

Land Grabbing in Pre- and Post-Coup Honduras

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Overview

Internal Historical Conditioning Dynamics (1950s-1980s)

- ❖ Greater openness to labor, agrarian, and social reforms
- ❖ Less landlord-peasant violence

*in comparison with neighboring Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua

External Historical Conditioning Dynamics

- ❖ U.S. hegemony and domination
- ❖ Postwar arms- and narco-trafficking
- ❖ U.S. led neoliberal policies
- ❖ Current policies supporting corporate food regime







Aguan Valley Land Grabbing

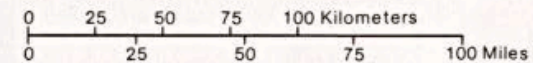
- ❖ Honduras's most dramatic case study
- ❖ Struggles, actors, conflicts
- ❖ Increased violence

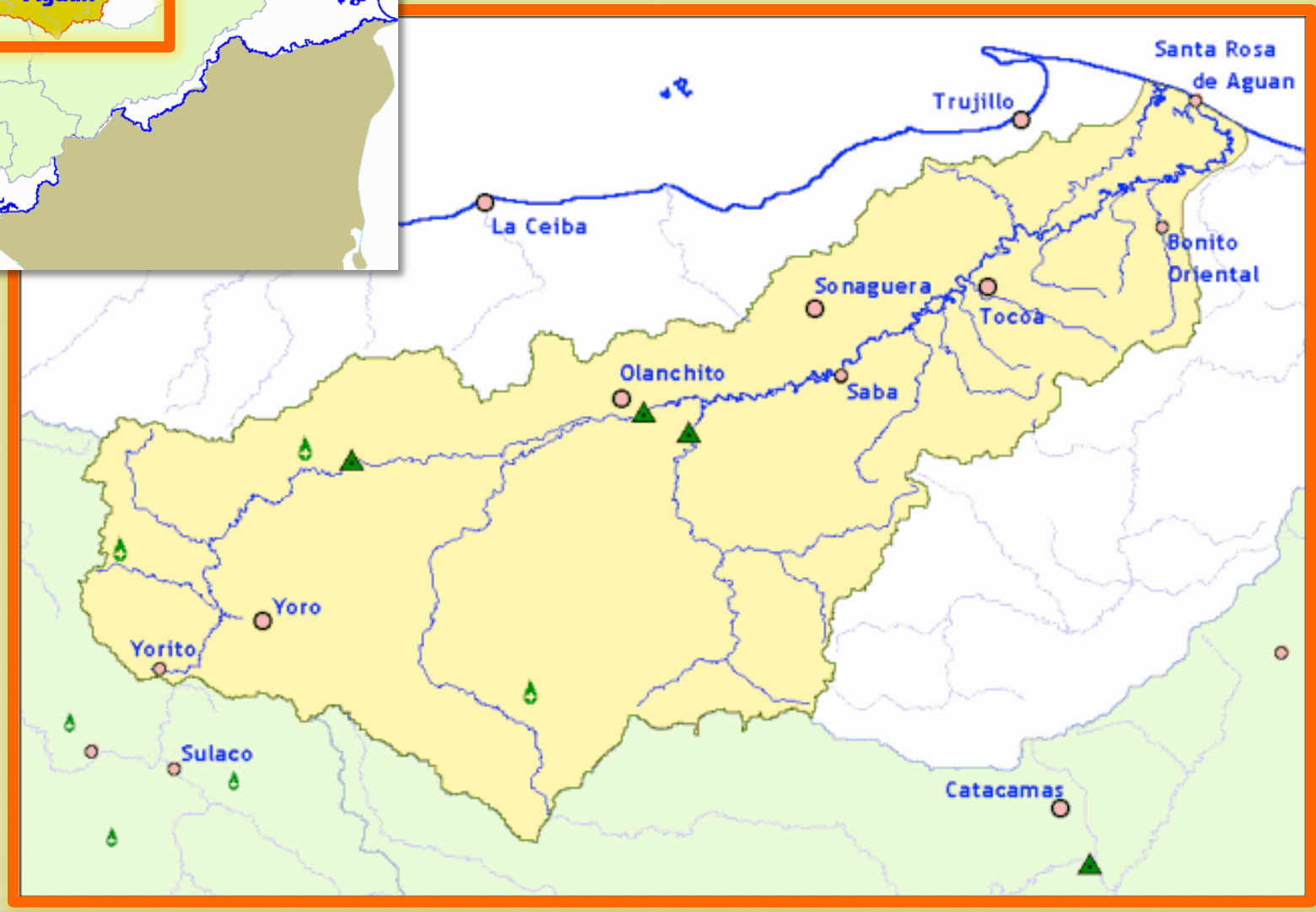
Fighting Back

- ❖ Anti-coup resistance front (NFRP)

Honduras

-  International boundary
-  Departamento boundary
-  National capital
-  Departamento capital
-  Railroad
-  Road





Source: Real-Time Streamflow and Rainfall Data for Honduras, USGS,
<<http://pr.water.usgs.gov/public/rt/hn/index.html>>

Land Grabbing Violence in Aguan Before and since the June 2009 Coup

Key Actors, Organizations, and Social Forces in the Conflict

Miguel Faccussé



One of Honduras' wealthiest

Snack & processed food producer

- ❖ Allied with Reynaldo Canales, René Morales and ex-military landowner, Henry Osorto
- ❖ Purchased Reform Aguan Valley land: **1,898.9 ha**

- ❖ Hired well-armed guards (with help of Faccussé)
- ❖ Gunmen contracted from El Salvador and Columbia

* **contested by Peasants**

- ❖ Focused on African Palm plantations





Social Forces

Impetus

- ❖ Agrarian Reform Law (1974-5)

Vs.

- ❖ Neoliberal Law of Agricultural Modernization (1991-2)



Resistance

- ❖ 1990s: Honduran Coordinating Council of Peasant Unions (COCOCH) and Vía Campesina

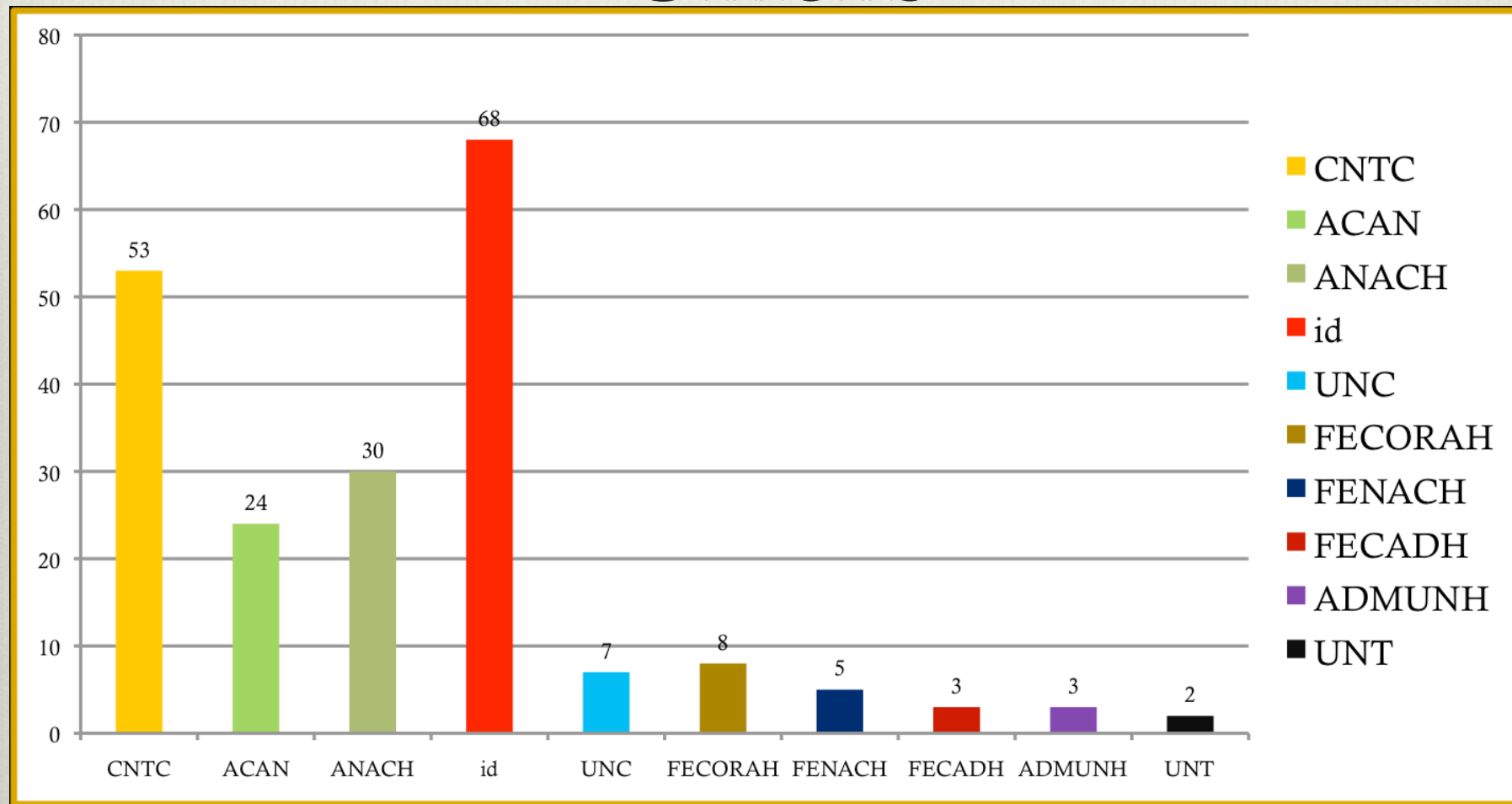
“The Community of Guadalupe Carney”

**Approximately 3,500 families
joined together becoming the
Peasant Movement of Aguan
(MUCA)**

Original Peasant Unions in Aguan

No.	NOMBRE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN	SIGLAS	GRUPOS
1	CENTRAL NACIONAL DE CAMPESINOS DEL CAMPO	CNTC	53
2	ASOCIACION CAMPESINA NACIONAL	ACAN	24
3	ASOCIACION NACIONAL CE CAMPESINOS DE HONDURAS	ANACH	30
4	INDEPENDIETES	ID	68
5	UION NACIONAL DE CAMPESINOS	UNC	7
6	FEDERACION DE COOPERATIVAS DE LA REFORMA AGRARIA	FECORAH	8
7	FENACIONAL DE CAMPESINOS DE HONDURAS	FENACH	5
8	FEDERACION DE CAMPESINOS PARA EL DESARROLLO DE HONDURAS	FECADH	3
9	ASOCIACION DE MUJERES DE HONDURAS	ADMUNH	3
10	INION DE TRABAJADORES DEL CAMPO	UNT	2
	TOTAL		203

Distribution of Original Aguan Unions



Contested Land



Aguan Valley

This contested land carries additional hegemonic symbolism across the Americas. It was occupied by the U.S. military from 1983-5 as a camp to train the Honduran and Salvadoran military along with ex-National Guardsmen of the defeated Nicaraguan Somoza dictatorship. The latter became the leaders of the U.S.-funded Contras,” attacking the Sandinista government and citizens of Nicaragua from their base camps in Honduras.



And the violence...



The Recent Violence in Aguan

- ❖ Began months after former President Manuel Zelaya's 18-2008 decree .
- ❖ Eleven peasants were killed in August 2008
- ❖ Activists reoccupied Dinant land, buildings and a Palm Oil processing plant.
- ❖ Forced to leave with President Zelaya's removal after the June 29 coup.
- ❖ 2010: 18 peasants gunned down; 35 killed since 2008.
- ❖ Government SWAT teams (Cobra) continue to harass people of Aguan.



Violence, narco-trafficking
and access to firearms



Historical comparison of violence in
Honduras vs. surrounding countries
(1950s - early 1990s)

What explains Honduras's relatively low levels of internal violence and less repression in the earlier postwar decades?

- ❖ Semi-egalitarian relations of power and cultural reciprocities
- ❖ Regional variations of moral economies beyond the North Coast U.S. banana enclave.
 - ❖ Note: see Williams 1986, Brockett 1998, Ruhl 1983; Posas 1981
- ❖ 1950 Honduras: less than half of the national territory in private hands. Generalized food sufficiency.
 - ❖ Note: see Parker 1964; Parsons 1975; Posas 1981a & b; Williams 1994; White 1977; Boyer 1984

Honduras's post-coup resistance, the National Popular Resistance Front (FNRP)

- ❖ **Embraces the need for a genuine revitalization of agrarian reform**
- ❖ **Demands an end to U.S. duplicity with respect to the forced removal of constitutionally elected President Manuel Zelaya in the June 29, 2009 coup.**
- ❖ **The agrarian struggles before and after the coup constitute a “daring to hope and struggle” in the midst of violence and general despair.**

