www.elsevier.com/locate/worlddev

CrossMark

Beyond "Landscape" in REDD+: The Imperative for "Territory"

MICHAEL K. MCCALL[*]

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Morelia, Mexico

Summary. — This paper problematizes the use of the "landscape" concept as the perspective in forest governance and REDD+ discourse, especially as it affects ownership claims and management of forest space. This study advocates the contrasting concept of "territory" as essential to spatial justice in community-held forest lands and for effectivity in REDD+ projects. Whereas landscape in REDD+ discourse is a basic unit of resolution for biophysical, especially conservationist, analysis; territory refers to spatial units embedded in tenurial entitlements, and thus in governance and the execution of management.

The study critically considers case studies and conceptual approaches in REDD+ and Climate Smart Landscapes projects and their commitment to landscape, or territory, as the spatial governance unit. The review highlights some promising partial steps toward "territorialization" as a good practice, but finds that most do not follow up the implications for governance.

The paper asserts that "landscape" as an analytical understanding of forest peoples' space contains serious defects—it does not set up the essential architecture and mechanisms for social owning and holistic management of designated (forest) space as territory, it does not address the contestations around "whose territory?", and a "landscape" discourse can obfuscate the actual practice of REDD+ programs.

"Territorialization" would involve situating legitimate land users' rights at the core of REDD+ spatial planning and implementation. "Forest landscapes as territories" would legitimize the entitlements of forest peoples to govern their own lands, with the responsibilities and rewards of their experience of effective management. The community and its social territorial space would become the definitive spatial unit for operationalizing REDD+, rather than the ecological unit or watershed, by prioritizing upwardly institutionalized territory over bio-physical spatializations of landscape. A territorial perspective should shift some power away from global and national policy-setters to local actors (not only registered landowners), as central in REDD+ governance.
© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Key words — REDD+, landscape, territorialization, forest governance, indigenous local communities, Latin America

1. OVERVIEW

Developments in UNFCCC and REDD+[1] forums utilize a set of conceptual and governance positions on *landscape* emanating from the forest conservation side of global climate change discourse. The paper first explores the concept of *landscape* as employed in the REDD+ world, where it is interpreted as shorthand for a multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary approach to rural resource analysis, and framed as a boundary approach to handle the reality that land spaces are holistic, interconnected, dynamic, complex problem settings (Section 2).

Section 3 critiques significant deficiencies and limitations of the neo-landscape concept as it is intended for holistic planning and integrated forest management in REDD+ programs, and which may render it unfit for purpose. Prominent among these is that the "holistic approaches" in REDD+ landscape units do not accommodate the need to manage and control the land, not just analyze it. This leads into discussion of (collective) ownership and entitlement issues and the proposition that "(forest) people + their landscape = their territory".

Section 4 introduces the essential need for a territorial spatial unit approach to planning and management, in place of landscape spatial units. The primary argument raised is the epistemological distinctions between "landscape for analysis" and "territory for governance and management". Beyond this are the issues concerning who has the rights, responsibilities and capacities for effective forest management under REDD+.

Section 5 critically reviews a range of approaches and recommendations developed in the REDD+ landscape discourse toward reconciling "landscape" and "territory" for effective governance in REDD+ programs. Some of these approaches are embodied in the current REDD+ safeguards, while others are still being experimented with in pilot projects and guidelines; they are summarized in Table 2.

The critiques are revisited in Section 6: *landscape* is essential for ecological and social analysis, but it does not yet form a modality of governance for effective holistic management. The architecture needed for that is *territorial*, to recognize ownership and therefore responsibilities. Related contentions are that REDD+ projects can be complicit in appropriation of local territories, and that the language of *landscape* in REDD+ discourse can obfuscate the rights and capacities of forest communities.

2. LANDSCAPE IN REDD+: A DIFFUSE SPACE FOR NEGOTIATING CLIMATE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

(a) *The landscape concept in REDD+ and UNFCCC discourse*

Re-visiting the dominant discourse and documentation of REDD+ in the recent Climate Change Conventions in Doha 2012, Warsaw 2013, Lima 2014, and Paris 2015, especially the Global Landscape Forums, provides the context for interrogating *landscape* as a concept, an approach, and a toolbox. The "landscape approaches" found in these framings have been put forward as the stratagem to "end the debate that pits agriculture against forests" (Buizer, Humphreys, & de Jong, 2014; Zwick, 2013; GLF, 2013, 2014a, 2014b). This is not to say that the discourse proponents do not recognize the challenges of the term—for instance, the recognition that while putative landscape frameworks have "…led to a wealth of theoretical knowledge, we remain struggling for evidence of

successful landscape interventions on the ground" (GLF, 2014b). Nevertheless the limited evidence alluded to includes intensive/extensive case studies, many from researchers in CIFOR and ICRAF, such as Cotula and Mayers (2009), Larson, Brockhaus, and Sunderlin (2012, chap. 9), Larson et al. (2013), Sayer et al. (2013), Scherr, Shames, and Friedman (2013), Reed, Deakin, and Sunderland (2015), Naughton-Treves and Wendland (2014), Sunderlin et al. (2014), Sills et al. (2014), Minang, van Noordwijk, et al. (2015), Minang, Duguma, van Noordwijk, Prabhu, and Freeman (2015, chap. 27), and Freeman, Duguma, and Minang (2015). The findings generated in these studies are considered in this paper and highlighted in Table 2.

This approach to working with rural (natural) resources comes out of the very broad consensus that stronger integrated approaches and methodologies are needed for handling the interconnected problems of forest degradation, lower productivity, loss of natural capital, loss of carbon sequestration capacity, etc., and from the experiences of years of generously funded, under-achieving projects. The concept that many agencies see as the delivery system for this approach is "landscapes", implying the integration of sectors—forests, agriculture, agroforestry, food, biodiversity, environmental conservation, farming systems, settlements, rural services, livelihoods, and of the delivery systems of institutions, funds, policies and programs. Thus, one driver is scientists' concerns for effective sectoral interaction or integration—or at least better communication and coordination among scientists and policy-makers (e.g., Sayer et al., 2013). There is the recognition that landscapes are multi-actored, multi-purpose, and multi- "nested"-scaled, and usually an assumption of polycentrism, with "no single actor…in charge" (Kusters, 2015, p. 11).

The actual term "landscape" was not tightly defined at early UNFCCC meetings, beyond its convenience as a supposedly holistic, integrated approach. Landscape is described as aiming to go beyond reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), and even beyond REDD+ (conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, and sustainable forest management) by shifting the focus beyond just capturing carbon in trees. Landscape is interpreted in REDD discourse as being inclusive and integrative—all actors, all livelihoods, all spaces; or reciprocally as polycentric with no single actor in charge (Duchelle et al., 2014; Kusters, 2015; Nagendra & Ostrom, 2012), thus, multi-actor, multi-purpose, "nested" scales. Any specific location is always part of a mosaic and probably of several landscapes of different scales, and complicating this, there are layers of contemporaneous governance situations. It is defined more by what it is not —i.e., that the "landscape approach" is not focused only on trees and forests.

The planning argument to support this is that "landscape approaches" are supposed to provide tools and concepts for managing social, economic, and environmental objectives in places where agriculture, mining and other productive land uses compete with the environmental and biodiversity goals. The landscape approach has been recommended to facilitate cross-sector planning in National Adaptation Plans and especially in watersheds (GLF, 2013, pp.10–11; van Noordwijk et al., 2015, chap. 13). The bulk of the landscape discourse in REDD+ however, rarely approaches the fundamental questions of the responsibility, entitlements and government of forest space, i.e., territory. Rather, it focuses on the application of "landscape" as a science-driven tool for analyzing ecosystem and inter-sectoral relationships. As Reed et al. (2015) say, "Landscape approaches [in the climate change/REDD+ discourse] are [still] primarily rooted in conservation and the science of landscape ecology" (p. 2).

In 2015, the term landscape continues to be difficult to define succinctly—there are many components to it, though a consensus is developing within the REDD+/climate change sphere. A landscape can be defined as a complex social-ecological system, a mosaic of different land uses but with a characteristic configuration, boundaries can be discrete or fuzzy, there can be multiple overlapping boundaries of polycentric responsibilities related to both social and ecological dimensions, and the landscape itself will be largely context-dependent. (This is adapted from Denier et al., 2015, p. 26; Freeman et al., 2015, p. 26; Kusters, 2015, pp. 10–11; Scherr et al., 2013, p. 2). What is significant to the argument in this paper is the privileging of overlapping fuzzy boundaries and the complexity of disciplines and sectors. These are key to the following critique of landscape vis-à-vis territory as an effectual management tool.

(b) Landscape as boundary object and analytic tool in REDD+

Landscape acts as a widely employed "boundary concept" in the forest governance and REDD+ discourse (Clark et al., 2011; Cohen, 2012; Hoppe, Wesselink, & Cairns, 2013). In this manifestation, "landscape" is not tightly defined; thus actors—even though they are contesting other principles— can make use of the fuzzy, encompassing term, landscape which is broad enough to satisfy epistemic communities of ecologists, foresters, agriculturalists, and planners, and yet is flexible and plastic enough to be accepted and employed differently by them. A desirable feature of this, as with any boundary object, is its perceptible visibility; people—planners, scientists, administrators, politicians—can see and feel a landscape, even though they hold different interpretations of the image.

Thus despite its lack of clarity, but with a general accordance not to cause disruptions by defining it—i.e., by exploiting its "constructive ambiguity" (Denier et al., 2015; Freeman et al., 2015; Sayer et al., 2013; van Noordwijk et al., 2015, chap. 13)—it has been widely employed in actual UNFCCC discussions and sessions for the past several years. Early instances in the UNFCCC included Technical Session 2.9: Landscapes—a Holistic Approach to Systems in Climate Change, and Discussion Forum 8: Sustainable Landscapes, Food Security and Adapting to Climate Change (GLF, 2013). Many agencies have been drawn to the general term, e.g., GCP, JICA, ODI, the CFP, UNREDD, Globe International, World Bank, and significantly CIFOR and ICRAF, who are leading efforts to mainstream "landscape" in REDD+ and in environmental management. National agencies also recognize the political benefits of such a boundary term which works with universal acceptables like "stakeholder" or "integrative" (Freeman et al., 2015; Zwick, 2013).

The boundary object nature of the concept is well illustrated when trying to gauge the size of a landscape. Although 'landscapes are always within a given area' (Reed et al., 2015; Sayer et al., 2013), there is no singular "landscape scale"; rather it depends on the nature of the specific objects and interaction processes (Minang, Duguma, Alegami, & van Noordwijk, 2015, chap. 9; Zimmerer, 2006, p. 66). UNFCCC documents do not delimit absolutely the scale of a landscape; nevertheless the CGIAR 'Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security' program has proposed it as a fuzzily delimited kilometers-wide area, corresponding to the "human-scale" landscape. This follows closely the field of landscape ecology: a landscape is a more or less well-defined and bordered piece of land that