

MRV: a social science perspective

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- MRV: representing the reality of the forest, including carbon and the diversity of human and non human life.
- *Representation requires legitimacy, not (just) 'truth'*
- STS perspective
- Science as a social practice
- Pathologies and blind spots

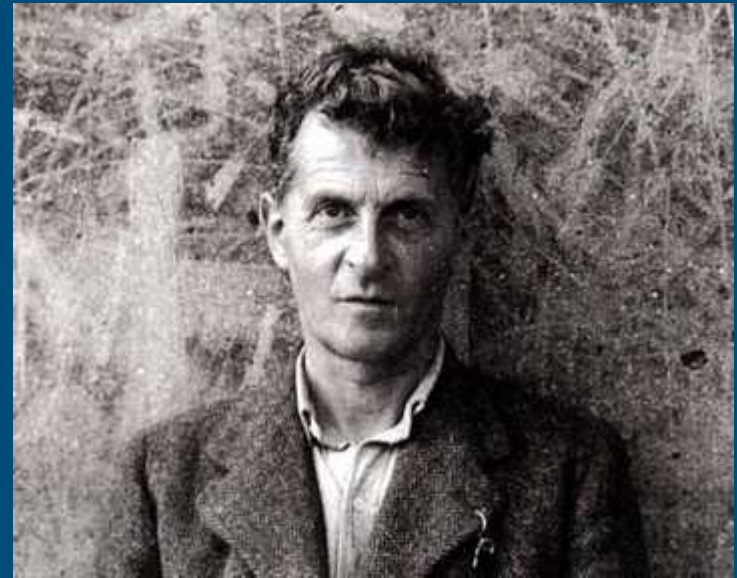
Standards and definitions

A rule can never contain the rules for following the rule

Wittgenstein

Philosophical investigations

Endless regressive search for definitions and rules for rules for rules.....etc



Sidetracking politics

“THE PERFECT
IS THE ENEMY
OF THE
GOOD”
- VOLTAIRE



Squables about what to include in MRV cannot be understood as a search for perfection, they are political



Representations are selective

- ✿ Lack of knowledge
- ✿ Uncertainties
- ✿ Technological limitations

They are not just (imperfect) mirrors

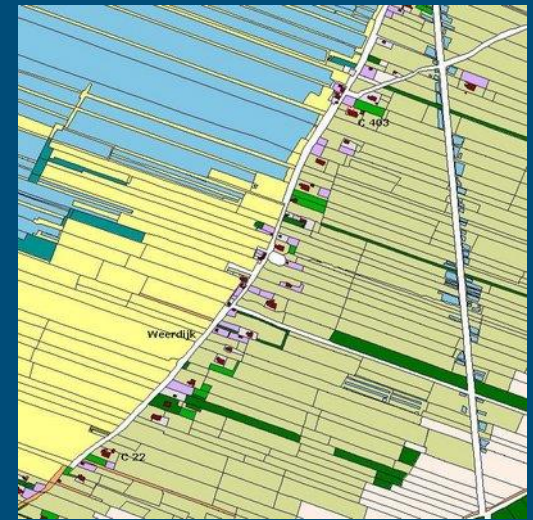
- ✿ They *do work*
- ✿ *World making*

MRV and the constitution of the forest

- MRV requires rendering the forest, including carbon and human and non human diversity legible
- In terms that are relevant in a specific social context
- Imposing a classification system that specifies the relevant categories to be included
- Selecting indicators as proxies

Maps did not successfully represent [...] the society they depicted, nor were they intended to; they represented only that slice of it that interested the official observer. They were, moreover, not just maps. Rather, they were maps that, when allied with state power, would enable much of the reality they depicted to be remade in their image

Scott, 1998, Seeing like a State



The politics of indicators

- MRV is not just a tool but the practical materialization of REDD
- Political question of what and whose realities are made to count
- Strategic behaviour to optimize indicator values (with intended and unintended effects)

- Make MRV relevant and legitimate on multiple scales
- Resist urges for hyperstandardization
- Allow local variation
- Don't let questions of knowledge overshadow the more important task of climate mitigation and adaptation
- Allow adaption and reflection to minimize perverse effects
- Guarantee flows of knowledge, perspectives and desires from local to global and vice versa

Turnhout et al. 2012 Nature

Gupta et al. 2012 COSUST

Turnhout et al. 2013 Conservation Letters