Birhanu Woldegiorgis

A history and policy analyses of Forest Governance in Ethiopia and REDD+

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Master's thesis in Global Environmental History
Abstract

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In the recent period, forest conservation for ecological protection has increasingly become a primary practice of many countries based on globally designed conservation tools, i.e., REDD+: reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. In this thesis, I discuss the REDD+ initiative, its adaptation, and its implementation process in Ethiopia. The thesis discusses forest management practices since the beginning of formal forest management in Ethiopia and REDD+’s impact on the national forest governance through theoretical and conceptual lenses that includes governance and environmentality, and a policy analytic framework. The theoretical and analytical approach are important to discuss the various forms of forest governance that have evolved in different historical periods because of the changing political economy of the country, and the process and formation of forest policies. The historical analysis shows how forest governance in Ethiopia has developed within the continuously changing political situation. The analysis also shows how Ethiopian forest management practices have been negotiated and impacted by international forest governance alongside the national political economy. Furthermore, the thesis analyses the effects of these practices on the lives of rural and forest communities as well as on forest resources. The REDD+ discussion shows the current forest governance principles in Ethiopia and the forest management practices in comparison with the previous ones, what REDD+ entails for the future, and what it means for the forest resources of the country. The thesis emphasises the impact of politics on forest management, the nature of discourse used in forest conservations, the interpretations of environmentality, and the applications of environmental protection practices by the government, NGOs and local people.

Keywords: REDD+, politics, governance, forest policy, political economy, environmentality, discourse, practice, forest management, ecology

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<td>BMERP</td>
<td>Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCBA</td>
<td>Climate, Community, and Biodiversity Alliance</td>
</tr>
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<td>CRGE</td>
<td>Climate-Resilient Green Economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCPF</td>
<td>Forest Carbon Partnership Facility</td>
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<td>FDRE</td>
<td>Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia</td>
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<td>FRELs/FRLs</td>
<td>Forest Reference Emission Levels/Forest Reference Level</td>
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<td>MEFCC</td>
<td>Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change</td>
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<td>MRV</td>
<td>Measurement, Reporting, and Verification</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFMS</td>
<td>National Forest Monitoring Systems</td>
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<td>NDC</td>
<td>National Determined Contribution</td>
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<td>OEFCCA</td>
<td>Oromia Environment, Forest and Climate Change Authority</td>
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<td>OFLP</td>
<td>Oromia Forested Landscape Program</td>
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<td>PAA</td>
<td>Policy Arrangement Approach</td>
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<td>PFM</td>
<td>Participatory Forest Management</td>
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<td>RDPS</td>
<td>Rural Development Policy and Strategy</td>
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<td>REDD+</td>
<td>Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation</td>
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<tr>
<td>R-PP</td>
<td>Readiness Preparation Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td>Safeguards Information System</td>
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<td>SES</td>
<td>Social and environmental standards</td>
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<td>UNFCCC</td>
<td>United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
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I want to extend my sincere gratitude to Professor Anneli Ekblom. As my supervisor she has given me a wonderful professional guidance during the whole process of writing the thesis. I want also to thank all the other people who provided me with great support and information to make this thesis possible. I want to thank Stephanie Ratti, Samuel Lule and my interviewees. I want to thank my family and want to dedicate this thesis to my Mother Mulata Walteneagus and Father Desta Woldegiorgis.
1. Introduction

While writing this thesis, the government of Ethiopia initiated and implemented a one-day campaign named ‘Green Legacy’. The day was held on July 29th, 2019. The target was to plant more than 350 million trees in one day to break a world record. The Green Legacy Initiative aimed to grow 4 billion trees to help curb the effects of deforestation and climate change (Ethiopian prime minister office press 2019). The campaign was part of the effort to combat environmental degradation. Another aim was to raise the public’s awareness about Ethiopia’s frightening ecological degradation and educate communities on the importance of adopting green behaviour, to become a green society (ibid.). The general public in different regions participated widely in the campaign. The one-day campaign was reported as successful because the participants were able to plant the prepared seedlings for all parts of the regions in the country. With the green legacy day Ethiopia also broke the world record in tree planting having planted more than 200 million seedlings in one day. It was reported in national media how international organizations supported the initiative for its decisive role in the fight against climate change.

The campaign is a very current and telling example of how political leadership connects itself with the issue of forest management. However, the campaign stirred various responses from the public, on social media, and from experts. Some experts warned that the action might have opposite effects if the planting campaign does not consider the ecological aspect of tree planting (e.g., adverse effects of planting of exotic trees such as eucalyptus, see Chapter 3). The principal critique against the campaign was that it was politically motivated, and not planned for the long term. Some commentators stated that the campaign was a political initiative to build a positive image for the government. Other critics pointed out how the green legacy day was continuing the trend of ‘green washing’ politics by referring tree planting activities of earlier leaders such as Emperor Haile Selassie. If the country had not been successful in making itself greener with previous efforts, then the chance of this one-day campaign making a difference was very small—the challenge is to help the seedling to grow a tree to become a forest, and to protect that forest while standing. The global forest watch report on Ethiopian forest shows that Ethiopia lost 384kha of tree cover, equivalent to a 3.2% decrease in tree cover since 2000 while it only gained 62.5kha of tree cover equal to < 0.1% of the global total in the year between 2001 to 2012 (globalforest-watch.org/dashboards/country/ETH).

The critique shows how the political rhetoric is intermingled with environmental concern and the political symbolism of forest conservation. What critics were arguing was that symbolic days of tree planting needs a follow up of various institutions (a policy framework), and an awareness that the tree planting activity is part of the more prominent forest conservation activity that creates environmental and economic benefit for the country. The critique also shows how politics continue to affect forest resources, forest management, and environmental protection in Ethiopia. The effects are increasing or decreasing forest cover, institutionalizing or deinstitutionalizing forest management and scaling up or down environmental protection rhetoric and practice. Furthermore, the critique exemplifies one of the core themes in environmental history, showing how politics and nature are connected in many forms. In this case, nature is used for the assertion of political popularity, which is far from a new phenomenon in Ethiopia as it will be discussed in this thesis.
Background

This study fuses the fields of environmental history, historical ecology (cf Balée 2006) and political ecology. Environmental history in different parts of the world has scrutinized the methods and discourses employed by various governments in various regions to protect environmental resources such as forests (see review in Radkau, 2008)\(^1\). The analyses show how societies and governments in various regions and countries maintain or manage their environmental resources and the embeddedness of politics and economy. In these studies, the main concern is to show the humans’ culture, social, economic and political organizations impact on the domination of nature; the awareness about the environment and the realization of protecting and conserving na-

\(^1\) From environmental history reading, we understand that every society, country, and governments understand the importance of protecting their environment and natural resources for their survival and for those in power to maintain control over the society they rule (ibid.). This gives us an argument that for every country and the government in power and the society it is critical and mandatory to protect its environment and natural resources. The historical reading of different countries shows this practice of different countries (Radkau, 2008).
ture for humans and for nature as well, which address the field of political ecology (see Latour 2004; Agrawal 2005). The analyses are also focusing on exploring the existing relationship between the national or international conservation efforts and the local level in managing environmental resources (ibid.). In other words, how the singular environmental problem-solving mechanism conflicts or is negotiated against the traditional experiential knowledge at the local level (see Agrawal 2005).

In Africa, various studies show how forest conservation practices are impacted by the political economy of the country and the intervention of international environmental governance regimes (Hoben 1995; Leach and Mearns 1996; Fairhead and Leach 1996, 2003). Global environmental movements have created new forms of organized intervention mechanisms on environmental degradation issues and problems such as climate change. The movements have resulted in state, suprastate and non-state initiatives of environmental protection initiatives such as tree plantation activities to curb the fuelwood crisis and forest degradations (Radkau 2008; Mosely 2010). Since 1970s, there are various global mechanisms to mitigate environmental problems and environmental resources degradation in the form of standard ecological knowledge and practices through various forms of organizations such as Untied Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and others (Mosely 2010). REDD+ is one of the most recent examples of such global imitative to mitigate environmental problems and stop forest degradations globally (REDD+ Desk 2016).

Ethiopia has a long tradition of forest protection practices. Historical evidence shows how various kings such as Zare Yakob (14th century) and Menelik II (20th century) enacted forest protection decrees in the attempt to protect the forest from degradation and to maintain forest resources for royal uses (Bekele 2003; Rahmato 2001). In Ethiopia, in the early 20th century formalized forest management was introduced during the Italian occupation (Bekele 2003). Since the beginning of the formal forest management in the early 20th century, forest protection ideas and practices in Ethiopia have been continuously evolving and changing. The context of the changes in the political economy in various periods determined the content of forest policy and the way it was negotiated. The shift in political ideologies and the economic priorities continuously shaped forest protection ideas and practices with the changes of the governments, i.e., the Italian administration, the imperial, the socialist, and the current government since the 1990s. Throughout these periods forest protection has been embedded in a wider political context, as will be shown here. Forest protection in Ethiopia has shifted informed by economic and environmental priorities and according to political economy priorities of the various administrations (Rahmato 2001; Bekele 2003; see Chapter 3 and 4). Such politically aimed forest protection has impacted forest resources in different ways, depending on what was the priority for forest protection in a certain period. The forest protection approaches of the state had been implemented for a long period without the ratification of proper utilization mechanisms and use rights (Rahmato 2001; Bekele 2003). This lack of clarity in forest management has resulted in other outcomes than intended in forest policy. The lack of proper land rights and ignorance about the vulnerability of communities in terms of applying comprehensive state policies for resource protection has rather exacerbated deforestation, forest degradation, and increased the need for agricultural lands (Rahmato 2001; Bekele 2003).

The existing historiography about Ethiopian forest management allows us to trace different forms of environmentalism between the state and the rural people. The term environmentalism will be explained in detail in Chapter 2, but in brief it as a concept used to discuss how variables such as politics, power, knowledge, institutions, and subjectivities interact to form new interrelationships (Agrawal 2005). Other authors have contrasted the different forms of environmentalism in Ethiopia, the environmentalism of the state was focused entirely on protection while the environmentalism of rural people were shaped by the dependency in the forest resources thus it was an environmentalism based on utilization (Rahmato 2001; Bekele 2003; Ayana 2012). These different forms of environmentalism created tensions between the state and local communities.
Governmental forest protection practices and ideas have depicted local people’s livelihoods and their environmentalism as harmful to forest resources and rely on the dualistic idea of separating local people from forest resources for better forest protection. This depiction of rural people practices as detrimental to nature has been present since the beginning of formal forest management in Ethiopia (see Chapter 3). However, Bekele et.al (2015) argues that with the introduction of participatory forest management practices that make both government and the rural people work together on forest management with a sense of ownership, a new form of environmentalism has emerged.

At the same time, since the 20th century, international environmentalism has gained importance and an increasing influence on Ethiopian forest management practices and debate. International environmentalism reshapes the country’s forest management practices through new ideas, knowledge, and forest management practices. The global initiative of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) and its adoption by the Ethiopian government in the last ten years, is the most recent example of international environmentalism influence on the Ethiopian forest management or way of forest governance in Ethiopia (REDD+ Desk 2016; Bekele et al. 2015). The REDD+ initiative is a strategy to enable developing countries to protect their forest resources from deforestation and degradation. It is based on the idea of rewarding or paying low income countries for their efforts in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from the forest (Angelsen 2008). Though REDD+ is governed by UNFCCC’s principles, standards and guidelines, REDD+ is still affected by how it is integrated within the context of the country’s forest resources, the history of forest conservation and management practices, the political economy context and the historical debates on degradation and deforestation. Furthermore, the level of understanding of local communities, local and regional institutional abilities, and the political commitment of the government also affects the REDD+ implementation success (Angelsen 2008; Bekele et al. 2015; Brockhaus et al. 2015 REDD Desk 2016; Bartholdson 2019). Thus, understanding how REDD+ initiatives evolve, and impact national forest governance is important in an academic sense. Recent studies of REDD+ are also focusing on the understanding of this local and national context amongst implementing countries in the tropical forest regions (Bekele et al. 2015; Brockhaus et al. 2015; Bartholdson 2019). Similar to these studies, this thesis analyses the REDD+ context in Ethiopia and also compare these recent developments with historical forest governance approaches. The main impacts REDD+ has on the national forest governance, as it will be explained later in detail are on forest policy and institutional changes.

Thus, here the pattern of implementation of the REDD+ initiative from the government and Non-Governmental side is analysed. The REDD+ initiative comes as an alternative strategy for forest conservation and carbon reduction. Ethiopia has committed to it on governmental level. However, the REDD+ project began to be implemented with full responsibility by NGOs. At the same time, the government follows the formal procedure a country should follow the standard put by the UNFCCC. Thus, there are potential tensions and a need for negotiations here. The contrasting processes and definitions since the adoption of REDD+ will be important to analyse as well as the national REDD+ context in Ethiopia. The government’s main engagement since the country adopted REDD+ and become a member of the UN-REDD+ Program in 2011 had been to develop a national REDD+ policy and institutional framework. The country was eligible for funding and capacity-building support to set up necessary institutional arrangements and revising its various policies and forest laws for managing, coordinating, and integrating REDD+ ideas and principles (Bekele et al. 2015; Brockhaus et al. 2015). The World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) provided a readiness preparation grant in 2012 for the government to formulate a national REDD+ strategy and advance its institutional and technical readiness for REDD+ (REDD desk 2016; Bekele et al. 2015). At the same time, from 2012, REDD+ pilot projects begun to be implemented. One of the main REDD+ pilot projects, named the Bale Mountains eco-region REDD+ project, started in 2013 with full implementation ownership of a Non-
governmental organization called Farm Africa (Bekele et al. 2015; Brockhaus et al. 2015). This is one of the projects that will be analysed here in Chapter 6.

Aims and objectives

The thesis is positioned in the ongoing scholarly discussions about historical and current contexts of forest governance in Ethiopia. It is significant in analyzing both past and contemporary forest conservation and management practices in conjunction with the international environmentalism approaches and the environment protection ‘packages’ or initiatives. The author believes that an integrated and critical analysis of realities on the ground concerning national and international goals will enable the reader to understand the problems with forest conservation and the issue of deforestation and forest degradation in Ethiopia.

In general, the thesis tries to assess the historical forest management practices by various forms of governments and political systems since the mid of the 20th century and, at the same time, analyse the role of international environmentalism in the forest governance system. The historical analyses build in a large part on existing sources with some additions. The main contribution of this thesis lies on the study/discussion of the global UNFCCC initiative of REDD+ and its implementation in Ethiopia. The author asks how this global forest conservation strategy has been adapted and implemented in Ethiopia and how it potentially has changed the long-standing national forest protection traditions the country has since the early centuries.

Alongside this question, the thesis also analyse the historical forest governance process where the contemporary REDD+ initiative is included, to show what were the historical political and economic factors that had an impact and role in forest management and deforestation practices at different periods, and how they together compare with the existing practices. With an emphasis on the current forest protection practices based on the global initiative of REDD+, the thesis tries to establish a historical context for the emergence of forest protection and the changing environmental and forest protection discourses in Ethiopia. By doing this, I am trying to map the historical process of forest protection in the country and understand how current forest protection practices connect with or differ from the past forest protection practices implemented during various government and political economy systems. The thesis also discusses the forest degradation narrative that comes to forest protection discourse in the country in the middle of the 20th century (Bekele 2003; Rahmato 2001). Thus, the thesis tries to contextualize the existing REDD+ practices from both the government and Non-Governmental Organization implementations perspectives and connect it with a historical analysis.

The structure of the thesis

The analysis is structured in two main historical periods: pre-1990s and post-1990s to discuss the impact of the political economy on the environment. The pre-1990s discussion provides a historical background and brings out the various important issues in this period when it comes to debates about forest degradation and deforestation, as well as efforts in forest conservation. The post-1990s period is characterized by a major shift in the structure of the political economy. It is also a period when the general perception of environmental resources and environmental change shifted to be more concerned about environmental resources. Besides, the post-1990s was an important period in the development of international environmental governance. This period has seen global cooperation by the formation of a global convention at the United Nations level to ratify and agree to enhance biological diversity and fight climate change. The discussion about global REDD+ initiative and the Ethiopian REDD+ practices covers the forest governance practices in the last ten and more years in the post-1990s’ period. In discussing the REDD+ initiative context in Ethiopia, the thesis’s analysis focuses on the government and the non-governmental
organization logic of practices and what it means for the country’s forest governance as a whole and in meeting the overall purpose of REDD+ initiative at the national and global level.

The thesis has seven chapters, including the introduction. Following this introductory chapter, the theoretical framework for this thesis is elaborated. The theoretical chapter discusses the main theoretical concepts the thesis employs. Governance and environmentality are important in explaining the Ethiopian forest governance process from historical to the present and, at the same time, to see the context of REDD+ practices. The thesis employs the Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA) as an analytical framework. Other relevant concepts, such as ‘practice’ and ‘discourse,’ are used in a great deal in the discussion throughout the thesis. They are used in the sense of their formal theoretical conceptions in referring to actors’ actions and rhetoric. Methods and sources are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter 3 discusses the pre-1990 period, specifically the period from 1936 until 1974, mainly based on secondary sources. The chapter gives the historical background of forest governance in Ethiopia. It is divided based on three important periods for forest management: the Italian occupation period (1936-1941), the imperial period (1941-1974), and the socialist period until 1990. The chapter problematizes the early forest management practices before 1936 to show how forest protection ideas resonated in the ruling elite, and forest degradation was a concern. In the three different periods, different sets of political ideology and economic reasoning shaped forest management in each period. Based on the different political economies in each period, what kinds of forest protection measures were taken, the deforestation situation in each period and also the underlying philosophy were discussed. The most important legislation and policies were taken, and the relationships between the state and the local people are also analyzed. Each subchapter also contains a short summary of the discussion.

Chapter 4 discusses the period after 1990. The chapter discusses the overall political and economic changes in this period and how this had affected forest governance differently comparing to the previous periods. The post-1990 period is divided into two, from 1991 until 2007 and the period after 2007. For the period before 2007, I develop on the government’s policy approach to forest management. In the period starting from 2007, the government makes major changes to its forest governance approach, and forestry becomes the focus of policy issues. The period also saw an important shift in the global forest conservation efforts and the introduction of the REDD+ initiative in Ethiopia in the following years. Thus, the chapter discusses these changes and major policies that come to change forest management practices in the period after 2007.

Chapter five discusses the government’s line of REDD+ practices specifically. The chapter analyses the process of policy and institutional formations. It explains how the objective of REDD+ has been integrated with political economy and forest conservation in Ethiopia. It also discusses the form of institutions that have been established to achieve REDD+ goals. It analyses how the various government line of practices affect forest governance and forest resources.

Chapter six will analyse in more depth, the line of practice and policy of Farm Africa, the Non-governmental organization that is responsible for implementing the first REDD+ pilot project called the Bale Mountains eco-region REDD+ project. It explores the logic for the involvement of the Non-governmental Organization in the REDD+ project implementation process. It states how the project was implemented, what were the dealings with the local people, what were the REDD+ standard issues when it was implemented at this level and its implication on the REDD+ performance and context of the country.

The last chapter presents a concluding discussion. I first give an overview over the historical chapters and the formation of forest governance in Ethiopia. As the major trends and connections have already been summarized in the individual chapters I will keep this relatively short. What is important here for this chapter is to understand how past debates and contestations has shaped the forest governance emerging with REDD+. The chapter, summarise the historical experience of forest management and policy, and then proceed to discuss the emerging forest governance in
Ethiopia and REDD+, the environmental dis-course, and present the author’s final thoughts of the thesis.
2. Conceptualisations and methods

In political ecology, historical ecology, and environmental history studies, the main focus is understanding human-nature relationships, humans’ awareness about environmental changes and means of adaptations, and protection by humans (See examples in Fairhead and Leach 2003; Balée 2006; Radkau 2008; Mosley 2010). Ideas and perceptions about the environment and environmental change, practices, organizational structures, and processes are core conceptual themes in understanding the human-nature relationship (Leach and Mearns, 1996; Fairhead and Leach 1996 and 2003; Radkau 2008; Mosley 2010). Environmental changes are intertwined with the understanding of societies’ use and practices of forest resources, as well as structural and organizational practices and approaches that operate by producing environmental policies that deal with environmental problems through conservation and other efforts (Mosley 2010).

In this thesis, the focus is on understanding the policy issues, both political and forest governance issues, ideas of environmentalism at the national level, and how the global environmental agenda connection with the national. Integrating various theoretical approaches is the best approach to realise the aims of any historical study (see Esa and Kari 2017; Icenberg 2014). In historical research, one of the main objectives is, understanding the policy and planning of a given country through analysing historical changes in the broader political economy (See, Agrawal 2005; Radaku 2008; Mosely 2010). Governance and environmentality are thus important concepts in this thesis both in explaining the Ethiopian forest governance process from historical times to the present and also in analysing the REDD+ practices in the present and these concepts will be explained further below. Other relevant (and interrelated) concepts, such as ‘practice’ and ‘discourse,’ are used frequently throughout the thesis. These concepts are used here in the sense of their formal theoretical conceptions in analysing various actors’ actions and rhetoric and are defined further here. The Policy arrangement approach (PAA), is an analytical framework for the understanding of the policy formation process will be employed in the analysis. The Policy arrangement approach (PAA) has been developed and used in the recent period to analyse various concepts jointly for a better understanding of environmental policymaking processes in both current and historical aspects (Van Tatenhove et al. 2000; Arts and Leroy 2006; Van der Zouwen 2006; Arnouts 2010; Ayana 2012). Below I will explain this method further including how it applies to my thesis.

Conceptualisations

Political Ecology

In his book titled Politics of Nature, Latour (2004) shows how entangled nature is with politics and politics with nature. His book emphasise how this very entanglement of nature and politics should be the focus of scholarly analyses. He criticises of what he calls “the externalization of nature” and he call to give more attention to the role of politics in the environmental discussion. This thesis follows his call. Latour (2004: 28) states:

…”never has anyone appealed to nature except to teach a political lesson” […] “Conceptions of politics and conceptions of nature have always formed a pair, as firmly united like the two seats on a seesaw, where one goes down when the other goes up, and vice versa”.

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For Latour, a political emphasis and awareness of political embeddedness in environmental debates have the potential of giving a stronger emphasis to the role of nature, in which the discussion becomes holistic, to give equal stress for the role of both nature and humans’ way of life (Latour 2004). This is rarely as obvious as when it comes to forest management which is so strongly related to politics in terms of policy and governance. Governance is therefore an important concept for me, below I will define further the tools of political analyses used in this thesis.

Governance
Governance helps to explain various ways of governing either society or the environment. An analysis of governance helps to explain the intent and ideology of a government that controls power at a certain point in time in governing society. Models of governance can be either state or society centered (Pierre 2000; Peters 2000). In a top-down governance approach, the capacity of the government to rule over society and make and implement policy is the core. In a democratic governance approach, analyses can be more focused on the interactions of the center with society or self-steering networks (Pierre 2000; Peters 2000; Kjar 2004). In other words, governance helps to explain the processes or practices of governing (Behagel 2012). Governance thus encompasses the process of policymaking (politics), a system of rule (polity), and steering instruments (policy) (Treib et al. 2007). In other words, governance relates to the analyses of policy choices and goals, intentions for institutional building, intentions for actors' political and economic decisions, principles of organizations (centralized or decentralized) (ibid.). The governing of the environment can be explained similarly to social governance. ‘Forest governance’ here, refers to the governing body that makes decisions about forest resources and land, it explains how decisions are made and carried out, and who are the responsible institutions in the governance process (De Zoysa and Inoue 2008). Forest governance in the context of the larger institution of property rights and the legal frameworks of a country has been developed and adopted through time and it is this very process that will be elaborated on here in the context of Ethiopia. Forest governance is strongly interlinked with other governing mechanisms; therefore, an analysis of forest governance of a country requires an understanding of the broader land and resource policy as well as overall economic policies, and the ideological orientation that a country adopts and follows (Counsell 2009). The change in political governance thus affects the condition of forest governance. For example, in the context of Ethiopia the political decentralization in the post-1990 Ethiopia created an opportunity for actors such as Non-Governmental Organizations to get involve in forest conservation (Arts and Visseren-Hamakers 2012; Ayana 2012; see Chapter 4).

The new governance system in the post-1990s period also allowed for the introduction of new approaches to forest governance, such as participatory forest management (Ayana 2012). The period has created multilevel or horizontal governance (see Hooghe and Marks 2001; Van der Zouwen 2006; Nelson and Agrawal 2008). Governance is therefore context-specific to a higher degree, which helps to disperse decision-making authority downwards to regional and local units of government (Ayana 2012). Research focusing on decentralized forest governance seeks to understand the negotiation process and how power in the policymaking and management of forest resources is dispersed in such situations (Ribot et al. 2006; Nelson and Agrawal 2008; Nelson 2010; Alden Wily 2011; Hajjar et al. 2012). For these reasons, governance is an important concept to understand the historical and current REDD+ international and national initiative for this thesis (see Kanninen et al. 2007).

Environmentality
Another concept interrelated with governance that will be used in this thesis and is that of environmentality. Agrawal (2005) coined the term environmentality drawing on the concept of gov-
ernmentality, introduced by Foucault ([1979] 1991). In governmentality, the government manages a complex web of society by changing the relationship between the governing body and those it governs (Foucault 1991). Governmentality involves scaled relations of power, technologies of government, knowledge production, and discourse. They together result in individuals changing their thoughts and actions such that they then self-regulate and from the side of the government further the goals of the governing body (Foucault 1991). Environmentality, like Foucault’s governmentality, offers concepts and tools to describe and analyse the complex interplays of power in the governance of human-environment interactions, in this case specifically related to environmental governance (Agrawal 2005). Agrawal uses environmentality as a concept to discuss how variables such as politics, power, knowledge, institutions, and subjectivities interact to form new interrelationships. These interrelationships have concrete outcomes in terms of governing the environment. Environmentality assesses complex relationship of the environmental governing body (national or international) and local communities in the advent of a new form of technologies and knowledge that form a new kind of forest management practices, administrative institutions, and new identities and actions for the local communities (Agrawal 2005). In this thesis, the concept is used to show contesting and different environmentalities, e.g., ideas, politics, institutions that centers around core ideas/discourses as already explained in the background of Chapter 1.

In the context of REDD+, Agrawal’s environmentality discussion is pertinent to analyse how external environmental projects can facilitate new ways to understand the environment by the local communities. Thus, environmentality in this context is related to the involvement of new technologies and knowledge (practice and discourses) that are associated with REDD+. In the forest management, it is responsible for the emergence of new political subjects with an increased level of environmental awareness that is locally construed. For Agrawal, environmentality is essential to show how and why various social groups work systematically to care and act in the environment they identify (Agrawal 2005). As the concept of governance helps us to define more precisely the institutional regimes and the higher-level forest governance system; environmentality helps to define the local negotiations and resulting political awareness: the involvement, the struggle, the resistance and the reformulating processes of the newly structured governance system by local people through the process of adopting new technologies, power, and knowledge that come with the new governance system for better environmental protection (ibid.). Hence, environmentality helps us to understand the emergence of more significant concern for the environment and the creation of ‘environmental subjects,’ that is, the people who care about the environment in the context of their own local reality and understanding of environment, and use both negotiation and resistance in the process (Agrawal 2005, 248).

Methods, sources and framework

Methods
The thesis will be based on a qualitative study and analysis of the different historical and recent documents, and previous arguments concerning the Ethiopian environment, forest and forest governance. Historical qualitative analysis (see Campbell 1998; Monaghan and Hartman 2000) is a technique or method used to collect and interpret various data, and it is used here to build the methodological approach of the thesis. The analysis of the historical sources is based on the qualitative content analysis method (Krippendorff 2018). This method is used to understand how

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2 According to Agrawal there is a current shift in the politics of environmental policy aim to decentralize government and secure the participation of local populations (Agrawal 2001; Agrawal 2005, 5-6). Similarly, Agrawal states that the decentralization policies for the environment are about new technologies to govern the environment. They aim to redefine political relations, reconfigure institutional arrangements, and transform environmental subjectivities.
and what the documents communicate, the motivations of the actors; to identify the actors in previous periods, to help trace continuity and new patterns of actors, organization, and reorganization in various forms of institutions throughout the different periods (c.f., Mayring 2014). In the analysis, I categorize issues that repeatedly come out from these documents such as forest governance, policy formation process, forestland and carbon rights, cyclic institutionalization, REDD+ standards and context, and other important ideas that are raised in various discussions. The qualitative analysis of document sources is combined with interviews of two actors within the field of REDD+ to try to build a fuller picture of forest governance processes and practices in the time spectrum from historical to the present. The qualitative historical analysis in the thesis is focused on ‘process tracing.’ By process tracing, it is meant the context and course of forest management practices in different historical periods, how and why they begin, and how and why they end. At the same time, process tracing also enables analyses of courses of action from global environmental governance and its contextual process of practices from different angles. Analysing the context and patterns of changes in the forest policy discourses and practices is not just stating what has happened but also why and how, it also includes the necessity of policy, discourse, and practice, for a theoretically informed historical data analysis (see George and Bennet 2005).

A main issue when discussing forest cover and deforestation estimation in Ethiopia is the general problem of having reliable numerical data about forest resources and deforestation rates in historical and present times (Bekele et al. 2015). Numerical data that are drawn from documents, reports, and works of literature mentioned above are also integrated into the thesis where it is applicable, to enrich the texts with numerical evidence. The purpose of integrating statistical data is to show trends in deforestation rates and estimation.

Sources

As should be clear from the above, the thesis builds on different types of sources. Available government policies and legislative documents have been used as sources of historical data, including reports concerning forest types, forest extents, estimation of deforestations and others. Literature reviews of existing studies relating to Ethiopia have also been included (Hoben 1995; McCann 1999; Rahmato 2001; Bekele 2003 and 2015; Ayana 2012). I also draw inspiration from other studies from West Africa (Leach and Mearns 1996; Fairhead and Leach 1996 and 2003) (and other parts of Africa (Brockhaus et al. 2015, Angelsen 2008 and Angelsen 2009; and Bartholdson 2019). When analyzing the Ethiopian REDD+ initiative, the Ethiopian REDD+ secretariats document, the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) documents have been used which are both formal documents intended as policy documents. In addition, project documents, assessment, monitoring and evaluation reports concerning the Bale Mountains eco-region REDD+ pilot project from Farm Africa and Oromia Forested landscape program have been analysed. Besides, the international REDD+ desk reviews and other REDD+ related documents from UNFCCC, including a series of COP agreements reports and documents focused on the REDD+ initiatives and agreements, also provide important background data. The data from these different documents are used for a qualitative analysis of the policy formation process and government and Non-Government actors’ activities regarding the REDD+ initiative. The data from the documents and the literature are informative enough to serve the purpose of the thesis, i.e., understanding REDD+ ideas and practices. However, as a limitation, the documents do not clarify the actual practices and interactions in the field, and sometimes they cannot explain why some issues happened (see discussion in Silverman, 2005).

During the reviewing and writing process, the why question becomes crucial in terms of understanding the context and big picture of the REDD+ activities. Few documents have detailed explanations of why and how. The context of why and how on various issues comes to play only inexplicitly in the texts. To this end, interviews were carried out and are referred to in this thesis. One interview was carried out with a project leader at the national REDD+ secretariat. Another
The interview was conducted with an official from the Bale Mountains eco-region REDD+ pilot project from Farm Africa. The interviews were carried out in person by meeting with the two individuals one by one in Addis Ababa, in the month of February 2020. The arrangement of the interviews was done informally, through a personal contact who is affiliated with the interviewees through similar works. The purpose of the interview was explained a priori. I told to the interviewees that I had already done an online research about the issue and that the writing process was halfway through and that what I needed was additional information in order to get a better understanding of REDD+ in Ethiopia. This made the interviews easy to conduct. The interview questions were arranged in a way that helps to get the overall picture of the implementation processes and the idea of practices from both governmental and NGOs, and therefore to understand the documents that were reviewed already. The interviews were then conducted with predefined questions that helped to fill the missing information from the documents. This helped the interviewees and allowed them to expand and redirect the interview. The identities of the interviewees are kept anonymous since the thesis was not primarily intended to be based on interview data. Interview notes were taken, and the information thus collected is integrated with the documents that were already revised.

The interviews helped to understand better the documents from both governmental and NGOs, and to get a better perspective about what was written on the documents and about the reality on the ground from those who are responsible for the tasks. The representatives provided important information to get the overall picture of the government and the NGOs’ lines of practices concerning REDD+ activities in the country. The interviews are important to understand the background of the various documents and research papers regarding the context of REDD+ activities in Ethiopia and they clarify the government and NGOs’ positions and practices on the REDD+ initiative. The interviewees were engaging in the conversation since they understood the purpose of the interview. Other than providing personalised information as officials pushing for REDD+ accreditation and policy, they found necessary to clarify some of the texts in the documents for me to understand better the whole picture of the REDD+ process. These interviews could have been expanded to include more officials, however, since the time was limited and arranging interviews formally was impossible resource wise, the interviews conducted with the two officials are considered enough to provide a better understanding of the documents, the process on the ground, and the problems that are discussed in this thesis.

Environmental policy analytical framework

Using a policy arrangement theoretical framework that stems from similar theoretical foundations as above, we can further understand how forest policy is temporarily shaped in terms of knowledge and discourses, actors’ coalition, rules, and power and resources (Arts and Leroy, 2006). The Policy arrangement approach (PAA) has been developed and used to analyze various concepts jointly for a better understanding of environmental policymaking processes in both current and historical aspects (Van Tatenhove et al. 2000; Arts and Leroy 2006; Van der Zouwen, 2006; Arnouts 2010; Ayana 2012). This approach is important because it helps the researcher to include and analyze ideas, knowledge, narratives, ideology, power, and institutional structures and organisation in combination. This analytical framework is also suitable because it includes institutional, networking, coalition, and discourse; thus, it helps to make a comprehensive framework that addresses agency, structure, interests, and ideas (Arts and Buizer 2009; Liefferink 2006; Van der Zouwen 2006).

Knowledge and discourse analysis provide us with an interpretive discussion of the ideas behind policy concepts, popular narratives, and storylines that elucidates why the policy was and is in such a way (Arts and Buizer 2009). For example, knowledge determines authority and action because knowledge affects authority and practice. This effect is particularly true in the process of finding solutions for environmental problems since this process is attached to political decisions. Foucault (2000) shows how power and knowledge are reproductive. The reproductivity means
that power is determined by knowledge; however, power also frames what is to be perceived as knowledge. Hence, any action, including the exercise of power, defines and is defined by the rules that people are knowledgeable about (Wodak & Meyer 2016). Thus, knowledge structure ‘practice’ that used as concept to explain the activities various actors and agents and ‘discourse,’ as concept to explain the way the phenomena, object or action are interpreted, constructed and stated systematically using language to create a reality. Hence knowledge, practice and discourse are intimately interlinked and also inform each other (Inglis 2012).

This process of interlinkages creates a dominant discourse that shapes the way people think and act (Mansfield 2000). In the view of actors, we can analyse, roles and coalition for specific goals, and the power dynamics that affect the ability of actors or actor coalitions to mobilize resources and influence policy outcomes (Arts and Buizer, 2009). This theoretical approach provides a kind of holistic conceptual framework. The approach helps us to discuss polity, politics, and policy altogether. The framework is a suitable analytical tool to understand the complex and dynamic forest governance process, and also its continuity (see Ayana 2012). This means that the policy arrangement approach is appropriate for both the historical policy and forest governance analysis as well as for the current REDD+ related policy and forest governance analysis of the Ethiopian case. This integrative approach (see Arts and Buizer 2009) is therefore preferred here. Through the policy arrangement approach, we can follow the process of when and how new ideas, concepts, and narratives emerge. Furthermore, we can better ask how they find their way into policy practices, and become reflected in new actor coalitions, new rules, new organizational setups, and new resource mobilizations. In the coming chapters, we will be following this process over time; From the introduction of tree plantation, the attempt of organizing institution to manage forests before the introduction of a colonial form of forest governance, to then the change into autocratic imperial forest governance, followed then by state-centric hierarchical forest governance and what is now an ongoing sort of decentralized participatory forest governance.
3. Forest policy in the pre-1990s period

How were forest degradation and deforestation conceived by the various governments, the local people, and experts in Ethiopia? This chapter presents the historical background of forest governance in Ethiopia and how the political systems and ideologies that are followed by the various ruling powers had affected forest management in Ethiopia. The historical analysis provides an understanding to the reader that frequent changes in the political governance in this period has affected the forest governance and institutions. It explores forest management activities for the period before the 1990s and to the early 20th century and the policies and motives of forest policy, as also some of their effects.

The presentation of the analysis is in a chronological manner and a summarized form. The pre-1990s period is divided into three sub-periods. The discussion highlights the forest management practices in the early periods and throughout the 20th century. The historical analysis begins with highlighting early forest protection practices before and in the early 20th century. The historical analysis then focuses on the Italian occupation period from 1936 to 41 and the Imperial period after the occupation from 1941to1974. The socialist military regime (Derg) period from 1974 to 1991 will be the last analysis follows by concluding discussion of the main points of the historical analysis. Each section is structured presenting first the historical background in terms of the laws issued for conserving the forest. Second, the various criticisms against the framework in contemporary or current scholarship are brought up. Finally, a summarized discussion. The discussion highlights issues such as ownership, access, right, and how these issues impacted the management of forest resources (Ayana 2012; Bekele et al. 2015). As will be shown, each period manifests different forms of politics, forest governance, and environmentalism approach in the process of forest management practices that affected forest and societies in various ways.

Early 20th-century forest protection practices

Ethiopia has a long tradition of forest protection that can be exemplified by the forest protection initiatives that were taken by various kings such as King Zare Yakob in the 1600 and Emperor Menelik (1889-1913) in an attempt to minimize degradation and deforestation (Bekele 2003, Rahmato 2001). As agriculture was (and still is) the main economic activity in Ethiopia, many rural people depend on extensive farming activities. Expansion of farmlands took place through clearing of forestlands (Pankhurst 1995; Bekele 2003). People used trees for many purposes. Fuelwood consumption was and is another reason for cutting trees (Pankhurst 1995; Rahmato 2001; Bekele 2003; Bekele et al. 2015). Therefore, there was a high risk of forest degradation and deforestation in the country. Historical information reveals attempt of forest protection during early imperial times. The kings (as exemplified above) issued imperial orders to protect forests mainly for the provision of trees for fuelwood and timber to their court. The imperial orders included preserving and protecting forested landscapes and plantation activities and sanctioning illegal tree felling activities (Pankhurst 1995; Bekele 2003; Rahmato 2001). Examples of forest reserves by royal decrees exist still today: the Menagesh-Suba, Wof-washa, and Yerer forests that were constituted as crown land and preserved forest areas in 1600 by King Yacob (Pankhurst 1995; Bekele 2003; Rahmato 2001). The historical sources and later research in the area, show that reforestation took place in these areas. This is one of the first royal environmental
practices in the country that we know of (Bekele 2003). These forested landscapes are one of few areas where preservation has been continued until the present day.

During the reign of Emperor Menelik (1889-1913), the king further enhanced the protection by demarcating the forest areas and assigning guards that control illegal tree felling (Rahmato 2001; Bekele 2003). Emperor Menelik is well known for his attempt to introduce formal forest protection and plantation activities in Ethiopia. The Emperor issued a decree that deemed forests as state property and demanded people to protect certain types of trees within the forested landscapes and around their farmlands (MoA 1986). This order protected specific trees such as Cor-dia and Juniper from cutting. As a result, local people referred to these protected trees as ‘Menelik’s trees’ (Bekele 2003, 86). The other significant activity during Emperor Menelik was plantation activities. The world-wide plantation of the eucalyptus tree in the 20th century (see discussion in Radkau 2008), was thus started in Ethiopia at a very early period, already around 1894/95 (Bekele 2003). The purpose of the plantation of eucalyptus was to increase the fuelwood and construction supply for the emperor’s royal court in Addis Ababa (Pankhurst 1995; Bekele 2003; Rahmato 2001). The eucalyptus tree later became an important source of fuelwood and construction supply for the rural and urban inhabitants (ibid.). Institutions for management of natural resources were also established as early as the 1900s during the Emperor Menelik period. For instance, in 1906 the Emperor ordered the establishment of the ministry of agriculture. The new organization was mandated to protect forest resources, control timber felling, and to facilitate tree plantation (Bekele 2003).

Discussion
In the academic debate, these early forest protection initiatives are seen as evidence of early national environmental concerns or awareness emanating from indigenous forms of environmentalism on the problem of forest resource depletion in the country (e.g., Pankhurst 1995; Berman 1966; Rahmato 2001). The activities during this early period helped to protect certain forested landscapes and some trees species (Cordia and Juniper) and introduced the eucalyptus to the country (Bekele 2003; Rahmato 2001). How much these efforts were materialized in terms of actual forest protection on the ground can be argued (Berman 1966). However, the important issue here is the presence of knowledge and awareness of environmental management in pre-colonial times. This stands against later colonial assumptions that there was a lack of knowledge or awareness of forest degradation or deforestation. Colonial narratives tended to misrepresent environmental change, local knowledge, and the role of societies in Africa (Leach and Mearns 1996; Fairhead and Leach 1996, 2003). Though the historical records are limited to the ruling class and its decrees, the concerns or awareness about forest resource depletion was not only the concern of the ruling class but took forms as a broader indigenous environmentalism. Various researches argue that farmers were aware of how to protect their environment and forest resources most possibly to sustainable forest use in all forms (Pankhurst 1995; Berman 1966; Rahmato 2001). Such evidence can be drawn for instance from the discussion in McCann (1999) about how local people substituted fuelwood with dung for their fuel consumption.

The Italian occupation period (1936–41)
In 1936, Ethiopia came under the Italian occupation, which lasted until 1941. The occupation destabilized the imperial government from its power of ruling the country and replaced it with a period of Italian colonial administrative rule. Though brief, the Italian rule changed forest management during the period and had an impact on forest management. This period is characterised by the introduction of forest management based on the colonial principles of economic use
(Bekele 2003, Rahmato 2001). In this period, the newly established administrations in different parts of the country issued various forest laws and regulations (ibid.).

The discussion of this period is based on what is documented by Milizia Forestale (1937/38) and the Italian historian Quaranta Ferdinando's (1939) book called *Ethiopia: An Empire in the making*. The historical analysis is done based on Bekele’s (2003) and Russ (1944) work, and other literature. The two gives details and direct analysis of the period. Here the focus will be on the major changes during this period in terms of colonial forest governance and the policy formulation process. Some of its peculiarities and similarities with colonial forest governance in other countries will also be discussed.

**Historical background**

The Italian administration established the first forest administration authority called Milizia Forestale or Forest Militia in its English translation, with branches in many parts of the country (Gebremarkos 1998; Gebremarkos and Deribe 2001; Quaranta 1939 and Milizia Forestale 1937/38 in Melaku 2003). The task of the Milizia Forestale was to supervise forest exploitation, to do inventories, and to carry out silvicultural and reforestation works (Milizia Forestale 1937/38 in Bekele 2003).

During this colonial period, forest management was guided by colonial interests. Forest resources were primarily targeted to benefit the newly established administration through the expansion of the forest industry. The report of the Milizia Forestale (1937/38 in in Melaku 2003) explains its intent to establish a forest policy that aims to conserve, develop, and utilize forest resources in the country. The report states that the goal of establishing the Milizia Forestale was to establish control of all forested landscapes. The purpose of doing this was to stop the ‘destruction’ of forests by local people and to put in place what was called a ‘rational’ utilization of forests through the protection of endangered tree species. Already in this brief introduction to the document we notice a focus on utilization. In addition, that the ambition of Milizia Forestale was the reforestation of existing forests and the creation of new forests (ibid.). The Italian historian Quaranta Ferdinando (1939) was generally very positive to the forest policy in the period. In his presentation, the Italian foresters who managed the activities under Milizia Forestale to fulfill the colonial interest were well educated and well versed with forest management knowledge (see discussion in Bekele 2003, 59-64).

The main change during the colonial administration was the structural change to the forestry sector, which is considered as the beginning of formal forest management in Ethiopia (Bekele 2003). The main objective as is implicitly revealed by the formulations of the Milizia Forestale was to exploit forest resources for economic interest mainly (ibid.). The Milizia Forestale also introduced sawmills to produce timbers from the many forested lands all over the country. These sawmills were new introductions and had not existed before 1936 (Milizia Forestale 1937/38 and Quaranta 1939 in Bekele 2003, 64). In this exploitation effort, the Milizia Forestale provided several Italian companies with concessions to exploit timber and other forest products. The data from 1937/38 Milizia Forestale report, show how from around 12000 hectares of forest in central Ethiopia, the administration was able to use the forest resources for sawn wood, charcoal, and firewood (Milizia Forestale 1937/38 and Quaranta 1939 in Bekele 2003, 64). Russ (1944, 11), after his field visit of many forested regions at the time related how “the Italians had established the largest sawmill in the country”. According to Bekele (2003), a strong motive for the Italians to become engaged in forest management practices and in establishing the Milizia Forestale in 1937 specifically was that forests were the chief readily available resource in the country for commercial exploitation.

With the establishment of the Milizia Forestale, forest management was reorganized in all the regions of the country. Much of the forest and forest lands were granted to chiefs and dignitaries with a responsibility to implement forest protection. The plan was to facilitate the administration
and control of forest resources. Milizia Forestale (1937/38) emphasized the need to promulgate strict disciplinary regulations that would enable a rational utilization of the forest (Bekele 2003). Tree felling was prohibited both in privately and customarily owned forests. Tree cutting was only allowed if permission was granted by the Milizia Forestale (Milizia Forestale 1937/38 in Bekele 2003). To enforce the disciplinary and prohibitory rules of forest utilization Milizia Forestale introduced laws and regulations. Between the years 1937-1938, the Italian administration issued forestry decrees and legal procedures for all the administrative regions (Milizia Forestale 1937/38 in Bekele 2003). The laws and proclamations intended to set utilization standards and protect the forest by mainly prohibiting local use of forest resources (ibid.). Some of the laws and regulations issued by Milizia Forestale are presented and explained in the table below.

Table 1. Proclamations / forest decrees issued during the Italian period (Source: Milizia Forestale 1937/38 in Bekele 2003).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proclamations / forest decrees</th>
<th>years</th>
<th>Objectives and purposes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forest decree No. 138</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Prohibits cutting trees in either individual or state forests within a certain distance, and trees that have economic value, such as gum or rubber-producing acacia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest decree No. 139</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Stresses the chiefs’ responsibilities and enforce a strict disciplinary regulation. Chiefs are responsible for reporting violations, failing to do so is punishable. Violation of the rule punishable by a fine three to five times the commercial value of the tree cut illegally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest decree No. 881</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>To establish an inventory practice, documenting and collecting information about forest types, species quantity to be cut and the unit price. The need for increasing the technical and financial capacity of the Milizia Forestale to increase forest exploitation capacity. To provide tree logging companies from Italy with systems and abilities for more forest exploitation. The inventory was also aimed to protect trees that were deemed too young to be cut or trees necessary for other economic benefits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Criticism

The main criticism of the forest policies in this period came from the expatriate foresters such as Russ (1944), Logan (1946), and Von Breitenbach (1962), who had studied Ethiopian forest conditions between the years 1944-1960s. These expatriate foresters and other scholars, such as Sbacchi (1985), who studied the Italian period, convey accounts of the forest management practices of Milizia Forestale, which is contradicting the publications of Milizia Forestale (1937/38) and what is related by the historian Quaranta (1939).

The policies in the colonial period caused significant deforestation. Through other policies, the Italian administration sanctioned deforestation for the rural people by allowing the landless population to clear forestlands to create new farmlands. The policy was intended to increase the popularity of the colonial regime amongst rural residents (Sbacchi 1985; Bekele 2003). Contrary to Quaranta (1939), Russ (1944) states that forest management under Milizia Forestale were harmful to the forest resources of the country, and that the expertise of forestry amongst the
Milizia Forestale officials was not up to the standard. Russ (1944) reports that the specialists working in Milizia Forestale were rather political colonizers than forest experts. In his own words Russ (1944, 34) Writes that:

The Italians… planted the trees one meter apart rather than the optimum 2 meters and half. 
It seems possible, from the work they did, that the majority of the Milizia Forestale sent to this country was political colonizers.

The actual reforestation activity of Milizia Forestale was also limited. Russ continues his account explaining how: “the Italians planted a few areas, principally near roads” (Russ 1944, 34). Russ also use the later Ethiopian forest area assessments to back up his argument that very little of the extracted forests were ever replanted. He estimates that the afforestation effort by Milizia Forestale did not exceed more than 150 hectares (Russ 1944; see also discussion in Bekele 2003).

The main criticism of expatriate foresters was the lack of visible reforestation efforts comparing to the rate of exploitation. In 1944 (p. 24), Russ wrote, “the Italians had imported a great quantity of woodworking machinery, and there is now more of this in the country than is needed”. He also documented sawmills abandoned after the end of the occupation and the little effort made in reforestation actions along the main roadsides. For many observant not just Russ but also Logan (1946), the abandoned sawmills after the colonial regime came to signify a monument over lofty ambitions of exploitation rather than proper forest management. Russ (1944-46) criticized the Italian forest management as exploitative, and as authoritarian in its approach. Furthermore, since continuing the agrarian economy which was a well-established economic base and making it more commercialized for economic benefit of the colonial administration was a priority, there was no immediate concern or need to develop a forest for the colonial administration other than exploiting it as a readily available resource (Bekele 2003; Ayana 2012).

Discussion

Overall, the forest management of Milizia Forestale (1936- 1941) was similar to the colonial forest management approaches elsewhere in Africa. As discussed by Leach and Mearns (1996), colonial forest management practices in Africa were mainly about managing forests as economic goods to maximize the benefit of the colonizer's economic interest. Colonial forest management practices were guided by ecological ideas that separated forest management from the local society, disregarding local knowledge, and the established practices of forest use and management (Leach and Mearns 1996). The Italian colonial regime was typical of a maximizing regime to forest outtake masquerading in a sense through a discourse of forest restoration in response to degradation from local use (Bekele 2003; Ayana 2012).

Though the effects of Milizia Forestale on forest loss still needs to be researched, one thing that is agreed upon amongst historians is that the Italian administration contributed to the Ethiopian forest management practice in the sense that they initiated a major structural change to develop the forestry potential of the country (Gebremarkos and Deribe 2001; Tadesse 2001; Bekele 2003; Rahamto 2008; Ayana 2012). The Milizia Forestale was the first agency attempting to estimate forest cover extent in Ethiopia. The estimations of forest cover by Milizia Forestale was later used as a base for forest conditions studies and estimations of the rate of deforestation. The Milizia Forestale made forest area estimation based on the resolution of one thousand hectares. The study made claims to have based the estimation through field observation of forested areas in various parts of the country (Milizia Forestale 1937/38). The estimation covers both highland forests and lowland woodland shrubs and savannah trees (Milizia Forestale 1937/38 c.f., Russ 1944; Melaku 2003, 60). Melaku (2003, 60) states that “the Italians total highland forest area estimate provided on the forest map they produced is calculated to be about 5.5 million hectares”. However, their estimation was not exact and did not include all the forests categorized as highland forests (Bekele 2003). The main importance of the estimation rather is that it estab-
lished the baseline for later forest estimations in the period after the 1940s to 1960s by the foresters such as Russ 1944; Logan 1946 and Breitenbach 1962 (see discussion in Pankhurst 1995; McCann 1999; Bekele 2003).

The important point relevant to this period is understanding how a colonial forest management practice was shaped in this period, the form of institutions and laws and legislations that were organized, established, and issued to guide colonial forest management ideology. Analyzing the colonial form of forest governance shows how it was organized mainly for exploiting forest resources and for economic gain. The exploitive and dualistic nature of the colonial form of forest governance scaled up forest degradation and deforestation even within a short-term period and had negative effects on forest cover, the degree to which is difficult to estimate today. The analysis shows that the idealised initiatives and plans to protect forests differed from the actual practices. Furthermore, knowledge and expertise of forest ecology in the colonial period were not well geared for forest protection; rather, they facilitated the exploitation of forests and the separation of local people from use and from local conservation efforts (Bekele 2003; Rahmato 2001; Ayana 2012).

The ‘restored’ Imperial period (1941 –1974)

This period after Italian occupation from 1941 shows the change from colonial to the imperial form of forest governance. The imperial period from 1941 till 1974 has two phases in forest management. The first phase, which spanned from 1941 till 1965, is characterized by a very slow process in the forest management consolidation. The political elites in Ethiopia were largely disinterested in forest conservation and protection because agricultural modernization was the prioritized economic policy (Bekele 2003). From 1965 until 1974, there was a second phase in forests management as forestry got much more attention from the government. In this period several laws and regulations were passed to protect forest resources (ibid.). For this part, various sources are used that discuss the period in detail. The historical analysis of this period shows the changes in forest management comparing to the colonial one. It also shows the development of a new group of actors in forest management practice and discourse, expatriate forest experts.

Historical background

After the imperial government came back to control and power in 1941, it focused on political and economic actions to consolidate territorial control and modernizing the country (Ottaway 1990; Bahru 1991; Teshale 1995). This brought about the deinstitutionalization of the forest management structures that had been established by the Italian administration (Tadesse 2001). The modernizing policy primarily focused on agricultural modernization and fast economic growth (Bekele 2003). Large-scale commercial farming was chosen as the means to transform the country from an agrarian to an industrial economy (Ayana 2012).

The imperial government focused on restructuring and organizing the agricultural sector to realize the imperial government’s modernization drive. Forestry was seen as a sub-sector with low priority. The forest agency was established within the agricultural ministry and was mainly responsible for reallocating forest land to expand commercial agriculture and the issuance of permits for the exploitation of forest products (Gebremarkos and Deribe, 2001; Tadesse 2001). This policy and lack of concern for forest protection pushed the farmland frontiers to encroach on forestlands (Bekele 2003; Rahamto 2008). Economic benefits gained from the forestry sector, such as timber production, was considered as a subsidy to the agricultural economy only.

Apart from the economic policy of the imperial government, land policy gave forestland ownership rights mainly to the state and landlords. Forest owned by the state was designated as state or imperial forest property while those owned by the landlords as private forest property. The own-
ership structure also played a role in intensive forest exploitation since forest exploitation was guaranteed in private and state forest ownerships (Gebremarkos and Deribe, 2001; Bekele 2003; Rahmato 2008). The absolute right of ownership on private land was harmful to the forest in terms of deforestation. The situation prevailed until a law regulating the management of forest in private ownership was issued in 1965 (Bekele 2003). Forest under the state ownership was also poorly managed and nearly considered as ‘open access’ to any individuals and reforestation practices was limited (ibid.).

The restored government introduced a new constitution in 1955. This constitution includes important paragraphs that state natural resources and forests. The 1955 constitution states “all natural resources as state domain” and within the list of natural resources, forests were listed. The constitution declared natural resources as “sacred trusts for the benefit of all including the unborn” and pledged to protect it. However, the domain of state was limited only to lands under state control, and other lands under private and other forms of ownership were left out from protection (The imperial Constitution 1955).

There were attempts to issue laws and legislation pertinent to forest management in 1952/53, laws, but to no avail. Regulations enforcing forest management were issued only after long period advocacy from foresters in 1965 (Bekele 2003, 88). In 1965, the imperial government, through its parliament, passed three forestry laws: state forest proclamation, private forest conservation proclamation, and protective forest proclamation (ibid; see Table 2).

Table 2. 1965 laws relating to forest protection (Source: Proclamation No.225, 1965 in Bekele 2003).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proclamations</th>
<th>Issued years</th>
<th>Main objectives and purposes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State forest proclamation No. 225</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>To conserve, protect, develop, and utilize forests. The proclamations specify how protection will be implemented following scientific standards that include the protection of other natural resources tied with forest protection. Defines forest and tree as “any wood plant including bamboo that reaches a height of ten-meter” and forest as “any land stocked with forest trees”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private forest conservation proclamation No. 226</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Declared all forest not owned by the state as private forest. Aimed to regulate the exploitation of forests on private land forest ownership conservation of forest and other related resources with the purpose of nature conservation through reforestation, conservation, and management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective Forest Proclamation No. 227</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Targeted forest protection in any land to conserve soils, water, and to control floods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Criticism

Critique against the imperial forest management approach came mainly from the expatriate foresters. The expatriate and local foresters were Russ (1944–46) an American forester, Logan (1946), Mooney (1953–61) and from the British Colonial Forest Service, Swain (1954). The German Forest advisor to Ethiopia, Breitenebach (1961–62) and Ethiopian forester Wolde-Michael Kelecha (1961) also voiced strong concerns. These foresters were then employed by the imperial government and Non-Governmental environmental Organizations (Bekele 2003; Ayana
The expatriate foresters became prominent figures after the dismantling of the Italian Milizi a Forestale. They documented forest cover status, estimated deforestation rates, and recorded exploitative forestry practices during this period.

Their main criticism was the lack of interest on the government side to protect forests. This despite their alarming reports on forest degradation and policy recommendations for proper forest management and advocacy for laws and regulations of forest uses (Bekele 2003; Ayana 2012). The fact that forest was not a priority for the imperial government, particularly between 1941 and 1965, was a significant policy debate between the experts and policymakers (Ayana 2012). Though these foresters were consistently advocating for the need for forest protection, the government, with its commercial agricultural expansion and modernization discourse, opposed all the attempts by the foresters to establish forest managing institutions and laws (Bahru 1991; Bekele 2003; Ayana 2012).

In their reports against the exploitative forestry practices and lack of guiding regulations, Russ (1946) and Mooney (1954) reports, show how different individuals, including landlords and foreign private loggers, engaged in sawmill activities without being provided clear guidelines and regulations for forest use. Mooney gives an example in his report of: “three German families making heavy felling […] They have felled over 600 of the very best trees […] moreover, they have paid nothing to the government for this timber […]” (Mooney 1954, 15). The debate was also internal within the imperial government. The minister of the ministry of agriculture Mahteme Sellassie Wolde Maskel wrote a letter in 1947 to the Emperor about:

> “the parliament failure to pass the forestry laws, in spite of his efforts to explain the parliament the importance of forest and forestry laws to the country, the failure of provincial authorities to implement imperial orders” (Wolde Maskel 1947 in Bekele 2003).

Furthermore, Mooney wrote several complaints in 1955 and 1961 after his field visits of the forest areas of the country. After his first visit to forest areas in the country in 1955 Mooney, wrote:

> “I notice with regret and great apprehension the dangerous and short-sighted tendency that exists to make quick money out of these forests without any thought for the future. This is certainly not in the national interest. Throughout my tour in the west, I saw on all sides the destruction of forests in progress” (Mooney 1955 in Bekele 2003).

In 1961, Mooney wrote in his final report on the state of forests in Ethiopia commissioned by the national herbarium of Ethiopia 1963:

> “In spite of the advice that has been given by professional foresters about the failure of the government to follow the foresters’ recommendations that were given for a decade past ten years, I regret to say that, so far no serious effort has been made to protect and manage any of the forests of this country” (Mooney 1961 in Bekele 2003).

This group of expatriate forest experts who had made assessments and reports on the condition of forests in Ethiopia, played a main role in creating a degradation narrative that was used to explain forest degradation and deforestation and that became a very dominant paradigm in later development and conservation thinking (Pankhurst 1995; McCann 1999; Bekele 2003). The estimates of these experts also gave rise to the idea that forest resources in Ethiopia had declined from 40 to 3 percent coverage (McCann 199). On one of Mooney’s report titled The Need for Forestry in Ethiopia, he argued that “Ethiopia was "densely wooded" in "ancient, and not so remote times,"” (Mooney 1955, 15). However, the information upon which this conclusion was drawn was not clear. Neither Mooney nor the other expatriate foresters managed to establish “how much of the country was forested or at precisely what period and at what rate deforested” as stated by Pankhurst (1995, 119). The deforested forestlands that were estimated (for the period, 1941-1960s) by the foresters in total were about 2 million hectares in comparison to the estimation of the Militia Forestale in 1938 (Bekele 2003). Though there is a lack of baselines the reluctance of the imperial government to enact proper forest management was responsible for
vast forest degradation and deforestation between 1941 and the 1960s (Bekele 2003). The environmental crisis in 1966/67 was in later periods blamed on the imperial government’s lack of interest in protecting forest resources for environmental protection purposes (ibid.)

Discussion

The historical analysis illustrates the existing competitive ideas between the imperial policymakers and the forest experts. As we have seen above, the imperial government did not give attention to the forest, and it took a very long time for the imperial government to understand the need for forest management. The introduction of forest experts was important for bringing attention to forest conditions and providing recommendations. They were also driving the debate stressing the lack of government practices and the dominant agricultural modernization which caused an increased level of forest degradation. The advocacy work of the foresters was thus significant in terms of building up the knowledge and awareness of the state of the forests. However, a firmly established political ideology of the political elite affected the policymaking process in the presence of experts with knowledge that advocate for policies that are important for environmental protection and forest management.

The factors that made the imperial government reluctant to respond to the recommendations of the foresters were financial and institutional incapacity. The policymakers (mostly royal landlord elites) lacked the broader interest in forest management, and they also mistrusted the expatriate foresters whom the politicians considered as an agent of colonial ideology (see discussion in Gebremarkos and Deribe 2001; Bekele 2003; Rahamto 2008; Ayana 2012). The imperial government had chosen to follow a closed-door policymaking process with no influence rather than trusting and following the reports from the expatriate foresters and letting them influence the policymaking process (Ayana 2012, 26). The economic reason was also an essential factor for the reluctance of the government, as mentioned already (see also Ayana 2012). The forest protection advocacy of the foresters could not fit in with the economic development plan of the political elite. The political elite rather was focused on maximizing their economic profits from their private holdings of farmlands and forestlands (ibid.). On the other side, the expatriate foresters advocated for the prioritization of forest resources and called for forest governance that opts for proper management and environmental protection.

The lack of government policy and the slowness of forestry policy an essential part of the government over twenty-four years, show how the foresters faced hard resistance from the imperial government. Since 1941, the state used its power in deciding policies and practices pertinent to its own political and economic priorities, which were agricultural modernization and maximization of profit for the ruling royal elite (Bahru 1991; Bekele 2003; Ayana 2012). The resistance came to an end in 1965, and the government considered giving attention to forestry and begun issuing laws and regulations for paving the way for proper forest management. The imperial government environmentalism geared to forest protection and environmentalism came after 1965. The looming environment influenced the change in the government’s approach. The environmental crisis of 1966/67 is evidence for how the environmental crisis relates to the political crisis (nature-politics/politics-nature) since as a consequence of the collapse of the imperial government collapsed and it changed with the new political system in 1974 (Bahru 1991; Bekele 2003, Ayana 2012).

It is important to note that there also was environmental awareness and the need for forest protection and rehabilitating degraded lands at the local level in this period. The main problem was in the existence of local environmentalism and informed knowledge about the need for forest protection from expatriate foresters. Although, in later periods, the knowledge formed about the forest degradation is argued as too exaggerated and speculative by scholars such as Pankhurst (1995), McCann (1999), Gebremarkos and Deribe (2001), Bekele (2003), Rahmato (2008), and Ayana (2012). The expatriate foresters had adopted the understanding of the Ethiopian environ-
ment as degraded and under threat, and much of their works were influenced by a dominant degradation narrative of the time. These specialists were highly critical of human intervention in forest resources historically and on the current day.

The politicians were determinant in following the principles of political economy through policies of agricultural modernization. The historical evidence shows that the reluctance from the higher-level politics during this period, however, did not stop local environmentalism from engaging in environmental protection activities. An example of such individually motivated conservation efforts activities is a story about a local environmentalist in the Wollo region (highly degraded region) in northern Ethiopia in the 1960s, who attempted to mobilize local farmers to engage in conservation activities (see also Rahmato 2001).

When we see the period from the formal forest management approach, the period marked the slow strengthening of formal forest management shaped by induced environmentalism thoughts and approaches. Since the 1960s, environmental thoughts and practices became more structured, and international development agencies and foreign forest experts started to be involved. The work of these foreign foresters’ experts was responsible for building up the knowledge around the state of forests in the country (Rahmato 2001 and 2008).

The socialist government period (1974-1990)

In this period, there was a significant change in the political economy and forest management discourse and practices. The main difference was the new socialist government which organised a full revision of forest management and a strong involvement. This change signifies the shift in the government’s role in forest governance than the previous period. The main reason for this transformation in the government's role in handling environmental resources, and mainly forest, was the first ecological crisis of 1966/67 during the imperial period. The influence of the environmental disaster on the government’s political ecology and form of environmentalism was an essential factor for the changes brought on forest management. The fact that the government’s political ideology was socialist and militaristic shaped also the approach to forest governance in a way that is fully control by the government. The government chose an absolute political control over forest and forestlands. Forest governance in this period was authoritarian and did not consider the local (rural) people’s environmentalism. It was politically envisioned environmental protection (Bahru 1991; Bekele 2003, Rahmato 2001 and 2008; Ayana 2012).

Historical background

The socialist period came with a total change in all aspects of peoples’ lives. The new regime changed the country’s political and economic ideology into socialism. With the evolution of the political system, land and natural resources were nationalized, and farmlands were allocated to the land tiller (Yeraswork 2000; Tadesse 2001; Bekele 2003). The period marked the end of the imperial regime and the beginning of a new political discourse (ibid.).

The socialist period has marked the beginning of a new form of forest governance. Forest management came back into the spotlight and gained much more attention. The 1966/67 environmental crisis is associated with the failure of the imperial government to make environment and forest protection a priority in its political and economic strategies (Bekele 2003; Rahamato 2001). The environmental problem was embedded in a new political discourse, the socialist regime used the condition of environmental problem, arguing that the aristocrat feudal system had depleted the country’s forest resources (Ayana 2012). Previously overlooked complaints and recommendations of the local and expatriate foresters about the high rate of forest degradation and deforestation, and the need for urgent forest conservation came to the center of environmental protection narratives and discourse (Rahmato 2001; Melaku 2003). In this period, the degra-
dation narrative that was started in the 1960s by the expatriate foresters, of how the country had lost its vast forest cover in a very few years, became a dominant narrative and was used by the government to enforce tree plantation activities (ibid.). In its first forest legislative preamble, the government affirmed a previous widespread forest cover in the law with the statement:

“Whereas, Ethiopia’s forest which formerly covered most of the country has been depleted by the defunct feudal-bourgeois order for the selfish interest of the aristocracy and the nobility; [---] Whereas, immediate and decisive action must be taken to avert this disasters situation by agitating and coordinating the broad masses to plant, conserve, develop and administer the country’s forest and wildlife resources” (PDRE’s proclamation 1980, 1).

The new socialist political discourse made way for enforcement of forest management and environmental protection. Environmental protection and forest management now became the main political agenda of the regime since forest degradation and deforestation were taken as the leading cause of the environmental crisis during the imperial period (Yeraswork 2000; Rahamato 2001; Bekele 2003). The socialist government also made itself the main actor in environmental and natural resources management by introducing direct control over land, forestlands, and forest resources. Centralization was thought to be an appropriate approach to solve the environmental and deforestation problem in the country. Forest management was formed with a robust bureaucratic authority situated close to the government (Yeraswork 2000; Tadesse 2001; Bekele 2003; Ayana 2012).

The government issued a new constitution, other proclamations, and legislations to enforce its forest management practices. The new constitution, proclamation, and laws focused on the nationalization of land and natural resources (Yeraswork 2000; Tadesse 2001; Bekele 2003; Ayana 2012). The laws and regulations gave authority to the government to limit the access and use right of forests and forestlands of the rural people (ibid.). The legislation, proclamations, and laws issued in this period are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Socialist laws relating to forest protection (Source: Forest Property Rights, the Role of the State, and Institutional Exigency by Bekele 2003).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proclamations</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Main objectives and purposes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PDRE Proclamation for land reform and to provide ownership for government</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Nationalized all the rural lands, including forest under state and the people control for collective use. It aimed to stop the extensive forest degradation in the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDRE Proclamation for forest conservation and development</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>To enforce forest protection and plantation activities To take immediate and decisive action against forest degradation and deforestation To plant, conserve, develop and administer the country’s forest and wildlife resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDRE Constitution</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>To ratify state ownership over natural resources: land, minerals, water, and forest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As part of this reform, the government built forest management institutions to strengthen forest management practices. The government established an autonomous forest management institution called Forest and Wildlife Conservation and Development Authority, and a Forestry and Wood Utilization Research Centre, as well as the Wondo Genet College of Forestry (Ayana 2012). The government had also introduced plantation activities: Plantation of exotic fast-growing tree species such as the eucalyptus tree in degraded areas was to launch as the strategy to amend deforestation (Davidson 1989; Yeraswork 2000; Tadesse 2001; Demel 2001; Bekele 2003; Mulugeta and Tadesse 2010; Ayana 2012). The government delineated large tracts of na-
tional forest reserves and established a state-owned forest plantation area covering about 4.8 million hectares of land (Kidane 2002).

The socialist government had worked together with international organizations on environmental rehabilitation activities following the ecological crisis that caused the 1985 famine in the northern part of the country (Pausewang 2002; Mulugeta and Tadesse 2010; Ayana 2012). The environmental protection activities during this period to follow the dualistic approach, i.e., separating the society from the environment (Hoben 1995; Pausewang 2002; Mulugeta and Tadesse 2010). As Hoben (1995) and Rahamato (2001) discuss, this process, the environmental protection activity of both the government and the international organizations did not brought significant changes in the affected rural landscapes.

Criticism

The government’s actions through introducing laws, policies, engaging in plantation activities and building forest management institutions had a great significance in forest development during this period. However, the main critique against forest policy in this period relates to the authoritarian approach to forest management. The critics from later period researchers who have studied the political economy and forest management practices of the period such as Yeraswork (2000); Tadesse (2001), Rahmato (2001), Bekele (2003), and Ayana (2012) criticized the socialist government approach to centralize power to the state. Authority and responsibilities were concentrated only in the government functions and in the state-run forestry institutions, limiting the participation of local people in the decision-making process and particularly in managing the protection of forest and forest lands (Yeraswork 2000; Tadesse 2001; Rahmato 2001; Bekele 2003; and Ayana 2012). The top-down approach of forest management neglected not only rural people’s potential role as forest managers but also their core economic issue, i.e., maintaining forest property (ibid.).

Discussion

The socialist government made radical changes to forest management. This radical change, together with a compelling international and national forest protection discourse made forestry the government’s political economy priority. The plantation activity helped forest cover in the country to increase (Bekele 2003). However, the centralized and authoritarian approach created conflicts of interest at the local level between the government officials and the local people. Taking full authority over land allocation and the categorization of land as forestland or farmland created a conflict between the rural people and the government’s institutions. The government’s decision to allocate land for various purposes, including delineating area for forests, was without any consultation with local people. Particularly delineated protective forestlands with no use access for local people created a pattern of resistance among the rural people. The failure in establishing ownership and utilization rights for the local people in later period resulted in deforestation (Bekele 2003, 118). Nevertheless, the authoritative approach introduced centralized policies and institutions that had a major significance in the development of forestry and forest conservation. The primary significance of this period is forest governance was in increasing forest cover in urban and rural areas (Bekele 2003). However, the political change in the period afterwards resulted in disturbance of this process and regression of forest cover (Yeraswork 2000; Tadesse 2001; Rahmato 2001; Bekele 2003; Ayana 2012; and see Chapter Four).

When comparing to the imperial government, the socialist regime was different in the sense that it formed a coalition with forest experts in promoting forest protection and forest management agenda (Ayana 2012). The government, with the objective of achieving political and economic goals through absolute control and management of forest and forestlands, and the foresters, with the agenda of environmental and forest protection and influencing the policymaking process;
came together in forest protection and management practice (see discussion in Rahmato 2001; Bekele 2003; Ayana 2012).

The involvement of international organization in the 1980s during the environmental crisis, brought the global environmental and forest management ideas, knowledge and form of practices that dictated the environmental protection activities of the period. It was the dualistic approach, i.e., separating the society from the environment (Hoben 1995; Pausewang 2002; Mulugeta and Tadesse 2010). Hoben (1995) discusses how both the government and the international organizations' intervention did not interrelate with the rural peoples’ livelihoods and views of the environment, and as a result, became counterproductive to the environment and to the rural livelihoods (Hoben 1995, see also the discussion in Rahmato 2001). This was because the cultural paradigm or principle of the environmental rehabilitation approach of the government and the international organization was not planned for the long-term or the connection between the society and their immediate environment (Hoben 1995 and Rahmato 2001).

The centralised approach and the environmental crisis have their own impact on forest cover and management in the following period after the 1990s. The involvement of international organisations also came to increase significantly. The next chapter will continue discussing this period.
4. Forest policy after the 1990s

This chapter is a continuation of the discussion in chapter three with a focus on the post-1990s period, it also provides a bridge for the later chapters’ discussion about the REDD+ initiative. The chapter discusses the overall political economy changes and continuities over the political economy and forest governance that came with the change of government in the country, and how this affected the forest governance differently comparing to the previous periods. The post-1990 period can be divided into two periods. From 1991 until 2007 and the period after 2007. In the first sub-period, forest governance became more decentralized, and issued laws and regulations that enhanced the forestry sector which gradually became part of the government’s policy-making process practice. Second, the government forest management practices became more and more intertwined with the global forest management initiatives, and its linked knowledge, practices and discourses since 2007, when national forest management was gradually geared towards to REDD+ initiative. Thus, the chapter is essential to show the slow and gradual progress to proper forest management initiatives and practices that are enforced by the changes brought into the political economy of the country at the national level. At the same time, through the global environmentalism agendas countries where pushed to align with the global strategies to deal with global environmental changes. The chapter is structured as the previous, by first presenting the historical background and the laws issued for conserving and managing forests, and then the various criticisms in academic debate in relation to or against these policies, and then a summarizing discussion.

Historical background

Political changes in 1991 brought the socialist government to an end and replaced it with a new ethnic federalist government (Bahru 1991). A decentralized governing system was adopted as a suitable governing system for the country and ratified under the new 1995 constitution (ibid.). The government structured itself as a federal system in five political levels: federal, regional, zonal, woreda (district), and kebele (lower administration level) (Bekele 2003). Contrary to previous centralized governance, the regional and woreda administration levels were now given major decision power to exercise decisions and policy (ibid).

This change in the governing style helped the newly established regional governments to enact and establish local natural resource management policies and institutions (Ayana 2012). In the constitution, it was decided that the land tenure system was to stay under the control of the state and thus ‘the people’ (FDRE constitution1995). Land and forest management were decentralized, and the decision-making process became inclusive through the regional governments allowing for local people to participate (see discussion in Ayana 2012). Regions were given the power to pass laws and regulations to manage forest resources without overruling federal laws, while the federal government maintained the power of making national policy and law concerning utilization and conservation of land, forest and other natural resources all over the country (FDRE 1995; Ayana 2012; Dickovick and Gebre-Egziabher 2010). Some of the legislation issued in this period are presented in Table 4.
Table 4 Policy or legislation issued by the federal government (Source: Forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia by Ayana 2003).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies or legislations</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Main objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>energy policy</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>To increase the country’s energy efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The environmental policy</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>To put general guideline pertinent with the global standards concerning environmental protection regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment impact assessment law</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>A standard to legitimize development projects to be with per standard of not harming the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife policy and law</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>To protect wildlife in the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural land administration and land use law</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>To set a standard of rural land use and certification of use right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The forest policy and law</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>To enhance forest conservation for both economic and environmental purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate-resilient green economy (CRGE)</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>To build a green economy in the country within 25 years period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the political change was significant for the development of forest governance, forest governance reform was slow and came later, mainly after 1994 (see below). The first four years after the change of the government in 1991 were actually detrimental to the level of forest cover extent in the country. The government did not have full immediate control over the country after 1991 and the rural people saw this as an opportunity to seize new farmlands by clearing the forest. The fact that the previous laws were nullified and the new government waited until 1994 to issue forest regulation to control the high rate of deforestation also exacerbated the situation (Bekele 2003). Bekele (2003), in discussing this period, states that the first three years until 1994 caused a lot of destruction to the forests that were planted during the socialist era. Farmers’ grievances over the forest and land property rights and against the centralized socialist government and the power vacuum that was created after the depositions of this regime, led the rural people to cut and clear forests and forestlands to create a new settlement and farmlands (ibid.). Bekele (2003) states that the deforestation rate was high during this brief period, as forests were left as an open-access resource to be exploited without any limits (Bekele 2003, 118-119). Bekele’s (2003) own calculation in the forested areas where he did his field and case studies show that the scale of deforestation and the level of destruction between 1991 and 1994 were very high. The results show that the forest level declined with about 48 % between 1991 till 2001, comparing to the forest level recorded between the years 1974-1991 in the forested areas where he conducted his study (Bekele 2003, 124). The extent of forest cover for the selected forest areas was 547,154 hectares until the period of 1991 and then declined to 279,176 hectares in the period between 1991 and 2001 (Bekele 2003, 124).

The scaling up in forest protection and management since the 1990s was a gradual process. The government first had to deal with immediate forest management problems and the high deforestation activities. The government started to issue laws and regulations and establish institutions progressively as deforestation problems continued and integrating the forestry sector in its economic policy became important (Rahmato 2001; Yeraswork 2000; Aspen 2002; Bekele 2003). In the 1994 proclamation, forest management and forest property rights aligned with the decentralized governing system. Forest property rights were divided into three categories; state forest that is managed by the federal government; regional forest that is managed by the newly formed regional administrations; and private forests in the forestlands that are considered as belonging to a
private person or are under customary rights (FDRE proclamation 1994). The proclamation intended to halt the massive deforestation activities by the rural people by giving a sense of assurance of possession and benefits from the forest during the process of forest demarcation. To this end, the proclamation states that rights to farmland and forestland that the rural people possess/own through customary rights are respected (FDRE proclamation 1994; Bekele 2003, 128). The legislation was intended to put a temporary binding or coercive mechanism to control forest destruction as well as to facilitate farmland management for forest protection (Bekele 2003). However, the practical success of this proclamation to stop the huge deforestation in the first three periods between the years 1991-1994 was not shown in other researches.

Another issue in the post-1991 period affecting and slowing forest management was the government’s economic approach. The government geared its economic and development policy and strategies towards building a market economy (Birhanu 2009; Tibebwa and Negusu 2009). For this purpose, and as part of the development strategies, the agricultural sector was again given priority to lead the country to industrialization (Ayana 2012; Bekele et al., 2015). The government in 1994 introduced a new development strategy called Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) (ibid.). The agricultural policy intended to develop the smallholder farming system and promote largescale commercial agriculture (Rahmato 2011; Ayana 2012; Bekele et al. 2015). Developing the agricultural sector was taken as the main springboard for developing other sectors, including forestry (ibid.). Subsequent development programs were issued by the government such as the Poverty reduction strategy program, the Plan for accelerated and sustained development to end poverty, the Growth and transformation plans, and the Climate resilience green economy were issued based on following ADLI’s main principle, i.e., priority to the agricultural sector (Ayana 2012; Bekele et al., 2015).

As a result, much emphasis was given to the agricultural sector in the development policies and strategies of the government. For example, the growth and transformation plan for the period between 2010/11–2014/15 aimed to attain a continual 11.2%–14.9% economic growth by emphasizing the development of the agricultural sector, and by shifting the economy to an industrial and service-led economy (FDRE 2010). The Growth and transformation plan and the investment policy focused on expanding large scale commercial farming to attain the government’s development and fast economic growth ambitions (Bekele et al. 2015).

With the focus on agriculture, the forestry sector was given little attention. Despite new legislation, the remaining forestlands were in danger of dwindling because of the need for commercial farming land expansion (Bekele et al. 2015). For example, government’s reports show an increase in farmland in a short period. In 2010, it was reported that the farmland increased from 9.8 million ha in 2004/5 to 11.25 million ha in 2007/8 (FDRE 2010). This expansion was directly linked to the decline of forestlands (Bekele et al., 2015). The 2011 government document stated how: “1.5 million ha of forest and shrub cover is at risk due to agriculture expansion and biomass energy needs” (FDRE 2011 c.f. Bekele et al. 2015, 38). The growth and transformation plan documents show that a large portion of land, including forestland was allocated to be transferred to commercial farming (FDRE 2014). Meanwhile the forestry sector was envisioned in the government’s plan to fulfill the demands of the market economy. This sentiment was made clear in the Rural Development Policy and Strategy (RDPS) document where it was stated:

[...] forestry activities shall not be performed for the sake of forest development per se. Trees to be planted shall provide tangible economic benefits to the people. It must be an agroforestry undertaking (FDRE, 2001:125 c.f. Ayana 2012).

From the wording in this document; we can understand that the government’s aim of developing the forestry sector was for its subsidiary contribution to the economic growth plans of the government. Therefore, it can be argued that forest management in the first part of this period was a low priority at the federal level. It was only gradually that the forestry sector became a priority in the policymaking process. The change came with the increased attention given to the forestry
sector, partly to increase its contribution to the economic growth plan, and partly for the global climate change mitigating initiatives that connect forest management with additional economic benefits through carbon funding (Ayana 2012; Bekele et al. 2015).

However, at the lower level of government and at the local level, the decentralized political structure and the participation of Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) helped to change the form of forest management into a participatory model (Ayana 2012). Participatory forest management gained momentum and increased the engagement of local people in a community-based organization to make the local people participate in forest management activities (ibid.). Currently, participatory forest management is the main mode of practice in forest management throughout the country. Forest management at all levels in the country also adopted in the rural natural resources development policies of the government as the main method of engaging rural people in natural resources management activities (Ayana 2012).

The changes after 2007

Significant changes in forest policy after 2007 are related to the Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE), and the ratification of participatory forest management in the forest policy. The short discussion of this issue aims to build a bridge for discussing the government line of practice regarding the REDD+ initiative in the next chapter. The government issued a new forest policy in 2007 which by some advocates have been noted as the country’s first (Ayana 2012). The policy emphasizes the development of the forestry sector to increase forest contribution to the national economy (FDRE 2007; Ayana 2012). As discussed above, prior to this the government had adopted the policy of participation of rural people in forest management as a mainstream practice in its rural natural resources development program and in forest policy (Ayana 2012). The 2007 policy specified this engagement further. In 2011, forest policy was strengthened further as forests and the forestry sector became one of the four pillars in the government’s strategic policy document called Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) (FDRE 2011). The changes in the legal framework have also supported additional institutional buildings that emphasize the forestry sector. The objective was to enhance forest management practices and increase forest contribution to the economy and the climate change issue (Ayana 2012). I will discuss these changes more in detail below.

The 2007 forest policy and the 2011 Climate-resilient green economy (CRGE) strategy

The 2007 forest policy defines forest management objectives and purpose to meet environmental and economic needs of the country. The forest policy explains the development, conservation, and utilization of forest for preventing environmental problems such as soil erosion, expansion of desertification, disturbance of ecological balance, and depletion of biodiversity; and further, it states the role of forest in the enhancement of national economy (FDRE 2007). The forest policy promotes participatory forest management and encourage forest ownership for individuals and forest use group associations and private investors, to create a sense of ownership and the right to get benefit from forest resource. This forest policy has been further revised in recent years with relevant additional laws. Among other changes, the revised law gives rights explicitly to communities to manage and benefit from forests. Hence in the revised forest policy, communities and associations have got more recognition in forest management. Communities’ involvement is increased in a more cooperative way (CIFRO 2018).

One of the main contributions of the 2007 forest policy, is giving legal recognition for participatory forest management practice in all over the country. Participatory forest management become a primary mechanism to involve communities in sustainable forest management and to reduce existing and historically induced tensions between the government and the rural people on the issue of property rights (Bekele et al. 2015). Various studies on participatory forest management
PFM in short show that it is widely recognized as a suitable way for forest management to rehabilitate degraded forest landscapes and reduce deforestation. Over 1 million hectares of forestlands are now managed using the PFM approach (Limenih and Bekele 2008; Gobeze et al. 2009; Ameha 2011). The involvement of government and non-government organizations to expand the organization of PFM in the various regions of the country is hoped to prevent forest degradation and allow for tree regeneration. PFM also allows people who do not own forests to access forest resources legally if they are members (Ameha et al. 2014; Bekele et al., 2015). The success of PFM gave the government the impetus to reform forest laws and regulation for the benefit of PFM solutions (ibid.). The PFM’s significant contribution is that it helps rural people to raise a sense of ownership of forest resources and change their utilization approach to include also long-term conservation and protection of forest resources as there is a growing sense of understanding among local people that protecting forest and forestlands have an economic benefit as well as environmental. Since REDD+ projects rely on communities’ participation for successful implementation, participatory forest management activity and its significant contribution in REDD+ project areas are higher than in none REDD+ project areas (Ameha et al. 2014; Bekele et al. 2015; FDRE 2018).

In addition to the forest policy, the Climate resilience green economy (CRGE) strategy is another important move that was taken by the Ethiopian government to enhance forest management. The green economy initiative is also an international initiative that was launched by the United Nations Environment program in 2008. The initiative aims governments to design an economic strategy that reduce environmental risks and ecological scarcities while at the same time eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development (UNEP 2016).

The Climate resilience green economy (CRGE) strategy is a fifteen years strategic plan that was adopted in 2010/11 and will last until 2025. In the CRGE document the strategic plan shows that, the forest is considered as one of the major components to achieve a green economy. Forest protection is planned to be delivered in two ways: by implementing proper forest management practice, and by adopting technological innovations to help energy and agricultural transformation to reduce deforestation in the country (FDRE 2011). The strategy has two main objectives: combating the effects of climate change and building a green economy and achieving development goals. The making of an environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient economy and mitigating and avoiding carbon emissions is planned based on four pillars:

“(1) improving crop and livestock production practices for higher food security and farmer income while reducing emissions; (2) protecting and re-establishing forests for their economic and ecosystem services, (3) expanding electricity generation from renewable sources of energy for domestic and regional markets; and (4) leapfrogging to modern and energy-efficient technologies in transport, industrial sectors, and buildings” (FDRE 2011, 2) (Fig 3).

The diagram presented in fig. 3, shows the CRGE’s representation of sectoral emissions contribution. According to the CRGE document, overall forestry emission estimated to be 37 percent. This is associated with poor management of forests by both the society and the government. The report strategized to minimize the forestry sector’s emission contribution and to use forests potential for emission reduction.
Overall, the changes brought to the forest governance since 2007 has been shaped by the government initiative to take forestry as part of its economic effort. However, the involvement of many stakeholders in the local community development projects, including natural resource conservation activities, and the global environmental conservation initiatives, are also an essential factor for the policy and institutional changes brought after 2007. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the period from 2007 is the beginning of the REDD+ project implementation process in the country. Hence, the changes brought since 2007 are strongly associated with the REDD+ initiative. Participatory forest management has spread to other forestlands and forest-dependent communities in large part through the planning and implementation of REDD+ projects in the country (Bekele et al. 2015). The CRGE strategy is also designed as a strategy to fulfill REDD+ objective, and with the assumption that the REDD+ initiative will support the implementation of the activities outlined in the plan (FDRE 2011; REDD desk 2016; Bekele et al. 2015; FDRE 2018).

Criticism
The main criticism of the government’s approach to forest governance since the 1990s is that the government was, and is slow, in its attempt to implement proper forest governance and conservation strategies, comparing to the rate of degradation in the country. The government has also prioritized the political economy as the governments before the 1990s. Agriculture is a priority, and the new emphasis on poverty alleviation and development agendas are depending on agricultural modernization and commercial farming (Bekele et al., 2015). This approach is conflicting with the forest conservation plan and hence critics, as mentioned in the introduction, claim that the forest conservation plant is more of a political gesture than an environmental one. At the international level, the idea of a green economy of is criticized for being policy focus more than politics. Moreover, the green economy strategy and forest conservation as a policy approach to follow has a drawback when it comes to context of politics that favor or limit the success of forest conservation (Lander 2011).
Since the 1990s, many other actors in environmental protection and forest conservation activities have also been included with Non-governmental organizations and also local forest ownership associations. The government’s reluctance to develop a well-designed forest governance system have in some ways stunted the role of these new actors (Ayana 2012). The reluctance and slowness of government to effectively revise forest policy shows the continuation of the historical conception of forest resources as limited and less important comparing to agriculture (Ameha et al. 2014; Bekele et al. 2015). It also shows the continuation of a similar policymaking process regarding forestry as in the past, although the government is now more influenced by the global environmental discourses than the previous governments. Formulating policies and strategies to address forestry and ecological national and international conservation mechanisms and aligning them with the country’s political economy considered as successful practices (Bekele 2008; Birhanu 2009; Tibebe and Negusu 2009). However, such development has also been criticized as a consequence of incentives such as the global REDD+ initiative. This situation, however, has continued affecting the strategies and policies designed to protect the environment and conserve forests (Bekele et al. 2015).

Discussion

The historical analysis shows that although there have been significant changes in the political economy and form of political governance in the country since the 1990s, forest management and the conceptions of the forest as resources have not followed the same level of changes. Forest management takes a slow pace and remains a low priority in both supporting the economy and environmental conservation activities. However, the decentralization of political governance has resulted also in a decentralized forest management and the involvement of communities and other stakeholders in forest conservation activities. The participation of Non-governmental organizations in nature conservation activities at a larger scale has created a support mechanism to potentially fulfill the natural conservation obligation of the government as well as supporting communities that depend on forest resources.

The significant effort that has been made by the government since the 1990s has been in formulating various policies and strategies with objectives of economic growth, poverty alleviation, and natural resources rehabilitation in the rural parts of the country. However as discussed here, policies and plans are prioritizing agriculture and agricultural development. The forestry sector has been targeted as a supportive mechanism for fulfilling the economic target of the agricultural sector. The government’s economic development policy that is based on commercial farming activities continues to compete with strategies that aim to develop forest resources other than economic or environmental conservation (Bekele et al. 2015; FDRE 2018). Another problem is that most policies and strategies tend to be aligned with the available financial supports from external sources. This trend limits the success of polices and prevents them from being transformed or applied into activities as these are depending on the availability of money. The Rural Development Policy and Strategy (RDPS) is one example, many of its activities are hindered by a lack of funds (Bekele et al. 2015).

In the meanwhile, the government keeps formulating continuous policies and strategies that are pertinent with the global initiative of poverty alleviation and environmental protection agenda that are able to crate financial support per the standard of the global development and environmental objectives. The Climate resilience green economy (CRGE) strategy is one example of the government effort to produce these successive strategies through involving itself in both global development and environmental initiatives, since these initiatives create financial support mechanisms to fulfill the government’s policy objectives. The changes in the forest governance starting from 2007, show the effect of global climate initiatives, notably the REDD+ initiative, as major incentives to motivate the government's responsibilities in conserving the country’s forest resources and rehabilitating degraded areas and stopping deforestation.
Thus, the government has taken the REDD+ initiative as another opportunity that will create both financial and technical incentives to fulfill its primary objective. The REDD+ initiative as a mechanism, creates financial support to the government that adopt, implement, and provide additional rewards through Carbon selling. This initiatives potentially, becomes a more viable opportunity to engage in conservation efforts for the government. However, as it is discussed in the following chapters, changing this viable opportunity into practice or successful activity presents many difficulties and negative consequences that may affect the forest resources and also the livelihood of local people (Angelsen 2008, 2009 and 2016; Bartholdson et al. 2019; MacGregor et al. 2015).

As introduced above, one objective of this thesis is to analyses in more detail the context of the REDD+ implementation process and highlight the problematic issues faced at the national and the project implementation level. The next chapter, chapter five presents the adoption and implementation of REDD+ initiative at the national or governmental level. The following chapter, chapter six discuss in detail the REDD+ pilot project implementation process.
5. The adoption and implementation of the REDD+

This chapter discusses the government line of practices regarding the REDD+ initiative. It examines the context of REDD+ adoption and implementation processes at the governmental level. As it is known, REDD introduced new technologies of governance that connect different actors on a global forest governance system based on new forest governance mechanisms. It has also introduced new practices conserving forest for ecosystem service payment, and discourse of mitigating carbon emission, enhancing carbon stocks and trading carbon using forest conservation to fight climate change. The chapter starts by presenting the background of the REDD+ global initiative and discussing the Ethiopian government response. The text further elaborates on the different steps taken by the government in adopting and implementing the REDD+ initiative. As the discussion will show, most of the government implementation processes focus on making the country’s economic and environmental, and forest policies relevant to REDD+ goals and standards. Another focus has been on building the necessary institutions at the national level and their capacities for the implementation and preparation of REDD+ readiness plans and other strategies at the national and regional levels.

REDD+ initiative background

REDD+ lies under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) initiative that aims to use the world forest to mitigate climate change through proper forest conservation activities. The target of the REDD+ initiative is to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. The + in the abbreviation stands for the aim to increase the role of sustainable management of forests, conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. The REDD+ initiative puts a mechanism that seeks to support and reward developing countries financially for reducing their emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and for enhancing their carbon sequestration potentials. Developed countries can then invest in reducing emissions through buying carbon credits from the developing country and thereby count this as national reductions in emissions. All the member countries or parties to Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have been actively negotiating on this REDD+ initiative since 2005 through various policy initiatives. The idea of REDD+ is to mitigate emissions and to build a sustainable forest management practices is rooted in the adoption of the Kyoto protocol in 1997 but REDD+ only started to be actively mediated since 2005 (Carbon Planet 2009).

The primary reason forests and developing countries targeted in the REDD+ initiative is stated as follows. The global forestry sector contributes to 17% of the global greenhouse gas emission, and the capacity of forest in trapping and sinking carbon dioxide is estimated to be negatively affected by the ongoing deforestation and forest degradation worldwide. The global REDD+ desk report (REDD+ Desk 2016) estimated the global loss of forest to 6.2million hectares per year between the years 2000 to 2010. The vast majority of forest loss is in the tropical forest areas and developing countries (ibid.). The IPCC (2013) report suggests that fast degradation and deforestation of forests and conversion of forestlands for other land use in the tropical regions contributed around 10% of the net global carbon emission.
The REDD+ initiative, during its designing, is considered being easy, cheap, and cost-effective. The idea is for rich countries to invest in REDD+ projects that conserve forests in tropical and developing countries and as stated above count this as their own national carbon emission reduction. Hence, the concept of rewarding individuals, communities, projects, and developing nations that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests taken as a cheap and easy mitigation alternative (Stern 2007; see critical discussion in Angelsen 2008; Bartholdson 2019). With its dual objectives, REDD+ initiatives have been targeted to improve the lives of forest-dependent people worldwide through sustainable forest use and forest conservation, and to improve the ecosystem services that forest provides and to result in carbon emission reductions at the local and global level (Parker et al. 2009; REED Desk 2016; FCPF 2018).

However, various researches that study the context of REDD+ in developing countries argue that from the context of the implementation process of the REDD+ idea is far from easy but rather a complex, technical and expensive and context-specific phenomena (Angelsen et al. 2009; Angelsen et al. 2009; Bekele et al. 2015; Brockhaus et al. 2015; Bartholdson 2019). The implementation includes policymaking, institutional formation, and technical reports in the design of REDD+ and in project preparation. Its implementation requires communication with various stakeholder groups. Its maintenance includes a whole new set of technologies and measurements that are difficult to translate to the local context, carbon offset measurements, carbon credits, carbon credits markets etc. Implementing countries rely on decisions and guidelines that come from the negotiations in annual COP meetings were the guidelines, criteria, standards, and obligations are established which must be followed for attaining the financial rewards.

Table 5. Series of COP meetings on REDD+ at the UNFCCC (Source: the international REDD+ Desk 2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COP meetings</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Main issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COP-11</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Developed and developing nations agreed to the same goal of mitigating climate change. The resulting agreement was to make developing countries to work together with developed nations to a common cause but with differentiated responsibilities and capabilities that also did not hinder the developing countries' development agenda (Brunner et al. 2010; UNFCCC 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP-13</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>The full contextualized and formalized idea of REDD+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP-14</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>The parties started to negotiate methodological issues associated with REDD+ policy approaches and incentives (UNFCCC 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP-15</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>The parties negotiated on the mobilization of financial resources from developed countries to developing countries, as well as scientific guidelines and the establishment of safeguard requirements. It standardized practices and policies for implementation and running of REDD+ projects. Financial support has been pledged with an amount of more than 100 billion USD by the year 2020 (World Resources Institute 2010; UNFCCC 2010, 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP-16</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>The current form that is REDD+ came to effect. REDD+ was revised to include poverty reduction and governance. Parties negotiated to include developing policies, strategies, and action plans that can accommodate or adopt REDD+ implementations. They negotiated how to adopt policies for capacity building, technology transfer, monitoring and verification systems, environmental and social safeguards</td>
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Issues such as gender, the participation of local communities, and forest governance by developing countries were also negotiated (UNFCCC 2011) (UNFCCC 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COP</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COP-17</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Parties negotiated specifically safeguards and measurement issues, and processes of reporting and verification. The aim was for developing countries to be able to deliver transparent, consistent, and annual information on safeguards measures (both environmental and social), to make sure they are addressed and respected. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) was established. Parties agreed that the financial resources could come from various sources, including public, private, bilateral, and multilateral sources in market-based approaches to support results-based actions of developing countries (UNFCCC 2012).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP-19</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Parties produced the ‘Warsaw Framework for REDD+. The framework introduced the ‘REDD+ Rulebook’ and a guidance for the full implementation of REDD+. This ‘REDD+ Rulebook’ states what elements countries must implement to qualify for REDD+ projects, these include: establishing national forest monitoring systems (NFMS); Creating a measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) system; Conducting a full forest reference emission levels/forest reference level (RELs/RLs) study; Establishing safeguards information systems. Addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and finally Coordination of support and institutional arrangements, and Result-based finance (Climate Law &amp; Policy 2014; Third World Net-work. 2013; Redd-Monitor 2013; Climate Law &amp; Policy 2014).</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The series of COP meeting introduced various mechanisms as it is shown on table 5. These mechanism negotiated in each COP are aimed for the feasible and standardized implementation of REDD+ in developing countries as they are the main implementer parties of the initiative. Developing countries are expected to fulfill the agreed requirements at the UNFCCC, i.e., policy-making processes and safeguard measurements needs to qualify as payments are result-based.

Though on surface the regulations and requirements are standardized there are variations in processes and how they are implemented in each developing country at the governmental level. The context also includes understanding the ongoing pilot REDD+ projects, and negotiations with other stakeholders such as Non-Governmental Organizations. The Warsaw Framework for REDD+ is important because it made mandatory for the government of developing countries to put in place the four elements of what is called REDD+ readiness to be eligible for funds. These are the National REDD+ strategy (Action Plan), the National Forest Monitoring Systems (including the REDD+ MRV system), the Forest Reference Level (FRL), and Safeguards Information System (SIS) (REDD Desk 2016). There are also three safeguards mechanism for the REDD+ implementation. The main one is UNFCCC’s environmental and social safeguards. The implementing institution also follow the Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance’s social and environmental standards, and the World Bank’s operational policies on environmental and social safeguards. Depending on which institution provided the funds for the REDD+, countries and project implementers must follow these safeguards in project implementation (UNFCCC 2009; REDD Desk 2016; FDRE 2018).

Scholarly analysis of requirements and the implementations shows its complexity and the importance of local context (Angelsen 2008; Angelsen et al. 2009; Bekele et al. 2015; Brockhaus et al. 2015; Bartholdson 2019). Changing the REDD+ initiative into practice is also affected by the political economy and the socio-cultural situations of each country. Another problem is also the
way REDD+ projects are communicated between experts and local people during the implementation process. That is why, in this chapter, the Ethiopian context is briefly discussed, to exemplify how the government has contextualized this process, the argument for REDD+, and how it has developed the governmental line of practice.

**Ethiopian Government’s line of practice**

The government’s line of practice is to make Ethiopian forest governance pertinent to REDD+ principles, standards, and over the goal of mitigating climate change and, at the same time, creating a green economy. The discussion of the government’s activities in this section is based on the various documents on the REDD+ secretariat website, other literature discussing the government activities, and the interview I conducted with the project leader at the national REDD+ secretariat in Addis Ababa to.

**REDD+ as an incentive**

REDD+ is seen as an incentive that creates the opportunity for the government and the country to do more in their ambition of protecting the forest resources and rehabilitating the forest degraded areas in the country. The REDD+ initiative is portrayed as a feasible strategy for forest conservation and carbon reduction, and Ethiopia has shown its interest and commitment to it. The REDD+ national strategy document states that the Ethiopian government support “global climate policy as well as the REDD+ mechanism as climate change mitigation mechanism” since it comes with support and rewards, and help the country to do more in fighting climate problems, as the country is vulnerable to climate change impacts (National REDD+ Strategy 2018). A similar idea was also stated by the project leader of the national REDD+ secretariat in Addis Ababa, affirming that REDD+ is seen by the government as an incentive for its forest conservation activities (interview Feb 10, 2020).

The Ethiopian REDD+ secretariat in its National REDD+ Strategy (2018)’s document states that forest conservation activities within the REDD+ initiative help the government to benefit beyond emission reductions and to get a reward for it. The findings show there is an awareness among the experts and policymakers that REDD+, as an incentive, can extend forest conservation benefits to increase ecological services and the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities in areas where there is a high rate of forest degradation and deforestation. Hence, REDD+ as an incentive for the government is a mechanism to engage in forest conservation and environmental protection activities. The funding from countries and the reward money from the mitigation of carbon emissions in the form carbon trading have been taken as an incentive for the government to engage in both environmental and development policy initiatives.

**Governmental activities**

The government started to implement the formal procedure in 2011 when REDD+ implementing countries agreed to fulfill the requirements (see the Warsaw framework) in order to become eligible for payment (Bekele et al. 2015; Brockhaus et al. 2015). Ethiopia became a member of the UN-REDD+ Program in 2011 which makes it eligible for funding and capacity-building support. Financial support was given to set up necessary institutional arrangements and revising its various policies and forest laws for managing, coordinating, and integrating REDD+ ideas and principles in policy based on what was agreed at COP 11 (Bekele et al. 2015; Brockhaus et al. 2015). The World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) provided a readiness preparation grant in 2012 for the government to formulate a national REDD+ strategy and build its institutional and technical readiness for REDD+ (REDD desk 2016; Bekele et al. 2015). Since this time, the government’s focus has been on preparing and implementing policies and actions that include readiness package, the REDD+ legal and institutional framework and a linked national
strategy, as well as forest monitoring systems and safeguards measures (Bekele et al. 2015; REDD Ethiopia 2019). The Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) was prepared in 2011 (Readiness Preparation Proposal 2011).

In the same year, the government prepared the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) Strategy, presented in the previous chapter that aims to show that the government’s economic and development policy is based on a green economy approach. The CRGE strategy is seen as a change from the previous political economy approach. The government attempts to integrate the economy and climate policies in one direction. The strategy is acclaimed in many of the official documents as an important step of the government to show its commitment to climate issues and integrate the REDD+ initiative easily and quickly (Bekele et al. 2015; FDRE 2017, 2018; REDD Ethiopia 2019). The strategic aim is to have low carbon-emitting initiatives across key economic sectors (forestry, energy, livestock, agriculture, transport, and industry) and to achieve a climate-resilient middle-income economy by 2025 (FDRE 2011; Bekele et al. 2015; FDRE 2017, 2018; REDD Ethiopia 2019).

The national REDD+ strategy document, which was finalized in 2016, also shows the government’s activities since 2011 in all aspects, policy, legal, institutional, and forest management approaches. Planned in three-phase the overall objective is reducing carbon emission and attaining economic growth by 2030 (REDD Ethiopia 2016). According to the plan by 2020, the country would have finalized the measures specified in the Warsaw framework and starts operationalizing results-based payment from 2021 (ibid.). Measures taken by the Ethiopian government are illustrated in figure 4. With this preparation, government operated REDD+ projects that can be materialized when the REDD+ UNFCCC funds are available accordingly to the agreement at COP meeting. The long-term aspects of REDD+ implementation and how the government goes about their planned forest conservation and emission reductions activities will be an interest for future studies.

Table 6. Shows the governmental activities and financial support provided from 2008 until 2018. Based on data from the National REDD+ Secretariat Report (FDRE 2018).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Governmental activities</th>
<th>Partnership activities</th>
<th>Financial grants signed or provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Emission reduction preparation note submitted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>The CRGE strategy developed</td>
<td>Readiness preparation plan approved by Forest Carbon Partnerships Fund</td>
<td>Readiness preparation plan formation grant 0.2M by Forest Carbon Partnerships Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Readiness preparation plan implemented</td>
<td>Emission reduction preparation idea note developed for Oromia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Forest Carbon Partnerships Fund grant signed 3.6 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Monitoring, Reporting and Verification project launched</td>
<td>Additional finance signed with Forest Carbon Partnerships Fund 10M</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Draft REDD+ strategy developed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process of revision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Forest reference level submitted to UNFCCC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>REDD+ safeguards adopted and prepared</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>REDD+ investment proposal of 80 Million prepared</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oromia forested landscape program design for 68 million finalized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Readiness preparation completion announced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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REDD+ as an incentive, has increased nationwide studies of forest resources and carbon stocks in the country by the national REDD+ secretariat for the preparation of the various documents stated above. Furthermore, it helped building institutional capacity, revising the existing forest, environmental, and other related policies for the integration of REDD+ initiative. These activities are the main government activities since 2011 in the government lines of practice. Below, the discussion shows in detail these activities.

Forests Data

According to the national REDD+ secretariat National REDD+ Strategy (2018) document and the interview with the national REDD+ secretariat officer, one of the main activities in preparation for the REDD+ policy environment, has been to carry out a nationwide study about forest types, extent geographical location, rate, and drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (REDD Ethiopia 2016; interview Feb 10, 2020; National REDD+ Strategy 2018). A major change of this inventory in relation to previous ones has been a revised definition of ‘forest’. The new Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MEFCC) included woodland areas in the new technical definition (MEFCC 2015). This technical redefining of forests was for the purposes of the REDD+ projects and for its implementation. In the new definition, forest is defined as:

Land spanning at least 0.5 ha covered by trees (including bamboo) attaining a height of at least 2 m and a canopy cover of at least 20% or trees with the potential to reach these thresholds in situ in due course (MEFCC 2015 in National REDD+ Strategy 2018, 16).

This a new definition of forest immediately increased the amounts of forest in Ethiopia. As shown in figure 5 the amount of forest area increased to 17.2 million hectares of forests, now covering 15.5% of the national territory (MEFCC 2015).
Figure 3. Forest map based on the new government definition (FDRE 2015; Ethiopian REDD+ secretariat national strategy 2018, 17).

The revised definition is the first forest assessment at the national level that claimed to extend to all the country’s vegetation cover (Bekele et al. 2015). Earlier academic forest definitions and inventories such as those presented in Eshetu and Hogberg (2000); Bekele (2003), Rahmato (2001); Dessie and Christiansson (2008), have also been limited in their spatial coverage. These studies only focus on the spatial areas that cover their study areas (Bekele et al., 2015). Other previous forest definitions are from the Woody Biomass Inventory and Strategic Planning Project (WBISPP) and FAO (WBISPP 2004 and FAO 2010). These standardized working definitions of forest have been adapted as initial base to build the new technical definition of forest (Bekele et al., 2015).

The pre-existing definitions and baselines as discussed in Chapter 4, have been used in REDD+ policy preparation. The (WBISPP) 2004 defined forest as:

Land with a relatively continuous cover of trees, which are evergreen or semi deciduous, only being leafless for a short period, and then not simultaneously for all species. The canopy should preferably have more than one story,” and woodlands are defined as “a continuous stand of trees with a crown density of between 20 - 80% (WBISPP 2004);

Meanwhile FAO 2010 define forest as “land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 meters and a canopy cover of more than 10 percent, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ” (FAO 2010). This works particularly for REDD+ pilot projects that are in the Oromia Regional State because based on the WBISPP and FAO 2005 data 61% of high forests and 51% of high woodlands are found in this region (Bekele et al. 2015). However as discussed above, with the new forest definition presented through the REDD+ inventory, the definition of forests was broadened to include also some areas previously defined as woodlands. Below, the
map of forest cover from the WBISPP (2004) and FAO (2010) is presented to show the change in the extent of forest cover because of the new definition.

Figure 4. 2005 WBISPP landcover or forest map based on the standard WBISPP and FAO2010 definition. The map locates forest extent with deep green color (WBISPP 2005).

The motive behind the new definition for the implementation of REDD+ as it is stated in the National REDD+ Strategy document, with the establishment of the new Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MEFCC), the National Forest Sector Development Program have been created with the ambition of transforming the forestry sector and doubling forest cover by 2025. There is a plan to plant 16.1 million ha of new forest to double in Ethiopia by the year 2025 that target to increase the forestry contribution for emissions reduction and the economy (National REDD+ Strategy 2018). Hence the new technical definition targeted to increase vegetation and spatial extension other than the conventional definition that limit forest (ibid.). The government program aims for the successful REDD+ implementation. The conservation of forested landscape is not enough. It aims to extend the effort to deforested lands, degraded forest areas, and degraded lands that are suitable for forest restoration (ibid). During the interview also, the limitless of forest cover in Ethiopia compared to other tropical forest regions was mentioned when it came to the issue of REDD+ implementation. Extending spatial coverage for forest development for the wide implementation of REDD+ has been necessary for the government institutions (Interview Feb 10, 2020).

Carbon stocks
Another and linked aspect of the REDD+ policy formation is understanding the carbon stock capacity of forests in Ethiopia. The REDD+ preparation proposal, the national strategy document, and the Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy (CRGE) documents state that the information concerning carbon stock in Ethiopia is limited to specific regions and forest types (FDRE 2011, 2016). This situation mirrors the international situation as studies about carbon stocks are limited internationally (Moges et al. 2010; Bekele et al., 2015). The data available for Ethiopia is usually linked with ongoing projects in those forested landscapes. The first carbon stock assessment was done before the countrywide forest assessment. Hence, the first carbon stock assessment for the CRGE document preparation was based on the 2005 WBISPP forest assessment cover (Bekele et al. 2015). The assessment suggests that there are: “2,683,127 tons of
carbon in woody biomass stock across the country” (Bekele et al. 2015, 15). In the Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy document (CRGE), based on these calculations, the government suggest that “forestry contributes to 37% of the country’s total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (150 million tCO2e in 2010)” (FDRE 2011 c.f., Bekele et al., 2015, 16).

The conversion of forested landscapes into agricultural land and the use of trees for fuelwood are identified as the major drivers for carbon emissions in the CRGE document (FDRE 2011). The objective of the government is integrating the REDD+ initiative in the CRGE strategy as the main mechanism to lead the country to reduce its emission level from forestry and ultimately to build a carbon-free economy (REDD+ secretariat 2016). Carbon stock assessment is a continuous task for the REDD+ initiative that the country must fulfill for its readiness for result-based payment, e.g. in the form of carbon credits or other payments (Readiness Preparation Proposal 2011). For example, recent submission shows that the emissions level is about 17,978,735 t CO2 eq/year and removals capabilities reach 4,789,935 t CO2 eq/year considering the activities that are going on within REDD+ projects (FCCC ETH 2016). The carbon stock analysis also goes together with the way forest potential for the REDD+ implementation is projected by the government institutions (National REDD+ Strategy 2018; Interview Feb 10, 2020).

Building institutions

The buildup of necessary institutions is stated as the backbone of the government’s activities related to adopting and implementing the REDD+ initiative. The government started establishing the necessary institutional framework in 2011 for the proper implementation of its CRGE strategy. The government established the National Planning Commission Commissioner that is responsible for the realization of the CRGE vision. The government also instated a new ministry, the Environmental Protection Authority into the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MEFCC) for a better implementation of the strategy and REDD+ policy process. Within MEFCC, the National REDD+ Secretariat was established to coordinate the National REDD+ Program at the national level (interview Feb 10, 2020). Sub institutions also have been established following the decentralized form of governance at the regional and local levels (Bekele et al. 2015; National REDD+ Strategy 2018; Bekele et al. 2019).
At the regional level, the main emphasis of establishing institutions for the REDD+ initiative is on the Oromia region, where 61% of high forests and 51% of high woodlands are found (see above); and where the REDD+ pilot projects are being run by the Non-governmental organizations. The focus on Oromia region was given because the government is entering the implementation phase and become responsible for the previous and new REDD+ projects in the region. In the region, the Oromia Environment, Forest and Climate Change Authority (OEFCCA), and Oromia REDD+ Coordination Unit have been established (FDRE 2018). The role of the Oromia Forested Landscape Program (OFLP) is to oversee the REDD+ projects. The implementation process has been established in 2017 and now is taking care of projects such as the Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ Project (BMERP) that was previously run by the Non-Governmental Organization Farm Africa (See more in the next chapter) (FDRE 2018). The Oromia Forested Landscape Program (OFLP) is supported by World Bank and planned to be run between 2017-2022. It is tasked to do the accounting, measuring, reporting, and verification (MRV) of mitigated emissions for the pilot projects in the Oromia region (FDRE 2018).

As discussed in previous chapter the REDD+ incentive has also aided the expansion of participatory forest management in both government and nongovernment managed areas. REDD+ projects help the participatory forest management type of organization to spread in many forestlands and to be more accepted by forest-dependent communities (Bekele et al. 2015). The other change the REDD+ initiative enforced the government to do, is to revise its existing forest policy and laws to be more pertinent with the initiative and more integrated with its strategy of building a climate resilience green economy (ibid.).
Discourse

Other than the new knowledge formation through revising forest definition and analysing carbon stocks presented above, the Ethiopian government has also focused on direct climate change, forest conservation, deforestation, and degradation rhetoric. The process of forming institutions and communicating is also part of advancing the government rhetoric about environmental issues (both problems and solutions), and the government’s responsibility, and active engagement in mitigating the problems. In its direct rhetoric, the government’s main message to the public through media has been that Ethiopia is one of the countries that are affected by climate change and with the potential to mitigate climate change. Since the year 2009, the government’s emphasis on environmental discourse has gotten high momentum in the media. The rhetoric has been also supported with activities that show the leadership of the government in the international environmental policy negotiations as an active participant in engaging in the environmental problems mitigating initiatives. The rhetoric has been also emphasized with activities such as plantation activities and other rehabilitation projects in the rural areas (as discussed in the introductory chapter) to show that the government has taken practical engagement other than informing the public about environmental problems; how activities such as tree plantation help to mitigate the problems; and how the government is committed to these activities. This environmental discourse is a continuing activity of the government.

The government’s environmental discourse is also clearly stated in its all documents prepared since the adoption of the REDD+ initiative. The national REDD+ strategy document states that the engagement of the government, and the participation of the people, will change the country into green energy and economy (National REDD+ Strategy 2018; Interview Feb 10, 2020). The various documents that were prepared as part of the REDD+ implementation process show there is a new discourse, at the expert level, in changing the understanding about forest by forming new definitions of forest, eco-service payment, carbon stock and other new information. These new language between the politicians and experts differ when we compare it with the forest discourse of the forest experts and politicians during the imperial period (see chapter 3). The REDD+ concept also communicated a new form of forest conservation to the public: protecting forest result with financial rewards. The environmental discourse since the adoption of the REDD+ initiative has focused on communicating to the public about environmental problems, what engagement can solve the environmental problems, the government’s political engagement, the new REDD+ initiative, and what it means protecting forest using the REDD+ mechanism.

Discussion

Government activities

REDD+ is seen as an important incentive in the Ethiopian government case. REDD+, as an incentive, provides the government with financial and technical support to strengthen its forest governance system through establishing new policies, strategies, and institutions. The government also shows a willingness to connect forest governance with the political governance system. The REDD+ initiative helps the structural changes in the forest management particularly in the establishment of institutions that specifically work on environmental and forest management issues. These institutions, as mentioned earlier, are REDD+ secretaries, Environment, Forest and climate change Commission and others. From chapter three and four discussions, it can be argued that this would not have been the case in the format of traditional forest governance system that has been continued until the REDD+ initiative has begun to be adopted in the country.

The government focuses on undertaking these structural and policy formations because they are required to be implemented in order to start actual REDD+ projects implementations (REDD secretariat 2020). Unlike any other environmental and development projects, the REDD+ initia-
tive has put standards and guidelines for implementing countries in order to show their readiness (REDD+ Desk 2016). REDD+ as one of the international initiatives with financial supports and rewards, it stirs government in developing countries like Ethiopia to take the initiative and to do more in their forest management activities.

As has been discussed by many researchers despite international standards, the activities taken by the various government are context-specific (Bekele et al., 2015). In the Ethiopian context, the government has taken policy measures, developing strategies, proposals and reports about climate change mitigating and carbon reduction in a continuous manner per request of the UNFCCC. Ethiopia is one of the few countries that submitted its national determined contribution (NDC) to the Climate Change Conference already in 2015 (REDD+ Desk 2016).

The overall environmental and forest management practices of the government compared to the previous periods are very different. In the period since 1990, the government clearly had more focus on environment and natural resources conservation issues. This was in tandem with and perhaps because global concern and initiatives become more strengthened than before because of climate change concern though Ethiopia has been a very active partner in these initiatives as discussed here. All possible mitigation initiatives that connect countries at the global scale are communicated between countries and organizations such as UNFCCC and NGOs.

**REDD+ as an incentive**

Taking REDD+ as incentive for the government to engage actively in improving its forest management practices in the last 13 years, and comparing it with the traditional forest management approach the government follow in the periods before 2007, it can be argued that the structural and policy changes brought after the adoption of REDD+ initiative will be difficult or slow to accomplish. Since the political economy impacting forest that governed for a long time continued also in the current political governance system, the obligation the government has in conserving natural resources without the REDD+ initiative would not have been enough considering continued practices in forest management in Ethiopia. The national political economy approach is not different from the previous period as it is prioritized agricultural sector over forestry, and it remains the main challenge to the forest governance to be attained to develop the sector more (Bekele et al. 2015). The government’s documents such as the CRGE and the national REDD+ strategy show that policy priority between economic development and environmental protection is a major challenge for the government to choose between commercialized agriculture and forest conservation (FDRE 2011, 2018; Bekele et al. 2015; National REDD+ Strategy 2018). However, it is stated that incentives like REDD+ initiatives are helping the government to balance between the two (ibid.).

During the interview with the REDD+ secretariat officer, the official explained that the government understands its obligation to protect the environment and the country’s forest considering climate impact on the agriculturally based economy. However, the REDD+ initiative increased the government capacity and interest in policymaking focusing on environmental and forest protection issues. The major importance of REDD+ as incentive is not only providing new technology of governance for forest conservation but also the financial mechanism set out in facilitating the new forest governance system. The financial support helps institutions like the national REDD+ secretariat to engage in policy document formation and other activities that help future REDD+ projects implementation in the country (Interview Feb 10, 2020).

Hence, Ethiopian governmental activities have been activated by these financial mechanisms from various sources to make the country ready for full-fledged REDD+ projects implementation start from 2020. The financial support being in the state of pledge has also created a gap on how to handle a benefit-sharing mechanism for the carbon reward gain upon verified emission reduction. The Ethiopian government proposed that carbon payment is shared equally among all relevant rights holders and stakeholders. However, the development of a national legislative docu-
ment that defines the benefit-sharing mechanism from carbon gain takes a slow process (Bekele et al., 2015). This shows that government activities were and are dependent on various conditions of global environmental governance.

Understanding REDD+ from the PAA approach

When we analyse the changes in forest management and policy during the late 1990s until now from the theoretical approach used for this thesis, i.e., approaching the subject based on the Policy arrangement approach (PAA), for the government, the environmental policymaking process around REDD+ may seem to be a smooth one. This is because the fundamental ideas, knowledge, narratives, ideology, power, and institutional structures and organization that are necessary for the policymaking process came together to push the government positively towards the REDD+ framework. The period since the 1990s in the environmental policymaking process at the global and national level is described one of alliance networking, coalition. A similar environmental discourse (the now global one) has been engaged in by different agencies that share power, responsibilities, similar interest, and resources. These important factors, as the discussion in this chapter shows, have manifested in the government policy-making process, which can be said is geared towards proper forest governance. In comparison to the previous governments discussed in Chapter 3, in this period, there is more alliances between actors (in knowledge, discourse, agency, structure, and practice) and between the global and national environmental protection approaches. As the discussion in Chapter 3 shows, the alliance in all these aspects was previously faulting between the national and international context.

The next chapter brings the discussion of the new actor the Non-governmental organization in the forest conservation, and it discusses the implementation process of the REDD+ pilot project in the Bale Eco-regions.
6. The Non-Governmental Organization line of practice

This chapter zooms in to analyse a specific REDD+ pilot project in the Bale Mountains Eco-region known as The Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ Project or BMERP for short. The project has been operated by Non-Governmental Organizations FARM Africa. FARM Africa and other Non-Governmental Organizations such as SOS Sahel were actively engaged in developing the participatory forest management activities that have assisted forest-dependent communities in the area since 2006 (Bekele et al. 2015). When REDD+ came as an incentive for developing countries to do more in forest conservation with the idea of linked result based payments, Non-Governmental Organizations and Farm Africa prominent among them, engaged in implementing REDD+ pilot projects in the area (ibid.). The interpretation of data is primarily based on formal documents that assess the project, a project planning document, and an interview with the Farm Africa representative who is responsible for the BMERP. The discussion below analyses this project and the line of practice of the Non-Governmental Organization, i.e., farm African in detail. It looks at the negotiations with governmental and regional authorities and local community. The purpose of the chapter is briefly showing the pilot project implementation process and problem faced, and the overall objective of the Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ pilot Project (BMERP). By doing this, the chapter discusses the practice, narrative, and process in the implementation phase of REDD+ at the higher institutional level.

Comparison with similar studies

Overall Non-Governmental Organization's practice using the REDD+ initiative involves in forest conservation activities with three objectives, i.e., conserving, carbon mitigating, and obtaining carbon payment. The analysis of various pilot projects has been done by many researchers such as Bekele et al. (2015); Brockhaus et al. (2015), Bartholdson et al. (2019) Angelsen (2016), MacGregor et al. (2015). Their major findings show that although REDD+ pilot projects have a similar generic problem (i.e. being a standardized global climate change mitigation mechanism) and the problems faced by each pilot projects in each country are context-specific (Bekele et al. 2015; Brockhaus et al. 2015; Bartholdson et al. 2019; Angelsen 2016; MacGregor et al. 2015). Furthermore, the process of verifying the carbon sequestered for approval of payment is to technical and abstract to communicate over different projects. In other words, the assumption that REDD+ can be implemented in the same fashion set by the international forest governance has faced practical problems in the process of REDD+ pilot project implementations for being context specific to the condition of the implementer country.

Analysing the REDD+ project practice in the conceptual sense through analysing the specific governance, environmentalism, policy-making process, and practices, may give a similar conceptual understanding of the process, although the context may vary. Changing a straightforward idea into practice is difficult for factors such as the requirement in the chain of implementation, the implementation process being more institutional and political than economic, differences in interpretation of the aim and the goal of the project between the implementers and receivers of the project, differences in the context of participation and power (Bartholdson et al. 2019; Angelsen 2016; MacGregor et al. 2015). Several research findings show that this is the case of many REDD+ pilot projects (ibid.). These factors, as shown in previous research, have created contested relationships between the local community and implementing institutions (that in-
cludes NGOs as an implementer, government as a supervisor, and donors). The factors are also creating as discussed in various researches such as Agarwal (2005) and Hoben (1995) different forms of practices than that was aimed. In Bartholdson et al. (2019) words “socially and culturally internalized” activity by those targeted groups at the local level (Bartholdson et al. 2019, 1). Hence the practice takes two forms, for the implementers, doing it per the project requirement to fulfill government and donor’s obligations while for the local community, doing it as per perceived goals but also matching their local social and economic needs.

There several differences regarding the implementation of current and future REDD+ projects between Non-Governmental Organizations and the government, respectively. One major difference will be in the carbon trading aspect. For example, during the interview with the representative of the Farm Africa, the representative explained that it will be easier for government-owned and future government implemented REDD+ projects to sell the sequestrated carbon accordingly the UNFCCC agreement (Interview Feb 19, 2020). According to the agreement, the developed countries will allocate the money by 2020, and verified sequestrated carbon from the REDD+ project will be paid directly to the government (UNFCCC 2012). In the current practice, Non-Governmental Organizations must find buyers to sell sequestrated carbon from the pilot project they are running, which is the case for Farm Africa in the Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ pilot Project (BMERP) (Interview Feb 19, 2020).

The Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ Project (BMERP)

The case analysis is structured based on various sources. The first one is the Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise (OFWE) Monitoring and Implementation Report document that includes both project rationale, activities, and performances (OFWE 2016). The other is the Oromia forested landscape program (OFLP) is document that reviewed and evaluated the pilot project (OFLP 2018). Both documents were corroborated with the data gained from the interview with the representative of the Farm Africa to get the whole picture of the processes of the project (Interview Feb 19, 2020).

Brief background to the project

The Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ Project (BMERP) lies between 50º22’–80º08’N and 38º41’– 40º44’E in Oromia Regional State (OFWE 2016; FDRE 2018). The Ecoregion is one of the most densely forested areas in the country (ibid.). The rationale of choosing this area for the REDD+ project lies with the long participatory forest management activities in the areas to support forest-dependent communities. The second was to use the potential of the region by reducing deforestation rate. According to the project document, the project helped to reduce 62 % of deforestation in the area (OFWE 2016). The OFWE document state:

The project aimed at preventing high rate of deforestation to achieve a net anthropogenic GHG emission reduction of ex-ante estimated 25,776,421.40tCO2e with 15% deposited emission as the buffer for risk which is equivalent to 3866463.21 tCO2e estimated while the net ex-ante anthropogenic GHG emission reduction under a project scenario calculated as 21909958.19 tCO2e. After implementation of Bale Mountains Eco-Region REDD+ project activities over the period of 2012 and 2015, the project has generated the cumulative carbon emission reduction of 5,532,714 tCO2e (OFWE 2016 iii).

The project ambition is to grow the “mitigation capacity” incrementally from phase to phase in the project area. Originally, the Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ Project covered about half a million ha and is intended to increase its areal cover throughout the project planned span, which is 20 years. The estimated emissions reductions during the project period are estimated to be 18 million tCO2 (Bekele et al. 2015). The interview with the Farm Africa repre-
sentative who is responsible for the BMERP state that “during the Farm Africa operational period until 2015, the project maintained a 62% reduction in deforestation and about 5.5 tons of CO2 reduction in emission” (Interview Feb 19, 2020).

The social issues
The eco-region is inhabited by about 1.6 million people (OFWE 2016). The Bale Mountains Eco-region is a rural area, and the communities’ livelihoods are highly dependent on the local forest resources and other natural resources (ibid.). The social conditions in the project area, depict with high number of youth and high number of unemployment (OLFP 2018). The local communities depend on small income livelihood activities. These social problems have creating competitions among the local people in forest resource use and to be included in the benefits gained from the REDD+ project (OLFP 2018).

The objective for designing the Bale Mountains REDD+ project is stated in the OFWE (2016)’s document:

“With clear understanding of communities dependencies on forest-related products and the potential impact that REDD-plus activities could have on the livelihoods of local community. With this understanding, the project has engaged local communities who are living in and surrounding the forest in the project area both at a time of the project design and implementation of project activities” (OFWE 2016, i).

The participation and organization of the local community is stated as an aim in order to empower and improve their access right and sustainable management of the forest resources (ibid.). The project plans to benefit the community in both direct benefits such as (sharing of carbon revenue) as well as other sustainably produced commercial forest products besides the traditional uses of the forest (ibid.). The project had also aimed to help the communities in the area to develop their livelihoods through poverty-reduction strategies that include communities to participate in other income gaining activities by providing them with financial supports for honey and coffee production ((OFWE 2016, 20-21).

The project activities were designed in a way that increases community participation in the projects. The activities include community institutional setup REDD+ and climate change awareness creation, the supply of fuel-efficient stoves, community organizational capacity, building assets and finance, support livelihoods improvement activities, supporting communities’ business plans such as coffee quality improvement and honey production as well as organizing village saving and lending association. The REDD+ initiative aims in building alternative and sustainable livelihoods mechanisms for the local communities. The REDD+ project then is broader than direct forest conservation and maintaining activities and improving the forestry economic benefit (REDD+ desk 2016). The BMERP tries to achieve its goal of making the REDD+ project more beneficial to the local community and addressing the government strategy of poverty-reduction by following the REDD+ initiative’s approach (OFWE 2016; FDRE 2018).

Project development
The Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise as representative of the government body was responsible for initiating the Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ Project idea as main proponent (OFWE 2016). Farm Africa was responsible in designing the project document and implementing the project activities (Interview Feb 19, 2020; OFWE 2016). Since 2017, the project implementation responsibility has been shifted to the Oromia forested landscape program, a program run by the regional government (OFWE 2016, OLFP 21018).
During the interview with the Farm Africa representative who is responsible for the BMERP, the representative noted that “Farm Africa has been involved in various Bale eco-region development projects since 2006” (Interview Feb 19, 2020). He further discussed that:

“The early work in the project was focused on natural resource conservation, developing sustainable utilization, increasing participatory forest management, establishing and documenting forest rights, and local institutional buildings such as organizing local associations” (ibid.).

These experiences let Farm Africa take the role in the development and implementation of the Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ Project REDD+ project form the early phase until 2016. The first activities that Farm Africa was responsible were: to design the project, conducting studies into carbon stocks potential and historical deforestation rate in the region. The second activities were: to develop the master plan that shows the commitment of carbon reduction in each year, addressing legal issues, following international REDD+ obligations such as getting consent from the local people (Interview Feb 19, 2020; OFWE 2016).

The project implementation started in 2012 with a plan of running the project for 20 years, and the fund was provided from the Norwegian government for the development and implementation of the BMERP. Other continuous financial sources are from the selling of carbon reduced through the project activities in the long run and from sustainable forest management and forest-based business development, mainly timber production (OFWE 2016).

REDD+ projects success depends on the participation of the local communities. The initiative is targeted to work based on local participation model. The assessment of other REDD+ projects in other countries has also shown that the essence of local participation is taken as the main mechanism for the local people to experience ownership for the project (Angelsen 2016; Bartholdson et al. 2019; MacGregor et al. 2015). The REDD+ guidelines are also clearly state that communities’ participation is based on well communicated agreement between the implementer institutions and the local people in the project areas. There for communicating the project aim and objectives, and activities with the local communities are important (REDD+ desk 2016). In the second step, communities’ participation in the activities of the project is also critical for the success of the project implementation process (REDD+ desk 2016; OFWE 2016). These two issues are further discussed below as they are the main emphasized issues in the OFWE and OLFP documents and during the interview with the Farm Africa representative for BMERP.

Communicating the project for consent

The first phase of the REDD+ project implementation is focused on awareness creation about REDD+ and the project and getting consent for commencing the project activities form the local people. Awareness creation and getting consent are a prioritized activities for both Oromia forest and wildlife enterprise and Farm Africa as implementer institutions of the project (OFWE 2016). In the project document, it shows various pictures of communities meeting and conferences for the reason of awareness creation and getting consent from the local communities (OFWE 2016). Similar issue is also discussed in the Oromia Forested Landscape Program and BMERR+ project document (FDRE2018). The REDD+ guidelines state that it is critical for the success of the project to focus on project communication and awareness creation to get consent from the communities living in the project area (REDD+ Desk 2016; FDRE 2018).
During the interview with the Farm Africa representative for BMERP, the official suggested that awareness creation was the main part of the project activity for two reasons: to get consent and to inform about the project and its benefit (Interview Feb 19, 2020). Both the government institution and Farm Africa were conducting awareness creation activities and sessions (Interview Feb 19, 2020). The Oromia Forested Landscape Program and BMERR+ project document (FDRE2018) claimed that knowledge about REDD+ among the locals is high, and they know what the project is about, what it entails, and what the benefits are because of the awareness-raising activities that are done on continuous bases. According to the OFWE (2016) and OLFP (2018) documents, the many information sessions and long periods of experience are stated as the factors that increase the level of knowledge or awareness about the REDD+ project (OFWE 2016; FDRE 2018). Media are also playing an important role as a source of information about climate change, REDD+ initiative, and carbon emissions (ibid.).

However, as stated in the various researches, communicating projects between the local people and the project designer have always faced difficulties and create a gap between the project implementer and the local community (see discussion in Bartholdson et al. 2019). Hence, the reality on the ground might be different than what is stated on the documents. This is because of how the project is perceived by the target group, for example, in the intent of benefit gained or level of participation might be different from what was intended in the project.

The main communication gap in the BMER REDD+ project is the emphasis on the immediate financial benefit from the project, particularly through carbon selling (FDRE 2018). The OLFP project review document complain that the project implementers (Farm Africa) had stated about the project and the financial benefits it entails and this has created too high expectations among
the local people (ibid.). In the OLFP document (2018), it is stated “in BMERR+ project areas, people were complaining that they have waited for too long for the REDD money and said “mo-tummaan dure hinsobu ture, amma sobuutti ka’e”, (in the past, government didn't lie, did it start now”?), to express their frustration (OLFP 2018, 73). The complaint is that the government failed to keep its promise while the local community have done their parts per the project plan in protecting and conserving forest. The differences between the intent of the project and the local people's perception, will risk the project goal. It is stated in the OLFP document that the dissatisfaction of the local people may put the forest at risk, as the local people shift to alternative income, gaining mechanisms that require cutting the trees that were preserved under the project (ibid.).

This become the main problem in communicating the REDD+ project for consent is because of the reality that the process of negotiating to sell the carbon at the international market is difficult very technical and takes a long process (interview Feb 19, 2020; FDRE 2018). For Farm Africa, however, such communication process for consent was right approach. During interview, the Farm Africa representative for BMERP explains the issue as follows:

"the communication steps followed in communicating the project with the local people was according to the REDD+ safeguard guidelines of Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance’s social and environmental standards that Farm Africa follow for the pilot project” (Interview Feb 19, 2020). “Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance’s social and environmental standards require the implementer institution to provide full information about the project to the local communities” (Interview Feb 19, 2020).

The emphasis on communication from the side of Farm Africa, in the process, is explained by the philosophy from Farm Africa that “communities must get full information about the project before they agree to participate in the project based on the Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance’s social and environmental standards require” (Interview Feb 19, 2020).

Issues in communities’ participation

Another issue in the process of implementing REDD+ project is participation and representation. Participation is expressed in all researches that studied the context of REDD+ projects as the cornerstone of REDD+ projects’ success (see above). One of the stated activities and successes of the BMER REDD+ project is organizing the local communities in the project area within various associations. In the OFWE (2016, 14) document, it is stated that “25,000 households have been organized and legalized into 64 Forest Managing Cooperatives”. The cooperatives organized as forest dwellers’ association and participatory forest management cooperatives that organized to ensure local people's participation regardless of having forests or forestland (FDRE2018). According to the OLFP document, the bureaucracy of existing participatory forest management cooperatives and forest dwellers association is creating a problem for the local people (OLFP 2018). This has created conflicts interest over resource use and benefit-sharing that are expected from the REDD+ project. For example, the OFLP review shows there is a conflict of interest between the people who own forest land and those who do not own forest lands, but still want to use the forest resources by becoming members either in the association or cooperatives (OLFP 2018). There are competitions and between participatory forest management association and forest dwellers cooperatives and differences in their principles allowing new people to become members to participate in the ongoing REDD+ project (ibid.). The forest dweller association is a closed group cooperative and its members are only people who has direct access to forest or have possession of forestlands are members (ibid.). This means that membership is not allowed to those who do not have direct access to forests and forestlands. Meanwhile, the participatory forest management cooperatives are open to any person who volunteers to be part of the cooperatives and to those who do not have direct access to forests and forestlands (ibid.). The main issue in the participatory forest management cooperatives is the membership fee require-
ment for those who want to join the participatory forest management cooperatives. The social problems in the project area, such as the high number of youth and a high unemployment rate are creating competitions among the local people in forest resource use and to be included in the benefits gained from the REDD+ project (OLFP 2018).

The documents, both the OFWE (2016) and OLFP documents (2018), state that problems that are going to be created during the process of the project implementation are going to be solved using conflict or grievances redress mechanism. This is mainly depending on the REDD+ guidelines for community or targeted groups approach and the existing policies and laws of the country. The participation of communities in the sense of government policies and laws means giving a right to the community to participate in joint forest management with the government. The OFWE (2016) state joint forest management and the agreement made between the cooperatives representing the local community and the government institutions helps to set out the rights, benefits, and responsibilities of the cooperatives during their participation in the REDD+ projects, and the government mandate and assistance for the successful implementation process. Further impact on the targeted community because of the project supposed to be addressed based on the REDD+ guidelines that demand free prior informed consent (FPIC).

Issues in the government’s policies and laws

The government’s policies and laws are important factors other than the REDD+ standards and environmental and social safeguards mechanisms in the implementation process of the REDD+ projects. This is because, there are gaps between the REDD+ safeguards and the Ethiopian government laws and policies. This is particularly a case, when there are problems, in negotiating the rights, demands, and benefits of the local people.

In Ethiopia’s case, government laws have more power, although the forest policy and other legislation provide guidelines on how to make the benefits of the local community from forestry while following the laws. For example. The implementation processes the government activate community consultation and consent procedures and other guidelines based on the project requirement. However, the country’s constitution state that land and forest belong to the government, and it is hard to contextualize the issue of consent from local society’s side as far as the government is willing to implement the projects. Hence, in some cases, it will be the issue of following the standards set out at the international level for implementing REDD+ projects since there is a variant issue between what the laws and policies of the country state, and what is required in the REDD+ initiative. Therefore, in the Ethiopian context, the government’s laws make the idea of participation as a process of consultation of the government’s intent of project implementation.

Implementer agencies such as Non-Governmental Organizations have limited mandate in this process, and their focus is implementing the project based on the government and international guidelines. Bartholdson et al. (2019) in their discussion of the issue of participation in the REDD+ case of Tanzania, they analyse the issue, to show the dissimilarities in the ideas of participation between the targeted groups and the implementer’s NGO. The conceptualization made by Bartholdson et al. (2019) is important because it shows how locals respond to REDD+ projects based on their social and cultural construct. In other words, how the locals perceive and experience the project from their economic needs and social and cultural positions.

REDD+ is based on the principle of local participation. However, the capability of a REDD+ project in participating how many people or community organizations within the project activities and benefits depend on different factors such as finance, spatial and community’s coverage capacity of the project. REDD+ project focus on the forested landscape where it can achieve its goal of carbon sequestration. Hence, as in other REDD+ projects they are at risk to insufficiently address social issues that existed before the project, and those that are going to be created dur-
ing the project. This situation, as it has been by Bekele et al. (2015) limits the performance of the REDD+ project and complicates the sharing of the supposed benefits from the project.

BMER REDD+ project’s performance
The BMER REDD+ project is able to mitigate 5.5 tons of Co2 within the implementation period in 2015, according to the interview with Farm Africa (Interview Feb 19, 2020). However, the verification and other technical issues, price fluctuations, and the carbon market being unreliable for Non-Governmental Organizations to find buyers and to sell the carbon sequestered makes it difficult for Farm Africa to complete the projects successfully. The negotiation for selling the carbon sequestered is still in process (interview Feb 19, 2020). However, in the future, when all REDD+ projects run by government institutions, since there will be as pledged readily available money for carbon trading, this kind of problem may not be faced according to my informant (Interview Feb 19, 2020). However, as it stated on the national REDD+ secretariat webpage, recent negotiation about the finance for carbon market at COP-25 Summit reached no results and parties are depend on future negotiations for the issue of carbon market to reach to an agreement (REDD+ secretariat 2020).

Discussion
The aim of this chapter and thesis has been to discuss the historical and contemporary context of the REDD+ initiative and pilot project in Ethiopia while try to make a conceptual understanding of the issue through the understanding of the specific governance, environmentalism, policy-making process, and practices. The analyses in the chapter has been limited to formal reports and assessments. In this sense, this chapter has the limitation of providing firsthand information about the project area and local peoples’ reality.

Overall the Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ Project is a project that has been implemented with the collaboration of the federal and regional governments as well as Non-Governmental Organizations. The collaboration at this higher level shows the commitment to adopting and implementing the REDD+ global initiative in Ethiopia by the government and all other involved institutions. The analysis of the documents shows, and the interview signaled that there is a high sense of ownership and good faith regarding REDD+ initiative and projects from the government. The activities implemented since 2011 show, the government commitment in the process of policy formation, building various institutions, and adopting international standards and commitments. However, the main issue is and will be how to implement it on the ground. REDD+ projects, as stated during the interview, are hard to implement as they include various activities and strictly follow guidelines, particularly when the implementers are NGOs to secure funding.

The main issues in the Ethiopian case that I have analyzed from the documents and the interview are the issue of consent, participation, and carbon payment or benefit sharing. For Farm Africa, all three issues, particularly consent and participation, have been implemented based on the requirement of global REDD+ standards, donor requirement for releasing the fund and allowing the project. All projects that focus on forest conservation start from 2006 have been based on participatory forest management and consent form the local people. In this case, there were awareness creation activities and getting local communities’ agreement before the start of the pilot REDD+ project in the Bale Ecoregions (OFWE 2016). These have done per the safeguard requirement stated in the REDD+ guidelines. Providing information and getting consent is a requirement for Farm Africa to implement per the REDD+ Social and environmental standards (SES) of Climate, Community, and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA).

Consent in the standard includes stating and explaining the project benefits, in this case, that the carbon payment provided for the local community when the project finalized. However, the car-
bon sequestrated has not to get a buyer as it was expected because of the technical difficulties’ verification process that REDD+ follows (see Bartholdson et al. 2019 for Tanzanian case). Government criticism in the Oromia forested landscape program document shows that the NGO overly stated benefit-sharing to the local people (FDRE 2018). During the project design, benefit-sharing between the Oromia regional government and Farm Africa agreed to be 60% to the local community and 40% to the government (OFWE 2016; FDRE 2018). In the Oromia forested landscape program document, it is stated that the local community feels the government has lied concerning the payment even though they have done their share in the activity of conserving the forests throughout the project period (FDRE 2018).

Participation has also been problematic as it has created a division between those organized in association and not (ibid.). However, when we see consent and participation form below in the case of natural resource management, the power and freedom of local people are limited because of the constitutional obligation they must follow per the article that state land and natural resources belong to the government and people (FDRE 1995; Bekele et al. 2015; OFWE 2016; FDRE 2018). The government uses its policies and laws as a mechanism to facilitate the community’s participation. At the same time, use them to assert their authority over the local people. Hence local people’s right, the process of project implementation is restricted since the government has more power as a better manager of land and forest resources. The discussions on participation also show that there is the assumption that local people are adaptive to new ventures, knowledge, and practices as far as they are communicated from those who plan and want to implement those new ventures. The assumption that some additional values and benefits are going to reward them for their participation, and this makes them easily adaptive (Ribot 2010; Viana et al. 2012; Almeida et al. 2014).

As stated by other researchers such as Bartholdson et al. (2019) and MacGregor et al. (2015), the overall objective of the REDD+ pilot project is to provide REDD+ implementation experience for the government in the form of a lesson learned. It provides a platform for future countrywide REDD+ implementation. To this end, the Oromia forested landscape program document state that the Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ pilot Project (BMERP) has provided essential lessons to understand for the program’s future implementation of REDD+ projects in the region and the country (FDRE 2018).

The analysis of the pilot, Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ Project, shows the problems faced already and gives an idea about the problems that will arise in future REDD+ projects. The Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ pilot Project is just one example of the REDD+ project in forested areas. However, future projects are planned to include areas that are classified as ‘degraded’. There might be other additional problems in REDD+ implementation in those degraded areas, especially lacking knowledge on forest and local history. In addition, the government will now take full responsibility for future REDD+ projects. The government has already started operating the Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ pilot Project for its next phase from 2017 till 2031 by the Oromia Forested Landscape Program. The government’s experiences in handling problems and carbon selling will be an interesting issue to study in future research. The role of Non-Governmental Organizations in the future REDD+ projects, although not specified as the pilot project are being phased out, and NGOs are replacing by government institutions. The role of international supporters is continuing as REDD+ projects depend on finance and carbon trading. The logic behind government takeover is that in the coming years that carbon trading funds will be available based on the UNFCCC agreements, and it will be easy for the government to trade mitigated Carbon after verification for the available funds.

The analysis of the pilot, Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ Project, also shows how the practices or implementation of actual conservation activities within the designed pilot REDD+ projects at the local level has been divergent from the local reality and impacting local people and forest-dependent societies and forest negatively (Bekele et al. 2015; OFWE 2016; FDRE 2018;
interview Feb. 2020). Designed pilot REDD+ projects at the local level continue to be divergent from the local reality and impacting local people and forest-dependent societies and forest negatively has been also main discussion point in many other studies (Bekele et al. 2015; Angelsen 2016; Bartholdson et al. 2019; MacGregor et al. 2015). That is why those researchers who study the issue at the local level the conditions of the pilot projects state that future REDD+ projects implementation governments must include the issue that is important to the local and forest-dependent people in their policymaking and project design process (Bekele et al. 2015; Angelsen 2016; Bartholdson et al. 2019; MacGregor et al. 2015). The critical issues that should be integrated into future REDD+ projects include properly facilitated participatory forest management, well-issued land, and forest right. Projects should also properly integrated social-cultural aspects, well-designed benefits sharing mechanisms, and well-adopted safeguard mechanisms that benefit the target group (Ribot 2010; Viana et al. 2012; Almeida et al. 2014). The advice is that governments should not follow the same process that has been practiced and experienced during the pilot projects (Bekele et al. 2015; Angelsen 2016; Bartholdson et al. 2019; MacGregor et al. 2015).
7. Concluding discussion

This thesis has explored the forest governance in Ethiopia over a span of period to show its progression over the mid-20th century until recent period. The historical discussion is important in showing the continued development of forest governance in Ethiopia: from an early imperial era followed by a colonial form of forest governance; to a socialist and authoritative form of forest governance. This part of the discussion has shown the long-standing national forest protection traditions the country has since the early centuries. The thesis, in the first three chapters, has shown the continuity and changes in the forest management practices that were developed since the 1990s. The changes since the 1990s and the recent decade development over the approach to forest governance is also highlighted. In this section, I have discussed the continuity and changes in forest management and the role of international environmentalism in the national forest governance. In the period after 1990s, the impact of political governance continued to affect forest resources and the institutions. In the post 1990 period, the international environmental governance involvement, and the integration of international environmental problems mitigating mechanisms to support the national forest governance, increased. The thesis analysis also has focused on analysing both past and contemporary forest conservation and management practices in conjunction with the international environmentalism approaches, and the environment protection ‘packages’ or initiatives that come to dominate forest conservation practices since the late 1990s. The thesis analyses REDD+ initiative as an international environmental problem mitigating mechanisms to explore the current forest conservation practices and discourses, and to compare the changes from the past. Below, I will first summarise the historical experience of forest management and policy, and then proceed to discuss the emerging forest governance in Ethiopia and REDD+, the environmental discourse, and present the author’s final thoughts of the thesis.

Summarising the historical experience

The main issue I have discussed is the political economy context in which the various the governments that come to power to administer the country were embedded. The emphasis here has been on how the political governance affected forest, and the way it was managed or governed. The discussion has shown that the country’s changing political governance continuously impact forest governance. Ethiopian forest governance has been characterised by continuous deinstitutionalisation and institutionalisation processes. At the same time as agriculture has been given the all-encompassing priority in policy, the forest governance approach has alternatively changed, at times stressing the political commitment of the government in protecting forest to support the country’s economy or mitigating environmental problems, and at times less so. The pre 1990 period, as discussed in Chapter 3, was a period characterised by different aspects of environmentalites between the governments and the rural people. Government focuses on protection, while the rural people focus on utilization. The political governance was also centralised, and it had created an authoritarian approach to forest governance. The policy making process norm in this period was closed door politics, based also solely on the political interest of the government, and not that of the people or forest experts that were advising the necessity of forest protection. This approach created a poor forest management policy with some exception in the later period by the socialist government.
Meanwhile, policy, legislative, and institutional networks, have been easier to implement for the government for the period after 1990s (see chapter 4), although the ‘closed door’ politics and policymaking process continued to be the norm. The centralised political governance was also changed into a decentralised system.

Overall an integrated and critical analysis of realities on the ground concerning national and international goals has been aimed to let the readers understand the problems with forest conservation and the issue of deforestation and forest degradation in Ethiopia. The choice of REDD+ initiative as the main analysis in this thesis (chapters 5 and 6) has aimed to critically analyse the process of current forest conservation practices; the government’s logic of practices; other actors including the local people and NGOs; and how the governance, environmentality approach, and policymaking process can be explained in relation to the current and past practices.

The emerging forest governance in Ethiopia and REDD+

By pinpointing how governance, environmentality, policymaking approach, forest management practices, and discourses have been negotiated in the past through the historical analysis, the thesis has shown how these historical debates shape the current forest management practices in Ethiopia. The analysis of policy making in the current forest management practices and REDD+ initiative adoption and implementation process has shown that the development of a national policy framework can be considered most critical for the success of REDD+ adoption and implementation in Ethiopia. The adoption of REDD+ initiative helps to facilitate the issuing of various policies, legislations, and strategies. At the same time, REDD+ has also increased the establishment of institutions to realise the government’s intent of showing its readiness for REDD+ implementation.

This readiness is because, from the policy arrangement approach point of view (an approach that I used to analyse discourses, narratives, politics, knowledge, and so on, jointly in order to get a better understanding of environmental policymaking processes in both current and historical aspects), all the conditions have been fulfilled, including alliances and finance for the government to engage in the policymaking and institutional building process. Alliance here refers to the political and economic policy, and between the various level of political governances, both in the issue of environmental protection and economic/sustainable development, have been an important phase in facilitating policy issues in the recent era in the Ethiopian context as shown through the Climate-resilient green economy policy, but also broadly in the REDD+ implementation.

REDD+ as an incentive, in the Ethiopian context, has made coordination and alliance easy or possible among government institutions, NGOs, and donors. The coordination or alliance is in the form of policy, strategy, and project designing and implementation and funding activities. The loose alliance between experts, policymakers, and donors during the previous periods on forest governance issue, has been changed, as global environmentalism continues to be linked with the national environmentalism. The linking is in the form of advancing similar ecological knowledge, conservation ideas, use of natural resources, and conservation methods such as carbon trading. This has created political and institutional alliances. The international mitigating mechanism REDD+ is a top-down market-based approach, and the process in Ethiopia shows that the government has taken the initiative as an incentive to scale up its own environmental and forest governance, considering the financial rewards that it will create.

It has been argued in many studies that forest conservation activities of the government, and those of the local people always differ by context. The logic of practice for the government and for the local people in the rural areas have varied in Ethiopia in the past and at present, as shown here. The logic of the government for forest conservation practice has been protection. Forest conservation activities for the rural people instead, were using a logic of utilization. In the cur-
rent forest conservation activities, the logic of practice for the government comes from the intention to implement REDD+ as a poverty alleviation policy. The government wants to use the opportunities that have gained from the international incentives in the form of projects with financial support that make the government do more in running its development and environmental agendas. However, an appreciation of rural people utilisation of forest is important in the conservation activities the government do. In current practices of forest conservation using the REDD+ initiative, the analysis has shown that the logic of the practice from the side of rural or local people engaging in the REDD+ project area comes from the aspiration of getting benefits from the project. The intent of their practice is explained through their self-organization in various types of cooperatives, such as forest-dwelling and non-forest dwelling associations, based on the new knowledge that come with forest conservation and REDD+ activities that encourage local people to participate in forest conservation activities in an organized form to be able to benefit from the project. The REDD+ pilot project in this sense has created a new form of environmental subjects that conserve and protect their forest resources with the intent of benefiting from it based on the new knowledge that was communicated (c.f. Agrawal 2005).

The environmental discourse

In the past and at present in Ethiopia, environmental problem mitigation and rehabilitation projects affected local people’s livelihood and environmental perceptions. Since the environmental crisis of the 1980s in Ethiopia, environmental rehabilitation projects supported by international environmental organizations have been implemented in rural areas. The various discussions of these projects show that the implementations of these projects were not successful in the sense of bringing last long changes to the rural landscape and the rural people (Hoben 1995; Rahmato 2001). These past and current projects have tended to miss an important factor relating to local people’s reality and sense of local environmentalism, coupled with their rights to use the environmental resources they live with. Environmental and development projects have created dependencies rather than transforming locals’ people livelihood and their landscape. This sense of ‘being provided’ benefits from government’s or NGOs’ run projects, has resulted in a sense of dependency among rural people.

As the various discussion of the pilot projects (such as Bekele et al. (2015) for Ethiopia; Bartholdson et al. (2019) for Tanzania) show, how the experimental REDD+ projects in many countries are filled with many problems that are generic to the main idea of REDD+ initiative (Bekele et al. 2015; Bartholdson et al. 2019; see also, Angelsen 2016; MacGregor et al. 2015). These problems tend to be context-specific to the political economy the government follows, and to the social and cultural reality of the local community in the project area (ibid.). In the Ethiopian context, the current REDD+ practice and the past environmental rehabilitation programs have had similar effects on the local people (Hoben 1995; Rahmato 2001 Bekele et al. 2015). The government use its authority to apply laws and policies through its institutions in implementing REDD+ project. Meanwhile, local people’s perception of REDD+ projects are based on their social and cultural reality and intent of practice while negotiating and sometimes resisting the government’s laws (Bekele et al. 2015; OFWE 2016; FDRE 2018; interview Feb. 2020).

Based on this thesis discussion, and other studies of REDD+ projects implementations in other countries, the main suggestion and discussion are that the REDD+ initiative cannot be successful until those who have stakes in the initiative are given the possibility and structures to try to make it context specific – e.g. to shape a new environmentality. To make a project context-specific means relating it to the reality and needs of the local community and, at the same time, harmonizing it with the government policies. The discussion of the Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ pilot Project shows that there are many drawbacks and problems in implementing the REDD+ initiative in the sense of achieving its objective, to safeguard forest ecosystems as well as communities’ rights. In addition, in Ethiopia, REDD+ is implemented while the government’s
economic priority is still agriculture which competes with the idea of REDD+ in maintaining and expanding the forest ecosystem. The analysis of the Bale Mountains Eco-region REDD+ pilot Project shows that the government has a lot of issues to consider that are important to the local society in its future REDD+ projects implementation. The analysis shows policy formation and revision processes since the REDD+ initiative is targeted to make them more aligned in order to facilitate the process of adopting and implementing the REDD+ initiative. However, the lesson learned from the pilot project shows that the policies and laws also should focus on solving existing issues of rights and benefits.

The role of NGOs in implementing the REDD+ project lies in developing the project design and securing funds. However, NGOs do not have decision-making powers and follow both the government rules and REDD+ international guidelines, their relations with the local people during the implementation of the project are facilitating the activities and maintain participation.

Final thoughts

The main aim of the thesis has been to show continuity and changes in forest management practices, and to analyse the past and current forest management activities from the perspective of governance, discourse, policy and procedures. The thesis explores the history and conceptualisation of forest governance within the context of forest management activities in Ethiopia – tracing this history to the present-day implementation of REDD+.

The study has followed the ongoing scholarly approach and argument that state that forest management practices, discourse, form of governance and idea of environmentality are context specific. In the Ethiopian context, the implementation of the REDD+ initiative is affected as the existing political economy continues impacting forest conservation ideas and practices. Although, and as discussed here successful in terms of policy framework, REDD+ need the reworking of forest governance to be aligned with the political governance. The government’s policies are based on the assumption that the forestry sector is not economically beneficial as the agricultural sector is. This assumption, plus the existing laws and regulations concerning rights on land and forest, have an impact on affecting the process of participation and benefit-sharing of the local people.

Furthermore, the assumption that the REDD+ initiative can be implemented in the same way and with the same results without being affected by the local context in all implementing countries should be reconsidered, as suggested by many other studies. This is because the REDD+ project cannot be implemented by only relying on the basis of the REDD+ initiative ideas, without being adapted to the specific context of the implementing country’s political and economic situation, and the social and cultural reality of the local community. For the successful implementation of REDD+ projects, these must align with the local context and reality of the people in the project area. That is to say, they must successfully engage and facilitate local people participation according to their view of forest and forest conservation activities.

Future researchers may benefit from this thesis historical discussion. The contrasting relationship between government, local people, and other implementing agencies; the application of laws and policies and authority over the local people; the process of aligning international guidelines, standards and safeguards; the performance of REDD+ implementation institutions; and the local people’s perception of REDD+ projects based on their social and cultural reality will be an important aspect of future REDD+ projects analysis for future studies. These issues need further studies since REDD+ projects are just in the beginning phase and the issue of carbon mitigation using REDD+ mechanism is going to be a continuous activity and the main environmental issue to study in the coming decades.
The ever-changing political governance in Ethiopia, the continuing de- and institutionalisation trends, don’t make it easier to ascertain what the future will bring about for the forest policies and forests of Ethiopia. In the last years, the green initiative of planting trees in Ethiopia engaged the government and the people. Although a step in the right direction for the environmental protection and economical benefit, it is not enough. Elevating the position of forest resources and forestry as a potentially beneficial economical sector must become top priority in governmental approaches to the forest issues if the country wants to benefit of its green resources in the long run.
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