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Patterns of Development, Forestry Sector and Green Growth Minimalism in Costa Rica: an historical perspective

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Introduction

The literature associated with analysis of socioeconomic development and economic growth contains a variety of concepts to differentiate the historical evolution of a society, country or region. Thus, the concepts of development model, development project, development focus, national development style and patterns of development tend to approach the notion of development through its teleological character; that is, the tendency to think about development as the result of different stages, phases, intervals that overlap each other and maintain a relationship among each other.

In the specific case of the concept of patterns of development, contemporary literature begins from the premise that societies lean toward giving priority to

certain actions or certain routes in relation to others. So, development, under this conceptualization, cannot be considered neutral but rather the result of the tension between projects and ideological visions, often conflicting, that in power struggles among interest groups and pressure groups generate predominant courses of action that determine the development agenda and can even generate emerging patterns (Perkins et al., 2012; Currie-Alder et al., 2014). Therefore, the patterns of development are the result of a dynamic process where there is a convergence of sociohistorical realities, power struggles and political philosophies about how a society has tended to use available resources (from material to human) and how social institutions have been created (ways of organizing the national economy, production

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and national consumption, incorporation in the international economy; the financial system; the political exercise; resolution of political conflicts; and protection of vulnerable social groups, among other variables). All of this is directed toward reaching certain collective goals (Auty, 1994; Hayami & Godo, 2005; Perkins et al., 2012).

In this perspective, the present article analyzes the positioning that the Forestry Sector has had in the framework of three patterns of development (1950-1969, 1970-1985 and 1986-2014) present in the recent Costa Rican history, to give an account of the emergence in the last period, strictly from the Figueres Olsen administration, of a Green Growth discourse with minimalism nuances that have influenced margins of action, concentration of actions and performance of this sector. It should be noted here that this minimalist discourse has considered the Forestry Sector as a complementary activity of forest conservation (payment for environmental services) and generation of foreign currency from the promotion of ecotourism characterizing the forest timber production and forest industries as permissive and potentially negative activities for the environmental identity and image of the country at international and regional level.

On the other hand, as McMichael (2007) points out, globalization as a planetary phenomenon and its intensification in the past two decades have generated clashes between traditional patterns of development (or considered autochthonous) and those driven by increasing communication and interdependence among different countries of the world united by their markets, societies and cultures, simultaneously offering a series of social, economic and political transformations at the national level. These transformations affect lifestyle, patterns of consumption, even ways of interacting inside the societies. The forestry sector as a part of the land-use sector of Costa Rica has not escaped these trends and remains trapped between continuity, crisis and its reconversion as it will be make clear across the article.

Land Use, Production and Forestry: Pathways in Recent Costa Rican History

The Welfare State, departure of the agro-export pattern and arrival of soft industries (1950–1969)

It is appropriate to point out that the elements of the patterns of development that are going to characterize the country in this time period go back to the events of the Civil War of 1948 and the establishment of a new Political Constitution in 1949, which would enable the restructuring of the political regime, emergence of a new system of parties and reorientation of the functionality of the Costa Rican political system (Bell, 1981).

In general, this period is significantly influenced by social democratic thought, which tended to gravitate toward the National Liberation Party (PLN), the political group emerging victorious from the Civil War of 1948. The premise of the party was the need to intervene in the economy (Brenes, 1990; León et al.2014). So, the beginning of the 1950s, went from maintenance and strengthening of labor and social legislation from the 1940s to a tax on capital and earnings from banana production and the nationalization of private banks in the country. The latter aspect is relevant to land use since nationalization had among its objectives to open new lines of credit for agriculture, facilitate agricultural and livestock development and establish of a new industry based on the model of import substitution promoted early in South America (Vargas, 2005).

While it is true in agriculture that more credit was given to the traditional economic elite for coffee production, at the beginning of this decade, there was a turn toward diversification in order to generate crops for food for local consumption, which was complemented by policies to strengthen the National Production Council, the agency in charge of simulating basic grains crops such as rice, beans and, to a lesser degree, corn. A series of agencies was also established to be in charge of the regulation of coffee production as well as of sugarcane and banana production. In this context, the nationalization of the Coffee Defense Institute serves as a symbol under the banner of sharing the profits of production.

It is also worthwhile to mention that at the beginning of this decade, establishment of a welfare state was outlined, based on a central state and a set of autonomous institutions. This new order would come to prejudice the interests of traditional Costa Rican groups such as the financial bourgeoisie (former owners of the private banks), the conglomerate of importers (who lost access to credit for commercialization) and the political bosses (political leaders of renown at municipal and local levels) (Rovira, 1982; Salazar 2003). Other groups envisioned a new era of progress as large- and medium-scale coffee farmers and cane producers. Also in the decade of the 50s, a new small bourgeoisie arises that has their eyes on modernization of production and a fledgling state bureaucracy.

In the second half of this decade (1955–1960), the conglomerate of importers loses even more force. The traditional agro-export sectors see their earnings reduced as well: despite the increase in international prices for coffee and banana and the strength of the national money (the colón), the governments are faced with the need to increase tax revenues from agro-export production. The efforts of the government of Ulate (1949–1953) to achieve a fiscal balance and reduce the central government's internal and external debts did not reduce dependency on tax revenues from the exterior sector.

This, added to dependency on the outside for supply of prime materials, industrial goods for mass consumption and capital goods, leads the government of Figueres (1953–1958) to define a series of guidelines to transform the productive structure of the country and diversify agricultural production toward exportation and to local production (León, 2012).

The implementation of these guidelines generated mixed results during this administration. The rescue of the coffee plantations, new crop techniques and varieties of coffee, banana and cocoa were encouraged. This had repercussion on the use of the land in the country's Central Valley and in the Atlantic zone.

What is needed by the end of this decade (1958–1962) is development of a network of highways, roads and road infrastructure, especially bridges, orchestrated by the desire to give access to the communities and stimulate agricultural activities (Rovira, 1982).

The policy of increasing wages for public workers and financing the state, carried out through indirect taxes, was prejudicial to import merchants, a situation that the government of Echandí (1958–1962), an opponent of National Liberation and, in part, of the welfare state, would try with little success to reverse, basically due to the collapse in prices for coffee, cocoa and, to a lesser degree, bananas, which ultimately resulted in a growing trade deficit.

It should be pointed out that the product of the political negotiation in this period is a kind of political-economic pact, which enables emergence of the Economic Development Law of 1959, aimed to rescue the agro-exporter through credit, and the Industrial Protection and Development Law, which promotes a substitution of manufactured imports substitution industrialization (Rovira, 1989; Robles et al. 2007).

The new decade, in spite of the ups and downs of international prices already mentioned, continued with consolidation of the principles of the welfare state, in spite of the discomfort of the Echandí government. So, for example, 1961 sees universalization of social security and of access to water for human consumption and production, as well as a reduction in tariffs on popular consumer products, principles that the liberationist government of Orlich (1962–1966) would maintain and strengthen in practical terms (Alvarenga, 2010).

The government of Orlich was unconcerned about the situation of international prices of the products previously mentioned because of the Cuban Revolution, which brought ample material and technical assistance from international agencies associated with the United States, aimed to avoid expansion of the specter of communism. Authorities took advantage of the situation

to encourage existing nascent industry through credits and investments in return for maintaining investment to keep coffee production going (introducing new varieties of coffee plants and cultivation techniques) as well as making it possible for the large banana plantations to become companies based on national (not necessarily state) capital.

The macroeconomic stability—a product of assistance flowing in from cooperation, international market conditions for foods, and economic political measures to keep interest rates low favored two economic activities that would have significant repercussions on land use in Costa Rica. The first was development of a cattle-fattening industry to supply US demand, which involved conversion of forests to pastures, especially in the provinces of Guanacaste and Alajuela where there were broad, flat areas appropriate for the management of large herds (Chacón, 2007; León 2012). This phenomenon came to be known as “the hamburger connection,” which would be one of the main causes of land-use change and soil degradation (Szott et al., 2000). Paradoxically, the massive logging for the conversion fostered a small forestry industry, which later was blamed for the advance of deforestation.

The second economic activity was the introduction of new monocultures, especially of sugar cane, oil palm and cotton production. The first managed to consolidate itself in various geographic areas of national territory thanks to establishment of the Agricultural and Industrial Sugar Cane League (LAICA) in 1966 as well as new entrepreneurship around food production (Alvarado, 1981; Sánchez, 2004). The oil palm industry would consolidate later in the 1970s, while the cotton industry would suffer the ravages of international prices, swings in demand and production costs, which altogether brought about its demise in the 1970s.

The development of these new agricultural activities was encouraged by establishment of the Lands and Colonization Institute (ITCO) in the first half of the 70s, an agency that organized exploitation of uncultivated land in the hands of the state, which would, at least in theory, go to landless peasant farmers (campesinos) and migrant farmers (Rovira, 1982). During this time, Costa Rica does not experience the same yearnings for agrarian reform as its Central America neighbors and countries in the South; still, the subdivision and sale of small areas does permit the emergence of agrarian cooperatives and family agricultural enterprises. Unfortunately, a lack of information and systemic studies hampers an evaluation of how much the activities developed by ITCO permitted the advance of the agricultural frontier, which is now strongly attributed to the industry of the monocultures and especially to the fattening of cattle in the livestock industry.

It should be noted that at the beginning of the Trejos administration (1966–1970), agricultural production and the emerging food industry followed the logic of generation of foreign currency to pay for importation of raw materials needed to develop a strong national industry. According to Rovira (1982), by the middle of this decade, three groups of well-formed interests already existed: a traditional bourgeoisie (made up of traditional agro-exporters and importers), the new agro-exporters and a new but emerging industrial bourgeoisie qualified to enter the international economy. The existence of a state bureaucracy can also be identified, a result of the entrenchment of the welfare state in the country.

In general, the Costa Rican economy before the end of the decade of the 70s is very positive, with a GDP of about 6% and sustained growth in exportations, with an annual rate of 15%. Equally, the share of consumption in terms of the GDP increased as a result of salary policies and public expenditures, which enabled consolidation of the welfare state (León et al. 2014). This is a period of farewell to the traditional Costa Rican agro-export pattern, sustained almost exclusively by coffee and bananas, and one of incorporation of soft industry based on the manufacture of metal products and plastics having a low level of sophistication, plus products from wood (paper, cardboard and handcrafted furniture). In addition, a food industry appears, based on food and drink products for popular consumption. It is easy to see that Costa Rica took advantage of what different authors have called the Golden Era of Capitalism.

In statistical terms, it is complex to analyze the forestry sector contribution to the national economy in the context of this development pattern, especially due the absence of continuous series of data using the same methodologies. Estimates done from national accounts for 1953, 1962 and 1968 suggest that the silvicultural production sector made a contribution to GDP of 1.75, 2.25 and 2% respectively (Banco Central de Costa Rica, 1970). However, these data should be analyzed with caution because the 1968 estimation did not consider furniture production. Likewise, in the national account yearbooks there are inconsistencies, for example, in documents of calculation of the year 1962 indicates that the values correspond to the production in the mountain excluding transport and sawing process whereas in documents of the seventies the same estimation is presented assuming that such activities are contemplated.

It is also difficult to determine the contribution to the forestry sector to Costa Rica's exports for this period. Data from the Ministry of Industry in that time, indicate that at the end of the sixties (1968) the percentage corresponding to the amount exported in forest products was 3% of the total exported, corresponding to 24.500 cubic meters of timber and 4.000 units of wooden manufactures, furniture and handicrafts.

In general, the sector could be characterized in this period by unsustainable forest management (as a result of the clearing of land and farms for agricultural and meat production), unrestricted exploitation of primary forest, poor management and planting of forest plantations, waste of hectares suitable for reforestation, very few technological packages to plant species with high economic value, poor biotechnological and genetic development, poor use of climatic advantages that allowed to establish plantations of different species, as well as the presence of artisan techniques and unsophisticated in cutting and sawing processes (Pérez and Protti, 1978; Hunter et al. 1978; Guier, 1980; and Fournier, 1985). Likewise, an unrestricted use of bank credit for the promotion of agricultural activities and a policy that pose evidence of land position from the eradication of the forest and the expansion of the agricultural frontier. Paradoxically, data compiled in a fragmented way the General Direction for Forestry established in 1970 suggested that during the 1950s and 1960s there was still a substantial use of wood in housing construction and patterns of wood consumption prevailed, mainly from the purchase of furniture of national production, which created a no existence of patterns of dependence of importation of wood or wooden products suggested.

Aspirations of an entrepreneurial state, incomplete industrialization and crisis (1970–1985)

Most researchers on Costa Rican development agree that at the beginning of the decade of the 70s, new patterns of development are being generated. Perhaps the most relevant milestone was creation in 1972 of the Costa Rican Development Corporation, known as CODESA, during the second government of Figueres (1970–1974). The concept behind the corporation was that the state would lend part of the money for its financial support, especially via the national banking system, for development of a mixed structure of public and private capital that would once and for all ignite industrialization of the country and the production of goods for export purposes (Vega, 1982; Aguilar 2005). Equally, though not expressed, is the idea of accelerating the process of import substitution, both industrial as well as of foods, so that the dependence on generation of foreign currency from traditional activities would be reduced. In the beginning, the project had the backing of the manufacturers but traders, importers and the new agro-exporters had reservations.

Both the CODESA project and the assurance of the welfare state are slowed by the crisis in oil prices in 1973, which generates inflationary pressures in the country and a reduction in availability of credit (Sánchez 2003; León et al., 2014). However, the permanence of international cooperation in the framework of the Cold War and stability in the demand for sugar, coffee and meat allows the country to continue with production policies designed in the previous decade.

Later, when Oduber assumes power (1974–1978), the CODESA project resumes in earnest, complemented by a series of specific policies to continue diversifying the export sector, especially incorporating manufactured industrial products. There is little evidence that CODESA generated significant changes in land use, with some exceptional cases, such as promoting the Tempisque Central Sugar Mill (for sugar cane) and Cottons of Costa Rica.

The Oduber government also develops an ambitious policy for food security under the National Basic Grains Program, which, thanks to a credit program, showed the need to increase agricultural production directed to the internal market. To do that, strategies linked the National Agricultural Production Council (CNP), ITCO and different agencies in charge of the social sector. Great expanses of land would be dedicated to rice, especially in the province of Guanacaste and South Pacific, and to production of beans in different areas of the country. The Rice Office is created in this period, an organization that subsequently leads to the National Rice Corporation. To a lesser degree, benefits are generated for the production of corn and tubers although small microloans are generated for farmers located in the highlands of the central plateau.

In another arena, the first national parks and conservation areas are established during the Oduber government, which increase in numbers and area in following administrations (Chacón, 2007). There are different hypothesis about the structural roots that encouraged these conservation efforts. The official discourse registered in state documents makes reference to the idea of saving the country's natural heritage and reversing the patterns of environmental degradation and destruction of biodiversity and forest ecosystems produced largely by expansion of the agricultural and livestock frontier. It also mentions the level of threat to basic environmental services, especially provision of water resources. The relevance of international tourism is also considered as a source of foreign exchange and how the natural heritage of the country could be an attraction, an aspect that coincided with the restructuring of the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (Boza, 2015). At the unofficial level, efforts to establish conservation areas aimed to avoid conflicts over acquisition of lands and exploitation of natural resources. In this way, key resources (timberlands, potential reservoirs of oil and alternative energy sources such as geothermal energy) would remain in the hands of the state.

The government of Carazo (1978–1982), an opponent of the National Liberation party, had to deal with the direct blows of the second oil crises in the 1970s. In the Costa Rican academic literature, there is a broad range of assessments about the response capacity of the president and the government, particularly in relation to indebtedness and the crisis of a shortage of

essential commodities generated by the macroeconomic environment (Rivera, 1983; Rovira, 1989; Lizano, 1999; Franco & Sojo, 1992).

The end of this period corresponds to the liberationist government of Monge (1982–1986), which combines the efforts of macroeconomic stabilization and contention of the entrepreneurial state implemented in the 70s (Franco & Sojo, 1992). This is a government of rationalization, of expectations and of belt tightening, which leads to the beginning of the dismantling of CODESA and what it signified in the Costa Rican imagination. It also represents a process of dismantling the welfare state based on monetary stabilization and then attending to the requirements of the three structural adjustment programs, which have strong repercussions for Costa Rican agriculture (Rovira, 1989; Vega, 1996).

Keeping his campaign promises, Monge tried to achieve a return to agricultural activities, eliminating taxes on agriculture, and to strengthen traditional agricultural production (coffee, bananas and sugar cane), without much success; but also, diversifying the sector, promoting new crops (fruits, plants and flowers) and their exportation as nontraditional products (García, 2002). Also, with the strengthening of the system of national parks and in light of the need to capture foreign exchange, the tourism industry is encouraged through a law whose passage was not without debate, in particular for its possible implications for land use in coastal areas (Chacón, 2002).

In this scenario, the forestry sector underwent a political process oriented, according to Fournier (1985), to a more rational use of the forest. This, at least, seems to have been the purpose of the promulgation of the first forest law of Costa Rica at the end of the administration of Trejos Fernández (1969) and the creation of the General Direction for Forestry as a specialized entity attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in 1970. It is noteworthy that despite the characteristics of this development pattern, the forestry sector was not incorporated in the dynamics of industrialization, nor was contemplated business wise in the CODESA framework. In fact, even in this period the sector is characterized by a low use of technological packages, a slow introduction of management plans, as well as a reduction of production activities regardless of legality (see CONICIT, 1984; Flores, 1985).

It is also striking that in the early seventies the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sector accounted for a percentage contribution of 18% of GDP at constant prices (1972) and then decreased to 12 % in 1981 in the context of the above-mentioned national crisis. However, the yearbooks of the Central Bank suggest that the contribution of the forest sector remained around 1-1.5% during this period, despite the blame speech that the forestry sector was subjected (along with the export agricultural sector) to the reduction of forest cover by 35% between the years 1950 and 1982.

Moreover, there are elements that indicate that during this period forest areas began to be valued based on the multiple environmental, social and economic functions that forest covered, although later during the 1980s a reductionism in the imminent environmental functions. It should be emphasized that the forestry sector during this period, despite forest cover that the forest still had in the early 1980s and the availability and potential of secondary forest. This fact has the following causes: inadequate means of transport between forest and markets, high production and transaction costs and insufficient reforestation (a trend since the previous period).

Logging in this period, unlike the previous, involves wood as a basic product. It is estimated that in the 1970s, about 80% of the wood harvested each year is destined for the domestic market and only 15-20% is oriented towards exports. Data from the Ministry of Economy and Trade of 1975 indicate that the percentage corresponding to the amount exported in forest products was only 1,25% of the total exported, corresponding to 12.000 cubic meters of timber and 2.500 units of wood manufactures, furniture, transformed pieces and handicrafts. About 90% of the wood for local market is mainly used for first transformation (sawmilling) industry, reducing its subsequent transformation into furniture or construction inputs. This occurs due to changes in housing constructions patterns, preferring the use of concrete and steel over wood.

In general, this period leaves a series of irritants related to the patterns of development. A certain frustration stems from not reaching a high level of industrialization, but, above all, an industrialization with a certain level of sophistication and innovation. A love-hate relationship is established with the agricultural sector, and forestry sector perhaps as well, which are seen as out-of-date, traditional and a low generator of foreign exchange, though still necessary for macroeconomic stability. Also, Costa Rican society is more urban and open to consumption of goods and services, while at the same time the universalization and quality of public services in matters of health, education and social protection is considered to be a foundation for the Costa Rican middle class and democratic stability (Vega, 1996; Zúñiga, 1998). Many of these aspects come to play a role in the transformation in the following period

Favorable market pattern, eclectic policies and resistance (1986–2014)

The past 30 years of Costa Rican history tend to be characterized by the so-called Development Costa Rican Style, a combination of positions by seven governments—four liberationist and three social Christian. On the one hand is the impetus for economic policies and reform based on the neoliberal counterrevolution addressing what are considered to be the excesses of the welfare

state and especially the entrepreneurial Costa Rican state (Zúñiga, 1993). On the other is the generation of movements for political resistance and reproduction of the old order in effect during the oil crisis of the 70s, which has impeded a full and sustainable adoption and implementation of the neoliberal ideology (Sojo, 1984; Raventós, 2001).

The favorable market pattern has been oriented to empower the private and transnational sector and to reduce the role of the state while at the same time dealing with a need to be more strategic and establish a vigorous civil society with a range of interests and pressure groups that have the power of veto. At this point Costa Rica does not experience the deep privatization of its public sector as do other countries of the region, but there is a state reform characterized by reduction of public job force mobilization (Zúñiga, 1993,1998). The structure of the central government and the operational breadth of the autonomous institutions remain, but with a pattern of budget reductions and, especially, of human resources.

In economic terms, it has been a period of transition characterized by letting go of the yearnings for its own or autonomous industrialization and reducing expectations by maintaining strong agricultural production “the Costa Rican way,” appropriate to the second part of the 20th century. The economy is thus transformed into a service economy, with a strong presence of the tourism industry, an economy anchored to attraction of direct foreign investment in manufacturing and with an agricultural sector based on monocrops (banana, pineapple and melon) with a high dependence on agrochemicals (Garnier & Blanco, 2010; García, 2002).

In this way, Costa Rica has come to constitute an economy with a high level of openness and few protected sectors in international trade (including rice and dairy products). This level of commitment to openness has resulted in ratification of more than 20 preferential trade agreements and in tariff reductions within the framework of the multilateral trade system (WTO). Similarly, it is worth mentioning that the country faces an economy sustained by consumption (increasingly imported goods and the level of debt from personal credit) and less on investment and national entrepreneurship, despite having a vigorous and widespread public-private bank (León et al., 2014).

In the political sphere, the country has experienced a series of transformations. During this period, a great majority of presidents have been elected as heads of state who are politically and institutionally weak, through two political parties (PLN and PUSC) that are also weak (Robles, 2014). The vast majority of presidents arrive supported politically and financially by pro-openness sectors and promoters of a neoclassic-globalized discourse and with the backing of binomial financial neo-exporter (or new oligarchy) (Vega, 1994; Robles, 2014).

As for land use in this period of study, Costa Rican efforts to conserve the environment and preserve ecosystems considered key or strategic are widely recognized in specialized international publications, ranging from articles disseminated in specialized journals to textbooks. This calls attention to the existence of a series of publications that indicate the existence of a certain environmental commitment by the population, in political institutions and Costa Rican society as well as pro-environmental perceptions or concerns about the state of the environment, aspects that form part of a set of factors associated with these conservation practices that have emerged or intensified since the 80s (see, for example: Evans, 1999; Steinberg, 2001 and more recently Vivianco, 2007).

What is certain is that with the establishment of a system of conservation areas and, to a certain degree, with the definition of economic incentives for forestry and sustainable forest management, the country was able to recuperate its forest-vegetative cover in the past two decades of the 20th century and the first of the 21st century, showing a commitment to conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity. This is well-documented in texts produced at the national level, such as by MINAE and PNUMA (2002). More recently, Costa Rica has been recognized internationally and regionally for being a pioneer country in areas such as the establishment of protected areas, payment for environmental services (PES), sustainable management of primary forest and, more recently, REDD+ and carbon neutral initiatives that address goals for the land-use sector.

In the period (1994-2014), sustainable forest management of natural forest, forest plantations and agroforestry systems have contributed about 4.200.000 m³ of logs, where forest plantations and agroforestry systems account 98,5%, while natural forest accounts 1,5%. According to estimations done based on records of the National Forestry Office, forest plantations contributed about 3.200.000 m³ de of timber. However, it should be noted that, forest plantations have a downward trend in the period mentioned, due to high land costs, opportunity cost for alternative activities (pineapple, palm, melon, agricultural industry, urban development and real state), the closure of species, illegal ant-logging activities, as well as the difficulty of dealing with the pathology and assuming the costs of legally operating (WB, 1993; de Camino et al, 2000; OET, 2008, Navarro et al., 2008). Regarding forest management, it is estimated that there are (2014) in the country at least 1,4 million hectares of primary forest and secondary privately owned with potential for sustainable forest management

Despite the above mentioned there are social resistance to increase and promote forest production and forestry industry, preferring to allow the population to choose the consumption of imported wood and prefabricated

furniture imported under free trade agreements with Canada, EE.UU., Chile, mainly.

Perhaps for all the above indicating the last estimation done by the National Forestry Office reported that the contribution of the forestry sector to GDP of Costa Rica reached only 0,87 % for the year 2002. There are few elements that suggest that this trend has changed. However, it is important to clarify that this phenomenon has to be seen in the perspective of an increase of services sector in the Costa Rican economy, activities performed in free zones and a gradual reduction of the agricultural sector to the national economy with the exception of monoculture export.

It might be pointed out as well, in this same period, the country developed “pathologies” of urban-style environmental degradation (significant contamination of watersheds, increase in the volume of untreated effluents and solid wastes, unplanned urban development with its respective consequences in terms of ecological footprint and reduction in biocapacity, unacceptable levels of atmospheric contaminants (Amador, 2002) as well as greenhouse gas emissions, mainly from the use and uncontrolled growth of the fleet of vehicles, all of this with the bad habits of postcolonial economy enclaves such as an increase in the use of agrochemicals associated with production for exportation (pineapple, banana, melon and coffee industry, among others) (García, 2002).

This has brought into the discussion the fact that the commitment of the inhabitants of this country (anchored in conservation) and of the different social groups is not enough to justify saying that the country has developed patterns of development toward a green growth.

In summary, Costa Rica in the past 30 years (from the 80s to the first decade of the 21st century) has developed contradictory practices toward the environment, generating a commitment toward public-private conservation, incorporation of some clean technologies and, at the same time, a commitment much more limited in terms of daily life and productivity. This ambivalent relationship between different social, economic and environmental actors in the country has generated a series of trade-offs that have limited a smooth transition to a green growth incorporating the land use matrix.

The irruption of Green Growth Minimalism and the Forestry Sector

Besides the mentioned levels of forest conservation reached by Costa Rica, the agricultural vocation of its people has marked its development throughout recent history. This article has made it possible to clarify how the country's economy evolved from a pattern of agro-export development to be complemented by import substitution

and promotion of nontraditional products. Since the decade of the 1990s to the present, the Costa Rican patterns of development have been characterized by a more open economy, not centralized as much in agriculture but more integrated globally with international markets of goods and services. This pattern of development has sought, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, to adhere to the principles of sustainability, encourage transformations toward green growth, use clean sources of energy, avoid extractive activities—such as mining and exploitation of petroleum, promote conservation of nature and the development of ecotourism, and make efforts to reduce the ecological footprint.

In this way, the patterns of development followed in the past 30 years (from the 80s) offer strengths and weaknesses as far as contribution of the land-use sector and forestry sector to establishment of a green growth.

Costa Rica in the 80s opts early for an open market economy, upsetting its past of protectionism, intervention and regulation of the economy. Now, as Wiarda & Kline (2013) argue, this new orientation in Costa Rica and other countries in the region does not represent however a dramatic rupture with the ways of linking the forms of production but rather restating it in a new scenario. To the above must be added the burdens of the past, represented by the limitations of small economies that tend toward public indebtedness and less in investment to sustain its patterns (Franko, 2007).

It should be noted that for Sheehan (1987), Latin America has been characterized until the beginning of the 1980s by a definition of patterns of development characterized by a practical dimension resulting from conflicts generated by economic crises caused by oil prices and by a more abstract dimension associated with the irruption of ideological debates of development (theory of independence vs. Neoclassical counterrevolution). Hence, in the 1980s Costa Rica early opted for an open market economy, which disrupts its protectionist past, intervention and regulation of the economy. Now, as Wiarda & Kline (2013) argues, this new orientation in Costa Rica and in other countries of the region does not represent a dramatic break with the political struggles of the past, if not rather rearticulating in a new scenario. Additionally, we must add burdens of the past represented by the limitations of small economies that tended to public indebtedness and less to the investment to sustain their development patterns (Franko, 2007).

In the rearticulation of this new scenario just mentioned during the administration of Figueres Olsen in the country, a green growth discourse was established with minimalist nuances, supported using the refrain of sustainable development. In the context of this speech, replicated in later administrations (Rodríguez Echeverría and Pachego de la Espriella), it was suggested that the country's

economy should grow in a “green way” through the drivers already mentioned: ecotourism and sustainable tourism, attraction of foreign rentiers, the development of clean technologies and the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases (especially of agriculture and transport sector) However, within the framework of this discourse the forestry sector was relegated or at least reduced to being a services provider.

The phenomenon began when the new forest law went into effect (1995), which created a system of payment for environmental services (PES) and decreed a ban on land-use change. The PES functions through a monetary payment to landowners, recognizing their provision of four environmental services: i) mitigation of greenhouse gases, ii) protection of water and soil, iii) protection of biodiversity, and iv) scenic beauty (Fonafifo 2011).

For the period 1997-2013, the PES program managed US\$200 million through fiscal funds, loans and donations. These resources were awarded for forest protection (88%), forest plantations and agroforestry systems (6%) and forest management (almost 3%) (Sánchez et al. 2013). The forest sector practically depends on the benefits of PES, which fails to offset the loss in competitiveness associated with overregulation of management and the high costs of legal operation. This situation undercuts legal security of forest businesses and reduces the willingness to invest in the development of a forest economy in a country with significant forested areas on private lands (Navarro & Thiel 2007). If we consider the enormous expanse of secondary forests, 600 thousand hectares, for which there is no regulation to allow their incorporation to sustainable management, the situation for the forestry sector could become unsustainable. If the secondary forests were legally managed, value chains could be developed, generating important benefits for the communities that coexist with the forest in rural areas.

In general terms, this minimalist of the discourse of the forest as a service provider (no goods) has had its practical consequences as indicated in the following section.

By way of closing

Although it is true that Costa Rica has done many advances in forestry, both in illegal and institutional, the information collected in this article and referenced in other studies indicates that the sector is in a situation of abulia, this because gradually fewer reforestation and forest management projects are being implemented as well as fewer entrepreneurship in forest industries while there is a growing shortage of domestic timber accompanied by an opening to the import of timber and forest industry goods while in the 70s and 60s the Costa Rican population had some level of knowledge of the provenance of their consumer goods elaborated

from wood in the 90s its consumption happens to be determined by price and availability restrictions provoking the existence of a consumer less informed and interested in forest production (MEIC & CCF, 1995).

If Costa Rica could capitalize the productive base of forests growth during the past 30 years, the economic benefits could be significant. In this sense, it is necessary to go further to efforts that restrict agricultural production and forestry and the administration of protected conservation areas. One of the options and perhaps the most innovative is the adoption of a focus on productive rehabilitation of the landscape, as a universal transversal axis to maintain the productivity of ecosystems and provide environmental services for the society. This should be accompanied by a revaluation of timber production for both domestic consumption and to export.

Significantly, Costa Rican scholar publications lack certainty with respect to the causes and the period of time which led to the level of environmental commitment toward forest conservation that is currently celebrated. It would seem that the changes in the relationship of the Costa Rican people with this environmental component stems particularly from a sort of political vision, professionals with an ecological or environmental vocation who became agents of change, appearance of civil society organizations tied to the environment, the ecotourism boom and the presence of important levels of environmental deterioration from the agricultural activities carried out in the decades of the 60s and 70s in the context of the welfare state and entrepreneurial state (Evans, 1999; García, 2002, Amador, 2002 Chacón, 2007). It is also presumed that, as previously indicated, many of the declarations of national parks and protected areas in the 70s and 80s served to avoid social and political conflicts over new lands for agricultural production. Similarly, the logic of the development of the payment program for environmental services in the 1990s and 2000s has been incorporated into this logic.

It remains unfinished to determine whether in the latest pattern of development elaborated or in the next one, it could be incorporated to the forestry sector in a more articulated and comprehensive way to the development and green growth of the country.

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