

Chronicle of a Disaster Foretold? REDD with Carbon Trading

September 2008



“Frankly, this debate just makes me want to scream. The clock is moving. They are slashing and burning and cutting the forests of the world. It may be a quarter of global warming and we can get the rate to two per cent simply by inventing a preservation credit and making that forest have value in other ways. Who loses when we do that?”

Richard Sandor

Derivatives trader, economics professor,
and founder of Chicago Climate Exchange
25 February 2008



“An effective post-Kyoto agreement must include a comprehensive system that allows for the accounting of land-use-related emissions and removals and establishes incentives to reduce emissions from deforestation.”

Charlotte Streck
Lawyer, ex-World Bank staff
and private carbon consultant

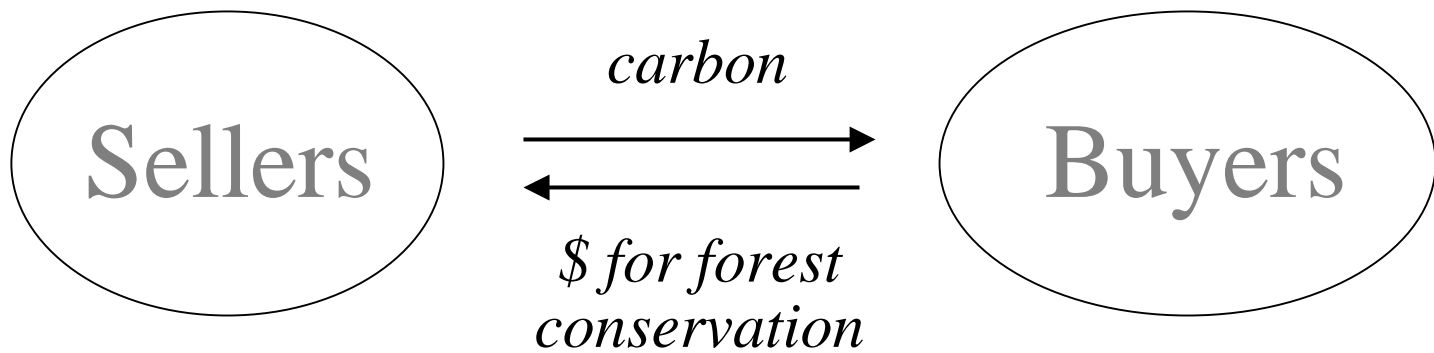
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“ . . . making that forest have value . . . ”

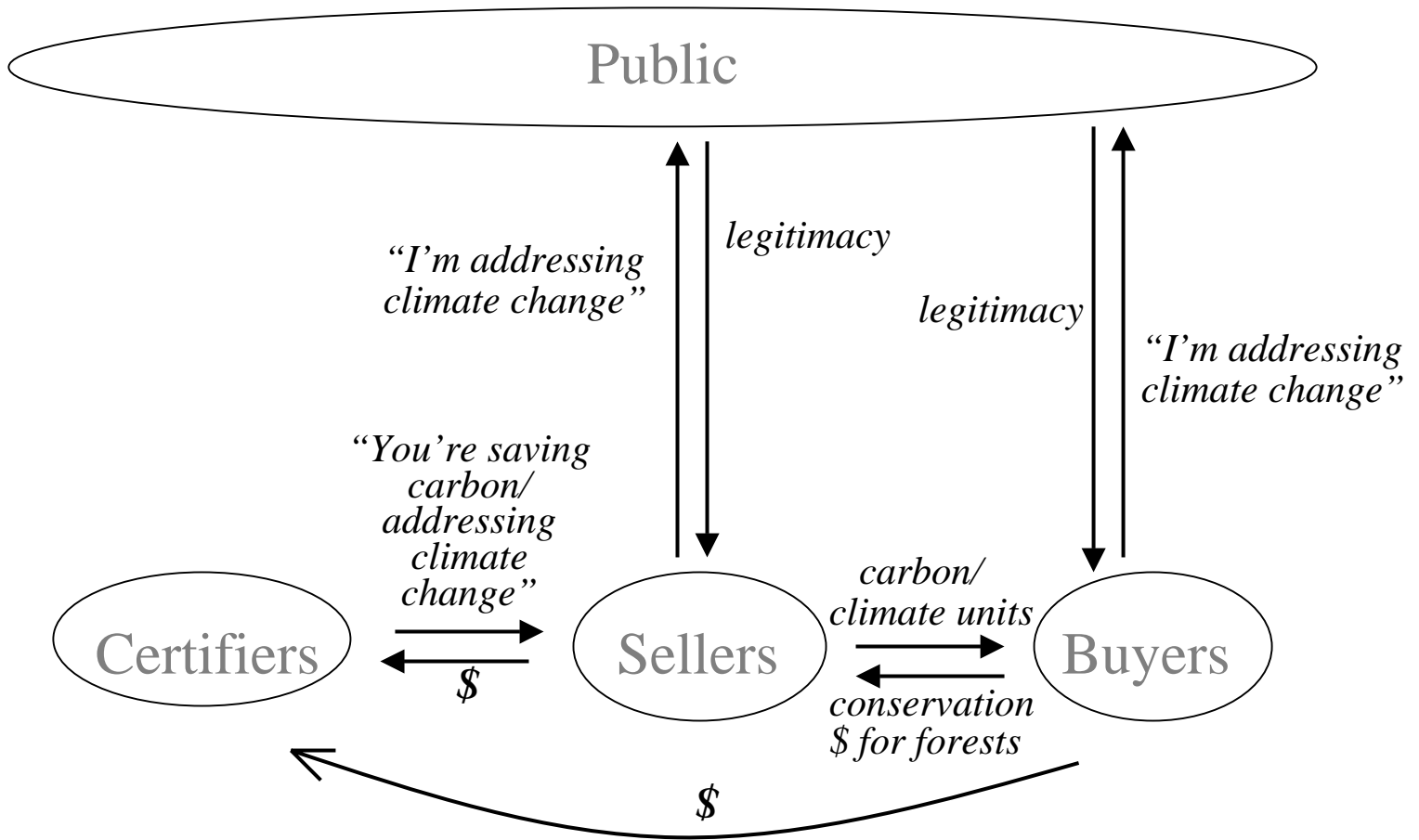
“ . . . accounting of land-use-related emissions and removals . . . ”

What do Sandor and Streck mean? Can they be sure themselves?

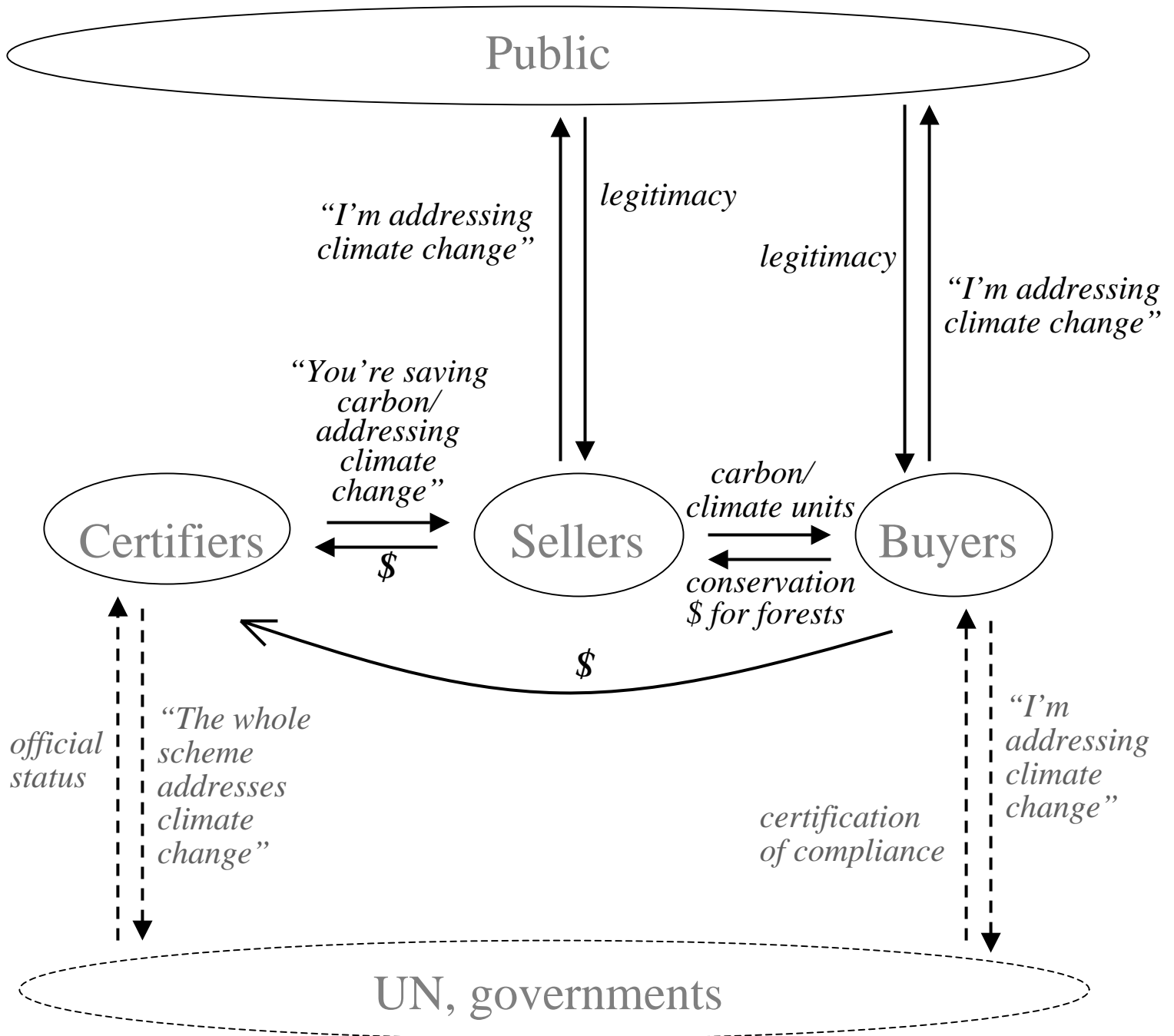
Their schemes imply new relationships ...
new entities ... new actors ... a re-
engineered society ... starting with ...



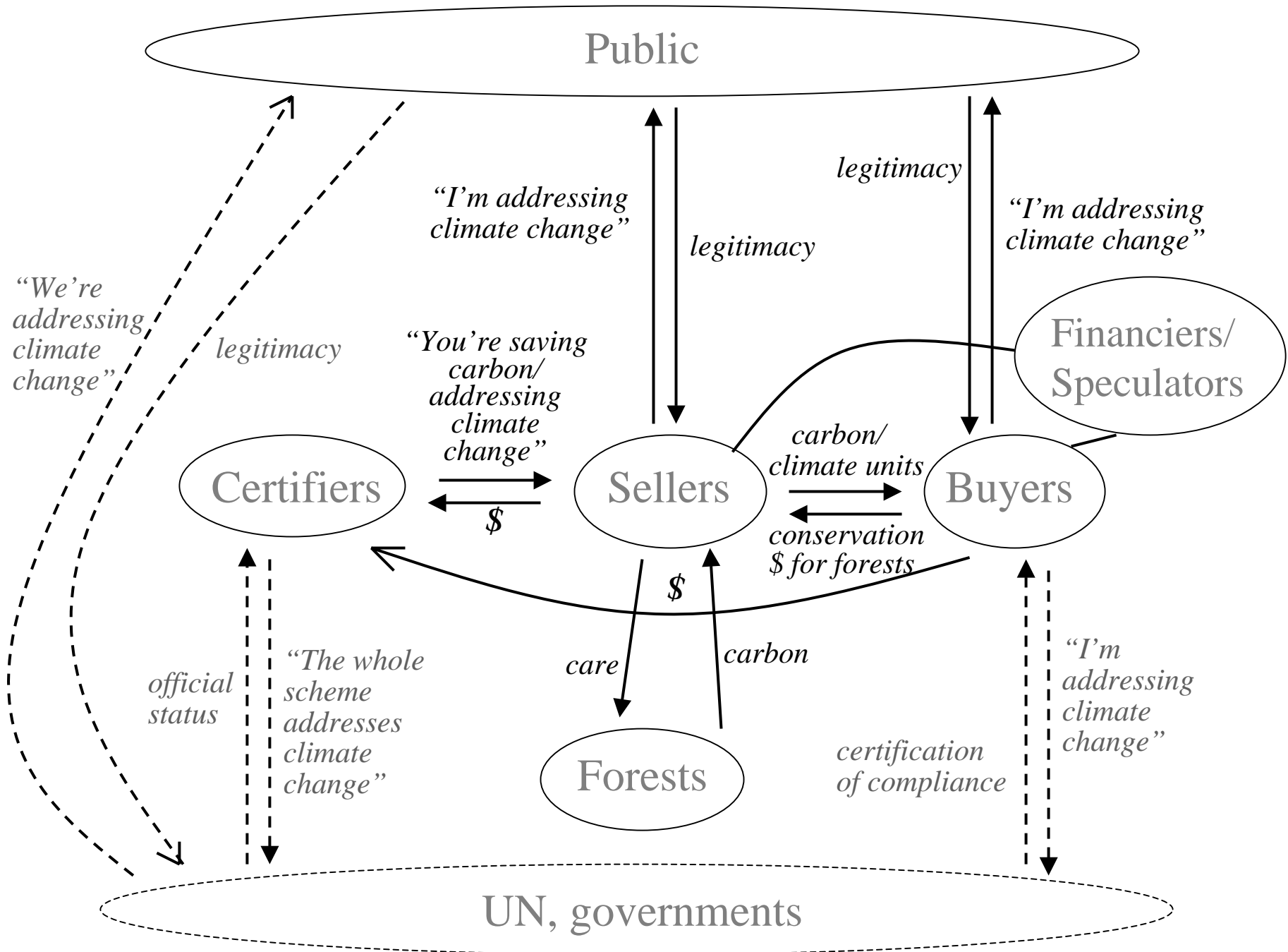
... and quickly involving also ...



... and not to forget ...



. . . and then . . .



“Well, that’s fine!” say proponents.

2 actors?

“Win-win situation!”

7 actors?

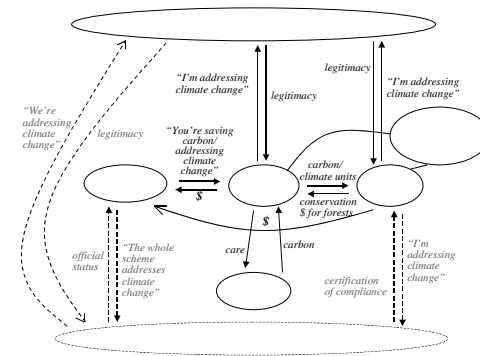
“Win-win-win-win-win-win-win-win-win situation!”

x actors?

“Win ^{x} situation!!”

But do Sandor, Streck, Nicholas Stern and the rest have any appreciable *power* to determine what these new relationships, entities and actors actually are? Can they decide who the sellers will be, what the commodity will be, how hedge fund managers will act, how forest soils will react, etc.?

No. That will be up to the collective that responds to and remolds the stimulus

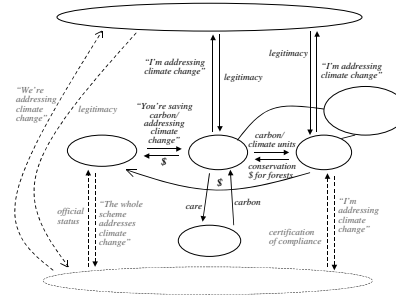


I.e. buyers, certifiers, indigenous peoples, consultants, dipterocarp or mahogany trees, ministries, lawyers, forest soils, technicians, politicians, chance, carbon molecules, etc. etc.

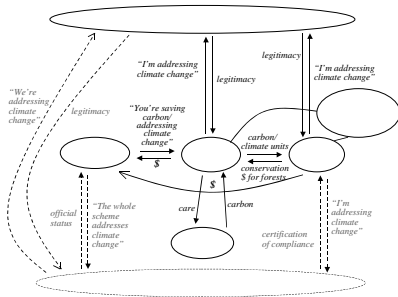


No Carbon
Market for
FOREST

... Which is why

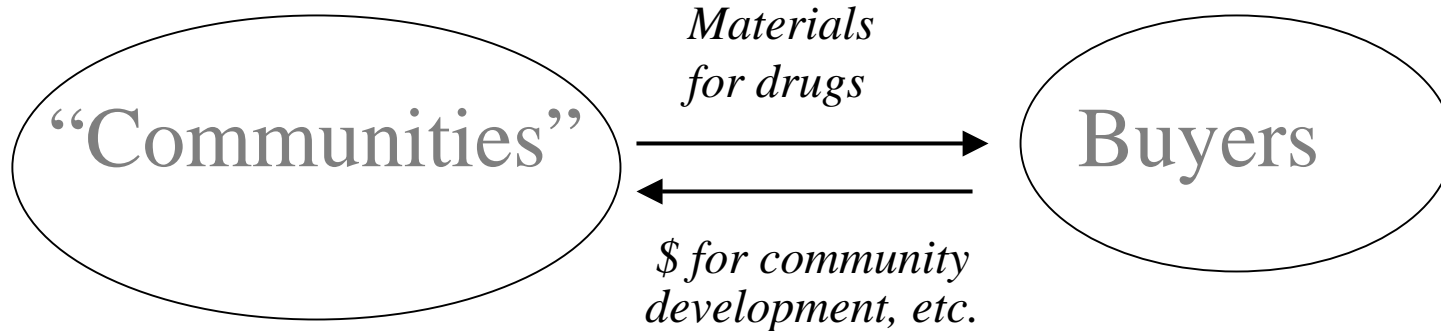


is not a model
not a scheme
not a blueprint



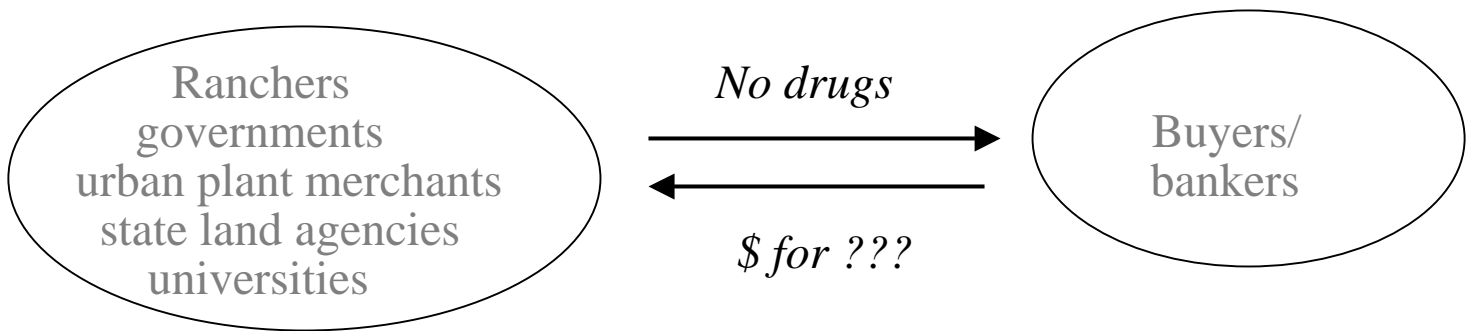
is an *event* in a techno-political and socio-natural struggle.

Example: bioprospecting's dream

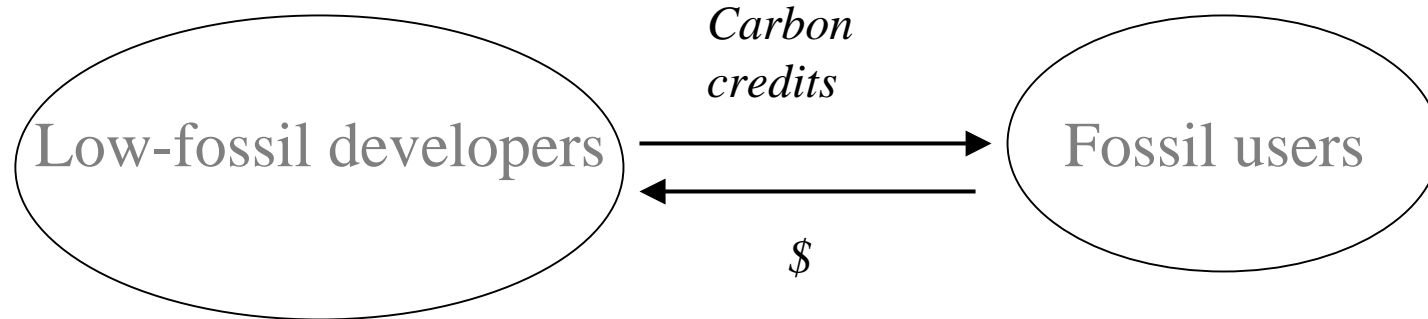


But after negotiation, power plays, etc.,
the actual outcome was different:

Bioprospecting's outcome

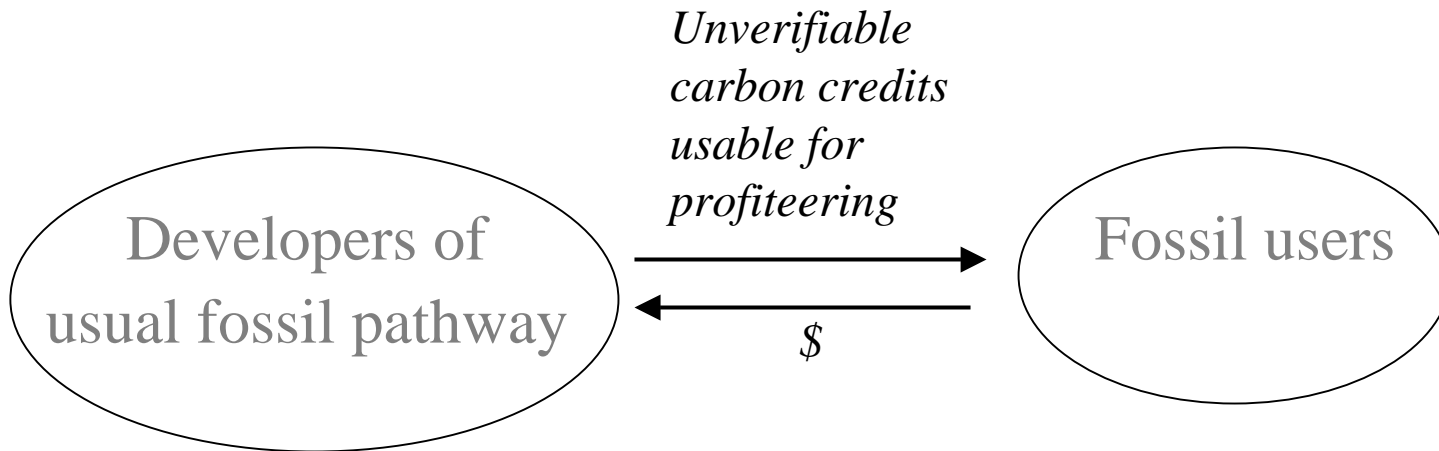


CDM's dream



But after negotiation, power plays, etc.,
the actual outcome was different:

CDM's outcome



One moral of the story

- Action is not the implementation of schemes.
- When talking about “alternatives”, we should be talking about alternative *trajectories*, not alternative *schemes*.