

Our common future? Cross-scalar scenario analysis for social-ecological sustainability of the Guiana Shield, South America

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Abstract

Scenarios help build a shared understanding of potential futures and allow us to engage with how interventions or activities may impact on people and the environment. There are many scenario sets that have been developed at the global and regional level, but to a lesser extent at the national and local levels. Yet fewer studies have explicitly linked imagined futures at different social-ecological scales. In this paper, we discuss how scenario analysis was used with indigenous communities and national level stakeholders in Guyana, South America, to explore context specific futures in relation to linked social-ecological systems. These futures were then analysed against published regional (Amazonian) and international scenarios using a qualitative coding approach and supported by quantitative factorial analysis. This allowed us to develop a matrix of multi-scalar scenarios, showing how scenarios at all scales interact. From this, we were able to identify virtuous and vicious cycles amongst the different scales where developments produced feedbacks to make situations worse, better or counteract change at other levels. Our results show that there is considerable mismatch between the different scales of analysis, with the national scale playing a key role as mediator. In addition, we highlight the importance of focusing on the root causes shaping futures as well as participatory forms of scenario development in order to provide better policy and decision support, and stimulate engagement at all levels of organisation in the process of change.

Key words: participatory scenarios; cross-scalar; Guiana Shield; Guyana; indigenous; stakeholders

1. Introduction

Ecosystem management and governance across the developing world is facing an increasingly unpredictable and dynamic future. Not only are there challenges coming from within society (e.g. fragmentation and unrest amongst ethnic, institutional and socio-economic lines), but also from national and international development policy (exemplified by the explosion in conflicting objectives amongst development finance, from direct investment in extractive industries and infrastructure, to narcotics/terrorism security, free trade and climate change mitigation and adaptation financing). This is overlaid by the rapid change in the natural environment itself with escalating non-linear abrupt climate disruption such as extreme flood and drought events and accelerating natural resource depletions leading to spikes in key commodity prices.

There is, at the same time, recognition that complexity, uncertainty and change is inherent in the management of social-ecological systems and many problems emerging from these situations could therefore be described as 'wicked' (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Brown et al., 2010). Wicked problems seem intractable and often involve the convergence of multiple social and ecological crises at different scales (e.g. Berkes and Folke, 1998; Gunderson and Holling, 2002). Part of this complexity arises from different interest groups – public, private, government, community, individual, collective - all vying for their voices and agendas to be considered in decision-making. Effective and more equitable management of social-ecological systems, therefore, requires analysis at multiple levels of governance, their inter-connections and the competing values and perspectives across scales.

This is particularly relevant in the Guiana Shield, South America, a region covering 2.5 million km² extending from Colombia in the west, through to the Venezuelan states of Delta Amacuro, Bolívar and Amazonas, all of Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana, and into the Brazilian States of Pará, Roraima, Amazonas and Amapá (Hammond, 2005) (Figure 1). As well as containing 10-15% of the world's fresh water reserves, a highly endemic biodiversity and richness in indigenous cultures, the Guiana Shield is part of the world's largest contiguous block of tropical forest, characterised by the highest percent of forest cover and lowest rate of deforestation on the planet, which is in stark contrast to the devastating deforestation evident in the southern and western parts of the Amazon basin. As such, the Guiana Shield has been at the centre of emerging new forces acting to modify and/or repartition access to, and exploitation of, its social-ecological systems.

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At the forefront are initiatives in the global battle against climate change, such as Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), as manifested by international programs including Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). Currently, Colombia, Guyana and Suriname are participating in the REDD+ United Nations readiness process (FCPF, 2013). Although these schemes may hold significant promise for conservation, there are still great uncertainties with regards to which groups will benefit, with some critics arguing that these initiatives may potentially diminish the power of local communities for controlling the management of their own natural resources. For example, procedures of stakeholder consultation which aim to achieve transparency and equal partnerships, and which address issues that affect the rights and capacity of local communities, are still problematic (Okereke and Dooley, 2010; Martin et al., 2013). Many indigenous groups in the Guiana Shield do not have rights to their traditional land and the resources which are found within these (Colchester et al., 2001; Rainforest Alliance, 2012). When indigenous groups do have land rights, these rarely extend to subsurface rights (Colchester and Rose, 2010), which are still negotiable and can be potentially revoked, as shown in recent cases in Guyana and Suriname (FPP, 2013). This is in the broader context of relatively inadequate political systems, as reflected by governance indicators such as high corruption, low freedom of speech and low regulatory control (Transparency International, 2013; World Bank, 2012).

Other trends, such as unsustainable practices of mining and land conversion, are widespread in the Guiana Shield (e.g. Hammond et al., 2007; Maughan 2011), as is the rising and sustained threat of organised crime and/or corrupt groups in co-opting whole regions and communities in supporting the narcotics drugs trade, migration, ill-planned infrastructure projects, and the unregulated expansion of the agricultural frontier (e.g. Ledec and Quintero, 2003; Dávalos et al., 2011). Many of the countries that make up the Guiana Shield fall in the 'medium-high' categories of human development and income (UNDP, 2012), with Brazil in particular becoming a global economic player. Nevertheless, poverty is endemic and indigenous peoples are amongst the poorest and most marginalised communities of the region (Hall and Patrinos, 2005, 2010). Globalisation has also played out in the region, bringing Western values and economies, acting as a homogenising force that can undermine unique indigenous cultures and knowledges, vital for effective social-ecological management.

At present, local communities have had limited voice and representation on the management of the Guiana Shield (e.g. Colchester and La Rose, 2010; Colchester et al., 2001). Yet, developments at the local level, including extreme weather events, such as flooding or drought, will have implications for the evolution of national and international policy, while at the other end of

the scale, international policy developments, for example affecting the repartition of natural resources, will have an impact on local livelihoods. Considering the relatively intact status of the Guiana Shield ecosystems, there are still many possible directions in which the region could develop. For example, large and small scale mining, logging and agricultural activities that have been rolled out in the region over the past decades could infer possible future directions. In contrast, international policies directed towards better protection of forests and other natural resources, such as PES schemes, may potentially drive us away from large scale exploitation of the region's natural resources. These are the two extreme visions of the future which regional, national and international decision-makers are contending with.

In light of these threats to, and potential opportunities for, sustainable management of the Guiana Shield ecosystems and its inhabitants, there is a need for a cross-scale, multiple perspective assessment of emerging social-ecological challenges. Scenarios - stories of what might be (Nemarundwe et al., 2003) - can provide a mechanism for such an exploration by building a shared understanding of how interventions or activities may impact on people and the environment. In their simplest form, scenarios can be a vision for the future which can prepare individuals / communities / institutions for uncertainty and complexity through social learning (Johnson et al., 2012) and by recognising the 'weak signals' of change, preparing for 'living the future' in advance, challenging mind-sets, raising awareness, and stimulating discussion and creative thinking (Ogilvy, 2011).

Although some scenario sets have been carried out at the regional (Amazon, Latin America) level, there have been few studies at the national and local levels within the Guiana Shield. Yet, fewer studies have explicitly linked imagined futures at different social-ecological scales. In this paper, we discuss how participatory scenario analysis was used with indigenous communities and national level stakeholders in Guyana, South America, to develop context specific futures. By evaluating the compatibilities of national and local futures with published regional and international scenarios, we hoped not only to draw on multiple sources of knowledge, but to strengthen community interests within policymaking.

2. Methods

2.1 Study context: Project COBRA

The research on Guiana Shield scenarios took place through the COBRA project - a research project funded by the European Commission 7th Framework programme with the mission to "...find ways to integrate community solutions within policies addressing escalating social, economic

and environmental crises, through accessible information and communication technologies" (see www.projectcobra.org). The project involved ten partners across Europe and South America including civil society organisations (CSOs), research institutions, and a small and medium environmental management enterprise. All partners were committed to improve community-based natural resource management in the region. The first phase of the project focused on establishing the viability of indigenous social-ecological systems through the identification of a range of strategies in response to differing environmental challenges and opportunities (Berardi et al., 2012, 2013a). Scenarios were then used to assess the extent to which these current indigenous strategies were 'future proof', thereby allowing the identification of 'best practices' (Mistry et al., 2013a). Therefore, as opposed to a device for planning (through modelling for example), scenarios themselves were not the end-goal in our approach (Evans et al., 2013), but were considered a research tool to provide a future context for framing in-depth qualitative data collected on current responses to environmental challenges.

Integral to the COBRA project was a participatory action research (PAR) approach. A PAR methodology engages a range of end-users in the research process right from the start, building social capital of the participants and allowing reflection and adaptation while the research is being undertaken (Kindon et al., 2007; Reason and Bradbury, 2008). As such, the project involved different stakeholders in the process of scenario development and analysis with the objective of identifying where people imagine or want to arrive to in the future (Swart et al., 2004). In addition, the project took a social-ecological systems approach (Berkes et al., 2003), recognising the deep links between ecological and socio-cultural systems, the nestedness of these systems, and the inherent complexity and non-linearity of processes. Therefore, to allow participants at each scale to articulate their views and opinions, while at the same time linking scenarios between different scales, we took a 'complementary' approach to our cross-scalar analysis (Zurek and Henrichs, 2007):

"the logics and assumptions in complementary scenarios differ across scales, but this does not preclude selected information from scenarios at one scale to feed into scenarios at another. The scenarios can differ substantially at the various spatial scales, and even contradict each other—nevertheless by this they also complement each other as they illustrate how an issue may be perceived differently at different scales, or even how issues differ in their relevance" (p.1290).

In the following sections, we outline the scenario process at different scales. At the international and regional levels, a desk-based literature review was undertaken, followed by a consultation process to identify individual scenario sets for the cross-scalar analyses. At the national and local levels, we focused on participatory scenario development for Guyana and the indigenous

communities of the North Rupununi. The North Rupununi was the core case study of the COBRA Project; an area where there has been a long history of considerable attention from the government and international donors for the management of its natural resources (Mistry et al., 2009). Because of the high capacity as well as the mutual relationship of trust that communities have built with international researchers over the past decade, the North Rupununi provides an excellent opportunity to explore indigenous visions of the future and their potential compatibility with the national, regional and international outlook.

2.2 Literature review of international and regional scenarios

There are a broad range of scenario sets from international and regional levels that have been developed by the academic, policy and private sectors, with varying timescales and using a range of processes and participants. A comprehensive review through a desk-based study was carried out on these, while at the same time compiling data and information on emerging trends that could help build pictures of potential future scenarios. Based on their relevance to the development of natural resources and underlying drivers such as climate change and economic choices with large scale impacts, a total of eight sources were selected for further in-depth analysis. Most of these sources have defined several detailed scenarios or scenario groups (Table 1). Additionally, based on their relevance to the Guiana Shield or South America in a broader sense, and their thoroughness, six regional scenarios were assessed in detail (Table 2). The processes and assumptions behind the scenario sets, and the core underlying drivers, were then analysed. Summaries of all the scenarios and their analyses can be found in Mistry et al. (2013b).

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2.2.1. Process of selecting one scenario set for each scale

Following the review of international and regional level scenarios, we created an expert group to help distinguish which drivers were the most relevant and appropriate to the goals of the project, and then compared these results to the published data. For this, we used an adapted and simplified version of the Delphi technique (Goodwin and Wright, 2009; Linstone and Turoff, 1975), an established tool for consensus-building. Its purpose is to elicit information and opinions from participants to assist planning and decision making, ideal in the

context where a panel of people would participate in the process at a distance, and by email. The expert group was constituted through the project network, comprised of seventeen academics, practitioners and policymakers with both international and regional expertise in the field of sustainable development and natural resource management.

Using examples from well-established scenario building organisations (e.g. Millennium Project), we developed and administered a questionnaire on global and regional drivers to the group, asking:

- How important do you think it is to stress society, technology, environment, economics, politics and values in both global and South American scenarios of change over the next 20-30 years?;
- Taking into account the different categories of society, technology, environment, economics, politics and values, what are your top five global drivers of change over the next 20-30 years?;
- Taking into account the different categories of society, technology, environment, economics, politics and values, what are your top five regional drivers of change over the next 20-30 years?

Respondents were requested to rank their answers in terms of importance and certainty and to provide explanations for their choices. Future scenarios are typically developed using the most important drivers and the critical uncertainties. Once all questionnaires were completed, we combined quantitative (ranking of drivers) with qualitative (rationalisation of choice) response data. Both at international and regional scales, the expert group highlighted 'population growth' and/or 'climate change' as the top drivers of change. However, our interest lay in the drivers with high uncertainty (as described by scenario analysis) and both population growth and climate change are generally considered highly certain and inevitable over the next 20-30 years (the timeframe of the analysis). Consequently, in a second round of consultation with the expert group, these drivers were excluded, and attention was drawn to the drivers that would have greater uncertainty.

2.2.2. Linking questionnaire results to published scenarios

Based on the questionnaire results and in order to identify scenarios that strongly integrated at least two of the questionnaire drivers, we used a scoring system to assess the degree to which ranked drivers, and their attached rationale, were present in the published scenarios. Some drivers were very specifically mentioned in the scenarios (determining scenarios axes) whereas in others, the importance was more implicit. Therefore, a score of 2 was given

when the driver was explicit and 1 when the driver was present in the narrative but in a more embedded and implied nature.

2.3. Participatory scenario workshops at national and local scales

A review of the literature found that at the Guyanese national level, there were some very context-specific scenarios, for example, climate change and its impacts on the coastal/urban regions (e.g. Bovolo et al., 2009; ECA, 2009; ECLAC, 2011; McSweeney et al., 2012), but there are no scenario studies that brought together a range of expertise and opinions from across the social and environmental disciplines. In addition, there were no scenario sets developed at the local level, let alone by indigenous groups. We therefore organised scenario workshops at the national level and with the communities of the North Rupununi. We used a participatory approach to develop the scenarios (see for example, Berkhout et al., 2002; Hulse et al., 2004; Kok et al., 2007, 2011; Patel et al. 2007; Enfors et al., 2008; Bohensky et al., 2011; Palacios-Agundez et al., 2013). Our view was that a participatory scenario process could provide a platform for dialogue among different interest groups, learning amongst participants and help develop shared visions to address sustainable development challenges (Johnson et al., 2012).

We followed the commonly used scenario-axes method in which four scenarios were developed around axes of importance and uncertainty (MA, 2005; Groves and Lempert, 2007; Goeminne and Mutombo, 2007). We chose the year 2030 as the endpoint for the scenarios in order to make the scenarios relevant to most participants' actual future and allow them to reflect on their own potential responses to upcoming challenges.

2.3.1. Participatory scenario workshop at national level

At the national level we organised a two day scenario workshop with over thirty participants representing a combination of government agencies, non-governmental organisations, academics and independent consultants. Working in four groups broadly classified as environmental scientists, indigenous representatives, government bodies and government ministries, participants were asked to reflect on the current drivers important for the future of Guyana and what Guyana would look like 2030. Using the two most uncertain and important drivers, four possible scenarios were developed. However, with limited time, each group were asked to describe at least two of the four scenarios identified. The whole process and results of different stages of the scenario development process are explained in depth in Davis et al. (2012).

2.3.2. Participatory scenario workshop at local level

In the North Rupununi, a three day scenario workshop was attended by thirty-two members of the sixteen communities that comprise the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB) (indigenous civil society organisation representative body). Participants were divided into men, women and youths, groupings that would allow people to honestly present their knowledge, perspectives, and needs, without being influenced by community power relations (Wollenberg et al., 2000; Rawluk and Godber, 2011). Using the two most important but uncertain drivers, four possible scenarios were developed by each group. However, with limited time, each group were asked to describe at least one of the four scenarios identified, and storyboarding (pictorial representations) was used as a technique to develop the narration for each scenario. The whole process and results of different stages of the scenario development process are explained in depth in Jafferally et al. (2012).

During the workshop, all activities and discussions were recorded using video and photos. Participatory Photography (PP) and Participatory Video (PV) (Bignante, 2010; Mistry and Berardi, 2012) are the main methodological tools used in the COBRA project, to facilitate, amongst other things, both horizontal (between communities) and vertical (to external stakeholders and decision-makers) communication. Following the workshop, participatory films and photostories were developed about the developed scenarios and then through two cycles of community consultations in sixteen villages, the scenarios were presented to wider community members for feedback. The final participatory video films and photostories are available on the COBRA Project Media Gate at <http://projectcobra.org/category/media>.

2.4. The process of cross-scalar analysis

Table 3 summarises the features of the scenarios at different scales. Using the data collected at each scale, all the drivers featured in the narratives and their associated trends, were coded into a database. Then, through a visual mapping exercise, all 101 scenario drivers were organised according to emergent themes. The approach adopted was inspired by Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006) where no a priori hypothesis was in place before the mapping exercise took place. Mapping commenced with the local drivers of change, where drivers sharing similar themes were grouped together. This was followed by national drivers, and then regional and international level drivers. The process involved extensive discussions between researchers over three iterative cycles of analysis. This resulted in a set of cross-scalar themes from which cross-scalar interactions could be identified.

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Since there were a large number of scales, themes and trends involved in the analysis, and to triangulate the initial qualitative assessment, we performed a Factorial Correspondence Analysis (FCA) on the data. Hierarchical Ascendant Classification (HAC) was then carried out on the coordinates of the modalities in the factorial space, considering the first three axes, using the Ward criterion. This criterion is based on the minimum of variance within each class (Lebart et al., 1997; Sanders, 1989). These analyses were carried out using the Statistica 7 software.

3. Results

3.1. Global and regional scenarios for cross-scalar analysis

At global and regional levels, there are generally two extremes of scenario narratives: 1. Market driven world in which environmental degradation continues; and 2. Government controlled world with great environmental awareness and sustainable solutions. Although, numerous drivers are featured in the published scenarios (see Table 3 for instance), Table 4 shows that the most important factors driving scenarios at the global level are globalisation, governance, ecosystem management and land use and technology. Correspondingly, the expert group also ranked globalisation and 'overconsumption' of natural resources as their top drivers of global change (see Table 5). On the other hand, the expert group emphasised the importance of values, described as the basis of human decisions, particularly around social-ecological system governance.

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At the regional scale, published scenario sets highlight socio-economics, globalisation and technology as key drivers. Although the expert group related mining (one of their top drivers) to a globalised market, governance was highlighted as critical to the extraction of natural resources, ecosystem management and land use in the Guiana Shield, and many responses focused on large infrastructure, such as dams, as a threat to the region in the future.

Comparison between the expert group responses and the published scenarios showed that at the global scale the MA Scenarios take 2 out of the top 4 drivers quite strongly into account, but values are only indirectly touched upon. The GEO4 does not explicitly take globalisation into account, but it is strongly implied in its economic and social drivers, in terms of levels of intervention. GEO4 therefore take 3 out of the top 4 drivers quite strongly into account. At the regional level, GEO Amazonia and SIM Amazonia are the two scenario sets that best represent the respondents' views. SIM Amazonia has strong scores for 2 out of 3 drivers. However, it does not integrate the top driver of mining. The GEO Amazonia takes into account all 3 drivers. Therefore, the GEO4 and GEO Amazonia (summarised in Appendix A) were used in the cross-scalar analysis.

3.2. National and local level scenarios for cross-scalar analysis

Tables 6 indicates the two most important and uncertain drivers used by each group at national level to develop their scenario narratives. Other drivers were incorporated into their storylines. Table 7 presents the individual scenario narratives.

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At the local level, women's concerns and uncertainties lay around the continuation of the NRDDDB as an institution and the kinds of values people would have in the future. For the men, mining, specifically oil, and issues of governance were key future priorities. The key concern for the young people was the lack of opportunities in the region and local governance challenges. They expressed these uncertainties in the form of recreational facilities for youth in the communities. Figure 2 illustrates examples of scenario storyboards, while Table 8 presents the individual scenario narratives.

INSERT FIGURE 2

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3.3 Cross scalar results

Mapping the drivers of change within scenarios across scales resulted in an agreed final classification comprised of fourteen themes (Figure 3). These

were: Values; Participative Democracy; Corruption; Public policies; Social policies; Environmental policies; Cohesion with other communities; Dominant stakeholders; Dominant scale; Markets approach; Investments in infrastructure; Approach to innovation; Energy; and, Aid. The themes that were mentioned mostly at the local level can be found more towards the centre of the diagram (e.g. 'Cohesion between communities' or 'Corruption'). Themes such as 'Markets approach' and 'Aid' were mostly mentioned at the highest levels. This diagram shows that themes related to governance are in great majority.

INSERT FIGURE 3

Studying the linkages present within the different themes enabled us to begin making tentative cross-scalar interactions (Table 9). Already at this stage, certain cross-scalar synergies and incoherencies became apparent. Overall, only three out of the fourteen themes are covered at all scales; social policies, environmental policies and dominant stakeholders. Most gaps are identified at the regional level (seven gaps), which often seems to create a break between the local and the international levels. Six gaps can also be identified at the local level, which seems to highlight clear incoherencies in focus areas between the local and the highest scales. The global level scenarios seem to cover most themes, but are strongly characterised by 'Aid', a theme that is not covered at any other scale. Investment in infrastructure is specific to the national level. The theme that features strongly at the local level but is not taken into account at other scales is 'cohesion with other communities'. Finally, there seems to be synergies, from local to global, on policy and governance themes. However, themes related to markets, innovation and energy seem to be only a 'high' level concern (from national to international).

INSERT TABLE 9

Similar results were found from carrying out FCA on our datasets. The first three axes accounted for 42.7% of the total inertia of the data. Interpretation of these axes (following Sanders, 1989 and Lebart et al., 1997) show that Axis 1 relates to local scale vs. global scale, Axis 2 is bound to 'worst' case vs. 'best' case scenarios, and the weaker Axis 3 is linked to regional (and rather negative) scenarios versus 'intermediate' (between 'worst' and 'best' case scenarios) global scenarios. This third axis might be underlining main incoherencies between regional and global scales. In our HAC analyses, the first cut-off point used for distinguishing classes was ten classes. By going through each class individually, similarities and inconsistencies were identified which led to the aggregation of some classes and a final number of seven. These HAC classes were then overlaid onto the FCA to visually display the

results (Figure 4). Using both the qualitative and quantitative analyses, a typology of the cross-scalar scenarios was produced (Table 10). These provide examples of cross-scalar win-win, win-lose and lose-lose scenarios.

INSERT FIGURE 4

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The win-win scenarios from the North Rupununi to the Guyanese scales involve low corruption and high participative democracy (Class 3). These focus areas are completely absent at the regional scale. At the global level, only the 'Sustainability First' scenario (present on its own in Class 5) involves high participative democracy. Some national and regional scenarios seem to find synergies on the themes of good social policies, good environmental policies, even balance of power between stakeholders and scales (but with the government slightly dominating), dynamic approach to innovation and high investment in infrastructure. However, as we see, these best-case scenarios might not develop into a win-win situation at all scales, if, at the local level, governance issues are not dealt with.

Considering the major gap identified between the local-national scenarios on the one hand, and the regional-international scenarios on the other hand, it becomes clear that win-lose situations could easily develop. Interestingly, it could be plausible that negative developments at the highest levels have relatively limited impact at the North Rupununi scale if the Guyanese government remains disarticulated from these drivers. One possible win-lose scenario could be the development of the Security First scenario at global level (class 6), leading to rather negative developments at the regional level (e.g. Inching along the Precipice scenario, class 6). However, this would not necessarily lead to negative developments at the Guyanese level depending on how the government manages the discovery of oil or its agricultural diversification (Class 4), an attitude which can then easily trickle down positively to the North Rupununi level.

The opposite situation could also very easily occur: positive developments at the highest levels could be blocked on their way to the national and local levels because of governance issues. Here again, the trickling process between the Global level 'Sustainability First' (Class 5) and the local worst-case scenarios (in Class 1) goes through the national level scenarios 'Guyana finds Oil but there is no agricultural diversification' and 'Guyana has no Oil and there is agricultural diversification'. In other words, the key player in these win-lose pathways is the national government.

From the North Rupununi to the Guyanese scales, lose-lose scenarios involve individualist values, a poor participative democracy and high corruption, poor social policies and little focus on the environment. Dominant stakeholders would be private, the dominant scale would be national (with little consultation at local scales), low investment in infrastructure and a poor focus on energy solutions and development. Transparency, benefit sharing, political continuity are crucial for the future of the country and its peoples.

Although falling in a different class because of a very distinct overall profile, the only scenarios at higher scales that mention a poor participative democracy, individualist values and poor social policies are “Markets First” and “Security First”. Although Markets First has a slightly better approach to environmental policies and energy, the link to local scales is very poor as the preferred scale is international (and international markets). Security First, on the other hand, is possibly the worst-case global scenario in most aspects. Even if the government is presented as the dominant stakeholder, it shares benefits poorly in this scenario. As for the regional level, corruption and participative democracy are not taken into account. Using other criteria, the scenario that could match this lose-lose pathway would be the “Once Green Hell” Scenario, in which social and environmental policies are poor, the dominant stakeholder is the private sector and the dominant scale is national.

There is also a lose-lose pathway from the regional to the global scale. This pathway involves a poor approach to markets (not integrating sustainability and poorly diversified), a poor integration of public policies (of scales and focus areas), low aid and a low approach to innovation. In essence, lose-lose scenarios from regional to global scales involve very poor cooperation across borders, between focus areas (e.g. environment, society, economy). It involves the “Security First” scenario at the global level, as well as the “Inching along the precipice” and the “Once Green Hell” scenarios at regional level.

4. Discussion

Our main aim in linking scenarios across scales was to evaluate to what extent different viewpoints at multiple levels of governance converged (Biggs et al., 2007), and the subsequent implications for effective and equitable management of social-ecological systems. More specifically, we wanted to assess how visions of the future may impact local communities of the Guiana Shield and what their own perspectives could bring to higher scales of decision-making. Here, we discuss three key insights from the results. Firstly,

the considerable mismatch between the different scales of analysis, especially between the local and global scales, and the role of the national level as the intermediary scale. Secondly, the importance of 'values' for determining future higher scale objectives. And third, the need to include diverse groups from within communities in scenario building and analysis.

4.1 Cross-scalar mismatch

At the global and regional scales, we see a strong focus on policies influencing society and the environment, with public-private partnerships as key facilitators. The GEO4 Scenarios, for example, play out the situation between economic development and the environment, and government and the market, as policy priorities. At the core of the GEO Amazonia scenarios is the role of public policies, particularly in the realm of sustainable development and nature marketisation (McAfee, 2012; Murat Arsel and Büscher, 2012). This focus on markets and privatisation is reflected in the current emphasis on the 'green economy' for nurturing sustainability through the transfer of technology, ideas, practices, and investment. For example, over the last decades Latin America has established an active network of business councils for sustainable development, such as Mexico's Comisión de Estudios del Sector Privado para el Desarrollo Sustentable (CESPEDES) and Consejo Empresario para el Desarrollo Sostenible (CEADS) in Argentina (O'Toole, 2013). In Guyana, the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) is focused on low-carbon and climate resilience through a reorientation of the economy from a (neoliberal) resource extraction development paradigm to a (neoliberal) supplier of environmental services (Mistry, 2014). At the same time, Guiana Shield countries have gained substantial support from PES schemes, including REDD+, that in Guyana for example, support policies such as the LCDS.

However, this focus on *policy* is not reflected at lower scales where the uncertainties lie around *practice*; issues around the actual operationalisation and implementation of effective development and environmental management. Indeed, local communities tend to be increasingly impacted by social-ecological changes and the policies related to these, but they are not necessarily prepared for them (Borges, 2010; Corbera and Schroeder, 2011). Local-level futures include education and capacity-building, mechanisms for safeguarding natural resources, with communities joining government and private enterprises in collaborative decision-making. While academic discussions acknowledge, and civil society organisations advocate, the important role of local and indigenous people in natural resource management (e.g. Cox et al., 2010; Blom et al., 2010), none of the higher scale scenarios feature local communities as dominant stakeholders in future environmental management. This mismatch is particularly significant considering local

communities are most likely to play a key role as 'stewards' of resources in PES schemes, particularly in the process of monitoring the quality of ecosystem services in order to justify payments (Palmer-Fry, 201; Danielsen et al., 2013).

In the few cross-scalar win-win situations identified by our analysis, local and national scale outcomes are linked by good governance structures and processes, highlighting the influence of effective and equitable power structures at national level on local level sustainable futures. This leads us to reason that the national scale is a key mediator between the local and regional / global scales, as can be seen in the case of REDD+ processes and implementation described above. This is reiterated by de Oliveira et al. (2013), who point out that in relation to national REDD+ agencies, the concerns are less about gaps in institutional or technical capacity, and more about gaps in legitimacy and governance principles such as transparency, quality control assurance, and fiduciary accountability. On this front the outlook is not optimistic. Although we see some positive trends in Guiana Shield governance at country level, such as the rule of law, other areas including effective regulatory control, transparency and corruption (the focus of national and local scenarios) show either little change or an actual worsening over the last fifteen years (World Bank, 2012).

At the same time, almost all the Guiana Shield countries have a high and growing dependency on natural resource extractive industries, such as mining, and logging, which are dominated by the private sector and are regularly linked to malpractice and corruption (e.g. FPP, 2007, 2013; Hammond et al., 2007). This suggests major conflicts between conservation and large-scale resource extraction in the future. The seeds of these impending tensions are exemplified by the current high demand for minerals in the Guiana Shield, particular gold and bauxite (Berardi et al., 2013b), and the exploratory drilling for petroleum both offshore and inland in Guyana (Jafferally et al., 2012). It therefore comes as no surprise that the presence of resource mining, especially oil extraction, featured significantly in the national scenarios.

4.2 From short-term 'proximate' drivers to values-based 'ultimate' drivers

So in order to promote the development of win-win scenarios, what should politicians and practitioners focus on? Raskin et al. (2002) point out that mainstream environment / development policies focus almost exclusively on 'proximate' drivers; those that are responsive to short-term intervention, and include population size and growth, economic volume and patterns, technological choice, governance (with a focus on policies) and environmental quality. These proximate drivers are clearly reflected in the global, regional,

and to a certain extent, national scenarios. However, our cross-scalar analyses show that there are other themes that can provide strong positive threads linking scales: values, participative democracy, social policies, environmental policies and dominant stakeholders. Values, in particular, are 'ultimate' drivers, or the root causes that shape society and the human experience (Raskin et al., 1998). In contrast to other scales, it is at the local level where we see 'values', subject to gradual cultural and political processes, as a clear and explicitly articulated determinant of futures, intimately connected to sustainable natural resource management (Pretty and Ward, 2001; Pretty and Smith, 2004).

We would therefore argue that there needs to be pathways for the 'trickling up' and reinforcement of community values through the development of participatory processes in policy development and implementation. Although values remain strong at the local level, they are threatened by top-down decisions made at the national level. Indeed, looking at the North Rupununi men's scenarios around the discovery of oil, they show that local values and practices could radically change according to how the national government manages its extractive activities in the area. Values are also at the core of the North Rupununi women's scenarios where the breakdown of community ethics and principles lead not only to social fragmentation and disintegration, but also concomitant environmental degradation and pollution. And, as illustrated by the scenarios developed by young people of the North Rupununi, if the link to understanding and proactively engaging with ultimate drivers is severed, there is a danger that youth will not contest the 'structural' issues determining the community / regional / national / international destiny, and therefore will not be active players, but passive pawns. This is particularly pertinent for local participation and potential ownership of PES and other related schemes. If current and future generations move away from their land centred worldview and environmental identity as 'forest stewards' towards more Western nature detached lifestyles, indigenous peoples may no longer have the capacity to play the 'nature guardian' role assumed within current policy paradigms (Mistry et al., 2013c).

4.3 Participation in scenario development

van Vuuren et al. (2012) in their assessment of global environmental scenarios point out that although most scenario processes are highly participatory and rigorous in nature, there needs to be greater involvement from a broader range of 'expertise' that includes psychology, sociology and anthropology. We would go further to suggest that scenario development does not need to be confined to the domain of 'experts' or 'futurists' at all. Involving a range of relevant stakeholders in a participatory process provides an opportunity for different worldviews to be conveyed and discussed (e.g. Bohunovsky et al., 2011; Kaltenborn et al., 2012), thereby allowing different

interests and perspectives to be shared for mutual and collective learning within social networks (Reed et al., 2010). It also allows for better use of scenarios as a research tool to elicit data on multi-scalar synergies and conflicts.

For local community members in the North Rupununi, taking part in a scenario process provided them with improved thinking about futures and understanding potential processes of change and adaptation (Ravera et al., 2011):

“I think workshops like this works well when there is gender balance; where you see the interconnection of one another’s vision as from the group discussions of the women, men, and youth. When you look at most of the presentations you see from each perspective there were the same kinds of vision and information coming out; if it was not about oil, it was recreational issues or the future of the NRDDB. I think that the men and women should come together at the same level to help work things out” (youth participant, quoted in Jafferally et al., 2012).

This quote also reflects the importance of dividing participants into interest groups (both in the national level and local scenario workshops), so as to allow people to more freely voice their uncertainties and aspirations for the future (Berkes, 2009; Johnson et al., 2012). This was particularly important at the local level where women and youth, normally the most marginalised members of the community, were given a more equal footing to express a diverse range of worldviews as reflected in their scenarios (Rawluk and Godber, 2011). And although not a goal of the scenario process, many of the local participants found the techniques and results potentially useful for planning their community’s future activities:

“This was interesting for me working with the men's group. The work that we have done was like an assessment of some of our development and what has been going on now and could in the future. We can use some of these tools in our communities. I find these tools adaptive. In our area oil is being looked for. What would happen if oil is found in the next year or thirty years from now? Where would our communities be? Would we have a good negotiating position? I have learnt a lot from the three groups that presented today. I would like to thank the staff for giving these tools to us and I will impart this knowledge to my community” (older male participant, quoted in Jafferally et al., 2012).

5. Conclusion

Our analysis of international, regional, national and local scenario sets is novel in that it has provided insights that are relevant to decisions being made today on environmental management in the Guiana Shield and beyond. We see the juxtaposition between national and higher scales focus on schemes such as PES and REDD+ as potential pathways to a 'green economy' and the lack of this vision in any of the local communities' scenarios. We also see that local communities as key stakeholders and the potential of grassroots movements to make significant changes, do not feature in any of the scenarios except those created at the local scale. This is in light of the fact that the Guiana Shield and wider Latin America has a long history of grassroots movements (e.g. Collinson, 1996; Martinez-Alier, 2013; Shapiro, 2013) and the recent worldwide phenomena of public protests and uprisings, such as the Zapatista Uprising, the Occupy Movement and the Arab Spring. Good governance is cited as a prerequisite for any form of effective cross-scalar social-ecological management, yet past trends and the current political situation in the Guiana Shield does not provide optimism for positive future outcomes which take into account the current contexts and future aspirations of local communities.

Undoubtedly, the Amazon and Guiana Shield have high political and environmental relevance to the global community (Pokorny et al., 2013), particularly in terms of carbon storage, hydrology and biodiversity, and there are various trans-boundary initiatives to conserve the region as a whole, such as the Guiana Shield Facility (GSF) (see www.guianashield.org), a multi-donor funding facility supporting regional institutional, administrative and policy frameworks for natural resource management. Yet, our scenario analysis indicates that future trajectories for the Guiana Shield as a region are very different to the visions of national stakeholders and local communities, with potentially important implications for the cohesion of the region in terms of social-ecological policy integration.

Integral to any success with environmental management aspirations driven by international and national policy developments will be giving local communities representative and ownership powers over how these policies are constructed and eventually implemented on the ground at community level. Within Project COBRA we have seen how tokenistic attempts at community consultation and participation have repeatedly failed because the modes of communication (usually dominated by written texts and complex vocabulary) simply do not allow community members to effectively participate. It is not surprising that most parties come away unsatisfied by these community engagement processes. Project COBRA, on the other hand, has promoted the use of visual forms of communication, including videos and photostories, for the active and effective engagement of community participants (Berardi et al., 2013a; Mistry et al., 2013b, c).

Another significant difference between the professional futurists' and a communities' approach to visioning the future was the difference between a preference for disciplinary abstraction and holistic practicalities, respectively. An important aspect to the implementation of scenario processes is the direct and explicit connection between scenario exercises and concrete decision-making. In fact, some scenario workshop participants, especially those drawn from non-academic sectors, wanted to take the 'inside-out' perspective, rather than the 'outside-in' perspective (Ogilvy, 2011). In other words, they had a more action-oriented way of approaching the scenario process, thinking more about the end point and what they can do to their world, rather than a more academic preference for detailed discussion over action. Johnson et al. (2012) point out that whereas scenarios employ open-ended, creative systems thinking, policy discussions and institutional decision-making tends to focus on individual issues or specific near-term problems, which can make linking the two types of processes challenging. In respect to this point, Ogilvy (2011) suggests that participant ownership over scenarios can come about through the development of lists of early indicators for each scenario; as participants try to imagine the first signs of a scenario, they inevitably find themselves occupying the world described by that scenario. This may be a way of motivating communities and others to incorporate visioning processes within their decision-making.

Linking participant qualitative narrative indicators to quantitative modelling could also be another approach. The IPCC scenarios, for example, provide both narratives as well as elaborate quantitative analyses. Scenarios by Costanza (2000) and the Very Long Range Scenarios in the Millennium Project are merely storylines without modelling exercise. Swart et al. (2004) states that as complexity increases and the time horizon of interest lengthens, the power of prediction diminishes. Therefore, "quantitative forecasting is legitimate to the degree the state of the system under consideration can be specified, the dynamics governing change are understood and known to be persistent, and mathematical algorithms can be created that map these relationships with sufficient accuracy for simulation" (p.140). Quantification of storylines is mostly done in global and regional scenarios, but developing measurable indicators and modelling different drivers of change at national and local levels could also yield useful information for social-ecological system management. In our case, the cross-scalar scenario exercise was primarily an exploration of scientific understanding of the dynamics that may shape the future of the Guiana Shield and its local communities. Future iterative interactions between the qualitative scenario data and quantitative scientific information from the region could stimulate greater cross-pollination of knowledge types that might generate useful insights for sustainable management of the region.

This paper therefore calls for an approach for devising future scenarios which is participatory, visual and qualitative, and in which stakeholder values are explicitly articulated. Only once policy makers at higher levels of decision-making, from national governments to international meetings and conventions, take on board this approach, will we see greater compatibilities between the aspirations and actions of communities on the ground, and policy development at other scales, especially with regards to the emerging significant mobilisation of finance in tackling climate change and adaptation. We acknowledge that the upfront costs of community engagement in visioning futures may seem prohibitive, but through this process of engagement, not only are communities preparing for 'living the future' in advance, but they are also helping to challenge mindsets, raise awareness and stimulate discussion and creative thinking amongst decision-makers who are often accused of having fixed and issue specific obsessions, have limited awareness of local issues, and lack creative solutions for emerging wicked challenges.

Appendix A

The Global Environment Outlook, GEO4 scenarios (adapted from <http://www.unep.org/geo/GEO4.asp>).

Markets First - This scenario pays lip service to sustainable development in terms of the ideals of the Brundtland Commission, Agenda 21 and other major policy decisions. There is a narrow focus on the sustainability of markets rather than in the context of the broader human-environment system.

Policy First - This scenario introduces some measures aimed at promoting sustainable development, but the tensions between environment and economic policies are biased towards social and economic considerations.

Security First - This scenario focuses on the interests of a minority: rich, national and regional. It emphasizes sustainable development only in the context of maximizing access to and use of the environment by the powerful.

Sustainability First - This scenario gives equal weight to environmental and socio-economic policies, accountability, and it stresses transparency and legitimacy across all actors. It emphasizes the development of effective public-private sector partnerships not only in the context of projects but in the area of governance, ensuring that stakeholders across the environment-development discourse spectrum provide strategic input to policy making and implementation.

The Global Environment Outlook, GEO Amazonia scenarios (adapted from UNEP & ACTO, 2009).

Emergent Amazonia - This scenario assumes that public policies aim at improving social services and promote sustainable development based on effective environmental governance. The State has managed to reduce poverty and inequality of income distribution. Market forces provide incentives for developing sustainable productive activities, in such a way that the stability of the ecosystems is guaranteed and ecosystem goods and services are valued. However, science, technology and innovation have limited development.

Inching along the Precipice - This scenario assumes that Amazonian population growth increases. Amazonia has become very attractive for multi-national investors and contributes to alleviate the food crisis caused by drought due to climate change in traditional cereal and grain producing areas. Although public policies promote sustainable development, market forces provide incentive for developing unsustainable productive activities that affect ecosystem stability and place no value on environmental goods and services. Science, technology and innovation have limited development.

Light and Shadow - This scenario assumes that demographic growth in the Amazonian countries stabilises. There is an increase in innovative initiatives that take advantage of investment opportunities to promote social-environmental sustainability, but initiatives for the valorisation of ecosystem services and internalization of environmental costs in production have not been very successful. There is investment in science, technology and innovation which promotes the development needed to optimise the sustainable utilisation of resources.

The Once-Green Hell - This scenario assumes that the Amazonian part of each country is the area that has registered the largest demographic growth. Public policies fail to promote sustainable development; the environmental component is missing from the public decision making process. Furthermore, market forces provide incentives for developing unsustainable productive activities. Science, technology and innovation have limited development.

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Figure 1. Map of the Guiana Shield region.



Figure 2. Examples of scenario storyboards developed in the North Rupununi, where (a) women’s scenario A of conflict and divide, (b) men’s scenario of oil discovery and development, and (c) youth scenario A of having a recreation facility and it functioning well.





Figure 3. Map of the drivers classified into themes.

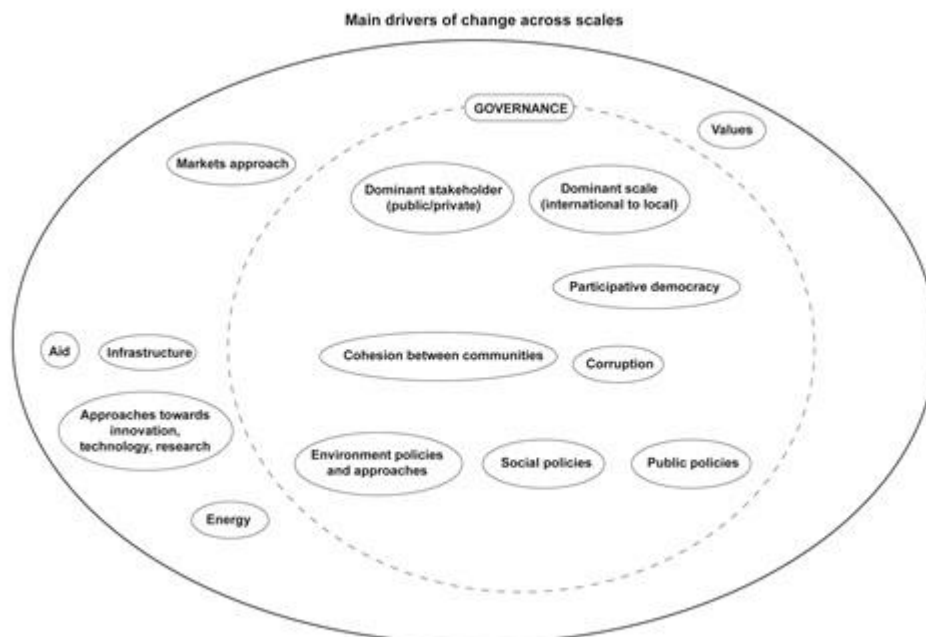


Figure 4. Factorial Correspondence Analysis of the scenarios and themes showing the groupings according to the Hierarchical Ascendant Classification analysis. Table 10 describes each class.

