contrast with what has been proposed in the environmental justice scholarship (Martin et al. 2014, Schlosberg 2004, Myers et al 2018, McDermott et al. 2013). Given that such authors align a narrow focus on distributive justice norms with ‘anti-politics’, the policy orientation towards procedural and recognition dimensions in these findings may indicate enhanced political engagement by the REDD+ policy-makers.

However, despite the dominance of procedural justice norms, an ‘anti-politics’ narrative is nevertheless evident in the policy discourse. Indeed, fundamental politics, specifically in relation to REDD+ justice issues, are largely absent or side-lined in the policy-makers efforts to address *both* procedural and distributive dimensions of justice. The findings suggest that a shift by policy-makers away from a narrow focus on distributive justice norms does not necessarily indicate enhanced engagement in the underlying and fundamental political challenges associated with the justice issues in REDD+.

As outlined in Sections 6.5 and 7.2, participation tends to emerge in the policy discourse in a limited and technical form, as part of the safeguards framework. Despite the consistent rhetoric on ‘stakeholder participation’ that is prominent in the policy discourse, it can be identified that this forms part of a managerial discourse that is driven by meeting minimum criteria and does not adequately or substantively

engage with the fundamental political questions and debates that surround procedural justice concerns in REDD+.

Equally, at the policy level, discussions of benefit-sharing are present that tend to reflect technical, narrow and depoliticised framings of distributive justice. The benefit-sharing discourse largely refers to the need to establish a financial or compensatory mechanism to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of the funding associated with REDD+. Discussions surrounding benefit-sharing are often formed in technical or managerial forms. The details of benefit-sharing tend to be financially-oriented and procedurally-driven and are bound up with terms such as ‘mechanisms’, ‘components’ or ‘instruments’.

In the policy discourse, benefit-sharing is frequently used alongside the word ‘equitable’. All of the policy-makers state aspirations to realise an equitable form of benefit-sharing. However, it is never clarified what exactly an equitable approach to benefit-sharing incorporates. For instance, phrases such as “we need to ensure financial mechanisms enable an equitable benefit-sharing approach” proliferate in the World Bank’s REDD+ documentation, but with little further detail on precisely how this would operate and what ‘equity’ refers to in this context. An equitable form of benefit-sharing could refer to a number of different things at different scales: does this mean a purely egalitarian approach to benefit-sharing across Ethiopia? Or within communities? Or would the sharing of benefits be based on participation of the forest actors? How does this map onto issues of aggregation in REDD+?

Thus, ‘equity’ largely emerges in rhetorical form in the policy discourse, with seemingly little basis or substance. Phrases such as ‘equitable sustainable development’ and ‘equitable growth’ proliferate in the World Bank’s discourse without further clarification or discussion of what precisely ‘equity’ means in this context. With minimal rooting in the substantive issues of distributive justice in the recipient nations, ‘equity’ tends to be used by the policy-makers in a technical and apolitical sense that is devoid of any specific meaning and outside of its socio-political contexts.

In contrast, the word ‘justice’ is largely non-existent in the policy discourse, only emerging on two occasions throughout all of the REDD+ policy documents. It only tended to be brought up in the interviews with policy representatives when explicitly



asked about. It is likely that 'justice' is avoided by the policy-makers as, unlike equity, it has an overtly political or moral underpinning. Rather than being bound up with financial mechanisms or the managerial aspects of benefit-sharing, '(in)justice' implies wrong-doing on behalf of one party and towards another and a distinct moral obligation to rectify the wrong-doing. Policy-makers seek to avoid explicit engagements with the idea that one party has 'wronged' another, or has responsibilities based on such wrong-doing. It is for this reason that benefit-sharing becomes framed outside of its fundamentally politically sphere, devoid of socio-economic analysis and history and acts as a simply technical mechanism.

Relatedly, 'justice' is avoided when outlining the responsibilities of the Global North for climate change. In this context, it would specifically suggest a historical 'wrong-doing' on behalf of the Global North and a moral drive to correct such a transgression. Justice is explicitly political in this context, referring to the historical responsibility of the Global North for climate change and the severe impacts likely to be felt by actors in the Global South that have contributed little to climate change. The word is bound up with broader reflections on North-South relations and the extent to which development in the North has been dependent on, and driven, by fossil fuel-led extractivism.

Accordingly, policy actors from the Global North are likely to be unwilling to 'admit' responsibility for climate change, given that it is intimately bound up with their developmental strategies in the previous 200 years. As fully outlined in Chapter 5, there is minimal engagement by the policy-makers with the Global North's responsibility for climate change. On the few occasions that it is engaged with, it is simultaneously side-lined and rendered as inappropriate in forming a key component of pragmatic and effective REDD+ and broader international climate action strategies. In line with this, REDD+ funding is primarily framed in relation to the insufficient financial capacities of the recipient nations. In such a way, climate change responsibility on behalf of the Global North becomes constructed as a fundamentally technical matter that can be addressed through financial transactions and outside of its socio-political, moral and historical contexts.

In the policy discourse, it can be suggested that, in place of 'justice', 'equity' forms part of a technical and depoliticised REDD+ framework, acting as managerial

language that insufficiently engages with fundamental political or structural questions. As Bourdieu and Wacquant (2000) have suggested, terms such as 'injustice' become absent in the contemporary policy landscape, suiting international policy institutions such as the World Bank that seek to frame issues of (in)justice in neutral or managerial terms. In doing so, the fundamentally political basis of justice claims, both on local and international levels, become masked and side-lined in the policy discourse as part of an 'anti-politics' narrative.

Considering both procedural and distributive dimensions of justice, the policy discourse is found to insufficiently engage with the specific political and cultural contexts in Ethiopia. More broadly, as outlined fully in Chapter 5, the profiling of REDD+ recipient nations by the policy-makers is overwhelmingly conducted at the national scale, with little recognition of regional heterogeneity or cultural diversity within recipient nations. More specifically, there is minimal engagement with the socio-economic and cultural implications of REDD+ for specific regional or local contexts within Ethiopia, which are rooted in deep and complex political struggles.

Embedded within a top-down, expert-led and broad-brush approach to REDD+ is inadequate recognition of the cultural, social and political struggles within Ethiopia. Here, distributive justice concerns emerge through a managerial discourse that operates outside of their fundamentally political bases in Ethiopia. More critical questions of distributive justice might concern how REDD+ benefit-sharing maps onto the vast inequalities in Ethiopia and the significant and heightened levels of rural poverty in the country.

In Oromia, for the forest-dependent communities, the importance of equal sharing, rights and responsibilities represent fundamental political struggles for the community members and are deeply bound up with the uneven nature of development in Ethiopia. In the interviews with the communities, the deeply political underpinnings of claims for egalitarian distributive justice became evident. Here, community control or management of the forested land was framed as being in fundamental opposition to the socio-economic inequalities associated with the state control of forests.

Indeed, the 'before' and 'after' narrative emerges in the community discourse in the specific political context of the marginalisation of the Oromo people in Ethiopia. As

outlined fully in Chapter 6, significant positivity surrounds the introduction of EWNRA and the REDD+ project for the communities, bound up with a broader mistrust of the state and the idea that previous government management of the forests perpetuated local injustices and inequalities.

On a number of occasions, before describing the positive changes that the EWNRA-led project has brought about, the interviewees state that, “previously the government controlled the forests...”. The state is rarely explicitly tied to injustices but is nevertheless seen to be in contrast with the beneficial ways in which EWNRA operates. An interviewee in Gago asserted that, “this organisation [EWNRA] stands for us”, and “to tell you the truth, we think of this organisation as our family, because it helps and improves our daily lives”. The sense that EWNRA is working for them is framed in opposition to the ways that the state operates in the interviews. Another interviewee explicitly ties the mistrust of the state with initial suspicion around the introduction of the project into the community: “...we didn’t have an awareness, so we didn’t accept it at the beginning. We thought that the government wanted to sell our trees to the NGOs.”

Accordingly, a shift away from state control of forests is understood by the communities to be key for enabling a more just, fair and sustainable formulation of forest governance. These community-level understandings exist in a context in which Oromo people have been socio-politically marginalised and in which rural populations across the country have faced land-grabs and have not felt the benefits of double-digit economic growth in Ethiopia. Subsequently, it can be proposed that for the communities, realising distributive justice is intimately bound up with their broader senses of political marginalisation.

However, the fundamentally political struggles associated with REDD+ and associated distributive (in)justices in Ethiopia is rarely engaged with in the policy discourse. Throughout the policy-makers’ documents, there is very little acknowledgement of the specific grievances and struggles of the Oromo people, despite it being well acknowledged in the broader international community (e.g. Amnesty International 2017). Although the Ethiopian government does engage in more ingrained, contextual discussions of specific regions in the country, including Oromia, this tends to be conducted at a largely ecological or economic level and

there is little acknowledgement of how REDD+ maps onto socio-political inequalities in the country or the specific needs of rural communities in Oromia in the existing political context in Ethiopia.

While the Ethiopian government evidently has vested interests in side-lining claims of socio-political injustice and the rights of the Oromo people, the international REDD+ policy-makers' avoidance of these issues reflects their broader anti-politics agenda. The top-down and technical formulations of the 'benefit-sharing' and 'stakeholder participation' discourses are 'placeless' and represent inadequate engagement with the specific needs and interests of rural communities in Oromia, which are deeply embedded in the political contexts, landscapes and struggles in Ethiopia. As Myers et al. (2018) have argued, the outcomes of distribution in REDD+ are highly political and cannot be adequately addressed through technical, compensatory mechanisms.

The depoliticised framings of distributive and procedural justice in the policy discourse reflect a form of misrecognition, in which there is inadequate engagement with the cultural dimensions of justice by the REDD+ policy-makers. As fully outlined in Chapter 5, this contrasts with the cultural values ascribed by the communities to the forests and forest governance. The forests appear to be indicative of the communities' identity and intimately bound with their sense of livelihoods and community functioning. The limited attention paid to recognition justice is broadly in line with what climate justice scholars have proposed (Forsyth and Sikor 2014, Schlosberg 2012, Edwards, Reid and Hunter 2015) and is indicative of a utilitarian-driven, globalised approach to REDD+.

In positioning REDD+ as a global initiative that has global benefits and burdens and that operates through top-down, placeless frameworks, the international policy actors necessarily devalue the specific cultural, political and sub-national contexts of tropical-forested nations. Ultimately, this enables a delocalised and depoliticised version of REDD+ to dominate. As McEwan (2008) proposed in relation to international development initiatives, the 'internal deficiencies-external expertise' narrative is entangled with inadequate political and cultural recognition: "the diversity of African historical experiences and trajectories, socio-political contexts and political

situations are reduced to a set of core deficiencies for which external generated solutions must be devised”.

The disengagement by the policy-makers with the fundamental political and culturally-oriented dimensions of REDD+ through top-down frameworks is reflected in its framing of ‘land rights’ and ‘indigenous people’s rights’. The two terms are used frequently by the REDD+ policy actors. Indeed, ‘respect for indigenous and local community knowledge and rights’ acts as one of the key components of the safeguards framework, aligning with the UN’s ‘Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples’ (2007). Additionally, as outlined in Chapter 6, land rights are frequently indicated to be key factors in determining both the effectiveness and equity of REDD+ interventions.

However, the terms ‘indigenous people’s rights’ and ‘land rights’ emerge in depoliticised and decontextualised forms in the REDD+ policy discourse. These are often employed in generalised and blanket forms, unrelated to specific local-level, political or cultural concerns. The terms are frequently included in the policy texts, but it is often unclear what they specifically refer to. Given the broader lack of contextual, political and cultural engagement, the inadequate clarification of ‘indigenous peoples rights’ and ‘land rights’ in the policy discourse would indicate that policy-makers are simply paying the terms lip service, in order to align sufficiently with the emerging international framework around indigenous peoples and to garner further public support for REDD+ policies.

Indigenous peoples are consistently framed by international REDD+ actors outside of their specific contexts and struggles, as homogenous groups that can deliver REDD+ goals. Throughout the policy texts, the identity of indigenous people’s is framed as being bound up with a capacity to deliver environmental sustainability and to have the inherent means to conserve tropical forests. Indeed, this relates to the proposed ‘eco-political capital’ that is said to be held by indigenous people’s that is “difficult to sustain” over time (Upton 2014). As Sikor and Cam (2016: 225) noted, “Global perspectives on the needs, interests and rights of indigenous peoples may not match the claims and notions of forest justice asserted by marginalized people at the local or national level”.

In presenting land rights and indigenous people's rights in depoliticised and decontextualised forms, key aspects of their contextual importance in Ethiopia become side-lined. Land rights have emerged as a significantly contested political issue in Ethiopia in recent decades and embedded with other issues in the country, including surrounding human rights or social justice, or as Bekele et al (2015: 64) suggest, "the epicenter of the political dome in Ethiopia". Indeed, as indicated earlier in the chapter, the community interviews highlighted that land rights represent fundamentally political struggles of distributive justice for rural Oromia populations. Land-grabbing and minimal land rights reflect more substantive and broader socio-political marginalisation for these communities in Ethiopia.

Accordingly, it can be suggested that REDD+ policy frameworks that do not adequately engage with the specific contextual and political struggles associated with land rights and indigenous people's rights render them as managerial and technically-framed issues. This acts as further evidence of the presence of an anti-politics narrative in the REDD+ policy discourse. Here, 'indigenous people's rights' and 'land rights' become integrated into top-down, bureaucratic and technical frameworks in which fundamental political and cultural struggles are necessarily absent and are negotiated as if in a political vacuum. Indeed, as Myers et al (2018: 2) argued, international REDD+ actors seek to reduce the inherent political 'messiness' of tropical forest governance by applying "problematic large-scale technical solutions to issues that are broadly recognised as deeply political".

Furthermore, the findings suggest a lack of reflection by the policy-makers on broader political, ideological and structural factors that surround REDD+ and climate change. Notably, the orientation of REDD+ as a neoliberal, market-based response to the climate crisis (see Chapter 6) is left largely unexamined and undebated in the policy discourse. The few debates that emerge on the role of the market in REDD+ tend to be form as part of a depoliticised framing that does not adequately engage with the fundamental or underlying political issues at the heart of neoliberal approaches to the climate crisis.

As indicated in Chapter 6, the use of the market and neoliberal modes of environmental governance in REDD+ is largely naturalised and left unchallenged. It is seen to be inevitable that that REDD+ funding will ultimately be sourced through

neoliberal-led market-based mechanisms, given the constructed inherent limitations of the public sources of financing. If REDD+ is to ultimately succeed as a climate change mitigation mechanism and a sustainable forest governance initiative, it is seen to be necessary to move beyond public sources of funding in the policy discourse.

Embedded in a naturalisation of REDD+ as a future market-based mechanism is the consistent side-lining of debates on the politics and ideology of REDD+ in the policy discourse. On very few occasions in the policy texts is the fundamental nature of the market-based, neoliberal-led approach to REDD+ questioned or debated. If issues arise with market forces in REDD+ strategies, these are not seen to be fundamental or systemic, but bound up with the constructed 'internal deficiencies' of the recipient nations. For instance, one of the NICFI representatives stated the following:

*“It would be good if countries had the investment capacity but many of those countries who need it more have weak investment capacity so foreign investment is crucial, adding the private sector into that of course. With development funding, you can only get so far, and it doesn't really change things unless you have the willingness of investors to implement new business opportunities.”*

Here, a clear dichotomy emerges in the policy discourse between the inherent value of the market and private sector investment as “crucial” and the constraints of these in the REDD+ recipient nations, given the constructed 'deficiencies' in financial and institutional capacities. Notably, the interviewee states that “you can only get so far” with market-based funding in REDD+. The implication is that the nature of the market and private investment in REDD+ is fundamentally or inherently positive but that this is limited due to implementation challenges in the recipient nations: the “weak investment capacity” and “willingness” of the Ethiopian state.

On multiple occasions in the texts of NICFI and the multilateral institutions, the “investment” and “institutional capacities” of the Ethiopian state are negatively framed as “weak” and as a key challenge to the adoption of REDD+ as a market-based mechanism. Accordingly, as indicated earlier in the chapter, barriers to progress of REDD+ as market-based mechanism become constructed as internally-derived and fundamentally bound up with the Ethiopian state's deficiencies in

governance and institutional capacities, as well as the nature of Ethiopian politics more broadly. Although the Ethiopian government has shifted to the pursuit of a market-based development strategy in recent years, the government nevertheless retains a significant control over the economy (Lavers 2012).

On a number of occasions in the policy texts and interviews, Ethiopia's political ideology is implicitly and explicitly critiqued and challenged. In particular, a World Bank representative, in reference to the challenges of adopting REDD+ as a market-based mechanism in Ethiopia, states that "the government is not very open for big companies and yeah, it's just a different type of government, it's not like in the UK or in Brazil...". The implication here is that there is something inherently 'wrong' with the structure and ideology of the Ethiopian state, contrasted with 'other' countries, which are seen to be dealing with private, foreign investment in the 'correct' way. This positions the political stance and ideology of the Ethiopian government in fundamental opposition to the realisation of a successful REDD+.

It is naturalised that other political systems, which work outside of the dominant neoliberal ideology, are inherently flawed, inappropriate for delivering sources of REDD+ funding in the long-term and not conducive to achieving progress in REDD+. Thus, such discourse necessarily suggests that progress in achieving the aims of REDD+ can only be achieved through the use of neoliberal-led, market-based mechanisms as the funding sources. This is intimately tied up with a dominant, Western worldview, which may impose itself on the non-Western world and marginalise other ways of thinking and other political ideologies, as critical climate change scholars have indicated (Smith 2007, Paavola and Adger 2006, Hulme 2009).

Accordingly, fundamental debate on the adoption of REDD+ as a market-based mechanism appears bound and closed. In the policy discourse, attention is shifted away from the fundamental, systemic and underlying nature of the adoption of REDD+ as a market-based mechanism towards the 'internal deficiencies' and political ideologies of the tropical-forested nations. While neoliberal-led, market-based solutions to REDD+ are left largely uncontested and undebated, political structures that may not be conducive to such solutions, as in Ethiopia, are constructed as antithetical to the progress of REDD+.



The limited nature of fundamental and systemic debate in the REDD+ policy discourse is also evident in the framing of multinational corporations. To varying extents, all of the policy-makers identify it as critical to involve multinational corporations in discussions, funding and implementation of REDD+. In particular, the World Bank places emphasis upon the necessity of encouraging corporations to make commitments to reduce the deforestation levels implicated in their supply chains if REDD+ is to succeed in its aims.

While discussions of multinational corporations by the policy-makers potentially move the debate beyond solely 'internal deficiencies', these tend to emerge as part of a depoliticised discourse. Terms such as "zero deforestation supply zones" dominate the discussion, acting to frame the debate in largely managerial, pragmatic and technical forms that do not adequately engage with the fundamental nature of global markets and capital. The corporations' actions are often painted in an overwhelmingly positive light, with the discourse emphasising what action they are *taking* towards improving the sustainability of their supply chains, rather than the negative actions they have previously taken which has led to deforestation in the first place or the role that they more broadly play in global GHG emissions.

The contradiction is that while the role of multinational corporations in REDD+ is seen to be 'crucial' by the policy actors, the reasons for this 'crucial' role are rarely discussed, i.e. the entanglement of multinational corporations in the climate crisis and large-scale deforestation. On only a few occasions is the role of mass consumption in the Global North indicated as a driver of tropical deforestation. For instance, a UN representative identified the global demand for soya as a key driver of deforestation in Brazil. However, these examples are only given in isolation and act as exceptions in the REDD+ policy discourse. Rather, discussions of the drivers of deforestation tend to be internally-framed, depoliticised and largely outside of broader debates on the fundamental nature of multinational corporations and mass consumption in the Global North.

Relatedly, the entanglement of markets, the neoliberalism and global capital with justice issues in REDD+ is not acknowledged on any occasion in the policy discourse. Climate justice scholars have critically integrated the extent to which market-based solutions may lead to just outcomes in international climate

governance, notably the idea that international carbon trading and offsetting mechanisms allows actors in the Global North to shift climate burdens to the Global South (Ervine 2013, Lovera 2009, Lovell, Bulkeley and Liverman 2009).

However, justice-led debates on the implications of market-based mechanisms and neoliberal modes of governance are not engaged with in the REDD+ policy discourse. When the social and community-level dimensions of REDD+ are discussed, these are not connected with the fundamental political ideologies at the heart of the policy-makers' decision-making or the adoption of REDD+ as a market-based mechanism. By leaving the broader, structural assumptions of neoliberal-led, market-based mechanisms unquestioned, the climate justice debates implicated within these become simultaneously depoliticised and masked.

The bound and restricted nature of the debates on the markets and, more broadly, neoliberalism, as a political ideology, in the REDD+ policy discourse acts as further evidence of the 'anti-politics' agenda. As part of such agenda, there is a noted and consistent move to avoid explicit and significant engagement with debates on the fundamental and underlying nature of the market. The lack of debate practised by the policy-makers on the market-based orientation of REDD+ echoes recent literature on depoliticisation which has highlighted the existence of a 'post-political condition' in climate governance, in which the dominance of market-based mechanisms and neoliberal ideology is inevitable and unquestionable, characterised by the notion of manufactured consensus (Swyngedouw 2013, Berglez and Olausson 2013, Kenis and Mathjus 2014).

The limited engagement with the underlying assumptions and structures of market-based mechanisms in the REDD+ policy discourse aligns with a 'reformist' position on environmental governance, which is proposed by critical climate change scholars to result in the narrowing of debate and policy ambitions (Okereke 2008, Hajer 1995, Swyngedouw 2010). These findings also fit with Dryzek's (1997) conception of 'economic rationalism', in which issues of justice are understood in a machinist sense; here, in order to address the issues, parts of the machine need fixing, but there is nothing fundamentally 'wrong' with the machine.

Buscher (2010) argues that technocratic policy frameworks limit engagement with systemic and fundamental political debates in order to reduce the inherent

messiness of REDD+. The trade-offs associated with neoliberal modes of governance are masked in favour of populist participatory, inclusive and 'win-win-win' constructions of tropical forest governance. In avoiding debate with the fundamental and underlying nature of markets and neoliberal governance, REDD+ policy-makers shift attention away from its potential distributive effects and associations with the climate crisis.

### **Summary and Discussion**

The findings suggest that the REDD+ policy discussions represent a technical, managerial and ostensibly neutral framing of justice issues in REDD+ that side-lines and binds debate on the fundamental politics and 'political justice' at the heart of these. A depoliticisation of REDD+ and associated justice issues occurs on a multiscalar level. It ranges from the decontextualising of local and regional-level justice issues in rural Ethiopia that have been disconnected from the political struggles of the Oromo people to the rendering technical of broader, international-level climate justice issues and the structural and systemic factors at the heart of these. At both levels of analyses, debates have been bound and removed from their fundamental, political contexts.

Thus, the analyses of the REDD+ policy discourse suggests a technical framing of justice issues that is rooted in 'anti-politics', aligning with Ferguson (1994) and Murray Li's (2007) understanding of international development interventions in the Global South. Ferguson's (1994: xv) interpretation of the 'anti-politics machine' echoes these findings: "...depoliticising everything it touches, everywhere whisking political realities out of sight, all the while performing, almost unnoticed, its own pre-eminently political operation of expanding bureaucratic state power".

As multiple REDD+ scholars have suggested (Myers et al 2018, Buscher 2010, Chomba et al. 2016), the managerial, depoliticised visions of REDD+ put forward in technical frameworks diverges significantly from the socio-political and cultural recognition concerns embedded in forest-dependent communities. These findings add further weight to the suggestion that fundamental norms diverge between the community and policy levels and that there is a distinct lack of self-reflection and debate among policy actors on what drives their frameworks.

Arguably, the very essence of depoliticisation is to seek compromise across the political, social and cultural spectrums and that technical visions of REDD+ allow a compromise to be reached that perhaps would not otherwise be possible (Myers et al 2018). However, while large-scale, international initiatives such as REDD+ may be justified in perpetuating an 'anti-politics' narrative in order to enhance progress, multiple scholars (Myers et al. 2018, Murray Li 2007, Ferguson 1994) highlight that such depoliticising agendas often have the opposite effects.

Indeed, Myers et al. (2018: 8) argue that many of the limitations of REDD+ are rooted in insufficient engagement with political issues and concerns, rather than technical failings, asserting that "projects that fail to appreciate the complexity of politics are setting themselves up for failure". This is, it is proposed, because progress in REDD+ is dependent on broader socio-political transformations in the recipient country. More specifically, sustainable forest governance is unlikely to advance in Ethiopia without the cultural and political recognition of rural communities, including the Oromo people, and a reduction in socio-economic and political inequalities in the country.

The depoliticised, technical frameworks perpetuated in the REDD+ policy discourse reflect the uneven power relations at play. The limited political and cultural recognition by the policy-makers are bound up with the top-down, expert-led and managerial orientation of REDD+. In such a set-up, it is unlikely that the culturally and politically-oriented needs, interests and values of the forest-dependent communities will be sufficiently acknowledged by REDD+ policy-makers and adequately integrated into REDD+ policy frameworks.

Thus, scholars suggest that 'anti-political fixes' and technical frameworks often result in the failure of development projects and only serve to further perpetuate 'messiness' and existing social injustices (Myers et al 2018, Buscher 2010, Murray Li 2007). The political complexities and challenges encountered during the design, management and implementation of REDD+ cannot be adequately addressed through an apolitical and technical framework. These findings can be viewed in the context of Lund et al's (2017) assertions: that technical, apolitical policy frameworks and models in the REDD+ community have legitimated the continued flow of resources as part of the latest 'conservation fad' yet have encountered significant

challenges in being implemented ‘on-the-ground’, given the complex political realities that they face. Accordingly, Lund et al. (2017: 132) propose that the technical and complex version of REDD+ “has been turned into a policy model that may be, in effect, unimplementable” on-the-ground.

### **7.5 Chapter Summary**

In summary, this chapter has built upon previous theorisations of depoliticisation, rendering technical and ‘anti-politics’ to specifically examine the extent to which climate justice concerns are depoliticised in the REDD+ policy discourse. These findings act to critically and empirically interrogate the concept of depoliticisation in climate governance, in the specific context of REDD+. A technical and depoliticising REDD+ agenda is evident in a number of different forms: the prominence of an ‘internal deficiencies-external expertise’ narrative; the rendering technical and depoliticising of fundamentally political justice issues through the international safeguards framework; the broader emergence of multiscale ‘anti-politics’ in the policy discourse.

Thus, in this chapter, I suggest that policy actors minimally engage with the fundamental politics at the heart of justice issues in REDD+ at all scales of concern, distilling complex realities through technical frameworks outside of their socio-political, cultural and structural contexts, as similarly outlined by other scholars (Myers et al. 2018, Lund et al. 2017). This means that neither the broader structural, socio-political or moral conditions nor the specific contexts in the sub-regions in Ethiopia are adequately engaged with by the REDD+ policy-makers. Instead, justice issues in REDD+ become embedded in a placeless, managerial and bureaucratic safeguards framework that inadequately reflects the needs, concerns and values of forest-dependent communities.

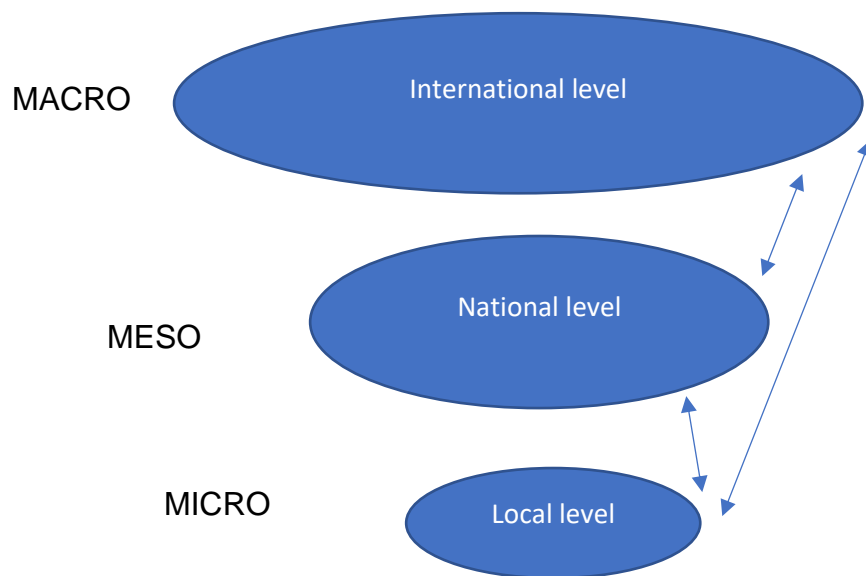
## Chapter 8: Discussion

### **8.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, there is a critical reflection on the usefulness, strength and value of the multiscalar model that has been adopted in this research. This section considers what the multiscalar framework has offered in researching climate justice in the context of REDD+, as well as the limitations that were found in implementing this model in practice. Following this, there is an outline and discussion of the key findings that emerged in this research across the three analysis chapters. I suggest that four main themes were dominant in the analysis: (i) *A Formulation of REDD+ in the Interests of the Global North* (ii) *A Top-down, Statist REDD+ Framework and Limited Actual and Significant Community Participation* (iii) *Fundamental Divergences in Justice Norms Between Policy and Community Actors* (iv) *REDD+ Policy Disengagement with Fundamental Issues of Justice and Depoliticisation*.

### **8.2 Reflections on the Multiscalar Framework**

In this thesis, I have empirically examined the REDD+ partnership between Norway and Ethiopia through a multiscalar framework (see Figure 9.1 below) and justice lens. The research demonstrates the usefulness of unpacking the implicit justice norms that underpin international climate governance, allowing us to consider how these may configure future climate action. It responds to calls from climate justice scholars to consider what may drive climate action (Klinsky et al. 2017, Okereke and Coventry 2016). An empirical justice-led analysis of REDD+ provides a useful analytic in critically engaging with the underlying assumptions of REDD+ discourse and in uncovering the conceptions of justice that underpin and justify specific REDD+ practices and strategies.



**Figure 9.1: A Multiscalar analysis of climate justice**

In examining REDD+ discourse through a justice lens, this research has added empirical analysis to the climate justice scholarship. It responds to gaps in the extant literature, in which the primary interrogation of climate justice has been thus far abstract and theoretical in nature, and builds upon limited analysis that has extrapolated the underlying norms of climate change governance (Di Gregorio et al., 2015, Harris and Symons 2013, Okereke 2008, Okereke and Dooley 2010). In doing so, this thesis builds upon Okereke's (2008) justice-led discourse analysis of climate governance by specifically unpacking the *scalar* constructions of justice norms in REDD+ discourse. Responding to calls for refined, scalar analyses of climate justice (Barrett 2013, Schlosberg 2004), this research engages with the community discourse present in Ethiopia alongside international, national and local forms of REDD+ governance.

More specifically, this thesis builds upon previous research that has interrogated divergences in justice norms across scales of governance (Sikor et al. 2014, Martin et al. 2014). The use of a multiscalar model in this research has allowed an in-depth interrogation of the norms that are constructed in REDD+ discourse and how these diverge or synergise across scales of governance. Through such a framework, researchers can draw out dominant and marginalised justice norms and perspectives across international, national and local levels of REDD+ governance. This research

is motivated by considering how underlying justice norms may direct values and priorities in the grounded realities and outcomes of REDD+ agendas.

This thesis has contributed to key debates on REDD+, in specifically considering challenges of REDD+ and policy-community conflicts from a (climate) justice perspective. The research is concerned with how variations in fundamental justice norms and values may underpin or explain conflicts and disagreements in REDD+ interventions, notably between policy and community actors. Accordingly, it provides a justice-led grounding of broader critiques of REDD+ and builds upon previous justice-centric analyses of REDD+ and international forest conservation initiatives (Okereke and Dooley 2010, Page 2016, Sikor et al. 2014). In utilising a multiscale framework, it extends these to consider interactions between local-level issues in REDD+ and broader contexts, structures and climate justice debates.

However, despite the evident strength and value of a scalar examination of REDD+ through a justice lens, there emerged distinct limitations to the operationalisation of the multiscale framework in this context. The multiscale model that guided this research was not as simplistic in reality and a number of complexities were brought out during the fieldwork.

Firstly, while directing attention towards international, national and local scales of governance proved useful in interrogating REDD+ on a multiscale level, there emerged challenges in easily distinguishing between three discrete scales of REDD+. On initial inspection, each examined actor converges on one of the three scales of REDD+ governance (e.g. multilateral organisations on an international scale). However, during the research, it became apparent that these distinctions were not as clear cut, given the operational and organisational complexities of REDD+. Notably, the Norwegian government is considered as a 'national' actor, but operates internationally, in developing the international REDD+ agenda, providing international funding for REDD+ partnerships and collaborating with multilateral institutions. Elsewhere, the Norwegian NGOs run projects across borders, but tend to focus efforts on specific, 'local' REDD+ projects and align closely with the regional environmental NGOs in Ethiopia.

Secondly, while this research highlights the insights that can be gained through examining and assessing scalar interactions in international climate action, the close



relations between some REDD+ actors act to blur the distinction between the international, national and local scales. With REDD+, funding trajectories are likely to indicate influence across organisations. In this research, similar discourses emerged from both NICFI and UN-REDD, which is perhaps not surprising considering that NICFI is the largest funder of UN-REDD and exerts considerable influence on the international REDD+ agenda. NICFI also provides a large part of the funding for the examined NGOs in this research, including Rainforest Foundation, Development Fund and EWNRA.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the multiscalar model does not account for variances at the three scales of REDD+ governance. While discursive overlaps were evident among different actors at the same level of governance, distinctions also emerged that cannot be accounted for using this model. Most notably, there were significant differences in the discourses of the Ethiopian and Norwegian governments, despite them both being attributed to the 'national level' of the model. Additionally, it is necessary to critically examine variations at the community level and to not consider the community as a homogenous entity. Thus, while key broad findings have emerged from the adoption of this multiscalar model, it does present a number of limitations and there is a need for a more ingrained, nuanced and multiscalar, justice-led analysis of REDD+.

Alongside a critical appraisal of the multiscalar model, broader methodological reflections can be made in understanding the value of this research. The use of a number of qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews, focus groups and document analysis enabled access to the requisite depth, nuance and detail for a justice-led interrogation of REDD+ discourse. Additionally, significant value emerged from the use of critical discourse analysis, in being able to better understand the power relations at the heart of REDD+ and international climate governance, notably considering whose conceptions of justice (and by association, whose interests) dominate and how these can configure future policy outcomes.

However, limitations to the research methodology emerged during the fieldwork, particularly in relation to my positionality in the interviews and focus groups at the community level. As EWNRA was involved in organising the interviews, finding a translator and selecting the interviewees, there were perceptions among the

community members that I was closely associated with the NGO. Given this, critical questions can be raised over the positivity of their responses towards the project and REDD+ more broadly. Indeed, conflicting evidence in the findings suggested that the interviewees at the community level were expressing support for EWNRA and the project as part of a performative 'adaptation strategy' of sorts, as Ayana (2014) found elsewhere. In other words, it may be that, as a perceived associate of EWNRA, the community members were saying what they thought I wanted to hear.

Additionally, as EWNRA was involved in selecting participants to be interviewed, critical questions can be raised over the extent to which the interviewees' responses accurately reflected the broader views and perspective of the community. Although I requested diversity of respondents, I did not personally select the participants and, accordingly, it may be that those interviewed are those that are most positive towards the project. I may have missed those participants which had alternative views or livelihoods or that may lose out as a result of the introduction of the project. This is borne out in the findings which indicates an overwhelming consensus among participants on the project and a distinct lack of critical voices in the interviews.

It is important to acknowledge the partiality and subjectivity of participants' responses and that there are limitations to these results, in line with the positionality of interviewer and participants. This is relevant at all scales, but was particularly problematic at the community level, with regards to my perceived association with EWNRA. I sought to acknowledge these limitations throughout this research and recognised the partiality of some of the findings in the analysis chapters, understanding that the interviewee's responses cannot be simply taken at face value and must be critically interrogated.

### **8.3 A Formulation of REDD+ in the Interests of the Global North**

The findings suggest that the REDD+ policy discourse is primarily driven by the interests of the Global North. A cost-effective narrative was dominant in the policy discourse, in which the REDD+ policy-makers prioritise the cheap and large-scale reductions in global GHG emissions through the forest sector. Here, the policy-makers act to fundamentally frame REDD+ as a cost-saving initiative for mitigating against climate change outside of the borders of the industrialised nations, meaning that critical and significant reductions in domestic GHG emissions can be avoided.

To varying extents and emerging in distinct, contextual forms, all of the policy actors perpetuate a carbon-centric and cost-effective vision of REDD+ that is entangled with power relations and maintaining the status quo.

For the Norwegian government, REDD+ appears to be used as a tool for ‘politically offsetting’ its continued dependency on an expansive petroleum industry and the role that it plays in exporting GHG emissions worldwide. As suggested elsewhere (Angelsen 2016, Hermansen and Kasa 2014), the emphasis placed on Norwegian’s proposed leadership on REDD+ in the policy discourse seeks to shift attention away from its role as a major fossil fuel exporter. A cost-effective orientation of REDD+ largely aligns with the Norwegian government’s strategies and positioning since the early 1990s, in which it seeks to maintain its status as a ‘front-runner’ in international environmental governance (Hermansen and Kasa 2014, Okereke and Dooley 2010, Angelsen 2016).

Under such a framing, Norway can take the credit for financially inducing REDD+ recipient nations to reduce their deforestation and forest degradation levels while not scaling back its own role in extracting and exporting fossil fuels worldwide. The Norwegian government’s continued complicity in the extraction and exportation of fossil fuels is incompatible with meeting international climate change commitments. Given the constraints of carbon budgets that relate to the 1.5-2°C targets set in the Paris Agreement, the Norwegian government’s inaction on scaling back, and even expanding, its petroleum industry acts to discharge greater climate burdens onto the Global South, towards communities and regions that are less capable to bear them and have least responsibility for them, as McKinnon, Muttitt and Trout (2017) have proposed. A primary focus on REDD+ by Norway is an inherently risky climate change mitigation strategy, given concerns over the large-scale roll-out of the initiative and its effectiveness in significantly reducing global GHG emissions (Lund 2017).

Relatedly, the findings indicate the devaluing of the livelihoods and development dimensions of REDD+ in the policy discourse. Throughout the policy texts and interviews, the livelihoods or development aspirations of REDD+ are consistently side-lined or rendered as secondary to the carbon-centric priorities of the policy-makers. The analysis suggests that if wider benefits can be gained through REDD+

interventions, the funders are likely to celebrate this, but, crucially, are unlikely to actively pursue such benefits in the first place. Elsewhere, the Ethiopian government uncritically assumes the realisation of a 'win-win-win' scenario in relation to REDD+ and the broader CRGE strategy. Without active and reflexive engagement of the immense challenges of meeting the needs of both agricultural development and forest conservation, it is unlikely that the issue will be organically resolved in a just way that acknowledges the multiple land-uses of the rural poor.

A calibration of REDD+ that does not actively prioritise the livelihoods or development dimensions of tropical forest governance is likely to mean that the initiative works against the needs, rights and interests of rural communities in Ethiopia, as suggested elsewhere (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, Okereke and Dooley 2010, Paladino 2011). If trade-offs occur in the implementation of REDD+, the lack of priority placed upon the livelihood or development aspects suggest that it would be these which would be sacrificed. Subsequently, critical questions can be raised over the extent to which REDD+ interventions are actively pro-poor in orientation or can form part of a 'just transition'.

For the communities, what was of fundamental importance were the potential livelihoods and socio-economic benefits of the project at a local level, to a significantly greater extent than the role that REDD+ can play as a climate change mitigation tool or in sequestering carbon. Largely, the community-level interests in REDD+ aligned closely with the values and norms indicated in the Norwegian and Ethiopian NGOs' discourse. Indeed, the NGOs offered an alternative conception of REDD+ than in the policy discourse, in which the livelihoods or development dimensions of the initiative are placed more centrally in their core aims and strategies. Accordingly, the findings suggest that the role played by NGOs in the formulation and design of REDD+ interventions is likely to be key in determining the extent to which livelihoods and development dimensions of forest governance form central components of REDD+.

Although REDD+ is yet to move into the payments stage in Ethiopia and efforts are currently geared towards enabling 'readiness' in the country, the discourse analysis indicates an orientation of REDD+ in the interests of the Global North and one which is unlikely to result in substantive benefits for marginalised rural communities in

Ethiopia and may further entrench existing socio-economic and political inequalities in the country. Evidence in other contexts in which implementation is taking off suggests adverse impacts on livelihoods at the local level through, for instance, community resettlement or economic exclusion (Sills et al. 2014, Lund et al. 2017). Accordingly, as suggested by a number of climate justice scholars (Chomba et al. 2016, McAfee 2012, Ribot 2010), there needs to be a shift towards an active and explicit pro-poor orientation of REDD+, in which livelihoods or development dimensions are integrated into core REDD+ strategies, rather than as secondary principles or as ‘co-benefits’.

#### **8.4 A Top-down REDD+ Framework and Limited Actual and Significant Community Participation**

Despite an indicated shift towards a more bottom-up and project-driven structure, the findings suggest that REDD+ continues to be primarily framed as a top-down policy framework and ultimately statist in orientation. Fundamentally, the policy-makers continue to be driven by the notion that the performance of REDD+ can be maximised if designed and implemented as a strictly national-level framework. This acts as largely a continuation of the powerful role that state actors have adopted in broader international climate change negotiations and decision-making (Okereke and Coventry 2016, Roberts and Parks 2010).

However, the findings also suggest that the top-down orientation emerges beyond the state level, considering the imposition of the values and agendas of the international institutions upon the Ethiopian government’s REDD+ strategies and policy design. The evidence offers that the fundamental elements of the REDD+ agenda are set at the international level through multilateral institutions, notably the UN and the World Bank. Thus, I propose that the fundamental REDD+ agenda emerges through an ‘international-national’ political interface.

These findings highlighted that, despite the large-scale rollout of PFM and a devolved forest governance framework in Ethiopia, participation of communities in the fundamental decision-making and design of REDD+ remains ultimately limited and technical in nature. The community discourse is generally positive towards participatory rights and empowerment and indicates that these have been enhanced following the introduction of the EWNRA-led REDD+ project. However, the evidence

suggests that participatory empowerment for the entire community in Nono Sele may be somewhat limited in reality, emerging as part of an ‘agreement as awareness’ discourse.

Analysis of both the community and policy-level discourses suggests that fundamental REDD+ decision-making is made at higher levels and that the underlying assumptions of the REDD+ agenda have already been pre-determined by the time forms of participation arise at the community level. Despite the inclusion of ‘participation’ in the safeguards framework, it appears to largely emerge at a rhetorical level and is bound up with meeting minimum standards, as scholars have suggested elsewhere (Blaikie 2006, Myers et al. 2018). The findings suggest the existence of ‘patrimonial’ form of participation in the policy discourse, which exists within the broader pre-set contours of the REDD+ agenda (Myers et al. 2018, Ribot 2011).

In the case of Ethiopia, despite the recent shift towards PFM and a more devolved approach to forest governance, there remain considerable political challenges to the realisation of actual and sufficient community participation in the country. Despite the formal adoption of PFM and a decentralising framework in Ethiopia, the fundamental design and make-up of REDD+ interventions appear to be made at the state and international levels. These findings fit within the context of broader Ethiopian politics and political discourse, in which the government’s strategies of ‘developmentalism’ has tended to economically and politically marginalise rural communities in the country, particularly the Oromo people, and to be insufficiently democratic or participatory (Gardner 2018, Amnesty International 2017).

A top-down, state-driven and insufficiently participatory form of REDD+ is unlikely to reflect the needs and interests of marginalised rural communities in Oromia. Indeed, climate justice scholars have placed significant attention on the importance of strong and effective participation in formulating a just vision of REDD+ (Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017, Agrawal and Angelsen 2012, Paladino 2011). Concerns over participation and a top-down orientation of REDD+ link closely with distributive issues, whereby a centralised system not only limits the agency or voice of communities in formulation and implementation of REDD+, but also presents challenges in ensuring that the financial benefits effectively and equitably flow down

to the community-level (Larson and Ribot 2012, Korhonen-Kurki et al. 2012, Paladino 2011).

These findings add further weight to the argument that the top-down nature of REDD+ clashes with the fundamental roots of PFM (Agrawal and Angelsen 2012, Larrazábal et al. 2012, Bastakoti and Davidsen 2017), as well as speaking to research that has provided broader critiques of PFM (Blaikie 2006, Lund et al. 2017, Corbera et al. 2017). This research contributes to existing understandings of PFM and REDD+, in drawing out the limits of participation in the specific context of Ethiopia. Accordingly, I recommend a shift away from 'patrimonial' forms of participation towards the actual and significant empowerment of communities in REDD+ decision-making and the enhanced integration of community-level needs into policy frameworks.

### **8.5 Fundamental Divergences in Justice Norms Between Policy and Community Actors**

In these findings, a 'utilitarian-neoliberal' nexus was indicated to be dominant in the policy discourse. Utilitarianism emerges in the policy discourse through a consequentialist pre-occupation with the *end-results* of REDD+ and a construction of the benefits and outcomes as *long-term* and *global* in orientation. The dominance of utilitarianism in the REDD+ policy discourse aligns with what climate justice scholars have found in other contexts (Edwards 2015, Sikor et al. 2014), as well as what previous analyses of Norway's climate change policy has suggested (Hovden and Lindseth 2004, Okereke and Dooley 2010).

The presence of utilitarian ethics and a 'bigger picture' narrative acts to underpin and morally justify an orientation of REDD+ that is carbon-centric in nature and marginalises the livelihoods or development aspirations of REDD+. The objective for the policy-makers here is to maximise 'overall utility', even if this may compromise community-level rights and needs. Utilitarian thought may justify the displacement of forest-dependent communities from their land or the exclusion of local people from their key sources of subsistence and income in the forest. Indeed, the pursuit of the 'greater good' tends to favour those more privileged.

Simultaneously, there is significant evidence of Okereke's (2008) proposed 'neoliberal conceptions of justice' in the REDD+ policy discourse. These primarily emerge through two key discursive framings: *Aversion to Welfare-based Resource Redistribution* and *Emphasis on Free Market Solutions to Environmental Problems*. Although there remains a lack of clarity over the future sourcing of REDD+ funds, analysis suggests the presence of broader neoliberal logics and assumptions in the policy discourse, as well as a broader commoditisation or 'neoliberalisation' of nature (e.g. Castree 2008). It is naturalised that REDD+ will ultimately be funded through the market, and that this is inherently superior to public sources of funds. Climate justice scholars have raised concerns over the extent to which a market-driven formulation of REDD+ could conflict with the rights, interests and needs of the forest-dependent communities and devalue the multiple uses of the forests for the rural poor (McAfee 2014, Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012, Chomba et al. 2016).

However, in this research, I suggest that, rather than underpinning the policy-makers' actions and strategies as 'neoliberal conceptions of justice', the neoliberal forms of environmental governance present in the policy discourse act as the *means* rather than the *ends* of REDD+. In other words, market-based mechanisms are the vehicles for realising more fundamental utilitarian outcomes. Broad synergies can be identified in the policy discourse between neoliberal forms of environmental governance and utilitarianism: notably, the dominant cost-effective and carbon-centric narrative is grounded in neoliberal ideology and market-based logics, but is fundamentally underpinned by utilitarian ethics that prioritise the global and long-term pursuit of averting dangerous levels of climate change.

In drawing out the complimentary and synergistic linkages between neoliberal environmental governance and utilitarian conceptions of justice, these findings build upon recent theoretical work by Edwards (2015). Considered thus, neoliberal forms of environmental governance are not just or unjust in and of themselves but are instead underpinned by, and shaped, to serve other justice norms. If the market-based mechanisms of REDD+ are considered as vehicles for the realisation of broader, more fundamental ethics, it can be suggested that their current formulation is not foreclosed and that the injustices associated with neoliberal forms of environmental governance are not inevitable (Ferguson 2009, Collier 2005).



A conceptualised 'utilitarian-neoliberal' nexus allows us to better understand the contingency of market tools in REDD+, whereby, despite the prevalence of neoliberal rhetoric and logics in the policy discourse, there is nevertheless ample evidence that it is public actors which continue to remain in primary control of the REDD+ processes (e.g. governments, multilateral organisations) and that, the majority of REDD+ funds continue to be sourced from ODA budgets (Turnhout et al. 2017). While a carbon-centric narrative dominates the policy discourse, a global compliance market for forest carbon has thus far largely failed to materialise and there are few signs that one will develop in the post-Paris era (Turnhout et al. 2017, Lund et al. 2017).

At the community level, egalitarian norms were indicated to be dominant, posing a challenge to, and existing alongside, the utilitarian-neoliberal nexus at the policy level. In Nono Sele, the evidence indicated the importance of equality in the design and implementation of the REDD+ PFM project for the forest-dependent communities, emerging as part of a discourse around 'equal sharing', 'equal rights' and 'equal decision-making'. Largely, the egalitarianism present at the community level appears to largely align with the norms of EWNRA. The form of egalitarianism dominant in the community discourse is indicated to be communitarian in nature, with emphasis placed upon benefits for the *entire* community. However, despite the evidence not highlighting forms of elite capture in the communities that was brought out in other REDD+ or PFM research (Myers et al. 2018, Corbera et al. 2017, Green and Lund 2015), the analysis suggests that there may be 'hidden minorities' that are not sufficiently having their voice heard in village discussions and that may lose materially from the introduction of the project.

The findings also indicate divergences between community-level and policy-level norms in relation to the value placed on different dimensions of justice (distributive, procedural and recognition). In contrast with the assertions of the majority of environmental justice scholars (Schlosberg 2004, Forsyth and Sikor 2014, Sikor et al. 2014), the analysis suggests that the policy-makers tend to prioritise the procedural dimensions of justice, while the forest-dependent communities are more likely to emphasise the importance of the distributive elements of REDD+.

Additionally, there is evidence of misrecognition in the policy discourse, whereby the cultural and specific sub-regional dimensions of REDD+ and forest governance tend to be side-lined by the policy-makers. While the community discourse indicated the cultural values of forests and forest conservation (through a 'forests as livelihoods' discourse), these are not sufficiently or actively considered by all of the policy-makers and does not appear to drive their decision-making on REDD+. These findings align with the concerns of much environmental justice research (Whyte 2011, Martin et al. 2014, Upton 2014) that has highlighted the marginalisation of local communities' perceptions of their environment.

Accordingly, the findings evidence significant conflicts between the values and interests of the REDD+ policy-makers and those of the communities, largely supporting what scholars have proposed in other contexts (Martin et al. 2014, Schlosberg 2012, Sikor et al. 2014, Myers et al. 2018). Here, universalist notions of justice prominent at the policy level are seen to be at odds with the needs, rights and norms of forest-dependent communities. These findings provide further supporting evidence that conflicts in REDD+ policy design, implementation and management are underpinned by, and reflect, more fundamental differences in actors' norms and ethics.

The competing conceptions of justice in the REDD+ discourse are intimately bound up with power relations and aligned with the construction of certain knowledge 'truths' about forests, with the dominant ethics of the policy-makers directing present and future orientations of REDD+ (Sikor and Cam 2016, Myers et al. 2018). Subsequently, despite the evolution of REDD+ frameworks and the integration of safeguards into the REDD+ agenda, concerns can be raised over the extent to which the (culturally-oriented) needs and interests of the forest-dependent communities are actively considered and valued by REDD+ policy-makers, which, as Martin et al. (2014) suggest, is likely to determine both the equity and effectiveness of the REDD+ agenda.

This research recommends an enhanced bottom-up integration of community-level needs, interests and values and of recognition justice concerns in the REDD+ policy frameworks, taking into account cultural and sub-regional variations in values and needs. Accordingly, I suggest a move away from 'placeless' and universalist policy

frameworks that tend to dominate the REDD+ sphere towards a ‘pluriversalist’ formulation of REDD+ that fundamentally acknowledges alternative, culturally-oriented conceptions of reality, as suggested more broadly by Collard, Dempsey and Sundberg (2015). A recognition of alternative stories and narratives is specifically an anti-colonial aspiration, as Collard, Dempsey and Sundberg (2015: 328) observe: “supporting already existing ‘worlding’ practices that enact worlds different from those produced by European imperialism and settler colonialism...to build a world of many worlds”. Subsequently, attention can be directed towards how fundamental conflicts in REDD+ can be resolved and how relationships can be built between REDD+ actors that tend to have different needs, interests and values.

### **8.6 REDD+ Policy Disengagement with Fundamental Issues of Justice and Depoliticisation**

Broadly put, there is significant and consistent disengagement by the REDD+ policy actors with the fundamental, deeper issues of justice associated with international climate action and sustainable forest governance in the tropics, pertaining to socio-political, cultural and ethical dimensions. On multiple scales of concerns, the policy discourse largely lacks reflection on the North’s responsibility for climate change, colonial relations and specific socio-political issues in recipient nations. Such disengagement emerges through a depoliticising, technical and managerial safeguards framework.

The findings suggest minimal engagement by the policy-makers with the Global North’s responsibility for climate change in their REDD+ strategies and discourse. On the rare occasions when it is acknowledged, it is not seen to be feasible or practical that responsibility for climate change informs the design, management and implementation of REDD+ or wider international climate action. For the Norwegian government, NICFI’s policy discourse acts to effectively discharge its responsibilities for climate change as a major fossil fuel exporter onto tropical-forested nations in the Global South. In the multilateral institutions’ discourse, minimal engagement with the North’s responsibility for climate change emerges alongside a prominent narrative of ‘shared responsibility’, which seeks to justify the obligations of the international community for REDD+ based on the insufficient financial, institutional or technical

capacities of the recipient nations to implement REDD+ rather than a sense of responsibility for climate change.

Moreover, the findings suggest that the REDD+ policy discussions incorporate technical, managerial and ostensibly neutral framings of justice issues in REDD+ that side-lines and binds debate on the fundamental politics and 'political justice' at the heart of these. A form of 'anti-politics' is perpetuated in the policy discourse on multiscale levels, ranging from the disconnections in the local and regional-level justice issues in rural Ethiopia from their specific sub-regional, socio-political contexts, including the political struggles of the Oromo people to the rendering technical of broader, international-level climate justice issues and the structural and systemic factors embedded in REDD+.

The REDD+ safeguards framework can be understood as a depoliticising tool in similar ways as 'coding' has been in ethical certification schemes, where the more fundamental social and environmental concerns have been transformed into standards and codes of conduct (McEwan and Bek 2009, Klooster 2005). Here, the safeguards effectively *become* the social dimensions themselves. Accordingly, the act of intervening in community-level social justice issues becomes part of a box-ticking, narrowly-defined and document-intensive approach, which are driven by meeting a number of minimum standards, rather than actively seek a just vision of REDD+, as scholars have previously noted (Myers et al. 2018). These depoliticising, technical frameworks perpetuate a placeless discourse that insufficiently engages with the relevant sub-national, cultural or socio-political contexts in the recipient nations.

Intimately bound up with a technical formulation of justice issues in REDD+ in the safeguards framework is presence of an 'internal deficiencies-external expertise' narrative, in which challenges to the effectiveness and equity of REDD+ are internal in origin (e.g. institutional incapacities, financial mismanagement, political will) and the solutions to such challenges are necessarily external in origin. Here, only appointed experts are constructed as having the required skills and abilities to 'measure' progress on safeguards, to advise on how to further develop and to rectify technically-framed 'internal deficiencies' in recipient countries.

Broadly, these findings are aligned with current thinking on depoliticisation, whereby a technical construction of political phenomena is intimately linked with expertise (Myers et al. 2018, Murray Li 2007, Ferguson 1994). Here, an expert-led narrative effectively justifies and guides the top-down formulation of REDD+, including the unilateral imposition of international safeguards frameworks and is bound up with a broader de-valuing of local-level or lay knowledge bases in Ethiopia. As multiple scholars have suggested (Myers et al 2018, Buscher 2010, Chomba et al. 2016), the managerial, depoliticised visions of REDD+ put forward in technical frameworks diverge significantly from the socio-political and cultural recognition concerns embedded in forest-dependent communities, with little apparent self-reflection from the policy bodies on the robustness of its models and frameworks.

These findings build upon postcolonial readings of North-South relations that have emanated from recent international development studies (McEwan 2008, Murray Li 2007, Andreasson 2005) to highlight how the constructed 'internal deficiencies-external expertise' narrative performs a depoliticising function in the policy discourse. Here, attention is directed away from the actions, policies and frameworks of international actors towards the constructed 'deficiencies' of actors and institutions within Ethiopia in implementing them. This research highlights the value of conducting a postcolonial analysis in the context of REDD+, allowing insights to be gained into the persistence of colonial discourse and artificial separations of North and South in REDD+ policies.

These findings build upon previous theorisations of depoliticisation in climate governance to specifically examine the extent to which issues of (climate) justice are enveloped in an 'anti-politics' discourse in REDD+. However, while depoliticising, technical frameworks could be justified as a way of ensuring effectiveness and progress in REDD+, the evidence elsewhere suggests that 'anti-politics' agendas often have the opposite effects and only serve to further perpetuate 'messiness' and existing social injustices (Lund et al. 2017, Myers et al. 2018, Murray Li 2007, Ferguson 1994). The idea here is that, given that the initiative is dependent on broader socio-political transformations and bound up with deep-seated culturally-oriented or political struggles in recipient countries, the challenges of REDD+ cannot be sufficiently addressed through apolitical and technical frameworks. Instead, as

Lund et al. (2017) propose, these may have rendered REDD+ as a policy model that is “unimplementable” on the ground.

Thus, I suggest that there is a distinct need to ‘re-politicise’ issues of justice in REDD+ policy strategies and to move beyond technical, placeless ‘safeguards’ frameworks. For REDD+ interventions to be sufficiently effective and equitable, there is a need for policy-makers’ responses to potential injustices in REDD+ to be more than simply ‘minimum standards’ and to address these in their relevant socio-political, sub-regional and cultural contexts. Policy strategies must explicitly and specifically tackle the political issues on multiple scales that are intimately entangled with the social dimensions of REDD+ or potential conflicts in the implementation of REDD+.

As well as this, a ‘re-politicisation’ of REDD+ would incorporate a significantly enhanced reflexivity from the policy actors on their positionality in the REDD+ agenda, notably in relation to the Global North’s responsibility for climate change. In particular, I suggest that the Norwegian government should move away from the use of REDD+ as ‘political offsetting’ towards deeper reflections on its role in climate change and in exporting fossil fuels worldwide. A proposed first step for the Norwegian government is an acknowledgement and confrontation of the contradictions and paradox at the heart of its REDD+ engagement, which, these findings suggest, is not currently occurring and to shift its policies and environmental governance strategies accordingly.

More broadly, enhanced reflexivity on the part of policy actors could also incorporate a ‘decolonising’ of the REDD+ policy strategies and frameworks. As broadly proposed by Collard, Dempsey and Sundberg (2015), there is a need for an active reflection from international and Northern REDD+ actors on colonial relations with the Global South and enhanced recognition that expertise, knowledge production and international frameworks are intimately bound up with imperial systems, colonial thought and historical geopolitical arrangements. As suggested by Collard, Dempsey and Sundberg (2015), “an ongoing and active reckoning with past is crucial...to understand the discursive material infrastructure we have inherited”.

Although Norway does not have specific historical colonial relations with the Global South, there is nevertheless an imperative for the Norwegian government to confront

the colonial thought processes imbued in REDD+ strategies and policy discourse, as with other international development interventions. In order to move towards a fair and just formulation of REDD+, there is an imperative for policy actors to decolonise existing strategies, which would require moving beyond defining barriers to REDD+ as 'internal deficiencies' in tropical-forested nations and to actively and explicitly reflect on the robustness and fairness of REDD+ policy models and frameworks, as well as surrounding socio-political, historical and systemic factors bound up with the climate crisis and tropical forest governance. A 'decolonising' REDD+ framework would also seek to give greater voice to marginalised communities in the Global South and to greater integrate their interests and needs in forest governance strategies.

## **Chapter 9: Conclusion**

### **9.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I draw conclusions on the key messages and contributions from the research, as well as suggesting future research to explore and offering targeted policy recommendations. Firstly, I summarise the key findings that emerged from this research, structured around the contributions of the multiscale framework and the four themes that were identified through the analysis. Secondly, suggestions are made for future research that can be carried out on REDD+ through a multiscale and justice-led framework.

### **9.2 Summary of Key Findings**

A multiscale and justice-led framework was used in this research to interrogate the Norway-Ethiopia REDD+ partnership. It allowed an uncovering of the (climate) justice norms that underpin and justify REDD+ policy practices and strategies and how these norms align or diverge across scales of REDD+ governance. By empirically examining the REDD+ policy framework through a justice lens, this research has contributed to the climate justice literature and to debates on REDD+ and surrounding community-level challenges. It specifically extends Okereke's (2008) justice-led discourse analysis of climate change policy by unpacking the scalar constructions of justice norms in REDD+ discourse.

However, while broad findings emerged from this justice-led multiscale analysis, there emerged limitations in sufficiently or accurately representing the complexity of the reality of REDD+ through the multiscale model. During the fieldwork, it became apparent that the multiscale nature of REDD+ was more complex and less clear-cut than initially conceptualised. In reality, it is not as straightforward or simple to distinguish between three discrete levels of REDD+ (international, national, local), given the operational and organisational complexities of the initiative. Equally, the multiscale model cannot adequately account for variations or distinctions at the three levels, if we are to move beyond considering these as homogenous entities. Nevertheless, four key findings emerged from this research.

Firstly, the findings suggest that the REDD+ policy discourse is primarily driven by the interests of the Global North, emerging through a cost-effective, carbon-centric



and globalising narrative. Here, REDD+ is justified as a cost-saving initiative for mitigating against climate change and based on its potential to provide cheap and large-scale reductions in global GHG emissions through the forest sector and outside of the borders of the industrialised nations. Simultaneously, the livelihoods and development dimensions of REDD+ and the interests and needs of the forest-dependent communities are consistently side-lined and rendered as secondary in the policy discourse.

Secondly, despite an indicated shift towards a more bottom-up and project-driven structure, the analysis suggests that REDD+ continues to be primarily framed as a top-down policy framework. Here, the fundamental REDD+ agenda emerges in the policy discourse through an international-national political interface. Within this framework, it was identified that despite the large-scale rollout of PFM and a devolved form of forest governance in Ethiopia, participation of communities in the fundamental decision-making and design of REDD+ remains ultimately limited and technical in nature. The evidence indicates insufficient actual and significant participatory rights for local-level community actors in Ethiopia, with the underlying assumptions of the REDD+ agenda having already been pre-determined by the time forms of participation arise at the community level.

Thirdly, the findings in this research indicated fundamental divergences in justice norms between policy and community actors. At the policy level, a 'utilitarian-neoliberal' nexus emerged as dominant, whereby market-based mechanisms and tools act as the vehicles for realising more fundamental utilitarian outcomes, i.e. a REDD+ justified on its potential *global* and *long-term* benefits. Meanwhile, at the community level, egalitarian norms were indicated to be dominant, posing a challenge to, and existing alongside, the 'utilitarian-neoliberal' nexus at the policy level. Divergences between community and policy actors also emerge when considering the value placed upon different dimensions of justice (distributive, procedural and recognition). Accordingly, this research highlights conflicts between the REDD+ policy-makers and the communities and that these are underpinned by, and reflect, more fundamental divergences in actors' norms and ethics.

Fourthly, there is significant and consistent disengagement by the REDD+ policy actors with the fundamental, deeper issues of justice associated with international

climate action and sustainable forest governance in the tropics, pertaining to socio-political, cultural and ethical dimensions. Such disengagement occurs on multiple scales and in relation to multiple spheres of concern, incorporating a lack of reflection on the North's responsibility for climate change, colonial relations and specific socio-political issues in recipient nations. This emerges through a depoliticising safeguards framework that bounds justice issues in REDD+ within technical and managerial bounds and side-lines the fundamental politics at the heart of these issues. An 'anti-politics' agenda presents challenges for an equitable and effective formulation of REDD+.

### **9.3 Opportunities for Future Research**

There are considerable opportunities for future research that makes use of a multiscale, justice-led framework in making sense of REDD+. An empirical multiscale analysis of REDD+ can enhance understanding of how conceptions of justice dominate at different scales of governance and how divergences in justice norms may help to explain conflicts or challenges in REDD+. Given the insight that can be gained through a multiscale analysis, it is necessary to further examine the scalar interactions and trends associated with REDD+, responding to broader calls from climate justice scholars (Barrett 2013, Schlosberg 2004).

Based on the reflections from this research, a multiscale analysis of REDD+ needs to be led by a more nuanced and refined model or framework. As outlined in the previous chapter, there is an imperative to move beyond a multiscale framework that is driven by three discrete scales of governance (international, national, local). It can be suggested that an enhanced and more appropriate multiscale framework would lead by immediately recognising the blurriness of the distinctions between the three levels and to understand that these are not fixed, homogenous entities. The complexity of the REDD+ organisational framework needs to be acknowledged from the outset and integrated into a multiscale methodological model.

Significant value emerges in examining the discourse of multiple actors on multiple levels of REDD+ governance, allowing researchers to better understand the norms, values and perspectives that underpin and justify preferences and strategies. More specifically, critical discourse analysis can allow climate justice scholars to better understand the power relations at the heart of international environmental policy

mechanisms, to respond to questions about whose conceptions of justice (and by association, whose interests) dominate and how these dominant conceptions of justice can configure future policy outcomes.

Given the value of discourse analysis and that REDD+ at a discursive level remains understudied, I propose that there is a need for further discourse analyses of REDD+ from a justice-led perspective. However, discourse analysis is likely to be most powerful if combined with an assessment and examination of on-the-ground results. It can be suggested that future research should look to holistically interrogate the REDD+ framework through an analysis of discourse and assessment of real world activities, i.e. what is being said and what is being done. This is likely to be most appropriate at a later stage of REDD+, when results-based payments have begun and when effectiveness and equity of REDD+ projects can begin to be measured. At the examined stage of REDD+ in Ethiopia ('Readiness'), there is little concrete that can be measured, but discourse analysis can act as an indicator of what is to come.

More broadly, it may prove fruitful to examine the emergence of REDD+ in Ethiopia at the results-based payments stage, given that different justice norms may emerge as dominant at the multiple scales of REDD+ compared to the 'Readiness' stage. At the community level, existing funding is directed towards supporting livelihoods and institutional development, but if and when results-based payments begin for 'avoided deforestation', different dynamics are likely to emerge, both within communities and between policy bodies and communities. At the international level, REDD+ remains open to debate to significant further changes in its design, in accordance with fluctuations in international and national politics, including the sourcing of funding, which are likely to be key in determining the justice norms of an international REDD+ framework.

Relatedly, it is also worth stressing that the findings in this research represent a context-specific articulation of climate justice constructions in REDD+. These are contingent on the specific REDD+ context and on the positionalities of the actors driving the REDD+ processes. As outlined fully in the previous chapter, the emergence of the 'utilitarian-neoliberal' nexus in these findings is driven by the Norwegian government's documented ideological and historical preference for market-based approaches to environmental governance. There is potential for further

research on Norway's engagement in REDD+ using a climate justice framework, in terms of empirically interrogating its specific climate change profile and responsibilities as a fossil-fuel exporting nation, building on extant theoretical literature (Angelsen 2016, Moss 2016), and the extent to which its support for REDD+ acts as a form of 'political offsetting' in the domestic sphere.

Accordingly, given the context specific nature of these findings, it is urgent and necessary to make use of a multiscalar, justice framework to examine other contexts of REDD+. This could incorporate analyses of the discourses, strategies and practices of other bilateral REDD+ actors, such as Germany or the UK. Equally, future research could interrogate Norway's partnership with other recipient nations through a justice lens. These may provide different sets of findings and it may prove fruitful to assess and examine the continuities and discontinuities across different contexts.

In addition, it is also necessary to further investigate the role of non-state actors in REDD+ policy formulation which the findings suggest are more likely closely aligned with the communities' norms in the analysis. It is likely that the involvement of NGOs in driving REDD+ processes will be key in determining the justice norms underpinning REDD+. There is a need to better understand the specific roles that non-state actors play in REDD+, the values that they hold and how they interact with both communities and policy-makers.

Furthermore, this research has highlighted the value that can be gained from conducting a specifically postcolonial analysis of REDD+. I propose making use of a postcolonial perspective when interrogating the REDD+ policy discourse from a justice perspective and in better understanding the relations between REDD+ 'donors' and 'recipients'. Similar discursive constructions exist between Northern and Southern actors in REDD+ as with other development interventions and there is significant potential here to adopt a postcolonial perspective in examining REDD+ as has been done in the field of international development.

Moreover, in examining REDD+ strategies and discourse, there is a need for a more ingrained, inter-sectional approach which explicitly confronts racial and gender inequalities. This could be conducted on a multiscalar level, in considering the ways in which these inequalities manifest in a North-South setting from an international

perspective and at the community level, critically engaging with inter-community dynamics. This could build upon previous climate governance research that has explicitly engaged with race and gender (Finney 2009). While the concept of climate justice has been developed and broadened in recent scholarship (e.g. Schlosberg 2004) to take enhanced consideration of procedural, distributive and scalar aspects, there remains a need to integrate broader social justice concerns more closely into climate justice frameworks.

## **Appendices**

### **APPENDIX A: Interview Guides**

#### **Stage 1 (NICFI/NGOs)**

1. Enquire about the overall role of NICFI (Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative) in regards to Norwegian governmental policy, as well as the current political landscape surrounding climate change (Including Kyoto/the forthcoming Paris negotiations)?
2. More specific information regarding the work that NICFI does regarding REDD projects in the Global South.
3. How the funding stream works regarding NICFI, REDD, the UN and the specific projects in the global south
4. The extent to which NICFI is independent/flexible in making decisions regarding REDD projects. How strongly are they informed by UN decision-making?
5. Specific information on the Norwegian funding of the REDD projects in Tanzania: what projects they fund there, how they decide which projects to fund (any criteria), how the benefits from the projects are distributed, the financial risks for those investing in REDD projects.
6. The extent to which NICFI makes decisions on behalf of the small-scale, regional projects / allows independent decision making? How much are local communities consulted in the projects? Ask specifically about the projects in Tanzania.
7. The extent to which CDM and REDD more generally (and NICFI more specifically) addresses issues of climate justice and mitigates against climate change in a just way.
8. Introduce 3 idealistic distributional conceptions of climate justice (using Grasso's 2012 table). Which, if any, does NICFI's project most align with? If none, how does it position itself?
9. Human rights issues with REDD (incl. the marginalising of local people)
10. The extent to which NICFI and REDD funding is politicised/ underpinned by political ideology.
11. The role of politics and science in climate change. To what extent do we need radical political change in order to address CC?

12. Would they consider the language they use for official purposes as politicised in nature? How do they aim to frame their language? Thoughts on lay vs. official discourse.

## **Stage 2: Ethiopian government/REDD+ Secretariat/Ethiopian CSOs**

### **Interview Guide for Government/Embassy**

1. Enquire about the overall role of the institution/department/embassy and their structure
2. How does the institution engage with REDD+ in Ethiopia?
3. How is the institution funded? What is the nature of the funding stream? (NOT WITH EMBASSY)
4. The extent to which the institution is independent/flexible in making decisions regarding REDD. How strongly are they influenced by the funders?
5. How does the institution position itself in regards to CGRE?
6. What is the institution's relationship with other multilateral organisations (particularly the World Bank) and CSOs?
7. Success/challenges of REDD+ in Ethiopia
8. How much are local communities consulted in the REDD programmes? What about the rights of marginalised groups/forest-dependent communities in regards to REDD?
9. How are the benefits from the REDD programmes distributed?
10. How has the REDD+ process evolved in Ethiopia?
11. The extent to which REDD (and the institution more specifically) addresses issues of climate justice and mitigates against climate change in a just way.
12. Future of REDD+ in Ethiopia/in general? To become part of CDM/a way of gaining carbon credits for developed countries?
13. The extent to which REDD funding (and the institutions' work on REDD) is politicised/underpinned by political ideology.
14. Would they consider the language they use for 'official purposes' as politicised in nature? How do they aim to frame their language? Thoughts on lay vs. official discourse.

15. The role of politics and science in climate change. To what extent do we need radical, systemic-level political change in order to address CC? Or do we need more gradual, consistent change?

### **Interview Guide for CSOs**

1. Enquire about the overall role of the organisation
2. How does the organisation engage with REDD+ in Ethiopia?
3. How is the organisation funded? What is the nature of the funding stream?
4. The extent to which the organisation is independent/flexible in making decisions regarding REDD. How strongly are they influenced by the funders?
5. What is the organisation's relationship with the government and other multilateral organisations (particularly the World Bank)?
6. How does the organisation position itself in regards to CGRE?
7. Success/challenges of REDD+ in Ethiopia
8. How much are local communities consulted in the REDD projects? What about the rights of marginalised groups/forest-dependent communities in regards to REDD?
9. How are the benefits from the projects distributed?
10. How has the REDD+ process evolved in Ethiopia?
11. The extent to which REDD (and the CSO more specifically) addresses issues of climate justice and mitigates against climate change in a just way.
12. Future of REDD+ in Ethiopia/in general? To become part of CDM/a way of gaining carbon credits for developed countries?
13. The extent to which REDD funding (and the CSO's work on REDD) is politicised/underpinned by political ideology.
14. Would they consider the language they use for 'official purposes' as politicised in nature? How do they aim to frame their language? Thoughts on lay vs. official discourse.
15. The role of politics and science in climate change. To what extent do we need radical political, systemic change in order to address CC? Or do we need more gradual, consistent change?



## **Stage 3: The UN/World Bank**

### **Interview Guide**

1. Enquire about the overall role of UN-REDD and UNDP in regards to REDD+ policy, as well as the current political landscape surrounding climate change (Including Kyoto/the Paris negotiations)?
2. More specific information regarding the work that the institutions do regarding REDD projects in the Global South.
3. How the funding stream works regarding NICFI, REDD, the UN and the specific projects in the global south
4. How does the institution engage with REDD+ in Ethiopia?
5. How does the institution position itself in regards to CRGE (Ethiopia's green strategy)?
6. How do they engage with NICFI? (Norwegian institute of climate and forestry initiative)
7. What is the institution's relationship with other multilateral organisations (particularly the World Bank) and CSOs?
8. Success/challenges of REDD+ in Ethiopia
9. How has the REDD+ process evolved in Ethiopia?
10. How much are local communities consulted in the REDD programmes? What about the rights of marginalised groups/forest-dependent communities in regards to REDD?
11. The extent to which REDD (and the institution more specifically) addresses issues of climate justice and mitigates against climate change in a just way.
12. Future of REDD+ in Ethiopia/in general? To become part of CDM/a way of gaining carbon credits for developed countries?
13. The extent to which REDD funding (and the institutions' work on REDD) is politicised/underpinned by political ideology.
14. The role of politics and science in climate change. To what extent do we need radical, systemic-level political change in order to address CC? Or do we need more gradual, consistent change?

15. Would they consider the language they use for official purposes as politicised in nature? How do they aim to frame their language? Thoughts on lay vs. official discourse.

#### **Stage 4: Interviews with forest-dependent communities**

##### **Interview/ Focus Group Discussion Guide**

1. What forestry activities do you carry, in the context of PFM?
2. What do you know about REDD+? How has this impacted upon your forestry activity?
3. What is your engagement with the project (*Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association*)? How are you working together?
4. What are the challenges in implementing PFM?
5. What are the benefits and disadvantages of participating in PFM?
6. How are the benefits from this project shared within the community?
7. How are the community's rights acknowledged in regards to forestry activity?
8. What is your decision-making within the community, in regards to forestry activity?
9. How much is the community asked to participate in decision-making, in regards to forestry activity?
10. What changes came after PFM concerning decision-making, equality, community participation and benefit sharing?

## **APPENDIX B: Participant Information Sheets**

### **Participant Information Sheet (for policy-based organisations)**

**Study title:** The Representations of Climate Justice in Climate Change Policy on a Multi-scalar Level.

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

This project will examine the ways in which climate justice, and marginalised groups within this context, are represented in REDD+ policy on a multi-scalar, through an examination of Norwegian funding of REDD+ programmes in Ethiopia.

#### **Why have I been approached?**

You have been approached as you are a representative of one of the selected climate change policy-making institutions being studied as part of this research project.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

No. Participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw at any point during the research process. If you decide to withdraw, you can contact the researcher using the contact details below. Following withdrawal from the study, your data will be destroyed and not used as part of the research project.

#### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed in a face-to-face discussion about climate change policy, particularly pertaining to issues which concern climate justice. You will be asked about your perceptions and views in relation to the key themes identified in the research study on climate change policy and climate justice. With your permission, the interview will be recorded using audio recording equipment, in order to create an interview transcript for data analysis purposes which is complete and accurate. Prior to taking part in the interview, you will be asked to sign a Consent Form to confirm your agreement to participate in this research project.

#### **Where will the research take place?**

The interview will take place in a location convenient to you. A more specific time and place will be agreed in advance of the interview.

#### **What is the duration of the research?**

The interviews are likely to last approximately one hour.

#### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

There will be benefits of taking part in this research at an institutional level, where a greater developed knowledge base can help to ameliorate communication practices on climate justice. This project will provide a better understanding of climate justice and affected marginalised groups, and the way they are represented on a discursive level, with implications for the broader discipline and relevant policy. Considering dissemination, this project will develop knowledge exchange pathways with the institutions. This is critical to

maximising the suitability of the results to the non-academic community. Moreover, I will actively engage with the institutions in the dissemination of key data.

### **What if something goes wrong?**

If you do not wish to be involved in the interview process anymore, you may withdraw at any time. If things go wrong, or you wish to complain, you can contact myself or the project supervisor. Contact details are given below.

### **Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

Yes. The data from the study will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. Only the researcher will have access to the data. You will be identified in the data only by your participant number. All the consent forms will be stored in a separate, secure (locked) location from the raw data. Your interview responses will be stored in a computer file anonymously and access to the file will be password protected.

### **What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The results of the study will be used for the researcher's PhD thesis. At a later point, parts of the thesis may be published in peer reviewed academic journals. The results of the study may also be presented at academic conferences.

### **Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is being organised by David Brown, a PhD student in the Centre for Communities and Social Justice (in the faculty of Arts and Humanities) at Coventry University. The faculty is funding the research.

### **Who has reviewed the study?**

The project supervisor and a Faculty Research Ethics Leader, as part of the University Applied Research Committee (UARC).

### **Contact for Further Information**

**Researcher:** David Brown

**Email:** brownd17@uni.coventry.ac.uk

**Phone:** (0044) 07932 737786

**Project Supervisor:** Professor Howard Davis

**Email:** ab3225@coventry.ac.uk

## **Participant Information Sheet (for the interviews with the communities in Ethiopia)**

**Study title:** The Representations of Climate Justice in REDD+ Policy on a Multiscalar level

### **What is the purpose of the study?**

This project will examine the ways in which communities in Ethiopia engage in forestry activities, as part of the REDD+ initiative. It will be investigated how the communities are represented in this, how they participate in the decision-making process and how they can benefit from REDD+ funding.

### **Why have I been approached?**

You have been approached as you are part of a community involved in forestry activity in Ethiopia, as part of REDD+, which is being studied in this research project.

### **Do I have to take part?**

No. Participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw at any point during the research process. If you decide to withdraw, you can contact the researcher using the contact details below. Following withdrawal from the study, your data will be destroyed and not used as part of the research project.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed in a face-to-face discussion about forestry activity and REDD+ in the local area. You will be asked about your perceptions and views of the benefits and costs of these, which is felt by the community, as well as the participation and representation levels of the community. With your permission, the interview will be recorded using audio recording equipment, in order to create an interview transcript for data analysis purposes which is complete and accurate. There will be a translator present at the interview. Prior to taking part in the interview, you will be asked to sign a Consent Form to confirm your agreement to participate in this research project.

### **Where will the research take place?**

The interview will take place in a location convenient to you. A more specific time and place will be agreed in advance of the interview.

### **What is the duration of the research?**

The interviews are likely to last between approximately half an hour to one hour.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

There will be benefits of taking part in this research at the local level, where there can be a greater understanding of the impacts of forestry activities and REDD+ upon the local communities, as well as how they participate in the REDD+ decision-making process. This has implications for how communities can engage with REDD+ forestry activities in the future and how institutions (nationally and internationally) can better consider the needs of communities, when implementing REDD+ activities. Considering dissemination, this project

will develop knowledge exchange pathways with the institutions. This is critical to maximising the suitability of the results to the non-academic community. Moreover, I will actively engage with the institutions in the dissemination of key data.

### **What if something goes wrong?**

If you do not wish to be involved in the interview process anymore, you may withdraw at any time. If things go wrong, or you wish to complain, you can contact myself or the project supervisor. Contact details are given below.

### **Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

Yes. The data from the study will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. Only the researcher will have access to the data. You will be identified in the data only by your participant number. All the consent forms will be stored in a separate, secure (locked) location from the raw data. Your interview responses will be stored in a computer file anonymously and access to the file will be password protected.

### **What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The results of the study will be used for the researcher's PhD thesis. At a later point, parts of the thesis may be published in peer reviewed academic journals. The results of the study may also be presented at academic conferences.

### **Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is being organised by David Brown, a PhD student in the department of geography at Coventry University. The faculty is funding the research.

### **Who has reviewed the study?**

The project supervisor and a Faculty Research Ethics Leader, as part of the University Applied Research Committee (UARC).

### **Contact for Further Information**

**Researcher:** David Brown

**Email:** brownd17@uni.coventry.ac.uk

**Phone:** (0044) 07932 737786

**Project Supervisor:** Dr. Marion Maclellan

**Email:** lsx934@coventry.ac.uk

## APPENDIX C: Consent Form

### Project title:

The Representations of Climate Justice in REDD+ Policy on a Multiscalar level

### Name of researcher:

David Brown

*Please initial box*

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during the research process.	
3. I understand that data will be kept strictly confidentially and anonymously.	
4. I agree to take part in this research project.	

*Please tick box*

Yes

No

5. I agree to the audio recording of the interviews.		
6. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.		

Name of participant:

Date:

Signature:

David Brown (researcher)

Date:

Signature:

## APPENDIX D: Health and Safety Risk Assessment for Ethiopia fieldwork

### STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECT RISK ASSESSMENT

<b>Person(s) undertaking project:</b>	David Brown
<b>Project supervisor:</b>	Dr. Marion Maclellan

<b>Brief outline of project:</b>  <b>Outline the types of activities that will take place or items fabricated i.e. face to face interviews, public surveys, water sampling, machining vehicle parts, brazing etc.</b>	To supplement the data gained through discourse analysis and through interview with policy officials, I will carry out in-depth interviews and focus groups with forest dependent communities in REDD+ sites in Western Ethiopia. While there, I will be working and travelling with a local NGO called Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resource Association.
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<b>Dates of study (from – to)</b>	05/12/2016- 19/12/2016
<b>Location(s) of activity:</b>  <b>Country and specific area.</b>	Metu, and the surrounding forested area, Ethiopia

<b>Will the project involve laboratory work?</b>  <b>If yes, you will be required to complete separate risk assessment(s) prior to carrying out any laboratory work.</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Will the project involve workshop work?</b>  <b>If yes, you will be required to complete an induction and may carry out a separate risk assessment(s) prior to carrying out any workshop work.</b>	<b>No</b>



<b>Will the project involve travel? (If yes, complete this section as fully as possible. The form may require review prior to travel to add missing details)</b>		<b>Yes</b>
<b>Contact details at destination(s):</b>	Afework Hailu Gebrewold, Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resource Association	
<b>Contact details of next of kin in case of emergency:</b>	07852 746211 (Mrs. Elaine Brown)	
<b>Approximate dates of travel:</b>  <i>Your supervisor must have details of travel plans once confirmed.</i>	<b>05/12/2016- 19/12/2016</b>	
<b>Arrangements to maintain contact with the University:</b>	<b>Regular email contact with supervisor</b>	
<b>Emergency contact information:</b>	<b>School/Faculty contact (Daytime): 02476 88 7363</b>  <b>24hr University contact (Protection Service): 02476 888 555</b>  <b>Local healthcare/emergency services: +251 911</b>	
<b>Has suitable travel insurance has been obtained? (Please attach a copy of certificate)</b>		<b>Yes</b>
<b>If EU travel, has EH1C card been obtained?</b>		<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has advice/vaccinations from GP been sought (where appropriate)?</b>		<b>Yes</b>
<b>Are medical kits required (i.e. in countries with poor healthcare facilities)?</b>		<b>Yes</b>
<b>Are there any warnings issued by the FCO* against travel to the area?</b>		<b>No</b>

Have you registered with the FCO* service LOCATE? (British nationals only)	Yes
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\*FCO = <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/>

**PLEASE USE THE HAZARD CHECKLIST AS A GUIDE WHEN COMPLETING THIS SECTION.**

<u>Hazard</u>	<u>Precautions to be used</u>
<p><b><u>Work factors:</u></b></p> <p><i>E.g.: dealing with the public, interviewing on sensitive issues, lone working, driving, working on boats, laboratory work; biological, chemical hazards etc</i></p>	<p>Will be interviewing members of forest-dependent communities. Travelling with the NGO each day to the REDD+ site by car. Will be with a translator, who will be a local contact of the NGO.</p>

<p><b>Site specific factors (in the field):</b></p> <p><b>E.g.: remote area, construction site, local endemic diseases, political unrest, terrorism risk etc</b></p> <p><b>If travel abroad see FCO* website – list any risks greater than there would be for the UK</b></p>	<p>The Ethiopian government has issued a state of emergency following unrest in the Oromia region. The FCO advises against all travel except essential in some parts of Ethiopia. However, I will be avoiding these areas and only travelling to parts of Ethiopia which are in green on the FCO website. I am only planning to travel to Metu and the surrounding forested area, which is in green on the FCO website.</p> <p>“The FCO advise against all but essential travel to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the East Shewa, West Shewa, North Shewa, Southwest Shewa, Arsi and West Arsi zones in Oromia region</li> <li>• Amhara region</li> <li>• Jijiga town three woredas (districts) of the Agnuak zone of the Gambella region that border on South</li> </ul>
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	<p>Sudan (Dima, Goge and Etang) and the Gambella wildlife reserve”</p> <p>This is taken directly from the FCO website. I won't be travelling to these areas of Ethiopia.</p> <p>I will be flying directly to GMB (Gambela airport), which is also in the green area, before travelling with the NGO to nearby Metu and the surrounding forested area to do the research.</p> <p>I will be keeping an eye on the political situation in Ethiopia and the FCO website before travelling there.</p>
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<p><b>Environmental factors (in the field):</b></p> <p><i>E.g.: extremes of temperature, altitude, weather conditions, tidal conditions, cliffs, bogs, caves, mountains etc</i></p>	<p>Although the temperatures will be cooler at this time of year, I will make sure that I prepare for the heat by bringing sunscreen and hat. I will also bring a sufficient amount of anti-malaria tablets. Will also bring a medical kit with me.</p>
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<p><b>Equipment:</b></p> <p><b>E.g.: operation of machinery, use of specialist equipment, manual handling/transportation, compressed gases, etc</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>
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<p><b>Other:</b></p> <p><b>Detail any special arrangements required, i.e. permissions required, accommodation, travel, catering etc</b></p>	<p>Liaising with the NGO about travel arrangements and accommodation. Will be staying in Metu in accommodation recommended by the NGO and will travel with the NGO to the REDD+ site in the forested</p>
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	area to carry out the interviews and focus groups. The NGO will collect me from the airport in Gambela.
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**This assessment must be reviewed before any significant project changes are made.**

**Assessment carried out by:**

**Signature: David Brown**

Position: Student

**Date: 18/10/2016**

**Authorisation to proceed:**

**Signature:**

Position:

**Date:**

## APPENDIX E: Policy Recommendations

### **For all REDD+ policy-makers:**

- An active and explicit move towards placing principles of justice or equity centrally in REDD+ policy formulation.
- Reflexively acknowledging the justice conceptions that underpin and justify policy strategies and preferences, and how these may or may not conflict with the dominant norms at the local levels.
- An active move towards 'pluriversalist' REDD+ strategies (Collard, Dempsey and Sundberg 2015) that acknowledge, value and integrate the (alternative) perspectives and norms of non-policy and community actors in tropical-forested nations. If these conflict with policy frameworks and strategies, considering how this can be reconciled.
- Integrating livelihoods/development dimensions into core REDD+ objectives and shifting away from these being 'co-benefits' or as secondary elements or principles of REDD+.
- Actively reflecting upon and confronting the trade-offs implicated in REDD+ and strategising how to manage and respond to these in a just and fair way that is most beneficial for all associated actors, moving beyond an uncritical 'win-win-win' framing.
- Actively and explicitly reflecting upon the responsibilities of the Global North for climate change and configuring REDD+ strategies accordingly.
- A move towards 'repoliticising' issues of justice in REDD+, interrogating how these are configured by, and embedded in, fundamental politics and political debates on multiscale levels.
- Significantly closer engagement with structural or systemic debates and the implications that these have for justice concerns in REDD+ (e.g. neoliberal forms of environmental governance).
- Significantly closer engagement with socio-political and cultural contexts and variations in recipient nations on sub-national and sub-regional levels in the design of REDD+ strategies and frameworks.

- Enhancing integration of community needs, interests and values into policy strategies and moving away from bureaucratic and technical safeguards frameworks when responding to community-level justice concerns in REDD+.
- Moving towards a ‘decolonising’ vision of REDD+, in which Northern actors identify, reflect upon and confront the colonial discourse and imperial thought systems implicit in REDD+ policies and strategies, seeking to move beyond these to establish a formulation of REDD+ that does not primarily perceive of barriers to an effective and equitable REDD+ as ‘internal deficiencies’, that reflexively engages in structural, historical and relational factors when devising REDD+ strategies and frameworks, and that seeks to give greater voice to marginalised groups and communities in the Global South.

**For the Norwegian Government:**

- Reflexively engaging with, and confronting, its responsibility for climate change and its complicity in extracting and exporting petroleum worldwide.
- Moving away from the use of REDD+ as a way of ‘politically offsetting’ its role as a major fossil fuel exporter and its economic dependence on an expansive petroleum industry towards an active reckoning with these.
- To stop exploring and developing new oil and gas fields and to begin transitioning away from its petroleum industry, in line with its ambitious domestic climate change commitments (McKinnon, Muttitt and Trout 2017). Considering Norway’s vast wealth, developed over many years through its sovereign wealth fund and relatively diverse economy, it is well-placed to transition away from its fossil fuel industry and to avoid further squeezing of development opportunities elsewhere in the world.

**For the Ethiopian government:**

- A shift towards actual and substantive participation of communities in REDD+ decision-making and moving away from the use of PFM as simply rhetoric and limited, symbolic participation.
- Enhancing engagement with, and valuing of, socio-political and cultural contexts at the regional and local levels in Ethiopia.

- Acknowledging and confronting political and ethnic struggles in Ethiopia and engaging with how REDD+ may map onto these.
- Increasing collaboration and engagement with environmental NGOs working on REDD+ and PFM projects in the fundamental design of national and regional REDD+ strategies.

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