

# **The Global Political Economy of REDD+**

## **Engaging Social Dimensions in the Emerging Green Economy**

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## Acronyms

<b>AWG-LCA</b>	Ad Hoc Working Group for Long-Term Cooperative Action
<b>CDM</b>	Clean Development Mechanism
<b>COP</b>	Conference of Parties
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of the Congo
<b>EITs</b>	Economies in Transition
<b>ETI</b>	Economies in Transition
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FCPF</b>	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
<b>FOEI</b>	Friends of the Earth International
<b>FPIC</b>	Free, prior and informed consent (World Bank: Free, prior and informed consultation)
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse gas
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>MRV</b>	Measurement, reporting and verification
<b>NAMA</b>	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>REDD</b>	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
<b>SBSTA</b>	Subsidiary Board of Scientific and Technological Advice
<b>TDERM</b>	Tropical Deforestation Emissions Reduction Mechanism
<b>UNDRIP</b>	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UN-REDD</b>	United Nations Programme for REDD+
<b>WPFCC</b>	World Peoples' Forum on Climate Change and the rights of Mother Earth
<b>WWF</b>	World Wide Fund for Nature

### *Note*

This paper is drawn from research previously published by Hiraldo and Tanner in *IDS Bulletin*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (May 2011), pp. 42-51.

## Summary

Green economy has generally focused on the energy sector, but interest in the role of forests in emissions reduction and in forest carbon markets is growing. This has led to the emergence of the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, enhancement of carbon stock and sustainable management of forests in developing countries initiative (known collectively as REDD+) as a means through which individuals, projects and communities in developing countries can be financially rewarded for reducing emissions from deforestation, forest degradation and enhancement of carbon stock.

The emergence of REDD+ has brought new actors to the green economy negotiating arena whose interests are not only linked to the economy and the environment, but also to human rights and social participation issues. Thus, whereas negotiations around green economy had previously been influenced by government institutions, multilateral bodies, private companies, financial institutions and environmental organizations, REDD+ is involving development non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights groups in the negotiations. Actors involved with REDD+ are making different proposals for its implementation at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), leading to the creation of clusters around particular interests, which in turn reinforce competition. While most research on REDD+ focuses on methodologies and policy approaches, little is known about how actors participate in these policy processes and how they affect these processes.

The creation of spaces at climate change negotiations provides opportunities for the participation of new voices that bring the social dimension into green economy (Newell 2000). Common to all is a conviction that these participatory forums open up channels for more effective communication and negotiation between the state and citizens (Cornwall and Coelho 2007:5). However, participation is rarely implemented as a mutual decision-making process, where different actors share power and set agendas jointly. From this perspective, participation involves conflict, and demands a capacity to analyse unequal relations at all levels (VeneKlasen et al. 2004:5).

This research seeks to assess how actors bring the social dimension into REDD+ negotiating processes at the global level. The underlying idea driving the analysis in this paper is that power relations in policy processes associated to the green economy need to be taken into account. Thus, the paper analyses power from a historical, structural and relational point of view at the different stages of global REDD+ development processes.

- *Conceptualization*: What are the narratives around REDD+ and by which actor-networks are they being supported?
- *Negotiation*: How is power shaping negotiating spaces around REDD+ and vice versa? Which strategies/coalitions are being used by forest dwellers' advocates in order to influence global REDD+ negotiations?
- *Implementation*: How are REDD+ governance structures being set up globally? What are the key decisions that have implications for the social dimension of REDD+ policies globally?

The paper argues that material choices are not the only factor hampering the possibility of an agreement on REDD+. While political and financial agendas play a key role in developing the global REDD+ architecture, actors' competition around co-benefits, markets and rights is also being determined by different environmental worldviews. There are four approaches around REDD+ that reflect different environmental worldviews linking forests and development: market-liberal, institutionalist, bio-environmentalist and social green. The paper questions the linear correspondence between actors and approaches by providing evidence of the diversity of views within indigenous groups and donors.

The need to find cost effective climate change mitigation mechanisms, national government impetus on growth and the productive power of capitalism within environmental governance has led to the prevalence of market-liberal approaches in REDD+ conceptualization. The wide range of strategies used by pro-poor social groups to raise awareness of the social dimension of REDD+ within global negotiations have resulted in the inclusion of key development and social justice issues within REDD+ agreements, including community participation in decision-making processes, the recognition of forest people's rights in all climate change actions and the creation of safeguards for REDD+. These advances provide evidence of the dynamic nature of power and the role of agency in the shaping of climate change policy processes.

Despite these advances, the creation of REDD+ programmes and institutions is being dominated by a focus on governance and growth, which favours the central government management of REDD+ and private sector initiatives. In the current context of unequal power relationships around decision making on forestry in developing countries, this approach to implementation creates barriers to the effective participation of civil society. Thus, despite the inclusion of their demands within global climate change agreements, pro-poor social groups feel compelled to renegotiate the inclusion of the social dimension within national REDD+ negotiations.

Increased institutional support to less powerful forest voices will be needed if equity, rights and social justice are to be considered key aspects of future REDD+ implementation. Political economy analysis will be crucial in helping policy makers create more equitable REDD+ agreements that deliver benefits across the broad range of stakeholders involved. It will also be crucial in identifying and overcoming future challenges for REDD+ policy making and implementation.

The paper starts with a conceptual framework for the analysis and the methodology used. The second section introduces the history of REDD+ negotiations with a focus on the major contentions. Then, key actors and ideological drivers in REDD+ are identified. This is followed by an analysis of power configurations among the different ideas and ideologies shaping REDD+ at the global level. The paper concludes with a reflection on the key issues for a political economy of REDD+ under a post-Kyoto agreement.

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## Introduction

Through the REDD+ initiative, national and subnational governments, communities and projects can be financially rewarded for reducing emissions from deforestation, forest degradation and enhancement of carbon stock in developing countries (UNFCCC 2009). The idea of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, enhancement of carbon stock and sustainable management of forests in developing countries initiative (known collectively as REDD+) has drawn the attention of different actors around the world, not so much for the idea in itself, but mostly because of the context in which it emerges (Sunderlin and Atmadja 2009:48).

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projects an average increase of global surface warming of between 1.8°C to 3.6°C within the 2001–2100 period. At least 17 per cent of total annual greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions that contribute to climate change come from deforestation, including carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane (IPCC 2007:46). Before REDD+, policies and measures for mitigation in developing countries, such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), had little impact on the focused mostly on power and manufacturing sectors, leaving little space for mitigation activities related to forestry. Consequently, developing countries had little or no incentive to reduce or avoid emissions from deforestation (Santilli et al. 2005).

REDD+ represents an opportunity for these countries to meaningfully participate in emission reductions related to the forestry sector. At the same time, REDD+ represents a highly cost-effective mitigation option if well implemented (Parker and Mitchell 2009). The potential environmental and economic benefits of REDD+ have attracted a wide range of national and global actors typically involved in green economy, including national governments, the private sector, environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and financial as well as research institutions. Forests are often inhabited areas, and their management has not only economic and environmental consequences but also social implications. REDD+ therefore has major consequences for the rights and welfare of indigenous peoples and local communities whose livelihoods, culture and way of life depend on forest lands and resources (Setra 2010; Seymour 2010:214-215).

REDD+ negotiations are seeing the participation of an unprecedented number of pro-poor social groups in green economy (Peskest and Brockhaus 2009:40) that seek to bring the social dimension to the negotiating arena. Thus, while mitigation has often focused on techno-managerial solutions, REDD+ draws attention to the social implications of green economy. Given the participation of competing interests in REDD+ policy processes, the ways in which ideas, power and financial resources are negotiated will influence future REDD+ outcomes. This paper examines the global political economy of REDD+ with a view to analysing the integration of the social dimension within this climate change mitigation mechanism.

The paper is structured as follows: it starts with a conceptual framework for the analysis and the methodologies used. The second section introduces the history of REDD+ negotiations with a focus on the major contentions and decisions. Then, key actors and ideological drivers in REDD+ are identified. This is followed by an analysis of power configurations among the different ideas and ideologies shaping REDD+ at the global level. The paper concludes with a reflection on the key issues for a political economy of REDD+ under a post-Kyoto agreement.

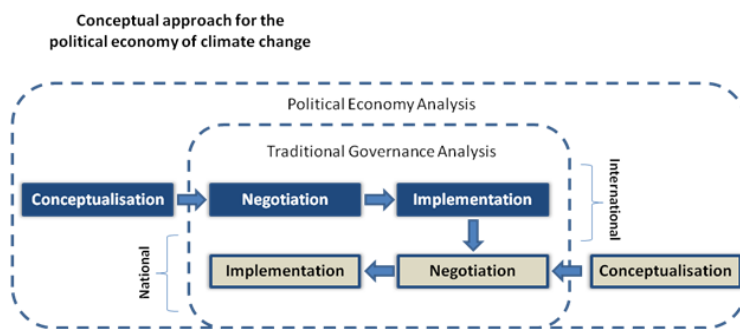
## Political Economy and Power in Global Environmental Policy Processes

Interest in the interaction of state and non-state actors within environmental policy processes has led to the emergence of political economy studies of the environment (Clapp and Dauvergne 2005). Research around political economy has commonly focused on the negotiated and implementation of policies. This research draws on a conceptual approach proposed by

Tanner and Allouche (2011), who call for a new political economy approach to climate change (Maier 1987). They highlight the importance that ideas, ideologies and power play in determining these inter-relationships by affecting the way they are conceptualised by different groups (Gramsci 1971; Bourdieu 1977). They also argue that greater attention to political economy dimensions is required in the translation of global climate change initiative to the national and sub-national level.

Their conceptual approach splits the analysis of policy processes into three different analytical stages: conceptualization, negotiation and implementation, and two spatial levels: the global and the national (figure 1). The introduction of new ideas and narratives at the national level, and consequent renegotiation of climate change initiatives lead to changes in the governance arrangements for implementation. Although international climate change initiatives usually establish governance arrangements at both international and national levels, most emphasis to date has been on international arrangements. This reflects the view that climate change is a global problem requiring global solutions. As a result, there is a risk that climate change and development initiatives are perceived to be failing to meet their objectives when, in fact, difficulties in governance and implementation may be because of a failure to integrate national and local political realities.

**Figure 1. Conceptual approach for the political economy of climate change**



Source: Tanner and Allouche (2011:6).

Power dynamics play a key role in each stage of climate change policy processes. Power is defined here as the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their own circumstances and fate (Barnett and Duvall 2005:42). Power analysis has often been limited to formal top-down regulations, assuming linear policy processes driven by structural hierarchies, enforcement and threat of sanctions. In these cases power is understood as “power over”: that is, as a zero sum where if one set of actors gains power, another set of actors need to relinquish it (Gaventa 2006). However, there are other forms of power underlying policy processes. Limits to participation associated with formal rules are also determined by actors’ agency and the way social structures are internalized by them (Gramsci 1971). When agency is based on mutual support, actors build alliances, strengthening their collective power; this is also known as social capital (Bourdieu 1983). The role of transnational climate partnerships has already been recognized as a key issue influencing climate change negotiations (Levy and Newell 2002; Bäckstrand 2008).

Power is also historically accumulated through economic (money and property) as well as cultural capital (cultural goods and knowledge), key elements reinforcing the power of certain ideologies. These forms of capital provide policy actors with productive power, that is, the socially diffuse production of subjectivity in systems of meaning and signification. A particular



meaning of development—for instance, how REDD+ is understood as a cost-effective climate change mitigation strategy—orients social activity in particular directions, defines what constitutes legitimate knowledge and shapes whose knowledge matters (Barnet and Duvall 2005:55). Productive power provides the potential to produce benefits such as the capacity to ideologically influence REDD+.

## Developing REDD+: History of Negotiations and Key Issues

REDD+ negotiations have led to the convergence of a wide range of actors, including national governments, multilateral institutions, private companies, financial institutions, research institutes, environmental organizations, development NGOs and human rights groups. They are intervening with different proposals for REDD+ implementation leading to the creation of clusters around particular interests, which in turn reinforce competition. Despite agreement on the recognition of REDD+ as a key mitigation mechanism, there have been three major contentious issues around negotiations over REDD+, namely:

- the inclusion of environmental and social co-benefits, including improving community livelihoods, conserving biodiversity, governance and rights, poverty reduction, climate change adaptation and protecting water resources (Verchot and Petkova 2009:22);
- the use of carbon markets as a way of generating financial resources for REDD+, which has gained different degrees of support; and
- actor participation within REDD+ governance structures at the national level and the recognition of indigenous peoples' and other forest dwellers' rights in REDD+.

The 15th Conference of Parties (COP15), held in 2009, witnessed the inclusion of co-benefits within REDD+ debate, such as improving community livelihoods, conserving biodiversity and protecting water resources (UNFCCC 2009). Nonetheless, there remains much divergence on whether, and how, social and environmental co-benefits should be mandated in the design of the international REDD+ regime. Underlying this divide is the question whether mitigation should take precedence over other development issues. Thus, while some actors favour keeping REDD+ simple and not encumbering it with additional requirements, others support a broader approach that ensures pro-poor outcomes and biodiversity benefits (Verchot and Petkova 2009). Despite the acknowledgement of the Ad Hoc Working Group for Long-Term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) on the need to include co-benefits in REDD+ during COP16 in 2010, Parties did not made clear whether poverty reduction and biodiversity co-benefits should be essential ingredients of future REDD+ implementation within Durban negotiations.

Actor coalitions are playing a key role in supporting particular agendas, hence intensifying the REDD+ debate. The Bonn UNFCCC meetings in June 2009 discussed the development of measures and safeguards that protect biodiversity. However, in September 2009, the seventh session of the AHW-LCA blocked the inclusion of language to prevent the conversion of natural forests to plantations against the express wishes of some 20 countries (including Brazil, India, Mexico, Norway and Switzerland), and the European Union (EU), supported by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) which also spoke for Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and the Republic of the Congo. As a result, the provision for safeguards was eliminated from the negotiating text (Holloway and Giandomenico 2009). Finally, the AWG-LCA agreed on the inclusion of safeguards in REDD+ during COP16, a decision which became operational after the COP17 in Durban in December 2011.

**Box 1: Financial mechanisms in REDD+**

The Copenhagen Accord of 2009 and subsequent Cancun agreement of 2011 stated that a Green Climate Fund will be established and will work as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the convention in order to support initiatives in developing countries related to mitigation, including REDD+ (UNFCCC 2011a:7). Discussions surrounding financing moved toward a hybrid model that included both market-based mechanisms as well as voluntary donations as sources of funding. Parties and observers are therefore considering different options for funding, including direct carbon market funding (where buyers pay sellers for an environmental service such as REDD+), market-linked funding (where revenues are generated from auctions of emissions), voluntary funds, and debt-for nature swaps (Parker and Mitchell 2009; Wertz-Kanounikoff and Angelsen 2009).

The lack of a legally binding framework to protect tropical rainforests has also intensified contention around REDD+ financing as forest issues have remained underfunded. In addition, how money will be generated is central as REDD+ will require substantial investments, estimated to be between \$17-33 billion<sup>1</sup> per year (Parker et al. 2009: 19).

One of the major contentions around REDD+ finance generation (see box 1) is the use of carbon markets, with the inclusion of REDD+ in a post-2012 climate agreement seeming to support establishment of global carbon forest markets. Private sector and financial institutions suggest the use of carbon markets can be a way of creating incentives for private sector involvement (Kossov and Ambrosi 2010) and some parties—including Australia, the European Union and the United States—have already called for the use of markets in REDD+ (Parker and Mitchell 2009). On the other hand, indigenous groups and other civil society organizations (CSOs) have criticized the use of carbon markets in REDD+. In line with this, in 2009, Norway and Tuvalu recommended that a decision on whether or not to link REDD+ to carbon trading be postponed (Holloway and Giandomenico 2009). However, the AHW-LCA at COP16 decided to “consider the establishment of one or more market-based mechanisms to enhance the cost-effectiveness of mitigation actions” (UNFCCC 2011a). These mechanisms will be voluntary and will need to ensure good governance and robust market functioning and regulation while safeguarding environmental integrity (UNFCCC 2011a).

Underlying this tension is the issue of property rights governing who owns the carbon and who has the right to benefit from incentives generated through REDD+ (Verchot and Petkova 2009). There are fears that private sector and/or national management of REDD+ involves the neglect of forest dwellers’ priorities, hence reviving previous contentions in forest management. The manifestation of these concerns at different climate change negotiations has led to a multi-stakeholder approach to REDD+ involving national consultation processes. A decentralized governance approach to REDD+ has also been proposed as a way to ensure community participation in political decision making, equitable distribution of forest benefits and recognition of forest people’s particular identities (Sikor et al. 2010). On the other hand, this approach has been received with scepticism by numerous organizations that argue that it opens up the participation of private sector in REDD+.<sup>2</sup>

In this context, numerous organizations are calling for the protection of substantive as well as procedural rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, which has been one of the major areas of contention in REDD+ negotiations. Substantive rights, which are concerned with the minimum standards of living, have been claimed by CSOs that highlight the need to make explicit the rights of forest communities to their forest resources in REDD+ agreements (Setra 2010). Procedural rights refer to a minimum level of participation by local people in political decision making and include, for instance, the right to information and access to justice.

<sup>1</sup> \$ figures refer to US dollars.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Skutsch, Senior Researcher, University of Twente, The Netherlands, and Centro de Investigaciones en Geografía Ambiental, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Morelia, Mexico; personal communication

Despite the recognition of the need for multistakeholder participation, the inclusion of procedural rights in REDD+ agreements has to date been a highly contentious issue. The tensions around this can be situated in the context of previous negotiations on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP; Menotti et al. 2009). At the COP14 UNFCCC meetings in December 2008, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States blocked the inclusion of reference to indigenous peoples and the explicit mention of rights (Holloway and Giandomenico 2009:14). In particular, there was no agreement on the inclusion of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) in REDD+ (Brown et al. 2008). FPIC means that indigenous peoples are not to be coerced, intimidated or manipulated; and that they are consulted and informed and their consent sought before authorizing or commencing activities that would affect them (UN 2007).

**Table 1: Key issues in REDD+ negotiations at the UNFCCC process**

	<b>Social and environmental co-benefits</b>	<b>Private sector and carbon markets</b>	<b>Forest community participation and their rights</b>
<b>Pre-COP 15</b>	European Union supported by the Democratic Republic of Congo blocked the inclusion of language to prevent the conversion of natural forests to plantations.	Consideration of various approaches to REDD+ financing, including opportunities for using markets, to enhance cost effectiveness.	Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States blocked the inclusion of the rights of indigenous peoples in REDD+.
<b>COP 15</b>	Biodiversity recognized as the only co-benefit.	Parties encouraged private sector financing. Carbon markets considered as an option.	Full and effective engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities in REDD+ and measurement, reporting and verification (MRV). Forest community rights not recognized.
<b>COP 16</b>	REDD+ should be implemented in the context of sustainable development and reducing poverty	Establishment of one or more voluntary market-based mechanisms to enhance cost-effectiveness	All climate change-related actions should fully respect human rights. The establishment of social safeguards.

As a result of these tensions, although the Copenhagen Accord stressed the need for full and effective engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities in REDD+, the rights of forest communities were not recognized in COP15 (UNFCCC 2009). Notwithstanding, the Cancun agreements have favoured advances in this respect. First, parties agreed that all climate change-related actions should fully respect human rights. In addition, the AWG-LCA has suggested establishing safeguards for REDD+ that respect the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities by taking UNDRIP into account. Therefore FPIC became a key element in REDD+ implementation (UNFCCC 2011a). The Parties recalled these decisions during the COP 17 (UNFCCC 2011c).

### **Ideological Drivers in the Development of REDD+**

The history of REDD+ negotiations provides evidence of a governance system where clearly different interests are competing with each other. To date, more than 33 governmental and non-governmental proposals have been submitted on different methodologies and approaches to REDD+ (Parker and Mitchell 2009). Material choices are not the only factor hampering the possibility of an agreement. While political and financial agendas play a key role in developing the global REDD+ architecture, actors' competition around contentious issues is also being

determined by different narratives. System framings not only involve objective choices but also subjective values. These framings often become part of narratives that are supported by particular actors, networks and institutions and justify a particular set of actions (Leach et al. 2010). We argue here that REDD+ proposals can be linked to four main environmental worldviews that link forests and development (following Clapp and Dauvergne 2005).

### ***Forests and economic growth: The market-liberal approach***

Underpinning the market-liberal approach is the idea that economic growth and high per capita incomes are essential for human welfare and the maintenance of sustainable development. It holds that market is ultimately the fairest distributor of benefits because its efficiency leads to maximizing of overall welfare (Cazorla and Toman 2000). When it comes to forests, this approach has produced two different discourses. The first is that forests products are a great source of economic growth and poverty reduction within developing countries (World Bank 2002). This is reflected in the vision of the Indonesian government in 1990 around the contribution of forests to development: “The logging industry is a champion of sorts...It creates the necessary conditions for social and economic development. Without forest concessions most of the Outer Islands would still be underdeveloped” (Ministry of Forestry quoted in Gellert 2005:1351).

The recognition of negative consequences of forest exploitation, especially in the context of climate change, produced a shift in this approach (Rudel 2008; Stern 2009). This is characterized by the “double dividend” that can “help the environment without hurting the economy” (Bosquet 2000:19), also known as green economy. This approach to low carbon development assumes that economic growth is compatible with significant reductions in carbon emissions and proposes sectoral as well as technical changes to reduce the production of carbon (Urban 2010:93-94). It suggests that environmental conservation should foster market equilibrium and not produce economic distortions, emphasizing cost-efficiency over equity (Gellert 2005). Participation of the private sector is seen as an essential option for future sustainability of REDD+ mechanisms. For instance, according to the World Bank:

the magnitude of finances required for REDD+ (on the order of billions of dollars per year) requires the involvement of the private sector. Official development assistance alone will not be able to carry the weight. The question is therefore what will motivate the private sector to contribute to scale. The carbon market could provide one of these incentives (Kossov and Ambrosi 2010:34).

A wide range of companies are showing an interest in this new approach. Companies involved in carbon trading see the potential of REDD+ for expanding carbon markets. Mining, oil and timber companies see REDD+ as part of their corporate social responsibility strategy (APP 2010) and as a potential mitigation mechanism to offset their emissions (Martins et al. 2010). The emergence of the double dividend approach has also led to the creation of multiple enterprises that manage investments in sustainable forestry. The executive chairman of the Australian company Keep the Habitat, Nigel Turvey, explained their interests in REDD+ as follows:

The underlying principle for REDD+ projects is sustainable forestry so we are working through with investors into the rehabilitation side...they are interested in REDD+ because with the regulation we have in Indonesia their investment will generate a financial return on the timber industry and they get a revenue on the carbon...they assess it as a profitable investment, we call it the business of conservation (Nigel Turvey, personal communication).

### ***Forests and governance: Institutionalists***

This ideology centres on the need for strong institutions, good governance and effective laws to protect the environment and human well-being. Key barriers to good governance include flawed policy and legal framework, minimal enforcement capacity, insufficient data, corruption and market conditions for wood products (ITTO and FAO 2009; EU-FLEGT 2011).

This ideology drives the belief that international aid to developing countries is needed in order to provide capacity building for REDD+. This has led to a phased approach to the initiative, supported by the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the United Nations programme for REDD+ (UN-REDD), which aims to help developing countries to achieve readiness for REDD+ (FCPF 2009). For example, the Australian government has entered into a bilateral agreement with the Indonesian government to provide technical support to some of Indonesia's REDD+ programmes (FCP 2009).

Capacity building and the focus on governance become even more relevant in the context of the recent inclusion of REDD+ within Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) under the UNFCCC, where governments play a key role in mitigation actions (UNFCCC 2011b). On the other hand, the institutionalist approach may also lead to a predominantly market liberal discourse and a government vacuum in some cases (Clapp and Dauvergne 2005). For instance, the FCPF states that "local government eligibility to participate in REDD+ will be conditional on meeting specific standards and indicators of good governance" (FCPF 2009).

### ***The ecological value of forests: Bio-environmentalists***

This environment worldview is led by the narrative that the earth is a fragile ecosystem that can support life but only to a certain limit. For instance, campaign groups argue that 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide equivalent in the atmosphere is the safe limit for humanity and that this should be the basis of international climate change negotiations (350 2010). Since natural resources are also finite for bio-environmentalists, economic growth and population growth are incompatible with environmental sustainability. From this perspective, human behaviour needs to be modified in order to solve global environmental problems (Clapp and Dauvergne 2005).

This narrative seeks to push the climate change agenda toward ambitious emission reduction targets as well as drastic changes in deforestation rates. For example, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is proposing an emission reduction target of at least 75 per cent by 2020, with a view to eliminating nearly all human-induced forest emissions by 2030 (WWF 2009). Greenpeace has stated that the Brazilian government should "adopt ambitious deforestation reduction targets in order to achieve zero deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon by 2015 and to adopt a five-year moratorium immediately on deforestation as an intermediate step towards zero deforestation" (Greenpeace 2009). In addition, advocates of this worldview, such as the environmental NGO, Fauna and Flora International, highlight the role of forests in biodiversity conservation and in the provision of other environmental services, and the need to ensure the presence of these two criteria in REDD+ implementation (FFI 2010).

While the bio-environmentalists are opposed to the business-as-usual model, their vision is not incompatible with the new version of the market-liberal approach. In fact, they may see carbon markets as a means for achieving greater environmental sustainability. For instance, Greenpeace proposes the creation of the Tropical Deforestation Emissions Reduction Mechanism (TDERM), which is a hybrid market-linked fund model for REDD+ (Parker and Mitchell 2009).

### ***Social greens***

Social greens believe environment and society cannot be regarded as separate issues (Clapp and Dauvergne 2005). REDD+ is therefore not only about mitigating climate change, as forests are part of the culture and are essential for the well-being of forests communities. Social greens

stress the importance of indigenous and forest community rights and knowledge, which are essential for environmental protection (Fairhead and Leach 1997; IIPFCC 2009). For example, in its submission to the Subsidiary Board of Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), Friends of the Earth International (FOEI) stated that “ensuring Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ rights and interests in the design of REDD is beyond a matter of state obligation. A rights-based approach will also contribute to effectiveness and permanence of REDD programmes” (FOEI 2009).

Social greens have also focused attention on the role of community participation and women in environmental conservation, proposing alternative actions such as participatory forestry management.<sup>3</sup> The director of the Indonesian indigenous organization, AMAN, said that indigenous peoples are the guardians of forests, lands and water management and that they have proved themselves to be able to maintain and manage natural resources (Setra 2010).

### **Convergence of Narratives and Actor Coalitions?**

While there is a tendency among some groups to advocate for a specific narrative, assumptions about a linear correspondence between actors and narratives may be incorrect. Indigenous organizations are often seen as a homogenous group, but their views vary depending on the organization, country or region. According to the Interethnic Association of the Development in the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDSESEP 2010), “compensation markets of carbon and other polluting emissions have failed because GHGs emissions have not decreased from 1900 to 2007, but they have augmented in 11.2 per cent within ‘developed’ countries. ...REDD cannot become a carbon market negotiated at the stock exchange masking the global climate criminality”.

On the other hand, the coordinating body for indigenous organizations in the Brazilian Amazon, Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira (COIAB), did not argue against the use of carbon markets and considered private sector participation in REDD+: “the UNFCCC should guarantee the effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Communities in the construction of mechanisms like REDD. However, this participation should be broadened in the pilot projects implemented by governments and private initiatives” (COIAB 2008).

This disjunction between actors and narratives is also evident among Annex-I<sup>4</sup> parties. Unlike other REDD+ country donors such as Australia and the United States, the Norwegian government has taken a line in keeping with the social green worldview in suggesting “REDD should secure the rights and involvement of local communities and indigenous peoples” (Parker and Mitchell 2009:43). As it can be inferred from above, tensions also arise within actor coalitions as those between the World Bank’s FCPF and UN-REDD, which proposes a human rights-based approach to programming. The institutionalist approach is also framed differently by UN-REDD and the World Bank, in that the former includes the “respect for the knowledge and rights of Indigenous Peoples to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and members of local communities” as a key issue in REDD+ governance (UN-REDD 2010), while the FCPF refers to FPIC as free, prior and informed consultation instead of consent (Bosquet and Andrasko 2010).

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<sup>3</sup> Sunderlin and Atmadja 2009; Steni 2010; Sunderlin et al. 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Annex I countries are members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Economies in Transition (EITs).

## Power Dynamics, the Social Dimension and the Limits of Compatibility

Competition among the four environmental worldviews described here is influenced by the different ways in which power is exercised within REDD+ policy processes. From global conceptualization to national implementation arrangements, narratives over REDD+ compete to influence the design of this climate change mechanism, affecting the way in which the social dimension is integrated.

Government objectives of economic growth and the need to achieve cost-effective climate change mitigation have given productive power to the market-liberal approach. This focus is linked to the emergence of REDD+ in the context of increasing attempts to value and commodify carbon and to marketize environmental governance (Newell 2010). This is reflected in 75 per cent of REDD+ proposals, in which 50 per cent advocate for the use of markets and 25 per cent the use of hybrid/market linked mechanisms to fund REDD+ (Parker and Mitchell 2009). As a result, parties have agreed on “the establishment of one or more voluntary market-based mechanisms to enhance cost-effectiveness in the Cancun agreements” (UNFCCC 2011a).

Lessons learned from accountability deficits in forestry management and climate change negotiations have pushed social greens to organize collectively through the engagement of constituencies, informal interaction among themselves and party delegates, dissemination of information through exhibits and other parallel events (Schroeder 2010).

Civil society mobilization demanding increased public consultation in REDD+ decision-making processes has led to the creation of invited spaces, where less powerful social groups are invited to engage in decision-making spaces in order to voice their demands and express their grievances (Navarro 2006) around REDD+. There is considerable disagreement on how inclusionary these new spaces are. While some CSOs argue that it has given them an opportunity to participate in decision making on forestry,<sup>5</sup> others suggest that they constitute a mere symbolic gift of power.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to invited spaces, social greens are increasingly gaining collective power by creating global forums outside the UNFCCC, such as the World Peoples' Forum on Climate Change and the rights of Mother Earth (WPFCC). This is reflected in the incorporation of several of the WPFCC's demands (WPFCC 2010) in the Cancun Agreements, including the creation of social safeguards and the need to respect “the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, by taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” (UNFCCC 2011a). Despite being just an AHW-LCA decision, it represented some progress made since the COP15 where forest community participation in REDD+ was reduced to “monitoring and reporting of activities”, while there was no reference to their rights in the text (UNFCCC 2009). At COP17, parties agreed on the formal inclusion of the AHW-LCA decision on social safeguards, implying the need to respect forest community rights in REDD+ (UNFCCC 2011c).

These developments are important not only because they acknowledge the historical exclusion of local communities in decision making on forestry (Sikor et al. 2010:432) but also because they show how collective agency can overcome constraints linked to hierarchical structures and hence broaden climate change approaches beyond those focused only on techno-managerial solutions. They also provide evidence of the dynamic nature of power and non-linearity of REDD+ policy processes. Despite not being its primary objective, including the social dimension in REDD+ has become a must in global climate change politics, pushing governments to recognize the risks of not including communities in forestry decision making.

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<sup>5</sup> Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chairperson, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and Executive Director, TEETEBBA Foundation (Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education, Philippines) personal communication

<sup>6</sup> Ange Baimey, Réseau Climat et Développement, personal communication; Lang 2010.

REDD+ is not only a matter of exercising “power over”, but also the result of human agency and networks (Schroeder 2010). The inclusion of different demands in COP16 negotiations has been well received and regarded as a key advance in REDD+ negotiations. Competition around REDD+ interests seems to have been diluted with the consideration of market-based mechanisms, agreement on the need to achieve good governance and the recognition of community rights as well as biodiversity co-benefits in REDD+ (UNFCCC 2011a).

Given the urgent need to reduce GHG emissions, REDD+ is quickly moving forward with pilot projects. Previous government failures to protect forests are raising concerns about future REDD+ governance, especially if its implementation is rushed (Seymour and Anglesen 2010). As a consequence, the institutionalist approach, backed by economic capital and institutional power, is gaining a central role within REDD+ implementation. The two main institutions working on this, the FCPF and UN-REDD, are currently working in 37 and 27 countries and contributing over \$180 million and \$92 million respectively (Sierra 2010; UN-REDD 2011).

But rather than producing a government vacuum, the good governance focus is providing national governments with a leading role in REDD+, with the recognition of the need to formulate national policies and take measures for implementation in the Cancun Agreements (UNFCCC 2011a). In addition, the view of carbon as a global and or national good provides opportunities for the appropriation of forests by highly capitalized actors, mostly national governments and private companies. Thus, despite trends associated with the decentralization of forest management in developing countries in the last two decades (Batterbury and Fernando 2006), local governments and forest communities could fail to effectively decide on the management of their forests.

While social green demands have influenced global climate change agreements, resource transfers have oriented REDD+ implementation toward institutionalist and market-liberal approaches. Furthermore, there is a large gap between global agreements and national as well as subnational implementation. The lack of institutional support to the social justice and poverty reduction issues at the national level is forcing civil society to renegotiate, often without success, the integration of the social dimension in REDD+.<sup>7</sup> From this perspective, in the current context of power imbalances around national decision-making on forestry, compatibility between central government-led REDD+ processes and democratic forest governance, as well as between REDD+ market-based mechanisms and pro-poor REDD+ implementation, remains at best inconclusive.

## **Conclusion: REDD+ Post-2012**

The integration of the social dimension in future REDD+ implementation will require not only pro-poor policies that guarantees the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, but also an understanding of how the inclusion of equity and social justice issues is negotiated among REDD+ policy actors at different levels. REDD+ decision-making processes are likely to be complex as they are part of a decentralized, power-embedded and non-linear network where diverse interests, narratives and actors converge (Peskett and Brockhaus 2009). Despite uncertainty, future decisions around REDD+ global architecture are likely to be dependent not only on financial and political agendas but also on subjective values and ideologies.

Exploring the ways in which different environmental worldviews exercise power through political economy analysis will be crucial in identifying the key challenges toward a successful integration of the social dimension in REDD+. This will not only imply taking into account “power over” relationships among different environmental worldviews, but also considering the role of collective agency to overcome constraints linked to hierarchical structures. Political

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<sup>7</sup> Ange Baimey, Réseau Climat et Développement, personal communication; Lang 2010.



economy research will be fundamental to unpack assumptions on equitable something-for-all REDD+ agreements, to critically examine the compatibility among different environmental worldviews and recognize the heterogeneity of social justice approaches to REDD+ (Okereke and Dooley 2010). These will be crucial steps toward a fair, effective and equitable REDD+ system and to avoid apolitical solutions to the climate change challenge (Tanner and Allouche 2011).

Despite the inclusion of the demands of social greens at the global level, conditions favouring engagement with pro-poor and social justice issues at the national level where REDD+ is implemented tend to be weak (Seymour and Angelsen 2010). Bringing the social dimension into REDD+ implementation will require establishing national regulations and an institutional architecture that recognize and engage local communities at different levels and enable benefits to reach them. Addressing issues of procedural justice in representing diverse voices in REDD+ debates will be a major challenge as the issue filters from international regulation to national and subnational implementation (Shankland and Hasenclever 2011). This will imply effectively decentralizing forest management and enabling entitled communities and local governments to preserve their own forests (Sikor et al. 2010). These processes should be supported through rural political economy analysis that identify challenges to the effective representation of local populations on decision making on forestry. Drawing on this approach, we suggest that increased political economy analysis, institutional support and policy space for currently less powerful forest voices is needed if equity, rights and social justice are to be considered as key aspects of the future global climate change regime.

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