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"Intimate Exclusions from the REDD+ forests of Sungai Lamandau, Indonesia"

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Due to land-use conversions for palm oil, mining and other extractive industries, Indonesia remains the largest contributor of greenhouse gases from primary forest loss in the world. Nowhere are solutions to large-scale forest loss more urgently required. To reverse the trend, the Government of Indonesia is banking on carbon market mechanisms like the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) programme. REDD+ is designed to enable the provision of economic compensations to protect forests by making them more valuable standing than cut down. The Sungai Lamandau REDD+ demonstration activity is unique in Indonesia as the first REDD+ project officially proposed by a community group upon land they hope to manage autonomously. Despite the project's "bottom-up" architecture, for some, access to Sungai Lamandau's REDD+ benefits remain exclusive. These exclusions are not only something imposed by powerful external actors, but has emerged endogenously, through the everyday functioning of gendered market relations, and community-based socio-environmental and ethno-territorial movements. This paper adopts a feminist-inspired intimacy-geopolitics to explore the nuanced powers of exclusion used by Sungai Lamandau's farmers to access the project's non-monetary REDD+ benefits. The paper focuses on "intimate exclusions" – everyday processes of accumulation and dispossession among villagers and small-holders. In doing so, it highlights the hazards of developing REDD+ projects structured with limited sympathy for marginalised actors. Although the seemingly "inclusive" benefits sharing structure attracted excellent ethical carbon credit ratings, the project still failed to address (and even exacerbated) existing inequalities – a root cause of Sungai Lamandau's forest degradation. (Text from author's abstract)

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