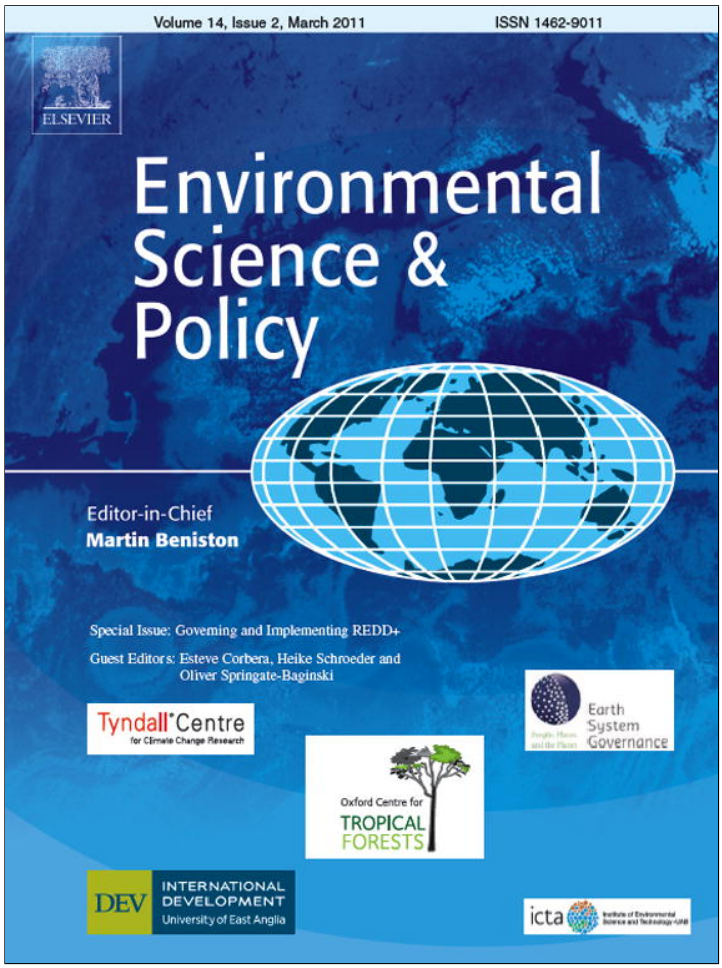

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Seeing REDD+ as a project of environmental governance

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we argue that REDD+ is more than an impartial container for the various tools and actors concerned with addressing anthropogenic climate change. Instead, even as it takes shape, REDD+ is already functioning as a form of governance, a particular framing of the problem of climate change and its solutions that validates and legitimizes specific tools, actors and solutions while marginalizing others. This framing raises important questions about how we might critically evaluate REDD+ programs and their associated tools and stakeholders in a manner that encourages the most effective and equitable pursuit of its goals. We bring the issue of governance under REDD+ to the fore through a focus on the objects to be governed, the tools of governance, and the forms of environmental, economic and social knowledge that are considered legitimate under this framework. We then turn to the example of indigenous people's participation in REDD+ to illustrate how this framework attempts to bring about environmental governance by aligning the interests of a wide range of stakeholders in this process to bring about desired environmental outcomes. This consideration is critical for the implementation of REDD+, for as we illustrate, this alignment has thus far been incomplete, suggesting an emerging crisis of governance within REDD+ that will compromise future project and policy goals, and thus the well-being of many stakeholders.

1. Introduction

Since 2007, efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation have explicitly recognized the role of conservation, sustainable management, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, facilitated through the use of equitable financial incentives, as promising approaches for mitigating global climate change (known as REDD+). Questions have been raised concerning the issue of govern*ment within* this so-called REDD+ framework, focusing on the structures that operationalize policy decisions related to deforestation and climate change. However, the literature has yet to offer a careful consideration of how REDD+ *is itself* an emerging project of environmental govern*ance* – that is, a set of social norms and political assumptions that will steer societies and organizations in a manner that shapes collective decisions about the use and management of forest resources.

In this paper, we argue that REDD+ is more than an impartial container for the various tools and actors concerned with addressing anthropogenic climate change. Instead, even as it takes shape, REDD+ is already functioning as a form of governance, a particular framing of the problem of climate change and its solutions that validates and legitimizes specific tools, actors and solutions while marginalizing others. This framing raises important questions about how we might critically evaluate REDD+ programs and their associated tools and stakeholders in a manner that encourages the most effective and equitable pursuit of its goals. Further, it calls into question the likelihood of achieving reductions in greenhouse gas emissions via REDD+ programs.

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This paper has three parts. First, we examine the current governmental structure of REDD+. While no single agency or organization holds a monopoly on the design or administration of REDD+ programs, we focus on two that have emerged at the forefront in transferring this concept from an idea into reality: the United Nations (via UN-REDD) and the World Bank (through the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, or FCFP). The second section of the paper considers how REDD+ functions, even at this early stage, as a largely unacknowledged project of environmental governance. Here we focus on the objects to be governed, who is governing, and how desired conservation and sequestration outcomes are to be achieved under REDD+. Finally, we illustrate how this framework attempts to align the interests of a wide range of stakeholders in this process to bring about desired environmental outcomes through the example of the formalization of indigenous peoples' participation in REDD+. We argue that this alignment has thus far been incomplete, suggesting an emerging crisis of governance within REDD+ that will compromise future project and policy goals, along with the well-being of various stakeholders.

2. REDD+: current structure

In 2006, acting on the request of COP11, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) took over the supervision of what were then known as REDD emissions reduction strategies (UNFCCC, 2006a, p. 17).[1] In 2007, the SBSTA recommended a draft decision (Decision 2/CP 13), subsequently adopted at COP 13 in Bali, Indonesia, that called for "Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries" (UNFCCC, 2008, p. 8). The addition of conservation, sustainable management and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks to existing concerns for the mitigation of deforestation was meant to avoid creating incentives for countries whose rates of deforestation remain at very high levels (therefore requiring more funding) while rewarding those whose forest cover is more protected due to conservation and sustainable management. With these additions REDD strategies began to be referred to as REDD+.Since 2007, the SBSTA has been working with an ever-expanding network of UNFCCC parties, international governmental organizations (IGOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), indigenous peoples' representatives and civil society representatives to understand and address methodological approaches and concerns relating to the implementation of REDD+ programs. The impetus behind these efforts at coordination and integration lies in the impending expiration of the Kyoto Protocol in 2012, and the expectation that any new international agreement on actions for addressing global climate change will include REDD+ programs as a key component.

REDD+ emerges from previous efforts to avoid deforestation and address climate change, such as efforts to account for land use, land use change and forestry as carbon sinks under the Clean Development Mechanism. Following Angleson (2009, p. 2), in this paper we define REDD+ as "an umbrella term for local, national and global actions that reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and enhance forest carbon stocks in developing countries," where enhanced forest stock includes "forest regeneration and rehabilitation, negative degradation, negative emissions, carbon uptake, carbon removal or just removals" of carbon from the atmosphere. Many organizations have become involved in the preparations for this potential new focus on REDD+. At the forefront of these are several UN organizations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) which, as of 2008, have collectively combined their efforts into a program known as UN-REDD.[2] The World Bank is the other major actor in REDD+. The Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) is spearheading that organization's REDD+ programs. Both organizations became involved in discussions of REDD early on, with FAO and UNEP representatives participating in the first workshop held by SBSTA on reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries in 2006, and the FCPF participating in the second workshop on the topic in 2007 (UNFCCC, 2006b, 2007).

UN-REDD and the FCPF have taken on unique but integrated roles in the process of assisting national governments in their preparations for future REDD+ activities. Throughout the early stages of developing REDD+ programs, UN-REDD has taken the lead on the design of effective monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) strategies, while the FCPF has been more closely involved with the development of successful economic incentives and tools for these programs. The activities of these two groups have become increasingly coordinated over time, resulting in several joint documents that deal specifically with collaborative efforts and the increasing coordination of policy meetings between the two organizations (UN-REDD, 2009a).[3] Most recently, a joint

[1] The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions via the mitigation of deforestation was first introduced as a formal topic of discussion in 2005, at the 11th Conference of Parties (COP) for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The intent of the governments of Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica in submitting this topic was to encourage the "Parties to the [UNFCCC] and to the Kyoto Protocol (KP) to take note of present rates of deforestation within developing nations, acknowledge the resulting carbon emissions, and consequently open dialogue to develop scientific, technical, policy and capacity responses to address such emissions resulting from tropical deforestation" (UNFCCC, 2006a, p. 17). Tropical forests store vast amounts of carbon in both the plants themselves and the soils in which they grow, such that the IPCC (IPCC, 2007) estimates that during the 1990s tropical deforestation accounted for 20% of global carbon emissions.

[2] At the time of submission for this article, the Government of the United States was finalizing its REDD+ policy statements.

[3] At the 4th UN-REDD Policy Board meeting in March, 2010, requests were made for the coordination of future UN-REDD policy board meetings with FCPF Participant/Committee Assembly meetings as well as future cooperation on delivery mechanisms for REDD+ (UN-REDD, 2010c).

statement was released by UN-REDD and the FCPF stating that options are already being explored that include "an effort by the FCPF Facility Management Team and the UN-REDD Secretariat to develop a joint delivery platform for REDD+ readiness, which would encompass an agreed set of operating principles and common standards, including a shared readiness template" and that future coordination agreements will be closely considered (UN-REDD, 2010a).

3. REDD+ and governance

The question of government (the structures through which decisions are made and resources are managed) within REDD+ is already the focus of a growing literature that focuses on everything from the appropriate means by which carbon stocks will be measured to the avenues through which broad-based participation in program and project design might be fostered. This paper steps back from this discussion and considers REDD+, and the processes through which its parameters are being determined, as a form of governance, a means of aligning a diverse set of stakeholders around agreed-upon objects to be governed, tools of governance, and forms of environmental, economic and social knowledge. For us, this is a critical distinction because governance shapes the definition of events and trends as problematic or not as well as which solutions are the most valid. Thus, concerns for issues such as land tenure, the distribution of benefits, and the recentralization of forest management under REDD+, while important in their own right, are questions framed by this underlying governance. Understandings of and responses to challenges within REDD+ will proceed from this governance. Thus, by defining in general terms the governance taking shape through REDD+, we are providing a framework within which many other concerns for this approach to conservation and climate change mitigation might be placed and interpreted. To extend our examination of REDD+ beyond issues of government to a focus on the framework as itself a system of governance shaping environmental outcomes, we focus on three overlapping lines of inquiry: What is being governed? Who is governing? How is that governance taking place?

3.1. *What is being governed?*

Answering the question of "What is being governed?" within REDD+ establishes how the need for and legitimacy of REDD+ projects is established. Broadly speaking, REDD+ aims to reduce carbon emissions caused by the cutting of forests. This goal is itself a narrow component of a broader goal, that of addressing global climate change to mitigate present and future human impacts. In an effort to draw in a wide range of actors, including those living in countries without tropical forests, the REDD+ institutional literature takes on this broader concern for global impacts as a means of legitimizing its narrower focus. For example, UN-REDD (2009b) notes:

> It is now clear that in order to constrain the impacts of climate change within limits that society will reasonably be able to tolerate, the global average temperatures must be stabilized within two degrees Celsius. This will be practically impossible to achieve without reducing emissions from the forest sector, in addition to other mitigation actions.

This broad REDD+ goal of limiting carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation while enhancing forest carbon stocks translates into many time and place-specific objectives that encompass more regionally and locally specific resources than the generalized term "forest" can efficiently signify. For example, resources whose use will be affected by REDD+ include trees themselves (potentially used for timber, food, fuel, cultural traditions, etc.), non-timber forest resources, and local landholdings adjacent to forests. Thus, governing the impacts of climate change through the reduction of deforestation and forest degradation requires governing many different types of land cover, livelihoods activities, ecosystem services and governance capacities (Angleson, 2009).

While the unique governance needs of different places and resources contribute to the complexities of specific REDD+ program activities, much of the institutional REDD+ literature encourages consideration of the potential positive synergies that could result from this complexity. For example, the World Bank (FCPF website, n.d.) supports their FCPF efforts by arguing,

> In addition to mitigating climate change, stopping deforestation and forest degradation, and supporting sustainable forest management conserves water resources and prevents flooding, reduces run-off, controls soil erosion, reduces river siltation, protects fisheries and investments in hydropower facilities, preserves biodiversity and preserves cultures and traditions. With all that at stake it is clear what has to happen. With all the services that forests provide both to humanity and the natural world, there is now widespread understanding of a simple yet profound fact–that forests are more important left standing, than cut.

Therefore, for UN-REDD and the FCPF, controlling and limiting the cutting of trees and harvesting of other forest resources, while requiring governance of complex, locally specific activities and environments, is likely to result in far more comprehensive gains than reducing carbon emissions alone.

The question of what is being governed can also be extended to include *who* is being governed. Just as protecting or conserving "forests" encompasses many different resources, there are also many actors and stakeholders associated with the stewardship of those resources, including forest-dwelling peoples and indigenous peoples, swidden agriculturalists, permanent small-scale farmers seeking new or additional land holdings, large and small-scale timber industries and their associated workers, and large and small-scale ranch operators, just to name a few. Since the origin of modern day conservation in the late 1800s and early 1900s, a prominent point of contention surrounding these efforts has been the struggle to meet the needs of local people who depend on natural resources while also managing those

resources in a way that protects the highest levels of biodiversity (e.g. NPS, 2007; USFS, 2010; Redford and Sanderson, 2000, p. 1363; Peres and Zimmerman, 2001, p. 795). In many cases local people have been on the losing side of that struggle, having their resource-dependent livelihood strategies criminalized in the name of protecting wildlife (Brockington and Igoe, 2006). These people then find themselves left with few alternatives with which to make a living forcing them to leave their home areas or to subvert the laws and participate in illegal extraction of resources with the risk of potentially severe punishment (Colchester, 1994; Ghimire and Pimbert, 1997).

The existing literature on REDD+, itself a subset of this broader literature, raises significant concerns with this aspect of government, including the inadequate representation of forest management issues in the country Readiness Preparation Idea Notes (R-PINs) that shape REDD+ programming in particular countries (Davis et al., 2009), the undermining of efforts to decentralized forest management (Phelps et al., 2010a), and possible contradictions between existing land tenure rights, the enforcement of REDD+ regulations and legislation, and the distribution and sharing of benefits among REDD+ actors (Börner et al., 2007). For example, Phelps et al. (2010b, pp. 312–313) note that the institutional requirements of REDD+ present the real possibility of recentralization of forest management that could undermine local participation in project design and management, arguing "Communities may participate in collecting forest-specific data, but carbon accounting, a major REDD+ component, will require centralized management... with billions of dollars at stake, governments could justify recentralization by portraying themselves as more capable and reliable than local communities at protecting national interest." Börner et al. (2010, p. 1280) raise the significant issue of land tenure and the assignment of benefits under REDD+, noting that in the Brazilian Amazon "if payments were to accrue to current landholders regardless of current tenure insecurities, large landowners who account for about 80% of all deforestation would reap the highest benefits." Further, they note that just as benefits may accrue in problematic ways, the negative outcomes of REDD+ in this region "will especially hurt smallholder families struggling to maintain soil productivity in traditional slash-and-burn systems on relatively small plots" (Börner et al., 2010, p. 1280). Therefore, while it is recognized by UN-REDD and the FCPF that involved actors will vary considerably from place to place (UN-REDD, 2008, p. 2), and these official discussions imply that these stakeholders are the responsible parties for site-specific deforestation and degradation and therefore in need of management and governance, the concerns for the well-being of communities in and adjacent to REDD+ projects is far from settled.

While this literature raises significant, specific challenges for REDD+, we argue that these are specific instances of a broader project of governance as it takes shape in practice. We argue that the concerns in the literature result from the ways in which REDD+ oversimplifies the causality of deforestation and forest degradation, especially when focusing on those living in close proximity to forest resources, assigning a disproportionately large portion of the blame for forest damage to local communities while downplaying the level of responsibility held by other stakeholders in the REDD+ process. For example, UN-REDD (2008, p. 4) appears to be aware of the complex causality of deforestation, and the limited culpability of local populations, in its project documents.

> The underlying causes of deforestation vary from country to country and even within a country and are often complex in nature.. While the primary cause of deforestation in Latin America was a conversion of forests to large scale permanent agriculture, in Africa deforestation was mainly caused by conversion of forests to small scale permanent agriculture and in Asia there was a mix of direct causes. The underlying causes are often even more intractable, ranging from governance structures, land tenure systems and law enforcement, to market and cultural values of forests, to the rights of indigenous and local communities and benefit sharing mechanisms, to poverty and food production policies. As a result, solutions need to be tailor-made to the environmental and socio-economic conditions of each country and their institutional capacity. Such over-simplifications are not lost on affected communities, therefore lowering the legitimacy of REDD+ and its associated institutions in the very places where project outcomes are most directly shaped.

However, this approach to complexity avoids discussion of climate change as a factor in livelihoods changes that contribute to deforestation. It makes no mention of global economic shifts and structures that make deforestation economically logical. Finally, it avoids any discussion of the extended history of colonialism and post-colonial economic structures that make natural resource-based economies so common in many REDD+ countries. In short, it avoids mention of any factors that might implicate wider REDD+ stakeholders in the processes of deforestation that REDD+ is meant to address. This general framing of the problem of deforestation obscures the complex intersection of environmental change and land use and livelihoods change that, in particular places, might result in deforestation (for discussion, see McCusker and Carr, 2006; Carr and McCusker, 2009), and results in the challenges of government raised in the existing literature. It will be very difficult to resolve these issues, however, without addressing the governance at the root of these practices.

3.2. *Who is governing?*

Addressing the issue of who is governed by REDD+ begins with a consideration of the visible, top-down structures of government within this framework, before moving on to an examination of the unacknowledged moments of governance that enmesh various REDD+ stakeholders, from local communities to states. This shift is critical to understanding likely future outcomes of REDD+, as it moves us from discussions of government within REDD+ to the idea of REDD+ as governance.

Under UN-REDD programmatic control is vested in a policy board made up of "representatives from partner countries, donors to the Multi-donor Trust Fund, Civil Society, Indige-

nous Peoples and three UN agencies'' (UN-REDD, 2009c). This policy board is responsible for ''overall leadership, strategic direction and financial allocations'' for all UN-REDD activities (UN-REDD, 2009c). It is critical to note here that participation on the policy board, and therefore the identification of who the valid actors are in the UN-REDD process, are shaped not through a broad consensus of affected parties, but by the UN-REDD Programme Rules of Procedure and Operational Guidance (2009d, pp. 3–4). Even indigenous participation, while clearly meant to be represented through individuals and organizations selected by indigenous communities, is facilitated by UN-REDD administrative structures (UN-REDD, 2009d, p. 4). This facilitated self-selection is also in place for civil society representatives. In short, while the UN-REDD program emphasizes the participation of indigenous and forest-dependent people in its process, who participates, and to what extent, is determined in a rather top-down manner by the UN-REDD secretariat and through UN policies. This approach to participation, while common in development, has been widely critiqued for curtailing the range of participants and views/voices incorporated into project and policy design. At its most problematic, this sort of participatory methodology can be reduced to an effort to legitimize top-down projects and programs without meaningfully considering the voices of affected stakeholders (for discussion, see Cameron and Gibson, 2005; Chhotray, 2004; Carr, 2008; Esteva, 1985; McKinnon, 2007; Parfitt, 2004; Chambers, 1995, 1997, 2005, 2008).

This is also true of the World Bank's approach to enlisting participation in REDD+ activities. A Facility Management Team (FMT) is responsible for the daily management of the FCPF including reviewing proposals from potential REDD+ country participants, proposing criteria for grant allocation, proposing members for technical advisory panels, and coordinating with relevant international bodies to ensure efficiency of the FCPF (FCPF, 2010, p. 30). This management team has been criticized in the past for its lack of involvement of indigenous peoples groups and other forest dependent peoples (Bank Information Center, 2010).

However, to approach REDD+ outcomes (and problems) as the simple products of top-down efforts to control natural resources by various multilateral and bilateral agencies fails to grasp that this process is more complicated than any top-down description of authority and power can capture. The structures and individuals that impact REDD+ programming are legitimized by the aforementioned treatment of the actors and stakeholders associated with forests as agents of degradation and deforestation, and therefore as things to be governed under REDD+. Casting these actors and stakeholders as problems to be addressed through the REDD+ process empowers the REDD+ governing institutions such as the UN-REDD Policy Board and the FCPF Facility Management Team to act on behalf of the forests, and by association on behalf of the larger world reliant on the forest resource to mitigate atmospheric greenhouse gases. For example, the World Bank (FCPF, 2009a, p. 1) suggests that, ''Through the FCPF, the Bank has sought to convene a broad range of actors – and balance the interests of potential donors and investors, recipients and sellers and other stakeholders of REDD.'' This language suggests that the World Bank, via the FCPF, is the proper organization to balance the needs of stakeholders, and thereby limit the potential deforestation or degradation that could potentially be perpetrated by them without such oversight.[4] Further, this framing of actors and stakeholders has wide purchase, as REDD+ efforts have evolved alongside discussions of conservation forests, production forests and community forests, all of which invoke similar framings and justifications. Actors involved in REDD+ are thus caught up in larger framings and understandings that must be spoken to in policy and program formation.

This control over participation, behavior and programming extends from local communities all the way to the actions of the state. While states are generally treated as the vehicle of environmental governance within REDD+, these states are themselves enmeshed in norms of governance that reduce their sovereignty. For example, current REDD+ guidelines state that monitoring/measuring,[5] reporting, and verification (MRV) systems must consist of various legal and institutional guidelines, as well as monitoring and measurement methods and protocols, comparable to and consistent with international guidelines. To ensure compliance with these guidelines, within FCPF REDD+ programs eligible governments[6] first submit a R-PIN, which is ''the initial proposal submitted to the Facility Management Team... outlining the basic elements of that Country's proposal for a Readiness Preparation Proposal'' (FCPF, 2010, p. 6). It is only when an R-PIN is approved by the Trustee of the Readiness Fund that countries may enter into agreements to fund a Readiness Preparedness Proposal (RPP). These proposals are submitted to the FCPF Facilities Management Team and are reviewed and approved by the Participants Committee that is comprised of 14 REDD Country Participants and 14 Donor Country and Carbon Fund participants (FCPF, 2010, p. 25). Thus, any country's framework for REDD+ implementation has to be validated multiple times by international organizations and their designated experts.

The establishment of such a framework is not merely an issue of best practices, but an example of environmental governance, as it shapes what is to be measured and how that measurement is to take place. In short, this framework lays out the yardstick against which the legitimacy of claims about the world are to be measured. For example, as currently laid out in IPCC Good Practice Guidelines and Guidance for estimating and reporting carbon emissions and removals at the national level (IPCC, 2003, 2006) and the UN-REDD framework document (2008), establishing a MRV system requires data on carbon stocks and ecosystem components (including their management and use) aggregated at the national level and conforming to the reporting requirements of international organizations like the UNFCC, FAO or UNEP. Thus, any MRV system likely to be deemed acceptable by the

[4] This recentralization of authority with the World Bank and/or other large multilateral organizations has been noted elsewhere with trepidation (e.g. Phelps et al., 2010), especially in its possible impacts on forest management regimes.

[5] Some of the literature refers to MRV as ''monitoring, reporting and verification'', while in other cases it is said to stand for ''measuring, reporting and verification.''

[6] An eligible government according to the FCPF is any Borrowing Member Country that is located in a tropical or subtropical area (FCPF, 2010, p. 4).

international community will be one that employs, and therefore legitimizes, existing framings of environmental challenges and their solutions, closing down alternative understandings and options to address or mitigate these challenges. This inadvertent closing off of alternatives may well be disastrous, as it could perpetuate the use of inappropriate practices, data and analysis in addressing climate change and its human impacts (see Carr et al., 2007 for a discussion of similar challenges associated with the widely employed DPSIR environmental reporting framework).

For example, following the IPCC Good Practice Guidelines (GPG), current REDD and REDD+ literature and practice focuses on the measurement of two variables – forest area change and carbon stock change estimation or emission factors (carbon per hectare) in order to calculate changes in total forest carbon (Angleson, 2009). In this case, these measures are justified as means of capturing the opportunity costs that can be compensated under REDD+, which are more or less limited to the cost of not selling these trees on local, national or global markets. However, this is but one opportunity cost for many communities living in and around REDD+ projects. The failure to measure and evaluate other forest services like non-timber forest products, watershed management or eco-tourism may create opportunity costs for many indigenous populations that exceed the ''officially compensated'' costs associated with not cutting down and marketing trees. Simply put, current MRV requirements for REDD+ capture carbon mitigation, but often overlook the other ecosystem services that have the greatest impact on local communities (for discussion, see Ghazoul et al., 2010; Phelps et al., 2010b; Grainger et al., 2009).

Further, the standardization of information and its collection within REDD+ creates the potential for tension between indigenous groups and other stakeholders. Indigenous and other forest dependent groups may not measure or evaluate the quality of their local environment through the same measures and values as the scientific or policy community, especially when that community does not live in the environment in question. In this light, growing concerns for the technical and institutional capacity of participating countries to build MRV frameworks require critical evaluation. While these concerns are no doubt rooted in a practical concern for the productive implementation of REDD+, the push to close these perceived capacity gaps through technology and knowledge transfer, training and collaboration also works to delegitimize ''non-standard'' forms of knowledge acquisition and analysis, thus reinforcing the authority of state and international institutions and their actions within the sphere of REDD+ and the mitigation of carbon emissions from forests. This precludes the use of alternative measurements that might be locally-appropriate, while requiring measurements that may make little sense in some contexts.

3.3. *Achieving conservation and carbon sequestration under REDD+*

As the previous discussion demonstrates, the governance of environmental resources is too complex to be reduced to the ideals of a few powerful (and wealthy) groups or individuals. Government structures, however legitimate, are not the same as governance. Structures do not automatically result in desired environmental behaviors or outcomes, and therefore we must probe into how governance will be achieved under REDD+.

Most documents, both by UN-REDD and the World Bank's FCPF program, treat the state as the principal apparatus for implementation of REDD+ projects. This state-centered focus is problematic in many Global South settings, where the state does not have the local capacity or legitimacy necessary to enforce rules and regulations in a manner that guarantees desired REDD+ project outcomes. Further, the implicit expectation that local level civil society and indigenous concerns will become part of the state's apparatus, and therefore be heard and acted upon, is deeply unrealistic.[7] If REDD+ is to operate such that carbon emissions from deforestation and degradation are reduced, it cannot anticipate that the state will have the ability to enforce laws and regulations in a manner that achieves meaningful climate change mitigation.

We argue that the enactment of REDD+ programs in specific places will require the alignment of the viewpoints and needs of many different actors toward a shared goal of limiting climate change and its human impacts. Therefore, while hierarchical government structures do exist in these programs, to understand likely future REDD+ outcomes, we must better understand the everyday self-governance of individual actions by any of the multitude of actors involved. Here, we illustrate how REDD+ might succeed or fail at this key task through the much-discussed issue of indigenous people's participation in REDD+ projects.

There has been a great deal of discussion surrounding the character and quality of indigenous peoples' participation in REDD+ processes. However, much of the criticism of participation focuses on visible institutional structures. Here, we step back to examine the ways in which the very designation ''indigenous'' is an example of governance that informs and enables the institutional structures that govern participation in REDD+ programming. We then briefly review these structures and the criticism associated with them, before turning to a concern for REDD+'s ability to align the interests of the indigenous with other stakeholders in the REDD+ process in a manner that results in conservation and carbon sequestration outcomes.

3.3.1. *Structures for indigenous participation in REDD+*

When discussing groups being governed under REDD+ it is important to stress that a general categorization like 'indigenous people' is not a straightforward description of a concretely identified group. The term indigenous is highly contested and there are many opinions concerning its

[7] One need only look to the ways in which another ostensibly participatory multilateral process, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, have played out in different places. For example, one might contrast the PRSP experience in Zambia (see Mpepo and Seshamani, 2005), where civil society participation eventually resulted in a very productive interplay between the state, citizens and multilateral organizations, and that of Kenya (see Shiverenje, 2005), where this process led to a breakdown between the state and its citizens. Thus, the assumption that any process, even one that is ostensibly participatory, will productively link state decision-making to the needs of its citizens is problematic.

definition as well as significant debate concerning who has the authority to create such a definition. Often, indigenous people are vaguely defined as people who were residents of an area that was subsequently taken over by an outside group, during colonization for instance (McGovern, 2000, p. 524). Others explain indigenous people as self-identified groups who have long standing ties to a particular area and whose cultural traditions are intimately linked to that land (Toledo, 2001, p. 2). For still others it is an expression of collective identity within a group that illustrates linkages with their cultural and traditional past in a certain area. Our goal here is not to resolve the question of indigeneity, but to note that the process by which this label comes to be applied to some people and not others is a component of governance under REDD+ which may or may not facilitate the alignment of the interests of affected communities with larger REDD+ goals of conservation and carbon stock enhancement to mitigate climate change.

We chose indigenous peoples' participation as an illustrative example of efforts to align stakeholder interests to REDD+ goals in part because this particular stakeholder group is highly visible in existing REDD+ processes. Within UN-REDD the chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues serves as a full member of the policy board. Also present are indigenous peoples' representatives (designated through a self-selection process facilitated by UN-REDD) from each of the three participating regions. These representatives serve as observers to the policy board meetings, not full members. Since 2008 several consultations with indigenous peoples leaders have been held, resulting in documents such as Operational Guidance: Engagement of Indigenous Peoples and Other Forest Dependent Communities (UN-REDD, 2009d, p. 2). According to UN-REDD, this document:

> provides background and context on the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in UN programmes and activities, identifies the guiding principles in order to respect and support the rights of Indigenous Peoples and other forest dependent communities, and outlines the operational guidelines for the design and implementation of UN-REDD Programme activities at the global and national scale. The Guidance also provides best practice advice on how to consult with Indigenous Peoples and other forest dependent communities and links to resources for further information.

As for the FCPF, the Capacity Building Program for Forest-Dependent People has been developed to "enhance [indigenous peoples'] knowledge of climate change and technicalities of REDD" (FCPF, 2009b, p. 1). This program requires proposals to be submitted by networks of indigenous peoples groups or other forest dwellers (or be endorsed by relevant networks and organizations) that "prepare national and regional organizations of indigenous peoples and other forest dwellers for their national REDD+ readiness processes and include regional and/or national capacity building workshops and initiatives," among other requirements (FCPF, 2009b, pp. 2–3). These capacity building efforts often seek to inform indigenous and forest-dependent communities why their forests are so important and why and how they should be protected, which presumes that such groups are currently unaware of this importance, or appropriate protection strategies.[8]

3.3.2. *Critiques of indigenous participation in REDD+*

There exists a significant literature critiquing indigenous participation in REDD+. However, this literature, like much of the critical REDD+ literature, focuses on structures of government. Generally, the governance that legitimizes (and is reproduced by) these governmental structures remains unquestioned. For example, several indigenous peoples' groups and organizations have provided input for the involvement of indigenous and other forest dependent peoples for UN-REDD and the FCPF.[9] These groups place heavy emphasis on the importance of free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples involved with all REDD+ activities (Tauli-Corpuz et al., 2009, p. 58). Such groups routinely cite the need to uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN, 2005, 2007).

REDD+, as thus far implemented by UN-REDD and FCPF, attempts to foster participation by indigenous communities to meet this requirement. For example, to participate as a member on the UN-REDD Programme Policy Board, a group must be selected by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Such a selection focuses on officially recognized indigenous groups from REDD+ project countries. A limited number of officially recognized indigenous groups may also participate as observers to the Policy Board meetings and discussions, three groups from each of the project regions. Through this involvement on the policy board and through national and international outreach and consultation programs, the UN-REDD Programme claims to "ensure that the interests and concerns of civil society and Indigenous Peoples are continuously reflected in its activities and outcomes" (UN-REDD, 2010a,b,c).

Such efforts are commendable in their desire to collect input from a broad number of perspectives, including those of indigenous and other traditional peoples. However, an already-broad critical literature on indigenous participation in REDD+ highlights the limits of such participation. Most of these critiques focus on the issues of government that shape the structure and limitations of participation. For example, many criticisms of REDD+ activities around the world cite insufficient information being provided to indigenous peoples, resulting in the further marginalization of already vulnerable groups (Dooley et al., 2008; Agrawal, 2010; Forest Peoples Program, 2010). More recently, over 40 indigenous peoples

[8] Critically, however, the valuation of these forests has little to do with local needs or values, as much as it does with the needs of the larger global community and the expectations of what constitutes good environmental practice.

[9] These include the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), Tebtebba (Indigenous Peoples' International Center for Policy Research and Education), the United Nations University, and the Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity *Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica* (COICA), the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee (IPACC) and the Kuna Yala General Congress (Panama) on behalf of *Coordinadora Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas de Panamá* (COONAPIP) (FCPF, 2009b, p. 2; UN-REDD, 2009e).

representative groups and organizations have signed on to a statement expressing concern with the lack of indigenous representation at the fourth Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) Dialogue on Forests, Governance and Climate Change held in London in April, 2010 (Lang, 2010). These groups state:

> Although we recognise the efforts of some countries to hold conference calls with civil society and indigenous peoples' organisations, this is far from satisfactory and amounts to information-sharing at best, rather than genuine participation or consultation which would allow these stakeholders and rightsholders to influence the outcomes of the process.Information-sharing must be accompanied by opportunities to engage in consultation through which civil society and indigenous peoples can provide meaningful inputs throughout the process – from framing the agenda to proposing workable solutions – and where clear feedback loops for the consideration and incorporation of such inputs exist. (Lang, 2010)

In certain instances, those involved with implementing REDD+ projects or similar conservation efforts for the purpose of carbon financing have even been accused of physical violence against indigenous peoples in the process of land acquisition (Goldtooth, 2010). Clearly, the transparent and just processes advocated by both UN-REDD and the FCPF for the involvement of indigenous peoples have not been implemented without incident.

Part of the problem here is that REDD+ efforts to foster participation by affected communities fail to address the fact that the designation ''indigenous'' is highly political, varying significantly from place to place, within regions, within countries, and within groups themselves. As a result, not all groups who self-identify as indigenous are officially recognized by others or their governments as such. Different groups of people may bring contested claims of indigenous rights to the same land areas. Many conflicts still exist concerning who benefits from such designations and how, and who does not benefit and why. In an effort to recognize the rights and challenges faced by communities affected by conservation and development efforts while sidestepping the difficulties inherent in identifying ''the indigenous'' in any particular case, in many conservation and development discussions affected communities are described as ''indigenous peoples and local communities'' (Springer and Alcorn, 2007, p. 1), broadening the term to capture a wider group. While the intent of this re-designation is to protect the rights of all people affected by such projects, in reality it is oftentimes a limited number of groups that come to represent impacted communities as a whole.

At present, the UN-REDD Programme's highly structured participation mechanism is unable to account for the exclusionary politics that the label indigenous can engender, resulting in significant risk of partial and problematic participation by the local communities most likely to be affected by REDD+ projects. This issue recalls past criticism of separate conservation efforts by Brockington et al. (2006, p. 251) who argue, ''Reports that focus only on indigenous people are not representative of the broader concerns, especially in countries where non-indigenous groups are as impoverished as indigenous ones''.

3.3.3. *Aligning the interests of indigenous peoples with REDD+*

These critiques of how representation and participation function within REDD+ focus on the existing government structures of REDD+. However, these critiques overlook the ways in which REDD+ is itself a framework that will bring about governance outcomes. When dealing with indigenous peoples or other affected communities, the level of formal participation in REDD+ decision-making will not be enough to determine specific environmental outcomes in particular places. While the leaders of officially recognized groups carry the sanction of the state for their activities and decisions, they will have to work carefully to legitimize REDD+ activities within their constituent communities lest the community choose actions or paths contrary to REDD+ goals. Therefore, the participatory structure of REDD+ is unlikely to translate easily into desired project outcomes. In short, we argue that understanding environmental governance in the context of REDD+ requires an understanding of the extent to which those who are governed by this project take on the goals and interests of REDD+ in their own decision-making.

The general consensus among indigenous peoples groups concerning REDD+ activities is presented in paragraph five of the Anchorage Declaration that came out of the Indigenous Peoples' Global Summit on Climate Change (UNU-IAS, 2009, p. 6) where it is stated that:

> All initiatives under Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) must secure the recognition and implementation of the human rights of Indigenous Peoples, including security of land tenure, ownership, recognition of land title according to traditional ways, uses and customary laws and the multiple benefits of forests for climate, ecosystems, and Peoples before taking any action.

Some indigenous peoples' groups and representatives take an optimistic view of the likelihood of such outcomes. For example, Elifuraha Laltaika, an Indigenous Peoples' representative to the UN-REDD Programme Policy Board, presents his vision of:

> a programme which is all inclusive [with] Indigenous Peoples at the decision making organs... [and]... Indigenous Peoples the recipients of vital benefits directed towards them and so they would be rewarded and feel the need to conserve the forests.... And make our planet a safer place to live despite the impacts of climate change. So that is what I envision as an ultimate success of the UN-REDD Programme.... we are heading towards incorporating and collaborating with other stakeholders... working along the same lines as the FCPF and at the end of the day I think we'll be very successful at reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation which is the ultimate goal (UN-REDD, 2010b).

Such optimism rests on the alignment of indigenous peoples' concerns for their own well-being, political legitimacy and security with the larger REDD+ goal of managing climate change to achieve planetary well-being. Clearly,

Laltaika is using broader concerns for the global environment as a lever to achieve the goals of various Indigenous Persons groups. At the same time, this is a very challenging alignment that requires careful critical evaluation to open the REDD+ process to all stakeholder voices and perspectives. By employing global concerns to achieve goals particular to Indigenous Persons, these organizations risk legitimizing these larger goals, and by association the very tools, measures, institutions and structures that constrain Indigenous participation in the REDD+ process.

Further, the above quotation is not a consensus view of REDD+ among indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples' representatives are increasingly becoming more vocal with their criticisms of these REDD+ strategies that ignore or insufficiently address the challenges and needs of the people that they represent. For example, the UNPFII argues

> Indigenous peoples will continue to oppose the REDD mechanisms if their rights are not recognized by States and the UN, including the UNFCCC and the World Bank. They are very vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, but they are also providing the solutions to climate change. Their traditional knowledge on forests and biodiversity is crucial for the methodological issues being tackled under REDD. Their participation in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating REDD policies and proposals has to be ensured. Their free, prior and informed consent has to be obtained before any REDD mechanism is put into place in their territories. It is their right to decide whether to accept REDD or not. . . .REDD, if properly designed and implemented can still contribute to mitigation. However, I believe that forests should not be used as carbon offsets for Annex 1 countries. Thus, emissions trading of forest carbon may not be the right approach'' (Tauli-Corpuz et al., 2009, p. 59).

This quote, among many other critical voices, speaks to a failure of governance under REDD+ in that it is an indication that REDD+ suffers from an insufficient alignment of interests among its many stakeholders, and its structures and institutions of governance cannot impose the desired environmental outcomes in many forest areas. It seems likely that until this is rectified, many indigenous peoples' representative groups will reject REDD+ efforts.

4. Conclusion

REDD+ is rife with assumptions about environmental governance that remain unacknowledged and therefore unexamined, creating significant challenges for productive project and policy design. This paper, therefore, is a theoretical backstop for existing calls for greater attention to issues like land tenure, property rights and the distribution of benefits under REDD+. We feel strongly that those examining REDD+ programs and policies begin from an understanding of the broad governance created by this program. For example, if it is to be effective the literature critiquing issues like the recentralization of governance and the dispossession of local communities must address the ways in which the need for REDD+ projects is established by framing deforestation and forest degradation as a critical means of addressing climate change, and mitigating the present and future human impacts of those changes. Further, critical examinations of REDD+ must remain cognizant of, and respond to/challenge the ways in which REDD+'s oversimplification the processes that lead to forest degradation and deforestation lays blame for these problems at the feet of the communities that live in and around those forests. The assignment of blame is a critical tool for legitimizing REDD+ governmental efforts to control the locations and behaviors of these communities. This is in no way contradicted by existing efforts to incorporate indigenous/community voices into the REDD+ project and program design process, as REDD+ governing organizations shape who can participate, and the form of that participation.

If this paper has lessons for the community that takes a critical view of REDD+, so too it has messages for those who are currently working to implement this program. To achieve forest conservation and enhanced carbon stocks, REDD+ must align the interests of *all* stakeholders to these broad goals. Thus far, the efforts at aligning the interests of various REDD+ stakeholders remain principally focused on those stakeholders engaged and comfortable with measures and governmental structures common to the Global North. For REDD+ to successfully conserve existing forest resources while enhancing carbon stocks, it must facilitate the design of projects that align the interests of the communities in and around these resources with these larger conservation goals. Our analysis has demonstrated existing situations where this alignment does not take place, and pointed to likely future circumstances where other failures of alignment will take shape. We argue that the best way to enable this alignment is to carefully consider how the participation of affected communities is facilitated in the REDD+ process, both to ensure that the voices of a wide range of affected people might be heard in this process, and to make a significant effort to make participation as unconstrained as possible, so as to hear the real concerns and needs of these communities as these programs and projects move forward. It is only through significant engagement with these communities that the alignment of stakeholder interests with REDD+ goals will be possible along the continuum from local communities to international organizations. Unless significant attention is paid to the way that local peoples are incorporated into REDD+ governance then the ability of these programs to attain their primary objective of mitigating climate change is remote. Further, if that goal is attained without tangible changes that address those needs then the costs to forest-dependent people are likely to be irreversible and REDD+ will come to represent another addition to a long history of marginalization of vulnerable groups of people by development and conservation projects.

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