

Understanding urban risks as encompassing socio-ecological phenomena

Territorializing landslides in Caracas and Quito

Panel: *Researching Multi-scale Causes of Vulnerability*

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Main objectives

- Set a contextual approach that accounts for **time, space and society** in the shaping of vulnerability
- Put forward **epistemological and discursive** dimensions within such approach
- Based on own fieldwork in Caracas and Sierra's research in Quito
- Based on 3 epistemic communities (Latin Am.; North Am.; France)

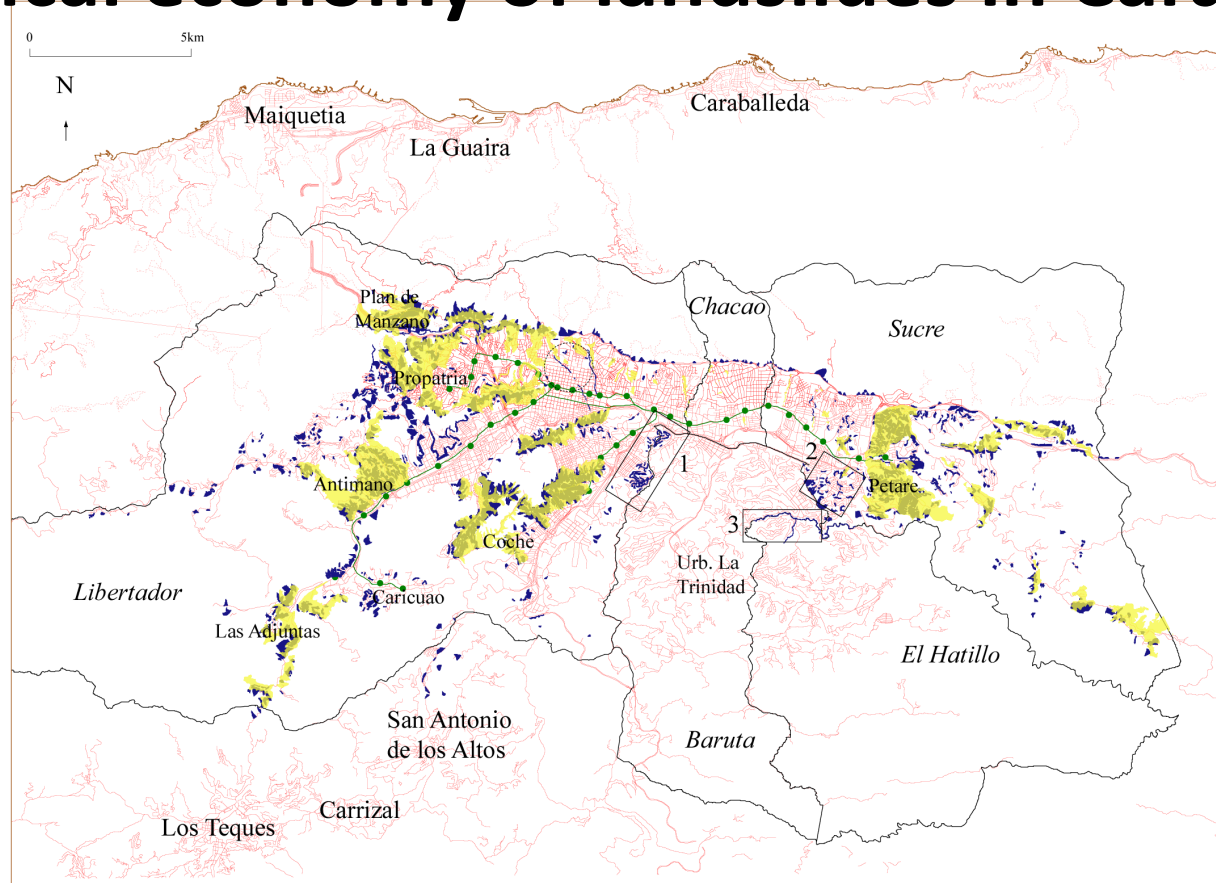
I. The political economy of landslides in Caracas

II. Managing landslides according to diverse risk conceptions and rationalities in Caracas and Quito

III. Viewing urban landslides as drivers of urbanisation in Caracas and Quito

IV. Territorializing landslides to view risks as encompassing socio-ecological phenomena

I. The political economy of landslides in Caracas



Source: D'après JICA, 2004



Lignes et stations de Métro



Limites du District Métropolitain de Caracas et de ses municipes





Principales routes et autoroutes


Sucre Municipio


Los Teques Villes de la grande Caracas


Coche Secteurs urbains de Caracas


 Centre historique

 Glissements de terrain avérés ou potentiels

 Localisation des barrios de ranchos dans le DMC

 Secteur Los Naranjos

 Secteur California Sur / Macaracuay

 Secteur Chaguaramos / Colinas Santa Monica

I. The political economy of landslides in Caracas

- *Political factors* (special local urban plans),
- *Economic factors* (« 1 meter square of land is 1 meter square to sell »),
- *And their articulation* (according to political tag of public authorities, either the top of the hills or the bottom of the valley is urbanized).

Santa Monica



Santa Monica



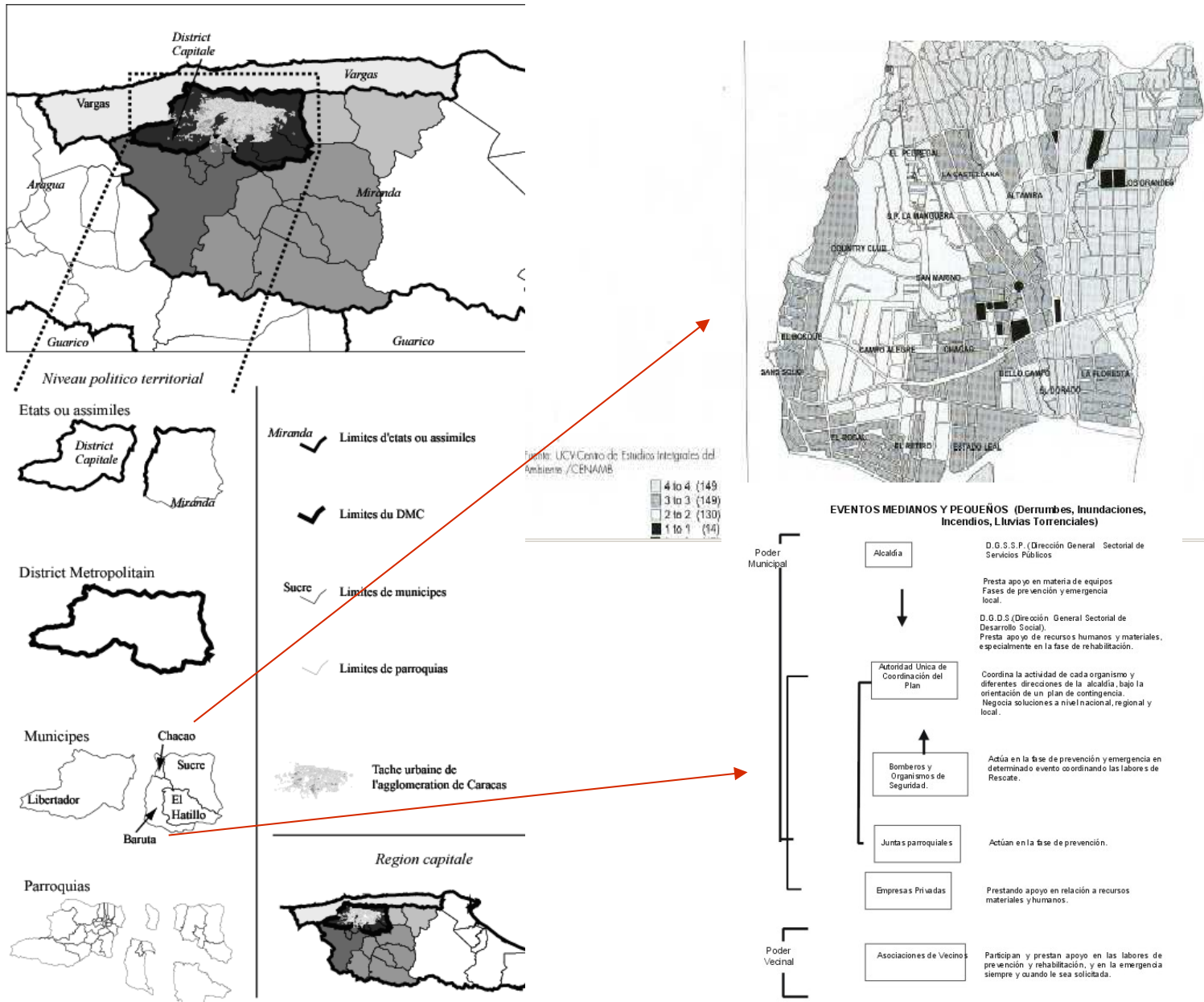
Foto: Adrian Criscaut



Santa Inés



II. Managing landslides through a differentiated recognition of risks



II. Managing landslides according to diverse risk conceptions and rationalities

- Risk identification and management are *place- time- and society-sensitive* (they can be studied through discourses, representations, risk policies or assessment...)
- Assessing the conceptualizations of society – environment interactions is critical (it says a lot about social organization and it frames the ability of a society to lessen vulnerability).

Ex: Caracas municipios / Caracas agglomeration / ravines of Quito

III. Viewing urban landslides as drivers of urbanisation

Landslides allow enforcing housing policy in Caracas



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CARACAS, domingo 05 de diciembre, 2010 | Actualizado hace 6 horas

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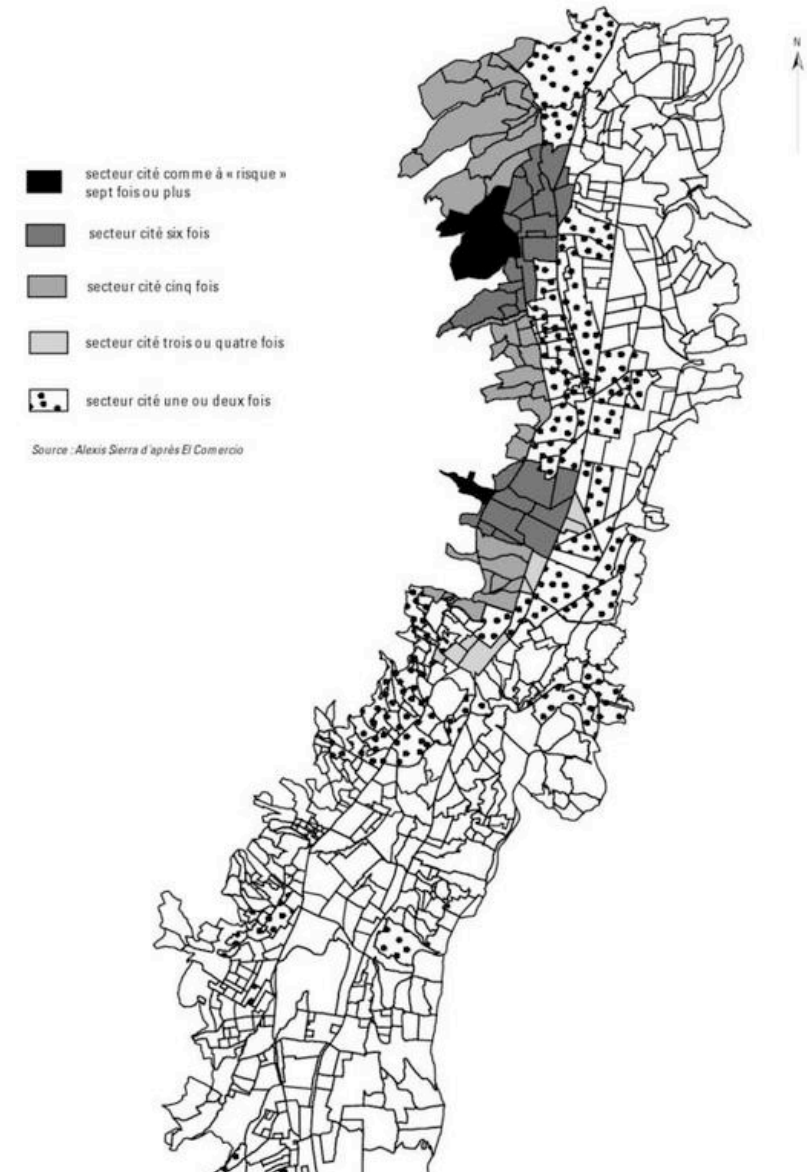
VIDEO

Chávez: Vamos a tomar los edificios abandonados

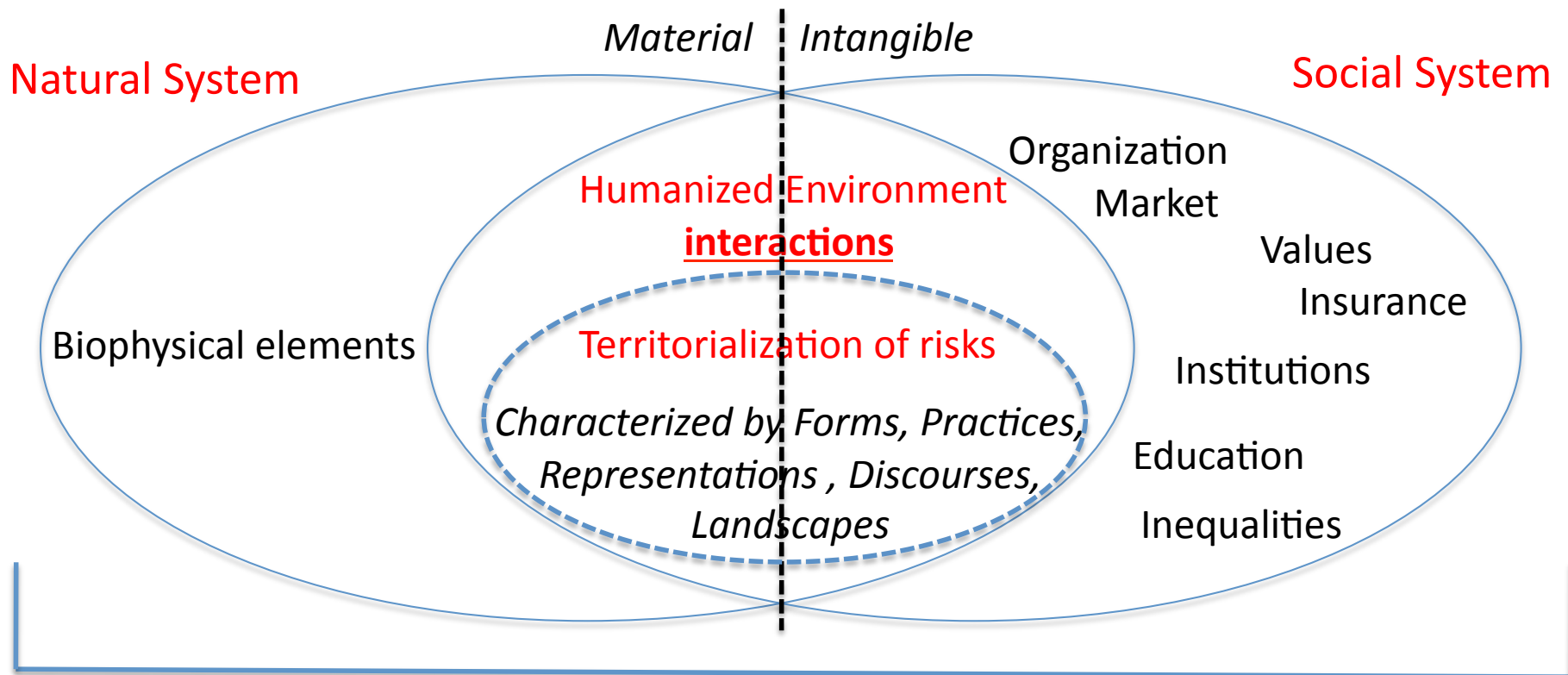
Durante su recorrido por el Municipio Brion en el estado Miranda, el presidente Chávez, ordenó por decreto "tomar los edificios abandonados de los ricos" para alojar temporalmente a los damnificados de esa zona.

ESTADO MIRANDA
Recorrido del presidente Hugo Chávez por las zonas afectadas en el municipio Brion

Risk of debris-flows and landslides in Quito, According to public authorities (Sierra, 2008)



IV. Territorializing landslides to view risks as encompassing socio-ecological phenomena



Socio-Ecological System = to be situated in **Time**, across **Space** and among **Societies**

- Selected Variables** depend on:
- Specific characteristic of the humanized environment at stake
 - Research questions at stake
 - Ideological sensitivity of the researcher

IV. Territorializing landslides to view risks as encompassing socio-ecological phenomena

*Different **entry points** according to ideology, research questions, and the situations at stake:*

- Cultural school of landscape (Sauer)
- Political economy analysis (Wisner, Watts, Blaikie)
- Analysis of discourses (Bankoff)
- Biophysical mechanisms
- Postcolonial approach and construction of knowledge (Escobar, Biersack)
- Social organization and inequalities (O'Brien, Adger)
- Individual and collective behaviors and choices in front of the environment - Hazard research (White)
- ...