

Contested Value

Alternative Discourses of Payments for Ecosystem Services in Mexico

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Compensation Discourse



- Alternative narrative first promoted broadly by PRISMA in 2003 seminal publications on PES in Latin America
- Difference in meaning stronger in Spanish:
 - Payment = simple monetary exchange
 - Compensation = recognition and honoring of a valuable service rendered
- Alters the narrative from rational economic actors interacting in a vacuum to a recognition of the richness of human relations and human relations with “nature”

Compensation

The discourse of compensation accepts that ecosystem services have value, but insists on a more holistic conceptualization of how that value is produced, can be recognized, and should be captured.



Compensation vs. Payments

- **SOURCE** of funding (markets vs. state) not important
- Values the **LABOR & CULTURAL PRACTICES** invested in ecosystem stewardship beyond or in addition to the \$ value of the ecosystem services produced
- Recognizes that owners & buyers have complex set of non-monetary **VALUES** for forests & the ES they produce
- Values the **RELATIONAL** aspect between rural and urban beyond mere economic transactions
- Takes a **TERRITORIAL** approach to planning for and managing the entire landscape.
- Works to overcome **STRUCTURAL** drivers of ecosystem degradation
- Views **ACTIVE MANAGEMENT & USE** of natural resources as compatible & necessary for their conservation
- Both require conditional **CONTRACTS**, though CES may be informal

3 Compensation Case Studies

What commonalities and differences exist in the civil society organizations in Mexico that have promoted and seem to exemplify the discourse of compensation for ecosystem services?

- “Successful” PES scheme(s) ~ All started with national PES program, but have developed independent “markets.”
- Some variation in their ethos, but great similarity in their conceptualization and actualization of CES
- CES discourse produced has been influential in Mexico and beyond



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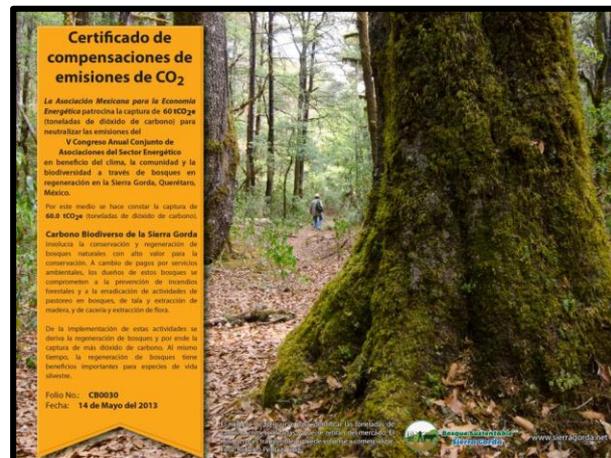
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Forest-based carbon offsets on national and international voluntary markets (carbono biodiverso)

CES as a means to finance holistic biodiversity conservation

- School-based environmental education
- Microenterprise development
- Sustainable agriculture and forestry
- Ecotourism



SENDAS

PROSAPIX “Payments” for watershed management in Veracruz from federal, state & municipal governments.

CES as “virtuous cycle” between rural and urban

- Watershed education for school groups
- Ecotourism for local urbanites
- Watershed management councils
- Active promotion with municipal & state governments



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Integrator of Indigenous and Campesino Communities of Oaxaca = Indigenous Carbon and Biodiversity (CARBOIN) credits sold on national and (possibly) California markets

CES as a support to the cultural reproduction and traditional ecological stewardship of indigenous communities

- Community governance
- Participatory land use planning
- Funds invested in projects for collective good
- Training and employment generation



Conclusions

- 3 cases vary significantly in their secondary motivations, but strong overlap in discourse of CES
- CES seen as a recognition of the value of traditional stewardship and a funding sources for holistic approaches to “sustainable development”
- Understood as only one in a suite of tools: “a violin without the orchestra.”
- Have successfully secured both private and government sources of funding through:
 - Assertion of the CES discourse
 - A network of partnerships at multiple scales

Un Mil Gracias!

- The National Forestry Commission of Mexico (CONAFOR)
- National Science Foundation (NSF)
- International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)
- UC MEXUS Foundation
- The Tinker Foundation
- The Institute for International Studies
- The many communities in Mexico with whom I worked for their information, hospitality and infinite patience

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Civil Society in Mexico

- Repressed, controlled and infiltrated by the Institutionalized Revolutionary Party (PRI) 1930s-1970s
- 1980s structural reforms created need for non-governmental social props
- Weakening of PRI provides opening in 1990s
- 2000s rapid rise in power and influence
 - Provision of grounded “services”
 - Political influence

