

Capturing gendered appreciation of multi-functional landscapes through viewscape interpretation

Caroline D Piñon, Isidra B Bagares

Viewscape refers to people's views of their surroundings such as landscapes and seascapes. These views are based on knowledge, beliefs and perceptions. Viewscape interpretation is a method that uses photos as visual stimuli to characterize and analyse people's preferences to inform planning and decision making. This method is widely used in urban architecture and planning.

In the southern Philippines, the viewscape interpretation method was used to complement household interviews aimed at understanding gender-specific appreciation of landscape functions. The viewscape represents the visual connection of women and men farmers with regard to the spatial arrangement of landscape features, such as ecosystem services (ES) and land use practices which they regard as valuable.

Materials

- Landscape photos¹
- Ecosystem services photos¹
- Land use photos¹
- Post-it notes for ranking (different colors)
- Marker pens
- Audio recorder
- Camera

¹ The photos should be based on the participants' understanding of these concepts.

Examples of ecosystem services

- Gas regulation
- Climate regulation
- Disturbance regulation
- Water regulation
- Water supply
- Erosion control and sediment retention
- Soil formation
- Nutrient cycling
- Waste treatment
- Pollination
- Biological control
- Refugia
- Food production
- Raw materials
- Genetic resources
- Recreation
- Cultural/spiritual

Based on Costanza et al. 1997

Study team

- Mixed-gender team of facilitator and documenter for the focus group discussion (FGD) and interview

Steps

1. Participatory identification of landscapes, ecosystem services and land uses

- Secure a list of individual residents in the study area (in this case, watershed), and segregate according to gender. Randomly select men and women participants, or ask for assistance in identifying men and women participants from a key informant in the area using gender as criteria—this will save you a lot of time.
- Conduct separate FGDs for men and women using focus questions (Box 1). FGDs should not be more than 1.5 hours so as not to tire out the participants.
- Each FGD may involve 8-10 participants for easier facilitation.

2. Taking photographs

- As described by the participants at the FGDs, take 3-5 panoramic shots of the landscape and all its features within the study site, e.g., different ES and land use practices for each landscape, etc. Print and laminate the photos (suggested size is 5x6).

3. Household interviews

- Prepare for the interview
 - Identify 3 villages located along an elevation gradient: upper, middle, lower elevations of the watershed.
 - From the village household list, randomly select interviewees. Visit each of them to schedule the interview. Ensure that you have sufficient numbers of household interviewees and male and female

Box 1. Focus questions/ discussion

What is your understanding about landscape, ES and land use?

What are the existing landscapes, ES and land uses in your area? Their current conditions? Their historical changes over time?

What landscapes, ES and land uses do you aspire to expand or sustain in your area?

During the household visit:

- Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the interview.
- Ask if both husband and wife would like to participate (voluntary with no compensation involved).
- If either or both agree, schedule the interview at their most convenient time.
- Inform them that the interview will take approximately 1½ hours.
- Interview the wife first, followed by the husband.

participants. The number of interviewees depends on the village population, as well as the researcher's time and resources.

- Household interviewees should be different from the FGD participants.
- Introduce yourself and ask preliminary questions
 - Review the purpose and method of the interview.
 - Ask the farmers for their basic socio-economic profile.
- Viewscape interpretation
 - Display the 3-5 landscape photos.
 - Provide the farmer with sufficient time to understand the photos.
 - Ask the farmer to describe the photos.
- Viewscape ranking
 - Landscape ranking**
 - Display 3-5 landscape photos.
 - Ask the farmer to rank the landscape photos according to their economic (first round), social (second round), and environmental (third round) benefits.



ES ranking

- Display 3-5 ES photos for each landscape.
- Provide the farmer with sufficient time to understand the photos.
- Ask the farmer to choose the 3 most important ES that each landscape can provide.
- Ask the farmer to rank the ES based on economic (first round), social (second round), and environmental (third round) benefits.

Talking points

Landscape features, factors behind choices, current condition, changes through time

Interview guide

What is going on in this landscape?

Among these landscapes, ecosystem services and land uses, which are most important to you based on environmental, economic and social benefits? Why?

Land use practices ranking

- Display the different 3-5 land use practices photos per landscape.
- Provide the farmer with sufficient time to understand the photos.
- Ask the farmer to choose the 3 most important land use practices for each landscape.
- Ask the farmer to rank the land use practices based on environmental (first round), economic (second round), and social (third round) benefits.

4. Clustering and data analysis

- Cluster men and women's responses and preferences to explore similarities and differences.
- Identify patterns of women's and men's responses and preferences.

5. Validation and refinement

- Conduct two separate FGDs for men and women with 8-10 participants from the interview sample.
- Display the most important landscapes, ES and land uses.
- Obtain feedback and discuss.

Advantages

- Photos easily capture farmers' interest.
- Farmers local knowledge and personal experiences are generated.
- Site- and context-specific landscape management preferences and options are identified.

Limitations

- Responses can be too site- and context-specific.
- This method takes time, especially the preparation of photos.



Do's and don'ts

- Do arrange for appropriate sizes of photos.
- Do anticipate the difficulty of finding available space to display the photos.
- Do take photos of landscapes that farmers easily relate to.
- Do take photos from vantage points.
- Don't forget to obtain farmers' consent to record the interviews.

Reference

Costanza R, d'Arge R, de Groot R, Farberk S, Grasso M, Hannon B, Limburg K, Naeem S, O'Neill RV, Paruelo J, Raskin RG, Sutton P, van den Belt M. 1997. The value of the world's ecosystem services and natural capital. *Nature* 387:253–259.

Recommended readings

- Kaplan S. 1979. Perception and Landscape: Conceptions and misconceptions. In: GH Elsner, RC Smardon, eds. 1979. *Our National Landscape*. USDA Forest Service, General Technical Report PSW-35, Berkeley CA. p.241–248.
- Lothian A. 2005. Coastal viewscape of Southern Australia: report for the coast protection branch, South Australia Department of Environment and Heritage. Scenic Solutions. South Australia: Mitcham.
- Menezes H, Barroso F, Pinto-Correia T. Understanding multifunctionality transition through landscape preferences: the case of a Mediterranean peripheral area in Southern Portugal (np, nd).