The Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry
with the Rights and Resources Initiative

“Global trends – implications on the
development and use of natural resources”

Territorial Dynamics in Latin America:
Implications for
rights, resources and development

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PRISMA
PROGRAMA SALVADOREÑO DE INVESTIGACIÓN SOBRE DESARROLLO Y MEDIO AMBIENTE
New patterns and old paradigms
the importance of understanding territorial dynamics

- Fundamentally new territorial dynamics across Latin America with clear implications for rural livelihoods and sustainable landscapes
- Complex and heterogeneous scenarios are the result of interplay between powerful international and regional interests with local actors who must resist, adapt or innovate
- New scenarios still largely analyzed through outdated development lenses that do not sufficiently incorporate new territorial realities, and thus hamper the formulation of equitable and sustainable policies

Presentation

1. Overview of trends and transformations in Latin America
2. How this plays out in specific territories of Central America and the Amazon
3. Alternative scenarios require new paradigms
4. Lessons from Latin America for rethinking development
Regional transitions drive new territorial dynamics:

- **Structural adjustment, free trade, and diminishing role of the State**
- **Rising interest in conservation and cultural heritage (hot spots, parks, UNESCO World Heritage)**
- **Democratization and decentralization, environmental justice movement, advances in indigenous rights**
- **Growth of illicit activities, operations and corridors (trafficking of persons, drugs, species; cartels and gangs, etc.)**
New economic models bring new rural realities: From traditional agro-exports to remittances, tourism and maquila

Foreign exchange generation in Central America

- Commercial surplus with CA
- Remesas
- Other services
- Tourism
- Maquila (Net exports)
- Other exports outside of CA
- Traditional agro-exports

1978
- GU: 69%
- ES: 67%
- HN: 65%
- NI: 74%
- CR: 69%

2006
- GU: 45%
- ES: 55%
- HN: 42%
- NI: 34%
- CR: 34%

- Dramaic economic changes and new patterns of accumulating wealth
- Expansion to “new territories”: Access/control over territories and resources
- Territorial reconfiguration, new territorial dynamics and new conflicts
Megaprojects in Mesoamerica and the Amazon: Trade infrastructure, extractive industry and tourism
Global crisis & territorial dynamics

A crisis of multiple dimensions
Financial, energy, climate, food security

A return to the real economy:
Bust of the financial bubble, drop in commodity prices provoke territorial hoarding for new and future sources of wealth: minerals, energy, natural resources in general

An explosive situation:
- Expansion to new territories, land grabbing and hoarding of the hinterlands
- New disputes over access and control over resources and territories
Climate responses & territorial disputes

Climate change is wreaking havoc on Latin America with impacts on human health, food security, economic activities and physical infrastructure.

Latin America urgently needs to promote adaptation.

Focus on new opportunities derived from the emergent markets associated with climate change mitigation (CDM, REDD and agro fuels).

Mitigation initiatives delinked from adaptation.

Production of agrofuels: A cure worse than the disease.

REDD: An opportunity or a threat?

New disputes for the use of and control over territories (food vs. energy production).
How does this play out in specific territories of Latin America?

- Petén, Guatemala
- Mosquitia, Honduras
- The Peruvian Amazon
Guatemala: Territorial dynamics & disputes in Peten.

Agrofuels, REDD, petroleum, infrastructure, tourism, migration, land concentration, narco-trafficking, etc.
The Peruvian Amazon: Territorial dynamics & disputes

- More roads in the Amazon: Next 10 yrs - 880 km of new highways & 2000 km paved roads
- Rapid proliferation of concessions for hydrocarbon exploration and operation - more than ½ of all the titled indigenous land in the Amazonia is covered by concessions
- 15 hydroelectric dams projected in Peruvian Amazon - 1st will flood 40,000 hectares
- Gold fever & ravaged rivers – in 338,000 ha. of Madre de Dios, 1500+ mining rts
- Opposing interests erupting into conflict: Killing of indigenous protesters, human rts abuses, persecution of AIDESEP leader
The territorial dynamics lens refocuses attention on the rights, livelihoods and local development aspirations that are disputed in rural territories, and how supporting these key elements can promote alternative pathways to equitable and sustainable development, and even better governance.

Conventional development and conservation paradigms fall short:
- Traditional rural development models emphasize efficiency (agricultural yields)
- Classic conservation discourses focus on biodiversity (set asides)

Rethinking development requires a reframing of assumptions
- Economic growth without equity undermines social cohesion
- Physical integrity of inhabited vs. empty landscapes
- Revaluing the role indigenous and peasant communities play in natural resource management and governance

Rethinking development requires centering on expanding rights
The Mesoamerican Community Carbon Initiative:
A REDD+ strategy focused on defending, strengthening and expanding the territorial and forest rights of indigenous peoples and community forestry organizations.

Unprecedented opportunity for designing inclusive REDD+ schemes that address the underlying causes of deforestation and degradation, and strategically integrate the role of indigenous peoples and forest communities.

Strategic role of indigenous peoples and forest communities:
A large portion of the region’s forests fall within indigenous territories and/or areas of community management, these are frequently the best managed forests as well as the areas most threatened by the new territorial dynamics.
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