

The politics of co-production: participation, power, and transformation

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Abstract

The global environmental change research community that engages with Indigenous knowledge holders commonly practice engagement in an extractive way: knowledge is treated as data that can be aggregated and understood in abstract and universal form. This assumes that knowledge and governance are separate and gives knowledge co-production the appearance of playing an informative and facilitative role in global environmental change governance. But seeking Indigenous knowledge to inform environmental decision-making implies that Indigenous peoples are stakeholders as opposed to self-determining nations with rights and responsibilities regarding their knowledge systems and lands. Indigenous sovereignty is not respected when knowledge is treated as mere data for collective decision-making. This paper brings literatures on knowledge co-production together with Indigenous knowledge, research, and environmental governance to explain why co-production scholars must move away from seeking to better 'integrate' Indigenous knowledges into western science and make way for Indigenous research leadership.

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