Industrial drivers of deforestation in non-forest sectors in Central Africa

Les projets agro-industriels et miniers dans les forêts d'Afrique Centrale.

Hélène Dessard and Laurène Feintrenie
Congo basin forests almost intact but under pressure

Trade-off between forest ecosystem services conservation and economic growth

=> Dynamics of major industrial drivers of the forest degradation
Assessment of the resilience of Congo basin forests

⇒ Impacts of mining and agribusiness will differ depending on:
   - the type of forest where they will be located
   - Infrastructures to be constructed

Prédiction of forest types

Amplified by climate changes
What are the dynamics of the two sectors?

- Agribusiness companies with land lease or land ownership above 1000 ha.
- Industrial mining companies: large investments, industrial process, staff.

Method

- draws on scientific literature and media reports review
- field surveys conducted in 2012-2014
- 3 categories of key stakeholders have been interviewed:
  - Government institutions
  - Private sector
  - Civil society
Results Agri-business

• 1,290,506 ha of agro-industrial concessions acquired or under negotiation in the 4 countries since 2000

• On declassified or degraded forests / savana / outside forests
  (except Atama in Congo…)

• Agribusiness companies need the support of governments for the establishment of an estate, not only at national level, but also locally

• Lack of formal procedures and issue of transparency
Results: mining sector

• Wave of exploration mining permits attribution since 2009

• Except in RDC, sector still underdeveloped

• Priority of mining rights over all other in the field
  (lack of inter-sectoral rights, packages-deal, expected returns higher than other industrial activities)

=> Land conflicts vs local employment?

• Most of listed companies play transparency and respect the mining code…at least partly…

=> Reduced direct impacts on the forest for now….
Focus on mining in forests

Indirect impacts of mining matter:

- fragmentation by infrastructures
- pressures on wildlife and wood-energy by life camps
- pollution on rivers

Mutual agreements between mining and forest operators:

~ « Payments for environmental services »

=> Regulating ecosystem services not taken in account in the transaction

=> Regulatory role of the hosting states ??
Take home message

• Land-use planning at national level needed!
• Legal requirements do not secure local people’s rights on land and resources
• Concertation plateforms (IDAK..) useful
• Agri-business companies have not been involved much in land grabbing in Central Africa since 2000 and global positive impact for now
• Mining firms: positive impact on economic growth with an ecological cost to evaluate and offset.
Remerciements

Territorial issues
The variability of forest characteristics and their different responses to disturbance should be considered in management decisions et territorial planning.

Antropogenic disturbance:
Forest harvesting, agriculture, mining, agri-business, infrastructures + climate change
Three main forest types in the CoForChange project area

As a result of soils & intensity of disturbance
Ancient climatic and anthropogenic disturbance (2500 to 2000 years ago)