Who's Developing Rural Paradise?
Multiple perspectives and experiences from community leaders and national agencies

Renée Hill A,B, Irene Shaver A,B, Isabel Gutiérrez-Montes B, Leontina Hormel A, Nicole Sibelet B,C, J.D. Wulffhorst A
A University of Idaho, USA; B Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza, Costa Rica (CATIE); C Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement, France (CIRAD)

Objectives
1. Understand larger context of rural development and community organization in study regions
2. Investigate multi-scale interactions between community organizations and national agencies

Two Study Regions
Heredia Province – Sarapiquí Canton
Cartago Province – Turrialba & Jiménez Cantons

Situating Costa Rica within global rural development trends
Neoliberal Reform
Decentralization
Decrease in State Investment
Liberalization of agricultural sector

Cross-team social science collaboration
Renée Hill- Team Turri
Irene Shaver- Team Bala

Project Design

Government Agencies:
10 interviews
Main Topics: Development goals, community needs, agency activities and responses

Community Development Organizations:
4 workshops (2 in each study region)
45 community leaders
Participatory mapping: Shared History & Future Visions

Community Organization

Preliminary Analysis
Who is responsible for rural development?
What factors influence rural development?

Bureaucracy

Community development used to be easier. Communities can develop on their own without the government, but the government puts so many hurdles for communities to develop alone. In this moment the government isn’t giving communities support or permission to develop alone.
- Community Leader

Agricultural Change

Agriculture has been abandoned because the government lacks a clear policy to support agricultural producers.
- Community Leader

State policies definitely need to change to create incentives for small and medium producers... without incentives like access to credit, training and markets the small and medium producers tend to disappear. And the whole process of rural development that the government has invested in over the years could be reversed... So it is important in the short- and medium-term to provide incentives for small and medium producers.
- Agrarian Development Agency

Producers have to modernize, look for profitable alternatives for production and commercialization, such as export crops, but without leaving behind food security.
- Agrarian Development Agency

The public institutions are designed in such a way and there are so many laws here that don’t allow them to do anything... so much control that doesn’t allow us to do absolutely anything. Here the bureaucracy is a monstrous ghost, and there are too many laws that don’t allow us to work. There is so much control that in the end it is not efficient control.
- National Agency for Community Development

Community development for me is a group of people that fight to achieve better things in their community, to be better off. And that’s why it has to be done together, it has to be a group that joins forces and knocks on doors to obtain resources, from basic necessities to the most technological. For me this is community development. This is the fight, this is desire, this is development.
- National Agency for Community Development

Next Steps
1. Data analysis continued
2. Write and deliver report of findings and interpretations to all participants
4. Manuscript as shared chapter of dissertation

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