

Forests through the paper mill

Assembling REDD+ through the production of documents

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MA thesis

TIK Centre for Technology, Innovation and Culture

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Abstract

Documents play a central role in rendering climate change governable, by bridging the perceived gap between the “global” climate system and the “local” politics, practices, and material realities that affects it. This thesis explores the role of documents in bringing about a specific technology that allows “global” climate concerns to have effect on “local” forests: The approach to reducing deforestation in developing countries known as REDD+. Specifically, the thesis asks how the production of documents within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) shapes REDD+ as a technology for governing deforestation.

REDD+ became a central element in the UNFCCC negotiations on a new international agreement on climate change in the period from 2007 to 2010. It was initially seen as a “well-known” technology that could address the issue of deforestation, understood as a problem of missing economic incentives to preserve the carbon stored in forests. The thesis shows how the documents that were produced in the negotiation process served to shape the outcome, resulting in significant modifications – as well as important continuities – to the original REDD+ proposal. The result was an assemblage that included, but also extended beyond, the final decision from the UN climate conference in Cancún, 2010.

The thesis takes a material-semiotic approach to studying documents and the work they do in the climate diplomacy of the UNFCCC negotiations. Its main contribution is a detailed empirical account of the negotiation of one central document in international climate politics – known as “Decision 1/CP.16” – based on an extensive archive of drafts and personal experience from the negotiation process. Furthermore, the thesis aims to illustrate how a material-semiotic attention to documents may supplement and nuance the understanding of climate diplomacy in international relations, and existing analyses of REDD+ and climate politics in critical social-scientific literature.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the result of my journey from the halls of UNFCCC conference centres around the world, where I worked for many years as a lobbyist, activist, and NGO representative trying to influence international climate politics; to the academic endeavour of analysing, understanding, and perhaps explaining, the deceptively simple question – as formulated by Mike Hulme (2009) – of “why we disagree about climate change”. I owe everything in this thesis – save, of course, any errors, omissions, and analytical deficiencies – to the people I have been fortunate enough to work with in both of these spaces: the community of NGOs and negotiators in the UNFCCC, and the academic community at TIK and elsewhere.

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List of abbreviations

AD	Avoided Deforestation
AWG-LCA	Ad-Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action under the Convention
BAP	Bali Action Plan
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
COP	Conference of the Parties
FOEN	Friends of the Earth Norway
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IR	International Relations
MRV	Measurement, Reporting, and Verification
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries; and the role of Conservation, Sustainable Management of Forests and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks in Developing Countries
RFN	Rainforest Foundation Norway
RL	Reference Levels
SBSTA	Subsidiary Body of Scientific and Technological Advice
STS	Science and Technology Studies
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1. Introduction: Climate change, forests, and the production of documents

1.1. From local to global, and back

The view from the fourth-floor window next to my desk at the University of Oslo includes a tall, freestanding mast, constructed from metal and painted in red and white. Resembling part of an oil rig or production facility, it seems strangely out of place in the middle of a green field at the outskirts of the University campus. The mast, however, is integral to the activities in the building next to it, which houses the Norwegian Meteorological Institute. Equipped with various instruments, the red and white metal structure is part of the Institute's nation-wide network of devices that turn local weather characteristics such as temperature, wind speed, and precipitation into inscriptions representing local and national climate data. This network is, in turn, combined with similar assemblages of instruments, buildings, scientists and databases in other countries, to produce the data that allows us to study the global climate and how it changes. From my window, in other words, I can catch a glimpse of the “vast machine” described by Paul N. Edwards (2010), which turns observations of local weather into “global data” that enact climate change as an object that may be studied, known, and governed.

The understanding of climate change as a global phenomenon, disentangled from its foundations in local weather measurements, is essential to how climate change is “rendered governable” and made susceptible to political intervention (Oels, 2005; cf. Miller, 2004; Asdal, 2004; Hulme, 2009). For example, the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is “to achieve (...) stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system” (UN, 1992, Article 2). This objective enacts the climate as a singular system at planetary scale, to be governed by way of governing the chemical composition of the planet's atmosphere (Demeritt, 2001). The more recent adoption of the “two-degree target” as a definition of what would constitute “dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system” (Randalls, 2010) is a further illustration

of how climate change is approached as a unitary global process, its governance being guided by the single metric of increase in global average temperature.

In order to control the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, however, climate governance must be able to affect the activities that lead to greenhouse gas emissions at the local level. In other words: Having been rendered governable as a global phenomenon by way of “making global” the kind of data that is gathered from devices like the mast outside my window, climate change needs to be “brought back” to the local level. This is how it can be brought to bear on questions such as how the building of the Meteorological Institute is heated, or how the scientist recording the local weather measurements got to work this morning. In this way, climate change travels from the local to the global, and back again.

The starting point for this thesis is a curiosity regarding how global and local levels are linked together in understandings of climate change and climate policymaking. This curiosity is far from unique. Mediating between “the global” and “the local” is at the core of many questions regarding how society should understand and respond to climate change. In the social sciences in particular, there has been a longstanding preoccupation with how climate change may be “brought back” from the global to the local level – variously being framed for example as a problem of “collective action”, the provision of a “global public good”, or a question of achieving “cost-efficiency”, to mention just a few common examples (cf. Stripple and Bulkeley, 2014). What such approaches have in common is that they can be said to assume the pre-existence of “the global” and “the local” as distinct levels, and that a central challenge for climate policy is to bridge the gap between them.

The academic field of Science and Technology Studies (STS) offers a different way of approaching this question (e.g., Latour, 2005; Barry, 2001; Law, 2008; 2009). It directs our attention to the practices and devices that are employed to link together actors on various levels, as well as how these practices and devices take part in enacting such levels in the first place. It opens up for a critical examination of some of the dualisms that dominates political and popular discussions on climate change, such as those between local and global levels, between science and politics, and between state and non-state actors. This in turn allows for a better understanding of how these elements are *drawn together* by the phenomenon of climate change and various approaches to govern it, rather than presupposing their existence in separation from each other.

My curiosity regarding the relationship between the local and the global is sparked by an engagement over many years with climate policymaking within national as well as international institutions. The perspectives offered by the STS literature resonate with my

personal experience of climate policymaking as a set of practices, and with the observation that these practices – rather than governing a set of clearly defined objects at distinct levels – are continuously engaged in constituting, re-presenting and reconfiguring objects and actors in ways that have specific effects on how climate change is – and can be – governed.

One such practice is the production of documents. Scientific documents are produced in order to render climate change visible and governable – the reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) are notable examples (Miller, 2004). Documents also play a significant role in constituting climate as a political issue to be handled through national governmental processes (Asdal, 2015). And, crucially, documents are central to the perhaps most explicit endeavour to link the “global” and the “local” in climate policymaking – that is, the process of establishing an international agreement on climate change to make nation-states implement global policy goals such as the above-mentioned target to keep global average temperature rise below two degrees (Weisser, 2014).

Having followed the negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for a number of years, I have experienced first hand the centrality of documents in the process of establishing an international agreement on climate change. Documents form the basis for any meeting that takes place under the UNFCCC, through previously agreed-upon texts that set out the mandate and thereby delimit the scope of negotiations. Furthermore, documents are the means of achieving consensus, as negotiators will try to bridge diverging views through the production of ever new texts that gradually eliminate disagreement. And finally, documents are the end goal of the negotiations, as political leaders adopt the negotiated texts as “decisions” which may travel with them back to their capitals. Through their process of production as well as their distribution and use, these decisions become “global documents” – common points of reference for actors involved with the climate issue in various ways and in different localities.

Documents, in short, are instrumental in achieving the kind of coordination between global and local levels that international climate change negotiations set out to achieve. At the same time, they are tangible and observable elements in the political process, that may be located and traced (Latour, 2010, p. 70). Studying the production of documents therefore seems to be one promising way of approaching the more general topic of how the local and the global is brought together in efforts to govern climate change. Moreover, as will be elaborated in chapter 2, it is an approach to which the STS literature can contribute important resources.

In this thesis, therefore, I will explore the production of documents about one particular issue within the negotiations on a new international climate change agreement. The issue I have chosen to focus on, is that of forests – or rather the disappearance of forests – in developing countries, and the technology that seeks to govern deforestation, known as REDD+. The topic is chosen in the hope that this somewhat narrow field of inquiry might be of value not only for understanding an issue that is interesting in its own right, but also for wider attempts to conceptualize how “local” and “global” can be drawn together (as well as delineated and kept apart) and how this affects our understanding of climate change and our efforts to govern it.

1.2. REDD+: Governing global forests

A different view through a different window: From a meeting room at a hotel in Palu, the province capital of Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, I can barely see the tree-covered hill slopes that mark the beginning of the forests still surrounding parts of the lower Palu Valley. Despite a long line of initiatives aimed at preserving the forests around Palu, deforestation here and in other parts of Sulawesi is still significant. This is also the topic of discussion in the hotel meeting room where I am sitting in March 2011, together with local officials, academics, environmental activists, and a number of Javanese and foreign visitors.

Nothing, one might think, is more “local” than a forest. Literally rooted in a specific place, they form the habitats in which humans and myriads of other species live their lives, providing essential resources for material as well as cultural and spiritual wellbeing. Yet the reach of “global documents” extends even to the most far-flung and remote forest areas, drawing them into assemblages that may span several continents and seemingly irreconcilable worldviews (Tsing, 2005). Through the documents produced over many years of negotiations within the UNFCCC, forests in as different locations as Central Sulawesi, the Congo Basin, and the Brazilian Amazon have been drawn together in order to address the global issue of deforestation through the equally global technology known as REDD+.

In Palu, 2011, I was intrigued to hear local officials describe their approach to governing the forests of Central Sulawesi using words and concepts identical to those that were painstakingly negotiated and agreed upon in a document known as “Decision 1/CP.16”, which was adopted by the UNFCCC climate conference in Cancún, Mexico, three months earlier. Having been present in Cancún myself, witnessing the many contingencies of the process of negotiating the document and the words it contained, the naturalized reappearance

of these same words in the vocabulary of local officials in Palu sparked my curiosity: How did such technical and condensed concepts as “REDD+”, “safeguards”, “MRV” and “additionality” travel the distance from the closed meeting rooms of a UN conference in Mexico to this small Indonesian city? Was this just another policy fad (Redford, Padoch and Sunderland, 2013) – new names conferred on old practices, and a different framing of the same “will to improve” that has attempted to govern forests and people in the Palu area since early colonial times (Li, 2007a)? How were the forests of the Palu Valley made part of the generalized, global forest that the document known as “Decision 1/CP.16” seeks to govern, and with what effects?

Forests have been understood as part of the climate system for as long as the phenomenon of climate change has been known and discussed (Stephan, 2012, p. 627). In popular discourse, they are frequently referred to (somewhat imprecisely) as “the lungs of the Earth”. In climate science, forest ecosystems are recognized as significant “sinks” – meaning that they sequester CO₂ from the atmosphere and store significant amounts of carbon – as well as an important “source”, releasing CO₂ and other greenhouse gases as they are burnt or cleared. 10-15 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions originate from forests and land-use practices, most of which is associated with deforestation in tropical areas (Houghton et al., 2012; IPCC, 2013). This has made deforestation an important issue in climate policy discussions, as reductions in deforestation rates will yield significant benefits in terms of greenhouse gas emission reductions – as well as potentially a range of other benefits relating to the conservation of forests.

The goal of protecting the carbon that is stored in natural ecosystems, including forests, is also enshrined in the UNFCCC, which has formed the basis for most international and national climate policy since its adoption in 1992. Because of the way the UNFCCC conceptualizes climate change as a unitary global process, forests – if they are to be made governable through the apparatus of the UNFCCC – must be approached in a way that is reconcilable with this singular and “deterritorialized” global understanding of the climate system. At the same time, however, the understanding of climate change as a global phenomenon must be reconciled with the fundamentally place-specific and “territorialized” character of forests (Lövbrand and Stripple, 2006). This gives rise to a particular form of tension, which makes attempts to govern forests through the UNFCCC an interesting topic of research in order to shed light on the relationship between the local and the global in the politics of climate change.

The idea of establishing a specific approach for governing deforestation at the global level is almost as old as the UNFCCC itself. During the negotiation of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, the idea was known as “Avoided Deforestation” (AD) – a proposal that ultimately did not succeed in becoming part of the agreed document. From 2005, a new version of the idea surfaced under the name “RED”, an acronym that over the following five years were to be expanded first to “REDD” and then further to “REDD+”. With the adoption of a series of decisions at the annual UNFCCC climate conferences from 2010 and onwards, there now exists a “framework” of rules, definitions and guidance that establishes REDD+ as a technology for governing deforestation at the global level (Recio, 2013). With the adoption of the Paris Agreement in December 2015, this technology also became enshrined in what is currently the most comprehensive international agreement on climate change. Hundreds of specific REDD+ initiatives are underway across the world, spanning everything from local conservation projects to national legislation and large-scale World Bank programmes (Cerbu et al., 2011; Angelsen and McNeill, 2012). Important differences notwithstanding, these initiatives are united, firstly, by their problematization of deforestation as an issue of missing economic incentives to keep forests standing, and secondly by the particular assemblage of elements that are combined in order to address the issue – including economic modelling, satellite-based remote sensing, accounting and auditing procedures, among many others.

A third aspect uniting most of the disparate REDD+ initiatives currently underway, is that they explicitly relate to the decisions on REDD+ that have been taken within the UNFCCC. In particular, most REDD+ initiatives build on the terms and concepts that are elaborated in “Decision 1/CP.16” – the document adopted at the Cancún climate change conference in 2010, and which I discussed with local officials in Palu in March of 2011. It seems clear, in other words, that REDD+ to a large extent has been shaped by the production of documents within the UNFCCC negotiations. Consequently, studying the process of producing these documents is highly relevant in order to understand how REDD+ has developed as a way of handling the tension between a deterritorialized climate system and the highly territorialized “carbon sinks” otherwise known as forests.

1.3. Research question

In this thesis, I will try to bring together the views from the two windows I have described above – the mast of the Meteorological Institute that points to our understanding of climate change as a global phenomenon, and the very locally rooted forests of the Palu Valley. Put

differently, I want to explore how forests in places such as Palu are combined with understandings of global climate change in order to form a governmental technology such as REDD+ – thereby being governed by and represented in a document from an international climate conference on the other side of the Pacific Ocean. In order to shed light on this, I will seek to answer the following research question:

How does the production of documents in the UNFCCC shape REDD+ as a technology for governing deforestation?

Specifying my question in this way, I admittedly take a step away from the ambition of understanding the linkages between the local and the global as a phenomenon in its own right. Such an endeavour would necessarily have to include not just the production of documents in a supposedly “global” setting such as the UNFCCC, but equally how these documents travel and are enacted in different localities with potentially very different effects. The scope of a master thesis has its limitations, however, and I therefore choose to focus on the UNFCCC as one site in which the work on and of the documents in question is particularly visible, and in which the friction between global ambitions and local particularities may come into view.

Another reason for choosing to focus on the UNFCCC process is my own longstanding participation in UNFCCC meetings. In different capacities, I have participated in more than 20 meetings under the UNFCCC, being present in total for more than 200 days of negotiations in the period between 2005 and 2015. This gives me the advantage of in-depth knowledge of the process, as well as access to a unique material in the form of documents and notes that are not publicly available. It is this privileged access that allows me to formulate a research question for the study not just of documents as such, but of the *production* of documents – including the actors and practices that shape (and are shaped by) them. My knowledge of and participation in the process however also comes with a unique set of methodological challenges – ethical as well as practical – to which I will return in the next chapter.

The choice of focusing on the production of documents rather than documents as an end-result gives rise to a further need to specify the research question. This is because a document multiplies throughout the process of producing it, which means that studying just one final decision from a UNFCCC climate conference in fact includes anything from 5 to 50 different documents involved in the process of producing it. For REDD+, the UNFCCC

secretariat lists 13 decisions, taken over a period of seven years and with a total of 40 pages of text, as being “key decisions” (UNFCCC, 2014). For each of these decisions, as many as 20-30 documents may have been produced during the process of negotiations.

As described above, one decision that stands out as particularly important is “Decision 1/CP.16” from the Cancún climate conference in 2010. This can be seen as the first authoritative statement on REDD+, as it introduces a series of concepts and terms that are fundamental to how REDD+ is being done in practice throughout the hundreds of REDD+ initiatives being implemented. In this thesis, therefore, I limit my analysis to the process of negotiating this decision, including the many documents that were produced in the process of negotiating it.

1.4. Thesis structure

The next chapter gives an overview of the literature, theoretical resources and material I draw on in my analysis. After first having provided an overview of STS and material-semiotic approaches, the chapter briefly reviews some important strands of the social-science literature on climate change, forests, and international governance; in particular, studies that draw on the Foucauldian concept of governmentality, and the literature on practices and documents in international diplomacy. On this basis, the chapter outlines how I combine these resources in a theoretical approach that analyses the production of documents as a process of “assemblage”. Finally, I describe the research design – that is, the methods I have employed in producing this thesis, and the materials on which my analysis is based. The chapter also discusses my own role in relation to the object of study, and the ethical challenges that arise from my previous involvement in the process I analyse.

The main part of the thesis consists of chapters 3–5, which describe and analyse the negotiation process leading up to the adoption of Decision 1/CP.16 in December 2010. The chapters deal with three different, but highly interconnected aspects of the process: In chapter 3, I focus on how the negotiations move from discussions of general ideas to more concrete engagement with text through the establishment of what I call a “chain of documents”. This entails allocating REDD+ a specific space in relation to other elements of international climate policy, and “opening up” the original idea of REDD+ in order to incorporate the specificities of local forests in the REDD+ assemblage. Chapter 4 focuses on what negotiators refer to as “streamlining” – that is, the gradual work of moving from a multiplicity of diverging proposals and interests to a “clean text” in which the REDD+

assemblage is – at least temporarily – relatively fixed. This work includes drawing boundaries between what is seen as political and what is understood as technical, reducing the specificity of the documents under negotiations, and “narrowing down” the number of alternative outcomes. Finally, in chapter 5, I focus on the community that is formed through the document production process, and the interplay between this “family” of diplomats and the documents they produce. This chapter shows how assembling such a community enables negotiators to contain challenges that arise through the negotiation process, and eventually to achieve the “closing off” of the final document that is adopted as “Decision 1/CP.16”.

The three chapters largely follow a chronological structure, telling the story of the REDD+ negotiations from the beginning of 2008 to the end of 2010, and elaborating on some of the questions that took on a particular significance at various points in the negotiations. In this way, the chapters can be read as an origin story of REDD+ as well as a detailed account of the process of negotiations within the UNFCCC more generally: a narration of the main disagreements that arose during the course of negotiations, and a catalogue of the tools that were employed in order for these disagreements to be resolved or bypassed. However, in order to highlight the three aspects of the document production process outlined above, and to be able to stay focused on the main research question of the thesis, I have been forced to make a few adjustments. This includes simplifying the timeline of the negotiations by compressing discussions that played out over a longer period of time, and chronologically separating issues that were in fact discussed and negotiated simultaneously. Furthermore, the description of specific controversies and questions under negotiation are primarily aimed at illustrating how the process of producing documents take part in shaping REDD+. The level of detail provided about different questions therefore does not always correlate with the importance they were attributed by the actors in the negotiations.

Following on from the analysis of the process in chapters 3–5, chapter 6 describes the outcome of the negotiations – the document known as “Decision 1/CP.16” – and brings together the analysis in the previous chapters of how the outcome is shaped by the process of producing documents. By way of closing, the chapter reflects on my findings, and makes a few remarks regarding the value of this approach to further studies of REDD+ and the relationship between local and global in the politics of climate change.

2. Theoretical and methodological approach

A fundamental insight in the material-semiotic strand of Science and Technology Studies (STS) is that any entity is the result of a “drawing-together” of a multiplicity of other entities, and is constituted by its relation to these other entities. The same can be said for the theoretical and methodological approach of a master thesis: Rather than simply “applying” a given theory to the data that is collected through a predefined methodological procedure, the available theoretical resources, data, and ways of exploring the world around us, will need to be re-worked, re-arranged, and brought into relation with the research object in a way that is specific to the task at hand.

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of the literature – from STS and other disciplines – that I draw on in my thesis, and I will outline how I combine these resources in my approach to answering my research question about REDD+ and the production of documents. Furthermore, I will describe the documents, interviews and observational data that form the basis for my analysis, and discuss certain ethical aspects of how I obtained and used these data sources.

First of all, however, it is important to make clear that my starting point in writing this thesis is neither “theoretical” nor “methodological” in the usual, academic sense. As mentioned in the introduction, I have myself been involved in the UNFCCC negotiations and discussions on REDD+ for a number of years. Throughout this chapter, I seek to show how this starting point has shaped the questions I ask and the approach I take to answering them. On this basis, I argue that while potentially problematic, my embeddedness in the field of study should in fact be seen as valuable and even necessary in order to shed light on the practices associated with governing forests and global climate change.

2.1. My triple perspective: Participant, observer, and analyst

From 2008 to 2012, I was employed in the environmental non-governmental organization (NGO) Friends of the Earth Norway (*Norges Naturvernforbund*, FOEN), running a project in collaboration with another NGO, Rainforest Foundation Norway (*Regnskogfondet*, RFN), that aimed to influence the negotiations on REDD+ in the new international climate change agreement (cf. Hermansen, 2015). While employed by FOEN, I attended all negotiating

sessions under the UNFCCC. I would follow and analyse the negotiations in order to report back to Norwegian NGOs and journalists, and I would coordinate with transnational NGO networks in order to develop policy proposals and lobby negotiators from Norway and other countries. This made me an active participant in the process – not as a diplomat directly involved in negotiations, but as an activist seeking to influence the outcome in line with FOEN/RFN positions.

Starting from COP 14 in Poznan, Poland, in December 2008, I also became part of the Norwegian government's delegation to the negotiations as an observer on behalf of Norwegian environmental NGOs. Being part of the government's official delegation gave me access to internal meetings in the delegation that were normally exclusive to civil servants and elected officials, as well as to certain parts of the UNFCCC negotiations that were only accessible by official government representatives. I would attend such meetings not in order to represent Norway in the negotiations, but as an observer, in order to report back to Norwegian NGOs about the negotiations and to strengthen ties between NGOs and the Norwegian government (see Røkkum, 2015).

This double role as a participant (in NGO circles) and an observer (in closed negotiations and government meetings) gave me a very particular view of the negotiation process. In effect, I was able to follow the negotiations simultaneously from an insider and outsider perspective: As an insider with full access to otherwise closed meetings between government officials, as well as an outsider taking part in networks of activists constantly seeking to uncover and influence what was going on in the same closed-door meetings. This “double perspective” on the negotiations gave rise to a highly productive form of friction (cf. Tsing, 2005). Constantly confronted with conflicting views on the same process – the humdrum practices of government officials engaging in the routine diplomatic work of negotiating documents on the one hand, and the outside image of the negotiations as a space for power struggles and great-power interests on the other – I developed a growing curiosity regarding the enterprise of multilateral negotiations; the phenomenon of climate change; the relationship between power, politics, and expertise; and issues surrounding “local” and “global”, as explained in the introductory chapter. This curiosity in turn led me, first, to write a book on international climate politics (Lahn, 2013), and later to discover the academic field of STS, and to start working on this thesis.

When I indicated in chapter 1 that the starting point for this thesis is my own engagement with the UNFCCC process, therefore, this does not just refer to the access it has given me to materials such as documents and meeting notes. Even more importantly, it refers

to how the experiences and questions resulting from my participation in international climate change negotiations is constitutive of my concern for the research area in the first place.

Following from this is the realization that my situatedness in the field of study cannot be seen as a “problem” that I can somehow “solve” through the choice of a particular research design (cf. Mosse, 2005, pp. x–xi). There may indeed be problematic aspects of turning lived experience into a research material, and some of these aspects will be discussed towards the end of the chapter. However, the main task facing me when developing this thesis was not to “purge” myself of my existing double perspective as a participant and observer in the process, but rather to supplement it with a third perspective – that of the STS analyst. In this effort, I have found that the resources provided by the STS literature, in particular in its material-semiotic versions, have been helpful in challenging and expanding my existing understandings.

2.2. STS and material semiotics

The field of Science and Technology Studies (STS) grew out of a preoccupation with the relationship between science, technology and society – that is, how scientific practice shapes and is shaped by what lies outside of “science” as traditionally conceived, such as politics and culture. One of the strategies STS scholars developed in order to investigate this relationship was to challenge the Mertonian conception of a clear demarcation of science from non-science, focusing instead on how science and society is “co-produced” (Jasanoff, 2004) or how the boundaries between science and other social endeavours are shifting and contested, and may be re-drawn through “boundary work” (Gieryn, 1983). Another strategy was to study science as a set of practices – for example through ethnographic accounts of the practical and material work that takes place in laboratories (Latour, 1987).

An approach that draws heavily on both of these strategies, and that has become increasingly prominent within the field of STS, is the approach that has become known as actor-network theory (Latour, 2005; Law, 2009). Actor-network theory does not start from preconceived categories such as science and politics, but seeks instead to study how different actors form “webs of relations” (Law, 2009, p. 141) that in turn shape and re-shape actors and collectives. Boundaries between science and non-science are seen as the contingent outcomes of shifting and unstable network-formations, and actor-network theory explores the formation of these “webs of relations” by way of studying the practices and materialities through which relations are enacted.

Over time, actor-network theory has developed into an approach with broad thematic reach. The conceptual resources of actor-network theory have been applied to studies of sites far removed from the scientific laboratory, such as those of markets (Callon, 2007), international politics (Barry, 2001), law (Latour, 2010), bureaucracy (Asdal, 2015) and parliaments (Asdal and Hobæk, 2016). Thus, actor-network theory cannot be seen as a program that is specific to the study of science.

Moreover, one could question whether actor-network theory should really be seen as a coherent “program” or even a “theory” at all. John Law (2009, pp. 141–142) argues that as the actor-network approach is “descriptive rather than foundational in explanatory terms”, it should be seen less as a theory than as a set of “tools” or “sensibilities” that draws on and overlaps with a number of different intellectual traditions. I align myself with Law when he argues that the term “material semiotics” is preferable to “actor-network theory”, as it “better catches the openness, uncertainty, revisability, and diversity” of the tradition (Law, 2009, p. 142). Similarly, Bruno Latour (2005) – although he now embraces the term “actor-network theory” – also cautions that the approach should not be seen as an explanatory theory that may simply be “applied” to an empirical material, but that it is better understood as a method for approaching an area of study (cf. Barry, 2013).

2.2.1. Material-semiotic sensibilities: Four aspects

If it is no longer linked specifically to the study of science and technology, and if it should not be seen as an explanatory theory, then what is this toolkit of “material-semiotic sensibilities” that Law refers to? What does it do? And in particular, what can it contribute to a study of climate change, REDD+, and questions about the “local” and the “global”? Here, I will outline four aspects of material-semiotic approaches – relationality, heterogeneity, materiality, and practice – that are of particular relevance to the approach I have chosen for this thesis.

Firstly, material-semiotic approaches are deeply *relational*, in the sense that they “treat everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously generated effect of the web of relations within which they are located” (Law, 2009, p. 141). This is what the term “actor-network” originally sought to convey (Law, 2008, p. 632): An actor is always connected to a range of other actors and entities, and may herself be considered a web of relations through which yet other actors and entities are connected. The task of the analyst is to trace these relations, how they are established, how they change, and with what effects (Latour, 2005).

Taking the relations that connect and form actors as the starting point of analysis, material-semiotic approaches avoid distinguishing *a priori* between categories such as nature/culture, local/global, social/technical, or micro/macro (Law, 2009, p. 147). One implication is that the field of inquiry is kept topologically “flat” (cf. Blok, 2014b), without the possibility to “jump” between micro and macro scales (Latour, 2005, p. 190). Instead, micro and macro scales are seen as effects – outcomes of relational processes – and hence phenomena to be studied and explained, rather than something in which to ground explanations of “the social” (Law, 2008: 638; Latour, 2005: 184–185).

This relationality should make material-semiotic approaches well suited for exploring questions about the relationship between “global” and “local” in climate politics. In the words of Andrew Barry (2013, p. 422), material-semiotic approaches challenge the analyst “to think through the relations between the molecular and the international” – and, I would add, to do so through an exercise of meticulous empirical mapping.

The second aspect of particular relevance to this thesis, *heterogeneity*, is closely related to how material semiotics tends to challenge foundational distinctions and dichotomies such as those mentioned above. The very term “material semiotics” points to such an erosion of foundational dichotomies, in that it places meaning and materiality, the semiotic and the material, on an equal footing (Asdal, 2015, p. 75; Law, 2009, p. 147). In the “web of relations” in which actors are located, all kinds of heterogeneous elements are drawn together: Humans, texts, animals, scientific theories, technical devices, and so on.

The emphasis on heterogeneity draws in part on the work of Gilles Deleuze (e.g. Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). According to Law, the term “actor-network” is similar to Deleuze’s notion of *agencement* – usually translated into English as “assemblage” or “arrangement” – in that it denotes the productive association of a multiplicity of heterogeneous elements (Law, 2009, p. 146; Barry, 2001, p. 218 n38). In studying the production of documents about forests and climate change, the aspect of heterogeneity is relevant because it allows for a less restricted understanding of the types of elements that are brought together through the document production process. Indeed, documents may in themselves be considered a heterogeneous assemblage with material as well as semiotic qualities: They are at the same time material objects and texts that talk about and enact other objects (Asdal, 2015, p. 75).

This brings me to *materiality* as a third important aspect of material-semiotic approaches. Building on insights from the STS literature, actor-network theory from its earliest iterations placed particular emphasis on the material devices that enable and order

action – for example, the devices through which nature-objects are translated into “inscriptions” in a scientific laboratory (Latour, 1987). But the insistence that the material be taken seriously in analysis of supposedly “social” phenomena is not restricted to a focus on technological devices. Paying attention to materiality is also a way of achieving the objective of tracing the relations that hold actors and assemblages together. In a sense, material arrangements become “breadcrumbs” for the analyst to follow in order to map those relations empirically. Here, too, the relevance to this thesis should be clear: Approaching documents as material artefacts is a way of grounding an analysis of international negotiations in their re-traceable, material foundations (Latour, 2010, p. 70).

Fourth and finally, material-semiotic approaches share with the field of STS more generally an attention to *practice*. As described above, actor-network theory and other material-semiotic approaches see relations as enacted and carried by practices, which means that they are precarious, always at risk of changing or coming undone (Law, 2009, p. 141, 145). Studying practice is therefore a way of analysing change as well as continuity in the “web of relations” that holds the social and natural worlds together.

2.2.2. Documents as «little tools»

With regard to practice as well as materiality, there are important connections between material semiotics and the work of Michel Foucault (Asdal, 2004; Barry, 2001; Law, 2009). Foucault’s concept of the *dispositif* – often translated as “device” in English – draws attention precisely to the practical and material arrangements through which larger epistemes, discourses or relations of power are enacted (Asdal, 2015, pp. 75, 86; Law, 2008, p. 632). Foregrounding the often mundane technologies and practices through which a particular order is enacted or a heterogeneous assemblage is held together opens up for analyses of what Kristin Asdal terms the “little tools” (2008) and “ordinary technologies” (2014) that are indispensable to the workings of government and politics.

The production of documents and negotiating procedures that takes place in an international organisation such as the UNFCCC can clearly be seen as examples of such mundane technologies (Weisser, 2014). Documents and the material arrangements for their production have figured prominently in material-semiotic studies ever since Latour (1987) showed how “inscription devices” turned instances of nature into scientific literature. Documents play a central role in establishing a “chain of translations” (Latour, 1999) between nature and scientific fact – between the material and the semiotic – thus making

nature available as an object of knowledge as well as government (Asdal, 2015, p. 75; Reinertsen, 2015, pp. 23–25). In his later work, Latour has shown how documents play a similar, but somewhat different role in a court of law, constructing a “fragile bridge” of texts between the facts of a case and the legal precedent that allows the court to pass judgement (Latour, 2010, p. 86).

Approaching documents as the “little tools” of government, in combination with Foucault’s conceptualization of government and power as productive, rather than simply forms of domination (Dean, 2010, p. 58), allows for a focus on how documents enable political action (Asdal and Hobæk, 2016; Asdal, 2015; Reinertsen, 2015). Similar approaches to documents are also found outside the material-semiotic tradition, however. Particularly relevant for this thesis are the studies by anthropologist Annelise Riles (1999; 2006) and sociologist Lauren E. Eastwood (2005), who provide rich ethnographic accounts of the role of documents in UN negotiations on gender issues and forests, respectively. Riles’ work in particular has been useful for elaborating my own approach to how documents – as well as the means of producing them – can be seen as the “little tools” of a UN negotiation process.

2.2.3. STS perspectives on climate science and politics

As so many aspects of STS and material semiotics seem particularly relevant to the study of climate change, it is not surprising that these issues have already been thoroughly explored in the existing STS literature. For example, climate change has been used as a paradigmatic case of “co-production”, in which the production of scientific facts and a particular political order are seen as mutually constitutive (Miller, 2004). In this tradition, a number of scholars have studied the relationship between climate science and politics (Miller and Edwards, 2001), asking questions, for example, about the politics of scientific computer models (Edwards, 2010) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (Shackely and Wynne, 1996; Sundqvist et al., 2015), and more generally about the role of science in democratic decision-making (Wynne, 2010) and public imaginaries (Jasanoff, 2010).

From a more explicitly material-semiotic or actor-network oriented starting point, analysts have provided detailed accounts of how scientific and technical devices enact particular orderings of nature and politics, for example with regard to greenhouse gas emissions (MacKenzie, 2009; Bumpus, 2011) or deforestation (Rajão and Vurdubakis, 2013). In this tradition, Heather Lovell (2014) has used actor-network theory to study the

role of remote-sensing technology and measurements of the carbon content of forests in the development of REDD+ policy. Another major focus has been on carbon markets, where Michel Callon's (2007) notion of the "performativity of economics" has been employed to trace the associations between economic models and technologies of government in climate policy (e.g., Lohmann, 2005; Callon, 2009; Blok, 2014a).

As part of the more general development in which material-semiotic tools have moved "beyond the laboratory" to studies of other sites and processes, there is a growing body of work that employs these tools in order to analyse other aspects of climate politics as well. Of particular relevance to this thesis are the contributions that build on the recent literature on "issue formation". Combining a material-semiotic approach with insights from the American pragmatist tradition, Noortje Marres (2007) and others have argued that more attention should be paid to how something emerges as an "issue", that is, as being articulated as a concern that is capable of attracting the engagement of a public and being handled by political institutions. In line with this, Asdal (2014) has studied how climate change emerges as an issue in bureaucratic and political institutions, and how this issue is subsequently modified through what she terms "modifying work" (2015). Similarly, Anders Blok (2014b) describes how climate change emerges as a multiplicity of "issues" or (following Callon, 2009) "problematizations", of which the science-policy interface that has been the preoccupation of so many STS scholars is only one among many.

Finally, a handful of studies take a material-semiotic approach to study the specific role of documents in bringing about, modifying, and governing climate change issues. These include Asdal's accounts of how documents transformed the "climate issue" into an "oil issue" in Norway's domestic climate politics (2014; 2015). Thematically even more relevant for this thesis is Florian Weisser's (2014) study of documents in the UNFCCC negotiations, in which he draws on actor-network theory to analyse the role of documents in the discussion of climate change adaptation at the UNFCCC conference in Doha, 2012. These contributions provide analytical perspectives that are highly valuable to the approach I have chosen in order to answer my research question.

2.3. Governing the climate: REDD+ and diplomatic practice

Although the starting point for this thesis is a material-semiotic approach grounded in the STS tradition, its subject matter also brings it into relation with a range of other disciplines that in different ways deal with issues of climate change, forests, and international processes

of government. A full review of the literature on these topics in the relevant disciplines is not possible to provide within the scope of a master thesis. In the following I will therefore focus in particular on recent critical literature on climate change and REDD+ that draws on the Foucauldian concept of governmentality, as well as on practice-oriented approaches to international negotiations and diplomacy.

2.3.1. From problem-solving to critical engagement

In a recent review of the literature on climate change governance and politics, Johannes Stripple and Harriet Bulkeley (2014) remark that the contribution of the social sciences to a large extent has been concentrated on policy development and practical “problem-solving”, with analytical approaches either focusing on international coordination or on individual behaviour. This also applies to the topic of REDD+, where contributions from economics and political science in particular has been closely intertwined with the development of REDD+ as a concept ever since the idea appeared in the UNFCCC negotiations (e.g. Santilli et al., 2005; Stern, 2007; Angelsen, 2008; Zarin et al., 2009; cf. Hermansen, 2015, p. 11). However, for the purpose of answering the research question of my thesis, this literature is relevant more as a part of the research material than as theoretical resources – that is, it is relevant to the extent it plays a part in the process of negotiating REDD+ and the production of documents in the UNFCCC process (see in particular chapters 3.1 and 4.4).

Stripple and Bulkeley (2014) however move on to argue that the social-scientific focus on policy development and problem solving has gradually changed over the last decade, as increasing engagement from a wider variety of disciplinary and theoretical approaches has opened up for a greater plurality of perspectives on climate change. This includes a growing number of contributions that treat climate change not as a puzzle to be solved, but rather as a lens through which phenomena such as modernity, globalization, or the political may come into view (cf. Hulme, 2009).

Among the consequences of this recent plurality is a growing attention to questions of scale, and the relationship between “global” and “local”, “international” and “domestic”, in cultural and political understandings of climate change (Stripple and Bulkeley, 2014, p. 6). Perspectives from the STS literature outlined above have arguably contributed to this development (Jasanoff, 2010), as well as insights from human geography (Bulkeley, 2005).

The role of forests in climate science and politics has served as one important entry-point for such discussions of scale and territoriality. Lövbrand and Stripple (2006) point to

how forests challenge the conceptualization of climate change as a unitary and homogenized global phenomenon, as their capacity to store carbon become localized and place-specific instances of the global carbon cycle. This results in a tension between the articulation of the carbon cycle as “global space” on the one hand, and the re-mapping of climate change onto territorially bounded forests on the other, which Lövbrand and Stripple describe – borrowing from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) – as a tension between “de-territorialization” and “re-territorialization”. The role of forests thus highlights how climate change is essentially “unsettled political space”, and that spatial categories such as global and local are always “in the making” (Lövbrand and Stripple, 2006, pp. 234–235).

The increasing plurality in social-science perspectives on climate change is also visible in the literature on deforestation and REDD+ beyond the above-mentioned questions of scale and territory. Recent contributions apply a range of theoretical approaches that ask more fundamental questions about how REDD+ and forests fit into the politics of climate change. Examples of such contributions include post-Marxist critiques of REDD+ as a process of commodification of nature (e.g., Corbera, 2012), studies based on hegemony theory (Stephan, 2012; Stephan, Rothe and Methmann, 2014) and poststructuralist discourse analysis (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand, 2006; Stephan, Rothe and Methmann, 2014). Within anthropology and geography, a growing number of studies look at the implementation of REDD+ from the perspective of local communities (e.g. Howell, 2015).

2.3.2. Analysing climate governmentalities

One approach that has become particularly prominent in the recent literature on climate politics generally and REDD+ more specifically, is Foucauldian governmentality studies. Foucault (2007 [1978]) used the term “governmentality” (*gouvernementalité*) to denote the rationalities or “mentalities” underlying historically specific ways of governing, and the “regimes of practices” that are associated with these mentalities (Dean, 2010, pp. 24, 27). Importantly, “government” is used to refer not exclusively to the formal institutions of state authority, but to the multiple and decentralized relations of power that permeate society (Dean, 2010, pp. 35–37). The term has found wide application across many disciplines, and is increasingly being invoked in order to analyse current attempts at governing the climate.

In an early contribution, Angela Oels (2005) argues that climate change has been “rendered governable” in a way that enables a form of “advanced liberal government” – meaning, among other things, that markets and other technologies for indirect government

of individuals become central to the practice of governing (cf. Dean, 2010, pp. 192–200). Following from this, a number of studies have drawn on the governmentality concept to analyse specific aspects of climate politics, like carbon markets, accounting of greenhouse gas emissions, personal “carbon budgets” etcetera (Stripple and Bulkeley, 2014, p. 11; cf. Bäckstrand and Lövbrand, 2006; Lövbrand and Stripple, 2006; Death, 2011). Benjamin Stephan, Delf Rothe and Chris Methmann (2014) combine the perspectives of governmentality and neo-Gramscian hegemony theory in order to analyse the emergence of REDD+ as an approach to governing deforestation.

A recurring topic in the governmentality literature is how the practices and technologies of government are involved in depoliticizing issues, thus placing them outside the scope of political contestation or resistance. Some studies of aid and international development in particular have argued that governmental apparatuses may function as an “anti-politics machine” (Ferguson, 1990) by way of “rendering technical” (Li, 2007a; 2007b) what are essentially political questions. This line of argument is also frequently found in analyses of climate governmentality, highlighting the role that technological devices and scientific expertise plays in framing climate issues and devising solutions. For example, Stephan, Rothe and Methmann (2014, p. 73) argue that “REDD+ contributes to the depolitization of global climate politics by replacing debates about equity and justice with technocratic discussions”.

As previously noted, there are a number of parallels between Foucault’s work and the STS literature, in particular in its material-semiotic incarnations. Thus, governmentality studies and material semiotics occupy “related conceptual spaces” (Law, 2008, p. 633; cf. Dean, 2010, p. 197; Asdal, 2014, p. 2111), and a growing literature fruitfully combine their perspectives (e.g., Asdal, 2004; 2015; Barry, 2001; Blok, 2014b; Huse, 2015). There are however also important differences, as governmentality studies traditionally have shown what Blok calls “rather totalizing tendencies” in assuming coherent regimes of government that “downplay inherent plurality and critical tensions” (Blok, 2014b, p. 45). Existing governmentality studies on climate change and forests nevertheless remains important points of reference for my engagement with the topic. They also offer an opportunity for this thesis to contribute to the literature that illustrates how material-semiotic sensibilities might enrich and complement a Foucauldian analytics of government.

2.3.3. Diplomacy as a site of government

The topic of this thesis is how REDD+ is shaped through the production of documents in the UNFCCC negotiations. This means that not only climate change and deforestation, but also multilateral negotiations and international governance are potential scholarly fields in which to ground my analysis. These areas are traditionally the purview of the discipline of International Relations (IR) – and indeed, a recent “turn to practice” in IR theory (e.g., Adler and Pouliot, 2011; Neumann, 2002; Pouliot and Cornut, 2015) provides an interesting parallel to a material-semiotic focus on the UNFCCC process.

The growing attention to practice in the field of IR stems from a dissatisfaction with what Iver B. Neumann terms ‘armchair analysis’: “text-based analyses of global politics that are not complemented by different kinds of contextual data from the field, data that may illuminate how foreign policy and global politics are experienced as lived practices” (Neumann, 2002, p. 628). In line with this, IR scholars have argued for a research program that seeks to “explain the constitution of world politics in and through practice” (Pouliot and Cornut, 2015, p. 297; Adler and Pouliot, 2011). Such a turn to practice foregrounds diplomacy as a site of study, seeing settings such as the UNFCCC negotiations as the “engine room of global politics” (Wilson Rowe, 2015, p. 65) and diplomatic practice as a “generative force” that produces “very concrete effects” (Pouliot and Cornut, 2015, p. 309).

A material-semiotic approach should be well suited to contribute to the study of diplomatic practice, and studies drawing on actor-network theory have indeed contributed to the recent “practice turn” in IR (Pouliot and Cornut, 2015, p. 300). However, Barry (2013) warns that actor-network theory cannot simply be imported into the field of IR, but that one needs to pay attention to the transformations and reconfigurations that are required in order to enable a fruitful “translation” in the actor-network sense of the word. Conversely, an IR literature that is attentive to the practices of diplomacy may offer to material-semiotic approaches an impetus to take seriously the specific *setting* of international politics as an integral part of the work that takes place there (cf. Asdal and Hobæk, 2016, pp. 113–114).

My ambition in this thesis is not to develop general theoretical foundations for the application of material semiotics in the study of diplomatic practice within the field of IR. However, to the extent my thesis can shed light on the practices of climate change negotiations, and the role of documents in these practices, it may serve as an illustration of the contribution material semiotics might offer if such foundations are further developed. Elana Wilson Rowe (2015) notes that despite the increased political prominence of the UN

climate change negotiations, detailed studies of the practice and dynamics of the UNFCCC negotiations are few and far between – with her own practice-oriented study of power dynamics in the REDD+ negotiations as an important exception. Through its detailed empirical account of the negotiation process, my thesis will contribute to further filling this gap, thereby providing a basis for further engagement with the topic in the IR literature.

2.4. A material-semiotic approach to REDD+ and document production

Having briefly reviewed the literature that has allowed me to add a third perspective (that of the analyst) to my previous double perspective (as a participant and observer) on the REDD+ negotiations, I will now outline how I make use of this literature throughout the analysis. In doing so, I would like to note, first, that the approach I have chosen is one in which the empirical mapping of the specific case takes centre stage (Law, 2008; 2009). While theoretical resources are useful for structuring and discussing the case in question, the main aim of this thesis is not to test a specific theory or arrive at definitive or generalizable theoretical insights. In other words: The questions I pursue are “how”-questions rather than “why”-questions – “little-narrative” rather than grand theory (Law, 2008, p. 632). The value and limitations of this approach will be briefly discussed in the concluding chapter.

Secondly, in keeping with the realization that “actors, too, have their own elaborate and fully reflexive meta-language” (Latour, 2005, p. 30), my analysis also seeks to build on the terms and concepts that the actors themselves use when they “theorize” the practice of producing documents and negotiating agreement on REDD+ in the UNFCCC. Sometimes these terms have striking similarities with terms already employed in the theoretical literature, and sometimes they diverge in ways that allow for a productive contrasting. In the following, I discuss some of the choices I have made and set out the main concepts I draw on in my analysis, and in particular in the concluding chapter. Several terms that are derived from my material of documents and interviews will however be more fully introduced and discussed as the process of producing documents is described in chapters 3–5.

2.4.1. Document production as a process of assemblage

At the most fundamental level, the “production of documents” that this thesis sets out to study is approached as a process of drawing together a range of heterogeneous elements – material as well as semiotic, human as well as non-human. The result of this process is

seen as a more or less stabilised assemblage of all these elements, which, as the thesis will show, includes the documents that were produced, but also the group of people that produced it, the forests that the documents are meant to govern, the technological devices that in various ways will effect this governing, and so on. The assemblage resulting from the document production process, then, is what is known as REDD+ – including, but not limited to, the specific governmental technology that is described in the final document coming out of the UNFCCC negotiations.

The term “assemblage” is here used in the Deleuzian sense of *agencement*. While this term is sometimes used interchangeably with Foucault’s notion of the *dispositif* (e.g., Li, 2007b, p. 264), there are a few important differences that cause me to prefer the former. Whereas a *dispositif* – especially when translated as “device” – connotes a bounded object, the word *agencement* is derived from the verb *agencer* – meaning to arrange or combine (Law, 2004, p. 41). This highlights the processual aspect of drawing the assemblage together – that is, the practices of assembling (cf. Latour, 2005; Li, 2007b; Asdal and Hobæk, 2016) – which is as central to my analysis as the assemblage resulting from that process.

Barry (2001, pp. 200, 218) further argues that Foucault’s term has connotations of something mechanical or automatic, while Deleuze’s term is more open-ended, allowing for a greater emphasis of heterogeneity. Assemblages, according to Barry, include “material forms as well as the ideas, passions and interests with which these forms become associated” (Barry, 2013, p. 428). The term may thus cover the specific arrangements of “REDD+” as a technology devised to perform a governmental function, as well as the ideas about climate change and forests that give rise to the problematization of “deforestation” as an issue to be addressed by this technology.

2.4.2. An assemblage of “technology” and “issue”

At this point, it is necessary to clarify the distinction between what I refer to as the “issue” of deforestation on the one hand and the “technology” of REDD+ on the other – both of which are inseparable from the overall REDD+ assemblage. My point in distinguishing between the REDD+ technology and the deforestation issue is not to argue that an issue and a governmental technology can be assembled or analysed in separation. On the contrary, I make the distinction, in part, to highlight that it can not. As the problematization of an issue is “never completely consensual nor total” (Callon, 2009, p. 543), drawing together the elements of a technology to address it will inevitably work back on the issue it is meant to

address, performing “modifying work” (Asdal, 2015) that may change the initial problematization of the issue as well. Distinguishing between deforestation as an issue and REDD+ as a technology allows me to show empirically how the two are sometimes enacted as separate, and sometimes closely entangled so as to become indistinguishable elements in the overall REDD+ assemblage.

In talking about deforestation as a specific issue and REDD+ as a technology for addressing it, I draw in part on the previously mentioned “issues” literature (Marres, 2007; Asdal, 2015). Climate change gives rise to a number of issues, or specific “problematizations” (Callon, 2009; Blok, 2014b), that in turn call for different political arrangements and interventions. In chapter 3.1, I will argue that deforestation appeared in the UNFCCC negotiations as one such specific problematization of the wider issue-complex of climate change. The development of REDD+ was in turn seen as a way of devising a technology capable of addressing this issue.

Furthermore, in referring to REDD+ as a technology for governing deforestation, both “technology” and “government” is used in a broad sense, in line with Foucault’s conceptualization of power as being enacted through a series of technologies (Asdal, 2014, pp. 2111–2112; cf. Dean, 2010). As the analysis will show, many actors understood the process of assembling REDD+ as a process of establishing an authoritative configuration of elements and practices that would be instrumental in achieving certain governmental aims – that is, a “technology of government”.

2.4.3. The technical and the political

Throughout the following chapters, words such as “technology”, “arrangement” and “mechanism” do not feature simply as theoretical constructs. They are also terms with which actors in the negotiations constantly engaged. This rather technical vocabulary may point towards REDD+ negotiations being seen as a somewhat technocratic exercise. In the governmentality literature, Tania Murray Li (2007a; 2007b) has developed a framework for analysing “practises of assemblage”, one of which – the practice of “rendering technical” – seems particularly relevant for the technically framed task of assembling REDD+. According to Li, “rendering technical” entails “extracting from the messiness of the social world (...) a set of relations that can be formulated as a diagram in which problem (a) plus intervention (b) will produce (c), a beneficial result” (Li, 2007b: 265). Although it is presented separately, the process is difficult to distinguish from what she (following Ferguson, 1990)

labels “anti-politics”: The “attempt to re-pose political questions as matters of technique” and subsequently “close down debate” (Li, 2007b: 279). Does this mean that the process of assembling REDD+ should be approached as a depoliticizing process?

A material-semiotic approach provides a somewhat different entry-point for answering this question (see also Asdal, 2014, pp. 2111–2112). Building on Barry (2001), technology and thus the process of “rendering technical” cannot be assumed to mean that political dimensions are evacuated. Rather, technology is something that must be approached as always potentially political. Here, material semiotics is closely aligned with other approaches in the field of STS, in that boundaries between categories such as politics and science, or the political and the technical, are seen as the contingent outcomes of the actors’ own efforts (cf. Gieryn, 1983).

What this means for the study of a process such as that of assembling REDD+, is that one cannot make *a priori* assumptions about the political effects of rendering something technical. Such effects instead become something to investigate empirically, as questions to guide the analysis. As will be shown in particular in chapter 4, these questions are further complicated by the fact that negotiators in the REDD+ process had their own clear conception of what should be seen as “technical” and “political” and what it meant to distinguish between the two. The meeting between a material-semiotic approach, the governmentality literature, and the actors’ own “theorizing” of their work thus provides the basis for a nuanced understanding of the relationship between the technical and the political in the case of REDD+.

2.4.4. “Little tools” that forge relations

Summing up, then, this thesis will approach the process of assembling REDD+ by studying the practices through which the assemblage takes shape – that is, the practices associated with the production of documents in the UNFCCC. It will start from an open-ended and “agnostic” position with regard to the consequences these practices might have in terms of shaping and forging relations between issues, technologies and actors, as well its potential political or depoliticizing effects.

Even more concretely, the analysis will focus on the “little tools” (Asdal, 2008) through which documents are produced, as well as how the documents function as such tools in themselves; and what these tools do in shaping REDD+ as a technology, as well as how this modifies the underlying issue of deforestation (Asdal, 2015). In going beyond the

documents themselves, to analyse in detail the practices of producing them, I also build on the ethnographic approach of Riles (1999; 2006), Weisser (2014) and Eastwood (2005). In particular, I will draw on Riles to show how the progressive procedural steps towards arriving at a final agreement take the form of a “chain of documents” – a material paper-trail through which the negotiation process is organized (cf. Reinertsen, 2015; Latour, 1987; 1999; 2010). The term will be further elaborated in chapter 3.

It must be emphasized that focusing on the “little tools” by which REDD+ is shaped should not be taken to mean that the factors traditionally seen as shaping outcomes in international politics – power differentials, economic resources and interests, and so on – are by implication ignored. Tracking the workings of documents and the practices of negotiators does not naïvely assume that such actors are free to determine how REDD+ is shaped independently from the politics, material interests and power relations of the countries or institutions they represent. Instead, what a focus on the “ordinary technologies of politics” means for the analysis of international relations is that priority is given to questions of “how” – that is, for example, through which mundane tools and procedures the financial resources of a large donor come to matter in the REDD+ negotiations (see chapter 4.4).

In sum, the theoretical approach that I have outlined above will enable an account of how the REDD+ assemblage is drawn together – through the production of documents that takes place in the UNFCCC negotiations – by combining, re-combining and modifying a range of heterogeneous elements that cuts across the divide between “local” and “global”. As such, the main contribution of the thesis will be empirical rather than theoretical – it will help fill the gap that Wilson Rowe (2015, p. 65) has identified when it comes to detailed studies of how international negotiations on climate change are done in practice. At the same time, it is hoped that the particular approach I have chosen may also serve to illustrate how material-semiotic sensibilities can contribute to the ongoing “practice turn” in IR, as well as to complement and nuance existing analyses of climate politics and REDD+ in the governmentality literature.

2.5. Research design

With STS and material-semiotic approaches being applied across a range of disciplines and issue-areas, there is little in the theoretical approach I have chosen to direct the research design of my project. The methods of data collection that I detail below are rather the result of the needs arising from my research question, in combination with my starting-point as a

previous participant in the field of study. The resulting research design is a mixed-methods approach that seeks to build on the strengths of my previous role while at the same time mitigating its potentially problematic aspects.

2.5.1. “Observant participation”

As highlighted in chapter 2.1, my most important source of insight into REDD+ and the UNFCCC is my own experience as a participant and observer in the negotiation process. As an employee of FOEN/RFN, I attended all negotiating sessions under the UNFCCC in the period 2008–2012. Additionally, I have been present at some other UNFCCC meetings in different capacities, including at one meeting in June 2015 as a representative of the University of Oslo in order to conduct interviews for this thesis. In total, this amounts to more than 20 meetings over a ten-year period, and more than 200 days of “fieldwork” in the UNFCCC negotiations.

All forms of fieldwork and observational research will to a certain extent involve participation from the researcher, and this is especially the case when observation is undertaken in order to gain the kind of contextual understanding that requires “in-depth interpretation of a particular time and place through direct experience” (Kearns, 2010, p. 242). Furthermore, I am not alone in studying a field in which I have myself been deeply involved. Mosse (2005) builds his study on international development on his own participation, as does Neumann (2006) in his account of diplomatic practices. McNeill and St Clair (2010) and Moeran (2009) describe this as a method of “observant participation”. In this case, what distinguishes it from other forms of observational research strategies is not so much the degree of involvement in the field, but the fact that data became available to me not as a student conducting a research project, but rather as an actor in a process that I only later set out to study (cf. McNeill and St Clair, 2010, pp. 115–116).

Moeran (2009) highlights several advantages associated with “observant participation”. In particular, it allows the analyst “to see beyond the social front that informants present to strangers in their everyday lives” (Moeran, 2009, p. 148), enabling access to what sociologist Erving Goffman termed the “back stage” of social interaction. McNeill and St Clair (2010) however also point to a number of challenges. One such challenge concerns the reliability of data – such as meeting notes – that was originally gathered for a different purpose than that of academic analysis. Another concerns the

potential violation of ethical standards in using data that was gathered without the informed consent of other actors in the field.

The advantages mentioned above are all relevant to my “observant participation” in the UNFCCC. Following the negotiations over a period of many years gave me in-depth knowledge of the UNFCCC process in general, as well as the discussions on REDD+ in particular, in a way that would have been difficult to achieve otherwise. Furthermore, my participation resulted in an extensive network among negotiators and other actors seeking to influence the REDD+ negotiations, as well as a large physical archive of notes from meetings and documents from different stages of the negotiation process – including meetings and documents that are not publicly available.

This, however, leads to the above-mentioned challenges regarding lack of informed consent. My role as an NGO observer within the Norwegian government’s delegation to the UNFCCC negotiations was conditioned on a clear understanding that the content of discussions taking place behind closed doors would not be publicly disclosed. In particular, it was emphasized that arguments and proposals originating from closed-door negotiating meetings should not be attributed to specific countries or individual negotiators, as this would be seen to violate the trust between negotiators that was required in order to have frank and open discussions in meetings closed to the public.

In order to address these concerns, I met with the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment in the fall of 2015 to discuss the use of my documentary and observational material for research purposes. As this particular part of the UNFCCC negotiations was concluded several years ago, the Ministry did not object to such use, nor to the possible publication of the documents in my private archive.

However, approval from Norwegian government did not address the lack of informed consent from other actors in the negotiation process. Because of this, I have avoided relying exclusively on my own notes for any part of my analysis. More precisely, I have not used my notes and observations as a source for quotes or descriptions of specific situations (with the exception of two cases where the notes added important details without directly identifying any actors). Instead, the notes from my own participation in the UNFCCC process have been used primarily as a starting point for formulating questions, for sketching out descriptions that I could then check against other data sources (cf. Bradshaw and Stratford, 2010, p. 77), and for acquiring further material for analysis. In particular, it was my prior knowledge of the process that allowed me to identify document production as a

central aspect of the negotiations, leading me to make documents the central object as well as the most important data source of my analysis.

2.5.2. Document analysis

As will be explained in chapter 3, the negotiations in the UNFCCC are structured around a “chain of documents” (cf. Latour, 1999; Reinertsen, 2015; Riles, 2006) – a series of drafts that leads up to the final decision. Some of these drafts are issued as official UN documents and made available through the document database on the UNFCCC website. Others are unofficial and meant for internal circulation among negotiators at a specific meeting. Taken together, they provide a comprehensive textual documentation of the negotiation process, showing chronologically how negotiations progressed towards agreement.

From my participation in the UNFCCC negotiations, I have accumulated a private archive of the unofficial drafts that were produced in the process leading up to the adoption of “Decision 1/CP.16”. Combined with the publicly available documents from the process, this amounts to a series of 30 draft versions of the final decision text. Together with the final decision and certain other key documents from the UNFCCC process (such as the mandate for the negotiations and the text of the UNFCCC convention itself) these documents form the most important material for my analysis. A list of official UNFCCC documents as well as those in my private archive is provided in Appendix I for reference.

While the documents mentioned above amount to a very large material, they lend themselves rather easily to analysis in that they are written as a sequential series of drafts. This made it possible to analyse the documents with a particular focus on changes in key paragraphs, rather than an in-depth reading of every document. The material is however extensive enough that I have had to avoid expanding it further. This led me to leave out of my initial analysis a number of other documents that have played a more indirect role in the negotiation process. This includes a number of so-called “submissions” from governments and non-governmental organizations, as well as reports, scientific papers, briefings from lobby groups and activists and so on. Some of these will be drawn into the discussion in cases where the initial analysis of the draft documents from the negotiations indicates that they are particularly relevant (e.g. Zarin et al., 2009), while others will be discussed indirectly, through references to analyses in the existing literature (e.g. Okereke and Dooley, 2010). In this way, I will be able to provide a more comprehensive picture of the documents

that influenced the negotiations while still confining my own analysis primarily to the 30 drafts that were produced by the negotiators directly.

2.5.3. In-depth interviews

To supplement the document analysis and to gain insights into the practices associated with producing them, six in-depth interviews were conducted with negotiators who were involved in the REDD+ negotiations during the 2008–2010 period. Interviewees were recruited based on my knowledge of who had played important roles during various stages of the negotiations.

The interviews were notified to the Data Protection Office for Research at the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), which found them to be in compliance with the Personal Data Act (NSD reference 43235). A letter informing interviewees about the research and seeking their consent for participation was presented in advance of each interview (consent letter and interview guide is included in Appendix III). Interviews were conducted in Bonn, Germany, in June 2015, with the exception of one interview conducted in Oslo, Norway, in January 2016. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted for about 30-40 minutes. They were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. As interviews were made on the condition of anonymity, all interview data has been anonymized. Throughout the thesis, interviews will be referred to using a number corresponding to a list in Appendix II, which provides a general description of interviewees' role in the process.

In conducting the interviews, my previous role as part of the Norwegian delegation and an NGO representative in the negotiations proved to be an advantage as well as a challenge. In-depth knowledge of the negotiation process was of immense importance in order to be able to follow the interviewees' accounts of times, places, people, and acronyms, and to ask relevant questions. At the same time, the fact that all interviewees to a certain extent knew me through my previous role raised the possibility that they might act differently towards me than they might towards a researcher with no background from the process.

To address the latter concern, I made sure to highlight my new role in the consent letter as well as in my introduction to each interview. In particular, I emphasised that my research did not have any connections to the Norwegian government, as any perception of such connections could have influenced the response in particular from developing countries who see Norway as an important donor country in the REDD+ area. Generally, I found that

these points were well understood, and indeed that most interviewees were used to similarly shifting roles from their own academic background or from experience with other “negotiators-turned-researches”.

The interviews were very useful as a source of data for analysing the practices involved in negotiating and producing documents. Not only did they provide a way of checking my own understanding of the process, thus allowing a form of triangulation of sources (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2010, p. 77) that further serve to address the potentially problematic aspects of my own participation in the field. They also brought forward a number of useful terms and explanations that shed light on how negotiators themselves “theorize” the process that they are part of. Several such terms will be employed in the analysis in the following chapters.

2.6. Balancing ethics and access

Aside from questions about consent, McNeill and St Clair (2011, pp. 115–116) highlight other challenges that may arise from what they describe as “observant participation”, including the risk that the analyst’s view is “tainted” by his position as an insider to the process he is describing – thus presenting a biased account of events or a skewed analysis – and the risk that the “observant participant” may himself have influenced the process that he later sets out to study. These are all relevant consideration in my case, as I have been actively involved as a lobbyist trying to shape the outcome of the negotiations on REDD+.

In response to such concerns, however, it is important to bear in mind that although impartiality remains an ideal in social science research, it is not possible or even desirable to remain completely an “outsider” to the phenomena one wishes to study. Kearns (2010, p. 249) describes successful observational research as striking a balance between insider and outsider positions. More specifically relevant for studies that deal with the complexities of UN negotiations, Eastwood highlights that it was precisely through becoming “more of an insider to the process” that she was able to access crucial aspects of the negotiation process in a way that allowed her to study “the manner in which delegates actually worked with documents” (Eastwood, 2005, p. 111).

In this thesis, I have sought to deal with my role as an insider to the process first by disclosing my affiliations and previous engagements in this chapter, and secondly by reflexively thinking through, at all stages of my analysis, how my earlier involvement may have influenced the way I approach and interpret my material. In doing so, I have found that

the resources provided by the STS literature and the material-semiotic approach that I have outlined above have contributed to achieving a certain distance and a fresh angle on the process I am studying, allowing me to draw conclusions that most likely differ substantially from those I would have reached if I was still a participant in the process.

The challenges mentioned above are similar in that they are connected to questions of access – whether to meetings, documents, or interviewees – and the balance between such access and potential ethical and methodological problems. While gaining access to the field and establishing rapport with informants is a challenge in all observational research (Kearns, 2010), this is especially the case in studies of multilateral negotiations such as the UNFCCC, as secrecy and restricted access to documents and meetings are deeply embedded in international diplomacy's *modus operandi*. The implication of such barriers to access in the field of international negotiations is that studies inspired by actor-network theory, with its injunction to “follow the actors”, are faced with particular difficulties (Barry, 2013, p. 426). Indeed, in his recent study of the UNFCCC process, Weisser (2014, p. 50) highlights precisely the researcher's restricted access to meeting rooms as a potential barrier to his actor-network theory inspired approach.

Seen in this light, I believe that my background as an insider to the UNFCCC process, with the access this has given me to closed meeting rooms and unofficial documents over several years of negotiations, should be recognized as enabling a richer account and a more accurate analysis of international negotiations than what could have been achieved from an outsider position. As long as practical and ethical challenges are addressed to the extent possible, and potential biases are disclosed and reflexively discussed, my contention is that drawing on the materials and insights of insiders such as myself is in fact desirable – possibly even unavoidable – if one wishes to move away from what Neumann (2002, p. 628) terms “armchair analysis”, and towards a much-needed focus on the practices and materialities that make up international politics.

3. The “chain of documents”: Global ideas meet local forests

Forests have played an important part in the politics of climate change for decades. As mentioned in chapter 1.2, recognition of the importance of protecting forests as reservoirs of carbon date back to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) from 1992. The development of the particular approach to governing forests known as REDD+ is also closely tied to the UNFCCC: It was in the UNFCCC that the proposal for what was first known as REDD – later to become REDD+ – was introduced in 2005. And it was here that the first authoritative statement on REDD+ was agreed in 2010, in the document “Decision 1/CP.16”, which is the focus of this thesis.

In order to understand how REDD+ was shaped by the production of documents in the UNFCCC negotiating process, I first examine how REDD+ became a topic of negotiation in the first place – that is, how it was provided with a separate space within the process of negotiations under the UNFCCC. Constituting REDD+ as a topic of negotiation is a story about moving from talk to text: from a lofty idea of a global-level approach to governing the phenomenon of deforestation, to workable expressions of that idea in the form of documents that may circulate among negotiators, be passed on from one meeting to another, and thus form the basis for a gradually emerging consensus on how REDD+ should be done in practice. In this process, however, the original, universalistic idea of REDD+ is challenged and modified in order to accommodate the circumstances of the specific forests and landscapes that it is meant to govern.

This chapter details how REDD+ found its home as one of the topics to be negotiated as part of a new international climate change agreement prior to the climate change conference in Copenhagen in 2009. It describes the basic process of negotiating documents in the UNFCCC, and the production of the first documents in the process that later led to the adoption of “Decision 1/CP.16” in 2010. In describing this initial phase of the process, I take a closer look at some of the discussions that dominated negotiations at an early stage – discussion of the questions commonly referred to as “scope” and “subnational”. These questions are used to highlight how the original idea of REDD+ is modified through a process of bringing national and local circumstances into the documents that are required in order for negotiations to begin. First of all, however, it is necessary to take a step back and

briefly summarize the origin of REDD+ as an idea and a proposal – even before REDD+ formally became part of the negotiations on a new international climate agreement.

3.1. REDD+ as a “well known technology”

The document that would later allow REDD+ to become one of the most important topics in the UNFCCC negotiations, was a so-called “submission” from the governments of Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica. The submission was sent prior to the UNFCCC “Conference of Parties 11” (COP 11) – the eleventh annual meeting of all countries that are signatories to the convention – that was to be held in Montreal, Canada, in December 2005. Submissions are documents typically sent by governments to the UNFCCC secretariat in order to communicate general views on topics under negotiations, specific proposals for text to be included in a document being negotiated, or proposals for new topics to be added to the agenda. In this case, the submission contained a proposal to add an additional topic to the COP agenda, in order to “open dialogue” on how to address “emissions resulting from tropical deforestation” (FCCC/CP/2005/MISC.1, p. 2).

In the document submitted by Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica, the modest proposal to “open dialogue” is elaborated over ten pages of text and figures, with frequent references to scientific literature as well as to the legal provisions of the UNFCCC. In this way, the document establishes “deforestation” as an issue that should be seen as bounded and well-known to the reader – that is, to the international climate policy community. “What is known” about the issue, the document states, is that the clearing of forests represents “10% to 25% of global human induced emissions”, most of which originates in tropical regions. Reducing these emissions will therefore be an important contribution to meeting global climate targets, and – crucially – to meet them in a less “costly” manner (FCCC/CP/2005/MISC.1, pp. 3–4).

Explaining the current high emissions from deforestation, according to the document, is text-book economics: The environmental services that forests provide are “not currently valued economically”, resulting in “little incentive to prevent deforestation” (FCCC/CP/2005/MISC.1, p. 4). Consequently, “responses to address [the] emissions resulting from tropical deforestation”, on which the document proposes that the UNFCCC should “open dialogue”, is necessarily a question of providing the economic incentives to reduce deforestation that are currently lacking (cf. Karsenty and Ongolo, 2011).

3.1.1. Deforestation as an established issue

One reason why the submission from Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica can presume the issue of deforestation to be already well-established as a problem of providing incentives for keeping forests standing, is that the discussion is not new in the UNFCCC context. The document repeatedly mentions that “there is currently no way to engage with the Kyoto Protocol for emissions reductions generated through the reducing deforestation rates” (FCCC/CP/2005/MISC.1, p. 3). This is a reference to the negotiation of the Kyoto Protocol, whose adoption by the UNFCCC climate conference in 1997 introduced binding requirements to reduce emissions in developed (Northern) countries, as well as a number of so-called “flexible mechanisms” that allowed for these requirements to be met through carbon trading and tradable credits representing emission reductions in other countries (Bumpus, 2011). One of these mechanisms, the “Clean Development Mechanism” (CDM), enabled developing countries to sell carbon credits resulting from emission reduction projects undertaken on their territory. During the negotiation of the CDM, the proposal was made to include “Avoided Deforestation” (AD) as one of the activities eligible for carbon credits – a move that would provide incentives to keep forests standing by allowing the sale of carbon credits if emissions from deforestation within a certain area was brought down. However, this proposal failed to gain acceptance, and deforestation was consequently left out of the Kyoto Protocol (Stephan, 2012, p. 628; Bäckstrand and Lövbrand, 2006).

Against this historical backdrop, the submission from Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica sets out to rectify the omission of the Kyoto Protocol by re-introducing the issue of deforestation into the UNFCCC negotiation process. The submission is not alone in this effort, however. A number of actors, including several large North American conservation NGOs and research institutions, are promoting the same view of deforestation as a well-defined issue of missing economic incentives (Stephan, 2012, p. 628). Informants interviewed for this thesis recall attending meetings and so-called “side-events” (workshops or presentations held by external organizations during UNFCCC meetings) where researchers and NGOs presented ideas on how to provide such incentives (see in particular Santilli et al., 2005), even before the submission from Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica in 2005 (interviews 4; 5). When their proposal was accepted and COP 11 in Montreal opened a two-year “dialogue” to explore how deforestation should be addressed, academic papers and NGO reports became even more important in shaping and popularizing an understanding of how reducing emissions from deforestation should be achieved. The most notable example is

probably the Stern Review, which was crucial for making the case for REDD+ internationally, as it argued that compensating developing countries for the “opportunity cost” of leaving forests standing – meaning the foregone revenue from competing activities such as logging or agriculture – would be a particular cost-efficient way of achieving emission reductions (Stern, 2007; Hermansen, 2015).

In this way, the document submitted by Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica in 2005 succeeded, along with other actors and documents, in bringing deforestation onto the agenda of the UNFCCC as a known and established issue. Reducing emissions from deforestation was seen as “big, cheap, and quick” (Angelsen and McNeill, 2012, p. 33): It held the potential to deliver large-scale emission reductions at low cost, and could be implemented relatively quickly. All that was needed was to develop the practical arrangements required to address the issue. This, too, was presumed to be a simple task: In his speech to the UNFCCC climate change conference at Bali in December 2007, Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg proclaimed that “the technology is well known. (...) Everybody knows how not to cut down a tree” (quoted in Lahn and Wilson Rowe, 2015, p. 137).

3.1.2. Well known but yet to be developed?

The use of the word “technology” by the Norwegian Prime Minister is interesting, because it can be seen as indirectly describing the task that was left to the UNFCCC negotiations: To devise a specific technology that could address the already well-established issue of deforestation. Furthermore, many actors already held a clear understanding of which elements such a technology should consist of. In their submission, Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica argued that satellite-based remote sensing had evolved to the point that precise measurement of the level of deforestation in real-time was no longer a problem (FCCC/CP/2005/MISC.1, p. 9). A series of market devices had already been developed through the establishment of the Kyoto Protocol’s flexible mechanisms, enabling the processes of commensuration, valuation and accounting that allowed for the trading of carbon credits (e.g. Lohmann, 2005; MacKenzie, 2009; Bumpus, 2011). Thus, in the words of one interviewee, a “vision of REDD+” already existed prior to the negotiation process that will be described in the following chapters (interview 4). This was the understanding that allowed political leaders to assume that the technology of REDD+ was “well known”.

At the same time, however, it was clear that it would still take work to develop this “well known” technology. What remained, in the view of those seeking to realize the “vision

of REDD+”, was to assemble all of the known and existing entities – satellite data, economic models, market devices, financial incentives, and so on – into an arrangement with global reach. This was the work for which the UNFCCC was needed: A decision from the COP, the supreme body of the UNFCCC, carries the weight that is required to authoritatively assemble the REDD+ technology. And the work of achieving such an authoritative decision inevitably involves the production of documents.

3.2. Finding a home: REDD+ in a new international climate agreement

The process of developing a UNFCCC decision begins and ends in the plenary hall of the annual COP meeting. The plenary hall is a meeting room usually large enough to hold more than 1,000 delegates, fully equipped for the ceremonial act of decision making: All countries are represented with their “flag” – a name plate behind which their spokesperson is seated and which may be raised in order to request the floor. From the front, seated at the flower-decorated dais, the COP president (usually a government minister from the host country), representatives of the UNFCCC secretariat and other elected officials chair the meeting. Using a traditional gavel, the president decides first on which issues to consider (through the adoption of a meeting agenda), and later on the document that is officially adopted as a decision on the issue. As almost all issues under discussion in the UNFCCC can only be settled by consensus, bringing down the gavel on a decision from the dais of the COP plenary is a symbolically loaded act of global governing: The decision that is taken becomes, in effect, a statement of the combined will of all the World’s governments.

The actual production of the document to be adopted, however, does not take place in the public, ceremonial space of the plenary hall, and only rarely does one experience actual discussions and disagreements play out in this space. How, then, do the eloquent statements from political leaders and top diplomats in the plenary hall turn into pieces of paper, to written documents that may be read, circulated, and eventually adopted as decisions with the stroke of the COP president’s gavel? How, in other words, do negotiations move from talk to text?

3.2.1. REDD+ becomes part of the Bali Action Plan

Whenever an issue is first accepted into the COP’s agenda, it is usually delegated to an appropriate “Subsidiary Body” for further work. This body will, in a separate meeting (still

publicly accessible), establish a “Contact Group” for the specific issue or set of issues, which might then, in another (sometimes public, sometimes more restricted) meeting decide to break out into smaller subgroups, or go into “informals” – closed meetings in smaller rooms, in which only government delegates (and sometimes only a limited number of representatives from each country) participate. It is in these meetings, or in even smaller “informal informals” where a very limited number of negotiators decides to negotiate more or less on a “self-ascription” basis (interview 2), that the detailed text of the document is usually crafted. It then has to be brought back, step by step, through a series of documents, for approval in each of the spaces from which the smaller group originated, until it is finally back in the COP plenary. At this stage, it is hoped that the document contains “clean text” (interviews 3; 4; cf. Eastwood, 2005, p. 114; Riles, 1999; 2006; Weisser, 2014) – meaning a text without the square brackets that are used to indicate disagreement over any words or phrases – in which case it is ready for adoption as a decision.

When the proposal from Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica to re-introduce deforestation into the UNFCCC negotiations was accepted in 2005, it was delegated to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA). For two years, the SBSTA conducted the “open dialogue” that the proposal called for. When the dialogue concluded at COP 13 in Bali, Indonesia, in 2007, the timing was excellent (interview 5): The same COP was set to agree a mandate for negotiating a new international climate agreement. The new agreement was expected to replace or supplement the Kyoto Protocol, whose commitments expired in 2012, and was to be finalised at COP 15 in Copenhagen, 2009. The mandate that was set to be agreed at COP 13 in Bali, therefore, would function as a roadmap for an important two-year process of negotiations through which a comprehensive new international agreement on climate policy was to be worked out. And as the open dialogue on deforestation concluded at the same time, with agreement on the need to establish some form of incentives in order to address the emissions from deforestation, it became possible to make the further development of such incentives a part of the mandate for negotiating the new international climate change agreement (Angelsen and McNeill, 2012).

The mandate that was eventually adopted by the COP as “Decision 1/CP.13” – also known as the Bali Action Plan – lists “policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation” as one of the questions that should be covered in the negotiation of the new climate agreement. This meant that REDD+ was no longer just an isolated topic being discussed in a process of “dialogue” – it was set to become an integrated part of the agreement that was expected to

govern climate policy at the international level from 2012 onwards. The Bali Action Plan established a new subsidiary body, the “Ad-Hoc Working Group for Long-Term Cooperative Action under the Convention” (AWG-LCA, or just LCA for short), in which the negotiations leading up to Copenhagen was to take place. Through its inclusion in the Bali Action Plan, REDD+ therefore became one of the topics that this new negotiating body should address.

At the same time, the COP concluded the “open dialogue” that followed from Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica’s proposal with a separate decision that provided a mandate for further discussions in SBSTA on a number of technical and methodological issues. This meant that REDD+ would be discussed in two parallel processes from 2007 onwards (interviews 4; 5). While the discussions would be conducted by more or less the same group of people – that is, forest and land-use experts within each country’s delegation to the negotiations – the institutional frame and political context of the two processes was different: In SBSTA, the mandate was limited to “methodological issues” (FCCC/CP/2007/6/Add.1), and REDD+ was treated as an isolated topic. The AWG-LCA, on the other hand, was mandated by the Bali Action Plan to discuss “policy approaches and positive incentives” for REDD+ – that is, more explicitly political and economic questions – and to do so as part of the politically charged process of negotiating a comprehensive, new international agreement on climate change. This was the process that eventually lead to the adoption of the document “Decision 1/CP.16”, which will be followed for the remainder of this thesis.

3.2.2. Achieving space in the AWG-LCA

For REDD+ proponents, the inclusion of “reducing emission from deforestation and forest degradation” as a separate paragraph in the document that establishes the AWG-LCA, was two-sided: It was crucial for the interest in REDD+ and the possibility to make it an important part of future international climate policy that it was included as a separate topic in the negotiating mandate for the new agreement. This meant that REDD+ was set to be integrated into the new agreement that was widely expected to be adopted in Copenhagen two years later. At the same time, the integration of REDD+ into the AWG-LCA also made REDD+ subject to the bigger political fights playing out over the form and content of the agreement itself. In this way, REDD+ was reduced to one small topic in a very large and politicized negotiation process, making it difficult for actors with an interest specifically in REDD+ to achieve the space that is needed to start working out a text.

The challenge was, firstly, to achieve space in a political sense, in the form of attention and priority from heads of delegation, political-level decision makers and negotiation chairs who were more focused on the “big picture” political questions under negotiation, such as how to differentiate mitigation commitments between developed and developing countries, and the legal form of a new agreement (Rajamani, 2010). The second and equally important challenge was that of achieving space in a physical sense – that is, a meeting room and a timeslot specifically set aside for discussions on REDD+. For the full first year after Bali, the AWG-LCA conducted its meetings through broad plenary discussions in which parties usually focused on their views on the new climate agreement in general, without splitting into issue-specific negotiation groups that could start working on actual texts and documents.

The group of forest experts that was responsible for REDD+ on behalf of their respective governments had already been meeting regularly for two years through the “open dialogue” under SBTSA. They also continued meeting under SBSTA to discuss technical and methodological sides of REDD+ under the separate mandate from COP 13. They were however “very frustrated” (interview 5) that similar discussions on the broader and more political issues of REDD+ could not begin in the AWG-LCA. Issue-specific discussions and production of documents was held back because it was seen as important to the process that all issues to be negotiated in the AWG-LCA proceeded in parallel, without “special treatment” of any one issue. When, towards the end of 2008, the AWG-LCA finally moved from general discussions towards producing its first document, the task was still approached by parallel treatment of all issues under negotiation – through a single document covering all the issues that were listed in the paragraphs of the Bali Action Plan.

3.3. From blank page to negotiating text

The fact that nearly a full year – half of the time set aside for negotiations from COP 13 in Bali to COP 15 in Copenhagen 2009 – was spent on general discussions before the first text appeared, suggests that the first document may be the hardest one to produce: This is the crucial step from making general statements to actually engaging with text on a piece of paper. Before looking more specifically at how committing words to paper contributed to opening up the existing vision of REDD+, I take a closer look at how this step of producing the first documents was taken in practice.

3.3.1. “Ideas and proposals”

In November of 2008, the chair of the AWG-LCA presented a document containing “Ideas and proposals” for the coming climate change agreement (FCCC/AWGLCA/2008/16, later in revised version FCCC/AWGLCA/2008/16/Rev.1). The document was presented with the official UNFCCC letterhead and a document number that allowed it to be identified as an official document in the UN system. In an explanatory introduction, the chair of the AWG-LCA described how he compiled the document from Parties’ submissions, meaning documents submitted to the UNFCCC secretariat in which governments outline their ideas and positions on the issues under negotiation. Separate sub-chapters listed the proposals that have been made regarding each topic under negotiation in the AWG-LCA – including one sub-chapter about REDD+. The text was not presented as a possible decision that may be taken by the COP, but rather as a summary of proposals from parties represented by short phrases or keywords, with the proposing countries listed in parentheses:

53. On the **context and objectives of policy approaches and positive incentives**, Parties proposed that they should:

- (a) Be flexible (Australia, Mexico, MISC.4/Add.1; Australia, Suriname, MISC.5/Add.2; China, EC and its member States, Norway, forest workshop; Malaysia, United States, forest workshop (short presentation));
- (b) Recognize different national circumstances (Colombia, MISC.1; EC and its member states, MISC.4; Australia, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, MISC.4/Add.1; Belize et al., MISC/5; Australia, MISC.5/Add.2) and capacity (Indonesia et al., MISC.5/Add.2);
- (c) Respect national sovereignty (Australia, Bolivia, MISC.5/Add.2);

(Document FCCC/AWGLCA/2008/16/Rev.1, p. 42)

In order to understand the work that this document does in shaping REDD+, the key lies not so much in the content of its ideas and proposals as in the meticulous listing of sources for almost every word in the text – country names followed by a document code indicating where the country's original “submission” may be found: “MISC.4”, “MISC.5/Add.1”, and so on. In this way, the whole authority of this document hinges on its anchoring in these and other previous texts. As is made clear already on page 1, the document has been prepared by the chair of the negotiating group AWG-LCA “in response

to the request from the AWG-LCA at its third session” - a request expressed through a textual conclusion from that session. It “assembles the ideas and proposals presented by Parties” through their existing textual submissions, and it is ordered in a manner that “follows the structure of the [Bali Action Plan]”, that is, the textual mandate for the negotiation process as a whole.

While the document was based on proposals submitted by different countries, these proposals were not reproduced in total, but listed in the form of keywords and short sentences. The effect of this is worth noting: When looking at the REDD+ section of the document, one might say that while the document marks the first step towards establishing a text that may govern deforestation at the global level, it is difficult to find in the document a coherent idea of how global deforestation should actually be governed. It seems impossible to get a sense of what the “vision” of REDD+ is, just by reading the list of seemingly arbitrary terms and phrases piled on top of each other.

This lack of coherence confirms that anchoring the text in parties’ proposals, by referencing the document and the name of the country from which the word is taken, is more important than actually presenting clear alternative proposals for a new agreement. Being able to show that the text originates from the parties’ own proposals is, in the words of one informant, “what a party-driven process means” (interview 2). Maintaining a “party-driven” process – as opposed to one driven by, for example, the chairs of the negotiation groups, or the UNFCCC secretariat – is a goal that is often stressed especially by developing countries. In practice, it seems, this means to maintain a “text-driven” process – or, more precisely, a process driven forward by documents.

Furthermore, the listing of the many diverse and contradictory words and phrases suggests that at this initial stage of negotiations, it is seen as important to establish what we might call a “collaborative spirit” among parties (cf. Wilson Rowe, 2015, p. 68). This is done by constructing a space in which presenting a country’s position does not have to be understood as a calculated move in an antagonistic negotiation process, but rather as a contribution to the common work that all government representatives are present in the UNFCCC process to do. The words are presented as “Ideas and proposals”, made not in the interest of advancing narrow national positions, but in order to help achieve the common goal of producing an agreed text. Establishing and maintaining this “collaborative spirit” is important, first, because it enables the establishment of procedural steps to get around disagreement, and second, because it draws the negotiators closer together, as will be further elaborated in chapter 5.

3.3.2. Establishing “party ownership”

Following from the fragmented listing of “Ideas and proposals” that was published towards the end of 2008, the chair of the AWG-LCa produced a new document titled “Negotiating text” a few months later, in May of 2009 (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/8). The new document built on the proposals from parties contained in the “Ideas and proposals” document, and was presented with the same official UNFCCC letterhead and document number, identifying it as an official UN document that allows it to be referenced in other UN documents. The “Negotiating text” was however also different from the “Ideas and proposals” document in several important respects. The text was no longer made up of lists of keywords. Rather, it followed the conventions of international law in that it consisted first of a so-called “preamble” – general or introductory statements of lesser legal standing in a series of unnumbered paragraphs – and then of regular, numbered paragraphs making definitive statements about what countries “shall” do. This meant that it was written in the form of a text that may be adopted by the COP as an agreement that may have legal effects on the countries who sign it.

At the same time, however, it was obvious that the document in its current state was far from ready to being forwarded to the COP plenary meeting for adoption. The paragraphs in the text frequently contained a number of alternative options, marking a change in orientation from the inclusive listing of proposals without contrasting one with another in the “Ideas and proposals”, to a more adversarial approach in the new text, pointing out how certain proposals were incompatible. In this way, the document set out the work to be done in the coming process of negotiations: To resolve these differences, and find ways to circumvent the incompatibility of current alternative proposals.

A second striking difference from the “Ideas and proposals” document was the fact that the “Negotiating text” contained no references to the countries or documents from which different proposals were taken. In this way, the explicit ownership to concepts and phrases was removed, while the connection to countries’ submissions was retained only through the reference to the previous “Ideas and proposals” document. Removing the ownership of individual countries to specific concepts and phrases was however only the first part of a longer process to establish a new form of ownership: A collective ownership of the parties in the negotiations to the document as a whole. In order to achieve this form of collective ownership, certain tools were applied to the document, with the effect of producing yet another document to replace it.

The “Negotiating text” document of May 2009 was still a “chair’s text” – something presented by the chair of the AWG-LCA. This was clearly stated in the text’s introductory paragraphs (Document FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/8, p. 3). It was also evident from a typographic detail: When indicating alternative options for a specific word or sentence, the words in question were marked using {curly brackets} rather than the [square brackets] that are conventionally used to mark disagreement or alternative options in texts formally under negotiation. In this way, the chair underscored the fact that the text did not yet hold the status of a text that is being negotiated directly between countries. It is rather a proposal put forward under his own responsibility.

At the negotiating session in June 2009, a “reading” of the chair’s “Negotiating text” was conducted in the AWG-LCA plenary. The “reading” entailed the chair, seated at the dais in front of the plenary hall, painstakingly going through the document page by page, allowing parties to take the floor in order to state their reservations to certain paragraphs or to input their own proposals into the text, by reading new (and sometimes quite long) segments of text out loud. Many countries also followed up with submissions of written proposals after the reading.

When a new document was presented after the negotiating session in June, the proposals and reservations that were introduced during and after the “reading” were included in full. This “Revised negotiating text” (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1) had increased fourfold when compared to the first “Negotiating text” from May. The same applied to the REDD+ section of the text, which, in the words of one informant, had “ballooned” (interview 2) from five to 20 pages.

While the practice of conducting a “reading” in which a room full of top diplomats sit for hours listening to textual revisions being read out loud might seem inefficient – and while the new text resulting from the reading was considerably longer and more chaotic – the procedure was nevertheless a crucial step in establishing the basis for further negotiations. The reading resulted in a document “owned” by the parties, in the sense that it included their own text rather than just text formulated by the chair (interview 4). It also marked – this time through the use of regular [square brackets] – the parts of the text that were opposed by one or more countries.

Through the procedure of “reading” the document, and the subsequent replacement of the first “Negotiating text” from May with a “Revised negotiating text” in June, negotiators now had before them for the first time – more than 18 months after the Bali Action Plan

started the negotiations and established the AWG-LCA – a document containing a “party-owned” negotiating text that was accepted as a basis for direct negotiations among countries. This in turn spurred important organizational changes to the negotiating process. At the next negotiating session, held in Bonn in August 2009, a “facilitator” was appointed specifically for the REDD+ section of the text. The REDD+ discussion was thus given a separate space nested within the larger structure of the negotiations – more specifically as a “Subgroup on paragraph 1.b.III” (the paragraph on REDD+ in the Bali Action Plan) under the “Contact Group on enhanced action on mitigation and its associated means of implementation”, which again was placed directly under the AWG-LCA. Thus, REDD+ had achieved the space that was needed to start the work of assembling it: Through regular meetings in the REDD+ subgroup as well as smaller meetings convened by the facilitator, the forest experts from different country delegations could now start working directly on their specific section of the text that was to become the new international climate change agreement.

3.3.3. Establishing a “chain of documents”

To sum up, I have so far described the successive steps of gathering a document of “Ideas and proposals”, then transforming this document into a “Negotiating text” from the chair of the AWG-LCA, and subsequently the further transformation into a “Revised negotiating text” with “party ownership”. Through these procedural steps (cf. Riles, 2006, pp. 83–87) that moves negotiations from general discussions to documents on which further work may be based, the negotiators establish what can be described as a “chain of documents” – a line of successive documents in which each new link build directly on the former.

In using the term “chain of documents”, I build on Bruno Latour (1999) and his concept of “chains of translations”. Hilde Reinertsen (2015) has similarly adapted Latour’s term to describe a “chain of documents” that allows for evaluability and accountability in an aid bureaucracy. My use of the term however also draws on Annelise Riles, and her description of how each document in UN negotiations represent a “step in a wider progressive trajectory” (Riles, 2006, p. 83; cf. Eastwood, 2005, pp. 41–45) towards the end goal of an agreed text that may be adopted as a decision by the COP. This end goal is crucially important – it is what Florian Weisser (2014, p. 53) describes as the “telos” of the UNFCCC negotiations: To arrive at what negotiators call a “clean text”. In this way, there is an established directionality in the chain of documents, in that each new addition to the chain – that is, each new document – should bring the process closer to its end goal.

As I have shown, a number of “little tools” (Asdal, 2008) are employed to achieve this – from the chair of the negotiations cutting and pasting countries’ submissions into an overview of “Ideas and proposals”, to a “reading” in which negotiators invest the text with “party ownership”. Combining all of these little tools, the chain of documents also becomes a tool in itself – a device that drives negotiations forward, towards an agreed COP decision.

In practice, however, the process is not always as linear as the metaphor of the “chain” might imply (Eastwood, 2005, p. 44). Furthermore, a document usually also establishes multiple linkages to documents outside the specific chain to which it belongs – for example in the form of references to previously agreed decisions or other multilateral agreements. This is also the case with the “Ideas and proposals” document, which – somewhat paradoxically – was established as the first link in the coming chain by insisting that it was actually *not* the first link, but simply bringing together words that already existed in other documents (i.e. submissions), on the basis of a request and a structure that was anchored in other documents (i.e. the Bali Action Plan). In this way, the first blank page of what might later become a new international agreement on climate change was filled by bringing together words that were already written.

3.4. Scope and scale: REDD+ meets the specificity of forests

In establishing the first links in a “chain of documents” that may ultimately lead to an agreed decision, the documents that were produced in late 2008 and the first half of 2009 gave negotiators the first opportunities to formulate their views on how REDD+ should be assembled, and to contrast their views to those of others by positioning them as alternative options or bracketed text. Thus, the production of documents provided openings for attempts to shape REDD+ in ways that differed from the original proposal from Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica, and from the “vision of REDD+” that existed among NGOs, academics and other actors prior to the negotiating process. The following section highlights two areas where the existing vision of REDD+ was challenged as negotiations moved from talk to text: The questions that in REDD+ jargon were referred to as “scope” and “subnational”.

3.4.1. Which trees should REDD+ govern?

When negotiations on the REDD+ section in the “Revised negotiating text” finally began in August 2009, there was already a clear understanding within many countries’ delegations of

the main questions that would have to be resolved through the negotiation process. All interviews conducted for this thesis confirm that during the early stages of AWG-LCA negotiations, among the most important was the question of “scope”. This, in effect, was the question of precisely what forests REDD+ should contribute to “keep standing” – that is, to which trees, specifically, the governmental technology of REDD+ were to be applied.

In the “Revised negotiating text” (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1) that was the basis for negotiations starting in August 2009, the first section of paragraphs in the REDD+ chapter – headlined “Objectives, scope and guiding principles” – contained the following paragraph:

106. [Developing country Parties contribute to enhanced mitigation actions in the [forestry sector] [land use, land-use change and forestry sector] [agriculture, forestry and land use sector] [through REDD-plus actions] by reducing emissions [from deforestation and forest degradation], [ensuring [conservation]] [permanence] of existing carbon stocks, [afforestation and reforestation] and enhancing removals [by sinks] [maintaining existing forest carbon stocks and enhancing removals], [and conserving carbon reservoirs] while promoting [sustainable forest [and land] management.] [and forest governance] [sustainable management of forests] [and prioritizing the restoration of forests]

As explained above, the brackets indicate disagreement. Much of the bracketed text in paragraph 106 was clearly meant as alternatives, so that, for example, negotiators were meant to choose between one of the three initial formulations regarding in which sector to implement REDD actions (the “[forestry sector]”, “[land use, land-use change and forestry sector]” or the “[agriculture, forestry and land use sector]”). In addition to these alternatives, four alternatives to paragraph 106 as a whole also appeared in the text. Clearly, the question of scope was contested, and the bracketed text gives us an indication of what was at stake.

From the first proposal on REDD was submitted in 2005, two things had been clear regarding what forests were actually to be “kept standing”. The first was that REDD+ should deal with forests in “developing countries”. In the popular discourse around REDD+, it is often assumed that we are talking about tropical forests, or even the specific type of forests known as “rainforests” (see, e.g., Lahn and Wilson Rowe, 2015). In the context of the UNFCCC, however, the distinction that fundamentally structures the negotiations and the texts they produce, is that between developed and developing countries. In an annex to the UNFCCC (Annex I), a list specifies which countries are understood to be developed

countries. These so-called Annex I countries are assigned a number of responsibilities that do not pertain to countries not listed in Annex I – the countries usually referred to as Non-Annex I countries, or developing countries (e.g., Roberts and Parks, 2007). The first thing to notice, therefore, is that the forests that REDD+ were to govern are not characterized by any specific biological traits (such as being tropical, or being rainforests) but by their location within the borders of a country not listed in Annex I of the UNFCCC.

Secondly, the original proposal from 2005 was about supporting developing countries in “Reducing Emissions from Deforestation” – abbreviated RED (Angelsen and McNeill, 2012, p. 38). When countries report their emissions to the UNFCCC secretariat, they do this on the basis of guidelines developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that define emissions from deforestation as the emissions occurring as a result of a land area previously categorized as “forest land” is converted into another type of land use that leads to its re-categorization as something other than “forest land” (Iversen, Lee, and Rocha, 2014). The proposal about “Reducing Emissions from Deforestation”, therefore, was aiming specifically to govern the forests that might be completely lost, for example to agricultural land or settlements and infrastructure. The incentives provided through RED would be aimed at converting less forest land to other land-use.

Through the “open dialogue” leading up to COP 13 in Bali, agreement had been reached that the proposal should be expanded to “Reducing Emissions from Deforestation *and forest Degradation*”, adding the second D to the acronym REDD (Cerbu et al., 2011, p. 169). This included the emissions from what the IPCC calls “forest land remaining forest land”, that is, emissions resulting for example from logging within a forest that would be replanted or otherwise still exist as a forest after the “degrading” activity. This expanded the scope of the incentives to be provided, from focusing exclusively on forests under threat of complete disappearance, to also aiming at reducing the degradation of forest land in general.

What was not resolved in Bali, however, was what to do about forests not under threat of deforestation or degradation. Would incentives also be targeted towards the conservation of existing forests, or even the establishment of new forests in order to enhance the stock of carbon stored in forests, rather than just reductions in existing rates of deforestation and degradation (Cerbu et al., 2011, p. 169)? As a result of disagreement around this, the full reference to REDD+ in the Bali Action Plan, serving as the basis for the negotiations in the AWG-LCA, came to read:

Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and *the role of* conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (FCCC/CP/2007/6/Add.1, p. 3, emphasis added)

The decision in Bali was to discuss the *role* that the types of activities referred to after the semicolon might play – giving a more uncertain status to the activities listed after the semicolon when it comes to being linked to “positive incentives”. Clarifying the question of what “role” the activities after the semicolon should play, therefore, was “obviously (...) the first thing to do” (interview 2) when negotiations on the text began in 2009.

The reasons why views on the scope initially differed, had to do with differences in the types of forests that countries in the negotiation sought to bring into REDD+. Countries like Brazil, with large areas of forest and high levels of deforestation, argued that it was more important as well as technically more feasible to focus on reducing the amount of forest that was completely lost (Okereke and Dooley, 2010, p. 89). Other developing countries were however in a very different situation. India, for example – not having the same large areas of intact forests in which deforestation can occur as Brazil – was looking to secure access to economic incentives for establishing new forests (“enhancement of forest carbon stocks”) (Okereke and Dooley, 2010, p. 89). Another group of countries, like the Democratic Republic of Congo, were in the situation that although they held large areas of forest, their rate of deforestation was currently very low – in the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo owing to a civil war that until recently kept foreign investment and thereby deforestation out of the country. They wanted incentives to manage and conserve their existing forest, regardless of earlier levels of deforestation (Cerbu et al., 2011, p. 169). In light of these differences, the semicolon in the Bali Action Plan came to be of great significance in the negotiations (interviews 4; 5) as a “gatekeeper” for the ability of some types of forests to be part of REDD+.

In the “Revised negotiating text”, the term “REDD+” or “REDD-plus” was used to denote an inclusive conception of REDD, in which the activities after the semicolon are included. This marked a gradually expanded scope for REDD+ – from the original RED in 2005, to REDD in 2007, and now REDD+ – in which new types of forests were brought into the assemblage (cf. Angelsen and McNeill, 2012, p. 38). The term “REDD” (without the plus) was however also used in the document from June 2009, indicating that there was still some disagreement around the scope at this time. In later versions of the text circulated

among negotiators from August to October, the use of REDD gradually disappeared and REDD+ was used exclusively. The views on scope therefore seem to have converged over time, although bracketed options remained in the text all the way up to the Copenhagen meeting. It was not until 11 December 2009, during negotiations in Copenhagen, that a draft text for the first time contained a “clean” paragraph on scope – meaning a paragraph without any brackets to indicate disagreement – in which all activities before as well as after the semicolon were included (private archive, 2009/10).

In light of this, the bracketed alternatives on “scope” found in the first few documents under negotiation can be seen as countries’ attempts to bring *their forests* into the text. Adding further bracketed options to broaden the scope of REDD+ was a way of making sure that the text reflected the specific circumstances of these forests in a way that would allow them to pass from one side of the semicolon to the other, in order to be governed through REDD+, and, by extension, to gain access to future “positive incentives”. Thus, the documents through which these proposals were introduced served as tools to expand and change the original idea of REDD+ as a uniform, global approach to forests based on incentivizing reductions in current rates of emissions, as this universalistic approach came to be challenged by the particular situation of different forests and different national situations.

3.4.2. Subnational forests and national government

Throughout the “Revised negotiating text” of June 2009, another way in which the original idea of REDD was challenged by the varying circumstances of different countries may also be identified. The document contained a large number of references to accounting frameworks and monitoring systems to be established in order to measure emissions and report on activities – building on the established understanding that REDD+ as a governmental technology would for a large part be assembled from existing technical devices such as remote-sensing satellites. In the two alternative paragraphs 111 and 112, however, two strikingly different approaches were outlined with regard to the level at which these frameworks and systems should be established:

111. [Option 1 (...)]

[Developing country Parties *shall establish national estimation of emissions and removals in the forest sector. Each developing country Party should develop an emissions estimation and monitoring system for its forestry sector.*] (...)

112. [Option 2

National [and/] or subnational accounting of emission reductions from deforestation *may be accounted for at either national or subnational level*, as decided by each Party.]

(Document FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1, p. 116, emphasis added)

Similar alternative options were found in a number of paragraphs, indicating disagreement over the extent to which REDD activities should be “national” or whether they may also take place on a “subnational” scale.

An important aspect of the original proposal for REDD from 2005 was that it would take a national approach to governing deforestation – meaning that all forest areas within a nation-state would need to be covered, so that changes in emissions from deforestation or other activities would be based on what happened in the entire national territory (Angelsen and McNeill, 2012, p. 45). This was important because it distinguished REDD from an earlier proposal in the negotiation of the Kyoto Protocol – previously mentioned in chapter 3.1 – to include “Avoided Deforestation” (AD) within the Protocol’s “Clean Development Mechanism” (CDM). The CDM is a project-based carbon trading mechanism in which emission reductions within a single geographical location (e.g., a factory) could result in credits to be traded in international carbon markets. The proposal of “Avoided Deforestation” was not accepted as an activity eligible for credits, partly because some actors in the negotiations argued that such projects would carry an inherent risk of “leakage” – that is, deforestation would simply be moved from one location to another, without any overall emission reductions having taken place (Stephan, 2012, p. 628).

When the original REDD+ proposal stressed that emissions would be monitored at the national level, this was meant to address the concern over “leakage”, thus distinguishing REDD+ from the proposal of “Avoided Deforestation” that failed to win acceptance as part of the CDM (FCCC/CP/2005/MISC.1, p. 9). The proposal that had been inserted into the new negotiation text’s paragraph 112 – that emission reductions “may be accounted for at either national or subnational level, as decided by each Party” – therefore ran counter to a central feature of the idea of REDD+ as originally proposed. It represented, in the words of one interviewee, “a risk to the vision of REDD” (interview 4). For this reason, the proposal was initially met with “suspicion” (interview 1) among actors in the negotiations who viewed it as a possible attempt to open up the discussion about the kind of project-based, “local” approach to governing deforestation that failed in earlier rounds of negotiations.

Despite suspicion and resistance, proponents of a subnational approach to REDD+ continued to insert their proposals into the documents following from the negotiating text all the way towards COP 15 in Copenhagen. Throughout the negotiations, Colombia's representatives in particular argued that a national approach to governing forests would effectively exclude their country from participating in REDD+ (interviews 1; 2; 3; 4; 5). As substantial parts of Colombia's forests were controlled by guerrilla forces in armed conflict with the government, they argued, it would be impossible for the country to take part in any international scheme requiring an ability to govern the full forested area within its national boundaries. While Colombia was the country most associated with the proposal of a subnational approach, and the issue was seen to be "very unique" (interview 2), it received backing from countries such as those of the Congo Basin, who were facing situations similar to that of Colombia (interview 1).

The question of "subnational" was similar to the question of "scope" in that it was a result of a meeting between the universalistic idea of REDD+ and the actual, "very unique" situation of particular forests. By opening up for the insertion of a subnational approach, the documents that were produced in the early phase of the negotiations became tools that enabled Colombia and other countries to bring the situation of their forests – a situation of armed conflict and unresolved claims to governmental authority – into REDD+.

Furthermore, the question of "subnational" highlights the importance of geographical scale in efforts to establish REDD+ as an approach to governing deforestation. What one interviewee described as the original "vision of REDD" seemed to involve a neat hierarchical "nesting" of levels of government, from the international level at which total deforestation is to be brought under control, to the national level at which nation-states will govern the forests within their national borders, and only then to the level below the national: the local or "subnational" (cf. Bulkeley, 2005). Bringing the subnational level directly into discussions at the international level, circumventing the national scale, thus represented a "risk" (interview 4) to this original vision.

3.5. Conclusion: Document production as "opening up"

Summing up the initial steps of the negotiation process, I have argued that REDD+ was included as one of the topics to be negotiated as part of a new international climate agreement in a way that took the issue to be already well-known and well-established. The problematization of deforestation in relation to climate change established the issue as one of

missing economic incentives to keep forests standing. REDD+ was proposed as the technology that would be needed to address this issue, and the remaining task for the UNFCCC was to authoritatively assemble this technology.

Establishing what I have called a “chain of documents” (building on Latour, 1999; Reinertsen, 2015; Riles, 2006) was the central tool through which negotiations moved from talk to text. The establishment of a chain in which each new document represents another step towards the end goal of achieving a “clean text” allowed negotiations to proceed, through a series of procedural steps (Riles, 2006), from disparate proposals found in country submissions to the “Revised negotiating text” document that had “ownership” from all countries. A number of little tools were employed in the process of establishing the chain of documents that allowed for this progression, including the “reading” of a document in the plenary hall, and minute typographical details that served as markers of “ownership”.

The production of the first documents in the chain had important effects on how REDD+ was shaped. First of all, when REDD+ was introduced as a topic of negotiation by way of including it in the Bali Action Plan (BAP), it was simultaneously embedded in the larger set of relations that structures international climate politics. Including REDD+ as one of the topics to be negotiated on the basis of the BAP meant that REDD+ was tied directly to the high expectations and the political prestige that surrounded the new international agreement on climate change set to be agreed in Copenhagen in December 2009. This greatly increased the interest in and potential reach of the original proposal, but at the same time it also involved challenges – such as the challenge of achieving the necessary space in a large and politicized process. A number of further challenges will be described in the following chapters.

Secondly, the first documents in the chain served to open up pre-existing understandings of REDD+. Along with the proposal to include deforestation and REDD+ as a topic of negotiations followed a clear “vision” of what REDD+ should look like. This vision existed outside the UNFCCC (in the form of reports from academics and NGOs) as well as inside (in the form of submissions like the original proposal from Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica). However, this chapter has shown that the establishment of a chain of documents did not simply provide a frictionless translation of the pre-existing vision of REDD+ as a “well known” technology into negotiated text. On the contrary, the documents produced through this process also opened up a discussion on how REDD+ should be assembled that changed and went beyond the existing “vision”.

The changes I have dealt with in this chapter concern the questions of “scope” and “subnational”. Both questions go to the heart of what Lövbrand and Stripple (2006) describe as the tension between “deterritorialization” and “reterritorialization”: On the one hand, deforestation is to be handled as a uniform, “deterritorialized” problem that can be addressed by one technology equally applicable to all situations. On the other hand, forests are rooted in specific places, thereby embedded in local situations that may involve high or low levels of deforestation, orderly management or armed conflicts and unresolved territorial claims.

As the idea behind REDD+ was to build a technology with global reach, it became important to draw as many different types of forests as possible into the assemblage that was taking shape. Somewhat paradoxically, therefore, the questions of scope and scale show that the global pretensions of REDD+ cannot be seen as a uniformly homogenizing force, but that they in fact also bring about a kind of “rediscovery” of local particularities (cf. Blok, 2014a, p. 2125). Through the production of documents and the tools by which negotiations moved from talk to text, a certain amount of space was opened up that allowed for new elements to be brought into the REDD+ assemblage.

So far, I have shown how this “opening up” served to re-shape the technology of REDD+ into something more attentive to the particularities of local forests. The extent to which such changes may also modify the existing problematization of deforestation – as an issue of missing economic incentives to preserve forest carbon – is a different question. This is among the questions to which I will turn in the following chapters.

4. “Streamlining”: Bracketing the political?

Reintroducing deforestation as an issue in the UNFCCC, establishing REDD+ as a topic in the negotiations of a new international climate agreement, and formulating the first documents on which negotiations could be based, were all necessary preconditions in order to assemble an authoritative, global approach to governing forests through the UNFCCC. As shown in the previous chapter, these initial steps were based on an already existing “vision” of the elements from which the REDD+ technology should be assembled, but they also served to open up a space in which this vision could be challenged and re-shaped. This is also evident in the document that these first steps resulted in – the “Revised negotiating text” of June 2009 – which contained a large number of brackets and alternative options in direct contradiction of each other.

However, in order to achieve the authority that the COP plenary can confer on REDD+ by adopting a decision, the “opening up” that happened in the initial move from talk to text must be followed by a process of “narrowing down” – of reducing disagreement and removing alternatives – in order to gradually move towards the “clean text” of a consensus document. In this process, negotiators are expected to reduce disagreement so that the document that will eventually be forwarded to groups at higher levels in the negotiations, and finally to political leaders at the COP, contains as few unresolved questions as possible – and, where disagreement is unavoidable, to make sure that the different options are clearly and succinctly laid out for political leaders to choose among.

This chapter shows how the production of documents following from the “Revised negotiating text” of June 2009 worked to gradually narrow down the differences over how REDD+ should be assembled, through a process known as “streamlining”. Engaging in the work of streamlining the documents, negotiators sought to draw boundaries between what was seen as “political” and what they understood to be “technical”. The latter were issues that should be solved at the level of negotiators, while the truly “political” issues were those that needed to be bracketed in order to be resolved by political leaders, or that had to be seen in relation with the broader negotiations under the AWG-LCA (Wilson Rowe, 2015, p. 68).

In detailing the process of streamlining, the chapter seeks to show how the production of documents through this process also served to shape REDD+ in a particular way. This will be illustrated with a closer look at the discussion about how to finance REDD+, and the

more technically framed questions of reference levels, “MRV”, and a quantitative goal. Furthermore, the work of streamlining had the effect of favouring a particular way of writing documents, in which isolated and transposable terms or concepts were given an advantage over holistic and coherent proposals – exemplified by the case of Norway’s so-called “legal text”. First of all, however, the chapter gives a brief overview of the practice of streamlining and the material arrangements it involved.

4.1. Means of production: Bilaterals and text “on the screen”

After the “Revised negotiating text” of June 2009 was published, and the “Subgroup on paragraph 1.b.iii” was established in order to start negotiations on the REDD+ chapter of the document, a new process was set in motion by the subgroup’s appointed facilitator. Often referred to as “streamlining” (interview 2), this process aimed to reduce the size of the text as much as possible, while at the same time preserving key differences between the positions of different countries. Initially, the facilitator would meet individually for so-called “bilaterals” (interviews 2; 3; 4) with the REDD+ negotiator of each country that had submitted proposals, asking them about different parts of the text: “Can I take this out? Do you understand that if I take this out it’s OK because your idea is still in this paragraph?” (interview 2). Based on such meetings the facilitator would then produce new documents which the secretariat would distribute to negotiators, with the aim of gradually reducing the size of the text by reducing the number of alternative options and brackets. This way of working, alternating between meetings and new documents, provided the facilitator with what one interviewee described as a series of “tools” (interview 2) by which to progress towards agreement.

During meetings in August, October, and November 2009, a series of new documents were produced that were markedly different from the “Revised negotiating text” from which the process of streamlining began. The documents now dealt exclusively with REDD+, as each of the many subgroups of the AWG-LCA produced their own documents for their specific topic rather than dealing with different chapters of a common “Negotiating text” covering all issues under negotiation. The new documents did not use the official UNFCCC letterhead that was used for the earlier “Ideas and proposals” and “Negotiating text” documents. Instead, they started with a short headline that would be difficult to decipher without a certain prior knowledge of the process (“Work on the AWG-LCA Revised NT (...) Informal subgroup on para 1(b) (iii)”), followed by the date and exact time of

publication (“13 August 2009, 1545h”) (private archive 2009/1). All of these characteristics point towards the new documents being “work in progress” – a temporary representation of a continuous flow of text, and a new addition to the “chain of documents” (see chapter 3.3) that will eventually lead to an agreed COP decision. This was the aim of the streamlining process: to finally be able to produce a “clean text” – that is, a text without brackets – or, at the very least, a text with only a handful of disagreements for which clearly distinguishable options are formulated that ministers or other political leaders may choose between in a final process of bargaining.

Striving for a “clean text” initially had the effect of focusing discussions on what was seen to be the key differences that further negotiations would need to resolve. Based on the new documents that were circulated, negotiations would now sometimes go into “drafting mode”. Such negotiations, or “drafting group” meetings, took place in a smaller room without observers from NGOs or other non-state actors present, and sometimes with text “on the screen” (interview 3). Working with text “on the screen” meant that the document would be projected from a computer onto a screen in the front of the room, allowing negotiators to work directly on the wording of the text, even using the “track changes” function of word-processing software to highlight how the text was being adjusted. In these settings, negotiators were able to suggest a new wording of a specific paragraph or to propose other changes to the document:

...you go into drafting mode and you can propose a new option, and then the options are on the screen and you can say: Who agrees to this new formulation? And if they agree then the other option will be deleted, and then you have a new proposal. If they don't agree you have one option in brackets, another option in brackets... (Interview 3)

Such changes would be suggested either in order to further the negotiator's own position in the negotiations, or in order to provide helpful suggestions for how to bridge differences – or some combination of the two. According to my own notes and recollection from such meetings, the mood in the room could become quite tense in situations where negotiators discussed contentious issues. More often, however, the mood was rather relaxed, with soft-spoken negotiators making suggestions to change a word or two, or move a sentence from one place to another, usually framed as constructive attempts to bring the group of negotiators as a whole closer to their common goal: that of being able to produce a clean text. Through this mode of work, the negotiators set out to formulate documents that

would reconcile sometimes very significant differences over how REDD+ should be assembled – as will be illustrated in the remainder of this chapter.

4.2. Avoiding entanglements: Finance and North-South dynamics

In addition to the question of “scope” – that is, which forests would be governed by REDD+, as addressed in the previous chapter – a central question in the early phase of REDD+ negotiations was that of “finance” (interviews 2; 3; 4). In the negotiating text document of June 2009, more than four pages were devoted to proposals relating to what is termed “means of implementation” – that is, the kind of finance that would be provided to developing countries in return for any results achieved in reducing deforestation (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1. pp. 117-22).

The proposals in the document ranged from detailed descriptions of how money should be raised to pay for REDD+ (“public funds, such as ODA”, “taxation of carbon in developed countries”, “access to the carbon market”...) to elaborate institutional set-ups for the distribution of funds (a “specialized fund established under the COP”, “trust funds for community forestry accounts”, “funds for ongoing capacity-building, support of price-floors, etc.”...). What all proposals had in common, however, was the assumption (explicit or implicit) that money in this context was something that should flow from developed to developing countries. This builds directly on the mandate of the REDD+ discussions taking place in the AWG-LCA, namely paragraph 1.b.iii of the Bali Action Plan, which reads: “Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (...).”

As already mentioned, the distinction between developed (Annex I) and developing (Non-Annex I) countries is fundamental to the structure of the UNFCCC: Based on the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities”, developed countries are expected to “take the lead” in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while developing countries are entitled to financial and technological support in order to implement climate change policies. This distinction between the responsibilities of the North and the South is based on a recognition of the uneven historical contributions of rich and poor nations to the problem of climate change, as well as differences in current economic capacities (see, e.g., Roberts and Parks, 2007). The mandate for negotiations on REDD+ followed this distinction between the responsibilities of developed and developing countries in that it explicitly dealt with “positive incentives” to reduce deforestation.

The mandate of the Bali Action Plan linked governing deforestation to compensation or reward of some form. This was in line with the established problematization of deforestation as an issue of missing economic incentives. And in order to provide such incentives, money should be provided to developing countries from the developed countries of the North. However, the many alternative proposals and bracketed options found in the “Revised negotiating text” of June 2009 illustrate some of the questions that arise once the straightforward economics of incentivizing reductions in deforestation meets the complicated politics of finance in the climate change negotiations. These questions were expected to be among the most difficult ones that needed to be addressed through the process of streamlining (interviews 2; 3; 4).

4.2.1. Markets as a win-win option

Outside the group specifically tasked with discussing REDD+, the negotiations in the AWG-LCA on a new international climate change agreement was marked by a deep division between the North and the South. At the heart of the disagreement was the question of responsibility for climate change, that is, who should bear the costs of reducing emissions and adapting to a changing climate (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand, 2007; Roberts and Parks, 2007). As a result of this, discussions on finance were particularly antagonistic, with some developing countries demanding “reparations” or “repayment of climate debt” in the form of tens or even hundreds of billions of dollars from Northern countries, and a strong common position from the South expressed through their negotiating group G77 (Rajamani, 2010).

Negotiations on REDD+, in comparison, was marked by a very different atmosphere. Interviewees explain that in contrast to the rest of the negotiations, there was “no North-South dynamic” in REDD+ (interview 2), and that countries “on both sides” agreed on the basic premise that REDD+ was “a good thing” (interview 6), with disagreements about exactly how REDD+ should be implemented cutting across the North/South distinction, and thus other groups and constellations in the negotiation being more relevant than the G77 and group of industrialized “Annex I” countries (on this point, see also Wilson Rowe, 2015).

Initially, this might appear surprising given the way REDD+ is rooted in the distinction between Annex I and Non-Annex I, and linked to the UNFCCC’s principles about equity and “common but differentiated responsibilities” – principles that elsewhere in the negotiations was a source of constant conflict between the two major blocs of developed and developing countries. While some informants point to a common interest in saving

forests, leading to REDD+ being perceived as a more “sexy” (interviews 1; 6) than other issues under negotiation, the documents that formed the basis for the streamlining process provide a different key to understanding why REDD+ was seen as being mutually beneficial for countries in the North and the South.

In the “Revised negotiating text” of June 2009, one proposal presented the objective of REDD+ as being twofold: First, to help “Developing country Parties to [re-organize the] work within their forestry sector to contribute in the efforts towards low-carbon economies”; Second, to help “Developed country Parties to meet their ambitious quantified emissions reduction targets” (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1, pp. 110-111). This twofold objective is modelled on the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol. The CDM is defined as a mechanism that will provide finance for emission reductions in developing countries *as well as* assisting developed countries in “achieving compliance with their (...) commitments” (UNFCCC, 1998, Article 12.2), achieved through the trading of carbon credits that allows for developed countries to finance emission reductions in Southern countries as an alternative to reducing emissions domestically. Other proposals were even more explicit in linking REDD+ to existing carbon trading mechanisms – stating, for example, that the REDD+ market should learn from, and be compatible with, the CDM (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1, p. 121).

Through these proposals, a connection was established between the document under negotiation and the narratives of “win-win” solutions (Angelsen and McNeill, 2012, p. 34) that have figured prominently in public arguments for REDD+ such as those found in the Stern Review (Stephan, Rothe and Methmann, 2015, p. 71): Making REDD+ part of the carbon market will benefit Southern and Northern countries alike – the former by providing access to finance for forest governance, the latter by enabling more cost-efficient fulfilment of emission reduction targets through the purchase of relatively less “costly” REDD+ carbon credits, as the original proposal from Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica stipulated.

4.2.2. Isolating REDD+ from the “broader picture”

While the implicit as well as explicit references to the CDM helped establish a win-win narrative that allowed “both sides” to see REDD+ as “a good thing”, they also served to firmly link REDD+ to old disagreements over the role of market-based approaches to climate change mitigation in general, and the appropriateness of market-based mechanisms for forests in particular. In negotiations on the market mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol, the

EU and Brazil were the central actors to block the proposal of “Avoided Deforestation” from being accepted as part of the CDM (see chapter 3.1). These two actors were still sceptical of market mechanisms for forests in the AWG-LCA negotiations in 2009 (Okereke and Dooley, 2010). Furthermore, most environmental NGOs and other civil society actors were sceptical towards the idea of linking forests and carbon trading (Stephan, 2012, p. 628). Even if the win-win narrative helped gain initial acceptance for REDD+, therefore, there was no agreement on whether the carbon market was an appropriate source of finance.

In the “Revised negotiating text” of June 2009, two approaches to finance REDD+ can be identified. In the first approach, action to reduce deforestation should result in “issuance of carbon credits” modelled on existing market mechanisms like the CDM. In the second approach, money is to be provided through the establishment of one or more new international funds (“the special REDD-plus fund”, a “readiness fund”, a “specialized fund established under the COP”, etc.) to channel finance from developed countries.

By many negotiators, however, “funds” and “markets” were not seen as mutually excluding. Most of the proposals reflected in the negotiating text of June 2009 envisaged REDD+ finance as a combination of funds and market mechanisms. The combination was either linked to different phases of implementation (more on this later) or to the different types of forest that were to be governed, that is, to what has been described above as the issue of “scope” (e.g., FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1, p. 120).

Through the process of streamlining that started in August 2009, the section on “Means of implementation” was reorganized around three alternative options for how to finance REDD+: Either through the use of “public funds”, by “access to and use of markets”, or through a “combination of market approaches and funds, depending on host countries’ preferences” (private archive 2009/4, p. 4). Once formulated, these three options were reproduced with only minor changes in all subsequent documents that formed the basis for negotiations through to the Copenhagen conference in December. Little time was spent discussing the text in the three options during meetings and drafting sessions. The reason for this was not that the issue was not seen as important – it was indeed deemed to be the central question by many actors inside and outside the negotiations (interviews 2; 3; 4; cf. Boucher, 2015). Rather, the lack of engagement with the text once the three options had been formulated must be understood as a consequence of how the process of “streamlining” sought to draw boundaries between what was seen as political and technical.

While the issue of finance for REDD+ was not shaped by the same antagonistic dynamics of “rich versus poor” as other parts of the AWG-LCA negotiations, the issue did

connect REDD+ to the “broader picture” of the negotiations in more direct ways than, say, the issues of “scope” or “subnational” that were discussed in the previous chapter. For example, the proposals for a market-based approach to financing REDD+ built on a particular expectation of the types of commitments that Annex I countries would take on as part of a new agreement, which was simultaneously being negotiated in another subgroup of the AWG-LCA. Similarly, proposals for a new fund to support REDD+ were difficult to discuss in isolation from discussions in other subgroups about the establishment of a new multilateral fund for climate change related support to developing countries in general. These connections to what happened outside the REDD+ subgroup posed a problem to the process of streamlining and a potential risk to the goal of achieving a “clean text”.

According to one informant, “a particularity of (...) the REDD process, was that the negotiators were in a bubble – practically were isolated from all the things that were happening on other levels in the [AWG-] LCA” (interview 3). This was seen as an advantage, as the lack of interdependence with other topics under negotiations enabled REDD+ negotiators to “advance very steadily through the months” while other negotiating groups were stuck in antagonistic conflicts between the North and the South. REDD+ negotiators “understood the broader picture and knew that the rest of the topics were advancing at their own pace”, and realized, therefore, that “the best that you could do is just working your issue and try to get it done” (interview 3).

The interconnectedness of finance with other parts of the “broader picture” therefore represented a threat to the isolated mode of work that allowed REDD+ negotiators to make progress towards a clean text. Moreover, no clear solutions were in sight: While there was a general feeling that issues of a more “methodological” (interview 4) or “technical” (interview 3) nature could be more or less resolved through the process of negotiations, “there was less consensus, or no consensus, on how [the finance issue] could be resolved” (interview 4). Defining the three alternative options of “funds”, “markets” or a combination of the two, and leaving them more or less untouched throughout the chain of documents thereafter, was a way of responding to this threat. It defined the issue of finance clearly as a political question for political leaders to decide. As a consequence of this move, the negotiators were able to leave the issue as soon as the documents had been organized so as to contain a menu of easily understandable policy options for decision-makers to choose from at a later stage in the negotiations, pending the developments in other groups.

In this way, the process of streamlining had the paradoxical effect of marginalizing the issue of finance within the negotiating process, even though the question of “funds versus markets” was widely seen as among the most contentious, and probably the most hotly debated among actors following the negotiations from outside the UNFCCC meeting rooms (Boucher, 2015). This allowed for negotiations to continue in the absence of consensus around finance, as it shielded REDD+ from becoming entangled with the “broader picture” of the negotiations and thus the North/South dynamics that provided for a more adversarial, less constructive atmosphere in other subgroups of the AWG-LCA (interview 5).

4.3. From global-scientific ideals to “national circumstances”

While the question of finance was from the outset perceived to be clearly “political”, a series of other questions that were dealt with through the process of streamlining were of a more ambiguous character. In early documents from the negotiation process, a number of proposals can broadly be categorized as underpinned by an ideal of a scientific, global managerial approach to governing deforestation. These proposals relate to the issues that were being discussed under the banners of Reference Levels (RLs), Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV), and a quantitative goal for REDD+. What many proposals on these three issues had in common was, firstly, that they represented a top-down logic in which the forest is seen as a global entity that should be governed through quantification, objective criteria and expert judgement. Secondly, proposals on all three issues sparked disagreement in the negotiations, as some developing countries saw them as restrictive and limiting their space to develop their own approaches to REDD+. Thirdly, they were proposals that would require a rather elaborate system to be established at the international level, and hence that the decision to be taken by the COP would need to be specific and detailed in nature.

As negotiations progressed, the proposals related to the three issues mentioned above were handled rather differently, illustrating some of the various ways in which the process of streamlining worked to distinguish between the political and the non-political. The result was however similar in that all of these technologies served to move REDD+ away from the global, scientific and managerial ideal that REDD+ was originally associated with, increasing the role of national governments and the prominence of “national circumstances” as a determining factor in the implementation of REDD+.

4.3.1. Measurement, Reporting and Verification

As the original “vision” of REDD+ was for a technology that would provide incentives based on the results countries were to achieve in reducing their deforestation, the question of how to measure, report and verify (MRV) the achieved results was central from the very beginning of the negotiations (interview 4). A number of proposals seek to establish scientific rigour and ideals of objectivity and expertise as a basis for countries’ approach to MRV – for example through

[measurement and monitoring technical panel] [expert review teams in accordance with the agree (*sic*) rules and guidelines] [national expert review teams, peer reviewed by team of experts or a measurement, reporting and verification technical panel appointed by the COP] (...) (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1, p. 124)

A key question in this regard was at which governmental level such expertise should be anchored: Were the expert review teams, peer reviewers and technical panels envisaged to be appointed by the COP, answering to global-level institutions, or should they be established by the national government? Discussions centred on which accounting standards should be applied in measuring and reporting on greenhouse gas emissions from forests, including which “tier levels” as defined by the IPCC should be required for REDD+ – in other words, how existing technologies of measuring and accounting forest carbon should be incorporated into the REDD+ assemblage (Lovell, 2014).

Several of the rather specific proposals on arrangements for verification of results that are outlined above were part of the documents being negotiated throughout October and November of 2009 (e.g. private archive 2009/5; 2009/7). They were all placed in brackets, however, as no agreement was reached on the issue. In order to progress towards a “clean text”, therefore, during the COP in Copenhagen in December 2009 the facilitator moved to remove all of the proposals from the text, replacing them with a request to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) “to develop modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying emissions and removals of greenhouse gases” (private archive 2009/10, p. 3). The result was that the number of brackets in the text was dramatically reduced, along with the level of specificity regarding procedures for measuring, reporting and verifying the results of REDD+.

In proposing that the specific “modalities” of MRV be deferred to the SBSTA, the facilitator thus sought to classify these questions as being of a more technical and “non-

political” nature, suitable for discussion in a body tasked with issuing “technological advice”. While the continued disagreement around questions of MRV during several months of negotiations would indicate that they could indeed be considered to hold at least elements of politics, the move was accepted by parties in the negotiations as a necessary step towards a “clean text” in the face of the severe time constraints that were beginning to shape how negotiations were conducted as they approached the COP end date (cf. Riles, 2006).

4.3.2. A quantitative goal

Perhaps the most illustrative example of a global managerial approach to REDD+ is the proposal for a quantitative goal for governing deforestation. The proposal was put forward by the EU (interview 4), and specified that all countries

should collectively aim at halting forest cover loss in developing countries by 2030 at the latest and reducing gross deforestation in developing countries by at least 50 per cent by 2020 compared by current levels (private archive 2009/1, p. 2)

The proposal was placed in the beginning of the text, and in all documents issued between September and November 2009 it figures as the very first paragraph. The placement as well as the content of the proposal serves to establish a global directionality for REDD+ – an overarching aim for REDD+ to achieve certain outcomes at the global level. The proposal was however also bracketed at an early stage of negotiations. Developing countries found the proposal problematic because it introduced a collective obligation to reduce deforestation without explicitly linking this to the provision of finance or “positive incentives” for developing countries (interview 6).

Unlike the above-mentioned proposals regarding MRV, however, the disagreement surrounding the quantitative goal did not lead to the proposal being cut from the text or deferred to other groups in the negotiations. In Copenhagen in December, the facilitator suggested moving the goal to the so-called preambular section of the document, somewhat weakening its legal standing but otherwise keeping it as part of the document (private archive 2009/10; 2009/11; 2009/12). Towards the end of the COP, when the rest of the document was approaching “clean text”, the disagreement around the quantitative goal was even further highlighted when the specific goal proposed by the EU was replaced with a so-called “placeholder” text, keeping open the possibility for any kind of quantitative target to be formulated by political leaders at the very last stage of negotiations:

[*Affirming* (...for any quantitative goal to be inserted or moved elsewhere)]
(FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/L.7/Add.6, p. 1)

Leaving bracketed text in the document at such a late stage in negotiations means that the issue was found worthy to be considered “political”, in the sense that it was acceptable to forward it to the ministerial meetings towards the end of the COP, where unresolved questions would be considered by political leaders in a final process of bargaining.

Through the process of streamlining and negotiations, in other words, the borders between the political and the non-political were drawn in such a way that, whereas a number of proposals around MRV were deferred to SBSTA and thus rendered non-political, the issue of a quantitative goal was in contrast forwarded to ministers as a political question. This strikingly different treatment of these two issues cannot readily be explained by their relative importance for the overall design of REDD+. On the contrary, the case can be made that questions concerning MRV are of much greater practical concern to the functioning of REDD+ than lofty goals for long-term collective achievements. Moreover, a quantitative goal was not identified as an important element of REDD+ by influential experts outside the negotiations (e.g. Zarin et al., 2009). As will be more fully explained in the following, the different handling of the two issues in negotiating a “clean text” is perhaps better understood as an effect – at least in part – of the process of gradually streamlining and “cleaning up” a document filled with brackets and disagreement.

4.3.3. Reference levels

In contrast to the somewhat peripheral issue of a quantitative goal, the question of Reference Levels (RLs) was highlighted by many experts as a crucial element of REDD+ (e.g. Angelsen, 2008; Zarin et al., 2009). RLs are the expected levels of emissions from deforestation against which actual emissions will be measured in order to determine the results of REDD+ – and thereby the level of financial support to which a country is entitled. RLs can be based on historical emission levels – as is the case, for example, in Brazil, where the results of the country’s efforts to reduce deforestation are determined through a comparison with the recorded emissions of previous years. RLs can however also be based on projections – that is, on some form of economic modelling that seeks to predict the future level of deforestation under “business-as-usual” conditions. The projected RL may then be compared to actual emissions in order to assess whether REDD+ has contributed to avoiding

emissions that would otherwise have occurred – similar to how projections are used as a “counterfactual” in current carbon credit schemes (Lohmann, 2005).

A number of proposals in the “Revised negotiating text” of June 2009 and the first documents to follow it can be taken as illustrative of an approach that sees the establishment of RLs as an objective, expert-led process. The most striking example is the proposal to establish a “global reference level (...) based on objective, measurable and verifiable criteria” (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1, pp. 122-123). Establishing a RL at the global level would introduce a hierarchical order in which expected future emissions in each country would need to keep within the expected development at the global level, and was proposed as a measure to address “international leakage” – the possibility of REDD+ resulting in deforestation simply moving from one country to another. Together with other ideas for how RLs should be established at the national level, the idea of a global RL can be seen as a proposal that serves to “render technical” (Li, 2007b, p. 270) the process of establishing a baseline for assessing to what extent REDD+ succeeds in “keeping forests standing”.

As negotiations progressed, however, it became clear that the issue of RLs was not universally seen as belonging to the realm of the technical, objective, “non-political”. As procedures for establishing RLs to a certain extent determines the amount of finance to be received by developing countries, as well as the environmental effectiveness of REDD+, countries became interested in how different approaches to setting RLs would reflect the situation of their forests, much like in earlier discussions on “scope”. Countries with currently low levels of deforestation argued for flexibility in establishing RLs that would provide them with incentives to keep forests standing even if this would not register as “results” if measured against a RL based on historical deforestation data. Furthermore, developing countries broadly opposed the idea of a global RL as it was seen as a way of imposing collective responsibility for the level of deforestation even outside national jurisdiction (interview 4).

The result of the disagreement was in the first instance that some new and more specific ideas were added to the text. Documents from negotiations in Bangkok in October (private archive 2009/3; 2009/4; 2009/5) contain proposals that seek to ensure that the realities of specific forests are reflected in the construction of RLs – not by fundamentally challenging the objective, expert-led approach to constructing RLs, but rather by bringing additional elements into the economic models or expert judgement that would construct them. A prime example is the proposal to apply a “correction factor” to reflect specific circumstances such as “historically low deforestation and forest degradation, developmental

divergence, and respective capabilities and capacities” (private archive 2009/3, p. 5; cf. Zarin et al., 2009, p. 69). Accounting for national specificity through a numerical correction factor can be seen as a continuation of the attempt to render technical the question of RLs in the face of political challenges. Adding further specificity only served to increase disagreement, however, as the new proposals raised new questions about how to determine correction factors or define terms such as “developmental divergence”.

During negotiations taking place in Barcelona in November, a new document was released by the facilitator in which the number of proposals regarding RLs were dramatically reduced (private archive 2009/6). The idea of a global RL, bracketed since August, was now completely removed, and was not found in any document after this. Furthermore, the many specific proposals on factors to address when establishing national RLs were deferred to the more technical discussions taking place in parallel in the SBSTA, leaving only a general paragraph that allows countries to develop RLs “in accordance with their national circumstances and respective capabilities”, taking into account any further guidance that may be emerging from the SBSTA discussions (private archive 2009/6, pp. 3, 5).

As in discussions about MRV, therefore, the negotiations on RLs progressed towards a “clean text” by way of reducing specificity. This was achieved by distinguishing between proposals that were sufficiently technical to be transferred to the SBSTA as a more appropriate forum for technicalities; proposals, like that of a global RL, that were sufficiently contested that the facilitator could move to cut them completely from the text on the basis of an obvious lack of consensus; and proposals that were found “worthy” of being forwarded to ministers. In this way, the process of streamlining worked to reduce the specificity of detailed proposals, breaking them into pieces that could be dealt with separately. The consequences of this mode of work will be further illustrated in this chapter’s final example: that of Norway’s proposal for a “legal text” on REDD+.

4.4. Removing ownership: The Norwegian “legal text”

In May 2009, the Government of Norway submitted a nine-page document entitled “The Norwegian proposal for a legal text on a mechanism for reducing emissions by sources and increasing removals by sinks in the forestry sector in developing countries (REDD-plus mechanism)” (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/MISC.4/Add.2). In addition to an explanatory note, it contained 38 numbered paragraphs, with paragraph 1 proclaiming that a “mechanism for (...) REDD-plus” is “hereby defined”. This was followed by a series of paragraphs detailing

most aspects of REDD+, under headings such as “Object and purpose”, “Scope”, “Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV)”, “Reference Levels”, and “Modalities and Procedures”. In this way, the document set out to give a comprehensive description of REDD+ as a complete, autonomously functioning “mechanism”.

Norway’s “proposed legal text” stands out from many of the earlier submissions through which countries had so far provided textual input to the negotiations. Whereas most other submissions (including a previous submission from the Government of Norway) gave general statements about countries’ views on different questions in the REDD+ negotiations, the content as well as the formatting of Norway’s document made clear that it was a proposal for a “legal text” – that is, text that may be incorporated directly into an agreement and adopted by the COP (interviews 2; 4; 5). In this way, it insisted on being included in the chain of documents in total, as a ready-made answer to the question of how REDD+ should be assembled. What effects did Norway’s intervention have on the production of documents that happened during the process of streamlining? A closer look at this question provides some interesting insights into how the streamlining process itself helped shape REDD+ in specific ways.

4.4.1. Defining “options” and providing answers

By the summer of 2009, Norway had become a significant actor in discussions on REDD+, following the Norwegian government’s pledge to contribute up to NOK 3bn annually to REDD+ initiatives (Lahn and Wilson Rowe, 2015). Its significance was apparent in the UNFCCC negotiations as well, where Norway – perhaps not the first country that comes to mind when talking about tropical forests and deforestation in developing countries – played a particularly active role. Countries like Brazil and Indonesia were seen as heavyweights in discussions on REDD+ by bringing their vast forests to the table (interview 2). What Norway brought was primarily money – an equally important element when assembling a technology that would provide economic incentives to keep forests standing (Wilson Rowe, 2015, p. 70). As shown by the proposal for a “legal text”, however, Norway also brought to the table specific ideas about how their money should be spent.

The submission followed on from other documents that Norway helped produce in order to shape negotiations on REDD+. Funded by the Government of Norway, a group of internationally recognized experts on deforestation and REDD+ had published a so-called “Options Assessment Report” (Zarin et al., 2009). The report was produced with substantial

input from a range of actors – academics, NGO experts, and government representatives from many countries in the North as well as in the South. This allowed the authors to claim that the report comprehensively assessed the main questions in the REDD+ negotiations, and identified the most realistic “options” for how they might be resolved. The report was widely read and discussed among REDD+ negotiators as well as other actors who followed the negotiations. In this way, the Government of Norway was involved in defining the terms of the REDD+ negotiations. Through the submission of a proposed “legal text”, Norway suggested a comprehensive answer to the questions they had helped define in the first place.

One of the answers that Norway suggested was that REDD+ should not only be a technology, but a specific form of technology known as a “mechanism”. The word “mechanism” carries a special significance in the UNFCCC. Creating a mechanism means “to create a *thing*” (interview 3), with connotations of an independently operating mechanical apparatus that automatically delivers certain outputs in response to specific types of inputs. This ties in with the existing “flexible mechanisms” of the Kyoto Protocol – with the previously mentioned “Clean Development Mechanism” (CDM) among them (interview 4): Subjecting a certain activity of emission reductions to the CDM will, provided that the correct procedural steps are taken, produce an automatic result in the form of a carbon credit that may be sold in international carbon markets.

The proposal to establish a REDD+ mechanism therefore signals the establishment of an autonomous apparatus through which certain ways of governing forests may be automatically converted into money, whether through the sale of carbon credits or other forms of finance, without relying on the good will of donors or the unpredictable decisions of political leaders. Such an apparatus will necessarily require a rather elaborate bureaucratic setup, with institutions to perform the routinized tasks associated with approving this conversion according to clearly defined regulations.

Norway was certainly not alone in proposing that REDD+ should be a mechanism – indeed, this was understood as an end goal for many REDD+ proponents ever since Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica submitted the original proposal to address deforestation through the UNFCCC in 2005 (interview 5). The Norwegian “legal text” stood out, however, in the level of detail at which it specified the institutions and regulations needed to create such an autonomous apparatus. Among other things, it defined three phases through which the mechanism should be implemented:

beginning with national REDD-plus strategy development and core capacity-building (phase 1), followed by the implementation of national REDD-plus policies and measures (...) (phase 2), and finally evolving into a results-based compensation mechanism for fully measured, reported and verified emission reductions and removals (...) (phase 3). (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/MISC.4/Add.2, p. 20)

This shows how Norway's proposal is firmly placed within the pre-existing "vision" of REDD+ as a technology of keeping forests standing by providing economic incentives based on the carbon they store. What the proposal does is therefore not to modify the existing problematization of deforestation as an issue, or to challenge fundamental assumptions of what the REDD+ technology should do, but rather to provide a helpful recipe for how to get there – to specify a series of procedural steps for how REDD+ may "finally" be "evolving into" this vision. The question is how Norway's proposal works when it meets the longer chain of documents in which it intervenes.

4.4.2. Towards collective ownership

Part of the process of moving towards a clean text is to remove the ownership that countries may have to specific proposals or concepts. Chapter 3.3 showed how "party ownership" to the first documents in the negotiations was established through the process of "reading" the document that was put forward by the chair. In the streamlining process, the task is somewhat different: It consists of turning proposals from individual countries into text that is owned by the negotiating parties collectively, as "in the end, it needs to be owned by everybody" (interview 4; cf. Eastwood, 2005, p. 44). This happens through a process of re-writing, modifying and combining parties' proposals, either through the direct interaction of negotiators with the text, in which the negotiators of different countries enter into "drafting mode" (see chapter 4.1), drafting new versions "that ends up, through back-and-forth, as a compromise" (interviews 3; 4); or through the facilitator's work of bringing proposals together and presenting it as a new "chair's text" that the negotiating parties are then asked to accept as a new basis for negotiations (interviews 2; 4).

The Norwegian proposal presented a problem for this mode of work. As it was already a comprehensive and fully-formed "legal text", it was unavoidably associated with (and thus "owned by") the country that submitted it. Furthermore, it presented itself as an alternative to the totality of the text that was being assembled from the proposals of all other countries,

thus resisting the kind of “back-and-forth” drafting work that was required in order to establish collective ownership. In the first instance, therefore, when the “Revised negotiating text” for the AWG-LCA was produced in June 2009, the Norwegian proposal was incorporated in full, over more than four pages (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1, pp. 125-129), as a bracketed alternative to the whole section on REDD+ that had been compiled from all other countries’ proposals. The result was that there were now two distinct alternatives to the REDD+ section as a whole: One Norwegian, and one with a more collective ownership.

However, this inclusion of Norway’s proposal into the chain of documents was not only a problem for the process of streamlining and achieving “clean text”. It also presented a problem for the proposal’s ability to shape the documents that were being produced. In order for a proposal to succeed in bringing its concepts and ideas into the next document in the chain, it needs the engagement of negotiators: It needs to be re-written, moved around, shaken up, and brought into relation with other countries’ proposals and existing, already agreed text. This is what occurs in the “collectively owned” text where all countries continuously engage with each others’ proposals: Simply put, it forms the “basis of negotiations” (interview 4). A complete alternative to the text, owned by one country alone, does not attract this kind of engagement (interviews 2; 5).

In the next document to be produced, in August 2009, the Norwegian proposal was still reproduced in full (private archive, 2009/1). While the part of the text that was collectively owned had undergone significant revision, however, the Norwegian alternative had no changes compared to Norway’s original submission. In September, a new document was issued (private archive, 2009/3) in which the Norwegian proposal was still included as an alternative to the collectively owned text as a whole, but this time the content of the Norwegian proposal was not even reprinted in the document – only the headings of the proposal were included, with a note that refers the reader to the previous document for the full text. This development shows what happens when there is no engagement with the text during the course of negotiations. Although in theory it stays “on the table”, as text that is “still alive” (interview 2), it gradually becomes irrelevant – dead weight that merely impedes collective efforts to achieve a clean and “streamlined” text, and that eventually is not even worth reprinting in new versions of the documents being negotiated. The question of when Norway would “give in” – no longer insisting that its text should continue to be included in each new document – became a “kind of joke” among negotiators (interview 5).

4.4.3. Picking apart the mechanism

Even if other countries did not directly engage with the “legal text” that Norway had introduced, it still had its use in the negotiating process (interviews 4; 5). As Norway accepted that their own proposal could not compete with the “collectively owned” text as a basis for negotiations, Norwegian negotiators began to gradually break up their coherent proposal into transposable pieces that could be moved into the part of the document in which collective text-production was taking place. This work started already in August, with Norway singling out certain elements and proposing to insert them into the REDD+ section that was constructed on the basis of all other countries’ proposals (private archive, 2009/1).

One of the elements Norway succeeded in moving from its own proposal into the collectively owned text, was the idea of REDD+ being implemented through three successive phases. Known as the “phased approach”, this was one of the main ideas being presented in the “Options Assessment Report” that Norway had financed earlier in the year (Okereke and Dooley 2010, pp. 90-91; Zarin et al., 2009). The phased approach was seen as a “very practical” proposal (interview 2), as it allowed for a differentiation in how countries would implement REDD+ based on their level of “readiness” to enter into a system where payments are made on the basis of quantified reductions in deforestation. For example, participation in such a system would require access to remote-sensing technology to monitor forest cover, and high-quality historical data to enable comparison and assessment of achieved results (Zarin et al., 2009), as well as a level of regulations and institutional capacity that went well beyond the current situation in many important forest countries (see, e.g., Karsenty and Ongolo, 2011). Put simply, many developing countries were not well equipped to govern their forests on the basis of the system that the original “vision” of REDD+ prescribed, in which technologies of monitoring forests and emissions are linked with economic incentives in order to produce certain results. The phased approach provided a solution where countries could gradually proceed step by step with reform and technical capacity-building until they reached the end goal, “finally evolving into a results-based compensation mechanism for fully measured, reported and verified emission reductions and removals” (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1, p. 125).

The general idea of differentiating between phases won broad support, and became part of the “collectively owned” text in the documents being negotiated in October and November 2009 (private archive, 2009/3). However, the neat and numbered sequencing in Norway’s original proposal was met with some resistance. In Norway’s proposal for a

comprehensive “mechanism”, the phased approach was imagined linearly: Countries would start in phase 1 and move through phase 2 in order to end up in phase 3, based on predefined “eligibility criteria” for graduating from one phase to the next. This created a “big discussion” (interview 3), with many developing countries arguing that Norway’s proposal was not providing enough flexibility. In essence, these countries wanted to be able to define which phase was appropriate for them, without necessarily starting from the first, or having to fulfil any predefined criteria in order to move from one phase to another. Through the process of other countries’ engagement – drafting and re-writing – Norway’s phased approach was therefore modified from a strict sequencing into a menu from which countries were able to choose. In the last document to be published during negotiations in Barcelona, in November 2009, the paragraph specifying the three phases for the first time includes a sentence stating that the “implementation of these phases, including the choice of a starting phase, shall depend on the specific national circumstances, capacities and capabilities of each developing country Party” (private archive, 2009/7, p. 3).

In this way, the phased approach (as well as other elements of Norway’s proposal for a comprehensive “mechanism”) was lifted from the isolated Norwegian “legal text”, and into the collectively owned text in the document. In the process, it was rephrased and reconfigured so that the result no longer “looks Norwegian” (interview 4). Norway’s full “legal text” proposal remained as an alternative proposal to the whole collectively owned text of the REDD+ section in all the documents that were produced until the Copenhagen meeting in December 2009, but the practical way through which it was able to influence the text that was being negotiated was only by being picked apart, moved around and substantially re-written. In the first document produced at that meeting (private archive, 2009/10), the full legal text proposal is for the first time removed, and there is only one alternative to the REDD+ section as a whole. By allowing their proposal to be removed from the document, Norway signalled that they were now sufficiently happy with the impact they had made on the collectively owned text, and were therefore willing to drop their holistic alternative in order to contribute to the common goal of achieving a “clean text”.

The proposal for a “legal text” allowed for Norway to present a coherent vision, and for this vision to be incorporated into the documents under discussion. However, in order to influence the outcome of those discussions, it needed to be broken down into transposable concepts such as the “phased approach” that was more easily combined with other countries’ ideas. The holistic mechanism had to be picked apart – its various elements laid out in order to be combined in new ways. In this process, Norway’s “ownership” to the text was removed

– along with much of the specificity of the original proposal. This aspect of the document production process clearly contributed to shaping REDD+ in a particular way: The three phases proposed by Norway became integral to REDD+. The larger mechanism of which the phases were envisaged to be part was however too inflexible to survive the process of streamlining, and even the very word “mechanism” – with its carbon market connotations – became too controversial to keep (interviews 3; 4).

4.5. Conclusion: Document production as “narrowing down”

The “telos” of the UNFCCC negotiations is the gradual progression towards a “clean text” (Weisser, 2014). This chapter has focused on how the progression towards a “clean text” is achieved by “narrowing down” the number of potential outcomes. In detailing how issues such as finance, Reference Levels (RL), Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) and Norway’s proposal for a “phased approach” were handled, I have shown how REDD+ was shaped through the production of documents that took place in the process known as “streamlining”.

Narrowing down options in many cases took the form of drawing boundaries between what was seen as “political” and “technical”. One of the practices through which negotiators sought to streamline the documents they produced, was to distinguish, for example, between proposals that were sufficiently technical to be transferred to the SBSTA as a more appropriate forum for technicalities; proposals that were sufficiently contested that the facilitator could move to cut them completely from the text on the basis of an obvious lack of consensus; and proposals that were found worthy of being highlighted as “political” and therefore forwarded to ministers.

Initially, the process of streamlining seems to be a classic example of “boundary-work” – the term Gieryn (1983) introduced to describe rhetorical and other strategies that are employed in order to distinguish, for example, between science and politics. Highlighting the practical work that goes into establishing and maintaining such boundaries brings attention to the fact that they cannot be seen as stable and natural, but rather that they are “drawn and redrawn in flexible, historically changing and sometimes ambiguous ways” (Gieryn, 1983, p. 781). This also captures how boundaries are drawn between the political and the technical in the production of documents in the UNFCCC, by employing what REDD+ negotiators as well as STS scholars describe as little “tools” (interview 2; Asdal, 2008). As the chapter has shown, these tools do very concrete work, which involves meeting

for “bilaterals”, adding or removing brackets, suggesting alternative wordings, working with text “on the screen”.

The work that goes into drawing boundaries between the “political” and the “technical” serves to format the negotiations in ways that favours certain outcomes, as exemplified by the three options for financing REDD+ (funds, markets, or a combination of the two). Because of the need to isolate the politically contested options from the rest of the document that still held the potential of becoming “clean text”, the conflict over finance had to be confined to the three clearly distinguishable options that were to be forwarded to political leaders. This meant that discussion on other issues had to proceed in a way that ensured compatibility with all three finance options, so as to avoid “contaminating” these issues with the politics of finance. Proposing an approach to MRV or to the establishment of RLs that was not compatible with a market-based approach to finance, therefore, in effect became difficult. The agnostic approach to funding sources for REDD+ allowed both proponents and opponents of carbon markets to continue their engagement with REDD+ as a concept (Stephan, Rothe, and Methmann, 2014, p. 68), but because of the need to clearly delineate between the political and the non-political in the documents under negotiation, the development of REDD+ was forced into a trajectory of fundamental compatibility with market-based approaches.

At the same time, the process of streamlining shows that designating an issue as “technical” does not necessarily close down the space for politics. In the case of MRV, streamlining involved deferring important questions to another negotiating body – the SBSTA. While this body is said to be more “technical” in scope (Miller, 2004), the potential political conflicts around questions of MRV will however continue to exist when more or less the same group of negotiators meet to continue their discussions there – moving the negotiations to a different forum does not necessarily change the politics of the issue. In the case of RLs, negotiators progressed towards a clean text by transferring responsibility from “global” to “national” processes of government, as proposals for constructing RLs through expert-led, “objective” processes were rejected and “national circumstances” was instead given a central role. The same tendency may be found in other parts of the text: In the last document to be produced by REDD+ negotiators during the Copenhagen COP, the 13 paragraphs make five separate references to “national circumstances” and the sovereignty of the nation-state (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/L.7/Add.6).

This illustrates that designating an issue as “technical”, in addition to narrowing down discussions in order to progress towards a clean text, may simultaneously open up new

spaces for politics in other processes. Conversely, it seems that designating an issue as “political” does not necessarily mean that it receives broad attention or becomes a central question in discussions on REDD+. In the case of the quantitative goal, it seems to have been easier to concentrate on something that has less impact on REDD+ as a whole, than on issues that are integral to the functioning of REDD+ as a technology of government – such as MRV. Issues that are less integral are also less entangled with other parts of the text under negotiation, and may therefore more easily be singled out as a separate, bracketed proposal that political leaders may approve or reject with minimal consequences for the rest of the document.

The boundaries that negotiators draw between what they designate as “technical” and “political” in their own terminology, therefore, cannot necessarily be equated with the kind of boundaries that governmentality scholars draw between political issues and issues that are “rendered technical” and thus depoliticized (Li, 2007b; Ferguson, 1990). Rather, they should be seen as flexible, and should primarily be understood as tools that negotiators employ in order to move towards a “clean text”. The effects they have on the REDD+ assemblage may vary, and close empirical study is required in order to conclude on whether they end up as tools of de-politization, or merely shifting the site of political contestation.

Finally, this chapter has shown how a different type of boundaries are drawn between proposals that are “owned” by individual countries and the text that is “collectively owned” by negotiators. The case of the Norwegian proposal for a complete and coherent “legal text” illustrated how a proposal, in order to survive as part of the chain of documents, must be able to move from “looking Norwegian” and into the part of the text that attracts attention and engagement from the negotiators as a collective. To achieve collective ownership, in other words, proposals must be broken open, picked apart, and shaken up, rather than stay frozen in the neat and coherent logic that the proposing country intended.

This, too, has important implications for how REDD+ is shaped: Because the practice of streamlining makes very elaborate or specific proposals difficult to maintain, an advantage is given to piecemeal approaches and transposable concepts that work within the pre-existing “vision” of REDD+ and the existing structure of the documents under negotiation. This limits the extent to which it is possible to challenge the fundamental problematization of deforestation as an issue of carbon emissions and missing economic incentives, serving to further narrow down how REDD+ may be assembled.

5. The “REDD+ family”: Challenges and unity

As shown in the preceding chapters, the production of documents in the UNFCCC negotiations is a process that draws together as disparate elements as forests, remote-sensing satellites and the economic modelling of “Reference Levels” in order to address the issue of deforestation. Even more concretely, however, the production of documents also draws together a group of people engaging in the practical process of writing, reading, and re-writing the documents under negotiation. In the case of REDD+ in particular, the production of documents seems to have assembled a group with an especially high self-perceived unity.

The aim of this chapter is to explore how the the production of documents brings into being an entity known – half-jokingly – as the “REDD+ family”, and what effects this “family” has on the way REDD+ is shaped. More specifically, I will examine three cases in which the production of documents helped establish or re-draw the boundaries of a community of negotiators that allowed certain challenges against the “vision” of REDD+ to be contained. In all three cases this had important effects on how the REDD+ technology was shaped, and the extent to which the issue of deforestation was modified in the process.

The first case describes how the original “vision of REDD” as a purely carbon-focused approach to mitigating greenhouse gas emissions was challenged by alternative understandings of forests as an object to be governed, implying different problematizations of deforestation as an issue. This involved conceptualizing forests as the home of vulnerable peoples or as complex and biologically diverse ecosystems rather than orderly stocks of carbon. In this case, the process of producing new documents managed to contain the challenge by ordering it under the banner of “safeguards”, allowing for a reconciliation with existing, carbon-focused ways of seeing forests – in effect closing down a radical challenge to REDD+, while simultaneously opening up new spaces for politics on various levels.

In the second case, I describe the breakdown of COP 15 in Copenhagen in December 2009, and how this challenged assumptions of the place of REDD+ in relation to the “bigger picture” in the UNFCCC negotiations. Most notably, the unusual and chaotic conclusion of COP 15 in Copenhagen led to a break in the “chain of documents” that had been produced by the “REDD+ family”, and was followed by active efforts to restore it. This led directly to the third challenge that I describe in this chapter, in which the attempts to restore previous documents as a basis for negotiations resulted in a new difficulty of maintaining unity

among REDD+ negotiators, and new and radical challenges were launched from within the community itself. In this case, various strategies for keeping the documents “closed” and avoiding disturbance of previously agreed text became a way of re-drawing the boundaries of the community of negotiators, closing off the REDD+ assemblage, and finally achieving a COP decision.

5.1. “Meeting the same people again and again”

Diplomats negotiating a specific topic in a multilateral process such as the UNFCCC have a number of roles to fill. On the one hand, they serve as impersonal representatives of their country. Raising the “flag” (that is, the plastic name-tag) of her country in order to request the floor, the representative of the United States of America speaks not as an employee of the State Department, but as “United States” – the object imagined by traditional International Relations theory as a monolithic entity with a given set of interests to defend. On the other hand, negotiators are colleagues united in the common goal of achieving a “clean text”, thus delivering to their political leaders a good basis for concluding a successful summit performance (cf. Death, 2011). Combining the roles of adversaries and colleagues is a constant balancing act for UNFCCC negotiators (Weisser, 2014, p. 53).

The negotiators specifically tasked with discussing REDD+ from 2005 onwards had varied disciplinary and institutional backgrounds (Wilson Rowe, 2015, p. 69). While some had been previously involved in negotiations on forests in relation to the Kyoto Protocol (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand, 2006), most were new to the topic (interview 2). Over time, however, as a consequence of “meeting the same people again and again (...) in these weird parts of the world” (interview 3) the way the negotiators came together around the common task of producing a “chain of documents” that would gradually lead towards a “clean text” resulted in an increasing sense of “camaraderie” and a “level of trust and comfort” (interview 3) among them. As one interviewee explained, you “could have very opposing opinions (...) and have hours of hours of back-and-forth, and then you could go out and have a beer” (interview 3).

Establishing good working relations and even friendship across national boundaries is in no way unique to the REDD+ negotiations (interview 2). Indeed, it is common diplomatic practice, at least within the UNFCCC, to refer to your counterparts in the negotiations in inclusive terms such as “dear colleagues” or similar phrases. However, the REDD+ negotiators seem to have been particularly “isolated” (interview 3) from other parts of the

negotiations. Many REDD+ negotiators worked primarily on this particular topic – not only when attending UNFCCC meetings, but also in their everyday work at the national level. As one interviewee pointed out, “many REDD negotiators are the guys that are implementing on the ground at home” (interview 6). This meant that although they represented countries with interests to defend and positions to fight for across the whole spectrum of issues under negotiation, the individuals involved in REDD+ negotiations had a rather narrow interest in the issue of REDD+. With REDD+ seen as a “very particular discussion” (interview 3), the “wider picture” of the negotiations became a potential threat – a challenge that REDD+ negotiators had a common interest in overcoming.

Following from their common work on the chain of documents, and their common interest in shielding this work from the potential challenges of the “wider picture”, REDD+ negotiators were often heard describing the group to which they belonged as “the REDD+ community”, “the forest people” or even “the REDD+ family” (interviews 4; 5; 6). Such concepts were sometimes also invoked in a way that included non-government actors from NGOs or research institutions that had close relationships with government representatives. The constitution of a “REDD+ family” can therefore be seen as arising directly from the production of documents, as a by-product of efforts to produce a “clean text”. Bringing this “family” of negotiators into being in turn had effects on the documents being produced – in particular how, towards the end of the negotiation process, the text was increasingly “closed off” – that will be illustrated in the following.

5.2. From challenges to safeguards

Ever since the original proposal from Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica was submitted in 2005, the “vision” of REDD+ focused strongly on a simple model of forests as measurable in terms of carbon, and economic incentives tied to the preservation of this carbon as the most important way to govern deforestation. However, actors already involved in work outside of the UNFCCC that also aimed at reducing deforestation, held different views on what it was that should be governed in order to achieve this goal. In UN fora such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Forum on Forests, deforestation was being approached not primarily as a problem of economic incentives, but also as a problem related to weak governance, deficient political institutions, or inequitable land tenure arrangements (see, e.g., Eastwood, 2005; Karsenty and Ongolo, 2011; Okereke and Dooley, 2010; Li, 2007b). Such approaches differed markedly from the strong focus on carbon and

climate benefits that was prevalent in the UNFCCC (Wilson Rowe, 2015, p. 69). During UNFCCC negotiations in 2008 and 2009, some of these views gradually became more strongly articulated in the UNFCCC discussions on REDD+ as well. In the following I will first present how a number of new questions were brought into the REDD+ negotiations, before turning to the document production process in order to examine how these questions were incorporated into the REDD+ assemblage, and with what effects for the original problematization of the issue of deforestation.

5.2.1. Clash of the forest tribes

Already at COP 14 in Poznan in December 2008, a broad range of civil society organizations actively challenged ongoing REDD+ negotiations with a view of forests as inhabited places, providing homes and livelihoods for indigenous peoples and various forms of forest-dependent local communities. Some activists from the indigenous peoples' movement had recently been involved in efforts to pass the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which contained a number of principles concerning indigenous peoples' rights to the lands and resources they have traditionally used and managed. Supported by non-indigenous environmental and human rights NGOs, they now sought to link REDD+ to UNDRIP and its principles – in particular the principle that the “Free, Prior, Informed Consent” (FPIC) of indigenous peoples should be obtained for any activity affecting their lands, resources, and self-determination as peoples.

In seeking to bring the struggle for indigenous peoples' rights, and in particular UNDRIP as a document that was seen to embody this struggle, into REDD+, activists in Poznan in effect proposed an alternative forest as its proper object of government: the inhabited and traditionally managed forest. Arguing that strengthening community rights over forests was an effective way of governing them in order to avoid deforestation, these groups in effect sought to challenge the existing problematization of deforestation as an issue of missing economic incentives to protect carbon, proposing instead to see deforestation as an issue of the violation of human rights and the rights of indigenous peoples.

In Poznan, the strong demands from indigenous peoples' organizations took most REDD+ negotiators by surprise. My notes from negotiation meetings as well as meetings with individual negotiators during the Poznan COP show a REDD+ community puzzled by arguments that their work was in any way linked to concepts such as UNDRIP and FPIC. As one informant explained: “We're used to playing around in our own field. But suddenly you

got into human rights and constitutional law” (interview 4). In other words, their understanding at the time was that REDD+ had to do with forests conceived as carbon stocks to be quantified and managed, and that questions about rights was outside the scope of the negotiations (interview 5). This understanding was strengthened by the fact that negotiations on REDD+ in the AWG-LCA had not yet started in Poznan, as explained in chapter 3.2. Demands from indigenous peoples’ groups were therefore directed towards the REDD+ negotiations in SBSTA, which were based on a rather narrow mandate to discuss technical aspects such as monitoring of emissions (on SBSTA, cf. Miller, 2004).

Furthermore, the issue of indigenous peoples’ rights was politically challenging for many of the actors in the negotiations. Attributing territorial rights to peoples, rather than individuals, can be seen as a challenge to the nation-state perceived as a unitary, territorial entity. This has made the issue controversial in some countries, with the United States and Canada, among others, voting against the adoption of UNDRIP in the UN General Assembly. When, following the demands of indigenous activists in Poznan, some countries proposed references to UNDRIP added to the text, this created a situation in which other countries had to bring constitutional lawyers into meetings that were usually the exclusive domain of REDD+ negotiators – technical experts on carbon and forest issues (interview 4).

The controversy around indigenous peoples’ rights was most strongly articulated around a disagreement about whether to reference the rights of “indigenous people” or “indigenous peoples” with a plural *s* – the former referring to a plurality of indigenous individuals, and the latter to a plurality of “peoples” understood as distinct cultural or ethnic groups. In this way, the plural *s* in “peoples” came to mark its own boundary between two clearly distinguishable “tribes”: The “REDD+ family”, with their understanding of forests as carbon stocks and little knowledge of the subtleties of human rights; and the group of activists and indigenous representatives who were more familiar with UN documents about indigenous peoples than with discussions about MRV or Reference Levels.

In Poznan, the issue was partly deferred by using the technical nature of SBSTA to argue that discussions on indigenous peoples’ rights, clearly perceived as political in nature, were more appropriate for the coming negotiations in the more “political” forum of the AWG-LCA (interview 5). The result was that after Poznan, a strong expectation had been established that the rights and participation of indigenous peoples needed to be addressed by the AWG-LCA negotiations.

Around the same time, conservation-oriented environmental groups voiced concern that a purely carbon-focused approach to REDD+ could lead to adverse impacts on

biological diversity, promoting large-scale tree plantations that might be efficient in absorbing carbon while threatening the biodiversity of the complex ecosystems in forests that to a lesser extent were subject to human management (interviews 1; 2). Similar to the indigenous peoples' challenge to the problematization of deforestation as an issue, these groups sought to conceptualize forests not as primarily stocks of carbon, but rather as biodiverse ecosystems. And similar to indigenous peoples' proposals to link the documents under negotiation to documents pertaining to other political processes such as UNDRIP, conservation groups sought to link REDD+ to established processes such as the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

In 2009, when the AWG-LCA negotiations on REDD+ started with dedicated meetings and the actual work of producing documents, negotiators were therefore faced with the question of how to reconcile these competing conceptualizations of the forests that REDD+ was to govern – and, by implication, the very issue of deforestation.

5.2.2. Documents through closed doors

In Poznan and the following negotiating sessions, the work to construct links between REDD+ and other documents and processes, such as UNDRIP and the CBD, was mainly taking place outside the meeting rooms – among the activists and NGO representatives following the negotiations as observers. These groups would frequently produce suggestions for text that they asked negotiators to insert into the documents under negotiation, handing pieces of paper with their text proposals directly to negotiators as they were entering the meeting rooms into which the observers were not allowed to go. From June 2009 onwards, after the subgroup on REDD+ was established under the AWG-LCA and the process of “streamlining” and textual negotiation could begin, REDD+ negotiators had to find ways to deal with the new set of issues that were constantly raised through the pieces of paper being put in their hands, and through the frequent meetings and conversations they had with the activists and NGO lobbyists waiting outside their meeting rooms.

There were several reasons why the NGO's demands could not simply be dismissed as irreconcilable with the original problematization of deforestation, and thus deemed as falling outside the scope of the REDD+ negotiations. From the early stages of REDD+ discussions, there was a recognition that non-governmental groups were needed in order to mobilize the political will and in part to implement the actual plans that REDD+ would require “on the ground”. This was taken to be important in developing countries where REDD+ action was

to take place, but also in order to ensure political backing for REDD+ in the countries that would provide the necessary finance (see Hermansen, 2015). Furthermore, the issues that were raised by the activists outside the meeting rooms in Poznan and beyond – biodiversity conservation and the rights of indigenous peoples – were important elements in how REDD+ was enacted by media and high-level political leaders, especially in Northern countries, and part of what made “saving the forests” a particularly “sexy” approach to climate change mitigation (interviews 1; 6). This strengthened the legitimacy of the NGOs and indigenous peoples’ organizations as actors representing important concerns, thus contributing to eschewing somewhat the traditional asymmetric relationship between government and non-government representatives.

An equally important factor in enabling the activists’ concerns to be taken seriously by negotiators, however, is found in the way NGO representatives continuously engaged with documents. At the outset, the boundary between the “family” of negotiators and the NGOs was a very concrete and material one: All participants in UNFCCC meetings are required to wear a “badge” – a coloured name tag with a barcode and a picture of the participant – around their neck. Government representatives wear pink badges, whereas observers from NGOs hold yellow badges. In informal meetings and smaller drafting sessions, the doors will remain closed to anyone not holding a pink badge (Weisser, 2014, p. 52). Documents, however, have less trouble passing through the doors of the meeting rooms. Engaging directly with the production of documents therefore provided a way for NGOs to influence what REDD+ negotiators discussed behind closed doors. One element of this engagement was the pieces of paper with demands and proposals that activists handed to negotiators as they hurried to their meetings. Another was the continuous effort of NGO representatives to track down the latest version of the document being discussed, in order to analyse it and react to it – whether through media, or directly to negotiators. In this way, NGO representatives were able to play a part in the process of producing documents without being present in the closed meeting rooms or mandated to speak on behalf of a country. By providing time-pressed negotiators with helpful suggestions for how a paragraph might be re-phrased, and demonstrating their knowledge about the issues under discussion, non-government activists were to a certain extent able to modify the boundaries established by the colour of their badge, so that they might be seen as part of the “community” or “family” that was formed around REDD+ in the UNFCCC negotiations (interview 3).

5.2.3. Safeguarding against resistance

As soon as the subgroup on REDD+ in the AWG-LCA was established in mid-2009, negotiators put forward a range of suggestions for how to deal with the questions of indigenous peoples' rights and biodiversity that had been raised by NGOs in Poznan and subsequent meetings. Some countries used the alternative conceptions of forests as a basis for challenging the fundamental ideas behind the original REDD+ proposal, such as its primary focus on forests as carbon, and the carbon market model of providing *ex-post* financial incentives. In particular, Bolivia made a number of proposals to the effect that REDD+ should start from the needs of indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities, seen as the traditional stewards of forests (Okereke and Dooley 2010, p. 88). Similarly, the Pacific island state of Tuvalu proposed an approach to funding REDD+ that would be based on local communities and support their work to retain forests under their management (Okereke and Dooley 2010, p. 90). On the other side of the spectrum, some countries sought to avoid the new questions altogether, maintaining that questions about *how* REDD+ was implemented – including how indigenous peoples and other forest-dwellers were included in the implementation process – was a matter of national sovereignty (interview 5).

During the meetings in August and October 2009, the facilitator of the REDD+ negotiations elaborated an approach in which the concerns being raised regarding indigenous peoples' rights and biodiversity were grouped together with a number of other concerns under a common heading. In the negotiating text of 3 October (private archive, 2009/3) a separate heading entitled "Principles – safeguards" appeared for the first time. The word "safeguards" had first appeared in Norway's "legal text" proposal a few months earlier (see chapter 4.4), where it was used in a somewhat narrower sense, as part of the Norwegian proposal for a mechanism with three sequential and clearly defined phases. The word was also familiar from other multilateral institutions; for example, the World Bank applies a set of "safeguards" on social and environmental issues to the projects they finance (interview 2). When the concept of "safeguards" was moved from Norway's proposal and into the "collectively owned" text in the document, however, it was used as a broad header for potential problematic aspects related to the implementation of REDD+. In addition to mentions of biodiversity and indigenous peoples' rights, the document listed concerns that are traditionally associated with development aid or financial support from the North to the South more generally, such as governance issues, corruption and lack of law enforcement

capacity in developing countries; as well as concerns that REDD+ negotiators were more used to dealing with, relating to potential problems of using forests as a way of avoiding emissions or storing carbon. The latter concerns included “leakage” or “displacement” of emissions that could occur if deforestation is simply shifted from one country to another, and the “risk of reversal” that could occur if carbon stored in a forest is later released due to unforeseen circumstances such as forest fires or political changes.

While these concerns were very different in character, they had an important feature in common: They were potentially negative outcomes that implementation of REDD+ should seek to avoid – or, in the words of one interviewee:

just all sorts of fears of people that this mechanism could end up being environmentally disastrous, it could end up dispossessing the poor and indigenous peoples etcetera. That's how it eventually became safeguards, because you are trying to safeguard... not to get there, right? Not for these bad things to happen because of REDD. (Interview 2)

In this way, the umbrella category of “safeguards” was established as a container of disparate “fears” that somehow should be handled in the implementation of REDD+, without challenging the primacy of carbon in the “vision” of REDD+ (interview 5). In grouping together concerns that originated from fundamentally different understandings of forests, the documents modified what was initially formulated as fundamental challenges to the problematization of deforestation as an issue of preserving forest carbon, turning these challenges into risks that could be mitigated and avoided. Establishing safeguards against these risks thus also became a way of safeguarding the original “vision” of REDD+ against political “resistance” (interview 2) and a potential “anti-REDD lobby” (interview 4) that could have grown stronger had these concerns not been addressed.

5.2.4. From alternative forests to additional procedures

The safeguards first appeared under the heading “Principles – safeguards”, and while some disagreement remained regarding the precise formulations (including whether to make explicit references to other UN agreements such as UNDRIP and the CBD) the topics of these high-level principles were broadly accepted as comprising questions of the participation and rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, biological diversity, governance issues, and the more carbon-specific questions of “reversal” and “displacement”.

Once the idea of the safeguards had been introduced, therefore, the remaining disagreement and brackets that had to be worked out in order to achieve a “clean text” did not centre on the substantive content of the safeguards. Instead, most countries’ negotiators (with the important exception of Bolivia, to which I will return in chapter 5.4) focused their attention on the question of how the safeguards should be linked to the activities and payments that would comprise the core of REDD+ – the incentives that would keep forests standing.

In the Norwegian “legal text” proposal, from which the term “safeguards” was taken, the idea was linked to Norway’s broader proposal for a mechanism with three clearly defined phases, and with “eligibility criteria” that would need to be fulfilled in order for a country to move from one phase to the next. Although the concept of “eligibility criteria” was not successfully moved from Norway’s proposal and into the collectively owned text of the documents being negotiated, the idea that countries should “demonstrate adherence to the principles and safeguards” (private archive, 2009/9, p. 6) through some sort of reporting requirements was popular among several countries – mostly the potential donor countries in the North – as well as NGOs eager to see the safeguards have practical effects.

In this way, the safeguards were connected to the procedural set-up of REDD+, as something that may be properly dealt with through plans, expert assessments, and reporting systems. As negotiators arrived in Copenhagen in December 2009, the disagreement on this issue was summed up in a single bracketed text fragment in the paragraph dealing with the monitoring of REDD+ activities:

a robust and transparent national forest monitoring system for the monitoring and reporting of the activities referred to in paragraph 1 above[, and the safeguards], (...) (private archive, 2009/11, p. 3).

In other words, what started out as a radical challenge to the fundamental “vision” of REDD+ – bringing into the negotiations alternative conceptualizations of the forests to be governed as biodiverse ecosystems or inhabited spaces in which struggles over rights were played out – had been narrowed down to a single, manageable question: Whether or not implementation of a given set of “safeguards” should be monitored on par with the monitoring of activities to reduce emissions in the forest sector. Thus, through their production of documents, the “REDD+ family” had found a way of handling the challenge within a procedural arrangement of plans and reports. Rather than fundamentally challenging the understanding of the issue of deforestation, the issue was rather modestly modified:

While reasserting the primacy of carbon in REDD+ and the underlying problematization of deforestation, a few additional concerns were incorporated into the issue, and a few additional procedural requirements were incorporated into the REDD+ technology in order to monitor how the broad principles of the safeguards were taken into account.

5.3. From Hopenhagen to Brokenhagen

In the case of safeguards, the challenge that the “REDD+ family” had to overcome concerned different problematizations of the issue of deforestation. This allowed for the community of negotiators to contain the challenge through their own work with documents – it remained, so to say, a family matter. The challenge that arose from the breakdown of COP 15 in Copenhagen in December 2009, however, was very different: In this case, events outside the control of the “family” itself threatened the authority of the very chain of documents that the REDD+ negotiators had produced over the course of the previous year. In responding to this challenge, the negotiators put considerable efforts into restoring the previously produced documents as the basis for negotiations.

5.3.1. Hope fading for a comprehensive treaty

Ever since the AWG-LCA was established, the relationship between REDD+ and the “broader picture” of the negotiations on a new international climate agreement can be seen as somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, the embeddedness of REDD+ in the broader agenda of the Bali Action Plan (BAP) and the AWG-LCA meant that REDD+ was set to become part of a new, broad international agreement on climate change, raising the prospects of large funds being available through the carbon markets and other financial mechanisms that this agreement was expected to establish (interview 5). This was a primary driver for the large political attention that REDD+ received from 2007 onwards (Angelsen and McNeill, 2012), and highlights that REDD+ was dependent for its own success on progress being made in the discussions on other topics being negotiated under the AWG-LCA – such as finance from North to South, emission reduction commitments for developed countries, rules for monitoring, reporting and verifying emission reductions, and so on.

On the other hand, REDD+ was to a large extent negotiated independently of the other issues in the AWG-LCA. As explained by one interviewee, REDD+ negotiators “were in a bubble”, practically “isolated” from the rest of the negotiations (interview 3). This meant

that while other issues were mired in problems of North-South politics and making only minimal progress, the REDD+ community could “advance very steadily through the months” of negotiations (interview 3). At the same time as the success of REDD+ was fundamentally linked to the “wider picture” of negotiations, therefore, it was clearly seen as an advantage that REDD+ could be negotiated as independently as possible from other issues. Links to other topics, and developments in other parts of the AWG-LCA negotiations, were potential threats to the steady progress that the REDD+ “family” would be able to make as long as they were allowed to focus exclusively on their own set of issues.

As explained in chapter 4.2, the wish to avoid entanglements with other issues under negotiation had the effect that discussions on finance for REDD+ was quickly limited to three alternative options that were bracketed out as “political” and left untouched through a series of documents, for political leaders to decide upon at a later stage. There was still a hope, however, that REDD+ would be part of a comprehensive treaty resulting from the AWG-LCA negotiations – a new “Copenhagen Protocol” or “Copenhagen Agreement” – that would include a decision on appropriate sources of finance. Expectations for COP 15 in Copenhagen were enormous, with the meeting being branded as “Hopenhagen” by a global, UN-backed advertising campaign (Bodansky, 2010). The document that formed the starting point for negotiations at the opening of the Copenhagen meeting still contained clear options on how REDD+ should be financed, although the three options on finance had been further narrowed down to two – one based on public funds, and one on a combination of funds and carbon markets (private archive, 2009/7).

As the negotiations in Copenhagen progressed, however, the prospects for reaching a comprehensive agreement gradually decreased. Compared to the documents being discussed in the group negotiating REDD+, the documents in many other negotiating groups under the AWG-LCA were very far from being ready for the final negotiations among political leaders. The host country Denmark, acting as “COP president” formally responsible for the meeting process, failed to gain acceptance for their proposal to put a new document on the table “under their own responsibility” (Meilstrup, 2010). Their idea was to introduce a short and “clean” compromise proposal written by Danish diplomats and the UNFCCC secretariat, to replace the long and complex text filled with brackets and alternative options that was the combined result of the different subgroups that had been negotiating on various issues under the AWG-LCA. When this was resisted, in particular by developing countries who did not trust the Danish presidency to produce a balanced proposal, the hopes that a comprehensive agreement could be reached faded (Meilstrup, 2010; Bodansky, 2010).

5.3.2. Adapting documents to deadlines

While these developments took place in what REDD+ negotiators sometimes refer to as the “big picture” or the “wider picture” of negotiations, REDD+ negotiators nonetheless had to adapt to the new realities of what could realistically be achieved in Copenhagen. Through their further production of documents, the negotiators adapted the text they were working on to the document that it was expected to eventually form part of.

In a new document proposed by the facilitator of the REDD+ subgroup on 11 December 2009 at 19:30, several important changes may be noticed. Most notably, the document was formulated according to the conventional form of a COP decision. In all earlier documents, paragraphs had been freestanding, so that they could begin, for example, with a clear statement such as “All Parties should...”, “Developing country Parties shall...”, etc. In international law, this signals that the text is part of a protocol or similar legally binding treaty. In the new document published on 11 December 2009, however, all paragraphs begin in a way that link back to the emblematic opening statement of a COP decision, namely “The Conference of the Parties...”. Each paragraph will then follow on from this: “*Affirms* that all Parties should...”, “*Encourage* all Parties to...”, etc. (private archive, 2009/10). In this way, the document signalled that the aim no longer was to produce a text that will form part of a legally binding treaty, but to adopt it as a COP decision – a document of significantly lower standing in international law.

Furthermore, the two options for how REDD+ should be financed was now completely removed from the text. Instead a new paragraph was proposed, stating that action to limit deforestation “[shall] [should] be supported in accordance with any provision of financial resources and institutional arrangements agreed by the Conference of the Parties” (private archive, 2009/10, p. 3). The whole issue of finance, in other words, was deferred to future negotiations, in order to wait for more clarity regarding the form of the wider international agreement of which REDD+ will form part.

This proposal was not well received by all REDD+ negotiators, most of whom were hoping for a far more elaborate decision on REDD+ and how it should be financed. During discussions over the following days, some negotiators attempted to reinsert proposals for more specific rules for the financial and institutional structure of REDD+. A new document, issued at 09:00 on 15 December, contained a bracketed proposal to establish “the REDD plus Committee and the REDD plus Fund under the authority and guidance of the [XX] governing body” (private archive, 2009/12, p. 6). The reference to a yet unnamed “governing

body” and the establishment of new institutions such as a committee and a fund indicated that the proposal assumed that there could still be agreement on a treaty of some sort in Copenhagen – a legally binding agreement to which such a governing body would belong, in the same way as the COP is the governing body of the UNFCCC itself. In a new document issued the same evening, however, this proposal was again removed from the text (private archive, 2009/13).

The back-and-forth of removing and reinserting specific proposals is illustrative of a dynamic that intensifies towards the end of a negotiating process (Riles, 2006). The clock is ticking towards deadline, and the facilitator tries to move negotiations further towards a “clean text” by issuing new documents that reduce the level of specificity. Negotiators who feel particularly strongly about some part of the text that has been cut, may try to reinsert it, but in so doing they risk delaying the process with the potential consequence that no agreement is reached and hence that no document can be forwarded to the COP for adoption in the plenary (Riles, 2006; Weisser, 2014).

The pressure of deadlines is intensely felt during the last days of a COP, and is often amplified through the employment of specific tools on the part of facilitators and chairs. For example, the chair of the AWG-LCA has the formal mandate to oversee negotiations in all subgroups in order to bring the results together in a coherent agreement. According to my own notes, towards the end of one negotiating session in the REDD+ subgroup in Copenhagen, the chair appeared dramatically in the door to the meeting room, hovering there for a few seconds and pointing at his wristwatch, before leaving and loudly shutting the door behind him. The signal to the negotiators was unequivocal: The “wider picture” of the negotiations urgently needed a clean text on REDD+ to be delivered, and further delays on the part of the “REDD+ family” in reaching agreement would be at their own peril.

Such theatrical performances notwithstanding, most REDD+ negotiators were confident that – due to their isolated mode of working and the exceptional feeling of community among negotiators – they were much closer to delivering a clean text than most other subgroups under the AWG-LCA. Informants interviewed for this thesis agree that the remaining brackets and disagreements in the documents being discussed towards the end of the Copenhagen meeting were so small that agreement would in fact have been reached, had the rest of the negotiations on a new international climate agreement been concluded as well (interviews 2; 5). This, however, was not how things would turn out.

5.3.3. COP discord and Copenhagen Accord

During the final days of Copenhagen, the whole negotiation process that had started with the establishment of the AWG-LCA in Bali two years earlier more or less fell apart. The series of events that led the meeting previously branded as “Hopenhagen” to collapse into what was later dubbed “Brokenhagen” have been extensively analysed elsewhere (Meilstrup, 2010; Lahn, 2013; Bodansky, 2010; Rajamani, 2010; Death, 2011). In short, as formal negotiations came to a complete halt over issues of deep distrust among the negotiating parties, a small group of political leaders met in direct negotiations to work out a shorter document that would enable the COP to produce at least a minimal result. This procedure was a complete break with the standard mode of operating in the UNFCCC and other multilateral negotiations (Bodansky, 2010). Having ministers and even heads of state directly involved in drafting documents is unheard of in the UN system: This is precisely what is supposed to be avoided through the process in which professional negotiators prepare a “clean text” with, at most, a very limited number of disagreements for which there are clearly worded options for political leaders to choose from.

What eventually came out of the negotiations between heads of state, was a document called “The Copenhagen Accord” – a two-page statement that was supposedly worked out in direct talks between the presidents of the USA, Brazil, China, India, and South Africa (Meilstrup, 2010, p. 243; Rajamani, 2010, p. 825). The document was presented in the plenary by the COP president. When a number of countries strongly opposed the document, on the basis both of its content and of the process through which it was negotiated, the Copenhagen Accord could not be approved as a decision (Rajamani, 2010, p. 826). After an intense and unusual debate, in which ministers and presidents intervened directly from the floor of the COP plenary, the COP finally decided to “take note” of the document, leaving it unclear what status – if any – the document now held in the UNFCCC system. Following from this failure to agree on a decision, the COP decided to extend the mandate of the AWG-LCA for another year, and to forward all the documents that had been developed by its various sub-groups for further work during 2010, with a view to try again at the next COP in Cancún a year later (Bodansky, 2010; Rajamani, 2010).

In several respects, the Copenhagen Accord represented a complete break with the “chain of documents” that the process of negotiating a new climate change agreement had centred on since the establishment of the AWG-LCA. It represented a *spatial break* in the sense that the room in which the Accord was negotiated during the final hours of the

Copenhagen meeting was closed off to most negotiators, as only a select group of heads of state, ministers and their close advisers were allowed into the room. This had the effect of excluding the negotiators most familiar with previous documents and texts from the process (interview 5). The spatial break in turn led to a *textual break*, in the sense that much of the text in the Copenhagen Accord did not build on or even resemble the text that had been developed by negotiators in the various AWG-LCA subgroups over the course of the last two years of negotiations. There were simply no negotiators in the room to bring the previously agreed text into the discussion in order to ensure continuity in the chain of documents.

This textual break is particularly visible in the Copenhagen Accord's paragraph on REDD+, which reads:

6. We recognize the crucial role of reducing emission from deforestation and forest degradation and the need to enhance removals of greenhouse gas emission by forests and agree on the need to provide positive incentives to such actions through the immediate establishment of a mechanism including REDD-plus, to enable the mobilization of financial resources from developed countries.

(FCCC/CP/2009/11/Add.1, p. 6)

The contrast between this paragraph and the latest draft documents originating from the REDD+ subgroup of the AWG-LCA is striking: Where the latest drafts included the carefully negotiated wording on the “scope” of REDD+ that was described in chapter 3.3.3, for example distinguishing between “conservation of forest carbon stocks” and “sustainable management of forest”, the Copenhagen Accord simply refers to “the need to enhance removals of greenhouse gas emissions by forests”. And while the word “mechanism” is not found in any of the latest draft documents from the REDD+ subgroup (see chapter 4.4), the Copenhagen Accord talks about the “immediate establishment of a mechanism including REDD plus” without further defining what this means.

In short: The lack of continuity with previous documents shows that the REDD+ paragraph in the Copenhagen Accord was written practically without participation from the “REDD+ family”, and without basis in the chain of documents they had produced over the course of the preceding year. This provides a key to understanding why, as negotiations resumed in the AWG-LCA after Copenhagen, the REDD+ negotiators showed little or no interest in the REDD+ paragraph in the Copenhagen Accord.

5.3.4. Keeping it in the family

One might expect the fact that REDD+ was highlighted as important and provided with a separate paragraph in a document negotiated at the very highest political level, to be welcomed by the “REDD+ family” as a sign of political goodwill towards their project of governing deforestation at the global level. In practice, however, the community of REDD+ negotiators virtually ignored the paragraph that had been negotiated by their heads of state (interview 5). Instead, they invested a great deal of work in preserving the documents that they themselves had developed, seeking to bring these documents back as the starting point for the following negotiations in order to restore the original “chain of documents” as the basis for the negotiation process.

When the AWG-LCA negotiations started again after Copenhagen, the group faced the task of producing a new document that could serve as a basis of negotiations. In the “wider picture” of the negotiations – that is, outside of the “REDD+ family” – disagreement arose between countries who wanted the new text to build on the Copenhagen Accord (most prominently the United States of America) and those who wanted negotiations to continue on the basis of the latest documents produced by the various AWG-LCA subgroups (Rajamani, 2010, p. 830). The outcome of this disagreement, which was the main topic for a meeting of the AWG-LCA in Bonn in April 2010, was that the chair of the AWG-LCA was given the task of producing a new “text to facilitate negotiations among Parties”, drawing both on the documents from the AWG-LCA negotiations *and* on the Copenhagen Accord (FCCC/AWGLCA/2010/6, p. 3). This new document, presented in May 2010 and replaced by subsequent versions in June (private archive, 2010/1) and July (FCCC/AWGLCA/2010/8), in effect sought to merge the competing documents that were left behind by the chaotic ending of the Copenhagen conference. Merging the text from the documents coming out of the AWG-LCA in Copenhagen with the document coming out of the last-minute negotiations among heads of state – the Copenhagen Accord – was a move to overcome the disagreement about which of these documents represented the best starting point for further negotiations (Rajamani, 2010, p. 831). In effect, the document was presented as a new “first link” in a completely new chain of documents – a fresh start for the negotiations post-Copenhagen. This was achieved in much the same way as the “Ideas and proposals” document from 2008 established itself as the first link of the pre-Copenhagen negotiations (see chapter 3.3): By insisting that it is actually not the first link, but merely

bringing together the words of various existing texts and documents in a way that allows the negotiating parties to take collective ownership of the text.

The new document dealt with REDD+ in two separate places: In an introductory chapter, it included two short paragraphs on the importance of reducing emissions from deforestation and the establishment of a “mechanism including REDD-plus”, based on the text negotiated by political leaders in the Copenhagen Accord. Secondly, towards the end of the document, it included a separate chapter on REDD+ that was almost a complete reproduction of the text negotiated by the “REDD+ family” and contained in the latest documents from the AWG-LCA spin-off group on REDD+.

For REDD+ negotiators, the fact that the document split the description of REDD+ in two and introduced new and unfamiliar phrases taken from the Copenhagen Accord might have initially represented a difficulty. It was however not insurmountable. As there was a solid understanding in the group that the main chapter on REDD+ (originating from the documents they themselves had previously produced) was the most important part of the text, it was possible to more or less ignore the two short paragraphs that drew on the Copenhagen Accord, and focus instead on the main chapter (interviews 2; 5). Over time, as the text of the document was further restructured, the two paragraphs from the Copenhagen Accord – not having any ownership among the negotiators – was removed completely (FCCC/AWGLCA/2010/CRP.1).

In this way, the “REDD+ family” succeeded in containing the challenge represented by the breakdown of COP 15 in Copenhagen, by bypassing the document that was negotiated directly by their political leaders. The new document that was established as a new “first link” as negotiations resumed after Copenhagen instead carried forward the text that had been produced through the original chain of documents negotiated by the community of REDD+ negotiators during the previous year. As will be shown in the next section, however, the new document in turn gave rise to yet another challenge – this time originating from within the group of REDD+ negotiators themselves.

5.4. Closed group, closed text

While the “REDD+ family” was successful in bringing the text from the pre-Copenhagen chain of documents into the first link of the new, post-Copenhagen chain, starting negotiations on a new chain of documents still had the implication that this text now became potentially open to contestation and amendments on an equal basis with all other parts of the

document. This represented a potential setback compared to the previous chain of documents, where for practical purposes all the text that no longer contained brackets or options was considered agreed, and thereby “closed” – meaning off limits for further negotiations. In the summer of 2010, two countries – Saudi Arabia and Bolivia – seized the opportunity provided by this new and more open situation in order to introduce a number of new proposals (interviews 1; 2; 3; 4; 5). In doing so, they effectively threatened a “re-opening” of much of what had already been agreed and turned into “clean text” over the course of 2009 (cf. Eastwood, 2005, p. 114; Riles, 2006, p. 81).

In the “wider picture” of the negotiations, the fresh start represented by the establishment of a new chain of documents was seen as necessary in order to overcome the Copenhagen acrimony and the subsequent conflict regarding which document formed the legitimate basis for further negotiations. Most REDD+ negotiators however held the view that negotiations on REDD+ were so far advanced, and the spirit of trust and cooperation among negotiators so much greater than in other parts of the negotiations, that they should be allowed to concentrate on the few remaining brackets and disagreements rather than opening up the whole text for discussion again. When Saudi Arabia and Bolivia broke with this understanding, it represented a threat of “going back” (Riles, 2006, p. 81) – jeopardizing the work that had already been done and putting at risk the possibility of adopting a decision on REDD+ at the next possibility: COP 16 in Cancún, Mexico, in December 2010. In responding to this challenge, a number of strategies were adopted for keeping the documents closed, thereby seeking to avoid further disturbance of the existing text.

5.4.1. The red among the purple

Under UN rules, all countries have an equal right to participate in all parts of the UNFCCC negotiations. However, when Saudi Arabia suddenly in 2010 chose to exercise this right in the REDD+ negotiations under the AWG-LCA, they were met with deep suspicion among other REDD+ negotiators. Saudi Arabia had not engaged systematically in discussions on REDD+ at any time in the process that started with the proposal submitted by Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica in 2005. It was only in the meetings that took place during the summer of 2010 that their chief negotiator started to attend the meetings of the REDD+ subgroup. A well-known figure in the UNFCCC negotiations for many years, he would “come to the meetings late and sit in the front to make himself visible” (interview 3), demonstrating through his sheer presence in the room that Saudi Arabia now took an interest

in the topic of REDD+. From this position, he asked for the re-opening of what most REDD+ negotiators understood to be already agreed text, and insisted that new, controversial proposals be inserted into the documents under discussion.

To the community of REDD+ negotiators, most of whom had been working closely together on this particular issue for several years, Saudi Arabia's sudden interest in REDD+ was seen to have nothing to do with substantive questions about deforestation, and everything to do with the politics of the "wider picture" of negotiations. Saudi Arabia is well known for their tactics of "horse-trading" (interview 1) in the UNFCCC negotiations, and it was assumed that the country now sought to hold back progress in the discussions on REDD+ as a "bargaining chip" (interview 3) to be used in order to get what they want "somewhere else" (interview 4) or even to weaken the prospects for agreement overall (interview 5). In other words, Saudi Arabia's engagement was forging connections between the REDD+ discussion and other, more politically contentious parts of the AWG-LCA negotiations – the very opposite of other negotiators' efforts to avoid such connections in order to protect their ability to make progress independently from the unpredictable dynamics of the "wider picture". The way Saudi Arabia's negotiator approached the REDD+ negotiations – from his physical presence in the room to the kind of proposals he made for changing the documents under discussion – made it "obvious" that he "did not belong" (interview 3) in the "family". In the words of one interviewee, "he was the red among the purple" (interview 3).

The position of Saudi Arabia as an "obvious" outsider enabled the "REDD+ family" to unite in an attempt to contain the challenge that Saudi Arabia posed to the clean text they had already achieved. Their first line of defence took the form of an argument over how the work on the documents should be arranged during the negotiating meetings. They argued that opening up the previously agreed text would mean going backwards, and that the work on REDD+ was so far advanced that they did not need the "fresh start" that other negotiating groups required after Copenhagen. In one of the first meetings of the REDD+ subgroup under the AWG-LCA in 2010, a senior REDD+ negotiator representing a large developing country rather undiplomatically stated that "the other groups are *retarded* in comparison to us" (private notes, 05.08.2010). A number of negotiators made similarly strong pleas that the work should be organized through general discussions that could focus on "lifting brackets in the existing text", rather than opening the whole document up again by putting text "on the screen". The facilitator of the negotiators also took part in these efforts to avoid direct

engagement with the text of the documents (interview 2), by slowing down the meetings to make sure that “nothing happened” (interview 5).

In the long run, however, these efforts to arrange the work on the documents so as to keep the text closed were not sufficient. Ironically, having had the problem throughout 2009 that too little time was set aside specifically for discussions on REDD+ (see chapter 3.2), negotiators were now faced with the problem of having too much time on their hands. Not even the concerted efforts of the chair and most negotiators to hold meetings where “nothing happened” could prevent Saudi Arabia from asserting their right to propose additions to the document. Furthermore, they were not alone. Bolivia were equally strong in their insistence on re-opening the documents for discussion and additions, and they represented a bigger challenge to the community of REDD+ negotiators, as they could not as easily be dismissed as a horse-trading, “red among the purple” outsider. Their long-standing engagement with the REDD+ discussion and active participation in the negotiations since well before Copenhagen put them in a more ambiguous position vis-à-vis the “family”. Hence, other tools were needed in order to protect the agreed parts of the documents from re-opening.

5.4.2. Mother Earth in brackets

Tracing Bolivia’s role in trying to re-open the document after Copenhagen requires taking a few steps back. Already well before Copenhagen, Bolivia had challenged the vision of REDD+ as it was formulated for example in the original submission from Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica in 2005. Following the election of Evo Morales as president in 2006, Bolivia took a strong stance against all forms of carbon markets in the UNFCCC negotiations. Their challenge to the original vision of REDD+, however, went far beyond an opposition to making REDD+ part of such markets. Bolivia fundamentally questioned the carbon-focused approach to deforestation that was at the heart of most REDD+ proposals, suggesting instead that efforts to reduce deforestation should be guided by the rights of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities, as well as the “rights of Mother Earth” and a concept of “historical debt” owed by the wealthy nations to the poorer nations for their historical over-use of the Earth’s resources (Okereke and Dooley, 2010; Kruse, 2014).

Throughout the documents being produced prior to Copenhagen, Bolivia’s proposals may be consistently identified as present, but marginal. Their presence is clear in many references to the rights of indigenous peoples, and proposals that seek to give indigenous

peoples' knowledge a status similar to that of scientific monitoring of forest carbon. At the same time, their marginal position is underlined by the way some of their proposals are rather clumsily formulated – as in the suggestion that “indigenous peoples must not be only like assistants to the implementation” (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1, p. 113). In this bracketed phrase, the odd wording of an obviously non-native English speaker has been left unchanged by the secretariat and his fellow negotiators, suggesting that no other negotiators considered it worthwhile to engage in a discussion of the proposal.

During the negotiations up to Copenhagen, negotiators sought to deal with Bolivia's proposals in the same way they dealt with other proposals that failed to receive broad support – they were bracketed, moved around, watered out, and eventually (for the most part) removed from the documents. As Bolivia's preoccupation with indigenous peoples' rights to some extent was subsumed under the heading of “safeguards”, it was expected that this would go a long way in addressing their concerns (interviews 2; 4). However, Bolivia were not satisfied with how questions of rights were “rendered technical” through the establishment of safeguards. Upholding their more fundamental challenge to the vision of REDD+, they insisted that the document should reflect a more holistic understanding of forests, going beyond the focus on carbon emissions and economic incentives. While other negotiators had little sympathy for this demand – they saw Bolivia as being “ideological” (interview 3) and wanting to “be paid to be nice” (interview 5) – they nevertheless had to find ways to include Bolivia's views to the extent that they would not object to the documents that were produced.

During negotiations in Barcelona in November 2009, a peculiar footnote was introduced in the text – appearing for the first time in the document issued 05 November at 13:30. The footnote pertained to paragraph 6, which stated that countries implementing REDD+ should “address, inter alia, drivers of deforestation, land tenure issues, forest governance and means of ensuring the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities.]¹” (private archive, 2009/6, p 3). As a way of containing Bolivia's attempt to go even further in specifying a different direction for REDD+, the facilitator suggested introducing the following footnote:

¹ Taking into account the need for sustainable livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities and their interdependence on forests in most countries, reflected in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Earth Day. (Private archive, 2009/6, p 3)

The footnote was later removed (private archive, 2009/10), only to be reintroduced in a later document, but with a slightly modified wording so that the reference to the “United Nations Earth Day” was instead made to “the International Mother Earth Day”, which is instituted by Resolution 63/278 of the UN General Assembly. The footnote thus introduced the entity of “Mother Earth” into the text, with its connotations of a holistic understanding of nature/culture (see Kruse, 2014). This time, however, the footnote appeared in brackets (private archive, 2009/12, p. 2).

The fact that negotiators by bracketing the footnote also literally put “Mother Earth” in brackets became a topic of some amusement among negotiators. It was also used by civil society organizations as a metaphor for the disappointing direction of the negotiations more generally (e.g., ECO, 2009). Reading the bracketed footnote about Mother Earth as some sort of joke, or as the accidental result of a quirky UN process, would however miss the point. In the process of achieving a clean text prior to Copenhagen, the footnote did important work: It served as a token of acceptance of Bolivia’s more holistic approach to deforestation, while at the same time leaving untouched the main body of the document, in which the dominant problematization of deforestation as an issue of carbon emissions and missing economic incentives was upheld. In effect, therefore, Bolivia was excluded by means of inclusion – in the documents as well as in the “REDD+ family” – their fundamental critique being incorporated into the document in such a way as to render it meaningless for how REDD+ was to be assembled in practice.

5.4.3. Fencing off clean text

While the footnote may have been effective in progressing towards a clean text in Copenhagen, it was still not enough for Bolivia to shelve their more fundamental challenge to REDD+. When the “fresh start” and the establishment of a new chain of documents after Copenhagen opened an opportunity, Bolivia decided that they “wouldn’t accept footnotes anymore” (interview 1) and joined forces with Saudi Arabia in demanding that the previously agreed text was re-opened for further discussion. In the summer of 2010, they made a number of new proposals, several of which sought to link the REDD+ assemblage to another document: the declaration that was agreed at the “World Peoples’ Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth” that the Bolivian government had held in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in April 2010 (Kruse, 2014). The Cochabamba meeting was attended by civil society organizations, indigenous peoples, as well as some government

representatives, and was initiated by Bolivia's president Morales as a response to the failure of COP 15 in Copenhagen. The declaration from the meeting was marked by anti-capitalist rhetoric, and explicitly rejected the "vision of REDD+" on the grounds that it would lead to the commodification of nature and violate the rights of indigenous peoples (Kruse, 2014).

In order to meet this challenge, the "REDD+ family" chose a new strategy for keeping the previously agreed text "fenced off" and closed for discussion: They insisted that the REDD+ chapter should be split into two alternative options: "Option 1" contained the text including the proposals from Bolivia and Saudi Arabia, while "Option 2" consisted of the text that had mostly already been agreed through previous negotiations and that the "family" wanted to shield from re-opening (FCCC/AWGLCA/2010/14, pp. 52–59). The result of this move was that Bolivia and Saudi Arabia could do whatever they wanted with the text in "Option 1", knowing that it would not really be able to make an impact on the end result, because the rest of the REDD+ negotiators would only engage with "Option 2" as a text with which to work and eventually forward to the COP for a decision.

On one level, the establishment of two alternative options was similar to how the Norwegian proposal for a "legal text" had been handled during the streamlining process of 2009 (see chapter 4.4): A proposal that did not enjoy broad support was carried forward as a separate "option", in effect isolated from the part of the text that enjoyed the engagement from and support of the majority of REDD+ negotiators. This rendered the alternative proposal powerless to effect changes in the part of the text that enjoyed majority ownership. On another level, however, there are important differences between the two situations that highlight the importance of the "REDD+ family" for how REDD+ was shaped through the production of documents. Whereas Norway was allowed to move parts of their proposal from their own isolated "option" and into the main part of the text, the same approach was not available to Saudi Arabia and Bolivia. When they asked for their proposals to be inserted both in "Option 1" and in "Option 2" of the text, this was forcefully opposed by the other REDD+ negotiators.

The most obvious way to understand this strikingly different treatment is the countries' different status with regard to "membership" in the "REDD+ family". By bringing a number of highly valued elements into the collaborative process of producing documents – most notably large financial contributions for REDD+ implementation, but also expert involvement, influential reports and high-level political engagement (Lahn and Wilson Rowe, 2015, p. 139) – there was never any doubt as to Norway's status as a prominent member of the close-knit community that had been established through the REDD+

negotiations. Saudi Arabia and Bolivia, on the other hand, held the status as obvious outsider with questionable motives, and as an ideologically tainted obstructionist, respectively. Being cast as “the red among the purple”, they were more restricted in their opportunities to influence the documents being produced.

Additionally, the “fencing off” of clean text to protect it from unwelcome disturbance further underscores the point made in chapter 4.5, that the way negotiators work on text in effect places limits on the extent of alternative proposals. Modifications are possible, as in the case of the safeguards, but only insofar as they may be accommodated within the structure of the existing documents. As the production of documents gradually narrows down the level of disagreement, expressed by the number of brackets and alternative options present in the text, the scope for modifications becomes increasingly narrow as well.

5.4.4. Black-boxing negotiations

The tactics of the “REDD+ family” were successful in keeping the almost clean text fenced off as a separate “Option 2” throughout the negotiations in the summer and fall of 2010 (FCCC/AWGLCA/2010/14). At the last negotiating session prior to COP 16 in Cancún, Saudi Arabia “basically backed down” (interview 4) and withdrew from the REDD+ negotiations. It was assumed among REDD+ negotiators that this was because they “got what they needed somewhere else” (interview 4) and therefore no longer had any interest in holding back progress on REDD+ as a “bargaining chip” (interview 3). As a result of this, going into COP 16 in Cancún, Bolivia was completely isolated in arguing for fundamental changes in the text on REDD+.

When negotiations picked up again in Cancún in December, the Mexican government – acting as the “presidency” of the COP in the same way Denmark had during COP 15 in Copenhagen – chose a rather unusual mode of work. Instead of organizing negotiations through the usual meetings of subgroups and “drafting sessions” with text “on the screen”, they carried out intensive consultations with countries in one-on-one meetings or meetings of smaller groups. These meetings resulted in “discrete pieces of text sown together by the Mexican Presidency” (Rajamani, 2011, p. 514) that were then shared with select negotiators in order to gauge their reaction and receive input for further development of the text. The result was that “negotiators never had the text” and that “the text evolved without going into drafting mode” (interview 3). The document production, in effect, became “black-boxed” (Latour, 1987): It was closed off, accessible only in the form of its

input (provided through small, ad-hoc meetings) and output (as draft documents shared only with select groups or individual negotiators).

The unusual mode of work was chosen in order to navigate the many politically contentious issues of the “wider picture” of the AWG-LCA negotiations, and had no specific connection to REDD+ (Rajamani, 2011). The effect on the REDD+ discussion was nevertheless important. Moving the work into bilateral discussions rather than collaborative production of documents meant that Bolivia’s proposals could be completely bypassed, while the Mexican Presidency could focus their efforts on clearing up the few remaining brackets in “Option 2” – the text preferred by the “REDD+ family”. Among other changes, the safeguards were taken out of the main text and moved to an annex towards the end of the document. A compromise was also worked out regarding how countries should report on the implementation of the safeguards (see chapter 5.2). In a document marked “Version of 09.12.2010 – 23.30” a new paragraph of clean text appeared for the first time, asking countries to develop “a system for providing information on how the safeguards (...) are being addressed and respected” (private archive, 2010/2, p. 2). Black-boxing the document production process thus had the effect of further side-lining Bolivia, while allowing the “REDD+ family” to sort out their remaining differences and proceed towards a clean text.

5.4.5. “Hearing no objections”

After intensive work well into the day after COP 16 was scheduled to end, the COP President, Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs Patricia Espinosa was able to present the result of the black-boxed negotiation process: A comprehensive and “clean” document covering all elements of the AWG-LCA negotiations, including REDD+, ready to be adopted as a decision in the plenary of the COP. While no country had been given the chance to review the document in its entirety prior to it being presented for adoption in the plenary, most countries were nevertheless sufficiently familiar with its content through the process of bilateral and small-group meetings that they felt confident enough to approve it. Furthermore, the failure to agree on a decision in Copenhagen one year earlier loomed large in the conscience of those present in the COP plenary hall: An agreement in Cancún would be essential in order to restore hope and credibility to the UNFCCC process. The document that was in effect presented on a “take it or leave it” basis was therefore met with “thunderous applause” in the COP plenary (Rajamani, 2011, p. 515).

As the only country, Bolivia took the floor to oppose the adoption of the decision. The reasons Bolivia gave for rejecting the document related to a number of issues, its treatment of REDD+ being only one among many others. A main criticism of Bolivia, however, related to the procedure through which the document had been produced: The black-boxed process of direct meetings, without the ability of parties to engage in direct negotiations on the text of the document, had resulted in a document that “did not emerge from a democratic discussion” (Rajamani, 2011, p. 517). This also applied to REDD+ – a topic on which Bolivia held particularly strong views, and for which considerable efforts had been devoted to excluding Bolivia from being able to influence the text of the resulting document.

Despite the strong and clearly stated objection of Bolivia, however, COP president Patricia Espinosa proceeded directly to adopting the decision. This was an unprecedented move in UNFCCC history (Rajamani, 2011, pp. 515–518). Traditionally, the words that the COP president uses as she brings down the gavel to affirm the adoption of a decision, are: “Hearing no objections, it is so decided.” In line with this, the traditional definition of “consensus” within the UNFCCC process is “the absence of express opposition” (Rajamani, 2011, p. 515). In this case, Bolivia’s objection was heard loud and clear, and there was certainly no absence of express opposition. In spite of this, the gavel was brought down, and the COP president declared that “Decision 1/CP.16” was adopted.

The adoption of “Decision 1/CP.16” brought the long process of negotiations on a number of issues under the AWG-LCA – including REDD+ – to a close. The unusual procedure through which the decision was adopted, in effect redefining the understanding of “consensus” within the UNFCCC process, is in itself an interesting topic of discussion, but one that exceeds the scope of this thesis (see Rajamani, 2011, for a discussion of some legal and political aspects). For the purpose of investigating how the production of documents under the UNFCCC has contributed to shaping REDD+ as a technology for governing deforestation, the most important insight that may be gained from the adoption of “Decision 1/CP.16” in Cancún probably lies in what the episode tells us about the importance of community in the negotiation process. The ability to influence documents under negotiation is connected to the access countries are given – material as well as political – to engaging directly with the text. The negotiations on REDD+ throughout 2010, as well as the unusual, black-boxed process of negotiations during COP 16 in Cancún, shows that this access is not guaranteed by the procedural rules of the UNFCCC – it is also linked to the negotiators’ ability to legitimately participate in the community that is brought into being through the document production process.

5.5. Conclusion: Document production as “closing off”

When “Decision 1/CP.16” was adopted in December 2010, it brought the main aspect of the REDD+ negotiations under the AWG-LCA to a close. Even more importantly, as the decision was adopted, the document itself became irreversibly closed off – purified, and released from the chain of documents that brought it into being, and the disagreements and particularities with which that chain is associated (cf. Riles, 2006, p. 83; Eastwood, 2005).

As shown in this chapter, however, the final decision text is far from the only result of the negotiation process. The negotiations under the UNFCCC cannot simply be understood as a process in which negotiators are producing documents: It is also a process in which documents are producing a community – a group with an inside and an outside – and in the specific case of REDD+ even a “family”, with a particularly strong sense of “camaraderie” among them. Who is inside and outside the “family” may shift, and the production of documents helps produce these shifting boundaries. Thus, documents “act in their own right and hold organisations together” (Weisser, 2014, p. 49). This in turn influences how REDD+ is shaped, for example by regulating the access that different actors have to the document production process.

Among other things, the community that documents help produce plays an important role in achieving the final “closing off” of the negotiated text that is required for a decision to be adopted. Towards the end of negotiations, the responsibility to agree on a final document moves from negotiators to ministers and other high-level political figures, who are expected to sort out the remaining differences. As demonstrated by the circumvention of the REDD+ paragraph in the Copenhagen Accord, however, bringing negotiations to a close by agreeing a final text among political leaders is not enough in itself. The authority of the final text also seems connected to it being closed off through the right procedures – that is, through the “chain of documents” and its associated tools – and by the help of the right group of people – that is, the “REDD+ family”.

In the case of safeguards, groups that were initially placed firmly on the outside – in the very physical sense of being excluded from the meeting rooms – were partly allowed to take part if not in the core, then at least in a sort of extended “REDD+ family”. The result was that their concerns to some extent became included in the documents, and the category of “safeguards” came into being. The re-drawing of community boundaries in this case was achieved by engaging directly in the production of documents – commenting on text, drafting alternative proposals, and circulating pieces of paper that could pass through the

closed doors of the meeting rooms. Obviously other dynamics played a part as well – i.e. the power held by civil society to pressure governments and the extent to which they are needed as implementers. It nevertheless seems clear that without the direct engagement with documents – for example, if a strategy of protesting outside the conference centre had been chosen instead – it is less likely that the same effect would be achieved.

At the same time, the partial inclusion of NGO activists into the “family” of negotiators came with a cost: The activists’ attempts to re-conceptualize forests as sites for struggles over land rights – broadening the issue of deforestation beyond a focus on carbon – were themselves modified, as they were reduced to a list of “risks” to be mitigated. This two-way “modifying work” (Asdal, 2015) clearly contributed to shaping REDD+ in a specific way: It served to broaden the existing problematization of deforestation by establishing a series of procedural steps related to “safeguards” that may allow for new questions to be raised and new actors to make themselves relevant in the implementation of REDD+. However, the production of documents also worked to safeguard the original “vision” of REDD+ against more radical challenges, containing such challenges within the logic of the existing understanding of deforestation as primarily an issue of carbon emissions and missing economic incentives.

When Bolivia sought to uphold a more radical challenge to the dominant problematization of deforestation, its proposals were marginalized through another re-drawing of community boundaries. Marginalization was achieved through the documents being produced: First, in placing Bolivia’s alternative in a footnote, later through various strategies for closing off the possibility for Bolivia and Saudi Arabia to re-open the “clean text” of the documents. Bolivia’s placement outside the “REDD+ family” was instrumental to the success of these tactics, as may be shown by contrasting the proposals from Bolivia and Saudi Arabia with those of Norway that were described in chapter 4.4. When clear boundaries were established between the “collectively owned” text and Norway’s alternative proposal for a “legal text”, the boundary was permeable. Norway, as a major REDD+ donor represented by highly skilled negotiators, and supportive of the original “vision” of REDD+, was allowed to move text between the two. This option was not available to Bolivia or Saudi Arabia, who were cast as the “red among the purple” and therefore had less access to the document production process.

Looking to community formation in order to understand international policy processes is not a new idea. Constructivist scholars of International Relations (IR) have highlighted how “epistemic communities” may shape the outcome of international negotiations, in

particular in the area of environmental governance (Haas, 1989; 1992). A material-semiotic approach provides a somewhat different perspective, however. What I have highlighted in this chapter is how the production of documents brings together what comes to be understood as communities in the first place. In this analysis, what links together (or sets apart) the various actors in such communities is not a pre-existing epistemic unity, but rather the practices and material arrangements of the negotiation process – that is, how they come together in order to fulfil the common task of producing a “clean text”. This provides a way of understanding not only how conflicts between actors of different epistemic affiliations may play out, but also how such conflicts are resolved and unity is achieved despite differences. In a very concrete way, the production of documents in the UNFCCC process draws together a heterogeneous group of actors, epistemes, material resources and other elements, thus forming REDD+ as an assemblage comprising not only the final text of “Decision 1/CP.16” but also the “family” of negotiators who produced it.

As the chapter has shown, both results of the document production process – the final text and the “REDD+ family” – are necessary in order to be able to finally “close off” the chain of documents and adopt a decision. The forming of a community of REDD+ negotiators however raises questions about the flexibility and potential for modifications to the REDD+ assemblage that was identified in the preceding chapters. If the process of producing documents also brings into being a “family” that is able to draw boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate actors and proposals, what implications does this have for future challenges to REDD+ as a technology of government? This is among the questions that will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

6. REDD+ in “Decision 1/CP.16”: Between global and local

With the stroke of a gavel, the COP president adopts “Decision 1/CP.16” in the plenary hall of the Cancún climate conference in December 2010. In doing so, she not only brings into being the first authoritative UN statement on REDD+, she also renders invisible all the work that went into producing it, including the documents that preceded it throughout the process of negotiations. Closed off and purified, “Decision 1/CP.16” is now free to travel the world – for example, by crossing the Pacific Ocean and find its way to the desk of a local official in Palu, Indonesia, preparing to welcome a delegation of Norwegian government and NGO representatives to the province of Central Sulawesi in March 2011.

Attempting, for a moment, to look through the window of this local official – or anybody else trying to make sense of “Decision 1/CP.16” – what does this document tell him about REDD+ as a technology for governing deforestation? And how does his reading of the purified end-result correspond to the understanding one may gain by analysing not only the final document, but the whole process of bringing it about?

In this concluding chapter, I seek to answer the research question of the thesis by drawing together the analysis of the three previous chapters. I begin by contrasting the insights of my analysis with a brief, isolated reading of the final “Decision 1/CP.16”. In this way, I aim to show how an attention to the practices associated with the document production process provides a richer understanding of the REDD+ assemblage, in particular when it comes to how REDD+ draws together the “global” and the “local”, and the implications it may have for political contestation and change. The chapter ends with a few reflections on the limitations of the approach I have chosen, as well as its potential value.

6.1. Reading “Decision 1/CP.16”

The document that was adopted as “Decision 1/CP.16”, with the title “The Cancun Agreements: Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action under the Convention”, is 30 pages long. It is organized following the structure of the Bali Action Plan (BAP) – the mandate for the negotiations under the AWG-LCA – with specific chapters on “Enhanced action on adaptation”, “Enhanced action on mitigation”, “Finance, technology and capacity-building” and so on.

As a sub-section of the chapter on mitigation, two pages of text are placed under what is (narrowly) the longest headline found anywhere in the document:

Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, p. 12)

These two pages contain the result of the negotiations on REDD+ that took place in the AWG-LCA over the three years from COP 13 in 2007 to COP 16 in 2010. In addition, two appendices towards the end of the document concern REDD+ specifically, increasing the total number of pages in “Decision 1/CP.16” dealing with REDD+ to five. What impression does these five pages give the before-mentioned local official in Palu of REDD+ as a technology for governing deforestation?

The first clue may be taken from the fact that the section on REDD+ is situated in the chapter on mitigation, making it clear that efforts to reduce deforestation is primarily linked to the need to lower global greenhouse gas emissions (rather than, for example, the need to adapt to a changing climate). This point is further emphasised in the very first paragraph of the REDD+ section (paragraph 68 of the full decision), in which the COP “*Encourages* all Parties to find effective ways to reduce the human pressure on forests that result in greenhouse gas emissions” (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, p. 12). Further down follows the key paragraph to which most of the others explicitly refer – paragraph 70 – which contains what was described in chapter 3.4 as the “scope” of REDD+:

70. *Encourages* developing country Parties to contribute to mitigation actions in the forest sector by undertaking the following activities, as deemed appropriate by each Party and in accordance with their respective capabilities and national circumstances:

- (a) Reducing emissions from deforestation;
- (b) Reducing emissions from forest degradation;
- (c) Conservation of forest carbon stocks;
- (d) Sustainable management of forests;
- (e) Enhancement of forest carbon stocks;

(FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, p. 12)

In other words, the “human pressure on forests” should be reduced only insofar as it has an effect on greenhouse gas emissions, and the activities developing countries should undertake are primarily related to “reducing emissions” and forests conceptualized as “carbon stocks”.

So far, the version of REDD+ that appears in the text of “Decision 1/CP.16” is closely aligned with how REDD+ is described in critical analyses that point to a “carbonification of forests” (Stephan, 2012) and a step towards global, “comprehensive carbon management” (Stephan, Rothe and Methmann, 2014, p. 73), in line with the problematization of deforestation as an issue of missing economic incentives to protect forest carbon.

Reading the rest of the document, however, seems to contradict such a clear-cut analysis. While the text contains no specifics as to how emissions or forest carbon should be managed in practice, it contains a number of references to elaborate policy procedures and planning schemes, such as a “national strategy or action plan” that should “address, inter alia, the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the safeguards identified in paragraph 2 of appendix I” (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, pp. 12–13).

Consulting the appendix to which the text refers, one finds a long list of “safeguards” that seem to have nothing to do with carbonification or carbon management. Rather, they talk about “respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities” and the need for actions to be “consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity” (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, p. 27). There is even a footnote that takes into account “the need for sustainable livelihoods of indigenous peoples” as reflected in “the International Mother Earth Day” (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, p. 28). Countries implementing REDD+ are asked to promote and support these safeguards, and to establish a “system for providing information” on how they are “addressed and respected” (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, pp. 14, 27).

From such a reading, it seems likely that a local official (or anyone else) in Palu (or anywhere else) who tries to make sense of REDD+ by consulting the international community’s most authoritative statement on the subject, will be left somewhat confused by this imbroglio of carbon management, gender considerations, Mother Earth, local communities, and top-down planning procedures. Moreover, the supposed global authority of the document is repeatedly called into question by the text itself, through no less than 11 references to “national circumstances” and national “sovereignty” as principles that should allow for flexibility in its implementation. And if the confused reader decides to check whether he is consulting the right document – if this is actually a decision about the concept

called “REDD+” which he has heard so much talk about in climate and forest policy circles lately – he will be confounded by the fact that the document actually does not mention the term “REDD+” even once.

Where, then, is this globally homogenous approach to governing forests solely on the basis of their carbon content, praised as a “big, cheap, and quick” solution to climate change (Angelsen and McNeill, 2012, p. 33), and decried as a neoliberal plot for the “carbonification of forests” (Stephan, 2012) and “commodification of nature” (Corbera, 2012)? Is REDD+ not contained in “Decision 1/CP.16” after all, or are we talking about a different REDD+ altogether?

The answer that my analysis has to offer the confused reader of “Decision 1/CP.16” is this: The production of documents in the UNFCCC negotiations has resulted in a REDD+ assemblage that is found simultaneously inside *and* outside the final document, and that is simultaneously closely aligned with, *and* significantly different from, the original “vision” put forward by Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica in 2005. To understand what this means, it is necessary to attend not only to the final document that was adopted as “Decision 1/CP.16”, but the whole process of bringing it about and the many documents that were produced along the way – as will be summarized in the following.

6.2. Little tools that shape REDD+

This thesis has shown how REDD+ was introduced into the UNFCCC negotiations as a “vision” for a governmental technology that would address the issue of deforestation, seen as a problem of missing economic incentives for preserving the carbon stored in forests. The task of the UNFCCC negotiations was to authoritatively assemble the REDD+ technology, increasing its reach through a “global document” adopted as a COP decision. Arriving at such a decision goes through the establishment of a “chain of documents” (cf. Latour, 1999; Reinertsen, 2015; Riles, 2006) – a series of sequential drafts in which each new document follows from and transforms the previous one, bringing the negotiators one step closer to the end-goal of a “clean text”. In the task of authoritatively assembling REDD+, the chain of documents became the main driving force pushing the negotiations forward.

In order to establish and work on the chain of documents, negotiators employed a number of “little tools” (Asdal, 2008) that allowed new documents to be produced. These ranged from procedures such as the “reading” of the chair’s text in order to invest it with “party ownership” and working with text “on the screen” in closed-door “drafting sessions”,

to the black-boxing of negotiations in Cancún that allowed the COP presidency to present a final document on a “take it or leave it”-basis.

In this process, the documents in the chain also became tools in themselves. In a somewhat simplified schematic of the negotiation process, documents first served to *open up* discussion, allowing negotiators to introduce new “ideas and proposals” in ways that expanded and contradicted the original “vision” of REDD+. Following this was a phase of *narrowing down*, in which new documents and practices were employed to “streamline” the negotiations, gradually limiting disagreement and alternative options. Finally, documents were used to *close off* what was understood to be “clean text”, marginalizing dissenting views through devices such as footnotes and splitting documents into separate “options”.

How, then, did all of the little tools that were employed in producing the chain of documents come to shape REDD+, and to have effects on the final decision?

In chapter 3, I showed how the move from talk to text, establishing the chain of documents, served to open up discussions in a way that allowed countries to bring the particularities of their own forests into the text. This was done by expanding the “scope” of REDD+ or opening the door to some forms of “subnational” approaches. In this way, the ambition to build a technology with global reach paradoxically came to pave the way for a kind of “rediscovery” of local particularities (Blok, 2014a): The REDD+ assemblage was expanded in order to accommodate different national circumstances, as the “de-territorializing” approach to climate change as a unitary global process came to meet the “re-territorializing” material realities of the world’s forests (Lövbrand and Stripple, 2006).

Chapter 4 described the process of “streamlining” and how it worked to draw boundaries between what was seen as “political” and “technical” questions. The effects of this are clearly visible in “Decision 1/CP.16”, and provides part of the answer why reading the final decision text may prove somewhat confusing. A long list of “technical” questions were deferred to further negotiations (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, p. 28), along with a few highly “political” ones – notably the question of how REDD+ should be financed (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, p. 13). However, rather than simply “rendering technical” these questions, with inevitable “de-politicizing” effects (Li, 2007b), it served to postpone and move important discussions to other times and places, potentially opening up new spaces for political contestation. Hence, designating an issue as “technical” in the process of streamlining cannot necessarily be taken to mean that it is de-politicized (cf. Barry, 2001).

Another way in which the streamlining process shaped REDD+, was by delegating questions to future plans and procedures at the national level. Riles (2006, pp. 83–87) points

out how UN negotiations are fundamentally structured by the “procedural steps” that play a key part in allowing disagreements to be overcome and brackets to be removed. A number of examples in chapters 4 and 5 can be seen as illustrations of how negotiators brought their own procedural, stepwise, and documents-based mode of work from the negotiations and into the REDD+ assemblage, as a resource to overcome challenges and disagreements. Establishing a series of planning procedures and monitoring arrangements at the national level, for example by structuring REDD+ implementation in three distinct phases, allowed negotiators to reconcile the “vision” of REDD+, as providing financial incentives in line with standard economic theory, with local realities that did not conform to this theory (Karsenty and Ongolo, 2011). Rather than adjusting REDD+ to become more oriented e.g. towards political change instead of financial incentives, the phases provided a way of allowing the specific situation in each country to “finally evolve” (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009-INF.1, p. 125) into conformity with the theory, through procedural steps of national planning, monitoring, and gradual implementation.

Finally, chapter 5 showed how the chain of documents worked to transform fundamental challenges to the problematization of deforestation – conceptualizing forests as livelihoods for indigenous peoples and sites for struggles over land-rights, or as biologically diverse ecosystems, rather than orderly stocks of carbon – into procedural arrangements for the implementation and monitoring of a set of “safeguards”. In this way, the chain of documents performed “modifying work” (Asdal, 2015) that resulted in changes both to the original problematization of deforestation and to the challenges presented by NGOs and activists: The original understanding of deforestation was modified as a series of new concerns – human rights, the protection of natural forests, and the need for “good governance” – were brought into the REDD+ assemblage. At the same time, these concerns were also modified, being reduced from fundamentally different problematizations of the deforestation issue, to a list of “risks” to be mitigated, and for which countries should establish “a system for providing information” (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, p. 14). Thus, the work performed through the chain of documents also served to “safeguard” the fundamental primacy of carbon in REDD+.

Summing up, I have shown how the production of documents – with all its little tools – shaped the outcome in ways that makes REDD+ simultaneously closely aligned with, *and* significantly different from, the original “vision” put forward by Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica in 2005. On the one hand, the negotiations enabled changes that challenged and went beyond the original “vision”. This has given rise to an understanding among some

negotiators and experts that REDD+ has been significantly transformed over the course of the negotiations (e.g., Angelsen and McNeill, 2012; interviews 1; 3). On the other hand, the process of document production also served to preserve important elements of the initial proposal – most notably, its primary focus on forests as carbon stocks. On this basis, other negotiators and commentators focus on the fundamental continuity in REDD+ (e.g., interview 6), and the marginalization of alternative approaches – or even de-politization – it has resulted in (e.g., Stephan, 2012; Stephan, Rothe and Methmann, 2014).

By showing in detail how the negotiations in paradoxical ways contribute to change and continuity at the same time, the thesis' detailed empirical investigation of the production of documents may thus offer a better understanding of REDD+ than what may be gained from an isolated reading of the final document. This, therefore, is the first part of my answer to the confused reader of “Decision 1/CP.16”. However, if the clues to a detailed understanding of REDD+ is not confined to the UN's most authoritative text on the topic, then where, precisely, are they to be found?

6.3. The REDD+ assemblage: Beyond documents

Bringing down the gavel on “Decision 1/CP.16”, the COP president brought into being an authoritative “global document” on REDD+, releasing it from the chain of documents from which it was produced. In a sense, the authority and global reach of the final document rests precisely on this dis-association with the previous documents in the chain. In accepting (against Bolivia's vocal protests) a document that rendered invisible the countries' disagreements and diverging interests, the governments of the world in effect came together to declare that the political will to establish REDD+ was stronger than any remaining differences. Thus, the importance of the adopted decision comes to reside, in part, in the instant “un-importance” of everything that preceded it (cf. Riles, 2006, p. 83).

In this respect, the “chain of documents” described in this thesis seems to differ fundamentally from the “chain of translations” that Bruno Latour (1999) describes when following scientific facts from the Amazon forest to the scientific literature. A crucial feature of Latour's chain is that it is “reversible”, allowing a re-tracing of every single transformation from the literature and back to the material realities it describes (Latour, 1999, p. 69). Similarly, Latour (2010) describes a “chain” of legal texts when following the production of facts in a court of law. While this differs in important respect from the scientific “chain of translations”, the court's “chain of obligations” (Latour, 2010, p. 222)

also retains its history, through the meticulous listing of the cases and judgements on which it builds. The adoption of a COP decision, by contrast, erases all of this. The quarrelling over brackets, the long nights with text “on the screen” in small meeting rooms around the world, and the many documents that were printed, circulated, discussed and picked apart – all of this is absent from the document that with the stroke of the president’s gavel suddenly appears final, authoritative, and global – as if it was set in stone.

And *yet it moves*. Yet there is more going on than what may be found in the text itself. The best way of illustrating this is by considering that although everybody “knows” that “Decision 1/CP.16” is about the approach to addressing deforestation known as “REDD+”, the acronym “REDD+” is itself not present anywhere in the document. Similarly, everybody “knows” that although one of very few footnotes throughout “Decision 1/CP.16” is dedicated to linking REDD+ to the “International Mother Earth Day”, REDD+ has in fact nothing to do with Mother Earth, Gaia, or any similar concepts – except as traces of a failed attempt to overcome Bolivia’s resistance. These are things you cannot read in the document; they are just things “you have to know” (interview 2).

This points to the fact that there is more coming out of the process of producing documents than just a final decision. Chapter 5 showed how the production of documents also draws together a community – a “REDD+ family” – that carries particular understandings of “what counts” and of who may legitimately take part in shaping and defining REDD+. This means that although the chain of documents preceding the final decision is rendered invisible as “Decision 1/CP.16” is adopted, the tacit knowledge and historically contingent understandings that resulted from the communal work on the chain lives on, carried forward by the “family” of diplomats who negotiated it.

This brings me to the other part of my answer to the confused reader of “Decision 1/CP.16”: The REDD+ assemblage that has taken shape through the production of documents in the UNFCCC is found, in part, in the adopted decision – the final link in the chain of documents. But it is also, in part, located outside of the documents altogether. It is also present in the community of REDD+ negotiators, many of whom are “the guys that are implementing on the ground at home” (interview 6) as well. Thus, “Decision 1/CP.16” is not likely to travel (for example) to the Indonesian province of Central Sulawesi on its own. Members of the “REDD+ family” will likely travel with it, carrying understandings that may limit how the document is read and how REDD+ is implemented. This nuances the point made above, about how “re-territorialization” and national circumstances may open new political spaces: Although many questions are left open by the text of “Decision 1/CP.16”,

an approach that goes too far in challenging the fundamental “vision” of REDD+ may in reality be deemed to be “the red among the purple” (interview 3), and thus constrained by the “family” that has been brought into being through the document production process.

The fact that REDD+ as resulting from the production of documents goes beyond the final decision, is one reason why I have talked about a “REDD+ assemblage”. Very concretely, what is drawn together in the document production process is an assemblage of heterogeneous elements that spans much broader than the final decision. It also includes the community that is formed, the practices and technical devices that will be employed when REDD+ is implemented “on the ground”, and the original “vision” with its problematization of deforestation as an issue of missing economic incentives to conserve forest carbon stocks.

This leads directly to another reason for using the term “assemblage”. Throughout the preceding chapters, I have shown how actors in the negotiations approached their task as one of assembling a specific governmental technology, while taking the underlying issue – the understanding of “deforestation” – more or less for granted. However, I have also shown how – as the REDD+ technology changed, expanded, and new elements were brought into it – the issue of deforestation also came to be modified in important ways. This shows how an issue and a technology for addressing it cannot be approached in isolation, as was the presumption when the Norwegian prime minister declared at COP 13 Bali that “the technology” of REDD+ was “well-known”. Rather, they must be seen as mutually constitutive, their various elements connected in myriad ways, as part of a broad and heterogeneous assemblage.

6.4. Conclusion: “The way of the ant”

Throughout the negotiation of “Decision 1/CP.16”, I have followed two contrary forces at work: The homogenizing force of the global approach that the UNFCCC requires, and the particularizing force of local forests, national circumstances, and the “very unique” situations that the politics of forests and forest peoples give rise to. This nuances the picture of a homogenous “mentality” or epistemic unity underlying the attempt to govern forests through REDD+. Through the production of documents, the negotiations open a political space in which the “vision” of REDD+ can be challenged and modified.

However, there are clearly limits to such challenges. The practice of producing documents has a limiting effect in that its strong “telos” of achieving a “clean text” continuously seeks to transform fundamental challenges into minor modifications that may

be handled within the existing problematization of the issue of deforestation. Another limit lies in the way the documents assemble a community around them – a “family” of REDD+ diplomats that are not only active in negotiations at UNFCCC meetings, but in many cases also in the work of implementing REDD+ in national political institutions.

While such limits to the flexibility of REDD+ as a technology clearly exist, and are likely to be closely connected to existing power structures and dominant mentalities of government, the approach taken in this thesis still resists the kind of sweeping statements about depoliticization and “anti-politics” that accompanies some of the governmentality literature on climate change and REDD+. Starting from the concrete practices through which “global” and “local” meets, my approach emphasizes how the outcomes of such meetings are shifting and contingent. Whether UNFCCC documents such as “Decision 1/CP.16” and their globalizing ambition in practice end up restricting politics, public involvement and radical challenges– or whether they in fact open up new spaces for local politics and contestation – becomes an empirical question that can only be answered by studying the concrete settings in which such documents are enacted.

This, however, is where I myself arrive at a limit – that is, the scope of this thesis. Studying the production of documents in the supposedly “global” setting of the UNFCCC, as I have done, will necessarily only provide part of the story about how documents bring “local” and “global” levels together. In order to get a more complete picture, these questions will have to be further studied in other sites and processes – for example, when local officials, activists, and indigenous peoples come together in a place like Palu, Indonesia, in order to bring their own forests, villages, and issues of land rights or food security into relation with the documents from a UN conference on the other side of the Pacific Ocean.

The limits to the possibility for generalizing from my analysis follows in part from the empirical and particularizing sensibilities of the material-semiotic approach that I have pursued. According to Bruno Latour, these sensibilities have the effect of transforming the analyst into precisely what the acronym of actor-network theory – ANT – suggests: “a blind, myopic, workaholic, trail-sniffing, and collective traveller. An ant writing for other ants” (Latour, 2005, p. 9). If this is so, what can an “ant” ever hope to contribute to our understanding of efforts to govern deforestation through “global documents”, and the relationship between the local and the global in climate politics more generally? Are contributions like this thesis doomed to be confined within the myopic and particularizing role of descriptive documentation, insisting on a contingency and heterogeneity that negates any claim to relevance beyond the specific case in question?

Andrew Barry (2001, p. 12) remarks that the inclination in Science and Technology Studies (STS) to build theoretical arguments on studies of specific cases has contributed to reducing STS to a “specialist field” that is seen as rather marginal by scholars in disciplines such as International Relations (IR). However, as the IR literature is increasingly turning to practices in order to understand, for example, how diplomats and multilateral negotiations shape world politics, the STS approach of theorizing through case-studies, and thinking theory through materiality and practice, should be of more than marginal interest. In this context, the detailed study that this thesis offers of the REDD+ negotiations in the UNFCCC may be of value not only as an addition to the current literature’s somewhat limited treatment of this topic, but also as an illustration of what a material-semiotic approach to documents and diplomacy might offer the “practice turn” in IR more generally.

However, I would argue that the potential contribution of such an approach need not be limited to the academic endeavour of “ants writing for other ants”. Incidentally, according to Tania Murray Li, “the way of the ant” is also an idiom among Indonesian political activists, indicating a way of “conducting a political campaign indirectly by identifying small openings and digging tiny paths, winning by persistence” (Li, 2007b, pp. 283–284). This, I find, gives reasons to hope for a more “applied” or practical value of the approach I have pursued as well.

What I have sought to show through this thesis is that approaching REDD+ by way of the production of documents allows for an understanding of how global, de-territorializing approaches to governing the climate is not only closing down, but also simultaneously opening up spaces for politics and contestation. Hence, we cannot rule out the possibility that governmental technologies like REDD+ in paradoxical ways might end up empowering – instead of sidelining or marginalizing – actors such as local officials, indigenous activists, or environmental NGOs in places like Central Sulawesi – or the Congo Basin, or the Brazilian Amazon. If this is the case, then surely there is a need for a thorough understanding of the specific practices that may limit as well as allow political engagement with projects to govern “globally”.

If the laborious and myopic work of analysing such practices cannot produce the generalizable insights of “grand theory”, then at least it might be useful in pointing to some of the “small openings” and “tiny paths” through which change may be achieved?

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Appendix I. List of analysed documents

List of documents in UN archives

The official documents that were analysed for this thesis are retrievable from the UNFCCC document database, at <http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/items/3595.php> (visited 13 March 2016). The list below is alphabetical, and includes the official document number, the title as stated in the document, and date of issuance.

FCCC/AWGLCA/2008/16 – Ideas and proposals on paragraph 1 of the Bali Action Plan.

Note by the Chair. 20 November 2008.

FCCC/AWGLCA/2008/16/Rev.1 – Ideas and proposals on paragraph 1 of the Bali Action

Plan. Revised note by the Chair. 10 December 2008.

FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/8 – Negotiating text. Note by the chair. 19 May 2009.

FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/14 – Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term

Cooperative Action under the Convention on its seventh session, held in Bangkok (...) and Barcelona (...). 20 November 2009.

FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1 – Revised negotiating text. Note by the secretariat.

22 June 2009.

FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.2 – Reordering and consolidation of text in the revised

negotiating text. Note by the secretariat. 15 September 2009.

FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/L.7/Add.6 – Outcome of the work of the AWG-LCA. Draft

conclusions proposed by the Chair. Addendum: Draft decision -/CP.15. Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (...). 15 December 2009.

FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/MISC.4/Add.2 – Ideas and proposals on the elements contained in

paragraph 1 of the Bali Action Plan. Submissions from Parties. 31 May 2009.

FCCC/AWGLCA/2010/6 – Text to facilitate negotiations among Parties. Note by the Chair.
17 May 2010.

FCCC/AWGLCA/2010/8 – Text to facilitate negotiations among Parties. Note by the Chair.
09 July 2010.

FCCC/AWGLCA/2010/14 – Negotiating text. Note by the secretariat. 13 August 2010.

FCCC/AWGLCA/2010/CRP.1 – Possible elements of the outcome. Note by the Chair.
24 November 2010.

FCCC/AWGLCA/2010/CRP.2 – Possible elements of the outcome. Note by the Chair.
04 December 2010.

FCCC/AWGLCA/2010/CRP.3 – Elements of the outcome. Note by the Chair.
08 December 2010.

FCCC/CP/2005/MISC.1 – Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries:
approaches to stimulate action. Submissions from Parties. 11 November 2005.

FCCC/CP/2007/6/Add.1 – Report of the Conference of the Parties on its thirteenth session,
held in Bali (...). Addendum: Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties.
14 March 2008.

FCCC/CP/2009/11/Add.1 – Report of the Conference of the Parties on its fifteenth session,
held in Copenhagen (...). Addendum: Decisions adopted by the Conference of the
Parties. 30 March 2010.

FCCC/CP/2010/2 – Work undertaken by the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth session
on the basis of the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative
Action under the Convention. 11 February 2010.

FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1 – Report of the Conference of the Parties on its sixteenth session,
held in Cancun (...). Addendum: Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties.
15 March 2011.

List of documents in private archive

All the documents in private archive that were analysed for this thesis are available upon request. The list below is chronological, with reference numbers assigned by me.

<i>Ref. #</i>	<i>Title as stated in document</i>	<i>Date (time)</i>
1/2009	Work on the AWG-LCA Revised NT. Intersessional informal consultations. Paragraphs 106 to 128 of the Annex to FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1	13.08.2009 (15:45)
2/2009	Guide to consolidated text for paragraph 1(b) (iii)	13.08.2009 (23:30)
3/2009	Revised annex III A to document FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.2. Non-paper by the facilitator (Non-paper no. 11)	03.10.2009 (12:00)
4/2009	Revised annex III A to document FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.2. Non-paper by the facilitator (Non-paper no. 18)	08.10.2009 (10:00)
5/2009	Revised annex III A to document FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.2. Non-paper by the facilitator (Non-paper no. 18)	08.10.2009 (11:00)
6/2009	Draft text. Proposed by the facilitator (Non-paper no. 39)	15.11.2009 (13:30)
7/2009	Draft text. Proposed by the facilitator (Non-paper no. 39) [Re-issued for technical reasons]	15.11.2009 (19:00)
8/2009	Draft legal text for 1 b(iii) (REDD) - short version. Draft legal text on REDD+ (long version)	(Undated)
9/2009	Doc. FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/14 [Reprint of REDD+ section]	(Undated)
10/2009	Draft text on AWG-LCA 8, item 3. Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to (...) [REDD+]	11.12.2009 (19:30)
11/2009	Draft text on AWG-LCA 8, item 3. Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to (...) [REDD+]	14.12.2009 (15:00)
12/2009	Draft text on AWG-LCA 8, item 3. Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to (...) [REDD+]	15.12.2009 (09:00)
13/2009	Draft text on AWG-LCA 8, item 3. Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to (...) [REDD+]	15.12.2009 (18:00)
1/2010	Advance draft of a revised text to facilitate negotiations among Parties, to be issued as an official document (...)	10.06.2010 (22:30)
2/2010	Draft text	09.12.2010
3/2010	Draft text. Note by the President	10.12.2010 (16:00)

Appendix II. List of interviews

Interview 1	REDD+ negotiator representing a European country (Annex I)
Interview 2	REDD+ negotiator representing an Asian country (Non-Annex I)
Interview 3	Former REDD+ negotiator representing a Latin American country (Non-Annex I)
Interview 4	Former REDD+ negotiator representing a North American country (Annex I)
Interview 5	Former REDD+ negotiator representing a European country (Annex I)
Interview 6	REDD+ negotiator representing a Latin American country (Non-Annex I)

Appendix III. Consent letter and interview guide

UiO : **TIK Centre for Technology, Innovation and Culture**
University of Oslo

Participation in research project: «Deforestation as an object of global governance»

Background

The research project «Deforestation as an object of global governance: Technologies of governance in the negotiation of a 'global text'» aims to investigate how negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has contributed to establishing deforestation in tropical countries as a central concern in global climate governance. It focuses on UNFCCC decisions dealing with «Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation» (REDD+), and to what extent the practical procedures and technologies that were used in negotiating these texts played a role in shaping the outcome of negotiations.

The research is undertaken as part of a MA degree at the TIK Centre for Technology, Innovation and Culture, part of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Oslo. It is carried out by Bård Lahn, MA student, and supervised by Prof. Kristin Asdal, PhD. The project will result in a thesis submitted to the University of Oslo. Further publications on the basis of the thesis might also be envisaged. The research project is undertaken independently, and has no relations to the Government of Norway or to any other governments or institutions.

Your participation

You are asked to participate in this project as an informant based on your role in the UNFCCC process during the negotiation of the REDD+ chapter of decision 1/CP.16, from 2008 to 2010. The participation will consist of an interview of approximately 60 minutes. Questions during the interview will concern, *inter alia*, the process of negotiating a decision under the UNFCCC, the development of positions and alliances during the negotiation of REDD+ in decision 1/CP.16, the role played by chairs, facilitators and secretariat in that process, and the development of central concepts in the decision text such as «safeguards», «national/subnational», and «forest reference levels/reference emission levels».

Care will be taken to anonymize informants and to keep interview data confidential. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings and transcripts will be kept by the student, and will only be accessible by student and supervisor. In the final thesis and any other publications resulting from the research, informants will be identified through a general description of their role only (e.g. «former negotiator of Annex I country»). When the project ends (tentatively in May 2016) transcripts will be similarly anonymized and all recordings will be deleted.



**TIK Centre for Technology,
Innovation and Culture**
P.O. Box 1108 Blindern, NO 0317 Oslo
www.sv.uio.no/tik/

Further information

Participation in the project is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw your consent for participation at any time, without stating any reason. If you decide to withdraw, all your personal data will be made anonymous.

The study has been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

If you have any further questions concerning the project, please do not hesitate to contact Bård Lahn (baardll@student.uio.no) or Prof. Kristin Asdal (kristin.asdal@tik.uio.no).

With heartfelt thanks for your contribution,

Bård Lahn
MA student, TIK Centre for Technology, Innovation and Culture



Consent for participation

I have received information about the project «Deforestation as an object of global governance», and I am willing to participate as an informant on the basis of the terms outlined above.

(Signed by participant, date)

REDD and Decision 1/CP.16 – revised interview guide

The content of the text

- What were the main issues as you saw them back in 2008/2009?
- What issues arose during the negotiations, and why?
 - Subnational – who / why
 - Rights, safeguards – who / why
- What were the expectations for REDD in the Copenhagen outcome?
- How would you say those expectations changed after Copenhagen?
- Early concepts that disappeared: Why / how / when
 - Global reference level
 - Quantified global goals
 - The idea of a "mechanism", including eligibility criteria, graduation between phases, a board established by the COP, etc
 - Financing for phase 3, including options for funds or markets
 - Reference levels based on objective criteria, an independent expert body, emissions only, a specified adjustment factor...

The process of negotiations

- How does one start negotiating a text – filling the blank page?
 - The «ideas and proposals» text based on submissions
 - First amalgamation texts: Lack of coherence, chaos of unconnected words and phrases. How were these texts approached?
 - Level of specificity – first texts had a lot of detail. Was this seen as realistic?
 - The Norwegian legal text proposal
- The REDD community/family: What is the significance?
- Relationship to the bigger picture: How did the AWG-LCA impact on REDD?
 - AWG-LCA vs SBSTA
 - Negotiating time (Too little in 2008-2009, too much in 2010?)
 - The REDD community and the LCA chair: How were the different amalgamation texts received and used?
 - Was the «ideas and proposals» text based on submissions of any use at all?
 - Near-final decision text in final hours of Copenhagen. After this, in 2010, a new short-version REDD text pops up as part of mitigation chapter. Why/how?
- Relationship between negotiations and other fora – eg REDD partnership meeting in parallel with UNFCCC sessions



