

## **Turning Tensions into Synergies for Collective Actions in Forest Governance:**

### ***Implications for REDD+<sup>1</sup>***

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#### *Abstract*

Forest governance proceeds in the context of interdependent ecological and social systems. It becomes problematic when the actors' differing and often competing interests and values produce tensions and tradeoffs. This paper presents case studies of forest protected areas in the Philippines - a country shaped by its colonial and post-colonial past, intertwined with the complexity of its present local socio-ecological systems. It points out the dilemmas in the process of carrying out conservation and development mechanism, elucidates the sources of tensions, and suggests how deliberation strategizes to counteract them and contribute to building synergies needed for collective actions. The relevant local-national-global governance interactions, and the forest-poverty nexus in the country typify the social fabric in many other places in the developing world; the paper thus highlights lessons that can potentially inform forest governance decisions in other developing countries. This is additionally important as interest on market-based mechanism heightens, especially in light of a country's readiness to REDD or REDD+.

Keywords: forest governance, protected areas, deliberation, collective action, Philippines, REDD

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## 1. Introduction

The increasing recognition that forest loss leads to profound negative costs to society in terms of forgone goods and services has reinforced the exigency to protect the forests. While on one hand, the sustainability of essential ecological processes and life support systems in forest areas is threatened, on the other hand, the security of a just and dignified livelihood of the people living in and around forests and protected areas is at stake. Reconciling claims from ecological and social systems immediately leads us to face issues of politics and governance – the structures and processes by which societies share power, and shape individual and collective actions (Young 1992). The question therefore arises, “What forest governance features best promote both ecological and human wellbeing?”

Forest policies have been a focus of global concern for a quarter of a century already since the loss and degradation of tropical forests first began to command the international community’s attention. During this period, there has been an evolving focus on forest governance (McDermott et al., 2010). In the Philippines in particular, an approach involving ‘telling people what to do’ or ‘keeping them out’ was observed to have gradually changed to one of ‘bringing them in’ as partners in conservation initiatives in the last three decades. The significant resources and rethinking that have transformed forest policy in the country have not realized their environmental goals, although certain policies, programs, and projects associated with participatory conservation have clearly fared better than their ‘top-down’ or authoritarian predecessors (Bagadion, Jr. et al., 2000). But then even high profile programs linked to the participatory approach have had, at best, mixed results (Utting, 2000).

The challenge in trying to understand the coupled social and ecological systems that all forest governance represents “urgently needs more emphasis and attention than it has received until now” (Agrawal et al. 2008, p.1461). This paper presents findings from a comparative case study of three forest protected areas in the Philippines. The research is particularly relevant in addressing the forest sustainability and human security dilemma in the country’s context which faces the daunting task of uplifting the forest dependent poor while at the same time conserving its forests. The dilemma is not unique to the Philippines, and so there should be lessons from the cases we examine for situations elsewhere in the world. The governance mechanisms in the three forest protected areas involved in the study vary in their performance and all present challenges as well as opportunities for the governing actors to manage. As the cases reveal, each of the mechanism’s features largely determine the quality of outcomes. In this paper, we compare forest governance features and outcomes *across* the cases and highlight what the empirical findings suggest about patterns or trends associated to forest management and conservation. One of the propositions we test is that polycentric, collaborative governance leads to better performance in both ecological and social terms (see Lebel et al. 2006; Innes and Booher 2003).

We begin with a background on Philippines forests, followed by the methodology employed in this research before providing the results and their implications for the Reduced Emission from Avoided Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) or more particularly, the REDD+<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Enhancing forest carbon stocks is added to REDD, and it tries to address both conservation & development goals.

## 2. Traversing the Socio - Ecological Landscape of the Philippines' Forests

The Philippines is an archipelago of over 7000 islands with a total land area of 29.8 million hectares, and a population of over 94 million people (World Bank 2011). Its forests have potentially high ecological and human life-support values, but as the following discussions demonstrate, they have been degraded over time. The country contains “one of the highest levels of diversity and endemism of life forms and some of the most unique habitats in the world”,<sup>5</sup> but is now experiencing a very high rate of biodiversity loss (Wood et al 2000; IUCN 2011).

The Philippines has been among the Southeast Asian countries<sup>6</sup> displaying a high rate of deforestation for many decades now. Historically, it was the first major log-producing country in Asia. In the early 1950s, it was South East Asia's largest timber exporter, joined by Malaysia a few years later and by Indonesia around 1965 (see van den Top 2003). During the 1965-1975 logging boom in the country, recorded timber extraction from its natural mixed dipterocarp forests peaked at 10-15 million m<sup>3</sup> in 1969, generating foreign exchange earnings of over US\$300 million. In the same year, logs and lumber were the biggest single export earner for the Philippines, delivering 33 per cent of total exports. However, the forests reached a point of near depletion in the later 1980s: and the number of corporate logging concessions in the country had significantly decreased, from 154 to 31 between 1987 and 1994. In 1998, the Philippines became the world's eighth largest importer of tropical hardwoods, spending US\$165 million per year to buy 700,000 m<sup>3</sup> of logs in the international markets.

The significant decline in the country's forest industry is reflected in its forest loss. Forest covered about 90 per cent of the total land area when the Spaniards first came to the Philippines in 1521; it had decreased to nearly 70 per cent by 1900, 49 per cent by 1950 and 18 per cent by 1994 (Environment Management Bureau 1996). Indigenous forests now cover less than 8.6 per cent of total land mass; the drop in forest cover from 70 per cent at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been described as one of the most rapid forest losses over the past decades recorded anywhere in the world (Heaney 2007 in Mayo-Anda 2011). The present deforestation rate is 55,000 hectares per year, and the extent of the remaining forests is 7,665,000 hectares (FAO 2011) with primary forests covering an area of 800,000 ha (Tan 2001 in Romero 2006).

Some scholars cite evidence for an exploitation phase lasting over a century in the country; such a phase is characterized by a government mainly concerned with maximizing revenue from

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<sup>5</sup>It hosts 40,000 species of existing wildlife (Wood et al 2000). It is home to an estimated 38, 600 forest-dependent species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish. Of these, 33 species of mammals, 57 birds, 28 reptiles, 48 amphibians, 1 fish, 8 arthropods and 31 plants found in forests are listed as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable on the IUCN red list of threatened species (IUCN 2011).

<sup>6</sup>A net increase in forest area reported at the regional level in Asia-Pacific notwithstanding, Southeast Asian countries experienced the largest decline in forests area in the last 10 years, with an annual net loss of more than 0.9 million hectares despite the fact that it has the highest percentage of forest within protected areas in the region in the same period (FAO 2011). It is estimated that Southeast Asia alone was responsible for 12% of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2000, with emissions rising twice as fast as the global average during 1990-2000. Land use change, including deforestation, accordingly accounts for 75% of this sub-region's greenhouse gas emissions. It is posited that any effort to limit the region's carbon footprint cannot gain credence without strong attention to this source (ADB 2010).

logging timber or with promoting agricultural expansion, and exploitation as the main goal of both stated and actual policies (Grainger and Malayang 2006). Pulhin (2002) argues that forest policy in the Philippines has been continuously revised to suit the changing priorities and needs of the country in relation to the goods and services provided by the forests. As in most tropical forests, government intervention plays a crucial role, having classified all forest land in the country under its jurisdiction. From Asia's most bountiful provider of rainforest timber during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to a net importer of timber, the country's record of one of the highest deforestation rates in the world can be linked to the history of its forest policy trends.<sup>7</sup> Analyses from other researchers also argue that agricultural expansion, economic development policy (Romero 2006), weak enforcement of existing forestry laws, mismanagement, and abuses including corruption (Mayo-Anda 2011; also Dahal and Capistrano 2006) are the key drivers of the country's deforestation.

### *Forest Ecosystem Sustainability and Socio-Economic Security Nexus*

Considering the scale of forest loss experienced by the Philippines in the past 50 years, and the gravity of several natural disasters that its people attribute to this deforestation, there have been increasing calls for forest protection including a total log ban. With this has come a re-visioning of forests as much more than a source of timber, giving more recognition of the ecological services they provide and the traditional forest-based cultures they can sustain (Changchui 2008). At present, the country's remaining forests continue to be a significant source of socio-economic value. Beyond the government revenues that the sector generates, many people still depend on forests for livelihoods; food security and survival are a fundamental part of the relationship of millions of Filipinos with the environment (Walpole 2008). An estimated one-third of the country's population lives below the poverty line; about 25 million Filipinos live in upland areas, half of them occupying forestlands and dependent on them for subsistence uses as well as traditional and customary lifestyles. Among the country's least advantaged populace are the 12 million indigenous peoples who live in various forest, lowland, and coastal areas. Both non-indigenous and indigenous peoples in many forest areas have limited means of earning cash and a substantial number of them therefore engage in unregistered logging or rattan extraction (Blaser et al. 2011). In the Philippines, like in many other countries in Southeast Asia, poverty is largely at the center of the continuity of illegal forest activities (Inoguchi et al. 2005).

Many people also look to the Philippines' forests for their conservation values: their roles in maintaining biodiversity, providing water, improving air quality, protection against flooding and landslides, and mitigating climate change. Given the receding biodiversity in the country, forest conservation has been a key objective in many efforts, including the declaration of forest protected areas (PAs). In the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992, protected areas are defined as "identified portions of land and water set aside by reason of their unique physical and biological significance, managed to enhance biological diversity and

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<sup>7</sup>The Colonial period's (1521-1945) introduction of the Regalian Doctrine during the Spanish era paved the way for mechanized logging during the American rule. Severe deforestation continued with the entry of the Japanese, with the country's forest resources being heavily exploited for war purposes. The granting of timber license agreements (TLAs) in the post-colonial period (1946-1970s) saw the Philippines' forest decline heading the list of countries within the Asia-Pacific region under the Marcos regime (1965-1986). There has been a policy shift towards local participation from the late 1980s to the present (Pulhin 2002; see also La Vina et al. 2010).

protected against destructive human exploitation”.<sup>8</sup> Considering both the NIPAS Act and its Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations, the primary goal of protected area establishment is biodiversity conservation (especially endemic species) in the context of sustainable development (La Vina et al. 2010).

More recently, along with the growing international consensus that policies to address climate change must include measures to curb deforestation, is an increasing interest from the country in participating in the ‘reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation’ (REDD) mechanism. Philippine forests make both positive and negative contributions to climate change. They have been sources of carbon (C) emissions as a result of deforestation in the past, but research has shown that they could be net sinks of C in the present and in the future (Lasco and Pulhin 2000). The country has a relatively high potential for the enhancement of carbon sinks (Blaser et al. 2011).

From what was initially put forward as primarily a means of mitigating climate change by avoiding deforestation, other expectations associated with REDD such as poverty reduction are steadily rising. As a participant in UN REDD and the REDD+ Partnership, the country’s REDD process is designed as a mechanism which goes beyond the aim of increasing carbon stocks. It emphasizes “delivering co-benefits such as biodiversity conservation, ecological restoration and equitable benefit sharing” (ibid., p.238). The government and civil society are collaborating to develop the ‘Philippine National REDD+ Strategy’, combining forest protection with objectives on ecological values and improvements in local livelihoods (Mayo-Anda 2011).

Integrating livelihood objectives is particularly significant in the country’s context given that the main factor hindering its climate change mainstreaming in key development plans and programs in the recent past, was its national priorities’ bias towards more pressing concerns associated with poverty issues (Lasco et al. 2008). The country has a per capita income of only \$3513 a year (FAO 2011), and it ranks 112<sup>th</sup> in the world in the human development index (UNDP 2011). REDD+ is seen by many development and funding agencies to offer “an important new approach to both climate change mitigation and the financing of sustainable rural development” in the forested countries of the region, recognizing ecosystem service valuation as needed to curb Asian deforestation (ADB 2010; Win 2011). Even with the Philippines’s current enthusiasm for REDD+, what could look most attractive if viewed through local people’s lenses, is not necessarily the idea of carbon mitigation from avoided further forest loss and forest degradation, but rather the perceived potential for rural development attached to an environmental aim.

### *Forest Conservation and Poverty Reduction as a Challenge*

Reconciling ecological and livelihood values in aiming for forest conservation and poverty reduction, respectively, has been, and is still, a problem. This has already been a theme in many efforts in the Philippines, especially following the 1986 EDSA revolution and the demise of the Marcos regime when a strong social and environmental movement pushed for drastic reforms in

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<sup>8</sup> This is close to IUCN’s current definition of a protected area, which is a ‘clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values’ (IUCN 2012), although the latter is explicit in its recognition of the cultural dimension of nature.

policies regarding natural resource extraction, indigenous peoples' rights and biodiversity conservation. The concept of 'decentralization, people's participation and recognition of the socio-political dimension of forestry moved into mainstream of policy formulation'. Both the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claims and the NIPAS Act of 1992 were enacted. In 1993, the Community Forestry Programme (CFP) was established recognizing that upland poverty alleviation, social justice and equity in resource distribution, and forest sustainability can be achieved through community forestry. In 1995, the community-based forest management (CBFM) programme was institutionalized, and in 1996 was established as the national strategy for sustainable forest management and social equity in the Philippine uplands (Pulhin 2002; see also Walpole et al. 1993). CBFM has now covered an area of around 5.7 million hectares of forest land, involving 496,000 households (DENR 2001 in Grainger and Malayang 2006). Such efforts at decentralizing environmental management in the Philippines have contributed to some democratization by changing relationships between villages, local and provincial governments and the state. Whether or not this development has contributed to good outcomes in both ecological and social terms is, however, a different story. Despite the country's decentralization program being carefully prepared, well documented, and generally based on sound principles, the record of implementation has been mixed (Utting 2000).

The twin goals of forest conservation and poverty alleviation are also at the core of several external interventions. Global factors affect decisions and actions relating to the country's forest utilization and management. Provision of funds and technical support serve as the international funding institutions' instruments of influence (Pulhin 2002), instruments that have contributed to shaping how state and civil society partnerships manage national parks. Two relatively recent innovations in protected area establishment which were driven by international funders and the national government in 1980s-1990s were the Integrated Protected Areas System (IPAS), and the National Integrated Protected Areas Program (NIPAP). The IPAS was specifically aimed to (1) conserve the integrity of ecosystems to sustain resource productivity and (2) safeguard the culture and wellbeing of cultural communities situated in the national integrated protected area system. Worth noting is that the IPAS was contained in the national conservation strategy that sought to identify, designate, and protect 'biodiversity hot spots' (World Bank 1989). The Philippine Strategy for Sustainable Development was used as IPAS' policy and legal framework, and thereafter, the NIPAS Act took effect in 1992. Despite such an enabling policy environment in addressing both environmental and developmental goals, Dressler (2009) argues that during phase 1 of the establishment of the IPAS, the Act's "priority was to protect biodiversity and forests at the expense of indigenous rights".

The Conservation of Priority Protected Areas Project (CPPAP) constitutes phase 2 of the IPAS establishment. Supporting the project was a World Bank Global Environment Facility (GEF) grant of US\$20 million, which lasted from 1994 until 2002. It was geared towards the following objectives: protecting ten priority areas of high biodiversity value; improving protected area management through strengthening the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR); incorporating local people into the management structure, and establishing permanent funding mechanisms; confirming the tenure of indigenous cultural communities; and developing sustainable forms of livelihood consistent with biodiversity protection (World Bank 1994). Its overall goal is to improve both ecological and social systems in selected forest protected areas for the benefit of forests and people. Anchored in the institutional framework of the NIPAS Act,

the project brought representatives of central and local governments, NGOs, and indigenous cultural communities together under a ‘partnership’ constituting the Protected Area Management Boards, or PAMBs which are authorized by law to make management decisions for the individual Protected Areas (PAs). The PAMB can be seen as a form of institutionalized participation of non-state actors in a government-hosted forest governance mechanism. The multi-stakeholder nature of the membership of this key governing body implies its potential to be more inclusive in accommodating interests and views, a function which is vital in environmental decision-making. As the case studies in the following sections reveal however, this does not guarantee good performance, with some protected areas showing disastrous outcomes.

More than 14 years have passed since the NIPAS Act came into force. In terms of results from associated projects on ecological wellbeing, some researchers argue that despite investments by government agencies, other non-state organizations, international development banks and other global donors, forest cover and other important habitats in the country continue to decline, and such rapid deforestation points to significant loss of biodiversity (Wood et al. 2000). Foreign money and fast tracking reforestation in the past have had poor outcomes. As Walpole (2008) posits, “no one says there is an increase in real forest cover in the Philippines. Maybe there is an increase in the number of trees, but it is not the forest we idealize, romanticize, log, or even live in”. Looking into the human dimension on the other hand, we note that the IPAS objectives sought to conserve forests while safeguarding the culture and wellbeing of cultural communities in the protected areas system. Although this policy shift was unprecedented and cause for optimism, considerable uncertainty remains over whether such policies could be properly implemented on the ground (Dressler et al 2006); and again, the last decade has shown that a great number of initiatives have not succeeded in making policies and their implementation work for both forests and people.

There are 244 formally declared protected areas in the Philippines, comprising 3,225,777 has (Global Forest Watch 2002) of large natural parks, landscapes and seascapes, wildlife sanctuaries and small watersheds, although according to Senga (2001), fewer than a quarter of these receive some form of protection either through foreign funding or local initiatives. Coxhead (2002 in Verburg et al 2006) observe that even in cases when most forestry activities are barred from the protected areas, the government has been ambivalent in enforcing these laws, partly due to the higher priority given to economic growth. Poor local communities are often at the crossroads of these competing interests; their needs and other circumstances are either sacrificed, or used in strengthening a justification behind the prioritization of national development agendas as well as global goals without genuinely addressing their own.

With the growing recognition of the significance of civil society’s involvement and local participation in resource management, community-based and other decentralized approaches have been introduced in many initiatives, from the earlier implementation of the NIPAS, the CBFM program, to the more recent REDD+. All these are designed to reconcile ecological and livelihood values. The Philippines experience, however, shows that using state-led protected areas, or community-managed forests, is not a panacea. Several scholars highlight some gloomy scenarios or uncertainties in their implementation (Utting 2000; Pulhin 2002, Walpole 2008). While there are some success stories one can hear around the country, effectiveness of various strategies in shaping collective outcomes for both ecological and human wellbeing remains a big question both in theory and in practice. This contradiction is yet to be resolved and so

problematic governance and poor outcomes continue on a large scale. Given the challenges faced and the prospects that community-managed areas in general hold, some scholars strongly suggest that further research and development efforts are necessary to identify and address the existing obstacles holding back the implementation of sustainable management practices in a community context (Porter-Bolland et al. 2011). The Philippines is not alone in this, so there should be lessons from the case study results that are applicable elsewhere in the world.

Finding the institutional arrangements that can work for both environment and development goals in a conservation mechanism can indeed be a daunting task. Lessons from failures in some past initiatives, however, point to the necessity of incorporating these twin goals along with meaningful and transformative community engagements. Massive deforestation has depleted the once lush tropical rainforests of the Philippines, but like many other developing countries, it faces the big challenge of meeting the needs of its poor while preserving its natural resource base. To address both these objectives on forest protection and poverty alleviation, the Philippines has tried and tested participatory, people-centred, and community-based approaches in different ways and settings. Despite the country's relatively long experience in decentralized programs, successful forest management and conservation have never been guaranteed, with relevant projects often exhibiting mixed outcomes in relation to their stated objectives (Utting 2000).

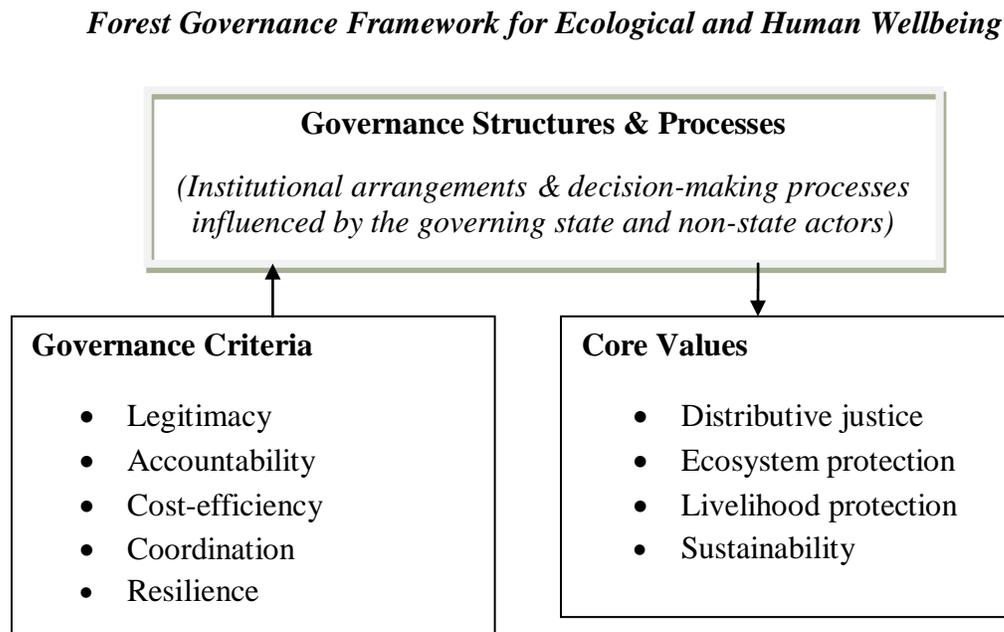
The Philippines case highlights the question of what dynamics drive social actors toward good forest governance. The different features of such mechanism need further analysis in order to better understand how social interactions are shaped and to identify the factors affecting socio-ecological outcomes. This study explores the dynamics driving forest land management and conservation in protected areas in the context of a developing country. In the Philippines, a range of policy instruments devolving authority of forest management to communities and other members of the civil society has been introduced in the last three decades (see Edmunds and Wollenberg 2001; Pulhin 2002). The long and diverse experiences of the country in experimenting with concepts and practices of decentralization, community forestry, and 'people-centred development' in the forestry sector, provide a fertile ground from which we draw several cases exhibiting different governance modes, and providing ample scope for deeper understanding of the forest protection–rural development interface..

### **3. Methodology**

In trying to investigate and understand forest governance, this research is both *institutional* and *interpretative* in its approach which is compatible with the comparative case study method employed. It is largely empirical but is infused with theoretical perspectives given that the "hermeneutic reconstruction of social problems cannot be achieved through purely empirical research operations in any case"; our normative judgements as researchers is unavoidable (see Scharpf, 1978: 349). It traces, and analyses features of governance mechanisms involving state and non-state actors in authoritative decision-making processes and their relationship with governance outcomes. In examining how the attributes of governance arrangements and processes influence the capacity of the social-ecological systems in addressing conservation and development goals, we use the following criteria: 1) *Legitimacy*, 2) *Accountability*, 3) *Cost-efficiency*, 4) *Coordination*, and 5) *Resilience*. We then looked into the governance features'

impact on distributive justice, livelihood protection, ecosystem protection, and sustainability (see figure 1).

Figure 1



For purposes of this study, we use the following definitions:

#### *Governance Criteria*

1. *Legitimacy*. Those who are governed accept the intervention as appropriate in terms of its processes, as well as its perceived potential outcome.
2. *Accountability*. To be accountable is to be held responsible; accountability includes the extent to which there is clarity about the roles of various institutions in decision-making; there is systematic monitoring of sector operations and processes; and the basis for basic decisions is clear or justified.
3. *Cost-efficiency*. I use the notion of cost-efficiency which focuses on costs in terms of time, money, effort, and other resources spent in decision-making; I do not use the welfare economist's notion of efficiency in utilitarian social welfare terms as this aggregates too many questions of livelihood and wellbeing into one measure.
4. *Coordination*. This refers to the extent to which various agencies and actors, whose decisions impact upon forests, are adopting coordinated strategies to obtain higher joint benefits or reduce their joint harm.
5. *Resilience*. The ability of the mechanism to steer human and ecological systems back to normal operating range in the face of severe ecological problems (Dryzek, 1987).

The five criteria used in examining forest governance mechanisms perform interdependently in shaping outcomes. While legitimacy, accountability, cost-efficiency, and coordination are necessary conditions in good forest governance, we consider ‘resilience’ as contingent, that is, required only when “one commences from a situation of fundamental disequilibrium” (Dryzek, 1987:54). As necessary conditions, a combination of the first four features is essential in all forest governance mechanisms if the aim is to have structures and processes that will facilitate the maintenance, or enhancement of the capacity of the social-ecological systems in promoting both ecological and human wellbeing. In order to benefit both forests and people, these criteria must, in addition, be anchored on the values as defined below.

### *Core Values*

1. *Distributive Justice.* The fair distribution of benefits and burdens to the least advantaged peoples in the course of protected area management and conservation.
2. *Ecosystem Protection.* Conservation of forests for the purpose of sustaining or enhancing the generation of ecosystem services and products.
3. *Livelihood Protection.* Protection of the local communities’ access to the benefits derived from the use of forests and forestlands through conversion of forests to other uses, direct use of forest products, and indirect environmental services (Tacconi, 2007), which support subsistence consumption, cash income, agricultural inputs, input to industries, or input to capital formation.
4. *Sustainability.* The use and management of the resource for maximum long-term benefit.

We employ case studies to investigate what governance features best promote both ecological and human wellbeing within particular ecological settings and social configurations. We have chosen three forest protected areas in the Philippines , namely: the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park in the North (360,000 has.), Mt. Kitanglad Range Natural Park in the South (47,270 has.), and Mt. Kanlaon Natural Park (24, 557 has.)in the central part of the country.

Case selection was facilitated by some preliminary knowledge of the cases supported by relevant literature. The cases were selected with a view that they are most likely crucial in generating findings that can contribute in building or critiquing governance theories as well as in formulating propositions. Driven by our interest to understand deeper the environmental protection – rural development interface, we chose three forest protected areas whose governance mechanisms cover the two-pronged goal of protecting the forests and improving the local livelihoods.

Furthermore, we chose them on the bases of their significance in terms of biological diversity and their differences in governance approaches. The three are among the ten priority protected areas in the country identified as highly significant for biodiversity conservation; they are all characterized by the presence of indigenous and other forest-dependent peoples; and are sites of environment and development programs.. As such, they have all been initially provided with major funding support from global actors.

The three cases are, in theory, all under a decentralized government-coordinated multi-stakeholder governance system; this is however muddled in practice. They exhibit evident variations in their modes of governing. In what appears to be a dominant characteristic, the Sierra Madre case is more ‘donor-driven’; the Kitanglad more ‘networked’; and the Kanlaon is relatively ‘state-dominated’.These distinctions proved to be important especially in illustrating

how processes and practices can differ even at these selected cases covered under the same policy instruments. We could have chosen forest protected areas that are community-controlled, government-managed, or one with co-management employed respectively if only to present stark differences in terms of governance modes, but then by doing so, we will run the risk of explaining performance relative to these arrangements which is not our objective as it potentially undermines the specific processes and approaches employed within each; the institutional hardware alone does not determine how the mechanism performs. Conventional debates focusing on pure modes of governance in which state, market, or community actors play the leading role – fall short of the capacity needed to address them considering the complexity and multi-scalar character of many of the most pressing environmental problems (Lemos and Agrawal 2006).

Moreover, what typifies a declared protected area in the country is one that is managed under the intertwining of many strands of control, such as in the case of the government-hosted multi-stakeholder body that governs most of the Philippines protected areas like the cases under investigation. We wanted to examine and highlight how the seemingly subtle distinctions in governance features in areas under this same brand of ‘governance regime’ may result to profound varying impacts in order to have a thicker analysis on how both governance structures and processes affect outcomes and what are their underpinnings. While the cases share some commonalities, there are factors that spell their differences in the broader socio-political structures and geographical contexts which as we will find out later are also strong elements influencing effectiveness in delivering outcomes or in mal-performance. Also, having a case such as Kitanglad which has several desirable characteristics can also provide firmer bases in making judgments on causal relations and in making comparisons.

The three case studies demonstrate complexity in their specificities and contexts that without any systematic approach in dealing with them, they can be overwhelming. The analytical framework shown above has directed our focus in this regard. In terms of data collection, our case studies have relied on ‘multiple sources of evidence’ (Yin 2003, p.14) drawing from a wide range of techniques in accessing knowledge (Yanow 2003). In particular, we made use of documents review and participant observation to complement with the in-depth interviews conducted which served as our primary source of the empirical material for each of the three cases.

#### **4. Results**

Applying the above forest governance analytical framework, the following discussions are drawn from the results of the comparative case analysis, using the five criteria of good forest governance (i.e. legitimacy, accountability, cost-efficiency, coordination, and resilience) in analyzing interactions and relationships involved in various structures and processes. We also examined how these features influence outcomes in terms of the core values for ecological and human wellbeing (i.e. distributive justice, ecosystem protection, livelihood protection, and sustainability). We start this section with the following summary table (Table 1) of the key points from each case study against the criteria and the core values that we have used.

Table 1. Summary of Key Points

<b>A. Governance</b>	<b>Case 1</b>	<b>Case 2</b>	<b>Case 3</b>
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Sierra Madre</b>	<b>Kitanglad</b>	<b>Kanlaon</b>
<i>Legitimacy</i>	Tokenistic participation Low credibility and trust Strong foreign funding with weak local support	Local participation is transformative Indigenous knowledge and cultural integration	Unfair representation Protests & legal action Vibrant civil society State-dominance
<i>Accountability</i>	Connivance, and condoning illegal logging, and corruption Short-lived rule of law Laxity in monitoring & evaluation	Tensions in overlapping jurisdictions Deliberation facilitates workable agreements High investments in IEC	Poorly managed conflicts Favored membership of a business corporation Policy infringements
<i>Cost-efficiency</i>	International NGOs' complex bureaucracy Externally-driven initiatives as costly Logistical challenges in representation	Discursive engagements facilitate knowledge exchange & cost-sharing Spread leadership and reduced transaction cost Simple bureaucracy and flexibility	Linkages enhance efficiency Hierarchy and complex bureaucracy Forest volunteers as cost-saving strategy
<i>Coordination</i>	Low credibility among governing actors hinders coordination	Discursive coordination Harmonization of relevant legislations	Low credibility among governing actors & non-state actors disengagement
<i>Resilience</i>	Economic growth, and corruption challenge environmental solutions Local potentials and capabilities undermined	Local institutions and innovative capacities Accountability, legitimacy, and coordination reinforce resilience	Weak accountability and coordination threaten resilience
<b>B. Core Values</b>			
<i>Distributive Justice</i>	Forest-dependent people and inequality Lack of coordination and weak accountability as constraining factors	Deliberation facilitates ingenuity and productivity, increasing the livelihood options of forest-dependent communities	Private interests in the name of development and at the expense of the least advantaged
<i>Ecosystem Protection</i>	Deteriorating ecosystem Forest depletion aggravated by rampant illegal logging	Improving forest and biodiversity. Volunteers' role in abating illegal forest activities	Geothermal operation inside the protected area's buffer zone damaging forest and biodiversity
<i>Livelihood Protection</i>	Reduced income without alternative livelihood Neglect of justice hinders livelihood protection	Justice considerations enhance livelihood options	The influence of the broader socio-political setting has a bearing on livelihood
<i>Sustainability</i>	Private sector's profit, government's economic growth priority, and local communities' desire for livelihood facilitate extractive activities.	A balanced approach to conservation and development Synergy among the governance criteria improves sustainability.	Resource exploitation favored over resource regeneration Ecosystem sustainability and socio-economic security dilemma

## 4.1 Forest Governance Criteria

### *a. Legitimacy*

As indicated earlier, legitimacy relates to the degree of acceptance by those who are governed regarding the intervention as appropriate and desirable. One of the legitimacy-enhancing elements as shown in the case studies is civil society's participation through building of local institutions for support. This proves to be particularly useful given the inherent significant role of the central government in the governance mechanism. Kitanglad and partly the Kanlaon case had illustrated that recognition of local knowledge and expertise, and integration of indigenous culture to broader management structures facilitate culturally sensitive policies and practice which widens acceptance on the appropriateness of the intervention. NGOs and other actors' localness in the area with a record of long engagements with the indigenous peoples and other forest dwellers had also served as an enabling factor for this feature in these sites. In Sierra Madre on the other hand, involvement of local communities had been generally tokenistic and instrumental rather than transformative, and so meaningful engagements that allow for reflection, contestation, and/or acceptance had been wanting.

The governing actors' credibility matters in view of how the governed assesses the legitimacy of the mechanism. Where this is lacking such as in the Sierra Madre and Kanlaon cases as shown in Table 1 above, which had been characterized by anomalies and protests, legitimacy was low. The fact that some of the people involved in irregularities are members of the governing body rendered the procedural legitimacy of the governance mechanism highly questionable and degraded. Another element in Kitanglad which appeared very weak in the other cases was the governing actors' strong sense of ownership of the initiatives brought about by various communicative interactions which facilitated broader support and deeper commitment. In this case, invoking supportive pieces of legislation was also made as a tool in further legitimizing the innovative ways that the governing actors have employed enabling various sectors' performance of their significant roles in the overall forest governance.

Discourse has power that can be tapped in many ways, and discourse framing has a silent presence underlying some engagements relevant to governance. It is used as a device by governing actors in attempting to seek legitimacy. For example, government bias on economic growth and development priorities using discourse as a tool for promotion seemed to help justify particular governance mechanism's operations, gaining support from the locals. In Sierra Madre's discourse, both legal and illegal logging has been associated to local livelihoods and local government revenues. In Kanlaon on the other hand, a discourse packages the geothermal plant operation in the buffer zone as a sustainable development initiative, an alternative and sustainable energy source that addresses the people's electricity shortage. These discourses eventually marred the many processes and approaches involved however, undermining accountability, which in turn weakened the mechanism's overall legitimacy as exhibited in both cases. While in one case, the discourse had its way of undermining the damage brought about by the overexploitation of the forests, condoning some illegalities involved; in the other, it served as an excuse to contravene a law and encourage production as a priority over resource protection.

Another important point that relates to legitimacy is representation. Analysis of the three cases tells us that although important, a relatively high level of sectoral representation does not

guarantee legitimacy. This is not surprising however given that representation of the sectors does not necessarily translate to representativeness of the interests that the sectors hold which can be as heterogeneous as the variety of values that each individual desires. Also, emphasis on representation may be at odds with the issue of cost-efficiency when dealing with both funding and human resource constraints relative to scale. An overall legitimacy of the governance mechanism seemed to be only evident in the Kitanglad case where beyond representation was a relatively good quality of participation, with strong investment on communicative approaches such as dialogue and deliberation during planning and other decision-making processes. In the case at hand, tensions initially occurred brought about by the differing mandates, priorities and programs among participating sectors or agencies in the governance mechanism. There were also conflicts triggered by overlapping authorities with regards to the protected area that involves indigenous peoples. Although not everything has been addressed, employing deliberative processes had facilitated better understanding and teased out points where different interests could converge and be converted into collective actions to advance commonly held values.

### ***b. Accountability***

Accountability is a dimension of input or procedural legitimacy which affects effectiveness. One of the identified barriers to improved environmental governance performance is poorly structured accountability system. If it is perceived to be unfair for instance, governing actors tend to try protecting themselves, sometimes leaving the governance mechanism, pursuing opportunities that seem more just (Metzenbaum 2002 p.99). This is exemplified in the Kanlaon case when the observed government bias to a corporate player leads to civil society representatives' disengagement from the formal decision-making arena, opting to express their views and contestations through other modes such as public rally, lobbying, litigation, and tapping the mass media for information dissemination. On the other hand, if the accountability system is characterized with laxity in terms of monitoring, evaluation, penalties, and sanctions, it encourages further violations of conservation rules and regulations – a situation reflected in the Sierra Madre case when a massive portion of the governed and some governing actors continued to get involved in illegalities for decades.

In either Sierra Madre or Kanlaon site, the accountability system undermined inclusivity and rule of law, hindering a good governance performance. Instead of having rules aimed to prevent 'the politics of personal favouritism and gain from meddling in administrative decisions...' for a better service delivery, the system became the 'objective' itself, with actors 'trying to protect... or extricate themselves' from it (ibid. pp.93-99). Poor accountability can unduly disadvantage some actors while benefiting others, creating a situation in which much of the governing actors' time and energy are then spent making adjustments in order to gain from the governance mechanism rather than lose from it. This has been exhibited for instance when lenience in the law enforcement in Sierra Madre has encouraged poor members of the local communities, as well as personnel of a powerful state agency to connive in illegal economic activities given that the system readily allows it. Accountability issue has also driven civil society members in the Kanlaon case to take a legal action against a state agency and a business company due to the governance mechanism's perceived procedural inequality.

Some scholars suggest that one way to reform a flawed accountability system is to employ information-based and performance-driven measures which advocate the concept of rewarding

good performance and penalizing a bad one (Kettl, 2002; Metzenbaum, 2002). This may work to a certain extent, but the danger of a ‘target-oriented’ approach such as this which focuses much on the performance as basis for incentive is that it can easily undermine the quality of the processes contributing the outcomes which in the long run can be self-defeating. A lesson can be learned from this study on this aspect when well-meaning activities which were tailored to comply the donor’s quantitative targets have failed to meet the broader objective for both forests and people. The same can be said when a stringent forest law enforcement was short-lived. To avoid the pitfall, what seems to be crucial for the governing actors is an emphasis on communicative interactions to enhance understanding of the critical linkages between outcomes and their objectives for a more even-handed assessment of performance.

The mode of governance exhibited in the three case studies does not only consist of a dichotomy of government regulators on the one hand and the regulated on the other, but of a complex web of government regulatory agencies and private sector organizations and individuals pursuing conservation and development goals (Wilson, 2002). While a more intertwined public-private and global or national-local authority characterizes all the cases, the processes that define accountability and all the other features shape their respective governance ‘hardware’ or the institutional arrangements that greatly influence political dynamics. These arrangements can be characterized to be state-dominated or donor-driven for example, and they are strengthened or weakened by the processes and discourses employed which when taken individually or together, is a crucial factor determining performance. There is strength in plurality of inputs from public-private partnerships for a better informed environmental policy formulation and decision-making. The three cases however showed that while this is desirable, the multi-sectoral nature of a governance mechanism had rendered the accountability feature more challenging. Its system had the tendency to be diluted by the multiplicity of interests and priorities involved which became a drawback in the absence of creative ways to counter the ensuing effect of undermining incentives to hold the actors more accountable.

In both the Sierra Madre and Kanlaon cases, accountability weakness had encouraged corrupt practices that have tarnished the ‘credibility’ of many governing actors which is an essential quality especially in a more complex mechanism such as in the cases under investigation (Kronsell and Backstran, 2010) while at the same time had aggravated ecological damage in the forests. As the cases had illustrated, corruption is an obstacle to sound environmental decision-making. While it is a consequence of weakness in accountability, it is also a cause weakening the latter and therefore contributing to governance failure in environmental policy implementation. Poor accountability system depicted by a prolonged laxity in enforcement of regulations that has developed a culture of tolerance for more than 3 decades like in the Sierra Madre case, and aggravated by the country’s long standing tradition of patronage politics where connivance and mutual support between businessmen and politicians is a common scene have all made possible some unfair distribution of benefits and burdens among stakeholders, and overexploitation of the forest resources.

While it is now widely recognized that governance accountability can be strengthened when stakeholders gain better access to information and participate in decision-making, it is the quality of the information and the nature of participation that spell the difference. In situations that involve the indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities for example, what looks essential is the ensuing stakeholders’ ‘empowerment’ defined by Young (1997 p.91) as a

“process in which individual, relatively powerless persons engage in dialogue with each other and thereby come to understand the social sources of their powerlessness and see the possibility of acting collectively to change their social environment”.

In the Kitanglad case, one effective way of addressing the earlier cited accountability challenge has been its attention given beyond peoples’ representation and participation. High priority has been invested on ‘soft projects’ such as information, education, and other communication programs as indicated in Table 2. Moreover, capacity-building activities among the governing actors and the broader communities employ deliberation as an important tool that makes enlightened constituents more vigilant on the governance mechanism’s responsibility, and liberates the governing actors from the stalemate-causing tensions, creating instead an enabling environment for ‘workable agreements’ leading to collective actions.

The accountability strength in Kitanglad in contrast to the accountability weakness in both Sierra Madre and Kanlaon had also pointed out a salient role that their governance arrangement had played in either improving or undermining accountability and performance. Given the mandate of the state within the multi-sectoral policy and decision-making body, the complexity of its bureaucratic hierarchy posed a threat across the three governance mechanisms in blurring interactions among actors, rendering accountability more difficult. As the earlier chapters have shown, Kitanglad had dealt with it better than the latter cases characterized by donor-driven initiatives and state-dominance respectively.

### *c. Efficiency*

Conservation and development projects are instruments used to address natural resource degradation issues. A lot of these initiatives are financed by international agencies through overseas development aid, as well as by local actors. The forest sector has been a highly oiled area in terms of foreign investment, yet failure in addressing forest depletion remains a very common observation in developing countries. Salient questions to ask: at what costs has a conservation governance mechanism improved or at least protected the conditions of the environment? Does achieving a better performance entail more resource need and spending in terms of personnel, funds, and time?

The case studies reveal that cost is not directly proportional with outcome. Among the three cases, namely: The Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park, Mt. Kitanglad Range Natural Park, and the Mt. Kanlaon Natural Park, the governance mechanism of Kitanglad which is in fact most cost-efficient in decision-making also performs best in both ecological and social terms. The most costly on the other hand which is the Sierra Madre case has the poorer performance in promoting ecological and human wellbeing.

Among the efficiency-enabling factors present in the Kitanglad case were the following: building on indigenous knowledge, tradition, and other local institutions, and empowering those involved in taking responsibilities of their actions thus spreading leadership roles which have avoided a likely higher level of transaction costs that could have accrued in creating and managing new systems; the ‘localness’ of key governing actors have likewise facilitated a simple bureaucracy that saves resources; and flexibility, as well as coordination have also served as strategies for the cost-efficiency of the mechanism. On the other hand, what appeared to be elements that have contributed to higher costs in the other governance mechanisms’ decision-making include but

are not limited to: complex bureaucracy on the part of the government and the implementing international NGO respectively, as well as the ensuing political dynamics among different governing actors; externally-driven initiatives when they were not integrated in existing local institutions; personal presence of representative-actors in the formal decision-making arena; and other issues associated with scale.

In the empirical research undertaken, among the scale-related concerns for example is the geographical size of a protected area, the time and funding needed when a large number of indigenous peoples' representatives are required, the layers of authority to deal with when operating in a complex bureaucracy, or the demand for integrative thinking when the objectives to be addressed are geared toward sustainable development. Issues on scale are not often highlighted in many studies and seem to be easily overlooked. However, not addressing them has the potential to undermine some creative ways which can enhance cost-efficiency, at the same time can actually be crucial in shaping the design of a governance strategy that influence outcomes. As Kettl (2002 p.179) has put it, maintaining ecological gains while addressing unresolved social concerns that relate to logistical constraints requires innovative approaches to "squeeze more environmental performance from a tight budget".

In the issue of representation and participation for instance, it has been recognized that traditional knowledge significantly contributes in addressing environmental change. Yet, we know that most of the indigenous peoples and other local knowledge holders often live in remote places that their access to formal decision-making arenas would likely pose a significant logistical challenge especially in the context of materially poor communities. This makes it more important to design strategies that maximize the value of their inputs in ways that more genuinely reflect their interests. Would this mean that a priority be given to inviting as many representatives as possible in the decision-making body's meetings? But given the logistical reality, is there a more creative way of effectively obtaining their inputs and incorporating them in decision-making without sacrificing efficiency?

The case studies revealed that the more cost-efficient forest governance mechanism had also managed better in democratizing environmental decision-making. While cost-efficiency is not a precondition for accountability or input legitimacy, the Kitanglad case had affirmed that a trade-off between cost-efficiency and effectiveness which is enabled by the input legitimacy of the mechanism, can be more illusory than real.

#### *d. Coordination*

The earlier discussions of the three cases suggest gains of coordination and disadvantages of its absence. In both the Kitanglad and the Kanlaon cases, we saw how some linkages between state and non-state actors have generated wider support from the indigenous and other forest-dependent people to various governance initiatives which has enhanced the overall cost-efficiency as well as effectiveness particularly for the Kitanglad case. It avoided unnecessary duplication of efforts, but rather led the latter to complement each other. It thus managed to address some logistical gaps and challenges faced when personnel and funding were limited. Moreover, coordination among actors and harmonization of some relevant laws were an important strategy that fostered understanding needed in the resolution of some earlier tensions brought about by plurality of values and priorities, and some overlapping management rights.

The Sierra Madre case painted a contrasting picture to that of Kitanglad. Its low level of coordination and a resulting absence of clear and strategic integration of initiatives in local structures and programs had meant a relatively low degree of support from among the local communities and other stakeholders. This became more evident with the exit of foreign funding, and so local actors were left on their own. Failure to harmonize interpretations of relevant laws (for example, NIPAS Act and the IPRA) had also meant not coming up with ‘workable agreements’ in relation to what appeared to have conflicting implications on the ground. In Sierra Madre and Kanlaon, poorly managed conflicts and misunderstandings were also attributed to the lack of coordination. Both cases highlighted that one of the factors discouraging coordination *within* and *across* social choices was the low level of trust brought about by the lack of credibility among some governing actors.

While lack of credibility was a barrier to coordination; lack of coordination also exacerbated actors’ credibility issue and the presence thereof has the potential to improve it. In the Kitanglad case we saw how partnerships, collaboration, dialogues, and deliberation have spontaneously led to some novel accountability mechanisms which helped in keeping the governing actors do their work. As a deliberative governance strategy, Innes and Booher aver that collaborative dialogue among diverse and interdependent stakeholders can produce: reciprocity, relationships, learning, and creativity (2003). The deliberative nature of the many engagements in the Kitanglad case as shown in chapter 4 had enabled its governance mechanism to rise beyond differing organizational mandates and agendas as well as personal biases, building instead on commonly held values as sufficient foundation for collective actions.

Governance involves the establishment and operation of the ‘rules of the game’; and this does not presuppose the need to establish ‘material entities or organization’, but rather social institutions or governance systems playing the role of solving collective-action problems that emerge from interactions among interdependent actors (Ostrom, 1990; Young, 1994). This solving-problem capacity seems to work best when the social mechanism tasked to do it is both coordinative and deliberative in nature. As the case studies had shown, coordination facilitated knowledge exchange and cost-sharing. The synergies it built contributed to a governance mechanism’s cost-efficiency and effectiveness. This was however possible only with having discourse as its tool of engagement in which communication is the precondition that is preferably deliberative. A discursive engagement is evident for example in the Kitanglad case when the relevant agencies resolved overlapping jurisdictions and conflicting pieces of legislation through consultation and dialogues; or in the Kanlaon case when through deliberation, the non-state actors in the governance mechanism succeeded to a certain extent in stopping the government and a business corporation in extending the area for geothermal project operation within the buffer zone. I analogize coordination here with a motorized vehicle, with discourse as its oil and deliberative communication as its steering wheel, that without the latter two elements it can hardly perform its function. While communication can enhance a governance feature, it however needs an enabling institutional strategy for it to be salient; one that enables coordination as an instrument for collective action.

#### *e. Resilience*

With a growing concern on environmental change, there is a widening interest on resilience as a desirable attribute supporting adaptation. While the previously discussed criteria of legitimacy,

accountability, efficiency, and coordination are necessary conditions, resilience as employed here is contingent, required only during a crisis germane to the socio-ecological system under consideration. The case studies revealed that the governance mechanism that was resilient in bringing deteriorated social and ecological systems back to their healthier state is also the one with high legitimacy, accountability, efficiency, and coordination: Kitanglad. The case study particularly illustrated how an enhanced accountability and legitimacy contributed to the mechanism's resilience. Performing a significant role in a mechanism's resilience as shown in this case were the local institutional arrangements and capacity which included but were not limited to local governments' fiscal and policy support, local NGO's co-facilitation, and indigenous peoples' strong participation as well as these local actors' share in the leadership roles. The ability to access multiple resources through coordinated efforts contributed to peoples' capabilities to manage environmental change and crisis. Tapping traditional systems of governance and social networks improved the ability to collectively make decisions and actions while dissipating shocks and reinforcing innovative capacities.

The above attributes appeared wanting in the Sierra Madre case whose governance mechanism's heavy reliance on foreign funding and external support undermines local potentials and capabilities in restoring the socio-ecological system's wellbeing. Moreover, in both Sierra Madre and Kanlaon cases (see Table 1), we saw how pursuit for economic growth and other developmental objectives had challenged remedies of ecological damage. Laws and regulations had at times been circumvented and violated due to greed and/or in the name of human need. Accountability systems hardly worked given the overpowering role of the state and the complexity of its bureaucracy which had further diluted its relationships with other relevant actors favouring resource exploitation over conservation or resource regeneration.

The above criteria are interconnected. While some actors perceive tensions, others see more the opportunities offered in their interconnectedness in terms of the synergies created. The following section will present how the performance of the different features of governance have promoted, maintained, or undermined the core values for human and ecological wellbeing.

## **4.2 Forest Governance Core Values**

### ***a. Distributive Justice***

The concern on justice adds complexity to the already challenging ecological problems, but any environmental governance mechanism that endeavours to promote human wellbeing along with its ecological objective must confront it. More often, forest conservation mechanism in a developing country aimed at protecting a common pool resource to achieve benefits at various levels tends to adversely affect the already disadvantaged and marginalized populations the most. Special attention then needs to be given to them. As the Sierra Madre case had shown, the declaration of a forested land as a protected area had meant serious income crises on the part of many members of the local communities who were previously workers of the now closed industrial logging companies that operated in the site for decades. In the Kitanglad and the Kanlaon cases, the limited access to certain areas that indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent members of the local communities had also been tilling for ages had resulted to

income reduction or loss to a number of households, a situation which was more significant in some parts of Kanlaon where the prevalence of ‘haciendas’ in the region had already historically reduced the farmers’ land.

In trying to address the cost borne by the locals, strategies employed included introduction of alternative livelihoods. Its implementation depicted different stories across the sites. A stumbling block for its success as the Sierra Madre and the Kanlaon cases had shown, although in different degrees, was directly associated to lack of coordination, and weak accountability which resulted to low level of input legitimacy. On the other hand, the opposite of these characteristics was observable at Kitanglad which in the eyes of its stakeholders had performed well in terms of allocation of benefits and incentives. As already mentioned, the latter case did not necessarily represent one in which local communities had not faced the conservation’s impact on income or their means of livelihood. It is not an exception in this respect, but through various deliberative engagements among actors, it managed to shift reactions from being adversarial to those that encouraged ingenuity and productivity. This shifting of reactions has important implications for justice as social in nature, or as a ‘plural’ concept. It is not tantamount to passive acceptance of others’ views and values. Rather, the deliberation has facilitated deeper understanding and one’s recognition of other interests. As such, the affected individuals transcend their notion of themselves into ‘beings-in-the-world-with-others’, and therefore extending their conceptualization of what is good for them to that which is also good for other affected people since there is now a better awareness of values other their own.

A question on equity was also evident in the aspect of giving opportunity to participate in the formal decision-making arena when in the Kanlaon case, undue favour was given by the governing actors to the membership of a business corporation over local communities or other civil society members’ representation. Illegal forest activities were another significant issue addressed by the conservation measure. Results of strategies employed have exhibited some trend of burden distribution affecting and was affected by the legitimacy of its governance mechanism. For instance, penalties involved in forest law enforcement were observed to be stringent when applied to the forest-dependent people while lenient when people from both government and the business sectors were involved. This phenomenon was particularly prevalent in Sierra Madre as well as in the Kanlaon case which is again linked to their weak accountability system, aggravated by their respective historical context as well as the country’s notable patronage politics.

While these gross inequalities are a reflection of the inability of a forest governance mechanism to employ context-tailored innovations that promote a just allocation of benefits and burdens especially to the least advantaged peoples, the mechanism operates within a broader socio-political system as its institutional backdrop whose very nature also affects its performance.

### ***b. Ecosystem Protection***

With a mounting evidence that humans are exploiting forests at unsustainable rates in tropical regions (Gibson et al., 2000; FAO, 2005; CIFOR, 2011), measures to protect and rehabilitate what remains is highly called for if we want to sustain the essential ecological processes and the multiple goods and services that forests provide. There is no common agreement about the most important factors causing deforestation, and therefore as Gibson et al. (2000) argue, there are

multiple processes at work to address the problem or that significant knowledge gaps exist about these processes, or both .

The case studies illustrate that although in principle, a multi-stakeholder approach in conservation and development was commonly followed across the sites, in practice, the individual or collective strength or weakness of the governance features in the course of the operations had substantially influenced the mechanisms' delivery of differing outcomes. The most deteriorating forest ecosystem was shown in the Sierra Madre case. It is interesting to note that it also had the governance mechanism that was weak in input legitimacy, accountability, cost-efficiency, coordination and resilience. While the Kanlaon case which presented some gains as well as losses in forest protection and rehabilitation, showed the waxing and waning of the necessary governance features. On the other hand, Kitanglad which had consistently showed strong point in all the necessary and contingent features had demonstrated an improved forest ecosystem.

Analysis of the three cases also supports the growing recognition that there are a myriad of linkages between effective conservation and environmental justice (Lynch, 2010), and the demand for integrated thinking and strategies; failure to see that the two are interrelated has meant that “at times the environment and social justice movements have worked against each other, rather than working together” (Johnson et al., 2008 p.2). While multi-sectoral approaches are needed to reduce deforestation while meeting other development objectives (Minang et al., 2008), they are not enough. The findings have shown the importance of appreciating the complexity of the forest resources, the forest users, and the network society itself represented by the multiplicity of the actors involved, and how all these and the fluidity of the relationships established affect the functioning of the governance mechanism employed, and thus demanding of various ways for effective forest protection.

Logistical constraints can be turned into opportunities for governance innovation and improvement. Inadequate human and funding resources to carry out monitoring activities and other law enforcement strategies were identified as barriers in addressing conservation goals in Sierra Madre given the exit of the international donors. While this contention is tenable especially given the role of scale in the country's largest natural park, we regard the identified factors as rather a manifestation of a more fundamental governance issue which could have been mitigated with more creative ways that enhance cost-efficiency. Along this line, both the Kitanglad and the Kanlaon cases have demonstrated a strategy of employing forest guard volunteers which proved to be effective in significantly abating illegal logging, at the same time serving as a good cost-saving mechanism. While the involvement of forest volunteers was not completely wanting in the Sierra Madre case, its very low level of accountability could not create an environment conducive for its effective implementation. A combination of factors involving the state's policy instruments, the government's quest for economic growth, and the local communities' desire to enhance their means of livelihood had provided the extractive activities an enabling condition.

### ***c. Livelihood Protection***

As the earlier discussions have pointed out, there is a direct link between forest protection and human security, or poverty reduction. One does not have to be reminded that forest ecosystem

degradation undermines food production and the availability of clean water, and therefore threatening human livelihoods, health, and ultimately societal stability (Munang et al., 2011). Protecting livelihood increases the prospect of having more effective forest conservation strategy (Porter-Bolland et al., 2011; Walpole, undated).

The Kitanglad case suggests that meeting both ecological and developmental objectives requires attention given to the other core value of distributive justice and finding governance strategies that are in consonance with it. As Guariguata has put it: “a forest put away behind fence and designated ‘protected’ doesn’t necessarily guarantee that canopy cover will be maintained over the long term compared to forests managed by local communities – in fact they lose much more”, arguing further that “after decades of expanding protected areas, the need to incorporate human rights concerns and equity into management objectives is now unquestioned”(in CIFOR, August 23, 2011 press release). The research findings have consistently shown that the mechanism which neglected issues associated to distributive justice also reflected low performance when it comes to the values of livelihood and ecosystem protection.

More often than not, forest governance mechanisms have segregated ecosystem protection and livelihood protection with separate approaches for forest protection and agriculture for example which appeared to be the mode followed in both the Sierra Madre and the Kanlaon cases. However, the reality in a developing country like the Philippines is populated landscapes where forests and farmland overlap and intersect. Giving this a due recognition like in the Kitanglad case can lead to a development of a governance pathway without segregated strategies at various levels, and would therefore be more context-tailored and responsive, with all relevant agencies strategically collaborating. This requires coordination and improvement of the communication channels among and between relevant state and non-state actors in the governance mechanism.

Attention given to environment protection tends to sacrifice developmental goals. This empirical investigation had demonstrated that such tendency can be avoided. In Sierra Madre where most members of the forest-dependent communities had claimed that there had been no protection of their main livelihood, nor a provision of an alternative one was provided along with the conservation mechanism, it is also the site where it has the worst forest depletion. On the other hand, in Kitanglad where there had been no big issue raised in relation to livelihood protection, it also performed best in terms of forest conservation.

In Kanlaon where efforts to protect the local communities’ source of livelihood had been wanting or weak, it was not due to the lack of awareness from the side of the governing actors about its significance on forest protection; nor is it attributed primarily to lack of funds. Like in the Sierra Madre case, the problem is more systemic, reflecting beyond value preferences among the governing actors overpowered by the broader socio-political milieu within which the mechanism steers. Such situation created tension and trade-off between environmental conservation and economic growth. As shown in the above Table, both Kanlaon and Sierra Madre case studies revealed that the government’s development priorities had been a powerful influence. With their respective governance mechanism’s accountability being very weak, some actors were able to unduly advance their private interests in the name of development.

Examining governance issues relevant to livelihood protection makes us see its inescapable link with strategies aimed to promote distributive justice. Performance of these strategies based on the governance criteria and the way the latter interact with wider institutional arrangements

determine outcomes on livelihood, as well as on the ecosystem dimension. When equity considerations, ecosystem protection, and economic needs are neglected, sustainability cannot also be expected.

#### *d. Sustainability*

Examining the cases, the Sierra Madre had major sustainability issues. Among the factors that had caused its governance mechanism to be problematic in this aspect include: heavy reliance on foreign-funding for support without integrating conservation and development efforts to local programs and priorities which had then meant later a ‘paralysis’ of key operations considering the absence of a substantial local institutional support; business profitability brought about by both corporate and illegal logging which had matched with the government’s quest for economic growth; and the local communities’ desire to protect their means of livelihood had undermined enforcement of regulations especially given that the mechanism had very weak accountability feature.

In the Kanlaon case, some attributes of the governance mechanism that were earlier working such as community participation, vibrant civil society, and discursive coordination, could have been viewed to be potentially enabling for sustainability. But like in Sierra Madre, when accountability was neglected or suppressed with the government’s bias for development, its resultant impact had weakened legitimacy adversely affecting sustainability. This was very well demonstrated by the geothermal operation inside the protected area’s ‘buffer zone’ and some associated blatant policy infringements. The prevailing tensions among features had spoiled the mechanism as a whole that it would seem to take a broader structural change more than just enhancement of processes, to have a socio-political context that facilitates the revival, improvement, and sustainability of the governance features that worked. The two cases have indicated that traditional market and state institutions can reinforce disincentives for more sustainable behaviours; likewise, civil society institutions are faced with huge challenges in effectively promoting fundamental reforms of those institutions (Fischer et al., 2012).

On the other hand, the Kitanglad case had shown that the sustainability of the socio-ecological systems in the area which had so far contributed to the wellbeing of both forests and people is promising. While building on local knowledge and institutions had been an enabling factor, it was really the synergy of various governance features that facilitated the communicative nature of the interactions within the mechanism that shaped its functioning for relatively effective and lasting conservation and development strategies.

The absence of a clear sustainability framework applied in conservation areas can lead to tolerance of approaches that often focus on short term effects at the cost of long term goal that is damaging for both forests and people. Such framework must aim for both livelihood and ecosystem protection, and address questions of justice. Some people claim that environmental governance often seems to involve tradeoffs between effectiveness and equity. In most complex environmental problems however, Biermann and colleagues state that this trade-off presents a ‘false dichotomy’ arguing that environmental problems are inherently political in nature which increases the need for democratic processes that allow actors to choose policies that they see as both equitable and effective (2011).

## 5. Implications for REDD+ Governance Architecture

Some scholars argue that there is an emerging crisis of governance within REDD+ that will undermine its policy objectives and compromise the wellbeing of many stakeholders. Thompson et al. (2011) for example, question the mechanism's ability to align the interests of affected local communities such as the indigenous peoples with larger REDD+ goals of conservation and carbon enhancement for climate change mitigation. They criticize the state-centred focus as problematic in many Global South settings where issues of capacity or legitimacy hinder effective enforcement of rules and regulations in a manner that guarantees desired REDD+ project outcomes. In response to critiques such as these, there seems to be a growing attention given to the importance of pluralism and inclusiveness in the REDD+ strategy (Cerbu et al., 2011; Enright et al. 2012; Kanowski et al. 2011; Thompson et al. 2011). The strategy aims to contribute to efforts geared toward climate change mitigation, conservation, and development although serious questions have been raised about its potential to deliver benefits on multiple dimensions (Minang and van Noordwijk, 2012). Participation of both state and non-state actors including the marginalized and the poorest groups in decision-making is viewed to be fundamental to incentivising REDD+ (Enright et al. 2012) in simultaneously conserving forest and reducing poverty. This calls for an increased appreciation and practice of networks as a crucial steering mechanism serving as channel of individuals and institutions influencing collective actions. 'Relations between actors in networks rely on communication, exchange of information, and on trustful and cooperative attitudes, which can provide arenas for deliberation' (Kronsell and Backstrand 2010, p.30).

Findings from this research have important implications for the governance architecture of REDD+. They highlight the strength of networked governance which under certain conditions provides an atmosphere that is enabling for more effective multi-level environmental decision-making that addresses integrated ecological and social systems. Networked governance is particularly relevant in the REDD+ context especially given the multitude of actors and interests involved that need to be understood, otherwise, the ability of the mechanism to achieve its goals is remote. REDD+ proposes the idea of 'nesting' or the use of nested approaches, which requires not only engagement of multiple actors at a given landscape, but also interaction and linkages of such actors at multiple scales and levels. The case study on the Mt. Kitanglad Range Natural Park reveals that a networked conservation mechanism facilitates polycentric (Ostrom, 2010) and multi-level (Minang and van Noordwijk, 2012) governance solutions. A networked mode of governing is also reflected in a proposal for a more systematic consideration of how forest governance functions across multiple scales, instead of viewing the 'international', 'national' and 'local' policy arenas as separable (Kanowski et al. 2011). In the context of REDD+, networked governance is required both horizontally and vertically, depending on the overall governance structure of REDD+ countries. The fluidity of the nature of networked governance allows for its functions to be implemented at different levels which may be functionally complementary, instead of just being nested—this provides a caveat to the nesting concept that REDD+ is promoting. With the fluid nature of networked governance, it is thus, possible for instance, in the case of Kitanglad that a conflict resolution is carried out by the indigenous Council of Elders in an upland village for example, while a policy deliberation is done by some Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) representatives at their central office. All these are part of the overall governance mechanism but at each level, the actors involved have a leeway in determining the appropriate political rules to apply. This is compatible to what Enright and colleagues (2012) have suggested for instance, requiring flexibility and adaptability in the design of the REDD+ benefits distribution system (BDS).

The study's findings have also demonstrated that in networked governance, several centres of authority are operating at certain points. Applied in the REDD+ context, this can mean local civil society groups including indigenous peoples taking active roles in project planning and implementations. This can potentially address the critique against an implicit expectation about local concerns being heard and acted upon as part of the state's apparatus, which is found to be deeply unrealistic (Thompson et al. 2011). Participatory approaches and various innovations from different sectors can enhance the legitimacy and cost-efficiency of the mechanism which in turn contribute to a sustainable ecological and human wellbeing. It has to be taken into account however that while the processes in this mode of governing are generally empowering, the risk involved given the inherent weak accountability element of networks, demands higher level of capacity among its actors in terms of leadership, coordination, and communication; the same skills are required for a country's REDD readiness at various levels and scales.

The study has also demonstrated that the increasing influence of civil society groups has not 'reduced' the influence of the state, but has rather shifted its role from the traditional command and control to that of a facilitator – a function which seems to fit given the government mandate and its institutional 'permanence'. This looks consistent with the proposition that an effective REDD+ regime can be built around national and sub-national policy settings as long as implementation is locally empowering (Kanowski et al. 2011), a feature that is potentially enabled by a networked governance. The findings underscore some preconditions for networked governance to perform well in the context of conservation and development efforts such as the REDD+. These include 1) collaborative approaches among diverse and interdependent stakeholders; 2) rich knowledge base (modern and indigenous) and skills among its governing actors and a massive information and education campaign given to relevant people; and 3) that the multiplicity of actors and institutions involved requires an innovative accountability system, flexible in its mode but robust in its substance. Finally, promoters and designers of REDD+ have a lot to learn from the vast experience of forest governance. The elements for effective REDD+ governance are running parallel to that of the conditions described in a networked forest management regime, and hence, any flaw in current REDD+ governance would be a costly repeated mistake.

## **6. Conclusions**

Forest governance proceeds in the context of interdependent ecological and social systems. It becomes problematic when the actors' differing and often competing interests and values produce tensions and tradeoffs that may impede sound decision-making. In a 'pluralistic world' with such increasing interdependence, what is argued to be "more feasible and attractive are workable agreements in which participants agree on a course of action, but for different reasons" (Dryzek 2000 p.170). The interactions between the governing actors and the governed in the forest governance mechanism characterized to have legitimacy, accountability, efficiency, coordination (and resilience in situations with severe ecological problem) can produce outcomes in which benefits and burdens are justly shared, and people's livelihoods and the forests are protected for a sustainable gain.

The case study results demonstrate that innovative accountability measures facilitated by a coordinating governance mechanism that deliberates and is therefore more sensitive to issues of context and scale provide high incentives for better sustainability performance. All the necessary features have the capacity to be mutually reinforcing in supporting good forest governance.

Analyses of the case studies pointed out some challenges encountered in the process of carrying out a conservation and development mechanism for a socio-ecological system. The latter is shaped by the interactions among actors having different interests and values with a potential to collide or converge which affects the different governance criteria consequently determining performance and outcomes. The different agenda, priorities, and programs for example can become sources of tensions that create problems when they are ignored, rendering the mechanism self-defeating. Through deliberation and other discursive engagements, these tensions can however be strategized and turned into synergies needed for collective actions.

Implications can be drawn from the research findings which are relevant to REDD+ given its multiplicity of actors, the changing political landscape with the increasing influence of actors beyond the state, and the complexity of socio-ecological systems involved. They point out that a promising REDD+ governance architecture is one that is networked which can be described as polycentric, multi-dimensional system employing communicative coordination as it engages both local and global actors. Networked governance is not a panacea for environmental conservation and sustainable development but a useful device that must be complemented by measures to enrich the knowledge base and enhance the capacity and skills among the governing actors and other relevant players.

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