

REDD+ and Costa Rica, another form of colonialism and commodification of natural resources?
An indigenous perspective

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Academic Abstract

The primary objective of the international initiative, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), is to conserve carbon by protecting forests and/or planting trees. The World Bank's Forest Partnership Carbon Facility (FPCF) introduced the REDD+ program to Costa Rica in 2008 and consultation with key stakeholders has been ongoing since. The major participants involved in the program include small landowners, representatives of the timber industry, and indigenous nations. Notwithstanding some native groups' opposition to and misunderstanding of the REDD+ program, the Costa Rican government signed an agreement with the World Bank (WB) in 2013 guaranteeing the sale of up to \$63 million in carbon credits through the REDD+ program (World Bank, 2013). The government of Costa Rica has plans to continue implementing the initiative, despite the intense opposition of a number of Bribris, an indigenous group located in Talamanca in the eastern portion of the country near the border with Panama. The Bribri are also the largest native population in Costa Rica. This inquiry samples indigenous peoples' perspectives, specifically the Bribris from Talamanca and the Ngäbes from Abrojos Montezuma, concerning key elements of the REDD+ program to understand more fully why they perceive the program the way they do. The principal findings of this study concerning those views include the following: the government has violated indigenous people's rights throughout the REDD+ implementation process, many interview respondents remarked that they lacked information about REDD+, feared privatization of their land, and were opposed to the initiative's commodification of natural resources. These results illuminate key policy and implementation concerns that could inform government and World Bank policy, while also providing study participants an opportunity to exercise individual agency concerning the topic. This research contributes to the growing body

of literature about REDD+ by providing the first-hand perceptions of members of Costa Rican indigenous communities of the initiative and their stated reasons for those views.

General Audience Abstract

The main goal of the international initiative, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), is to conserve carbon by protecting forests and/or planting trees. The World Bank's Forest Partnership Carbon Facility (FPCF) introduced the REDD+ program to Costa Rica in 2008 and has engaged in a process of consultation and information sessions with small landowners and representatives of the timber industry and indigenous nations. The Costa Rican government signed an agreement with the World Bank (WB) in 2013 guaranteeing the sale of up to \$63 million in carbon credits via the program and the government appears to be relying on indigenous peoples' land because indigenous territories comprise some 20% of the country's forested lands (Government of Costa Rica, 2015; World Bank, 2013). Moreover, some native groups, including the Bribris, the largest indigenous group in the nation, located in Talamanca in the eastern portion of the country near the border with Panama, have publicly opposed doing so (World Bank, 2013). This study explored indigenous peoples' perspectives, specifically the Bribris from Talamanca and the Ngäbes from Abrojos Montezuma, concerning key elements of the REDD+ program to understand better why they perceive the program as they do. Key findings from those interviews include the fact that the government has violated indigenous people's rights throughout the REDD+ implementation process and that many native residents lacked information about the program and feared privatization of their land. In addition, many of those interviewed were opposed to the initiative's basic premise; the commodification of natural resources. These results highlight key REDD+ policy design and implementation concerns in Costa Rica that could inform both government and World Bank policy in that nation. More generally, this research contributes to a growing body of literature concerning REDD+ and indigenous peoples. The findings offered here may now be compared to those of other analyses

investigating the purport of this initiative from the vantage point of native peoples of other developing nations.

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Key Terms

ADII: *Asociación de Desarrollo Integral Indígena* (Indigenous Development Association)

ERPD: Emissions Reduction Program Document

CR: Costa Rica

FCPF: The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

FONAFIFO: *Fondo de Financiamiento Forestal de Costa Rica* (The Forest Financial Fund of Costa Rica)

FPIC: Free, prior, and informed consent

ILO 169: International Labor Organization Convention No. 169

INEC: *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos* (National Institute of Statistics and Census of Costa Rica)

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

PCV: Peace Corps Volunteer

PSA/PES: *Pago de servicios ambientales* (Payment for Ecosystem Services)

REDD+: *Reducción de Emisiones por Deforestación y Degradación* (Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation)

RIBCA: *Red Indígena Bribri- Cabécar* (Indigenous Network of Bribri and Cabécar groups)

UCR: *Universidad de Costa Rica* (University of Costa Rica)

UNDRIP: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

WB: World Bank

Chapter 1

Problem Statement and Introduction

“The land is ours, but the air isn’t?” read a sign held at a protest by indigenous groups in San José, Costa Rica in October of 2015. This was just one of the posters among a group of native peoples protesting Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), an international program working to conserve carbon by making payments to citizens to halt deforestation. The Costa Rican government, the nation’s primary news media and related literature suggest there are two competing discourses regarding REDD+ implementation in the native peoples’ territories of Costa Rica. The government narrative suggests that a cultural mediator initiative has been fruitful and innovative in helping to educate indigenous peoples about the program. However, some media outlets and a socio-environmental organization at the University of Costa Rica, Kioscos Ambientales, have presented a starkly contrasting negative view, arguing that its portrait accurately reflects indigenous peoples’ negative reactions to REDD+.

Baker and Florian (2014) have argued the nation’s cultural mediator program, designed to include local, native people as REDD+ informants who are able to converse in their own language, is working as envisaged. Red Indígena Bribri y Cabécar (RIBCA- Indigenous Organization for the Bribri and Cabécar territories) and the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) designed the cultural mediator program; a pilot study was conducted in 2012 in Talamanca with support from the Climate Works Foundation (Baker & Florian, 2014). Despite these analysts’ praise for the program, a number of Bribri indigenous people from Talamanca declared in 2016 that they did not want anything to do with REDD+, a nominally indigenous REDD+ program, or the cultural mediator services associated with either (Méndez & Picado, 2016).

The aim of this research was to understand these competing perspectives better by exploring why a large group of native peoples have come to oppose REDD+ in Costa Rica. As my study unfolded, I focused on themes such as native views of governance, environmental attitudes, and the transmission of information to shed light on the appropriateness of neoliberal programs, such as REDD+, for indigenous communities.

As a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) in Costa Rica, I became aware that an opposition to REDD+ existed in Costa Rica by speaking with other PCVs living in indigenous territories where people had spoken out against the program. Prior to my service, I knew that REDD+ operated in Costa Rica; however, I had not considered the possibility that there was opposition to its implementation among members of the country's indigenous populations. This topic became of great interest to me and served as a catalyst for my research. I decided to pursue this question using neoliberalism as my theoretical framework, since the REDD+ policy assumes that resources can be commodified and their value monetized and I was curious whether the indigenous populations would accept that assumption. I was likewise interested in whether that fact might underpin their opposition to the initiative. Through semi-structured interviews with a sample of 16 indigenous people, I gained a deeper understanding of how each interviewee perceived the program and what each deemed important and/or problematic about the initiative.

The following research questions guided my inquiry:

- Why are some indigenous peoples in Costa Rica, specifically those of the Bribri and the Ngäbe groups, responding to the neoliberal mechanisms inherent in the REDD+ program in the way they are? What are their underlying motivations for doing so?
 - How do these people's attitudes on governance (both local and national) and natural resources affect their perceptions of REDD+?
 - How does access to information influence these people's perceptions of REDD+?

- How has the Payment for Environmental Services (PES) program affected indigenous peoples' response to REDD+?

Brief History of REDD+

The idea of carbon markets, also known as emissions trading, was formally adopted in 1998, under Article 17 of the Kyoto Protocol (United Nations, 1998). This was the first instance of an international agreement defining carbon as a commodity that could be bought or sold, a mechanism that is being considered as one method to finance the REDD+ program. In 2005, Costa Rica and Papua New Guinea submitted a joint proposal at the 11th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by slowing deforestation rates in developing countries (United Nations, 2005). This was the first step in creating what is now called REDD+. The program was predicated on performance-based payments (Angelsen, 2009). In 2010, at the 16th Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC, participants outlined the following REDD+ activities designed to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions:

- Reducing emissions from deforestation;
- Reducing emissions from forest degradation;
- Conservation of forest carbon stocks;
- Sustainable management of forests;
- Enhancement of forest carbon stocks (United Nations, 2010).

Neoliberalism in the context of this inquiry

Harvey (2005) has characterized neoliberalism as an “accumulation of dispossession (p. 160)” comprised of the following tenets:

1. Privatization and commodification

The corporatization, commodification, and privatization of hitherto public assets have been a signal feature of the neoliberal project. Its primary aim has been to

open up new fields for capital accumulation in the domains hitherto regarded off-limits to the calculus of profitability (Harvey, 2005, p, 160).

2. Financialization
3. The management and manipulation of crises
4. **State redistribution**

According to Harvey, state redistribution assumes the following form:

The state, once neoliberalized, becomes a prime agent of redistributive policies, reversing the flow from upper to lower classes that occurred during the era of embedded liberalism. It does this in the first instance through pursuit of privatization schemes and cutbacks in those state expenditures that support the social wage (Harvey, 2005, p. 163).

My inquiry focused on the privatization, commodification and state redistribution tenets of Harvey's (2005) characterization of neoliberalism since those appeared intuitively to me as most pertinent to the assumptions underpinning the REDD+ program. Market-based strategies and using carbon to promote capital accumulation are inherent features of REDD+. Moreover, the initiative was founded on the idea of commodifying carbon. I wondered whether these neoliberal notions might contradict native people's epistemology, or their way of knowing and constructing truth. Also, the notion of land privatization is a novel concept for some indigenous peoples who practice collective land ownership. I undertook this study to explore these questions.

In addition to commodification and privatization, this inquiry sought to explore how the government has played a role in shaping indigenous peoples' response to the REDD+ program. Harvey contended that the neoliberal state "favors individual property rights, the rule of law, and institutions of freely functioning markets and free trade (2005, p. 64)." Under this model, governments favor business and markets more strongly than the wellbeing of their citizens. While neoliberalism assumes that the "trickle-down theory of economics" will benefit everyone, in practice, states that have adopted this governance form tend to redistribute wealth from lower classes to upper classes. As Harvey suggested, "The main substantive achievement of

neoliberalization, however, has been to redistribute, rather than to generate wealth and income (2005, p. 159).” As such, neoliberal governments favor businesses in lieu of individuals. This form of governance encourages competition and the notion that personal freedoms exist only in relation to the market. Thus, each individual is responsible for his or own welfare. Moreover, as Harvey has observed,

Neoliberal theorists are, however, profoundly suspicious of democracy. Governance by majority rule is seen as a potential threat to individual rights and constitutional liberties. Democracy is viewed as a luxury, only possible under conditions of relative affluence coupled with a strong middle-class presence to guarantee political stability. Neoliberals therefore tend to favour governance by experts and elites. A strong preference exists for government by executive order and by judicial decision rather than democratic and parliamentary decision-making. Neoliberals tend to insulate key institutions, such as the central bank, from democratic pressures (2005, p. 66).

Appeals to traditions and cultural values bulked large in all of this. An open project around the restoration of economic power to a small elite would probably not gain much popular support. But a programmatic attempt to advance the cause of individual freedoms could appeal to a mass base and so disguise the drive to restore class power. Furthermore, once the state apparatus made the neoliberal turn it could use its powers of persuasion, co-optation, bribery, and threat to maintain the climate of consent necessary to perpetuate its power (2005, p. 40).

It follows, as Harvey (2005) suggested in these passages, that neoliberalism tends to erode democracy.

The REDD+ program is neoliberal at its core; the goal of the initiative is to commodify nature and sell carbon on a global market, while allowing, in Costa Rica’s case, the World Bank to lead the endeavor. The World Bank is a favored entity in a neoliberalist state, as it promotes business and markets over social welfare. Moreover, as Harvey (2005) has explained, and in any case, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have functioned as vehicles for the globalization of neoliberalism. Harvey (2005) has also described how the major neoliberal states gave the IMF and the World Bank authority in 1982 to negotiate debt relief, suggesting those regimes’ support for non-democratic institutions to enjoy more power than democratic

governing bodies in the name of promised economic growth. The two institutions used their power to promote that agenda and its values, rather than the welfare of the individuals in the nations with which they worked. I conducted this research to understand better how indigenous peoples in Costa Rica perceived these neoliberal values and claims as they encountered them in the guise of the REDD+ program.

In addition to Harvey's (2005) criticism of the World Bank, many other civil society organizations have expressed concerns about that institution's involvement in climate finance programs. The G-77 and the China block of developing countries have argued that the United Nations should control such funds, rather than the World Bank. That group has suggested that the World Bank:

- Provides loans to adapt to climate change when these countries did not cause the climate change
- Has conflicts of interest, it supports projects that pollute and deforest and lend to non-renewable energy sources, thus, its motives are not pure.
- Is considered undemocratic and unaccountable (Orenstein, 2008).

REDD+ in Costa Rica

REDD+ has existed in Costa Rica since 2008, because that nation's government signed an agreement to participate in the World Bank's Readiness Fund. For the ensuing decade, the organizers of REDD+ have sought to involve local landowners and indigenous peoples in the program. The Bank anticipates that the program's informational and consultation phase will be completed by 2020 for all targeted stakeholders (Figure 1) (Government of Costa Rica- ERPD, 2016). However, in the process of conducting interviews, I learned that the discussions had only recently been initiated. Nonetheless, the Costa Rican national government's goal has been to implement the REDD+ program fully during the 2016-2020 time period. Figure 1 depicts the Costa Rican government's plan for REDD+.

Figure 1. Costa Rica's REDD+ Strategy and Timeline (Government of Costa Rica- ERP, 2016)

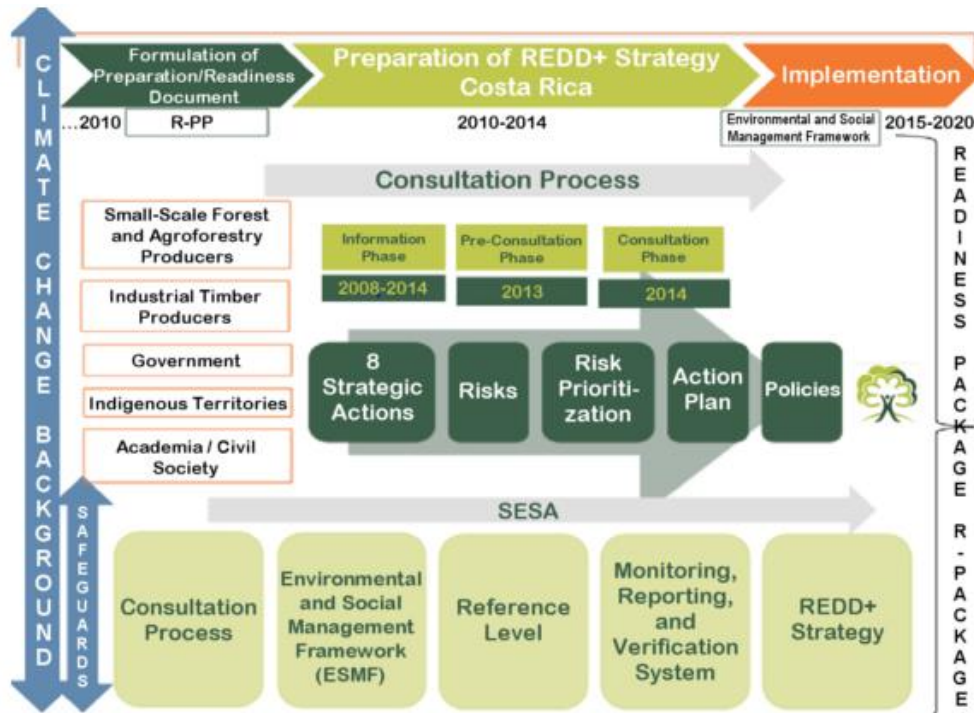


Figure 1 suggests that the REDD+ initiative aligns with Costa Rica's national environmental goal to become carbon neutral by 2021 and with its social development aim of ending poverty by 2030 (Government of Costa Rica, 2015; Government of Costa Rica, 2016). The Costa Rican government enacted a Payment for Environmental Services (PES) program, Pago de Servicios Ambientales (PSA-PES in English) in 1997, through which it reimburses landowners for not harvesting timber on their properties; the program is conducted by the Fondo de Financiamiento Forestal de Costa Rica (FONAFIFO-The Forest Financial Fund of Costa Rica). This effort is focused on protecting biodiversity, encouraging carbon sequestration, conserving aesthetic beauty, and protecting water sources (Johns, 2012). Although the government is presently unable to fund all small landowner requests for support under this initiative, the country's deforestation rates have nonetheless stabilized (Johns, 2012).

The organizers of REDD+, primarily representatives of the World Bank and FONAFIFO, have sought to involve local landowners and indigenous peoples in the program. There may be good environmental reasons for their attempts. A recent study by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), for example, argued that the most important forested areas for conservation in Latin America include lands located in and around the subcontinent's various indigenous territories (Fendt, 2016). This may be so because native peoples have effectively conserved their forests. Although indigenous peoples make up just 2.4% of the population in Costa Rica, their territories account for 20% of the country's currently forested land, excluding publicly protected areas (Government of Costa Rica, 2015).

The Bribri and Cabécar own the largest area of original forest among all indigenous groups in Costa Rica (Fendt, 2016). Moreover, (and likely related to the size of their holdings) indigenous peoples' involvement in REDD+ appears to be critical for the Costa Rican government to sell enough carbon credits to meet the requirements of the Emission Reductions Agreement it signed with the World Bank's FPCF in 2013—an accord valued at 63 million USD (World Bank, 2013). Significantly, the deforestation rate within indigenous territories in Costa Rica is only 0.3% compared to 1.6% on private lands (Government of Costa Rica- ERPD, 2016). Reed (2011) has highlighted a clause in Costa Rica's REDD+ agreement, additionality, that suggests that the initiative should operate in locations in which forest conservation has not otherwise occurred.

Additionality is the hypothesis that drives REDD+ policy makers to avoid giving credits to projects that would have happened anyway. Moreover, this concept is often posed as a question: —is the project reducing emissions in a way that is business as usual, or is it beyond business as usual? Essentially, it is a test to see if carbon trading mechanisms are having a positive effect and are leading to measures that reduce emissions by more than that which would have occurred in the absence of the effort. It is generally understood that if investors of REDD+ want more 'bang for their buck' they should target those forests that are under the most threat. In practice, however, this carries the risk that the

main winners of such project schemes could turn out to be the very ones that have been driving deforestation to begin with; such as cattle ranchers, African oil palm plantation owners, and urban developers (2011, p. 538).

Put more plainly, the REDD+ initiative may not be essential to protect indigenous-owned forests, as native peoples in Costa Rica appear to be adequately conserving that resource within their territories without international support. Yet, the literature suggests the importance of native people's involvement with REDD+, because their territories make up a large portion of Costa Rica's total forested area (Van Dam, 2011). This fact both demonstrates the complexity of this situation and raises the question of whether indigenous participation is necessary in Costa Rica for the nation to realize its environmental goals via REDD+.

The World Bank requires REDD+-affiliated governments to follow policies derived from the treaty of which they are signatories. Additionally, the Bank's Operational Policy 4.10 requires free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) for any program that affects indigenous populations. The WB also formally embraces broad participation by indigenous peoples throughout the implementation process (Stecher, 2012). For Costa Rica, this same imperative holds for the United Nations' Declaration of Indigenous People's Rights (UNDRIP), which the country adopted in 2007, and the International Labor Organization Convention No. 169 (ILO 169), which the nation accepted in 1993 (Baker & Florian, 2014; IWGIA, 2016). Governments that have adopted UNDRIP agree not to displace indigenous populations living within their territories and also guarantee the right of those populations to organize as they wish and to establish their own schools and maintain their native languages (United Nations, 2008). For its part, the United Nations has also explicitly recognized indigenous groups' rights to conserve and protect their environments (United Nations, 2008). Legally, the UN has likewise argued that native

*Native and indigenous are used interchangeably in this piece for pace and variety.

peoples must be included in any process that could affect their wellbeing or basic rights; this aspiration requires FPIC for such groups in relation to all actions that affect their interests (United Nations, 2008). Although Costa Rica is a signatory nation of ILO 169 and has laws aimed at protecting indigenous lands, it should be noted nonetheless that the government must enforce these formal rights if they are to be realized.

Chapter 2

Literature review addressing concerns about the REDD+ program's relationship to indigenous peoples

Indigenous rights

The relevant literature suggests that defining indigenous land rights prior to REDD+ implementation is essential (Adhikari & Agrawal, 2013; Angelsen, 2009; Griffiths & Martone, 2009; Van Dam, 2011). This includes providing clear land titles to native and non-indigenous people, boundaries that may exist legally, but are not always adequately enforced. Since carbon rights are linked to land rights, clear boundaries are essential to permit selling carbon in an international market (Loft et al., 2015). Additionally, REDD+ could violate what many native populations may consider their customary land rights, by limiting access to forest resources and possibly displacing them from their traditional lands unless its provisions are very clearly and completely explained to tribal representatives and accepted (Fuente & Hajjar, 2013). Finally, in general, REDD+ could threaten indigenous people's rights to their land, particularly if governments permit third-party brokers to take advantage of the complexity of the initiative to enter into fraudulent contracts with native people (Reed, 2011).

In terms of consultation, indigenous rights should be upheld, whether those include, as Griffiths and Martone have noted, "human rights; land tenure; customary rights; FPIC; good governance and [or] equity" (2009, p. 20). Brosius, Tsing, and Zerner (1998) have suggested that governments need to ensure that legal strategies are in place to protect indigenous people so that the top-down nature of the REDD+ program does not undermine its environmental and social justice aspirations. Whether a government respects indigenous people's rights will likely affect whether those populations adopt or reject the REDD+ initiative when it is offered. Scholars

argue this structure of indigenous rights should be in place prior to REDD+ implementation. In addition to calling on countries to respect indigenous people's rights, scholars have emphasized the importance of their effective participation in conservation programs; including consultations with their members before major choices are taken that affect them (Griffiths & Martone, 2009). Regrettably, Griffiths and Martone have found that a "2008 review of nine Readiness Plan Idea Notes submitted to the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility found that most [readiness plans in general] had been developed with only minimal or no consultation with forest people" (2009, p. 19). Contrary to this outcome, as these scholars noted, inclusion of indigenous people and their participation throughout the implementation of REDD+ are essential for its success. To allay the fact of varying institutional capacities among indigenous communities to participate, Reed (2011) has suggested that governments work to build their capacity to become involved prior to REDD+ engagement. In short, both the funding agency and the national government should help these communities to establish mechanisms for self-representation in program processes. Good governance and helping to build this capacity are fundamental steps to creating an inclusive initiative.

Arnstein (1969) has observed that citizen engagement in public program implementation can range from manipulation by relevant authorities to total citizen control of decision-making. The REDD+ program, Griffiths and Martone (2009) have argued, may not be adequately consulting with indigenous communities in a number of countries, and even when the initiative's leaders do so, that gesture alone does not ensure native people's adequate participation. Schroeder (2010) has contended that although indigenous people have been asked to provide input on REDD+, they have nonetheless often been excluded in practice from actually doing so. Based on Arnstein's typology of participatory approaches (1969), the REDD+ program in Costa

Rica appears to have engaged in a form of tokenism, a symbolic gesture that has not generally addressed native people's concerns of the initiative's implementation process.

Tensions can arise when indigenous populations do not believe they are well represented in public program implementation and/or when they perceive that delegates engaged in such efforts are inadequately representing their communities in policy or planning decision-making processes (Stecher, 2012). Thus, scholars have highlighted the importance of effective communication, transparency, capacity building and including native people in decisions that affect them (Adhikari & Agrawal, 2013; Angelsen, 2009; Reed, 2011). Reed (2011) has suggested, based on his research in Ecuador, that indigenous people should be the ones informing other native citizens about REDD+, and he has emphasized the importance of information sources as an important indicator of whether indigenous people will accept or reject the initiative. Adhikari and Agrawal (2013) also have contended that trustworthy intermediaries are essential to facilitating conservation programs of any sort.

In Costa Rica, it appears that the REDD+ program representatives typically included indigenous leaders and cultural mediators in their efforts to inform indigenous people about the initiative's provisions and likely impacts. This fact notwithstanding, some native people in Talamanca have argued that they have not been properly informed of the purposes and possible implications of the initiative (Radio Temblor, 2016). Brosius et al. (1998) has argued that, in some instances, political institutions may move forward based on their own interests without fully recognizing the communities' interests, which could explain this situation in Costa Rica. Thus, my research included questions related to how well indigenous people believed their interests to be represented in the REDD+ process as well as how they perceived the role of national governance in their lives.

Social conflict

The way in which the payments are structured for indigenous communities matters, in addition to their perceptions of programmatic and governance legitimacy within their territories. Scholars note that if collective land titles are given to leaders, social conflict within communities could arise and neglect vulnerable populations, thus increasing disparities within targeted groups (Brosius et al., 1998; Pokorny, Johnson, Medina, & Hoch, 2012). As such, as Angelsen (2009) has observed, local autonomy likely will influence the efficacy of the REDD+ program and play a role in how payments within it are distributed.

Social conflict could also arise within a territory based on who participates and who does not, creating an economic disparity among participants. West (2006, p. 22) studied a native group living outside a protected area in Papua New Guinea and reported that a clear increase in physical fights among village members accompanied implementation of a conservation program that involved an economic component. To explore this potential, this research included questions about indigenous peoples' prior experience with PES because that awareness would likely influence their willingness to adopt REDD+ by shaping their perceptions of its likely positive and negative effects.

Ideological differences

The literature suggests that since REDD+ was created in a top-down fashion, without fully incorporating indigenous people's perspectives and expertise, it may ultimately be unsuccessful. For example, Reed (2011) has argued that some native people in Ecuador have contended that REDD+ is not a solution because Western countries continue to pollute, and indigenous peoples in that nation do not accept those populations' attitudes toward the environment in any case. Some native groups do not believe that the environment has a price,

indicating ideological, or perhaps more deeply, ontological differences with REDD+ program assumptions.

The program also focuses explicitly on carbon rather than other environmental services and does not generally incorporate forest management strategies based on native people's traditional practices (Pokorny et al., 2012; Van Dam, 2011). Griffiths and Martone (2009) have suggested that focusing solely on carbon could interfere with addressing the actual problems underlying deforestation, while also threatening indigenous people's livelihoods. Fuente and Hajjar (2013) have warned that the economic benefits of such initiatives could become their focal point, rather than the wellbeing of the indigenous people whose lives they touch. The literature suggests that closing the gap between the ideological and ontological views of the REDD+ program's designers and indigenous people will likely play a large role in predicting the initiative's effectiveness. Therefore, I included interview questions about native people's attitudes towards the environment.

As indicated above, the aim of this inquiry was to increase understanding about how ideological and ontological differences between the REDD+ program's design assumptions and native peoples' beliefs will affect those populations' decisions ultimately to accept or reject REDD+ in Costa Rica. In order to address such differences, some native leaders, such as the Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin (COICA), have suggested an indigenous REDD+ initiative that would allow native people to incorporate their worldviews into the program (Stecher, 2012). This begs the question of whether a more natively shaped REDD+ could resolve epistemic or ontological differences, since the program would still be founded upon neoliberal principles, which reify commodification. Thus, studying Costa Rican

native people's perceptions of REDD+ should shed light on whether it is an appropriate program for other peoples who share their epistemic and ontological worldviews and assumptions.

Gaps in literature

Mendoza-Salamanca (2013) has suggested that indigenous community participation in REDD+ programs depends on the context of their country and the institutional framework they confront. It is important, therefore, to study native population attitudes to gain a better understanding, in the present case, of REDD+ adoption challenges in each context. For this inquiry, I interviewed people from two different indigenous territories in Costa Rica. Reed (2011) has cautioned that representations of native people can be over-simplified; therefore, I sought to address the nuanced perspectives of these populations. Furthermore, Evans, Murphy, and de Jong (2014) have argued that each forest-dependent community is complex and different, thus highlighting the importance of speaking with individuals from different groups to determine what factors could play a role in the adoption or rejection of REDD+. These same authors have also suggested that local narratives are different from their global counterparts, further substantiating the importance of studying grassroots indigenous perspectives in Costa Rica concerning the REDD+ initiative. This inquiry contributes to the growing body of literature about REDD+ by gathering first-hand perceptions of members of Costa Rican indigenous communities to the program and describing the reasons they provided for those views.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methods

Epistemic frame

I adopted an interpretivist stance for this inquiry, meaning that reflexivity on my part, as an investigator, was an essential part of this research process. As an active participant in this study, I was unable to remain objective. As a Peace Corps Volunteer, I realized that my affiliation with the United States government could be perceived negatively. However, I learned that the Peace Corps enjoyed a good reputation in the two indigenous territories in which I interviewed for this study. The Peace Corps Volunteers working in those locations had forged good relationships within each, which permitted me to carry out this inquiry. Furthermore, a few respondents from Talamanca mentioned that they had already been interviewed for other studies or that they were familiar with anthropologists who had lived in the territory previously. As a result, my own interview process was not as difficult as it might have been.

However, I was a white female from another nation and culture conducting research in two indigenous territories where my only acquaintances were Peace Corps Volunteers. I was a stranger to the residents of both territories, and this was reflected in a few instances. Nevertheless, to practice reflexivity, I would often ask Peace Corps Volunteers, who were living in the two territories, how they perceived certain occurrences during the interviews to try to understand better the nuances and complexity of my respondents' reactions to my questions. Additionally, since I was the sole investigator conducting interviews, I did my best to be self-aware of my cultural background during the data collection process and to account for my personal biases throughout the experience. Another way I worked to address my assumptions and biases was to take field notes throughout the data collection process and to allow myself space to separate the descriptive notes I developed from the more reflective ones I wrote.

Site descriptions

I conducted interviews in two indigenous territories, Talamanca and Abrojos Montezuma. The Bribri territory of Talamanca is located in the Limón region of Costa Rica in the Caribbean (eastern) region of the country close to the Panamanian border. The Bribri group is the largest native population in Costa Rica, and their territory contains more indigenous residents than any other such site in the nation. The region includes about 30 communities totaling approximately 7,800 people (INEC, 2013). Only about 596 non-indigenous people live in the territory, a low figure compared to other native jurisdictions in Costa Rica, in which an average of 50% of the inhabitants are non-indigenous (INEC, 2013). Approximately 4,700 people speak the indigenous language in the Talamanca territory, or 60% of the area's population (INEC, 2013). Based on communication with Peace Corps Volunteers living in Talamanca, much of the Bribri population speaks Spanish in addition to their native language, although those individuals who live in isolated areas, where there are not schools, do not know Spanish as well.

Agricultural exports—primarily plantains, bananas, and cacao—drive the economy in the Talamanca area (Borge & Martínez, 2009). According to the Costa Rican Census of 2011, 45.2% of people living in the Bribri territory of Talamanca have jobs, compared to the national average employment rate of 51.7% (INEC, 2013). Indigenous people manage about 550 farms in the territory (INEC, 2013). In addition, some area residents work as artisans, selling traditional Bribri crafts to earn a living (Benavides, Herrera, Benavides-Galindo, & Herrera-Zeledón, 2014).

The Bribri territory consists of 43,690 hectares and contains one of the highest percentages of forest-covered land when compared to other such areas in the nation (Benavides et al., 2014). Natives living in the region have also worked to retain their traditional customs, including those linked to medicine and home construction (Benavides et al., 2014). In general,

the relevant literature suggests that the Bribri group in Talamanca has maintained control of its land and natural resources and has sustainably managed those assets (Benavides et al., 2014). As a result, deforestation in its territory tends to be related to the actions of invaders, rather than arising from the activities of the area's residents (Government of Costa Rica-ERPD, 2016).

The Ngäbe group is the largest indigenous group in southern Central America, with the majority living in Panama (Benavides et al., 2014). As of 2011, there were 3,654 indigenous people living in five Ngäbe territories in southern Costa Rica (INEC, 2013). Members of this native population have lived in Costa Rica since at least the late 1930s. The Ngäbe use plants for medicinal purposes and forest materials to build their homes, and they select their own spiritual leaders. The group's women are known for their traditional-style dress (Benavides et al., 2014).

The Abrojos Montezuma territory consists of 1,480 hectares and is located near the Costa Rica-Panama border near Ciudad Neily in the western part of the country. The Abrojos Montezuma territory had a population of 610 indigenous and 884 non-indigenous people in 2011 (INEC, 2013). About 37.9% of the people living in the Abrojos Montezuma territory is employed, a low number compared to the national average (INEC, 2013). About 527 of the 610 indigenous people living in Abrojos Montezuma speak their native language (INEC, 2013). Based on communication with a Peace Corps Volunteer living in Abrojos Montezuma, much of the Ngäbe population speaks Spanish in addition to their native language. The territory contains 34 farms operated by native people and 30 by non-indigenous individuals (INEC, 2013). The major crops in the area include cacao, banana, pejobaye (peach palm fruit), root vegetables, and tubers (Benavides et al., 2014). The Abrojos Montezuma territory's residents had not had experience with the PES program, when I undertook interviews for this study there (Florian-Rivero et al., 2014).

Justification of study groups

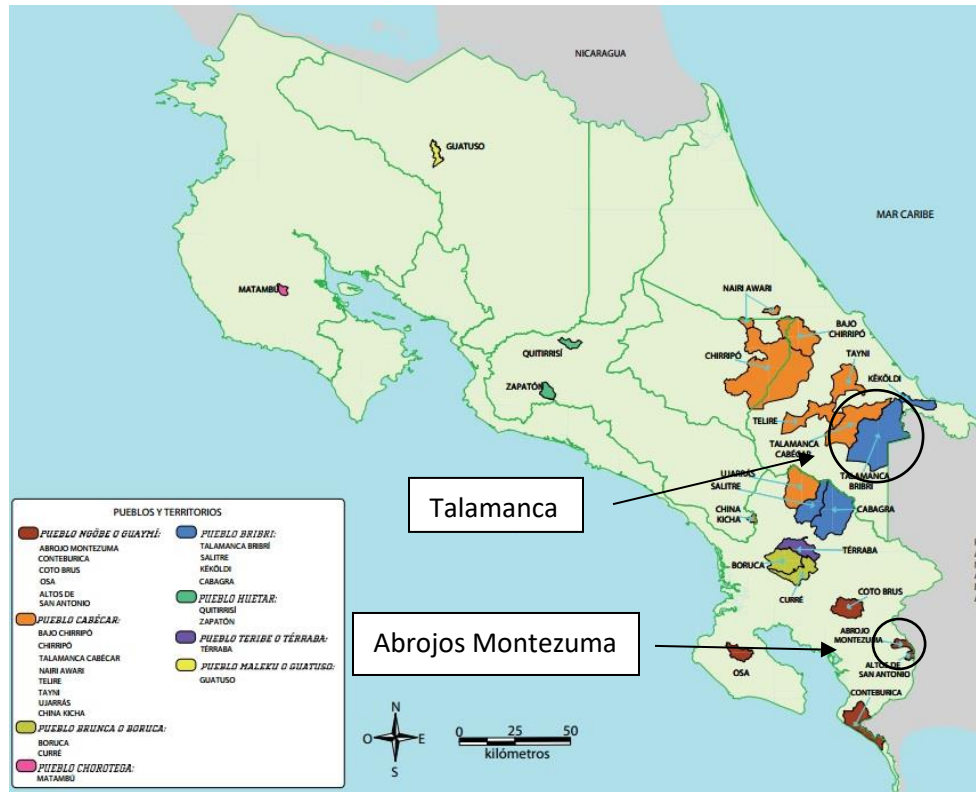
My primary motive in selecting the Bribri group from Talamanca and the Ngäbe group from Abrojos Montezuma was that I was able to determine that people within these territories had at least some knowledge about REDD+; I was not seeking explicitly to speak with individuals who opposed or supported the program, but simply to identify people who were aware of its provisions.

Additionally, the two territories had contrasting population sizes and different numbers of non-indigenous people living within them. I also selected these groups based on personal communications with Peace Corps Volunteers living in Talamanca and Abrojos Montezuma. Through these communications, I was able to ascertain that each group contained individuals who had denounced REDD+. While the Bribris have publicly opposed the program, the PCV living in Abrojos Montezuma informed me that there was at least one native leader there who strongly disapproved of REDD+, though the person had not done so formally. Some community members in Talamanca had actively spoken out against REDD+ in the form of a protest in October of 2015 and by signing a petition in 2016 protesting the initiative; this sort of oppositional organization had not developed in Abrojos Montezuma (Radio Temblor, 2015; Porras & Picado, 2016).

In addition, Talamanca and Abrojos Montezuma have contrasting population sizes—as I noted above, the Bribri group from Talamanca is the largest indigenous group in Costa Rica. Furthermore, Talamanca is located near a popular tourist destination and some communities in the territory have long experienced tourism, whereas Abrojo Montezuma has not. The Ngäbe group in Abrojos Montezuma is among the native populations most geographically removed from the nation's capital, San Jose, and little information concerning the REDD+ program has

reached the community as a result. Finally, The Bribri in Talamanca has participated in the Payment for Environmental Services program since the late 1990s, whereas the Ngäbe group in Abrojos Montezuma has not engaged with it. This allowed for a more nuanced sample since the two indigenous groups have had different experiences with the nation’s conservation programs.

Figure 2. Map Indicating Study Area (INEC, 2013)



Recruitment

I conducted a total of 16 semi-structured interviews in the two territories. I interviewed 10 people in the Bribri territory of Talamanca and six people in the Ngäbe territory of Abrojos Montezuma, so as to reflect the relative size and population of each area. The number of men and women that I interviewed depended largely on who was informed and involved with the REDD+ program and—most importantly—willing to speak with me. PCVs living in Talamanca

and Abrojos Montezuma assisted me in contacting people in their respective communities who knew about REDD+.

I used meeting attendance rosters on the official REDD+ Costa Rica website and compiled a list of all people from Talamanca or Abrojos Montezuma who had attended national and local meetings about REDD+ to identify my initial potential sample. The compiled file included 22 people from Talamanca and about 23 people from Abrojos Montezuma. Even though Talamanca has a larger population than Abrojos Montezuma, there were more people on the meeting list from Abrojos Montezuma. This was likely because I was able to access the attendance list for the meetings held locally in Abrojos Montezuma, whereas this information was not available for Talamanca. Next, I sent the compiled list to the PCVs residing in each territory, who had agreed to help me schedule interviews, to determine if they could assist me by introducing me to these potential key informants. In some cases, I was able to speak with some of the key informants I had identified, but in other cases, I relied on PCVs' acquaintances to help me identify people (a snow ball sampling strategy) who knew about REDD+. Additionally, I asked each interviewee if there was anyone else in their community they thought I should speak with concerning the REDD+ program. Even though I set out to use the REDD+ attendance list as the basis for my sample, I ultimately used snowball sampling as well, because I relied heavily on advice from the resident PCVs and initial interviewees to help identify individuals with whom I should speak. Bernard has argued that snowball sampling can be an appropriate method when researching, "small, bounded, or difficult-to-find population" (1988, p. 97). Indeed, this was the case with interviewing these two isolated indigenous groups in Costa Rica.

As mentioned, as a part of my snowball sampling, I asked interviewees if I should talk with someone else in particular about REDD+. Sometimes these suggestions were fruitful

excursions, but in many cases, the people who had been suggested were not home. Nevertheless, I was able to interview two people on the meeting attendance list in Talamanca and attempted to speak with two others, although they were not home when I sought to do so. In Abrojos Montezuma, I was able to speak with three people on the meeting attendance list, one of the key informants I sought to interview was out of town. Unfortunately, I was unable to speak with that individual. Additionally, I made a concerted effort to speak with local elected officials and informally recognized leaders

Although Costa Ricans are known for their hospitality, I would not have been able to conduct my research without the assistance of PCVs who lived in these territories. They were familiar with the people and culture and had a working knowledge of the native languages in each location. In the Bribri territory, the PCVs were able to call acquaintances and ask people if they knew about REDD+. People were inviting and happy to help me. Members of the Bribri group, on the whole, were more open with their responses, evidenced by the amount of time they spoke to me in comparison with interviewees from the Ngäbe group. Those I interviewed from the Bribri group, on average, spoke with me for approximately 62 minutes whereas the Ngäbe group spoke with me for about 29 minutes. One of the study participants in the Bribri territories called me a few months later simply to ask how I was faring.

The Ngäbe indigenous group members were more reserved and also more geographically isolated; it did not appear to be culturally appropriate to knock on people's doors in their community without first being acquainted. Thus, I relied on the PCV living there and a key informant to introduce me to people who knew about REDD+. In Abrojos Montezuma, I had some difficulty finding a sufficient number of people informed about REDD+ to interview, because many people did not know about the program. One key informant led me to speak with

two other people in the territory. I was grateful for his help; however, in some cases, he spoke in his native language to clarify questions, and it was also difficult to ascertain the extent to which he influenced the two interviews he attended. Table 1 below provides demographic information concerning the interview respondents.

Table 1. Demographic information about the interview respondents

Name	Date	Gender	Territory	Community
Jose	12/15/2016	Male	Bribri	Watsy
Alvaro	12/16/2016	Male	Bribri	Suretka
Miguel	12/16/2016	Male	Bribri	Suretka
Bernie	12/17/2016	Male	Bribri	Coroma
Liliana	12/18/2016	Female	Bribri	Coroma
Ana	12/18/2016	Female	Bribri	Bajo Coen
Teresa	12/19/2016	Female	Bribri	Amubri
Alberto	12/19/2016	Male	Bribri	Suretka
Juan	12/19/2016	Male	Bribri	Watsy
Jonathon	12/20/2016	Male	Bribri	Meleruk
Oscar	01/07/2017	Male	Abrojos Montezuma	Bajo los Indios
Katia	01/07/2017	Female	Abrojos Montezuma	Bajo los Indios
Antonio	01/09/2017	Male	Abrojos Montezuma	Abrojo Montezuma
Adrian	01/09/2017	Male	Abrojos Montezuma	Abrojo Montezuma
Leonardo	01/10/2017	Male	Abrojos Montezuma	Abrojo Montezuma
Luz	01/10/2017	Female	Abrojos Montezuma	Alto Rey

Data Collection

I used qualitative methods, specifically semi-structured interviews, to help me explore how those with whom I spoke perceived the REDD+ program. I conducted the interviews from December 2016 to January 2017 at the participants' place of choice to create a natural,

comfortable setting. For the most part, I interviewed individuals in their homes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, I conducted the interviews in Spanish, the national language of Costa Rica. Even though both the Bribri and Ngäbe groups have their own traditional languages, many people in these territories also speak Spanish. Every participant with whom I spoke was able to communicate in Spanish. I followed Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol to obtain the written consent of each study participant. As I have noted, the average time of my conversations with the study participants in Talamanca and Abrojos Montezuma were about 61 minutes and 29 minutes respectively. The shortest interview was about 18 minutes in length while the longest interview was about 110 minutes. I conducted 10 interviews in Talamanca with three females and seven males. I conducted six interviews with two females and four males in Abrojos Montezuma (Table 1).

Each participant was given a consent form in Spanish that I, or the PCV who accompanied me, read aloud at the request of the participant. All interviewees signed a consent form prior to their interview. In one instance, I forgot the consent forms for two interviewees, but fortunately had the instrument accessible on my telephone and was able to read the form aloud and obtained signatures prior to recording the interview. This unforeseen event was documented with IRB and was considered acceptable by its standards following that office's review on November 22, 2018. In another unforeseen event, a participant wished to change a line in the consent form that stated that an indigenous government had voted against REDD+. Therefore, he crossed it out and signed his name. This event was also filed with IRB and considered acceptable on January 8, 2018. In order to ensure that the consent form and research questions were grammatically correct in Spanish, a Peace Corps Language Facilitator, who knows both English and Spanish, aided in preparing the materials.

I audio recorded the interviews and assigned a pseudonym to each study participant to ensure confidentiality. Along with recording my conversations with those participating in the study, I recorded observations following each interview in the form of field notes and captured photos of the landscape throughout the research process. I sorted my notes into descriptions, reflections, and emergent questions. I would also jot notes throughout my fieldwork while I was waiting for transportation or if I noticed something of importance while I was in the field, a practice Emerson (1983) has suggested.

During the interviews, I tried to refrain from taking notes, because I was concerned such might distract from the conversation. Although Emerson (1993) has proposed asking the participant if they would be comfortable with note taking during interviews, I believed I should give each study participant my full attention throughout our interaction. An experience about which I learned reinforced my decision—a PCV who had lived in Talamanca for almost four years explained that during her first few months living in the territory, she had tried to record people to learn the local language. However, people felt uncomfortable with the audio recorder, so she stopped using it until they felt more at ease. Taking my cue from my colleague's experience and realizing that I was new to the culture, I wanted to do my best to encourage a comfortable conversation, so I decided against taking notes during the interviews.

Interview questions

Using semi-structured interview questions allowed me to probe and clarify questions as needed throughout the interview process. This proved necessary, as Spanish is my second language and the interviewees' second language as well. The questions I elected to ask drew on major themes found in the literature about concerns indigenous peoples all over the world had

expressed in relation to REDD+. Table 2 below provides those questions and the concepts they reflected in the relevant academic literature.

Table 2. Operationalization of Concepts in Interview Questions

Question	Concept
Where are you from? How long have you lived there? How old are you? What is a typical day like for you?	Background information
How did you first learn about the REDD+ program? Do you have a role in the program? Did you attend any REDD+ workshops, if so which ones?	Familiarity with REDD+
How does local governmental representation work in your community? What are your thoughts on local governing bodies? What do you think about indigenous representation in new governmental programs affecting native people?	Local governance/representation
What are your thoughts on the consultation process in relation to new governmental conservation programs? What did you think about the consultation process associated with the REDD+ program?	REDD+ process (consultation program)
What do you think about the cultural mediator program that is part of REDD+? What materials about REDD+ do you have? Where are they from?	Diffusion/transfer of information
How do you feel about land tenure in your territory? In your opinion, how does land tenure relate to REDD+?	Land tenure in relation to REDD+
What do you think about ILO 169? What does it mean to you? How do you understand ILO 169 terms of REDD+? Does the government respect your rights?	Indigenous rights/respect
Have you ever received money from the Payment for Environmental Services (PES) program? What are your perceptions of PES? Why do you think some indigenous groups suggest they support the Payment for Environmental Services Program, but do not support the REDD+ program? Do you draw a similar distinction? If so, why? If not, why not?	Perception of PES (already existing conservation in CR)

What do you think about an Indigenous Payment for Environmental Services program? What would that look like in your view?	PES indigenous program
What are your thoughts on natural resources? What about conservation of natural resources? What about climate change? How do you think REDD+ will affect the environment?	Environmental values specifically about REDD+ related themes like conservation, natural resources, and climate change
How do you feel about buying and selling natural resources (commodification)? What do you think about REDD+ program payments?	Thoughts about neoliberalist mechanisms
Why does the government want to pursue the REDD+ program?	Government's motives
The Bribri group from Talamanca has refused to participate in REDD+, how do you think the government will react? What do you expect will happen next for REDD+ implementation in your territory?	Government reaction to opposition, thoughts about implementation of REDD+
What is your biggest fear regarding the REDD+ program?	Fears with REDD+
What should the Costa Rican national government do concerning the REDD+ program? Would you accept REDD+ under different circumstances? If so, can you share what those might be?	What the government should do in relation to REDD+.

Data analysis

My analysis of the interviews consisted of an iterative process of coding and writing analytic memos about the themes and patterns that emerged in those conversations. I also used NVivo to conduct descriptive coding as defined by Saldaña (2009). This type of coding is used to summarize passages of data into one key term. Throughout this process, I coded the transcribed and translated interview texts a total of three times and aggregated/narrowed the themes each time. As a result, I developed approximately 150 codes and some 15 themes during the process. The three major aggregate themes that arose from coding were the government's interactions with REDD+ alongside its historic relationship with indigenous peoples in Costa Rica, the inequitable access to information, and finally, the interviewees' negative perceptions of

commodification and privatization. These themes corresponded with two of Harvey's (2005) principal characteristics of neoliberalism: commodification and privatization and state redistribution. Thus, in my third round of coding, I pulled relevant passages that illuminated those major themes for the results section.

Limitations

Due to limited funding and time, I was unable to interview additional individuals and visit other territories. As a Peace Corps Volunteer, I had a commitment to my community foremost, but was approved to travel to Talamanca and Abrojos Montezuma to conduct interviews for this research. I spent almost a week in Talamanca and conducted 10 interviews during my time there. I was able to spend about two weeks in Abrojos Montezuma but was only able to interview six people there. This was in part due to the fact that few people in the community knew enough about REDD+ to be able to speak to its strengths and weaknesses.

While I realize I did not live in these communities and was merely visiting, I took thorough field notes, and these helped during the coding process. I was ever aware that being a visitor in these communities meant that I had not fully gained trust with my study participants. Unfortunately, I did not have time to build a personal rapport with residents by living in their communities or making multiple visits. That fact underscored the importance of the PCV facilitators in helping me identify interviewees and gain access to them.

At times, it was difficult to discern if people did not want to speak openly with me, because I, personally, had not gained their trust or if this was typical behavior toward any outsider. A few instances come to mind. For example, one of the women in the study spoke more openly with the Peace Corps Volunteer, who was an acquaintance, and when I interviewed her, she refrained from sharing a specific experience with me that she previously shared with the

PCV. Notably, the settings of these two encounters were different—I was recording her responses, whereas the PCV was chatting with the interviewee in the kitchen while they cooked dinner. Another respondent asked me to explain why I was conducting research and what my intentions were in doing so. Overall, the Ngäbe people were more reserved and it took some convincing by another key informant to persuade one of the respondents, in particular, to speak with me.

During my fieldwork, I was hoping to attend key meetings, as this would add depth to the research. However, there were no gatherings or workshops concerning REDD+ during the period I was visiting the two territories. One of the study participants invited me to a national meeting about the initiative to be held later in the nation's capital. When I communicated with that individual about the logistics of that meeting, however, I did not receive a response.

The timing of my visit likely influenced the number of people I was able to interview. Since I traveled during the holidays, this could have contributed to why many people were not home. In addition, in Talamanca, the officials from the President's House had held an educational session to inform indigenous people about their right to free, prior, and informed consent on December 9, 2016, about a week before my fieldwork there. Some of my study participants alluded to that gathering as one of the first informational sessions the government had facilitated; I believe interviewees who attended this meeting could have a stronger reaction to how the national government has been treating indigenous peoples throughout the REDD+ process. Thus, I remained cognizant of how that meeting might have affected people's responses during my data analysis (Consulta Indígena Costa Rica, n.d.).

Chapter 4

REDD+ Program Context and Structure

Key actors

The indigenous people's response to REDD+ is rooted in multiple factors as well as in their reaction to different actors. Indeed, part of the reason the response to REDD+ is so complex is likely due, in part, to the number of stakeholders involved with the program.

The World Bank

The World Bank is an economic development institution that works internationally, largely in developing countries. Its leaders have long embraced neoliberal principles. In Costa Rica, the World Bank's FCPF is working with the Costa Rican national government to prepare the country for the REDD+ initiative. According to the FCPF website, "The partnership relies on an effective and inclusive governance structure, with the Participants Assembly and the Participants Committee at its core (FCPF, 2017)." The World Bank is one of three international organizations assisting interested countries with REDD+; the others include the Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (FCPF, 2017).

Costa Rican Government

The World Bank and the Costa Rican government signed an accord for the latter to sell carbon credits through the REDD+ program. REDD+ is aligned with the already existing PES program and the government's goal for the nation to be carbon neutral by 2021. As a part of its responsibility as a participant in the initiative, the Costa Rican government is responsible for creating the RPP, or "readiness package," for REDD+, which provides specifics concerning how the program will be implemented in the country. The president's office has also been directly involved with the initiative and, as noted above, its representatives have consulted with

individuals residing in all of the indigenous territories to describe the requirement for free, prior, and informed consent (Consulta Indígena, n.d.).

FONAFIFO

FONAFIFO is a branch of the Costa Rican government that administers PES and is working on the nation's strategy for REDD+. Part of the reason the World Bank chose to fund Costa Rica's REDD+ was because this organization was purportedly viewed as trusted entity among indigenous groups (Baker & Florian, 2014)

Executive Committee

The REDD+ national executive committee includes representatives of many relevant stakeholders from the indigenous territories, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of the Environment and Energy, small forest producers, the wood industry, landowners, and a major bank.

Cultural mediators and territorial coordinators

The REDD+ program's designers have sought to inform Costa Rican indigenous peoples about the effort by means of a program created for the purpose. Thus, some of the initiative's leaders have developed what they have termed "indigenous blocks" as a way to organize their efforts to communicate with native peoples. These are based on geography and each involves a block and territorial coordinator and cultural mediators, all of whom are indigenous. The original concept was to create a governance structure and engage local people knowledgeable in indigenous languages and cultures to speak with their fellow residents concerning REDD+. The formal role of the cultural mediators is to inform indigenous communities about the carbon initiative using materials created by a working group at the national level. The World Bank has provided funding to support the effort.

University of Costa Rica Kioscos Ambientales

The Kioscos Ambientales is a social-environmental justice group located at the University of Costa Rica. Members of this entity have sought to inform indigenous peoples about the threat that REDD+ poses to their rights and livelihoods, as they view it. Additionally, they have expressed negative perceptions concerning the content and adequacy of the consultation and informational phases of REDD+.

ADIIs (Indigenous Development Associations)

In Costa Rica, ADIIs serve as the legitimate territorial governing bodies for the populations they serve. Each native jurisdiction has an ADII elected by its residents. All Costa Rican municipalities have adopted a typical Costa Rican, perhaps non-traditional for indigenous peoples, structure. The ADIIs are comprised of a president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, etc. The Costa Rican government originally devised this office structure, but it has since been adopted and recognized as the legitimate territorial governing body by the indigenous residents of the nation's native territories.

Frente Amplio/community movement

The Frente Amplio, a Costa Rican political party, has embraced an anti-REDD+ platform. Many of the indigenous individuals with whom I spoke during my research mentioned this resistance. The anti-REDD+ community movement originated in Talamanca and has a strong presence there. The group has organized protests as well as petitions against the initiative. Additionally, members of this party have created materials targeted to indigenous territory residents that argue REDD+ implementation will threaten their livelihoods.

Chapter 5

Data Analysis and Findings

While the interviewees' responses to the REDD+ initiative were surely as complex as the jungles where they live, I ultimately discerned the following common concerns in my analysis of my interviews: the national Costa Rican government's role in REDD+, indigenous people's access to information regarding the program, and how commodification and privatization influenced native individuals' responses to REDD+. Using Harvey's (2005) description of neoliberalism, I here address how my respondents perceived two of that concept's principal tenets—state redistribution and privatization and commodification.

I. Government's role in REDD+ in Costa Rica

As detailed below, the Costa Rican national government has arguably violated its native people's rights throughout the implementation of REDD+ and the PES program as well. This has led those people to distrust officials representing that government and, at times, their territorial governments too. One could argue that these difficulties antedated REDD+, and, in fact, this program appears to have exposed the government's fractured relationship with a share of the indigenous populations in Costa Rica and that fact, coupled with the World Bank's negative reputation worldwide, has proven to be a durable challenge to securing REDD+ program implementation in the native controlled areas of Costa Rica.

Harvey (2005) has argued that neoliberalism erodes democracy. In Costa Rica the government's treatment of indigenous rights and its lack of transparency and accountability to indigenous people throughout implementation of the REDD+ initiative illustrate this contention. Harvey (2005) has observed that the neoliberal state promotes redistribution, of wealth upward.

In accepting the neoliberal premises of the REDD+ program, Costa Rica “[has] become[s] a prime agent of redistributive policies, reversing the flow from upper to lower classes” (p. 163).

Moreover, these neoliberal goals foment social competition and advance the notion that everyone will benefit from the ideology’s “trickle-down economic theory” (Harvey, 2005). While this is what the theory suggests should occur, my interviews suggested the program is not functioning that way in Costa Rica. Furthermore, democracy constitutes a threat to neoliberalism, because in adopting a positive business climate as its organizing aim, governments must work to persuade citizens to buy-in to the idea that markets and market actors should always be accorded supremacy in social decision-making. Often, as Harvey has explained, the state may act in undemocratic ways to secure that result, “Once the state apparatus made the neoliberal turn it could use its powers of persuasion, co-optation, bribery, and threat to maintain the climate of consent necessary to perpetuate its power” (2005, p. 40). For Costa Rica, this raises the question of whether the government has the capacity to act democratically towards its indigenous populations.

Violation of indigenous rights

The indigenous people with whom I spoke painted a bleak picture of their relationship with the Costa Rican government and, at times, their ties with their territorial governments as well. For example, 11 of the 16 respondents articulated instances when the national government had violated their rights or instances where its representatives had not respected them. The relationship between indigenous peoples and the Costa Rican government has been characterized by a long history of marginalization, starting with the colonization of the country by the Spanish. The following interviewee suggested that the government had not respected indigenous rights prior to the government’s efforts to promote the REDD+ program. Specifically, this individual

reflected on how the Costa Rican government had imposed its preferred structure and approach to education on Talamanca in the 1950s. In addition, this interviewee shared his belief that the national government forced the Bribris of Talamanca into accepting the PES program, while largely ignoring democratic ideals in that process.

Interviewer: Do you think that the government respects your rights?

Alberto: I believe that in general terms they do not respect us, they don't respect us because, because first education didn't arrive until 1950 in Talamanca for the Bribris and in Amubri specifically. From there, for example, we weren't consulted about the payment, the payment of environmental services that, beginning in 1995, they didn't have an information session for the indigenous communities (Alberto, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

Another respondent recalled her experience in elementary school, where she was punished for speaking her native language:

Because of our history from the past, you see me talking, you see me talking in my own language. It's because my grandparents' values, character, because in the school it was prohibited, we didn't have the right to leave to recess if we spoke in Bribri (Teresa, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

Both Alberto and Teresa's examples suggest the national government had not historically respected indigenous cultures. It also highlights that the Bribris were both separate and beneath those who spoke Spanish as a first language.

The Bribris from Talamanca pride themselves on being the only indigenous population not colonized by the Spanish, and members of other native groups mentioned this fact to me as well. Other indigenous people alluded to the Bribris' capacity for social organizing as one of the primary reasons the community movement against REDD+ originated in that group's territory.

Even so, the Bribris have endured negative treatment from the national government, as reported by Alberto and Miguel in these comments:

Well, I believe that, let's say, um the first here in Costa Rica and the world, there is, there are sectors eh could we could say that historically they have been excluded, they have been made invisible, in regards to youth, in regards to the children, in regards to the women. And within this organization, they also find the indigenous people separate. So, eh, when you begin to discuss human rights on the international level of also eh, eh

intrinsically, let's say, the state of the discussion of the rights of the indigenous communities that I don't know, beginning with the colonization, beginning with all of those processes of independence of the states, eh it hasn't moved forward, like discussing the Costa Rican state, like part of, of the democratic model, a participative model no, for example. The first article of the constitution that says a pluricultural and multi-ethnic state, in that way, like that, um, dang, recognizing the, eh um eh let's say the right of the indigenous communities (Alberto, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

Regarding REDD+, the Convention (ILO 169), well, um, it says, us, that when the [government] creates, when it evaluates, or executes a project in the territories, it should be with previous, free and informed consent, right? And that's not happening so the program or the REDD+ strategy contradicts, contravenes or violates what is stipulated in Convention 169 (Miguel, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

These observations shed light on the sentiments of many of my respondents, who noted specific actions by the national government that had undermined the agency and relative autonomy of the country's indigenous peoples. These observations also highlight the historically fractured relationship between the Bribris and the Cost Rican government. Some scholars have contended that the national government had good intentions when it signed legislation to protect Costa Rica's indigenous people. However, its intentions aside, my interviewees suggested that the government officials have not implemented relevant law in an equal and fair-minded way across the country's native territories. This perception was apparent among my respondents throughout the interview process. A majority of those with whom I spoke argued that laws aimed at protecting indigenous people's rights do exist at the national level but are poorly and unevenly enforced. The following respondent expanded on this concern:

Let's see, the laws exist, the government approves them, ratifies them, but doesn't carry them out, they don't execute them. It's sad. In Costa Rica there exists some quantity from there is the Convention. It's the Declaration from the United Nations. It's the law 6172 that is the indigenous law, it's a ton of rules that I don't know, don't actually carry out, mm, so, um, the intention is good, but they are worthless. (Miguel, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

This study's interviewees were quite open in sharing their discontent with this situation. Moreover, a majority of those with whom I spoke argued their rights had been ignored or

overlooked specifically in relation to the representation and consultation processes of the REDD+ program. Specifically, eight respondents suggested that their rights guaranteed by ILO 169 had been infringed upon; interviewees noted that they were concerned about the transparency with the consultation process with REDD+. The cultural mediators, who were charged with explaining the effort to the indigenous populations in their native languages, were not elected or appointed by the indigenous residents' legitimately recognized territorial governments. Nine of this study's 16 interviewees expressed concern that the national government did not recognize their territorial governments. Those respondents articulated their discontent with that situation and explained that, in their view, the REDD+ mediators were not legitimate, because the citizens of the territory had not democratically elected them. The following participant explained how the national government had violated his and other natives' rights by not allowing each territory to elect their own representatives for the REDD+ initiative:

The cultural mediators, eh, for example, the territory cultural mediators, are people that are named, that are chosen by the government, and not by the indigenous territory. So, from the beginning, they are already violating the rights for the indigenous communities, that the representation is already chosen or elected by the government. This person, for us, has to know about the culture, our worldview, and more. And what is most important, the language. Why the language? So that they can explain to people who don't speak Spanish. That's what the REDD+ project is about. However, the government makes the decision (Jonathon, Bribri, 12/20/2016).

Another respondent offered a similar claim, also articulated by about half of this study's interviewees—that the Bribri indigenous people in Talamanca were unaware of how individuals were selected to represent them in REDD+ discussions at the national level. This problem of representation was a clear example of the government overstepping its power in the eyes of the indigenous people with whom I spoke.

Ok, in reality, they were never named by the indigenous territory. You can say that they, eh, something like what they named themselves, or they were named by the outside, but by the board of directors in ADITIBRI (ADII in Talamanca), eh, excuse me, from

REDD+, the board that presents the talk about this project. They chose people from there, never here. (Bernie, Bribri, 12/17/2016).

The notion of respect in relation to territorial legitimacy was one of the most frequently discussed topics among my interviewees. Those with whom I spoke felt very strongly that the government was violating their rights by ignoring the already established democratic processes at the territory level. The Bribri interviewees were more vocal about this, perhaps, because they have had more people from their territory travel with Costa Rican government officials to various international conferences.

While some scholars have touted the cultural mediator program as an effective way to communicate REDD+ concepts, my interviewees believed the initiative had been conducted in a top-down manner without effectively taking indigenous peoples' perspectives into account. Many reacted negatively when I asked about the cultural mediators because they perceived they had not been chosen by territorial government representatives (ADII), who they perceived as the legitimate governing group for their land areas. One interviewee remarked that he did not mind if the government paid the mediators for professional consulting work, but that they were not elected by indigenous people and thus, could not represent them. The government's top-down, almost manipulative, behavior has influenced how indigenous peoples are responding to REDD+.

There's an error on the part of the government that I'm omitting because the government made, the government made the agreements. They normally hire the people they want, and they don't talk directly to the territorial government (Juan, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

A number of participants explained that the people promoting REDD+ within the territory and tribe, were a distinct minority in the Bribri territory, and were the same individuals who also advocated for other elements of the national government's agenda. The following

respondent also voiced a similar, negative reaction to the government's behavior in promoting the REDD+ initiative.

There is another percentage that is less that I'm telling you, that are relatively few who are the people who are the cultural promoters. They are the people who are allied with state and, that, um, they have been promoting REDD+ (Alberto, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

The national government's top-down behavior and treatment of indigenous people as it has promoted REDD+ has heightened that population's negative perceptions of the program's legitimacy, irrespective of whether its representatives intentionally so acted. Many of those with whom I spoke knew that International Labor Convention No. 169 protected their rights, particularly in terms of new projects that might be developed in their territories. However, the Costa Rican government has violated the protections guaranteed by ILO 169 by choosing indigenous representatives for REDD+ at the national level without consulting the legitimate territorial governments and by not hosting any consultations with indigenous people since REDD+'s inception in 2008. This has created a distrustful atmosphere, which, in turn, has incited an opposition movement to the initiative:

So that is what happens, and that is the way the government presents us with REDD+, from the north to the south, you see all of America brings us the same thing, you see them focusing on the resources in the mines, in things like that, who continually remove us, so it's, it's the fight that has existed, eh, between us with them and more than anything, the government, because they are, they have the duty to help us and rather [than] do that, they humiliate us, continually humiliating us (Adrian, Abrojos Montezuma, 01/09/2017).

This respondent argued that the indigenous relationship with government programs had historically been top-down in character. REDD+ is yet another initiative, as this interviewee saw it, that began at the international level and came to Costa Rica with a pre-established agenda. The next interviewee whom I met argued that the indigenous opposition movement is not against every project that enters the Bribri territory. Rather, they are interested in efforts that start from within the region and that ensure effective indigenous involvement from the beginning.

Eh, many times, they tell us, we as an indigenous movement, we say no to everything, no to this, no to that. No, we don't. It's not that we oppose everything. For example, we do oppose REDD in how it was presented. It was formulated from the outside (Miguel, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

While these native people's relationship with their nation's governance institutions is not as tenuous as occurs in other countries, the Costa Rican government has nonetheless acted in ways that have created distrust and suspicion among native groups. Specifically, the government has not created an atmosphere of trust concerning REDD+, in which indigenous people believe that they are being heard and respected. In short, the Costa Rican government has exhibited behavior—both historically and with the REDD+ program—that makes it difficult for indigenous populations to trust its officials now.

Lack of accountability

Of the 16 individuals with whom I spoke, only two suggested that the government would listen to their views and respect their collective decision concerning adoption or rejection of the REDD+ program. Indeed, most of my interviewees suggested the government would not respond positively if the indigenous peoples ultimately rejected REDD+. More importantly, they perceived that national officials had not supported them in general. The following interviewee exemplified this perspective:

I think that the government is reacting and going to react in the same way, in the same negative way, ignoring the community looking for ways, er, that REDD+, first with REDD you see, for example, they start with REDD, then once they are in, then then want more and more (laughter) (Miguel, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

The following respondent comments suggest that these individuals perceived that the national government lacked accountability historically, which indeed, had shaped their perception of how the regime has acted in relation to REDD+.

Well the government of, of our country well, is always, you can almost say, has forgotten us. They don't support us at all. Um, we always say they've never helped us ever, we ... we're exploited here. (Ana, Bribri, 12/18/2016).

Eh I believe that mm, there is a lot abandoned, I believe it because not only here in the indigenous territory, rather that also the territory eh in, in, this part of the southern zone, it's very, very abandoned by the government (Katia, Abrojos Montezuma, 01/07/2017).

These interviewees suggested that the government has repeatedly failed them by demonstrating a lack of accountability. This perception was surely a contributing factor to why many indigenous people have responded with the degree of suspicion of REDD+ they have exhibited to date. While the regime has not, according to this study's respondents, acted transparently with regard to the program, this specific example points to interviewees' negative overall attitude toward Costa Rica's government, which was predicated on their largely negatively perceived historical relationship with its representatives. Furthermore, two participants argued that the government does not follow through with offers its officials make during election campaigns. While this is a common occurrence with elections in democratic states, especially in Latin America with its history of clientelism, this pattern of behavior does little to build a stronger, more trusting relationship between indigenous peoples and the national government. The following interviewee observation aligns with the view that the national government has lacked accountability toward the country's indigenous people.

I mean, to appeal to the indigenous people to just to get into government, but once they have their positions, they forget about us, the Indians. They only remember us when it's time to vote (Ana, Bribri, 12/18/2016).

Moreover, one participant described how the government has tried to persuade Bribris in Talamanca that REDD+ is in their best interest, while suggesting these claims would not benefit the group. He noted that the support the state has promised will accompany REDD+ should already have existed. This example again highlights the level of distrust among my interviewees that the national government will not demonstrate accountability.

So the discourse is to return again to the discourse of the mediators of some representatives on the theme of REDD+: it is that we approve REDD+; because of REDD+ we are going to have money or the funds to clean up the indigenous territories, first to return the land only to the indigenous people; second that we are going to use some of those resources to invest in social savings already, executive centers, health centers, centers eh roads or let's say, bridges. So, the communities return to the issues, let's say, that we need to approve the project that has been clearly presented to us, that has not allowed us to implement our rights. It's illogical when, when there is a huge responsibility from the state, the institutions, for, for that, there are resources, let's say, so the communities say okay first they don't tell us anything, they don't inform us, and second, that they want us to slyly, let's say, they want us to make, to believe that it is going to be the solution to the problem (Alberto, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

Finally, the comment just below demonstrates how the government's perceived lack of accountability has resonated in a negative way with the indigenous individuals I interviewed and how that fact has ultimately damaged the regime's relationship with them. This interview respondent argued that the national government had received funding on behalf of territory governments and had not passed that aid along to those entities. In this individual's view, the government's representatives are willing to steal from the native peoples and, as a result, they simply cannot be trusted:

That is the truth, they are stealing, where they receive a resource to name of population of us, you see, and when that resource doesn't arrive to the community, yes (Adrian, Abrojos Montezuma, 01/09/2017).

Lack of trust of Costa Rican Government

The national government's behavior in relation to REDD+, such as its perceived violations of indigenous rights by not showing these groups respect and keeping them informed about projects that would affect them, ultimately had fomented a distrustful environment among those I interviewed. Trust, or more specifically, whom the indigenous respondents chose to trust, played a critical role in determining whether those individuals believed the information they received. For example, two interviewees mentioned their suspicion of a book the Costa Rican government had provided that outlined indigenous peoples' rights protected by ILO 169. The

two suggested that they planned to read the text thoroughly to ensure that national representatives were not trying to trick them into accepting something not in their best interest. A government official gave the text to one of the participants at a meeting at which staff from the Costa Rican presidential house spoke about FPIC for indigenous peoples (Consulta Indígena, n.d.). That gathering had concluded with national government officials requesting that the natives who had attended sign a document confirming they understood what they had been taught. However, the person I interviewed explained that the Bribris of Talamanca, who participated in the meeting, did not sign anything because there was not adequate time for them to read the information and make sense of it. This specific example appears to be part of a broader pattern; the government's choices during the REDD+ implementation process have done little to build confidence or trust with the members of the nation's indigenous peoples I interviewed.

Other respondents suggested that government REDD+ program representatives were not behaving in good faith. They believed public officials were only promoting themselves and would sell out indigenous people to businesses rather than stand up for their rights. The view that the regime would undermine indigenous people's rights to serve businesses aligns with the state's role in neoliberalism. Very much in keeping with Harvey's (2005) arguments, in this view, under the guise of promoting democratic ideals, the government was seen by this study's interviewees as actually to be promoting businesses, entrepreneurship, and the market at the expense of indigenous people:

We've been fighting against REDD+ for like 8 years. So now the government believes this, this way, this strategy says that it's to skip historic debt with the indigenous communities but in reality, they are responding to their own interests so that REDD+ passes, right? (Miguel, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

Interviewer: Why does the government promote the REDD+ program?

Liliana: Because it serves them, laughter, eh no, they want to steal nature... the, the like how do you say what is the riches that we have, so they are going to be rich, not us (Liliana, Bribri, 12/18/2016).

Liliana: Well REDD+ talks a lot of that for sure there is, I'll bring the book this, that law that according says REDD+ that they are going to comply, eh, the right of the indigenous people, that they are not going to violate that but it's not so, it's not very secure because they can always change it.

Interviewer: Mm in whatever moment?

Liliana: In whatever moment, mhm. (Liliana, Bribri, 12/18/2016).

Interviewer: And why does the government promote the REDD+ program?

Oscar: Well, eh, it's because the government, let's say, um, eh, dang, they say that they promote it because if not, they are never, let's say, going to promote the, the indigenous sector (Oscar, Abrojos Montezuma, 01/07/2017).

The president never comes here unless it's something that benefits the state, the central government. He hasn't come for the projects that are good for Talamanca, he has not come to look for solutions for health, education. But they are necessary things here because poverty exists here for the people of Talamanca, very extreme, extreme, extreme poverty (Alvaro, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

These four respondents shared their perceptions of the national government's motives with REDD+ and all of them expressed strongly negative views. Indeed, of all my interviewees, those who spoke positively about the government's motives concerning REDD+ comprised a small minority. All of the respondents above demonstrate how they believe the government would not put indigenous people's wellbeing before its desired agenda.

Other respondents argued that the government was seeking to take from them and did not understand why it wanted to give them money for conserving their land, a stance that suggests a general wariness towards the regime.

The previous government didn't take us into account, so when a government does take us into account, one must be careful because that means I'm important, or rather maybe I have something good to take (Teresa, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

In this statement, the respondent was wondering aloud why the government was interested in indigenous people's natural resources and land and expressed concern that the

nation in fact was seeking to take one of these from her. Such suspicion toward the central government was common among the interviewees, suggesting that distrust is shaping how the people I interviewed are responding to the REDD+ initiative. The following interviewee underscored her distrust towards these official outsiders in a more general way.

That we, the indigenous, we always have the habit of playing our cards close. We aren't saying if you come with a lot of trust, I mean, if you offer trust... I mean, they see that you have come with good intentions, it's that a lot don't because they also think that, that's why, like, just a while ago, I asked you: why are you interested in this? Because it's scary to give them too much information because maybe they'll use it for reasons that don't help us. Then it's, it's good, that, uh, I'm happy that you are gathering this information (Ana, Bribri, 12/18/2016).

This interviewee alluded to how it has become second nature for some indigenous people to be suspicious of political officials. This is doubtless so, in part, because of the way they have been treated historically, but it seems clear that they have defensible reasons for adopting this view in their current circumstance too, given how the government has sought to secure REDD+ implementation.

Feel the need to defend rights

All of these interviewees' examples of perceived untrustworthy behavior on the part of the government reflected a view that many respondents expressed—the need to defend their rights, as indigenous people. This respondent commented on a perceived general lack of support from the national government:

The national government of Costa Rica says no to the indigenous people, there is no help in anything, bless God, because we learned to defend ourselves (Teresa, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

While asked to contemplate the REDD+ program and his perceptions of the initiative, another interviewee suggested that indigenous people will continue to defend their rights against their attempted usurpation by government-sanctioned others. His rationale for defending his

people was that he believed native people just want to live peacefully and freely, and not be beholden to an external program that dictates how they use their land.

We have our roots and we know our reality and moreover the values that we have can't be bought with money and it's a privilege what God has given us for which we keep moving forward and if we have to [fight tomorrow to defend our land], we are going to because the people tranquilly respect, know our human rights, know all the laws that belong to us, that they can't stop them, we are sure of that, but if not, we would like that they come because normally they want to run over us, they wanted to defeat us, and that they can't. We have the same rights as any citizen, or individual that comes from a different country, but you have hair, the same eyes. I'm the same that we have a different language, I'm Costa Rican and I speak my language, jikena achina to que se cauta se ka tsache ludi. I want to tell the world that we should continue defending our land and our rights (Juan, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

Taken together these interviewee perceptions suggest that the indigenous people's relationship with the national government has been troubled historically and the manner in which its officials have acted toward this population during the REDD+ implementation effort has only heightened native people's suspicions. The government's failure to act democratically by independently selecting indigenous representatives within each territory has further alienated the indigenous individuals I interviewed concerning the REDD+ program. In addition, it appears that the information channels developed by the national government to share REDD+ information with the native populations have not been transparent. The next section focuses on how access to information, in conjunction with transparency were key factors shaping how the indigenous people I interviewed are responding to the REDD+ program.

II. Access to information

The process of REDD+, since its inception in Costa Rica, has not been democratic in relation to indigenous populations' access to information. As noted above, government-sponsored discussions concerning REDD+, have been underway in the country since 2008.

Nevertheless, many interviewees for this study maintained that they did not fully understand the initiative. Indeed, it was difficult to find indigenous people who knew what REDD+ was and could share their perceptions of the program.

While there are real challenges with any engagement process with Costa Rica's native groups, including these populations' members, the government does not seem to have worked to achieve transparent communication and equitable access to information for them. In addition, many interviewees observed that they did not believe they were well informed about REDD+ and that the only informational sessions the government had conducted concerned climate change, rather than the REDD+ program specifically. This substantial gap in information has contributed to a distrustful atmosphere concerning REDD+ among the members of Costa Rica's indigenous people I interviewed.

This situation has prompted native people to seek out other information sources to learn about the initiative, including nonprofit and university organizations, relevant websites, and other indigenous individuals with similar experiences. This lack of access to information has opened space for an anti-REDD+ movement predicated on information that indigenous peoples are obtaining from sources other than the government. Harvey (2005) has argued that the neoliberal model assumes equitable access to information regarding the market. This conception assumes that each individual has the ability to act rationally on the basis of equal access to information. Such, according to my interviewees, was not the case for REDD+ in Costa Rica.

All agents acting in the market are generally presumed to have access to the same information. There are presumed to be no asymmetries of power or of information that interfere with the capacity of individuals to make rational economic decisions in their own interests. This condition is rarely, if ever, approximated in practice, and there are significant consequences. Better informed and more powerful players have an advantage that can all too easily be parlayed into procuring even better information and greater relative power. ... Asymmetric power relations tend, therefore, to increase rather than diminish over time unless the state steps in to counteract them. The neoliberal

presumption of perfect information and a level playing field for competition appears as either innocently utopian or a deliberate obfuscation of processes that will lead to the concentration of wealth and, therefore, the restoration of class power (2005, p. 68).

Harvey (2005) has also contended that each individual should have equitable access to information in a neoliberal state; otherwise, there will be asymmetric power divisions. The interviews I conducted suggested that the Costa Rican government has arguably done little to promote equitable access to information regarding REDD+. That pattern of behavior or action has increased the power of those who have ready access to program information. In this case, that fact would disadvantage the indigenous populations most affected by the initiative.

Top-down nature of the information

The top-down nature of the information provided native groups regarding REDD+ is emblematic of the national government's position in the program. Interviewees' responses suggest that the government has been presenting REDD+ by means of a series of largely one-sided informational sessions. Nine of the 16 respondents for this study suggested the government has acted in a top-down, almost colonial manner, during the REDD+ consultation process. The following interviewee put the matter this way:

And that, that we continue, we are going to continue defending our rights, the government isn't going to like it because we want to mark the beat, do things the way we want to. Not how the government is deciding for us. The government employees that study this, agree on the best methodology, but that doesn't exist. The Bribri have a way of consulting and we respect it because that's what is said in the agreement (Juan, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

This respondent suggested that the government needs to begin to respect the Bribri's method for consultations and should consider that norm during the REDD+ process. Another interviewee argued that he was not amenable to the process by which the initiative had so far been formulated.

I don't agree with the REDD+ project, as long as it doesn't come from the indigenous people. A development that is, that, that, um, is created internally from the indigenous territory for, by an indigenous person there, I would agree with that. A project that comes stipulated a frame already that is already stipulated from outside the territory and that is coming to implement within the territory never is workable for the same territory (Jonathon, Bribri, 12/20/2016).

Still another respondent expressed his disapproval with the way REDD+ had been negotiated between the national government and the country's indigenous populations. This interviewee was especially distressed that, in his view, the program had not been explained adequately in a quest to impose it on native groups:

You, the indigenous people, are going to get this, this, this and that, it serves you all well, this costs millions, this another so many millions, this another so many millions. And for what benefit? We want them to address these questions because we are negotiating in this way it's like that. That has not been done, no it hasn't been explained to us, so dang. They see it as a benefit, personally, they are imposing what they want. So, I mean because, so, that is my point of view, no, no I don't consider it like, like good (Alvaro, Bribri, 12/16/2016)

This evidence of inequitable access to information suggests the government has been operating in a neoliberal fashion in relation to the REDD+ program. Officials have shared its agenda with the nation's indigenous people in a way that this study's interviewees argued has diminished their agency and autonomy. Native people serve as the active targets of regime information regarding REDD+, but they have not had the opportunity to debate the positive and negative attributes of the program with government representatives. And many with whom I spoke also believe those officials were uninterested in their perspectives in any case.

As a result, those interviewed for this analysis do not trust the information provided by the national government. In addition, the geographic isolation of the indigenous populations, the language barrier between the government's actors and some indigenous people, and the time it takes to conduct consultations thoroughly are likely all contributing factors to the mistrust interviewees reported. Two respondents in particular suggested that effective consultation takes

considerable time since it involves not only information exchange, but also the development of a degree of trust between government agents and native residents:

The government's creation of a skilled consultation protocol and a consultation protocol isn't created quickly. The indigenous community or Bribri or Cabécar could say that I am going to create a consultation protocol, but I am going to need three years and I need to talk with my people, to converse with them, have a dialogue with them, and each, each point of view from each person to see how the elders see it and the others see it, right? So, you can't just create this in a rushed manner (Jose, Bribri, 12/15/2016).

Eh, [the government is] trying to pressure the indigenous people, with the minimum time possible for them to do their projects, to approve the projects, but eh for us, indigenous people, we cannot give an approval to a consultation, or a law, or anything like that when we have not analyzed it very, very, very well (Jonathon, Bribri, 12/20/2016).

Lack of transparency and information

As far as this study's interviewees were concerned, government consultations thus far had taken the character of didactic information sessions, rather than providing opportunity for interaction concerning REDD+. Indeed, one respondent explicitly argued that consultations have not actually begun in the indigenous territories yet, since no real exchange of views has occurred concerning the initiative.

Yes, yes, it has not been done, nor the government consultation. The government has not said how they are going to do REDD because they gave us no information. So, you see, in Mexico, REDD did not work, for whatever reason, nor in Mexico has REDD been approved, nor in Guatemala has REDD been approved, not even in Nicaragua, even less. So, there are things of speculations that they do, like information that's unclear about nothing. Why? Because they have not had a referendum with all of the indigenous communities. You see? The only thing they've done is present information at this time (Jose, Bribri, 12/15/2016).

However, the majority of the interviewees expressed confusion about the details of the REDD+ consultation process.

In addition, the information provided by the state appointed cultural mediators at the information sessions tended to concern climate change, rather than the REDD+ program's specific provisions. Many of the Bribri interviewees expressed confusion and frustration with

this situation, because they believed they understood climate change, but did not understand REDD+. This respondent highlighted this concern explicitly:

When the Costa Rican state sends two consultants to inform the communities, basically talking of climate change, but not about REDD+, let's say, so it still leaves an enormous hill to climb, and I can, I will participate in the five workshops, fi, let's say of the five workshops, I could participate in three workshops. And the intentions weren't to explain to the people, in what, in what it consisted of, you see? (Alberto, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

Furthermore, a few interviewees contended that the individuals who were charged with informing indigenous people in Talamanca did not have the knowledge to do so. The cultural mediators were formally expected to provide "culturally-appropriate" materials in relevant indigenous languages. In some cases, however, and in keeping with the comment just above, study participants explained that they had not seen materials from the cultural mediators addressing REDD+, only climate change. Whether the national government intended this is unclear, but it is clear that the interviewees were concerned as well as frustrated that they had not been apprised openly and fairly of the provisions of REDD+.

The cultural mediators' apparently limited knowledge of REDD+ could reflect the complexity of the program and the fact that interviewees did not lend much credence to their accounts could reflect their general antipathy to the national government. And it is possible, that the mediators were charged with speaking to climate change with indigenous residents, despite their formal REDD+ roles. In any case, the lack of clarity and transparency concerning REDD+ during the last eight years has contributed to an already fractured relationship between the national government and the indigenous people with whom I spoke. This notion was shared among respondents from both the Bribri and the Abrojos Montezuma territories:

Also, all the communities have always said, is what the state doesn't say, is that if there hasn't been financing or previous resources in order for those processes of information to exist, it's because, because the state doesn't, doesn't want to deal with it, the whole issue of the consultation, pre-consultation, the information, dang. I am telling you, it's not the

first time it, has been decades and decades... of, of times that the state doesn't want to invest to inform the people. So, I am saying it over and over, the state takes, like that like, making fun of the representative institutions, and so in the end that's worrying. That's frustrating (Alberto, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

They are my colleagues and our friends. Let's say well um, I don't know about REDD+, but according to the declarations from the state and the reports from the state, it is the cultural mediators who are the ones that know REDD, REDD+. Here we have two cultural mediators that they inform [us or is this passive 'are informed' more or at least what REDD+ is. And they declared from what FONAFIFO, the MINAE (Ministry of Environment) the Costa Rican state have not informed them eh with precision let's say eh what REDD+ is (Alberto, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

Interviewer: Okay all good, okay, why do some indigenous groups agree with PES but don't agree with the REDD+ program, and what do you think?

Antonio: Well, I think that some don't agree, like I said, because there are contradictions, some explain in another way, what the benefits are or not. And some [are] missing the knowledge, some don't, don't agree as well. Thus, it's the same old thing, right? Seeing those who participated in the workshops of REDD+, they don't have any knowledge (Antonio, Abrojos Montezuma, 01/09/2017).

To change the process of consultation well, let the person explain, of course, the, the representatives in those local cases let the person explain clearly what REDD+ is, as well as the consequences for, for the future and for the present as well, you see, that is what would be interesting for me. I have asked to them to explain the reality (Adrian, Abrojos Montezuma, 01/09/2017).

These three respondents shed light on the breakdown in communication between the national government and its representatives and those with whom they were charged to consult. If, indeed, those with responsibility for informing indigenous people about REDD+ did not possess the information necessary or the capacity to do so, that fact could only undermine native residents' ability to develop the understanding necessary to make informed judgments concerning the initiative. Moreover, the respondent cited above articulated that he wanted to know more information about the benefits as well as the *drawbacks* with the REDD+ program to be able to make a fair judgment concerning it. In addition to REDD+ representatives not having adequate knowledge to discuss the program's strengths and weaknesses, one interviewee noted

that legitimately recognized leaders in the territories do not know what the effort is or aims to accomplish:

For example, we've been at this for 8 years now and I don't even dare say that the president of the association (ADII) even knows what REDD+ consists of. I dare say that the community leaders still don't know what REDD+ consists of. (Alberto, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

The Association (ADII) has never told us about that. And that is part of the problem we have with the Association and we are pressuring them as well that, that it shouldn't be like that because we voted for them as our local government to defend us, to help us, to inform us, they never inform us like they should (Liliana, Bribri, 12/18/2016).

These respondents perceived that their territory leaders had not been informed about REDD+, adding another layer of confusion and distrust to the program's consultative process. One interviewee specifically blamed the territorial government for not informing residents about the program.

In any case, 11 of 16 respondents mentioned that they lacked sufficient information regarding REDD+ to develop a judgment concerning it, or, more generally, that they did not feel adequately informed about it. The following interviewees expressed concerns regarding their limited knowledge of the REDD+ program.

Eh, I'd say that when it refers to..., uh, I'm in contact with the 27 communities. That's a high percentage of the communities that don't have information, they don't agree, or are against it (Alberto, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

Right now, because I don't have much knowledge like I told you, that we are missing meetings, because of that, it's hard to say if it's good or bad (Antonio, Abrojos Montezuma, 01/09/2017).

They don't seem to have much of any confidence or responsibility in telling us the truth or chatting with us. They haven't talked very clearly with us, they don't explain things (Bernie, Bribri, 12/17/2016).

The region of Bribri still isn't clear what the REDD+ is because they have been saying that they've already done the consultation, just as they are saying they've done in other territories. But we don't really know, uh, if they completed the consultation like is

required because for us indigenous people, the consultation isn't done with a small group of people (Ana, Bribri, 12/18/2016).

The biggest fear let's say that of, of let's say, um eh, that well that mo, more than anything to be, a report of, let's say, the issue because one, one doesn't know what REDD is for example (Oscar, Abrojos Montezuma, 01/07/2017).

Access to information is a key element when seeking to understand why the indigenous people I interviewed are responding in the way that they are to the initiative. The last quoted respondent explained that not being informed about REDD+ was his greatest fear with the initiative. This lack of clarity regarding the program has prompted others to seek to address it. A community-based indigenous movement started in Talamanca, in part, because participants felt the need to acquire their own information and subsequently inform other residents about what they found, which often, as it happened, related to the ways REDD+ would threaten indigenous people's livelihoods.

The government's perceived lack of success has created space for non-governmental organizations to provide residents information concerning REDD+

The way the government has behaved in informing individuals about the REDD+ program has created space for other entities to assume roles in that process. The perceived failure of the mediator program among many natives has arguably pushed people to seek information on their own or from other more trusted organizations. A community movement—largely unsympathetic to REDD+—has acknowledged this publicly by explaining in its materials how its members have searched for videos on YouTube, participated in transnational indigenous conferences, and found other informational materials online. Moreover, the community movement in Talamanca has created its own materials and has been convening its own meetings within the territory.

In addition, the community indigenous movement has enjoyed the support of a non-governmental organization, namely Kioscos Ambientales, which is a social-environmental justice group based at the University of Costa Rica. Eight of the interviewees shared that they had attended at least one meeting with representatives of Kioscos Ambientales. However, one respondent suggested that the NGO was a negative force because its staff had informed people in Talamanca that REDD+ as well as the Costa Rican government were not to be trusted. This particular respondent wanted to debate the merits of REDD+ and believed that Kioscos Ambientales was preventing that possibility. Meanwhile, another interviewee expressed their gratitude to the group in their interview for informing her of the dangers of REDD+ for indigenous peoples.

That girl (from Kioscos Ambientales) always I am going to thank her because through her we learned many things. Because if it weren't for her, she has been here, I believe that the government hasn't wrapped up the time and we nothing more arrive, and we say okay [to] the pre-consultation. This, this, this never tells us the truth that, that what they (the government) aim, they just say the positive parts from them, according to them, but no because the new, how it is, how there is a group also that are fighting against the government (Liliana, Bribri, 12/18/2016).

The following interviewee argued that the Bribri community was more aware about what is happening with REDD+ than other indigenous communities in Costa Rica, because its residents, who are participating in the community movement against REDD+, have sought actively to obtain information concerning it. This respondent noted that the PES program had been adopted in Talamanca without the population fully knowing or understanding what it was. This concern raised the question of whether those indigenous people actually approved the PES program or were insufficiently informed and therefore unable to make an educated choice.

Now our movement is gaining momentum and other groups, like the university, and other people eh well we have given information, we've published the information about what is happening with REDD+ the possible damages, the harm that can bring us. So now yes one now knows, more or less, when it's implemented um PES, there wasn't information,

nobody knew anything, nobody talked about that, so it passed tacitly, and they wanted to do that with REDD+. But not now. The community more or less makes it, has managed quite a bit of information because it's that they are now more attentive, right? (Miguel, Bribri, 12/16/2016)

This respondent highlighted the fact that the movement had held information sessions to warn their community about the dangers of REDD+. Indeed, about half of the interviewees mentioned either participating in the community movement or having received information about REDD+ from its members.

Alberto: They've made material, for example, like, let's say we have had access to conservation materials in other countries like Indonesia, like Mexico, like Papua New Guinea about the conservation and how it has been revised. (28:46) with REDD – also and this in Costa Rica have made several documentaries like for example, I don't know, this forest is for the community. You can find it in YouTube, you can find the forests for the communities, this.

Interviewer: They are owned by the state? By the government, or are they separate?

Alberto: No, they are from the communities (Albert, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

The younger people involved in that effort are responsible for seeking information on the internet concerning REDD+, while others involved have had a responsibility to direct the community's dialogue concerning the topic.

We are a group of young adults, we have a role, as photographers, as journalists, or at times we focus on just digging up information from the web, others are in charge of talks, right? (Jonathon, Bribri, 12/20/2016).

The following comments from interviewees suggest that, indeed, those people who appeared to be most informed about REDD+ had acted aggressively to learn about it.

That I myself had and I myself have had to search for it, to ask, and to give meetings, to go to a workshop or to listen to someone.

Interviewer: It wasn't easy?

Bernie: It wasn't easy, it wasn't something that our government promoted either, I search, eh, or that planned programmed, nothing (Bernie, Bribri, 12/17/2016).

From that point on until now, I started to inform myself, to read, to ask about REDD+. At this point, it could always be done reading those pages, to see who was who, who they were sending, and when (Alvaro, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

Another respondent, from Abrojos Montezuma, mentioned that he originally thought that REDD+ was only to apply in that territory. However, this interviewee also suggested that he had communicated with one of the leaders of the Bribri community movement and, as a result of that interaction, had come to believe that there were competing discourses about REDD+: the one in which he had participated in his local community and another, arising from the Bribri community movement, that was highlighting the dangers of privatization.

Well, about REDD+, I thought it was only here in Costa Rica but I saw that no, that it's almost at a global level. On Facebook in that informs me, I find videos so I am seeing that it's not, not, it was not only here. I thought that it was only here only Montezuma (laughter) (Antonio, Abrojos Montezuma, 01/09/2017).

It's because of that, through social media, through the internet, from YouTube, I don't know, to realize, you know, about what is happening in other places also (Alberto, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

The Bribri community movement has been successful, possibly in part because of its use of social media. In a globalized world, social media and internet access can provide equitable entry to information, if the infrastructure is in place, even when they may not have access to other vital services such as running water. For example, one respondent mentioned that while many indigenous people can access the internet, just as many individuals still do not have electricity or easily accessible water service. This is to say that social media is not available equally to indigenous residents, but neither are other basic services. However, it has provided a platform for some native residents to obtain information concerning the REDD+ program. Additionally, social media have provided a platform for at least some indigenous people to exercise agency and assert their autonomy as they have sought to learn more about the initiative.

III. Commodification, Privatization, and REDD+

Commodification of carbon and privatization of land are integral elements of the REDD+ program. As Harvey has argued, “the corporatization, commodification, and privatization of hitherto public assets has been a signal feature of the neoliberal project” (2005, p. 160).

Commodification entails placing a quantitative value on something; in this case, it is the carbon in Costa Rica’s rainforests. Most of those I interviewed argued that assigning a monetary value to natural resources was not compatible with their culture, a profound ideological (and even ontological) difference between the nation’s indigenous people and the REDD+ program’s assumptions.

In addition to commodification of natural resources, the initiative’s designers, namely staff at the United Nations (the UN-REDD Programme), Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank (FCPF), have sought to privatize the land within indigenous territories, which in effect, would restrict the use of that property by those residing on or near it. Many interviewees expressed their fear of such use limitations, because their livelihoods are directly linked to the land. Moreover, interviewees argued that, as indigenous people, they know how to care for the earth and its resources. While the REDD+ designers hoped to find a way to protect tropical rainforests in developing countries, the native people I interviewed in Costa Rica argued they have been caring for their land adequately.

Commodification

Many interviewees explained that they did not accept the idea of being paid for natural resources and suggested that REDD+’s embrace of that view was the principal reason why they were not supporting the initiative. They argued that paying for natural resources was contrary to their cultural beliefs. Nine of my interviewees explicitly suggested they could not accept the idea

of the commodification of natural resources. The following interviewee comment shed light on how caring for natural resources is an integral part of indigenous culture, in this specific instance, Bribri beliefs.

Open your eyes, as we say, to see the threats that they were talking about for a lot of time, but I never thought would happen in Talamanca. We are going to be threatened for our forest, for our land, for our environment. That's what they are looking at. Our great environment, that we have as indigenous, we have, but that's because our ancestors were people who showed us how to take care of it (Teresa, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

This observation suggests that ideological differences underpin interviewee arguments against the REDD+ program. Another interviewee argued that wherever there are forests, there are indigenous people, those populations know how to care for them.

Interviewer: Mhm, but there are other forests in the country where they can use this program? What do you think?

Bernie: No, no I don't know, I believe that yes there are other forests in some indigenous community, or I mean the indigenous communities it's that where they exist is an indigenous community where resources always exist.

Interviewer: Mhm ahh I understand.

Bernie: Yes, and that is a custom from, that is very much from the indigenous people, you can see that there are forests in other countries where there are indigenous communities. In the western culture, it's not like that.

Interviewer: Oh, I see.

Bernie: That's the destruction, what they call development. The Bribri no, with the indigenous people from almost all of America, we see things almost very similar always where there are Bribri or where there are indigenous people, there are natural resources.

Interviewer: How beautiful.

Bernie: Because, because we have another worldview, another point of view another, another way of understanding, right? We have ways use to the forest differently so that has helped us to still have the forests (Bernie, Bribri, 12/17/2016).

Other respondents also argued that the commodification of natural resources was not acceptable in their culture. All of the following interviewees explicitly rejected the concept of selling natural resources. In doing so, they effectively rejected the neoliberal foundation of the REDD+ program.

Interviewer: How do you feel about buying and selling natural resources? Like giving a monetary value to natural resources?

Ana: That's not for us Bribri. You can't sell natural resources. No. (Ana, Bribri, 12/18/2016).

From my, indigenous point of view, a value from a resource if it is natural, does not have value, natural does not have value. We cannot give an economic value to something that is natural (Jonathon, Bribri, 12/20/2016).

I don't feel happy at all. If I were selling a river, or Talamanca, or the trees or if... No, no I don't share that, that an indigenous person grabs natural resources because it wouldn't be our custom, it wouldn't be. One shouldn't be called an indigenous person. I have said that the person that does this, from my point of view, shouldn't be considered indigenous. He should be excluded (laughter) removed from the group, yes (Alvaro, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

Already it's a living thing, it's a mother ah which we should respect, love for that we always conserve the environment, because of culture, because of love, because we believe that it's a living thing, never for money (Bernie, Bribri, 12/17/2016).

I think that the natural resources, more than selling, protecting and they should not sell, no had to protect and what simply caring for it, one cannot, cannot sell (Antonio, Abrojos Montezuma, 01/09/2017).

The following passage underscores, how culturally, the Bribri do not value money in the same way as Western culture. Additionally, the interviewee noted that the Bribris did not originally use currency, but instead relied on natural resources.

I mean for the Bribri, as I told you, a moment ago, eh, to sell natural resource and talk of the forest directly is not advisable because it's the house where we all live. Where we go to bring all of the things we need and by another way that there are forests that are areas of protection, sacred areas that is where our grandparents, ancestors are buried so that cannot be sold because you are selling something that cannot be sold. On the other hand, for the culture to sell natural resources is to sell yourself. Why? Because we did not arrive to this land, we arrive as indigenous, we did not arrive with money, the money is a medium now we agree but we did not arrive with money (Jose, Bribri, 12/15/2016).

Several interviewees also distinguished between Western notions of conservation versus caring for the environment. Of those who clarified their position on caring for the earth, they often mentioned how Sibú, the Bribri's God, had given them their land and that it was their duty to care for it. Here is how two interviewees treated these concerns:

I repeat, to take care of, not to conserve, not to commodify, not to sell resources that aren't ours. It's a gift from Sibú (God), so we don't have a right to negotiate, to say, well, that

cup of coffee, like somebody might say, with milk costs 450, eh, 500 colones. I can't say, well a hectare of forest costs so much, that river, this much, I can't (Miguel, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

I'm not very, very clear, but that World Bank, that, that famous bank you always hear about, but let me tell you, they can offer us any amount of money, but that's not what we want. We take care of the land, like it is. We are humble, as you can see. We don't have doors, our house is humble, but we want them to respect that right because God has left it that way (Ana, Bribri, 12/18/2016).

Six interviewees mentioned they did not need money in exchange for natural resources, a strong assertion, considering quite a few respondents mentioned that Bribris would accept help from the government if it were not tied to their natural resources. For example, one respondent explained that many indigenous people live in extreme poverty and that the national government does not help them. In any case, the following passages highlight how strongly these interviewees feel about protecting nature and how commodification is contradictory to their culture.

We don't need them to pay us to care for a tree, I don't need them to pay me to care for the river. All this, this nature, for me, I am doing it for myself. It's forever starting from my childhood, I mean when I was little, they say you see one good little tree, one must care for it, clean it and the rivers always have been a good part of us indigenous people (Alvaro, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

The government has its own interests, the government knows that Costa Rica they are in the middle of a different kind of life that is all about the money, (snaps fingers) money but not here. Here, life is different. So, they are interested in the money and they don't care as you can see the people here need more money. People here want a tranquil and healthy life (Juan, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

The following interviewee statements also illustrate respondents' unhappiness with the notion of commodification. These two interviewees contended that money has caused social divisions that were not part of Bribri culture prior to PES. In addition to social conflicts, others noted that they feared REDD+ would accelerate indigenous cultural deterioration. Bribri individuals offered these comments (the Ngäbe people of Abrojos Montezuma have not engaged

with the PES program).

Well, first of all, we don't conserve, we take care of the land. We use our resources, we use the earth, we use the ground, but we don't receive a financial benefit from it, the financial payment we receive in medicine, with housing, for healthcare, in all of these things, this is what we receive as indigenous. But the elders never, our forefathers have never received anything, not even five colones, therefore there was never a division (Miguel, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

Yes, so and apart from that it's not that the Bribris didn't exist. The Bribris have cared for the forests with love and respect for the environment never for money. And what happens when, when they now pay and there is, there is a division because of a complaint, one gets it and the other doesn't and so there is conflict. That's not how the Bribris lived. We lived in a better way, when there wasn't the payment for environmental services (Bernie, Bribri, 12/17/2016).

Privatization of land

Some of the interview respondents expressed fears of the possible consequences of privatization, especially with the idea that it might cause them to lose access to the land to which they feel tied and on which they depend. Indeed, 14 of 16 interviewees mentioned that they were afraid of losing access to their land. Feelings of autonomy, specifically that indigenous people already understand how to conserve their land and how to subsist on it, were foremost when residents discussed their fears.

Most interviewees noted that land privatization was their worst fear with REDD+, and they did not understand not being able to access their territory for their needs. While those with whom I spoke did mention the land that would be restricted by PES or REDD+ is located up in the mountains, which requires hours of walking to access; it was the idea of ownership that mattered to them. Indigenous people control their land in their territory, and those I interviewed argued that they did not want to be restricted in how they might access or use it. Many feared that their subsistence on the land would be jeopardized:

Interviewer: And what is your biggest fear with the REDD+ Program?

Ana: They will take our nature away and that we are going to lose our, our water, our

forest. They will privatize medicine, everything we have in the forest, the animals, everything. They will change our way of life (Ana, Bribri, 12/18/2016).

Interviewer: And what do you hope happens next with the implementation in your territory?

Miguel: Well, first of all, I hope that it doesn't happen, but if would happen, dang, it would [be] a disaster for us, indigenous communities because it would [be] the privatization of the resources, not having access to the use of those resources so one must, bring us a lot, dang, many problems (Miguel, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

The forest is part of, let's say, the Bribri territory. They put three thousand hectares that cannot be touched. You can't cut a tree, nor can you go look for a medicine. That needs to be fixed. That's why I say that REDD+ must consult (Jose, Bribri, 12/15/2016)

Other respondents from Talamanca noted that the REDD+ program was a stronger form of privatization than PES. In addition, they understood that the national government would send forest guards when the initiative was implemented. Therefore, they feared they would be arrested for utilizing natural resources on [their own], but now restricted, lands. Many of the respondents who feared being arrested had also seen a video from the Kioscos Ambientales that had raised this concern. One respondent mentioned that a woman had been prosecuted for collecting rainwater on land restricted by REDD+. While these are perceived, and not yet realized threats, they are very real to the indigenous people who fear their livelihoods will be endangered with a new, international program that would restrict access to the natural resources on which they daily depend for survival:

Maybe we didn't write down that the fight was not easy. No, it's not, it's not only to put that down on paper. Rather the tranquility in what our community has well I can go cutting my leaf peacefully. I can cut medicine quietly and nobody charges me. Nobody is going to be waiting for me there with a few people from the police or the law enforcement people and for where I take you, yours yes is mine (Teresa, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

If not that the government comes through like that, but after they...because I saw it in the video that I have where they, they don't declare that but then, then we can't touch anything that we there anymore. That, that property isn't going to be, in another word, not going to be from us anymore. Because it's prohibited because they are going to put a resources guard. And so that resources guard is going to care for all of that mountain and

we ourselves don't have even the right to collect anything there (Liliana, Bribri, 12/18/2016).

Well it's an interesting to them because (laughter) eh PES with REDD+ environmental services is a form of privatization of the forests, but where you have that forest, you can't be eh broken up, and either and this forest isn't possible, nor are, there aren't, there aren't forest guards. PES, is what simply the local government gives the limits of the territory, of the forest that is placed in conservation, but no, they don't give, or don't put or don't um send certain police or security guards to act as surveillance. Let's say that 24 hours where no indigenous person can enter to touch or touch the forests, I mean it's a, it's something that much stronger in the privatization that, that, the other privatization that is a little weaker (Jonathon, Bribri, 12/20/2016).

While the Ngäbe people in Abrojos Montezuma do not have experience with the PES program, the following interviewees nonetheless commented on how they enjoy their current freedom to use their land without restrictions. They strongly believed that a REDD+ or PES program would restrict their freedom to use their land as they wish.

I feel like the indigenous community that I am, I feel free, free now that I can take some wood from the farm. And with PES, I'd need a permit. I cannot even cut so it affects me, that affects me. Because I don't feel free anymore and nobody in my community, let's say, in my family feels free, free to see, to search for something that they need. So for me, like, that affects me, and some communities as well (Leonardo, Abrojos Montezuma, 01/10/2017).

The government continues attacking us (laughter), yes, yes, attacking yes. Yes, you now see the same thing: we have freedom here in Montezuma, but other territories don't. Because they can't go to cut wood for the cooking stove I use because that is already privatized if they see me cutting there, something taking a leaf perhaps, they are going to fine me, you see? (Adrian, Abrojos Montezuma, 01/09/2017).

Additionally, interviewees expressed a sense of autonomy when they discussed their land. Primarily, they responded negatively toward programs they viewed as designed and imposed from the top-down and that did not adequately consider indigenous culture. When respondents spoke to me about natural resources, every person I interviewed had a positive response. Many interviewees also cited their dependence on the land. With this reliance, some interviewees suggested that their people had conserved the land better than the proposed schemes

will. They questioned why a program meant to conserve natural resources would restrict indigenous people's access to those resources.

Nine of 16 interviewees argued that indigenous people already know how to manage their natural resources and did not need others to teach them how to do so. Within these explanations, these individuals often mentioned that native territories were the greenest areas in Costa Rica. The following interview excerpts capture the sense of autonomy that more than half of the interviewees expressed concerning the natural resources located in their territories.

We can use [the forest] well because we are the best, the best forest engineers, we know this land the best, we know how to best manage the environment. There are no walls/barriers for us. But it's different to be in a classroom and learn about how to manage the environment, how, to, to, that doesn't exist for the Bribri. We already know how to manage the environment; there are no barriers/walls for us. It's different to be in a classroom and to learn about how to take care of the environment, that doesn't exist for the Bribris, we already know. From the time, from before the Spanish arrived we already know how to conserve our land and we continue to do so (Juan, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

As a whole, we have refused the REDD+ program, but not just to refuse it and not participate, it's not that to refuse that we don't want projects. We can, they can take us into account for whatever project, but it's not a refusal in specifically to this project, it's that we do not want the privatization of the forests. Nobody else more than us, indigenous people, we know how to live with nature. If we were to approve this project we would be turning over our soul of the earth in the hands of another person. We would end up, as you might say, in the street without anything, we would be like the government that doesn't possess even a parcel of land; nonetheless, it's all being negotiated (Jonathon, Bribri 12/20/2016).

IV. Additional findings

Neoliberalism adopts the premise that trickle-down economics exists and works to ensure that all benefit from improvements in the market and economy. However, this assumption is often not realized in practice. Instead, neoliberal policies concentrate wealth among elites and corporations. Furthermore, as I argued above, neoliberalism promotes individual rights in relation to the market and assumes that each person can autonomously control their wellbeing

(Harvey, 2005). While REDD+ has not yet been implemented in Costa Rica, the majority of the nation's indigenous territories have engaged with the PES program. In my sample, the residents of Talamanca had experience with PES and all argued that only a small number of people had benefited from it. Moreover, they feared that REDD+ would produce a similar outcome. Two Bribri interviewees mentioned that the REDD+ representatives from Talamanca have already received funds and traveled internationally with the program. All of the following interviewees below expressed their concerns that the money from REDD+ will remain with the government or a select few:

Because that money comes, that they are supposedly going to give me, their pockets aren't going to arrive to, to, to the whole community, right? So there it's going to leave, complicating the subsistence, the survival here on the land (Miguel, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

Well, that depends on which indigenous group is interested because like all political things, if they are giving me [something] or they are giving me resources, they are giving me some benefit but not to everybody (Juan, Bribri 12/19/2016).

And telling eh strongly in Talamanca we have always been a threat to them, because we have always been characterized like that big things that don't benefit us, but rather only a small group of people (Alvaro, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

Now so sometimes there are some people that, without having a square meter of forest, receives a lot of money. Those who are really conserving and caring for the forest, it [the subsidy] doesn't reach them. To me, that's not right (Bernie, Bribri, 12/17/2016).

Something that isn't going to be good for our future because I've read leaflets that they've handed out and it says that they, like I said, that they work with individual groups, not with everyone, with the whole community. They don't benefit the whole community, but rather with a group, or with an organized group there that works with them (Ana, Bribri, 12/18/2016).

The money is going to fall directly to the government, and the government is going to distribute between (laughter) eh associations, depending the committees that there are you see. So, they are going to be those who benefit more (Adrian, Abrojos Montezuma, 01/09/2017).

In addition, according to my interviewees, PES program implementation has not progressed smoothly and has been characterized by a lack of transparency regarding payments

arising from it. One respondent informed me that she was not receiving money even though her land had been entered into the PES program. Her brother placed her family's land into the PES without discussing his choice with her and she has received no monetary benefits from his decision to date. Rather, from her point of view, the only thing her sibling's choice has accomplished is conflict. Moreover, with only a few individuals benefiting from the PES program, several respondents noted corruption has emerged as a primary challenge. Here is how one interviewee expressed these concerns:

Ok, with all of this, there's disorder, there's abuse, there's corruption. One can imagine with REDD+ it will be worse, there will be more money, more corruption, more problems throughout the territory. The indigenous will see more money, more corruption, more problems. Then, I think that, it's not viable that way, the question of REDD+, Right? And the who indigenous community isn't going to benefit from it. We already see it. We already saw it (Bernie, Bribri, 12/17/2016).

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This inquiry sought to understand how a sample of indigenous people viewed the REDD+ program in Costa Rica. That initiative was developed on the basis of neoliberal assumptions concerning commodification and the primacy of efficiency and markets as a preferred valuator and mechanism of social choice. Using Harvey's (2005) description of the central tenets of neoliberalism as a means to organize interviewee perceptions of the initiative, it is clear that this study's respondents were most concerned about the initiative's privatization and commodification of natural resources. Interviewees also expressed deep reservations about the national government's role in informing their populations about REDD+ and broadly inequitable access to information concerning it. REDD+ is inherently a neoliberal program and examining how a sample of indigenous people perceive it helped to shed light on why such an approach may not be the best the solution for conserving resources in indigenous territories.

By agreeing to the initiative, the Costa Rican government accepted the neoliberal privatization and marketization on which it was predicated. The Costa Rican government, by committing to a neoliberal program without first consulting its indigenous population, accepted the idea that its engagement in a carbon market was worth more than ensuring the individual rights of its native citizens, whom its leaders apparently believed could be persuaded to accede to its provisions by means of a marketing effort.

In retrospect, it is therefore not surprising that this study's interviewees perceived that the Costa Rican national government had acted in untrustworthy ways. Such perceptions have actively worked to undermine the legitimacy of the REDD+ program among indigenous territory residents. Those interviewed for this analysis frequently argued that the national government had

not historically treated indigenous people of Costa Rica well and their views of the REDD+ initiative and marketing efforts concerning it were colored by that view. Some cited past unfulfilled national officials' promises, while others mentioned the lack of support they believe they receive overall from government. Still others argued that the central government had directly violated their rights as indigenous people in the past and were doing so in preparing for the REDD+ initiative too.

Many of the respondents in this study reported that they did not trust the information they had received from national representatives and were upset with the way its officials had selected people to represent them in the REDD+ process. Many interviewees argued, too, that the government's program organizers did not respect the legitimate, territorial governing bodies of the indigenous territories. That perception stoked concerns among the indigenous population that something was amiss with this conservation initiative. In addition, the central government did little to allay this growing perception until recently when it sought to organize a consultation regarding indigenous peoples' rights with FPIC. However, two of the interview respondents expressed wariness and suspicion regarding this consultation as well, seeing it as little more than a facade for what they perceived as different and undeclared aspirations.

According to Harvey (2005) neoliberalism assumes that all individuals have equitable access to information, which was not the case for the participants in this inquiry. The majority of the respondents, 11 of 16, argued in their interviews that they had not received, and did not then possess, adequate information to evaluate the REDD+ program. This situation could have arisen in part from the fact that the Costa Rican government has fallen behind in its proposed timeline to consult with its indigenous peoples concerning the initiative. Public officials held their first information session to inform the Bribris of Talamanca of their right to FPIC in late 2016. This

obvious lack of transparency regarding REDD+ consultations raises the question of whether the Costa Rican government possesses the capacity to ensure equitable access to information, even as it has corroded the trust native individuals have been willing to extend the REDD+ consultative process.

The general lack of information from the national government has allowed space for other organizations to play that role and such has occurred, especially in the Bribri territory. Those groups have mostly offered negative assessments of REDD+ as a threat to native livelihoods. In any case, the relatively poor national government relationship with indigenous people has shaped those citizens' willingness to trust their officials regarding REDD+. Therefore, in truth, it might not matter how well the national government informs indigenous peoples concerning this program. Third-party actors are likely to be better received precisely because they are not government representatives.

Interviewees shared stories about their troubled relationship with the national government, non-indigenous people encroaching on their land, mining companies seeking oil in their territories, and their extended family's experience with a hydroelectric dam project in Panama that damaged their way of life. Each of these examples highlights a negative experience arising from the actions of non-indigenous people and thus implicitly raises the intriguing question of why the Bribri interviewees believed the representatives from Kioscos Ambientales from the University of Costa Rica. Perhaps they did so because those individuals offered views that confirmed their own negative perceptions of the government's intent and actions with the REDD+ program.

Apart from native population suspicions and concerns about the initiative's possible impacts on their livelihoods, the effort is inherently complex and difficult to explain, a reality

made more difficult by the fact that Costa Rica has not defined its strategy for the program fully. Despite REDD+'s complexity, it seems clear, based on the perspectives shared by this study's interviewees, that its organizers should have included indigenous peoples from the beginning of its planning process. The fact that such did not occur has further marred the government's image and perceived trustworthiness among its indigenous peoples. Transparency would have created an opportunity to work toward repairing that relationship, but at least in the eyes of this effort's respondents, such simply did not occur for REDD+.

Finally, many of the participants responded negatively to the privatization of land and commodification resources that the REDD+ program embodies. One of their major concerns had to do with the notion of selling natural resources, as this contradicts their cultural beliefs. While not every interviewee expressed this concern, many of those with whom I spoke had difficulty understanding how one could quantify the value of natural resources. Even though many people sell their agricultural crops, the idea of selling forests, air, and water made them deeply uncomfortable.

In addition, many respondents argued that they already knew how to care for the land and would continue do so without being paid for their efforts. The concept of REDD+ was difficult for them to comprehend because they did not understand why an international institution wanted to pay them to conserve land they have historically nurtured. This foundational puzzle made many of those I interviewed deeply skeptical of the national government's motives in adopting REDD+. Those interviewed for this study suggested plainly that their cultural beliefs mediated how they viewed REDD+. Just as clearly, in their view, the government has thus far paid little attention to that reality.

With respect to privatization, those I interviewed believed that they would lose access to

their land and the natural resources on which they depend should REDD+ be implemented. A few respondents distinguished between PES and REDD+ and suggested the latter constitutes a stronger form of privatization. Overall, the native people I interviewed, perceived the program's fundamental assumptions as incompatible with their own in numerous ways.

Possible Implications

This inquiry has highlighted the critical importance of including indigenous people's perspectives when designing international programs that concern them. In an important sense too, this study provided those who chose to participate in it space to express their views and beliefs regarding an important concern now confronting their communities. In that way, it provided an opportunity for their elective exercise of agency. Two interviewees explained that they were grateful that I was studying REDD+ and soliciting indigenous people's perspectives for my research for just this reason.

From a theoretical standpoint, this inquiry explored how a neoliberal program has functioned in two very different indigenous cultures. It also added to the growing body of literature addressing REDD+ by examining the program from the perspective of indigenous peoples. It appears that developing an improved sensitivity to the ways of being and knowing of those on whom a program will rely may help program designers devise more effective conservation programs that conserve carbon and reduce deforestation globally. This study suggests it is both destructive and fruitless to develop initiatives in an a-cultural way, assuming that the values of those framing an effort can and should supersede those of all others affected by it.

Recommendations

I derived these suggestions directly from the indigenous people's responses to REDD+—many are similar to concerns other scholars have earlier found in studies of international conservation and development projects (ICDPs).

Those interested in pursuing such schemes should truly consider indigenous culture by involving elected, native peoples throughout all stages of project design and implementation and they should consider employing grassroots policy development, rather than the sort of top-down approach that has been employed with REDD+. Inclusive, effective participation is essential for the success of international conservation and development projects. Those implementing such efforts should take time with consultations and try to devise more effective ways to reach isolated communities. Furthermore, it is imperative to build and maintain transparent communication networks among all actors and practice openness relentlessly. Aligned with transparency, those who seek to implement ICDPs should *actively* work to build trust among all actors involved with policy initiatives. Here is how one interviewee expressed this imperative:

Well, dang, it would be under other circumstances, but, I mean, like I already said, in good faith, not, not the same circumstance that we already saw. Because each day they study more, each day they prepare more so that they bring us other strategies that we do not know about. But if they are going get us to trust them, there has to be a study, to have meetings, to know what we are accepting. We are not going to accept anything without a consultation that is what they are going to give us (Teresa, Bribri, 12/19/2016).

The neoliberal elements of the REDD+ program undermined its legitimacy with the indigenous people interviewed for this study. While those with whom I spoke did not agree with the neoliberal design assumptions underpinning REDD+, such as commodification of nature and privatization of lands, many interviewees agreed that the government should provide their communities some sort of assistance. Furthermore, the majority argued monetary support should not be contingent on their natural resources. Some respondents mentioned ensuring fair prices for

their agricultural crops, such as banana and cacao, could be a mechanism for helping them.

Finally, with an assistance program, it is imperative to ensure that it actually produces equitable outcomes for its targeted groups. As one interviewee observed,

Rather a, a way of creating a mechanism. I don't know that someone eh some fund to help the communities (indigenous), for programs for agriculture, programs, but that serves the general community, not just a small group (Miguel, Bribri, 12/16/2016).

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Appendix 1. Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board Approval



Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board
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Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 8, 2016

TO: Max O Stephenson Jr, Beth Olberding

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)

PROTOCOL TITLE: An indigenous perspective: REDD+ and Costa Rica, another form of colonialism and commodification of natural resources?

IRB NUMBER: 16-1113

Effective December 8, 2016, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at: <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 6,7**
Protocol Approval Date: **December 8, 2016**
Protocol Expiration Date: **December 7, 2017**
Continuing Review Due Date*: **November 23, 2017**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

Appendix 2. Research Questions in Spanish

1. Where are you from? How long have you lived there? How old are you? What is a typical day like for you?
¿De dónde es Ud.? ¿Cuántos años ha vivido aquí? ¿Cuántos años tiene? ¿Cuál es su rutina diaria?
2. How did you first learn about the REDD+ program? Do you have a role in the program? Did you attend any REDD+ workshops, if so which ones?
¿Cómo supo sobre el programa REDD+ forestal? ¿Tiene un rol en el programa de REDD+ forestal? ¿Asistió a algunos talleres de REDD+? ¿Si es así, cuáles talleres?
3. How does local governmental representation work in your community? What are your thoughts on local governing bodies? What do you think about indigenous representation in new governmental programs affecting native people?
¿Cómo trabaja la representación gubernamental en su comunidad? ¿Qué opina de los gobiernos locales? ¿Qué piensa de la representación indígena en programas gubernamentales que afectan a las personas indígenas?
4. What are your thoughts on the consultation process in relation to new governmental conservation programs? What did you think about the consultation process associated with the REDD+ program?
¿Qué opina del proceso de consulta en relación con los nuevos programas gubernamentales sobre conservación? ¿Qué piensa del proceso de consulta de REDD+?
5. What do you think about the cultural mediator program that is part of REDD+? What materials about REDD+ do you have? Where are they from?
¿Qué piensa del programa de mediadores culturales que es parte de REDD+? ¿Qué materiales tiene sobre REDD+? ¿De dónde son?
6. How do you feel about land tenure in your territory? In your opinion, how does land tenure relate to REDD+?
¿Cómo se siente acerca de la tenencia de la tierra en su territorio? ¿En su opinión, como está relacionada la tenencia de tierra a REDD+?
7. What do you think about ILO 169? What does it mean to you? How do you understand ILO 169 terms of REDD+? Does the government respect your rights?
¿Qué opina de ILO 169? ¿Qué significa para usted? ¿Cómo entiende ILO 169 en relación a REDD+? ¿El gobierno respeta sus derechos?
8. Have you ever received money from the Payment for Environmental Services program? What are your perceptions of PES? Why do you think some indigenous groups suggest they support the Payment for Environmental Services Program, but do not support the REDD+ program? Do you draw a similar distinction? If so, why? If not, why not?
¿Ha recibido dinero del programa llamado Pago de Servicios Ambientales? ¿Cuál es su percepción de los objetivos de este programa? ¿Y la efectividad de la implementación del programa en Costa Rica? ¿Por qué algunos grupos de indígenas están de acuerdo con este programa, pero no están de acuerdo con el programa de REDD+ forestal? ¿Piensa usted de manera similar?
9. What do you think about an Indigenous Payment for Environmental Services program? What would that look like in your view?
¿Qué piensa de un programa de Pago de Servicios Ambientales Indígena? ¿Qué le parece desde su punto de vista?

10. What are your thoughts on natural resources? What about conservation of natural resources? What about climate change? How do you think REDD+ will affect the environment?
¿Qué piensa sobre los recursos naturales? ¿Y, sobre la conservación de los recursos naturales? ¿Y sobre el cambio climático? ¿Cómo piensa que REDD+ afectará el medio ambiente?
11. How do you feel about buying and selling natural resources (commodification)? What do you think about REDD+ program payments?
¿Cómo se siente sobre comprar y vender recursos naturales (dando un valor monetario a un recurso natural)? ¿Qué piensa sobre los pagos del programa de REDD+?
12. Why does the government want to pursue the REDD+ program?
¿Por qué el gobierno promueve el programa REDD+?
13. The Bribri group from Talamanca has refused to participate in REDD+, how do you think the government will react? What do you expect will happen next for REDD+ implementation in your territory?
¿Los Bribris de Talamanca se han negado a participar en el programa de REDD+, cómo piensa que el gobierno reaccionará ante esto? ¿Qué espera que suceda después con la implementación del REDD+ en su territorio?
14. What is your biggest fear regarding the REDD+ program?
¿Cuál es el temor más grande con el programa de REDD+?
15. What should the Costa Rican national government do concerning the REDD+ program? Would you accept REDD+ under different circumstances? If so, can you share what those might be?
¿Qué debería hacer el gobierno de Costa Rica en relación con el programa de REDD+? ¿Aceptaría usted el programa del REDD+ bajo otras circunstancias? ¿Si es así, podría compartir sus razones?

Appendix 3. Consent form in English

Title of Project: An indigenous perspective: REDD+ and Costa Rica, another form of colonialism and commodification of natural resources?

Investigator: Dr. Max Stephenson Jr. **Contact info:** mstephen@vt.edu/ +1 (540)-231-6775

Student Investigator: Elizabeth Olberding beth.olberding@gmail.com/ +506-8416-0074

Email/ Phone number

I. Purpose of this Research Project

This study will address how a sample of the Bribri and Ngäbe indigenous peoples in Costa Rica perceive and understand the international REDD+ program and its principal elements and why. The student investigator is undertaking this effort as her Master's thesis project. The target sample consists of indigenous individuals, 18 years of age and older living in the Bribri territory of Talamanca or Ngäbe territory of Abrojo Montezuma, who are reasonably familiar with the REDD+ program and whose local tribal governing bodies have formally declined participation in the initiative.

II. Procedures

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to sit for a 60-minute audio-recorded interview. You will be asked about your experience with and perceptions of the REDD+ program as it relates to your native community's land. The interview will be conducted in your home, workplace, or another comfortable place of your choice. After the interview is conducted, the audio file will be transcribed to provide a written account of your interview. It will then be translated into English for analysis for use in the student investigator's thesis.

III. Risks

You will not be at risk physically if you decide to participate. The only potential risk you might experience could be a minor emotional one if the REDD+ program evokes especially strong feelings on your part.

IV. Benefits

Your participation will contribute to a study about indigenous perspectives regarding this Costa Rican and international government organization initiative. Hopefully your participation will help illuminate key policy and program concerns that could inform Costa Rican national government and World Bank policy. The investigators cannot promise or guarantee you any benefits for your participation in this study. We are, however, grateful for your willingness to assist in this way.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

The researchers will not release identifiable information from the study to anyone other than the two individuals responsible for the project without your written consent. Your name will not be used in the thesis. Instead, you will be assigned a random and unique identifier. All data collected will be stored separately in a password-protected computer folder that will protect any information identifying you as a study participant. The data will be destroyed 2 years following the student investigator's graduation and/or publication of any article(s) resulting from this work.

The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may review the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in VT research.

VI. Compensation

We are unable to provide monetary compensation for participation in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. In addition, you are free not to answer any question that you may choose without incurring a penalty.

VIII. Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the student or principal investigators whose contact information appears at the top of this document.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the VT IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore at moored@vt.edu or (540) 231-4991.

IX. I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this study. I have had all my questions answered. I acknowledge the information in the Consent Form and give my voluntary consent to participate in this inquiry:

_____ **Date** _____
Participant Signature

Participant printed name

Appendix 4. Consent form in Spanish

Título del Proyecto: Una perspectiva indígena: ¿REDD+ y Costa Rica, otra forma de colonialismo y mercantilización de los recursos naturales?

Investigador: Dr. Max Stephenson Jr. **Información de contacto:** mstephen@vt.edu/ +1 (540)-231-6775

Co-Investigadora: Elizabeth Olberding beth.olberding@gmail.com/ +506-8416-0074
Correo electrónico/ número telefónico

I. El Propósito del Proyecto de investigación

Esta investigación va a examinar las percepciones y entendimientos del grupo de Bribris y Ngäbes en relación al programa internacional llamado REDD+ sus elementos principales y el por qué. Este proyecto es parte de la tesis de Maestría de la investigadora y la información que está recolectando será usada para su tesis. La población meta son personas indígenas de edad mayor a los 18 años, que viven en el territorio Bribrí de Talamanca o el territorio Ngäbe de Abrojo Montezuma, y que están informados sobre el programa de REDD+ y donde sus gobiernos locales votaron en contra de REDD+.

II. El Procedimiento

Si Ud. decide ser parte de esta investigación, participará en una entrevista de 60 minutos que va a ser grabado solo con audio. Alguien va a preguntarle sobre su experiencia y opinión sobre el programa de REDD+. La entrevista será en su casa, oficina, o un lugar cómodo que puede escoger. Después de la entrevista, los archivos de audio van a ser transcritos para tener un documento escrito de la entrevista. Las entrevistas van a ser traducidas al inglés para el proyecto de tesis.

III. Los Riesgos

No existen riesgos físicos si decide participar en la investigación. El único riesgo sería en el aspecto emocional, y solamente si el programa de REDD+ forestal crea sentimientos negativos en usted.

IV. Los Beneficios

Su participación contribuirá con una investigación de las perspectivas indígenas sobre iniciativas del gobierno. Esperamos que su participación pueda iluminar políticas clave y preocupaciones sobre el programa que podrían informar al gobierno y políticas del Banco Mundial también. Los investigadores no pueden prometer beneficios personales de esta investigación. Estamos agradecidas para su participación y ayuda.

V. El Alcance de la Anonimidad y la Confidencialidad

La investigadora no va a liberar información que lo identifiquen ante personas que las dos personas ligadas en esta investigación, sin su consentimiento escrito. Su nombre verdadero no estará en el reporte, se le asignará un nombre aleatorio como una identificación única para proteger su identidad. Toda la información que sea recolectada va a estar en un archivo cerrado con una contraseña en una computadora para proteger alguna información que podría identificarlo. La información va a ser destruidos dos años después de la graduación de la investigadora y/o dos años después de una(s) publicación de un(os) artículo(s) que resulta de éste trabajo.

Consejo Institucional de Revisión de Virginia Tech (universidad) podría revisar la investigación para intenciones de auditorías. El Consejo Institucional de Revisión está encargado de la protección de sujetos humanos involucrados en las investigaciones de VT.

VI. Compensación

No podemos ofrecer compensación monetaria por su participación en esta investigación.

VII. La libertad para dejar la investigación

Usted tiene la libertad para dejar de participar en ésta investigación en cualquier momento sin sanción alguna. Tiene la libertad para no contestar cualquier pregunta que no quiera contestar sin ninguna sanción.

VIII. Preguntas o preocupaciones

Si tiene preguntas sobre la investigación, podrá contactar a los investigadores (su información de contacto está en el encabezado del documento).

Si tiene preguntas o dudas sobre la investigación o sus derechos como sujeto en la investigación u ocupa reportar una lesión relacionada con la investigación, podría contactar Dr. David M. Moore en moored@vt.edu o +1 (540) 231-4991.

IX. He leído el formulario de consentimiento y las condiciones de la investigación. Todas mis preguntas o dudas han sido contestadas. Yo conozco la información en el formulario de consentimiento y doy mi consentimiento voluntario.

_____ Fecha _____
Firma de Sujeto

Nombre escrito de Sujeto