Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI)
Supporting Resilient Forest Livelihoods
through Local Representation

REDD+ Institutional Choices and the Implications for Local Democracy in the Kasigau Corridor, Kenya

Susan Wangui Chomba

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Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) Research Programme

The Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) is a research and training program, focusing on environmental governance in Africa. It is jointly managed by the Council for the Development of Social Sciences Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (UIUC). It is funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The RFGI activities are focused on 12 countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, DR Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. The initiative is also training young, in-country policy researchers in order to build an Africa-wide network of environmental governance analysts.

Nations worldwide have introduced decentralization reforms aspiring to make local government responsive and accountable to the needs and aspirations of citizens so as to improve equity, service delivery and resource management. Natural resources, especially forests, play an important role in these decentralizations since they provide local governments and local people with needed revenue, wealth, and subsistence. Responsive local governments can provide forest resource-dependent populations the flexibility they need to manage, adapt to and remain resilient in their changing environment. RFGI aims to enhance and help institutionalize widespread responsive and accountable local governance processes that reduce vulnerability, enhance local wellbeing, and improve forest management with a special focus on developing safeguards and guidelines to ensure fair and equitable implementation of the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) and climate-adaptation interventions.

REDD+ is a global Programme for disbursing funds, primarily to pay national governments of developing countries, to reduce forest carbon emission. REDD+ will require permanent local institutions that can integrate local needs with national and international objectives. The results from RFGI Africa research will be compared with results from collaborators in Asia and South America in order to enhance RFGI comparative scope, and to broaden its geographic policy relevance.

RFGI Working Paper Series Editors' Note

James Murombedzi, Jesse Ribot

and Gretchen Walters

Struggles for control over and access to nature and natural resources; struggles over land, forests, pastures and fisheries, are struggles for survival, self determination, and meaning. Natural resources are central to rural lives and livelihoods: they provide the material resources for survival, security, and freedom. To engage in the world requires assets that enable individuals, households, and communities to act in and on the world around them. The ability to accumulate assets and the ability to access government and market services depends partly on such resources along with the political-economic infrastructure – rights, recourse, representation, markets, and social services – that are the domain of government. Democracy, which both enables and requires the freedom to act, is predicated on these assets and infrastructures. Since the 1980s, African governments have been implementing local government decentralization reforms aimed at making local government more democratic by making them responsive and accountable to citizen needs and aspirations; in many places this has been done through a decentralisation of natural resource governance to local administrations. In order to be responsive to individual, household and community demands, local governments, too, need resources and decision-making powers. There must be a public domain – a set of public resources, such as forests or fisheries, which constitute this domain of democracy, the domain of decisions and services that citizens can demand of government. Natural resources, when decentralized into the domain of local authority, form an important part of the resources of individuals, households, communities and governments, making possible this move toward local democracy.

Natural resources provide local governments and people with wealth and subsistence. While nature is not the only source of rural income, the decentralization

of natural resources governance is a core component of local government reform. However, governance reforms have been implemented in a context broadly characterized by an enduring crisis of the Western economic and financial systems, which in turn has stimulated privatization and liberalization in every sphere of life, including nature. The process has deprived local governments of public resources – depriving individuals and communities of a reason to engage, as a powerless government is not worth trying to influence. Privatization is depriving forest-dependent peoples of their access to formerly 'public' or traditionally managed resources. National governments, as well as international bodies such as the United Nations programme, titled the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD), further this trend as they collaborate with private interests to promote the privatization of natural resources. The resulting enclosures threaten the wellbeing of resource-dependent populations and the viability of democratic reforms.

The specter of climate change is deepening the crisis of enclosure. A key response to climate change has been the attempt to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions through enhancing the capacity of forests in the developing world to store carbon, ostensibly for the benefit of the atmosphere as well as the communities who use these forests. UN REDD seeks to pay communities, through their national governments, to conserve their forests as carbon storage. A plus '+' was added to REDD, forming REDD +, to call for improved ecosystems services, forest management, conservation, forest restoration and afforestation to enhance the capacity for carbon storage. Designed on the basis of similar payments for environmental services (PES) schemes, REDD+ has the potential to inject vast new sums of money into local resource use and governance. In the context of fragile local governments, nascent democracies and powerful private interests, such cash inflows result in the commercialization and privatization of forests and natural resources and the dispossession of local resource users. This financialization of natural resources grossly diminishes the scope for democratic natural resource governance schemes. To be sure, the implementation of REDD+ can also learn from and avoid the pitfalls experienced in these PES schemes, especially if they represent local interests in natural resource governance decision making.

The Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) is an Africa-wide environmental-governance research and training program focusing on enabling responsive and accountable decentralization to strengthen the representation of forest-based rural people in local-government decision making. Since January 2012, the programme has carried out 33 case studies in 12 African countries, with comparative cases Nepal and Peru, to assess the conditions under which central

authorities devolve forest management and use decisions to local government, and the conditions that enable local government to engage in sound, equitable and pro-poor forest management. Aimed at enabling local government to play an integrative role in rural development and natural resource management, these case studies are now being finalized and published to elicit public discourse and debate on local government and local democracy. This Working Paper series will publish the RFGI case studies as well as other comparative studies of decentralized natural resources governance in Africa and elsewhere that focus on the interesction between local democracy and natural resource management schemes. Using the concepts of institutional choice and recognition, the cases deal with a comprehensive range of issues in decentralized forest management in the context of REDD+, including the institutional choices of intervening agencies; the effects of such choices on accountability and representation; and the relationships between local government and other local institutions. The series will also include syntheses discussing the main findings of the RFGI research programme.

Based at CODESRIA, and funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the RFGI is a three year collaborative initiative of CODESRIA, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). RFGI working papers and documents, including the background papers, the RFGI programme description, and the RFGI Methods Handbook, can be found on line at:

- http://www.codesria.org/spip.php,

- http://www.iucn.org/fr/propos/union/secretariat/bureaux/paco/programmes/paco_forest/thematiques_et_projets/gouvernance_and_iucn_tools/projets_en_cours/_programme_de_recherche__initiative_pour_la_gouvernance_democratique_des_forets_/

- UIUC http://sdep.beckman.illinois.edu/programs/democracyenvironment.aspx#RFGI

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The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) is an independent organisation whose principal objectives are to facilitate research, promote research-based publishing and create multiple forums geared towards the exchange of views and information among African researchers. All these are aimed at reducing the fragmentation of research in the continent through the creation of thematic research networks that cut across linguistic and regional boundaries.

CODESRIA publishes *Africa Development*, the longest standing Africa based social science journal; Afrika Zamani, a journal of history; the *African Sociological Review; the African Journal of International Affairs; Africa Review of Books and the Journal of Higher Education in Africa*. The Council also co-publishes the Africa Media Review; Identity, Culture and Politics: An Afro-Asian Dialogue; *The African Anthropologist and the Afro-Arab Selections for Social Sciences*. The results of its research and other activities are also disseminated through its Working Paper Series, Green Book Series, Monograph Series, Book Series, Policy Briefs and the CODESRIA Bulletin. Select CODESRIA publications are also accessible online at www.codesria.org.

Contents

About the Author

Susan Chomba is a PhD candidate at the University of Copenhagen and research fellowship at the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). She holds a double degree Masters in Sustainable Tropical Forestry (SUTROFOR)-(top student award) from Bangor University in Wales, UK and University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Her active research is in forest governance, land tenure, democracy and vulnerability.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This study examines reasons for institutional choice and recognition through a renowned REDD+ project in Kenya. It uses the choice and recognition framework to interrogate two key aspects of democratic representation in recognized institutions, i.e. accountability and responsiveness. The study is based on empirical data collected through interviews, focus group discussions; and secondary data through document analysis. The findings reveal that the project recognized state-sanctioned institutions, i.e. Locational Development Committees (LDCs) and elected local councillors but shortly thereafter derecognized them in favour of newly – created Location Carbon Committees (LCCs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs). This recognition and derecognition was predicated on gstructural as well as symptomatic features of state-sanctioned institutions, including lack of downward accountability, corruption and inefficiency. Recognized CBOs and LCCs received carbon revenues and powers to allocate them to various development projects in the community, invoking perceptions of accountability and responsiveness to local needs, compared to state-sanctioned institutions. The study demonstrates the struggle in making institutional choices that promote local democracy, and at the same time, being efficient and non-corrupt in order to meet REDD+ project goals. The conclusion suggests possible ways of enhancing local democracy through REDD+.

Key words: REDD+, institutional choices, recognition, democracy, accountability; responsiveness.

1

Introduction

The UN-led atmospheric-carbon mitigation programme entitled Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) is unfolding as a hybrid of market, conservation and development approaches to climate change mitigation in the forestry sector (Angelsen et al., 2012). Globally, there are concerns that REDD+ may stifle the gains from decentralized forest management, especially efforts towards consolidation of local democracy (Phelps et al., 2010). Existing evidence shows that when national governments are presented with high financial returns from forests coupled with high levels of corruption, they have the tendency to recentralize forests (Nelson and Agrawal, 2008, Phelps et al., 2010). This entails removing forest governance from the domain of decentralized institutions to higher level government institutions or their local extensions(Sandbrook et al., 2010), which could compromise the growth of local democracy.

Kenya, like many other African countries, is undergoing radical democratization reforms following the passing of a new constitution (Kenya, 2010). The constitution provides an opportunity for a shift from authoritarianism, and perhaps corruption, which have bedevilled Kenyan society for many years (Harrington and Manji, 2013, Wrong, 2009). Chapter 11 of Kenya's constitution provides for the creation of the devolved[1] county[2] governments to 'promote democratic and accountable exercise of power' (Kenya, 2010). However, in a country where corruption has defied previous reform efforts and is now seen as a norm, devolution is regarded by some as devolution to 'fat cats', i.e. the local elite (Elmi, 2013).

Nevertheless, the current wave of devolution in the country still carries hope towards establishing representative and accountable institutions at the local level. This is mainly because unlike in the past where decentralization was based on piecemeal reforms and presidential decrees, decentralization is now embedded in

the country's new constitution. At the same time, corruption has been singled out as one of the major challenges facing the establishment of democratic institutions in developing countries (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2006, Fisman and Gatti, 2002). REDD+ can be a victim of corruption (Tacconi *et al.* 2009) or it can instead play a vital role in the fight against corruption. Designating the fight against corruption under REDD+ to monitoring, reporting and verification of carbon emissions solely as tends to be the current practice, ignores the political nature of institutions and their leaders. An understanding of local institutional landscape and their histories of accountability and responsiveness towards local needs is critical for REDD+ if it is to benefit from and play a role in supporting local democracy and countering corruption.

Lund (2006) observes that "Africa has no shortage of institutions [that] attempt to exercise public authority." Indeed, studies on institutions in any African country tend to produce lists and acronyms, simply put, enough to make an institutional alphabet soup. REDD+ is coming into a complex local institutional landscape; a plethora of community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) state-sanctioned appointed and elected institutions and non-state actors as well as customary ones. These institutions compete and sometimes complement each other in the exercise of authority. Some of them are in a constant dynamic process of formation, restructuring and elimination (*ibid)*. REDD+ is entering a landscape of many overlapping institutions.[3] They institutions vary in their genesis (reasons for their formation) as well as the structural features elements that act as the basis for accountability, responsiveness, or ability to be efficient and non-corrupt.

When presented with such a variable mix of local institutions, some authors have argued that intervening agents, such as governments, larger NGOs or donors who are making decisions and/or implementing REDD+ activities, should partner with democratically elected local governments in order to promote local democracy (Ribot 2011a). This is especially relevant in countries[4] where democratic decentralization is a national objective. There are a number of problems with these propositions. First, the drawbacks of elected local governments in different contexts are not given sufficient attention, and therefore there is a risk that the challenges of working with them, vis-a-vis other local institutionsare underplayed. Second, there is an implicit assumption that since democracy is a national goal; all project interventions must have democracy as their goals. Another implicit assumption is that only one type of democratically elected local authority exists at the local level; which over looks multiple other elected institutions, such as elected user committees, that exist or may be created at the local level.

Rather than propose a blanket support for elected local government everywhere, this study aimed at understanding which institutions are chosen, why they are chosen and evaluate them on two attributed of democratic representation: accountability and responsiveness. The study addresses the following research questions[1]. Which institutions did the REDD+ project recognize or derecognize at the local level and why?[2] What are the underlying structural and cultural factors that determine democratic representation of local-level institutions in this case? The findings indicate a dynamic process of recognition and de-recognition of local-level institutions based on structurally embedded factors that inhibit accountability and responsiveness. In the discussions, I explore the underlying structural, as well as symptomatic factors that determine democratic representation of various institutions and draw wider implications for local democracy. I conclude with lessons from the Kasigau project and how REDD+ can enhance local democracy.

2

Theoretical Framework

The study uses the institutional choice and recognition framework to analyse democratic representation. The framework supposes that intervening agents, such as those implementing REDD+ exercise "choice" through partnering or transferring power and resources to certain institutions at the local level (Ribot, 2011a, Ribot et al., 2008). For instance, national governments, international NGOs, private sector actors, other actors in REDD+, choose which local institutions to work with, and which powers to confer. Once an institution is chosen, it is recognized, i.e. conferred with authority. Such choices however, have consequences, both positive and negative.

There are three possible ways in which intervening institutions could engage with local-level institutions: bestow recognition, withhold recognition (misrecognition) and withdraw recognition (derecognition). Derecognition refers to the withdrawal of public resources and power from one authority to another; it is the affirmative action taken mostly by intervening agents to indicate that they disapprove the actions or ethos of the local level institutions. The recognition of local-level institutions bears implication on three principles of democratic practice: representation, citizenship and public domain (Ribot et al., 2008). The in-depth analysis of all the three principles is beyond the scope of this paper; I shall focus on the aspect of democratic representation.

Democratic representation occurs when a government (or leader or authority) is both accountable and responsive to their citizens (Ferejohn, 1999, Przeworski et al., 1999). Accountability is the ability (of citizens) to sanction leaders both positively and negatively as an appraisal for their actions or performance (Goetz and Jenkins, 2005). A leader is responsive when he/she addresses the needs of their citizens, or adopts policies that are signalled by the citizens (Przeworski et al., 1999). For leaders to be responsive, they must have a domain of autonomy

– with discretionary powers and material basis, which they can draw upon in order to address the needs of their citizens (Ribot et al., 2008, Ribot, 2004). On the other hand, endowing leaders with material basis and discretionary powers in the absence of effective accountability mechanisms presents fertile ground for corruption (Ferejohn, 1999, Lederman et al., 2005, Rose-Ackerman, 2007) .

Corruption here is broadly defined as abuse of public office for private gain (Kaufmann, 1997). Corruption distorts democratic representation by affecting the mechanisms of political accountability and delivery of public good and services (Lederman et al., 2005, D CHAPIN et al., 1977). Factors such as voter bribery, stealing of public funds to finance campaigns, imbalance of powers between arms of government affect political accountability, even in the presence of an electoral process (Lederman et al., 2005). In the public sector, corruption denotes extortion, conspiracy to defraud the public and other forms of malfeasance (Fisman and Gatti, 2002, Lederman et al., 2005). Corruption can be facilitated by lack of transparency in public institutions, lack of public access to information, manual collection of revenue and record keeping which eases interference with records and complicates auditing, opening up to crimes of opportunity.

Using the institutional choice and recognition framework, the paper investigates institutional choices under REDD+. It traces the causes of lack of accountability in the institutional structures, which translates into symptomatic factors such as corruption that ultimately inform institutional choices.

3

Methods

Description of case study area

The Kasigau carbon project is located approximately 3° South of the Equator in Taita TavetaCounty, Coast province of Kenya (Figure 1). Taita Taveta is located in a semi-arid area, and is one of the poorest counties in Kenya. The project covers an area which traverses across two constituencies, six elective wards and six administrative locations.

Figure 1: Map of the study area
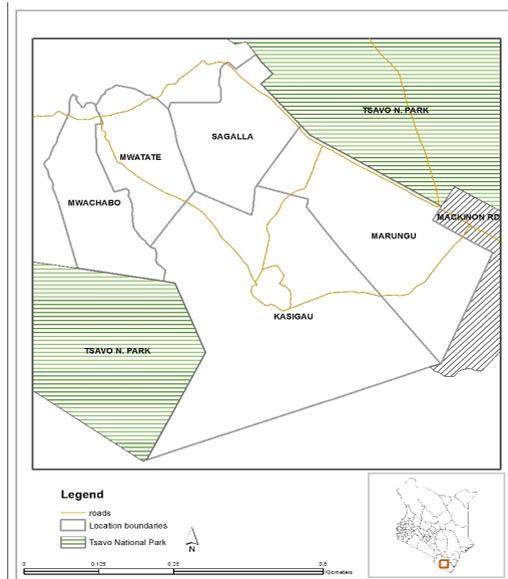
Source: Author

Description of local governance structures

Governance at the local level in Kenya comprises of two intertwined structures: the newly-enacted devolved county government (elective) structure under the 2010 constitution; and the former provincial administration (administrative) structures. The latter was adopted from the colonial administration after independence in 1963 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Governance structures showing the provincial administration, devolved county government and the carbon project. Representation in the houses of senate and parliament are omitted as the emphasis is on the local level institutions directly involved with the carbon project.
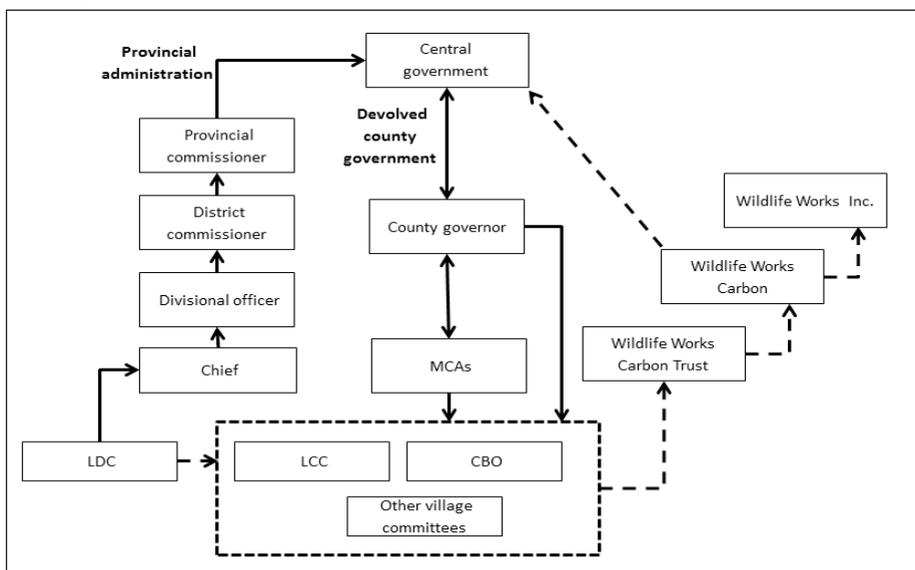
Under the provincial administration, Kenya was divided into provinces headed by provincial commissioners (PCs), then into districts headed by district commissioners (DCs), divisions headed by divisional officers (DOs), then locations headed by chiefs and finally sub-locations headed by assistant chiefs or headmen (Figure 2). This structure is in the process of being merged with the county new structure. PCs and some DCs have been recalled and deployed to other civil service positions, while the other administrators, including the chiefs who are central to this study have been retained.

Under the devolved government structure,[5] the country is divided into 47 counties, 290 constituencies and 1,450 wards/locations. Each ward elects a

Member of County Assembly (MCA), an equivalent of a councillor in the previous parliamentary structure. In most cases, locations and wards share the same geographical boundaries hence chiefs and MCAs share the same geographic jurisdictions. At the constituency level, each constituency elects a member of parliament (MP) to the national assembly. The MPs were retained from the previous parliamentary structure when the county structure took place in 2010. At the county level, the county elects a governor who is the head of county (and county assembly), a senator who represents them in senate and a woman representative who represents them in the national assembly. All the elected leaders are nominated through political parties (most parties do hold internal elections (albeit most are characterized by controversies and accusations of vote-rigging) among their registered members. The study focused on the very local institutions that are engaged in the REDD project, i.e. chiefs, former councillors or current MCAs, but their accountability and powers to be responsive must be understood within the higher governance structures described beforehand.

Description of the REDD+ project and justification for selection

The Kasigau REDD+ carbon project is implemented by Wildlife Works Carbon (WWC), a subsidiary of Wildlife Works (WW), an international corporation based in the United States. Wildlife Works is described as a 'for profit conservation organization and one of the world's leading REDD+ carbon projects developers' founded in 1997 byan American entrepreneur (WildlifeWorks, n.d.). Kasigau project was the first in the world to be validated and verified under the Voluntary Carbon Standards (VCS) as well as the Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) standards.[6] Following what the project terms as 'successful implementation of the Kasigau project in Kenya', Wildlife works is in the process of implementing such other projects in other parts of the country and other countries in Africa, Asia and South America (Dodson, 2014, WildlifeWorks, n.d.). This case therefore presents the effects of REDD+ implementation on local democracy by an external intervening agent, particularly private entrepreneurs, in the developing world.

The project was selected for the study on the basis that it was at an advanced stage of implementation, as it was already selling carbon credits and allocating a proportion of its revenue for community development. The allocation of carbon revenue to the community enabled the study of responsiveness, i.e. if the institutions chosen to represent people did use the revenue to meet the desired community needs, and what accountability mechanisms were used. Furthermore,

the project partnered with different local institutions at various stages, providing an opportunity for understanding the basis for institutional choice, recognition and derecognition. The project is implemented in three phases: phase one covers Rukinga wildlife sanctuary, a 30,170 ha former livestock ranch privately owned mainly by the entrepreneur. Phase two incorporated thirteen other private and community owned ranches covering approximately 170,000 ha between Tsavo East and Tsavo West national parks. Phase three was underway in approximately 14 other neighbouring ranches. This paper covers phase two of the project which included community owned ranches. This study focused on phase two, which was already selling carbon credits and distributing the funds to communities in five[7] of the six locations.

Study approach

This paper is based mainly on primary and secondary data collected through field work in three periods: January-April 2013, July-August 2013 and January-April 2014. Primary was collected through a total of 61semi-structured interviews, five focus group discussions, and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques such as participant observation, local institutional mapping and ranking. The semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with project leaders, leaders of various local institutions as well as ordinary community members spread across five administrative locations covered by the project (Table 1).

The aims of these interviews and focus group discussions were: i) to capture the history of institutional evolution before and after REDD+ and how local people sought to articulate their needs through them; ii) to understand the reason for the recognition and de-recognition of institutions at the onset of the REDD project, and iii) to evaluate the modes of democratic representation (i.e. accountability and responsiveness) among the recognized and derecognized institutions.

Secondary data collected included the Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs),[8] written in the years 2011, 2012 and 2013. SOPs comprised the formal documents which spelt out the modes and rules of engagement between the project and local level institutions. Together with Project Design Documents (PDDs), the standard documents developed by REDD+ projects for the purposes of validation and accrediting under various standards (in this case VCS and CCBA), formed the core documents that were analysed.

Table 1: Summary of research methods and selection criteria

Methods	Location					Selection criteria
	Kasigau	Marungu	Sagalla	Mwatate	Mwachabo	
Focus group discussions (Number of participants)	8	10	8	10	7	All leaders of LCC (7) and the collaborating CBO (3), i.e. chairman, secretary and treasurer invited to FGD in each of the locations.
Semi-structured interviews and institutional ranking						
- Ordinary community members	10	10	10	10	10	4 men, 4 women, 2 youth purposely sampled (snowballing) based on their knowledge of local institutions and the REDD project in each location.
- Elected leader (councillors/ MCAs)	-	1	1	1	1	All elected representatives invited but only three availed themselves for interviews due to other commitments and time constraints.
- Chiefs	1	1	1	1	1	All chiefs interviewed.
- Project officials number of participants	3					key project leaders based on their portfolio with local institutional engagements selected through snow-balling.

Data validity, reliability and analysis

Data validity and reliability were addressed through a number of measures described under social research methods (Whitte more et al., 2001, Chambers, 1994). These included triangulation, consideration of intra-community dynamics and ranking of selected variables to understand how far generalizations could be made within the selected sample. Triangulation was done at two levels: triangulation of methods (use of secondary data, interviews, focus group discussions and participant observations) as well as triangulation of respondents (project officials, local institutional leaders and ordinary community members. Intra-community variability was addressed by conducting interviews with aggregated members of the community, i.e. men, women and youth; and leaders versus ordinary citizens.

Data was analysed using the constant comparison method of qualitative data (Boeije, 2002, Glaser and Strauss, 2009). This involved a four-stage process: i) coding of transcribed data ii) creating and integrating broad categories according to various themes – this also resulted in the generation of theories; ii) delimiting the theories using concrete rules; iv) writing of theories. Coding was used to identify repeating ideas and themes from the interviews and focus group discussions, with the most recurring themes identified(Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003).

4

Findings

Local institutional setup

The origin of the local level institutions is integral to understanding the nature of their authority and accountability, and therefore interpreting the perspectives of intervening agents such as project implementers in bestowing recognition or de-recognition. In this section, I highlight the genesis of the three institutions under study in Kenya and their history of representation of the local community needs.

LDCs and chiefs

Local Development Committees (LDCs) fall under the provincial administration previously described; they were established under the second[9] attempt at decentralization, where the "district" was the focus for rural development under the single party rule in the 1980s.[10] The district focus turned out to be a deconcentration of the ministries under tight control of the state rather than effective decentralization (Crook, 2003). The provincial administration was an extension of the colonial-style administration by the post-colonial government. Just as in colonial times, authorities under the provincial administration were controlled and manipulated by the powerful executive, and were not given either resources of power to carry out development projects as was envisaged under the policy statements (Chege and Barkan Joel, 1989).

LDCs were formed at the location level headed by chiefs, who were appointed by the civil service on behalf of the central government. Senior authorities such as PCs and DCs were directly appointed by the president, and were often his cronies (*ibid*). Rather being accountable to the local people, LDCs were accountable to

the Divisional Development Committees headed by the DOs, who were in turn accountable to the District Development Committees headed by DCs. As such, committees such as LDCs, and their heads, i.e. chiefs, were associated with the short comings of the single party and authoritarian state including corruption, inefficiency, political oppression and lack of public accountability (Chege and Barkan Joel, 1989, Crook, 2003). The new constitution (2010) was shy to repeal the provincial administration, and instead called for "restructuring" within five years to fit into the new devolved governance. Some Kenyans[11] have expressed the opinion that the provincial administration ought to be scrapped as it is viewed as the antithesis of people's right to govern themselves (Sihanya, 2011).

Elected local councillors and MCAs

The lowest cadre of elected authorities was the councillor/MCA, an elected representative, mostly covering the same geographical jurisdiction as the chief (i.e. the ward or the location). Before 2010, councillors fell under local authorities, who comprised of county and town councils, municipal and city councils. Under this regime, all local authorities were supervised by the minister for local government, who was appointed by the president. Thus though the councillors were elected, they came under an appointee of the executive, who had excessive power, including the power to appoint commissions to run any local authorities or order investigations aimed at re-organizing them (Ng'ethe, 1998). Consequently the powers of councillors were stifled through three key ways: (i) control by the minister indirectly though his/her control over local authorities; (ii) working under the shadow of the provincial administration, particularly the district commissioner who was the chief decision maker at the district level; and (iii) lack of fiscal decentralization by the state which disabled local governments to perform their development functions (Ng'ethe, 1998, Smoke, 1993).

Under the current county government, the ward councillor is referred to as the MCA. MCAs are no longer under the control of neither an all-powerful minister nor the district officials. Instead, they perform functions under the county assembly, supervised by an elected governor, whom they also have power to impeach. Furthermore, the national commission on revenue allocation is tasked with ensuring equitable revenue shares between the central and the county governments, whereas the latter has the autonomy to raise and spend revenue within its area of jurisdiction. The MCAs therefore, although a relatively new as institution that could not be evaluated under this study, represents a significant shift from the previous crop of councillors in terms of their powers and resources.

CBOs

Community based organizations (CBOs) in Kenya refer to 'grass root organizations', which originated from the *harambee*[12] *movement*, popularized by Kenya's first president which is translated into "lets pull together" in Kiswahili (Edwards and Hulme, 1996). It represents a call for "self-help" at the local level in matters of development (Brass, 2012). CBOs are distinct from Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in that they can be supported by the government financially (Brass, 2012). This provided an avenue for the state to use them as forums for spreading its agenda under the Moi regime (1979-2002). The president remained the most sort-after guest of honour who would attend the harambees (fundraising, for instance to build a local school or hospital) and "give (funds) generously". He would also seize the opportunity to spread his populist agendas, attack his political opponents and issue presidential decrees (Chege and Barkan Joel, 1989). However, when not used as political tools, CBOs contributed to citizen-initiated development at the local level, filling the gaps left by the state. Belonging in CBOs is based on membership (individuals or corporations); who share a 'common interest'. Therefore they represent the interests of their members, which may or may not coincide with the interest of the wider citizenry. Being that they depend on finding external funding from government, private donations or external donors, their downward accountability, even to their own members can be distorted (Edwards and Hulme, 1996).

Which institutions did the REDD+ project choose to work with and why?

The recognizing institution, based on our study framework was identified as Wildlife Works. This was the "intervening agent" that set up the project, sold carbon credits and allocated revenue to local communities through its subsidiary arms, Wildlife Works Carbon and Wildlife Works Carbon Trust (WWCT) respectively. In the year 2011, the carbon project started by partnering with chief-headed LDCs in two locations; Marungu and Kasigau. Shortly after, the LDCs and chiefs were derecognized and a new institution, the LCC was created as a carbon committee and recognized as the local partner in each location. The project also facilitated the selection of one CBO to work with the newly-formed LCCs in each of the five locations.

Reasons for derecognition of LDCs and chiefs

Interviews with project officials and local community revealed divergent reasons for de-recognition of LDCs and chiefs in favour of newly-established institutions. Project officials indicated how LDCs had too much to deal with in development projects by various government ministries and on top of that, those initiated by external NGOs. As a result, the officials suggested, LDCs had too much to deal with, and would not be effective and efficient in executing the carbon project. For instance, Kega, a project official in charge of community division elaborated:

> "We had to disengage with LDC and work with CBOs and LCCs. The LDCs deal with all manner of projects and partners in the location. They deal with projects [from different] line ministries such as health, infrastructure, environment, education, etc…we realized this was too much for them and so far, they have not demonstrated either capability or efficiency in handling all of them" Project official 1, 18th July 2013.

These accounts by project officials revealed how LDCs, having to integrate five or more line ministries as designed during the establishment of the provincial administration; and on top of that deal with the many NGOs characteristic of a poor rural setting, seemed like a predetermined failure. It also meant that the LDCs had to contend with many powerful and unbending high-level ministries, hence their demands, sanctioned by top-down source of authority, took precedence over other demands at the local level.

Interviews by local community members on the historic representation by LDCs provided a different perspective for derecognition. Most respondents regarded LDCs as nepotistic and corrupt. Historically, when new projects came into the villages under various donors, the chiefs appointed their relatives and friends to the various committees in order to benefit from bribes and allowances, s one of the villager, a well-educated former civil servant revealed:

> The LDCs were working well after their formation in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As time went by, some LDC members turned the institution into a cash cow, demanding bribes and failing to attend meetings to approve projects if the bribe was not paid. If any member of the LDC was seen as working with the NGOs without requesting for a bribe, or was vocal about real issues that affected the community, the core leaders [chiefs] would drop them from the committee and not call them to attend subsequent meetings. The LDCs were later just referred to as the 'leaders meeting' so that if an ordinary committee member was not re-invited and made an inquiry as to why, he would be told it was just a 'leaders meeting' happening. Thuti, Village elder, 23rd July 2013.

Elected councillors were included as officials in the LDCs. Councillors did not have funds or structures such as offices of personnel to carry out projects in the local level. Rather, they presented the needs of their constituents to the district level councils. The district councils were often underfunded by the central government, while their own internal revenue collection suffered from corruption; hence they could not implement development project as the local level as recounted by a former area councillor:

> In my first year as an elected councillor, I received a budgetary allocation of Ksh 35,000 [approx. US $450] annually to carry out development projects in the entire location. What development projects can you implement with that kind of money in a year? The figures increased gradually upon our [councillors] complaints. The following year it was doubled to 65,000 [approx. US $ 765], and so on, during our last year, we received Ksh 2.5 Million [approx. US $ 29,411]. I put it into the construction of the ward social hall. The social hall stands half complete as we only spent a fraction of the money before my term came to a close. The newly-elected ward representative has since diverted the remaining funds to meetings, allowances and the funds are now gone. He sees the social hall as my personal project although I have left the office. He does not want to complete it for the fear that I will take credit for it and use it as a re-election tool against him in the coming general election. He would rather start other projects that he will take credit for. Gambo, previously elected councillor, 17th July 2013.

Some elected councillors, initiated their own committees in their areas of jurisdiction, such as education committees, roads committees, health committees, etc., which operated parallel to the chief-headed committees. But the councillors revealed that these committees died off gradually when local councils were starved of funds by the local government, and the little that was given was misappropriated through graft in the local councils' management.

It therefore appears from the community respondents that although LDCs were overburdened, corruption among various chiefs and councillors was a key factor for the project's disengagement. Thus although the project officials publicly justified derecognition of LDCs on the basis of "overburdening", corruption was also a major factor.

Derecognition of an institution (the LDC in this case) did not translate into de-recognition of the person (the chief) in all cases. Examination of "negative cases" revealed that while all LDCs were dropped from formal engagement by the project, individual chiefs who were deemed as helpful to the project, conservation minded and supporting in mobilizing the local community continue to receive

preferential recognition by the project. For instance, the chief of one of the locations has been the face and voice of the "community" in many aspects of the project. For example, he was paid for all expenses to attend the COP 15 in Copenhagen in December 2009, has appeared on many newsprints, including the British guardian as well as the project documents, as a crusader for the benefits of the carbon project to his people.

Maintaining chiefs and councillors as ex-officio members of LCCs was also recognition of their importance aimed at eliciting government support in the project at the local level. For instance, the project relied on chiefs to call for *barazas* (public meetings) and act as facilitators. Chiefs and councillors, like other LCC members received the sitting allowance of Ksh 1000 (approx. 12 US $) per meeting attended. This presented a financial incentive for their cooperation. Their status as ex-officio members however implied that they could not participate in the election of other leaders of the committees and their opinions in LCC could be disregarded, as one project official recounted:

> "…the absurdity of retaining chiefs as opinions leaders in LCCs is that their opinion can actually be disregarded. The flip side of retaining them is that if the LCCs are too weak….the chiefs and councillors end up dominating them..." project official 2, 25th February 2014.

Chiefs and councillors interviewed were in denial of de-recognition. They argued, based on the varying degree of involvement in many projects in their locations that the LDCs, which they headed, were still part of the carbon project, but most importantly, that they were fully involved in all aspects of the project at the community level. What was obvious was that chiefs and councillors had no direct control of decision making and control of funds under the carbon project.

Reasons for recognition of LCC and CBOs

After de-recognition of LDCs, chiefs and councillors, the project facilitated the creation of a new institution, the LCC in each location. In addition, one CBO was chosen from pre-existing ones (or a new one created) to work with the LCC.

Each LCC comprised of seven elected[13] members distributed across the villages in each location, including the chiefs and councillors, who were ex-officio members. Elected LCC leaders served for a period of two years, the councillor until the next general election after five years whereas the chief as an appointed authority served an undefined term. The role of the LCC was to prioritize, approve or disapprove community projects, ensure equitable use of funds across

the locations and to act as signatories to financial transactions together with CBOs and provide accountability checks on CBOs.

CBOs were the technical arm, managing the financial accounting and record-keeping of the project at the local level. In locations where many CBOs pre-existed, the selection criteria for a CBO was as follows: it had to be conservation oriented in its mission and objectives; it had to have been in operation for a minimum period of three years; and it had to have an operational bank account and audited financial records. Selected CBOs were also facilitated by the project through salaries for technical staff such as accountants, building or renting offices and buying printers and computers. CBOs were however at liberty to source for funding from other development donors.

Assessing responsiveness and accountability across recognized and derecognized institutions (LCCs and CBOs)
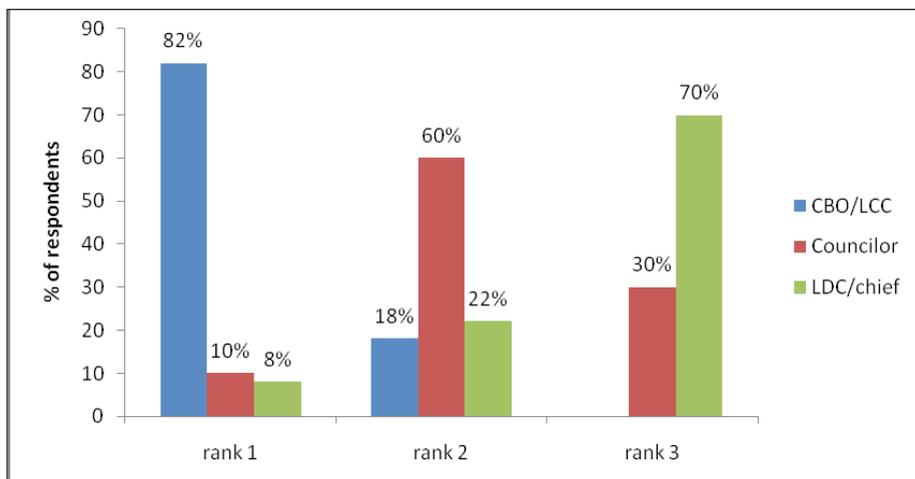
Responsiveness

Upon the sale of carbon credits by WWC, communities received a proportion of the revenue through WWCT. Financial records held by the project, the CBOs, as well as collaborative evidence provided by community respondents showed that the each of the five locations had been allocated US $50,000 in the year 2011 and US $85,000 in the year 2012. In total, the project had allocated USD 810,000 to the communities. LCCs officials and chiefs indicated that this was by far the largest sums of money that had been directly entrusted with the local community by any development organization or the state in the area. It had in turn made the local communities view the project favourably, based on the interviews conducted with ordinary community members, as one LCC official narrated:

> "In this area, we have worked with many NGOs in building schools, water projects, etc. in the past. None of those NGOs entrusted the local communities with managing finances like Wildlife Works. This carbon project provides the funds and gives us the opportunity to choose the projects that we want to undertake and lets us implement them on our own. So far, we have spent the money on paying fees for ten fully-sponsored and 124 partially-sponsored students in various schools and tertiary colleges, construction of a classroom and water harvesting project at our Primary school" Mwatate, LCC official 1, 18th July 2013.

Similarly, other locations invested most of their funds in education (payment of school fees and construction of classrooms); water projects, such as construction of storage tanks, piping, and rock-catchment.

A majority of community members interviewed indicated the carbon based LCCs and CBOs were the most responsive to community needs, compared to either LDCs/chiefs or councillors: 82 per cent of the respondents ranked CBOs/LCCs number 1, 60 per cent ranked councillors number 2, while 70 per cent ranked chiefs and LDCs number 3 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: percentage of respondents who gave various ranks of responsiveness (1=most responsive; 2=responsive and 3=least responsive) to different institutions at the local level.

The ranks were based on the responsiveness of the three institutions in the past 3 years to community-level needs which were specified through FGDs as water, health facilities, education bursaries and infrastructure such as classrooms. Carbon project funds disbursed through CBOs and LCCs was reported to be the main funding for development projects implemented by local-level institutions.

Accountability

Mechanisms of accountability assessed across the four categories of institutions included elections, media, voice and the display of information and financial records for public scrutiny (Table 2).

Table 2: Recall of accountability mechanisms in the past five years

Accountability mechanisms	CBO	LCC	Chiefs/ LDC	Elected representatives
Elections	Regular (every 3 years)	Regular (every 2-3 years)	None	Regular (every 5 years)

Media reports	None	None	None	None
Voice (public expression of satisfaction or dissatisfaction e.g. through barazas)	Regular	Regular	Rare	Rare
Provision of financial records of projects for public scrutiny	Regular	Regular	None	Rare
Documentation through IT	Regular	None	None	None

Indicators derived during focus group discussions. None: accountability mechanism had not been used or seen in the last five years. Rare: a few incidences of the accountability mechanism had occurred, but were not consistent in all five locations; and did not occur in any scheduled time frame. Regular: the accountability mechanism occurred within a defined time frame.

LCCs and CBOs under the carbon project were perceived to more accountable to local communities as well as the project due to presence of multiple accountability mechanisms. These included regular elections that were enforced under the carbon project, which for instance, was not possible for chiefs; and although elected ward representatives faced elections every five years, respondents indicated that government-presided elections were complicated by irregularities such as voter bribery and stealing of votes, hence it was not viewed as an efficient mechanism for holding leaders accountable.

CBOs and LCCs maintained documentation of financial records of expenditures of carbon revenue in the office computers which were audited mostly by the project officials. Access to information and financial records meant anybody in the community willing to question them could do so, but the main forum that this happened was during the public *barazas* when the financial reports were read out and community members discussed and questioned the details. Lists and costs of implemented projects such as education bursaries awardees, construction of classrooms or construction of water catchment facilities were observed by the researcher displayed in some of the CBO offices.

Corruption

Corruption was mentioned as a key barrier for accountability and responsiveness among chiefs, councillors and other elected authorities. The nature of corruption coincided with the mandates and jurisdiction of institutions: chiefs appointed their allies and relatives as LDC officials so that they could benefit from per diems during meetings, or collude to use public money for their own personal gain.

Elected councillors exaggerated costs to skim off the excess. A CBO chairman, who was also a village leader, recounted how projects led by elected local governments exaggerated costs:

> We attended a recent leaders meeting in the Wundanyi, and found that on average, a classroom constructed by parents and NGOs cost and average of Ksh 850,000 [approx. US $ 10,000). The same classroom constructed by elected local authorities or MPs using the constituency development funds, with material sourced from comparable distances with that of parents and NGO funded ones, cost an average of Ksh. 2.7 Million [approx. US $ 31, 765]… These people [elected leaders] are in collusion with the contractors to squander public money. Gashoto, CBO chairman, 18th July 2013.

The councillors were also seen by the public as interested in implementing projects that could be publicly displayed in order to earn them credit for re-election, and not those that were necessarily addressing the needs of the local communities. For instance, the construction of the social hall mentioned by one of the councillors was perceived as his own initiative by the local community as well, since he did not get wider community participation in prioritizing local needs as was done by the REDD+ project.

On the contrary, corruption was not a major problem noted with the CBOs and LCCs. Since the project started allocating funds for local development through the two institutions, only one CBOs and LCC had been found awarding suspiciously high-cost tenders to a specific contractor by the project auditors as recalled by a senior project officer:

> Sometime back, one of the CBOs had tried to inflate the costs in conjunction with the contractors. We found out during audits and we explained to them how that was not acceptable. We did not want to ask the community to disband the CBO and LCC leaders immediately as this was the first time we found them and we wanted them to learn in the process. In a society where corruption is the order of the day from the highest to the lowest cadres, we understand that things cannot change overnight. Since then, the CBO and LCC has been resolute on integrity. Project official 1, 12th March 2013.

The main mechanism of sanction applied in this case was a verbal warning, being that the CBO and LCC were considered first offenders by the project. Interviews with community respondents in the location indicated that they were not aware of the corruption case pointed, but they were concerned with the slow implementation of projects in their location compared other locations which had received carbon funds at the same time with them.

Discussions

REDD+ is seen as a mechanism that can promote wider democracy by the virtue of choosing the 'right institutions' at the local level (Ribot, 2011a, Ribot, 2011b). In Kenya for example, REDD+ comes at a point where devolution of resources to local level institutions is seen as critical in the face of failed attempts in the past(Chege and Barkan Joel, 1989, Smoke, 1993, Kramon and Posner, 2011). Yet the local arena is characterized by multiple institutions which claim to represent the public (Lund, 2006). This study sought to investigate which institutions REDD+ choose to work with at the local, why they were chosen and the implications of the choices on local democracy. The findings indicate that the project initially chose to recognize state-sanctioned LDCs headed by local administrative chiefs, as well as elected councillors, but shortly thereafter de-recognized them in favour newly-created LCCs and CBOs.

The study identifies two sets of factors that led to derecognition of both LDCs and elected local authorities: i) structural/political factors; and ii) symptomatic factors. Structural and political factors are embedded in the very nature of the institutions; the reasons for their formation, their mandates, structural mechanisms for accountability as well as the ability to avoid misuse and control by other arms of government, particularly the executive. The LDCs and chiefs were appointed officials, under a top-down and executive-controlled provincial administration. The main objective for their formation was strengthening the executive and weakening the elected arm of government, during the district focus for rural development back in the 1980s (Chege and Barkan Joel, 1989). As such, chiefs in Kenya, and elsewhere in Africa, are difficult to hold accountable (Berry, 2001, Ribot, 1999); their responsiveness when it occurs, is largely based on benign dictatorship, rather than structural mechanism of accountability.

Elected authorities, particularly the councillors under study, were inept due to several underlying factors. One, local authorities, within which the councillor operated, were under the authority of a power minister, appointed by the executive. This denied them both fiscal and decision making autonomy. Furthermore, the minister reserved the right to appoint commissions to run any local authorities or order investigations aimed at re-organizing them and rewarding upward accountability and corruption (Ng'ethe, 1998). Combined with stifled funding from the central government, local councils and councillors were the ultimate representation of failed devolution (Ng'ethe, 1998, Smoke, 1993).

There are concerns already that REDD+, particularly when implemented through the national platforms, will likely be affected by corruption and other governance challenges that have characterized in the public sector such as forestry (Tacconi et al.,

2009). In addition, corruption, and its many faces of malfeasance is not new in local governments in Kenya or other developing countries (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2006, Fisman and Gatti, 2002). However, corruption remains mainly a symptom of the failures of the larger structural factors in state-sanctioned institutions, such as the absence of mechanisms to hold chiefs downwardly accountable, or lack of functional auditing mechanism in local government projects, opening loopholes for crimes of opportunity such as cost exaggeration.

Proponents of democracy argue that partnering with non-elected authorities leads to deprivation of powers among the elected authorities; and in the process, undermining democracy (Ribot, 2004, Manor, 2004). They argue that elected local government carry broad citizen representation and formalized mechanisms of electoral accountability (Ribot, 2011b). Furthermore, local people cannot easily contest rules made by non-elected authorities, as those authorities are not downwardly accountable and are often inaccessible. For instance, Ribot (2009)contends that appointed authorities, such as hereditary customary chiefs or state-appointed chiefs, cannot be considered local democratic bodies – even if appointed by a democratic central government; since their appointment confers the local people with no direct accountability mechanisms. Poteete and Ribot (2011) also point out that the ability of people to hold chiefs[14] accountable vanished, if it had ever existed, once chieftaincies were absorbed into the colonial and post-colonial states. As a result, these scholars put forth democratically elected local authorities as the legitimate ones because they are assumed to carry the voice and choices of the wider citizenry.

But such propositions of one particular kind of institutions may be construed to overlook the challenges that come with partnering with state-sanctioned institutions, including democratically elected ones. In this case, the carbon project underwent phases of institutional recognition and derecognized and even crafted and recognized new ones. While the project disbanded LDCs completely, chiefs and councillors/ MCAs were relegated to the roles of ex-officio members in the LCCs. Such side-lining of state-sanctioned institutions, though justified on the basis of inefficiency, corruption, and overburdening by project officials and supported by the perspectives of a majority of respondents surveyed, has wider implications for local democracy.

Manor (2004) argues that channelling local representation through single-purpose committees usurp the space for democratically elected authorities. Such committees, even though they may be responsive to local needs and local mechanisms to hold leader accountable present, cease to functions as soon as the project ends, and thus do not provide long-term institutional solutions beyond the life-time of the project. Thus a third dimension of democratic representation, i.e. sustainability, emerges, which out to be factored in, while making institutional choices.

Conclusion

REDD+ has the potential to leverage local democracy, particularly in countries such as Kenya where devolution and democracy are national goals. In order to do so, there are both short-term and long-term ways of intervention. In the short term, partnering with efficient and effective committees such as LCCs may be necessary to meet REDD+ goals, but keeping them under the presidency of the elected local government. That way, decisions are kept within the realm of elected local government. As a result, communities involved could learn critical lessons on how to address their needs through elected leaders, and to hold their leaders accountable. It is worth to note that the duration of the project under study was 30 years, which provided long-enough time to draw lessons and incorporate them into local governance structures. To institute long-term democratic governance however requires bestowing both resources and discretionary powers on REDD+ under democratically elected governments themselves.

There are important lessons that can be learnt from the Kasigau REDD project on democratic attributes, i.e. accountability and responsiveness of recognized institutions. For instance, although the project opted to craft new institutions, CBOs and LCCs could have been corrupt too. In order to empower them while holding them accountable, CBOs were equipped with funds to implement local level projects, provided with qualified personnel such as project managers and secretaries, offices, computers, printers and internet. In return, they provided efficient machinery for community project implementation, record-keeping while being accountable to Wildlife Works as well as the registrar of societies. LCCs were provided efficient monitoring by keeping the CBOs in check, while bearing the electoral legitimacy to evaluate proposed community projects and prioritize them.

The empowerment of CBOs and LCCs, and the employment of multiple accountability methods demonstrated that accountability, even among state-sanctioned institutions has to go beyond elections. In addition to the ability by the

local communities to sanction the LCCs members through elections after every two years, Wildlife Works carried out constant auditing of projects, insisted on public access to information and public display of financial expenditures. These were key mechanisms that REDD+ players can apply when working with state-sanctioned institutions if accountability and responsiveness are to be achieved.

Notes

1. Note that the term 'devolution' here is being used to mean transfers to local elected governments. In the decentralization literature this is usually called 'decentralization' while the term devolution is reserved for transfers from government to non-government bodies such as private bodies or non-governmental organizations (i.e. transfers outside of the state). In this paper, due to the usage in Kenya, the term 'devolution' will be used to mean 'decentralization' in the more common usage.

2. The counties form the new local governments and must be differentiated from the defunct local governments. They are comparable to former districts. The main differences are that county executives, including the county heads (governors) are elected directly by the people as opposed to appointments by the state as was the case under the district structure. The execution of the devolved government holds mixed fortunes for the country.

3. I use the term institutions to refer to the formalized arrangements based on organizational structures as opposed to its application in reference to rules and norms (see Cleaver 2002; Ostrom 1990). In reality, the two may not be easily distinguishable; formalized institutions contain socially embedded rules and norms, while the non-formalized, culturally embedded institutions may have evolved with great influence from formalized institutions (Cleaver 2002), through processes such as what Moore (1978) refers to as the "invasion" of local arenas by the state – as under indirect rule and post-colonial administrative arrangements (Mamdani 1996).

4. A majority of developing countries in across Asia, Africa, Latin America and Easter Europe have been practicing one form of decentralization or another in the last three decades, (see Bardhan 2002; Bardhan & Mookherjee 2006; World Bank 2008).

5. Under the devolved structure, the central government devolves powers specified in the Fourth Schedule of the constitution of Kenya and the County Governments Act of 2012 to the county governments. For those that are relevant to this study, county governments receive revenue from the central government, but it is also mandated to collect revenue within the county. County governments are also tasked with implementing national legislation on forestry, and ensuring community participation at the local level.

6. The two standards take into consideration all the three elements on carbon, social and biodiversity monitoring and verification, but the rigor differs with VCS being strong on carbon and CCBA on social and biodiversity.

7. One location was in the process of sorting out colonial-old administrative boundary disputes.

8. One project official indicated that the SOPs were developed with participation of the community and did not accept designation of wildlife works carbon as the recognizing institution as he viewed it as an indication of the project imposing its will on the community. LCC and CBO leaders indicated that they were involved in meetings that deliberated on SOPs but they also indicated that the project made it clear of the terms that had to be met for the carbon finances to be given to the community.

9. The first decentralization was under the *majimbo (regions)* constitution immediately after independence in 1963. The constitution focused on political devolution of power, but was quickly repealed in favour of a unitary state. Similar efforts at devolution were instigated under the Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP) which culminated into the district focus for rural development.

10. The District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD) was a strategy developed by the Kenya government that aimed at strengthening, coordination and planning of development activities in the districts. For further details, see Chege (1997); Chitere & Ireri (2004).

11. This was the general attitude of the opposition during 2002 general elections, (see Shinyanga, 2011).

12 Harambee is actually coined from two names of Hindu gods, 'Har' and 'Ambe', Lord Shanka And Lord Shiva respectively. The two names were widely used by Indians brought by the colonial government as labourers in the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway in the 19th century. They used to chant the names of these gods in order to receive power to carry out the difficult tasks of moving and laying the rail tracks (Stephen Mils and Yoyo Vetch, (2013). "Muthaiga Country Club, the First One Hundred Years)".

13. The election takes the form of majority votes through public *barazas*. While this may not be as rigorous as a secret ballot, it is cost and time effective. Interviewed community members during one of the election barazas expressed satisfaction with the method.

14. A distinction between government-appointed administrative chiefs and traditional hereditary-lineage is in order here. Traditional chiefs represented specific ethnic groups, tribes or clans. They have been studied in details and sometimes found to accountable to the local people in certain cases in Ghana and South Africa (see Berry 2001; Hendricks and Ntsebeza 1999). Administrative chiefs on the other represent the colonial and post-colonial attributes to monitor and rule people hierarchically down to the lowest cadres of the society; they are government prefects (Mamdani 1996).

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RFGI WORKING PAPER SERIES

The Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) is a research and training program, focusing on environmental governance in Africa. It is jointly managed by the Council for the Development of Social Sciences Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (UIUC). Natural resources, especially forests, are very important since they provide local governments and local people with needed revenue, wealth, and subsistence. Responsive local governments can provide forest resource-dependent populations the flexibility they need to manage, adapt to and remain resilient in their changing environment. RFGI aims to enhance and help institutionalize widespread responsive and accountable local governance processes that reduce vulnerability, enhance local wellbeing, and improve forest management with a special focus on developing safeguards and guidelines to ensure fair and equitable implementation of the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) and climate-adaptation interventions.

RFGI is a programe of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) is an independent pan-African research organisation primarily focusing on social sciences research. It was established to promote and facilitate research and knowledge production using a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach. The Council is committed to combating the fragmentation of knowledge production, and the African community of scholars along various disciplinary and linguistic/geographical lines. http://www.codesria.org

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is a leading authority on the environment and sustainable development focusing in part on ensuring effective and equitable governance of natural resource use. IUCN supports scientific research, manages field projects all over the world, and brings governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice. RFGI works with IUCN's Regional Offices for Central and West Africa (PACO) and Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO) and the Headquarters in Switzerland. http://www.iucn.org

University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign is a public research-intensive university in the U.S. state of Illinois. A land-grant university, it is the flagship campus of the University of Illinois system. At UIUC, RFGI activities are part of the Social Dimensions of Environmental Policy Initiative (SDEP) of the Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science and the Beckman Institute. http://sdep.beckman.illinois.edu