

## **POLLEN, 2018, Oslo**

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### **Countering carbon: locating REDD+ contestation**

Climate change threatens the privileges and way of life of global economic and political elites. To mitigate climate change, core consumption patterns and habits of this elite must change. Yet, REDD+ promises to alleviate this crisis, ostensibly by asking others – people who depend directly on forests for their sustenance – to change. Thus, the ambition and policy label of REDD+ contributes to sustain a status quo that implies increasing levels of material consumption among the global elite, fuelled by cheap fossil energy.

However, the failure of REDD+ to deliver on promised benefits to forest communities and governments across the tropics is generating a backlash. This is also fuelled by the current framing of REDD+ as a policy model that implies singular, reductionist valuation of forests around the world – in terms of the amount of carbon they hold – and an increased emphasis on forest protection often through top-down and techno-bureaucratic procedures (Corbera 2012; Romijn et al. 2015). These and other REDD+ requirements are threatening forest dependent communities' rights to and use of forests for multiple purposes. Meanwhile, some of the initially promising REDD+ initiatives that have served as exemplars in the marketing of REDD+ in policy circles are abandoned for a rush for more lucrative resources on their forest lands (eg Prey Long in Cambodia and Surui Forest Carbon Project in Brazil). Thus, deforestation rates are soaring in many REDD+ countries.

Consequently, REDD+ is contested. Among researchers, consultants, NGOs and bureaucrats we see contestations between those who analyse the many failures and contradictions of REDD+, and those who seek to explain away these failures and contradictions (Chomba et al. 2016, 2017, Fletcher et al. 2016, 2017; Githiru 2016; Angelsen et al. 2017). This debate takes place in international public forums, such as scientific journals, blogs, conferences, and meetings. On the ground, at the sites of REDD+ projects, we see contestations of different kinds across various interest groups from local communities to civil society groups to state actors (Benjaminsen 2014; Asiyani et al. 2017; Nathan & Pasgaard 2017).

With this panel, we wish to further and broaden debates around the different modes, forms and spaces of contestation and resistance to REDD+. We seek to foreground evidence of both public and more hidden forms of contestation to REDD+ in different locations. Recognising that some actors may be too invested in REDD+ to question it in public, we welcome contributions that examine differences between the public and hidden transcripts and acts of contestation. We also welcome contributions that examine public acts of resistance to REDD+ among various actors and especially among indigenous and forest communities - contestations including gradual everyday forms or abrupt forms of resistance; whether counter-calculations, counter-discourses, protests, sabotage, petitions, law suits or invocation of international declarations. For all these forms of contestation, we hope to see contributions that examine the underlying logics including grievances over REDD+ as well as the reasons actors chose more or less public forms of contention. We also ask how REDD+ contestations intersect with other mobilisations and struggles.

Our hope is to gain a better understanding of who resists REDD+ and why, and the conditions under which such contestation takes on a public character. While the literature on hidden and public forms of resistance and protest originates from contexts of credible threats of violent repression (Scott 1990), the choice of whether to openly contest and resist REDD+ among academics, bureaucrats and policy makers may be influenced by considerations regarding institutional norms, scientific authority, and funding (Lund et al. 2017).

Thus, with this panel we hope to bring different forms of contestation and resistance to REDD+ in different locations – from policy and academic forums to forested landscapes - in conversation with each other to examine (i) the factors that shape the forms of contestation and resistance and (ii) the perceived grievances that motivate different actors to resist or contest REDD+. We believe such an effort may contribute to further a more realistic image of the paradoxical continued support to this contested policy among some actors.

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