**SUMMARY**

Overcoming the ‘panacea problem’ has been a major challenge for scholars devoted to the study of social-ecological systems (SESs). Panaceas are overly simplified institutional prescriptions, which have recurrently misguided natural resource policies across the world. To address this challenge, SES-scholars have focused their efforts on identifying the right institutional fit for a particular system, and a major initiative to refine the analysis of human-environment interaction has been the development of a multi-tiered interdisciplinary framework, called the SES framework. SES studies and analytical frameworks need to go beyond their current focus on finding the right institutional fit by positing power and discourses as key components of the analysis of SESs.