Linking global tourism and community forests: governance adaptations and local resilience in the face of emerging markets for tropical resort architecture

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Introduction

• Consequences of increased demand on forest resource extraction.

• Discourses:
  • *Scarcity*
  • *Optimism*
  • *Complexity*

• Observed pathways of change
Increased demand

Depletion

Management intensification

Substitution

Expansion of harvest areas

Resource resilience

Improved governance

“Sustainable”

Demand decline

(Homma 1992)

(Belcher & Schreckenberg 2007, Shackleton et al. 2015)
Study area: Quintana Roo, Mexico
Mayan history
Mayan present
Major tourist destination

Ca. 900 hotels, ca. 90,000 rooms
Forest management

• Post-revolution (1930-1980) communal land rights

• 1950s timber rights to concessions

• NTFP remained communal

• 1984 timber rights to communities.

• 1,000 – 100,000 ha

• Initial focus: Chicle and mahogany
Issues explored

1. Role of tourism in forest product emergence and evolution
2. Factors that influence demand
3. Governance evolution
4. Influence of construction materials on landscape management
5. Factors of change and innovation
Analyzing: Thatched hut

http://www.viceroyhotelsandresorts.com/

- Thatching
- Polewood
- Zapote posts
Cross-checking evidence

Harvest assessment
- Polewood & Thatching grass

Archives 1984-2014
- Forest management
- Hotel construction
• Assess plant-based materials used at 75 hotels

• Interview (135 total):
  harvesters  contractors
  forest technicians  authorities
Game-changers

Hurricanes
Game-changers

Tourism development

[Graphs showing hotel rooms and new hotel rooms per year from 1980 to 2012.]
Game-changers

New regulations

• Jurisdiction over agricultural areas

• Endangered species act
Tulum
Hotels 138  Rooms 6,254  R/h 19
Forest product importance: 4.02 ±1.34

Playa del Carmen / Riviera Maya
Hotels 247  Rooms 34,745  R/h 403
Forest product importance: 3.02 ±1.05

Cancun
Hotels 145  Rooms 30,608  R/h 408
Forest product importance: 2.33 ±0.52
Thatching

- Regulation: Agriculture vs. forest
- Aesthetic preferences
- Shift in production regions
- Subsistence use of palm persists
Polewood

• Poles < 35 cm, + 90 tree species

• Governing: Conflict of use timber vs. polewood

Regulation agricultural areas
Zapote posts (*Manilkara zapota*)

Informal governance heterogeneity: conflict of use
Discussion

Commodification: not linear process of intensification

• Forest & agricultural governance

• Other regulations: building codes

• Development, reconstruction & maintenance
Take home messages

Commodification: not linear process

Demand 3 dimensions:

• new construction
• reconstruction
• maintenance
• Thatched huts: subsistence ≠ commercial

• Aesthetics guide not authenticity
Integrated landscape critical: forest governance
Merci beaucoup!

