

SOCIAL EQUITY THROUGH AN ECO-CULTURAL TRAIL: THE NGÄBE-BUGLÉ MIGRATION UNDER CAPITALISM IN WESTERN PANAMA

Gomez Concepcion, Hatvany

Iowa State University, hatvanyg@iastate.edu

1 ABSTRACT

Panama is a country internationally recognized for the interoceanic canal which plays a unique role in the country's national economy as well as international commerce. Although the Panama Canal is the biggest source of income and is a key figure for understanding the Panamanian's history, identity, and economy, this study focuses on the overlooked and ignored western area of Panama. This area is in the shadow of the Canal and the fast-economic growth of Panama City where the canal's major ports prevail. Therefore, this study looks towards exposing the economic and environmental threats that this region faces, and overall to unveil the social disparities among Latinos and native indigenous peoples, living in the western area of Panama. In so doing, this study aims to uncover a new path of action for designers – to work with the communities and empower them to take actions on environmental injustices, social inequities and the economic burdens imposed by capitalism and global climate challenges. The study analyzes the Provinces of Bocas del Toro, Chiriquí and the "Comarca" (indigenous autonomous territory) Ngäbe-Buglé in the light of the burden of capitalist growth models imposed on the western area of Panama. At this point, the study raises relevant issues of social inequity and show opportunities for interventions with the aim to promote the care of the environment alongside better economic conditions for the most vulnerable groups of this region. This proposal focuses on issues of social equity in the interaction among Latinos and indigenous of this region.

1.1 Keywords:

Social Equity, Capitalism, Indigenous Tourism, Environmental Care.