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"Deforestation, Forest Transitions, and Institutions for Sustainability in Southeastern Mexico, 1900–2000"

Barton Bray, David, and Peter Klepeis

Barton Bray, David, and Peter Klepeis. "Deforestation, Forest Transitions, and Institutions for Sustainability in Southeastern Mexico, 1900–2000." *Environment and History* 11, no. 2 (May, 2005): 194–223. doi:10.3197/096734005774434584 . Research on tropical forest cover change processes identifies myriad driving forces and demonstrates how change dynamics are non-linear and complex. Despite appreciation in the academic literature for the historical patterns and processes of deforestation, however, a simplistic, linear 'deforestation narrative' persists in the popular imagination. Concern arises when this narrative influences environmental policy and effective response to the tropical deforestation problem. The authors' main goals here are twofold: (1) to contribute to a nuanced history of forest change in southeastern Mexico; and (2) to explore the role of institutional development in reducing deforestation rates. Drawing on forest transition theory, Barton Bray and Klepeis analyse the twentieth century forest histories of the eastern Yucatan Peninsula, the southern Yucatan Peninsula, and the Lacandon Rainforest. A deforestation narrative rightly dominates characterisations of the 1960–85 period in southeastern Mexico, but it falls short of accurately representing the complex processes of deforestation, forest recovery, and the development of sustainability-oriented grassroots institutions in the 1985–2003 period. All rights reserved. © 2005 The White Horse Press

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