

REDD+: The “Win-Win” Solution?

Operationalizing REDD+ Safeguards in Indonesia and
Malaysia’s National Policy Arenas



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Abstract

Over the past decade UNFCCC's climate scheme, "REDD+", has gained precedence in climate policy spheres; Its immaculate 'win-win' solution—to institute a global market-based system for climate change, whereby developed nations pay individual forest users to espouse more sustainable forestry practices—has drawn in the lion's share of critical debates amongst policymakers, civil society organizations, and scholars alike. As REDD+ has unfolded into diverse contexts, however, its prospect as a 'win-win' solution has been reframed to include better forest governance as part of its objective. In this study, I explore REDD+'s prospect as this 'win-win' solution by observing how REDD+ is adopted into national forest policies of Indonesia and Malaysia. More specifically, I analyze how these countries adopt social concerns as part of REDD+'s objective, by looking at how they operationalize social safeguards in their national safeguarding information strategies (SIS-REDD+). This serves as a useful lens for comprehending how REDD+'s objectives are being shaped in differing contexts and what implications these have for global environmental governance discussions. The findings of the study indicate, first, although both countries address the same social safeguards, they do so in ways, which reflect different conceptions of REDD+. While both countries promote transformative governance reforms as possibilities of REDD+, they remain relatively passive in stipulating such changes. Their neutrality underscores the constricted position the state has in this capacity building phase of REDD+. At the same time, however, Malaysia does express a greater focus on equitable governance standards than Indonesia. This governance emphasis can, at least partially, be attributed to the Malaysia's history of sustainable forest governance, which has laid its foundation for REDD+. In light of these finding, as of now, the prospect of REDD+ as 'win-win' in Malaysia is more feasible than in Indonesia—for reasons that can be attributed to the areas' different historical contexts and institutional capacities.

Key words: REDD+, Social Safeguards, Global Environmental Governance
Fragmentation, Indonesia, Malaysia

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1 Introduction

1.1 REDD+: The ‘Win-Win’ Solution?

In light of burgeoning scientific reports emphasizing the vital and cost-effective role forest management could have on climate change mitigation, the UNFCCC established a “fresh” and promising alternative to the existing climate policies that were faltering under the Kyoto agreement: “Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, conserving and enhancing forest carbon stocks, and sustainably managing forests” (REDD+). The premise of this scheme was to provide “positive” incentives for developing countries to adopt sustainable forestry practices by placing a financial value on the additional carbon stored in trees, and not emitted into the atmosphere. In other words, paying forest actors in developing countries to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Angelson and Brockhaus, 2012; Tobias, 2015). By dovetailing development concerns like economic growth and poverty reduction with climate imperatives like emission reductions, this cutting-edge market-based approach was largely championed the ‘win-win’ solution to climate change.

The novelty of REDD+ is its application of businesslike reasoning in climate action negotiations, which are traditionally grounded in moral-obligation. Its non-traditional proposal to create a large-scale performance-based market for carbon sequestration can, more specifically, be defined as a form of “payment for ecosystems services” (PES). As part of this system, the natural assets of an ecosystem are granted monetary values and, in turn, the preservation of these resources is regarded as a service that individuals can be paid for (Griffiths, 2007; Corbera and Brown, 2010). As a form of climate action, these PES schemes, which rely on the commodification of forest carbon-sequestration, can be classified as products of greater processes of ‘market-environmentalism’, and a ‘new carbon economy’ that depends on the exchange of carbon emissions through cap-and-trade and project-based markets (Corbera and Brown, 2012: 1742). The driving principle of this market-based approach to environmentalism is the notion that, in the face of powerful economic drivers of deforestation, strong economic incentives are necessary if forest clearance is to be discouraged (Elliot, 2013).

However, as REDD+ has unfolded into real-world settings this initial, highly technocratic approach has been vehemently criticized for being insensitive to the social problems it poses for forest communities. Since many of the countries in which REDD+ projects are situated score high on indices of corruption, and often lack capacity to regulate commercial activity in their forest frontiers, a variety of social issues have come to the surface as REDD+ activities continue to develop in these contexts (Corbera and Schroeder, 2017). These issues range from apparent structural inequalities—which exclude certain forest communities from taking part in decision-making processes and accessing key economic, political and legal resources—to insufficient social safety nets, and insecure livelihoods. Addressing social

concerns are especially relevant in the tropical nations of the South East Asian region—where REDD+ projects are most condensed and contestations and sensitivities over forestland and resource rights are commonplace (Cramb and Curry, 2012; Fujisaki et al., 2016). In response to these ardent concerns, the UNFCCC has taken measures to prevent REDD+'s potential negative effects, by establishing both 'social' and 'environmental' safeguards as preconditions for its projects (Angelson and McNeill, 2012; Chhatre et al., 2012; Visseren-Hamakers et al., 2012). As stated in the Cancun agreements, all participating REDD+ countries are required to establish a 'Safeguards Information System' for REDD+ activities (SIS-REDD+), which outlines how these safeguards are addressed in relevant activities (UNFCCC, 2010). In succeeding conventions, measures to ensure that countries are acknowledging these safeguards have been instituted. In particular, REDD+ countries are required to submit updated reports on how SIS-REDD+ is being implemented in national settings in order to obtain results-based payments under REDD+ (UNFCCC, 2011).

Whether REDD+'s primary objective should be augmented with these 'social' safeguards, however, has been the center of critical debate amongst policymakers, funders, academics, activists and affected community members alike. McDermott et al. (2012) define this normative debate as a difference in how REDD+ actors "operationalize" REDD+'s social safeguards. They define 'operationalization' as "the ways in which the definition and prioritization of social policies are developing in the context of applying them to specific REDD+ activities, subject to the particular demands and constraints of implementing organizations" (McDermott et al., 2012: 65). Accordingly, they contend that for some stakeholders, these social safeguards have been operationalized as precautionary measures to insure against risks that could hinder the sustainability, and thus profitability, of REDD+'s goal as a carbon-based PES scheme (McDermott et al., 2012). For others, these social safeguards have been adopted as additional objectives of REDD+. Acknowledging the socio-political contexts of REDD+'s projects, actors on this side of the debate argue: if REDD+ is to avoid perpetuating exploitive "business as usual" (BAU) practices at the expense of marginalized forest communities, it needs to address the underlying drivers of deforestation and power relations within these forest-governing structures (Griffiths, 2007; Godden et al., 2011; Angelson et al., 2012; Angelson and McNeill, 2012; Corbera and Schroeder, 2017).

The weight given to social safeguards, in other words, reflects increasing pressures for 'good governance' as part of REDD+'s objective. Angelson and Brockhaus (2012: 17) define this type of governance reform as "transformational change" which they describe as "a shift in discourse, attitudes, power relations, and deliberate policy and protest action that leads policy formulation and implementation away from business as usual policy approaches that directly or indirectly support deforestation and forest degradation". If REDD+ is to be successful as a PES, therefore, it needs to adopt greater forestry reforms as part of its unique carbon-cutting initiative (Pant, 2011; Angelson and McNeill, 2012; Luttrell et al., 2013; Fujisaki et al., 2016; Corbera and Schroeder, 2017). Accordingly, many policy analyses of REDD+ now utilize governance frameworks, which evaluate its various schemes according to both how effective and efficient its achievements are in terms of mitigating carbon, and how equitable they are (Angelson et al., 2012; Luttrell et al., 2013). In doing so, a number of affected forest actors have been absorbed into its policy debates. As the scope of REDD+ — in terms of the number of actors involved and the objectives it seeks to fulfill—has expanded, its conception as a "win-win" strategy now increasingly depends on its potential to promote synergies between a range of sustainable development goals, while still addressing the initial goal of carbon mitigation (Angelson and McNeill, 2012; Visseren-Hamakers et al., 2012; Luttrell et al., 2013; Gupta et al., 2016).

1.1 (Specific) Aim and Research Questions

The overarching aim of this study is to understand how countries in the second ‘capacity-building’ phase are conceptualizing REDD+. In other words, to understand which objectives of the climate scheme—that is, to solely sequester carbon through market ends or to foster sustainable forest governance simultaneously/prior to sequestering carbon—are being pursued by REDD+ countries. To do this, the study will focus on how countries currently operationalize REDD+’s safeguards. It will specifically focus on how ‘social’ safeguards—measures meant to account for social issues—are operationalized. By doing this, the study seeks to answer how social concerns or ‘non-carbon’ aspects of REDD+ are addressed in comparison to the technical or ‘carbon-related’ ones. The study attempts to answer these questions through a comparative case study between REDD+ countries, Indonesia and Malaysia—two countries with, historically, very different experiences of forest management. As both countries are considered to be in the second phase of REDD+ implementation, analyzing how each country conceptualizes the equivocal climate scheme would not only further understandings of how it might look once they scale-up, but also how its design and implementation may be shaped by pre-existing differences in how the countries govern their forests. Accordingly, this study is guided by the research question:

How are REDD+’s ‘social’ safeguards operationalized in Indonesia’s most recent national ‘Safeguard Information Strategy’ (SIS-REDD+) Report as compared to in Malaysia’s?

Here, ‘social’ safeguards are operationalized according to McDermott et al. (2012)’s definition, which frames it as the way social policies are both defined and prioritized in REDD+ schemes. This means, first, finding out what specific social or ‘non-carbon’ concerns are defined and, subsequently, understanding how these ‘non-carbon’ concerns are acknowledged in relation to more technocratic or ‘carbon’ ones. Thus, to answer this broader research question, I put forth two sub-questions:

1. What ‘non-carbon’ concerns do Indonesia and Malaysia define as ‘social safeguards’ in their national SIS-REDD+ reports?

2. How are these ‘non-carbon’ concerns addressed in relation to ‘carbon-related’ ones’?

The research inquiry adopts a framework generated by McDermott et al. (2012)’s study—which analyzes how diverse non-state actors conceive REDD+ according to how they operationalize its social safeguards—to observe how official states operationalize and, thus, conceive REDD+. Understanding how REDD+ is conceptualized by these states has broader implications for its prospects as a ‘win-win’—that is, if it can overcome challenges of current climate and sustainability schemes—which services broader climate policy debates.

1.1 Disposition of Thesis

In the following chapter I will present the research problem—that is: the prospects of REDD+'s being a 'win-win' solution within the greater structure and politics of REDD+'s design and implementation. Next, I will present relevance of this problem within the context of South East Asia, specifically in Indonesia and Malaysia. In chapter four, I will situate this problem within theoretical strands related to global environmental governance and its institutional fragmentation. Thereafter, I will introduce and outline two typologies of McDermott et al. (2012)'s conceptual framework, which I use to understand how the two countries operationalize the REDD+ safeguards in national policy. This leads into the next chapter, where I will present methodology of the study. Subsequently, I will present my analysis of the two country reports. This will be followed by a discussion of the findings in chapter eight. The final chapter will summarize the findings and provide a conclusion of the study.

2 Getting REDD+(Y): Operationalizing Safeguards in National Policy

Despite the increasing influence non-state actors have had in shaping REDD+ activities to promote greater social aspirations, sequestering carbon according to national jurisdiction is the keystone of REDD+ (Di Gregorio et al., 2012; Schroeder and McDermott, 2014). This is most clearly exemplified by UNFCCC's official definition of REDD+ as a country-driven "three phased" climate mechanism, which culminates in a national performance-based payment system for reducing carbon emissions (UNFCCC, 2011). The extent to which non-carbon values are stressed in this process of formalizing official REDD+ policy outputs is ultimately subject to state decree. The phase-based process entails: first, sketching out a blue print for REDD+ in the form of a national action plan, and measures for capacity building. Second, implementing national policies and measures, and further capacity building. This requires discerning the economic, social and political factors that are shaping REDD+'s policies and projects as they continue to be designed and implemented in local settings. Finally, once these contextual details are sufficiently accounted for, establishing countrywide system of measuring, assessing, and remunerating forestry programs' materialized impacts and objectives. This transition from phase two to three, therefore, requires clear definitions of what REDD+'s objectives are and how they will be pursued. In landscapes where actors have starkly different visions for REDD+, this becomes a very contentious and political process, which could potentially subvert support for the climate scheme altogether. At the same time, without scaling up from the second to third phase, REDD+ risks treading the same path as previous forestry schemes and losing sight of its climate-focus, effectively jettisoning its 'win-win' title (Angelson et al., 2012).

As a trans-governmental climate policy tool, REDD+ opens up a myriad of opportunities to address diverse environmental issues, but in doing so it also incurs a number of challenges, which can be situated within greater global environmental governance debates. Whether and how REDD+ will succeed in mitigating carbon, and initiating greater forest and land-use governance reforms, is up in the air. Its trajectory, nonetheless, provides valuable insight for future climate agendas, especially market-driven ones, and for forestry governance. Greater research around the ebb and flow of politics in REDD+'s design and implementation, therefore, is crucial for not only understanding the future of REDD+, but also for shedding light on broader climate policy debates. More specifically, evaluating how REDD+ countries operationalize REDD+ safeguards in their SIS-REDD+ reports, as part of the second phase of REDD+, could serve as an instructive lens for understanding how REDD+'s objectives are being shaped in differing contexts and what implications these have for global environmental governance discussions.

3 Setting the Context: REDD+ in Indonesia and Malaysia

The Southeast Asian states of Indonesia and Malaysia make compelling case studies for evaluating current tides of REDD+. Despite their similar geographical, cultural, and economic dispositions, the countries have significantly different histories of forest management and, unsurprisingly, contrasting experiences within REDD+. Understanding how these divergent historical backgrounds may play a role in the countries' uptake of REDD+ is valuable for future REDD+ policy discussions.

3.1.1 Indonesia

Since its inception after the 2007 Bali climate conference, Indonesia has been one of the leading countries in spearheading REDD+ and influencing REDD+ dialogue globally (DGMoEF, 2015). However, its progress in enacting REDD+ schemes has been nothing short of sluggish. The country's poor track record of forest conservation, paralleled with its ambitious national commitments to cut GHG emissions by 26% unilaterally, and by 41% with international support by 2020, has made it an exemplary place for REDD+ (DGMoEF, 2017: 4). Home to the third largest area of tropical rainforest on Earth, the expansive archipelago state is one of the largest contributors to GHG from primary forest on Earth, removing up to 840,000 hectares of primary forest annually (Howson and Kindon, 2015: 96). In spite of more substantial national commitments made by Indonesia—including its development of a National Strategy Plan for UN-REDD+; its 2011 Presidential moratorium on clearing primary forest and peat land areas, which has since been extended twice; and its national claim for the need to move 'beyond carbon' as part of REDD+'s objective—little has effectively transpired into provincial and local realities (UN-REDD, 2012; Astuti, R. and McGregor, 2015; Howell, 2015; DGMoEF, 2015). As Cronin et al. (2012:57), discern from their extensive discourse analysis of REDD+ media and policy in Indonesia, the Indonesian government shows a strong will to "have their cake and eat it too".

The reason for this backlog can, in part, be attributed to the country's post-colonial history and current political-economic climate, which are inexorably intertwined in exploitive forest practices (Astuti and McGregor, 2015). Throughout the country's successive phases of decentralization and centralization, political patronage has played a pivotal role in dictating current forest governance; poor spatial planning and contestations over land concessions overlapping with local customary forestland, have often supported corporate interests (Cramb and Curry, 2012; Eilenberg, 2015; Cronin et al., 2016). Consequently, district elites are often positioned as brokers between forest corporations and communities, using their authority to manipulate land allocation regulations to their own advantage (Cramb and Curry, 2012; Eilenberg, 2015). The contestations between these parties have contributed to the appreciable number of international civil society organizations, which also reside in the country (Astuti

and McGregor, 2015; Dixon and Challies, 2015; Eilenberg, 2015; Howell, 2015). While the sizable number of non-state actors in Indonesia is conducive to encouraging forest policy reforms as part of REDD+'s objective, the reluctant position of the state belies this holistic objective and ultimately muddies REDD+'s overall purpose here.

3.1.2 Malaysia

In contrast to Indonesia, Malaysia has more recently joined REDD+ and has been relatively progressive in implementing REDD+ activities thus far. Although Malaysia has had a cooperative role in other climate conventions, including the UNFCCC, it hadn't agreed to join REDD+ until 2011. By 2013, it had constructed its national strategy plan and since then has pledged to voluntarily reduce carbon intensity by 40 per cent by the year 2020, compared to 2005 levels (NRE, 2011). The country's initial absence can be greatly attributed to its relatively transparent legal framework in its forest sectors and its history of sustainable resource management. Malaysia, which is comprised of thirteen states and three federal territories, has managed its forests for nearly a century. Throughout this time it has improved and refined the system to incorporate selective and sustainable forest management in their forestry practices (Cramb and Curry, 2012). So much so, that it is regarded as one of the leading tropical countries for its record on implementing sustainable forest management (Godden et al., 2011). In line with Malaysian constitution, each state has jurisdiction over land and natural resources, allowing each entity to independently enact laws and formulate policies in pertaining to their forests. With that said, the federal government still retains power over specific aspects of forestry such as resource conservation and local government plans and, thus, oversees matters such as environmental impact assessments and regulations on forested catchment (NRE, 2017). To enhance coordination between the national and sub-national parties, the National Forestry Council (NFC) was established and they introduced the National Forestry Policy (NFP) in 1978, which sets principles for sustainable forest management (NRE, 2011).

When compared to other tropical forest nations, like Indonesia, Malaysia has had a historically low emissions baseline from deforestation (Godden et al., 2011). Thus, unlike these many other REDD+ states, one of Malaysia's primary incentives for joining REDD+ was to fortify this aspiration for "sustainable forest management". They define this as transitioning "from managing forest for its resources to managing forest for its natural capital" (NRE, 2017). For this reason, Malaysia has progressed comparatively faster than its neighboring nations, as it is now in the second phase of implementation. The primary reason for this expedient progression can be attributed to the effective forest policies and tools that were already governing its forests. These sustainable forestry efforts were largely carried out to attract private forest certification schemes, namely the "Malaysian Timber Certification scheme", which required transparent forestry practices and encouraged the establishment of national forestry standards that are conscious of local and indigenous voices (MTCC, 2015). While the extent to which these standards fully reflect the voices of local communities has been contested, they do set the stage for REDD+ design and implementation in the country (Godden et al., 2011). Considering the decentralized management of forest resources, retaining these social standards as part of forest governance should be of key concern for Malaysia's REDD+ policy outputs.

4 Fragmented Global Environmental Governance: The Conflicted State

In this study, I situate REDD+ within greater theoretical strands of global environmental governance (GEG). REDD+ projects make up a contemporary form of environmental regulation that functions under the ambit of the legal frameworks consistent with multilateral environmental agreements. Due to the inherent limitations broad-scale multilateral agreements have in effectively governing sustainable forestry practices at national and local levels, however, REDD+ has fostered a more diffuse form of governance. This form of governance encourages a nexus of flexible, private and public organizations to hold stake in its development (Godden et al., 2011). Employing Pattberg and Widerberg (2015)'s definition of GEG, I understand REDD+ as a “system of institutions (both international and transnational), actors (both public and private), governing processes (both formal and informal) and governing institutions (regulation, voluntary agreements, information disclosure, among others) that address global environmental problems.” (28-29). According to Elliot (2013) environmental problems, like deforestation, are ‘multi-scalar’ in nature. They are “affected by the decisions and behaviors of actors at the local, national, and transnational levels, which have impacts across spatial scales” (Elliot 2013: 121).

REDD+ has, therefore, developed considerably outside the formal auspices of the UNFCCC; its current form of governance has, ultimately, repositioned the nation state, and challenged its central role in environmental governance. As a consequence of this, REDD+ has seen a rise in policy gaps over its design and implementation between the state and its other institutions. I understand this legitimacy gap—that is, the tensions between the state and other REDD+ actors—as an issue related to “institutional fragmentation in GEG” whereby “policy domains are marked by a patch-work of international institutions that are different in their character, their constituencies, their spatial scope and their [predominant] subject matter”(Biermann et al., 2009: 16). Gupta (2015) describes REDD+'s fragmented instructional structure as a type of “organizational bridge” between diverse state and non-state global actors. The positives of this fragmented “bridge” structure are: it creates new platforms for actors to get involved in forest management; it lends impetus to previously stalled negotiations, such as those under the Kyoto agreement; and it allows for alternative ideas and negotiations to transpire in policy platforms (Zelli and Van Asselt, 2013; Gupta, 2015). As Angelson and Brockhaus (2012) maintain, it is this fragmented structure that allows REDD+ to stimulate greater, necessary governance reforms in forest landscapes. As previously mentioned, however, this also gives rise to legitimacy and coordination gaps between diverse institutions, working at different scales and holding different views (Zelli and Van Asselt, 2013). Thus, by focusing on how the state pursues REDD+—acknowledging that it is a crucial actor within the politics of REDD+'s design and implementation—I hope to shed light on greater debates on global environmental governance issues and management of fragmentation in climate policy debates.

5 Conceptual Framework: Operationalizing REDD+ Safeguards

In this section McDermott et al. (2012)'s substantive and conceptual typologies for operationalizing REDD+ safeguards are outlined. How these two typologies serve as a framework for the analysis of Indonesia and Malaysia's SIS-REDD+ reports will be expanded on in the following chapter.

In order to address the two relevant sub-questions, first, I discern how each country 'defines' their social safeguard by distinguishing the types of 'non-carbon' concerns that are mentioned in their safeguard text. Thereafter, I analyze how these defined 'non-carbon' values are prioritized within the greater safeguard text by using a conceptual typology, which identifies the different ways actors approach REDD+'s safeguards.

5.1 Substantive Safeguard Typology

Table 1—Substantive Typology

1. "Consistency with International Agreements"
(UNFCCC/ COP16/Annex I, 2a)
2. "Transparent and Effective Governance"
(UNFCCC/ COP16/Annex I, 2b)
3. "Respect for the Knowledge and Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, noting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)" (UNFCCC/ COP16/Annex I, 2 c)
4. "Stakeholder Participation"
(UNFCCC/COP16/Annex I, 2 d)
5. "Enhancement of Social Benefits"
(UNFCCC/COP16/Annex I, 2 e).
6. "Additionality" (Indicated by "Enhance...social benefits" but not demanded under UNFCCC/COP16 Annex I, 2 e)
7. "Equity"(UNFCCC/COP16 1.4)

Source: (McDermott et al., 2012)

McDermott et al. (2012) categorize seven types of non-carbon issues that can be found within REDD+ safeguard texts. While some of these categories are more explicitly stated, others are more implicit and have been stipulated subjectively amongst REDD+ safeguarding actors.

The first five categorizations are UNFCCC safeguards that explicitly mention social issues. These include: "consistency with international agreements"; "transparent and effective governance"; "respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, noting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)"; "stakeholder participation"; and

“enhancement of social benefits”. In addition to these, the categories of “equity” and “additionality” are added. Here, “equity” refers to the fair “distribution of costs and benefits across stakeholders” in REDD+, which is recognized under the Cancun Agreements. Social “additionality” represents the “requirements to demonstrate measureable net social benefits”. The concept derives from carbon accounting standards that focus on verifiable and quantifiable reduction of carbon emissions that is ‘additional’ to what would’ve occurred without the management intervention (McDermott et al., 2012: 68). As McDermott et al. (2012) argue, social “additionality” is implied in the social safeguard “enhancement...benefits” yet not required by states. Its principle—that REDD+’s social benefits should be measured and assessed just as sequestered carbon is—has been set as a standard under many existing safeguard frameworks established by international, public-private and private stakeholders (Godden et al., 2011; McDermott et al., 2012).

5.2 REDD+ Conceptual Typology

McDermott et al.’s (2012) conceptual framework underscores how different actor’s conceptions of REDD+ are reflected in how they make use of its safeguards. As part of the framework, they construct a continuum of how REDD+ is conceptualized by its actors; it ranges from rationales that see it for solely its market profitability to rationales that see it just for its potential to stimulate greater forest policy reforms. Within this conceptual continuum they pinpoint the most common ways actors understand and implement REDD+ safeguards. They categorize these different approaches as: “risk-based”, which tends towards more carbon-based thinking and “rights-based”, which leans towards more human rights justifications. In addition to this, they discern a more ‘neutral’ approach, which resides in a sort of limbo area between risk-based approaches and a weaker, rights-based approach. Actors that take this approach highlight REDD+’s co-benefits—its potential to improve social conditions—but, unlike rights-based proponents, cease to make these social considerations actual goals of the climate scheme (McDermott et al., 2012: 69).

In line with more carbon-focused rationales, ‘risk-based’ approaches define safeguards as precautionary measures taken to “minimize” the potential risks a REDD+ project may pose for worsening the social conditions of a forest community. As Visseren-Hamakers et al. (2012: 648) proclaim this approach aligns a market liberal stress on pricing and insuring risk to maximize economic efficiency with an institutional emphasis for overseeing governance processes. Contrastingly, ‘rights-based’ approaches stipulate safeguards as additional goals that REDD+ projects must achieve if they are to be sustainable. These stakeholders understand upholding the rights of local communities as not only crucial for sustainable development, but also necessary for cutting carbon and establishing a sustainable low-carbon economy.

6 Methodology

In order to grasp how the state of Indonesia conceptualizes REDD+ compared to the state of Malaysia, I adopt the methodology of a comparative case study. The cases of REDD+ in Indonesia and Malaysia are, more specifically, examined using the principle of comparison, which assumes we can understand social phenomena better when they are compared in relation to two or more meaningfully contrasting cases or situations (Bryman, 2012: 72). Here, Indonesia and Malaysia are representative of two contrasting cases of forest governance. Despite their similar geographical, cultural, and economic dispositions, Malaysia has historically been very transparent and inclusive in setting their forestry policies and institutions, whereas Indonesia has notoriously been more reticent and iniquitous in governing their forestlands. This juxtaposition can best be understood as a comparison of the ‘most similar’ cases, whereby countries are very similar in size and scope, and often “...share the same important characteristics, but differ in one crucial aspect” (Halperin and Heath, 2017: 219). In comparing them, it is easier to see how the end result may be correlated with their differing variable (Liphart, 1971). Considering Malaysia’s strong already strong institutional framework, a greater emphasis on both governance and climate mitigation are expected of its country approach. Thus, the merit in comparing these two cases is it yields greater understanding of how these divergent historical backgrounds may play a role in the countries’ adoption of REDD+, which is fruitful for future climate policy discussions.

6.1 Data Collection and Analysis

This thesis has taken the form of a pure desk study. Thus, the empirical material that is used and analyzed in this study consists of diverse forms of documents; these help to construct the cases of REDD+ in Indonesia and Malaysia. The base of observation and comparison between the two cases, however, is each country’s most recent ‘Safeguard Information Strategy’ (REDD+ SIS). These two reports provide relevant information on policies and related institutional tools enacted by the respective governments in order to address REDD+’s safeguards. These primary sources serve as the foundation of the analysis.

Additional primary sources that have been considered for this research include: reports from relevant UNFCCC climate conventions, namely the most relevant Cancun, Durban, and Warsaw Agreements; country climate reports for the UNFCCC; and related national forestry policy documents and standards (NRE, 2011; UNFCCC, 2011, 2012, 2013; MTCC, 2014; MoEF, 2017). These sources are used to construct the respective country cases, as they can be understood within the greater framework of REDD+, and to structure later discussion of the analysis. Secondary sources, which are also used to build the respective country cases, include: diverse academic literature on global environmental governance, forest governance and climate policy, and REDD+ more aggregately, and contextually. Not only do these

sources serve as the foundation of this study, but they also situate this analysis within greater debates around REDD+.

In order to see how each country operationalizes REDD+'s social safeguards within their most recent SIS-REDD+ reports, I employ of a qualitative content analysis. In order to answer the more detailed sub-questions, I divide the analysis into two consecutive parts. To start, McDermott (2012)'s substantive typology is used as a guide to distinguish what 'non-carbon' concerns Indonesia and Malaysia's SIS-REDD+ reports acknowledge. As previously enumerated, these social considerations have been categorized into seven types: "consistency with international agreements"; "transparent and effective governance"; "respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, noting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)"; "stakeholder participation"; and "enhancement of social benefits" "equity" and "additionality". In order to locate these social aspects, I manually search for related themes in the text. I do this by, first, looking for the direct phrases, then, going back and looking for parts within the text that address overlapping concepts or paraphrases. For 'equity' and social 'additionality', I especially look for similar concepts such as: 'equitable benefit sharing', 'rights-based distribution' and 'social net benefit', 'measurable social benefits', and so on.

Once these are identified, the second part of the analysis delves deeper into how the articulation of these safeguards can be thematically classified and re-classified according to McDermott et al. (2012)'s conceptual framework for REDD+. As the framework asserts, actors' conceptions of REDD+ range according to how they value non-carbon factors in relation to carbon-based ones. The most commonly identified approaches to safeguards are: 'risk-based', more neutral stances, and more 'rights-based'. These serve as the theoretical base for the analysis, beyond this coding is carried out from an inductive approach whereby relevant themes emerge from the data (Bryman, 2012; H Halperin and Heath, 2017).

6.2 Delimitations

The comparative study focuses specifically on the cases of Indonesia and Malaysia's REDD+ Safeguard Information Strategy (SIS-REDD+) reports. These reports provide relevant information on how REDD+'s environmental and social safeguards are being institutionalized on a national level. As decided under the Durban convention of 2011, participating REDD+ countries are required to update these reports every four years so as to show that they are addressing and respecting the social and environmental repercussions of REDD+ activities (UNFCCC, COP17, 12). These reports should be "transparent", "flexible", "consistent with 1/CP.16 safeguards", "build off existing systems" and, more importantly, "be country-driven and implemented at national level" (UNFCCC, 2011)

Hence, by delimiting the scope of analysis to focus on Indonesia's and Malaysia's most recent SIS-REDD+ reports, the study narrows its understanding of REDD+ to the perspectives of the state. The state is chosen as focus point due to the pivotal role it has in REDD+'s design and implementation throughout each phase. To clarify, this study does not

attempt to give a comprehensive overview of how REDD+ is unfolding in practice, nor how it might unfold. Rather, it seeks to understand how REDD+ is being adopted into national policy, as of most recently, and what implications this may have, acknowledging that there are many other actors impacting its development at the sub-national and district levels. To account for this limitation, the texts are analyzed critically, keeping in mind inherent biases. As Bryman (2012: 555) asserts, all documents are constructed from the perspectives of their authors and all data can be framed according to these perspectives.

7 The Cases of Indonesia & Malaysia

In this section I first identify what ‘non-carbon’ concerns Indonesia and Malaysia address in both the construction and final design of their SIS-REDD+. Thereafter, I provide an analysis of how these definitions, or ways of prioritizing certain social safeguards, reflect more carbon-based or non-carbon objectives of REDD+.

7.1 Defining Social Safeguards

Table 2—Social Safeguards: Substantive Content of Indonesia and Malaysia’s REDD+ SIS Reports

	1. Consistency with International Agreements	2. Transparent Effective Governance	3. Indigenous Peoples & Local Communities	4. Stakeholder Participation	5. Enhancement of Social Benefits	6. Additionality ¹	7. Equity
Indonesia REDD+ SIS²	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓ ³
Malaysia REDD+ SIS⁴	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

¹ “Additionality” refers to requirements to present additional, measureable social benefits for particular actors, as distinct from less affirmative guidelines to “enhance” or “contribute to” social benefits

² Standards for “additionally” that measure ‘additional social benefits’ are not addressed in SIS-REDD+ safeguards. However, they are addressed in safeguard framework of the previously existing safeguard initiative, REDD+ SES, which works within the ambit of SIS-REDD+.

³ Equity or “equitable benefit sharing” is addressed in criteria 3.3. under principle 3. “Rights of Indigenous and Local Communities” of Indonesia’s SIS-REDD+ PCIs (DGMoEF, 2015/ Annex: principle 3, criteria 3.3.)

⁴ Although elements of ‘additionally’ are alluded to in principles and targets guiding Malaysia’s SIS-REDD+, such as by “enhancing economic and social wellbeing” or to “empower” and “improve the capacity” of stakeholders to conserve biodiversity, how these elements will be measured or ‘respected’ are not detailed (NRE, 2017/ “MC&I Principles”, 3, “Convention on Biological Diversity’s Aichi Targets”, a.,e.).

7.1.1 SIS-REDD+: Indonesia

Indonesia’s “Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF)” was appointed the task of developing and implementing the country’s safeguard information system. With input from relevant stakeholders, the state-representative group constructed a framework for SIS-REDD+ that “effectively” translated the seven REDD+ safeguards from COP-16 Decision into the national circumstances. The current framework consists of “7 Principles, 17 Criteria and 32 Indicators” (PCIs), which stitches together elements drawn from existing “safeguard-related instruments” governing Indonesia’s forestlands. Each ‘principle’ aligns with one of the seven safeguards. Furthermore, to ensure compliance these PCIs, they were translated into tangible assessment tools (APPs) (DGMoEF, 2015).

Throughout the development and design of its SIS-REDD+, Indonesia assures that social concerns like keeping “consistency with international agreements”, establishing a system of “transparent and effective governance”, holding “respect for indigenous peoples and local communities” and ensuring “stakeholder participation” are accounted for. These governance-related concerns comprise the first four principles of the PCIs. The significant value placed on these concerns is best exemplified in the text where ‘the operationalization of SIS-REDD+’ is described as an iterative, “learning-by-doing” approach, which benefits from clear coordination between all its stakeholders (MoEF, 2015: 26). Thus, good governance is a social objective that is not only sought in the design of REDD+ schemes, but also in SIS-REDD+ itself.

Indonesia also acknowledges non-carbon values related to promoting the ‘social-benefits’ of REDD+—such as, improved sustainable livelihood, transformative forest policies, and alike—yet, to a much lesser degree. Under ‘Principal 5’, the “Conservation of Biodiversity, Social and Environmental Services” (which is consistent with the fifth REDD+ safeguard), enhancing the ‘social benefits’ of “effective strategies that maintain, conserve or restore biodiversity” is acknowledged (DGMoEF, 2015: 42). Beyond framing them as incentives to take part in REDD+, however, there is no indication that these social benefits need to be verified. In other words, the concept of social “additionality” or ‘social net benefit’ is not stipulated in SIS-REDD+ (DGMoEF, 2015: 24). In a similar vein, issues related to “equity” were also addressed by Indonesia, albeit to a far lesser extent. Principles of “equity” were discerned in “criteria 3.3.” of “principle 3” “Respect of Indigenous and Local Communities”, whereby REDD+ activities must “...contribute to maintaining or enhancing the social economic wellbeing of indigenous and local communities, by sharing benefit fairly with them, including for the future generations” (DGMoEF, 2015: 40).

7.1.2 SIS-REDD+: Malaysia

Similar to Indonesia’s, Malaysia’s Safeguards Information System was also developed through a multi-stakeholder process. Overseen by Malaysia’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE), the design and implementation of the policy framework engaged with numerous stakeholders to decide how REDD+’s safeguards should be adopted into national policy. Unlike Indonesia, Malaysia didn’t create a new framework for its SIS-REDD+ but, rather, adopted it into the country’s current forest management systems (NRE, 2017). Malaysia’s SIS-REDD+ is built upon three existing systems in particular: the “Malaysian Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Management of Forests” (MC&Is); the “Criteria and Indicators for progress of Aichi Biodiversity Targets under the Convention on Biological diversity”; and “State Forest Management Plans” (NRE, 2017: 8-9).

The MC&Is—a framework consisting of 9 principles, 47 criteria, 97 indicators and 307 verifiers—was developed as a standard for certifying sustainably managed forests under the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS); and is operated by the Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC). The “Aichi Targets” represent Malaysia’s revised National Policy Biological Diversity, which consists of five overarching goals and related key indicators that were created in order to harmonize different forest initiatives. Malaysia’s ‘State Forest Management Plans’ represent the diverse regulations established by Malaysia’s

13 provinces. Each plan is given relative independence, but they are ultimately subject to the “National Forest Policy”.

Malaysia also gives considerable attention to governance-related concerns in the structure of SIS-REDD+, and in safeguard standards. In particular, ‘Stakeholder participation’ is a central concern for the country, found in the “Full and Effective Participation and Consultation Processes” is one of the stated pillars of governance and as one of the primary Aichi Targets (NRE, 2017: 22). Within national jurisdiction, a full and effective stakeholder consultation process is addressed in the form of “Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC)”. The emphasis on FPIC to engage all stakeholders, namely addresses the safeguard to “respect indigenous and local communities”. The third principle of MC&I, “Indigenous Peoples’ Rights”, and the ‘Aichi Target, to “improve the capacity knowledge and skills of all stakeholders to conserve biodiversity, address this (NRE, 2017: 21-22).

In addition to these governance issues, being “consistent with international agreements” is also demanded of REDD+ schemes. MC&I’s first Principle, “Compliance with Laws and Principles”, and of Malaysia’s governance pillars “Permission/Prohibition to implement REDD+ activities”, “Institutional coordination and policy coherence across sectors”, and “Institution coordination across levels of government managing forest” all reflect this emphasis to maintain institutional coherency in forest-related sectors (NRE, 2017: 10-14). This stress overlaps with a demand for “transparent and effective governance”. Other areas in the text that reflect a need to maintain effective governance are: the governance pillar for “clear and secure land and forest rights”, and the second and seventh principles of the MC&I’s, “Tenure and Use Rights and Responsibilities” and “Management Plan”, respectively (NRE, 2017: 11& 21).

In contrast to Indonesia, Malaysia acknowledges ‘equity’ to a much higher degree. For example, ‘enhancing social benefits’ is acknowledged in numerous places, including under principles 4 and 5, “Community Relations and Worker’s Rights”, and “Benefits from the Forest” (NRE, 2017: 21). Furthermore, issues related to ‘equity’ are taken up more substantially. “Equitable REDD+ Benefit sharing Mechanism” is the fourth pillar of governance (NRE, 2017: 12). It is also expressed in the ‘Aichi Target to “ensure that the benefits from utilization of biodiversity are shared equitably” (NRE, 2017: 22). On the other hand, similar to Indonesia, the notion of social “additionality” is not detected as a concern in Malaysia’s safeguard strategy

7.2 Prioritizing Carbon vs. Non-Carbon Rationales

In their safeguarding strategies, both Indonesia and Malaysia put significant weight on addressing ‘non-carbon’ issues related to either maintaining or establishing ‘coordinated’ and ‘transparent’ governance. Hence, social safeguards such as “consistency with international agreements”, “transparent and effective governance”, “stakeholder participation” and, to a lesser extent, “respect of knowledge...indigenous peoples”, are mentioned most frequently. On the other hand, safeguards such as “equity”, the “enhancement of social benefits”, and “additionality” are prioritized to lesser degree, if at all. The extent to which they are prioritized, however, is a key difference between the two countries’ strategies. According to

McDermott et al. (2012), these differences can be understood as the extent to which the country is pursuing good governance as a way to mitigate social issues that could hinder the economic viability of the climate mechanism, or to also encourage social improvements that would ensure its sustainability. In other words, strategies that put greater emphasis on ‘equity’ and REDD+’s ‘social benefits’ as part of their standards reflect more ‘non-carbon’ based rationales for REDD+. Contrastingly, strategies that solely put stress on the effectiveness of institutions indicate a more carbon-focused understanding of the climate scheme. Accordingly, three themes have been identified that help to delineate how Indonesia and Malaysia conceptualize REDD+. These themes have been identified according to: first, the ways in which the countries prioritize governance-related social concerns in relation to the others and, subsequently, the extent to which the countries have already addressed these governance concerns. These themes can be labeled as: the relative weight given to ‘equity’ in comparison to ‘effectiveness’ and efficiency; the extent to which social benefits are encouraged or mandated; and, finally, the country’s current capacity to harmonize REDD+ interests.

7.2.1 Relative Equity

In both Indonesia and Malaysia’s SIS-REDD+ reports, the countries emphasize social issues related to ‘effective’ and ‘efficient’ governance much more frequently than issues related to ‘equity’. In order to translate REDD+ safeguards into national contexts, both countries have evaluated current forest schemes, and either adapted or adopted their standards into a national SIS-REDD+ framework. To describe how they developed their SIS-REDD+ schemes, both countries state that their approaches were to be as “cost effective” and “efficient” as possible. For Indonesia, this meant constructing their own set of standards (PCI), which were devised “...through extensive consultation with safeguards and REDD+ stakeholders to gain technical and regulatory inputs to ensure that the PCI fit the Indonesian context.” (GDMoEF, 2015: 19). For Malaysia, this entailed building “upon existing systems and national priorities, while considering a cost effective implementation” (NRE, 2017: 16). In other words, Malaysia simply absorbed REDD+ into existing forestry management schemes. It could do this because its national forest policy, for the most part, had already accounted for diverse social concerns like equitable benefit sharing. As they proclaim: “For Malaysia, the REDD+ activities and safeguards are complementary” (NRE, 2017: 9). Thus, despite the country’s highly technocratic approach to SIS-REDD+, it has an appreciable number of standards that emphasize equity and related rights-based concerns, in relation to its standards that stress more technical and administrative issues.

Hence, there is a stark difference in the extent to which ‘equity’ is prioritized in Malaysia’s safeguards standards as compared to in Indonesia’s. This substantial difference is exemplified by how frequently and thoroughly the theme of benefit sharing, or related concepts like ‘fairness’ or ‘rights’, come up in the text. In Indonesia’s report, ‘fair benefit sharing’ is referenced once as a way to “contribute to maintaining or enhancing the social economic wellbeing of indigenous and local communities “ (DCMoEF, 2015: 40). It is a criterion under the principle “Rights of Indigenous and Local Communities”. Beyond this, ‘equity’ related issues are not addressed in the summary of its strategy. Contrastingly, concepts related to ‘equity’ come up numerous times in Malaysia’s safeguard strategy. For example, three of the nine MC&I principles mention either “recognizing”, maintaining”, or enhancing” the ‘rights’ of forest-dependent communities. In addition to this, “Equitable Benefit Sharing Mechanism” is one of Malaysia’s governance main pillars, which details the country’s plan

to design a federal-state mechanism of distributing benefits in an “effective, inclusive, and transparent” manner (NRE, 2017: 10).

This difference reflects the countries’ contrasting national priorities and, thus, objectives for REDD+. How Indonesia and Malaysia differ in terms of their national priorities is best exemplified by how they evaluate forest policies and institutions for their SIS-REDD+. In the process of evaluating forest schemes, Malaysia adopted a “practical approach” to SIS-REDD+, which “understood the complexity of forest issues and their jurisdiction.” (NRE, 2017: 16) For this reason, forest management practices and forest management practices for certification were analyzed according to how “effective” they are and how well accounted for non-carbon issues related to ‘equity’ and respecting the rights of its diverse forest communities. The standards of the schemes that were adopted are detailed in Malaysia’s SIS-REDD+ report. As stated, these standards do incorporate such social considerations in their forestry policies, thus reflecting the country’s overarching priority to enact more sustainable forms of forest governance.

In Indonesia, “appropriate” forestry schemes were assessed according to three criteria: ‘relevance’ to the social safeguards, ‘limitations to scope’, and ‘effectiveness’. A system’s ‘relevance is defined as its “technical feasibility/potential for implementation” and “potential of effectiveness under ideal conditions” (DCMoEF, 2015: 17). Interestingly, policy instruments that were deemed ‘most relevant’ were voluntary certification standards used in the context of timber production, similar to Malaysia (DCMoEF, 2015: 17). Next on the ranking list were more technical, carbon-based policies tools, namely the “Strategic Environmental Assessment” (KLHS) and “High Conservation Value” (HCV). Factoring in scope and effectiveness, however, these tools had more leverage. Those regarded as being the “least relevant”, coincidentally are safeguard instruments that deal with more rights-based concerns regarding forest resources. These include: FPIC, “Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment” (SESA), the “sustainability management system for all production forest concessions in Indonesia” (PHPL); and the “timber legality verification system” (SVLK) (DGMoEF, 2015: 4). In other words, adopting standards from instruments that deal with non-carbon issues like the acknowledgement of rights and re-distribution of benefits are less prioritized by the state Indonesia.

7.2.2 Social Benefits

The extent to which social benefits are promoted or demanded is another interesting theme detected in the comparison. While both countries acknowledge that “enhancing the social benefits” to incentivize actors to act sustainably is a key non-carbon concern for REDD+, neither country makes it a requirement that these co-benefits of REDD+ be verified. Hence, “additionality” is not defined as a social concern for either REDD+ state. Nonetheless, both states do indicate having a synergetic relationship with parallel safeguarding frameworks at sub-national levels, which do consider social “additionality” a standard for REDD+ projects. For Indonesia, this relationship is underscored as a central part the “learning-by-doing” approach of its safeguarding strategy. In its report, Indonesia’s SIS-REDD+ is depicted as a ‘clearing house’ of information from various safeguards frameworks in Indonesia. Accordingly, through “better coherence and linkages with SIS-REDD+” they could “feed information of their implementation into SIS-REDD+ in the future” (DGMoEF,

2015: 24).

Malaysia and Indonesia's promotion of REDD+'s co-benefits, but reluctance to legislate them, can therefore be understood as 'neutral' approaches of safeguarding. This desire to appeal to all interests is reflected in the nations' ambiguously worded standards related to REDD+'s benefits. In Malaysia's strategy, for example, descriptions of how the social benefits will be addressed under the safeguard "enhancing social benefits" are supplemented with noncommittal words like "strive" to diversify the local economy and "encourage" the economic wellbeing of communities (NRE, 2017: 35). In comparison, descriptions of more technical goals, like "reducing risk of reversals", are more upfront; for example, it states, "forest government 'shall' be determined by..." or "frequency and intensity of monitoring shall be determined by..." (NRE, 2017: 36). Besides the relatively evasive wording of its standards, however, Malaysia's report doesn't have any further statements that suggest the country needs to appeal to diverse interests, or even that there are many diverse interests. Indonesia, contrastingly, makes it clear throughout its report that a "variety of safeguard frameworks is inevitable in Indonesia, where forest conditions and economic growth vary across the country and the people and cultures are diverse" (DGMoEF, 2015: 24). For this reason, REDD+ in the country is heavily reliant on an assortment of stakeholders. Therefore, ensuring "better governance and support from all stakeholders, especially donors" is key to "keep the momentum going" (DGMoEF, 2015: 34). Indonesia's very impartial stance is corroborated by its statement: "The development of SIS-REDD+ presented many challenges, yet they are far outweighed by the benefits an operational safeguards information system will provide as it promises better transparency and governance, not only in REDD+, but in the forestry sector in general. That is something all of us can value." (DGMoEF, 2015: 5).

7.2.3 Capacity to Harmonize

A final aspect, which corresponds with how each country prioritizes governance-related social concerns in comparison to the others, is the extent to which the country has the institutional capacity to "harmonize" these diverse conceptions of REDD+. In its report, Indonesia reiterates that one of the greatest challenges its SIS-REDD+ faces is finding out "how to make and keep the system operational at various levels, i.e. district, province, and national." (MoEF, 2015: 32). Accordingly, building human resources capacity and infrastructure at sub-national levels, and improving governance to allow effective data collection and reporting is regarded as the country's primary aspiration for REDD+. On top of this, the government recognizes that establishing an overarching "legal umbrella" is necessary for improving governance and sustaining support from its stakeholders (DGMoEF, 2015: 34).

The structure of the country's SIS-REDD+ framework as a "learn-by-doing" system, accentuates the apparent institutional weakness. The state goes so far as to acknowledge the potentials REDD+ safeguards have for reforming poor forest institutions and improving overall wellbeing of forest communities. Moreover, it recognizes that these reforms are conducive for REDD+ to be implemented in an effective and efficient manner. However, beyond associating itself with other safeguard frameworks in the country, stating that it seeks to "further understanding about the relationship and the importance of coherence between SIS-REDD+ and other safeguards frameworks", the government keeps a very reserved status

(DGMoEF, 2015: 34). For this reason, Indonesia both envisions SIS-REDD+ as “bridge” used to harmonize “safeguard interests at the international level with the local/ national level by internalizing global guidance within existing systems and mechanisms in Indonesia” (DGMoEF, 2015: 22). At the same time, it emphasizes the need for the international community to recognize this institutional challenge and that this limitation should be used “to boost negotiation and implementation of REDD+ safeguards at the international level” (DGMoEF, 2015: 22).

In contrast to Indonesia, Malaysia has relatively strong institutional capacity for addressing REDD+’s social safeguards. As stated in its report, Malaysia’s ‘National Forestry Policy’ provides “greater uniformity in the implementation strategies for the achievement of forest conservation, management as well as social and educational needs” (NRE, 2017: 15). “Managing the expectations of its various stakeholders, while not encroaching into their jurisdiction” is valued to such a high degree that it is one of the first “*Key Lessons from Malaysia to Be Shared with Other Countries*” (NRE, 2017: 24). Accordingly, MC&I and Aichi targets represent public and private policy tools, developed through a multi-stakeholder consultation process, which were constructed with the intention of “harmonizing different interests” (NRE, 2017: 23-24).

8 Discussion

In analyzing Indonesia and Malaysia's national safeguard information strategies, it is apparent that the two governments conceptualize REDD+ in dissimilar ways, albeit with similar intentions. As noted, one of the most distinctive differences between the two cases is the extent to which governance issues related to equity are addressed in comparison to more central governance concerns related to sequestering carbon as effectively and efficiently as possible. Compared to Indonesia, Malaysia's SIS-REDD+ has a stronger emphasis on making sure REDD+'s impacts are distributed equitably, and that they account for the rights of forest dwellers. This reflects a more 'rights-based approach. Ergo, the Malaysian government demonstrates a greater will to support more holistic development concerns than the Indonesian Government. Yet, similar to Indonesia, Malaysia puts less emphasis on safeguarding these equity considerations than it does on more technical, climate-mitigating ones. This suggests: for both countries, the most central objective of REDD+ is to establish a carbon-based PES. However, for Malaysia, pursuing these carbon-based goals means adapting them to account for the country's strong sustainable forest development priorities. In line with its grander plan to establish a form of sustainable forest management, therefore, Malaysia has subsumed REDD+ certifications processes into its stringent timber certification processes. Consequently, Malaysia is understood as conceptualizing REDD+ as both a tool to transition to a low carbon economy and to promote the sustainable development of its forests, at least more so than Indonesia does.

While the countries differ in how substantially they addressed equity, they are more similar in the extent to which they acknowledge REDD+'s social benefits. Both countries delimit social safeguards of REDD+ to include all but "additionality". In other words, although both countries recognize that promoting REDD+'s co-benefits is necessary to incentivize the climate policy tool, neither stipulates that such transformational change needs to be fulfilled as part of REDD+'s objective. For this reason, both countries can be seen as taking relatively 'neutral' approaches to safeguarding. By defining co-benefits as necessary conditions for receiving verifiable payments, however, the possibility of establishing a carbon-based PES is drastically limited—it reduces the objective of REDD+ to specific social aspirations that are not only hard to measure, but also not in every actor's interest.

In this light, the extent to which countries can substantially incorporate social concerns that require such transformative change, such as ensuring a fair distribution of benefits or an improved socio-economic or political status, in to the design of REDD+, is dubious. While it is one thing to standardize REDD+ actions that "enhance" or establish laws that "contribute to" improving the social and economic wellbeing of forest communities, it is another to make it a requirement. As critics assert, reifying such structural changes is a laborious process. Under the phased-based framework of REDD+, addressing such social concerns as part of national capacity building efforts could mean stultifying REDD+'s ultimate goal of establishing a carbon-based PES system altogether (Angelson and McNeill, 2012; Corbera and Schroeder, 2017). This is especially true for states with very weak institutional capacities and forest regulations prior to REDD+—where perennial instances of corruption and poor governance not only delegitimize its projects, but also scupper them from realizing any form

of an efficient and effective PES. For this reason, current REDD+ governance in many of these states has taken the form of strong civil society engagement, which is more characteristic of previous forest sustainability schemes (Rae et al., 2011).

At the same time, stakeholders argue that without addressing these structural changes, REDD+ risks exacerbating iniquitous power relationships, which, in turn, makes it more likely for powerful actors to shirk from making substantial commitments. Hence, making it easier for actors to pick up BAU practices in the guise of environmental responsibility. Not addressing these underlying drivers of unsustainable practices in climate change has been one of the biggest critiques of previous market-based forms of environmentalism, namely against similar top-down development projects instituted by World Bank (Griffiths, 2007; Gupta, 2012; Elliot, 2013; Corbera and Schroeder, 2017). As lessons from REDD+'s pilot projects show, it is these very structural problems that have hindered the time, cost efficiency and effectiveness of REDD+ schemes at the subnational and district levels (Angelson and McNeill, 2012; Fujisaki et al., 2016).

These normative debates highlight the paradoxical position of the state in the second phase of REDD+. Although legislating such social changes is more conducive to REDD+'s sustainability, it also drives away diverse interests in the climate mechanism. For the state, being a mediator between these interests in REDD+, this would be against its own interest. In other words, gaining as much financial and institutional support for REDD+ as possible is essential if its projects are to scale-up. However, if these supporters envision REDD+ in different ways, scaling up becomes an all-more contentious process.

The inhibited status of the state in the politics of REDD+'s design and implementation, thus, exemplifies greater global environmental governance issues related to institutional fragmentation. As Zelli and VanAsselt (2013) contend, the downside of REDD+'s fragmented governance is it exacerbates regulatory weaknesses between the state and other institutions that exhibit different standards and conditions for REDD+. While REDD+'s structure has been fairly successful in bridging some interests and furthering procedural aims, it has also made scaling up REDD+ actions and financing its overarching goal as a country-led PES nearly unattainable (Gupta et al., 2015: 355).

As demonstrated in the cases of Malaysia and Indonesia, efforts to appease all parties requires that countries remain neutral when acknowledging certain social concerns in REDD+. However, this neutrality is also relative; Malaysia's SIS-REDD+ stresses non-carbon issues related to equity—and, therefore, a more rights-based approach—far more than Indonesia's does. This apparent difference can be seen as dependent, at least partially, on whether, and to what extent, the country can harmonize the various expectations of REDD+ stakeholders. In Malaysia's case, more transformative change in forest governance was enacted prior to REDD+'s arrival. Accordingly, this makes it easier for REDD+ to espouse priorities for more rights-based, non-carbon related concerns into its objectives. In effect, it has greater institutional capacity to synchronize REDD+'s various climatic, financial, and more holistic development interests. In Indonesia's case, contrastingly, REDD+ was adopted into contexts of, historically, poor forest governance. As consequence, the state makes it clear that it lacks the human, institutional, technical, and financial capacity to harmonize such interests. This lack of capacity is best exemplified with the state's self-constructed safeguard framework, which they define as a "learning process". Accordingly, Indonesia acknowledges that while addressing non-carbon concerns related to more transformative change is beyond national jurisdiction, it is addressed by parallel safeguarding initiatives.

In light of the cases of Indonesia and Malaysia, the prospect of REDD+ being a ‘win-win’ solution, ultimately depends on the contexts and capacity of its participating countries. In Malaysia’s case, its conception of REDD+ reflects this ‘win-win’ objective—that is, it operationalizes its ‘social’ safeguards as a way to ensure both the climate mitigating and sustainable development promoting potentials of REDD+. Its potential as a ‘win-win’ solution, however, is the product of its historical, socio-political and economic contexts, which has allowed a more hospitable condition for REDD+. Contrastingly, in Indonesia’s case, REDD+ is envisaged as more of a tool for transitioning to a low carbon economy than it is as a sustainer of greater sustainable forest reforms. In other words, while it too operationalizes its ‘social’ safeguards as a way to ensure both carbon rationales and non-carbon rationales are accounted for, it does this to a less substantial and legitimate degree than Malaysia does. The case of Indonesia, therefore, reflects greater GHG issues related to addressing climate change in the contexts of a weak state, and a multitude of conflicting actors. Despite the large role it could have in cutting emissions, in the sporadic state that it is in now, Indonesia poses less potential as a ‘win-win’ in the near future. Considering Malaysia was able to focus more on rights-based solutions because it already had the infrastructure, however, it could be that supplementing REDD+’s current structure with additional phases dedicated to infrastructure- and then society-building could potentially be more effective in maintaining the ‘momentum’ of similar REDD+ schemes in the future. In any case, related questions as to whether these countries will scale-up, and if so how it will do so, are crucial in furthering research on global governance issues as it relates to climate policy.

9 Conclusion

In this paper, I have explored the trajectory of REDD+ in the Indonesia and Malaysia according to how it is conceptualized in national policy discourse. Furthermore, I have analyzed the implications these national conceptions of REDD+ have for its prospect as a ‘win-win’ solution in the respective countries, considering its ultimately fragmented structure of governance. To understand how Malaysia and Indonesia conceptualize REDD+, and whether this aligns with its ‘win-win’ proposition, I have chosen to focus on how each country operationalizes REDD+’s ‘social’ safeguards. In doing so, I have discerned which ‘non-carbon’ concerns are acknowledged as a national concern for REDD+ and, subsequently, how these ‘non-carbon’ concerns are prioritized in comparison with those that align with more carbon-related concerns.

As it can be seen, while both Indonesia and Malaysia defined REDD+’s ‘social’ safeguards in the same way, the two countries differed in the extent to which they prioritized these safeguards. More specifically, safeguards related to making existing institutions more coordinated, such as “consistency with international agreements”, “transparent and effective governance”, “stakeholder participation” and “respect of knowledge...indigenous peoples”, were most prioritized for both states. Contrastingly, safeguards that fostered more transformative change of these institutions, such as “equity”, “enhancement of social benefits”, and “additionality” were prioritized to a far lesser extent, and varied considerably between the states. I understood the variable ways that these latter safeguards were prioritized, therefore, as the degree to which Malaysia and Indonesia conceptualize REDD+ from a more neutral versus from a more rights-based approach. In doing so, I identified several themes, which helped to delineate how each country conceptualizes REDD+.

First, while both countries advocate transformative reforms as incentives of REDD+, they remain relatively passive in legislating such changes. In other words, the countries’ failure to address social additionality reflected a more ‘neutral’ position on their behalf. This neutrality, in turn, accentuates the conflicted position of the state as an actor in the capacity building phases of REDD+. Second, in spite of this, Malaysia has a significantly stronger emphasis on ‘equity’ than Indonesia does, which reflects a more rights-based approach on their behalf. This stress on equity, and thus more sustainable governance, can be attributed to its history of forest management. This, in turn, segues into the final theme I discerned. This is: the relative capacity of the two countries to harmonize REDD+’s diverse interests. In other words, the diffusiveness of interests in a country affects where they can, and will, put emphasis. In the case of Indonesia, which has many diverse interests but little capacity to harmonize them, focusing on infrastructure is of utmost priority if the focus of REDD+ is not to be lost. Contrastingly, in the case of Malaysia, which has already gone through this step in their history of forest management, harmonizing interests is less of a priority than focusing on more holistic development goals. In light of these findings, I contend: the prospect of REDD+ as ‘win-win’ climate solution, at least as it can be discerned from the gauge national policy, is largely contingent on the historical contexts of a participating country’s forest governance, and on its current institutional and societal capacities.

10 References

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