

Review of: "“Saving the Forest” with a REDD+ Project: Socio-Ecological Repercussions on Indigenous People in Cambodia"

Ajree Ducol Malawani¹

¹ Mindanao State University - Iligan Institute of Technology

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The article titled "Saving the Forest with a REDD+ Project: Socio-Ecological Repercussions on Indigenous People in Cambodia" by Frédéric Bourdier presents a comprehensive examination of the socio-economic and ecological impacts of a REDD+ project on indigenous communities in Cambodia. The study is well-structured, offering a detailed analysis of various themes that emerged from the experiences of the villagers involved in the conservation efforts.

The findings and discussions section presents a nuanced exploration of key themes such as historical legacies, deforestation crises, institutional and corporate dynamics, resource management as a power struggle, and the impact of top-down conservation practices on vernacular knowledge. The inclusion of multiple perspectives, from indigenous communities to conservation protagonists, enriches the analysis.

The conclusion aptly synthesizes the research outcomes, critically evaluating the proclaimed successes of REDD+ projects in the context of the extractive industries and carbon markets. The article questions the efficacy of carbon credits and highlights the potential negative consequences for indigenous populations, suggesting that the focus on forest preservation may inadvertently lead to the elimination of traditional management methods of natural resources by indigenous peoples.

The article is well-supported with citations, and the inclusion of references to specific reports and studies adds depth to the arguments presented. Frédéric Bourdier's credentials and affiliation with IRD and the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne lend academic authority to the work.

Few points could enhance the article:

1. **Clarity on Data Sources:** While the methodology outlines ethnographic surveys, it would be beneficial to provide more details on the number of participants, selection criteria, and specific methods employed.
2. **Consideration of Counterarguments:** To strengthen the article's academic rigour, acknowledging potential counterarguments or alternative viewpoints could add depth to the analysis.
3. **Broader Contextualization:** Providing a broader context within the Southeast Asian region and considering how Cambodia's REDD+ project compares with similar initiatives in neighbouring countries would enhance the article's

relevance and impact.

Nonetheless, this article makes a significant contribution to the discourse on conservation, indigenous rights, and environmental justice.