

# Ideas and Legacies Underlying Land-Use Dynamics of Agricultural Frontiers in The Peruvian Amazon



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## 1. Context

The Peruvian Amazon is under the threat of agricultural expansion. With ~70 Mha, this region is the second most significant portion of the Amazon, only behind the Brazilian one (~365 Mha). It contains some of the most critical biodiversity hotspots worldwide. It is home to diverse indigenous peoples with a vast cultural heritage. Such characteristics suggest the imperative to ensure its conservation. However, reality is different. Statistical data during this century has shown an increasing trend of forest loss led by the expansion of agricultural land [1].

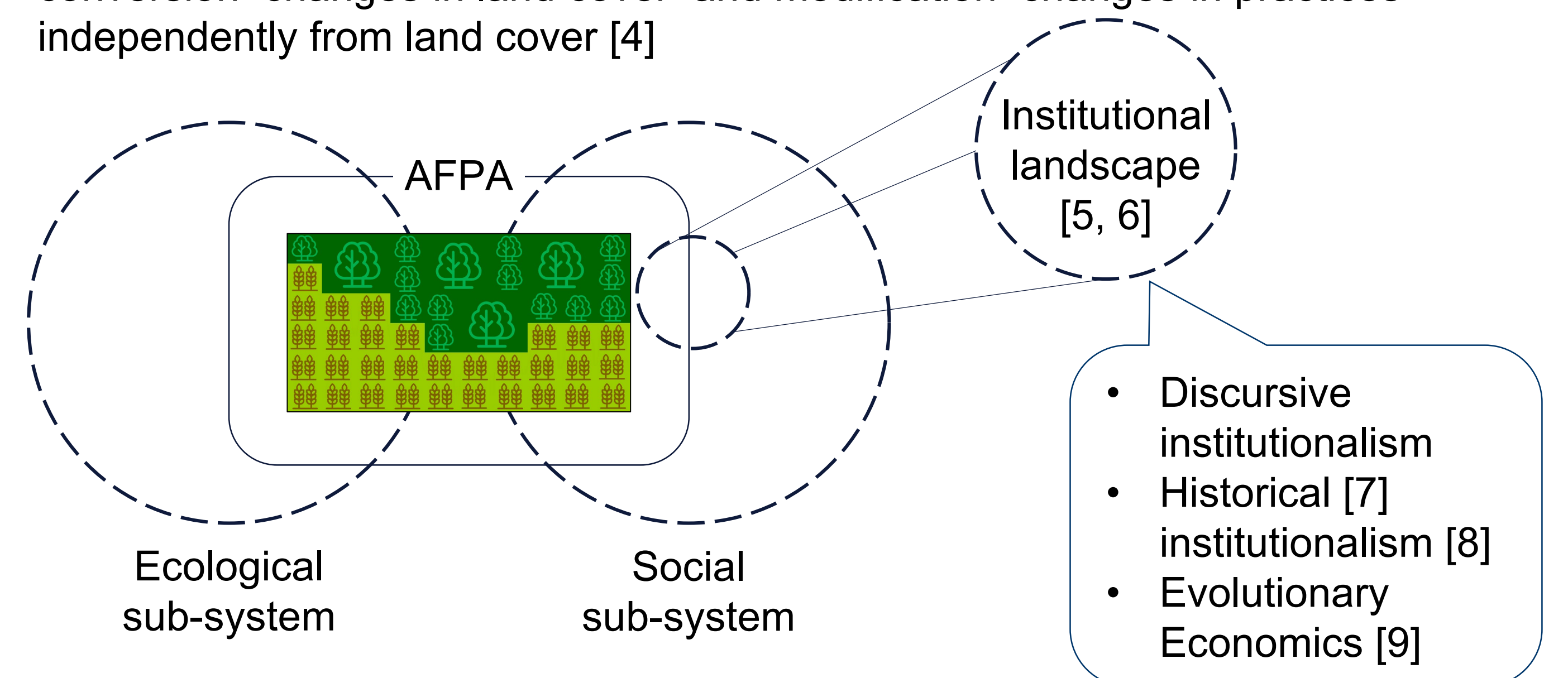
An angle to address this threat is that of institutions influencing agricultural land-use dynamics in the Peruvian Amazon. Institutions are social structures incentivizing human behavior toward a particular course [2]. In this way, institutions define access to resources, such as land, and place constraints on their use [3]. Institutions are diverse and connect to land-use dynamics differently. Farmer associations exist that rule directly on land management at local levels. Besides, although indirectly, national regulations and international markets also set the ground for local decision-making. With particular attention to agricultural frontiers, this presentation focuses on the latter group to understand the underlying forces behind agricultural expansion at the expense of the Peruvian Amazon.

## 2. Research question

What are the most salient features of the national-international institutional landscape influencing land-use dynamics of agricultural frontiers in the Peruvian Amazon (AFPA)?

## 3. Conceptual framework

AFs are remote regions where agricultural expansion occurs at the expense of unmanaged ecosystems. Land-use dynamics in them dynamics include conversion—changes in land cover—and modification—changes in practices independently from land cover [4]



## 4. Methods

Semi-structured expert interviews (35) and coding.

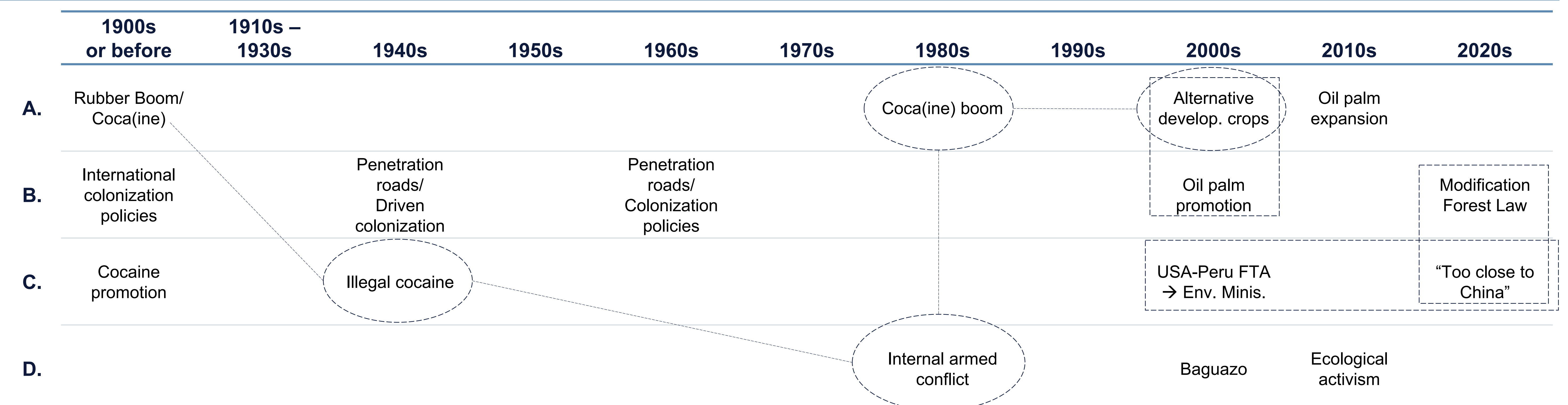
Code system:

- Institutions
- Diverse perspectives
- Historical track

Literature review to contrast findings from interviews.

- Systematic search: agriculture and deforestation in Peru [10].
- Suggestions by interview partners.
- Personally-known literature.

## 5. Preliminary results



### A. Commodity markets

- National and international.
- Legal and illegal.
- Also oil and gold (illegal mining)

“anticocainismo”

- “anti-forest lay”

### B. Productivist/development policies

- Policies consider the Amazon land as K.
- Andean migration due to poverty and conflict
  - Related discourse: “The national pantry;” “the conquer of Peru by Peruvians” (Belaunde).
- Invisibilization of Indigenous peoples:
  - “Related discourse: They are like the dog in the manger” (García)

### D. Social context

- Peoples discontent
- Ecological concerns
  - Demonization of oil palm [11]
  - Exaggeration: productive potential [12].
- Protective systems [11]

### E. The ecological sub-system

- Amazon soils are infertile:
  - Partial evidence: The Amazon comprises 49% of Peru’s agrarian land [13].
- Technology and transportation costs: Analysis per crop [12].

### C. International influence

- Constant from the USA.
- Institutions provide room for their influence:

## 6. Key messages

- Diverse forces influence AFPAs.
- The productivist/development discourse underlays most institutions.
- The Peruvian State has played and still plays a prominent role, e.g., promoting migration.
- The continuous international influence: special mention to the USA.
- Reminder: there is an ecological sub-system!

## 7. Upcoming work

Local level: two study cases to connect with these results.

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