How do international markets transform the Vietnamese uplands

To Xuan Phuc
Anthropology department, Uni. of Toronto
Market in the uplands: what we know

- Exchange relations
- Limited access to markets -> poverty
- Recently: commodity markets
- Market in the uplands
  - Needs and material requirements
- Impacts:
  - Rural differentiation
  - Power structure
  - Dispossession
Market in the uplands: What we don‘t know?

• ‚The market‘
  – Market not natural but socio-economically and culturally constructed:
    • Who?
    • How (what conditions? Mechanisms?)
    • Time and place?
  – Consumption side
    • Needs and material requirements
    • Are that enough? Market culture?
  – Meanings of the market for different people?
Through the lens of rubber: Silver gold in VN
Global demand

Source: Vietnam Rubber Corporation
Silver gold: Policy makers increase by 300,000 ha until 2010
Silver gold: scientists
rubber suitable for any ecological areas
Silver gold: mass media
persuading the public
Where to find the land?

- ‘Poor forest’ under SFEs
- Forest land of HHs
- Maize, cashew, paddy land
- Brothers’ land
Mysteries:

• SFEs land:
  – Deforestation?
  – The deal between SFEs & local authorities?
  – Central government and local authorities?
  – Between SFEs and companies?

• HH land:
  – Huge investment: new labor arrangement + restructuring power relations: patron-client?
  – New consumption after compensation?
  – Enclosure: conflicts?
  – Risks: economic (loan, land contribution, price), climate, others?
  – New poverty: 3 skill laborers/ha, 5-7 years after planting?

• Brothers’ land
  – What it means for brothers?

• Others:
  – Socialist states and market force?
  – The role of China?