



International scientific conference
“Agri-Chains and Sustainable Development: linking
local and global dynamics”

Session 6 "Private standards in agri-chains: evaluating
their outcomes and assessing their impact“

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“Evaluation of the FSC forest certification
scheme in Brazil: a three level approach”

Introduction

Critical knowledge gap regarding forest certification evaluation (Cashore and Auld, 2012; Romero and Castrén 2013; van Kuijk et al., 2009)

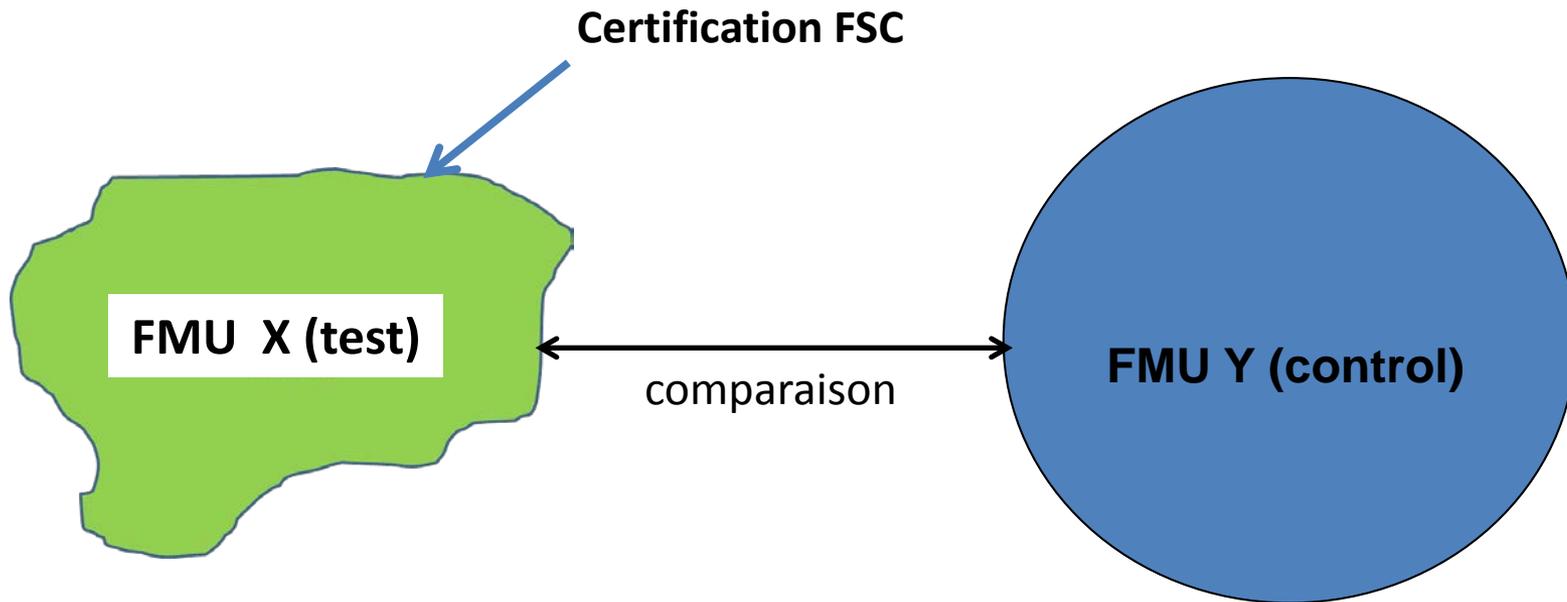
To what extent FSC contributes to alleviate the environmental problem it addresses ?

Methodology

- participant observations as members of the FSC entities and consultancies
- field research in concessions areas of the Pará State, Brazil
- semi-structured interviews with key players
- extensive literature review of the evaluation studies of the forest certification schemes

The first level: forest management unit (FMU)

Quasi experimental methods: whether and to what extent the FSC do matter?



The first level: forest management unit (FMU)

The “corrective action requests (CARs)” analysis:

Do the FSC companies comply with the CARs issued by third-party auditors?

⇒ FSC standards as a benchmark for environmental effectiveness evaluation.

What’s wrong with the CARs analysis ?

- FSC standards are the result of negotiation processes
- Stakeholders have asymmetric resources in the negotiation arena
- Some FSC standards are vague and subject to interpretation, including in the Brazil ([Schulze et al., 2008](#))

The first level: forest management unit (FMU)

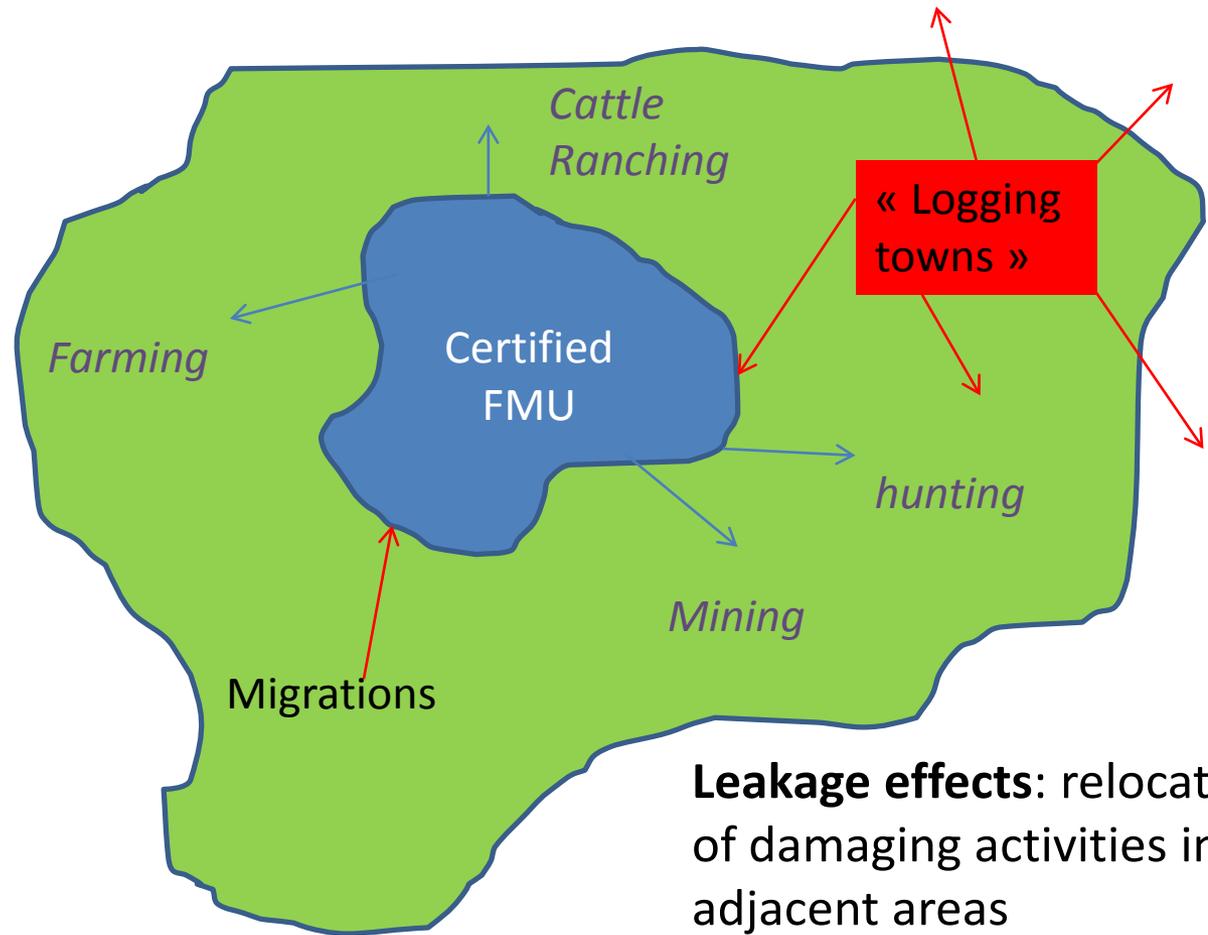
⇒ Analyzing the standards setting process rather than whether they are fully implemented

Ex: Brazilian FSC standard for plantation forests: an indicator that obliged forest companies to restore forest areas converted to plantation was amended in 2012 to reflect the business vision:

- forest restoration is no longer mandatory in cases of "justified conversion" of forests.
- allows companies to convert "a small percentage" of the Forest, to the extent that this conversion is legal
- the conversion of degraded forests or young regenerating forests is allowed.

The second level: indirect effects and landscape issues

To what extent the strengthening of environmental management measures in the certified forest unit may lead to harmful activities on adjacent areas?



Leakage effects: relocation of damaging activities in adjacent areas

Attraction effects: Corporate Social Responsibility (and certification) as a paternalistic model

The second level: indirect effects and landscape issues

Attraction effects:

- Example in the South-East of Brazil: from a small district (900 inhabitants) to a Logging town (10000 inhabitants)

Leakage effects:

- Displacement of Illegal logging activities
percentage of illegally harvested native Amazonian timber remains high (around 60%)
- Benefits from FSC certification reinvested in harmful activities in forest areas (cattle ranching, agriculture).

The 3rd level: the political dimension

FSC as a guiding principle capable of boosting public environmental action?

OR

FSC as a “green marketing” tool?



The 3rd level: the political dimension

Brazilian Law of Public Forest Management (2006) :
FSC inspired

= boosting Brazilian FSC timber for international
markets

No structurally changes in the modes of production
and consumption in Brazil.

Far from solving the problem of deforestation and
forest degradation : illegal logging remains high

Conclusion

- FSC in Brazil has been reoriented in order to achieve an objective that fits into the neoliberal agenda: restoring confidence by making the products “politically acceptable” on world markets.
- The needs to go beyond a narrowing conception of evaluation at the FMU level: extending the evaluation methods to the political dimension of private forms of governance.

Obrigado !



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