

Global forest conservation initiatives as spaces for participation in Colombia and Costa Rica

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Abstract

This paper investigates the spaces for participation that have been created by readiness preparations launched in connection with the international initiative “Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation” (REDD+) in Colombia and Costa Rica. I analyse the emergence of these spaces and who is leading the process in each country. My findings indicate that in Costa Rica, the public sector is leading preparation activities and creating the public spaces for participation in REDD to which private actors are invited. In Colombia on the other hand, NGOs, development assistance agencies and other private actors are leading the process and the state is the invited actor. I identify four factors that determine the scope of different actors’ possibilities to participate in the REDD+ spaces. These are a) control of key resources, b) ideological affinity, c) the creation and dissemination of information and knowledge, and d) the creation of norms to validate REDD+ pilot initiatives. The separation between these factors is not clear-cut and consequently they reinforce each other at different levels. The research presented here contributes to a better understanding of the implications that national REDD+ politics may have in the future functioning of the programme.

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the negotiations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2007, the concept of REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) was launched as way to include in the climate regime the reduction of carbon emissions through forest conservation (Bumpus and Liverman 2011). Originally touted as an “apolitical” technological fix (cf. Li 2007), the focus of REDD quickly moved from strictly carbon storage to multiple objectives (Angelsen and McNeill 2012). In September 2008, the UN-REDD Programme was launched to support national REDD+ strategies. The *plus* signifies a stronger commitment, albeit no guarantee, that the so-called ‘co-benefits’ of forest conservation (protecting biodiversity and livelihoods) are included on an equal footing with carbon storage and uptake. The inclusion of additional objectives into the REDD+ project reflects the diversity of actors with different amounts of power/knowledge involved in REDD+ arenas (Brockhaus and Angelsen 2012). How so called “co-benefits” are addressed in each country will depend, among other things, on the constellations of actors defining REDD+ at national levels.

Previous research on REDD+ has discussed whether REDD+ works or fails, drawing on economics-related notions of commodification, Payments for Environmental Services (PES), and opportunity costs, among other things (Angelsen and Wertz-Kanounnikoff 2008, Angelsen 2009). Scholars and consultants have concentrated on broad issues such as the policy and regulatory framework affecting forests, law enforcement, government effectiveness, and the design and implementation of policy reforms (Pacheco et al. 2010, Contreras-Hermosilla 2011, Hall 2011, Larson and Petkova 2011, Nasi et al. 2011, Tomaselli and Hajjar 2011, Vatn and Vedeld 2013). Other issues include forest tenure rights with particular emphasis on indigenous peoples (Larson 2011, Larson and Petkova 2011, Nasi, et al. 2011, Van Dam 2011), evaluation of early-implementation projects (Wertz-Kanounnikoff

and Kongphan-apirak 2009), and citizens' involvement in REDD+ decision-making (Hall 2011, Larson and Petkova 2011). In some contexts, it has been argued that REDD+ can lead to land-grabbing (Fairhead et al. 2012), while in other cases it is seen to support community-based resource management (Angelsen and Agarwal 2009) and still in other cases REDD+ projects weaken community-based resource management- privileging conservation schemes controlled by the state, donors and environmental NGOs (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012). Recent academic work has been concerned with how REDD+ will affect previous decentralization processes (Toni 2011) or with how environmental governance, particularly of REDD+, can be centralized without necessarily implying a form of state centric arrangement (Gallemore and Munroe 2013). Corbera and Schroeder (2011) conclude that one of the themes on which the research agenda should focus is the politics of REDD+ in international and national negotiations. This article gives emphasis to the national politics of REDD+; specifically focusing on who is participating in REDD+ debates and planning activities. Not only because agencies financing REDD+ (e.g. the World Bank and development cooperation agencies) emphasize the need for participation, but because it rests at the core of indigenous and local peoples' claims in Latin America. Despite the debates and uncertainties related to the financial mechanisms to support REDD+ (Ebeling and Yasue 2008, Isenberg and Potvin 2010, Bumpus and Liverman 2011), several countries, including Costa Rica and Colombia, have started preparations to participate in REDD+ with the support of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), among other organisations.

In 2010 during the conference of the parties to the UNFCCC in Cancun, governments agreed to adopt a phased approach for REDD+ (Agrawal et al. 2011). The Cancun agreement stipulates that countries participating in REDD+ should implement a stepwise approach to activities by phases. These phases are 1) development of a national REDD+ plan and capacity building. 2) Implementation of national plan and demonstration activities and; 3) result-based

actions with full reporting and verification (Angelsen et al. 2009). Despite the support that the phased approach has gained among policy makers, REDD+ cannot be conceived of as a single scheme applicable to the entire Latin American region. In this paper I use two countries, Colombia and Costa Rica to discuss participation in REDD+ early implementation, focusing on the processes of national REDD+ planning.

2. BACKGROUND

The rationale for choosing these two countries is that by comparing them it is possible to investigate how a global initiative such as REDD+ unfolds in two radically different contexts. Colombia and Costa Rica differ in terms of the history of forest conservation approaches, in the role played by the state and other actors in forest conservation and the level of decentralization at which environmental policies are implemented. Costa Rica has a long experience with “Payments for Ecosystem Services” (PES) schemes, whereas Colombia has only incipient initiatives on PES. Previous experiences with PES could influence the way in which REDD+ evolves, as REDD+ can be conceptualized as a form of a “global” PES (Angelsen et al. 2012) and therefore countries could rely on their previous PES experiences to implement REDD+.

In both cases, Colombia and Costa Rica, public subsidies in the form of forest conservation certificates giving tax exemption to forest owners have been used to incentivize forest conservation. In Costa Rica, the subsidies scheme evolved into a “Payment for Ecosystem Services” program in 1997 as a result of the new forest law and the support from donors (Bosselmann and Lund 2013). The Forestry Financing Fund (FONAFIFO) in coordination with the Ministry of Environment manages the PES program in Costa Rica and provided incentives for reforestation.

Colombia has the most decentralized public administration in Latin America. Over 40% of total government spending is allocated by subnational governments against an average

of 15% in the rest of Latin America (Alesina et al. 2005). The administration of forest and other natural resources is also decentralized (Alvarez 2003). With the decentralization of the public administration, local environmental authorities (Regional Autonomous Corporations/Corporaciones Autonomas Regionales-CARs), are more able to influence environmental debates, because decentralization has given them considerable power. CARs are the public institutions in charge of management and administration of all natural resources and environmental issues in the area of their jurisdiction, including the granting of concessions of authorization for forest harvesting.

Between 1986 and 1991, Costa Rica lost 4.2% forest cover per year (Sanchez-Azofeifa et al. 2001), giving it one of the highest deforestation rates in the world. After the PES programme's creation, in concert with other changes in policy priorities, and changes to the forestry law, Costa Rica has managed to increase its forest cover from 21% to 50% between the 1980s and 2012.

The area covered by forest in Colombia remains disputed. While the Forestry Development Plan estimates the country's forest cover at 64 million ha., the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization -FAO estimates 49.5 million ha., the World Bank 48 million ha., and the forest authority during the 1990s (INDERENA) 54 million ha. (FAO 2004). FAO reports a constant rate of deforestation of 0.17% annually between 1990 and 2010. The Colombian government reports a rate of 0.48% annually for the same period (Cabrera et al. 2011).

In Costa Rica non-indigenous private actors own most forest, whereas in Colombia indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians control most of the forest (ca. 50%). In Costa Rica 50% of the forest is privately owned, 40% is owned by the state and although few in number (1.7% of the Costa Rican population), indigenous peoples control 10% of the country's forests (Larson et al. 2010).

3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This article is based on fieldwork carried out in Colombia and Costa Rica between January and September 2012. Given the early stage at which the REDD+ national processes were during the time in which I conducted fieldwork, my interviews focused exclusively on the process of REDD+ planning. The fieldwork involved 32 semi-structured interviews with representatives from the government, civil society organizations including indigenous peoples' organizations, NGOs both national and international and academics. Most interviews were conducted with individuals but some were conducted with groups of people belonging to the same organization. Interviewees included actors belonging to organizations that participated in the formulation of the "Readiness Preparation Proposal- R-PP" of the country, as well as with actors who were not participating in REDD+ preparations but who felt they have been excluded from the process, for different reasons. To protect the identity of my interviewees I do not quote them with names here. Interviewees were selected by identifying relevant organizations and actors who were mentioned in the R-PP of each country, but I was also advised by local researchers who have a better overview of the situation in each country. I was not able to engage actors from the major industries (oil, gas, timber, and mining) in each country, and some of them expressed that REDD+ was unknown to them. Questions asked during the interviews included how they had been included (or not) in the REDD+ national processes', what their role in the process was, what interviewees thought about the resources necessary to participate in the REDD+ process', how the process was evolving in the country and why they thought it developed in that way, what were the different interviewed actors' links to other forest dependent actors', what was their opinion about different models of REDD+ governance, their opinion about the role of markets in financing REDD+ or other measures to tackle deforestation and their links to other organizations working with REDD+

related themes nationally and internationally. In addition I reviewed relevant literature and policy documents.

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In my analysis I focus on participation, which I consider to be limited by access to key resources, ideological affinity between actors participating in the REDD+ processes, the ability to create and disseminate knowledge and information and by the creation of norms that govern the conduct of actors involved in REDD activities. Prior to explaining in detail how I conceptualize participation I introduce the concept of environmental governance.

4.1 Environmental governance

Since the 1990s the concept of governance in Latin America has been used to describe a new scenario in which the way of dealing with public matters and satisfying social demands is no longer exclusively controlled by governments. Policy making is increasingly the result of the interaction of a wide variety of actors (Martí i Puig 2010). Governance describes a new style of government characterized by the interaction between state and non-state actors (Martí i Puig 2010). The processes of privatization of public services, the liberalization of the economy, and territorial decentralization has resulted in a displacement of power and state control upward (to international organizations, transnational networks and corporations), downward (to local governments, departments and regions) and outward (to communities and NGOs) (Pierre and Peters 2000).

In this paper I examine the implementation of REDD+ in Costa Rica and Colombia through the lens of environmental governance. Environmental governance is a concept that has been used in a variety of ways to describe or critique the institutional arrangements of state, market and civil society through which decisions about natural resources and the environment are made (Bridge and Perreault 2009). Environmental governance, as a concept, is useful to examine the complex and multi-scalar institutional arrangements, social practices

and actors involved in environmental decision-making. But as Bridge and Perreault (2009) observe, there is a risk of using environmental governance as a concept to describe “changing organizational forms or an environmental managerialism that is unreflexive about relations of power”.

I understand environmental governance as mechanisms, institutions and practices that allow the production of social order by controlling that which is related to the environment and natural resources (Bull and Aguilar-Støen 2015). Through the lens of environmental governance I also want to focus on both state and non-state actors (Bernstein 2002, Bulkeley 2005, Bridge and Perreault 2009) playing a variety of roles in the development of REDD+ programs.

International development agencies, governments, environmental NGOs, research institutions, industry associations, and profit-making ecosystem-services brokerage firms promote and support REDD+. My analysis pays particular attention to emerging forms of alliance and coalitions between actors who once seemed to have little in common (Corbera and Schroeder 2011, Fairhead et al. 2012). These alliances, linking actors whose interests, power, and authority influence each other at local and global scales might affect REDD+ national negotiations (Corbera and Schroeder 2011). My analysis focuses on emergent hybrid problem-solving governance arrangements, which include state actors, sub-national governments, multilateral institutions, scientists, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and businesses (Karkkainen 2004).

4.2 Legitimacy and participation

I use the notion of authority to examine who is making ‘the rules of the game’ in national REDD+ preparations. Authority can be seen as a source of power, creating and supporting certain policies or practices, while hindering others. Moreover, authority rests on the shared acceptance of rules by affected communities (Bernstein 2004) and may provide a

source of legitimacy in the sense that it may imbue those who are in a position to influence discourse and practice with trustworthiness. By community I mean here groups of social actors with shared interests on the issue to be governed. Most studies dealing with the issue of legitimacy tend to emphasize the significance of participation (e.g. Steffek 2003), particularly of local stakeholders who traditionally have had less decision-making power. In this sense, some commentators warn that participation in development practice and policy has become a buzzword emptied of meaning (Cornwall and Brock 2005). Hereby, I examine how the actors engaged in REDD+ conceptualize and set in practice participation.

The possibilities to participate in REDD+ and how different actors participate in REDD+ preparations, and eventually in the distribution of benefits, is imbued with power. The control of key resources like forests and carbon rights, information and data and networks are sources of power affecting the legitimacy of actors seeking to participate in REDD+ (Aguilar-Støen and Hirsch 2015). Actors controlling information and controlling or owning land, as well as those engaged in broader networks, would have better opportunities to enter REDD+ spaces as these resources will often give them authority and power. Forests are intrinsically tied to the land and in that way, owning or controlling land with forests is a resource, *sine qua non*, for the establishment of REDD+ schemes. Carbon storage is connected to forests and forest lands but how carbon rights should be assigned is a controversial issue.. States could retain sovereign rights to carbon, as is the case in many Latin American countries in regard to resources found in the sub-soil. It can also be argued that land right holders or forest right holders should be the holders of carbon rights (Corbera et al. 2011). Forest and carbon rights are thus obvious resources necessary to participate in REDD+. Payments from the scheme will be made in the future to those countries that can demonstrate that the area covered with forest in the country has not changed from the initial baseline, or that the size of such an area has increased.

Several authors have discussed the close ties between knowledge and power and between the co-production of knowledge and social order (Foucault 1980, Latour 1987, Jasanoff 1990, Fairhead and Leach 2003, Forsyth 2003, Goldman et al. 2011). Specifically for the case of REDD+ it has been argued that since debates are characterized by very complex and technical language, not accessible to those who do not have previous experience with REDD+ or with similar initiatives, controlling the creation and dissemination of REDD+ related knowledge contributes to gaining authority and legitimacy and to strengthening the position of certain actors in discourse formation (Aguilar-Støen and Hirsch 2015). With the term networks I mean coalitions of actors who share values, interests and practices organized in a “social system” where durable patterns of interaction and communication aimed at a specific issue, are developed (Bressers and Laurence Jr 1998). Ideas, values and resources circulate within networks, and through this networks may set the boundaries of what constitutes expert and non-expert knowledge. Certain actors can control the co-production of (REDD+) science by fostering linkages between specific science and policy networks. This might happen for example by providing funds for certain types of research or research institutions, or by engaging certain actors in research or implementation projects (Aguilar-Støen and Hirsch 2015).

Finally, another source of legitimacy and power is the creation of norms to validate or certify REDD+ pilot projects. With norms I mean procedures to govern the conduct of those currently involved in REDD+ projects and of those who will be involved in such projects in the future. I understand norms in this context in a way similar to which Foucault (2002) refers to “techniques”. Since REDD+ pilot projects provide opportunities to test how the scheme will work in the future, being able to design and create norms to set apart projects that should be considered as REDD+ from those that should not in the future, constitutes a source of power and legitimacy.

Power relations are not static as the entry of new actors into REDD+ arenas might influence decision-making processes and could change power relations. Decisions related to REDD+ are made in specific spaces. Through spaces I mean decision-making arenas and fora where actors can act to influence policies, discourses, decisions and relationships and affect governance (i.e. the distribution and control of resources and responsibilities) (Cornwall and Coelho 2007). Decision-making spaces are shaped by pre-existing power relations. Power relations contribute to shape the boundaries of spaces, set the frame of what is possible within them and who may enter, with which identities, discourses and interests (Cornwall 2002). Power can be understood as “networks of social boundaries that delimit fields of possible action” (Hayward 1998: 9). According to Hayward (1998) power’s mechanisms consist in laws, rules, norms, customs, social identities and standards that constrain and enable inter- and intra- subjective action.

4.3 Ideological positions

A fourth factor affecting actors’ access to REDD+ spaces is their ideological position regarding the role of markets or other means to avoid deforestation. Angelsen and McNeill (2012) suggest that different ideological narratives underpin the positions of different actors and frame the debate and the claims advanced by them. Broadly, at global and local levels there exist four ideological positions: market liberalism, institutionalism, bio-environmentalism and social greens (see Angelsen and McNeill 2012 p.p. 36-38). These positions differ in the way in which the role of forests in economic and social terms is perceived and thus in how REDD+ should be implemented. Market liberals emphasize the role of markets and forests on economic growth and development and privilege the involvement of the private sector in REDD+. Their position has a strong emphasis on carbon markets. Institutionalists emphasize institutions, governance and legislation to protect the environment and guarantee human wellbeing, for them both markets and other mechanisms

are necessary for the success of REDD+. The position of bio-environmentalists is based on the idea of ecological limits demanding ambitious targets for reduction in emissions and deforestation rates; their vision does not conflict with that of market liberals since they see carbon markets as one, though not the only one, of the possible mechanisms to reduce deforestation. Social greens draw on radical social and economic thought and argue that society and the environment are inseparable entities. They emphasize a “rights based approach” for REDD+ (Angelsen and McNeill 2012) which means that they argue that REDD+ implementation should comply with international laws and norms regarding indigenous peoples’ and local communities’ rights (e.g. UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, ILO 169 convention on the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples).

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: BUILDING REDD+ IN COLOMBIA AND COSTA RICA

5.1 Spaces for participation in REDD+

Colombia and Costa Rica represent two different approaches to the creation of spaces where REDD+ is discussed and defined. In Costa Rica, public institutions are leading REDD+-readiness preparations whereas Colombia offers a good example of the ways in which NGOs, private actors, the business sector, and development cooperation agencies influence REDD+ readiness preparations in a context in which the state is the ‘invited’ actor. My interviews indicate that in Costa Rica, REDD+ will be incorporated into the national PES program to expand the coverage of the payments. This indicates that the approach in Costa Rica is towards a centralized REDD+ program in which the state will play a prominent role. In Colombia on the other hand, the approach is towards a decentralized system for REDD+ in which local authorities will play a decisive role. These two different approaches reflect the way in which forest governance is understood in the two countries. Centralization does not always imply a state centric approach. Some authors argue that centralization can occur in

non-state networks; notably NGOs, both local and big international ones (Gallemore and Munroe 2013), and from this perspective; it is possible to argue that in Colombia REDD+ could evolve towards a centralized, but non-state-centric approach. . Below I offer evidence of this in the case of Colombia.

The previous experience with PES in Costa Rica and FONAFIFO are largely shaping the REDD+ process. It is FONAFIFO which decides what actors are included as ‘Relevant Interested Parties (RIPs)’. These parties then take part in the discussions. Actors’ previous participation in PES was one of the criteria used for selecting them as RIPs (Costa Rica 2010, FONAFIFO 2011).

The Big International NGOs working in Colombia (World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Conservation International (CI), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), in collaboration with USAID and one local NGO/consulting firm (Corporación Ecovera), created the Colombia REDD+-round table (*Mesa REDD+-Colombia*) in 2008. Other private organisations (the Fund for Environmental Action and Children (FAAN), the Natural Patrimony Fund, and the Nature Foundation), as well as the Ministry of Environment and the Institute for Environmental and Meteorological Studies (Instituto de Hidrología Meteorología y Estudios Ambientales-IDEAM), joined the Colombia REDD+ round table a year after its creation. The REDD+-round table in Colombia leads REDD+ discussions in the country. In addition one of the NGOs (Fondo para la Acción Ambiental y la Niñez-FAAN) manages the grant from FCPF for the development of the readiness strategy.

5.2 Entering REDD+ spaces

Having the opportunity to enter REDD+ spaces is to a great extent determined by the combination of four types of variables: key resource, ideological affinity of actors, the creation and dissemination of knowledge and information and the creation of norms to validate REDD+ pilot initiatives (Aguilar-Støen and Hirsch 2015). With key resources I mean

the strategic control of information as well as control or ownership over land and engagement in broader networks . Carbon rights are also a key natural resource. The issue of who hold rights to the carbon stored in forests is not settled in Colombia, whereas in Costa Rica it has been decided that carbon ownership will be tied to land ownership (Corbera et al. 2011).

As explained in a previous section, ideological affinity refers to the closeness of discourses, positions and values between actors participating in REDD+ spaces. Creation and dissemination of information and knowledge refers to actions and initiatives to shape national REDD+ debates based on the production of information and knowledge relative to the implementation of REDD+. The creation of norms to validate REDD+ pilot initiatives refers to the promotion or design of procedures to govern the conduct (cf. Foucault 2002) of those involved in REDD+ projects. However, how the factors mentioned above influence and operate varies in the two countries. In what follows below I analyse the most important differences in relation to the four factors mentioned above.

5.2.1 Key resources

Control over forests and tenure rights of forestland seem like an obvious key resource to participate in REDD+. Interviews with actors owning forest or having rights to forests suggest that forestland owners are targeted by those engaging in the creation of REDD+ spaces and are consequently “invited” to participate in the process, but they are not creating the spaces of participation themselves. The situation is similar in both countries. A second resource, namely access to networks combine to shape the way in which forest land owners get involved in REDD+ spaces.

In Costa Rica, private forest owners are organized in the “National Forestry Office” (Oficina Nacional Forestal-ONF) created by the forest law in 1996 and a representative of the ONF is part of the board of the “National Forestry Financing Fund” (Fondo Nacional de

Financiamiento Forestal-FONAFIFO). The second (non-public) most important group of forest owners are indigenous peoples. Different from private forest owners, indigenous peoples do not have a seat on FONAFIFO's board. Indigenous peoples are included in REDD+ preparations through the "Integral [Indigenous] Development Associations or Asociacion de Desarrollo Indigena Integral (ADIIs)¹". Currently, indigenous leaders challenge this, arguing that the ADIIs are official government bodies that 'represent' and govern each indigenous territory by law, but do not necessarily represent or respect traditional ways of organization and are not accountable to indigenous peoples.

The ADIIs that are representing indigenous peoples in Costa Rica's REDD+ are those located in areas with the highest forest cover, organized in the "network of ADIIs of the Caribbean". This network was established with the support of an NGO (The Nature Conservancy[TNC]) and international development cooperation (USAID) in connection with the creation of a protected area: "La Amistad International Park' (TNC 2007). Thus, control over forest land combines with access to networks to facilitate indigenous peoples' participation in Costa Rica. The ADIIs of the Caribbean are promoting the idea that indigenous representation in the 'REDD+ Board of Directors' be based on the amount of forest that each ADII controls (Costa Rica 2010). Accordingly, the ADIIs with the most forest area (i.e. the ADIIs of the Caribbean) would have greater decision-making power in two ways, first, the organizations participating in REDD+ processes belong to the network of ADIIs of the Caribbean, and the indigenous representation within the REDD+ board will be determined by the amount of land controlled by the ADIIs and consequently the network of ADIIs of the Caribbean will most likely represent indigenous people in the REDD+ board.

¹ The Indigenous Law in Costa Rica granted legal, although limited tenure rights to indigenous peoples to their territories in 1977. In 1982 the government created the "Indigenous Integral Development Associations (ADIIs) as the legal representative bodies of indigenous people. These organizations however, are not based on indigenous peoples' own forms of organizations they rather follow rules and procedures established by the state.

Networks are an important resource for participating in REDD+'s processes in at least two ways. First, networks facilitate access to relevant information and second, having access to such information and being part of a network's activities combine to give actors included in the network authority as "REDD+ experts". To illustrate, a number of preparatory meetings have been organized in connection with readiness activities under the sponsorship of development cooperation agencies (e.g. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH-GIZ /Central American Commission for Sustainable Development-CCAD program). Such meetings are organized as "expert workshops" gathering NGOs, consulting firms, private companies and UN agencies². Actors participating in such workshops are cast as "carbon experts". Through these readiness activities, information, values and knowledge generated in the expert workshops are incorporated into the national REDD+ planning process. For example, the legitimacy of ADIIs to represent indigenous peoples in Costa Rica has not been challenged by any actor participating in the readiness preparation, rather, the activities financed by the Regional REDD+ Program GIZ/CCAD reinforces the position of ADIIs within the process.

In Colombia, indigenous and Afro-Colombian organizations are stronger than their Costa Rican counterparts. The Organisation of Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon (OPIAC) and its regional counterpart representing all Amazonian countries (COICA) applied for funding to the FCPF in order to develop informational workshops. With WWF's support, the Colombian Ministry of Environment, the NGO representing the National Patrimony Fund, OPIAC, and COICA organized one national and six regional REDD+ workshops. In these workshops, indigenous leaders expressed their concerns regarding the possibility of REDD+ weakening their territorial and property rights. At the same time, these leaders acknowledged

² GIZ in collaboration with CCAD launched in 2010 the Regional REDD+ program for Central America. Organizations invited to expert workshops arranged by the regional program include NGOs (e.g. the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Nature Conservancy (TNC), Rainforest Alliance), consulting firms (e.g. Carbon Decisions, ONF International), private companies (e.g. First Climate), and UN agencies (e.g. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)) The Regional REDD+ Program GIZ/CCAD also finances various activities targeted at readiness preparation in all countries in Central America. This includes the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) in Costa Rica.

that under certain circumstances REDD+ could strengthen these same rights (COICA and OPIAC 2011). Colombian indigenous people's organizations have access to international networks and fora where they get access to relevant information. COICA's members participate in high-level REDD+ meetings and have the resources to coordinate with funding agencies (e.g. FCPF) in order to develop of different activities. Because of their participation in international fora and the role played by the network coordinated by COICA, indigenous organizations are encouraged to participate within the NGO/business/development cooperation 'created space' of the Colombia REDD+ round table. While indigenous organizations are participating in some activities organized by the REDD+ round table, they are also, through COICA bringing their concerns and interests to the international climate negotiations. In this respect it can be said that Colombian indigenous organizations gain legitimacy through engaging in alternative international networks (i.e. COICA) and not necessarily because they are considered REDD+ experts by the Colombian REDD+ round table (see also Aguilar-Støen and Hirsch 2015).

In Colombia, civil society organisations that are not considered 'REDD+ experts,' according to the terms established by the REDD+-round table, are excluded. For example, Colombian scientific institutions have been excluded from the REDD+ round table even though they claim to have developed knowledge and expertise in carbon accounting. During a meeting with two interviewees from Colombia's National University they argued that "Science has been very much lacking in the preparatory work... REDD+ round table participants do not have scientific background... The preparations were highly politicised and driven by party politics... The government let the NGOs take over to avoid criticism". The 'knowledge' required to participate in the REDD+ round table in Colombia is not just any type of knowledge. It has to be maintained and strengthened through particular networks in which different concepts and arguments are socially constructed and legitimated through

complex processes that have produced new forms of expertise and consultancy (Fairhead and Leach 2003, Bumpus and Liverman 2011). We see that the production, legitimacy, and authority of knowledge impacts how environmental ‘problems’ (in this case related to REDD+ and deforestation) are framed (Peet, et al. 2011) and how solutions to these problems become, in turn, constructed and ultimately founded on the politics of knowledge that framed them. In both countries, NGOs, particularly Big International NGOS, and development cooperation agencies, associated through various networks, are playing an increasingly important role in controlling the flow of information and in that way strengthening their position as REDD+ actors.

5.2.2 Ideological affinity

The ideological narratives dominating in the REDD+ spaces in both Colombia and Costa Rica is a combination of market liberalism and institutionalism, although the discourses of some actors participating in REDD+ spaces are closer to bio-environmentalism. Because both the institutionalists and the bio-environmentalists’ visions of the role of carbon markets play in the protection of forests does not conflict with those of the market liberals, alliances might be formed between these groups. However, actors who strongly reject markets as mechanisms to solve environmental problems face higher hurdles to be invited to participate in REDD+ spaces.

In Costa Rica, REDD+ is seen as a continuation of policy actions to reduce deforestation in the country that started in the 1970s with the Forest Credit Certificate scheme (CostaRica 2010). The ideological position of FONAFIFO could be described as a combination of market liberalism and institutionalism. This position does not necessarily conflict with the bio-environmentalist position of most Big International NGOSs working in the country. However, international and national NGOs that oppose carbon markets (e.g. Friends of the Earth-Costa Rica) have been excluded from REDD+ discussions. The ADIIs

ideological position is close to that of FONAFIFO because ADIIs are local government bodies that report to and are accountable to the central government.

In Colombia the ideological position of actors participating in the REDD+ round table is close to market liberalism. In interviews with representatives from NGOs behind the REDD+ round table and in documents produced by them, it is clear that these organizations strongly support carbon markets as the most efficient form to finance REDD+.

Representatives from the Colombian government argued that private investments with little state regulation in remote forest regions are more economically efficient, as they lower the government's intervention costs, and could also offer better adapted development options at the local level. A quote from an official of the Ministry of Environment is illustrative here:

“The market in a way takes care of redistributing the resources at local levels. It is a lot simpler... it lowers our costs... So, if the state does not receive the [REDD+] money, it does not need to invest in the regions where they are receiving the money... well that is good...

The government does not need to invest in those regions; in a way they take care of themselves.” This vision is expressed in several official documents (e.g. the National Strategic Plan for Green Markets produced in 2002 by the Ministry of Environment and the National Development Plan 2005-2010). This view also represents the outlook of all the big International NGOs operating in Colombia and some of the local NGOs who increasingly wish to involve private funds in current forestry and development mechanisms. This view seems to reflect an overtly optimistic view of the potential impact of REDD+, as other experiences in Latin America (e.g. Socio Bosque program in Ecuador) have shown that a certain degree of supervision, control and technical assistance are required to make these schemes work for multiple purposes, like sustaining forest dependant livelihoods and conserving forests (de Koning et al. 2011, Krause and Loft 2013).

The voluntary carbon market³ is a prominent subject among members of the Colombia REDD+-round table, partly due to their engagements with actors interested, connected, or involved with the carbon business. These actors include the local public environmental authorities (CARs), national and international business partners (mining and energy-producing companies, plantation companies, forest companies, and carbon-marketing companies), international research organisations, development cooperation agencies, and indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders. These engagements may allow the channelling of funds from a range of private businesses directly into carbon-market projects. In Costa Rica, the approach is more towards a combination of funding sources: the carbon market and a global REDD+ fund. However, my interviewees from the government considered that given that in Costa Rica deforestation has been reversed, the country will not be able to demonstrate a high level of avoided deforestation under a global REDD+ fund. This is known as the “baseline problem” (Rosendal and Schei 2014). Therefore, in Costa Rica my interviewees considered that the carbon market would also offer good funding alternatives for REDD+ in the country.

Indigenous organizations have a more rights based approach, defined in this context as an approach that would strengthen their collective rights to the land and their right to Free Prior and Informed Consultation (FPIC) as defined by the ILO 169 Convention. But those who have not expressed total rejection of carbon markets have better possibilities to participate in the REDD+ round table in Colombia. For example COICA has expressed in international meetings, as well as in an interview I had with the leader of the organization, that they are not opposed to carbon markets, if markets are regulated. Other organizations that

³ The voluntary carbon market is part of the global carbon market, but it is not regulated by the compliance schemes under the Kyoto protocol. Instead of undergoing the national approval from the project participants and the registration and verification process from the UNFCCC the calculation and the certification of the emission reduction are implemented in accordance with certain industry-created standards.

have expressed strong opposition to REDD+ and carbon markets, and demand rights based approaches to climate change, such as the National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia (ONIC) were not invited to participate in the REDD+ round table.

5.2.3 Creation and dissemination of knowledge and information

Information and knowledge production are important in facilitating or limiting action and participation in REDD+ debates. The REDD+ debate is characterized by a very complex and technical language that is not easily accessible to those who do not have previous experiences with REDD+, as expressed by my interviewees. To get information about REDD+ it is necessary to be able to access fora and networks where information about REDD+ circulates. Having access to such forums and networks requires that one has previous knowledge of REDD+, as interviews with some local NGOs and leaders of indigenous organizations indicate. Controlling knowledge production and dissemination is an important factor in shaping who will participate in REDD+ debates and how, the direction REDD+ takes nationally and locally and at some point in the future, knowledge production and dissemination will be central to assess the actual outcomes of the schemes implemented on the ground.

My findings indicate that networks involving NGOs and research institutions, with support from development cooperation agencies and private actors are creating and disseminating knowledge about REDD+. This happens mainly through two mechanisms one is involvement in REDD+ pilot projects and the other is involvement in REDD+ fora. The approach adopted in international climate negotiations would ideally advance in phases, where the first phase would be the development of a REDD+ plan and capacity building. In practice several REDD+ pilot projects, which involve the development of demonstration activities or REDD+ pilot projects, are on-going in parallel with the development of the REDD+ national plan. The networks behind REDD+ pilot projects are also involved in

capacity building activities. These capacity building activities range from fundraising strategies, to indigenous peoples' participation to carbon monitoring.

Since generating information and knowledge about REDD+ is crucial for the REDD+ process, the Big International NGOs emerge as consultants with special expertise in REDD+. The information, views and knowledge generated through pilot projects is shared with scientists and policy makers in fora organized under the auspices of the REDD+ national spaces in both countries. These fora serve as mechanisms to legitimate and validate the knowledge and information that NGOs are creating. But the situation varies between Costa Rica and Colombia. Costa Rica has a long and strong tradition of including research institutions in discussions of policy initiatives. In addition many regional research centres (e.g. Centro Agronomico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza-CATIE) have their headquarters in the country. These organizations have through the years, forged close links to consultancy firms and have been financed by development cooperation money from countries in the north strongly involved in REDD+ (e.g. Norway and Germany). These regional research institutions are invited together with other actors by the government to participate in fora where REDD+ discussions take place and where knowledge and information is validated.

In the case of Colombia, since Big International NGOs themselves control the REDD+ space they have considerable leverage in defining how REDD+ should evolve in the country, in defining relevant issues to be addressed during REDD+ consultations and the substance in the REDD+ national plan. As outlined above, national research institutions in Colombia argued in our interviews that the knowledge and information about REDD+ that they produce has not been valued for the REDD+ round table in Colombia.

In both Costa Rica and Colombia, NGOs and consultants are being re-cast as “REDD+ experts” thanks to their involvement in pilot projects and in the creation and dissemination of information and knowledge. NGOs and consultants have privileged access to policy-making

arena, both nationally and internationally, which strengthens these organizations' power in discourse formation at both levels. Knowledge production is highly selective in regards to who define problems, solutions to such problems and who participates in policy making (Beymer-Farris and Basset 2012; Goldman and Turner 2012). Findings made by these "REDD+ expert" actors circulate through international networks where they contribute to the production of lessons learnt that influence future REDD+ projects. Creating and disseminating knowledge also contributes to enhance the reputation of those actors involved in the network, reinforcing their power in discourse formation which is central for defining the limits of possibilities for all involved in REDD+ readiness initiatives.

5.2.4 Creation of norms to validate REDD+ pilot initiatives.

Finally, NGOs, corporations and research institutions are involved in creating standards to certify carbon offsets that can be traded in the voluntary carbon market or eventually in a future REDD+ carbon market. I understand such standards as "norms". With norms I mean procedures designed to govern the conduct of those involved in REDD+ projects (cf. Foucault 2002 uses the term "techniques"). The creation of such norms builds on and reinforces access to key resources and the creation and dissemination of knowledge. To illustrate I will use an example involving Colombia⁴.

The Rainforest StandardTM (RFS) was launched during the UN Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20 in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012. RFS was developed by Columbia University in New York in collaboration with environmental funds from Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador, and the National Environmental Fund (FAAN) in Colombia. According to its developers, this standard integrates carbon-accounting, socio-cultural/socio-economic impacts, and biodiversity outcomes into one single REDD+ standard. Projects certified with RFS can be registered in the Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance

⁴ There are also examples from Costa Rica, see <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2013/09/12/2612101/costa-rica-carbon-market/> last accessed 11.05.2014

(CCBA) and in the Verified Carbon Standards (VCS). The CCBA is a partnership among research institutions (CATIE, CIFOR, and ICRAF), corporations (The Blue Moon Fund, The Kraft Fund, BP, Hyundai, Intel, SC Johnson, Sustainable Forestry Management, and Weyerhaeuser), and NGOs (CARE, CI, TNC, Rainforest Alliance, and WCS). The VCS was established in 2005 by the Climate Group, the International Trading Association, and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. The VCS is one of the world's most widely used carbon-accounting standards. Projects across the world have issued more than 100 million carbon credits using VCS standards. The VCS headquarters are in Washington, D.C., with offices in China and South America. The REDD+ round table suggested that only projects certified by the RFS could register as REDD+ pilot/carbon-market projects in Colombia. This initiative was incorporated into the Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) of Colombia. According to its proponents, the establishment of a national register for voluntary carbon-market/REDD+ projects would also require a national information campaign targeted at investors and the general public. Which means that those actors involved in the validation of standards would be in a better position to spread information and knowledge. Naturally those organizations involved in the REDD+ round table and those involved in developing the standard and the national register would be in a better position than others to spread information about REDD+. The alliances built between NGOs, the private sector and international research institutions contribute to the creation of standards accepted as valid by the REDD+ table and the Colombian government to govern the conduct of those involved in REDD+ pilot projects. These standards are shaping the direction of REDD+ in Colombia even before the government has managed to put in place a plan of action. These alliances involve networks and actors beyond national borders, and as such do not always represent the interests and priorities of forest dependent communities. This does not imply that any network or actor within national borders will automatically represent better the interests and priorities of forest

dependent communities or of other actors whose interests would be affected by REDD+.

Unless, these communities and their organizations or all relevant actors (i.e. those who could be affected by forest policies) are involved in planning how REDD+ will evolve in each country, their voices have lower chances of being heard.

6. CONCLUSION

My findings indicate that new alliances and coalitions between private actors, NGOs and the state are emerging as a result of REDD+ readiness preparations in Costa Rica and Colombia. These new engagements build to some degree on previous collaborations and experiences of forestry and forest conservation and are financed by international development cooperation. Two important caveats as to how my findings can be generalized to other countries in Latin America are needed here. First, Costa Rica's experience with PES is quite unique in the world in terms of scope and continuity, and in that sense the country and the way it is developing its REDD+ program won't be representative of the reality in many other countries in the global south. Second, when this research was conducted Costa Rica and Colombia, like most other countries in Latin America or elsewhere, were still in a planning phase to implement REDD+. For that reason my research could not grapple the outcomes of the projects.

The development of REDD+ readiness preparations and national action plans requires the involvement of all relevant actors, those whose interests would be affected by REDD+ and those who would benefit from the program, but in practice this is not the case. I analysed the emergence of the spaces where REDD+ discussions are taking place. I find that Colombia and Costa Rica differ in important ways. In Costa Rica, REDD+ is setting its foundation on a more-than-15-year old PES programme based on hybrid public/private/development cooperation funds (Fletcher and Breitling 2012). Government institutions involved in PES created the space where REDD+ is being discussed in Costa Rica; other actors are invited to

participate. In contrast, a coalition of Big International NGOs, national NGOs, and private actors with funding from development assistance agencies created the REDD+ space in Colombia and the state is one of the invited actors. It is through the differentiated ability of actors to define the limits of what is possible or desirable to do that power asymmetries manifest in REDD+ spaces (see Hayward 1998). Crucial to defining the limits of what is possible is to participate in spaces where relevant REDD+ discussions are taking place. I identified four factors that determine the scope of different actors' possibilities to participate in the REDD+ spaces. These factors are a) control of key resources, b) ideological affinity, c) the creation and dissemination of information and knowledge and d) the creation of norms to validate REDD+ pilot initiatives. The separation between these factors is not clear-cut and consequently they reinforce each other at different levels. Key resources to participate in REDD+ spaces are ownership of forest land, access to networks, knowledge and information. Knowledge and information is created through complex processes taking place at various scales and involving a range of actors associated in networks. Access to such networks and to REDD+ spaces is also facilitated by different actors' affinity in regards to their ideological position on REDD+. To some degree, the factor that sets the greatest distance between ideological positions is the role of carbon markets in REDD+. Thus although some actors give stronger emphasis to the role of markets, this position is compatible with the visions of those privileging the role of institutions because for these actors, institutions do not necessarily conflict with markets, as institutions could also regulate markets. On the other hand, those who advocate a rights-based approach to REDD+ and reject markets are more often excluded from REDD+ spaces.

Finally, my research contributes to better understand how local REDD+ planning processes are developing in two different contexts in Latin America. The implementation of REDD+ involves several geographical scales, from the local to the global and this paper

highlights how some of the actors involved at different scales interact. REDD+ has the potential to re-shape forest conservation and forest management initiatives and research like the one presented here, that focuses on issues of power and access to decision-making spaces, as well as on the ways in which participants engage in national preparations, is important to understand the implication that national politics of REDD+ might have in the future functioning of the program.

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