

Joint Master in EU Trade and Climate Diplomacy

***Land, Environment, and Transformation:
Community Perceptions of Foreign
Development and Investment through the
Cerro de Hula Wind Park, Honduras***

Supervised by Dr. Sami Zeidan

Rodrigo Barahona

2026



Co-funded by
the European Union

I hereby declare that I have composed the present thesis autonomously and without use of any other than the cited sources or means. I have indicated parts that were taken out of published or unpublished work correctly and in a verifiable manner through a quotation. I further assure that I have not presented this thesis to any other institute or university for evaluation and that it has not been published before.

July 14, 2026; Barahona, Rodrigo

Acknowledgements

This thesis was partially completed in Dakhla, an isolated city and disputed territory between Morocco and Western Sahara, where many development projects are emerging.

To Albania, to Myanmar, to Brazil, and to any place where these themes resonate, I offer my acknowledgements with respect.

To my family, my friends, my mentors, and the kind people of Santa Ana and San Buenaventura, I express my gratitude deeply and wholeheartedly.

Abstract

Renewable energy development has become an increasingly important component of foreign investment strategies in developing countries, bringing new economic opportunities alongside complex social and political considerations. This thesis examines how perceptions of foreign development and investment have been impacted by the Cerro de Hula Wind Park among Lenca-descendant community members in the municipalities of Santa Ana and San Buenaventura, Honduras. To address this question, the study employs a qualitative research design based on semi-structured interviews with community residents, landowners, and municipal authorities. In addition, representatives of the European Union are consulted to provide institutional perspectives on the importance of governance and stakeholder engagement for the green energy transition. Interview data were analyzed through thematic coding informed by the theoretical frameworks of political ecology, world-systems theory, commodity-form theory of law, social movements theory, and social representation theory.

The findings suggest that community perceptions of the Cerro de Hula Wind Park alongside foreign development and investment are generally favorable, although they remain conditional rather than unequivocally positive. Participants associated the project with improvements in infrastructure, educational opportunities, land rental income, and local development while also expressing concerns regarding environmental change, unequal financial benefits, and legal arrangements perceived to favor foreign investors. Together, these perspectives coexist inside a unique social representation and reflect how economic opportunity and cultural attachment to land are negotiated simultaneously within the community. By documenting these lived experiences, this thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of the social dimensions of renewable energy development in Honduras and argues that successful foreign investment rests on equitable governance, meaningful community participation, long-term institutional accountability, and sustainable economic benefits.

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	6
<i>Chapter Outlines</i>	10
<i>Methodology</i>	11
<i>Data Collection Procedure</i>	11
<i>Interviewing Methods and Questionnaires</i>	13
<i>Data Analysis: Thematic Coding</i>	13
<i>Research Limitations</i>	14
<i>Chapter I: Theoretical Background</i>	16
<i>Background of Foreign Development and Investment in Honduras</i>	16
<i>Overview of Renewable Energy Development in Honduras</i>	17
<i>Background of Indigenous Political, Economic, and Social Matters in Honduras</i>	18
<i>Political Ecology, World-Systems Theory, Commodity-Form Theory of Law</i>	19
<i>Social Movements Theory and Social Representation Theory</i>	20
<i>Theoretical Synthesis</i>	21
<i>Chapter II: Interview Coding and Results</i>	23
<i>Application of Thematic Coding</i>	24
<i>Chapter III: Thematic Module and Excerpt Discussion</i>	30
<i>Community Identity, Land Value, Environmental Protection</i>	30
<i>Economic Benefits and Financial Incentives</i>	31
<i>Governance, Legal Protections, Collective Action</i>	33
<i>Coexistence of Perceptions and Attitudes on Past, Present, and Future FDI</i>	35
<i>Chapter IV: Lessons for the Green Energy Transition and Development Cooperation</i>	38
<i>Honduras and the European Union's Global Gateway</i>	38
<i>Honduras and the European Union's VPA-FLEGT</i>	40
<i>Conclusions</i>	42
<i>Citation Endnotes</i>	44
<i>Bibliography</i>	46

Introduction

Located in the core of Central America, Honduras is a small country that has found itself at the crossroads of significant periods of time. Ranging from independence from Spanish colonialism to rapid railroad development during the Industrial Revolution to a recently successful *coup d'état*, the history of Honduras is abundant in pivotal events that have re-directed the trajectory of the country. The latent impacts of such occurrences, though they are sometimes subtle, can still be observed and measured if examined carefully.

A common pattern within these events is the consistent presence of foreign influence and the minority people groups who were most impacted by its actions. The banana plantations and mining operations of the 20th century are prime examples of these incidents, infamous because of the conspiring between the Honduran government and international corporations for their own financial benefit at the expense of laborers. Despite the harm inflicted by this precedent, foreign presence inside Honduras remains alive and well, attaching itself to the evolving industries growing sharply in demand.

Among those expanding industries is the development of renewable energy systems. Renewable energy is an essential tool necessary for the transition to green economies and decarbonization. While fossil fuels have long been the cornerstone of developed and developing countries alike, investments in renewable energy open the door to new employment and innovation opportunities for an emerging labor force. From a purely economic perspective, long-term renewables outpace fossil fuels in virtually every metric. As such, green technology is often a flagship point of multiple environmental campaigns. The Cerro de Hula Wind Park, a main focal point of this thesis, exists inside of this context.

The Cerro de Hula Wind Park, henceforth referred to as *the Park*, is a wind turbine energy project based in the Santa Ana and San Buenaventura municipalities in central Honduras. With initial operations starting in 2012, the project was jointly developed by Globeleq Mesoamerica Energy, S.A, a Costa Rican energy development company, in conjunction with Siemens Gamesa and Iberdrola Ingeniería y Construcción, two

Spanish conglomerates specializing in environmental engineering programs abroad.¹ The Park is currently managed by Energía Eólica de Honduras S.A (*EEHSA*), and covers 9,849.9 hectares of land.¹ The benefits generated by the Park since its inception include a production of 426.1 Gigawatt hours of electricity from 51 wind turbines per year,¹ a prevention of 270 tons of greenhouse gas emissions,² and a substantial contribution to the 80% target of renewables into the national energy grid.²

As already mentioned, the development of industry often involves nuances and complexities that can be overshadowed by the assets created. From the financial side, the Park's main business model revolves around the sale of wind turbine electricity to Empresa Nacional de Energía Eléctrica (*ENEE*), Honduras's nationalized energy provider, through a twenty-year power purchase agreement.³ This energy is then supplied to the Honduran population as traditional electricity utility, with the Park generating enough renewable output to cover the energy needs of one-hundred thousand households.² This dynamic exemplifies a case of foreign figures taking the lead in renewable energy expansion inside a developing country while also seemingly forming dependency ties that could risk asymmetric reliance. Even though these factors touch upon economic and scientific measures that are quantifiable, the social implications of said factors require a deeper level of analysis.

Before Park activities officially opened in 2011, a cohort of indigenous Lenca people in Santa Ana declared the following statement:

[The Park] "has been imposed on our indigenous communities in the municipality of Santa Ana, Department of Francisco Morazán, which violates our ancestral title, human rights, the right to land, the right to water, the right to a healthy environment, the right to culture and cultural heritage. The mountains are being broken, the historical foundations are being destroyed, the sources of water and reservoirs of vital importance are being buried, the cultural and food heritage of one of the millenary seeds of which we are historical custodians is being attacked."⁴

The statement further references the Park as a violation of the International Labor Organization's Convention 169 related to indigenous and tribal people rights, alongside identifying the international private banks complicit in financing the project.⁴

Contextually important is the fact that many of the Park's wind turbines are built upon land that is rented from local community members. From available information, Iberdrola responded to this statement more than a decade later denying accusations of

forced land expropriation.⁵ Although this exchange did not gain traction in public discourse, it introduces the sociological interactions this thesis seeks to understand.

The Lenca are one of Honduras's many indigenous people groups rich in culture and history, representing the largest share of total indigenous population⁶ and being present in Santa Ana and San Buenaventura. Lenca tradition is importantly known for its profound and intergenerational connection to the land, as expressed in the previous declaration. Unfortunately, Lenca heritage finds itself threatened by numerous development projects that have sparked year-long struggles for cultural sovereignty and environmental survival. Most notable is the high-profile case of Berta Caceres, a Lenca leader assassinated for her stand against construction of a hydro-electric dam funded by multiple international institutions.⁷ While Lenca people have engaged in collective negotiations through organizations such as Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (*COPINH*) and Organización Indígena Lenca de Honduras (*ONILH*),⁶ the continuous growth of development projects holds a stronger leverage of power backed by foreign financiers and then supported by preferential governments.

Understanding these two entities together, the Cerro de Hula Wind Park and the Lenca-adjacent communities of Santa Ana and San Buenaventura, is one of the major purposes of this thesis. Given the recent age of the Park against the decade-long history of both foreign development and indigenous movements inside Honduras, this research opens up the opportunity to unveil recognizable patterns that could otherwise remain unseen.

The Park is rather obscure in terms of publicly accessible data and media presence. Academic research conducted on the Park would therefore be more scarce, naturally. Despite the low quantity of third-party analysis, a considerable amount of documentation comes through the Park's legal obligation to provide environmental impact assessments from its operations. Available studies include pre-construction analysis on bird and bat species, forest land assessments, and pollution prevention and abatement plans, amongst others.¹ A general overview of these studies indicates they were conducted in the context of the Park's expansion potential and energy efficiency improvements, relying heavily on statistical data. The Park's larger volume of quantitative information, which is still rather sparse, highlights the first signs of a knowledge gap in relation to the minimal qualitative information that is not skewed

towards the natural sciences. Thus, the intricate themes of foreign investment and indigenous matters are most likely to be excluded from these few existing studies.

Development of the Park was equally obliged to hold socialization procedures in order to garner perspectives of the local community. Consultations came in the form of municipal meetings and site visits with landowners and community leaders, with COPINH and ONILH being listed as participants of these engagements.¹ According to disclosed details, presentations about the Park appeared to have been met positively and general support for the project was described as being welcomed by local authorities and community members.¹ Interestingly enough, there is a mention of an opposition group which raised concerns about the Park. However, no specific elaboration on the identity of the group nor their demands was provided beyond a vague discussion meeting that was purportedly held.¹ Records from these consultation platforms could have offered valuable evidence regarding how local communities initially responded to the proposed development. Yet, no published record of meeting notes, feedback recommendations, or individual and collective disputes appears to be found in an open-access domain. A community development plan and grievance mechanism that contain complaint logs are referenced;¹ however, access to this information seems to be limited to in-person visits exclusively. The knowledge gap is consequentially widened by the imbalance of technical and scientific research that dominates understandings of the Park compared to the social and qualitative dimensions that have not yet materialized into literature due to accessibility and transparency limitations.

To address this gap, therefore, the core research question driving this thesis is presented:

How have perceptions of Lenca-descendant community members in Santa Ana and San Buenaventura towards foreign development and investment been impacted by the Cerro de Hula Wind Park?

This research question is capable of properly incorporating concepts of foreign development, community identity, and Global North-Global South dynamics for a much more profound comprehension of an understudied case. This approach is also helpful in identifying repeating patterns of foreign development interactions with local traditions and power structures, possibly reminiscent of past historical events inside Honduras.

To supplement the main research question, the proceeding questions are also explored in this analysis:

1. *How are financial incentives, land negotiations, and governance arrangements utilized by Park officials to shape community perceptions of foreign development and investment?*
2. *What position should development-supporting institutions such as the European Union take in this topic, specially in the context of the renewable energy transition?*

The hypothesis surrounding this analysis estimates that perceptions towards foreign development and investment would lean towards a generally favorable view because of the Park. This idea is based in comparison to the prominent instances of mass opposition to controversial development projects and escalations of protests into violence unrest, to which the Park would not fall in line with. In contrast, the ever-increasing links between developed urban and developing rural zones could perhaps form higher demands for social and economic integration within the community, to which the Park would indeed fall in line with.

Chapter Outlines

The general unfamiliarity and underrepresentation of Honduras in global academic discourse requires a critical examination that bring readers up to speed to the imperative historical context that carved the path for foreign development and investment inside Honduras, backed by the relevant theories explaining their mechanisms.

Chapter I establishes the theoretical background guiding this analysis. Namely, concepts of *political ecology* and *world-systems theory* have been identified as the most suitable frameworks for illustrating how foreign direct investment, or *FDI*, is utilized as a tool that injects capital flows into Latin America for political and financial gain. Under these two banners, *social movements theory* and *commodity-form theory of law* serve as additional frameworks for understanding indigenous social mobilization and legal institutions' protections of the interests of capital, respectively. Lastly, the sociopsychological framework of *social representation theory* is presented to unravel the inner-workings behind collective perceptions-shaping.

Chapter II is dedicated to the qualitative research portion of this analysis. Expanded upon in the methodology section, perceptions towards foreign direct investment will be investigated through interviews with Lenca-related community members to gather information directly from the main subjects of this thesis. Thematic coding analysis is employed to identify central points consistent with the theories described in the prior

chapter. Chapter III further develops the thematic findings by discussing how community members' perceptions of foreign development and investment are constructed through the coexistence of environmental, economic, cultural, and institutional experiences surrounding the Park. Lastly, Chapter IV lays out the greater implications for the global green energy transition and modern development cooperation, focusing on the European Union and its investment strategies.

The conclusion returns to the central purpose of this study: forming a clear account of the voices and perspectives of Santa Ana's and San Buenaventura's community members to be recognized. Through documenting local knowledge and lived experiences of the real people going through these changes, this research aims to challenge top-down understandings of foreign development and investment as a contribution to democratic processes that promote inclusivity and visibility.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design to investigate the perceptions of Lenca-adjacent community members in Santa Ana and San Buenaventura regarding foreign development and investment via the Park, in line with the main research question. As stated earlier, a qualitative framework is important and thus preferred due to the shortage of publicly accessible social data and the heavy inclination towards quantitative, natural-science environmental impact reports comprising the existing literature about the Park. The themes of identity and land attachment, collective action and community experiences, and perceptions towards foreign entities explored throughout this thesis are best labeled as qualitative in nature, naturally. Therefore, an approach capable of capturing the nuanced perspectives and lived realities of participants over purely quantitative measurements is essential.

Data Collection Procedure

Data for this study was collected using semi-structured interviews conducted with residents and local figures from the municipalities of Santa Ana and San Buenaventura. Semi-structured interviewing was chosen to ensure the core research questions were addressed while granting participants the flexibility to elaborate on their cultural, historical, and personal narratives. Interviews were conducted remotely through online

phone calls, allowing for flexibility and accessibility for participants from different locations within the study area.

The sampling strategy entailed a combination of purposive and snowball sampling, which meant participants being sought after based on their uniquely relevant knowledge and their contacts being obtained with the aid of participating interviewees. The first criterion for participant selection involved community members who lived and grew up around the area for a considerable amount of time before the arrival of the Park, so as to give an insight on the prior development conditions of the zone and how the evolution of the Park influenced their perspectives over time. Secondly, efforts were made to keep diversity amongst participants with respect to age, gender, education level, and socioeconomic status, with the purpose of recognizing the diversity of individual's social positions that could then influence their individual perceptions. Highly important were participants holding the titles of land owners and government representatives because of their direct involvement in the processes of land contracts and local governance paired up with negotiations with the Park's development plans. Lastly, supplementary interviews were held with coordinators working with the European Union's European External Action Service inside Honduras. Responding to the second sub-question, they provide institutional perspectives on foreign investment for renewable energy development and the greater role of international actors in advancing the green transition within developing countries.

The chart containing summarized profiles of community participants is presented:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age, Gender</i>	<i>Community Role</i>
<i>Liliam L.</i>	57, Female	Semi-resident
<i>Juan Carlos B.</i>	61, Male	Landowner, semi-resident
<i>Ruben L.</i>	43, Male	Semi-resident
<i>Griselda A.</i>	46, Female	Resident
<i>Daniel A.</i>	76, Male	Elder
<i>José Luis L.</i>	48, Male	Laborer
<i>Andres A.</i>	Male	Mayor of San Buenaventura
<i>Alberto Z.</i>	Male	Mayoral consultant
<i>Jorge S.</i>	Male	Mayor of Santa Ana
<i>Melissa G.</i>	42, Female	Resident
<i>Ezequiel O.</i>	18, Male	Student

Table 1. Interview Participants; n = 11

Interviewing Methods and Questionnaires

The semi-structured interviewing follows closely the central research question alongside the theoretical frameworks expanded upon in Chapter I. Rather than utilizing rigid, closed-ended questions, the questionnaire applied adaptable prompts categorized into four main thematic modules:

1. *Community identity, land value, environmental protection*
2. *Economic benefits and financial incentives*
3. *Governance, legal protections, collective action*
4. *Coexistence of perceptions and attitudes on past, present, and future FDI*

Adhering to these modules, the questionnaire contained prompts generally resembling the following questions, with much focus on the time periods before and after the Park:

1. *How did the community engage in daily life before the Park? How does the community engage in daily life currently? What customs, traditions, or routines have changed as a result? How would you describe the importance of land for the community? How has the environment been affected by Park construction? How valued is the environment?*
2. *How were labor and employment conditions before the Park? How are those same conditions now? What material and economic benefits has the Park brought to the community? How have land contract negotiations taken place? How favorable are the conditions set within these contracts?*
3. *How have you represented the community as a government official in talks with the Park? What have been your political and economic priorities? What conflicts have arisen with Park officials? How have you exercised your leadership role in dealing with contentions with the Park?*
4. *How has the community interacted with Park representatives? What community needs have been met, and which ones are still lacking? Considering the changes brought to the community, what is your general perception towards the Park and FDI? How important is FDI for the community and Honduras? How does the future of the community look like, and how would FDI fit in that future?*

Data Analysis: Thematic Coding

After recording, transcription, and translation, interview texts were analyzed using a thematic coding system designed to signal recurring patterns and ideas within participants' narratives. This qualitative method is guided by a combination of deductive and inductive coding, which respectively refers to the use of established theoretical frameworks alluded to by the interview modules and Chapter I alongside the identification of new and unexpected themes appearing organically during analysis.

The first stage of analysis involved an open coding phase where segments of text were assigned descriptive labels representing key ideas expressed by participants. These labels include, but are not limited to, themes about infrastructure improvement, land

ownership value, contract negotiations, financial incentives, development conditions, employment opportunities, cultural identity, community participation, perceptions of foreign figures, future development aspirations, amongst others.

The second stage of analysis involved the grouping of named labels into broader thematic categories informed again by the four interview modules and the theoretical frameworks illustrated in Chapter I: political ecology, world-systems, commodity-form, social movements, and social representation. While the coding process remained open to emerging themes from participants' answers, the selected thematic categories generally reflected the principal concepts explored throughout the interview modules. By synthesizing these localized descriptions with broader conceptual frameworks, this act moves the analysis past isolated individual remarks and towards possible systemic patterns to be recognized. The resulting themes construct the analytical structure through which interview responses are interpreted and discussed in relation to the thesis' research questions.

Research Limitations

Certain challenges should be kept in mind when interpreting the obtained results. Firstly, there is a reliance on a relatively smaller sample size that does not exactly produce a statistically significant representation of a larger population sample. As an expected challenge, however, findings should be taken as a qualitative contribution to in-depth insights of participants' perceptions from those specific zones rather than serving as a general account of all Lenca or Lenca-adjacent communities in Honduras.

Secondly, participants displayed varying degrees of connection to their indigenous heritage. While this diversity was valuable for capturing a range of perspectives, it also meant that participants did not share a uniform relationship to the cultural and political issues explored in this study. Perceptions of foreign development in relation to land use and community change were thus morphed by varying levels of cultural identification and personal involvement, which may have influenced the consistency of responses across interviews. In addition, the shortage of information about the Park appeared to manifest itself where some participants expressed limited access to facts regarding the institutional mechanisms underlying the Park and foreign investment broadly. Some answers came directly from tangible development results that interviewees noticed first-

hand, over any specific policy agendas or international actions. As a result, interview responses primarily reflect lived experiences and perceptions rather than holistic knowledge of the systems operating behind the Park.

Thirdly, geographical and technological barriers restricted opportunities for direct observation of local community interactions occurring daily in the zones of interest, not to mention sightings of the Park itself. Although remote interviewing enabled participation from individuals located across the study area, it limited the degree of contextual immersion traditionally linked with field-based research. These limitations set the boundaries of the analysis while also highlighting the importance of continued research of the social dimensions of renewable energy development in Honduras. For that matter, given the author's own connection to Honduras, this thesis invites future studies from researchers holding diverse international and disciplinary backgrounds to further examine similar renewable energy developments across Latin America and the Global South, providing unbiased perspectives to an emerging field.

Chapter I: Theoretical Background

Background of Foreign Development and Investment in Honduras

Historically, Central America witnessed an influx of foreign economic interests since the infamous *banana republic* period. Wilmore (1976) discusses how American firms invested more than \$750M and owned 30% of manufacturing output in Central America in the late 1960s, while representing 80% of the total presence of foreign companies in the region.⁸ The recipient local firms were noted to have higher access to external loans and supplier credits than firms not associated with foreign direct investment, also known as *FDI*. FDI became a precursor to rapid economic growth, with Bengoa and Sanchez-Robles (2003) highlighting how the active liberalization of Latin American markets to attract foreign investments lead to higher levels of GDP and lower levels of public debt during the late 1970s to 1990s.⁹ Specifically in Honduras, recent political action proposed the formation of Zones for Employment and Economic Development, or *ZEDEs*. These designated areas were envisioned to have greater autonomy from national Honduran law, justified by the desire to not have foreign investors disincentivized by political instability and corruption. Proponents such as Castle-Miller and Shubin (2020) argue that weak democratic institutions alongside crime hold back prosperity for lawful citizens, and thus parallel legal systems for these zones are necessary for economic benefits to spread to the rest of the population.¹⁰ On the contrary, critics like Palma-Herrera (2019) describe *ZEDEs* as modern economic enclaves resembling previous mining and plantation enclaves that brought about deforestation and loss of wildlife habitats.¹¹ Furthermore, Caldas (2024) uses a political science lens to contend that free-market charter city projects overlook territorial disputes in Latin America and represent a form of neoliberal authoritarianism due to the segmentation of democracy between Honduran natives and foreign operators inside *ZEDEs*.¹² These contrasting views fall in line with the general debate occurring in Honduras regarding FDI, with the newly-elected National Party elevating deregulation and free-market economic policy as a top political priority. As *ZEDEs* were designed during the conservative National Party's previous time in office, it is likely that *ZEDE* proposals might be revitalized once more inside the Honduran congress during upcoming periods of time. When *ZEDEs* were declared unconstitutional in 2024, various international financiers counter-sued the Honduran Supreme Court's decision

through the World Bank's International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) agreement,¹³ which prompted the then-Honduran government to retaliate by exiting the convention. However, with the re-signing of the agreement as of March 2026, now-president Nasry Asfura said:

“By rejoining ICSID, Honduras adopts globally recognized international standards for the resolution of investment disputes. This does not weaken the country; it strengthens it. It places us within the framework of predictability that international markets value and that investors require.”¹⁴

Overview of Renewable Energy Development in Honduras

Flores et al. (2011) provide an overview on energy usage in Honduras, highlighting how 62% of power generation was based on fossil fuels and 48% of oil being imported from the United States pre-2008 *coup d'état*.¹⁵ With renewable energy, the authors estimate costs to achieve a proposed 2030 sustainable energy plan to be around \$4.946B throughout a fourteen-year period.¹⁵ The high reliance on non-renewables has opened up Honduras to explore modern development plans for green energy. Parada et. al (2023) analyze green hydrogen and wind and solar energy storage potentials in Honduras, with results suggesting Honduras is capable of generating 1.1 million kilograms of green hydrogen and 13,004 MWh of electricity from solar and wind energy shedding per year.¹⁶ Cerro de Hula, relevantly, represents the largest share with 15% of production.¹⁶ Despite these figures, the authors calculate only a 28.66% efficiency from energy plants while cost-benefit analysis shows a 0.2797 return on investment, indicating greater inputs than outputs and thus weak economic feasibility.¹⁶ On the institutional level, IRENA (2023) gives an overview on Honduran political bodies' commitments to expand renewable energy development. National commitments, in accordance to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, pledged to expand renewables in total electricity production to 68.4% by 2026.¹⁷ Decree No. 46-2022, importantly, defines the provision of electricity services as a human right in Honduras.¹⁷ As it currently stands, there is significant interest in renewable energy development in the country, such as Honduras partnering with the European Union in 2026 to strengthen renewable energy investments through the private sector and technology exchange.¹⁸ On the legal side, Decree No. 138-2013 of Honduran law sets favorable conditions for renewable energy investors:

“Currently, there is investor interest in the development of medium- and large-scale solar energy systems, but due to the operational characteristics of this generation technology, it is necessary to establish suitable conditions to incentivize and grant participation to this type of technology within the electricity generation matrix, reducing barriers to entry and the risk to the investment process.”¹⁹

This law is a follow-up to Decree No. 51-2011, which directly grants judicial security to investors with the explicit desire to promote and protect national and international investment inside Honduran territory.¹⁹ From a financial standpoint, foreign development investors can perceive dependence on fossil fuels and low development conditions as an untapped market to mobilize investments towards to with low risk and high protection conferred by Honduran law.

Background of Indigenous Political, Economic, and Social Matters in Honduras

Matters related to Honduran indigenous people closely follow the patterns of FDI inside the country. Historically, Rayo et. al (2024) discuss how the Honduran government has consistently prioritized extraction and development through foreign investments in energy, tourism, agribusiness, and mining, often planned at investor conferences and forums.²⁰ These acts directly challenge Honduran constitutional law that establishes state protections for indigenous community rights, namely Article 346 that confirms:

“It is the duty of the State to enact measures to protect the rights and interests of the indigenous communities existing in the country, specially the lands and forests where they are settled.”²¹

Evidently, domestic laws have proved ineffective in properly safeguarding indigenous people against violent repressions. Reports found that least 131 land and environmental defenders were murdered in Honduras between 2012 and 2022,²² many of them of indigenous and Afro-descent and involved in hydropower, agribusiness, mining, and logging protest activism. Such instances made Honduras claim the title of the country with the highest number of land defender killings per capita in 2023.²³

With economic matters and specifically with the Lenca people, Palma and Diaz-Puente (2024) form a quantitative model indicating that only 4% of Lenca territory presents favorable development conditions while 80% are lagging and significantly vulnerable to adverse economic conditions.²⁴ Toombs (2025) analyzes how Lenca traditions and identity have been reshaped by growth of the tourism industry, with cultural development projects in Honduras specifically promoting Lenca artefacts due to their high marketability.²⁵ Overall, the history of indigenous social movements is entirely

vast to be able to present concisely. The constant theme of social struggle for identity sovereignty still persists, nevertheless. The Berta Caceres case, alongside the rest of the slain environmental leaders, reminds that even modern industries such as renewable energy are still susceptible to the historically similar takeovers by ill-intended actors.

Political Ecology, World-Systems Theory, Commodity-Form Theory of Law

Tornel (2022) describes political ecology as the understanding of conflicts and struggles generated by the forms of access and control of natural resources, most commonly studied under socioecological struggles against capitalist appropriation of culture.²⁶ As a growing theory within the political economy realm, modern political ecology broadly revolves around five major theses: degradation and marginalization, conservation and control, environmental conflict and exclusion, environmental subjects and identity, political objects and actors.²⁷ The fundamental work of Robbins (2012) on political ecology provides valuable grounding for this thesis's focus on novel environmental projects, their effect on perception building, and political representation:

“People’s beliefs and attitudes do not lead to new environmental actions, behaviors, or rules systems; instead, new environmental actions, behaviors, or rules systems lead to new kinds of people. Correlatively, new environmental regimes and conditions have created opportunities or imperatives for local groups to secure and represent themselves politically.”²⁷

World-systems theory situates the previously mentioned cases about Honduras inside the global context. While Wallerstein (1974) characterizes a world-system as a structural, interdependent relationship between core and periphery nation-states,²⁸ Chase-Dunn & Grimes (1995) expand upon this idea by arguing that periphery countries experience development processes in alignment with their subordinate status to core countries.²⁹ Inside the Latin American region, Cardoso (1979) signals how foreign investment from core nation-states have moved away from raw materials and agriculture into industrial infrastructure, generating new forms of economic dependency for periphery countries and their citizens.³⁰ Renewable energy projects, the likes of the Park, could certainly fall under this depiction. While political ecology examines how foreign development reshapes local relationships between communities and land, world-systems theory sets these processes within broader structures that organize global flows of capital investment between developed and developing nations.

Beyond economic development frameworks, commodity-form theory of law observes legal institutions as structures that facilitate conditions for capital accumulation,³¹ often through the special protection of contracts and private investment that has been ever-present in both Honduras and Latin America. This idea extends to the world stage, where Miéville (2004) explains how international law is not politically neutral but is deeply connected to global capitalist relations and power structures.³² Commodity-form theory of law is helpful for understanding the covert reasonings behind the law Decrees and ZEDEs cases occurring inside domestic affairs, but above all, understanding the international dimensions and Global North-South legal pacts that eased the path for the Park to even arrive to Honduras in the first place.

Social Movements Theory and Social Representation Theory

Social movements theory serves as the theoretical framework behind collective action, collective resistance, and collective political mobilization amongst different groups aiming for social change, providing academic grounding for the earlier referenced cases about indigenous people in Honduras. Tarrow (2011) depicts social movements as collective activities carried out by shared-value individuals and organizations through consistent and sustained contentions against political authorities and elites.³³ Within the Honduran context, group opposition by organizations such as COPINH and ONILH goes beyond disagreements on economic outcomes. More importantly, their efforts create a process where communities articulate their collective interests and defend their cultural values through negotiations with external institutions.

Social representation theory is a framework inside social psychology highly useful for investigating how people construct their perceptions towards any particular social matter. Rateau et al. (2012) define social representation as an organized system of opinions, knowledge, and beliefs that engage with each other within an individual's personal and cultural experiences.³⁴ These representations are then shared by and with other members of similar social circles, depending on group homogeneity, and are collectively produced through social exchange and exposure to mass communication.³⁴ Wagner et al. (2002) apply this theory to the indigenous people setting, suggesting that communities undergoing social or cultural change can develop diverse or competing social representations of external interventions, allowing traditional and modern forms

of knowledge to coexist within the same social group.³⁵ This pattern is specifically illustrated under the term *cognitive polyphasia*, which refers to the coexistence of representations that are sometimes incompatible.³⁵ With regards to this idea, Provencher (2011) argues:

“In the cognitive polyphasia conceptual model, individuals are viewed as having a large degree of agency over the ideas, types of knowledge and beliefs they want to use to make sense of their world. However, it is also crucial to acknowledge that no one thinks alone and that sense making efforts always take place within the context of social thinking and through communication on issues that confront people.”³⁶

This concept identifies the relationship between collective identity and individual interpretations and how they, even if contradictory, can still work simultaneously in forming the perceptions of people. Perceptions are constructed through the dynamic interaction between shared cultural understandings and the personal interpretations of community members, rather than exclusively through collective group identities or solely through individual experience. Within this thesis, differences in perceptions towards foreign development and investment may be attributed to participants’ distinct social representations, socioeconomic status, age and gender, or personal connection to their own Lenca heritage. All in all, these theories complement each other in understanding both the formation of community perceptions and the processes where said perceptions may translate into collective action, allowing for a comprehensive idea of indigenous responses to foreign development and investment.

Theoretical Synthesis

The theoretical frameworks outlined above provide the lens through which interview responses and community perceptions will be analyzed throughout this study, with each concept contributing to a different angle of the research question.

At the overarching level, political ecology provides a framework for looking at how participants discuss land ownership, environmental change, and relationships between local communities and foreign development actors. World-systems theory allows interview responses to be analyzed in relation to Honduras’ position within global systems of capital and foreign investment, while pinpointing possible links of dependency that will be deemed as important or not by participants. Commodity-form theory of law further contributes to how participants perceive the role of local legal

institutions, policies, and investment protections in shaping local development processes. Most importantly, participants holding official government roles have the unique position of directly revealing how state institutions negotiate local community interests and regulatory obligations in contrast with the demands of foreign investment.

At the community level, social movements theory gives insight into how participants describe collective organization and engagement with development projects, while social representation theory provides the primary framework for examining how meanings surrounding foreign development are constructed and expressed within the community. These frameworks allow individual perceptions to be understood as personal experiences but also as products of complex social, cultural, political, economic, and legal factors functioning across multiple scales. Taken together, their combined application allows the interview material to be interpreted from complementary analytical perspectives, recognizing that no single framework is sufficient to capture the complexity of participants' experiences and understandings.

Chapter II: Interview Coding and Results

The following deductive coding structure bridges the interview material with the five foundational bases:

- Political Ecology (**PE**): Environmental changes and land-use transformation with the evolving relationships between local communities, natural resources, and foreign development actors.
- World-Systems Theory (**WST**): Perceptions of foreign capital fulfilling critical public infrastructure and development gaps inside a dependent economy.
- Commodity-Form Theory of Law (**CFT**): Monetization of land resources through legal leasing arrangements alongside legal institutions' facilitation of this process.
- Social Movements Theory (**SMT**): Presence of organized community activity in relation to Park development and relative to higher-profile Lenca indigenous mobilizations across Honduras.
- Social Representation Theory (**SRT**): Participants' construction of meanings around foreign development with the *cognitive polyphasia* of perceiving development as a dual reality between progress and modernization versus cultural and environmental shifts.

As interviews continued with the guidance of the interview modules and theoretical frameworks, the conversations yielded a vast set of informative themes relayed by the following inductive coding matrix:

<i>Code Tag</i>	<i>Code Name</i>	<i>Code Definition</i>	<i>Code Indicators</i>
COMP	Compensation	Perceived adequacy and equity of Park land rental payments	Appreciation of rents, disapproval of low rents relative to company profit, value extraction critiques
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility	Voluntary Park social investments and community projects	Scholarships, school supplies and meals, home fixing, clean water initiatives
CULT	Cultural Transformation	Shifts in daily lifestyle, community values, traditional customs	Urban connectivity, technology adoption, digital integration
ECON	Economic Benefits	Direct or indirect material and financial gains generated locally	Land lease rents, municipal tax revenue, community social funding
EMP	Employment Opportunities	Jobs promised, created, or anticipated during Park lifecycle	Temporary and long-term employment
ENV	Environmental Impacts	Physical alterations to local ecology, landscape, natural resources	Deforestation, turbine noise pollution, water scarcity
FDI+	Positive Perceptions of FDI	High explicit support for foreign development and investment	Private capital driving economic growth, filling state and national limitations
FDI+/-	Conditional Perceptions of FDI	Conditional support for foreign development and investment dependent on specific safeguards	Calls for better bargaining power, precaution of foreign actors, environmental awareness

GEN	Generational Transformation	Shifts in socio-economic dynamics and behaviors among local youth	Youth educational and professional migration, city re-location, technology
GOV	Governance and Negotiations	Role of institutional intermediaries and bargaining dynamics	Municipal mediation, mayoral negotiation power, legal cases and challenges
INFRA	Infrastructure Improvements	Road transportation infrastructure, public utilities	Road maintenance, education access improvements, water and housing repairs
LAND	Land Value and Sovereignty	Territorial autonomy, land utility, intergenerational differences and dynamics	Family heritage, voluntary contract terms, idle land usage
UNMET	Unfulfilled Expectations	Shortcomings between Park development expectations and actual realities	Unfinished road paths, low staffing ratios, unrealized statements

Table 2. Inductive Coding Matrix

Application of Thematic Coding

Each interview transcript was then systematically reviewed and coded according to the charted thematic categories selected and identified during analysis. Interview segments were partitioned into individualized line segments tallied by a source number, amassing over five-hundred lines of text source, for ease of code tag application. The following coding matrix begins the initial set of thematic coding findings:

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Applied Code(s)</i>	<i>Textual Reference</i>
Liliam L.	PE, INFRA	<i>"The Mountain... has had in some way a certain protection against urbanism for many decades because it was somewhat protected by the difficulty of access regarding communication routes."</i>
	WST, ECON, INFRA	<i>"This area has experienced unsustainable development because around the middle of the beginning of the last century... the main road in Honduras passed near the area... When a new project came to build the Pan-American Highway, the road was diverted... and the area was then economically affected..."</i>
	WST, INFRA	<i>"...the community's development was impacted by the arrival of a national military and international project; it was a joint operation between the United States and Honduras during the Cold War... It benefited the conditions of access..."</i>
	PE, ENV	<i>"...economic activity was centered on forestry; unfortunately, these are forestry-oriented lands that were not managed sustainably, which caused the entire area to be deforested rapidly..."</i>
	CULT, ECON, INFRA	<i>"With the arrival of the military project and the improvement of the road, activity diversified toward vegetable cultivation by some families who had the possibility of setting up empirical irrigation systems."</i>
	PE, ENV	<i>"...the wind energy project arrived, considering that our area is one of the highest in this region... although the water resource has been decreasing due to the heavy forestry impact..."</i>
	SMT, CSR	<i>"...the company did heavy work installing its social responsibility area involving community leaders. That is where</i>

Juan Carlos B.	CULT, INFRA	<i>the socialization and negotiation process began with the owners of the plots... ” “What I value from the company as good for the community is the maintenance of the road... It has made it easier for people from the community to go out to work daily in the capital and return...”</i>
	CSR, ECON	<i>“Also access to education... I think this bus is sponsored by the mayor's office with resources generated from the Project... I do know they have a very strong scholarship program...”</i>
	EMP, UNMET	<i>“The job generation of this project is minimal because it requires specialized personnel, the company operates with little human resource...”</i>
	WST	<i>“I don't know much about this company, but it is a company with completely foreign capital; there are no local investors. It is operating at the Central American level...”</i>
	CULT, LAND	<i>“...My grandfather refused for years to give this permission and make this negotiation... those towers were among the last ones placed because it wasn't until he passed away that his children accepted...”</i>
	SRT, LAND	<i>“For my grandfather, electricity had no value... He didn't need energy to cultivate or raise cows... he wasn't willing to hand over an intimate part of himself to a company.”</i>
	PE, CULT	<i>“As soon as he died, the road was opened, the wind turbines were installed... Now we take walks, not in the forest, but on the road they opened.”</i>
	PE, WST	<i>“What I am not sure about are the safety measures like the ones they have in Europe, where they require houses to be 1 kilometer away... Here, that is not done.”</i>
	SRT, UNMET	<i>“These are communities where very few projects arrive... when a project of these magnitudes arrives, people receive it almost without thinking about the advantages and disadvantages...”</i>
	CULT, ECON	<i>“It has generated urban movement in these last decades... They are even subdividing lots in the area... because the heirs are taking advantage of these attractive conditions...”</i>
	FDI+/-, CSR	<i>“The conditions for resource exploitation must have a sustainable development component that is not only linked to the short term, like scholarships, but also links social responsibility to long-term development strategies”</i>
	PE, ENV	<i>“What has perhaps been affected is the landscape... To build the road, they did have to clear forest.”</i>
	GOV, UNMET	<i>“If a synergy were created, it could be. If the project were a catalyst for new economic activities in ecotourism. But the project is not interested in that. And the local government isn't either.”</i>
	PE	<i>“Its population is dedicated exclusively to the production of vegetables... developments that do not depend on government support and even less on private enterprise... traditional and artisanal crops whose production depends on the rains”</i>
	WST	<i>“Before the arrival of the Company, which is a Spanish consortium that has been exploiting a novelty in Honduras... there was no development plan or project financed by the State...”</i>
	COMP	<i>“The contract was suggested for 20 years. In my case, it involves a manzana of land where two antennas are installed, for which they pay 1,500 lempiras or 3,000 lempiras monthly.”</i>
	WST, COMP	<i>“Later one realized that with the profits they have from generating energy, what they give to the land owners is really very little... based on the profits the project generates for them.”</i>

Ruben L.	CSR, ENV	<i>"For other people who had their houses close to the antennas, they build them houses elsewhere, but those were private agreements with people whose homes were very close and were going to have noise problems."</i>
	SRT, LAND	<i>"I see it as beneficial; they are idle lands because in my case, I had no plans to do anything with the land... the adaptation to the community does not represent an invasive project..."</i>
	FDI+, WST, CFT	<i>"The differences compared to Costa Rica exceed 3 billion dollars... foreign direct investment is necessary because national private enterprise falls short. What Honduras needs is to generate legal conditions..."</i>
	PE, COMP	<i>"...the rent... in reality it is not for everyone. It is for the people who own land and who fortunately were in the most suitable locations... The large plots in the Mountain belong to relatively rich people..."</i>
	CULT, GEN	<i>"But now there are more city customs. I understand that people don't like to produce and the new generations don't like to produce in the Mountain... I feel that now there is a cultural appropriation by city people."</i>
	FDI+/-, CULT	<i>"Foreign investment itself has not brought development, but rather it's the passing of time. As part of the government and the community itself 'putting its batteries in' [working hard]."</i>
	CULT, GEN	<i>"I have also heard negative things. I have heard that there are children and adolescents who consume drugs in the Mountain... Connectivity also brings problems."</i>
	FDI+, CFT, SRT	<i>"Foreign investment is important and the government has to create the perfect scenario for these companies to come to the country, in terms of laws, already defined zones, because it generates employment that both a national and a foreigner will give you"</i>
Griselda A.	CFT	<i>"When it actually arrived, the managers of these companies looked for land to locate these turbines, they held meetings with the land owners and formalized a contract..."</i>
	EMP, UNMET	<i>"One of the expected promises was the idea that there would be permanent employment, perhaps for the majority... At that time, I did hear it said that the highway would be paved, but it was done only on some parts..."</i>
	CSR, ENV	<i>"For some house owners, the noise of the wind turbines is heard quite a bit at night; through requests they have fixed these houses, they have put insulation so that the noise doesn't enter..."</i>
	ECON, GOV, UNMET	<i>"Another is that more taxes enter the mayor's office through this project... I'm not going to tell you that it has benefited a lot here, but there has been help..."</i>
	COMP	<i>"When the project started, it seems that what they gave them was very little. Later, when my dad entered, they increased it, but I did hear some complaints that the income was very little."</i>
	SRT, COMP	<i>"...older adults get sick and require expensive medications; through that income [land rent], he can buy his things, go to his treatments... If this project had not arrived, there wouldn't be many things."</i>
	CULT, GEN	<i>"In those times they are not like the current ones; for example, they have a very different mindset from what I thought at their age...the youth now use other options. They go to work every day, they return, without forgetting the place"</i>

Daniel A.	FDI+/-, SRT, UNMET	<i>"It has positive and negative things. The negative ones, returning to the past, could be the unfulfilled promises; we inhabitants expected something beyond, something different. The positive ones are that many families have benefited; if someone asks them for help, they help with the case and it gets done."</i>
	UNMET	<i>"...the president of the company offered that he was going to pave 500 meters a year, but it was only by word, he left nothing written... The company has changed owners about 3 times..."</i>
	ENV	<i>"Sometimes when there is a lot of wind, those towers make 'buya' [noise], so the sound is felt in the houses. It is the only thing I can say that bothers."</i>
	CSR, INFRA	<i>"We only had water with a hose; with the help of the company they put water with pipes and a water tank."</i>
	FDI+, WST	<i>"We have received help for agriculture in the Mountain, and that is foreign investment from the World Bank, so they gifted us... products to produce food. So foreign investment is good..."</i>
	LAND	<i>"Deals have to be honorable and signed. If it doesn't suit you, just don't rent it. If I had the capacity to produce I could do something, and if someone wants to rent it from me, I'll rent it to them."</i>
José Luis L.	CSR	<i>"The company has done several house improvement projects, student scholarships, school snacks... there have been changes compared to before and now."</i>
	COMP	<i>"My dad is a landowner. The duration says it is for 20 years, with the rent coming to 100,000 lempiras a year... The first project they did, they say it was very low."</i>
	SRT, ECON, LAND	<i>"There are lands that produce nothing, they are for cows and horses to eat, so it's a benefit to rent it. Renting the land is one of the biggest benefits."</i>
	CSR, GEN, INFRA	<i>"I participated in a meeting about the benefits the company has given, of planting trees, of the road that was in poor condition, the school snacks... now the high school is close because of the road. Young people study more."</i>
Andres A.	ECON, GOV, INFRA	<i>"...the payment of taxes has greatly improved the quality of life of citizens throughout the municipality... We managed to improve citizens' housing, we put in water..."</i>
	GOV	<i>"...during all that time from 2001 to 2010, we were in constant meetings and negotiations, and at the beginning they wanted to pay whatever they wanted... It was not easy..."</i>
	GOV	<i>"...we as authorities were going to give them [land owners] full ownership with security of land tenure so that they could negotiate directly with the company on the plots where they have installed the turbines."</i>
	WST, CFT, GOV	<i>"One of the greatest problems was that former president... issued a decree where these renewable energy generating companies were exempt from paying taxes, fees, services... That created a big conflict for us..."</i>
	WST, CFT, GOV	<i>"But now that agreement puts a lot of conditions on us, tied more to the laws of another country and not to our laws. For us as authorities, it has caused great discomfort..."</i>
	WST, GOV	<i>"Obviously, because of economic influence, they want to have attributes that do not belong to them... They are economic threats...that the contract will be rescinded..."</i>
	WST, CFT, SMT, GOV	<i>"...when the decree was signed that left them exempt from taxes... a clause [stated] the State was going to give us... 10%..."</i>

		<i>the State has not paid us... if they don't pay us, then we have the resource of going to a lawsuit."</i>
<i>Alberto Z.</i>	FDI+/-, PE, ENV, GOV	<i>"I agree with foreign investment but let them give benefits, jobs, let them not damage the environment, let them respect authorities... But companies that only come to profit from the resources... I do not agree."</i>
	SMT, GOV, LAND	<i>"But it was a very hard negotiation, it was a quite strong negotiation because at the beginning there were land matters where they wanted to acquire and take possession of the land; there was a conflict because at first it was to buy the land."</i>
	SMT, GOV, LAND	<i>"Then there was a strong opposition from the municipality because they were afraid they would keep the whole municipality, and from there came another type of action [renting]"</i>
	CFT, SMT, GOV	<i>"...the weight of having such a high investment makes companies try to take advantage... and that is where practically the negotiators of the municipality step in, facing strong challenges because they need legal assistance..."</i>
<i>Jorge S.</i>	PE, WST, ENV	<i>"And all those costs were all benefits for them, for the company, and nothing was left here; they are just exploiting the resource"</i>
	FDI+/-, WST	<i>"The country needs many resources... evidently it requires foreign investment, but it must be investment that is well directed... because under conditions that come with strong financing... they come with too many questionings..."</i>
	WST, CFT	<i>"And they came with a mentality that somehow they shouldn't be charged... Foreign capital does have influence because in 2013 they were exempt from all tax payments... entirely exempted from taxes by not paying construction permits..."</i>
	WST, SRT	<i>"...these are projects that generate a lot of money and the country at one point doesn't collect it, the country pays for that energy. So there are things in favor and unfortunately things against."</i>
<i>Melissa G.</i>	ENV	<i>"There are many complaints regarding the issue of noise, cracked houses due to the magnitude of the project because logically a lot of heavy machinery is used... people live 2 kilometers away and hear the noise at 2 or 3 in the morning."</i>
	CFT, SMT, GOV	<i>"We are about to join with about 8 municipalities to take it to the Supreme Court of Justice... We are all fighting as a block to see how the National Congress reforms that Decree... it is a law that violates us as municipalities."</i>
	FDI+/-, GOV	<i>"As long as it doesn't violate the rights of the municipality and the mayor's offices that paid their taxes, repair permits, renewal permits, I think it is important because investment is needed in places for development and many things more."</i>
	COMP, INFRA	<i>"For the people who have contracts, for them it is a good benefit, and all the families who have rented the properties where the blades are located and where the roads pass."</i>
	CSR, ECON, INFRA	<i>"It has improved a lot... and other people have been helped with the house reconstruction project and the roads too."</i>
	CSR, ENV	<i>"I have heard them say that from the wind turbines... have a lot of 'buya' [noise], but in some closer parts they have reconstructed the house so they don't hear that noise."</i>
	FDI+, SRT, CSR	<i>"They give scholarships to students who have excellence... For us, for some people it is a good project, for others no. For me, I say it's fine. But other than that, I don't see much problem."</i>

<i>Ezequiel O.</i>	CSR, GEN	<i>"My sister has maintained the scholarship given by the wind company, but for that scholarship people have to maintain their grades."</i>
	FDI+/-, SRT, ENV	<i>"From what I've seen, for me it has been peaceful to be honest. Some people are affected by it. In a negative way to some people. There are people who say they affect the environment; I've heard some people mention it."</i>
	PE, LAND	<i>"...regarding the issue of deforestation, it's the only thing I would change; they had to deforest and open roads to locate the electrical towers."</i>
	COMP	<i>"For me not directly, but to my grandfather yes, he had a great benefit. He rents land and there the money they give him serves for his medication"</i>
	CULT, GEN, INFRA	<i>"It is a benefit that they make repairs to the road. There is connectivity with the city... I have plans to move, mostly for work and for the university. The highway has facilitated this."</i>
	SRT, LAND	<i>"The land has that family value. If at some time I have land like that, and they tell me if they could rent it from me, the truth is I would accept because in part it is a benefit it would give me."</i>
	GEN, INFRA	<i>"What has helped me the most is the road... you can transport yourself to the city easier even when the road is deteriorated... I would see myself finishing my career because I am working and studying, I would see myself achieving many goals."</i>

Table 3. Applied Coding Results

Chapter III: Thematic Module and Excerpt Discussion

The coded results reveal the interlinked and multifaceted dimensions that have impacted the community throughout the course of time, long before and up to the arrival of the Park alongside its more than a decade-long existence inside Santa Ana and San Buenaventura. The Park represents a point of reference as well as a pivotal moment for community members in the way they perceive foreign development and investment, with the Park's actions and presence inside the community extending beyond those traditionally associated with a renewable energy company. The Park's active involvement in infrastructure, education, community outreach, contract conversations, and relationships with municipal authorities points to an effort in building a positive image within the community, which in turn appears to influence how residents understand the role of foreign actors in development processes. At the same time, expressed perceptions were not universally and unconditionally positive to their maximized extent, as some participants also raised concerns such as environmental degradation and low contract benefits as points of contention. Therefore, to further explore these instances, a deeper discussion on the interview thematic modules holding participants' narratives is necessary to review the factors at play that ultimately aid in constructing community members' perceptions of foreign development and investment.

Community Identity, Land Value, Environmental Protection

The introduction of a large-scale renewable energy project into a remote area inevitably brings change to the physical and cultural scene held by the community. These narratives demonstrate how the Park's inception began a new phase in the area's history, where a clear cultural divide between older and newer generations was formulated based on their value of land and the environment. While older residents were described as keeping stronger emotional and cultural bonds to what participants referred to as *the Mountain*, later generations appeared to be more oriented toward modernization and economic opportunity. The Mountain's past is told as one of agricultural livelihood and dependency to the land:

"It was a beautiful place, a place where vegetables and livestock have been cultivated, which are sources of work and sources that we in the community live on." [Griselda A.]

"Before the project, they were subsistence producers who practically produce not to generate wealth or escape poverty, but to subsist." [Juan Carlos B.]

Perhaps the most evident case of this generational transition is the account of a community elder who constantly refused the sale of his land to the Park, after which his heirs approved the construction of roads and wind turbines following his passing:

“There was a very strong sense of nostalgia; he lived for more than 90 years, and he was a person who loved the forest, he didn’t care about a new project... that was his forest; even after 90 years, he had the habit of walking in his forest, it was a sanctuary for him, he would take two-hour walks through the forest even at 90 years old.” [Liliam L.]

Political ecology lens would interpret this as a case where land functioned as a source of sustenance and symbol of heritage before it acquired a new layer of value by being reimagined as a productive asset within the expanding renewable energy economy. This interpretation aligns with the analysis of Dunlap (2021) on wind energy development, arguing that renewable energy projects frequently transform landscapes into spaces of economic production by redefining land according to its capacity to generate value.³⁷ In terms of social representation, the Park gradually became embedded within the community’s collective understanding of development rather than remaining solely a renewable energy project. Likewise, Batel and Devine-Wright (2015) state that communities construct shared meanings by assimilating unfamiliar development into existing identities and everyday experiences, rather than evaluating renewable energy technologies only according to their technical or environmental performance.³⁸ The cognitive polyphasia displayed in this module reflects the dynamic nature of social representations, where multiple forms of knowledge and experience coexist within the same community. Perceptions incorporated elements of environmental stewardship and the gradual transformation of traditional ways of life alongside economic opportunity and modernization, allowing different interpretations to remain valid at the same time.

Economic Benefits and Financial Incentives

Monetary matters represent a crucial aspect for any investment-driven development initiative. Throughout interviews, community members repeatedly associated the Park with financial opportunities that were previously unavailable, ranging from land lease payments and municipal tax revenues to scholarships and infrastructure investments.

“It’s natural, it’s resistance to change. But in the end what people want is money; imagine receiving about 1,500 dollars a month in rent, it changes your life.” [Ruben L.]

Despite this, an acknowledgement of the unbalance in shares of the economic value generated by the project accrued is present, revealing an awareness of the unequal distribution of benefits despite generally favorable perceptions of the Park.

“In my case, what they give me is very little compared to the profits produced by the two towers located on the land I rent to them... that’s why I think they kept adding things, for example, the 30,000 lempiras bonus was not contemplated in the agreement. They added it as they began to get results.” [Juan Carlos B.]

“The first project they did, they say it was very low... I don’t know of conflicts, but since it’s a contract, each one has knowledge of what they signed, how the process is.” [José Luis L.]

“Deals have to be honorable and signed. If it doesn’t suit you, just don’t rent it.” [Daniel A.]

Interestingly enough, even with this asymmetry, an acceptance of contract legitimacy is expressed by some participants through the emphasis of the contracts’ voluntary nature. Although interviewees acknowledged that financial compensation was unequal relative to the company’s profits, they maintained that landowners entered into the agreements with sufficient knowledge of the contractual conditions. The acceptance of unequal contracts can be understood as a function of a world-system’s normalization of structural dependency. Dos Santos (1970) frames this dependency as a type of techno-industrial dependence where international figures shape the everyday options available to rural communities.³⁹ Because peripheral regions typically lack domestic access to advanced capital and specialized infrastructure, local communities face a limitation in viable economic alternatives other than agreeing to contracts turning their idle lands into an immediate economic utility. Furthermore, Ramírez and Böhm (2021) extend this discourse to the renewable energy sector through the concept of *transactional colonialism*, stating that contemporary wind energy projects integrate local territories into global systems of capital through negotiated contract agreements in place of directly coercive land expropriation.⁴⁰ Consequently, a new moment of cognitive polyphasia exists inside community members’ simultaneous recognition of these structural inequalities while continuing to regard the Park as a legitimate and beneficial investment, demonstrating the effect of tangible economic opportunities in the process of formulating perceptions of foreign development and investment.

Governance, Legal Protections, Collective Action

The governance aspect of the Park comprises an unexpectedly significant facet of this analysis, given that its influence was relatively less apparent than the project's economic benefits and infrastructural changes as mentioned by community members. While participants consistently identified visible outcomes such as employment and road maintenance, closer examination reveals that many of these discussions rested upon legal and institutional arrangements that quietly kept the relationship between the company and local authorities representing the community. The accounts of the mayors of Santa Ana and San Buenaventura, supported by a mayoral consultant, show that governance of the Park extends well beyond its day-to-day tasks and into the legal territory of upholding municipal authority for the benefit of the community.

“We are clear that the law favors them, but the communities are going to rebel if these people stop paying taxes because obviously the community will stop receiving the benefit given through that payment they make.” [Andres A.]

“The National Congress has violated the Constitution of the Republic because the deputy is there to legislate, not to violate what the constituents established... we are all fighting as a block to see how the National Congress reforms that decree... with the company it has been a fight with them, but they only know how to say: *‘When they reform the decree, we will pay as corresponded.’*” [Jorge S.]

In reference to Decree No. 138-2013 and Decree No. Decree No. 51-2011, which were explained previously, the mayors declared that these laws disproportionately privilege renewable energy investors by limiting municipal fiscal authority while reducing the economic returns available for local government funding. These concerns provide a primary-source commentary of the legal pathways through which the State has enabled the conditions in favor of foreign investment, albeit directing criticisms towards said legal structures more than to the Park itself. The commodity-form theory of law would treat this perception as evidence of legal structures becoming integral to the organization of capitalist exchange that, in turn, have consequences on the distribution of rights and economic privileges amongst stakeholders. As Woodhouse (2024) argues in the context of renewable energy legislation, legal frameworks supporting the energy transition simultaneously facilitate both decarbonization and the organization of juridical conditions essential for capital accumulation.⁴¹

This module also uncovers elements of an early-stage social movement in the form of a lawsuit being crafted by the mayors of multiple municipalities, including Santa Ana and San Buenaventura, in response to the tax exemption decrees.

“Up to now we are making the collections and we already have the lawyers working on it... but we are waiting for the prudent time; if they don’t pay us, then we have the resource of going to a lawsuit.” [Andres A.]

“What happens is that sometimes the fight, the fear, with all the problems that have happened, in some way the mayor’s offices hold back... but definitely moments will come with this issue that we are all going to sue.” [Jorge S.]

Political mobilization represents an organized effort by municipal leaders to leverage their own institutional authority to collectively pursue legal reform. Social movements theory would suggest that collective action emerges when separated concerns are framed as a common issue requiring coordinated intervention. This is consistent with the analysis of Vanhala (2012) on legal mobilization, where the proposed lawsuit illustrates how collective actors can pursue their common objectives through litigation when institutional reform is viewed as a more effective avenue than direct political confrontation.⁴² While the proposed lawsuit challenges the legislative framework governing the Park, the narratives indicate that this structural imbalance is also reflected in the negotiations that built the relationship between municipal authorities and Park officials throughout the project’s implementation.

“They always tried to impose their criteria and all; fortunately there were sagacious people, people who played their spaces very well, and who knew how to negotiate for the benefit of the population... Freddy Cerrato, thanks to him it was recovered, because practically they were going to keep the land; he fought very hard so that it wouldn’t be that way, but rather that it would be rented.” [Alberto Z.]

“And they came with a mentality that somehow they shouldn’t be charged, that their payments should be small... there were several months of socialization; I have always said that these are projects that generate a lot of money.” [Jorge S.]

“It has been a constant struggle where the municipal authorities do not feel secure because each year they are putting more conditions, like more obstacles; the treatment is no longer the same as before. [Andres A.]

It is important to consider the place the communities at-large inside Santa Ana and San Buena Aventura occupy amidst this upcoming legal dispute. In terms of community opinions, these governmental conflicts seem to be largely confined behind-the-scenes to the institutional sphere, which in turn has exerted relatively little influence on the community’s expressed perceptions of the Park and foreign development and

investment as a whole. This disconnect can be attributed to the manner in which municipal authorities have approached the dispute, opting to resolve their concerns through an institutional dialogue at the Honduran government level to avoid unnecessary tensions within the community and with the Park. The positive assessments of the Park's contributions shared by community members and mayoral figures assist in explaining the cautious approach adopted by authorities, whose objective appears to be preserving the Park's economic and social benefits while seeking revisions to the legal framework governing its operations. However, because these legal acts have been managed within private administrative circles, they have not generated the type of public awareness or shared grievance usually associated with larger community mobilization. The conditions necessary for the formation of a social movement within the community have not yet materialized, making it uncertain whether the progression of the lawsuit will alter local perceptions of the Park or give rise to community collective action. Nevertheless, a public statement is set to be announced for the community once all legal matters are set into motion, opening the door for these questions to be answered possibly in the near future.

“So once we sue, we are going to make an open calendar and inform the population... as I tell you, because of the years we have been in this, and the certain experience we have, your Servant at least exhausts all resources so as not to enter into conflict, not to harm the company; we are waiting for the prudent time.” [Andres A.]

Coexistence of Perceptions and Attitudes on Past, Present, and Future FDI

The preceding modules examined the leading themes through which participants interpreted the presence of the Park and its activities, each emphasizing a particular dimension of the community's relationship with foreign development and investment. The blending of the thematic codes considered in unison points toward a broader pattern becoming evident regarding the coexistence of beliefs and the evolution of attitudes toward foreign development and investment. When considered collectively, the thematic coding demonstrates that participants did not interpret the Park through a single dimension in isolation. As mentioned before, references to employment, infrastructure, environmental protection, land ownership, governance, contractual arrangements, and community identity frequently appeared alongside one another within the same interviews, illustrating that perceptions of foreign development and investment were constructed through the accumulation of interconnected experiences.

The social representation present inside the community ultimately reflects a negotiated understanding of foreign development and investment rather than a fixed position of acceptance or rejection. While it is very clear that participants overall have welcomed the Park as a positive contributor to the community, this assessment does not seem to translate into a fully unconditional support for foreign development and investment across all participants uniformly. Participants consistently evaluated future investment through the lens of their experiences with the Park, expressing support only insofar as new projects generated tangible local benefits and fulfilled their social obligations. Cognitive polyphasia takes a major role as the leading concept bringing together and synthesizing the coexistence of beliefs observed throughout this study. As such, these experiences have contributed to the creation of a shared social representation that is uniquely characteristic to the community of Santa Ana and San Buenaventura.

Foreign development and investment are not confined to a single moment in time for community members, however. Memories of the Mountain before the Park's arrival emphasized limited economic opportunities and agricultural livelihoods, reflecting a period in which major development initiatives were difficult to imagine as part of the community's future due to projects of such magnitude being absent from everyday life.

"I never imagined that investment attraction existed for the community... we grew up with the perception that the greatest resource the community had was forestry and agriculture... I didn't imagine, either as a child or older, that this potential existed." [Liliam L.]

"Like everything at first, it was said that a power project through the air was coming; it was a novelty that I had never heard of, let alone seen... it was something new, people were excited because at that time it was said that there would be sources of employment and many things." [Griselda A.]

While the past established the Park as a new developmental possibility, the present reflects its consolidation as part of the municipalities' everyday reality. Participants' evaluations are now based less on the novelty of foreign investment than on its sustained capacity to improve community life through its visible contributions. Looking to the future, participants generally expressed openness to additional foreign development and investment at both the local municipal and national level. These reflections geared towards the future also suggest an understanding of development as a gradual process unfolding over time.

“I feel that the development of the village is not solely thanks to the wind investment, but other factors as well, like the approach of technology, the installation of electricity, the improvement of transport.” [Ruben L.]

Rather than anticipating that additional foreign investment would fundamentally resolve existing challenges inside Honduras, interviewees viewed future projects as a natural continuation of the zones’ ongoing evolution. This idea is based on the observation that the community, throughout everything, has still retained its rural and agricultural grassroots that have long defined its character. Although the Park has expanded economic opportunities and introduced new forms of development, these changes have been gradually incorporated into the community’s existing social fabric rather than fundamentally redefining it. The Park has, in essence, grown side-by-side alongside the community without overshadowing it with its proximity.

It is highly important to remember that the relationship described throughout this study is neither static nor without friction. The emerging legal dispute accompanied by the dissatisfactions of contractual terms can perhaps be attributed to the change in company ownership conducted by Park officials, as suggested by the mayors’ accounts. This transition disrupted an established pattern of cooperation that was built for more than a decade, reinforcing the notion that current social representations will continue to be reconstructed through new experiences and changing social relations.

Chapter IV: Lessons for the Green Energy Transition and Development Cooperation

The case of the Cerro de Hula Wind Park and its involvement in the formation of these coexistent perspectives raises more questions and implications that extend beyond the municipalities of Santa Ana and San Buenaventura. On its own, the Park may appear to represent a highly specific and localized case. However, it still occupies a place within the vast landscape of the global green energy transition, where the cumulative experiences of small communities add up to influence how renewable energy development is perceived and implemented. The green energy transition in itself encompasses several intertwined objectives that reach past decarbonization, including sustainable development, international coordination, economic investment, energy security, community participation, among others. Negotiations of social, economic, and environmental priorities between external actors and host communities are therefore becoming an increasingly central component of the green energy transition, and as evidenced by the troubling background of foreign involvement inside Honduras, the challenge lies in renewable energy projects successfully departing from the problematic development models of the past. The secondary sub-question of this thesis takes a final look at how the lessons derived from the Park can inform the role of development-supporting institutions, particularly the European Union due to the Park's Spanish origins, in crafting future renewable initiatives that foster environmental and equitable outcomes for host communities.

Honduras and the European Union's Global Gateway

The European Union, or the *EU*, has established itself as a pivotal actor in international development cooperation, specially in the realm of sustainable energy infrastructure in the Global South. Initiatives such as the EU's *Global Gateway* strategy aim to mobilize billions in public and private investment for sustainable infrastructure projects in the current decade and across the world.⁴³ Besides the recent partnership between Honduras and the EU on renewable energy mentioned before, the Global Gateway's horizon extends to a billion Lempira investment through five cooperation projects seeking to address structural inequalities, promote human rights, and foster sustainable development inside Honduras.⁴⁴ As seen from these initiatives, the European approach appears to illustrate an evolving understanding of development cooperation that

incorporates financial support into long-term objectives formulated under mutually beneficial international partnerships. The idea of mutually-beneficial partnerships is not a deduced interpretation but an explicit intent by the European Commission to walk away from the traditional donor-recipient relationships into the direction of joint project design and consultations with partner countries.⁴⁵

As it relates to the Park, important parallels can be drawn between the findings of this research and the EU's contemporary adaptation of development cooperation. The Park as a renewable energy project embodies the worthwhile environmental and economic potentials of the green transition at-large, but importantly, it highlights the significance of governance, community engagement, and consistent dialogue in determining whether these benefits translate into long-term local development. As it relates to the EU, these concepts echo the general principles promoted by the Global Gateway strategy as well as the EU's effort in maintaining positive relationships with partners worldwide. The larger magnitude of the EU's operations, in contrast, means that translating these principles into practice presents its own set of challenges.

Marcello Abate, a representative of the European External Action Service (*EEAS*) for Honduras, explains through a supplemental interview how the EU navigates tensions between high-level investments balanced with civil society representation.

"The challenge of this is what we are seeing in practice: the involvement of civil society in the [project] design, because on many occasions this type of initiative, investment, and prioritization of investments is kept and negotiated at high levels."⁴⁶

According to Abate, one of the principal challenges facing the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy is ensuring that local stakeholders are involved in the design of investment initiatives, as these decisions are often negotiated at governmental and international levels before reaching the communities directly affected. In response to this obstacle, the EU is currently restructuring its civil society roadmaps to strengthen structured dialogue and facilitate more active participation throughout future Global Gateway investments, Abate relays. Viewed through Park experiences, these institutional advancements indicate that such participation constraints influence how renewable energy development is experienced by host communities, a concern the EU itself recognizes through its high efforts for civil society and stakeholder integration.

In this sense, the present research contributes to the broader objective of strengthening community representation by documenting local perspectives that are often absent from high-level discussions surrounding renewable energy investment.

Honduras and the European Union's VPA-FLEGT

Equally noteworthy for valuable insights into the EU's evolving approach to development cooperation is the Voluntary Partnership Agreement on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade (*VPA-FLEGT*), to which Honduras holds membership in. The VPA-FLEGT, which is an EU initiative designed to improve forest governance and reduce illegal logging through legally-binding partnerships with timber-producing countries,⁴⁷ mirrors various of the same principles underlying the Global Gateway strategy through its emphasis on transparent governance and collaborative partnerships as essential components of sustainable development. Although operating within the forestry sector rather than renewable energy, the agreement sets an alternative instrument through which the EU pursues similar development objectives by utilizing legally-backed commitments to strengthen institutional accountability.

The relevance of the VPA-FLEGT with the Park lies in its institutional approach to governance. The legal disputes documented in this study indicated that, even if a renewable development project is able to properly cultivate community engagement in its initial phases, subsequent changes in corporate ownership and legislative frameworks can undermine previously established relationships. As such, agreements the likes of the VPA-FLEGT can complement the Global Gateway's stakeholder participatory approach by embedding governance principles with legally-binding frameworks. Ultimately, these two tools at the EU's disposal demonstrate reinforcing approaches to development cooperation that are capable of covering for one another's gaps wherever possible.

The Park provides an illustrative example as to why such approaches matter in practice. José Filadelfo Martínez, a political analyst and coordinator for the VPA-FLEGT, offers a view on how sustainable development depends upon the continuous organization of governments, civil society, and the private sector rather than the implementation of environmental policies in isolation.

“To combat... illegal logging, governance is a key aspect; you have to get all the actors involved in the exploitation and conservation of the forest to participate... all these actors must meet and agree on how to comply with the law.”⁴⁸

Martínez’s expertise on the forestry sector inside Honduras still resonates closely with the experiences documented about the Park. In both sectors, sustainable development is shown to depend on the institutional structures that enable governments, private actors, and local communities to work together over the long run. The Global Gateway and VPA-FLEGT reflect the EU’s growing prioritization of dialogue and governance, two core themes that were recurringly present throughout the case of the Park.

With these ideas in mind, the findings of this thesis do not fundamentally challenge the participatory approaches already reflected in recent EU development and investment plans. Instead, they provide qualitative support for principles that the EU has increasingly sought to integrate into its international partnerships, with the Park providing an empirical example of how said principles are perceived and negotiated within local communities. As the green transition continues to expand globally, the reciprocal relationship between institutional policy and local experiences will remain key to ensuring that renewable energy development is both environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive for all participants involved.

Conclusions

The remote towns of Santa Ana and San Buenaventura may appear far removed from the international discussions building the green energy transition at the world stage. Before the arrival of the Cerro de Hula Wind Park, their communities began to witness the first signs of changing patterns of development and infrastructure at a rather slow rate. The introduction of a foreign renewable energy project, however, added another chapter to that history that connected these municipalities to the broader global effort to confront climate change while simultaneously raising new questions surrounding development, governance, and community identity.

The interviews conducted for this thesis demonstrate that community perceptions cannot be reduced to simplistic positions of either support or opposition to foreign development and investment. Participants consistently expressed nuanced perspectives that balanced appreciation for the Park's tangible contributions with an awareness of some of its shortcomings. From improvements in infrastructure, educational opportunities, municipal revenues, land rental income, these benefits coexisted inside a unique social representation that also holds concerns regarding environmental change, unequal economic returns, and recent legal disputes. Thus, perhaps one of the most significant findings of this study is how the relationship between the community and the Park has remained dynamic rather than static. The theoretical frameworks employed throughout this research help in explaining this progression, showing that development is a continuously negotiated process through which communities reinterpret their relationship with the Park according to their experiences and needs.

The Cerro de Hula Wind Park presents a case that differs from many of the renewable energy conflicts seen throughout Honduras, Latin America, and the Global South. Although disagreements and legal disputes have emerged over time, the findings of this research indicate that the project has generally maintained a connection with its host communities characterized by negotiation over confrontation. It is worth noting that efforts were made to include perspectives from representatives associated with both the Park and COPINH, to which no response was received. Thus, the absence of these perspectives leaves open the possibility that important dimensions of possible conflicts remain unexplored, presenting a valuable opportunity for future research.

Overall, foreign development and investment function as central figureheads of the global renewable energy transition. As nations continue to pursue decarbonization through international partnerships with institutions such as the EU, many of these relationships still exist inside the vast world-systems that manage the movement of capital and influence how development is conducted. As Abate acknowledges:

“Engaging in development cooperation relationships with other countries does not imply solely supporting the development of other countries but also benefiting from that development. Which, frankly speaking... has always been the case. Cooperation is not selfless... But it is true that there has always been a return, which ultimately is a part of the interest.”⁴⁶

With this open perspective, transparency regarding the reciprocal nature of foreign development and investment supports rather than weakens their legitimacy. The Park demonstrates that, beyond global investment strategies and renewable energy targets, the lasting success of the green energy transition will ultimately be measured inside communities such as Santa Ana and San Buenaventura, where global ambitions are transformed into the everyday lived experiences of communities and their people.

Citation Endnotes

1. Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), *Energía Eólica de Honduras S.A.*
2. Secretaría de Cumbres de las Américas, *Policy Brief*.
3. Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), *Sustainable Energy for All: Rapid Assessment and Gap Analysis—Honduras*.
4. Observatorio de Multinacionales en América Latina (OMAL), “Los impactos de un proyecto eólico de Iberdrola en Honduras.”
5. Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, “Honduras: Comunidades y organizaciones denuncian imposición de proyecto eólico Cerro de Hula en sus territorios.”
6. Asociación Civil Lacommunis, “Pueblo lenca, Honduras.”
7. Sandra Cuffe, “Fight with Joy: Remembering Berta Cáceres.”
8. Larry Willmore, “Direct Foreign Investment in Central American Manufacturing.”
9. Marta Bengoa and Blanca Sánchez-Robles, “Foreign Direct Investment, Economic Freedom and Growth: New Evidence from Latin America.”
10. Michael Castle Miller and L. Grant Shubin, “Fostering Justice and Stability: Rights Protection and National Sovereignty in the Honduran Zones for Employment and Economic Development.”
11. José Luis Palma-Herrera, “El regreso de los enclaves a Honduras en el siglo XXI: Las zonas de empleo y desarrollo económico (ZEDE), la versión de las ciudades chárter rechazada por su creador Paul Romer (2010–2019).”
12. Lara Caldas, “Charter Cities and De-democratization in the Neoliberal Age: The Case of Honduras.”
13. Luciana Ghiotto et al., *Inversiones mafiosas contra Honduras: Resumen*.
14. International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), “Honduras Signs the ICSID Convention.”
15. Wilfredo C. Flores, Osvaldo A. Ojeda, Marco A. Flores, and Francisco R. Rivas, “Sustainable Energy Policy in Honduras: Diagnosis and Challenges.”
16. María Parada, Indira Ochoa, and Héctor Villatoro, “Green Hydrogen Assessment of Generation and Storage Potential from Solar and Wind Energy Shedding in Honduras.”
17. International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), *Renewables Readiness Assessment: Honduras*.
18. Agencia EFE, “Honduras y la Unión Europea sellan alianza para fortalecer sector de energías renovables.”
19. Congreso Nacional de Honduras, *Decreto No. 138-2013: Reforma a la Ley de Promoción a la Generación de Energía Eléctrica con Recursos Renovables*.
20. Giorleny Altamirano Rayo, Eric S. Mosinger, and Kai M. Thaler, “Statebuilding and Indigenous Rights Implementation: Political Incentives, Social Movement Pressure, and Autonomy Policy in Central America.”
21. Asamblea Nacional Constituyente de Honduras, *Constitución de la República de Honduras*.
22. Toby Hill, “Honduras: Why Urgent Action Is Still Needed in One of the Deadliest Places to Defend the Planet.”
23. Global Witness, “More than 2,100 Land and Environmental Defenders Killed Globally Between 2012 and 2023.”
24. Oscar Meza Palma and José M. Díaz-Puente, “Integration of Indigenous People into Sustainable Development through the Territorial Analysis of Their Potential: The Case of the Lenca People in Honduras.”
25. Hannah Toombs, “(Re)Crafting Indigenous ‘Tradition’ in Honduras: How Constructions of National Identity and Heritage Shape Artisan Craft Livelihoods in Five Lenca Communities.”

26. Carlos Tornel, “Decolonizing Energy Justice from the Ground Up: Political Ecology, Ontology, and Energy Landscapes.”
27. Paul Robbins, *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*.
28. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*.
29. Christopher Chase-Dunn and Peter Grimes, “World-Systems Analysis.”
30. Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*.
31. Marie Thøgersen, “International Law as Ideology: A Commodity Form Approach.”
32. China Miéville, “The Commodity-Form Theory of International Law: An Introduction.”
33. Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*.
34. Patrick Rateau, Pascal Moliner, Claude Guimelli, and Jean-Claude Abric, “Social Representation Theory.”
35. Wolfgang Wagner, Gerard Duveen, Jyoti Verma, and Matthias Themel, “‘I Have Some Faith and at the Same Time I Don’t Believe’: Cognitive Polyphasia and Cultural Change in India.”
36. Claudie Provencher, “Towards a Better Understanding of Cognitive Polyphasia.”
37. Alexander Dunlap, “More Wind Energy Colonialism(s) in Oaxaca? Reasonable Findings, Unacceptable Development.”
38. Susana Batel and Patrick Devine-Wright, “Towards a Better Understanding of People’s Responses to Renewable Energy Technologies: Insights from Social Representations Theory.”
39. Theotonio Dos Santos, “The Structure of Dependence.”
40. Jacobo Ramirez and Steffen Böhm, “Transactional Colonialism in Wind Energy Investments: Energy Injustices against Vulnerable People in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.”
41. Andrew Woodhouse, “Commodity-Form Theory of Law, the Climate Crisis, and the European Union.”
42. Lisa Vanhala, “Legal Opportunity Structures and the Paradox of Legal Mobilization by the Environmental Movement in the UK.”
43. European Commission, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, “Global Gateway Overview.”
44. Catherine Calderón, “La Unión Europea invertirá mil millones de lempiras en Honduras a través de iniciativa Global Gateway para responder a desafíos sociales.”
45. European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *Joint Communication: The Global Gateway*.
46. Marcello Abate (EEAS representative for Honduras), interview by author, Online, May 29, 2026.
47. European Commission, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, “EU–Honduras Agreement.”
48. José Filadelfo Martínez (VPA-FLEGT coordinator), interview by author, Online, June 9, 2026.

Bibliography

Agencia EFE. “Honduras y la Unión Europea sellan alianza para fortalecer sector de energías renovables.” *La Prensa*, May 5, 2026.

<https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/union-europea-gobierno-acuerdo-energias-renovables-HB30461372>

Asamblea Nacional Constituyente de Honduras. *Constitución de la República de Honduras (Decreto No. 131)*. *La Gaceta*, no. 23,612, January 20, 1982.

<https://pdpa.georgetown.edu/Parties/Honduras/Leyes/constitucion.pdf>

Asociación Civil Lacommunis. “Pueblo lenca, Honduras.” *Ma Puca*. Accessed April 2026. <https://mapuca.lacommunis.org/pueblo-lenca-honduras/>

Batel, Susana, and Patrick Devine-Wright. “Towards a Better Understanding of People’s Responses to Renewable Energy Technologies: Insights from Social Representations Theory.” *Public Understanding of Science* 24, no. 3 (2015): 311–325. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662513514165>

Bengoa, Marta, and Blanca Sánchez-Robles. “Foreign Direct Investment, Economic Freedom and Growth: New Evidence from Latin America.” *European Journal of Political Economy* 19, no. 3 (2003): 529–545. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0176-2680\(03\)00011-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0176-2680(03)00011-9)

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. “Honduras: Comunidades y organizaciones denuncian imposición de proyecto eólico Cerro de Hula en sus territorios.” March 15, 2011. <https://www.business-humanrights.org/es/latest-news/honduras-comunidades-y-organizaciones-denuncian-imposici%C3%B3n-de-proyecto-e%C3%B3lico-cerro-de-hula-en-sus-territorios/>

Caldas, Lara. “Charter Cities and De-democratization in the Neoliberal Age: The Case of Honduras.” *Tensões Mundiais* 20, no. 43 (2024): 103–123. <https://doi.org/10.33956/tensoesmundiais.v20i43.12405>

Calderón, Catherine. “La Unión Europea invertirá mil millones de lempiras en Honduras a través de iniciativa Global Gateway para responder a desafíos sociales.” *Contra Corriente*, December 13, 2024. <https://contracorriente.red/2024/12/13/la-union->

europa-invertira-mil-millones-de-lempiras-en-honduras-a-traves-de-iniciativa-global-gateway-para-responder-a-desafios-sociales/

Cardoso, Fernando Henrique, and Enzo Faletto. *Dependency and Development in Latin America*. Translated by Marjory Mattingly Urquidí. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.

Chase-Dunn, Christopher, and Peter Grimes. "World-Systems Analysis." *Annual Review of Sociology* 21 (1995): 387–417.

<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.21.080195.002131>

Congreso Nacional de Honduras. *Decreto No. 138-2013: Reforma a la Ley de Promoción a la Generación de Energía Eléctrica con Recursos Renovables (Decreto No. 70-2007)*. *La Gaceta*, no. 33,191, August 1, 2013.

https://www.tsc.gob.hn/web/leyes/Ref_art_2_ley_promocion_energia_electrica_2013.pdf

Cuffe, Sandra. "Fight with Joy: Remembering Berta Cáceres." *Intercontinental Cry*, March 7, 2016. <https://icmagazine.org/fight-joy-remembering-bertha-caceres/>

Dos Santos, Theotonio. "The Structure of Dependence." *The American Economic Review* 60, no. 2 (1970): 231–236. JSTOR

Dunlap, Alexander. "More Wind Energy Colonialism(s) in Oaxaca? Reasonable Findings, Unacceptable Development." *Energy Research & Social Science* 82 (2021): 102304. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2021.102304>

European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank: The Global Gateway*. JOIN(2021) 30 final. Brussels, December 1, 2021. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021JC0030>

European Commission, Directorate-General for International Partnerships. "EU–Honduras Agreement to Reduce Illegal Timber Logging and Associated Trade Enters into Force." *International Partnerships*, September 1, 2022. <https://international->

partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/eu-honduras-agreement-reduce-illegal-timber-logging-and-associated-trade-enters-force-2022-09-01_en

European Commission, Directorate-General for International Partnerships. “Global Gateway Overview.” *International Partnerships*. Accessed June 2026.

https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/global-gateway/global-gateway-overview_en

Flores, Wilfredo C., Osvaldo A. Ojeda, Marco A. Flores, and Francisco R. Rivas.

“Sustainable Energy Policy in Honduras: Diagnosis and Challenges.” *Energy Policy* 39, no. 1 (2011): 551–562. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2010.10.020>

Ghiotto, Luciana, Jen Moore, Aldo Orellana López, Karen Spring, and Manuel Pérez Rocha. *Inversiones mafiosas contra Honduras: Resumen*. Washington, DC: Institute for Policy Studies, 2024. <https://ips-dc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/resumen-inversiones-mafiosas-contra-honduras.pdf>

Global Witness. “More than 2,100 Land and Environmental Defenders Killed Globally Between 2012 and 2023.” *Global Witness Press Releases*, September 10, 2024. <https://globalwitness.org/en/press-releases/more-than-2100-land-and-environmental-defenders-killed-globally-between-2012-and-2023/>

Hill, Toby. “Honduras: Why Urgent Action Is Still Needed in One of the Deadliest Places to Defend the Planet.” *Global Witness*, March 4, 2024. <https://globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/land-and-environmental-defenders/honduras-why-urgent-action-still-needed-one-deadliest-places-defend-planet/>

International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). “Honduras Signs the ICSID Convention.” *ICSID News Releases*. March 6, 2026. <https://icsid.worldbank.org/news-and-events/news-releases/honduras-signs-icsid-convention>

International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). *Renewables Readiness Assessment: Honduras*. Abu Dhabi: International Renewable Energy Agency, 2023.

https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2023/Nov/IRENA_RRA_Honduras_2023.pdf

Miéville, China. “The Commodity-Form Theory of International Law: An Introduction.” *Leiden Journal of International Law* 17, no. 2 (2004): 271–302. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0922156504001827>

Miller, Michael Castle, and L. Grant Shubin. “Fostering Justice and Stability: Rights Protection and National Sovereignty in the Honduran Zones for Employment and Economic Development.” *A&C – Revista de Direito Administrativo & Constitucional* 20, no. 80 (2020): 49–85. <https://doi.org/10.21056/aec.v20i80.1413>

Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency. (MIGA). *Energía Eólica de Honduras S.A.* World Bank Group. Accessed April 2026. <https://www.miga.org/project/energia-eolica-de-honduras-sa>

Observatorio de Multinacionales en América Latina (OMAL). “Los impactos de un proyecto eólico de Iberdrola en Honduras.” Accessed April, 2026. <https://omal.info/los-impactos-de-un-proyecto-eolico-de-iberdrola-en-honduras/>

Palma, Oscar Meza, and José M. Díaz-Puente. “Integration of Indigenous People into Sustainable Development through the Territorial Analysis of Their Potential: The Case of the Lenca People in Honduras.” *Land Use Policy* 137 (2024): 106993. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2023.106993>

Palma-Herrera, José Luis. “El regreso de los enclaves a Honduras en el siglo XXI: Las zonas de empleo y desarrollo económico (ZEDE), la versión de las ciudades chárter rechazada por su creador Paul Romer (2010–2019).” *Anuario de Estudios Centroamericanos* 45 (2019): 133–149. <https://doi.org/10.15517/aeca.v45i0.40696>

Parada, María, Indira Ochoa, and Héctor Villatoro. “Green Hydrogen Assessment of Generation and Storage Potential from Solar and Wind Energy Shedding in Honduras.” *E3S Web of Conferences* 379 (2023): 03003. <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202337903003>

Provencher, Claudie. “Towards a Better Understanding of Cognitive Polyphasia.” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 41, no. 4 (2011): 377–395. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5914.2011.00468.x>

Ramirez, Jacobo, and Steffen Böhm. “Transactional Colonialism in Wind Energy Investments: Energy Injustices against Vulnerable People in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.” *Energy Research & Social Science* 78 (2021): 102135.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2021.102135>

Rateau, Patrick, Pascal Moliner, Claude Guimelli, and Jean-Claude Abric. “Social Representation Theory.” In *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology*, edited by Paul A. M. Van Lange, Arie W. Kruglanski, and E. Tory Higgins, 477–497. Vol. 2. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2012.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249222.n50>

Rayo, Giorleny Altamirano, Eric S. Mosinger, and Kai M. Thaler. “Statebuilding and Indigenous Rights Implementation: Political Incentives, Social Movement Pressure, and Autonomy Policy in Central America.” *World Development* 175 (2024): 106468.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2023.106468>

Robbins, Paul. *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*. 2nd ed. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012.

Secretaría de Cumbres de las Américas. [Policy Brief]. Organization of American States. Accessed April 2026. https://www.summit-americas.org/brief/101812_es.html

Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL). *Sustainable Energy for All: Rapid Assessment and Gap Analysis—Honduras*. Vienna: Sustainable Energy for All, 2014.
https://www.seforall.org/sites/default/files/Honduras_RAGA_EN_Released.pdf

Tarrow, Sidney G. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. 3rd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Thøgersen, Marie. “International Law as Ideology: A Commodity Form Approach.” *Legal Form*, November 17, 2025. <https://legalform.blog/2025/11/17/international-law-as-ideology-a-commodity-form-approach-marie-thogersen/>

Toombs, Hannah. “(Re)Crafting Indigenous ‘Tradition’ in Honduras: How Constructions of National Identity and Heritage Shape Artisan Craft Livelihoods in Five Lenca Communities.” *Latin American Research Review* (2025): 1–21.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2025.10109>

Tornel, Carlos. “Decolonizing Energy Justice from the Ground Up: Political Ecology, Ontology, and Energy Landscapes.” *Progress in Human Geography* 47, no. 1 (2023): 43–65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03091325221132561>

Vanhala, Lisa. “Legal Opportunity Structures and the Paradox of Legal Mobilization by the Environmental Movement in the UK.” *Law & Society Review* 46, no. 3 (2012): 523–556. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5893.2012.00505.x>

Wagner, Wolfgang, Gerard Duveen, Jyoti Verma, and Matthias Themel. “‘I Have Some Faith and at the Same Time I Don’t Believe’: Cognitive Polyphasia and Cultural Change in India.” *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 10, no. 4 (2000): 301–314. [https://doi.org/10.1002/1099-1298\(200007/08\)10:4](https://doi.org/10.1002/1099-1298(200007/08)10:4)

Wallerstein, Immanuel. *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: Academic Press, 1974

Willmore, Larry. “Direct Foreign Investment in Central American Manufacturing.” *World Development* 4, no. 6 (1976): 499–517. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X\(76\)90035-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(76)90035-8)

Woodhouse, Andrew. “Commodity-Form Theory of Law, the Climate Crisis, and the European Union.” *Transnational Legal Theory* 15, no. 4 (2024): 616–628. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20414005.2024.2399989>