Hidden dimensions of participation: Rethinking national interpretation processes as critical space for ensuring equitable REDD+

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The case for scrutinising national interpretation processes

- **c.70 REDD+ countries**, big implications for forest-adjacent communities
- REDD+ one example of internationally-conceived policies
- Contextual difference in drivers, governance, contribution to wellbeing
  => **Process of negotiating national approach influences equity**

  “UN-REDD Programme supports nationally led REDD+ processes and promotes the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities.”

- Yet processes have received little attention in research or policy
Framework for understanding the political process

- Global environmental norms
  - Mobilizations: actors - roles - forums
    - Struggles in specific sites: actors - claims
  - Notions of justice
    - Livelihood strategies
    - Scale
    - Strategies & resources
    - Access to & control over resources

Wider political economy

Environmental projects
National interpretation processes in Uganda and Nepal

• Both began REDD+ process in 2009, moving into implementation stage
• Think-tanks on perceptions of national REDD+ process in August 2016, 2 days with c.20 state and civil society participants
• SS interviews to explore a diverse set of intermediaries’ objectives, notions of justice, efforts to influence policy, barriers and opportunities (with 7 intermediaries in each)
Results & conclusions

• Diverse set of objectives among intermediaries to be reconciled
• Processes internationally-led with complex administrative agenda.
  => Equity issues subordinated
• Stance of CSOs to be determined, but considerable doubts persist
• Limited political space for expression/influence constrains process
• Limited evidence taken from REDD+ pilots or other sectors/programs
• Weak safeguards, implementation capacity + trust severe limitations

⇒ Dichotomy between advancing in admin process and infancy of national interpretation
⇒ Attention required to space and forums suited to advance national negotiation and adaptation to enhance equity in REDD+