Representing Carbon Property Rights

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Peter Spencer
52 day hunger strike ended Jan 10, 2010

Spencer argues that the Commonwealth of Australia is deriving benefit from his farm – that by preventing him from clearing, Australia can meet its Kyoto commitments.

Spencer insists his protest is not over land clearing, but property rights.
Land versus Property ... And what are those rights things?

- National and/or global carbon trading market requires secure and well-defined carbon property rights

- But what is the difference between carbon as property and land as property? And different views of property!

- How do rights interact – bundle of inanimate sticks?

- Inherent complexity – property, perceptions, environmental systems
From bundles to constellations

**Bundle of rights**

- Maine 1861

**Web of Interests**

- Arnold 2002
- Zellmer & Harder 2007

**Constellation of property rights**

- Boysdell, Sheehan & Prior 2009
- Boysdell et al. 2009a

Layers of complexity

**Concepts of “Land”**

Eg. *Boundaries that define your farm on the surface of the Earth*
Concepts of “Land”

Eg. Water

Layers of complexity

Eg. Airspace, geological pore space

Static, intangible

Dynamic, tangible

Static, tangible

TS 1E – Environment and Energy: Policy and Practice

Kate Fairlie & Spike Boydell

Monday 12th April
Concepts of “Land”

What are we managing?
- Land?
- The Environment?
- Natural Resources?
- Or Property?

And what is the difference?

Contested meanings...

Eg. Carbon

Static, intangible

Dynamic, intangible

Static, tangible

Layers of complexity

High- and low-context societies

“...You can no more sell our land than the sky. Our affinity with the land is like the bonding between a parent. You have responsibilities...obligations... You can speak for a child. But you don’t own a child.” (Behrendt, 2003)
So – what’s the issue?

• Disconnect between legal, economic and community understandings of property and ‘what I own’.

• Need for a representation that highlights rights and how these intersect, and adequately communicates this to all stakeholders.

Visualisation

-How do we communicate property rights?
-How do we represent property rights?

Communication: Visualisation vs. Representation

How can we design a property rights representation that is all-inclusive?
Key Concepts: In Summary

- Property varies. Ultimately it requires an understanding of relationships between people/stakeholders over ‘land’.

- Need a property rights representation that communicates:
  - A property (the object to which the rights refer)
  - The property rights
  - The interaction between property rights – push/pull
  - Stakeholders (people who are affected by the right)
  - The interaction between property rights and stakeholders

- Needs to be dynamic – explore push/pull factors e.g. with carbon storage, water, risk management, etc.

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