

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF BIG-LEAF MAHOGANY  
(*SWIETENIA MACROPHYLLA*)  
LOGGING ON PERUVIAN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Aaron A. P. Groth

Dr. Larry Brown, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Big-leaf Mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) is the neo-tropic's most valuable hardwood but it continues to experience rapid and in many cases irreversible depletion throughout its range. In Latin America, unsustainable harvests result in the exhaustion of the resource within one region and the displacement of extraction to increasingly more remote areas, including protected areas and titled indigenous lands. This study draws from political ecology theory to explore the social and environmental impacts of mahogany logging with six indigenous communities of the remote and biologically diverse Alto Purús region of Peru. Specifically, it uses ethnographic methods and participant mapping to examine the processes of marginalization and degradation of indigenous peoples and lands as a consequence of mahogany extraction in this region, as well as to understand indigenous responses to the extraction of this resource in the context of power asymmetries between indigenous communities, the state, and the timber industry.

Keywords: Amazon, indigenous, Big-leaf Mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*), selective logging, social impacts