A POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF NEOLIBERAL MULTICULTURALISM

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND MARKET-BASED CONSERVATION IN INDIGENOUS COSTA RICA

ALONSO RAMÍREZ COVER

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This dissertation is part of the research programme of CERES, Research School for Resource Studies for Development.

Cover picture: Juliana Bittencourt and Zuiri Mendez (SubVersiones)

ISBN: 978-90-6490-081-5

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A POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF NEOLIBERAL MULTICULTURALISM

Social Inclusion and Market-Based Conservation in Indigenous Costa Rica

EEN POLITIEKE ECOLOGIE VAN NEOLIBERAAL MULTICULTURALISME

Sociale integratie en op de markt gebaseerd natuurbehoud in inheems Costa Rica

Thesis

to obtain the degree of Doctor from the

Erasmus University Rotterdam

by command of the Rector Magnificus

Professor dr. H.A.P. Pols

and in accordance with the decision of the Doctorate Board

The public defence shall be held on

Monday 27 November 2017 at 10:00 hrs

by

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Para Lourdes y Victoria

Porque sin su amor profundo e incondicional
nada en mi vida tendría sentido o propósito

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Acronyms

ACLAC	La Amistad-Caribe Conservation Area
ACLAP	La Amistad-Pacifico Conservation Area
ACOMUITA	Association of Indigenous Bribri Women of Talamanca
ADI	Integral development association
ADITIBRI	Integral Development Association of the Talamanca-Bribri Indigenous Reserve
ADITICA	Integral Development Association of the Talamanca-Cabécar Indigenous Reserve
ANAI	New Alchemists' Association
APPTA	Association of Small Producers of Talamanca
BANHVI	Housing and Mortgage Bank
BID	Inter-American Development Bank
BID-MAG	Sixaola Binational Watershed Project
CACTA	Talamanca County Agricultural Center
CAFMA	Forestry management certificate
CATIE	Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center
CBC	Community-based conservation
CBP	Permanent Binational Commission
CCAD	Central American Commission of Environment and Development
CCF	Costa Rican Forestry Chamber
CE-REDD+	Executive Committee for REDD+
CGR	Controller General Office
CIAGRO	National College of Agronomical Engineers
CLC	Chiriquí Land Company
CLFT	Local Forestry Council of Talamanca
CONAI	National Commission on Indigenous Affairs
DINADECO	National Directorate for Communal Development
EARTH	Agricultural School of the Humid Tropics
ENCC	National Strategy for Climate Change
ERDS	Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Sixaola Binational Watershed

ER-PD	Emissions Reduction Program Document
ER-PIN	Emissions Reduction Program Idea Note
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FONAFIFO	National Forest Financing Fund
FPN	National Parks Foundation
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GiZ	German Development Agency
ICDP	Integrated conservation-development project
ICE	Costa Rican Electricity Institute
IFO	International financial organism
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMAS	Mixt Institute of Social Assistance
INEC	National Institute of Statistics and Census
INDER	Institute for Rural Development
ISI	Import-substitution industrialization
ITCO	Institute for Lands and Colonization
ITCR	Technological Institute of Costa Rica
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IWRM	Integrated watershed resource management
JPRAN	Board for the Protection of Aboriginal Races of the Nation
MAG	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
MBC	Market-based conservation
MCCA	Central American Common Market
MEP	Ministry of Public Education
MINAE	Ministry of Environment and Energy
MINSA	Ministry of Health
MIRENEM	Ministry of Natural Resources and Mines
NCP	National Cacao Program of the MAG
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NTAE	Non-traditional agricultural export
OAS	Organization of American State
ONF	National Forestry Office
PA	Protected area
PILA	La Amistad International Park
PLN	National Liberation Party
PES	Payments of environmental services
PNDF	National Forestry Development Plan

PSA	Program of Payments of Environmental Services of FONAFIFO
RBLA	La Amistad Biosphere Reserve
RECOPE	Costa Rican Oil Refinery
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the Role of Conservation, Sustainable Management of Forests and Enhancement of Carbon Stocks in Developing Countries
RIBCA	Bribri-Cabécar Indigenous Network
R-PIN	Readiness Program Idea Note
R-PP	Readiness Program Proposal
SAF	Agroforestry systems
SAP	Structural adjustment program
SESA	Social and Environmental Strategic Assessment
SGF	Small Grants Fund
SGP	Small Grants Program of GEF
SINAC	National System of Conservation Areas
SIS	Safeguards Information System
SPN	National Parks Service
TBIR	Talamanca-Bribri Indigenous Reserve
TCIR	Talamanca-Cabécar Indigenous Reserve
TIR	Talamanca Indigenous Reserve
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UCP	Project Coordinating Unit of BID-MAG
UCR	University of Costa Rica
UFCO	United Fruit Company
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-REDD	United Nations REDD Platform
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I want to thank the Bribri and Cabécar men and women that generously invited me to their homes and workplaces over the past four years. It was a privilege to share your stories and ideas about your collective well-being, the environment, political organizations and agendas, community life and politics. I treasure every minute of the precious time that you have given me over countless hours of discussions. More specifically, I would like to thank the various leaders and members of the Talamanca-Cabécar and Talamanca-Bribri Integral Development Associations, the Bribri-Cabécar Indigenous Network, *Talamanca por la Vida y por la Tierra* and the Association of Indigenous Bribri Women of Talamanca for their time and invaluable assistance. I want to especially thank Jonny Buitrago, Leonardo Buitrago, Elías Escalante, Augustín Jackson, Calixto Molina, Aldir Morales, Melis Páez, Guillermo Rodríguez, Justa Romero, Levi Sucre, Faustina Torres and José Luis Villanueva. They helped me in many different ways. Some offered me their generous hospitality, allowing me to stay in their homes; others extended their invitation to assist in town gatherings; while others more enlightened me with different perspectives of what is like to be Bribri and Cabécar political activists in Costa Rica. Their help was of the outmost importance for talking to the local and traditional authorities of the Neighborhood Councils and the *awapa*. I am forever grateful for the unparalleled generosity of these men and women, without which, my work would have never found a satisfying end.

I also want to thank everyone in Costa Rica and Panama, outside of the Talamancan territories, that has contributed to this work over the past five years. These people kindly offered some of their time to hear my questions and offer their honest answers, for which I am extremely grateful. Particular appreciation must be given to Mauricio Álvarez, Carlos Borge, Felipe Carazo, Magaly Lázaro and Carlos Sandí for their guidance and research assistance in the development of this work. Particular appreciation must be conveyed to Zuiri Méndez and the kind people at the *Kioskos Ambientales* Program of the University of Costa Rica for their research assistance and insightful commentary to this project. Additional thanks are also required for the staff of La Amistad-Caribe Conservation Area at Puerto Limón and Suretka, particularly to Olman Morales and Miguel Madrigal; as well as to the people from the National Forestry Financing Fund at San José and Puerto Limón, especially to Alberto Rojas, Juan Pablo Pérez and Gilmar Navarrete. All of them provided extremely necessary information and insight about

environmental policy in the indigenous territories. In Panama, I want to express my gratitude to Leyson Guillén and Rogelio Cansar for their kind attention and research guidance.

At the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam, I want to thank my two supervisors: Dr. Max Spoor and Dr. Bram Büscher. Dr. Spoor helped me in an incomparable manner throughout the course of this difficult project. He provided this work with the constructive criticism and visionary outlook that I required to push myself to the limit. His surgical readings of my writing, argument coherence and idea organization were instrumental for getting this thesis up to final examination. I can only hope that the results of this investigation match the extraordinary level of his helpful and thought-provoking contributions. But more than just thanking him for his academic influence to this work, I must also thank Max for his unconditional support for the duration of this research. As any other research project, this dissertation had its happy and not-so-happy times. During the latter, there was a moment in which I came very close to abandoning the whole endeavor altogether. Yet, Max was there. Pushing me onwards, offering me a helping hand when I needed it the most. I am more than certain that this work and my future as a scholar is profoundly indebted to him.

Thoughtful gratitude is merited for Dr. Bram Büscher as well. As my thesis supervisor, he helped me through the best of times and the worst of times of this dissertation. From the beginning, his insight, passion, dedication to academic life, drive towards academic excellence and politically-meaningful research became the beating heart of this thesis. He is an inspiration for me and for this work. His spiritual support was critical, especially at times in which I saw myself lacking the strength to see this project through. Going well beyond the line of duty, he worked with me from the frontlines of thesis writing, helping me to gain the confidence I required to overcome my personal and professional adversities in order to complete this dissertation. Through his example, I was shown a world in which balancing work and family could be possible despite the tough comings and goings of academic life. In so doing, Bram became one of those mentors that I guess all of us doctoral candidates yearn for, but few end up meeting. I was extremely lucky to have his commanding theoretical presence, his selfless approach to thesis supervision and, more importantly, his invaluable friendship for this long trip. Both Bram and Max provided welcomed wisdom, interesting insights and an engaging outlook, all of which have been critical ingredients for producing this dissertation. It is my only desire that this humble document offers a just reflection of their priceless academic contributions and the hope that they placed on me since the beginning of this project. More than supervisors, they approached this work with a friendly and helpful disposition, and that is a luxury that not many PhD students get to have. It has been a privilege to be a part of your research

projects, and your academic and personal lives over these years. Thank you both!

Additionally, I want to thank the other members of my Doctoral Committee. Dr. Robert Fletcher, Dr. Murat Arsel and Dr. Julien-Francois Gerber offered me thought-provoking feedback to my work during the presentation of my Full Draft in late June 2017. Though coming from different scientific backgrounds, all of them had considerable influence in the final version of my work. I hope that they appreciate the way in which their constructive criticism and shrewd observation has shaped this piece. Dr. Rosaleen Duffy was the external commentator of the initial research design paper that I presented in The Hague on December 2013. Her comments were of enormous value at the beginning of this project; and I expect them to be as insightful today, now that this research is ending. Dr. Barbara Hogenboom and Dr. Kees Biekart became members of my Doctoral Committee some weeks before I wrote these words. I want to thank them in advance for what I hope would be challenging, interesting and constructive criticism of this thesis. I am honored for having such prestigious scholars as part of my Doctoral Committee and I thank you all in advance for offering your generous contribution in giving shape to my modest work.

This dissertation was made possible through the financial and logistic support given by the University of Costa Rica, the Research Group on Political Economy of Resources, Environment and Population of the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam and the Chair Group on Sociology of Development and Change of Wageningen University. With the resources generously offered to me over the past seven years, I was able to develop a detailed scholarly account of conservation and development projects being implemented in Talamanca, Costa Rica. These institutions offered me the chance of investigating a subject of huge interest for me, while enjoying a full-time research position at least during the first three of years of my PhD. Although changes are bound to take place in lengthy and protracted projects like this one, the support received from these institutions was instrumental for me to continue until the last stages of research. Full-time research appointments are a rare privilege in the context of scholarly life in the Third World. So, I want to convey my wholehearted thanks to these prestigious academic institutions for offering me the privilege of developing the most critical stages of this research in these conditions. It is my wish that this work and myself have met your high academic expectations.

I also want to express my gratitude to the School of Political Sciences of the University of Costa Rica, which offered me the opportunity and conditions to begin, develop and improve my work over the past five years. Specifically, I want to thank Dr. Andrés León, Dr. Alberto Cortés, Dr. María Paula Barrantes, Dr. José Miguel Rodríguez, MSc. Fernando Zeledón, Lic. Shirley Picado, and Dr. Tania Barrantes. Whether offering a helping hand during the planning, execution and revision stages of this

research or giving much needed orientation for navigating the complicated labyrinths of administrative procedure in Costa Rican governance, their support and friendship deserves to be noticed. Similarly, at the Institute of Social Research of the University of Costa Rica, I want to thank Dr. Carmen Caamaño, Dr. Carlos Sandoval, Lic. Ana Lucía Gutiérrez, (soon to be doctors) Francisco Robles and José Julián Llaguno, as well as the other members of the research and administrative staff of that prestigious academic institution, for the intellectual and spiritual support given throughout the execution of this project. For over a decade, all of you have given me the encouragement, friendship and intellectual space I required to develop my work; and, in so doing you planted the curiosity that drove me to explore the politics of environmental conservation in Costa Rica and Talamanca. I am grateful of the role that these scholars played in allowing me these precious opportunities despite the difficult academic environment at the University of Costa Rica. Special thanks must be conveyed to Dr. Koen Voorend and MSc. Ariana Araujo for their unconditional help and friendly support during the entirety of this work. Both of them stood by me in the lowest of moments, offering me friendship and support when I needed it the most.

The idea that we should pursue academic careers came to Lourdes and me around the time we got engaged in 2008. We knew that, in the context of Costa Rican academic life, succeeding in this project would not have been possible without obtaining degrees from abroad. So, studying in the First World became our main project. Indeed, sometime after our first anniversary, I received the acceptance letter from the MA program at ISS; and went to The Hague for the first time a month after our second anniversary. Lourdes came with me and by our fourth year of marriage, she was doing her MA and I was enrolling to the PhD program that I am currently finishing. Put in other words, this PhD has been a fixture for a great deal of our married life.

Similar to other companions, this work has sometimes been a welcome addition, and sometimes it has not. Our daughter, Victoria, was born during the year I came back from fieldwork – a glorious year for Lourdes and me, albeit not so worthy of remembrance when talking about my PhD. I say this because all of our lives consist of constant changes, upon which our only hope is that we are able to cope. While Victoria's birth was one of the happiest moments of my life, I cannot forget that it also happened in a backdrop defined by constant fear of failing to negotiate family life and academic obligations. Surpassing these pressures was never easy for me and I cannot say that I have found the way to deal with that, but I can say that I would not have made it through this research project without the continuous support of the people closer to me. I have been privileged with a kind and loving family which has cared for us through this project. My brothers, Eduardo and Felipe, my sister, Adriana, my parents, Walter and Mariam and my wife's family (which is

undeniable my own as well), Luis Diego, María Elena and Diego, have have offered us their love and care, and through these, they have made this dissertation possible.

However, it is to Lourdes and Victoria that I dedicate this dissertation. Without their unconditional love, caring and engaging support this thesis would have never existed. They are what truly matters in my life. They are my reference point around which I give meaning to my reality and make sense of what I am and what I do. I am proud of being Lourdes's husband and Victoria's father, and I am grateful for their love and caring. This thesis exists thanks to them both. I love you!

Abstract

This dissertation analyzes how indigenous populations are politically included by or excluded from different forms of market-based conservation practices being implemented by state agencies, NGOs and international financial institutions (IFIs), in two adjacent Costa Rican indigenous territories: the Talamanca-Bribri and the Talamanca-Cabécar Indigenous Reserves (TBIR and TCIR, respectively). More precisely, this thesis explores the interaction between these indigenous peoples and three green economy interventions oriented at conserving forest cover and biodiversity through: 1) the promotion of organic cacao production in agroforestry systems (AFS), 2) the financialization of forest carbon through payments of environmental services (PES) and 3) the design of new indigenous-minded forms of PES through REDD+.

While this thesis explores if the various economic, environmental and social promises of these interventions become materialized, attention is focused on explaining their political impact with regards to historical indigenous demands for autonomy, control over natural resource management and right to self-determination. In this sense, this thesis will conceptualize these interventions as 'inclusive' forms of neoliberal conservation oriented towards addressing the historical forms of social exclusion of the Bribri and Cabécar indigenous peoples from Costa Rican society. This thesis will show how the green economy has been embraced by conservation state agencies and NGOs in Costa Rica from an ambivalent stance, coming not from a stable consensus over the need of configuring forest governance under market logics, but due to neoliberal pressures to make protected areas financially self-supporting and capable of contributing to the wider national economy vis-à-vis other productive and social land uses. It will also explain how have the Bribri and the Cabécar managed to retain a strong territorial claim over their lands, leading state and NGO actors to introduce market-based conservation in the TBIR and TCIR as an effort towards modifying existing indigenous livelihoods, behavior and perspectives in favor of conservation, instead of forcefully imposing it.

Afterwards, this dissertation will characterize the manner in which the proponents of these forms of the green economy have attempted to gain legitimacy and promote "buy-in" for these interventions at a local level, while also highlighting how local participation is being shaped by discursive and material powers of the green economy. It will explain how these interventions simultaneously appropriate indigenous demands for political autonomy and self-determination and transform local institutions handling natural resource governance. Drawing on literature

about the relationship between indigenous politics and state formation, this thesis explains how this appropriation and transformation of indigenous demands lead to new forms of social exclusion.

Overall, this thesis is based on the concept of neoliberal multiculturalism, understood as a political project engrained within neoliberal forms of governance that seeks to selectively recognize indigenous rights with the objective of rendering these compatible to the wider ideas, interests and logics of capital. Using this concept as a key part of the analytical framework, this thesis demonstrates that the market-based interventions in the TBIR and TCIR entail the disciplining of indigenous peoples and politics to livelihoods considered more compatible with the economic and political practices and ideas of the green economy, while still recognizing and supporting the traditions, rights and ideas of the Bribri and Cabécar inhabitants that are compatible to neoliberal conservation. So, viewed in a historical perspective, the gap between recognition and implementation of indigenous rights in Costa Rica is not being reduced through neoliberal conservation. While conservation state agencies and NGOs have begun to diversify environmental governance to accommodate to some indigenous ideas and culture, the overriding neoliberal mindsets of individualistic rationality, marginal optimization and environmental efficiency remain the unyielding project planning imperatives. Consequently, this thesis argues that while there is some effort to achieve inclusivity through these interventions, political exclusion remains an integral feature of the relationship between modern conservation and indigenous peoples in Costa Rica.

Resumen

Esta disertación analiza cómo poblaciones indígenas resultan políticamente incluidas o excluidas de diferentes prácticas de conservación basadas en el mercado, implementadas por agencias estatales, ONGs e instituciones financieras internacionales (IFI), en dos territorios indígenas costarricenses: las Reservas Indígenas Talamanca-Bribri y Talamanca Cabécar (TBIR y TCIR, respectivamente). Más precisamente, esta tesis explora la interacción entre pueblos indígenas y tres intervenciones inspiradas en la economía verde y orientadas a la conservación de la cobertura forestal y la biodiversidad, a través de: 1) la promoción de producción de cacao orgánico en sistemas agroforestales (SAF), 2) la financialización del carbono producido por bosques a través de pagos por servicios ambientales (PES) y 3) el diseño de nuevas formas de PES amigables a los derechos indígenas por medio de REDD+.

Si bien la tesis explora si las promesas económicas, ambientales y sociales terminan materializándose, la atención se centra en explicar el impacto político de estas intervenciones al respecto de demandas históricas de los indígenas por una mayor autonomía, control sobre los recursos naturales y el derecho a la autodeterminación. En este sentido, esta tesis conceptualizará estas intervenciones como formas 'inclusivas' de conservación neoliberal orientadas a abordar formas históricas de exclusión política de los Bribri y Cabécar en la sociedad costarricense. Esta tesis demostrará cómo la economía verde ha sido acogida por las ONG y las agencias costarricenses de conservación estatal desde una posición ambivalente, definida no por un consenso estable sobre la necesidad de configurar la gobernanza forestal bajo lógicas de mercado, sino que como resultado de presiones neoliberales destinadas a hacer a las áreas protegidas financieramente autosostenibles y capaces de contribuir a la economía nacional. Se explicará cómo es que los Bribri y Cabécar han logrado retener un fuerte control de su territorio, obligando al estado y las ONG a introducir la conservación basada en el mercado no mediante la imposición forzosa, sino que como un esfuerzo de reformar los modos de vivencia indígena para ser más coherentes con la conservación.

Posteriormente, esta disertación caracterizará la forma en que los proponentes de esta economía verde han intentado obtener legitimidad y promover la aceptación indígena de estas intervenciones a nivel local, al tiempo que se señala cómo la participación local es moldeada por el discurso de la economía verde. Se explicará cómo estas intervenciones se apropian simultáneamente de las demandas indígenas de mayor autonomía política y la autodeterminación, para transformar instituciones locales encargadas de la administración de recursos naturales. Con base

en literatura recientes sobre la relación entre política indígena y formación de Estado, esta tesis explica cómo la apropiación y transformación de las demandas indígenas lleva a nuevas formas de exclusión social.

En general, esta tesis está basada en el concepto de multiculturalismo neoliberal, entendido como un proyecto político enraizado dentro de formas neoliberales de gobernanza que busca reconocer selectivamente los derechos indígenas con el objetivo de hacerlos compatibles a las ideas, intereses y lógicas más amplias del capitalismo. Usando este concepto como una parte clave del marco analítico, esta tesis demuestra que las intervenciones de mercado en el TBIR y el TCIR, implican el disciplinamiento de los pueblos indígenas y su política a favor de modos de vivencia considerados más compatibles con las prácticas económicas y políticas, así como las ideas de la economía verde, mientras se reconocen las tradiciones, derechos e ideas de los Bribri y Cabécar que pueden ser compatibles con la conservación neoliberal. De este modo, vistas en una perspectiva histórica, la brecha entre el reconocimiento y la implementación de derechos indígenas en Costa Rica no está siendo reducida por medio de esta conservación neoliberal 'inclusiva'. Si bien, agencias estatales y ONG han venido diversificando la gobernanza ambiental para admitir algunas ideas indígenas, las mentalidades neoliberales de racionalidad individualista, optimización marginal y eficiencia ambiental siguen siendo los imperativos de la planificación de proyectos. Consecuentemente, esta tesis argumenta que, si bien hay esfuerzos para garantizar la inclusividad a través de estas intervenciones, la exclusión política continúa siendo la faceta integral de la relación entre la conservación moderna y los pueblos indígenas de Costa Rica.

Samenvatting

In dit proefschrift wordt beschreven hoe inheemse bevolkingsgroepen in de samenleving opgenomen of ervan uitgesloten worden als gevolg van de implementatie van verschillende methoden van op de markt gebaseerd natuurbehoud in twee aangrenzende leefgebieden van de inheemse bevolking: de Talamanca-Bribri en Talamanca-Cabécar Indigenous Reserves (respectievelijk TBIR en TCIR) in Zuidoost-Costa Rica. In dit onderzoek is specifiek gekeken naar drie verschillende interventies op het gebied van beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen. Deze waren gericht op behoud van bosbedekking en biodiversiteit in de bufferzones van het nabijgelegen internationale park La Amistad (PILA) door middel van: 1) het bevorderen van biologische cacaoproductie in boslandbouwsystemen; 2) financialisering van de koolstofvoorraad in bossen door middel van PES en 3) het ontwerpen van nieuwe, op de inheemse bevolking gerichte vormen van PES door middel van REDD+.

In dit proefschrift wordt ingegaan op de diverse economische, milieu- en sociale beloften van deze voorbeelden van de groene economie, maar de focus ligt op wat deze initiatieven betekenen voor de roep om politieke autonomie van de inheemse bevolking, voor hun controle over beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen en hun recht op zelfbeschikking. In dit opzicht worden de eerdergenoemde interventies in dit proefschrift opgevat als op sociale integratie gerichte vormen van neoliberaal natuurbehoud die bedoeld zijn als reactie op de lange geschiedenis van sociale uitsluiting uit de Costa Ricaanse maatschappij van de inheemse Bribri- en Cabécarstammen.

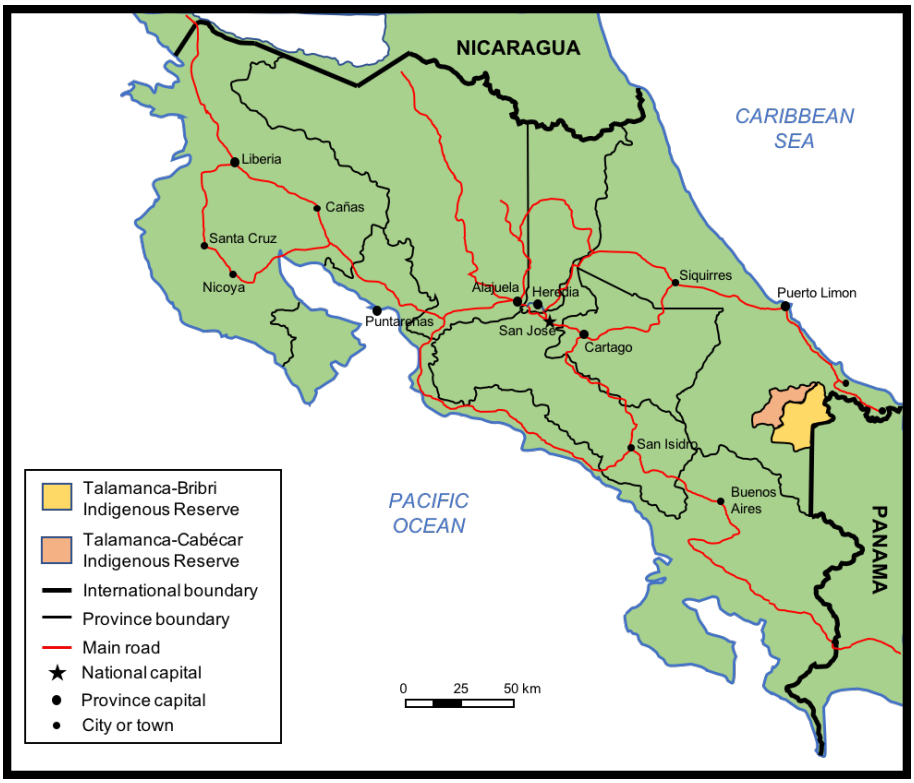
Dit proefschrift laat zien dat de 'groene economie' door overheidsinstellingen voor natuurbehoud en ngo's in Costa Rica met ambivalentie is omarmd, waarbij er geen stabiele consensus was over de noodzaak bosbeheer conform de wetten van de markt te organiseren, maar sprake was van neoliberale druk om beschermde gebieden financieel onafhankelijk te maken en een bijdrage te laten leveren aan de bredere nationale economie in vergelijking met andere productieve en sociale manieren van grondgebruik. Het beschrijft dat de Bribri- en Cabécarstammen sterke territoriale aanspraken op hun grondgebied zijn blijven maken, en dat de overheid en ngo's op de markt gebaseerd natuurbehoud in de TBIR en TCIR hebben geïntroduceerd in een poging om de inheemse bevolking te bewegen om hun bestaande manier om in hun levensonderhoud te voorzien, hun gedrag en hun zienswijze te veranderen ten gunste van natuurbehoud, zodat dit niet dwingend opgelegd hoefde te worden.

Hierna volgt een uiteenzetting van de wijze waarop de voorstanders van de 'groene economie' hebben geprobeerd om legitimiteit te verwerven en deze interventies op lokaal niveau te 'verkopen', waarbij ook aandacht wordt besteed aan hoe lokale participatie wordt vormgegeven door discursieve en materiële machten van de groene economie. Het onderzoek verklaart hoe de voorstanders van de groene economie zich met deze interventies tegelijkertijd de inheemse aanspraak op politieke autonomie en zelfbeschikking toe-eigenen, en lokale instituties voor het beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen transformeren. Daarmee verklaart het onderzoek, op basis van literatuur over de relatie tussen inheemse politiek en staatsvorming, hoe deze toe-eigening en transformaties tot nieuwe vormen van sociale uitsluiting leiden.

Het begrip neoliberaal multiculturalisme staat centraal in dit proefschrift en wordt opgevat als een politiek project geworteld in neoliberale vormen van governance met als oogmerk inheemse rechten selectief te erkennen om deze in overeenstemming te brengen met de algemene ideeën, belangen en logica van het kapitaal. Met dit begrip als essentieel onderdeel van het analytisch kader toont dit onderzoek aan dat de op de markt gebaseerde interventies in de TBIR en TCIR de inheemse bevolkingsgroepen en politiek vormen van levensonderhoud opleggen die geacht worden beter aan te sluiten bij de economische en politieke praktijken en ideeën van de 'groene economie', terwijl de tradities, rechten en ideeën van de Bribri -en Cabécar-inwoners die aansluiten bij neoliberaal natuurbehoud erkend en ondersteund worden.

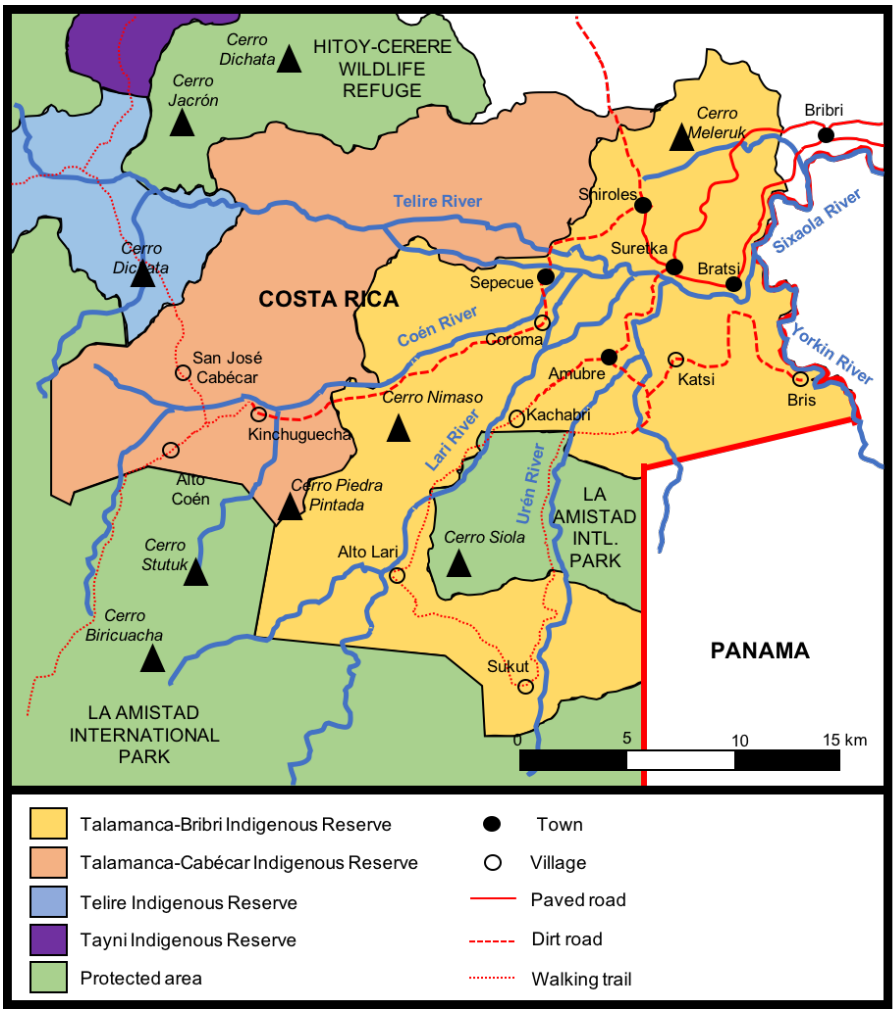
Vanuit historisch perspectief bezien wordt de kloof tussen erkenning en implementatie van inheemse rechten in Costa Rica dus niet kleiner door neoliberaal natuurbehoud en blijft de paradox van natuurbehoud bestaan. Hoewel overheidsinstellingen voor natuurbehoud en ngo's begonnen zijn met het diversifiëren van milieubeheer om enigszins tegemoet te komen aan inheemse ideeën en cultuur, blijft de neoliberale denkrichting van individualistische rationaliteit, marginale optimalisatie en milieuefficiëntie de projectplanning onverminderd bepalen. Daarom is de conclusie van dit proefschrift dat er met deze interventies weliswaar pogingen tot sociale integratie worden gedaan, maar dat sociale uitsluiting een wezenlijk kenmerk blijft van de relatie tussen modern natuurbehoud en inheemse bevolkingsgroepen in Costa Rica.

Map 1. *Location of the Talamanca-Bribri and Talamanca-Cabécar Indigenous Reserves within the Costa Rican national territory*



Source: Elaboration of the author based on maps provided by the Development Observatory of the University of Costa Rica.

Map 2. *The Talamanca-Bribri and Talamanca-Cabécar Indigenous Reserves*



Source: Elaboration of the author based on maps provided by the Development Observatory of the University of Costa Rica.

1 Introduction

Over the course of the past decade, the green economy has been heralded as the answer to the economic, social and environmental crises ailing the world today. Building on the ideological precepts of sustainable development, the green economy offers the chance to merge development and conservation through the usage of market-led forms of natural resource governance devoted to green growth (see Hayden, 2014; Sandor, 2012). Though popular in various spheres of development policy, green growth has become a central approach for environmental conservation, attracting the attention of big international NGOs, international financial organisms (IFO), state agencies and donors whom are currently converging the usage of market logics for planning and carrying out new conservation projects and interventions (Büscher and Fletcher, 2015; Arsel and Büscher, 2012; Igoe and Brockington, 2007). In a context defined by growing degradation of globally-valued natural resources worldwide, natural rural landscapes are being re-organized and new legal, political and economic infrastructure that could allow environmental services to be traded is being put in place (Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2010), through considerable efforts to promote ecotourism, integrated conservation and development projects (ICDP) and schemes for the financialization of nature through payments of environmental services (PES) and REDD+. Behind this fundamental shift in our understanding of nature and our relationship with it, advocates of the green economy claim that these forms of conservation will not only result in the protection of natural resources, but also the promotion of local development, the reduction of rural poverty (Muradian et al., 2013; Arsel and Büscher, 2012), and more importantly to this dissertation, in considerable advances for indigenous agendas regarding the materialization of long-standing claims for territorial autonomy and self-determination (see Yashar, 2005; Van Cott, 2010; Escobar and Alvarez, 1992).

The significance of this latter promise must not be understated, especially considering the complex and paradoxical relationship between modern conservation and indigenous peoples over the past two centuries. While alliances between these groups are frequent today (see Chapin, 2004; Catton, 1997; WWF, 1997; Stepp et al., 2004), initial encounters were often violent and grossly disadvantageous for indigenous peoples. Whether in underdeveloped Africa and Asia or in the developed regions of North America, the first protected areas and game reserves were designed following preservationist approaches – dubbed today as "fortress conservation" – which quickly interpreted indigenous populations as a threat to the conservation of natural landscapes

(Brockington et al., 2008; Jacoby, 2001; Neumann, 2005; Spence, 1999). Indigenous dispossession of ancestral lands and resource uses soon followed, as colonial elites carved out protected areas in order to foster new capitalist economic practices or to consolidate state power over territorial frontiers (see examples in Grandia, 2012; Agrawal and Redford, 2009; Vandergeest and Peluso, 1996). In the rare instances that modern conservation allowed the presence of indigenous peoples, the decision came from a position of perceived cultural superiority of white elites, for which indigenous life was to be evaluated according to their contribution to the enhancement of Western ideas of pristine natural landscapes (Brockington et al., 2008).

The gradual shift from fortress conservation to community-based conservation (CBC) since the 1980s may have allowed for renewed collaboration between indigenous peoples and conservationists, but that did not mean that various forms of social exclusion of indigenous populations by conservation suddenly stopped. Various studies offer evidence of growing failure of conservation projects aimed at indigenous peoples, due to contradictions between how these groups and conservationists value natural resources differently, leading to opposed resource management imperatives and practices (see Holt, 2005; Hutton et al., 2005; Chapin, 2004). One consistent reason behind these types of failings was the inability of conservation to account for the dynamic character of indigenous culture in contexts of socioeconomic transformation (see Dove, 2006; Niezen, 2003). Often, the introduction of indigenous groups within conservation planning tended to reify the former as "ecologically noble savages" and their natural resource management practices as timeless and immutable vis-à-vis historical change (see Niezen, 2003; Colchester, 1997; Conklin and Graham, 1995; Redford, 1990).

Indeed, various authors have explained how previously successful efforts to protect landscapes eventually led to conflicts with local indigenous communities, due to the failure to acknowledge new or existing demands for economic development and welfare, especially in a context of gradual articulation of these peoples into an ever-expanding capitalist system (see Holt, 2005; Chapin, 2004; Agrawal and Redford, 2006). Moreover, failure to account them as more than just another "stakeholder" within the implementation of equilibrium-based models of biodiversity conservation, led to limitations to engage with the central concerns that has historically led them to enter in alliances with conservation, such as attaining their collective right to self-determination and political autonomy through the exercise of control over natural resources in their ancestral territories (see Isla, 2015; Holt, 2005; Castillo, 2004) In this context, it is no wonder that some indigenous populations ended up perceiving conservation as no different than other "mega-projects" (i.e.: oil and mineral extraction industries and massive agricultural plantations), given how these interventions provoked

significant changes in rural lives, failed to fulfill promises of improved welfare and discarded any type of effort to protect their land-based rights (see Dove, 2006; Dowie, 2005). As Holt (2005) argues, whether in the case of top-down or bottom-up approaches, conservation seems to place indigenous people in a 'catch-22', where local culture is considered as both a support and a threat to conservation. Yet, the green economy is currently promising a solution to this dilemma, that could resolve the historical problems of the relationship between indigenous peoples and modern conservation namely by offering a win-win solution based on the possibility of harmonizing conservationists' objectives of nature protection with indigenous demands for "cultural" conservation.

Conservation and development specialists have found the promises of these win-win solutions through market logics enormously appealing. Indeed, organizations like the Bank Information Center (BIC), one of the non-profit NGOs that worked in the context of the Costa Rican REDD+ Program studied here, concluded that this initiative constituted a *"viable commercial mechanism to support conservation and the maintenance of carbon sinks in forests, whilst simultaneously engaging with the preoccupations of indigenous peoples"* (Baker and Donaldson, 2015). Despite garnering the support of all of the other big international NGOs and state agencies involved in the Costa Rican REDD+ Program, this conclusion was written and published well before: 1) negotiations between indigenous peoples, conservation NGOs and state authorities in the REDD+ dialogue ended, 2) indigenous consultation regarding this 'indigenous alternative' began and 3) the recently-established National REDD+ Program yielded any tangible policy result. From this very brief example alone, it is quite clear that there is a positive outlook for these win-win solutions, despite the fact that not enough evidence exists providing support of their actual effectiveness in promoting social and political inclusion. Accordingly, numerous scholars have offered warnings and called for studies regarding the contrasts between the discourse behind the green economy and its actual realities (see Muradian et al., 2013; Sullivan, 2013; Büscher et al., 2012; Dressler and Roth, 2012; Robertson, 2004). Instead of going along with the 'market hype', they view the on-the-ground realities of the green economy as a contested political process whereby attempts to commoditize nature may result in the social exclusion of poor rural communities from the natural resources they require to survive (Fairhead et al., 2012; Leach et al., 2012; Kelly, 2011; Corson, 2010). Indeed, numerous studies have already began showing the effects of the contradictions of market-based conservation (MBC) and explored the incomplete and competing logics that end up provoking a combination of positive and negative results (Büscher and Fletcher, 2015; Arsel and Büscher, 2012; Corson, 2011). Yet, more studies are needed to better understand the social impact of neoliberal conservation, especially regarding the role that indigenous peoples play in the context of these neoliberal interventions.

This dissertation analyzes how indigenous populations are politically included by or excluded from different forms of market-based conservation practices being implemented by state agencies, NGOs and international financial institutions (IFIs), in two adjacent Costa Rican indigenous territories: the Talamanca-Bribri and the Talamanca-Cabécar Indigenous Reserves (TBIR and TCIR, respectively). More precisely, this thesis explores the interaction between these indigenous peoples and three green economy interventions oriented at conserving forest cover and biodiversity through: 1) the promotion of organic cacao production in agroforestry systems (AFS), 2) the financialization of forest carbon through payments of environmental services (PES) and 3) the design of new indigenous-minded forms of PES through REDD+.

While this thesis explores if the various economic, environmental and social promises of these interventions become materialized, attention is focused on explaining their political impact with regards to historical indigenous demands for autonomy, control over natural resource management and right to self-determination. In this sense, this thesis will conceptualize these interventions as 'inclusive' forms of neoliberal conservation oriented towards addressing the historical forms of social exclusion of the Bribri and Cabécar indigenous peoples from Costa Rican society. This thesis will show how the green economy has been embraced by conservation state agencies and NGOs in Costa Rica from an ambivalent stance, coming not from a stable consensus over the need of configuring forest governance under market logics, but due to neoliberal pressures to make protected areas financially self-supporting and capable of contributing to the wider national economy vis-à-vis other productive and social land uses. It will also explain how have the Bribri and the Cabécar managed to retain a strong territorial claim over their lands, leading state and NGO actors to introduce market-based conservation in the TBIR and TCIR as an effort towards modifying existing indigenous livelihoods, behavior and perspectives in favor of conservation, instead of forcefully imposing it.

Afterwards, this dissertation will characterize the manner in which the proponents of these forms of the green economy have attempted to gain legitimacy and promote "buy-in" for these interventions at a local level, while also highlighting how local participation is being shaped by discursive and material powers of the green economy. It will explain how these interventions simultaneously appropriate indigenous demands for political autonomy and self-determination and transform local institutions handling natural resource governance. Drawing on literature about the relationship between indigenous politics and state formation, this thesis explains how this appropriation and transformation of indigenous demands lead to new forms of social exclusion.

Overall, this thesis is based on the concept of neoliberal multiculturalism, understood as a political project engrained within neoliberal forms of governance that seeks to selectively recognize

indigenous rights with the objective of rendering these compatible to the wider ideas, interests and logics of capital. Using this concept as a key part of the analytical framework, this thesis demonstrates that the market-based interventions in the TBIR and TCIR entail the disciplining of indigenous peoples and politics to livelihoods considered more compatible with the economic and political practices and ideas of the green economy, while still recognizing and supporting the traditions, rights and ideas of the Bribri and Cabécar inhabitants that are compatible to neoliberal conservation. So, viewed in a historical perspective, the gap between recognition and implementation of indigenous rights in Costa Rica is not being reduced through neoliberal conservation. While conservation state agencies and NGOs have begun to diversify environmental governance to accommodate to some indigenous ideas and culture, the overriding neoliberal mindsets of individualistic rationality, marginal optimization and environmental efficiency remain the unyielding project planning imperatives. Consequently, this thesis argues that while there is some effort to achieve inclusivity through these interventions, political exclusion remains an integral feature of the relationship between modern conservation and indigenous peoples in Costa Rica.

1.1. Research questions

This is the main question that has guided this dissertation: *how is neoliberal multiculturalism established in the context of the market-based interventions and strategies implemented in TBIR and TCIR and how does this impinge on the possibility of the green economy to reach its objectives of environmental conservation and social inclusion for the Bribri and Cabécar people?* This question is accompanied by three other sub-research questions:

1. What are the main features of the wider conservation discourse in Costa Rica, how it is being transformed by ideas about the green economy and how has this affected the governance and intervention strategies of the market-based conservation projects being implemented in the TBIR and TCIR?
2. How do these key features relate to local Bribri and Cabécar territorialities at the level of regional and local governance levels?
3. How does neoliberal multiculturalism impact the possibilities of the market-based conservation projects implemented in the TBIR and TCIR of producing inclusive forms of development and conservation for the Bribri and the Cabécar people?

1.2. The case: the relationship between Bribri and Cabécar peoples with modern conservation

The current interactions between the Bribri and the Cabécar indigenous peoples and the state agencies and international NGOs promoting

conservation in their territories offer an excellent case study of how the relationship between indigenous people and modern conservation has been moving forward vis-à-vis the shift from fortress conservation to neoliberal initiatives, like PES or REDD+; and how these interactions are affected by neoliberal multiculturalism. While historically protective of their traditional customs and of the integrity of their state-mandated territories, these two indigenous peoples are nationally well-known for their political activism against attempts to promote oil and mineral extraction, hydroelectric power endeavors and banana plantations (Borges and Villalobos, 1997). In 1982, converging around the need of countering these types of "mega-projects", state conservation agencies and national and international NGOs began considering the Bribri and Cabécar peoples as allies for the establishment of La Amistad International Park – a transfrontier protected area spanning between Costa Rica and Panama, but which is operated as two separate national parks in each country (see map 3).

Demographic studies made around this time estimated that the two indigenous territories (created in 1978) had a population of 2.383 inhabitants, occupying an area of 664,2 km2, leading to a population density of 3,58 inhabitants per kilometer squared (Bozzoli de Wille, 1986). This density was perceived by conservation NGOs and state agencies as conducive for the protection of natural resources (Castillo and Borge, 1995). While there was some for-profit cultivation (e.g.: cacao, banana and rice) in the Bribri townships most accessible to mestizo-owned lands, large extensions of forests predominated the landscape, intermeshed with patches devoted to indigenous traditional agroforestry. Sharing shelter in dispersed traditional houses made from local materials, most of the Bribri and the Cabécar living beyond the Telire River fished the local rivers, gathered forest resources for food and medicine, hunted the local fauna and cultivated traditional crops for their own subsistence with limited technology. The agreement amongst conservation NGOs and state officials was that indigenous resource use patterns were mostly sustainable, supporting the idea of an alliance.

However, like most indigenous populations in Costa Rica, the way of life of the Talamancans is being pressured to change by inward and outward forces. A local population surge, the introduction of previously non-existent forms of technology in the lowlands of the Talamanca Valley, a slow, but unrelenting plunge into the national and international capitalist markets and the expansion of new state services in the area have been the causes behind changes in resource use patterns of the Bribri and the Cabécar, and consequently, in the integrity of their cultural forms of land use (Castillo and Borge, 1995). Through state intervention, the Talamancans have seen the introduction of mestizo educational practices and Westernized healthcare systems. Today, only 7,8% of the local indigenous population remain uninsured by the Costa Rican Social Security Board (CCSS), and 87,7% of them know how to read and write in

Spanish, due to schools created by the Ministry of Public Education (MEP). Recently built roads have integrated the main indigenous townships of Suretka and Shiroles to the local, provincial and national capitals. Many of the inhabitants in these places now work for wages in the banana plantations of Dole and Chiquita, the hotels and commerce of the mestizo towns in the adjacent Sixaola Valley.

Map 3. La Amistad Biosphere Reserve and its different forms of territorial management

Source: Elaboration by the author based on maps provided the Costa Rican Ministry of Environment and Energy and the Panamanian National Authority of the Environment.

Meanwhile, others have begun producing cacao, plantains and bananas for sale to intermediaries whom commercialize these produces in San José (the national capital), Europe and the United States. Alongside all of these changes, local population grew yearly by an average of 10,4% in the past 30 years, leading to a total population of 9,821 inhabitants and a population density of 14,8 inhabitants per kilometer squared, more than four times the one reported in 1982 (INEC, 2012). The usage of new tools for agriculture, hunting and fishing, growing demand for state services,

the gradual transformation of household livelihoods from subsistence to market production, the introduction of monocultures and the selling of handicrafts to nearby hotels are all visible change of the transformations brought to the TBIR and TCIR by capitalist development; many of which are perceived by conservation NGOs and state agencies to be having deleterious consequences for the previously well-conserved landscape of the Talamanca Valley (MIDEPLAN, 2011; MINAET-SINAC, 2011).

Table 1. Main conservation projects under implementation between 2012-2017 in the TBIR and TCIR

Project and duration	Scale and location of intervention	Proposing actors	Financial sources	Project description
Sustainable Development Project of the Sixaola River Basin (BID-MAG) (2009-2016)	Local, mainly in the Talamanca and Sixaola Valley	BID MAG Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN)	11,9 million USD (9,2 million from BID loan; 2,7 million from government sources)	Promotion of sustainable development through financing of productive activities (mainly organic cacao, plantain and banana production)
Integrated Management of Ecosystems at the Sixaola Binational River Basin (BID-FEM) (2009-2012)	Transfrontier, alongside the Sixaola River Basin	BID Costa Rican Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE) Panamanian National Authority of the Environment (ANAM)	17,9 million USD from a BID loan	Creation of Binational Commission for Sustainable Management of the Sixaola River Basin and support for an environmental diagnostic of natural resources in the river basin
Payments of Environmental Services Program (PSA) (1998-now)	National, though mainly in the forested areas of the TBIR and TCIR adjacent to PILA	World Bank (WB) FONAFIFO	47,0 million USD from WB loans and government sources	Payment of environmental services in exchange of conserving forests in the territories

Source: Elaboration by the author based on information collected from MIDEPLAN, 2011; Nessim et al., 2004; and data obtained from FONAFIFO.

The conservation projects that will be studied in this dissertation constitute the main interventions designed by conservationists to address this situation. These have come as a result of a combination of state and NGO interests at national and international level and operate through different forms and scales of conservation governance, thereby providing

a very rich case for analyzing the historical interaction between indigenous peoples and conservation. On one hand, the project promoting organic cacao began implementation in 2012, but originated in long-standing efforts of the Costa Rican and Panamanian governments of promoting inclusive economic development alongside the transfrontier river basin that serves as their political boundary. By 2000, a common Binational Sustainable Development Strategy (BSDS) was defined, and later, divided in order to be executed separately by each state. The Costa Rican plan was dubbed Sustainable Development Project of the Sixaola River Basin (BID-MAG), was implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) and financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (BID), and included a major component for promoting organic cacao production in indigenous agroforestry systems, which was implemented between 2012 and 2016 (see the next table for more details). On the other hand, PES appeared as a national initiative promoted since 1998 by the National Forest Financing Fund (FONAFIFO) and oriented towards protecting the buffer zones of PILA, of which the TBIR and TCIR are part of. This project pays the Bribri and the Cabécar in exchange of conserving several patches of forest in their territories. REDD+ has been deployed afterwards using this PES initiative as a basis from which to design a more 'indigenous-inclusive PES'. On the other hand, PES appeared as a national initiative promoted since 1998 by the National Forest Financing Fund (FONAFIFO) and oriented towards protecting the buffer zones of PILA, of which the TBIR and TCIR are part of. This project pays the Bribri and the Cabécar in exchange of conserving several patches of forest in their territories. REDD+ has been deployed afterwards using this PES initiative as a basis from which to design a more 'indigenous-inclusive PES'.

These projects show that the relationship between the Talamancans, the NGOs and the state is changing here in the context of the tectonic shifts of capitalist development. While all of these actors guardedly consider each other as allies, given that their particular interests seem to orbit around the notion of protecting natural resources, their goals are not the same. For the Bribri and the Cabécar, strengthening indigenous rights and local autonomy over natural resources could be conducive to environmental conservation. Yet, conservationists do not agree with this claim, considering that territorial and political autonomy are issues beyond their purview, that granting such rights could complicate the design of necessary forms of governance to consolidate conservation objectives (Dettman, 2006; Candela, 2007) and, in a few cases, because any claim of local rights should be rendered void when discussing globally-valued natural resources resources (Rojas and Porras, 2012). Yet compromises should be made. In a context of unusually strong indigenous organizations and in which the Talamancans do hold some legal power over their territory, it is not a matter of imposing fortress conservation and fences-and-fines approaches, but of generating "buy-in" to conservation efforts. The green economy has presented itself as an

alternative to attend the concerns of both parties simultaneously. It offers conservation a way of influencing indigenous livelihoods, behavior and perspectives at a local level, while justifying the protection of natural resources vis-à-vis other productive uses in a neoliberal economy centered on export/foreign investment-led development and a public environmental sector each time more dependent on donor funding to operate. It also offers indigenous people the promise of inclusive development and the recognition of their cosmovision, cultural rights and political autonomy.

In the following chapters, this thesis will analyze these dynamics from the perspective of neoliberal multiculturalism, characterizing the way in which the green economy seems to respect parts of local traditional culture, considering it conducive to conservation and worthy of preservation, while discarding others that do not suit this end. In so doing, the wider literature of neoliberal conservation will benefit from this dissertation given the objective of looking not only at the social, economic and environmental impacts of market-based conservation, but also at the consequences for cultural and indigenous politics. Moreover, the fact that this research is centered on Costa Rica further makes this thesis an important scientific and political contribution, due to its nuanced and critical understanding of a country that is celebrated both for its environmental-friendly policies and the advanced state of protection of indigenous rights (see Brockett and Gottfried, 2014; Zimmerer, 2011; Van Cott, 2010; Campbell, 2002; Evans, 1999) and which is considered to be a benchmark for environmental and indigenous policy in Latin America and the world.

1.3. Research methodology

This thesis used a qualitative research approach based on an extended presence in the field to capture best the different meanings and representations of development, conservation, territory, political autonomy and governance and resource uses of the Bribri and Cabécar people. Main data collected and interpreted was obtained through a combination of various techniques (including participant observation, structured and semi-structured interviews and document analysis).

1.3.1. Research setting

The two indigenous territories studied in this dissertation are located on the main flood plain of the upper Sixaola River Basin, and extend from there to the foothills of the Talamanca Mountain Range until reaching the boundaries of La Amistad International Park. This flood plain is known as the Talamanca Valley, a geographical area with a landscape mostly characterized by forests interspersed with lowlands which serves as the meeting point for five rivers: the Telire, Lari, Coén, Urén and Yorkin. The inhabitants of the TBIR and TCIR live in 41 villages. Suretka and Shiroles

are two most populated towns in the territories. Both are located about 2 kilometers apart from each other and about 20 kilometers from Bribri, the nearest mestizo township and are easily accessible from Bribri by a recently-built paved road. Local Bribri and Cabécar farmers use the floodplain to grow plantain, banana and cacao, as well as other subsistence crops (e.g.: maize, rice, beans, etc.). Plantains and bananas are more commonly seen near the rivers, while cacao and other subsistence forms of agriculture are more common in the areas farther away and nearby forests.

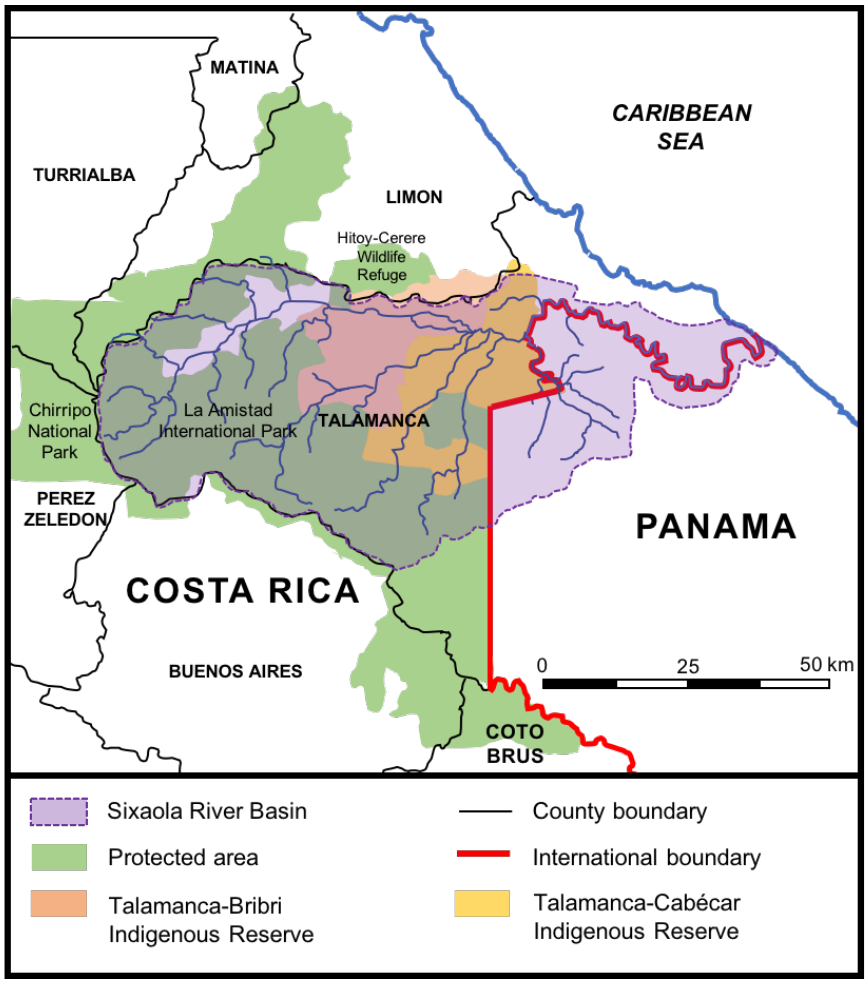
The six rivers run through the Talamanca Valley until meeting up to form the Sixaola River, a politically-important body of water that serves as the international boundary between Costa Rica and Panama. This river flows until reaching the Caribbean Sea, thereby creating a basin covering an area of 2.839 km2. Despite its size, the most economically important part of the river basin is not located in the Talamanca Valley, but in a lower floodplain of the Sixaola River called the Sixaola Valley. Separated from the Talamanca Valley by two small mountain ranges running 20 kilometers inland and parallel to the coastline, the Sixaola Valley has a landscape mostly dominated by banana plantations owned by multinational corporations, spanning from the town of Bribri well into Panamanian territory. There has been some tourist development as well, but it has mostly been limited to the towns of Puerto Viejo and Manzanillo, a couple of mestizo towns located in the coastline, about 40 kilometers away from Suretka and Shiroles. These banana plantations and tourist-related businesses employ a small fraction of the Bribri and Cabécar population living in the Talamanca Valley.

While the lowlands of the Talamanca Valley are easily accessible by car, the area beyond the right margin of the Telire River is much more difficult to reach as there are no bridges or reliable crossings. A ferry service using motorboats allows the Bribri and Cabécar to cross the Telire River and from there a network of dirt roads connect the main towns and villages, like Amubre, Sepecue, Coroma and Kachabri. From the river crossing onward, forests become a more prevalent fixture of the landscape, interspersed with small villages and indigenous houses. Topology becomes more fractured as one makes its way inland after crossing the Telire River in Amubre or Shiroles. The lowlands of the valley gradually give way to the Talamanca Mountain Range, where the highest peaks of both countries can be found. The area beginning after the base of the mountain is more difficult to access. There are no roads for vehicles, so walking trails must be used to traverse these parts. Here, distances tend to be calculated in hours or days of travel. Many parts of the highlands covered by RBLA are pretty much inaccessible without proper physical training and an experienced guide (MINAET et al., 2012).

Administratively, about 80% of the land of the Talamanca Valley is located within Costa Rican territory and the rest is in Panama. In Costa Rica, local political management should fall on the municipal authorities

at the town of Bribri. Yet, it must be said that specific management of issues ranging from water provision, electricity, healthcare, education, agriculture, road infrastructure, environmental management and border control are dependent upon many other public agencies boasting different degrees of effective on-the-ground presence and political and managerial autonomy from the local and the national government.

Map 4. The Sixaola River Basin



Source: Elaboration of the author with maps provided by the Central American Commission of Development and Environment (CCAD).

Consequently, actual land use management happens in different geographical locations including San José, Puerto Limón, Puerto Viejo, Bribri and the different villages of the TBIR and TCIR. It is relevant to say that according to the Law of Indigenous People (6172), indigenous territories, such as TBIR and the TCIR, are self-governed and cannot be sold, transferred or divided in any way. Therefore, land governance should lie on indigenous authorities organized around integral

development associations (ADI), that is, local councils created by the state to promote the development of indigenous communities and to act as formal interlocutors between indigenous peoples and state authorities.[1]

While the law declares these organizations as 'de facto' local governments over indigenous territories, in practice, the extent of their territorial autonomy is often considered dubious as state and municipal authorities also have some say over many different agendas. Environmental management is one of these issues. The establishment of RBLA has created a buffer zone overlapping the TBIR and TCIR, thereby giving rise to new institutions governing land use through control over and restrictions on agriculture, as some forms of the latter have been framed as the most important threat to forest cover (Connelly and Shapiro, 2006). These land use dispositions are often at odds with indigenous and afro-Caribbean populations at both sides of the border, given the restrictions that these efforts impose on resource access and land use. Further institutions have also appeared through the enactment of the green economy interventions that were previously mentioned.

All of these complexities are the reason why the Talamancan Indigenous Reserves were chosen as the research site of this thesis. The Talamanca Valley offers an interesting geographic location in which indigenous peoples are claiming for recognition of their political autonomy vis-a-vis the effects of the institutionalization of conservation interventions. This happens in a context where the nature of jurisdiction of state agencies over land and resource management is unclear, due to a history of struggle between indigenous and non-indigenous populations over resources in the wider river basin.

1.3.2. Methodological approach

Before I characterize the methodological approach used for this research It is important to point at two central facts: first, that I was trained as a political scientist and not as an anthropologist; and second, that the objective of this work was not to write ethnography. My interest was to explore the political interaction between the Bribri and Cabécar peoples and state officials and NGOs seeking to devise, plan, consult, implement and evaluate development/conservation projects in TBIR and TCIR. Consequently, the idea was to explore the way local micro-politics and traditional and non-traditional governance structures affected these projects, and from there frame these within the historical dynamics of regional territorialization in the context of the establishment and reproduction of much broader political and economic structures, such as neoliberalism (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013). The ontological and epistemological assumption for this thesis is that *"(i)n their conscious human activity, (people) for the most part unconsciously reproduce the structures that govern their substantive activities of production."* (Bhaskar, 1989: 80). In other words, while the Bribri, the Cabecar, the NGO representatives or the state bureaucrats interviewed for this work may not consider that their

own decisions are the means for the reproduction of structure, this may be the actual result of their actions. Meaning that the researcher is obliged to unpack societal valuations and choices thereby showing the ways in which structures affect or become affected by them. Of course, this sort of engagement with the field requires gathering an in-depth understanding of existing social realities in Talamanca Bribri and Talamanca Cabécar Indigenous Reserves, as well as the comprehension of different cultural meanings and representations, which is why the methodological approach here can be loosely understood as ethnographic (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

Moreover, data interpretation and collection did not take place in two distinctly defined stages of work, but happened simultaneously as a means of directing the wider research process (Mikkelsen, 2005). And, as expected for an ethnographic approach, this research dynamic led to changes in the original dissertation design presented in 2013. Second, there is no assumption of universal and objective knowledge being created with this work (Laws et al., 2013). On the contrary, statements made here try to account for nuance and difference in perspectives recognized in the field, while also attempting to offer a voice to the lived-in realities of the Bribri and Cabécar indigenous people. This is a particularly important task as the continuous and selective construction of these indigenous communities for legitimating interventions is and has been, regretfully, a common reality of the discourse and practice of agricultural, developmental, educational, healthcare, conservation, and even, indigenous state policy-making. While I am critical of the radical interpretative accounts that render reality into pure relativism, one must not ignore that local understandings about social reality are always partial and located (Haraway, 1998). A framing of qualitative analysis must therefore be based on the realization that cultural meanings and representations offer a partial understanding of reality (Laws et al., 2003). It is therefore important to know the research context to understand how its particular configurations of social relations reflect on the production of these particular forms of understanding. The information produced and presented throughout this document has originated from numerous sources, but mainly through the continuous interaction of the researcher with people who served as informants, in the context of their specific social realities. They include local inhabitants of the Talamancan Bribri and Cabécar Indigenous Reserves, environmental and development consultants and practitioners with great knowledge about the area, local, as well as national activists, and state officials in charge of state policy-making over issues ranging from environmental management to indigenous policy.

Third, reflexivity in interpretation was considered crucial at every stage of this research. The objective of critical reflection is to inform the researcher about its ontological and epistemological bias by continuously asking himself: "what do I know?" and "how do I know that I know?"

(Guillermin and Giliam, 2004). Such continuous challenging of research findings and tentative conclusions is extremely important to avoid misrecognition of developments during fieldwork provoked by my own perspective, which undoubtedly may also be affected by factors like gender, ethnicity, nationality, religious beliefs and class. Reflecting on the perspectives of my interviewees from my position as a well-educated, middle-class, mestizo, catholic male Costa Rican allowed me to produce a new perspective about the research context in which I lived in and the participants that I've met during the past couple of years, thereby leading to integrating new perspectives that I had not considered earlier.

1.3.3. Fieldwork dynamics

Information gathering and interpretation in the field accounted for about 16 months, between 2013 (when my dissertation design was approved) and 2015 (when I presented my post-fieldwork seminar). I also spent two months doing preliminary fieldwork to acquaint myself with the case studies I ended up choosing, as well as other potential ones. During this initial stage, I spent two weeks at Meleruk (a town located in the northern boundary of the territory, in the main access road coming from the town of Bribri). I conducted some basic interviews with key indigenous leaders and members of the Integral Development Association (ADITIBRI), which operates as the formal local government of the TBIR. I also interviewed consultants and NGO officials with considerable experience working in the area to define the best points of entry to the indigenous communities.

In December 2013, I returned to Costa Rica and stayed there for a period of twelve months. The great majority of the time was spent in the Indigenous Reserves, though this stay was interspersed with smaller periods in San José and Puerto Limón. This research has been multi-sited, given that the TBIR and TCIR were not interpreted as isolated social spaces, but have been produced through multiple social, economic and political processes operating at many different scales. Leaving the territories from time to time was a necessity as most conservation and agriculture state agencies do not have a permanent office in the indigenous towns and policy is planned and executed from offices located in the provincial and the national capital. Indeed, before November 2015, the park administrator of the Costa Rican side of PILA did not held a permanent office in the Indigenous Reserves, nor near the park itself, and only visited it with some regularity, thereby "*managing the area by remote control*" (Park Administrator PILA, interview, September 28th, 2014). Furthermore, given that transnational dynamics evolving in these indigenous territories were also relevant, I also spent about a month in total interviewing Panamanian conservation state authorities, NGOs and indigenous leaders in Panama City and Changuinola (regional capital of Bocas del Toro province).

Short-stay housing options in the Talamancan Bribri and Cabécar Indigenous Reserves are limited. Many consultants, academic researchers

and government officials prefer to stay in Puerto Viejo, a coastal township located about 30 kilometers outside of the Reserves. The reason is that Puerto Viejo offers visitors the expected comforts of a tourism destination that are not enjoyed in most places in the Reserves, such as paved road access, telephone, Internet access, electricity, air conditioning, etc. Personally, though I understand the rationale behind this practice, I considered it contrary to my interest of getting to know the reality of the research site, which is why I opted for staying at the territories themselves.

With that said, this decision was not bereft of methodological and reflexivity dilemmas regarding where precisely to stay in the Reserves. I recognized two different options. One was to stay at a small Bribri farm that belonged to some acquaintances and which is in the hamlet of Meleruk, over the main access road connecting the Bribri Indigenous Reserve to the mestizo town of Bribri, about 8 kilometers away from Suretka. This housing option offered me a introspective look at life in a Bribri farm, as well as to a clear perspective on local family and clan-based relationships. But I also gave me insight in some of the everyday difficulties associated to their livelihoods. One of these had to do with transportation. Though I own a car that I used to move around the Reserves, generally, the Bribri and Cabécar countryside is much more difficult to transit without a 4x4, and in many parts (particularly those at the other side of the Telire river) car access is impossible. This means that walking is the only reliable form of transportation in most cases, with the drawback that much of this also entails considerable time investment, depending on the selected destination within the territory.

Complications such as these, eventually obliged me to reconsider my decision to stay in Meleruk, given that it was located far from the main areas of interest, such as the township of Shiroles, were most indigenous political groups are located. Additionally, the small Bribri farm grew unsuitable for long-term stays as, much other Bribri farms in the area, it lacked phone access and electricity was largely unreliable. Therefore, I opted for the Finca Educativa at Shiroles as an alternative housing option. The Finca Educativa is a lodge built exclusively for visitors of the Indigenous Reserve, using funds provided by international aid, by initiative of a local NGO called New Alchemists' Association (ANAI) and under the purview and administration of the ADITIBRI. This place has served various objectives over the years since its construction in 1990, from being one of the first attempts towards establishing the territory as a potential ecotourism destination, to becoming a renowned political space for meetings between indigenous organizations and NGOs and state officials, to constituting a comfortable location for people doing academic research (as it is located in the main townships of the Bribri Reserve and has some useful requirements for work, like reliable electrical power and internet access).

The drawbacks of the place are obvious, though. For starters, the locals often identify the place as the accommodation of NGO

representatives and officials visiting the territory. Choosing this location was an undoubtedly difficult affair, but I eventually decided on it because of the immediate necessities that required to be attended for research. I am aware that this choice was brought about by necessity and may have had an effect in my research process, given the potential risk of misidentification of my purpose. Yet, it also offered me an interesting insight towards the ideational construction of the Bribri and the Cabécar from the perspective of conservation territorialities. The Finca Educativa, built to sensitize the local Bribri population about the importance of safeguarding their "culture" and their "traditional forms of interaction with nature", seeks to offer *"a package of diverse options to know, enjoy and share experiences, culture, art, customs and traditions of the Bribri"* (SGP-GEF, 2009: 2), through ecotourism, the making and selling of local artisanship and the preparation of foods made from organic agriculture. This contradiction of objectives – between the defense of local values and culture bereft of complexity by conservation/development discourse of optimization and simplification – constituted the very representation of the fieldwork dynamics I wanted to look at in the territories. Indeed, the Finca Educativa was a marvelous physical representation of my subject study, being a building made using a few materials used by the Bribri, but covering a two-story concrete structure following the pattern of proper mestizo architecture; or having a small agricultural plot for organic production of cacao, but without a single resemblance of subsistence Bribri cultivation crops or fallows available for shifting cultivation.

Although the Talamancan Bribri and Cabecar Indigenous Reserves are very small spaces there is a very interesting heterogeneity in their human geographies. The Telire River functions almost as a perceivable boundary between different realities of land use integration to the capitalist market. Whereas in the towns of Suretka and Shiroles – on the left margin of the river, and well connected through two dirt roads with the main mestizo towns – one could recognize practices that are similar to those of the mestizo that live outside of the territories (e.g.: plantain and banana monoculture cultivation, townships centered around state schools and clinics and a relative prevalence of wage and service economies), the situation is completely different in the communities at the right margin – which is totally disconnected from the territory via road. In locations like Bajo Coén, Sepecue and Amubre, one can notice the presence of more traditional agricultural practices such as shifting agriculture, plots for policultivation interspersed with forest cover and semi-traditional agroforestry systems using cacao and banana, combining for-profit and subsistence forms of agriculture

1.3.4. Research methods employed

Data for this thesis was obtained through a mixture of methods including participant observation, structured and semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Observation was used mainly as a means of

expanding wider knowledge of the area and its social interactions. This was done in many ways, from engaging local meetings organized amongst Bribri and Cabécar people o by NGOs and state agencies in the context of the different levels of governance colliding at the Indigenous Reserves, to talking to the local bureaucracy of the ADITIBRI, to looking at different forms of trade between indigenous farmers and mestizo buyers in the riverbanks. I even took part of other more everyday activities such as attending local cultural events, spending time with indigenous acquaintances on the weekends. During my stay, I visited plenty of Bribri and Cabécar farms that used diverging forms of organization of agriculture and space. I also had opportunities to observe interactions between the main park officials and the local indigenous peoples in the context of a couple of verification tours to evaluate local compliance to forest restrictions.

Information on the political dynamics surrounding the BID-MAG and the REDD+ negotiations was mainly obtained via interviews with key political leaders amongst the different actors involved. Information about the cacao component of BID-MAG was obtained through interviews with local Bribri and Cabécar farmers whom benefited from the project.[2] The locations were chosen because of being representative of the heterogeneity of the indigenous territories[3], the degree of incorporation in the for-profit cocoa markets and the interaction of the project in areas within and outside the RBLA. Given that the project was implemented in various townships, it would be my recommendation that similar studies be done in those areas to understand the reasons why those towns also presented a noticeable degree of resistance to the project as well.

Finally, data on the financial resources uses of the PSA program was backed with a revision of ADITIBRI's accounting books and interviewing of the higher leadership of the Association as well as local leaders at some of the Neighbourhood Council that composes the territorial administrative division of the territory. Interviews were also done with people living in proximity to the area in which the Program of Payments of Environmental Services (PSA) contracts for both forest conservation and regeneration were employed, to identify access and use-related problems originating from the implementation of the project. Attention in these interviews was also oriented towards understanding the rationale of indigenous peoples' internalization of these projects.[4] Attention was also given to members of indigenous communities that expressed their opposition to the PSA and REDD+ projects, either through personal interviews and presence in their rallies as an observer. For the REDD+ project I also had access as an observer to the internal meetings of the Secretariat handling negotiations.

Semi-structured interviews are tools of data collection that allow for a more conversational interaction with the researcher and the research participant. There can be some degree of comparability between answers obtained through these means, given that there is some degree of order

and control in the interaction (Ritchie et al., 2003). Generally, a tape recorder was used in every meeting. This was never an issue when talking to state agency official or members of NGOs, but it generated some resistance when used with local people in some occasions, which is why, some interviews were not taped. Interview transcripts and notes taken during the interviews were being translated into interview reports. A qualitative sampling process was used with attention centered on gathering a variety of points of views in different parts of the territory, thereby accounting for heterogeneity in perspectives.[5] Residents constituted the main population for interviewing purposes, but there were plenty of other key informants coming from the NGO sector and government officials with considerable experience in the region, as a result, I met with people from the local municipalities, the main state conservation agencies, private consultants, environmental NGO practitioners and indigenous representatives living in San José, Puerto Viejo and Panama City.

Besides that, I also engaged in considerable document collection, of the regional political history, conservation initiatives, and data on natural resources, key state and municipal records about the area. The lack of a unified set of archives for government policies in both countries forced for countless hours of reading and photocopying of documentation from the archives of the key political and academic institutions of the countries involved with the local dynamics of the Talamanca Valley. Of relevance were the various territorial planning documents developed either by SINAC, the ADIs, National Forest Financing Fund (FONAFIFO), the Institute for Rural Development (INDER), the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) and some of the NGOs present in the area, Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) in particular. These planning documents, spanning over a period of forty years of interventions, made it possible to develop the genealogy of semi-traditional indigenous uses in the Indigenous Reserves as the main lynchpin of conservation territorialities, that features prominently in this thesis. This documentation provided an indisputably important complement to information gathered in the field.

1.4. Chapter structure

This thesis is structured into eight chapters. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework of this dissertation. Chapter 3 contains an introduction to the Talamanca region and its inhabitants, by offering a historical account of the different territorial projects that have been deployed in the region since colonial times (c. 16th Century). The objective is to show how the land, resources and people in this region have been defined and redefined by discourse and practices of different state, indigenous and market territorialities over time, and how these efforts of claiming authority over the region have faced resistances and resulted in new and unexpected contradictions, leading to the current form of

territorialization that defines the contemporary reality of the Bribri and Cabécar Indigenous Reserves as territorial formations where indigenous peoples' claims of political and territorial autonomy exist, yet are continuously rendered unstable.

Chapter 4 discusses the wider political and economic context in which conservation and land use governance interact in Costa Rica. It explains how protected area buffer zones – such as these two indigenous reserves – gained considerable importance for national development because of a multifaceted crisis in Costa Rican society in the 1980s. With the subsequent structural adjustment, these areas were considered key accumulation sites for intensifying national articulation to the global markets through commodification and financialization of natural resources. The introduction of new conservation tools, such as payments of environmental services and agroforestry systems currently pushed forward by government authorities through the PSA, REDD+ and BID-MAG constitute the result of this transformation.

Chapter 5 discusses the history of the RBLA and their interaction with the Bribri and the Cabécar through the implementation of exclusive forms of conservation and the rationale for change from the perspective of SINAC and other state authorities. The core idea of the chapter is SINAC's notion of the "passive frontier thesis", that is, the idea that relations between indigenous peoples and the RBLA can be further improved by focusing on their integration to capitalist production through sustainable development practices and new forms of participative conservation.

Chapter 6 characterizes the Bribri and Cabécar contestation to one of the two specific forms of conservation-related territoriality that are being deployed in the Talamanca region: conservation-through-development. Focusing on the cacao production component of the BID-MAG project, the chapter explains how conservation territorialities have historically attempted to economically and environmentally optimize the Bribri and Cabécar semi-traditional agricultural practices to make them suitable to neoliberal conservation. This chapter is particularly concerned with exploring how these projects have discursively reduced local resistance to these practices as a manifestation of an economic problem about high production costs, unstable returns and limited investment, thereby misrecognizing the logics of traditional land uses and other territorial constraints.

Chapter 7 focuses on the other form of conservation territorialities: conservation-as-development. This chapter investigates the conditions that allowed the successful appropriation of the Costa Rican payment of environmental services program by the Bribri and Cabécar Indigenous Reserves. While the specific PSA arrangement is predatory of the indigenous governance dynamics rising from their condition in Costa Rican sovereignty, it has managed to be appropriated due to the somewhat lax implementation of its disciplinary logics of monitoring and

benefit disbursements, and not because of integration of the indigenous populations into the neoliberal mentality that the project proposes. This reality is shown by describing the inherent difficulties of the government authorities to include indigenous territorialities into PSA project management in the context of ongoing REDD+ negotiations, an issue that is discussed in chapter 8.

Chapter 9 offers a conclusion that returns to the main research question, reflecting on potential new other forms of research and offering a general redefinition of the main argument made here. It frames the micropolitics explored in the previous chapters within the larger context of the Costa Rican state and its unique self-portrayal before the world as a "green state". This chapter comments on the orientation of the national process of state formation in the context of neoliberal globalization, by arguing that since the 1980s, it has been considerably based on the material and ideational necessity of diversifying the image of the country through the sign value economy. In the context of conservation, the necessity to link up with the ongoing national agendas of competitiveness and economic development and the strong resistance to the expansion of the fortress conservation strategies, have forced local conservation efforts to engage in new forms of presenting the country as a paradise for green development due to the inherent tendencies of its populace for conservation. The objective of this chapter is to puncture that image by arguing that this self-image, constructed solely as the enter point to the global conservation sign-value economy and presented in the national motto of "no artificial ingredients", constitutes a fallacy that ends up rendering local and regional complexities invisible for the sake of converting conservation into development, and thereby constituting a project of neoliberal multiculturalism. This is done by addressing conservation imaginaries of the RBLA as a passive frontier and exploring the multiple inconsistencies of that with existing realities of conservation in this place.

Notes

[1] Traditional authorities also exist and are often incorporated within the village political structures of the ADIs, which are dubbed as Neighborhood Councils.

[2] These interviews were done mainly in the communities of Gavilán Canta in the TCIR; and in Sepecue, Amubre and Shiroles in the TBIR. Additional interviews included those made with members of the indigenous communities whom served as project facilitators at these locations.

[3] Overall, the TBIR and the TCIR can be divided into three main sections. The first one would be the lowlands of the Talamanca Valley on the left margin of the Telire River. Paved road access to this geographical section of the territories is effective. As a result, economic and social integration of the Bribri

and Cabécar towns with mestizo social structures is considerable. This is where the towns of Shiroles and Suretka are located. It is also the area were the key state services are located, as people are provided with schools, a high school, a supermarket, a health clinic, electricity, TV/cable services, cell phone coverage and a bus system between the towns and Bribri, the county capital. While Bribri and Cabécar prefer to speak in their languages here, most people are also fluent in Spanish, due to the presence of mestizo education and the effect of continuous interaction with business partners, employers, state officials and service providers from outside of the territories.

The second region is located between the lowlands and foot of the Talamanca Mountain Range after the right margin of the Telire River. It is an area that is more difficult to access by road, due to the lack of bridges to cross this body of water. Indeed, for some development practitioners interviewed for this work, the river is often perceived as a boundary between mestizo integration and indigenous livelihoods. These claims can be understood as isolation from state services and mestizo economic structures is more noticeable. There is an electric power grid that reach some of the towns, but leaving considerable gaps in coverage. There are also two small primary schools in Amubre and Sepecue. However, after that, state presence is almost non-existent. There is considerable integration to the national economy through the production of cacao, plantain and banana, yet, some forms of subsistence farming are also very noticeable. Most people speak in Bribri and Cabécar (and their many variants and dialects), but Spanish is still used by most.

The third section is located in the mountains. It is considerably isolated as unpaved roads give way to dirt trails and time and distance to reach the small hamlets grows considerably higher. National education, security and healthcare services are non-existent due to the remoteness of the location, leading most state officials and authorities to use helicopters to reach this section. Indeed, places like San José Cabécar, Alto Urén and Alto Lari require a three-day hike to be reached given the difficulty of the terrain. This does not mean that there are no economic, social or cultural interactions between mestizos and indigenous people living in this section, but it is much more limited. The people of these hamlets tend to practice subsistence agriculture under their more traditional agroforestry systems and Spanish is spoken considerably less.

[4] Most interviews in this sense were done in the towns of Amubre and Gavilan Canta.

[5] Overall, interviews were carried out using a topic guide centred on the research interests for each of the case studies and lasted from 30 to 60 minutes each.

2 Theoretical framework

This dissertation uses a theoretical framework based on political ecology to study the relationship between indigenous peoples and modern conservation and development interventions mobilized by state agencies and international NGOs. The objective of political ecology is to understand conflicts over resources by focusing on the underlying motivations, interests, power relations and social structures that provoke them (Robbins, 2012). This translates into an approach centered on understanding conservation projects as strategic attempts by the state and other non-state actors to legitimate claims and exercise control over natural resources and, by extension, of the usage that indigenous peoples make of them (Bailey and Bryant, 1997). It is also a useful approach for exploring the nature of political resistance, particularly regarding how indigenous communities espouse their own ideas and visions about conservation and development, leading to an interplay mired with contestation and cooperation that produces, re-produces or transforms economic and political structures governing access to and use of natural resources.

Political ecology analyses how new conservation interventions affect local institutions governing access and use to resources, leading to the uneven production of fortune and misfortune, by bringing back the well-known political economy question regarding who benefits and who loses from particular configurations of structures determining resource control (Ribot and Peluso, 2004). Regarding the study of protected areas, conservation projects and indigenous people, political ecology relies on the recognition of the role of the former as projections of political power manifested geographically and spatially vis-à-vis existing on-the-ground indigenous uses which may be conducive to conservation or not (Robbins, 2012). Some studies have engaged with these interventions by problematizing how nature under conservation has been socially constructed through environmental discourse and policy and how these ideas have resulted in serious material implications on local indigenous peoples' access to resources (see Anderson and Grove, 1989; Neumann, 2001; amongst many others). Others have discussed how conservation measures link to new dynamics of capitalist production leading to processes of displacement, exclusion and marginalization of local people from their livelihoods (see West, 2006; Igoe and Brockington, 2006; Brockington et al., 2008). Finally, some authors have concentrated on showing how the establishment of protected areas is related to wider processes of state formation and projects related to reinforcing sovereign claims over lands vis-à-vis indigenous groups inhabiting the frontiers of

political reach of otherwise homogenous nation-states (see Peluso, 1992; Dilsaver and Wycoff, 2005; Schwartz, 2006; Büscher, 2013).

This chapter offers a detailed overview of the theoretical framework used for this dissertation. It will commence by defining the green economy as the most noticeable manifestation of neoliberalism, understood here as a mode of capitalist governance with critical implications for regulating the use of and access to nature. It will discuss the nature of the concept of neoliberalism being used in this thesis, then move onwards to the discussion of the impacts of neoliberalization in environmental conservation. Afterwards it will explore what some authors have called 'inclusive' neoliberalism in order to understand how this process has been intertwined with efforts by development practitioners to devise more participatory, socially inclusive and democratic forms of market-based conservation. Finally, the chapter will discuss the relevance of this discussion regarding neoliberal multiculturalism, advancing the argument that new discourses toward 'inclusivity' in neoliberal conservation could obscure the disciplinary nature of neoliberalism as a mode of capitalist governance.

2.1. Neoliberalism and social inclusion

The green economy, alongside its many specific policy iterations (e.g.: PES, REDD+, ecotourism, etc.), has been subjected to considerable criticisms for being considered a form of neoliberal re-organization of environmental governance. Contributions made by people from different fields of the social sciences in both the developed and underdeveloped worlds, have concluded that market-based conservation measures constitute evident representations of a wider process of neoliberalization of nature (Büscher and Fletcher, 2015; Igoe and Brockington, 2007; McAfee and Shapiro, 2010).

Neoliberalism is a complicated and controversial concept which is often used politically to describe (or conflate) all of the negative implications following economic globalization (see Saad-Filho, 2005; Duménil and Lévy, 2005). Indeed, conceptualization of neoliberalism as a political project imply a number agendas with socially pernicious effects such as the imposition of macroeconomic discipline as the key element of monetary policy, the liberalization of international trade and global finance, the imposition of economic freedoms at the expense of any other form of collective organization of production and the hacking down of state regulation of the economy through privatization and deregulation (Palley, 2005).

Yet, if viewed as an ideology as some authors do (see Turner, 2008; Harvey, 2005), the rhetoric behind all of these measures is unimportant compared to the notion that neoliberalism is simply about justifying the necessary changes in regulation in favor of the agenda of capital through the commoditization of any and all spheres of action previously held by

the public sector (Harvey, 2005). In this sense, neoliberalism is not so much deregulation as it is re-regulation, an institutional adjustment vis-à-vis a new regime of accumulation whereby financial capital has achieved dominance (Boyer and Salliard, 2003).

In this sense, depending on whomever one is reading, neoliberalism may be conceptualized as set of ideas, as a hegemonic project, as a new world order, as a discourse, as a class project, a form of governmentality and as political and economic theory. Consequently, debates result from the conceptual stretching that neoliberalism has suffered and which has led some to think that the concept has been so overused that it is useless for consistent and insightful social, political or economic analysis (see Peck, 2013). Indeed, some scholars sometimes choose to consciously avoid using the term, as they perceive that it is lacking on precision, given the previous experience of numerous authors before them which have use the concept to conflate every single negative consequence of recent economic reform upon poor people (Brenner et al., 2009).

Yet, one must not ignore the scholars whom still see considerable analytical value in making use of this concept in order to comprehend larger similarities in the development trajectories of numerous societies across the world since the 1970s and 1980s (see Chang, 2000; Gamble, 2006). Indeed, in an effort to avoid criticism about the imprecisions of the term, many authors have discarded the usefulness of the monolithic, common and politicized interpretation of term (i.e.: Neoliberalism with a big N), in favor of exploring the complicated process by which it becomes materialized in multiple, interconnected, yet variegated historical and geographical settings (i.e.: neoliberalism with a small n) (Peck, 2013). Recent discussions have taken a cue from this difference in order to explore neoliberalism not as a single massive transformation, but as a set of processes of restructuring happening in a manner contingent to other dynamics. Put differently, instead of a discussion about neoliberalism, we need to be having an argument about "neoliberalization", following the idea of a process which is always subjected to contradiction, resistance and other contextual factors that shape it in different ways (Brenner and Theodore, 2002).

The main implication that can be obtained from this is the notion of neoliberalism as a transformation that takes place in an erratic fashion over time, manifesting in numerous institutional configurations, developing in an uneven fashion and often leaving behind a plethora of failed policy experiments, partially-consolidated agendas and incomplete regulation as a result of constant resistance and other social obstacles. In the words of Peck and Tickel (2002), a key feature of neoliberalism is its "variegation", meaning that its "actually-existing" forms are never fully complete versions, but hybrid forms contingent on historical and geographical realities. Consequently, to talk about neoliberalization implies recognizing at least three key aspects: 1) that neoliberalism is never a complete process, 2) that it is always contradictory and 3) that it

always presents itself in an uneven fashion at the level of actual reality. Though, it certainly has some common patterns that may be recognizable across the various contexts (Peck and Theodore, 2012). Indeed, local context matters greatly to gather on the many forms it becomes manifested, but it is also a broader process that gives birth to connections between the various actually-existing instances that are produced. Put differently, while it shapes every local context, one must not forget that there are pressures which consistently promote an ideal market society.

The conclusion that can be derived from this is that neoliberalism transforms erratically over time, leading to various different institutional manifestations and developing in a spatially-uneven way, often leaving behind a plethora of failed policy experiments, (partially-) surrendered agendas due to oppositional resistance and incomplete forms of regulations (which often may look as mal-regulation) (Peck, 2013). In other words, a key feature of neoliberalism is its variegation, in the sense that its actually-existing forms are never incomplete versions of a gigantic and all-encompassing process, but the actual process in itself, which is defined by the manner in which it gets congealed by historical conjuncture into hybrid forms (Peck and Tickell, 2002). As Drainvile (1994: 38) states: "*neoliberalism is both a broad strategy of restructuring and a succession of negotiated settlements of concessions to the rigidities and dynamics of structures, as well as the political possibilities of the moment*".

Consequently, to talk about neoliberalization implies recognizing three key aspects of neoliberalism: 1) that is never complete, 2) that it is always contradictory and 3) that it always presents itself as uneven in the level of actual reality. With that said, accepting the local, complicated and varied character of neoliberalization must not impede us from thinking about the fact that there are some common patterns, ideologies, projects and disciplinary mechanisms that exist across the various contexts it has been studied (Harvey, 2011). Local context matters, but neoliberalization is not limited to be a collection of its local manifestations (Peck and Theodore, 2012), on the contrary it is a much broader process that both create and connect these various local instances. Evidence of this is that while it shapes every local context differently, there is indeed a neoliberal ideology that has consistently promoted an ideal market society, while signaling the transformations needed to make it real everywhere (Castree, 2010).

From the purview of the traditional discussion on development, neoliberalism was an ideology that came strengthened in the aftermath of more than a decade of failures of the different variants of social democratic or Keynesian economics in the developed world and the many iterations of import-substitution industrialization in many parts of the underdeveloped world, to resolve the economic problems faced by the world economy in the late 1970s. During the 1980s and 1990s, neoliberalism managed to consolidate power through the implementation of structural adjustment programs (SAP), designed closely following the

policy prescriptions set out by the main IFOs tasked with dealing with the economic effects of the 1982 Debt Crisis and bring about development to the Global South (Palley, 2005). Through the SAPs, a fundamental transformation of the relationship between society, states and markets took place, shown through the promotion of international trade for development purposes, the liberalization of global finance, an aggressive deregulation of commodity, monetary and labor markets and a significantly reduced social policy framework that contemplated 'trickle-down' as the most effective measure to reduce poverty.

However, by the 2000s, the policy prescriptions set out under the Washington Consensus were undergoing a legitimacy crisis as IFOs and governments were incapable of justifying the impacts of market fundamentalism in parallel development efforts to reduce poverty and control a deepening inequality (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). Expectedly, new debates arose regarding need of addressing the failings of neoliberalism, but without openly questioning the core economic precepts of the Consensus. Whether discussed as 'inclusive' neoliberalism (Scheba and Sarobidy-Rakotonarivo, 2016), or neoliberalism 'with a human face' (Weyland, 1996), neoliberal policy has not abandoned its market-oriented and financial capital-centered core as the key measures needed to promote development and welfare, yet it has certainly introduced a number of additional elements with the objective of provoking the integration of larger elements of society (Cleaver, 2001). There are many ways in which this has been done, but it is relevant to mention the efforts to create the appropriate institutions to produce equitable economic growth, the active design of pro-poor policies, the introduction of more participatory-oriented development and the promotion of market-based forms of governance. Alongside these changes, NGOs have become a more common fixture of development policy along with the usage of "bottom-up" approaches in order to incentivize involvement and accountability by civil society. Underlying all of these new trends is the idea of neoliberalism producing a new form of citizenship, whereby people are thought as rational and profit-driven agents oriented towards achieving self-empowerment and, by aggregation, produce the improvement of the wider community (Smith, 1989; more on this on the section on neoliberal multiculturalism).

2.2. Neoliberalization of nature and its effects on environmental conservation

The idea of exploring the effects of neoliberalization in environment governance has been strongly in vogue since the early 2000s. Landmark studies by Castree (2008), McCarthy and Prudham (2004) and Heynen et al. (2007) made critical advances on these issues by exploring a number of then-recently enacted policies designed to regulated incipient carbon markets and wetland banking, devise market-based urban water

distribution systems, promote environmental services and re-design institutions for regulating fisheries (see Bakker, 2007; Robertson, 2004; St. Martin, 2007; Rocheleau, 2007). As a result, an entirely new area of social analysis opened up, orienting itself towards exploring how neoliberal ideas and policies were provoking changes in the relationship between society and nature. Environmental conservation is perhaps the policy field which has gained the most attention through this literature.

While it is well known that the history of conservation and modern protected areas has always been closely related to that of capitalist accumulation and colonialism (see Brockington et al., 2008), the rise in dominance of neoliberalism has provoked a substantive increase in capitalist impingement on conservation projects (Büscher and Fletcher, 2014). In turn, a literature on neoliberal conservation has been rapidly developed defining some common features of these initiatives, as well as the manner in which these provoke the exacerbation of material inequalities at the expense of livelihoods, values and ideas developed by the local communities that make use of these resources.

Overall there are two strands of neoliberal conservation literature. One more inclined to Marxist analysis, whereby scholars, mostly drawing on Harvey's (2005, itself based on previous findings by Duménil and Lévy, 2005) account of neoliberalism, contemplate these forms of market-based conservation as mostly centered on privatizing and commoditizing natural resources in order to commercialize them in new capitalist markets for the benefit of a class project of capital accumulation. Critical to this understanding is the notion of accumulation by dispossession, by which new expanded cycles of capital accumulation under neoliberalism require the constant transformation of otherwise collective forms of property owned by marginal communities to be separated from access to their natural resources in an effort to plunge them into market structures.

The other strand is much more in tune with Michel Foucault's analysis of governmentality. Fletcher (2010) argues that neoliberalism must not be understood necessarily as a class project, but as a particular form of governance whereby individuals and groups are actively disciplined through the establishment of the necessary incentive structures that promote a desired form of action. In the case of neoliberalism, attention is not necessarily set on deregulation for the free operation of market structures, but as re-regulation and enhanced interventionism oriented towards creating the structures that allow individuals to function in markets, favoring objectives conducive to economic growth. Indeed, the rationality behind this form of governmentality is not centered in creating Smithian self-interested and utility-maximizing actors operating freely in the context of unfettered exchange, but disciplined individuals that use rationality to foster economic growth that is perceived as productive by society. This thesis is much more inclined to the second strand of neoliberal conservation, given that conservation here is perceived to be functioning not solely as part of

a wider strategy of capital accumulation but as a means of disciplining the Bribri and the Cabécar through behavioural incentives for making them more docile to modern conservation.

Whichever the strand of analysis, there are at least three common elements shared in most analysis of neoliberal conservation: 1) a prevalence of win-win discourses justifying market-based conservation projects, 2) an active effort towards commoditizing natural resources as the key perceived means of guaranteeing the conservation of natural resources and 3) the use of territory as a key tool for the re-regulation of market-society-nature relationships (see Igoe and Brockington, 2007). The first key element of neoliberal conservation is the notion that market-based conservation programs are always presented as mutually favorable and beneficial solutions to complicated socioeconomic and political problems. Indeed, a common feature of most studies is the recognition of a discourse claiming the capacity of these forms of conservation to reconcile contradicting agendas such as the promotion of economic growth alongside with environmental conservation or guaranteeing the livelihoods of the locals (Büscher, 2012; 2010). In so doing, these scholars argue, neoliberal conservation renders complicated power balances that provoke conflicts invisible, such as the notion that capitalist economic growth is the most likely the reason why the world is facing and environmental crisis requiring conservation projects. Sometimes, this win-win discourse implies the incorrect idea that solutions to complicated problems about production and environmental degradation only require technical solutions or managerial responses in order to be fixed.

Second, commodification is understood as the process of assigning exchange value to things in order to be bought and sold in markets (Castree, 2003). Of paramount importance for this literature is the fact that commodities produced by neoliberal conservation bear considerable differences with the more common commodities of our everyday life. Indeed, attention is frequently set on the fictitious nature of the commodities being produced in the context of these measures. The concept of fictitious commodity originates in the writings of Karl Polanyi (2001), and is generally taken to refer to things which are not actively being produced with the final implication of selling them. For example, while people may physically trade in an ounce of coffee, one cannot do the same with an hectare of land, as in this latter case, one is not exchanging the actual land, but the legal right to it. Of course, to engage in this type of trading there must be a complex legal and economic infrastructure in place that includes procedures for territorializing, measuring, and titling these commodities. This is much more complicated when looking at environmental services: first, the specific ecological function must be carefully defined and delineated in order to be conceptually separated from the rest of the ecosystem that gives it meaning, afterwards, a number of methodologies need to be devised in order to allocate the ecological function with a measurable unit that

permits commercial exchange, finally, state institutions are required to locate potential providers of these services with counterparts, thereby giving the whole process the appearance of a market (Kosoy and Corbera, 2010). It is an extremely complicated procedure, which often becomes even more problematic as, by nature, ecosystems are often resilient to conceptual compartmentalization, in such easily delimited units. Of course, implicit to this market-based re-conceptualization of nature and its complexity there is also an active effort to ignore other forms of valuation of nature that may be central to the representations of the stakeholders of conservation projects. Imposition of these forms of commodification may result in the modification of patterns of behavior of local populations leading them to prioritize individual gain at the expense of more community-oriented benefits (Vatn, 2010).

The third element of neoliberal conservation is the idea that processes of neoliberal re-regulation through conservation depend of territorialization. Due to the importance of this element in the argument of this dissertation, I have decided to treat it independently and at some length in this section. Territorialization is a process by which states enhance their capacity to rule over people through the division, and arrangement of discretely-bounded geographical units that allow the control of social uses of natural resources (Vandergeest and Peluso, 1996). Environmental policies, such as the creation of protected areas, offer states the chance to delimit highly-valued resources, define rules for using and accessing said resources, identify proxies for safeguarding these and, in so doing, control people in a more optimized fashion. Considering the close relationship between territorialization and state formation as well as the ongoing tendencies of market-based conservation to promote forms of devolved and decentralized governance strongly featuring civil society organizations, NGOs and IFOs, Igoe and Brockington (2007) argue that in the context of neoliberalism, territorialization becomes an entirely new form of state formation driven not necessarily by the state, but by non-state actors with the objective of privatizing access to natural resources for their own benefit. Whereas territorialization is seen by the Marxist strand as part of a process of systematic enclosure favoring the commodification of natural resources at the expense of local livelihoods, for the Foucauldian or post-structuralist strand, territorialization is about the active disciplining of subjects by states through the production of spatialized power relations (Peluso and Lund, 2011).

Political ecology has been drawn to the idea of state formation given its importance for describing the way conflicts over access to natural resources derived from conservation are hinged upon wider processes of political domination in society (Bailey and Bryant, 1997). One of the most important reflections from political ecology in this sense may well be Vandergeest and Peluso's (1996) landmark article on state territorialization in Thailand. In this article, the authors study the case of long-standing efforts by the government to take control of the inhabited

forests in the periphery of this country. For them, state formation depends on the capacity of the state to create new territories, through environmental policies, to make them function as complex and overlapping units that allow people and resources to be (re-)arranged, thereby permitting a more effective administration of space and people. This argument hinges upon the adaptation of Sack's (1986)[1] concept of territoriality[2], which the authors use to narrow down the main indicators of territorial activities of the state with regards to natural resource management, and more particularly, their efforts to foster or regulate logging and forest conservation. Of key importance to Vandergeest and Peluso (1996) is the need of looking at the way in which state agencies impose new forms of conceptualizing geographic space as a means of exercising control over resources and, by extension, control the way in which indigenous people behave. "Abstract space" is a hypothetical form of space used by state planners for modeling spatial activity often times by eliminating extraneous variables deemed irrelevant for analysis (Lefebvre, 1991). This abstract dimension is linear, allowing for the formation of clear-cut boundaries in geographical space, which are used to create discrete and mappable units which can themselves facilitate the centralized management of lands for a distance.[3] Quite simply, it is a form of territorial calculation that has been determined historically by the state in an effort to naturalize and reify state-induced territoriality as the only legitimate form of socio spatial organization. This means that it is used in the establishment of protected areas as discretely bounded units where behavior is disciplined through criminalization and surveillance (Peluso, 1993).

2.3. Inclusivity and neoliberal conservation

With all of this said, one must not automatically consider that neoliberal conservation only yields negative results, neither one must fall into the win-win trap of considering that all of it is positive by default. In reality, market-based conservation projects produce positive and negative results for the environment, local communities, and the wider economy. There is some evidence of this claim in the work of some of the key scholars of this literature (see Roth and Dressler, 2012; Büscher et al., 2012). In other words, it is difficult to simply assume that the changes provoked by the green economy will be either good or bad for the various social groups to which said changes are directed.

Some authors have taken this finding to acknowledge the relevance of local contexts to define important stimuli that ends up giving shape to different potential outcomes of market-based conservation. Local institutions and the particular configuration of social relations at a regional, local or household level may produce important effects on the way neoliberal conservation interventions get designed and implemented on the ground. This brings us again to the concept of neoliberalization, in that sense that researching neoliberal conservation implies the need of

keeping an eye opened towards the manner in which the local impinges on these conservation practices. Roth and Dressler (2012) even come to argue that some market-based programs often become so transformed by the pressures and resistances of the local context, that become fundamentally changed to a point of being able of recognizing them as a form of neoliberal conservation.

This is the reason why efforts at promoting inclusivity in the context of neoliberal conservation must not be rejected easily as rhetorical strategies of little analytical importance. Over the course of the past two decades, debates on internatonal conservation, and especially in the usage of market-based tools, have been making a stronger focus on the need of addressing local participation gaps (Bebbington et al., 2007). This has been done following claims that enhanced local participation in policy-making about development offer a chance of developing citizens capable of giving form to their everyday lives in a manner that allow them to become empowered (Mohan and Stokke, 2000). There are some parallels between these ideas and the shifts witnessed in conservation practices since the 1980s, whereby policy and management practices have been shifting away from exclusionary preservationist approaches due to overwhelming criticisms of the impacts of these measures in the well-being of poor rural communities excluded from natural resources required for their livelihood (Büscher and Whande, 2007). In turn, conservation has been moving towards a more inclusive style of governance, characterized by the interpretation of local people as potential allies and partners for conservation (Brockington et al., 2008; Wily, 2002; Agrawal and Kent, 2006). Indeed, since the early 1990s, these inclusive forms of environmental conservation have become very popular and diverse, with some focusing on the use of co-management and other forms of participatory decision-making, others oriented towards the protection of indigenous forms of knowledge and traditional conservation practices, while others centered on achieving balanced distributions of the benefits (Agrawal and Kent, 2006; Naughton-Treves et al., 2005; West et al., 2006).

In the meantime, an increasing process of articulation of local stakeholders with the structures of the global political economy, through complex networks of actors involving international NGOs and IFOs has also been moving forward, leading some actors to consider community-based natural resource management as a major avenue for channeling the neoliberalization and incorporation of previously isolated rural areas to wider processes of capital accumulation (Büscher and Dressler, 2012; Büscher et al, 2012). In so doing, the claim of neoliberal conservation scholars is that CBC has opened the door to new processes of commodification that lead to the disempowerment of the poor communities which were once targeted (Brockington et al., 2008). In some ways, criticism around the use of participatory approaches to promote environmental conservation have found echo in wider discussion about the failure of projects to promote political participation for development

in the context of neoliberalism. Based on criticisms of the historical difficulties behind achieving the often-praised win-win results, these approaches have been questioned in view of the inability to detail with issues of enormous importance like power imbalances within local communities (Igoe and Croucher, 2007; Igoe and Fortwangler, 2007).

This has become even more pronounced with the advent of NGOs, as these organizations have been characterized as lacking transparency and political accountability, often with scholars levelling claims that these agencies actively fail to organize effective bottom-up partnerships, in view of an overriding prerogative of serving donor interests at the expense of local stakeholders (Garland, 2007). Not surprisingly, this view has been considered to be unrealistically negative by mainstream positions within the international development debate. Scholars writing from this perspective, have claimed that NGOs and bottom-up approaches to conservation and participatory development do result in positive effects such as the establishment of new political spaces from which tangible changes can be negotiated and new forms of citizenship devised in order for otherwise marginalized people to become empowered (Hickey and Mohan, 2005). Indeed, whether being solely technical or managerial, inclusion of stakeholders may yield positive results and improvements to structural problems, including poverty. Yet, it can also be said that transforming citizenship is not enough to counter problems embedded in unequal social structures. The lesson that must be taken from here is the need for more nuanced perspectives when looking at the manner in which local contexts impinge on development and conservation interventions meant to foster new forms of citizenship, participation and social inclusion.

2.4. Neoliberal multiculturalism

While one could accept the idea of inclusive forms of neoliberal conservation, some nuance is required when discussing about the manner in which states tend to recognize political and cultural rights of indigenous populations. In recent decades, Latin American indigenous peoples have begun demanding that states tackle historical forms of political and social exclusion affecting them. This has been done by requiring state institutions to politically recognize more inclusive notions of territory, development, conservation and citizenship in the context of policy programs oriented towards indigenous peoples. Through demands for political autonomy, indigenous control over natural resource management in the lands they inhabit, the recognition of Latin American states as multi-ethnic, self-representation and self-development, indigenous peoples have contested established political institutions and the assimilationist tendencies of state development policies from the past (see Yashar, 2005; Hale, 2005; Van Cott, 2010; Escobar and Alvarez, 1992). Besides that, indigenous peoples have also been key actors in social protests against the enactment of neoliberal reforms. As they claim, these

have provoked more social inequality and poverty, while also constituting a potential threat to their tenure and control over territory (see Isla, 2015; Silva, 2009; Escobar, 2008; Hale, 2006). The wider tendencies of political mobilization of indigenous peoples in Latin America echo on the discourses and politics of mobilization of the Bribri and Cabécar.

There are two important changes that constitute the context for these demands. The first one is the recent re-appearance of representative democracy in Latin American societies, which was accompanied by the passing of new legal dispositions recognizing these countries as multi-ethnic and multicultural; as well as the establishing of a new set of rights for indigenous peoples and communities (Van Cott, 2010). Costa Rica can be included in this group of nations, despite its long-standing democratic regime. Indeed, though is generally agreed that the country consolidated a formal democratic regime in the 1950s (see Hagopian and Mainwaring, 2005), legal recognition of indigenous rights did not begin to slowly take place until the late 1970s, with some key hallmarks of progress, such as the constitutional recognition of the multi-ethnic character of the Costa Rican state taking place until 2014. The second important change has been the recognition of indigenous rights at the international level. Active participation of indigenous leaders and transnational indigenous organizations in the context of multilateral organizations like the United Nations (UN), the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Organization of American States (OAS) has allowed for the establishment of key international legal frameworks designed to force state recognition of their rights, such as the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 in 1989 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007 (Stavenhagen, 2009). In response to these transformations, states have attempted to recognize these rights through the implementation of new mechanisms designed to include indigenous participation and demands. This has happened in policy areas that have a direct effect upon the lives of indigenous communities, such as social safety nets, education, healthcare, and more importantly for this dissertation: environmental and rural development policy.

With all of this said, recent literature has shown that there is a gap between recognition of indigenous rights and their implementation through state policy in Latin America, an issue that is quickly becoming the source of continuous political contention between indigenous peoples and the state (see Stavenhagen, 2009; Hale, 2006). The concept of neoliberal multiculturalism is of key analytical importance for this dissertation. According to Hale (2006), neoliberal multiculturalism is a political project engrained within neoliberal governance that seeks to selectively recognize indigenous rights with the objective of making these compatible to the wider ideas, interests and logics of neoliberalism and capital accumulation. Put in another way, it entails the disciplining of indigenous peoples to the economic and political practices and ideas of contemporary capitalism, while offering a response to small fraction of

their demands. According to Escobar (2008), neoliberal multiculturalism constitutes more than just a state attitude, but a cultural and political disciplinary project by which indigenous features that are deemed compatible with neoliberalism are considered accepted and further promoted by state policy, whereas others deemed unacceptable are rejected and marginalized, even to the point of active criminalization of certain conducts.

The argument behind neoliberal multiculturalism requires a wider interpretation of neoliberalism. Instead of just seeing it as a collection of economic philosophies and actions, one must recognize its function as a particular form of state regulation. Parallel to the post-structural strand of neoliberal conservation, neoliberal multiculturalism does not concentrate that much in how state power might be weakened by market reform, and instead, it looks at how state regulation becomes more pervasive consolidating new forms of discipline society, in this case through the manner in which collective identities are constructed. From the perspective of Goldman (2001), one feature of neoliberal conservation projects is their intention to produce new identities in the form of "eco-rational subjects". Indeed, the objective of the projects is to develop stakeholders in the sense of people capable of realizing the vision of the 'green economy', in this case by defining the necessary skills, behaviors and ethics that are needed to function as partners to conservation (Büscher et al., 2012). This endeavor is consistent with efforts from neoliberal multiculturalism to simultaneously promote certain forms of involvement of indigenous people that are considered helpful for a larger goal, while suppressing others that are viewed as opposed to the wider rationality expected by the project, or the state (Hale, 2005). Put differently, the neoliberal state is meant to created support to market logics by creating a community of acceptance to this form of interaction.

One way of looking at how this impinges in the previous discussion about neoliberal conservation is by looking at the interaction between state territorialization and localized conceptions of space. Indeed, the exploration of the origins and use of abstract space can only lead to exploring just one side of conservation-related territorialization. The other one has to do with the social interplays that these efforts produce. The obvious choice then is to explore how abstract space contrasts with the characteristic complexity of local indigenous livelihood strategies (Roth, 2008: 375). As implied by the common property literature, local scale dynamics often produce a form of multidimensional space which is not decisively circumscribed and "*is flexible and more complex than that used for the purpose of state management*" (Ibid: 375; see also: Ostrom, 1990). As Vandergeest and Peluso (1996: 389) argue, lived space "*is not abstract or homogenous, but located, relative and varied*". Here malleable tenure, intersecting land uses and management based on species and not areas contrasts with abstract space (Roth, 2008: 375). For some authors, conservation conflicts often surge from the encounter of these forms of

looking at space given the contrasts between state-led conservation territorialities and local peoples' spatialities, leading to efforts to either obscure, change or eliminate the latter in order for the state to regulate human-environment relations and assert control over natural resources (Vandergeest and Peluso, 1996). Quite simply, lived space and abstract become incommensurable with one another and this leads to the production of political instability. The necessary implication is that the pulverization of lived space is a central element of the creation of abstract space.

Recent literature on internal territorialization has focused on reviewing more closely what are the effects of this interplay and thereby, challenging the idea of a separation between states and civil society even more thoroughly. Examination has become centered upon how territorialization takes place unevenly at very specific locations, leading to arguments of how this process is mutually constituted by both state and civil society practices (Sikor, 2001; Wadley, 2003; Roth, 2004), depending on how locality-specific conditions vary, such as the nature of coercive power of states, the involvement of different authorities (i.e.: military, paramilitary and police forces) and the historical, political, cultural and ecological characteristics of the landscape being studied (Sivaramakrishnan, 1997; Ramutsindela, 2004; Ramutsindela, 2008). This has been very useful to understand how territories can be produced through contestation at different scales (Brenner, 1999; Buch-Hansen, 2003; Sassen, 2005; Rocheleau and Roth, 2007).

These efforts are interesting for study because they open up the scope of territoriality to address territory, not solely from the perspective of the state, but also reflecting on how territorialization works in other contexts as well. In Latin America, this has centered on the exploration of how indigenous social movements invoke culturally-specific understandings of space in an effort to replace and re-conceptualize territory as a more relational concept, instead of a cartographic form of space, and therefore, challenge state claims over their territories (Echeverri, 2005). Concepts such as 'pachamama', 'sumak kawsay', or even the Bribri term 'ijuk' (meaning: land) raise *"new ontological concerns about what is said to exist"* (Bryan, 2012: 219). This challenges commonly accepted views about space that are instrumental in the oppression of indigenous people and the denial of their cosmovisions and ideas regarding, rights to nature and cultural difference (see Toledo et al., 2002; Barrera-Bassols and Toledo, 2005; Cervantes Trejo, 2011; Arsel, 2012).

Simultaneously, the recognition of these new forms of 'territory as challenges to state power' also entail a more sophisticated critique of how territory comes into being, which relates to the contestation that the state in turn makes of these new emancipatory efforts through territory. In some cases, neoliberal multiculturalism has entailed the appropriation of recent territorial vindications like the aforementioned in order to validate particular forms of economic production and organization. An example

that requires consideration has to do with the growing use of market-assisted land reforms or market-based conservation instruments to address problems of access to land and natural resources or as part of political strategies to support indigenous territorial claims (see Nygren, 2004; Hayes, 2008; Wainwright, 2008; Wainwright and Bryan, 2009; Grandia, 2012). This territorial turn has made some of these vindications to become channels through which neoliberalism has altered the perspective of indigenous demands for territory, by recasting them as new sites for expanding neoliberal forms of governance designed at maintaining the socio-spatial order that they wished to counter (Hale, 2005). For the purposes of this dissertation, this entails the need of opening the scope of territoriality in political ecology, including a more critical exploration of the appearance of territory, how politics molds it and the impact of efforts to promote social change (Bryan, 2012).

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter has offered a detailed overview of the theoretical framework used for this dissertation. It has explained how the green economy is seen as the most noticeable manifestation of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism has been defined a new form of regulation of capitalism which entails a political project of transforming environmental governance and the manner in which nature is conceptualized and used. This discussion has offered a brief literature review of the impacts of neoliberalization in environmental conservation. This has included an explanation of what is meant by 'inclusive' neoliberalism in order to understand how this process of transforming regulation of the environment has become intertwined with efforts by development practitioners to devise more participatory, socially inclusive and democratic forms of market-based conservation, leading to new contradictions. Finally, the chapter has also defined the concept of neoliberal multiculturalism in order to describe the manner in which this project of inclusive neoliberalism often times include a disciplinary outlook meant not to acknowledge and foster cultural differences, but as a mean of appropriating what is convenient to market regulation and state formation, while sidelining the rest.

Notes

[1] For Sack (1986) there are ten basic 'tendencies of territoriality'. Although these tendencies often refer to social practices related to territory, in reality they also include effects produced by territoriality as well (Ibid: 28). While the first three are considered to be always present in territoriality, the others are contingent: 1) territoriality entails the classification of areas, mainly by declaring prohibitions of access to these areas or their contents, 2) territoriality uses boundaries to make its communication easier; 3) territoriality is a more efficient strategy for enforcing control than non-

territorial ones, 4) *"territory provides a means of reifying social power"* (Ibid: 32); 5) relatedly, it shifts attention away from the power relationship of control that sustains it (Ibid: 33), 6) apart from hiding this relation, territory also makes it impersonal (Ibid: 33), 7) territory entails a *"place-clearing function"* (Delaney, 2005: 77) that makes it appears as the *"neutral, essential means by which a place is made"* (Sack, 1986: 33), 8) territories act as a vessel that molds space, starting from the scope of authority to identity, 9) territoriality *"helps create the idea of a socially-emptiable space"* (Ibid: 33), as space that can be devoid of material context and ideas (i.e.: abstract space), and 10) territories are prolific, that is, once deployed, they spawn more territories.

[2] Vandergeest and Peluso (1996) describe a set of key components of this internal territorialization. First is the need of the state of creating and mapping boundaries that allow for space to be delimited, classified and controlled (Ibid: 388-389). This was done through clear mapping of the national boundaries, but also through the forcible creation of villages through land classification schemes in sensitive border areas in order to control otherwise nomadic or semi-nomadic groups which were recognized as threats (Ibid: 404). The authors argue about the need of the state of creating an 'abstract space', that is an equivalent, grid-like, and undifferentiated abstraction of space, which may operate as a tool to render space more easily controllable from a distance by political elites. This is made easier by a second component that is the establishment of rules in order to define acceptable uses of resources within the demarcated areas. In the case of Thailand, this is reflected on the expansion of land codes and codifications of private property (Ibid: 400). This leads to a third component which is the active enforcement of boundaries. State coercion an political violence are certainly forms in which this can be mediated, but the mustering of active collaboration of private actors through the assignation of territorial rights of access can also be another way to fulfill state goals (Ibid: 413). Such actors may be private property owners also interested in guaranteeing security of their ownership through state legislation or even the direct involvement of outside military aid to increase the capacity of state agencies to enforce controls over its territories (Ibid: 413). Whereas these three components are important, the authors also recognize strongly their lack of effectiveness. Indeed, the fact that only 5% of areas outside the central region of Thailand were fully surveyed and registered as property is an example of the limitations and contestation that may be encountered along the way (Ibid: 404).

[3] In this sense, it is often said to operate as a *"matrix of socio-spatial organization that (…) is produced and regulated by the state"* (Brenner and Elden, 2009a: 358), with its most important quality the capability that it has to make space appear *"homogenous and thus devoid of social differences"* (Ibid: 358) derived from everyday social life. It operates as a tabula rasa that *"destroys its (historical) conditions, its own (internal) differences, and any (emergent) differences, in order to impose an abstract homogeneity"* (Lefebvre,

1991: 370). This in turn allows for *"continuous rational economic calculation in the spheres of production and exchange, as well as comprehensive and encompassing control in the realm of statecraft"* (Brenner and Elden, 2009a: 358), thereby establishing an unitary rationality that can *"make economic growth possible and draw strength from that growth"* (Ibid: 358).

3 Historical territorializations of the Talamanca Valley

> "The commercial resources of Talamanca can be considered as being currently null. (…). A great deal of new tradable goods may widen commerce in this district, provided that there is enough interest from entrepreneurial people. Coffee, cacao and sugar could be produced in larger quantities in Talamanca than all other current harvests of the Republic on the day in which an intelligent and laborious people have taken possession of these rich lands." (Gabb, 1978: 74)[1]

American paleontologist William Gabb wrote these words in 1874 as part of his *Verified report about the exploration of Talamanca during the years of 1873-1874*, a geographic, geological and demographic investigation ordered by the Costa Rican state and financed by Minor C. Keith, whom would later become a co-founder of the U.S. multinational United Fruit Company (UFCO) (Denyer and Soto, 2000). The report was to become the first effort to gather and systematize scientific knowledge about the Talamanca and Sixaola Valleys, mainly with the objective of ascertaining the productive potential of the land as well as the availability of natural resources and the local indigenous populace for capitalist agricultural expansion. At the time, this region held a marginal position within the national economy, and Costa Rican state claims of sovereignty were tenuous at best. Yet, three decades later, Talamanca was transformed, from a place inhabited by indigenous peoples to a landscape dominated by banana plantations and railroad tracks (Villalobos and Borge, 1998). Political pressures from the Costa Rican government, cartographers and politicians, led the UFCO to demarcate a small patch of land to become an "indigenous reserve" for the Bribri and Cabécar peoples. In reality, this plan did not come to fruition at least until 1977 with the creation of the Talamancan Indigenous Reserve (Lansing, 2014).[2]

The objective of this chapter is to explore the historical origins of these territories. The TBIR and TCIR are patches of land shaped out and demarcated by the Costa Rican state to be inhabited by Bribri and Cabécar indigenous peoples. The irony here is that while both reserves have been conceived as the means to include these populations within the Costa Rican state, they also have operated as a means of excluding them from it.[3] I will explain this contradiction by showing how the land, resources and people of the Talamanca Valley have been defined and redefined by the practices of different territorialities over time, and how the related efforts of ruling the Talamanca Valley and its inhabitants have faced resistances and resulted in an unstable state territorialization of this geographical space and its inhabitants. It is my claim that these historical

efforts of state territorialization have been reflective of broader discursive and material processes oriented towards rendering the Talamancan indigenous populations as objects, ascertaining their compatibility with the production of economic value and organizing land governance in accordance. This is shown first, in the manner in which the Spanish conquistadors attempted to integrate the Talamanca Valley into their system of *encomienda*. Later, this argument is exemplified in the way the Valley was converted from illegible indigenous land uses into plantation-oriented private property, under the control of the UFCO, leading to the expulsion of indigenous populations in the early 20th Century. Finally, it will be demonstrated through the fragile coexistence between indigenous land uses and for-profit forms of cultivation, after the Talamanca Valley was retaken since the 1940s. This chapter will explain how the continuous historical bombardment of state attempts to render space legible for fulfilling state objectives towards agricultural expansion in the 1960s and energy self-sufficiency in the 1970s and 1980s, took place at the expense of Bribri and Cabécar autonomy and self-determination over their lands.

This chapter concentrates in the political construction of indigenous peoples and the lands occupied by them vis-à-vis state power over the course of these three historical periods. The first section discusses the colonial history of the Talamanca region (from the 16th to the 18th Century). Attention is centered on the manner in which Bribri and Cabécar resistance to Spanish conquest and colonization led to the conceptualization of these lands as unruly frontier regions separate from the reach of colonizers. Afterwards, I focus on the effects of these unstable colonial understandings of the indigenous subject in the context of the recently independent Costa Rican republic (from 1821 to the 1940s). The focus is set on the processes and territorialities that led to the creation of the first – albeit short-lived – 'indigenous reserve' created by the United Fruit Company in the Talamanca Valley in 1916. Otherwise a brief anecdote within a wider process of dispossession and marginalization of indigenous peoples, this reserve constitutes a moment of materialization of the hegemony of the Costa Rican territorial state. Later on, the chapter concentrates on the changes and continuities of the relationship between state power and indigenous peoples after the forced withdrawal of UFCO in the late 1940s. Emphasis here is on describing the state rationalities towards these peoples in the context of state-led development projects and the introduction of indigenous recognition policies until the early 1980. The final section sets the stage for understanding the territorial logics behind the introduction of green economy projects in the context of RBLA BID-MAG and PSA, since the 1980s.

3.1. The failed Spanish colonization of Talamanca

The Spanish conquest of what today constitutes the territory of the Costa Rican state began in the 1560s, and, in the span of forty years, most of the indigenous population and lands in the Central Valley, parts of the

Northern Pacific and the Central Caribbean seaboard had been forcefully subjected to Spanish rule (Solórzano Fonseca, 2002; 1997; 1996). With that said, the geographical extension and characteristics of Spanish colonial occupation of Costa Rican territory would not change considerably over the course of the following centuries, given the considerable political and military resistance of the local indigenous populations to Spanish rule, as well as to the threats posed by other geopolitical forces with vested interested in these areas (Boza Villarreal, 2014). As a result, by the time of Independence, in 1821, large extensions of land that was claimed by the Spanish - including the Talamanca Valley - have managed to remain outside of colonial control. Indeed, these geographical spaces became 'unruly frontier regions' for colonial rulers and 'safe havens' for indigenous peoples escaping from them (Solórzano Fonseca, 2013).

Before the Spanish conquest, Talamanca[4] was mostly inhabited by Bribri, Cabecar and Teribe peoples (Solórzano Fonseca, 1996).[5] The region is often treated by historians as a 'loose political territory' were hierarchical control was held by various small chieftainships (or '*cacicazgos*'), operating as rudimentary forms of socio-political, economic and military organization defined by the domination of various clans related with each other by kin (Borge and Villalobos, 1998; Boza Villarreal, 2014). These chieftainships were organized around key regional political figures (dubbed by most literature as '*caciques mayores*', or '*Blu*'), which organized joint religious, economic and military actions, as well as occasionally gathering and redistributing productive surpluses (Ibarra Rojas, 2002). Economically, the Talamancan peoples had developed a system of itinerant agriculture based upon the cultivation of maize, beans and tubers (Corrales, 1982). Though little is known about pre-colonial indigenous trade relationships, it appears that the indigenous populations of Talamanca had a network of routes that linked the various chieftainships in the region, as well as with other ethnic groups in the Central Valley and today's Nicaragua, Panama and Colombia (see Fernández Guardia, 2006; Ibarra Rojas, 2002; Stone, 1961).

Besides these broad conclusions, information about the internal politics and economics of the Talamanca region is scarce. Most information about this area and its people during colonial times comes exclusively from Spanish reports, descriptions and accounts (Solórzano Fonseca, 1997). This limits analysis in various ways, but mainly records may be – and often are – biased in different ways. For example, there is practically no attention given to either the practices or narratives of indigenous resistance against Spanish dominance, thereby leaving us with only one side of the story. On the other, it appears that there existed open conflicts and political infighting amongst the various indigenous ethnic groups, kinship (clan) structures and chieftainships that existed in this place, which probably led the Spanish colonists to confusion with regards to their accounts of the actual forms of socio-spatial organization of the Talamancan indigenous peoples (Ibarra Rojas, 2002).

Indeed, some Costa Rican historians have questioned the feasibility of a clear-cut spatial definition of the Talamanca region given: a) that the overarching imperatives of conquest often led the Spanish colonizers to draw arbitrary boundaries to delimit these spaces (see Quirós, 1987; Solórzano Fonseca, 2013; Guevara Berger and Chacón Castro, 1992);[6] and b) that there is recent historical evidence of a much more complex socio-political and economic relationships between the Talamancan peoples and other indigenous groups elsewhere in the country at the time of Independence (see Boza Villarreal, 2014). Consequently, the information is extensive for describing the overall motivations and interests of the Spanish conquerors and colonists in Talamanca, and considerably insufficient for characterizing the ideas that propelled the various forms of indigenous resistance.

The Spanish attempt at conquering the Talamanca region was a direct result of the considerable structural limitations of the marginalized Costa Rican colonial economy. Lacking any noticeable mineral wealth (e.g.: gold, silver, etc.), this province was rapidly forced to engage with the transoceanic mercantile economy through the trading of surpluses in local agricultural production. As in other parts of Latin America, the *encomienda* system was the basis for economic organization of the province. The *encomienda* was a contractual arrangement between the Spanish Crown and individual conquerors/colonists, by which the latter were rewarded with the right of appropriating captured indigenous population for use as labor power, in exchange of pacifying and settling newly discovered areas in the name of the former (Quirós, 1987). Often times, the *encomienda* also included land titles over particular patches of land, and occasionally, endowed the beneficiaries with the authority of administering the allocation of indigenous populations amongst other *encomenderos* (i.e.: colonists to whom an encomienda was granted), as well as charging and extracting tributes from both the indigenous and the *encomenderos* in a specific jurisdiction (Ibarra Rojas, 2002). Put simply, the *encomienda* was a system of incentives that allowed the Spanish Crown to expand its colonial holdings in Latin America, by transferring all the immediate economic benefits and logistical risks of military conquest to private individuals.

However, the marginal economic status of the province resulted in little incentives for the colonists to settle, leading to a small and slow-growing population of colonists. This, in turn, led to most of the agricultural surpluses for trade to be extracted through the direct and forceful use of indigenous labor in plantations or the indirect dispossession of indigenous produces through the use of tributes in species (see Dietrich, 1978; González, 1987). This dependence upon indigenous labor was not a problem early on due to the abundance of indigenous labor. But, over the course of the 17th Century, it rapidly became a problem as the local indigenous population rapidly dwindled due to the combined effect of diseases; famines, dislocation and the

appalling conditions to which the indigenous workforce was subjected to. This process eventually led to an imminent economic crisis (Solórzano Fonseca, 1996). The local Spanish political and religious elites devised various solutions to address the problem, with none oriented towards attending the structural problems of the parasitic colonial economy. Consequently, the establishment of a new politico-geographical space that could serve as a staging ground for appropriating more indigenous labor through conquest became the chosen solution. Talamanca was considered an ideal candidate due to its condition as both a 'shelter region' for indigenous people escaping Spanish rule, and its proximity with the cacao plantations of the Matina Valley. As a then Costa Rican governor argued about the area:

> "The land is fresh and abundant with all forms of fruits, it is inhabited by some Indians of a group called the Tariacas (referring to the Bribri); as well as other groups around them, all of which come to this beach to make salt and to rescue the cacao of which there is plenty. In this land, there are gold deposits in the rivers and brooks, I did not search them in depth, in order to not seem greedy, and just did my due diligences. In this case, to capture Indians; so, I captured the little chief alongside all of his family and another four others coming from Talamanca that had come to kill turtles. They call themselves atheists, and inhabit the banks of a river called Coín. On my side, I have recognized and seen the possibility of conquering Talamanca and the Valley of Duy (…)" (cited by Solórzano Fonseca, 1997: 151).

This brief reflection also embodies two major and mutually related ideological themes informing the Spanish territorialization of Costa Rica. The first one is the overall presumption made about the great agricultural and mineral wealth of these lands; whereas, the second, is the idea that agricultural productivity was not the result of the actions of indigenous peoples, but a "natural" characteristic of the overall landscape. Indeed, a common theme in colonial portrayals of indigenous peoples in Talamanca was the notion that they were not a factor in explaining the productivity of the land. All in all, the role of indigenous labor and knowledge in the transformation of the landscape and in the production of the agricultural and mining riches present in the idealizations of Talamanca is rendered invisible by this statement.

Though this notion ran contrary to the actual material reality of the colonial economy, this particular vision of indigenous labor constitutes the basis of the juridical reasoning that serves as the ideational support of the *encomienda* system. Indigenous peoples outside of Spanish political and religious control were considered unproductive and uncivilized by the colonial authorities, making their submission the only manner in which their souls could be saved and for them to become members of society, a process of political inscription that was inescapably mediated by their role as contributor to the Spanish Crown. Indeed, the legal status of the indigenous peoples as part of the Spanish political body was

established following the uneven feudal power structure that already existed in Spain. As such, indigenous peoples that had been captured were assigned with the condition of 'free vassal of the Crown', which means that they were obliged to give retribution to the *encomenderos* to which the Crown had assigned them (Ibarra Rojas, 2002). Moreover, they were considered to be incapable of holding their own lands privately (Fernández, 1976). Consequently, such retribution came in the form of tributes in species (often in the form of agricultural produces) that were directly appropriated by the *encomendero* and the Spanish Church (in charge of the evangelization of the indigenous people). In other words, political recognition of conquered indigenous populations as "members of the Spanish polity overseas" was mediated by their role as objects of production.

Attempts to conquer Talamanca were numerous and constant since the early 17th Century, with the establishment of the city of Santiago de Talamanca in 1604. This city was to become a key staging area for the Spanish settlers and a major center from which to expand the encomienda system and operate the network of indigenous '*reducciones*' (i.e.: agricultural towns set up by the *encomenderos* and the Catholic Church in order to settle captured indigenous peoples and use them as forced labor power).[7] However, Talamancan resistance was considerable. By 1610, this emplacement had been destroyed during a major indigenous rebellion in the area. From that point onwards, all military efforts to stifle resistance and pacify this region in 1638 and 1665 ended with continuous failure (Boza Villarreal, 2014). The most successful attempt was the establishment of various Catholic missions between 1675 and 1706, yet, this effort also ended in a massive indigenous uprising organized by Pablo Presbere[8] in alliance with various of the *cacicazgos* in the area (for a very detailed and historiographic account of cases of Talamancan resistance to the Spanish, see: Solórzano Fonseca, 2013; Ibarra Rojas, 2002).

While the Talamanca region strongly resisted and successfully remained separate to Spanish dominance, it cannot be said that this period had no relevant impact in the lives of the indigenous peoples. For starters, there was a significant reduction in the indigenous population of the region over the Colonial era. The combination of new diseases introduced by the Spanish was a major reason of this (Azofeifa and Barrantes, 1984; Boza Villarreal, 2014). But, it is also relevant to point out the fact that, faced with the inability of taking over Talamanca, the Spanish centered their efforts in capturing indigenous peoples to repopulate areas where other indigenous populations were previously annihilated by the *encomienda* (Solórzano Fonseca, 1997). Similarly, since the 18th Century, continuous Miskito[9] raids - supported by the United Kingdom - ended up with the kidnapping of numerous Talamancans to be sold as slaves in Jamaica and other English colonies in the Americas (Villalobos and Borge, 1998).

Economically, the introduction of trade networks between the Talamancan indigenous peoples and the Spanish - mainly through some

of the Catholic missions – led to the use of new tools for agriculture, and new economic practices in Talamanca, such as the use of livestock (Bozzoli de Willie, 1979; Stone, 1961). With that said, the indigenous economic base remained strongly focused around an itinerant agricultural system mixed with hunting and fishing. Moreover, while the political and religious structures seem to have remained fairly unchanged, the constant threat of Spanish raids and the gradual resolution of infighting amongst the clans, led to the reinforcement of the political figure of the '*Blu*'[10] – often referenced by the literature as either a cacique mayor or a political equivalent of an overarching ruler, much like a king – which would be extremely relevant after Independence (Monge Alfaro, 1974).

In other words, even though the provincial colonial authorities of the Central Valley claimed sovereignty over Talamanca, by considering it just another *reducción* of their system of territorial ordering, in reality, this region remained in a constant state of rebellion against Spanish dominance, and outside their factual political control until Independence in 1821. It was a nominal political control to say the least. This in turn meant that, the newly formed Costa Rican state inherited a territory upon which it had no clear control, a particularly complicated situation considering the growing interests of other parties to take over these lands. On the contrary, Talamanca was a patch of land whose territorial control was vied upon by various different parties - namely the Costa Rican state, but also the British-supported Miskito, the also recently independent Colombian nation and, of course, the very indigenous peoples that inhabited the area.

3.2. State territorialization and agrarian expansion

At the time of Independence, most of the territory of what is now Costa Rica remained outside of the political control of the recently formed state. Outside of the Central Valley, where the main urban centers are located, government presence was limited to a handful of townships in the Northern and Central Pacific seaboards and a single seaport in the Caribbean (Boza Villarreal, 2014). Though Talamanca was part of the lands that were claimed by the Costa Rican state, there were no official representatives assigned to the area, leading state control to be insignificant (Fernández, 1976). Moreover, these territorial claims would remain constantly challenged by other geopolitical actors.

On one hand, since the late 17th Century, the Miskito – an ethnic group from modern Nicaragua and Honduras – had been involved in constant attacks and raids into territories claimed by the Spanish Crown alongside the Caribbean coastline of Central America. These attacks were backed by the United Kingdom (UK) in an effort to challenge Spanish power and guarantee geopolitical control over the Caribbean Sea. Effectively, the Talamanca region had completely fell under Miskito control for the better part of the first three decades since national

independence (Villalobos and Borge, 1993).[11] This limited Costa Rican state presence in the area, at least until the United States and the UK signed the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty in 1850. This agreement required both powers to remain neutral with regards to the internal politics of Central American nations, thereby settling tensions over geopolitical interests in the Caribbean Sea (Solórzano Fonseca, 2013).[12] The actual political effect of the treaty was Britain's abandonment of its territorial claims in the region (excepting Belize), including of their financial and political support of the Miskito.[13]

With that said, the end of political dominance of the Miskito over Talamanca did not translate into a stronger control by the Costa Rican state. Indeed, the Costa Rican government was not able to assign state officials to the region until the 1860s (Boza Villarreal, 2014). And, even so, a permanent presence was not completely guaranteed until 1885 with the establishment of the San Bernardo Agricultural Colony, a state-led land reform project that was meant to offer agricultural lands to mestizo settlers in the area. It must be added, that this project was abandoned a decade later given the limitations of the Costa Rican government to guarantee a continuous supply of necessary goods for the colony to be actually productive (Viales Hurtado, 2001).

On the other hand, in the context of subsiding pressures of Miskito colonization, political rivalry between Costa Rica and Colombia began to pile up. By the late 19th Century, Talamanca became the object of a long-lasting border dispute. Territorial delimitation of Talamanca changed constantly as Spanish authorities in colonial Costa Rica and Panama attempted to realize control over this area. After Independence, the unclear nature of the boundary led to contesting claims of sovereignty between the Costa Rican and Colombian (and then Panamanian)[14] governments (Lansing, 2014). In view of their limitations, Costa Rican claims over Talamanca and Bocas del Toro could not have been backed up with the constant presence of government authorities or colonists in the area (Boza Villarreal, 2014). This situation allowed the Colombian government to send a military detachment to Bocas del Toro in 1837, both to colonize these lands but also to protect their international boundary from encroachment by the Miskito Kingdom. This action by the Colombian state was viewed as a challenge for Costa Rican sovereignty over the Talamanca Valley. This boundary dispute continued to be a serious issue of contention during the 19th Century, and then between Costa Rica and Panama after the independence of the latter in 1903. While a US-backed border agreement was eventually signed in 1907, granting the Talamanca Valley to Costa Rica, the Panamanian state refused to accept this decision leading to a violent skirmish in 1921 and the suspension of formal relations until 1928 (Guevara Berger and Chacón Castro, 1992). It was not only until 1941 that an enduring border agreement was finally reached between both states, leading to the current configuration of the frontier.

In any case, given this continuous tension, and the limitations faced to back up their territorial claims with either colonists, troops or government officials in Talamanca, the Costa Rican state began developing political relations with Bribri and Cabécar leaders in the area. This was done as a means affirming the authority of the state upon these lands (Solórzano Fonseca, 1996). One way entailed the validation of existing indigenous political positions within the governance structure of the Costa Rican state. As said earlier, the political position of the '*cacique*' existed in Talamanca since before colonial times (Ibarra Rojas, 2002). Historical evidence suggests that this was formerly a third-tier position within the indigenous hierarchy – after the *Usekar* (the Cabécar religious leader) and the *Usekol* (the funeral singers) (Stone, 1961). Yet, in view that its functions were that of military commander and intermediary between the *Usekar* and the rest of the population, this position became greatly empowered probably as a result of the ongoing indigenous resistance against Spanish and Miskito dominance, as well as political infighting between the different Talamancan ethnic groups (Bozzolli de Willie, 1973). Consequently, by the mid 19th Century, a single cacique with considerably more power than the others emerged and adopted the title of '*blu*'.

While the initial plan of the Costa Rican government was to offer political positions to various *caciques* in Talamanca, thereby distributing power to facilitate their influence upon the area, the presence of a powerful *blu* led the authorities to select only one. As a result, Santiago Mayas was selected as political chief of Talamanca in 1867 (Palmer, 1986). The political chiefs were government officials in charge of managing local state governance, with responsibilities much like what today would be a county mayor, though with far more extensive obligations with regards to the administration of justice (Alfaro and Zeledón, 2006). Soon after a legislative decree was passed formalizing and deputizing the *cacique* as part of the governance structure of the state, and becoming a key political liaison between the state and the indigenous peoples. In 1880, Antonio Saldaña – the new *blu* – was appointed as political chief, and, even though he resigned to this position shortly after, he remained part of the government workforce and maintained friendly relations with key officials (Lansing, 2014). His position not only as political leader, but as related to the commercial exchange networks between the Talamanca Valley and nearby Puerto Limón, allowed him to become a very effective cultural and linguistic liaison between state officials and indigenous populations, even though the role of political chief eventually was passed to professional bureaucrats after the creation of the San Bernardo Colony.

Having said this, it is clear that the Costa Rican state had their reservations regarding the reliability of indigenous peoples as political allies. Indeed, the aforementioned 1861 expedition to the region was partly informed by reports received by the local authorities in Limón that Colombian claims over the region were aided by the most important

cacique in Talamanca (Solórzano Fonseca, 1999). While the expedition ended with a political agreement with the indigenous leadership of the time, shortly after, some indigenous groups staged an uprising leading to the burning of the main state offices in the area and requests to the Miskito for them to be put under British control (Boza Villarreal, 2014). This was probably an isolated act from specific segments of the indigenous populations in the area, as two years later in 1870, Mayas himself committed an armed force to aid the Costa Rican military in response to a dispute with the Colombian government over a border township (Solórzano Fonseca, 2013). While historical sources from the perspective of the Talamancan indigenous peoples are scarce, it is more likely that these were attempts by indigenous groups to politically manage their own tenuous position with regards to whichever geopolitical force suited better their own particular interests. Indeed, it would erroneous to think of the local Bribri and Cabécar peoples as defenseless subjects in this dynamic. In that sense, existing political intermediaries became critical to deal between state interests and the indigenous populations, even to the point of organizing electoral processes for the various national political parties (Villalobos and Borge, 1998).

While for the indigenous people this involvement was part of a strategy oriented at guaranteeing their territorial claims and their political survival; for the state, the continuous alliance with these local indigenous groups was part of a strategy to emphasize their claims against Colombia and Panama (Guevara Berger and Chacón Castro, 1992). The claim of the Colombian state depended on an 1803 declaration of the colonial government of Costa Rica that claimed that the Miskito Kingdom had taken complete control of this part of the seaboard (Solórzano Fonseca, 2013). This allowed the Colombians to argue that - being populated by peoples organized in a non-recognized state – control of the area was lost and therefore, it could be retaken by anyone. In turn, the Costa Rican argument was that this was not the case, as it still held political control. In other words, it is clear that the Talamancan indigenous peoples had a strategic legal importance in Costa Rican claims vis-à-vis Colombia and which is why it was necessary to integrate them somehow (i.e.: indigenous caciques on the payroll as state officials, the organization of voting processes and the establishment of legal state authorities with the power to exercise national laws in these lands). Put simply, the integration of indigenous citizens within the Costa Rican nation-state, while probably informed by new liberal notions of citizenship,[15] was nevertheless, part of a wider strategy to support insecure territorial claims over Talamanca. This meant their Bribri and Cabécar integration in national everyday life including the rights to hold elected offices, voting and the obligation of following political and legal rule from the Costa Rican state.

Parallel to this process of state territorialization of indigenous politics and lands, the Costa Rican state also fostered an aggressive policy of agricultural colonization of Talamanca. Indeed, since 1839, new laws

regulating the property of the state ended up converting untitled and public lands in the country into *baldíos*, that is unproductive lands that could be claimed by individuals or organizations to be used for economic gain through a legal procedure called *denuncio* (Guevara Berger and Chacón Castro, 1992). As a result of the rapid expansion of coffee as a key source of internal revenues and the means of a rapid integration of the national economy into global markets during the course of the 19th Century, the Costa Rican state eventually stopped acknowledging any and all forms of communal tenure held by indigenous peoples as a means to facilitate land grabs by private actors (Viales Hurtado, 1998).

Ideologically, the *denuncio* process was supported by new liberal ideas with regards to the relationship between private property and productivity, which overall regarded tropical jungles and otherwise unused lands as an obstacle for economic and social progress (Mahoney, 2006). This is a view that has had a considerable influence in the Costa Rica agricultural policy, to the point that until the late 1980s, Costa Rican forestry laws used to offer incentives to farmers whom have managed to convert standing forests into pastures and agricultural plots, as part of the 'opening up' of the national agricultural frontier (Brockett and Gottfried, 2002). Indeed, land colonization narratives during the 1960s often saw the process of colonizing forests for agriculture as a means of constructing the nation's future and therefore imbued these practices with ideas about rural progress and a clear sense of nationalism, through the pacification of the agricultural frontier (Llaguno Thomas, 2013). It is no coincidence that the Costa Rican national anthem frequently refers to the country as a nation made up of agricultural laborers, as a way of describing the very identity of the nation state.

Now, within this ideological basis, indigenous lands were more often than not considered to work against this self-construction of the Costa Rican vision of the future. In this context, indigenous peoples were often seen as backward and as vestiges of traditional societies vis-à-vis dominant ideas about enlightened progress in the country. Indeed, plenty of historical accounts of these political actors describe the Talamancans as having a fairing limited capacity to use land in a productive and modern manner, somewhat reminiscent of previous ideational construction of the indigenous peoples by the Spanish colonists before. For example, the previously cited William Gabb, was the first researcher to study land productivity of the Bribri and Cabécar peoples in Talamanca. His studies became the basis for new state agricultural policies in the area (Gabb, 1978). His impression was that indigenous peoples lacked optimized means of using the land, thereby becoming incapable of exploiting the full capacities of agricutlure. Indeed, when explaining why indigenous populations in Talamanca were smaller that he expected, he argued:

> "(…) it is due to the unbeatable indolence of these people. While they could, with little effort and small labor invested, achieve very good harvests of corn, rice and nutritional legumes, and in spite of the

> abundance of oxen, pork and poultry meats, their lack of foresight reaches the extreme of not raising more animals than what they need for immediate use, and they not hesitate on killing or selling their last cow, pig or chicken, instead of conserving them for raising. They are happy living all year long with plantains and chicha (alcoholic beverage). The natural consequence of such a voluminous and little fulfilling diet is an inferior state of vitality and without any power against disease." (Gabb, 1978: 77).

This functioned to reinforce claims of the lack of civilized practices amongst the Talamancans as well as their inability to attain self-progress. The key government officials in the region also voiced such views about the irrationality of the indigenous economic practices and regarding their limitations to produce economic value over time (Lansing, 2014). Indeed, historical accounts of the region conclude in the need of developing programs that could allow them to reform the 'uncivilized' Bribri and Cabecar inhabitants in order to counter their traditional ways (Fernández, 1976). This discourse extended to the spaces that these people occupied, which were exclusively characterized as derelict, reflecting onto the notion of the indolence of indigenous bodies. In other words, the Talamancans were considered to be incapable of producing economic value and therefore, superfluous to the dominant notions of economic progress. This view proved to be a major consideration of the main economic endeavours developed in the area, such as the establishment banana plantations in the area (Bourgois, 1994).

The obvious effect of these aggressive agricultural and land policies was the opening up of an agricultural frontier in the country from the 19th Century until the mid 20th Century when the *denuncio* process was repealed. In the Caribbean seaboard, the use of *denuncio* led to a rapid opening up of an agricultural frontier for colonization. Between 1881 and 1935, there were over 650 *denuncios* declared in Limón, of which, plenty took place in the Talamanca region. Overall, these *denuncios* led to the privatization of roughly a quarter of the current land area of the province (Viales Hurtado, 1998). Foreign businesses were greatly helped by these measures. The United Fruit Company quickly became amongst the biggest beneficiaries (Boza Villarreal, 2003). Already the largest landowner in the province due to considerable land concessions, awarded by the Costa Rican state for its role in the building of the railroad connecting the coffee fields in the Central Valley with the main national seaport in the Caribbean Sea, with the den*u*ncio process, the UFCO also became interested in expanding their productive area towards the Southern Caribbean, leading to a claim for about 20.000 hectares in the Talamanca Valley which were to be used as part of their banana plantations extending from Bocas del Toro in Panama (Bourgois, 1994). The land appropriation was so large that it spurred interests by land speculators whom began declaring *denuncios* over indigenous lands in the

Valley in order to sell it afterwards to the UFCO in exchange of a hefty profit (Lansing, 2014).

For the Costa Rican state, though, the *denuncio* process entailed serious contradictions. For once, the process marginalized the indigenous inhabitants that were otherwise necessary for supporting national claims upon the frontier, thereby deteriorating state sovereignty in the region. All in all, by 1913, the UFCO had managed to obtain over 13.000 hectares of land in the Talamanca Valley, integrating them to their banana operations organized from Bocas del Toro by its subsidiary, the Chiriqui Land Company (CLC) (Viales Hurtado, 2000). As part of this plan, the Company had begun the construction of a railroad line in order to communicate this area with their main base of operations in Panama in order to channel the production of banana that were planted by 1916. Indeed, by the 1920s, more than 3 million bunches of bananas were being exported from these regions alone (Bourgois, 1994).

This originated concerns for the Costa Rican state, as the colonization of the Talamanca Valley by the UFCO seemed to integrate this area much strongly with productive networks originating in Panama. For example, the main railroad line built by the Company ended up offering way more connectivity between this region and the provincial capital of Bocas del Toro than with the Costa Rican province of Limón (Viales Hurtado, 1998). Similarly, economic operations of the UFCO rarely used indigenous labor and eventually became extremely dependent of migrant labor including Panamanians brought from the main operation base in Changuinola. Consequently, most economic operations there became greatly dependent of the local Panamanian economy, to the point that the locals tended to use Panamanian or U.S. currency, instead of Costa Rican colones (Bourgois, 1994). With stronger transportation and production ties to the Panamanian economy, the use of the *denuncio* as a means of colonizing this frontier region ended up backfiring for the Costa Rican government, leading to serious concerns regarding the effect of economic development in the area for future claims of sovereignty over the Talamanca Valley.

This situation eventually provoked serious preoccupations for the local and national state authorities, given the existing political tensions with Panama over the international boundary. Local political authorities of the time complained to state officials in San José about rumors of the UFCO attempting to purchase the San Bernardo agricultural colony, a move that could have led to a serious challenge to Costa Rican national integrity (Lansing, 2014). Eventually, consistent political pressures put on the UFCO led to a nominal recognition of the law that established the colony in 1885 and the ones that followed which stated that this area should be set aside for its use by indigenous peoples. In other words, out from the contradiction between state claims of sovereignty and the expansion of capital to the region, is that the first indigenous reserve in Costa Rica was set aside and recognized by the state.

Nevertheless, the actual concession of the UFCO to state demands of an indigenous reserve was an extremely short-lived chapter of the story of the Talamanca Valley, and by 1918, the company had begun planting bananas in the area, while engaging in further incursions in the Valley throughout 1919, despite evident concerns from the Costa Rican Congress regarding that the conversion of the Colony into property of the colony (Boza Villarreal, 2014: 235) could constitute a serious threat to the national sovereignty. In reaction, the state established a much smaller plot of land of 35 hectares for nationally-born Costa Rican citizens in the region, and defined a 2.000-hectare plot for indigenous peoples, under the terms that these lands could not be sold afterwards (Solórzano Fonseca, 2013). Yet, these new dispositions never came into fruition and the UFCO not only occupied the entirety of the lowlands of the Valley, but also forcefully expelled the indigenous populations towards the nearby mountains.

In short, the two contradictory processes of state territorialization – namely the expansion of capitalist spaces through the *denuncio* process and the inclusion of indigenous peoples and lands as-part-of the Costa Rican state – reinforced the exception of indigenous peoples within society. Discursively, two very important changes took, which still political importance in current discussions about the Bribri and the Cabécar. First, there were renewed considerations of indigenous peoples and their lands as requiring economic improvement as a means of making them compatible with capitalist uses. Yet, secondly, given that the state lacked the means to support its hegemonic claims, there was also a concurrent discourse regarding the need of including the Talamancans as subjects of state power, which is why these groups rapidly involved themselves in national politics. This insecure position of the indigenous groups in the Costa Rican political landscape reflects the broader tensions that lie within internal territorialization, in that creating spaces for capital accumulation imply results that are not in unison with state power, and often excludes the very peoples that the state attempts to bring under its fold.

3.3. State territorialization and indigenous rights in the Costa Rican Welfare State

The UFCO was eventually forced to leave its banana and cacao plantations in the Talamanca Valley over the course of the 1930s. This move was the combined effect of a serious outbreak of the Sigatoka disease which diminished banana production, the considerable exhaustion of the Company's lands due to poor land management practices, the reduced demand for banana as a result of the economic depression of the late 1920s and the imminent outbreak of the Second World War and the significant losses in infrastructure investment resulting from recurrent flooding of the Sixaola River (Villalobos and Borge, 1998). The withdrawal of UFCO from these lands led to two different consequences. The first was the

transferring of some of UFCO lands in the Sixaola and Talamanca Valleys to former banana workers through shareholding agreements, while still controlling the commercialization of banana and cacao production from their administrative division at the Bocas del Toro province in Panama. Indeed, this spurred a rapid colonization of lands – mainly in the Sixaola Valley – by migrant workers coming from other already exhausted agricultural frontiers of Costa Rica (such as Guanacaste), and even of Nicaraguan migrants (Bourgois, 1994).

The second consequence was a more vigorous process of indigenous land invasions of areas previously occupied by the UFCO. There had been land invasions of UFCO properties in the Talamanca Valley since 1919, yet these were significantly fostered by the gradual withdrawal of the Company since the 1930s. Indeed, records from the Institute for Rural Development (INDER, originally the Institute for Lands and Colonization) contain numerous references to land invasions by indigenous families since the 1931 (ITCO, 1963). Bourgois (1994) argues that this dynamic became so frequent that UFCO was eventually forced to hire a supervisor to charge rent to anyone who took over parts of their lands, thereby at least giving the façade of the Company having some claim over legal possession on these otherwise abandoned properties, in case of resuming production in the area sometime in the future. However, by the 1960s, the legal standing of the Company had become ambiguous due to the fact that the 14.000 hectares of UFCO land in the Valley had been abandoned for over two decades (Quesada and Ramírez, 1989). Consequently, the UFCO gave possession of these lands to the Institute of Lands and Colonization (ITCO) – a public agency in charge of land reform – as a public relations move, according to an internal company memorandum: *"in exchange of the lands donated, we (the UFC) will be given assistance to undergo the eviction of squatters in our holdings in other parts of Costa Rica"* (UFCO, 1963; cited by Bourgois, 1994).

The expulsion and subsequent re-settling of indigenous peoples of the Talamanca Valley provoked considerable socioeconomic and political effects within the Bribri and Cabécar people. One was the introduction of a dual productive system in the region. The arrival of UFCO introduced a new agricultural system in the Talamanca Valley based on the production of banana and cacao for the international market. This system included both UFCO as well as other non-indigenous producers whom sold their products to the Company for export through Panama (Bourgois, 1994). At the centre of this productive logic was UFCO, with an operating base that extended from Coroma in the lowlands of the Talamanca Valley to the province of Bocas del Toro (Quesada and Ramírez, 1989). With the withdrawal of the Company, some of these non-indigenous producers remained in the Talamanca Valley and introduced cacao and banana as cash crops amongst the recently arrived indigenous peoples that were re-settling the area. Cacao – a product that was already part of the indigenous cultural practices (see Bozzoli de Willie, 1979)[16] – became a

new economic alternative for the Bribri and Cabécar, partly integrating some of them within the wider commodity market controlled by UFCO. Though, it must be said that, while diversified between cash crops and other produces, local agrarian production remained mostly directed to self-consumption, as these new crops were used to finance commercial exchange for other goods not produced locally, but required for subsistence (e.g.: salt, matches, linens, machetes, medications, etc.) (Villalobos and Borge, 1998). Indeed, anthropological accounts from the early 1960s clearly state that: *"(t)he circulation of money is scarce, and therefore, money is not that important for the Bribri"* (Stone, 1961: 92). Itinerant agriculture and crop rotation practices continued to exist after the resettling process, yet collection of food from nearby forests was diminished compared to hunting and fishing (Borge and Castillo, 1994).

Socially, the indigenous re-settling of the Talamanca Valley happened without following the geographical patterns that existed prior, leading to a considerable decomposition of former kinship dynamics and a land use pattern combining geographical concentration around the main railways left behind by the UFCO, that also connected the Valley with the rest of the country (Bozzoli de Willie, 1979). This is considered to be the cause of the current geographical differentiation of the indigenous reserves between the left and right margins of the Telire River. The former is where the non-indigenous peoples settled alongside former indigenous workers of UFCO and new indigenous re-settlers. Here, productive systems have not lost some traditional components, yet are much more oriented towards for-profit agriculture. Moreover, culturally, there has been a greater adoption of Spanish as the main language, nuclear familiar structures are more prevalent than kinship relations and wage labor is far more noticeable. Differently, on the right side of the Telire, productive systems are much more varied, subsistence farming is prevalent even though banana, plantain and cacao are harvested for trade, and fishing and hunting are used regularly as well (Whelan, 2005). In other words, Bribri and Cabécar re-settling did not mean unchanged continuation of land uses prior to the arrival of UFCO. On the contrary, it implied a combination of economic and cultural practices that have transformed Talamanca into a veritable frontier region whereby geographical space, still illegible to state power, but shared by capitalist and traditional subsistence practices and between mestizo and indigenous culture. Of course, this is not a harmonious coexistence between capitalism and Bribri and Cabécar indigeneity. On the contrary, it is a continuous tension that affects land use and the spatial distribution of productive activities in the Reserves, while defining land and territory in the very center of the ongoing contradictions of Talamancan indigenous societies. While more about this will be said about this issues in the following chapters, its relevant to explain how the state rationalities and territorialities have historically continued to put pressure on these contradictions after the 1940s.

Concomitantly to the return of the Talamancan indigenous peoples to the Valley, the Costa Rican state abrogated the legal dispositions that allowed indigenous lands to be declared as *baldíos*, thereby making practices of land grabbing of indigenous land illegal, through the elimination of the *denuncio* process. Indeed, the General Law of Baldíos of 1939 – which derogated the *denuncio* – is often considered to be the first "indigenist" law in Costa Rica (see Montero Vargas, 2002; Chacón Castro et al., 1999; Guevara Berger and Chacón Castro, 1992),[17] given that it was the first disposition that recognized (or even mentioned) land rights of indigenous peoples in national history. While being a law oriented towards defining the limits of an ongoing agricultural practice, its article 8 defined exceptions to appropriation of *baldios*, which included, amongst other things, indigenous lands, which were considered to be "unalienable and the exclusive property of indigenous peoples". Behind this unusual piece of legislation is the rise of a new form of state rationality informed by early 20th Century indigenist movements in Latin America.

Much like in the case of Mexico or Peru, the new indigenist state policies in Costa Rica centered on planned acculturation and the integration of indigenous peoples within the nation-state, through the modernization of indigenous economies and the implementation of mestizo-oriented educational programs (Dietz, 2004). In 1945, Costa Rica created the first state entity in charge of the tutelage of the indigenous interests – the Board for the Protection of Aboriginal Races of the Nation (JPRAN) – with the objective of "*(…) elevating the cultural level of the indigenous peoples and protecting their health*" (article 2, decree 45 of 1945). The Board did not include any single indigenous representative within its governing bodies and was to be directed by state officials of the Ministries of Public Education and Health (MEP and MINSA, respectively). Yet, JPRAN was also given the power to create, delimit and administer new indigenous reserves, on behalf of the people living there.

Of course, the very understanding of indigenous lands at this time is questionable, given that they were mostly interpreted as "refuge zones", that is, as the places were indigenous people lived and have their agricultural crops; discarding the recognition of other natural resources that were fundamental to their survival which were often cut down and made into pastures for mestizo agriculture, especially in the reserves created in 1956 in the Southern Pacific region (Chacón Castro et al., 1999). This process was probably intensified in the early 1960s, when a new Law on Land and Colonization determined that indigenous lands were to be declared part of the state patrimony and under administration of ITCO, a state agency in charge of promoting agrarian land reform in Costa Rica. In other words, while created for the protection of indigenous rights, JPRAN effectively became the means through which the Costa Rican state would offer state assistentialism oriented towards the optimization of these peoples through mestizo education and capitalist production

techniques, at the expense of any form of indigenous participation to materialize their wills.

Information of the effect of these changes in Talamanca during the 1950s and 1960s is scarce, as studies on the region were few and mostly concentrated in analysis of Bribri cultural practices, lacking a detailed exploration of the wider agrarian political economy (see Stone, 1961; Bozzoli, de Willie, 1973). Yet, it is unlikely that land reform policies would have a considerable effect given that the most easily accessible lands of the Valley (in the left margin of the Telire) remained in legal possession of UFCO and did not entered into the state patrimony until the mid 1970s, when the TIR was created (Bourgois, 1994). Of course, this is not to imply that there were no cultural or economic effects whatsoever. The already-described cultural changes had great influence in the territories due to the establishment of nine public schools in Amubrë, Shiroles, Bratsi, Suretka and Bribri between 1956 and 1963 (Arias et al., 2015). This followed the acculturation method with little regard to any recognition of bi-cultural teachings in any way, at least until the late 1970s when this began to change slowly (ADITIBRI Official in charge of Indigenous Education, interview, March 3rd, 2014; see also Borge, 2012). Besides education policy, the growing relevance of the Catholic Church and various other evangelical churches that settled there since the early 1960s also led to the transmission of ideologies running counter to indigenous culture and practices, opposing the role of the *awapa* (shamans), organization of *chichadas*,[18] or polygamy (Tafjord, 2016). Only the Bahai faith has been respectful, though not actively supportive of indigenous customs (Awa from Kachabri, interview, April 17th, 2014).

Table 2. Indigenous reserves adjacent to the Costa Rican part of La Amistad Biosphere Reserve

Indigenous reserve	Year of creation	Ethnicity	Population	Towns
Talamanca-Bribri	1977	Bribri	8.368	30
Talamanca-Cabécar	1985	Cabécar	1.435	11
Telire	1985	Cabécar	545	11
Tayní	1984	Cabécar	2.850	14
Chirripó	1993	Cabécar	6.341	19
Cabagra	1977	Bribri	3.188	19
Salitre	1977	Bribri	1.807	15
Ujarrás	1982	Cabécar	1.321	11

Source: Elaboration of the author with data collected from INEC, 2013

Growing pressures from the indigenist movement and, in no small measure, by some indigenous leaders themselves[19] led to the promulgation of new key indigenous legislation during the 1970s. The

JPRAN was replaced by the National Commission on Indigenous Affairs (CONAI) in 1973, numerous indigenous reserves – including the TIR – were created by executive decree between 1976 and 1977, and a new Indigenous Law was promulgated in 1977. This law recognized indigenous rights to self-government of their territories, the formation of their own representative bodies following their own traditional customs, shared sovereignty over access to natural resources (alongside the nation-state), and the reaffirmation of these indigenous reserves as "*inalienable, imprescriptible, non-transferable and exclusive for the use of indigenous communities inhabiting them*" (art. 3). With this said, this latter piece of legislation, rather than being a well-structured mechanism that clearly defined the means through which to exercise all those rights, ended up offering considerable leeway to state authorities to interpret the manner in which these precepts were to be implemented. For example, while article 5 of the Indigenous Law states that "indigenous reserves should be ruled by the indigenous peoples in their communal traditional structures", the Costa Rican state unilaterally defined Integral Development Associations (ADI) – a non-indigenous political organizations – as the political agent in charge of representing indigenous peoples of a reserve before the state.

Effectively, this combination of lack of implementation of the Indigenous Law and of extensive legal leeway of state power over the reserves has been a mechanism for mobilization of state rationalities and territorialities at the expense of indigenous peoples since the 1970s, and Talamanca is not an exception. Between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the region gained national attention in view of its potential importance with regards to energy security. As a response to the rise of oil prices and in the context of implementation of import substitution policies, the Costa Rican state – through the Costa Rican Oil Refinery (RECOPE), a state-owned enterprise – began considering the possibility of exploring for oil in the national territory, with Talamanca as the main area of focus. While these preoccupations had appeared in 1973, RECOPE found the necessary funding and technical support to realize this endeavour by early 1980 (Villalobos and Borge, 1998). Unsurprisingly, the state company gained the political support of the Integral Development Association, whose then president claimed that the paid jobs of the oil exploration (in a context of serious diseases affecting cacao, as I will present in the next chapter) would allow the Talamancan indigenous communities "*to abandon isolation in which they had lived through all of their history*" (La República, 02/12/1980). This is not an unexpected position of the ADITIBRI, both considering the rationale behind the creation of these entities, but also the fact that Talamancan indigenous positions towards external intromissions to the reserves has never been of monolithic dissent; on the contrary, some indigenous groups often times ally themselves to the interests of businesses and/or state agencies, in order to propel projects which they may consider as modernism or developments with regards to an

underdeveloped Talamanca. This finding is not unusual for the political interplay of regions lying on the social frontier between traditional and capitalist livelihoods (Li, 2014). So, despite the stringent political dissent of various indigenous political leaders, whom demanded the project to be developed outside of the reserve and with considerable ecological controls, ADITIBRI signed, alongside CONAI the agreement that allowed RECOPE to explore for oil in the area. Effectively, oil explorations in the TIR began in December of 1980.

Over the course of four years, RECOPE directly made significant changes to the Talamancan landscape, while also setting the stage for many indirect ones, even though the actual oil exploration ended up being completely unsuccessful. For the state company, the project was the means through which to finally develop the region, indeed as its chief economic officer said in press declarations in 1981: "*The marvellous part is not only to see roads, trails and camps emerging from the stormy mountains of Talamanca, but to witness the mystic and faith with which geologists, tractor operators, drillers, helpers, carriers, and drivers work from dawn until dusk*" (Gaceta Legislativa, 1981). Indeed, amongst its biggest impacts, the oil exploration accelerated the introduction of wage labor to the region, leading to a plethora of negative social effects, such as familiar disintegration, migration, alcoholism, conversion of smallholders into wage laborers, all of which greatly related to a higher monetization of the local economy (Toledo, 1982). The project also facilitated easier access to the reserve through the introduction of more efficient transport systems as the company opened up numerous roads and built various bridges, a process that its considered to have led to land use changes and deforestation due to greater access to external markets (Borge and Castillo, 1994). Finally, the project – compounded with the various education and healthcare policies that preceded it – also led to changes in settlement patterns in the left margin of the river, as people became concentrated around public services created or improved in the context of the project (such as local schools, clinics, communication and trade (Barrantes, 1993). This set the stage for a more thorough involvement of state authorities with indigenous communities as well, leading to programs that eventually concluded with a dramatic change in land uses which included a significant rise of area devoted to permanent crops and a reduction of forested areas.

In other words, while in the early 20th Century, the Bribri and Cabécar peoples saw themselves displaced from their lands due to the interests of banana production for profit, later on they have faced the threat of similar displacements due to state interests in promoting energy production as capital attempts to encroach upon these unstable territories. With that said, currently these same indigenous peoples are also included within conservation initiatives, such as the payments of environmental services program, from which indigenous territorial authorities obtain an annual payment from various environmental services provided by these

lands. All of this means that the local Bribri and Cabécar seem in a way mobilized by the state in forms that are not precisely exclusionary of their condition as Costa Rican citizens, but that nevertheless, are guided by the purview of making these lands to realize their economic value by contending its indigenous character. As we will see in the following chapters, this is the way in which new development and conservation projects seem to mirror the realities of early colonialism and the processes witnessed in the early 20th Century, by territorializing indigenous peoples and their spaces in a manner that considers them as part of the nation-state, but separate from the spaces for capital accumulation that it wants to build in these regions.

3.4. A final thought on the historical territorialization of the Talamanca Valley

Developing a historical background of the nature, orientation and goals of territorial interventions of the Talamanca Valley and the recurrent themes that these efforts share is of critical importance given that it offers an interesting ground to reflect on the manner in which current political actors behave and reflect on these histories, thereby affecting current political circumstances of conservation. From this perspective, the next two chapters argue that current conservation efforts in the Talamanca Valley are reflective of prior political strategies with deep roots in the historical development of the national and regional political economy of Costa Rica, as well as in the ethnic struggles and the history of dispossession that determined it.

The Talamanca Valley has historically been a geographical space mired by the competing claims between capital, state power and indigenous people and it is also an example that embodies the way in which territory comes into being transforming both discursively and materially both land and people in the process. The historical territorialization of the Costa Rican capitalist state in the region became materialized in the land grab of UFCO in order to transform the Talamanca Valley into a banana plantation in the early 20th century, and later into an energy production facility in the 1970s and 1980s and, as we will see later on, into a key region for achieving the promises of sustainable production of cacao and environmental security and financializing through forests-as-carbon-storage. In all these instances, the indigenous subject was formed and reformed discursively according to changing state rationalities and territorialities. This is a process that clearly reflects and informs the very constitution of the Costa Rican nation-state, particularly with regards to the formation of a national imaginary about national progress.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, state territorialization was related to a discursive formation of the indigenous people as both an obstacle to capital accumulation and as tool for state sovereignty. These

contradictory discourses mirror the politics and economics that outlined the 20th Century of the Talamanca Valley. Indigenous communities were defined as being part of the nation-state, yet separate from the capitalist processes that co-constituted its very formation. This contradictory position has been a feature of the Talamancan relationship with capitalist development and state formation ever since. It resulted from state attempts to consolidate control over national territory and the contradictions implied by the use of capitalist accumulation as a means to realize these goals. This tension was eventually reflected in the status of the Talamancan region as a contested space between transnational interests towards capitalist integration with the Panamanian economy and state interests of safeguarding the already weak territorial claim and adverting any further encroachment in the region by its geopolitical neighbors. This concluded with the reinforcement of capitalist relations and a violent insertion of the Bribri and Cabécar into these through marginalization. Some nominal hegemony was maintained and reflected in the formation of special state-mandated reserves which were extremely weak at first and then consolidated with considerable limitations in the 1970s. In this sense, the indigenous reserves studied here are in some way a manifestation of the contradictions resulting from internal territorialization, and of the compromised position of the Talamancan peoples within the Costa Rican nation-state. It is critical to remember this when dealing to the new forms of territorialization guided by conservation and the green economy.

Notes

[1] Though this quote was originally part of a report made for the Costa Rican government, it was first published in 1895 by Swiss geographer Henri Pittier and then re-published in Luis Ferrero's compilation of Gabb's writings in 1978.

[2] In 1988, the Talamanca Indigenous Reserve was separated to create the Talamanca-Bribri Indigenous Reserve and the Talamanca-Cabécar Indigenous Reserve.

[3] To exemplify this: these lands are formally considered as property of an Integral Development Association (a private local community board with an assembly composed of all inhabitants of the indigenous reserve), whose Development Council is responsible of handling the sale and demarcation of property, as well as constituting the main form of political governance within the indigenous territory. Consequently, within these territorial forms the delineation of property rights is handled as an internal matter without involvement of the national authorities in charge of land registries and surveys. While being exempt from legal obligations in terms of property, indigenous people are required to follow the environmental laws. The extraction of timber, as well as mining rights, for example, must follow

guidelines mandated by the state to all other property owners in the land (see Guevara Berger and Chacón Castro, 1992).

[4] Colonial historical sources on Talamanca often use this name to refer to a region much larger than the Valley studied by this dissertation. Recently, Costa Rican and Panamanian historians have contested the idea of a clear-cut conceptualization of this geographical space, as its characteristics originate from the intended political district of the Costa Rican province that the Spanish colonists wanted to establish in the area. Indeed, the very name 'Talamanca' was actually given in honor of a town located in the outskirts of Madrid. In any case, most historians tend to use the name Talamanca, much like the Spanish did, in order to refer to an area roughly including all lands between the Chirripó and the Changuinola Rivers, alongside what is now the Costa Rican and Panamanian seaboards (see Fernández, 1976; Guevara Berger and Chacón Castro, 1992). With that said, recent studies have argued that the local indigenous people conceived a much wider area as their lands, including most of the Southern Pacific seaboard of Costa Rica (see Boza Villarreal, 2014). This redefinition is based upon evidence of trade relations, migration processes and jurisdictional power structures linking this entire area under a loose form of indigenous governance. In any case, the Talamanca Valley constitutes a small fraction of both these historical conceptualizations of the Talamanca region.

[5] Spanish records also speak of other loosely defined ethnic groups in the area of which there is very limited historical information, such as Dorasques, Changuenas, Ara, Cureros, Urinamas and Siguas. Yet, there is little historical evidence to evaluate this claim.

[6] An obvious example of this is the fact that the 'encomienda' contracts between the Spanish Crown and the colonists – which legalized the capturing and forceful use of indigenous labor – rarely referred to a specific place, but to a particular indigenous group. This became an incentive for some colonists to expand the definition and the variety of groups recorded in order to reap higher benefits from the captured populations (Fernández, 1976).

[7] The reducciones were the most evident means of colonial state territorialization of indigenous groups in Costa Rica. Centralized living quarters composed of the house of the encomendero; a local church, a military emplacement and the houses of the indigenous people that inhabited the town often formed these townships. The town was surrounded by a large patch of common lands, where indigenous people worked on and the products of which were to be used to pay the tribute to the Church, the encomendero and for self-sustenance (in that order).

[8] Pablo Presebere was a Talamancan *Blu* that led a successful indigenous insurrection against Spanish authorities in colonial in 1709. During the rebellion, several Spanish priests and soldiers were killed as fourteen missionary temples were destroyed. This rebellion appeared to be well-supported by indigenous populations from Chirripó in Costa Rica to Bahía Almirante in Panama, an alliance that eventually guaranteed the loss of political control of the colonial government over Talamanca until Independence in 1821.

[9] The Miskito are an ethnic group that inhabits the Caribbean coastline of Central America from Honduras to Nicaragua. During the 18th Century and

well into the 19th, the Miskito people entered in informal alliances with the British privateers that were arriving to the Caribbean as part of the effort of the Crown to beleaguer Spanish trade route towards the European mainland. In 1740, a formal treaty of alliance was signed between these indigenous peoples and the Crown leading to the establishment of a British protectorate as a means of disrupting Spanish governance in Central America. The Miskito often raided Spanish colonies and indigenous territories in Central America and often sold people captured here as slaves in the British colonies.

[10] It is likely that the position of King of Talamanca was adapted by the Bribri people as a result of their historical interaction with the Miskito, which themselves have developed a loose political structure of government with a King (Solórzano Fonseca, 1999).

[11] The Miskito Kingdom territorial claims were extensive and included a significant section of the Caribbean coastline of Central America, from Yucatán to the Talamancan coast in Costa Rica. At the time of Independence, and with the support of the British, the Miskito held considerable military power to the point of dissuading any action by the recently independent Central American states. Indeed, the Costa Rican government actually paid tribute to avoid attacks by the Miskito during the early years of independent life.

[12] The main purpose of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850 was to guarantee the political neutrality over any potential project to build a canal crossing Central America, thereby impeding any form of exclusive use either by the United States or Great Britain. To do this the treaty also demanded both powers to refrain from participating in the internal politics of the Central American nations in order to gain leverage over the control of the canal. This included avoiding the use of protectorates in this fashion.

[13] With British interests beginning to wane in the region, the British systematically allowed the various Central American nations to have uncontested claims to the last areas occupied by the Miskito Kingdom in Nicaragua, provided that these peoples were allowed to self-govern themselves and remain under a semi-sovereign status. This led to the complete occupation of these lands by Nicaragua in 1894.

[14] Panama attained its Independence from Colombia in 1903.

[15] Indeed, the first nationalist governments of the recently independent Costa Rican state quickly denounced and repudiated colonial policies with regards to ethnic groups and even questioned the abuses that were allowed by the Crown (Molina, 1986). Indeed, according to president Braulio Carrillo's speech to Congress in 1839: "*it is important to communicate with these groups, to tolerate and respect their uses, cultural features and government, removing all devices used by our predecessors (the conquerors), so that, erasing hate and fear, we may open our doors to commerce, to our population and to our discoveries, and, in so doing, to show the world our moderation and democratic virtues*" (cited by Guevara Berger and Chacón Castro, 1992: 40).

[16] Cacao was used extensively for self-consumption and with ceremonial means by the Bribri and Cabécar. It symbolizes the blood of the Talamancan indigenous peoples and was used in various rites, such as marriages, as well as birth and death ceremonies at the time of this transition (Bozzoli de Willie,

1979). It continues to be significant in Bribri and Cabécar social practices, though with the expansion of Catholicism and Bahai religions, this is a much less relevant practice. With that said, cacao drinks are still prepared by Bribri and Cabécar households in order to receive guests, which implies the social and cultural relevance of the product.

[17] Before the 1939 General Law on Baldíos there was a previous fleeting disposition that recognized the political right of indigenous peoples to vote in the national elections. This was introduced as an article of the Constitution of 1844. Not only does this disposition was never actually implemented, but it completely disappeared with the promulgation of the Constitution of 1847. Afterwards, no form of legislation was created in order to define the legal position of indigenous peoples in the country, nor that of their lands within the property system (Chacón Castro, 2002).

[18] Chichadas are Bribri celebrations in which they drink chicha, which is an alcoholic beverage made of maize. These celebrations take place for various reasons, from recreation and leisure to bringing together dispersed relatives and family members to the repayment of communal farm labor. Indeed, anthropological studies about the Bribri and the Cabécar often bring this latter use to the fore as a means of exemplifying economically-relevant traditional or cultural practices (see Borge and Castillo, 1994; Bozolli de Willie, 1979; Stone, 1961).

[19] The Costa Rican Association Pro-Indigenous Peoples was formed by very influential scholars that were experts on indigenous affairs at the time, politicians informed by the Latin American indigenist movement, and a few indigenous leaders selected from some of the various communities around the country. Amongst their biggest patrons was Karen Figueres, the daughter of one of the most influential leader of the National Liberation Party (PLN), the most well organized political party in the country at the time (Guevara Berger and Chacón Castro, 1992).

4 A political economy of sustainable development in Costa Rica

The objective of this chapter is to portray and discuss the material and ideational context in which the green economy has been conceptualized in Costa Rica. Although a common assumption is that the relationship between economic development and conservation is defined by struggle, this chapter argues these two are actually quite compatible between them. Indeed, it will be argued here that, in a context defined by neoliberalism, the current efforts towards the development of Costa Rican rural areas are being spearheaded by policy interventions centered on the need of optimizing social, economic and, also the environmental and conservation practices of Costa Rican rural societies through the green economy. These interventions are thought as being "diversified" given their separation from traditional preservationist schemes, yet it is clear that all of these new alternatives for improving rural livelihoods depend upon a narrow rationality of economic value and market practices, through which complex rural realities are being essentialized and territorialized.

This chapter explores the origins of renewed interest of state agencies towards protected area (PA) buffer zones in Costa Rica, an issue of great importance for the study of TBIR and TCIR, given their buffer status vis-à-vis RBLA and BID-MAG. In the first section, I argue that the PA buffer zones gained considerable importance for national development in a historical context determined by the aftermath of the economic crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Indeed, the structural adjustment of the 1980s and 1990s was used by international financial organisms (IFO), international conservation NGOs and the Costa Rican state to put these areas – alongside other rural regions – in a policy pathway oriented towards modernization through the strengthening of their articulation to the global markets. While initial policy measures were centered on developing non-traditional agricultural exports (NTAE), these policies' intensification of historical problems of unproductive deforestation led the adjustment to change its approach towards a new form of capital articulation through commodified and financialized forms of "conservation commodities".

Later, I explain how was this was achieved through the creation and implementation of new market-oriented policy measures, such as the establishment of payments of environmental services (PES) and the fostering of agroforestry systems (SAF), both of which were designed to promote forest cover as a means of safeguarding the goal of macroeconomic stabilization achieved by the adjustment. This trend continues as the current National Forestry Development Plan (PNDF), REDD+ and the National Strategy for Climate Change (ENCC) – the basis

of the national pledge for carbon neutrality in 2021 – contemplate the promotion of financialized carbon trade as the means of achieving competitiveness and productivity in rural areas.

Finally, I argue that, following the neoliberal adjustment, conservation policy of the Costa Rican state has become subject to political and economic purposes, including business- and market-based ones centered on offering incentives for the private sector to profit from the protection of the forest and the overriding requisite of nature "paying its part" to national development. Overall, the development of agricultural/forestry and conservation policy in Costa Rica can be considered to be coherent with what Büscher and Arsel (2012) and Büscher and Fletcher (2015) have already discussed regarding the ongoing tendencies of global capitalism of creating capitalist markets for new environmental commodities as a means of resolving its own negative environmental and economic contradictions. More than that, following on the rationale exposed by the ENCC and the PNDF, this chapter supports the claims that these trends in conservation policy have been ingrained within current processes of state formation in Costa Rica (see Fletcher and Breitling, 2012; Lansing et al., 2015). Indeed, here, forest resources and their conservation have been aligned with global accumulation as a means of securing natural resources for future capitalist appropriation.

4.1. The 1980s Debt Crisis and its environmental effects

The 1980s was a time of crisis and change for all of the Latin American economies. Costa Rica, in particular, was faced with a multilayered crisis that affected its economy and environment. The so-called "Debt Crisis" can be considered a turning point for the Costa Rican economy, given that it offered a political opportunity for a new project based on diversified export-led strategies as the new central feature of development planning. This major policy change led to a complete transformation of rural geographies through the expansion of new productive practices to achieve this goal. Yet, with economic recovery and renewed capitalist articulation, the country also witnessed a more intensive use of the country's forests. This environmental crisis would soon be the center of attention from IFOs and aid organizations, given the threat posed by dwindling resources for the new outward-oriented economic model. In this section, I briefly characterize the main features of the "Debt Crisis", before moving onwards into dealing with the national policy debate for solving the environmental crisis.

The 'Debt Crisis' marked the exhaustion of the Costa Rican variant of the structuralist (or interventionist) economic model that the country had followed for over two decades. Until the late 1970s, Costa Rica featured a regime of accumulation based on an agro-export economy centered on a handful of traditional products (e.g.: coffee, bananas, meat

and sugar), alongside an incipient industrial sector, which was strongly fostered by import-substitution industrialization (ISI) policies (Rovira Mas, 1987). Industrial production was strongly fostered by the state through rent transfers through taxes on the agro-export sector and the Central American Common Market (MCCA), which was originally conceived to become a highly-protected trading space oriented towards fostering regional accumulation, allowing the inward-looking Central American productive sectors to overcome the limitations resulting from each countries' small national markets (Robinson, 2003). Of course, traditional agro-exports were still promoted as the main source of income for the state (Hidalgo Capitán, 2003).

The effect of the economic crisis faced by the Costa Rican state forced the country into entering negotiations with the IFOs in 1982. USAID also became a key actor for the economic recovery of the country, as the U.S. was channeling considerable amounts of aid resources to restructure the national economy and avoid the country falling to communist hands like it happened to Nicaragua in 1979 (Sojo Obando, 1991). After various interim economic stabilization agreements between 1982 and 1985, IFO pressures congealed in the deployment of three rounds of structural adjustment programs (SAP) in 1985, 1988 and 1993. Conditionality was a key element in the structural adjustment as these IFOs used the internal political tensions amongst the economic and political elites over the mounting external debt and balance of payments crisis as leverage for promoting a new strategy of economic development (Robinson, 2003). Based on contemporary theories and empirical studies claiming an association between free trade policy and economic growth (see Bhagwati, 1978; Krueger, 1978; Balassa, 1985), the neoliberal project aspired to a significant departure from the previous ISI policies. The new main objective was to promote an export-led development centered around the diversification of exports of goods and services as a means to consolidate new sources of income. By generating new sources of income from the international markets, policy official argued, the country would be able to counter balance of payments instabilities and lead to macroeconomic stabilization, a much-cherished political objective for the Costa Rican state and economic elites after four years of ongoing crisis. Discussing all measures implemented through the adjustment would divert considerably from the objective of this chapter, but suffice to say that the SAPs centered on the necessary means to promote export-led development, mainly: the dismantlement of protectionist tariff structures, the promotion of agricultural and industrial exports and tourism through tax incentives and the deregulation of market prices, the implementation of far-reaching legal reforms oriented towards financial and trade liberalization, a more aggressive foreign trade strategy centered on integrating the country to key free trade zones, and a partial state reform based on the privatization of some state-owned enterprises (Hidalgo Capitán, 2003).

Costa Rican rural areas have been notably affected by the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, given the emphasis of these measures on restructuring the agricultural sector and promoting a new services sector based on tourism. For starters, financial liberalization measures led to a strong contraction in credits for non-competitive forms of agriculture. Furthermore, the government also eliminated price and direct subsidy deregulation to basic grains production and cattle-ranching (Fernández Arias, 1999). Meanwhile, tax incentives were created in order to favor competitive non-traditional agricultural exports (NTAE) (e.g.: pineapple, melons, cassava, ornamental flowers, etc.), which have expanded significantly both in economic importance as well as in terms of their occupied geographic area in the countryside. Besides this, the neoliberal project also profiled tourism as a centerpiece of the measures that were pushed forward to diversify the exporting base and attract investment (Campbell, 2002). The decision of promoting tourism in the rural areas of the country also gained the support of the regional agro-export elites, which wanted to diversify their accumulation strategy beyond agricultural production and was strongly supported by IFOs under consideration of creating revenue for the least developed regions of the country (Ramirez Cover, 2011). As a result, the Costa Rican state actively promoted tourism in complete collaboration with the IFOs leading it to become one of Costa Rica's highest remittance-earners.

Taken together, these measures have led to a significant transformation of the agrarian landscape of the country, which was previously dominated by a combination of traditional crops (e.g.: coffee, banana, sugar), government-supported basic grain production and pasture for cattle-grazing. According to Zimmerer (2011), the agricultural area in Costa Rica extended by about 6% since 1985 due to enlarged production of traditional (banana) and non-traditional agro-exports (pineapple and melons). This extended production has been the source of a remarkable intensification in agricultural practices, evidenced by a pervasive use of agrochemicals (Galt, 2008). Moreover, this expansion and intensification of agricultural uses – alongside the prevalence of cattle ranching – considerably affected forest cover, especially in privately-owned buffer zones nearby national parks (Sánchez Azofeifa et al., 2003). Indeed, by the early 1990s, there were increasing concerns from key conservation agencies that deforestation provoked by old and new forms of agricultural production would eventually isolate national parks as the only forested areas in the country (Boza, 1993). Similarly, growth in tourism has been accompanied by the development of a dynamic and highly profitable real estate market in touristic destinations (Barrantes, 2011; Robinson, 2003). This form of urban growth has taken place nearby or within PA buffer zones as well, as national parks and other protected natural landscapes constitute the basis of Costa Rican tourist attractions. This situation has been followed by serious concerns regarding the direct effect of changes of land use nearby guarded ecosystems, as well as the

indirect effects of growing demand for lumber as building materials at these urban centers (see Honey, 1999; Honey and Krantz, 2008). In other words, while the country had achieved some degree of macroeconomic stability through export-led development by the end of the 1980s, this new capitalist articulation also meant new intensive uses of natural resources in a country faced with a crisis related to resource degradation. This crisis would soon be the center of attention of IFOs, aid organizations and the government as the potentially deleterious effects were considered a direct threat to the highly-cherished objective of neoliberal stabilization.

4.2. Neoliberal fixes to the environmental crisis in Costa Rica

Costa Rica was also facing a serious, yet slowly advancing, environmental crisis by the mid 1980s. This issue was not entirely new, as the country was experiencing serious degradation of its soil, forest, water and coastal resources since the 1940s. Yet, the old problems related to cattle-ranching had now compounded with the effects of structural changes in the rural economy, due to incentives for NTAE cultivation. By 1987, this issue had gained the attention of public officials at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Mines (MIRENEM) and influential policy practitioners at the National Parks Foundation (FPN) and the Fundación Neotrópica, leading to fairly influential reports determining the need of immediate policy action to reduce deforestation. These policy reports entailed the formation of a new forms of conservation rationality focused on developing new tools for environmental governance, which unlike previous fortress conservation-oriented policies established by the country during the 1970s, were designed under specifications of creating new forms of commodification of natural resources through environmental conservation.

Environmental issues were not addressed in the first stage of the SAP by the IFOs and USAID (which was the most influential bilateral aid agency, due to the geopolitical situation of the time). Yet, over the course of the 1980s, concerns were growing amongst these agencies regarding the potential effect of resource shortages regarding the natural resource-dependent export-led development strategy set in those initial policies:

> "Depletion and degradation of the renewable resource base is becoming an increasing constraint to future economic and social development in Costa Rica. (…). With few mineral and petroleum resources, the country is heavily dependent upon renewable natural resources for generation of income in productive sectors, such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy generation, and tourism, as well as to supply the raw materials for most manufacturing and processing industries." (USAID, 1987: 3).

Effectively, for USAID and the IFOs, attending resource deficits in the future was of the utmost importance to guarantee the long-term

success of the economic programs developed in the context of the structural adjustment, as these could potentially undermine gains obtained with regards to macroeconomic stabilization in the future (USAID, 1987; WB, 1993; FN, 1987). As a result, the problem had to be identified and policy needed to be designed in order to provoke a market-oriented transformation in the manner in which these resources were managed. USAID was particularly inclined towards this alternative, as seen in the Natural Resource Management Strategy for Costa Rica published in 1987. The document became extremely influential for the development of new policy measures during the late 1980s. This document framed this environmental crisis as having its origins in more than four decades of serious forest mismanagement resulting from the indiscriminate clearing of Costa Rican forests (USAID, 1987). With the highest deforestation rate in Central America, and 60.000 hectares of forest lost every year during the 1980s, Costa Rican forested lands had been reduced almost in half between 1970 and 1987 (USAID, 1987). This, in turn, had resulted in a dwindling water supply for human consumption, productive use and energy generation at key river basins; and considerable soil degradation due to erosion in previously forested areas. Moreover, with this forest loss and the subsequent degradation of water and soil resources, concerns were growing regarding the state of wildlife resources and future expenditures on risk management related to flooding and potential weather events (USAID, 1987).

For the USAID, the origin of this forest mismanagement originated in the land use policies defined by the Costa Rican state since the 19th Century. As explained in the previous chapter, legislation on the "baldíos" allowed farmers and peasants to gain tenure to public domain lands outside of the established state-owned protected areas, by clearing the forests, and thereby "improving" said lands by putting them on agricultural or other productive use. While attempts were made to quell this practice through the derogation of previous "baldíos" legislation in 1961, these forms of colonization of forested lands continued. These measures were reinforced further by tax dispositions as well. For example, until the mid-1980s, people holding forested lands were subjected to higher property taxes than people that held cleared lands, even though both lands remained idle (Augelli, 1987). Given this particular configuration of legal dispositions over land uses, considerable land speculation due to heightened development pressures upon agricultural lands, the rapid expansion of cattle ranching due to generous tax credits and low-interest banking loans since the 1940s and notable internal migrations in the rural areas during the 1960s, deforestation augmented quite noticeably, leading the country to lose about 40% of forest cover between the 1940s and the 1980s (USAID, 1994). This increased even further, provoked by policy encouragements towards further forest clearings in order to establish agricultural lands for non-traditional agro-export production (Zimmerer, 2011).

While USAID recognized that the Costa Rican state had made some efforts towards curbing the negative effect of this land use regime, so far accomplishments were limited. Indeed, the 1969 Forest Law have established several dispositions meant to prohibit spontaneous settlement on public lands. Yet, the Law could not be effectively enforced partly due to the lack of an adequate cadastral registry that could permit identification of public land; as well as to the inability of state forest agencies to act, due to serious budgetary and administrative constraints (USAID, 1987). At the moment, USAID considered that the only effective policy implemented by the Costa Rican state to deal with deforestation was the system of protected areas which was established and expanded during the 1970s and 1980s. Yet, even in this case, this specific policy was limited in scope and under threat of failing due to growing pressures mounting upon the private forests that existed contiguous to these protected areas:

> "The Government of Costa Rica, with the help of private Costa Rican and U.S. conservation groups has made a good beginning of protecting the wildlands and initiating management of some of them. However, the wildlands are under increasing pressure of encroachment. Much of the threat comes from unplanned, chaotic development of the lands contiguous to the parks. Here valuable forests with commercial potential are cleared for low yielding pastures. With time, the parks will stand like islands in a sea of degraded pastures." (USAID, 1987: 78).

While it is clear that USAID was quite concerned with the appalling magnitude of deforestation in Costa Rica, the truly vexing issue for the agency seemed to be the enormous wastefulness and economic irrationality of the process in itself. According to the Strategy, not only were most of the lands being logged unsuitable for agriculture, but deforestation itself was rarely productive. Citing Ashe's (1978) study, the U.S. aid agency is shocked to recognize that 86% of the timber cut between 1955 and 1973 was not productively used whatsoever, as most of it was left to rot or was burned down on site. This is then followed with serious preoccupation regarding the notable lack of efficiency of the Costa Rican forestry industry. According to the Strategy, sawmills here often operated well under capacity, requiring absurdly large amounts of timber to produce significantly smaller amounts of lumber for further industrial uses (e.g.: 646.200 m3 of timber to produce 303.000 m3 of lumber in 1986), and leading to the production of lumber of which only 4,3% of its cost was actually reflective of the price of standing trees (USAID, 1987). In other words, the principal problem identified by USAID was that existing forest management in Costa Rica was based on the lack of recognition of the commercial value of forests in favor of other less efficient land uses. Moreover, considering the magnitude of forest cover loss over the course of the previous four decades, unless some new forms of rational management that allowed farmers to recognize the inherent commercial

value of forests were implemented soon, imports of forest-related materials would increase undoing the macroeconomic stabilization achieved by adjustment policies:

> "(...) the commercial forests which are the main sources of wood for the economy will be approaching depletion around 1995 if present trends continue. Thereafter, Costa Rica will have to import increasing amounts of wood and its substitutes, burdening itself with a possibly unsustainable cost which could cancel out many of the gains in exports achieved with USAID help." (USAID, 1987: 56)

In other words, attention had to be directed to maintaining forest cover, with particular emphasis made on protecting the highly-valuable patches of private forest that were left, all of which were located within the buffer zones of existing protected areas. The solution offered by USAID was to improve management strategies for exploiting these commercially-viable strands of forests, that is making these forests valuable for farmers through market-oriented intervention. For this to happen, USAID was to assist the government into effectively operationalizing a new scheme of forest management, partially based on innovations introduced with the recently passed 1986 Forest Law. The lynchpin of the plan was the offering of aid for the Costa Rican state to effectively implement sustainable forest management plans as well as introducing new measures to make forestry industry much more efficient and cost-effective.

The new management plan was much more thorough than what existed earlier and required obliged forest owners to include a variety of additional information including inventories of individual trees, their distribution in the farm, and a detailed explanation of the goals with harvesting them; thereby attempting to offer a more rational account of the use of forest resources, under close guard by the Costa Rican state (Brockett and Gottfried, 2002). In theory, such managing practices would ensure a sustainable harvesting process, as well as giving the means for state forestry agencies to keep a reasonable management and accounting system capable of limiting illegal felling and avoiding forged documentation, a serious problem before 1986. In essence, the management plan could be considered as a means for collecting information and promote self-discipline to promote the presence of a sustainable supply of forests for the forestry industry. The proposal made by USAID also suggested accompanying these efforts inventories of standing timber in order to assure fair pricing, as well as financing better infrastructure for control agencies (USAID, 1987).

The agency also suggested changes meant to encourage a greater level of efficiency and vertical integration between forest plantations, sawmills and the rest of the forestry industry. Amongst the measures supported, USAID considered the establishment of financial subsidies and aids to support investment on forest properties, and diverse tax incentives for sawmills that had managed to guarantee themselves a long-

term supply of lumber through forest owners using management plans. By assuring the continuous supply of timber to the sawmills, USAID was expecting to foster sustainable forest harvesting and reforestation practices through the use of forest plantations or agroforestry, thereby creating a sustainable feedback loop that could eventually stop deforestation. With sufficient assistance, USAID considered that forest owners would be able to realize the financial benefits from harvesting trees rather than just cutting them down in favor of pastures, thereby leading to a more economically and environmentally efficient forest industry and eventually reducing pressures of encroachment on national parks and forest areas surrounding these:

> "(…) the areas surrounding some of the national parks of Costa Rica offer unusual opportunities for demonstrating the complementarity of conservation and development, and creating models for expansion." (USAID, 1987: 79).

In summary, the USAID Strategy was meant to counter the deforestation problem by attending its mismanagement origins. This mismanagement was considered to be the result of state-produced irrationality, whereby forest owners were encouraged to overlook the economic value of forests in favor of clearing them for agricultural purposes. For USAID, the best alternative was to encourage farmers to recognize the economic and market value of conserving forest resources by promoting a diversification of the countryside near protected areas, particularly through the development of an efficient forestry industry with considerable agroforestry components. Nevertheless, as Lansing et al (2015) has argued, USAID recognized that technical assistance in the elaboration and enforcement of sustainable management plans for forests would be eventually ineffective to develop a competitive forestry industry, mainly because, in the land use policy context of the Strategy, sustainable forest management was not financially viable (USAID, 1989). This conclusion was similarly reached by the World Bank in 1993, as part of their Forestry Sector Review, a fairly influential paper which defined the necessary policy changes to be made in order to foster environmental planning, and which later became a template for the 1996 Forestry Law (Brockett and Gottfried, 2002). According to the Review: *"(t)he key issue in multiple use management is to reorient incentives to conserve environmental values"* (WB, 1993: viii).

Much like the 1987 USAID Strategy, the 1993 World Bank Review talks plenty regarding the need of recognizing the ecological value of Costa Rican forests through markets. Yet, differently from the USAID document, language in the Review changes from attention on the use of tax incentives, subsidies and direct development aid in forestry development, and concentrates a lot more on market mechanisms for recognizing the value of environmental services. For the World Bank, new policy action should be oriented towards eliminating the numerous market distortions established by the Costa Rican state that lead to

deforestation (WB, 1993). Curiously enough, while the Review does consider that some of these distortions originate in the land use regime, the conservation policy measures implemented by Costa Rica are also rife with these distortions in favor of deforestation. The document explains that conservation here has been excessively oriented towards a command-and-control approach that actually ends up favoring forest cover loss. This policy was centered in four specific areas: 1) the creation of state-owned protected areas, 2) the regulation of private forests through permits that controlled harvest rates, 3) trade-based protections through export bans and import tariffs on forest products and 4) subsidies for forest plantations.

The first measure is considered to be somewhat effective, albeit lacking the implementation of efficient management practices. Quite simply, protected areas are becoming too costly to maintain and expand without an adequate financial agenda that could generate fresh resources. The inherent solution is to streamline management through privatization of conservation services or by facilitating market recognition of environmental services provided by protected areas:

> "The World should pay therefore for the environmental benefits that Costa Rica produces. These benefits include tourism, discovery of new pharmaceuticals, existence and other option values and carbon sequestration. Already Costa Rica is benefiting from tourism. Nevertheless, there is a scope for more tourism industry and for returning revenues to the management of protected areas." (WB, 1993: vi).

With this said, the main focus of the Review is centered on the other conservation policies dealing with private forest management. For starters, while restrictions on private forest management, including the introduction of sustainable management plans, are perceived as relevant by the World Bank, these are considered to be ineffective given that the state never had the capabilities of enforcing these regulations on private landowners in such a complicated policy environment so biased towards forest clearing practices (WB, 1993). Moreover, the Review argues that even trade protections meant to defend the forestry industry eventually became market distortions that reinforced deforestation. The establishment of a ban on log exports made any accumulation strategy based on forest harvesting unviable, while import tariffs subsidized the local forest industry, leading it to become wasteful and uncompetitive. Also, these protections eventually made the local forestry industry expensive to consumers, whom eventually choose to consume other alternative building materials. In other words, both command and control measures and trade protections were defined by a problematic misrecognition in the economic value of sustainable harvesting of forests, thereby reinforcing their elimination in favor of pastures as a more reasonable economic alternative (WB, 1993).

Besides this, the World Bank continues, with such low timber prices resulting from trade protections, reforestation practices were eventually discouraged. Moreover, while Costa Rica introduced subsidies for reforestation since the late 1970s, these prove to be completely ineffective to provoke changes in forest cover loss, an argument shared by other authors as well (see Ortiz Malavassi et al., 2003; Brockett and Gottfried, 2002). Being mostly designed around income tax reductions, most of these benefits only targeted large commercial plantations, which in a context of diminishing support from banks to small and medium-scale forestry activities, meant that the actual owners of natural forests ended up not supported. Moreover, by functioning as subsidies for private commercial forestry, these measures were not environmentally sensitive, thereby leading to the fostering of forest plantations of low ecological value and not to efforts to conserve the much more biodiversity-rich natural forests. In this context, small and medium forest owners saw themselves lacking sufficient support or incentives to protect natural forests, as subsidies for reforestation rarely reached them and credits for agroforestry were virtually non-existent (de Camino et al., 2000). In a context in which land use policy environment still demanded "improvements" for securing tenure, then the existing forest subsidies and tax incentives, different from what USAID would argue, were actually part of the perceived problem of forest mismanagement contemplated by the World Bank (WB):

> "Perhaps the main problem with plantation incentives, however, is that they help perpetuate the bias against natural forests in the Costa Rican economy. Lands receiving the plantation subsidies will forego the opportunity of maintaining or re-growing a natural forest, which produces more environmental benefits than plantations. These incentives thus add to the negative impacts of agriculture, cattle ranching and land tenure policies, overregulation of forest activities and trade protection. The problem of lagging reforestation can be solved more efficiently by changing these policies rather than by applying subsidies." (WB, 1993: iv).

In this sense, the solution presented by the World Bank required a complete overhaul of the forest use incentives in order to allow landowners to visualize the undistorted economic value of forests. Of course, this implied the necessity of deregulating forest clearing-biased incentives through the reduction of tariff barriers to imports, the elimination of the export ban on logs, and the derogation of tax-based subsidies for reforestation as well as other distortions provoked by financial credits still given to the agricultural sector, in particular cattle-ranching. Yet, the truly innovative suggestion made by the World Bank entailed the introduction of measures meant for private forest owners to realize the economic value of environmental services of their forests within the economy. Within a wider discussion of policy alternatives for improving environmental management of buffer zones with economically-important forests, the World Bank suggested the creation of

a mechanism to induce voluntary compliance towards conserving forests centered on a management agreement with the government in exchange of monetary compensation. In other words, the World Bank then suggested an ideational predecessor of the current payments of environmental services program (PSA). The document even considers extending the reach of this mechanism towards recognizing the forest services with regards to watershed protection.

It could be argued that this discursive shift from direct subsidizing forest harvesting towards environmental services is based upon ongoing changes in the national debate regarding economic tools for dealing with deforestation. In the end, forest policy elites in the country were already implementing the Forestry Management Certificate (CAFMA), which financed forest owners in exchange of conserving or sustainably managing natural forests, thereby constituting a direct predecessor of the PSA (see Ortiz et al., 2003). Yet, the actual language of "environmental services" is probably the result of, first, an ongoing change in mindsets from a fences-and-fines approach towards the use of ecological landscape management to address wider environmental phenomena like climate change. Indeed, it is no surprise that the 1993 Review emerged between the passing of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, a period rife with the introduction of new political technologies to address climate change through market-mediated tools. Second, it is clear that this discursive shift also entails a perspective influenced by the structural adjustment, whereby attention towards privately-owned forests in the buffer zones require a form of management centered in market practices.

Indeed, over the course of the following five years after the publication of the Review, the Costa Rican government passed the 1994 General Law on the Environment and the 1998 Law on Biodiversity, which replaced the centralized National Parks Service (SPN) with the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC), a decentralized office that began implementing new conservation approaches based on ecosystem management through buffer zone and biological corridor management. Moreover, the 1996 Forestry Law designed a new approach to forestry based on decentralization and the introduction of market mechanisms – including the aforementioned PSA. The Law also created a business sector-oriented National Forestry Office (ONF) to advise the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE) on forestry activities. It abolished permits for logging, transporting and exporting timber from forest plantations, while still requiring these to present sustainable management plans (Brockett and Gottfried, 2002). Yet more relevant to this chapter, the Forest Law put banned conversion of forests into agriculture (punishable with prison sentences) and created FONAFIFO as the executor of a national PSA designed to pay for environmental services provided by the forest (Fletcher and Breitling, 2012). This implies a new conservation rationality on the rise centered on environmental

governance oriented towards new forms of commodification of conservation.

4.3. Neoliberal contradictions and carbon neutrality

With all this said, I must also reiterate that this discursive vision of the buffer zones and its policies, including the PSA program, contrasts heavily with its factual execution of the PSA and other buffer zone management tools over the past twenty years. While environmental services are being commodified, and financialized into derivatives under property of FONAFIFO, there is little indication to the rising of a carbon abatement market as a result of the PSA program (Sánchez et al., 2003). Fletcher and Breitling (2012), as well as Brockett and Gottfried (2002) have argued that this is probably due to the complex – and largely unexplored – politics of implementation of the PSA program and the Costa Rican forestry policy sector at large. They have argued that the PSA has come to the fore in the context of a political negotiation made between two opposing political groups within the Costa Rican forestry sector, namely one oriented towards the political defense of state interventionism in conservation policy and another much closer to market-oriented policy design. The result of this political tension has been a "hybrid policy regime" in which many conservation tools combine the two approaches in themselves and that is reflective of the contested nature of neoliberalism in Costa Rica.

Surely, there have been some instances in which FONAFIFO has managed to find buyers of carbon sequestration efforts, such as when it sold 2 million U.S. dollars in carbon abatement through PES to Norway in 1997. But experiences like this have been quite small compared to the projects being developed with other non-market forms of funding. The PSA has not succeeded to motivate the arrival of an internal environmental services market either. While some nationalized electric companies have financed PSA contracts to protect river basins in order to protect water for hydroelectric generation (Fletcher and Breitling, 2012), their whole contribution was of about 1 million dollars in 2009 (Blackman and Woodward, 2010). In other words, whereas these sorts of programs are supposed to be just a preliminary stage before the appearance of full-fledged environmental services markets, in this particular case that situation has not become a reality yet.

On the contrary, since its inception, the PSA program has depended almost exclusively of public revenues obtained either from indirect taxes to fossil fuel consumption, a tariff on water uses established in 2006 and, in no small measure, by donations made by IFIs (mainly the WB, itself), which are by all accounts administered as public funds. And while one could say that both taxes are meant to function under the user pays principle, the execution works through forceful state intervention and not under the neoliberal precepts of voluntary distribution of resources through markets (Fletcher and Breitling, 2012). The hierarchical features

of the mechanism are reflected in the actual implementation. The program features a very low additionality that could not be supposed to be a sensible acknowledgement of the value of the land according to market prices, let alone a clear reflection of cost-opportunity if the owner were to use the PSA for any other purposes.

This is why some FONAFIFO officials tend to equate the PSA to a *"positive reward for compliance of the (Forestry) law"* (FONAFIFO Monitoring Officer, interview, April 18th, 2014), given that it fails to account for cost-opportunity. Indeed, a 2003 survey of forest users benefiting from PSA contracts found that most users were not convinced to protect their forests due to potential profitability of forest for conservation or even because it was a way of obtaining "free money" in any way; the study finds that the more likely reason why they have not made changes to land use in their farms (at least in the case of farmers in the Central Valley, the Northern Zone and the Osa Peninsula, where the study was focused) is due to *"structural reasons manifested since 1985, whereby agriculture and cattle-ranching practices have not become viable economic alternatives for them, and have caused a very low probability of them selling their lands as well"* (Ortiz et al., 2003: 29). Interviewees that questioned the program often argued in a similar line by stating that actual decrease of deforestation is not the consequence of the PSA program itself, but of the structural change of the country from an agricultural-based to a services-based economy, where tourism and real estate development has gained considerable importance in rural areas vis-à-vis agricultural activities (IUCN-ORMA ecological economics unit director, personal interview, September 6th, 2014). Other studies also question the actual effectiveness of the PSA contracts claiming that these were mostly established on forests that tackled no real danger of deforestation (Daniels et al., 2010). Porras et al. (2013) argue only about 0,2% and 0,4% of total deforestation was avoided through the PSA in Costa Rica, thereby arguing that the bias towards protecting existing forests is. This is also supported by a 2011 report by the Comptroller General Office (CGR) which challenged the cost effectiveness of the program, saying that it had been only soberly positive when attending all conservation problems.

All of these arguments are being made even without questioning the political inner workings of PSA implementation, which also seems to entail features that make the program more analogous to a hierarchical mode of governance than to a market-oriented one. For starters, commodification of environmental services is extricated from additionality. The PSA is supposed to finance four different services (i.e.: carbon sequestration, scenic beauty, hydrological services and biodiversity conservation), yet this distinction is not made in most of the contract modalities, leading to a tendency of 'bundling environmental services', leading to questionable forms of commodification. Castree (2003) argues that for commodification of nature to take place, the thing that is supposed to be transformed into a commodity first needs to

undergo several processes allowing the thing to be calculable, discrete and commensurable to economic value. While clean water and carbon sequestration are feasible of being commodified, scenic or landscape beauty, or even biodiversity, precludes any possibility of defining commensurable values, as both services are dependent on extremely complicated interaction of social, physical and biological factors, rendering them very difficult if not impossible to be assigned a discrete financial value (Muradian et al., 2010). And even in the case of carbon sequestration, the PSA program has been questioned as there are differences between local experts regarding what is the actual sequestration capacity of forests of different species and ages (ITCR expert on forestry, interview, April 10th, 2014). Indeed, up to 2016, Costa Rica did not have an agreeable standard for calculating carbon sequestered due to the variegation in information offered by forestry maps (REDD+ Strategy consultant, interview, August 17th 2014).

Finally, the directedness of the environmental service is questionable. Intermediary organizations are frequently allowed with substantial influence in the execution of the PSA. As demand for these contracts grow, FONAFIFO gains a considerable power in determining which sellers of environmental services may be considered or not (de Camino et al., 2001). FONAFIFO defines in no small measure, under political pressures put over the program by other entities such as MINAE, SINAC and the more conservation-minded civil society organizations, whom have push the program towards the protection of more biodiversity-rich and hydrologically-important forests; rural development agencies (such as the Agrarian Development Institute and MAG), whom pressure the program into becoming a tool for combating rural poverty, thereby fostering it to become a supplementary aid for poor farmers; and IFOs (such as the WB) whom have sponsored for it to both become a more business-oriented environmental tool, as well as making it more inclusive of some critical sectors, such as indigenous communities (Vaas, 2013). Indeed, one of the most noticeable political features of the PSA program both in the context of the World Bank-financed Ecomercados I and II projects and, currently with the FCPF-backed REDD+ strategy, is that it has attempted to gain more political stability in the context of these continuous pressures, by diversifying the stakeholders to which it caters. As I will show on chapters 6 and 7, the PSA program was considerably expanded to include forests at indigenous territories and has been expanding in order to offer alternatives to peasant farmers as well since the implementation of the first Ecomercados loan in 2003 (FONAFIFO, 2013). Moreover, the PSA program has also been open to consider alternative forms of contract to account for agroforestry schemes in the context of REDD+ (Porras, 2010).

Despite all of these contradictions facing the PSA program and also other buffer zone-oriented policies in Costa Rica, there are ongoing attempts towards solidifying the financial link between forests and

carbon. The National Strategy for Climate Change and the National Forestry Development Plan 2011-2020 constitute a fairly clear attempt of the Costa Rican state to secure its forest resources through a deeper integration of forests within the circulation of capitalist finance. The PNDF is the most important strategic instrument for forestry policy planning in Costa Rica. In its 2011 iteration, the objective for policy planning is to *"maintain and sustainably augment the country's forest cover through the efficient valorization of forests (…) through guarantees of juridical security, a clear land tenure regime and the right of forest owners to use their private property to produce goods and services necessary for the inhabitant's quality of life"* (MINAET, 2011: 11). To accomplish this, the PNDF defines a number of specific policies to be developed over the course of the current decade, under the challenge of moving forward from a forest policy that is separate from productive necessities, to one that integrates them fully:

> "The greatest challenge is to move forward from an advanced policy of conservation of natural resources and environmental protection, which has often been seen as disarticulated from economic and social policies; towards an integrated approach of sustainability, in which prosperity is built from the talent of the people and the environmental wealth. Before the dichotomy of preserving or conserving, we need to adopt a model in which environmental protection, the intelligent use of natural resources, economic development and job creation reinforce each other mutually." (MINAE, 2011: 16).

Much like the 1987 USAID Strategy and the 1993 World Bank Review argued, for the PNDF the biggest problem that needs to be surpassed in order to deal with this challenge is the current de-valorization of the forest vis-à-vis other productive alternatives in rural areas (agriculture, tourism and urban growth). This in turn, is considered to be the result of the lack of competitiveness of the wood production value chain, which has gradually lost its productivity and sustainability. Indeed, the Plan argues that these problems are fairly noticeable in the 1) low rate of reforestation, 2) the presence of continuous deforestation, 3) the closure of critically important forest industries, 4) constant claims from the forestry sector of more government support, 5) the lack of competitiveness of forest resources vis-à-vis other alternative productive materials, particularly in the context of the construction sector. While useful to maintain over 300.000 hectares of forests over time, the PNDF considers that the sources of income for the forestry sector through FONAFIFO and the PSA are limited to maintain an adequate forest cover and that more resources are required to diminish deforestation and lead to a better supply of forest plantations and the wider forestry commodity chain.

In this context, the Plan argues that there is need of new projects that may guarantee a continuous and predictable financing for both the public institutions in charge of conserving forests in the context of protected areas, but to the private sector in order to expand forest cover

through natural regeneration, new forest plantations and agroforestry systems. In this context, climate change is seen as an opportunity for new forms of funding these credits through a deeper financialization of forests through carbon. Being developed alongside the PNDF, the ENCC delineates the main issues of policy action under the rubric that *"the decarbonization of the economy constitutes an excellent opportunity for competitive sustainable development and attraction of investment and financial resources"* (MINAET, 2009: 46). The hallmark of this Strategy is its pledge to abate the country's greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere through policy action in forests, industry and private consumption, guaranteeing national carbon neutrality by 2021. At the forestry level, this is supposed to be accomplished through four policy actions: 1) the development of new economic and financial stimulus for reforestation, particularly in buffer zones and biological corridors around national parks, 2) the promotion of agroforestry systems, 3) the expansion of the PSA in order to include efforts for human-directed natural regeneration of forests (i.e.: plantations and productive-oriented reforestation) and 4) devising stimulus for avoided deforestation through the integration to global initiatives such as REDD+ (MINAET, 2011). Alongside these measures and as the lynchpin of the entire Strategy, the state has proposed the creation of a voluntary carbon market through the financial consolidation of the PSA using REDD+ resources, the establishment of new clean development mechanisms under the context of the Kyoto Protocol and the introduction of an eco-labelling mechanism dubbed C-Neutral for the local market, which is supposed to become a national branding of Costa Rican production as being neutral to climate change.

While it is too early to revise on the effects of these policies as some have not reached the implementation stage (e.g.: REDD+), it is clear that the current efforts towards the promotion of the country as a carbon neutral state are the last stage in a wider process of guaranteeing the protection of forests through linking them to capital accumulation and financialization. While in the past, USAID contemplated this financialization through the use of sustainable management techniques and subsidies designed to foster forestry as a potentially profitable trade industry in the context of implementation of trade diversification, and later on the World Bank revised these policies into developing PES as the means of financializing forests through the creation of commodified and financialized derivatives like the PSA; today, the Costa Rican state is following on this tendency by promoting a deeper financialization of forests through its exclusive linkages to carbon economies. By centering PSA as a means of promoting climate change abatement, the PNDF and the ENCC are promoting the value of carbon abatement as the key environmental service financed by the PSA, thereby relinquishing the importance of the other, this in turn entails a new valorization of forests.

4.4. Conclusion

All in all, this history shows how there has been a historical governmental trend towards providing environmental protection through financializing or commodifying the very natural resources that are to be conserved. The exposure of conserved resources to accumulation originates in the precepts of the neoliberal adjustment priorities, particularly those regarding the need of dealing with natural resource security problems without compromising macroeconomic stabilization. Following on the same road as the new outward-oriented economic model for Costa Rica, the new environmental policies for forest conservation have been determined by policy diversification within a narrow mentality of market imperatives and the introduction of particular forms of territorialization of resources in order to fulfill the obligations of new calculations and forms of optimization. This of course is completely coherent with recent arguments regarding accumulation by conservation, that is, arguments about how new forms of conservation have been drawn along market-based lines of efficiency, optimization and commodification, despite being driven by the very same contradictions that spur their appearance (see Buscher and Fletcher, 2015).

This brief account of the Costa Rican government conservation policies argues that the current conservation-development endeavors based upon the green economy originate in governmental imperatives of securing control of resources and population, to face the economic unbalances of public debt and international threats from abroad. Yet, it also shows that there are some areas around which consensus has not been necessarily reached. Indeed, following on the work of Fletcher and Breitling (2012) it is clear that a market vision has not been fully realized through the PSA, nor with respect the ongoing ENCC, PNDF and REDD+. As I will show in chapters 7 and 8, FONAFIFO has been forced to separate from the idealized institutions of free-market governance in developing the PSA in the context of the indigenous territories studied here. These authors speculate about the reasons behind these difficulties at the national level, discussing on problems with the overall cost effectiveness of the program in a middle-income country with a previous presence of a well-managed system of protected areas. While it is difficult to ascertain the reasons behind this tension, it is possible to recognize some of them through the manner in which the green economy has been territorialized in the Talamancan territories.

In the following chapters, I will delve deeper on the effects of these trends in conservation, capitalist accumulation, territorialization and state formation in the context of the Bribri and Cabécar indigenous peoples and their political struggles with the Costa Rican state. I will bring these issues to orbit around a discussion of neoliberal multiculturalism. Following Ong (2006), if states operate by conceding and abrogating rights to benefit from the resources over which these have sovereignty, what does this

process of "green economy" state formation involves for the Bribri or the Cabécar, living at the edge of the Costa Rican state? Indeed, not only these conservation policies have been developed thinking in the discrete territorial formations occupied by these populations and not reflective of their own territorialities (e.g.: the buffer zone), but these have been determined in a context marked by ongoing tensions between political activism from these indigenous groups and the existing neoliberal technocratic approaches for natural resource management. The rest of this dissertation will delve deeper into the institutional cracks produced by this tension as SAF, PES, REDD+ and PA co-management allow some leeway for dealing with issues of greater interest of the Bribri and the Cabécar, than simply conservation, such as social welfare, poverty alleviation, cultural integration and political development.

5 Environmental governance and the 'passive frontier' thesis

> "It is possible to argue that the Caribbean sector of La Amistad International Park constitutes a passive frontier, and that the Pacific sector has an active frontier, which is why both frontiers demand a different treatment." (MINAET et al., 2012: 45).

Chapter 3 showed how state territorialization, exploitation and violent dispossession of lands and resources have been three key defining processes of the history between the Costa Rican state and its indigenous populations, particularly those that inhabit the Talamanca Valley. The chapter showed how these processes were central to the formation of the Costa Rican state and the consolidation of colonial mercantilism, and later on, agrarian capitalism. Finally, that chapter showed how these asymmetrical processes remained prevalent at the time new legal systems and forms of political governance were established with the objective of protecting indigenous rights. Overall, the section was meant to show that there has been a historical tendency of using state policy in order to legitimate the rule and development objectives of a mestizo majority vis-à-vis the material and cultural practices of indigenous peoples, even in cases in which said policies were supposedly meant to liberate them. This chapter follows on these ideas, by understanding this historical practice not as a feature of an agro-export political economy of the past, but also of the reality prevalent in the political economy of forest and biodiversity conservation of today.

In this regard, this chapter begins by explaining the legal outcome and institutionalization of the long-standing struggle by Costa Rican indigenous populations for their right to political recognition, including their demands for political autonomy and sovereignty over access, use and benefit from natural resources present in their lands. This fight has undoubtedly resulted in some victories for the indigenous populations, represented in the fact that there are legal dispositions that defend, to some extent, their political autonomy and their influence over state decisions regarding use of natural resources in their reserves. Yet, in practice, these provisions have also allowed the state to exercise important power and influence over their local politics, as well. As it will be shown here, the authority to regulate land uses can and is influenced greatly by the state, thereby impeding the Bribri and Cabécar to exercise true self-determination and autonomous governance (see PEN, 2011; Chacón Castro, 1999; Montero Vargas, 2002). In this sense, historical asymmetries defining the relationship between indigenous populations and the Costa Rican state remain prevalent, especially with regards to critical

governance areas such as natural resource management and environmental conservation.

This will be demonstrated in this section by exploring the manner in which restrictive forest and biodiversity conservation policies are being implemented by state environmental authorities through La Amistad International Park (PILA) and La Amistad Biosphere Reserve (RBLA) through actions that sometimes involve the indigenous local governments as well. To do this, this chapter will explain how PILA was created following different political and environmental objectives than those of the indigenous reserves. Indeed, PILA was created through an international cooperation project between Costa Rica and Panama in order to guard the shared landscape of the Talamanca Mountain Range, by protecting forests and wildlife from encroachment by mestizo farmers in the Southern Pacific region of both countries, and safeguarding water source of strategic importance for hydroelectric power generation. Protection of indigenous culture was never an objective behind the creation of this transfrontier protected area. Yet, being developed in a historical context of a paradigm shift in international conservation politics in which openings were made in favor of allowing indigenous sustainable uses of ecosystems, pressures existed for environmental authorities to find a way of involving the adjacent and highly-forested indigenous reserves that existed around PILA as buffer zones of a much larger RBLA, including the TBIR and TCIR.

The task has not been easy for environmental authorities as the establishment of PILA in the 1970s was bound to create some resentment from the Bribri and Cabécar peoples claimed lands used for creating the park. This includes Namawoki, a small section of PILA, that exists in the middle of the TBIR and separate from the main body of the park, and that is currently inhabited by a few Bribris. Despite the existence of an informal alliance between the Talamancan indigenous local governments and state and non-state conservation organizations, there is a history of contestation fueled by overlapping territorial claims that reflect upon: 1) the current conflicts over the rights to engage in traditional biodiversity and forest uses, enactment of which has been deliberately left in a legal limbo in favor of state conservation priorities; and 2) periodic political struggles over the lack of means of consultation of indigenous people for land use and environmental decision-making by park authorities. This situation will be exemplified by characterizing the manner in which park authorities seem to sideline indigenous authorities in co-management processes, as well as in evidence of political violence brought upon the Bribri and the Cabécar peoples living nearby the Namowoki sector regarding access to traditional forest uses.

With that said, this chapter will also explain why there are incentives for state conservation agencies and NGOs to approach environmental governance in a less conflictive manner. Not only do pressures exist from funding agencies to include the Bribri and Cabécar

into environmental management schemes, but local indigenous authorities are also in a reasonable bargaining position to demand their inclusion as well. Indeed, the political position of the Talamancans is strengthened by the fact that: 1) natural resources at TBIR and TCIR are considered to be well-protected, even if conservationists constantly acknowledge the potential threats to these in the future due to indigenous population growth and wider economic integration; and 2) Talamancan peoples' property over their territories is not being actively compromised by other actors (e.g.: mestizo farmers, transnational corporations, other state agencies, etc), thereby not requiring the Bribri and the Cabécar to join conservation as a means of solidifying territorial claims. The outcome of this political situation has been the idea of the "passive frontier", a policy notion of state conservation agencies that recognizes that while there may be ongoing socioeconomic and demographic processes that could threaten natural resources at PILA in the future, actual environmental degradation has been limited so far thereby meriting other forms of interaction different than the use of forceful fences-and-fines territorial approaches. As the PILA Park Management Plan of 2012 argues:

> "(…) is possible to strengthen a good synergic relationship between this wildlife protected area, the other protected areas and the indigenous territories. This may be a policy based on prevention, conservation and sustainable development (...such as…) green seal certifications for banana, plantain and coffee production and also environmental services and tourism in the area." (MINAET et al., 2012: 66).

The "passive frontier" thesis lies at the core of almost all of the recent state- or NGO-led conservation-development interventions to the Talamanca Valley and its popularity is almost self-explanatory. Based on the recognition of a long history of political and economic abandonment of this environmentally-rich frontier region of Costa Rica, it is easy to attain political support through a discourse (no matter how fictitious it may be) that both claim to defend local biodiversity without the use of political violence, while offering its indigenous inhabitants a chance to "catch-up" to development. It is a tactic not unheard of as plenty of other protected areas have often been the object of discourses that understands them as mechanisms to undo central state negligence, in order to recognize and empower the cultural and economic characteristics of indigenous territories (see Sale, 1985; Alexander, 1990; Arias and Nations, 1992; Fall, 1999; 2003; Wolmer, 2003). It even becomes a passionate discourse for the defense of decentralized environmental governance structures hinged upon the empowerment of indigenous populations as guardians of these biological regions, despite discursively redefining them, their practices and lands as "new" subjects, that could be much more "beneficial" to said conservation efforts. However, as this dissertation will show in this and the following chapters, the re-forging of existing socio-geographical spaces through this "passive frontier" thesis is not a simple task. Indeed, its effectiveness hinges upon the political

interplay, material processes and discursive practices that take place in a completely separate territorial form – the Bribri and the Cabécar Indigenous Reserves – and which are dependent of a long history that affect the aforementioned circumstances.

5.1. Indigenous politics in Costa Rica

Legally, in Costa Rica, indigenous peoples seem to inhabit in a "zone of indistinction"[1], whereby rights validated through various pieces of legislation – including an Indigenous Law and ILO Convention 169 – are often times set aside and its execution suspended by state authorities through political fiat. This is manifested in the form of a legal, political and bureaucratic framework that deliberately misrecognizes and omits cultural and racial differences and rights of the indigenous communities with regards to the needs of dominant mestizo population, while rhetorically embracing these identities and the multicultural nature of the nation-state. Furthermore, this zone of indistinction seems to function as a political mechanism whereby the state is given the authority to define what is to be considered as legally and politically viable for indigenous populations often times through the effective negation of the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination with regards to the legal and political principles through which their lands, and their access and use of natural resources should be governed.

Historically, politico-legal relations between the Costa Rican state and indigenous peoples were defined by omission. While there were a couple of legal dispositions recognizing the existence of indigenous peoples and their position as citizens of the country prior to 1939, these were never enforced effectively. During the 19th and most of the 20th Centuries, political institutions continuously disregarded their land rights, property systems, cultural practices or even their very existence as members of the nation-state. On the contrary, as I have been shown in chapter 3, their lands were automatically transformed into "*baldíos*" (which is a term in Spanish for "empty lands"), and indigenous populations were swiftly dispossessed of them for productive goals or as a means to reinforce claims towards national sovereignty. This situation changed with the promulgation of the 1977 Indigenous Law, as well as several other legal dispositions, which carved out the 24 Indigenous Reservations that currently exist in the country – including the ones in which this thesis focuses. Moreover, the creation of the Constitutional Court in 1989 and the ratification of ILO Convention 169 led to the formation of a more robust legal system that recognizes, at least discursively, their cultural and political rights.

Nevertheless, this indigenous legal framework is rife with contradictions and opportunities for unilateral bureaucratic interpretation by government authorities when it comes to being implemented. Take for example the aforementioned Indigenous Law. Far from being a well-

structured piece of legislation, this legal document is imbued with dispositions that offer considerable leeway to interpretation favorable for state authorities. Article 5 of the Law states that "*indigenous reserves should be ruled by the indigenous peoples following their communal traditional structures*", a political right also reaffirmed by Convention 169. Yet, in practice, and through interpretation by executive decree, the Costa Rican state has unilaterally defined the local integral development associations (ADI) as the sole means of territorial representation of these populations and the actual legal owners of the land that indigenous populations inhabit. Clearly, ADIs are not traditional structures in any way, nor do they share any resemblance with other political structures developed by the Bribri and the Cabécar over time, a reality that is recognized often by local political leaders in the Reserves (Candela et al., 2007). On the contrary, ADIs were public non-state entities, created under the venue of the central state, in order to coordinate government policy in frontier regions during the 1960s and 1970s (DINADECO, 1983). At their original inception, ADIs were supposed to function as "transmission belts" that could mobilize national policies of agricultural modernization and development (as conceived in the context of the U.S.-backed Alliance for Progress Program[2]), into isolated rural areas (Rivera Araya, 1998). In other words, these were originally conceived as proxies that localized state power, and as such, were (and continue to be) subject to national laws and dependent of financial resources provided by the central state, while allowing the latter to oversee their operation, even to the point of holding the legal power to intervene, reorganize or disband them if deemed necessary.

Of course, this is not to say that local ADIs are just simple "pawns" subservient to state power in the Indigenous Reserves. On the contrary, there have been many occasions in which these local organizations have been the center of political resistance to government agendas, such as in a later stage of the struggles against RECOPE's oil explorations of the early 1980s and Harken and Mallon Oil exploration in the coastlines in the early 2000s.[3] Indeed, many indigenous leaders do recognize the potential of these organizations to be mechanisms for guiding political struggles of the Bribri and the Cabécar vis-à-vis the state (Méndez Benavides, 2014). But with all of this said, one cannot deny that ADIs do work in a wider political reality determined by power asymmetries, whereby the central state does reserves itself the power to allocate key financial resources for them to organize and act accordingly to policy (Candela et al., 2007). Indeed, due to the fact that ADIs are in no legal position to levy taxes upon the local dwellers of the Reserves, nor have any other form of gathering the financial resources needed to mobilize their own development strategies, they are made structurally dependent of resources provided by other sources, namely the central state through the National Directorate for Communal Development (DINADECO) or other state agency with the legal power to provide resources to these organizations; or alternatively,

NGO- or IFO-financed projects in the region. And given that both types of resources available generally come through projects whereby ADIs have rarely had any say on initial planning and formulation (see Candela et al., 2007), this means that these organizations are set to have a limited degree of actual political autonomy in practice.

Local governance is but one of the ways in which the Costa Rican state systematically disregards the implementation of the indigenous law, and more will be said about this in the following chapters as I engage with the specific projects studied for this dissertation. Yet, it is relevant to say that there are plenty of other forms in which this zone of indistinction becomes manifested. Costa Rican civil law fails to recognize communal property, thereby impeding indigenous authorities and grassroots organizations to ask for credits for their own locally-organized and autonomous development projects (Guevara Berger, 2000). Judicial entities often fail to recognize the presence of indigenous legal orderings, in spite of the implied rhetorical adoption of the pre-constitutional thesis (Guevara Víquez and Rodríguez Aguilar, 2006). Educational policies implemented in the territories rarely account for multicultural education, even though articles of the 1977 Indigenous Law and various constitutional sentences have deemed otherwise (Borge, 2012). Political consultation processes are rife with legal vacuums that are often circumvented by political fiat at the expense of indigenous participation (Chacón Castro, 2002). And perhaps, the most critical issue in many indigenous reserves – the Talamancan Bribri and Cabécar excluded, is that the state has not even initiated the process of reclaiming lands from non-indigenous land owners, despite these territories existing for over 40 years (Chacón Castro et al., 1999). Perhaps all of this is best summed up in the following extract from a 1992 constitutional ruling about the legal situation of indigenous peoples (which could still be used to describe current reality):

> "The current legislation does not recognize their own (indigenous) forms of organization, forcing them to organize legally around the Integral Development Associations, or as simple private non-profit associations, thereby imposing them with organization models that are foreign to them. They cannot obtain financial credits because lands are not legally theirs, and because the law considers them inalienable and imprescriptible. And there are no juridical procedures designed to grant guarantees over communal property. Moreover, they claim that the institutions that were created by law in order to defend them, are not theirs, but of the state." (Constitutional Court, ruling 3003-1992, October, 1992).

For the purposes of this dissertation, it is important to take a look at how this "zone of indistinction" manifests itself with regards to the politico-legal framework governing the access to and use of natural resources in the Indigenous Reserves. Indeed, the legal framework has a fair share of ambiguities and contradicting pieces of legislation regulating

indigenous and non-indigenous access, use and exploitation of natural resources. For starters, while article 15 of Convention 169 demands the protection of "*the right of these (indigenous) peoples to participate in the use, administration and conservation of these resources*", article 7 of the Indigenous Law removes any type of indigenous participation from key decision-making with regards to forests as it: 1) forces indigenous territories to leave forest cover unaltered in order to guard the hydrological equilibria of river basins, 2) demands forest uses to be organized exclusively by state institutions and 3) determines that only the state can name park rangers for the protection of these forests. The article does require the state to look for prior authorization of CONAI, but as seen in the previous chapter, this is an institution that has a long history of supplanting indigenous political will in favor of state territorialities (also see Chacón Castro and Guevara Berger, 1992; Chacón Castro, 2002; Villalobos and Borge, 1998). Perhaps the only environmental decision-making process whereby the Indigenous Law states that there should be obligatory consultation with the locals has to do with mineral resources found in the subsoil of the Reserves, which are considered "patrimony of the state and indigenous communities" (article 6). But, even so, this article is rarely followed up by the state in practice as it is considered to be lacking in applicability, because of incompatibilities with the Mining Code (PGR, 2006).

Between 1977 and 1996, when the Forestry Law entered in effect, indigenous reserves were subjected to much more stringent environmental measures than any other forested land tenure in the country (except, perhaps the strictest protected areas), given that this legal standing had allowed for complete bans on land use changes involving forest cover. Yet, afterwards, these dispositions have continued to be very strict. Formally, the 1996 Forestry Law does not contemplate the existence of communal land tenure such as present in the indigenous reserves, as it only considers the existence of public and private property. Whereas the ADIs are the legal owners of the Reserves, land is internally distributed in the form of either individual, familiar or communal plots, and therefore, property is much more difficult to track on the field, as there appears to be no formal land registries or cadastral plans. This situation forced the central state to regulate forest uses through an executive decree on the Guidelines for Forest Use at Indigenous Reserves since 1995. The Guidelines defined a stringent limit to tree felling in the Reserves of three trees per hectare, per person, with an annual limit of 9 trees in total. Moreover, if trees are felled, the Guidelines demanded that they should be exclusively used locally and not to be traded with people outside of the territory. It was a legal measure clearly defined to establish a strong control over indigenous natural resource uses, surpassing any type of state limitations made over private forests and also, created without any type of indigenous mediation or participation (PGR, 2016). Indeed, the Guidelines have produced considerable conflicts for the Talamancans and have been contested continuously (more about this in the following

section), to the point that it has been subjected to several constitutional rulings as organized indigenous groups in Talamanca and elsewhere have made efforts to suspend its execution.

Another way in which the legal ambiguities that form this state of exception are manifested has to do with traditional uses of resources, given that in Costa Rica, as the very Management Plan of PILA states: *"(t)here is no legal definition of 'traditional use'"* (MINAET et al., 2012: 116). Article 14 of Convention 169 does contemplate that: *"measures shall be taken in appropriate cases to safeguard the right of the peoples concerned to use lands not exclusively occupied by them, but to which they have traditionally had access for their subsistence and traditional activities"*, meaning that such behavior should be permitted, which in the case of the Bribri and the Cabécar it may entail practices of extraction of flora from forests for medicinal and religious purposes, willful intervention of forested areas for controlling plagues and cultivation of orchards and agroforestry systems, as well as hunting and fishing (see Borge and Castillo, 1997). Yet, in practice, the extent of these activities is closely regulated by state authorities, governing from their own self-benefitting rules of interpretation, whereby laws meant for the general population can be implemented here, such as the Conservation of Wildlife Act or the Biodiversity Act, which entail considerable fines for these practices, and on occasions, even jail sentences.

In synthesis, while the Costa Rican legal system has managed to evolve by introducing new legislation that allows for the political recognition of its indigenous communities, it still has not been able to abolish the zone of indistinction by which indigenous peoples are governed by omission or contradiction. Indeed, this approach to indigenous affairs and policies seems to be directed at erasing the longstanding political traditions that tied them to the land that it is now considered as the indigenous reserve. While each of the ethnic groups still have some remnants of their own governance structures, and political visions of their territories that are central for land management, stewardship and consultation, such traditions and perspectives are not even considered by state authorities as the manner in which indigenous communities should govern and manage themselves. In turn, the emphasis has been given to imposing particular forms of political authority, which historically have operated as unquestionable channels of state influence and aid dependence. In the following section, the intention is to show how this wider politico-legal context also impinges on indigenous livelihoods by looking at the role of conservation policy within this zone of indistinction.

5.2. Historical origins of La Amistad International Park and La Amistad Biosphere Reserve

Different from other territorial formations in the Talamancan region, historical information on the origins of PILA is very scarce and difficult to track down, especially from the side of indigenous peoples.[4]. With this said, my research allows me to conclude that the park was created in the backdrop of two processes: one related to the initial efforts of the Costa Rican state to counter deforestation as a result of encroaching of crop areas, plantations and pastures in forested lands during the 1970s (Boza, 2012); and the other has to do with renewed efforts to foster international cooperation and development in Central America. The history behind the establishment of the first state-mandated protected areas has been well documented from a conservationist point of view by Evans (1999), Fournier (1991) and more recently, by Boza (2012). Indeed, these authors agree that the creation of PILA followed systematic efforts taken by the Costa Rican state to reduce forest cover loss, by declaring certain frontiers of agricultural expansion as protected areas. This process was supported all along by international cooperation and a vibrant conservation policy community which fostered considerable governmental intervention in regulating forest uses (Zimmerer, 2011).

Yet, it is also relevant to say that PILA, in particular, was also the result of wider efforts by the Central American region of promoting international cooperation. Indeed, PILA was planned first in the context of the First Central American Meeting on the Conservation of Natural and Cultural Resources in 1974 (Matul Romero, 2007). Being an international meeting developed in the context of the recently created Man and the Biosphere Program of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), environmental conservation became a priority of the negotiation agenda. There already existed a plan amongst Costa Rican state authorities of creating a national protected area covering a significant section of the Talamanca Mountain Range (Boza, 2012). This idea was supported and expanded by the Panamanian government that suggested a similar area be created in their territory. As a result the Costa Rican side of the protected area – originally dubbed Talamanca Forest Reserve – was transformed into an international protected area named La Amistad (Spanish for "friendship"), with the intent of being *"a symbolic gesture of the excellent relations of friendship and fraternity between the two governments, of the high scientific and ecological value of the region and the necessity of conserving and preserving the area's flora and fauna"* (Bilateral Agreement for the Creation of PILA, 1978).

Following a joint agreement between both governments, the recently created Costa Rican National Park Service (SPN) began developing the initial planning documents alongside Panamanian authorities, with the funding of UNESCO. The Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) produced the formal

version of the management plan for the Costa Rican side of the park in 1981, leading to its formal determination as a Heritage Site in 1982. Panama did not delineate, nor created its side of the park until 1988, an issue which reinforced the belief amongst institutional actors in Costa Rica that the park should be governed as two different and separate parts, divided by the national boundary; a reality that is prevalent to this day (Panama former head of Protected Areas Directorate, personal interview, December 5th, 2014). Although being the first transfrontier protected area in Central America and one of the first actions of binational cooperation between Costa Rica and Panama, PILA has never operated as a single internationally managed project. This is due to the desire of each state to retain their autonomy regarding territorial management practices. As a result, there is a significant lack of coordination which is materialized today in the fact that MINAE and the Panamanian National Authority of the Environment (ANAM) have different legal frameworks and management plans to orient actions in the protected area. Indeed, even the reports that both countries need to present at UNESCO as a part of the commitments related to the day-to-day operation of RBLA are not produced in a binationally, but result from the independent work by each country (MIDEPLAN, 2011).[5]

For Costa Rica, the agenda of rapid territorial expansion of protected areas came to an end with PILA. While newer protected areas were created afterwards and some expansions did take place, these were very limited. As the then director of SPN stated with the creation of PILA: *"we are moving out of the decade of declaration and into a period of consolidation and refined management of the parks"* (Boza, cited in Tico Times, 15 October 1982). While the park was created following quite explicit scientific and biological determinants, one cannot deny the importance of other much more productive goals as well. Indeed, the executive decree that created the park openly stated that it was justified due to its *"extraordinary hydroelectric potential, given its abrupt topography and rainy weather"*. This energy potential was probably a priority at the time, as the Costa Rican Electricity Institute (ICE) – the state agency with the responsibilities of manage electricity generation in the country – was contemplating to develop a massive hydroelectric project in the area, by damming the Sixaola River and creating a reservoir that would have flooded the entire surface of the Talamanca Valley lowlands (Villalobos and Borge, 1998). At the time, it was considered that the Sixaola River was capable of producing up to 17% of the energy consumption of the country in 1978 (see Afonso, 1978). The project has since been abandoned by ICE.

PILA was created almost without a budget as "*there were no facilities, nor tents or sleeping bags, medicines or horses. Everything had to be built from the ground up and literally create the park from the ground*" (former PILA administrator, personal interview, May 2nd, 2014). In Costa Rica, the park is currently administered by two different offices of SINAC: Regional Office for La Amistad-Pacifico Conservation Area (ACLAP), which

handles the side of the park facing towards the southern Pacific region and the Regional Office for La Amistad-Caribe (ACLAC), which handles the Caribbean side. Because of lack of accessibility and funding, to this day, ACLAC does not have a single permanent office in the park grounds proper. It is relevant to highlight this "absenteeism" in the state approach towards PILA, given that it is the object of considerable criticism by the Bribri and the Cabécar. The reason behind this is that PILA as such was created over land that is either inhabited by some indigenous communities (such as in the Namawoki sector) or that is generally considered by the Talamancan indigenous peoples as part of their own cultural and religious heritage. Indeed, they claim that some of the mountains covered by PILA, have special cultural meanings, especially, mount Kamuk, which is considered to be the original place where Sibö sowed the cacao seeds from which the *ditsewö* (the Bribri and Cabécar, though literally, "the people") emerged (*awa* from Meleruk, interview, March 4th, 2014). Also important is the fact that being lands which the Bribri and Cabécar used to utilize as hunting grounds, fishing and trading with the Bribri and the Cabécars in the Pacific side of the Talamancan Mountain Range, they should be the legal owners of these lands. It must be added that one reason why PILA was so easily carved out with so little financial cost to the state, despite of its massive size, is that the park was considered to be on unclaimed *baldíos* by ITCO, thereby considered to be legal property of the state following the dispositions of 1839 and 1939 that I discussed in the third chapter. All of these issues, combined with the aforementioned absenteeism, tend to anger the locals as they considered these to be land of little significance for the state, whereby for them it is, quite literally, the origin of life itself.

5.3. The 'passive frontier' thesis

The initial management approach taken by both Costa Rican and Panamanian state authorities regarding PILA followed a fences-and-fines orientation (Candanedo Díaz, 2010). Authorities interviewed for this research were often reluctant and elusive of being interviewed about earlier implementation of conservation policies in the area, but from the little data obtained, it seems that the management approach entailed excluding local peasants and indigenous peoples from all park management decision-making process, while also establishing measures to limit uses of resources by them at both the Southern Pacific and Caribbean sides of the protected area (see also Villalobos and Borge, 1998; Wo-Ching, 2011).

Indigenous leaders did recognize that there were no eviction processes in the Talamanca Valley, though they did complain about the implementation of policies for controlling forest and wildlife uses on the buffer zone, particularly after the biosphere reserve was created in 1990. The lack of enactment of these eviction processes in Talamanca was probably the result of the fact that the actual limits of the park are remote

and difficult to access with the existent infrastructure, thereby not requiring the need of maintaining a permanent presence in the park proper (former PILA administrator, interview, May 2nd, 2014 and September 28th, 2014). Indeed, PILA has no administrative office within the bounds of the Caribbean sector, as this is located in Suretka within the administrative complex of the ADITIBRI. This evidence contrasts with the Pacific sector of PILA, where park ranger offices are located in Pittier and Biolley at the boundary of the park, with park rangers and officials often engaging in local patrolling of the the area to avoid potential encroachment by local peasants (Candanedo Díaz, 2010). Indeed, in the Southern Pacific side of PILA, Schelhas and Pfeffer (2008) calculate local evictions to be at least of about 3.000 hectares and 150 landholdings. Moreover, they also argue that compensations for these lands were considered to be inadequate by the former peasant settlers, and therefore, continue to be the reason for ongoing resentment.

Of course, this comparison between the situation in the Southern Pacific and the Caribbean sides of PILA is not to imply that there is no conflict or contestation present in the Caribbean sector with regards to top-down conservation measures. Indeed, conflicts exist regarding the implementation of measures and its negative effects upon local livelihoods and with regards to the governance of areas inhabited by indigenous peoples in which PILA overlaps. More on these conflicts will be discussed in the section immediately following this one, but for now it is relevant to acknowledge that the management approach used at both sides of the park differs significantly, event to the point of becoming two completely management imaginaries and philosophies for the park authorities involved. It is critical to understand the difference between these management philosophies as both have important implications regarding the adoption of new forms of conservation implemented after the creation of LABR in the 1990s.

The 1990s was a decade of substantial change in Costa Rican conservation governance. The promulgation of the 1996 Forestry Law and the 1998 Law on Biodiversity entail a general overhaul of the bureaucracy administering protected areas, moving from a centralized system towards a decentralized one (Isla, 2015). The SPN was transformed into the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC), a decentralized agency operating through various semi-autonomously managed regional offices in charge of administering protected areas in the sector of their purview, as well as in charge of handling regular forestry and wildlife use controls in each outside of PA boundaries (Evans, 1999). Alongside this process, the state also began promoting much more complex protected areas featuring zones for sustainable development practices beyond exclusive conservation (such as wildlife refuges, wetlands and marine management areas, see table 3) as well as co-management practices in those places in which protected areas were directly adjacent to local communities and conflicts over resource management existed (Campbell, 2002).

Table 3. Categories of protected areas according to Costa Rican environmental legislation

Category	Characteristics	Property regime
Absolute biological reserves	Protected areas created by law or executive decree. Their objective is to promote strict conservation of natural ecosystems	Absolute biological reserves can only be created in public lands.
National and international parks	Protected areas created by law. Their objective is to promote strict conservation of natural ecosystem. Recreational and tourism uses are admitted	National parks can only be created in public lands.
National wildlife refuges	Protected areas created by law or executive decree. Their objective is to promote conservation or sustainable management of ecosystem or specific species. Recreational uses, tourism and other forms of sustainable management are permitted	National wildlife refuges can be created either in public or private lands
Forestry reserves	Protected areas created by law or executive decree. Their objective is to promote sustainable forestry management. Resource extraction is permitted.	Forestry reserves are established on lands under state-regulated private property
National monuments	Protected areas created by law, executive decree or municipal regulation. Meant to protect places with recognized cultural or natural value. Recreational uses and tourism are permitted.	National monuments are established on public lands.
Wetlands, marine reserves and marine management areas	Protected areas created by law or executive decree. Meant to protect marine and coastal wildlife. Their objective is to guarantee sustainable use of resources in territorial waters and coastlines.	Wetlands can be created in private property. Marine reserves and management areas are established in territorial waters.

Source: Elaboration of the author with data obtained from the Law on Biodiversity (7788) and their regulating bodies.

While PILA was already a Heritage Site and subjected to some degree of interaction with the indigenous populations inhabiting its buffer zone, decisions were made to also make it a biosphere reserve in 1990. According to the Man and the Biosphere Program, a buffer zone is supposed to act as a mechanism that delineates a "core" conservation area from outside land (and societal pressures put upon this land), by

controlling a space that is adjacent to this "core", thereby helping in its protection, that is, a buffer zone (Fall, 2003). Often the management of these buffer zones entails the organization of activities that produce a lower environmental impact, such as organic or shade-grown cultivation, sustainable ecotourism, and other market-oriented conservation instruments (Paasi, 1999).

Table 4. Protected areas in the Sixaola River Basin

Country	Protected area	Management category	Area	Year	Adjacent to TBIR or TCIR?
Costa Rica and Panama	La Amistad International Park	International park and UNESCO World Heritage Site[a/]	400.929 ha (193.929 ha in Costa Rica and 207.000 ha in Panama)	1978	Yes
Costa Rica	Hitoy-Cerere Biologica Reserve	Absolute biological reserve	9.949 ha	1978	Yes
Costa Rica	Gandoca Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge	Wildlife refuge and RAMSAR site[b/]	5.013 ha (terrestrial), 4.436 ha (marine)	1985	No
Panama	San San Pond Sak Wetland	RAMSAR site	16.414 ha	1993	No
Panama	Palo Seco Protection Forest	Forestry reserve[c/]	254.445 ha	1983	No

a/ Designation as a World Heritage Site imples the obligation of the parties to protect and preserve the object. UNESCO monitors on the condition of the site every 6 years as well.

b/ A RAMSAR site is a category given to wetlands deemed to be of international importance, under the Ramsar Convention of 1971. As a protection category, governments must ensure the conservation of these areas, though sustainable development is permitted.

c/ Protection forests in Panama are an environmental management category akin to forestry reserves in Costa Rica.

Source: Elaboration by the author with data provided by SINAC and ANAM.

In turn, this makes activities developed in the core and buffer zones to be extremely limited, particularly if they involve the extraction of protected nature for consumption. Through these means, biosphere reserves are meant to serve three objectives: 1) the conservation of ecosystems of high biodiversity, 2) the promotion of socio-economic human well-being in the buffer zones and 3) the development of new

opportunities for environmental education and research. In that sense, the obvious change that such denomination instills is a major change in direction of management practices from a traditional top-down fortress conservation approach (which may still remain prevalent in some cases) to a more community or participatory oriented one, particularly in the buffer zones.

This is how the aforementioned imaginaries come into play. Different historical geographies have entailed different problematiques and have translated into different management approaches in both sides of PILA, leading to two different theses with regards to how to address these wider changes in conservation policy, especially the transition from PILA to RBLA. In ACLAP, local peasant farmers driven by economic pressures from lowland agro export plantations have been brought next to the boundaries of PILA, and, in some cases have even begun to encroach on the park itself. This dynamic lead park authorities of PILA to refer to the Southern Pacific boundary of the park as an active frontier. As such, while a participatory or sustainable development approach is not discarded in any way, the nature of existing pressures entails an approach based on fences-and-fines and top-down forest management policies, in order to control land uses nearby the Park (MINAET et al., 2012: 64). Whereas, in ACLAC, in the Caribbean side, the frontier is considered to be "passive", that is, the notion that actual conservation action must not be centered on the specific natural resources present within the boundaries of PILA, but in the buffer zones that surround it, given the fact that PILA is remote and inaccessible, and that surrounding indigenous reserves have maintained such a well conserved forest cover over time (MINAET et al., 2012: 66).

The idea of a passive frontier recognizes that while there may be ongoing socioeconomic and demographic processes that could threaten natural resources at PILA in the future, actual environmental degradation has been limited so far. It follows that conservation should not focus solely on the buffer zone using forceful conservation tools (e.g.: active vigilance of resource uses, use of law enforcement to control access or punitive strategies to address illegal resource uses). Alternatively, the passive frontier implies that it: *"(…) is possible to strengthen a good synergic relationship between this wildlife protected area, the other protected areas and the indigenous territories. This may be a policy based on prevention, conservation and sustainable development."* (MINAET et al., 2012: 66). As the current Management Plan of PILA states, the passive frontier thesis implies a general involvement of park authorities into the actual development processes of its buffer zones as a means of protecting forests, which is why attention is drawn to the need of working in and around any other conservation and development initiatives that could allow for the *"absolute conservation of water-producing forests in the Caribbean seaboard"* (MINAET et al., 2012: 67). Indeed, amongst the proposals made within this management document, there are three which are relevant to highlight: 1)

philosophical principles of RBLA must be harmonized with those of conservation of PILA, that is, every other territorial formation governing land management must be put in coherence with the protection of its core area (i.e.: PILA); 2) attention should be given to the means for guaranteeing the sustainable development of the Bribri and the Cabécar, through processes of sustainable agricultural production, payments of environmental services and ecotourism, but also through engaging in mechanisms for shared responsibilities of conservation-oriented buffer zone management (i.e.: the transformation of indigenous reserves into areas for the conservation of nature); and 3) the strategic engagement of PILA with other territorial projects being developed in the region as a means of finding common grounds for cooperation. While these three measures have been developed for PILA's specific management, in reality constitute the very center of almost all state- and NGO-led conservation/development interventions to the Talamanca Valley.

As said before, this passive frontier thesis is completely coherent with popular discourse in favor of landscape conservation approaches. This means that efforts are being made to decentralize environmental governance through the delegation of conservation tasks to local actors, including NGOs and indigenous populations. Of course, this delegation functions through a dominant interpretation of the objectives of indigenous populations being completely coherent with environmental conservation. And therein lies the conflict. While the Costa Rican government apparently did not require evicting the Bribri and the Cabécar in order to create PILA, the creation of the park is considered to be a transgression of indigenous rights nevertheless. The manner and nature of these transgressions differ regarding which of the various conservation-as-development intervention we look at for this thesis, but it is relevant to begin by looking at how top-down mechanisms are employed in that way.

5.4. Perceived effects of top-down conservation practices in the indigenous reserves

5.4.1. Consultation, participation and co-management

The "passive frontier" thesis has been conceived from a paradigmatic shift in the conservation agenda of PILA, mainly from a top-down policy approach based on fortress conservation and maintaining park integrity alone, to one in which ecological viability is dependent on connectivity of PILA with the other protected areas and indigenous reserves surrounding it (MINAET et al., 2012). While existing legislation (presented in the form of the aforementioned state of exception) allows SINAC to impose environmental policy to indigenous reserves, the Management Plan does recognize that Bribri and Cabécar cooperation with government policy is desirable – in recognition of the noticeable lack of financial resources and manpower to actually administer PILA. So, involvement of the

indigenous reserves is relevant for these purposes, which is why one of the main actions of the Plan entail the recognition of shared responsibilities between the main interested parties recognized by the document, namely SINAC, indigenous peoples and the local municipality (MINAET et al., 2012). This is supposed to be done in two different ways. First, by fostering sustainable development activities that could offer alternatives to unsustainable management of forests, land and other natural resources (more about this in chapter 6 and 7); and second, by directly including indigenous organizations – the ADIs in particular – into responsibilities with regards to natural resource management.

In respect to this second form of "shared responsibilities", it is relevant to say that over the past two decades, various forms of co-management practices have appeared at PILA as a result of pressure from the Bribri and Cabécar regarding forest uses, featuring various degrees of success. For starters, since 1999, the previously mentioned Guidelines for Forest Resources at the Indigenous Reserves (DE-27800) do provide for the two local ADIs – ADITIBRI (for the Bribri Reserve) and ADITICA (for the Cabécar Reserve – to handle the distribution and allocation of permits for felling trees and commercializing lumber (Steiner, 2006). Of course, this particular transference of competences from SINAC to the ADIs was somewhat limited as: 1) SINAC did reserve the right to audit and control the activities of the local ADIs regarding the distribution of these permits, and 2) there were considerable limitations to the ADIs regarding where could these permits be granted. For example, article 5 of the Guidelines state that such permits will not be permitted in: patrimonial sites, areas of hydrological resupply, water springs for communal uses, areas where soil management is in effect, endangered species of trees, non-traditional forest products and areas destined for ecotourism. Indeed, by elimination the Guidelines seem to almost limit tree felling to species located within agroforestry systems, which seems to make the policy somewhat biased towards for-profit agricultural systems at the expense of other indigenous forms of production (see chapter 6 for more on this).

With this said, originally, the handling of forestry permits was given the local "*Consejo de Vecinos*" (or Neighborhood Council, i.e.: a decentralized power structure of the ADIs designed to elevate political demands of people from the local townships and hamlets to the ADIs), thereby allowing for a true form of political participation and decentralization of decision-making processes regarding resource management. Yet, this practice was short-lived and eventually eliminated in 2005, as the ADIs transferred permit management to Environmental Units within their main administrative structure, as pro-conservation political leaders at ADITIBRI and ADITICA and SINAC considered that there were ongoing "conflicts of interests" regarding forestry permit allocations at the local level (Candela, 2007). Different than the *Consejos*, the Environmental Units are managed by highly qualified indigenous ADI officials with knowledge on agroforestry and supported by experts

from SINAC (including the PILA administrator) and other organizations (at the time of my fieldwork, a member of the German Embassy was working alongside them in a project to improve permit management practices). While this could be seen positively as control over forest management, this change also means that SINAC has much more influence over the allocation of permits. In contrast, local indigenous demands for a more prominent role as environmental authorities in the Reserves are limited.

Indeed, this dispute over the nature of the conservation agenda and the need to integrate local demands for development and territorial self-determination is reflected in almost every form of co-management structure developed for PILA and the Reserves-as-buffer-zones. An example of this is the Local Forestry Council of Talamanca (CLFT). The CLFT is a consultation body created by the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE) in order to promote the exchange of points of view over environmental legislation between local actors and SINAC, particularly regarding forestry. In the case of the CLFT it integrates various actors including MINAE, the Ministry of Health, the "*Fuerza Pública*" (Public Force, i.e.: the state police and law enforcement agency), some local organizations and the ADIs. The curious part of my involvement in the meetings of this organization was the noticeable difference between representatives regarding the overall goals of intervention. For MINAE, and some of the other organizations the objective of CLFT was to establish a system of control and vigilance over forest resources extraction and trading within the Indigenous Reserves, almost as a first response coordinated system to avoid illegal deforestation. Yet, for the local indigenous leaders, while controlling deforestation was important, the objective of the CLFT was to offer the necessary resources, knowledge and political legitimacy for the ADIs to become the sole authorities over natural resource management within the Reserves.

Indeed, when asked about their impressions regarding park management, indigenous members of the CLFT often expressed feelings of government neglect regarding conservation efforts in the park and its surrounding areas. They claim that there is no nearby offices, personnel or resources dedicated to conserve the park, and that is the Bribri themselves whom need to be administering the rules and regulations given from the MINAE. Furthermore, many questioned the rules used to protect natural resources as they are implemented upon indigenous people, rejecting any type of indigenous knowledge and with little to no participation of indigenous peoples in natural resource conservation practices. As one interviewee stated:

> "The Bribri and Cabécar, we are the ones really managing the park, MINAE comes only to do politics and there is no personnel in this sector. ADITIBRI and ADITICA do the managing for them. The problem is that they do not consult with us when they want to do something. When they go and make proposals on how to remedy the

problems of the park, they assume what we want, and present something back often lacking our point of view" (Neighborhood Council Member, interview, 7th November 2014)

Over the course of several interviews, trust became a major topic of discussion as communities and community organizations were often fairly critical of conservation mechanisms. In the community of Suretka, one participant from ADITIBRI stated that: "*If there are conflicts in the park is not because of us, but of MINAE. They are the ones that should administer the park, but they do not care that much. So, we are the ones that end up managing La Amistad International Park, but, the difference is that there is no pay for us. Is like we are volunteers. Our quarrel with them (MINAE and SINAC) is that even when we do this, they go and give permission to people to take minerals from the park, and from our lands.*" (former ADITIBRI Vice-President, interview, August 12th 2014). Indeed, while the park does rely on indigenous park rangers which are paid by ADITIBRI, there is little presence of MINAE in the area and participatory mechanisms in decision-making structures of the park have not been operative, at least until the development of a new management plan for PILA in 2012.

The new management plan attempted to address some of these issues by finally establishing a semi-permanent office for the park administrator within the indigenous territory, but said office is often closed due to the manager travelling elsewhere continuously. Moreover, co-management practices continue to be extremely limited besides the park rangers program, which is administered following precise rules provided by MINAE and with little intervention or negotiation from the local governance mechanisms. Local and traditional knowledge is not considered in any way by the state institutions and traditional practices often clash with local enforcement activities. During a workshop developed with local leaders regarding perceptions about conservation approaches towards indigenous peoples, an official from ADITIBRI stated: "*There is no office, there are no competent people (…). Their responsibilities of caring for the park are not being fulfilled. At least, the Bribri do know about the importance of medicinal plants and the rest of the resources that you can find in the forest.*" (former ADITIBRI official responsible for Forests and Territorial Management, interview, August 13th 2014).

Many Bribri are waiting and ready for the co-management plan between MINAE and ADITIBRI to be implemented. "*Communities are affected because they cannot use the materials they once used. Since MINAE created the park, it has been very complicated to live here. There have always been people there. They want to strike a deal with MINAE in order to let them use the resources there. But, then again, they were supposed to do that when they discussed the management plan in 2012*" (ADITIBRI Park Ranger, interview, August 15th 2014). However, it is important to say that there are noticeable divergences seen between environmental authorities and indigenous leaders regarding not only the authority to determine whom should be the one controlling natural resource uses, but also with regards

to which are the priorities of control. Indeed, while illegal deforestation is considered as a problem for most indigenous leaders, there are divergences regarding actual control when traditional uses of the forests are involved. In the next sub-section I will discuss on the material effects of these policies on the field.

5.4.2. Local livelihoods and traditional uses

Historically, some of the aforementioned legal vacuums composing what has been dubbed here as the "zone of indistinction", had been taken advantage of by the Costa Rican state in order to mobilize its own conservation agenda, often at the expense of indigenous territorialities. In the specific case of top-down conservation measures (i.e.: direct enforcement of forest, flora and wildlife use limitations), this has been done through the introduction of particular forms of administrative rules to monitor and determine desirable uses by indigenous people.

As said earlier in the chapter, since 1995, the Costa Rican state has developed a set of Guidelines for Forest Uses in Indigenous Reserves, which established a stringent limit to tree felling limiting this practices to three trees per hectare per person with no more than 9 trees in total per person per year. Moreover, if trees are felled, whichever benefit received, whether profitable or not, can only include indigenous peoples and not non-indigenous people from outside of the Indigenous Reserves. It is relevant to say that the establishment and enactment of these measures for forest use control were created without any indigenous mediation and/or participation, leading it to quickly become a source of serious political conflict in the territory (PGR, 2016).

Fieldwork on the effects of these top-down measures of forest and wildlife conservation was done around the towns of Amubre and Kachabri, two towns located near the area in which the Indigenous Reserves overlap with PILA, which is locally known as Namawoki. These meetings were organized with collaboration of a local organization named Talamanca for the Land and the People, whose members are mainly from Meleruk, but that have plenty of continuous contact with the people of these parts. Most of the information was gathered from individual and group interviews and was centered on understanding how does PILA regulations influence local livelihoods, particularly regarding those economic and cultural activities which require access to the forests. This research included the local *Consejo de Vecinos* and also the then Administrator of PILA for the Caribbean sector. Direct work was done with 12 community members, with whom I spent some time in order to understand their daily lives and everyday activities, particularly with regards to forest uses.

Recurrent negative discussion of these top-down PILA regulations was notable during fieldwork and interview evidence was obtained that suggests that forestry and hunting bans are having a direct negative effect upon natural resource uses in both towns. This is despite the fact that the

current PILA Management Plan, the aforementioned forest guidelines and the internal environmental guidelines of ADITIBRI claim to recognize Bribri cultural access and uses of natural resources in protected forests. Indeed, the Management Plan clearly states that indigenous forest traditional uses are permitted, while outlining the necessity of park authorities of engaging the locals from a perspective based on human rights set out by Convention 169 (see SINAC-MINAE, 2012). Of course, there are certain exceptions made clear in the Plan, such as the fact that the actual area for traditional management is quite small, as most of PILA is considered to be for conservation purposes only. But perhaps the most relevant of these restrictions is the fact that shifting agriculture is expressly prohibited in the forests of the Reserves, be these located within the overlapping sections between PILA and the Reserves, at the buffer zone or even communal forests under control of ADITIBRI. Only forests located in the farms occupied by Bribri or Cabécar families may be subject to some form of agriculture, but under express vigilance by SINAC officials. With this said, there are no express rules governing harvesting flora from the forests for indigenous use. Hunting regulations are also found in the Plan, and are permitted, but solely in key specific areas and under very explicit qualifications, namely, that hunting may be done for subsistence purposes only, using antiquated hunting methods (e.g.: bows and arrows and no guns) and be done in the day without the use of dogs (SINAC-MINAET, 2012). With this said, areas that allow hunting at PILA or at the buffer zone are so small that the activity is effectively banned, which is why the local radio station tends to reiterate this issue.

All of these restrictions have been negatively received and have had critical impacts upon local livelihoods, particularly in what concerns the ongoing bans on shifting agriculture and hunting within the overlapping areas of the park and the indigenous reserves. For starters, there is a negative effect upon means of subsistence, as indigenous farmers tend to use saved seeds from products grown in their farms as genetic material in order to grow their own food. Seeds shared amongst the indigenous people in Kachabri are considered to be important by the interviewees as they guarantee some degree of crop diversity that allows them to overcome diseases, something relevant considering that disposable income for buying pesticides is extremely limited. Indeed, traditional agricultural practices of the Bribri and the Cabécar do entail cultivating some areas while others are left resting for various years before being used once more, thereby allowing constant processes of reforestation. As one interviewee stated:

> "We accept conservation as our way of life. But how can I support it if the law endangers the very things that we do that makes us indigenous? They (SINAC and ADITIBRI) say that I cannot use forests to grow rice, when we have used those lands for so much time for our forms of cultivation. We know how to conserve land. Time after time we have leave it to rest to look for another, and when we come back, it

has plants and trees once more. Aren't we conserving by doing what we do?" (local farmer from Amubre, interview, October 25th, 2014).

The Bribri have also taken issue with the nature of hunting regulations established at LAIP and its buffer zone. Most interviewees found that hunting restrictions have had an adverse effect upon access to food in two different ways: one is by becoming an obstacle for obtaining wild meats. Indeed, as an interview stated: "*(b)ecause of what MINAE and ADITBRI says no one here wants to sell meat even though, I'm sure that everybody eats it. It is like if they (MINAE and ADITIBRI) just wanted us to eat farm animals, instead of what we have been eating traditionally for so much years. And it is very unhealthy too, those chickens come from the towns where they use hormones and who knows what else.*" (local farmer of Kachabri, interview, October 26th, 2014). Another form of problems has to do with reducing local access to wild flora, often obtained by the locals as part of their hunting trips. This wild plant life is relevant for producing their own medication or as additional foodstuffs of great importance for their subsistence. Surely, these practices are not explicitly prohibited by PILA's Management Plan, yet, given their intrinsic relation to hunting, it is relevant to point them out.

Curiously enough, some of the claims gathered around ongoing disputes over hunting and shifting agriculture with regards to fortress conservation mechanisms imposed in the Bribri and Cabécar territories, tend to reflect upon processes of forceful integration of indigenous lives into "*sikwa*" (outsider) culture. Loss of available wild meat sources obtained through hunting by ongoing PA-related restrictions, implies a higher dependence on meat coming from outside the Indigenous Reserves. This in turn, leads to the privileging of centralized township structures around the "*pulperías*" (local stores), as well as other public services (e.g.: education, healthcare, etc.), as well as the prevalence of a money economy to buy the meat (or medication and other foodstuffs obtained in the forests). Dependence on public services becomes also more prevalent as lack of hunting sources also means that forests become less used for medicine, thereby fostering a more stringent need of public health services (see Ibarra et al., 2011; Sylvester et al., 2014). This is very interesting considering the prevalent discourse of a few SINAC conservation officials in the Indigenous Reserves who blame misguided government policies that inadvertently fostered lifestyles and social practices at the expense of what they consider conservation-friendly traditional culture and uses of land and resources. As the recently appointed La Amistad Heritage Site Promotor argues:

> "If you see all of our policies in healthcare and education, they all indicate that there must be a school or a healthcare center, obliging everybody to settle around this centralized location. That kind of policy approaches are the ones provoking problems in the indigenous territories. We're forcing them to do something that they have not been accustomed of doing. We as the Costa Rican society, have forced them

to settle, to be sedentary, instead of engaging with shifting agriculture, that they copied our model of living. And in that contact they have learned our good ways, but also our bad ones" (LAHS Promotor and current PILA administrator, interview, August 21st 2016).

As a counterpoint to all of these undeniable negative impacts of PA regulations at PILA, it must be said that authorities – both from SINAC and from the ADIs – believe that some of these measures are extremely important in order to quell forms of illegal extraction of precious woods and wildlife from PILA and the indigenous reserves (La Amistad Heritage Site Promotor, personal interview, August 21st, 2016). Indeed, there have been cases of illegal felling of trees for the purpose of supplying nearby local markets (Candela Restrepo, 2007). Though there is no study yet on the nature and features of wood-related commodity chains, these markets themselves seem to have been growing steadily, and local sources suggest that it is probably due to both the expansion of ecotourism in the Caribbean coastlines and supply limitations resulting from Costa Rican stringent measures put on its forestry sector (Steiner, 2006). But with this said, it is also relevant to say that while most interviewees consider that controlling illegal wood trading is necessary, those activities are completely different from their traditional agricultural or hunting interactions, not to mention their uses of lumber for their subsistence priorities.

These numerous adverse impacts regarding the implementation of land, forest and wildlife use restrictions due to the establishment of PILA have resulted in problems regarding food gathering influence cultural identity and quality of life. Indeed, these restrictions are by all intents and purposes, one of the most contested forms of government policy in the territories. It is no wonder that some of the Bribri and Cabécar inhabitants tend to resist this sort of policy implementation, even by taking advantage of the noticeable lack of financial resources and personnel of park rangers in charge of administering PILA. This has also manifested itself in the form of pressures from the indigenous communities and of NGOs towards the implementation of other more socially-inclusive mechanisms for dealing with conservation.

5.5. Conclusions

Often times, state authorities portray the passive frontier thesis as an approach centered on promoting synergies between conservation and the local Bribri and Cabécar organization. This has been welcomed by the Talamancans, whom consider that spaces for political participation are necessary for conservation to be adjusted within their own practices. Indeed, many of them are pleased that there are attempts towards guaranteeing "buy in" by the local indigenous people regarding activities of fostering environmental conservation of the buffer zone of RBLA, either through co-management of natural resources. Yet, it is clear that, in

practice, these new political opportunities are not fulfilling the expectations of the Bribri and Cabécar.

This chapter has shown the presence of conservation bias in discussing local development trajectories, as well as, the use of co-management practices as a means to legitimize SINAC decisions regarding forest uses. By actively defining the agenda of collaborative bodies of political participation such as the CLFT, defining ADIs centralized structures to handle forestry permits, defining stringent limits to forest uses by indigenous peoples, limiting disposition to democratize the distribution of said permits and deliberately avoiding a political discussion on the understanding of what traditional uses my mean, the Costa Rican state has offered an extremely loose interpretation on the national obligation to address the environmental rights of indigenous peoples of Talamanca. In effect, the passive frontier thesis transforms the TBIR and TCIR into buffer zones of the park, and also excludes them as proactive political agents in park management and decision-making processes for defining the best allocation of economic benefits and development goals of conservation.

In some way, these co-management processes seem to develop as a continuation of the various territorial projects described earlier, as final decision-making is not left to indigenous peoples, but to park authorities. The synergies proposed by the passive frontier thesis are almost designed to work within existing structures of power within SINAC administration and thus consultation is rendered "technical" (Li, 2007), local managers gather their input through initiatives like CLFT or the discussion processes that surround the Guidelines, in order to meet the objectives of consultation requirements, but besides that, all existing decision-making authority is presupposed. Indeed, this is the view most indigenous leaders interviewed for this chapter tend to offer regarding co-management practices and participatory approaches of SINAC with regards to PILA governance and natural resource management. Ultimately, the current governance approach to PILA tends to facilitate conservation projects that seem to benefit the state, with little perceived benefit for the indigenous populations, particularly the ones that are dependent of natural resources being subjected to control.

Notes

[1] The concept of zone of indistinction used here comes from Agamben's (2005) work. Normal understandings of the state of exception tend to refer to situations in which the rule of law is suspended by the authorities in order to address some imminent risk to the integrity of the state (see Schmitt, 2005). However, the concept is interpreted by Agamben as a legal abandonment of the individual. In other words, through the state of exception, the individual, though subject to the purview of state power, is rendered as ambiguous and

incommensurable by the legal system as *"a zone of indistinction is opened between law and nature, inside and outside, violence and law"* (Agamben, 2005: 64), thereby allowing the state to rule over the individual by political fiat. Moreover, Agamben suggests that these political practices of withdrawal of legal protection and entitlement, often considered to be exercised in the direst of political situations, are gradually becoming a central working paradigm of government practices and intensification of state power more generally. Indeed, he relates his concept to Foucault's (2009) work on biopolitics, in the sense that the state of exception becomes a means of reproducing the control of the state over population, with the intent of either rendering them productive for society, or removing them from it by considering them unruly.

[2] The Alliance for Progress Program was a major economic development initiative fostered by the United States in Latin America during the 1960s. The state objectives of the program were related to increasing local agricultural and industrial output, fostering the formation of democratic governments, reducing illiteracy, social inequality and poverty, promoting rural land reform and guaranteeing price stability through anti-inflationary policy in the region (Gruggel, 1995). Overall, the Program spent over 22 billion US dollars in aid in the Latin American countries between 1961 and 1967. Yet, scholars suggest that while development was the narrative espoused to justify the program, in reality it was meant to solidify anti-communist governments in the region as part of a wider strategy of containment developed in the context of the Cold War (Smith, 1999). In any case, by the 1970s, the program was considered a complete failure as it did not promote stable reforms to guarantee higher productivity, land redistribution was minimal, there were few social, educational or health benefits for poor populations, economic growth was never consistent during the period (except in Mexico and Brazil) and a majority of Latin American governments actually shifted to military dictatorships or other forms of non-democratic governance during the implementation of the project (SmIth, 1991).

[3] During the 1990s and early 2000s, the local ADIs loosely operated as part of a wider network of conservation and local organizations in opposition of oil exploration projects off the coast of the Southern Caribbean region of Costa Rica. The bulk of these efforts were fought against the Costa Rican state and two energy transnational corporations: Harken Energy Corporation (the precursor to George W. Bush's Arbusto Corporation) and Mallon Oil. The most intense period of the struggle happened in the late 1990s and early 2000s after the Costa Rican government gave authorization to these companies to explore for oil resources in national waters nearby the coastline. Local resistance took place in the form of public protests, the use of legal claims against jurisdictional authorities and lobbying with state agencies. The oil exploration project was eventually abandoned by the government in 2004.

[4] Information about the early years of implementation of PILA at the Talamanca Valley is insufficient. While efforts were made to track down the National Park Service officials associated to park management activities forty years ago, many of them have either retired and have lost touch with current PILA authorities, continue to work but in other lines of work, or have died. Moreover, except from the previous PILA administrator – who was

reassigned from the central offices of the Park Service to PILA during the 1990s – the people with firsthand knowledge of the park's early history were often involved with policy-making at the Biolley and Altamira stations located in the Pacific side of PILA. This means that they had limited experience with the indigenous communities of the Talamanca Valley.

I can gather from the PILA administrator at the Caribbean side that the approach towards indigenous communities early on was somewhat neglectful as neither investments were undertaken by the state for developing infrastructure nor a permanent government presence was established in the area. The former administrator did claim that the decision to create PILA was not mediated by consultation with the Bribri and the Cabécar, nor there was any effort to harmonize environmental enforcement of the park with indigenous demands during his early years of experience in the area (former PILA administrator, interview, May 2nd, 2014) This implies the top-down approach, but which was not followed through with additional resources given the remoteness of the protected area. With that said, further information about park management is scarce as the former administrator entered PILA at a moment in which state authorities were considering implementing new management schemes with which to share some degree of responsibility of PILA with local organizations, under some pressure by international NGOs and local organizations (Borge, 2004).

With that said, in the Biolley and Altamira stations, the early implementation of the park was much more politically intense. Schelhas and Pfeffer (2008) estimate that PILA entailed evictions for over 3.000 hectares of small holdings which were located within the park boundaries, with inadequate forms of compensation being used to meet that goal. Moreover, enforcement of environmental laws outside of the park area were often met with conflicts as views over resource uses often contrasted between park rangers and local farmers (Candanedo Díaz, 2010). Indeed, at one point it seems that tensions rose to the level that farmers were jailed for engaging in forest clearing within the park's boundaries (former Altamira Park Ranger, interview, July 7th, 2014), leading to violent reactions from the community whom threatened to burn down the Altamira offices in return for the strict nature of environmental enforcement in the area (Schelhas and Pfeffer, 2008).

[5] This situation has been recently recognized by UNESCO following a complaint by an indigenous Naso association in Panama regarding a reduction of some species of fish in the lower river basin of the Sixaola. The World Heritage Committee of UNESCO organized a mission in coordination with the governments of both countries to assess the state of the park. The mission demonstrated that there were significant problems of coordination between both states, and that it was necessary to allocated more personnel for the protection of the park. The mission also highlighted the need of a better bio-monitoring process in order to keep track of the state of wildlife. So far, the response has been limited (MIDEPLAN, 2011). A new site administrator has been named, but the year following the visit, MINAE and ANAM developed the new management plans of PILA without coordinating efforts.

6 Neoliberal multiculturalism and agrarian territorialities in Talamanca

> "(…) let's see what happens when the day has come to harvest this cacao. If we manage to get it out (to the market) it would be a good thing; yet we do not know who is going to buy it from us… that is to be seen." (Bribri farmer discussing the BID-MAG[1] Cacao Project, 2014).

The previous chapter was meant to describe the origins, implementation, territorial implications and local resistances to fortress conservation practices developed in the Reserves after the formation of PILA. To that effect, I concluded that while there has been some degree of coherence between state rationalities regarding the maintenance of forest cover and indigenous demands for political autonomy, the territoriality of conservation priorities also impinged over the reproduction of traditional forms of biodiversity uses and cultural conceptualizations, leading to resistance and internal conflict in the Reserves. In this chapter, I shift the gaze from co-management of natural resources towards sustainable uses of resources, by focusing on the implementation of the Cacao Project of the Sixaola Binational Watershed Project (BID-MAG). Of course, this is not a complete separation with the themes of the previous chapter, as the passive frontier thesis discussed there entails a conservation approach based on essentializing and "improving" indigenous productive practices, including their forms of traditional agriculture as a means of guaranteeing their "buy in" of conservation efforts in the RBLA.

Originally conceived as part of a much larger and internationally-coordinated integrated watershed resource management project (IWRM) to be implemented jointly by Costa Rica and Panama (Alvarez, 2014), the BID-MAG was significantly changed during its planning stage, leading to the formation of two completely different national initiatives that shared the same name, but functioned under radically dissimilar logics.[2] This chapter concentrates fully on the Costa Rican part of the Program. Colloquially dubbed by the locals as the BID-MAG Program the Costa Rican project was executed between 2009 and 2016 as an "on-demand" integrated conservation development project (ICDP), in order to "*improve the conditions of living of the populations in the Sixaola River Basin (…) through social, economic, environmental and local management interventions that may contribute to the implementation of a sustainable development model*" (Nessim et al., 2004: 1). ICDPs are a result of changes in conservation ideology since the 1980s. Indeed, the concept is a moniker used to characterize a project that counters the historically-dominant top-down fortress conservation thinking, for one hinged on recognizing the productive links between

conservation and development, especially in buffer zones, where biodiversity-rich landscapes overlap with poor rural people (Adams, 2004). The overriding logic of ICDPs is fostering alternative livelihoods to improve quality of life, development and increase local income, thereby reducing social needs towards removing or destroying natural resources (Adams and Hutton, 2007) Discursively, ICDPs are often presented as win-win solutions, due to its imagined potential for conserving biodiversity whilst improving local livelihoods (see Büscher, 2010).

However, translating the discursive wonderings of ICDPs into factual realities has been very challenging. Numerous critics on similar projects elsewhere have pointed out difficulties when dealing with existing inequalities, not to mention tendencies in ICDPs to distribute benefits in an unequal fashion (Igoe and Croucher, 2007). Others have argued about problems when trying to foster political participation of the locals, leading to criticisms of the ongoing simplification of concepts like community and empowerment for the benefit of markets (Büscher et al., 2012). Some have argued that there are inherent conflicts between poverty reduction and environmental conservation, and that these are often channeled through dissent on project priorities between local populations and conservationist state agencies and NGOs (West and Brockington, 2006). Indeed, the very quote presented at the beginning of this chapter constitutes a form of evidence of the failure of BID-MAG to account for one of the most obvious development and income-related concerns (i.e.: commercialization) regarding the fostering of forest cover-friendly cacao as the sustainable livelihood alternative of Bribri and Cabécar peoples in Talamanca. As I will show in the following pages, much of these other problems inherent to ICDPs are more than prevalent in the case of the implementation of BID-MAG in the two Indigenous Reserves studied here.

With that said, this chapter is not centered exclusively in exploring the project trajectory of cacao components of BID-MAG, its implementation failures and local politics of resistance and appropriation. The main objective of this chapter is to address the structural reasons behind the failure of this ICDP in order to showcase the failed articulation between the commodification of indigenous cacao production with the cultural valuation of cacao through an exploration of the socioecological complexities of locally produced natures. I do so by examining the relation between discourse, territoriality and materiality in the production of the organic cacao commodity, specifically regarding the farm-level enactment of land use obligations in the context of international cacao certification. This chapter begins by framing BID-MAG within one of the most important discursive formations supporting the passive frontier thesis, that is, the idea that buy in for conservation in Talamanca could happen by reorganizing indigenous cultural practices in a manner that is coherent with Westernized forms of agriculture. Indeed, from the perspective of conservationist and agricultural state agencies and NGOs sustainable

agroforestry (SAF), particularly regarding the production of cacao has been viewed as the historical solution to the environmental conundrum that characterizes de Bribri and the Cabécar. The solution to the problem of growing population and capitalist integration is to offer a more intensive commodification of cacao as the solution, thereby resolving the issue through the maximization of local economic efficiency.

With that said, this chapter will explain how the restructuring of indigenous agroforestry as a means for capital accumulation and conservation buy in is flawed precisely because it fails to capture the economic, social and cultural features of the Bribri and Cabécar production. This is done by exploring how BID-MAG attempted to address the problem of financial support for investments in cacao plants and technology, themselves problems generated by the very territorial status of indigenous reserves in Costa Rica, as its main objective. At this point, I will expand on the ongoing conflicts between project managers and local populations for resources, political participation and benefit distribution. Afterwards, the attention is shifted to the reality of cacao within the reality of Talamancan agriculture, mainly the existence of a dual productive system. This will allow me to frame these micropolitical struggles within the difficulties and lack of feasible adoption of full-fledged cacao-based economies, in a context determined by existing livelihood strategies and lack of access to markets.

6.1. The 'problem with Talamancan agriculture' and the cacao solution

Historically, for the Talamancan indigenous peoples, cacao has been a key agricultural product, with important functions not only as a source of food or as a commodity for economic exchange, but also as a central feature of their cultural and religious traditions (Bozzoli de Willie, 1979). With that said, cacao has also gained notoriety within the various ongoing efforts for the conservation of biodiversity and forests at RBLA, not necessarily for the produce itself, but the manner in which it is cultivated. Indeed, the Bribri and the Cabécar tend to grow cacao within complex and varied systems of SAF, which some authors often refer to as "policultivation" (see Somarriba, 2004; Borge, 2011; Orcherton, 2003). Generally, these SAF entail the presence of considerable forest cover at a superior canopy that covers cacao trees at lower levels, though it must be said that there is more than just one form of SAF management practices for the Talamancans (Orcherton, 2003).

Indeed, one may not use the concept of policultivation lightly, given the considerable variation between SAFs. A clearer account of differences will be done later on in this chapter, but for now, suffice to say that these SAF present considerable diversity of tree species at the canopy level (Dahlquist et al., 2007) and there are substantial differences regarding the density in which cacao plants are cultivated at the lower level of

vegetation (Deheuvels et al., 2012). The motivation behind these decisions has to do with a large variety of factors including but not limited to the quality of the soils, features of the terrain, historical economic necessities, cultural beliefs, food security concerns, etc. Some authors have argued that the presence of flat surfaces and acceptable drainage in the Talamanca Valley lowlands makes them more productive for banana (see Borge and Castillo, 1997), whereas others argue that customs and beliefs are also relevant in justifying these decisions (see Orcherton, 2003). While the reasons behind these differences in cultivation are not unimportant for agencies and organizations promoting conservation, the most relevant of these certainly have to do with the levels of biodiversity present in the various forms in which SAFs manifest themselves in the Talamancan landscape (see Harvey et al., 2006; Parrish et al., 1999). Indeed, compared to banana agroforestry systems, cacao tends to receive less cover from commercial types of trees (though, must not be implied that these species of trees are not present in cacao SAFs) (Hinojosa, 2002).

It must also be added that, despite overwhelming perception amongst the Bribri and Cabécar interviewed for this work that cacao has a cultural importance due to its uses in various traditions, it is also a crop produced to make a profit by some. Indeed, for them the production of cacao is guided by a diverse set of criteria including custom, religious beliefs and profitability. Some of the interviewees often combined these perspectives when discussing the importance of cacao for them, often lamenting that one of these aspects took prevalence over the others due to the nature of economics in the Reserves. Indeed, the current president of the Association of Indigenous Bribri Women of Talamanca (ACOMUITA), which is also one of the most successful local producers of cacao in the Reserves lamented that: "*for us, the Bribri, cacao is extremely important. It is our natural beverage and its part of our stories and beliefs. Sadly, these stories once told by our elders are not being told that often anymore*" (President of ACOMUITA, interview, June 11th 2014). On a similar note, Melis Paez, the awá[3] from the township of Meleruk, and whom was expected to see cacao from a completely different perspective than ACOMUITA, argued in similar terms: "*cacao has changed its way of being (…) it's more commercial now than cultural"* (interview, March 18th 2014).

As I have shown earlier, agrarian development interventions in the geographical space occupied by the Talamancan Indigenous Reserves are not new in any way. Early in the 20th Century, UFCO took over most of the lowlands of the Talamanca Valley and then proceeded to transform its landscape radically since 1909 until the 1930s. Plantation production was eventually disrupted by the appearance of sigatoka infections,[4] leading to the loss of considerable parts of the Company's banana harvests and the eventual reduction of UFCO operations by the early 1940s, ending with a few and much smaller cacao plantations (Villalobos and Borge, 1998). Land was retaken by the indigenous peoples over the following two decades, whom lacked any sort of state or NGO technical, financial or

productive support, except for a short-lived government-led agricultural project in the early 1970s. More often, government projects in the area tended to be scarce as the state actively neglected attending these populations (Guevara Berger and Chacón Castro, 1992). The Bribri and the Cabécar did manage to expand cacao cultivation considerably on their own during the process of indigenous retaking of the Talamanca Valley, despite the absence of technical assistance, credit programs and preexisting commercialization networks (Borge, 2011). Indeed, Talamanca county (where both mestizo and indigenous produces live) had achieved record levels of cacao production in the late 1970s (Enriquez and Suárez, 1978), with this production being sold to national processing plants in San José, the latter benefiting from import substitution industrialization policies sponsored by the Costa Rican state since the early 1950s.

However, everything changed in 1979 with a major outbreak of moniliasis, a fungal disease that rendered inedible most of the cacao production of the county, including those located in the Reserves. Damages to production were quick and sizeable. While state inspections showed that 900 hectares of cacao plantations in the Caribbean seaboard had been affected at the end of 1979, by the next year the disease had spread to over 7.000. By 1983, Costa Rican cacao production had diminished in more than 72% from its 1978 levels, while exports reduced in 96% (Phillips, 2003). To this day, cacao production in Costa Rica has not recovered to levels seen before the outbreak, and it is feasible that this will not happen soon, given early estimation of agricultural damages made following the devastation produced by Hurricane Otto in 2016.

In the Reserves proper, much like in other parts of the country, production of cacao grinded to a halt rapidly, leading many indigenous farmers to eliminate their cacao trees (Posas, 2001). In turn, the county has shifted to the cultivation of plantain following a monoculture pattern. Driven initially by national demand (as plantain is part of the Costa Rican diet), production began to rise and then intensified transnational companies (mainly Del Monte and the Standard Fruit Company) settled in the Sixaola Valley which began purchasing for export to the United States (Somarriba, 1993). While the cultivated area of plantain production in the Talamanca county was estimated at 900 hectares in 1985 (Rosenboom et al., 1990), by 2001 it had expanded to 3.000 hectares producing for the national market, with another 1.600 for export purposes (MT, 2003). In other words, the past thirty years have witnessed a major change in the regional landscape of Talamanca – and by extension, of the Indigenous Reserves – as it has shifted from being devoted to cacao production, to becoming the biggest plantain producer region in the country. This critical socioeconomic change has been the context of new agrarian development interventions in the region – most of them focused in the reinsertion of cacao-based SAFs.

The most prevalent of these interventions entails a new political and economic approach. As was mentioned in chapter 2, the dominant

perspective on indigenous agriculture since colonial times and well into the 20th Century, was that indigenous peoples were at odds with rational agricultural production. Spanish chronicles have argued that abundance of foodstuffs in the region was a natural facet of the Talamancan landscape. Whereas 19th Century accounts – in the forms of Gabb's writing, but also those of Henri Pittier and various other naturalists visiting the region over the early 20th Century (see Goebel McDermott, 2005; Denyer and Soto, 2000) – was that while indigenous agriculture did exist, it was inherently unproductive, thereby concluding that considerable state intervention was critical for the region to achieve its productive potential. This outlook starts to change with new studies being produced about the region after the 1950s (see Lansing, 2011), as ethnographers begin to develop accounts of patterns of adaptation of Bribri and Cabécar agricultural practices to deal with climate concerns, their own cultural beliefs and other livelihood issues (see Stone, 1961). Whereas others – much more culturally-oriented in focus – delve into detailed analysis of the role that agriculture plays within various Bribri rituals, thereby offering findings of the presence of cultural rationalities at play in their livelihood decisions (see Bozolli de Willie, 1973). This new climate in academic research eventually translated into new efforts to understand the nature of indigenous land management practices over the course of the 1980s.

There has not been a single stable state or NGO-oriented agricultural development project in Talamanca (though there are actors sponsoring projects with continuous presence to the point of becoming features of the landscape), and consequently, there have been many approaches and objectives employed over the past thirty years. Yet, a common feature in most of these interventions is the recognition of a dual problematique regarding Bribri and Cabécar agriculture. First of all, scholars and policy practitioners agree that the Talamancans are gradually moving towards plantain monoculture at the expense of other forms of agroforestry, including those with more commercial ends, like cacao and banana (Orozco et al., 2008). Secondly, rapid population growth in the Reserves is quickly becoming a potential and unsustainable threat for the regional ecosystems (Borge, 2006). The central concern is that if no intervention is made, and indigenous populations continue to grow, the most sustainable forms of indigenous agriculture – namely traditional and cacao/banana-oriented SAFs – are going to become less able to cope, leading to a preference towards more ecologically-unfriendly alternatives like plantain monoculture plantations (see Borge and Laforge, 1995; Borge, 2006; Somarriba and Harvey, 2003). The logical response then is to, first, make cacao economically relevant to the region once more, by introducing new and hybrid varieties that could resist to fungal infections (including moniliasis), and second, finding a way to enhance the economic value of indigenous agriculture, through new channels of commercialization of a variety of Bribri and Cabécar farm products (e.g.:

cacao, banana, lumber, etc.) or practices related to those (e.g.: agroecotourism), within the spaces for traditional agriculture (Parrish et al., 1999; Somarriba and Beer, 1999, Beer, 1991).

In other words, contemporary agrarian interventions in the Talamancan Indigenous Reserves have been designed to make changes in order to improve indigenous agriculture, no matter if they may be oriented towards fruit trees and orchards – like the first interventions headed by the New Alchemists Association in the early 1980s – towards cacao production – as those defined by the CATIE and more recently by MAG within the BID-MAG project – or even those designed to reinterpret forests as carbon storage facilities that I will be explaining in the following chapters. This overarching logic is present in most projects developed in the area, particularly in the larger ones, like NAMASOL in the 1990s, or the BID-MAG in the 2010s, though the latter with some key differences from the former projects, given the fact that state actors and agendas held a much more influential role. Lansing (2009) has offered a fairly detailed analysis of NAMASOL (1995-1999) that deserves attention, which is complemented by my own, gathered from interviews with the same actors involved there, almost twenty years later. The objective of this project was to trigger an important change in Talamancan production and the producers themselves by fostering a process of technological change that could lead to the evolution of Bribri and Cabécar culture (Borge and Laforge, 1996). It begins with the presentation of several hypotheses regarding the characteristics of indigenous production and of the producer himself, the most relevant for the purposes of this chapter being that the region presented two different systems of agricultural production: the traditional one (or "*sköwak*") and an external one (or "*sikwa*").

In appearance, both systems operate in a complementary fashion with one another, leading to impressions of them being considered two sides of a same indigenous farming rationality. Indeed, this planning project claims that both the *sköwak* and *sikwa* systems are linked through the cultivation of corn. Traditionally, both the Bribri and the Cabécar have used work parties as a means to cope with the lack of enough labor for farming purposes. These '*chichadas*' are based around the production of *chicha* (an alcoholic drink made out of fermented corn), which is used for payment purposes instead of using cash-based transactions (as the use of money is not prevalent everywhere in the Reserves) (Borge and Laforge, 1996). Both systems seem to be harmonically linked, as *sköwak* agriculture – centered on subsistence production of various things amongst which corn is included – is interpreted as the basis for Bribri and Cabécar engagement into cash crops, through communal labor. Underpinning this conceptualization of indigenous production is, of course, a general understanding that Talamancans operate as economically rational actors. Indeed, one of the key hypotheses presented by the document implies that indigenous peoples tend to maximize the utility of their workforce, though labor efficiency. This means that, according to this key document

which set forth critical planning assumptions for agrarian development interventions in Talamanca, indigenous labor is clearly guided towards for-profit productive ends. From there, the main proposal of NAMASOL was to elevate productivity through different means, thereby becoming a central tenet until now. Indeed, the Strategic Planning of the Territory and indigenous Peoples of Talamanca in the mid-2000s, a document designed to develop a general consensus for strategic interventions in the Reserves clearly concluded that in Talamanca:

> "Development is constructed through new productive processes which may offer added value to traditional production, elevating productivity and productive quality, creating new forms of employment in new economic sectors not necessarily agricultural, such as tourism and construction, controlling the mechanisms that guide commercial intermediation with the rest of the country and selling environmental services, such as protection of biodiversity, protection of river basins, landscape conservation and protection of wildlife reserves, etc." (Borge, 2006: 33).

Both this and the former documents have been developed in ways in which to become discursively-friendly to the Bribri and the Cabécar. The NAMASOL document presented its arguments within the context of an understanding of wellness, somewhat developed out of general interpretations of local cosmovision. Land security, guaranteeing the good health of the local population and fostering good relations with *sikwas* and with indigenous neighbors at the Reserve are considered some of the components of this wellness, while arguing that a productive agricultural system is just the means to get there, not the end (Borge and Laforge, 1996).

In other words, the argument is that the production for profit is seen as a mechanism through which that wellness may be attained. Similar discursive choices are made in the Strategic Planning document, which, amongst its main propositions, contends that for-profit production could be a means towards rescuing Bribri and Cabécar forms of cultural production (e.g.: artisanship, traditional medicine, culturally-traditional gender roles at local households and politics, etc.) (Borge, 2006). And while, it is unquestionable that these holistic linkages are of great importance of the authors, as was gathered in subsequent interviews with them for this chapter, the main conceptualization present in both documents is that the Talamancans are abstractly comprehended as rational economic actors, lacking any distinction whatsoever.

Consequently, for these key planning documents, the main argument is that maximization of labor efficiency is the key aspect of indigenous productive rationalities, thereby enhancing said productive capacities is the appropriate way of helping them and make their agriculture function. At interviews with NGO and state officials, there were always arguments about the need of taking into account the complexities of indigenous subjects, whereby economics is just one facet

amongst others such as culture, communal identity, territorial demands, etc. Yet, more often than not, all of this talk is abandoned as the problem is eventually narrowed to a recognition that the Bribri and the Cabécar are just rational economic actors, whose rationality when allocating labor is the one responsible of defining the interactions between the modern and the traditional within their complex systems of agriculture. Any and all recognition of other social, cultural or political facets or potential hypothesis regarding the contradictory co-existence of traditional livelihood and sikwa agriculture in the Bribri and Cabécar agrarian landscape is discarded, as this discourse often takes over the notion that sköwak agriculture is just a complementary feature to the modern half of their system oriented towards plantain production or cacao and banana for-profit production within semi-traditional agroforestry systems.

Despite the complexities of local indigenous agriculture, the conclusion of these documents (and, by extension, the entire discursive formation), is actually very simple: the entire dual agricultural system of the Bribri and the Cabécar is unsustainable. Modern agriculture is deemed incapable of becoming a reasonable means of subsistence for the indigenous farmers, whereas the traditional side is argued to be incapable to meet projected population requirements in the future (Borge and Castillo, 1997; Posas, 2001; Somarriba, 1993; Guiracocha, 2000). In other words, while the si*k*wa part of the system is problematic given its long-lasting negative environmental effects and historical commercialization barriers (e.g.: plantain monoculture), the *sköwak* part is considered to be unable to meet the necessities of the growing population. Indeed, this is the main framing device for the problems that development interventions in Talamanca seek to resolve. Yet, curiously enough, their involvement has not been centered in corn, understood as the lynchpin between traditional and modern agriculture, as the NAMASOL document suggested in 1996 and the Strategic Planning document reiterated ten years later. On the contrary, the focus of interventions in the area has shifted between various agricultural products, with the main ones being plantain and cacao, both of them produced mainly for profit. Indeed, apart from re-conceptualizing the indigenous farmer and his agricultural system in an undifferentiated account of economic rationality, this discourse has also framed their produces as critical objects of intervention in the area. Cacao has been particularly relevant in this regard, as it is contemplated as a mechanism with which to tie agricultural development policy with measures to reinforce the buffer zone of La Amistad Biosphere Reserve.

Most efforts to promote cacao as the key objective of development intervention in Talamanca have been sponsored by CATIE and, more recently, by the National Cacao Program at MAG (NCP). Indeed, CATIE has been a key historical actor in the region ever since the 1970s, through the development of numerous development interventions focused on this product, most of them in collaboration with MAG and with the financial

support of the IADB. While they did not have a role implementing the cacao component of the BID-MAG project regarding this crop, they do retain considerable influence in the project in a key advisory role with regards to the NCP, as the main provider of genetically-modified cacao plants and in devising the scientific basis that supports the cacao intervention in the area (Cacao Program director, personal interview, May 21st 2014). CATIE was also the agency in charge of writing the first management plan of PILA in 1981, and held a key role in the elaboration of the RBLA plan in 1991, as well. An agricultural higher education center and a research facility devoted to the productive sector, CATIE has been interested in sponsoring cacao production in Costa Rican since the 1940s (Barquero, 1949). Most of their efforts before the outbreak of moniliasis countrywide, CATIE was mostly focused on offering support to farmers in order for them to maximize their productive yields. Yet, in the 1970s, their role shifted towards agroforestry, as this practice became popular amongst development practitioners (Somarriba and Beer, 1999). During the 1980s, CATIE embraced the notion that agroforestry could be a development tool, given its potential to attend problems of overpopulation, desertification and conservation in rural areas in the tropics (Somarriba and Beer, 1999).

Put differently, for CATIE and the NCP, cacao agroforestry constitutes an optimized environmental and economic solution for rural development as it offers the chance to cultivate crops while maintaining forests and lumber at the same time. CATIE has had a clear ongoing presence in the region. The first major project with Talamancan indigenous communities began in 1984, after the outbreak of the monialiasis epidemic. It focused on offering the locals with new varieties of cacao trees that could withstand infection (Dahlquist et al., 2007). In the late 1980s, CATIE designed a second project with support of the German GTZ, which was meant to elevate the density of economically-valuable shade trees in cacao agroforestry plantations and of black pepper trees in order to foster diversification of for-profit crops in indigenous farms. In other words, this was a project centered in a long-standing effort of introducing more economically-profitable forms of agroforestry in the region (Beer, 1991; Somarriba et al., 1994). During the early 2000s, CATIE was also involved in a project oriented towards the maximization of cacao agroforestry efficiency, in this case, centered on recognizing the value of ecologically-important forest species within the indigenous farms, the former developed under ongoing efforts for reforming the management plan of PILA, within the territorial logic of a biosphere reserve (Harvey et al., 2006). Indeed, a great deal of CATIE studies during that decade concentrated not only on arguing that agroforestry was an economically efficient use of farming space and an inherently sustainable land use, but also a farming practice that offers an anthropogenic linkage between protected areas, national parks and biological corridors (see Parrish et al., 1999; Polidoro et al., 2007; Somarriba, 2004; Guiracocha et al., 2001). In this

context, enters the cacao component of BID-MAG a 1.5 million-dollar project designed to continue on these efforts of fostering cacao productivity in the region.

6.2. The BID-MAG cacao project: objectives and failures

6.2.1. Introducing the BID-MAG

The BID-MAG was originally conceived as a new stage in the ongoing effort in transfrontier development cooperation between Costa Rica and Panama. The Program was inscribed in the context of a series of bilateral agreements signed by both countries over the course of the 1990s, the most important being the 1993 Agreement for Transfrontier Cooperation and Development. This agreement set forth a brief, but comprehensive, agenda for developing the region, including the establishment of a Permanent Binational Commission (CBP), with various subcommittees for attending environmental, local governance, security, productive and migratory issues of importance to both countries (Matul Romero, 2007). The Commission was established featuring some representation of civil society, but it functions mainly as a means to organize concerted action between state agencies (Matul Romero, 2007). The main civil society actors involved in the commission rarely include any local organization – such as the indigenous ADIs – and is often limited to CATIE and some environmental NGOs, such as International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), all of whom have had noticeable influence in the execution of certain components of the wider Sixaola Program, given that the area "*constitutes a priority for conservation issues*" (National Coordinator of BID-MAG, interview, February 23rd, 2014).

BID-MAG, itself, was devised in 2003 following an IADB donation oriented towards the development of the Regional Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Sixaola Binational River Basin (ERDS). This Strategy was conceived as the starting point for a medium to long-term intervention of the region devoted to three main objectives: 1) enhance productivity, 2) integrating better management of natural resources and 3) reducing local vulnerability to natural disasters (MIDEPLAN, 2003). In its inception, the ERDS suggested that the best way of achieving these goals were through the implementation of a single project to be executed in a coordinated fashion by both countries. However, that would end up being impossible, due to a combination of factors, but mainly, resistance from the national governments and several state agencies (Guillen, 2013).

Eventually, the project was divided into three different initiatives: 1) BID-MAG, which was implemented solely for Costa Rica, 2) the Sustainable Development Strategy for Bocas del Toro, which was the Panamanian counterpart of BID-MAG, and 3) the Integrated Ecosystem Management Project of the Sixaola Binational River Basin, that was

referred to in chapter 3 and which was implemented jointly by both countries. Each one of these projects was executed following differing logics of implementation (see Alvarez, 2014; Guillen, 2013), thereby making them completely separate from each other, despite having a shared origin.

Originally, BID-MAG was conceptualized as a "typical" IWRM, which expectedly included the establishment of various work units in the form of river management organisms and a clear overarching focus on dealing with key activities with implications to water supply sustainability (Nessim et al., 2004). However, the actual execution of the project differed considerably. Between the time the first loan proposal was sent to the IADB in 2004 and its eventual execution in 2011, the program morphed from an IWRM into an "on-demand" ICDP with a rhetorical disaster vulnerability component, losing all watershed management components and shifting the executory organism from MINAE – which had a much clearer environmental conservation bias – to MAG. Of course, this meant that the project was eventually executed following a more productivity-oriented logic, so while there was some degree of internalization of sustainability concerns, the overriding institutional objective for sifting between project proposals was undoubtedly fostering economic diversification and productivity (external evaluator BID-MAG, interview, March 22nd, 2016). This is the main reason why BID-MAG ended up using over 30% of the funding for the productive component in initiatives for stimulating plantain and palm tree monoculture cultivation, despite them being considered as ecologically unsustainable, while also investing around 40% in sustainable cacao agroforestry (BID-MAG, 2015). Having said this, the wider emphasis of the intervention was consistent with the historical objective of "improving" Bribri and Cabécar agriculture, as have many other development interventions done over the past thirty years. As the ERDS states:

> "(…) the fostering of organic production, productive diversification, the development of an industry that transforms local traditional production, an improvement in commercialization mechanisms and tourism are the best and most sustainable possibilities for implementing the Strategy" (MIDEPLAN, 2003: 10).

Yet, again, the most noticeable differences and tensions that underline this project relate to the prerogative of MAG of financing any types of productive endeavors, in spite of their environmental effects, whereas, other NGO practitioners, CATIE included, would have preferred to center the modernization process within the context of cacao agroforestry and other sustainable practices alone.

The Cacao Project was but one of various projects that formed the "Productive Diversification Component" of BID-MAG. Though it was executed in the form of 24 different smaller projects with as many Bribri and Cabécar communities in the Reserve, all of them were managed

directly by the NCP, with the support of CATIE. Overall, these projects were primarily oriented to address vulnerability to natural disasters by promoting forest cover and recovering "*the (cacao) agroecological system that existed in the Sixaola and Talamanca Valleys, and which was destroyed in favor of plantain monoculture, leading the area to a high level of vulnerability*" (Fallas Solano, 2012: 6). Hydrogeologically, the Talamanca Valley is first and foremost a flood plain, which has historically shown to be susceptible to pronounced weather events (such as seasonal rains and tropical storms), leading to negative destructive effects upon indigenous communities, which are often located near the riverbanks of the Sixaola and its tributaries. The operating assumption of the Cacao Project is that forest loss due to the expansion of productive land uses – especially plantain monoculture – lead to the sedimentation of the local rivers making them prone for more destructive flash floods (MIDEPLAN, 2003). Forest cover should be maintained to avoid any future natural event. Therefore, expanding cacao agroforestry becomes a means of increasing the income of local indigenous farms, which in turn (following the perceived rationality described in the previous section), would make the Bribri and Cabécar attach a greater value at conserving forests and biodiversity and adverting potential calamities produced from enhanced weather events.

The Cacao Project proposal nominally recognizes the history of Talamanca with cacao by acknowledging the presence of over 1.800 hectares cultivated with this produce, though almost no references are made with regards to cultural practices, meanings or territorialities attached to said cultivation (see Fallas Solano, 2012). On the contrary, the proposal clearly states that the problem that demands intervention in the Bribri and Cabécar farmlands is that of lack of productivity. Indeed, as a member of the Project Coordinating Unit of BID-MAG stated: "*our priority consists in guaranteeing that technical assistance reaches the producer and that this translates into an improvement of productivity. Our objective is to surpass the current levels of production of the area, that, in average, are of about 100 kilograms per hectare (per year), and take them over 1.000 kilograms per hectare, given that the genetic material used permits that.*" (interview, August 10th, 2015). The main project proposal argues that most of these problems are due to mismanagement of indigenous farms, given that cacao plants being used are extremely old, prone to be affected by monilia and are cultivated under low densities, thereby hindering productivity and potential profitability (Fallas Solano, 2012). Consequently, the project proposal concludes that the intervention should be made for augmenting productivity of indigenous farms, by offering technical assistance for them to cultivate cacao, in agroforestry systems, using densities of about 630 new plants (themselves genetically-modified grafts provided by CATIE) per hectare (Fallas Solano, 2012).

To support indigenous farmers, the Cacao Project focused on promoting cacao through two different actions. On one hand, the project was oriented to address one of the main perceived entry barriers by NCP,

which has to do with initial investment (Salazar, 2014). Indeed: "*the true barrier for cacao farming in Talamanca is the initial costs regarding genetic material. If people want to plant in a pattern of 4x4 (meters between plants), that would entail over 600 different plants, which means an investment of over almost one million colones (about 2.000 U.S. dollars), which is a sum of money that very few indigenous farmers can give away*" (NCP Official, interview, May 21st, 2014). This is without mentioning the fact that since the monilia crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s, financial credit opportunities were shut down by banks (Rosenboom et al., 1990; NCP official, interview, May 21st 2014) or that, even if these forms of funding were present, they could not possibly loan to a Bribri or Cabécar landholders, given that the land is not formally theirs, but by the ADIs. Consequently, the Cacao Project meant to deal with these initial expenditures by giving away the cacao plants freely to local producers alongside farming tools and materials to the recipients whom required it, had lands ready and prepared for cultivation and also given proof of taking care of their former cacao cultivated plots, following the land management guidelines devised by the NCP (Fallas Solano, 2012). The Project also provided on-farm technical assistance to indigenous farmers and engaged in verification tours in order to guarantee that cacao plants were being trimmed down, grafted, cleaned and taken care of, following the dispositions of the aforementioned guidelines.

In other words, the cacao component of BID-MAG was based on the presumption of improving the sustainable production of cacao farms of the Bribri and the Cabécar, while also fostering biodiversity conservation and dealing with vulnerabilities to climate change. To do so the objective was – as in plenty other projects before it – to increase the viability, both economic and ecological, of cacao as a key produce in the complex dual agricultural system of the Reserves. In particular, this new project was based on a discourse that has historically linked cacao with wider ecological benefits. The main claim being made is that if there is need for sustainable land use and economically efficient management of space, then cacao agroforestry is the best choice. Indeed, the argument has been that this type of systems – unquestionably oriented towards deepening Bribri and Cabécar integration into national and global markets – is the best solution for solving the contradictions in the indigenous productive system (Somarriba et al., 2004). Moreover, according to the Sustainable Development Strategy, cacao agroforestry is also a key alternative for reducing vulnerability of local ecosystems, by providing anthropogenic links between farmlands, parks and biological corridors (see Harvey et al., 2006). Yet, despite these benefits, positive achievements of the Cacao Project have been difficult to identify.

6.2.2. The difficulties of cacao commercialization

The BID-MAG program lacked a formal evaluation system during the entirety of its implementation, leading to a planning mechanism that was

centered on activity completion instead of achieving objective-oriented results. Indeed, this is perhaps the reason why most of the implementation and progress reports of the various projects that constituted BID-MAG lack a narrative analysis and only refer to degrees of physical or financial execution of the allotted resources for each project portfolio. The Cacao Project is a clear example of this as the key progress indicators utilized in the various follow-up documents produced between 2011 and 2015 tend to consist of the quantity of cacao plants or tools offered to beneficiaries, the number of workshops done with the local counterparts or of fieldwork tours of NPC officials to indigenous farms. And while these indicators are certainly relevant for financial management purposes, the ironical part is that they say very little about the actual effectiveness and efficiency of a development project center on promoting productive efficiency.

Key concerns, such as the degree of appropriation of the Bribri and Cabécar, the immediate or short-term effects on household income or the success of these communities at commercializing cacao have remained unanswered, despite being elemental to ascertain the results of the project. Indeed, all of these are preoccupations shared amongst the indigenous and NCP informants interviewed for this work that were not captured by the final reports submitted by the UCP. Commercialization was a common feature in interviews made for this dissertation, with plenty of claims in a similar line as the quote presented at the beginning of this chapter, whereby serious doubts existed amongst the beneficiaries regarding the potential buyers for the cacao planted as part of the project. Indeed, if there were positive claims amongst the locals about the commercialization potential of cacao it was to be seen much later in the future, or as a beneficiary said: "*(…) I am too old now, and for that I tell them (her children) not to be sad and continue, so they can feed their children with whatever this land will offer us, because I will not see that for sure*" (Bribri Cacao Project beneficiary from Amubre, interview, October 15th 2014).

Such concerns regarding the inherent problems of agricultural commercialization are well justified, given the profound influence that certification bodies for organic production and plantain intermediaries have with regard to the asymmetrical rules of the game regarding the entrance of indigenous farmers to the organic cacao and plantain markets. Indeed, when the locals speak about their decision to cultivate one or both of these for-profit crops, they often cite perceived advantages or disadvantages regarding the manner in which payments are made or requisites for their product be acceptable for commercial intermediaries.

Plantain is by far the most criticized product for most of the Bribri and Cabécar interviewed for this dissertation. The main reason for this reaction is probably the "*computado*" system of commercialization that is used by intermediaries to buy the product. According to this system, the full price can only be paid to the producer if the plantain bunch contains a minimum of 30 fruits (or "fingers"). If it fulfills this expectation, then the farmer is paid in full, but if the bunch has less than 30 fruits, then it is

considered to be incomplete and its price is computed to acknowledge for failing to reach this expectation. Depending on the buying price of the intermediaries coming to the Reserve, this may often mean that two "incomplete" bunches of say, 25 plantains, may end up be sold by the price of a single bunch of 30 fruit, meaning a substantial net loss for the indigenous farmer and his or her household. Even so, what produces such resentment towards the system is that once the intermediaries take the plantain away and commercializes it in the national market (at the major cities of the Central Valley) they often sell the plantains individually, thereby reaping a profit at the expense of the indigenous producers. Considering that there are just a few buyers of the product, Bribri and Cabécar farmers often suspect that there is collusion between them, leading to price arrangement that benefit intermediaries at their expense, with little else to be done as no other potential buyers enter the Reserve.

It must be added that this is not a problem for all plantain producers. Certain households, particularly in Shiroles and Suretka, have managed to organize themselves and by-pass the commercial intermediaries in order to sell directly to exporters, such as Dole or Chiquita. Both pay higher prices and with less fluctuation than intermediaries, thereby allowing these farmers to obtain better terms of trade. Also, with these companies, the price on plantains is set by weight and not under the "*computado*" system, thereby becoming another advantage. Of course, access to this market is not possible for all plantain producers, as selling requirements entail the implementation of costly farming practices, such as regular fertilization and continuous management of sigatoka. The absence of sufficient financial resources and labor becomes a serious barrier for entering this market, thereby only becoming accessible for households with sufficient clan support or with enough financial resources. Indeed only 20% of plantain-producing households of Shiroles and Suretka commercialize their product through Dole, and only one in the intermediate zones at Sepecue does it there (NCP officials, interview, May 21st, 2014).

With all of these commercialization problems recognized, cacao is not necessarily a better alternative, given the existing rules regarding access to the organic market and turnover, and the inherent weakness of the market itself. For example, several farmers interviewed from Suretka and Shiroles, claimed that they favored organic cacao or banana cultivation, but decided to produce plantain instead. The reason for doing this was that nearby farms were already growing plantains and using agrochemicals in the process. As organic certification bodies and MAG regulations on the matter define requisites regarding distances from farms using chemicals, these farms were incapable of attaining the necessary certification to sell organic cacao to the main buyers (i.e.: a local Association of Small Producers of Talamanca, or APPTA; and a company from San José called TROBANEX), whom cater exclusively for the organic market. In other words, while interested in the organic market, these

producers had little choice but to produce plantains. An issue which is aggravated by the fact that, in spite of espousing a sustainable development discourse arguing on the contrary, BID-MAG spent a considerable amount of resources attempting to expand plantain markets through two seriously mismanaged projects related to plantain processing plants for the production of flour[5] and toasted plantain chips,[6] that nevertheless, have become somewhat viable alternatives to selling the product fresh. Indeed, interviewees from this area and some from Amubre claimed that land use changes are limited due to these territorial dispositions regarding organic production and agrochemical uses.

Another perceived problem has to do with turnover, as it is much easier to sell plantain than to sell cacao, thereby becoming an attractive factor for cultivation. Plantain can be sold each week in the Reserves and profits are obtained immediately from the intermediaries, whereas the process with cacao is more complicated. For example, being a small association with limited processing capacity and a stable capital flow, APPTA often times lacks the money to pay cacao farmers right away for their product, whom are obliged to wait for a month to receive payment on their produce. This delayed payment is particularly problematic for households that require to buy staples at the local stores at credit (such as the ones of Shiroles and Suretka), or that require investment in their farms, thereby giving a competitive advantage to plantain, in spite of all of the aforementioned problems commercializing that product. Besides this, selling to APPTA entails local farmers to pay an annual membership fee, without guarantees for them to actually obtain an organic certificate on their farms yearly. A final key issue regarding turnover has also to do with the lack of road infrastructure to move production around the Reserves. Indeed, the absence of reliable roads going up to the highland areas explains the reliance in agricultural production for self-consumption. While plantain, bananas and cacao can be harvested year-round, to bring production to the intermediaries for sale is difficult at some times, particularly during the rainy season (May to November), given that roads get seriously affected by the constant floods of the nearby rivers (Whelan, 2005). This implies the need of having some part of production always devoted to self-consumption in order to face any type of eventualities over the course of the year.

Finally, recurrent market shocks are also relevant for the local Talamancan economy, especially regarding their appropriation of productive endeavors like the Cacao Project. More so, if one considers (as many other do) that this is a region that is well-known for its susceptibilities to the comings and goings of an unfair system of commercial exchange (see Borges, 2006; Whelan, 2005; Orcherton, 2003; Hinojosa, 2002). Surely, there have been major economic effects produced by serious biophysical events (such as the floods of 1991 and 2005, the earthquake of 1991, or the 1978 monilia epidemic), all of which reduced productivity of for-profit farming significantly, but there are also the

inherent instabilities present in all of these cash crop markets. For example, cacao prices were stable during 2014, when I did my fieldwork research in Talamanca, but dropped dramatically during 2015 and 2016 losing most of the value they gained over the course of 2014 (CANACACAO, 2016). Likewise, plantain prices often present significant variations over the course of a single year, as production tends to rise over the course of the later months of the year, leading to significant reductions (NCP official, interview, May 21st, 2015).

It is justifiable that the Bribri and Cabécar people often make explicit their mistrust regarding these new market opportunities and resist interventions in some way; or even revert back to dual agricultural production. Indeed, as some NCP officials recognized, that some of the problems of the project is that there was little faith on its results, which manifested in the form of failure to comply with the initial terms of their involvement in the program: "*(o)ne goes to some of the farms and finds out that they have not removed the plants that are infected with monilia, even though they knew that they had to cut them down to produce healthy pods. But they become sloppy, put on excuses, and end up doing nothing. And please notice that it is very simple, it is just trimming the plants. But they do not do it adequately, nor in the adequate time*" (NCP official, interview, May 21st, 2014). Again, the project lacked any form of effectiveness indicators, making it difficult to see if there is future for cacao amongst these beneficiaries. With that said, interviews do suggest that many of them were not as receptive as others. While the previous discussion offers an economic dimension for understanding the mistrust towards cacao production, up next I will discuss on the political and cultural basis for that attitude.

6.2.3. Political and cultural failings of BID-MAG

Overall, the BID-MAG program exhibited a very limited political participation in formulation and planning stages from local organizations, including both the indigenous ADIs and other Bribri and Cabécar grassroots organizations. There are plenty of indicators that justify this claim, but this chapter will refer to the two most critical. First, the Program lacked any rational foundation that would explain the manner in which project funds were to be distributed and allocated to each component. Indeed, according to the external review of the project (financed by IADB), MAG and the Coordinating Unit designed the initial budget distribution separately from all actors (Alvarez, 2014). Consequently, it is reasonable to argue that while the project was presented rhetorically as a on-demand ICDP, the on-demand part was not realized in practice as budget amounts for each project were assigned before any local organization had a chance to propose their specific projects. If there was any form of coordination between MAG and any other political actor, it probably was with the Municipality of Talamanca, and most likely this was due to the legal requirements of taking into account the local government for coordination with regards to investment in the infrastructure components of BID-MAG.

Second, there was a considerable absence of communication and feedback mechanisms in the project as a whole. As said earlier, BID-MAG lacked any form of indicators to measure program effectiveness and progress report design was basically centered on demonstrating expenditure distribution (see Fallas Solano, 2012). No project document integrated reports of noticeable articulation of local feedback regarding or changing project goals, indicators, or even on-the-ground evaluations of capacities of beneficiary organizations to engage with the component regarding productive diversification. Indeed, while the Program contemplated the creation of some local assemblies in order to integrate local political actors (Nessim et al., 2004; also see Law 8639, which regulated the Program), no follow up was made on the operation of these, evidencing that this issue was at the bottom of actual project priorities. Indeed, the actual functions of the assembly were never clearly defined within project operation. It existed, but BID-MAG never gave any attention to actually defining what its role within the program would be (Nessim et al., 2004). On the contrary, a common feature in the interviews with indigenous participants at these assemblies is that they functioned more as an informal instance, whereby agenda was "validated", despite being exclusively in control of the technical coordinators of the UCP (Bratsi Assembly member, October 14th, 2014). It is no wonder why absenteeism of the indigenous representatives to the Assembly and the rest of smaller local gatherings was noticeable. There were indigenous leaders whom decided to miss more than half of the meetings of the River Basin Council (the key political intermediary with the UCP), arguing that their presence there was not needed to make any decision (Guillen, 2013).

This gross lack of political involvement manifested differently depending on which of the productive diversification projects one looks at, but, in the specific case of cacao it presented itself in the form of the lack of rigorous recognition of anthropological elements of the Bribri and Cabécar cosmovision. Talamancan culture assigns sacred and religious attributes to certain types of soils, as well as many types of seeds in general, and cacao in particular (see Borge and Castillo, 1997). Indeed, according to tradition, *Sibö* (the Bribri-Cabécar equivalent with a deity of creation) created the world with the intention of the *ditsewö* (the people, meaning Talamancan peoples) to harvest and cultivate the land, which would, in turn, give daily sustenance to the indigenous family for it not to go hungry. More precisely, *Sibö* is responsible for promoting and organizing the natural agents and processes that produce germination, thereby becoming the provider of food for the Bribri and the Cabécar (awá from Meleruk, interview, March 18th, 2014). Of course, in a region that is increasingly intervened by the forces of markets, state politics and sikwa culture and Christian ideologies, not all Bribri and Cabecar live by these precepts anymore (particularly those living in the Talamanca Valley floor in or around Suretka and Shiroles). Nevertheless, these beliefs are of considerable importance for understanding Talamancan indigenous

identities, and for the purposes of this chapter, are critical for interpreting everyday agricultural practices, especially in the intermediate zones of Amubre and Sepecue and the highlands of the Valley.

This has to do with the debate regarding which are the actual species to be cultivated within agroforestry systems in Talamanca. Many scholarly pieces on the Talamancan economy tend to center on the distinction between *sköwak* (traditional and for subsistence) and *sikwa* agriculture (for profit), which co-exist together within the discretely limited spaces of many Bribri and Cabécar farms (see Borge and Castillo, 1997; Borge and Laforge, 1995; Guiracocha et al., 2001). While the importance of this distinction must not be diminished in any way as it is undoubtedly important for understanding the historical-geographical trajectories development of these peoples, this dual classification does tend to minimize the fact that there seems to be a complex variety of both sikwa and sköwak agroforestry systems in the region around which cultural meanings and worldviews have been constructed (Ocherton, 2003). While this thesis did not set out doing an anthropological/agronomical study of local indigenous knowledges and their implementation of agriculture, it did gather some information on how these knowledges were relevant for explaining the failure or success of these development interventions. Take cacao as an example: while it is clear that indigenous farmers consider that cacao has become a cash crop over time, with one of them actually claiming that "*it has changed its way of being, by becoming more commercial now*", almost all farmers interviewed also agreed that it is a sacred plant.

> "(…) cacao is for us, the Bribri, of the outmost importance. It is our natural beverage, and it is also part of our beliefs and stories. Sadly, these stories that the elders used to tell are not being told anymore, or are told very rarely" (awá from Meleruk, interview, March 18th, 2014).

One way in which this cultural valuation can be witnessed is with regards to the species that they believe should be used. According to interviews, there is a local preference towards indigenous or traditional cacao (*Theobroma bicolor*, locally known as *saló*) and *pataste* (another local species), instead of commercial cacao (*Theobroma cacao*). This preference can be explained in many different ways. From a subsistence or livelihood point of view, the Bribri and Cabécar tend to prefer the cultivation of crops that could have different potential uses. Traditional cacao – particularly pataste – is known to be a seed that local fauna (e.g.: lowland paca or "*tepezcuintle*", peccary or "*saino*" and peccaries or "*chancho de monte*") seems to be attracted to, thereby allowing these agroforestry systems to be complemented by hunting practices for subsistence, which remain very much prevalent in Bribri livelihood practices, especially in the intermediate zones and in the highlands of the Valley (*awá* from Kachabri, interview, March 20th, 2014). Another obvious and culturally-relevant use of traditional cacao is to produce beverages which are used with ceremonial ends (Bozzoli de Willie, 1979; Borge and Castillo, 1997;

Orcherton, 2005). The symbolic dimension of cacao is critical to local indigenous identity as a resource of great prestige, valued due to its spiritual perspective, as it is considered to be directly linked to the origin of the Talamancans, its relevant use for medicinal purposes and also because it used in plenty of local ceremonies, such as funerals, birth and marriages.

Another critical livelihood aspect of indigenous cacao agroforestry systems has to do with the other species of flora which make up the system. It is customary not to cultivate one single type of tree around cacao, but various ones, each with different particular uses. For example, they use lumber-producing trees such as "*laurel*" (*Cordia alliodora*) and "*cedro*" (*Cedrela odorata*), as they are useful for building houses; "*guanacaste*" (*Enterolobium cyclocarpum*) and "*jabillo*" (*Hura crepitanis*), given that its sap is useful for killing insects and driving birds away; and "*guabo*" (*Inga edulis*), "*jaboncillo*" (*Sapindus saponaria*) and "*guarumo*" (*Cecropia peltata*) have uses as organic compost and medicinal purposes. Guarumo leaves are often used as a cure for constipation, from the sap of the "*higuerón*" (*Ficus aurea*), *awapas* (plural for spiritual healers) produce a medicine for intestinal worms, the juice made out of the boiled peel of "*indio pelado*" (*Bursera simaruba*) is useful for treating pimples and the infusion of "*tabacón*" (*Triplaris melaenodendron*) is used to deal with stomach aches (*awá* from Meleruk, interview, March 18th, 2014). In other words, these agroforestry systems are meant to have an immense amount of uses and advantages for indigenous livelihoods, while also having an intrinsic cultural value for their own everyday traditions and religious practices.

This is also a reason why some degree of resistance from the local farmers was to be expected if the intention was to make them change their practices, as the Cacao Project attempted to do. As said, the project entailed the introduction of new varieties of genetic material – provided by CATIE – that could be useful to withstand the effects of monilia. Moreover, the Project also entailed a systematic change of the local cacao fields, including the replacement of old cacao plants in favor of new ones, cultivated in a *sikwa* fashion. While both these practices did not explicitly entail the elimination of existing forest cover in the fields, it did imply some of these plants to be removed in order to acquiesce with a cultivating structure proper of a more *sikwa* (non-traditional) agroforestry system, whereby density should be larger in order to guarantee higher levels of productivity (Fallas Solano, 2012). Given that little of these cultural and livelihood practices was actually internalized by the Project, it ended up being confronted by some of the Bribri and Cabécar farmers, especially in the intermediate regions and the highlands, where these cultural practices are more prevalent. Indeed, this was recognized late by one of the UCP project officials which was interviewed for this thesis:

> "(…) there were two different fronts: on one side, there is Low Talamanca (i.e.: the Sixaola and Talamanca Valley lowlands) and on the

> other, High Talamanca (i.e.: the area beyond the Teribe River and the highlands). There (referring to High Talamanca) the indigenous population is more accustomed to traditional cacao. It is difficult to go over there and talk to them about trimming and cleaning. There is a cultural attachment to cacao, and therefore, work had to be more intelligent. There is some kind of affection to the plant (…) and so, in the issue about trimming, there are significant sensibilities. In the lowlands, there was not so much trouble, probably because there is not that much traditional cacao being planted there as it is on the indigenous part." (UCP Official, interview, February 25th, 2014).

However, other NCP officials did not grasp the importance of these features of indigenous agriculture, often times interpreting this resistance as neglect on the part of the locals, or even as lack of faith on the product on their part. Some even argued that productivity "*is not the priority for many of them, which is why we had to make a more emphatic claim towards them just making use of the resources that we had available*" (NCP official, interview, 25th February, 2014). While this argument may have convinced some of the beneficiaries, many of them resisted implementation of the project or eventually failed to engage in continuous follow-up of the agricultural practices suggested by the Cacao Project. Moreover, it is very unlikely that these beneficiaries would re-engage with cacao in the terms disposed by BID-MAG, as with the finalization of the program in late 2014, any form of technical assistance of the NCP was interrupted, with a complete lack of commitment of MAG regarding further support in the future (Alvarez, 2014).

6.3. Conclusions

In the previous chapter, a discussion was presented on the inherent problems of the "passive frontier" approach used by environmental authorities regarding the implementation of governance systems for the regulation of natural resource uses in the Indigenous Reserves. There I discussed the disconnect between state goals centered on fortress conservation practices and indigenous livelihood imperatives of the Bribri and Cabécar; and also of how state dispositions to render said imperatives invisible have historically led to failures in the implementation of co-management practices at PILA. I bring this up because it is ironic how ICDPs (themselves tools for countering top-down decision-making of conservation-as-development interventions) implemented in Talamanca, have featured the same level of disconnect as well.

The current chapter has pointed out the failings of the Cacao Project, itself a component of BID-MAG, a self-proclaimed "on-demand" conservation-development program. Perhaps the key problem here has been the lack of alignment between what project administrators assume to be the desirable trajectories of development for local indigenous populations with regards to the needs of the participants, especially with regards to non-economic components of improving livelihoods and

activities and their roles regarding their appropriation of project goals. In absence of such an alignment, as I have shown here, there is potential for increased tension, contestation and even abandonment of the participants, and therefore, the lack of successful implementation of development and conservation goals. This disconnect has been shown with considerable detail regarding the Cacao Project failings to truly integrate key concerns of the locals with regards to cacao commercialization within project considerations. Certainly, the project has attempted to promed buy in to conservation by discursively recomposing and appropriating indigenous culture and livelihoods, yet the cacao agroforestry production sponsored by the state and NGOs through BID-MAG have not actually included politically-viable spaces for participation for the locals to give their inputs with regards to project management and planning, nor have acknowledged the complex interplay of cacao with other forms of production and consumption of forest resources.

Indeed, there is also a notable disconnect with regards to how these conservation and development projects are being evaluated. Despite being a highly complex project, operating in a highly complex environment where integration of cultural, economic, political, social and environmental factors is critical to influence behavior and decision-making changes, the Cacao Project in particular, and BID-MAG in general lacked any form of integration of most of these features. Indeed, the project was itself completely different in execution from what it looked originally during its inception, an issue which translated into a total lack of effectiveness and efficiency indicators of progress. Effectively, the project was promoted under the goals of promoting conservation of natural resources, reducing vulnerability to natural disasters and reducing poverty through the generation of income through diversification of production in the Indigenous Reserves, and in all of those accounts lacked a single indicator that could allow the measuring of success.

But more than just centering on the managerial failings of the project, this chapter also made an effort to contextualize its goals within a long history of agrarian territorial interventions of the Talamancan region, in order to showcase the failed articulation between the commodification of indigenous cacao production and cultural valuation and the socioecological complexities of locally produced nature. The Cacao Project, attempted to improve production in the Bribri and Cabécar cacao farms, while also attempting to promote buy in and reduce vulnerability and foster forest and biodiversity conservation. To do so, it did what many other projects have done over the course of the past thirty years: increase the economic and biological viability of cacao trees within these SAFs. According to CATIE, agroforestry is both an economically efficient use of space and an ecologically sustainable form of land-use, and these two features are relevant because together they position agroforestry as a

solution to overpopulation and desertification in rural areas such as this one.

Yet, as has happened with plenty of the previous interventions, Talamanca cacao remains economically impractical. Its vulnerability to monilia requires the introduction of very expensive resistant varieties of cacao and new cultivation practices, which are not easily accepted by the locals on cultural and livelihood grounds. While this economic impracticality has been the motivation for efforts to make cacao agroforestry more profitable, either through greater market exposure to niche markets, in effect, it is very difficult to access these if there are no considerable investment made in the region. This is without mentioning the need of engaging in a structural change that would provoke a reduction in the use of pesticides in the nearby monoculture areas (Hinojosa 2002) or, alternatively by increasing the value of cacao plots, including the intensified planting of valuable trees for felling (Beer 1991; Borge and Laforge 1996). In short, cacao agroforestry is an ecologically friendly use of space, but with specific biological and economic constraints that require never-ending development interventions for it to spread in Talamanca.

To conclude, while state territorial interventions have shifted over time from a more command-and-control oriented policy to a market oriented one, it still uses periodic territorial interventions in order to verify accomplishment of the objectives of maintaining forest and forest cover by indigenous counterparts. One of the oldest and most important conservation/rural development programs in the Talamanca Valley has to do with how to make sustainable cacao production a more attractive cash crop in the area, vis-à-vis other less sustainable and greatly expanded crop alternative in the Valley, such as commercial banana and plantain. CATIE and various state agricultural agencies (mainly the Ministry of Agriculture, the Institute of Agricultural Technology, the Institute of Rural Development and the Ministry of Environment) consider overwhelmingly that cacao is the most environmentally comprehensive cash crop possibility in the area. Indeed, cacao can grow with little use of agrochemicals and underneath considerable forest cover, which theoretically allows the fulfillment of two critical objectives: 1) to promote a feasible economic alternative for the population, while 2) protecting forest cover and local biodiversity. Some authors, such as Borge (2011) consider that it is also the soundest 'cultural' economic alternative, as cacao is a crop with considerable cultural significance within the Bribri and Cabecar (specifically in the context of policultivation systems, whereas plantain is, exclusively, a monoculture).

In so doing, the introduction of cacao has invented a powerful discourse by which indigenous peoples are understood with regards to their agricultural productivity, and which now works as a form of disciplining, i towards the creation of incentive structures meant to make individuals into self-interest actors bounded by economic rationality (see

Fletcher, 2010: 173). Neoliberal governance here has developed a discourse that has contemplated the compatibility of one feature of Talamancan culture with self-regulating markets. Accordingly, it has push forwards this form of agricultural practices in order "*to inculcate ethical norms vis-a-vis the environment, within neoliberal framework conservationists would simply endeavor to provide incentives sufficient to motivate individuals to choose to behave in conservation-friendly ways*" (Ibid: 176).

It is within this conservation-development puzzle that indigenous people and its agricultural system become key pieces. While indigenous agriculture follows a particular cultural rationale, its current dependence on modern monoculture crops makes it unsustainable (Harvey et al. 2006; Polidoro et al. 2008). Discursively, cacao agroforestry is posited as a solution, yet for it to work, this crop requires a surge in its market value. The key assumption here is that indigenous farmers are rational, and therefore utility maximizers, which means that they will favor the crop that allows for the best margin of profitability. Put differently, from the perspective of this discourse, the solution to the problems of agriculture at the indigenous reserves entails making their already ecologically-friendly forms of agroforestry compatible with capital accumulation. Yet, the biggest obstacle for this project is reality itself, namely, the economically questioned cacao tree.

Notes

[1] The acronym BID-MAG is used as a popular short-hand in the Indigenous Reserves to refer to the Sustainable Development Program of the Sixaola River Basin. This term originates in the fact that the program was executed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), with resources loaned by the Inter American Development Bank (BID).

[2] The Panamanian version of the project was called Bocas del Toro Sustainable Development Program. While originally thought as an ICDP, much like BID-MAG, this program was much more oriented toward the development side of the equation, concentrating on productive diversification and the building of infrastructure and primary services. With a total funding of 46,9 million USD, the project was executed in two stages. The first stage was concerned with "*strengthening institutions and civil society encouraging the design of decision-making and decentralized management tools*" (Lamay and Coloane, 2007: 14). Attention was directed towards bolstering the budgets of local government institutions in the province, ANAM in particular. The second stage was allotted the bulk of the budget (30,0 million USD) and was designed with the objective of strengthening of productive diversification and infrastructure. This was done through programs meant to diversify agricultural crops different than banana, such as cacao; while improving road access to certain villages. It is important to say that a great deal of the finance ended up being

spent on projects all over the province, particularly in communities around Bahía Almirante, and not precisely on the border region (Guillén, 2013).

[3] An "awá" holds a social position, which is roughly equivalent to that of the shaman in other Latin American indigenous cultures. The role of the shaman differs from culture to culture, but, broadly speaking, they often hold a role as "healers" or "advisors" within the community, thereby holding considerable social prestige within the local communities (see Taussig, 1987; Velásquez, 1987; Halifax, 1979). For the Bribri proper, the awá holds at least three critical social roles: advisor, healer and historian. The awapa (plural for awá in Bribri) are individuals with considerable knowledge about the Bribri myths about the origins of the Earth and the cosmos, and are considered to have a great capacity to commune with spirits and, in some way, with Sibö. This implies a critical social role as a respected advisor for the Bribri communities or the specific clans of which the awá is part of (Rojas Conejo, 2009). Generally, the awapa knows a great deal about the qualities and uses of local plant and animal life, thereby allowing them to use this knowledge as part of traditional healing practices such as seképeyok (healing chants and diets) and kömanéuk (a more psychosomatic approach towards healing) (Bozzoli de Willie, 1979). Awapa approach these healing practices in different ways depending on the place, with significant differences between the Talamanca Valley and the highlands (Jara Murillo and García Segura, 2011). Of significant importance for this thesis is the role of the awá as a historian of the Bribri people. They continuously gather the various stories behind the mythological origins of the world, which then pass on to their children and to the awapa (Rojas Conejo, 2009). One means of doing this is by using these knowledges as a means of interpreting their current realities, thereby allowing this knowledge to maintain continuous usage. For this reason, the practices of the awapa could be understood as a form of political resistance towards changes in the modern world. In some way, they contribute to the Bribri reality by bringing a different form to approach and know the world, by unifying the material reality of projects and interventions and the mythological reality upon which their identity is partially based upon.

[4] Black sigatoka is a fungal disease that affects banana plants and that is provoked by the ascomycete fungus. When infected, productivity of banana plants affected by sigatoka can be reduced in more than half, with fungicidal control to prevent or counter outbreaks requiring more than a year (Jones, 2000).

[5] The BID-MAG project included other components different that the Cacao Program that is studied in this chapter. One of these projects involved the establishment of a small agro industrial plant for producing plantain flour, using the local plantain production from the indigenous territories and their surroundings. One obvious critique of this project was its bias towards plantain production in a manner that runs counter to the overall objectives of BID-MAG goals of promoting sustainable development in the region. As said in the document, perception amongst NGOs and MINAE is that the monoculture cultivation of plantains hinders ecosystems in the Talamanca Valley (Somarriba, 1993; Borge, 2011). But besides this major contradiction in the BID-MAG Project, this sub-component failed due to considerable mismanagement and failure to account for local demands. Indeed, the project

local appropriation of the initiative was minimal as the local counterpart of the project – the Talamancan County Agricultural Center (CACTA) – did not want to produce plantain flour and was more interested instead in building a factory for producing plantain chips, which was the first idea with which they were approached originally (President of CACTA, interview June 1st 2014). As a result, the plantain flour factory was accepted passively by CACTA and with considerable doubts regarding the potential profitability that could be obtained from the project. This was heightened by more critical analysis of the market studies that supported the decision of the governing bodies of BID-MAG of fostering this initiative. Effectively, the market study holds as a key premise of their analysis of demand and cost-effectiveness that plantain flour could effectively substitute the more commonly used wheat flour within the national market (MAG, 2012). This is argued despite the fact that plantain flour is a product rarely known by Costa Ricans and that it costs six or seven times more than wheat flour. This and other faulty premises, led CATCA to express serious doubts to the Ministry of Agriculture and the governing body of BID-MAG regarding the potential profitability and financial sustainability of the project. Indeed, to this day, while the plantain flour factory has been built, it remains unused by local producers.

[6] A second agro-industrial project included in BID-MAG was the establishment of a factory for producing toasted plantain chips. This project was implemented without any type of technical study that could support specifications for the factory, nor even a market study that could offer a clear account of the potential demand for the product (COOPETISOLA and MAG, 2010). Indeed, a visit to the factory proves serious contrast between the project on paper and the final result, as the initial profile document states that the factory would make 19.485 kilograms of plantain chips a year (COOPETISOLA and MAG, 2010), but a visit to the factory in June 2014 showed that its actual productive capacity would have been of 180 kilograms a month. This is without mentioning that the project did not involve capacity-building for the local association in charge of managing the factory in key areas such as commercialization and distribution. At the time of my visit, COOPETISOLA, the organization in charge of the factory, was dealing with problems for addressing important commercialization issues such as printing bar codes on their products, labeling and branding, with little to no assistance on the part of the governing bodies of BID-MAG (President of COOPETISOLA, interview, June 4th 2014). This shows that the local organization lacked any sort of commercialization strategy beforehand, meaning that even if they manage to produce a single bag of plantain chips, it is more likely that they would not have someone to sell that to.

7 Neoliberal multiculturalism and PES in the Talamanca Valley

> "The PSA has helped us plenty, the indigenous people cannot say that they have not understood that. But if we do not fight for what is ours today, tomorrow we will have nothing with which to fight" (former ADITIBRI president, interview, May 16th 2014).

This chapter studies the politics of appropriation and resistance related to the implementation of payments of environmental services (PES) in the Talamancan Bribri and Cabécar Indigenous Reserves. To do so, it addresses the perceptions of indigenous leaders regarding the local impacts of the Costa Rican state-led PES program – the *Programa de Pago por Servicios Ambientales* (PSA) and follows-up on their negotiation with the Costa Rican state regarding the inclusion of new "indigenous-minded" features in the context of the re-designing the PSA for implementation in these territories. The case of the PSA program and the ongoing REDD+ negotiations (next chapter) exemplify how indigenous policy-making in Costa Rica functions as a form of neoliberal multiculturalism. The argument of this chapter is that the PSA has attempted to integrate some forms of indigenous cultural, economic and political demands into its design, albeit also marginalizing, suppressing and eroding other aspects of indigenous demands, due to the neoliberal imperatives behind the program.

The PSA program has been deployed in the Bribri and Cabécar Indigenous Reserves since 1999. Discursively, this program has been designed to be a territorial strategy designed to transform the evanescent characteristics of forests – such as their scenic beauty, carbon sequestration processes and their protection of biodiversity and watersheds – into commodities, which are then privatized by the National Forestry Financing Fund for them to be traded in markets. In practice, concrete commodification of environmental services remains doubtful as the PSA program has not enthralled the national and international private sector into constituting a true market of environmental services. Indeed, in the Bribri and Cabécar territories, the program has been re-designed more as an effort to promote buy-in to conservation than a form of capitalist accumulation. Yet, this does not mean that there are no ramifications from the ongoing processes of commodification and privatization that constitute the main institutional features of the PSA.

While being presented to the Bribri and Cabécar as a financial means to support indigenous demands for political autonomy, the PES program has been accompanied by obligations for the Bribri and Cabécar

to adopt practices that run counter to their cultural, economic and political uses of the forests. The rationale behind this contradiction between discourse and practice of the PSA, is the result of PES being framed as a solution to perceived local problems of economic efficiency maximization of the Bribri and Cabécar agriculture, by the Costa Rican state and conservationist NGOs. Green economy measures, like PES, are considered by these actors, to have more far-reaching impacts than cacao agroforestry since, it is supposed that the main beneficiaries of the program – the Indigenous Development Associations (ADI) – will reinvest these resources into expenditures on human and social capital, leading to poverty reduction.

Using information collected from the financial statements of the Bribri ADI and about 25 interviews done with the local leadership of both ADIs, local grassroots organizations and regional indigenous platforms, this chapter argues that the PSA has favored autochthonous efforts towards territorial autonomy and self-governance to a point. Indeed, the program has allowed the ADIs to obtain critically-needed funding that is used to reinforce local alternative development programs and local governance capabilities. Yet, it has also undermined this political autonomy by demanding the use of this funds to locally finance conservation actions imposed by the state, as well. This is exemplified by the fact that it entails Bribri and Cabécar governance to accept forms of conservation and resource uses that are incompatible to their own cultural uses of forests. It is relevant to note that this lack of recognition in the PSA program has become a major issue in current negotiations between the Costa Rican state and indigenous organizations for the development of an indigenous agenda within the National REDD+ Strategy.

The chapter is structured in five sections. The first two deal with the configuration of the PSA as a territorial strategy for the Talamancan Indigenous Reserves. It explores how the neoliberal objectives of commodification and privatization that are inherent to the PSA program have been made discursively viable in Talamanca, despite the lack of legible and verifiable property rights in the indigenous territories. Attention is given to how the solution to this conundrum has sponsored a framing of the PES as a financing tool for the indigenous "local governments" (i.e.: the ADIs). The following two sections characterize the perceived effects of the PSA programs for promoting forms of local governance of natural resources. Emphasis is put on whether these resources have been used to foster autochthonous forms of resource management and on their impingement on cultural uses. The final section will bring all these issues together around my discussion on neoliberal conservation and territorial and political exclusion through neoliberal multiculturalism.

7.1. Neoliberal mindsets and the barrier to entry to the PSA program

The incorporation of the Talamancan Indigenous Reserves into the Green Economy has been an important goal of recent NGO- and IFO-led sustainable development interventions since the implementation of the NAMASOL project in the 1990s. Indeed, that project openly argued that: *"(b)oth the agroforestry system and the forests have an immense value as carbon sinks for the global industry"* (Borge and Laforge, 1996: 72). The project recommended incorporating the entirety of the Bribri and Cabécar territories within implementation programs for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), given that: "*(t)he money (received from these payments) could then be used to consolidate the sustainable development model that Talamanca has managed to create (…) and to guarantee the biodiversity of the Talamanca National Park"* (Ibid: 72). This vision has been also shared by other NGOs supporting sustainable development interventions in the area, such as CATIE, which decided to link PES with their own efforts towards cacao agroforestry in the early 2000s (see Lansing, 2007 for more information on this PES project).

With that said, actual incorporation of the Bribri and Cabécar indigenous territories to the renowned Costa Rican PSA program, was faced with considerable political resistance from FONAFIFO during the early years of implementation. Indeed, between 1998 and 2003, only a handful of indigenous territories participated in the program, and the ones that did only managed to incorporate a very small fraction of their lands (see the following table 5.1). This happened despite FONAFIFO recognizing the considerable extension of well-conserved forests that these territories could offer the PSA (FONAFIFO, 2001) and ongoing pressures by NGOs – like IUCN, CATIE and TNC – to integrate these lands into the program (Borge and Martínez, 2009).

It was not until after 2004, and because of the implementation of the Ecomercados project,[1] that the PSA began exhibiting a major territorial expansion in the indigenous reserves. It matters to know why did FONAFIFO resisted to include these territories in the PSA and how does these resistances were subsided (partly through indigenous mobilization), because that answer is critical to understand the way this PES scheme has functioned discursively and practically over the past thirteen years. The argument here is that FONAFIFO's resistance to the inclusion of indigenous territories in the PSA reflects a contradiction between the neoliberal mindset of the PSA program and the material and ideational realities of indigenous territories and cultures. This claim can be argued by looking at the bureaucratic and discursive barriers to entry raised by the institution to the ADIs over the first years of implementation.

Perhaps the most noticeable barrier had to do with the lack of differentiated rules regarding program enrollment for forest landowners trying to enter the program. Indeed, as a former Talamancan Bribri ADI

president recalled: "*at the beginning, everything was hard because the rules were the same for all the people entering FONAFIFO, which resulted in rules that could not be fulfilled by the ADIs, and therefore, entry was denied for us*" (ADI President, interview, May 8th, 2014) Enrollment in the PSA is a complicated and, often, frustrating affair that demands numerous interactions with different forms of state bureaucracy.

Table 4. Contracts signed and hectares included by the Costa Rican Indigenous Reserves in the PSA program. 1997-2015

Year	PSA Protection		PSA Reforestation		PSA-Regeneration	
	Hectares	Payment	Hectares	Payment	Hectares	Payment
1997	1,118.00	259,678.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1998	1,308.00	363,481.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1999	1,142.00	320,060.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2000	3,723.00	844,941.28	50.00	90,120.43	0.00	0.00
2001	4,199.00	931,540.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2002	2,550.00	542,021.59	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2003	6.888.00	1,465,907.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2004	7,014.00	1,501,607.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2005	6,600.00	2,112,000.00	40.00	32,640.00	0.00	0.00
2006	2,900.00	928,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2007	6,555.60	2,097,792.00	0.00	0.00	150.00	32,160.00
2008	12,400.60	3,968,192.00	0.00	0.00	252.50	53,065.00
2009	8,930.20	2,577,664.00	0.00	0.00	600.00	130,440.00
2010	9,049.80	2,919,936.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2011	10,506.70	3,362,144.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	102,500.00
2012	12,442.20	7,963,008.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2013	12,282.30	7,860,672.00	0.00	0.00	155.70	63,837.00
2014	12,421.00	3,732,515.38	100.40	107,032.59	434.00	98,318.10
2015	10,547.00	3,279,109.10	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	279,611.20

Source: Elaboration of the author with data provided by FONAFIFO.

For example, a landowner must give proof of having no standing debts with social security payments, must hold a formal land title accompanied by a legalized and formalized cadastral map including the exact geographical data of his land, and hand in a forest management plan previously prepared and accepted by a forestry regent (whom will also need to oversee field verification and contract monitoring at the behest of FONAFIFO) (FONAFIFO, 2015). Each one of these requirements carry an economic cost for potential beneficiaries, often making enrollment a very onerous affair (Bosselmann and Lund, 2013). Indeed, forest regents alone can charge up to 18% of the total payments received by the beneficiaries. So, it is no surprise that some poor beneficiaries find the PSA program unaffordable, despite owning lands in forested areas deemed critical for conservation by SINAC and FONAFIFO (Porras, 2010).

While many of these requisites for enrollment have become cost-related entry barriers for many indigenous beneficiaries over time (see Borges and Martinez, 2009), the most relevant limitations have been faced regarding the complicated legibility of property rights at indigenous reserves. This problem has two different manifestations. On the one hand, the ADIs – which are considered the legal owners of the entirety of the reserves, in representation of the indigenous communities – often face limitations for producing proper land documentation. Historical institutional separations between the state agencies in charge of handling land titling processes and those doing survey and cadastral work causes situations in which ADIs may have slightly contradicting data in both documents required for enrolling in the program (Acuña, 2007). Fixing these incongruities is a very costly endeavor, given that it sometimes requires protracted legal and cadastral measures involving lawyers and copious administrative fees. Moreover, these problems with land documentation also need to consider the troubling fact that all ADIs are not in possession of all the entirety of the lands assigned to them by law (Guevara Berger et al., 1996). The Talamancan Bribri and Cabécar Reserves have remained incapable of attaining possession of at least 10% of the land assigned to them by the state since 1977 (Herrera and Benavides, 2016). In some cases, non-indigenous people holding land reserved for indigenous uses have the proper land documentation proving ownership thereby resulting in contradicting claims and considerable land tenure insecurities for both parties.

On the other hand, property rights within the reserves are extremely difficult to track down. In the Talamancan Bribri and Cabécar territories proper, land is distributed in many ways. Individual farms have small plots of land to be used for their own subsistence and commercialization. Yet, different families often share "*trabajaderos*" (or communal working lands) to develop agricultural endeavors with members of their extended family or clan structures. While forests may exist within these two types of land tenure, other forests are often also owned by the different clans (kinship-based structures) in which the Bribri and Cabécar organize themselves while still others are under the control of the ADIs themselves either as part of their own conservation objectives (e.g.: protection of forests and mountains with sacred, cultural or water-production values) or as unclaimed lands to be redistributed amongst poor indigenous families. There may be some small degree of legibility as individual family farms sometimes use green fences or barbwire (if they can afford it) to close off their plots (or part of them) to avoid livestock wandering to cultivation areas or those located in neighboring farms (which is a continuous source of conflict between the Bribri and the Cabécar). Yet, overall, this veritable mosaic of land tenures completely lacks formal legibility as the ADIs have never developed a cadastral map or a land survey, not to mention that there may be resistances to doing so from some of the locals whom may use resources located at forests owned

by the ADIs or the clans (political leader of Talamanca por la Vida y por la Tierra, interview, April 20th, 2014).

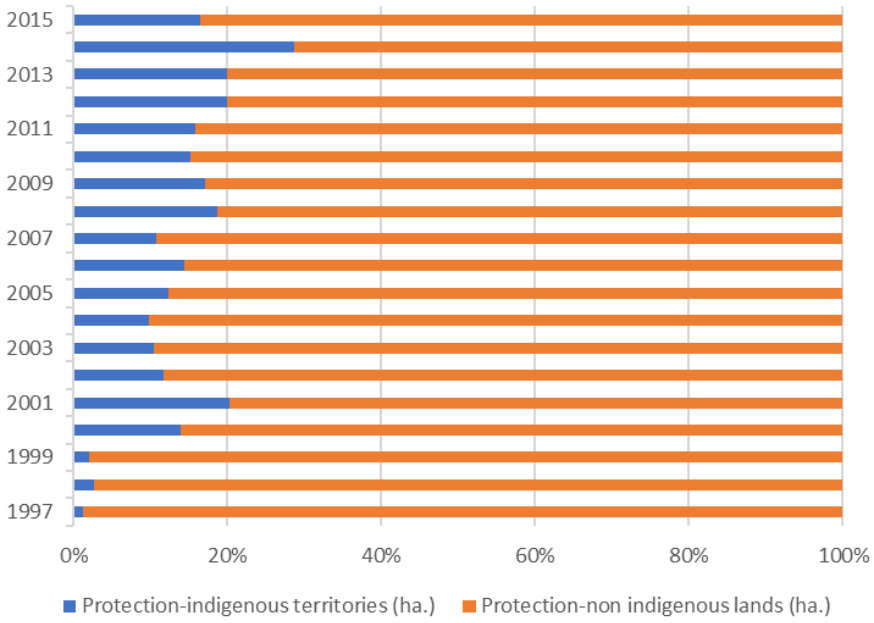
All these problems can be considered as obstacles to the neoliberal mindset in which the PSA program is based. PES schemes are neoliberal policy tools that highlight the commodification and privatization of environmental services. Yet, to fulfill this objective, these instruments require the prior existence of certain forms of property enclosure that could assure the actual and demonstrable transfer of rights over said ecosystem services (Castree, 2003). For example, the 1996 Forestry Law – which created the PSA – clearly states that FONAFIFO offers compensation to the legal proprietors of the land to obtain the rights over the environmental services offered. After this, only this government agency is permitted to trade these rights with third parties, whether in the shape of biodiversity or carbon offsets (Navarro, 2010). Put differently, through the payments made, FONAFIFO is essentially obtaining possession of a good, formerly retained by the landowner, thereby involving the creation of a new arrangement of property rights (McAfee, 2012). So, if the service is ill-defined, or there is a lack of clear land rights that may hinder a clear transfer of property rights over the environmental services provided, then the offsets become goods with uncertain market value (Muradian et al., 2010).

Moreover, seen from the perspective of the landowner, the lack of clear and secure property rights may also end up complicating the straightforwardness of the payment transference as well. Ideally, a PES scheme should operate as an easy exchange involving the fewest number of go-betweens and coordination tools as possible, thereby limiting the thinning of the payment. Otherwise, the payment will be incapable to mirror a well-defined market price structure. Yet, in the case of the Bribri and the Cabécar, where land ownership may often involve different actors (individual families, clans, ADIs, private owners, contesting neighbors, etc.), the risk of dilution is high and therefore the directedness of the payment could be compromised, leading to the people owning the land to be ineffectively or inadequately recompensed for the services (Muradian and Rival, 2012).

Besides these bureaucratic and property-related barriers, there have been others that merit some attention. For example, Borge (2003) notes that part of FONAFIFO's lukewarm approach to indigenous peoples reflects the opposition of economic sectors with vested interests in the distribution of PSA moneys, an issue that is reflected in the current low-level participation of indigenous territories in the program, despite having the best conserved forests outside of state-owned protected areas (Corbera et al., 2011, see also the following graph). This claim was supported by many indigenous and mestizo peasant leaders as well (RIBCA coordinator, personal interview, August 4th, 2014; UNAFOR coordinator, interview, September 23rd, 2014). Documentation on this issue is scarce and there have not been many studies exploring the power struggles that

take place within the higher institutional levels of FONAFIFO (see Fletcher and Breitling, 2012).

Graph 1. Comparison of hectares under PES in indigenous territories with non-indigenous lands. 1997-2015



Source: Elaboration by the author with data provided by FONAFIFO.

Even though a department of MINAE, FONAFIFO functions with a significant level of independence, being governed by an Executive Board that not only includes government officials, but also delegates of the forest industry and the financial sector, with no representation offered to other forest landowners (e.g.: indigenous peoples and mestizo peasants). Therefore some authors often label the entity as a quasi-state institution, as its decision-making level tends to function more as a political arena between for state and private sector interests (Lansing, 2014). So, FONAFIFO's lukewarm inclusion of indigenous peoples from the PSA, some authors argue, could have originated in the unwillingness from some groups of beneficiaries in the private forestry sector to allow portions of the payments to become available for indigenous peoples (see Borges, 2003; Borge and Martínez, 2009; Vaas, 2013; Daniels et al., 2010).

Some other interviewees, including an interviewed FONAFIFO official also point out to preoccupations amongst NGO and PSA officials regarding the potential misuse of payments by indigenous peoples as a reason for institutional resistance. (FONAFIFO REDD+ official, interview, 28th April 2014). Indeed, the issue of accountability features prominently in discussions about potential changes required by the PSA in order to facilitate access by indigenous peoples in the early 2000s. One potential

reason may have to do with claims of corruption in the use of said resources, an issue that gained some notoriety in the early 2000s when a local TV news crew made an exposé on inconsistencies in the expenditure of PSA resources by the Talamancan Bribri ADI (FONAFIFO Regional Manager, interview, August 19th, 2014; former ADI president 2003-2004, interview, August 15th, 2014).

7.2. Breaching institutional resistance

Over the course of the early 2000s, FONAFIFO was coming under increased pressures to resolve the access problems faced not only by the indigenous territories, but by other non-indigenous small landowners failing to access the program, as well. Most of these pressures came either from NGOs, which found a lucrative business operating as intermediaries for the negotiation of PSA contracts in bulk, on behalf of small landowners (Vaas, 2013); OFIs, which had been sponsoring the narrative of PES schemes as tools for poverty reduction in rural areas, that was clearly not being materialized in Costa Rica; and indigenous organizations and national platforms (including the ADIs) which saw the PSA as a reasonable alternative for supporting their own forms of governance (see Pagiola, 2002).

In that context, the Ecomercados project was launched through a grant of 8 million dollars financed by GEF and designed as a comprehensive administrative reform of the PSA that also included a considerable expansion of its geographical coverage. Originally designed as a tool for re-orienting the PSA to fill perceived gaps in the national system of protected areas, the project was influenced by these continuous criticisms regarding low level of enrollment of poor farmers. Expectedly, the project included a 50% expansion in the number of contracts with small landowners until 2009 as one of its main objectives (Borge and Martínez, 2009) Attention was quickly granted to the Talamancan indigenous Reserves, being not only a poor region, but also towards key conservation gaps for the consolidation of the buffer zone of PILA, the Costa Rican lynchpin of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor.

Of course, to overcome the contradiction between neoliberal goals of the PSA and the territorial realities of the Talamancans, Ecomercados did require the elaboration of an informed political and discursive strategy to justify their intervention. Such policy strategy was published by FONAFIFO in 2003, with the objective of "*delineate the (administrative) changes required for the three traditional modalities (of the PSA) – Protection, Reforestation and (Forest) Management), according to the Bribri-Cabécar rationality*" (Borge, 2003: 4). It is a lengthy document that resulted from negotiations between FONAFIFO and various indigenous organizations, including the ADIs. The document focuses on two main goals: 1) appease concerns over Bribri and Cabécar misuse of the payments by reframing their land management decision-making as being coherent with the PSA

mindset; and 2) define the specific modalities with which FONAFIFO was to intervene the indigenous reserves, to guarantee the additionality and directedness of the payment, efficient ecosystem service commodification, poverty reduction goals and as little misuse of resources as possible.

Regarding the first goal, the strategy basically argues that Bribri and Cabécar rationalities fall neatly within the neoliberal economic logic that support the PSA. Beginning with a description of Talamancan farming practices (that is also bereft of any attention towards the cultural or political determinants of these practices), the strategy explains that the Bribri and Cabécar dual agricultural system is the result of an economic rational choice to maximize labor efficiency, guarantee lower farming maintenance costs and maximize farm utility in a wider economic context of vulnerable and unstable commodity markets. The argument is then that the Talamancans choose to cultivate different plant species at different distances and with different uses as a risk management strategy, whereby they are meant to guarantee productive and stable harvests to fulfill a goal centered on income generation, but without abandoning some forms of subsistence production for when markets are not viable. Put plainly, the FONAFIFO strategy frames indigenous farmers as marginal utility maximizers by default. Their choice of what to produce, when and how is determined by the recognition of inefficient markets and the imperative to reduce costs to reap high benefits. Conservation is part of this goal as maintaining some biological diversity is paramount for reducing farming costs regarding plague control.

However, the perceived problem with this system is that it is becoming increasingly vulnerable to population growth. Subsistence agriculture is considered here to be incapable of supporting the ongoing population burst faced by the Bribri and the Cabécar in the future, at least without also leading to some form of colonization of the forests. However, for-profit agriculture is deemed incapable of providing enough income to the locals to live of these products, given unstable commodity markets. So, the FONAFIFO strategy states the necessity of developing new alternative forms of production and income generation.

These perceived assumptions about cultural rationalities of the Talamancan indigenous peoples could be logical recipients of neoliberal-minded PES schemes. Indeed, the actual effectiveness of these programs is directly dependent on the role of money transfers at steering land management behaviors towards the desired land uses defined by the buyers of said ecosystem services, in this case, conservation of forest cover (Muradian et al., 2010). This of course, also implies the susceptibility of potential users to re-conceptualize nature as a potential subsystem of the economy. Indeed, the strategy does further the idea that Bribri and Cabécar people already conceptualize Talamancan forests as a form of investment and capitalization, but without monetary components. Indeed, one of the theses brought back from NAMASOL here, is that while much of the Talamancan economy exhibited extremely low levels of

monetization, savings or financial investments, Bribri and Cabécar had internalized these economic processes within their own land management practices, particularly with regards to husbandry animals and forests (Borge and Laforge, 1996)

Of course, while the strategy affirms that the necessary mindset exists, attention must be offered to how the PSA is going to be implemented without compromising additionality, payment directedness and commodification. While the PSA program offers different contract modalities – with some oriented towards reforesting pastures and other devoted to different forms of forest management that allow a sustainable extraction of lumber for productive purpose. The FONAFIFO strategy put emphasis on the PSA using contracts centered on conservation of forests belonging exclusively to the ADIs. This is not to say that interaction between FONAFIFO and the indigenous territories should exclusively focus in this modality, implying that this could be the most effective and the less conflictive option.

This conclusion was perhaps the main result of the negotiation process between FONAFIFO and the indigenous organizations, according to both FONAFIFO officials, the consultant in charge of developing the strategy and the indigenous leaders themselves. From FONAFIFO's point of view, forest management and reforestation contracts would require various institutional arrangements that would be extremely difficult to afford or control by the farmers, the forestry regents or the ADIs themselves. For example, forest management contracts would have required every individual beneficiary to develop expensive management plans and implied new obligations for continuous control of the ADI regarding domestic consumption of lumber, that these organizations could not possibly afford. Whereas, for a reforestation contract FONAFIFO, the regents and the ADI also needed to create a control system to avoid farmers from cutting down already existing agroforestry systems and to demand an even more costly management plan determining which specific tree species were to be planted and following specific forest densities (Borge, 2003). Furthermore, and even more important, this would have required an intensive intervention of the territories in order to clarify land rights over individual patches of land, which, according to Bribri leaders interviewed, was bound to generate internal conflict. While the idea of an indigenous-minded PSA program was certainly put on the table by the indigenous organizations it was discarded by FONAFIFO given that it would entail the development of complicated institutional arrangements, it would entail the same problems and costs as the other options and it would fail to guarantee additionality and conditionality of the PSA program. As somebody involved in the negotiations said recently: "if someone were to demonstrate that there is hunting and cutting down of forest in these places then there will be trouble, how could you value biodiversity services in that way?" (SINAC Official, interview, August 13th, 2014).

On the contrary, the use of a PSA Forest Protection modality on forests under control of the local ADIs was a much cheaper and politically feasible option for all parts. Instead of a bunch of individual contracts, the indigenous territories would only require developing a couple each year, thereby reducing forestry regency and forest management costs significantly. Moreover, the program could have the chance of focusing on bundles of ecosystem services, as ADI forests often include areas with great religious and archeological value, with high levels of biodiversity, critical to water production, and often in mountainous areas with great terrain inclination. Given that these lands have only one owner (the ADI) and are considerably large, it is easier for forest regents and PSA officials to delimit specific plot sizes for the contracts without overlapping with plots from other indigenous peoples. In other words, these are specific lands in the territories that are much more susceptible to be bounded and put under some form of control for exclusive forms of environmental conservation. In other words, the solution was the enclosure of the lands with greatest collective social and cultural meaning for the Bribri and the Cabécar, with the objective of imposing a conservation-minded financial mechanism.

While this decision to use the PSA at culturally-relevant forests has spurred periodic opposition from some sectors of the Bribri and the Cabécar, many indigenous leaders interviewed considered it to be the best tool for attaining poverty reduction and guaranteeing political autonomy and strong institutions to govern the territories:

> "What are we going to conserve if we are losing our lands? No, the first thing is the institutional strengthening. Many institutions come here and do their investing in building things that we have no use for. For example, there is a community center that was built recently and nobody is using it, and that's not fine. We didn't want that back then. For us the priority is to organize ourselves." (Former ADITIBRI President, interview, August 15th, 2014).

Indeed, this 'social capital solution' to the PSA property legibility problem was framed as a collective solution for poverty and development problems for the entire community in the FONAFIFO strategy:

> "What is looked for (by these projects and interventions) is the visibility of the project, a way of proving that budget goals are being met and to fulfill the aspirations of the recipient populations, but only for a short period of time, of about five years, which is the expected lifespan of these endeavors. The indigenous organizations have been making these criticisms for more than ten years (…) and on the contrary, they point towards efficiency, to serve as leverage for autochthonous economic initiatives, support for the political development of the local political and entrepreneurial leadership, support for education projects, means to collaborate with the defense of natural resources and to improve land tenure as a way to stop the threat of potentially harmful extractivist tendencies" (Borge, 2003: 68).

In other words, what seems to be lacking in the territories is the presence of a strong institutional framework that may reorient these much-needed interventions and financial investments made from abroad, towards supporting a local and autochthonous project of development, or as it is argued earlier in the document: "*(t)he tasks required to combat poverty cannot be continued if not previous sustained by strengthened local institutions. Whatever bridge, food distribution process, road or school that may be built will not have positive and irreversible results if the institutions that have to deal with these affairs are not strengthened as well*" (Borge, 2003: 35). In other words, for the PSA program to combat poverty in the territories, its focus must be re-oriented towards fostering a strong territorial governance (mainly through continuous investment on the local ADIs as the informal local governments of the territories) and other forms of social capital formation, to guarantee a strong indigenous position when approached by NGO and state interventions and development projects in the future.

To summarize, indigenous involvement with the PSA program was faced with a complicated problem of how to make the neoliberal objectives of commodification and privatization viable in Talamanca, a place where the lack of necessary and pre-existent legible and verifiable private property rights is noticeable and prevalent and where the cultural forms of resources uses were deemed incoherent with the rationale needed of potential beneficiaries. Under pressures by NGOs, indigenous communities and IFOs, FONAFIFO was forced to deal with this issue and the best possible choice was to enclose the lands of the ADIs that were deemed to protect particularly important sites for Talamancan culture, water provision and cultural uses of resources. The rationale behind this choice included a reconceptualization of the Bribri and Cabécar as inherently rational economic subjects, and of the PSA becoming a tool for fostering autochthonous development, political autonomy and self-determination. In the following section, I will examine the effects of the PSA regarding these latter issues.

7.3. The benefits of the PSA program

The Talamanca Bribri and Cabécar Indigenous Reserves were chosen as the first indigenous territories to be enrolled in the PSA program. This choice was informed by different reasons. First, unlike most indigenous reserves in the country, almost all of the land of the TBIR and TCIR is in indigenous hands, thereby leading to a higher capability of the ADIs to exercise higher levels of control of land use decision-making. Indeed, second, despite the numerous administrative, organizational and political problems faced by the local ADIs (see chapter 5), governance in these two territories is much stronger compared to other indigenous reserves (Borges, 2003). Finally, the TBIR and TCIR had previous experience with performance-based payment programs in the past, which facilitated enrollment procedures to some level (Borge and Martínez, 2009).[2] Of course, it was not until 2003 that the PSA was significantly expanded due

to a higher availability of funding through the Ecomercados project. So, while the PSA program was one intervention amongst many before 2003, afterwards, FONAFIFO's PES became one of the most relevant programs ever established in the Talamancan indigenous territories.

The changes implemented to the PSA in 2003 were twofold. On the one hand, attention was given to raising the overall coverage of the program for indigenous territories. With additional funding coming from Ecomercados, FONAFIFO had the resources needed to duplicate the land area that indigenous reserves were allowed to include in the PSA contract from 300 to 600 hectares yearly. This amount was raised even further to 1.000 hectares in 2009, due to the additional financial support to the PSA offered by Ecomercados II – a much larger Global Environmental Facility (GEF)-financed project devoted to the continuation of the overall objectives of its predecessor (FONAFIFO Regional Manager, interview, August 19th, 2014). On the other, the interaction between FONAFIFO and the ADIs was subjected to a flurry of new administrative changes to make the PSA much easier to access. Amongst the most important changes, FONAFIFO eliminated the requisite of presenting formal cadastral maps as part of enrollment requisites for ADIs (though a topographical study was still required, in order to ascertain the precise coordinates of forests included in the PSA contract) and limits were imposed to charges made by forest regents on PSA contracts involving indigenous territories.

Through these measures, the PSA was rendered more attractive for ADIs, given that the new conditions offered were significantly better than the ones reserved for private forest owners, whom are limited to sign up to 300 hectares yearly and have to pay up to 18% in regency fees, compared to the 600 hectares and 8% rates offered to indigenous territories. Though these privileges have been questioned by some interviewed private sector representatives (Forestry Chamber President, interview, September 22nd, 2014), these are staunchly defended by FONAFIFO officials noticing the value added to the performance of the program well with respect to potential donors and international organisms:

> "There is a lot of pressure from the international organisms regarding the participation of minorities, especially the indigenous peoples. They basically function as spearheads for many funding projects, given these specifications. So, for FONAFIFO, and the government in general, to support them in this way (easy access to the PSA) has been like to 'show to have done something really well.' From the perspective of international organisms that offer money to FONAFIFO, it is politically useful that some of the funds be invested in the indigenous territories." (FONAFIFO Regional Manager, interview, 19th August, 2014).

Of course, these officials also point to various benefits received by the ADIs themselves that merit some discussion and contrast with some other drawbacks identified. Perhaps the biggest benefit identified by FONAFIFO officials has been the payments themselves. As chapters 3 and

5 discussed, ADIs lack any sort of permanent forms of revenue that could help finance their functions as the "de facto local governments" of the indigenous reserves. Sure, there are potential sources of funding in the Integral Development Fund managed by the DINADECO or in other direct transfers made by state agencies to the ADIs. Yet, both sources of funding cannot be possibly considered as viable alternatives to develop autochthonous projects. On one the hand, DINADECO is a political organization which overall funding agenda is partly determined by the party-in-government, thereby any sort of project developed through there would definitely reflect some of the government's rural development objectives. On the other, direct state transfers are also attuned to those agencies' objectives in the territories. Even in the extremely rare case in which these projects may consider some degree of political involvement of indigenous peoples in planning and design stages, these forms of funding have limited lifespans and are often subject to the inner workings of political and electoral cycles. This situation is one amongst other structural impediments for ADIs to actually engage in a truly autonomous form of governance.

Compared to this, PSA payments offer two perceived benefits. These payments are both constant and stable, thereby allowing some room to local ADIs to administer resources under short- or medium-term expenditure plans, a possibility that is almost non-existent with many other sources of revenue. When signed, PSA contracts entail fairly clear clauses determining the rate of distribution of the payments within the five years during which these contracts are generally active. So, if an ADI has managed to put 1.000 hectares yearly in the PSA program, this means that at any given point, the association can count with up to five different payments disbursed over the course of each year, and with expectations of receiving money from the PSA over the course of the following five years. Elected political leaders of the ADI during the time of this research have argued that the stable disbursement of these resources has certainly allowed for expenditures to be effectively administered under investment plans (ADITIBRI President, interview, May 8th, 2014). They also pointed out the possibility that this entails for developing multi-year engagements, such as the development of scholarship programs or for paying administrative wages or personnel training – which were extremely difficult to finance before the program was established (Former ADITIBRI President, interview, 15th August 2014).

As part of this research, I was permitted an opportunity to look at the financial statements of ADITIBRI. It is relevant to say that this was not an unfettered access to the accounting books of the association, given that many of these documents are considered to be confidential and subject to accountability processes organized by the Bribri themselves. However, they did offer some evidence that is fairly meaningful to discuss here. Regarding overall benefits, these statements do justify claims of the PSA payments having become a strategically-important form of revenue for

the territories. Indeed, between 2010 and 2013, the roughly 510 million colones (about 910.000 US dollars) received from five separate PSA contracts constituted an 80% of the total financial resources obtained by ADITIBRI. It is worth adding that about 75% of the other sources of revenue that the ADI received in that period of time came from non-permanent sources of money, such as payments from DINADECO, resources obtained from the Sixaola Binational River Basin Project and others coming from the Mixt Institute of Social Assistance (IMAS) and the Housing and Mortgage Bank (BANHVI) related to both targeted poor assistance payments and housing bonds, all of which are not only defined to be spent in specific obligations, but are also non-permanent forms of revenue (see graph 5.2.).

Graph 2. Distribution of ADITIBRI budget by source of income. 2010-2013 (in hundreds of U.S. dollars)

Source: Elaboration by the author made with data obtained from ADITIBRI financial statements.

A second perceived benefit has to do with the relative lack of political obligations accompanying these resources. Different from most other forms of revenue of the ADIs and in particular those coming from the state, PSA payments are "free" from obligations for the ADI regarding were to invest them. Whereas the Ecomercados strategy contemplated the possibility of demanding a local investment plan as a requisite for making payments available for indigenous reserves,[3] these payments are now visualized by the FONAFIFO officials as profit received for a provided service, and therefore are not subject to further inquiry or auditing on the part of the state agency (FONAFIFO Regional Manager, interview, August 19th 2014). This "financial freedom" allows the ADI to decide how

to spend the money more effectively, thereby allowing it to concentrate on various agendas that are often not contemplated in state- or NGO-led projects being executed in the territories. For example, in the past, ADITIBRI has used some of these funds in activities that go from communal works (e.g.: building and repairing bridges, roads, schools, community halls, etc.) to buying lands for guaranteeing the territorial integrity of the reserve and financing study scholarships for poor families (see Borge and Martínez, 2009). The same goes for the ADITICA as well (ADITICA President, interview, August 20th 2014).

It is relevant to say that most of the money obtained by ADITIBRI through the PSA program has been actually spent in administrative costs related to the day-to-day operations of this organization. About 236 million colones (roughly 438.000 US dollars, or 40%) of the money obtained from the PSA program has been channeled towards paying wages and administrative costs (e.g.: public services, furnishing, facility maintenance, etc.) of the indigenous association itself. One must also add another 88,5 million colones (roughly 164.000 US dollars, or 15%) which have been used to pay ADITIBRI's legal department or external legal aid used for various objectives, including the process of purchasing new lands in order to guarantee the territorial integrity of the reserves. In other words, with these moneys, the ADITIBRI has managed to develop an administrative structure that, as previous presidents argued, was previously non-existent. This new structure includes a lawyer and a permanent accountant, which seem to have strengthened the legal and financial planning of the organization. Besides that, the Association has also managed to use PSA funds in order to improve its administrative departments and improve on the negotiation capacities of its leadership, whether through scholarships or covering various administrative expenses required for the organization to have a more noticeable presence in the territory. The resources obtained by the ADIs from FONAFIFO have certainly constituted a clear advance in the Bribri and Cabécar project of guaranteeing political autonomy and autochthonous forms of development.

7.4. The drawbacks of the PSA

However, there have also been noticeable drawbacks that merit attention. One obvious drawback has to do with the financial and territorial compromises that the PSA forces upon the Bribri and the Cabécar. FONAFIFO – based on conservation priorities defined by SINAC and the Ecomercados projects – has deemed that the Talamancan indigenous reserves are best approached through the use of contracts under the Forest Protection modality. As a result, most of the contacts signed by the Bribri and Cabécar ADIs have been designed under this modality over the past decade (see following graph). While other modalities may consider alternative (though, not indigenous) forest uses, Forest Protection PSA contracts emphasize exclusively on the implementation of strict forms of

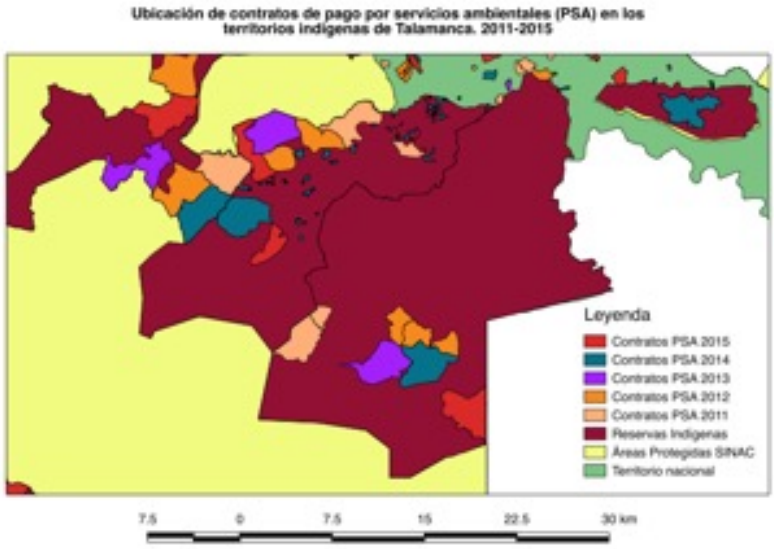
forest conservation, leaving absolutely no ground for alternative or cultural uses of the resources being protected (FONAFIFO, 2014). This obviously means that the beneficiaries are not allowed to extract trees, bushes or other forms of plant life from these lands, which in turn result in problems for the communities located nearby. Moreover, hunting and fishing are also prohibited in forests under this type of contract modality, given that biodiversity protection is one of the ecosystem services being paid through the PSA.

Obviously, these measures contradict with the manner in which the Bribri and the Cabécar interpret and use natural resources, and has become a continuous source of conflict. At the most far away communities located nearby the forests that are currently being put under conservation, signs have been raised prohibiting cultural uses of resources, thereby provoking the anger of some of the Bribri and Cabécar inhabitants (see following figure). This has led some of them to voice their concerns about the PSA contract modalities used at the territories not being the best alternative. Indeed, one Bribri Community Council leader from San Miguel stated in interview that*: "(…) according to the International Convention 169, they (FONAFIFO) have to adapt to our communal and cultural characteristics, not the other way around. We cannot ignore the culture of our people, or adapt to their idea of protection"* (interview, October 26th, 2014).

Similar complaints were raised by other community leaders whom question that the PSA program does not contemplate indigenous forms of conservation or different alternatives of approaching these populations. For example, a Cabécar communal leader from Gavilán Canta argued that while the PSA program is undoubtfully important for ADITICA and ADITIBRI, PSA could fulfill its goals though other alternative modalities more consistent with indigenous practices, "*(…) because when the PSA is inserted here, then you cannot touch anything, and sure, that is very romantic. But, in our cultural context, we engage in a sustainable use of the forests, they give us food and housing, etc. If they say to us that we cannot use forests any longer, then they should offer us an alternative"* (interview, October 19th, 2014). Some others have also expressed their concern regarding the use of communal ADITIBRI lands within these contracts, given that some of them do hold a significant cultural or religious meaning. Indeed, FONAFIFO has actively suggested the ADIs to include forests with cultural or religious value within the PSA with the purpose of reducing operative costs and avoiding any form of potential conflicts regarding the distribution of moneys or the imposition of unwanted obligations between clans or individuals. Yet for some Bribri and Cabécar leaders interviewed, this is a problematic measure as these lands do serve a cultural purpose and their commodification is seen with serious preoccupation. To synthesize, while there are clear benefits being obtained for the purpose of solidifying indigenous governance over the territories and promoting political and territorial autonomy, the PSA contract do require the Talamancan indigenous peoples to relinquish their

control over patches of their lands, negatively affecting cultural access and use over natural resources.

Map. 5. Location of PSA contracts at the Talamanca Bribri and Talamanca Cabécar Indigenous Reserves. 2010-2015



Source: Elaboration by the author with data from FONAFIFO and the Development Observatory of the University of Costa Rica

For some of the local, and more radical, Bribri leaders that counter the current configuration of the PSA, this contradiction is further aggravated by their impression that a great part of the resources obtained by the ADIs through PSA does not get channeled towards indigenous agendas. Their view is that these resources are either used to finance the very same conservation obligations acquired by the ADIs or misused (political leader of Talamanca por la Vida y por la Tierra, interview, April 15th 2014). These claims are not entirely untrue, but neither are undeniable facts. Regarding the first one, it is true that some of the money gets spent on administrative costs related to the PSA contract. Indeed, ADITIBRI has been obliged to hire two indigenous park rangers (*Dualok-Kimu*) for various environmental monitoring purposes including enforcing prohibitions on the use of natural resources at the PSA-protected forests. Moreover, it is also clear that part of the money obtained from the contract gets spent in paying the forest regent, per FONAFIFO's contract obligations. Yet, the actual money spent on these activities does not equal a majority of the PSA-related disbursements, but only about 20%, which is a high percentage, but not as controversial as some of these leaders suggests.

Now, regarding the second part of the claim, there have been cases of misuse of PSA resources in the past. Interviewees spoke of at least two major controversies regarding the misuse or mishandling of the PSA contracts by the Talamancan Bribri ADI. One related to the decision of the Executive Board to allocate part of the PSA contract to the farm of one of its members, thereby diverting a percentage of resources for his own benefit. Another case entailed disputes regarding the allocation of these resources between rival political groups represented at the Association. That specific case did gain public attention as a result of an exposé done by one of the major national TV networks. Though the incident provoked a temporary halt in PSA disbursements to the ADITIBRI, while the CGR audited the records, this investigation ended up finding no evidence of misuse of resources whatsoever (CGR, 2004).

It is relevant to say that these problems took place early on the implementation of the PSA in the territories, and similar cases of misuse or mishandling have not been presented in such magnitudes ever since. As a result, it is extremely difficult to generalize such cases as a form of widespread corruption. This is without mentioning that, as one ex-president of ADITIBRI argued, could be to make the case for external actors whom would like some say on the usage of PSA resources at the expense of Talamancan indigenous autonomy. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this dissertation, what needs to be taken away from these accusations is not the veracity of these claims, but the fact that the PSA has the potential of becoming a source of internal political conflict amongst the Bribri and Cabécar, specifically regarding different and contesting views on what should be the best means for the Talamancans to attain their cherished political autonomy.

Indeed, though arguments both in favor and against the PSA contract tend to agree on the importance of the payments for strengthening the finances and administrative capabilities of ADITIBRI, the main issue of divergence has to do with how its current configuration entails preoccupying similarities with other problematic forms of state intervention and the impacts of these over the goal of attaining political autonomy and autochthonous development. In this context, a great deal of the Bribri and Cabécar groups holding leadership positions have contemplated a moderated position hinging on the possibility of reform of the PSA contract modalities to acquiesce to the needs of indigenous populations and their cultural uses. Whereas, the more radical groups have engaged with the issue with growing concern about the actual potential of the PSA to fulfill on promises for local political autonomy, considering the entire program as benefitting not the Bribri or the Cabécar, but FONAFIFO, intermediary NGOs and the businesses that could eventually pay for carbon abatement certificates in the future. Indeed, as one of these leaders said in interview:

> "(t)he PSA are the sale of the most important product of Great Talamanca, the big intermediaries are the ones that are pushing that

> agenda onto us, and the investment of those resources often leaves us wondering because objectives are not being fulfilled. We should not be going around begging for resources, because we should be the first benefitted, yet we are the last. The indigenous communities should have been the first in benefitting from biodiversity, and I do not know why we are running behind the government, when it is them that should be behind us. We are the only culture that have conserved these resources, so when are they going to pay us back for what they taken from us? Why do they want the mountain if they don't even work it? (political leader Talamanca por la Vida y por la Tierra, interview, April 15th, 2014).

It is quite noticeable that while some Bribri and Cabécar leaders may be prone to consider approaches to political autonomy that contemplate negotiation with state institutions, there is a general sense of criticism with regards to how the PSA program has operated in the territories. Such criticisms, particularly in what regards to the ongoing costs of the PSA, it is incompatibility with indigenous uses of the forests and the relinquishing of territorial autonomy over patches of indigenous land need to be sorted out. REDD+ negotiation offered an opportunity for renegotiating their incorporation to the PSA program, and by extension of their interaction with the state in these terms.

To summarize, while it is clear that the PSA contract has been an extremely useful policy for developing an autochthonous form of governance, and a stepping stone towards political autonomy, it has externally-imposed boundaries to what it can truly accomplish. The instrument entails indigenous people to relinquish their political and territorial control of considerable patches of their land in order to accommodate conservation agendas and mindsets which are definitely not coherent with their own. Moreover, it is a tool that also entails considerable costs of operation which reduce its own potential as a means for attaining true political autonomy and it has become a conflictive issue for internal politics, which also aggravates the problem.

7.5. Conclusions

As I have shown, the PSA has provided a chance for developing a new type of relationship between Bribri and Cabécar indigenous communities and the Costa Rican state in the Talamanca region. It is also an image of the complex ways in which current indigenous activism takes place in this country, as the Bribri and the Cabécar have decided to organize their demands through the establishment of institutional tools and new political spaces of participation inside the state and not utilizing open mobilization. Of course, the PSA is not a novel instance of participation in any way as the country has engaged with forest conservation subsidies and semi-market tools since the 1980s. Yet, neoliberal multiculturalism has made the PSA an important device to accommodate for indigenous demands.

For the communities involved, the goal of attaining control over the territories they inhabit becomes a more tangible possibility under the financial resources provided by the PSA thereby leading to a greater development of indigenous territorial governance capabilities. The PSA program has become a key source of revenue for the local ADIs to solidify their jurisdiction over the indigenous territories of Talamanca, and has also transformed into a very important tool for mustering resources for an improved administration of some public services, building local infrastructure and strengthening the political acumen of the indigenous leadership. These results were not part of the principles that sustain the PSA program. On the contrary, its main goal, at least discursively, is the commodification and privatization of indigenous forests. Yet, in order to do so in the Talamancan Indigenous Reserves, it has been obliged to acclimatize to these institutions and develop a critically important political tissue that has helped indigenous peoples to get near to their objectives of political and territorial autonomy and self-governance.

For the majority of indigenous leaders, the PSA program constitutes an occasion to overcome the disappointments of past government initiatives to ease self-governance and indigenous participation. By negotiating the PSA in order to suit the political demands of the territories, indigenous ADIs have managed to reach a pertinent role in the autochthonous development of the territories. For some Bribri and Cabécar leaders, through the PSA, the idea is that they are now in a position of exercising their right to define the conditions under which development in their territories is envisaged. An issue that they prove through the fact that the ADITIBRI has managed to develop budgets for social programs, infrastructure and local political organization.

Yet, it is also clear that the PSA – even though seen favorably – is, in the end, an imperfect approach to attain their objectives of territorial self-government. In practice, the PSA program provides an insufficient amount of money to the territories compared to most other municipalities in the country, an important amount of the money received gets spent on activities related to the maintenance of the PSA, and there is a consistent potential of the program to provoke internal conflicts. This is without stating that the PSA also involves the ADIs to renounce their political control over parts of the territories for the duration of the contracts and that it implies acknowledging forms of conservation and resource uses that are completely alien to the cultural uses of indigenous communities in Talamanca. PSA may be a pertinent tool for aiding political autonomy, but it does not go beyond a shallow level and it is not a mechanism for safeguarding their collective possession over the land. Its goal is clear and simple: protect buffer zones, and protected areas through the active commodification and privatization of these resources.

Neoliberal multiculturalism entails the implementation of new spaces for political participation by the state in order to make headway in achieving development or conservation goals which are also defined by

the state. In the context of neoliberal governance, this means the allocation of obligations to civil society and the decentralizing of state responsibilities to the markets. Bribri and Cabécar activists have acknowledged this by observing the limitations of the PSA program. The institutional resistances towards the recognition of indigenous cultural uses of resources is a clear indication that the PSA is limited and non-conducive towards territorial autonomy, because it does not give them the tools to consolidate their control over the territories inhabited. Though the successes of the PSA for supporting indigenous governance must not be undervalued, it is clear that its promise as a tool for consolidating political autonomy in insufficient.

In conclusion, the PSA program has provided an opportunity for Bribri and Cabécar organizations to negotiate with the state, in spite of obstacles still in its implementation. Aware of these boundaries and the neoliberal mindsets inherent to these mechanisms, activists use these new political spaces because they provide a chance to engage in discussions with the state through demands of territorial autonomy. Because of these obstacles, the Bribri and the Cabécar have sought to reframe their demands around the notion of an indigenous-minded PSA program and their own notion of Bribri and Cabécar environmental governance in the context of the recently finalized REDD+ negotiations. The idea of a Talamancan governance implies the restitution of protected areas and the reorientation of PSA contracts to the communities that inhabit them and their institutions. In short, this idea of governance is based on a notion of self-government of indigenous territories, requiring the recognition of territorial rights and cultural uses of resources, as well as some form of representation in decision-making regarding these instruments. The following chapter will discuss this and will reinforce the point made here that these new opportunities for participation do not necessarily translate into significant policy changes by the state on territorial autonomy or towards indigenous peoples.

Notes

[1] Ecomercados was a two-stage project implemented by FONAFIFO between 2000 and 2016. The main objective of the project was to expand the coverage of the PSA program by introducing 200.000 additional hectares. This expansion was directly oriented by at least two main objectives: harmonizing the goals of the PSA with those of the national conservation policies and democratizing access to the program in order to deal with inequalities regarding access of poor forest owners into the PSA. The first goal was achieved by guaranteeing that new forested areas included were located in priority zones for the consolidation of the Costa Rican section of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. The second goal was meant to be achieved by expanding participation of a greater percentage of women and indigenous

territories into the PSA (Borge and Martínez, 2009). The project was also meant to develop considerable reforms within the administrative structure of FONAFIFO in order to accommodate to the necessities of new PSA users and to facilitate access for the most vulnerable sectors. The first stage of the Ecomercados Project was financed with an 8 million dollar-grant from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), and a 11,2 millon dollar-donation from the German Development Bank (KfW). Perceived success of the initial project justified a continuation of the Ecomercados project in 2008 through a 30 million dollar-loan with the World Bank and another 10 million dollar-donation from GEF (FONAFIFO, 2012). Over the course of this second iteration of the project, FONAFIFO committed to expand PSA coverage by including an additional 288.000 hectares (190.000 of these located within buffer zones for protected areas and connecting biological corridors) with an additional increase of 50% in the number of small forest owners.

[2] Before the creation of the PSA, the two reserves had been part of small government initiatives to diminish deforestation through the use of forest credits that private companies could later exchange for tax exemptions in the Forest Certificate Program (a predecessor to the PSA) (Ortiz et al., 2003). Some NGOs, like the Small Grants Fund (SGF) – a funding platform for grassroots organizations financed by GEF and administered by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) – had also financed very small PES-like programs since the early 1990s (Borges and Martínez, 2009). Indeed, it was with support of GEF, that ADITIBRI and ADITICA (the Bribri and Cabécar associations, respectively) managed to fulfill with the onerous requirements to enter the PSA in 1998.

[3] As said earlier in this chapter, FONAFIFO officials were concerned of potential misusage of PSA resources by indigenous territories. In this context, they contemplated the possibility of asking the indigenous territories to present an investment plan in order to audit their uses of the resources obtained. However, this possibility was quickly opposed by the Bribri and Cabécar at the time and continues to be resisted at this point. When prompted by the question of their disposition to hand in an investment plan for the PSA if that was proposed at the REDD+ negotiation, a former ADITIBRI president argued that: "*(i)f they do not ask this requisite of whomever John Doe (translated from Spanish: "fulano de tal") from Puerto Viejo, whom is a foreigner and has 300 hectares of PSA, then I don't know why they should be asking for this to us. We could provide something like that to FONAFIFO, but only as a small detail, a courtesy if you will, and never because we're obliged legally to do so*" (former ADITIBRI President, interview, May 18th, 2014).

8 Neoliberal multiculturalism and REDD+ in the Talamanca Valley

> "We are realists, for us REDD+ is just a pretext for putting our agenda at the government's table. (…) If they manage to sell carbon or not, we do not care. We are concentrated in defining and negotiating an agenda that should offer the bases in which REDD+ or whichever project that comes later should operate upon when entering in our land. That's our first priority. The second is to develop an indigenous-minded PSA." (RIBCA representative, interview, August 4th, 2014).

This chapter follows-up on the politics of payments of ecosystem services in the Talamancan Bribri and Cabécar Indigenous Reserves, from the perspective of neoliberal multiculturalism. With that purpose in mind, it explores the negotiation about the conditions of indigenous incorporation into de PSA program between indigenous organizations and the Costa Rican state, in the context of REDD+. Since 2010, FONAFIFO has been designing the country's main policy commitments and adjustments to be made to the PSA as part of their contribution to the global REDD+ initiative. In return, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) has proposed a 64 million dollar-disbursement in exchange of rights over prevented carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. So far, the Costa Rican REDD+ Strategy entails expanding the coverage of the PSA program, partly by increasing carbon sequestration practices through the sustainable production and consumption of lumber and the improvement of government capabilities for controlling illegal deforestation (MINAET and FONAFIFO, 2011). If approved, the Strategy will be implemented nationwide, with substantial effects on the Talamancan Bribri and Cabécar Indigenous Reserves, given the well-conserved nature of their forests and biodiversity and their strategic location as buffer zones of RBLA.

For indigenous activists at these negotiations, REDD+ constitute an opportunity for enacting various necessary adjustments for the PSA program that they perceive are required to suit their cultural and livelihood needs. Yet, there has been considerable resistance from FONAFIFO officials whom are preoccupied with the potential effects of such changes in the program's conditionality, verification and monitoring. All of these technical aspects are perceived to be more relevant for FONAFIFO, given that REDD+ is much more focused on adequate carbon sequestration accounting than the PSA program before it. With information collected from official REDD+ documentation, the aforementioned sources and 10 interviews with officials from FONAFIFO and the MINAE involved in the National REDD+ negotiations, I conclude that these negotiations have offered some room for designing a more

culturally-adjusted PSA modality. With REDD+, the PSA does not counter the existing state governance oriented towards institutionalizing conservation practices involving preservationist approaches, private property regimes and resource commodification at the expense of indigenous claims over land and territorial autonomy. Indeed, much like in the case of the PSA, REDD+ seems as a "mirage" of fulfillment of long-standing claims of indigenous autonomy and self-determination, and therefore, can be considered to be a continuation of neoliberal multiculturalism.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first one contextualizes and describes the main tendencies regarding the global and national design of REDD+. The international negotiation process is characterized by focusing on several conflictive issues that are relevant for understanding the Costa Rican case. Specifically, the chapter follows up on the political tensions that have appeared after the implementation of market-based conservation measures in this country (as shown in chapter 4). Current forestry framework in Costa Rica is determined by the tension between a market- and an interventionist-oriented forest policy agendas, both of which are dominant vis-à-vis other forest narratives, such as the ones coming from the indigenous territories. The second section describes how these narratives were capable of taking over the discussion of REDD+, thereby delineating the policy arena and the major policy goals of administrative reform of the PSA. The third section centers on the political mobilization of the indigenous territories and how it has been able to open up spaces for participation in the REDD+ process. Attention is also given to how these opportunities for participation have fared for indigenous platforms like the Bribri-Cabécar Indigenous Network (RIBCA), and the internal conflicts produced with other indigenous organizations. The fourth section delineates the main conclusions reached throughout the chapter.

8.1. Contextualizing REDD+ in Costa Rican forests

8.1.1. The international context

Much of the literature about REDD+ harbors a very optimistic notion of the future of this policy. Articles abound regarding its recognition as an "opportunity" to obtain a mutually beneficial agreement between all relevant actors involved in climate change negotiations (Skutsch and McCall, 2010). Plainly put, REDD+[1] is an international financial mechanism based on environmental performance that would use a combination of market and non-market incentives as a means of promoting the effective reduction of carbon emissions produced by deforestation and forest degradation.[2] The logical base of this program is that productive activities may be oriented towards leaving forest resources intact or towards forest renewal processes as long as the adequate economic incentive is provided to them beforehand (Baez, 2011).

Discursively, REDD+ is presented as a win-win solution, as it will simultaneously contribute to climate change mitigation, promoting the conservation of vital ecosystems yet also fomenting alternative and profitable sustainable land uses and economic activities that could help relieve rural poverty (Di Gregorio et al., 2013). Surely, put in these terms, REDD+ is a very attractive policy, but one cannot deny that such narratives tend to lose sight of the fact that conservation and development are highly politicized social constructions, thereby subjected to the complicated nature of environmental politics, where grey areas abound along with uneven compensations for efforts made, and logically, also winners and losers (Büscher, 2010). This is why it is necessary to comprehend the manner in which the political context in which REDD+ is being developed and how the agreements reached are also defined by political conflict and asymmetries between the actors involved.

There have been numerous inflexion points in the development of the REDD+ initiative. A relevant one for the purposes of this dissertation has to do with the distribution of social and environmental benefits and drawbacks of its implementation for indigenous peoples. There are fears amongst transnational indigenous platforms that REDD+ financial mechanism may lead to larger income dependence on forests for both the public and the private sector due to the potential profitability of the carbon stock market. These new political and economic incentives could eventually lead private companies and state conservation agencies to engage in a more centralized, restrictive and top-down control of the forested lands from where these rights over carbon stocks originate, at the expense of forest uses of more vulnerable actors, such as indigenous peoples, threats of displacement, food security concerns and serious hindrances to indigenous cultures and traditions (Sandbrook et al., 2010; Griffiths, 2007).

This is the main reason why indigenous peoples have expressed serious concerns regarding the policy design of REDD+, particularly with regards to how benefits are going to be distributed and which kinds of environmental and social safeguards and grievance mechanisms are going to be considered and implemented (Hiraldo and Tanner, 2011). An overall consensus on some of these matters was achieved in the context of COP-16 in Cancun in 2010, given the recognition by the parties that, first, each country has to guarantee the presence of the necessary environmental and social safeguards for defining the rights of indigenous people to the forest; and second, that whatever the choice regarding the nature of the national REDD+ design at each country, it would require considerable consultation with local counterparts in order to assure some form of recognition of identities, demands and uses of the forest (Schroeder, 2010). Moreover, other parties also agree that REDD+ must be implemented under the rubric of strengthening forest and land rights of indigenous peoples by shifting ownership to these groups and designing national programs to include these processes (Hiraldo and Tanner, 2011).

Having said that, the question remains regarding the manner of implementation of all of these ideas. Surely, the idea of strengthening land rights may be contemplated from the perspective of historical demands to political autonomy, self-determination and autochthonous development, but it can also be interpreted from the perspective of promoting private property rights and the elimination of communal properties that are of critical importance to some indigenous communities (Larson, 2011).

The scale of implementation of REDD+ constitutes a second and also relevant inflexion point to consider. Literature on this particular issue often concentrates in how is REDD+ negotiated at a national and regional level leading to considerable variety in implementation mechanisms and how does this variegation translates into future problems for additionality, conditionality and carbon stock and emission accountability (see Corbera and Schroeder, 2011; Schroeder, 2010; Verchot and Petkova, 2010). Effectively, a major debate considered has to do with the "plus" in REDD+ as the mechanism has been widened to include plenty of other agendas going well beyond avoided deforestation and forest degradation, transforming REDD+ into an agenda that, as one interviewee put it: *"is everything and nothing at the same time"* (FONAFIFO consultant, interview, March 31st, 2014). All of these issues are of great importance, though I believe that we need to concentrate on how this variegation could affect the political ecology of REDD+, especially regarding indigenous rights to and uses of the forest.

The characteristics of REDD+ programs at each national level are significantly diverse, constituting a reflection of the various combinations of measures and policy instruments derived from each one country's particular economic, political, cultural, historical and environmental contexts (Corbera et al., 2011). This is why it is feasible to think that national REDD+ programs would undoubtedly reflect the various interests with regards to access and use of forests from promoting a much insidious use of market-oriented conservation strategies, to expanding and augmenting the state-mandated areas devised for conservation purposes. To contemplate national REDD+ programs working side-by-side with some forms of sustainable uses of forests in the context of agriculture, agroforestry or even energy production, is not a far-fetched scenario.

8.1.2. The national context

The current rural landscape in Costa Rica has been determined by important processes of land use change over the past decades. While there are economic and cultural factors that are relevant to understand, what has happened during this time, the role of policy changes regarding forest governance should be noted as one of the most important ones. Until the 1970s, Costa Rican forest governance regime was based in a "*laissez faire*" approach, whereby existing rules allowed and even promoted the colonization of the agricultural frontier through the transformation of

forest into pasture, whether for grazing or agricultural practices (de Camino et al., 2000). This regime was based on the development of various economic incentives that included credit systems and fiscal subsidies designed to promote land titling based on the occupation of lands and their "improvement" through productive uses (Brockett and Gottfried, 2002).

The approval of the 1969 Forestry Law constituted a critical moment in the development of the forestry regime in Costa Rica. Legitimized by academic and environmental concerns regarding a potential natural resource security crisis due to the massive deforestation exhibited by the country between the 1940s and the 1960s, the new law defined a new approach to forest policy centered on command-and-control, hierarchically-based and top-down instruments for forest conservation. It was a multifaceted agenda based on three distinct measures: first, the creation and expansion of a system of protected areas under direct administration of the state. This system was based on a mandate oriented towards a fences-and-fines approach emphasized on the strict preservation of natural resources (Campbell, 2002). A second measure was the implementation of a new legal framework for forest administration in privately-owned lands. While on paper the objective was to promote sustainable uses of forests, in practice the effect was the elevation of transaction costs for activities of forest exploitation, though the inclusion of new taxes, tariffs and administrative fees (Brockett and Gottfried, 2002). Finally, there was a third, albeit less relevant measure imposed regarding the use of fiscal subsidies as an incentive for reforestation.

While one may not diminish the accomplishments of command-and-control instruments applied since the 1970s, these measures were ineffective to curb deforestation, not to mention that these were strongly opposed by various actors of the Costa Rican rural landscape. By the mid-1980s, the system of protected areas had not achieved the necessary popular support given the high social costs of its initial establishment. Meanwhile, forest exploitation restrictions were harsh and constantly opposed by the forest industry, which occasionally tried to evade enforcement obtaining permits through corruption. These restrictions were also difficult to monitor and verify by the state. Finally, the fiscal subsidies were only accessible to large owners of forested lands (see Campbell, 2002; Carriere, 1991). Moreover, the forestry policy sector as a whole was undermanned and underfunded, leading to evident difficulties to respond to the many changes been faced by the country's forests as a result of the Debt Crisis of the early 1980s and the subsequent structural adjustment (Borges-Mendez, 2008).

In this context, and as I have shown in chapter 4, a new policy narrative appeared reforming the forestry sector in view of the perceived deficiencies of the command-and-control approach to attend deforestation, specifically regarding private forests. The most evident

aspect of this narrative has been the notion that forests conservation cannot be done through continuous efforts to isolate forests from economic production. Early on, IFIs, alongside externally-funded academic institutions (e.g.: CATIE and the Agricultural School of the Humid Tropics, EARTH) and international NGOs, began pushing for policy changes in favor of devolved forest management and harmonization of state action with private forestry interests, while espousing a discourse of public choice and government failure (Carriere, 1991). One of the main efforts has been focused on developing forest uses that may dissuade owners to deforest their lands, by allowing to recognize the inherent financial and commodity value of forests. This focus is somewhat reflected in the inclusion of a new economic language in the 1986 Reform to the Forestry Law, but more notably, in the passing of the 1996 Forestry Law and the 1998 Biodiversity Law, which amongst other changes: 1) decentralized decision-making and the administrative operation of the state forest management and 2) created FONAFIFO and the PSA program.

While chapter 4 concentrated on the use of PES as one of the most emblematic green economy measures implemented in the country, since 1996, other measures were taken in order to neoliberalize the Costa Rican environmental policy sector. For example, state forest management has been restructured and decentralized considerably as a result of the creation of the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC), leading to the formation of a structure of territorially-based offices working with considerable financial and administrative autonomy. This was accompanied by the establishment of several democratization mechanisms, which included new spaces for political consultation that have raised the influence of IFIs, international donors and NGOs regarding the decision-making process at each conservation area (without necessarily improving relations of the state with less influential political groups like indigenous peoples or peasant farmers) (Isla, 2015). Parallel to this, and as shown in previous chapters, the PSA is a mechanism devoted to the commodification and privatization of forest rights as a means of developing an ecosystem services market that could regulate forest-related decision-making processes in the privately-owned forests. Indeed, it was created as a replacement of existing subsidies in response to demands by the IFIs that forest policy be based on market self-regulation rather than state intervention (Lansing, 2014b). These two changes are oriented towards defining new and more efficient financial mechanisms for supporting environmental management and dealing with deforestation (Honey, 1999).

This new forestry governance regime does not imply the dissolution of what preceded it. Indeed, in a country like Costa Rica were neoliberal reform has been greatly countered by political resistance (even from some of its elites), there exist contradictions that reflect the tensions and difficult compromises made by political actors seeking to implement market-

oriented approaches and the ones which recognized the importance of a robust state-centered model of forest conservation. A great deal of the literature on the matter talks about a "hybrid forest governance", as a means of referring to the internally contradictory result of this compromise in policy-making (see Brockett and Gottfried, 2002; Campbell, 2002; Fletcher and Breitling, 2012; Vaas, 2013). This hybrid governance features aspects of each approach simultaneously, with new market-oriented measures accompanying a set of still relevant hierarchically-based interventionist policies of the previous regime. For example, the PSA follows this tendency being, on paper, a mostly market-oriented approach to ecosystem services; while also exhibiting a considerably relevant role of the state. Indeed, as Fletcher and Breitling (2012) argue, the state does feature prominently in the PSA, as the program is being financed almost exclusively by taxes and public revenues obtained from IFI donations and credits, with little input from private sector companies. These authors do not doubt the claim that the PSA is a neoliberal conservation mechanism, but they also consider that it is important to acknowledge and study these internal contradictions. Effectively, stimuli for voluntary carbon markets have not led to the actual formation of local or international ecosystem services markets since the creation of the PSA. Moreover, the state also holds a critical role defining conservation priorities of the program by fiat, with little to no role of markets on the decision (Vaas, 2013).

Like Fletcher and Breitling (2012), I am not arguing that the PSA program is no less neoliberal in any way. The fact that the state plays a significant role is not unusual, nor inconsistent with other forms of neoliberalization, as the state is always a key actor in establishing the necessary institutions for markets to actually be established (Peck and Tickell, 2002). Neither is it highly unusual that the state plays an important role in PES (see McAfee and Shapiro, 2010). Moreover, the PSA it is evidently based in a discourse emphasizing the commodification and privatization of environmental services, and functions through the effective appropriation of rights over these ecosystem services for sale in the international carbon market, as commodities. Even if the program does feature some form of hierarchical governance, it retains sufficient neoliberal characteristics through this discursive basis, as well as clear capabilities to potentially produce deleterious results (Matulis, 2012). My point is that attention must be given to the interplay of these policy narratives as both influences are extremely relevant when looking at the opportunities and obstacles to participation for the indigenous communities in the PSA, and now, in REDD+.

8.2. REDD+ negotiations in Costa Rica

8.2.1. A "limited" playfield: dominant narratives and the REDD+ negotiations

The Costa Rican preparation to REDD+ began in 2008. With the approval of the Bali Action Plan at COP-13, various international platforms were created in order to finance the various arrangements for developing countries to get ready for the implementation of REDD+. The readiness process in Costa Rica has been mostly funded by the FCPF (a REDD+ readiness platform established by the World Bank), though there has also been some additional financial support coming from the German Development Agency (GiZ), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the United Nations' REDD platform (UN-REDD) and the State Department of the United States (through USAID). Each of these platforms has concentrated in particular aspects of the readiness process (such as political consultation, the development of the safeguards information and monitoring and verification systems), meaning that the process can best be characterized as a fairly complex institutional and organizational arrangement whereby it sometimes feels that there is not one single REDD+ readiness process going on in Costa Rica, but several at once. While FONAFIFO has attempted to centralize decision-making processes around a National REDD+ Secretariat (i.e.: a department within FONAFIFO's administrative structure) and a REDD+ Commission composed of all interested parties, it is undeniable that the convergence of so many funding agencies and organization has led to a messy negotiation process.

As said, FCPF is the main funding organization in the Costa Rican REDD+ readiness process, and also the actor that fired the starting shot to the process, by selecting Costa Rica as a participant country of their Preparation Fund for REDD+, and committing to the future purchase of carbon emissions for up to 63 million U.S. dollars, once a National REDD+ Strategy and a Emissions Reduction Program be designed by the local authorities (FCPF, 2008; 2014).This purchase of carbon emissions is seen by FONAFIFO as a critical source of funding for the PSA (director, National REDD+ Secretariat, interview, September 28th, 2014). According to officials of the Secretariat, the FCPF constituted the logical alternative for financial support, given that the World Bank had developed a strong relationship with FONAFIFO through the Ecomercados I and II projects, both of which have provided about one third of the PSA funding between 1997 and 2009 (MINAET and FONAFIFO, 2011). Moreover, since Ecomercados II is nearing its end of implementation and expectations of obtaining more resources through the fuel and water taxes (or any other fiscal revenue) was not a viable option in a context defined by growing tensions over the country's fiscal deficit,[3] the potential funds received from the FCPF would become extremely necessary for the continuation and further expansion of the PSA program.

The REDD+ readiness process has been organized following the guidelines of the FCPF and consists of a multi-stage dynamic supported by the development of key documents and components oriented towards detailing the main actions to be developed as part of the Emissions Reduction Program, upon which future carbon purchases would be made. This process entails the design of several specific components that are of key importance for guaranteeing the economic value of the carbon rights to be transacted between FONAFIFO and the FCPF, such as: 1) defining the baselines that will be used to measure the actual carbon abatements to be realized through the PSA, 2) determining an acceptable methodology for measuring said abatements, 3) establishing a verification and monitoring mechanism to be used to guarantee compliance with carbon abatements from the original carbon owners (i.e.: the actual land owners), 4) determining potential land owners to be enrolled in the program, as well as defining the plan for distributing benefits amongst these in order to guarantee and acceptable level of additionality and conditionality, and 5) designing a safeguards mechanism to protect the benefits and rights of these enrolled parties (FCPF, 2008). In theory, the process should be participatory from the start, allowing for a gradual development of each of these components, as the different actors are offered a chance to weigh in from their different economic and social context and necessities.

In practice, the high level of disconnection and overlapping of the different REDD+ readiness processes happening in Costa Rica and the overbearing forest policy consensus between the state and the private sector have led the first stages of the process to exclude subaltern narratives from being integrated. The first delineation of the various components of the Costa Rican REDD+ strategy happened through the Readiness Program Idea Note (R-PIN), the Readiness Preparation Paper (R-PP), and the Emissions Reduction Program Idea Note (ER-PIN), three key documents in the process that were presented by FONAFIFO in 2008, 2011 and 2013, respectively. The R-PIN and the R-PP are extremely important stages for the REDD+ readiness process as both of them determine the main characteristics of the eventual configuration of the Emissions Reduction Program.

Through the R-PIN, it was decided that the national REDD+ program would be established within the existing programmatic ideas, administrative platform and contract modalities of FONAFIFO's PSA program, with some minor components executed through SINAC and the National Forestry Office (a para-state agency representing the interests of the industrial forestry sector). In other words, it was decided that the Costa Rican REDD+ program would operate on a national basis and under the venue of the state. The R-PIN also decided which were to be the main areas of intervention of the program, namely, that; 1) most of the funding received from carbon sales through REDD+ would be oriented towards expanding PSA coverage under Forest Conservation modalities, 2) that some of the funding would be directed to projects for combating

forest fires and strengthening existing protected areas, while, 3) another part would be used for designing a more business-minded PSA alternative oriented towards fostering a sustainable forestry sector (FONAFIFO and MINAE, 2008). Indeed, when looked comparatively between the R-PIN and the final draft of the Emissions Reduction Program Document (ER-PD) presented in 2016, these key areas of intervention have barely changed throughout the eight years of the REDD+ readiness process.

Ironically, while the FCPF demands considerable and meaningful participation in the readiness process, both the R-PIN and the R-PP were actually the work of a small policy group that represented state and private sector interests, with absolutely no involvement by indigenous or peasant organizations. Indeed, both documents were produced by representatives from SINAC, FONAFIFO, the National Forestry Office (ONF, a para-state agency that represents the interests of the forest industry), three national and international environmental NGOs with historical ties to the PSA program (namely FUNDECOR, TNC and IUCN), a few members of the academic sector whom also worked as key consultants of the readiness process (mainly from forestry schools at CATIE, the Costa Rican Technology Institute – ITCR – and the EARTH), the Costa Rican Forestry Chamber (CCF, a pro-forestry industry political platform) and consultants hired by FONAFIFO to develop the document. In other words, the delineation of REDD+ resulted from the work of a small, albeit fairly knowledgeable, policy network, which represented the two dominant policy narratives described in the previous section. Other policy narratives remained without representation, an issue that was duly recognized by the FCPF in its external evaluations of both documents (FCPF, 2008; 2011). Given that both documents were developed and published before the political consultation process began, the market and interventionist narratives are the only ones reflected there.

The market narrative pushes for a harmonization of forest conservation policy with the economic interests of the private forestry sector. Specifically, these groups, headed by the CCF, have used REDD+ to question the low level of openness of the PSA with regards to more lucrative forest business models. From their point of view, the PSA, though a well-intentioned policy, has been historically more akin to the preservation of standing forests than other forestry-based activities such as forest plantations, reforestation and agroforestry. From their perspective, the REDD+ program could be reoriented towards a greater integration of the PSA to forestry business models and as a result, help them counter the ongoing economic crisis affecting the sector. REDD+ was therefore interpreted by them as an alternative for linking forest conservation to highly lucrative forest business models based on the exploitation and reforestation of high-value woods. These preoccupations are duly reflected in key strategic options identified in the R-PIN which consider the expansion of the PSA program centering on modalities

different than Forest Protection and allowing much more contracts for forest plantations, and 2) the development of policies that could allow for local market shifts from using high carbon footprint materials in favor of sustainable wood produced in plantations supported by the PSA (MINAET and FONAFIFO, 2011).

In turn, the second narrative focused more on interventionist instruments. Attention in REDD+ has mostly centered in developing new institutions and resolving enforcement problems regarding already-existing conservation policies. Indeed, actors like SINAC have perceived REDD+ as an alternative for improving institutional capabilities and mobilizing existing plans to strengthen command-and-control mechanisms for conservation. Indeed, this has been reflected in strategic options oriented towards: 1) augmenting the PSA contracts for Forest Protection in 300.000 hectares, emphasizing in key biological corridors and PA buffer zones, 2) financing currently underfunded strategies such as the Plan for Controlling Illegal Wood-Cutting and Forest Fire Management in Protected Areas, or 3) reinforcing the verification and monitoring mechanisms used in the regency system with the funding of new controls through the National College of Agronomical Engineers (CIAGRO). In other words, within the existing hybrid policy framework determining Costa Rican forestry governance, REDD+ has been defined by the interaction of the two main policy narratives, thereby exhibiting both market- and state-oriented agendas of approaching the deforestation problem. While this means that other forest use narratives were obliged to face a negotiation, whereby key issues had already been delimited by the state and business interests, some room existed for indigenous peoples to introduce some aspects of their political agenda.

In other words, by 2011, the Costa Rican state had presented is R-PP and defined the key strategic options and identified the associated risks that would eventually define the National REDD+ Strategy presented in 2015. This happened without actually finishing the preparation phase determined by FCPF, and in absence of a wide consultation process involving other political actors with high stakes on national forest policy-making – such as the indigenous peoples. Indeed, the Social and Environmental Strategic Assessment process had not actually begun at this point, with its first workshop taking place until later on in 2011. Moreover, this consultation process did not have an actual working plan to develop further group-specific consultation workshops until late-2013, several months after the publication of the ER-PIN. It is reasonable to conclude that eventual involvement by subaltern narratives took place in the context of a limited negotiation arena, whereby certain key elements of the REDD+ strategy had been previously developed. This is not to say that there was no room for indigenous people to maneuver, but that the main configuration of the program was already decided before they got to sit at the negotiating table.

8.2.2. Enter subaltern narratives: demands for an indigenous REDD+

The integration of non-dominant forest narratives has been the result of the political capabilities of indigenous and peasant organizations. Yet, this integration has undoubtedly taken advantage of the fact that FCPF has obliged FONAFIFO to develop extensive validation and legitimation practices as part of the readiness process, in particular, with regards to indigenous peoples. FCPF procedure demands that all REDD+ readiness processes financed by them should be organized following the World Bank participation safeguards, which, in the case of indigenous peoples, include a demonstrable wide political support of their policies resulting from a prior, free and informed consultation of the measures to be implemented (WB, 2006). Though, to reiterate, while it is undeniable that these obligations have led to the integration of new subaltern narratives in the negotiation process, including the formulation of specific measures addressing their particular demands, it is also clear that these openings have taken place within the established neoliberal mentality of the PSA program.

The first instance to actually integrate political participation from various different political actors in the REDD+ readiness process was the Social and Environmental Strategic Assessment (SESA) that took place in San José in may 2011 (FONAFIFO consultant, interview, September 2nd, 2014). This activity began the SESA process, which was conceived as a mechanism for identifying potential risks and defining key environmental and social considerations to the REDD+ preparation process in order for these issues to be managed during implementation, thereby mitigating any potentially-adverse effects of the strategic measures determined by the National REDD+ Strategy. SESA is conceived as a participative process involving all key actors to the readiness process, and is meant to function as an opportunity to promote extensive participation of interested parties (FCPF, 2011). According to the World Bank, the SESA process should fulfill all participatory standards indicated in the national legislation of each country and in the case of indigenous peoples, all the obligations defined by Convention 169 (which Costa Rica ratified in 1993).

Curiously enough and in spite of the considerable discursive importance given to SESA, in Costa Rica, this process began in 2011, three years after the readiness process was initiated. Moreover, it seems that the SESA process without enough planning, given that the workshops with the various interested parties (e.g.: indigenous peoples, state organizations, environmental NGOs, peasant farmers and the forest industry) that are supposed to accompany this larger meeting were not programmed until late 2013. Indeed, the bulk of the consultation process has happened between 2014 and 2015, three years after SESA took place. While it is difficult to determine if there were political pressures pushing FONAFIFO to begin the SESA process in this manner, it is clear that

concerns over the lack of participation were coming from indigenous groups, hired consultants and the FCPF itself, whom commented extensively on the lack of consultation exhibited by the R-PIN and the R-PP (ex-FONAFIFO consultant, interview, March 31st, 2014; RIBCA Bribri representative, interview, August 4th 2014). Indeed, FCPF reviews of the R-PIN concluded that "*(c)onsultations with the private sector, indigenous peoples and institutions of the civil society seems to have been limited or non-existent altogether.*" (FCFP, 2008: 2).

With this said, RIBCA leaders did claim to have been approached however briefly, by FONAFIFO to attend two meetings regarding REDD+ in early 2008 and late 2010, which seems to concur with the elaboration of a consultant work oriented towards identifying organizations representative for the potential interested parties (Borge, 2011). The National SESA Workshop was assisted by representatives of all key organizations identified by FONAFIFO, including indigenous peoples, peasant farmers, the academic sector, the private forestry sector, international organisms and NGOs. While the activity was not met with stringent resistance on the part of indigenous organizations, they did express their annoyance with their late integration to the process and the lack of a clear representation of their interests within the R-PP (which was used by FONAFIFO as the basis of the discussion at SESA). Indeed, one perceived weakness by the indigenous leadership was the lack of integration of their demands in the REDD+ readiness process:

> "(…) the consultants arrived in 2008 and they did not come back until 2011, almost three years after. That was one of the weaknesses that the leaders saw, that each time they met the consultants, they said one thing, but the documents ended up saying something different. That is why, before the first SESA workshop, we organized ourselves and established a Technical Commission (at RIBCA) and began discussing the issue at different levels (…) in order to negotiate with FONAFIFO from our own position" (RIBCA director, interview, 4th August, 2014).

Effectively, the SESA workshop was used by RIBCA and the Talamancan ADIs as an opportunity to fulfill two key objectives: first, to demand a separate negotiation process with FONAFIFO, and second, to integrate a set of five new issues to be discussed as part of the negotiation of this indigenous-centered REDD+ readiness process. These "special issues", as these are referred to by interviewed indigenous leaders consist of: 1) the design and implementation of an indigenous-minded PSA modality, 2) the development of a strategy for resolving territorial disputes and guaranteeing legal control of ADIs over these lands, 3) the inclusion of indigenous cosmovision within rules regarding forest management and regeneration policy, 4) the definition of a strategy to improve the relationship between indigenous people and protected area authorities, and 5) the inclusion of a new participatory monitoring mechanism for conservation policy implementation at the indigenous territories.

These five special issues are a clear reflection of long-standing tensions between the Costa Rican indigenous communities (including the Talamancan) with regards to issues related to political autonomy and self-determination in the context of conservation policy-making. As has been explained in chapters 5 and 7, while there is a formal acknowledgement of conservation authorities with regards to the importance of indigenous peoples and territories for securing conservation goals, this is not easily translated into tangible and equitable policies. They are recognized as having a "special relationship" with the territories they use and inhabit, and are expected to defend conservation efforts, even though conservation agencies exhibit resistance with regards to recognizing cultural uses of resources under conservation and new culturally-based management practices.

So, by integrating the notion of an indigenous PSA, claiming the inclusion of Bribri and Cabécar cosmovision into forest policy and demanding improvements in the relationship with top-down forms of conservation, RIBCA and the ADIs are actually attempting to re-negotiate the terms of their incorporation with the green economy promoted by the Costa Rican state. For these indigenous leaders, the integration of these measures is considered to be an opportunity to hold some political influence over their territories, understood not solely as the discretely-bounded pieces of land given to them by the state, but their cultural lands, which, in the case of PILA, overlap almost entirely with their most sacred mountains and forests. As the then ADI president stated:

> "What is new about these five proposals is that they are supposed to be accompanied by a new legal framework for the defense of our rights at each special issue. We are proposing a legal framework for those issues. For example, take protected areas: we are saying that we want a decree that gives those lands in co-management and co-responsibility with the government, and that indigenous peoples have the right to manage these lands. It is all founded upon our cosmovision, because those are our sacred lands, where those protected areas were imposed upon us. Our idea is not to eliminate those areas, but more about how, us, together with the government, could give them a more adequate treatment; and for that we need a framework, otherwise it will be impossible" (ADI President, interview, August 5th, 2014).

The decision to change the historical interaction with the state with regards to protected area management, environmental monitoring and forest policy-making has also to do with the need of addressing pressures faced by the territories with regards to extractive activities nearby (Grandia, 2007; Brockington et al., 2009). This is not precisely the case for the territories of the Bribri and the Cabécar in Talamanca given that these tensions are not so immediate (though there is heightened vigilance amongst the various organizations and populace which is often channeled to mobilize political action), but is certainly the situation of the Bribri, Cabécar and Ngöbe-Buglé peoples living in the indigenous territories of

the Southern Pacific region, where the expansion of agrarian plantations is pushing peasant farmers up against the reserves (Llaguno Thomas, 2013). Nevertheless, indigenous peoples from both seaboards do express an urgent need to develop and secure the spaces of political participation that could allow them to have their participation and input in policy-making recognized, and by extension its governance reflected upon the territories vis-à-vis these threats.

Likewise, the inclusion of goals related to what they call the "cleansing" of the territories, i.e.: the formalization and defense of legally-acquired land rights of the indigenous peoples to the territories given to them by the state, is also completely coherent with this conceptualization of REDD+ as a negotiation upon the terms of incorporation to the state. As mentioned in previous chapters, while the Costa Rican state did legally-dispose the creation of discretely-bounded patches of land for indigenous people to occupy, in reality it has not fulfilled this obligation, leading to indigenous communities owning a fraction of the land that is legally supposed to be theirs (Guevara Berger et al., 1999). To a large degree, this inability of the state to fulfill this obligation is the product of conflicting goals between an agrarian policy set on colonization and capitalist development vis-à-vis a policy of recognition of indigenous rights and uses of land (Chacón Castro and Guevara Berger, 1992, see also chapter 3). So, by conditioning their support for REDD+ to these obligations, indigenous peoples are attempting to renegotiate some key aspects of their own incorporation to the state.

What I find curious about this is that while it is evident that there are political demands for recognition, self-determination and political autonomy behind each special issue, the discursive framing used by these subaltern narratives attempts to make itself relevant through finding a common ground with the neoliberal mindset behind REDD+. In particular, indigenous leaders present their demands as critically important for the commodification, privatization and accountability of the carbon emissions themselves. As said earlier, the PSA program operates through the explicit bounding of forested lands to be conserved in exchange of payment for the owner. This exchange implicates the transfer of rights upon carbon emissions abated, which then become property of FONAFIFO, whom can dispose of them in the international market at will (Matulis, 2012). In this scheme, the key issue is the existence of secure property rights at the level of the landowner. If land rights are secured, then there would not be any problems regarding the additionality and conditionality of the contract. Indigenous leaders have recognized this issue and claim that not only their demands for territorial cleansing and indigenous PSA fall within their own agenda, but that it is also in the interest of FONAFIFO, who requires indigenous land rights to be secured in order to verify the value of carbon emissions abated through REDD+. As the current ADITICA president argued:

> "The implementation of the PSA in the territories often times require FONAFIFO to look the other way with regards to some things. The legal threat is always there, of course. See, if someone from the government comes here and says 'I will apply the PSA law by the book', then it would not work, it would be dysfunctional. Not only it will restrict our right to traditional uses, but it would be impossible to have PSAs at the territories. This is because, when you ask for a PSA, you have to put an annotation in the Public Registry for that land, that the land is under the PSA and if you fail to fulfill the contract, then FONAFIFO can use the value of the land as collateral for you to pay the money they have given to you, right? But that is also illegal with indigenous territories, because these lands are unalienable. That is why FONAFIFO officials need to help us with these issues, and that is also why we are proposing a different form of PSA" (interview, August, 5th, 2014).

In summary, as Bribri and Cabécar activists see it, the institutionalization of these five special issues are the means of legitimizing their struggles around territorial autonomy. In their views, the new spaces of participation created amidst the structures of the conservationist state could serve to bring the Talamancans closer to their goals of exercising effective control over the territories that they use and inhabit. This is perhaps the main reason why it has been so important that these groups emphasize the necessity that FONAFIFO and SINAC recognize their cosmovision and their cultural conception of territory not only as a cultural feature, but as a legal element. It has been extremely important for these leaders that the authorities recognize their relationship with the environment as something equally useful for them given the complex institutional requirements for carbon emissions to be considered as commodities. This reflects the realities of neoliberal multiculturalism, that in order to accommodate indigenous mobilization some acceptance of the neoliberal order must take place. For the indigenous organizations involved in REDD+, the actual sale of carbon is unimportant compared to the goal of gaining control over the territories they use and inhabit, yet for this to become a concrete possibility, they would need to accept their involvement in carbon markets nonetheless. Under neoliberal multiculturalism, these spaces of participation are implemented to advance state development goals, and while there is opportunity to be seized, there is also political cost and a need for compromise.

8.2.3. Obstacles to accommodation: state and indigenous challenges to the indigenous REDD+

The negotiation for an indigenous-minded REDD+ has not moved forward unchallenged or without obstacles. Indeed, there has been some opposition from state authorities and other indigenous organizations, including some of the very people that proposed the five special issues for

consideration at the SESA. These various forms of opposition originate in different sources of conflict, given the high level of complexity of the negotiation. Yet, my argument here is that all of these problems point towards the limitations of neoliberal multiculturalism to acquiesce a true recognition of political autonomy and self-determination, in view of the requirement of accommodating state- and market-oriented interests. While neoliberal multiculturalism has indeed offered these groups spaces for participation, it does not offer the appropriate tools to consolidate self-representation and control over the territories that these indigenous parties inhabit, given the contradiction that doing this would entail to the wider development agendas orbiting Talamanca, consolidation of efficient carbon markets and promoting indigenous buy in to conservation being a fairly relevant one.

Take the integration of the REDD+ readiness process as a first example. As said, in Costa Rica there are not one, but many simultaneous REDD+ processes functioning concurrently. So, while the SESA is financed by the FCPF, the National Consultation Plan of both the indigenous peoples and the peasant sector is handled by GiZ and the development of the Safeguards Information System (SIS) is administered by UN-REDD. Even though there is a centralized structure attempting to organize everything, each specific project has its own leadership and timeframes. In turn, this leads to programs being executed at different rhythms, which then provoke failures in articulating the process effectively. One of the main aspects affected by this is political participation. As each process moves at its own time, discussions that should have come after a detailed discussion of SESA or that were expected to involve intense negotiation between the parties tend to take place before all of that to the detriment of political postures of the various interested parties.

This situation has had important impacts on the indigenous parties involved in the negotiation, as well as for their standing vis-à-vis the wider indigenous community. For example, the development of the SIS, which is meant to define the main mechanisms for avoiding or mitigating potentially deleterious effects upon rights and uses of natural resources by forest-dwellers, was moving faster than the SESA, were such measures where to be initially negotiated. This is without mentioning that the SIS actually preceded the very consultation process, where the wider indigenous community was supposed to weigh in to provide feedback to SESA and SIS. At the time in which a final workshop on the SIS was called in 2014, most indigenous leaders came unprepared and uninformed about the objective of the meeting, leading to the elaboration of a SIS without their knowledge and input.

This situation produced preoccupation amongst interviewed indigenous leaders, one of whom claimed that: *"(t)here was no room for other important safeguards that we wished to negotiate with the government"* (ADITIBRI president, interview, August 5th, 2014), such as the

development of a clear state protocol regarding prior and informed consent for state projects with indigenous territories, demands related to recognition of cultural rights and discussions regarding the procedures to claim back indigenous lands under control of non-indigenous people. While FONAFIFO organized a series of meetings afterwards to inform the indigenous communities, it is clear that the SIS was not designed according to the preferences of the indigenous organizations. In other words, decentralization and the importance of organizations providing financial support within the readiness process were to the detriment of the indigenous position there.

This situation has also resulted in even more negative results amongst the wider indigenous communities, specially with organized groups that have not taken part of the process. One Talamancan group called *Talamanca por la Vida y por la Tierra* has been particularly active throughout the REDD+ negotiation stating their concerns regarding the considerable delay exhibited with the beginning of the political consultation process and the potential of REDD+ of becoming a mechanism that could produce serious risks to the Talamancan forests. As one Bribri leader of the organization said during a public speech held in Sepecue:

> "The people that defended the territory fifteen years ago are the same ones selling the forest to conservation, and they are the ones that allowed that payment of environmental services to take place within the indigenous territory. Without anyone being consulted! And, these big actors from those times, defending conservation and the indigenous cosmovision left and right, are the ones that promoted the PSA and now REDD+ with the government, going behind our backs." (Leader of Local Forest Community Council, interview, June 6th, 2014)

There is considerable fear among this and other organizations that REDD+ will lead to the privatization of indigenous lands in favor of carbon plantations by private companies at the expense of cultural uses of the forests. While many other political organizations dispute the extent of these claims, there is some degree of uncertainty regarding what is being negotiated at REDD+, which can then be used to create rifts between the various indigenous communities. Indeed, this organization has been very successful at organizing numerous collective actions including protests during visits by key FONAFIFO and MINAE officials to the Talamancan territories, demonstrations in front of the Office of the President and a declaration of "No REDD+" in the Talamanca Bribri territory between 2014 and 2016 (see figure 1). While the REDD+ readiness process has moved forward in spite of these demonstrations, it is clear that there is considerable concern with regards to the transparency of the process amongst the indigenous people in the territories that could eventually lead to delegitimizing the entire endeavor.

Internal divisions between the indigenous communities is not unheard of between the different territories over time (Guevara Berger et

al., 1999), nor it is unusual with regards to REDD+ processes, as neighboring Panama had to halt the advance of its inclusion into REDD+ precisely due to conflicts between indigenous groups, and between them and the state (PRISMA, 2013). In Costa Rica, another reason of the conflict has to do with the different political contexts from which each indigenous territory negotiate from. Whereas the Talamancan territories perceive REDD+ as a priority, given their successful experiences with the PSA and the lack of an immediate territorial threat in the form of agrarian or energy-oriented megaprojects, the ones in the Southern Pacific region face a completely different situation with a great deal of their lands under non-indigenous control and the imminent threat of continuous agrarian plantation expansion and the construction of the Diquís Hydropower Facility nearby. Their decision not to participate in the existing consultation process for REDD+ has led to some degree of conflict between the indigenous leaderships and fueled the de-legitimization of the entire strategy amongst the most reticent sectors of the indigenous community. For the Talamancan ADIs and RIBCA, though, this situation has certainly led to a weaker political position to mobilize their agenda as other territories follow different and often more conflictive interests vis-à-vis FONAFIFO, aggravating the progress of the negotiation.

Picture 1. Indigenous organizations manifest their rejection of REDD+ during a meeting with authorities from FONAFIFO and the Minister of Environment.. Suretka, August 29th, 2014

Source: *Kioskos Ambientales* Program of the University of Costa Rica.

This is further aggravated by the fact that there has been little success in mobilizing the two key issues of the five-point agenda presented in the context of SESA, namely with the cleansing of the territories and the indigenous-minded PSA. With regards to the former, it is clear that there seems to be different expectations to the length of the

support that would have been obtained by indigenous leaders though FONAFIFO regarding the re-claiming indigenous lands. While RIBCA officials were expecting the design of a comprehensive plan for the government to address the problem of indigenous territories under non-indigenous hands, FONAFIFO was only able to offer a brief land survey determining whom are the legal owners of the land and potential mechanisms for advancing claims for that land (Benavides Galindo and Herrera Zeledón, 2015), with little to no indication of whether the government was going to go through enacting the re-claiming process. Indeed, it is clear that FONAFIFO will not handle that issue by itself, given that they consider that it is not under their legal purview and that if engaged by the PSA it would imply a serious divertion of funding required for conservation. Overall, indigenous leaders interviewed during a brief return to the field in 2016, expressed a clear dissatisfaction with the lack of support from the government regarding the solution to these historical problems. It is clear that REDD+ was not flexible enough tool to be used as leverage for dealing with land right conflicts.

I also consider that while there have certainly been important improvements in the negotiation of an indigenous-minded PSA modality, expectations should be moderated regarding the future impact of the program at indigenous territories. For starters, it is clear from the recently published Emissions Reduction Program Document, that indigenous lands are not the objective of the program. Surely, the document argues that FONAFIFO will allocate roughly 20.000 additional hectares to all indigenous communities, a significant area, but only a fraction of lands currently under their control (about 329.000 hectares). Moreover, the ER-PD clearly states that REDD+ will be implemented in *"lands under private property (…) and in a smaller measure, in communal forms of property (i.e.: indigenous lands)"* (MINAE and FONAFIFO, 2016: 56). Besides that, the three priority regions defined by the ER-PD do not include Talamanca, which is where most of the indigenous territories are located. While the negotiation between the Talamancans and FONAFIFO continues in order to better define the features of the indigenous PSA, the Secretariat has made it extensively clear that *"the current priorities for distribution of the funds of the current PSA or the ones used for the REDD+ with the Carbon Fund are not up for negotiation"* (Director of National REDD+ Secretariat, interview, September 28th 2014).

Besides these obstacles, FONAFIFO has also raised concerns with regards to the specifics of the indigenous proposal on the features of this PSA modality. In 2015, RIBCA – with the financial support of GiZ – developed an initial proposal of potential changes to PSA modalities in order to be implemented in the indigenous territories. The proposal suggested the need of re-directing the PSA in order to recognize the cultural value that the Bribri and the Cabécar assign to the Talamancan forests, by allowing them to "*use forests either for cultural purposes or for the sustenance of indigenous families, albeit, without diminishing its conservation*

objective" (Morales Pita, 2015: 36), and establishing legal guarantees in order to defend these cultural values. In other words, their demands with the Indigenous PSA is the establishment of a:

> "PSA that contemplates our relationship with the forests, with total adequacy to the indigenous culture. We do not manage the forests, that is an imported word, we lived from the forests. The law is to squared for us, it is meant for clearing the forests, it does not suit or needs, because what we can do is to support ourselves in the things we produce in the forests" (RIBCA Cabécar representative, interview, August 4th, 2014).

Besides that, the proposal demands that FONAFIFO make the enrollment procedures more flexible, by reducing obligations related to payments to forest regents, that no sacred forests be object of the PSA contract, and that verification and monitoring mechanisms used for the PSA include active indigenous participation (Morales Pita, 2015). This is a demand developed in consideration of the high cost to entry that has historically characterized the PSA.

Whereas some of these issues are not problematic from the perspective of FONAFIFO, the key demand is made by RIBCA regarding the integration of traditional uses and cultural values of the forest within the neoliberal mindset of the program. As stated before, FONAFIFO considered the feasibility of using a Forest Protection modality for the PSA in Talamanca due to the fact that is easier to bound the communal forests where some forms of conservation are already in place, than to engage with clan- or family-owned patches of land. Indeed, the notion of using the Reforestation or the Forest Management modalities – which would, in theory, be somewhat coherent with current agroforestry uses of the land – is seen with some degree of inkling by FONAFIFO in view of the potential problems it would generate for proper accountability of abated carbon emissions. There is the preoccupation that by including different non-delimited familiar plots of land, or trabajaderos used by entire communities, that there would be considerable difficulties to control these many users and guaranteeing their compliance to a PSA program in order to guarantee additionality of the payment. As the Regional Manager from FONAFIFO in Limón argues:

> "Logistics can become a problem for using these types of modalities in the indigenous territories (Forest Management and Reforestation), because you have the ones that do it well, and there are the others that complain. Then, when I have to do the inspection, I can end up verifying that five plots are fine, but that the other five are not, and I cannot pay them like that. Then the five that did their job complain about the five that didn't, because they have not internalized the idea of the program, and so nothing gets done and you can end up producing more conflict" (interview, August 19th, 2016).

Put in other terms, to allow the integration of PSA provisions for recognizing cultural uses of resources and the subsistence of the families on the indigenous forests, would counter the very logics of commodification, privatization and accountability upon which the very formation of the carbon emission abatement relies. While REDD+ has been a mechanism that has opened up new spaces for negotiating the conditions of indigenous incorporation to the conservation policy of the Costa Rican state, there is a limit to the potential of these spaces for guaranteeing indigenous political autonomy and self-determination, and such limits are determined by the fact that indigenous integration in Costa Rican society cannot possibly question the development and conservation agendas pushed forward by the state, entailing, in this case, the commodification of the very resources that indigenous peoples are trying to control.

8.3. Conclusions

This chapter has argued that the REDD+ readiness process has depended greatly on the decisions made by the most powerful actors of the Costa Rican forestry sector. It clearly is a reflection of the compromises between policy actors in favor of integrating market-based instruments for forest conservation and others oriented towards maintaining and reinforcing the existing command-and-control tools created since initial policy interventions in the 1970s. As a result, the degree of flexibility of REDD+ to accommodate to any other forestry narrative or perspective has been previously delineated between these policy positions, even before indigenous peoples were invited to the table. Well before their participation, the decision was made that REDD+ would be policy mechanism destined to finance already-existing command-and-control policies and expanded solely to cover new market-oriented instruments that entail a clear engagement with the private sector as its new focus of attention. Closed policy networks – composed from members of state conservation agencies, the private forestry industry and academic sectors – have molded REDD+ with very little external consultation.

Of course, this does not mean that there have not been any spaces for indigenous peoples to take advantage of. There have been various elements that have led to indigenous inclusion in REDD+. National and international institutional requirements have forced policy elites in charge of decision-making to open the consultation process in order to attain effective validation vis-à-vis FCPF and other funding bodies. Moreover, there are political incentives in place to promote buy of indigenous, even despite the fact that the National REDD+ Strategy has been clearly defined as a tool to promote forest conservation in threatened Costa Rican private forests. In this context, REDD+ has provided a clear opportunity for the Talamancan indigenous peoples to negotiate the terms of their incorporation in the PSA program with the Costa Rican state, including

the implementation of a modality of PES that suits the political and cultural needs of these populations.

However, these opportunities for participation have met a inflexible limits, thereby becoming an uneffective means to incorporate important policy changes fostering indigenous territorial autonomy. Indeed, there have been hindrances to the consolidation of the indigenous agenda through REDD+, represented in the fact that FONAFIFO has clarified that it will not get involved in processes related to reinforcing indigenous territorial control over their lands, nor adapting the PSA program in ways that could compromise existing conditionality, additionality, verification and monitoring mechanisms. Moreover, the readiness process has also failed as a means of effective participation by indigenous organizations, as shown by evidence of the negotiations happening around the SESA and SIS processes.

In this way, the National REDD+ Strategy in Costa Rica reflects the very essence of neoliberal multiculturalism. While the discourse in favor of REDD+ presents this initiative as a means of combining market-based incentives to conservation with the defense of indigenous rights, in practice, here this outcome does not seem likely. Bribri and Cabécar organizations approached REDD+ readiness negotiations using their involvement in these new green economy initiative as a means of exercising some leverage to obtain long-standing territorial and cultural demands. Yet, governance structures have proven to be extremely rigid in allowing forms of livelihood different from what have been considered to be compatible with conservation here. Neoliberal multiculturalism entails the possibility of state structures to accommodate to some indigenous demands and viewpoints (at least, at a discursive level), but without compromising the central tenets of neoliberal governance. This is the case of the PSA and REDD+. In chapter 7, I showed how the PSA was modified for implementation in the Talamancan territories as a means of protecting livelihoods considered to be compatible to conservation, while promoting rationalities that are inconsistent with indigenous ways of life.

In this chapter, REDD+ has become an effort by conservation to double down on this bet. While some room has been offered to modify the implementation of the PSA program, the actual possibility of changing the neoliberal core of the PSA program by integrating these cultural practices is unquestionably limited. Demands for an indigenous PSA have faced considerable opposition by FONAFIFO officials as these may counter critical logistical and accounting imperatives of the program. This is an expected reaction from this government agency, especially considering that in the post-REDD+ context, the PSA is bound to emphasize its orientation as a market-based tool designed to promote carbon abatement vis-à-vis the rest of the ecosystem services it is meant to guarantee. The negotiation behind the Costa Rican REDD+ Strategy captures the essence of neoliberal multiculturalism, as it is a process that has opened some room for indigenous leaders and state authorities to incorporate different

policy imperatives akin to indigenous ideas and values, but only to a point in which neoliberal governance and conservation and development priorities are not actually questioned. In this sense, with REDD+, environmental conservation has drawn a very clear line defining how much of the local culture can be considered to be a support, and how much could be considered as a threat. Regretfully for the Bribri and Cabécar organizations, it appears to be clear that long-standing claims of territorial autonomy are perceived as countering environmental conservation, particularly as defined in a context of the neoliberal green economy.

Notes

[1] REDD+ is an acronym that stands for two great agendas. The first one, previously dubbed as REDD means "reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation." The plus (+) part stands for "the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries".

[2] Since the Thirteen Conference of the Parties (COP 13) of the UNFCCC, REDD+ has produced heated discussions in academic, conservation and development circles given the lack of clarity regarding the mechanisms that were going to be implemented in order to incitivize the reduction of carbon emissions. After COP 17, clarifications have been made regarding the usage of both market and non-market sources as a means of funding the initiative. A Green Climate Fund has been created in order to support REDD+ programs, while a market-based approach oriented to translating verifiable actions into carbon credits is also considered to be viable (von der Goltz, 2009)

[3] Growth of the fiscal deficit in Costa Rica has accelerated over the course of the past ten years. By 2015, the gap between public income and expenditure reached an amount equivalent to 5,9% of the gross domestic product of the country, the highest deficit in over three decades (PEN, 2016).

9 Conclusions

This dissertation is the result of a long and complex research process organized with the objective of understanding how some of the recent conservation and development interventions related to the operation of La Amistad Biosphere Reserve had affected the lives of the Bribri and Cabécar indigenous peoples living at state-mandated territories located around the Reserve, indigenous territories that are also conceived by the state as buffer zones for this major conservation endeavor. Overall, the thesis has shown that policy interventions have been diversified beyond the original imperatives of the Costa Rican conservation project. While the spirit of a socially-exclusive fortress conservation-minded approach towards La Amistad International Park remains, present and reflected upon the execution of restrictions to forest uses at the expense of indigenous livelihoods, there are newer instruments featuring different perspectives, including what I have dubbed here as the green economy.

As I have shown in chapter 4, inspired by the tenets of a new outward-oriented development project for Costa Rica, the imperatives of conservation practice have changed, and today are oriented at emphasizing sustainable development and neoliberal policies through new and diversified practices hinged on the economic and environmental optimization of rural livelihoods, and espousing their integration to capitalist markets. All in all, these new trends in conservation policy-making are meant to guarantee critical biopolitical objectives of the Costa Rican state such as guarding natural resource security, maintaining macroeconomic stability, and doing both things through the formation of new commodity and financial markets for resources put under conservation.

In the previous chapters, I have offered a detailed look at two of these new and diversified forms of conservation at RBLA – mainly market-oriented agroforestry systems and payments of environmental services – thereby characterizing the particular ways in which both tools attempt to preserve certain traditions and livelihood practices of the Bribri and Cabécar indigenous peoples, while at the same time modifying others through the market-oriented essentialization of indigenous cultural practices (while totally omitting the equally important non-market features of said practices). This practice of intervention through the marketing of rural livelihoods and cultural practices for the capitalist system with little concern regarding potential drawbacks is reflective of conservation elites' idealization of Costa Rica as a land of "no artificial ingredients". But it is a practice that is also reflective of a wider history of interactions between environmental conservation and indigenous

peoples, as local culture is often considered to be both a supportive and threatening to former.

Yet, as I have shown throughout the dissertation the actual territorialization of these new conservation imperatives has been contested by and modeled through Talamancan cultural, political and economic realities coming "from below". Chapter 5 characterized the contestation against top-down forest conservation approaches and the eventual disposition of state authorities of including some degree of co-management instruments to deal with key overlaps between La Amistad International Park and the two indigenous reserves. There I discussed how have stringent forest policies affected the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and how they often challenged these dispositions in order to extract resources needed from forests under state protection. Chapter 6 explained how sustainable agricultural interventions had to organize around discursive imperatives based upon the protection of indigenous culture in order to justify its intervention around cacao trees and agroforestry. There I argued that interventions made by the state alongside a key academic institution have failed to account the realities of the indigenous territories, thereby leading to the program to be somewhat resisted and perceived with serious suspicion by the locals. Finally, in chapters 7 and 8, I explained the extent in which FONAFIFO has presented the PSA and REDD+ as tools for promoting social development and autonomous indigenous governance, while also attempting to fulfill institutional objectives of establishing a market for ecosystem services. This PES program has been forced to bend to the point of cracking in order to allow for other neoliberal rationalities and solutions to come in, running against the limits of its own reality, but without actually fulfilling the objectives of both the market-oriented technocratic sectors in charge of the program, nor those of the indigenous people, which serve as beneficiaries.

All in all, these chapters have identified and characterized a number of institutional cracks produced by ongoing tensions between the neoliberal technocratic territorialization of market-friendly natural resource management and indigenous political activism centered on guaranteeing the territorial autonomy of the Reserves. In so doing, I questioned the self-idealization of conservation elites' in Costa Rica as a land of "no artificial ingredients", where conservation comes naturally for the most environmentally-aware sectors of society. These institutional cracks and ongoing tensions are at the core of this dissertation precisely because they are reflective of the interrogation of "territorial verticality", that is, the manner in which a discrete segment of space is subjected to a variety of territorial power relations working at different scales. At a fairly empirical level of analysis, it is clear from the results of each of these political interventions that there has been a continuous misreading of the politico-environmental landscape, which is then reflected on cases of project mismanagement, misappropriation of resources and limited internalization of project goals as in the case of the Cacao Program,

incomplete incorporation of indigenous visions and territorial demands of autonomy into project planning and management as in the case of co-management spaces for RBLA or outright political resistance due to complete contradiction of cultural and environmental values and livelihoods like it is currently happening with REDD+. Yet, at a more analytical level there is a lot more to say about the narrow-minded mentality of the Costa Rican conservation project and the tensions it produces at the level of local indigenous politics. This dissertation has manifested these continuous tensions between indigenous demands, state recognition of collective rights and the neoliberal technocracy behind new conservation policy-making, yet there are relevant comments to be made regarding how the resulting institutional cracks change not only the landscape of indigenous politics, but also the way in which the neoliberal green economy manifests in Costa Rica.

9.1. Neoliberal conservation and the challenge of multiculturalism

Since colonial times, the history of Talamanca has been determined by competing territorial claims between productive imperatives, state power and the indigenous peoples that have physically occupied this small geographical space. Over the course of the 20th Century, these competing claims began orbiting a single, but complicated, contradiction as the physical presence of indigenous peoples became a political tool for the state to claim sovereignty over the region with respect to perceived threats of encroachment from its neighboring states, while at the same time, the Bribri and the Cabécar became an obstacle for capital accumulation. The two main drivers of state formation in Costa Rica – reinforcing claims over a tenuously held territory and offering the means for the local economy to integrate with the world markets – entered into a complicated contradiction that was never fully resolved over the course of the past century. This, in turn, informed the current compromised position of the Talamancan indigenous peoples with regards to the Costa Rican state and its citizenship regime. In this context, neoliberal conservation has risen as a new alternative for solving the ongoing contradiction through the implementation of what I have characterized as the "passive frontier thesis".

Itself a concept originating from the 2008 PILA Management Plan, the passive frontier thesis encapsulates the dominant logic behind most state- and NGO-led conservation and development interventions to the Talamanca Valley. A discursive contradiction in itself, the passive frontier thesis, recognizes the agency of the Bribri and the Cabécar in provoking a fairly low degree of environmental degradation of the Talamancan region compared to the rest of the country, while at the same time arguing for the diminished agency of these very same groups to maintain the same degree of environmental protection of the landscape in the future. Politically, it is

a recognition of the common goals of addressing potentially deleterious processes of resource degradation between state- and NGO-led conservation agencies and indigenous activists, while prescribing that the former are the ones that should set the policy agenda for Talamanca, by implementing measures meant to guarantee sustainable development using market-related tools (such as the use of green seal certifications for agroforestry production, payments of environmental services, tourism, bioprospecting and others). Returning to the overarching discussion regarding the recognition of indigenous agency in the construction of their own environmental context that was presented along chapters 3 through 5, the passive frontier thesis presents itself as a hybrid. On the one hand, it combines elements from colonial interpretations about the negligible impacts of traditional indigenous practices over the natural environment, while, on the other, indigenous agency to change or protect the environment is recognized, but only if directed by state-led forms of intervention. It is an extremely representative discursive conceptualization of the "*sikwa*" political viewpoint of the Talamancan peoples and their effects on the environment, as it implicitly remarks on the superiority of new conservation tools for attending the ongoing environmental problematique of the Talamanca Valley while at the same time diminishing the agency of the very people that have not only degraded parts of said environment, but protected it as well.

This is best reflected when looking at the nature of the diversification of environmental policies implemented for promoting sustainable development and conservation at the Talamanca Valley. While most interviewees from state agencies and NGOs expressed an undeniable respect for the productive systems and cultural practices of the Bribri and the Cabécar, the fact of the matter is that the actual incorporation of these ideas and practices into new conservation endeavors explored in this document has been a limited and a contested struggle. There is a continuous tendency amongst the various project officials to essentialize the complex reality of the Bribri and the Cabécar enhancing the traditions and practices that are perceived to be compatible with conservation, while attempting to modify the ones that are considered to be incompatible. The BID-MAG project is a good example of these practices. The economic and environmental problematique of agricultural production of the Bribri and the Cabécar was consistently explored during the Namasol project leading to conclusions about the strong links between "*sikwa*" and traditional production. However, policy imperatives of CATIE and MAG have been designed based on the idea of treating these forms of cultivation as interchangeable and separable. As a result, cacao has been promoted in a way that reflects acceptable indigenous livelihoods, but failing to acknowledge the wider agricultural and livelihood context. The same can be said about the PSA and REDD+. In other words, while there seems to be a genuine disposition by state conservation agencies and NGOs towards promoting buy in to efforts at

protecting RBLA and the Sixaola Basin through the improvement of existing livelihoods, these efforts become hampered by the inability to think beyond the narrow neoliberal rationality of the green economy.

9.2. Neoliberal state formation and indigenous peoples

The forms of contestation and cooperation exhibited by the Bribri and the Cabécar in the different chapters of this dissertation need to be understood in the context of recent changes in state formation in Costa Rica. There are undeniable continuities reflected in the still unstable position that indigenous communities still occupy, being considered both part of the nation-state, yet also somewhat separate from the processes of capitalist integration that historically drove and continues to drive state formation in this country, and, particularly, in the Talamancan region. Indeed, the decision to carve out and maintain state-mandated zones for indigenous people early in the 20th Century was a territorial manifestation of this ongoing contradiction between state formation and capitalist development, as seen in chapter 3. This contradiction has accompanied the process of establishment of the indigenous reserves where the Bribri and Cabécar live today, and the same thing can be said of the choices of integrating the Reserves into the ongoing conservation programs studied here. For example, the very idea of including the reserves to the PSA program, while constituting Integrated Development Associations, and not the actual forest dwellers, the actual "beneficiaries" of it, reflects this contradiction, as I have shown in chapter 7.

With that said, there have been some transformations along the way, leading to the resurgence of the Bribri and the Cabécar as political actors vis-à-vis the Costa Rican state, such as in the case of REDD+ and PA co-management. It is difficult to argue against the fact that there has been a process of democratization and that it has manifested in a new relationship between indigenous organizations – both state-mandated and the grassroots ones – and the Costa Rican state. Today, there is more political room for these peoples to address the state in a more open and direct fashion, an issue which was exemplified in chapter 7 with regards to the changes made to the implementation of the PSA program at indigenous territories. Moreover, the transnationalization and neoliberalization of the state and its functions has also offered an opportunity for these indigenous communities to achieve new opportunities of interaction with the state. Certainly, in the case of REDD+, the very fact that the FCPF and several environmental NGOs demanded increased participation of indigenous peoples and the peasantry, obliged FONAFIFO to slightly break with the political tradition of negotiating changes to the PSA exclusively with the industrial forestry sector and key forestry and conservation-related NGOs. In recent years, Costa Rica recognized its multicultural character in its Constitution, an important achievement within a process of gradual recognition of state obligations with international legislation on indigenous rights. This, in

turn, has legitimized some long-standing indigenous requests, such as pluricultural forms of education, recognition of their legal rights to autonomous forms of development and their collective ownership over the lands they inhabit. Yet, with all this said, there is an evident gap between acknowledging these rights and exercising them in practice. In the case of the Costa Rican state, some of these claims – territorial rights in particular – have been ignored consistently throughout the past four decades since the creation of the Indigenous Reserves.

Over the course of chapters 5 to 8, I have consistently argued about the importance of neoliberal multiculturalism for understanding the interaction between indigenous peoples and the Costa Rican state in the context of implementation of new conservation practices. Following Van Cott (2006) and Hale (2005), neoliberal multiculturalism is a process by which the state – the Latin American states, in particular – engage with multiculturalism (mostly in response of the aforementioned international pressures to do so) leading to new possibilities of political recognition of indigenous peoples' rights, while at the same time establishing new forms of political and disciplinary control over these populations and of the political demands of their representatives. Put simply, while it may establish new spaces for political participation and even empowerment, neoliberal multiculturalism is not the road for changing historical forms of political inequality faced by the Costa Rican indigenous peoples. Indeed, as the case of the PSA shows, while the ADIs may gain necessary financial resources to develop policies suitable for the cultural, political and economic reality of the Bribri and the Cabécar, it has to accept the commodification and financialization of its forest resources, relinquish political control over patches of the indigenous territory and submit to constant state conservation auditing in return. Neoliberal multiculturalism is undeniably a complicated subject: on the one hand, it seems to check the more deleterious consequences of neoliberal reform, but on the other, it intensifies the articulation of indigenous peoples with neoliberalism in new and potentially problematic ways.

Overall, this dissertation has shown how the institutional cracks resulting from tension between indigenous activism and neoliberal technocratic conservation, result in a new politics of multiculturalism. The Costa Rican neoliberal state attempts to solve indigenous demands through different ways, but mainly through the means of guaranteeing their incorporation within the space of bureaucratic decision-making. However, this form of official recognition is limited from the start, leading to a small chance of actual reform of the power relations that have historically defined the relationship between the Talamancans and the Costa Rican state. In the end, it almost seems like if the possibility of a slight reform blunts the edge of actual political resistance, as the truly important issues for the Bribri and the Cabécar – territorial autonomy, self-development and access to stable forms of funding for their projects – remain largely untouched. Cultural differences regarding their approach

towards territorial politics are taken into account in the discourse of the managers, project officials and state political authorities interviewed for this dissertation, yet the translation of this recognition into political action is not always reflective of the hopes of the indigenous activists and politicians. The historical roots of the liminality of the Bribri and the Cabécar are never questioned, just acknowledged and then put aside. Moreover, neoliberal multiculturalism seems to privilege a form of indigenous political participation that is favorable to the wider neoliberal project. Indeed, if one thing can be extracted from the political justification given to the Cacao Program, the PSA and REDD+ is that there is a great deal of appropriation of indigenous culture and rights in order to offer a development agenda that is friendly to neoliberal tenets of market expansion, political decentralization and citizen responsibility.

Within these institutional cracks, cultural difference may be welcomed by neoliberal multiculturalism, but it is not in the way in which it could be hoped by the various indigenous organizations and activists interviewed for this research, as there is no confrontation with the historical origins of the real problematiques behind their poverty and their liminal position as citizens of this country. Moreover, the most critical projects constantly addressed by these leaders – territorial autonomy and their right to self-determination – is rejected first hand by the Costa Rican state. In the end, it seems like if neoliberal multiculturalism would tend to favor a particular type of indigenous activism and identity formation while neglecting the rest, the reality of environmental policy-making in the context of RBLA is representative of the situation of indigenous politics in Costa Rica, whereby state policy does recognize ethnic pluralism though transformed in both content and reach under the rubric of neoliberal multiculturalism.

Appendix

Appendix 1. Interviews

Respondent	Type of interview	Number
Talamancan BID-MAG Cacao Program beneficiaries - Amubre (8) - Sepecue (7) - Shiroles (7) - San Miguel (8)	Semi-structured	30
Talamancan people living nearby PILA - Kachabri (Group: 8) - Amubre (Group: 7) - Kachabri (4) - Amubre (3)	Semi-structured, individual and group interview	9
Talamancan beneficiaries of INBio Tourism Project - Suretka (Group: 4) - Shiroles (Group: 4) - Suretka (3) - Shiroles (3)	Semi-structured, Individual and group interview	8
Talamancan people living nearby PSA programs - Amubre (6) - Gavilán Canta (5)	Semi-structured	11
Talamancan Indigenous Integral Development Associations - President, ADITIBRI - Vicepresident, ADITIBRI - Officer in Charge of Forests and Territorial Affairs, ADITIBRI - Officer in Charge of Indigenous Education, ADITIBRI - Accountant, ADITIBRI - Former ADITIBRI President 1 (x 2) - Former ADITIBRI President 2 - Park Ranger, ADITIBRI - President, ADITICA - Vicepresident ADITICA - Former ADITICA President - Local leaders and *awapa*, Neighborhood Councils (8)	Semi-structured	20

Local Talamancan indigenous organizations - President, APPTA - President, ACOMUITA (x2) - Local Leader, Talamancan Authocthonous Peoples Union - President, Koswak Indigenous Association - Director, RIBCA - Political Leader, *Talamanca por la Vida y por la Tierra* (x 3) - President, STRIBAWPA - President, CACTA - President, Association of Plantain Producers of the Sixaola River - President, COOPETISOLA - President, Bocatorean Cacao Cooperative (COCABO) - President, Association of Organic Peasnt Producers (ACAPRO)	Semi-structured	15
State agricultural and environmental agencies in Costa Rica - PILA Administrator, ACLAC-SINAC (x 2) - RBLA Heritage Site Promotor, ACLAC-SINAC - PILA Park Ranger 1, ACLAC-SINAC - PILA Park Ranger 2, ACLAC-SINAC - Regional Director, ACLAC-SINAC - Regional Manager for Limón Office, FONAFIFO - Monitoring and Verification Director, FONAFIFO - REDD+ Executive Secretary, FONAFIFO - REDD+ Public Relations Officer, FONAFIFO - R-PP Consultant, FONAFIFO - SESA Consultant, FONAFIFO - Climate Change Unit Director, MINAE - Director, Binational Project of the Sixaola River Basin (BID-FEM) - BID-MAG National Coordinator, MAG - NCP Director, MAG - NCP Officer, MAG - Regional Sixaola Director, MAG - Evaluating Consultant, BID-MAG Project, MAG	Semi-structured	19
Other state institutions in Costa Rica - Executive Secretary of the Frontier Development Cooperation Agreement, MIDEPLAN - President, CONAI - Mayor, Municipality of Talamanca	Semi-structured	3
State environmental agencies in Panama - Changuinola Regional Director, ANAM	Semi-structured	7

- National Director, Mesoamerican Biological Corridor for the Panamanian Atlantic Seaboard (CBMAP) - PILA Administrator, ANAM - Climate Change Unit Director, ANAM - Environmental Quality Director, ANAM - Hydrological Resources Director, ANAM - Evaluating Consultant, BID-GEF		
Other state institutions in Panama - General Director, General Direction of Indigenous Peoples, Ministry of Government (MINGOB) - Coordinator of the Frontier Development Cooperation Agreement, Ministry of Economy and Finances (MEF)	Semi-structured	2
Local Talamancan non-indigenous NGOs and CSOs - Director, Talamanca-Caribe Biological Corridor - Officer in Charge of PES, Talamanca-Caribe Biological Corridor - President, ANAI - President, Talamancan Tourism Association (ATEC)	Semi-structured	4
National and international NGOs and CSOs based in Costa Rica - Officer in Charge of Climate Change Adaptation Project, IUCN - Officer in Charge of the Environmental Economics Project, IUCN - Director, Foundation for the Development of the Central Mountain Range (FUNDECOR) - Director, National Indigenous Roundtable (MNI) - Director, Oilwatch Central America - President, Forestry Business Chamber (CCF) - Coordinator, National Forestry Union (UNAFOR) - Tourism Program Coordinator, National Biodiversity Institute (INBio)	Semi-structured	8
National and international NGOs and CSOs based in Panama - Director, Panamanian Centre for Social Action Studies (CEASPA) - Director, Center for Environmental Incidence (CIAM) - Director, Panamanian Ecological Consultants (CEPSA) - Director, Fundación PANAMA - National Director, National Coordinating Body of Indigenous Peoples in Panama (COONAPIP)	Semi-structured	5

Academic institutions in Costa Rica and Panama - Climate Change Researcher, EARTH - Officer in Charge of Cacao Project, CATIE - Environmental Economics Professor, Technological Institute of Costa Rica (ITCR) - Indigenous People Researcher, Development Observatory, UCR - *Kioskos Ambientales* Program, UCR (x 3) - Talamanca-Sixaola Researcher, School of Sociology, UCR - Indigenous People Researcher, University of Panama	Semi-structured	10
Total		**151**

In order to safeguard the anonymity of the respondents, this table does not use their actual names and identifies them using their town of residence or the institution to which they were affiliated at the time of the interview.

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Curriculum vitae

Alonso Ramírez Cover (San José, Costa Rica, 1982) studied political sciences at the School of Political Sciences of the University of Costa Rica, obtaining his Bachelor's Degree in Political Sciences (with Distinction) in 2006 and his Licentiate's Degree (with Distinction) in 2008. For his Licentiate, he was awarded with a Scholarship Grant from the Institute of Social Research of the University of Costa Rica, to conduct research on environmental conflicts related to water use, distribution and pollution in Guanacaste, Costa Rica. In 2010, he was awarded with a Netherlands Fellowship Program (NFP) scholarship from the Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation (Nuffic) to pursue a Master's Degree in Development Studies with emphasis in Development Research at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam. He graduated from ISS with a research paper that received distinction titled 'Neoliberalism and territorialization at Las Baulas Marine National Park, Costa Rica'. One year later, in November 2012, he began his PhD research at ISS. During his PhD, he spent more than three years in Costa Rica, with academic affiliations at the Institute of Social Research and the School of Political Science of the University of Costa Rica and the State of the Nation Program of the National Council of University Rectors. He currently works full-time at the University of Costa Rica as a researcher of the Center of Research and Political Studies and as a lecturer of political economy and development studies at the School of Political Science. Before and during his PhD, he has published on the complex relationship between contemporary neoliberalism and environmental policy-making in Costa Rica.