



## Seeking One's Fortune Elsewhere: The Social Breakdown of a Smallholder Settlement in the Brazilian Eastern Amazon and the Consequences for Its Rainforest Reserve

Örjan Bartholdson, Roberto Porro & Adam Pain

To cite this article: Örjan Bartholdson, Roberto Porro & Adam Pain (2021): Seeking One's Fortune Elsewhere: The Social Breakdown of a Smallholder Settlement in the Brazilian Eastern Amazon and the Consequences for Its Rainforest Reserve, Forum for Development Studies, DOI: [10.1080/08039410.2021.1998213](https://doi.org/10.1080/08039410.2021.1998213)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08039410.2021.1998213>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 26 Nov 2021.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)



## Seeking One's Fortune Elsewhere: The Social Breakdown of a Smallholder Settlement in the Brazilian Eastern Amazon and the Consequences for Its Rainforest Reserve

Örjan Bartholdson <sup>a</sup>, Roberto Porro <sup>b</sup> and Adam Pain<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*The Department of Urban and Rural Development, The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SLU, Uppsala, Sweden;* <sup>b</sup>*EMBRAPA: Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation, Belém, Pará, Brazil*

**Abstract** Using two cases, Anapu and São Manoel, located in the Brazilian Amazonian, this paper discusses the relationships between smallholders' capacity for collective action, smallholders' potential to unite and defend their territories, and the role of the state. In November 2017 a forest reserve of the settlement in Anapu was invaded by near 200 armed illegal squatters. We show how this event resulted from a gradual increase in internal tensions and loss of trust, thereby undermining attempts for collective action. A large reason for the lack of a functioning social network, reciprocal interactions and social trust is the migratory background of the settlers, which hinder the creation of extended kin networks, intermarriages between kin groups, as well as other forms of long-term networks of cooperation. This becomes clear when comparing Anapu to the social organization of the settlement of São Manoel in central Maranhão, which has been strong and functional for several decades. The reasons for the latter's social coherence and trust is that it formed around interlinked extended kin groups. Collective resistance against a predatory large landowner in the 1980s contributed to forging trust and cohesion that could effectively be used to acquire and maintain collectively owned fields and cattle, to formalize an association and a cooperative and to negotiate social tensions within the community. The reciprocal network of São Manoel has made it possible for its settlers to use its more restricted natural resources to a sustainable extent, without negatively affecting the eco-system of their habitat.

**Keywords:** collective action; social networks; forest reserve; community based forest management

### Introduction

In November 2017, a couple of hundred squatters invaded a forest reserve inside a smallholder settlement in the Northeastern part of the Amazon, called *Projeto de Desenvolvimento Sustentável Virola Jatobá* (PDS VJ). Perhaps the most surprising aspect was that several smallholders who already lived in the settlement joined the invaders. The invasion was the culmination of the gradual erosion of the economic and social life

of the settlement. The aim of the 2002 creation of this settlement had been two-fold: on the one hand to provide a livelihood for poor landless smallholders and, on the other, to protect near 40,000 hectares of forest reserve within the boundaries of the settlement from illegal loggers and land grabbers. The idea behind this settlement came from a Catholic nun, Sister Dorothy Stang, who wanted to transform the settlers into custodians of the rainforest, instead of the culprits of deforestation that they so far had been referred to by media and politicians. During the initial years of the establishment of the settlement the first wave of settlers had created a common identity and strong relations to each other. They expressed pride in being custodians of the forest reserve. This pride increased among the group of settlers who were engaged in the community-based forest management project (CBFM) that was created in 2008. However, when the invasion of part of the forest reserve occurred in November 2017 it did not meet any resistance from the settlers who defended the PDS. They tried to rely on the state authority to remove the invaders. But several of the settlers also chose to participate in the invasion. At the time of the invasion the settlement had already broken into competing social factions and the initial state of social cohesion and trust had been lost.

The conservation of forests and the provision of ecosystem services in the Brazilian Amazon is based on a series of policies that include the establishment and maintenance of different forms of protected areas and settlements, such as indigenous lands, extractivist and sustainable development reserves and settler forest reserves, labeled '*projetos de desenvolvimento sustentável*' (PDS). Such protected areas make up almost 44 percent of the forest area of the Brazilian Amazon (Pack et al., 2016). The present political situation in Brazil shows that these protected areas and settlements have no guarantee that the state will use its power to protect their territorial rights. In the PDS VJ, already in 2008, the state allowed smallholders who did not display any commitment to move into the settlement. The state's decreasing engagement and protection of the PDS VJ created tensions between different groups of settlers and contributed to the gradual erosion of the trust and social cohesion within the settlement. It is essential to comprehend the social processes and factors that create and maintain the organizations of such settlements and what aspects might cause their disintegration, especially if the state is no longer able or willing to uphold environmental laws, rules and regulations. If the state does not actively intervene to defend the territories of smallholders their only defense against external pressures and invasions is their ability to act collectively.

Most researchers agree that an essential factor for the potential successful integration of food production and provision of ecosystem services (ES) is the creation of a functional collective management (Rydin and Pennington 2000; Glasbergen, 2010). Certain strands of sociology and economy draw heavily on the concept of collective action to theorize such management. Several studies (Bratman, 2011; Kleinschmit et al., 2021; Narvaes et al., 2021) demonstrate the impacts of the illegal trade of timber and the predatory appropriation of land for large-scale cattle grazing, mineral extraction and energy production, on the regional politics and economy in

the Amazon region. These risk undermining the social organization and collective action of smallholder settlements.

However, research on collective action often offers only poor empirical descriptions and theorizations of the social processes that either allow groups to reproduce themselves over time, or cause them to dissolve in the face of external and internal tensions and contradictions. In sociological and anthropological research, focused on social movements, however, these questions have not been taken for granted. There are several studies within anthropology and sociology that describe processes when people organize to achieve a specific common project. The research on squatters in Latin America, who have occupied land in urban areas, is full of examples of how the community's collective action has dissolved after specific projects, such as demand for legal titles, infrastructure or electricity, have been accomplished (cf. Caldeira, 2001; Perlman, 1976; Skar, 1994).

An essential aspect of long-term successful collective action is the ability of social groups to maintain such action over time. First, what is it that drives people to organize themselves socially and be able to act collectively, that is, envision a joint project? Secondly, what makes some social organizations able to reproduce themselves on a long-term basis, i.e. act collectively and reciprocally over time, while others disintegrate after a specific project is accomplished? The mechanisms behind the difference between successful long-term social organization and collective action and organizations that either dissolve quickly or are so ridden with tensions and factions that they are unable to act collectively in a unified manner, are seldom analyzed in texts about collective action. In order to analyze social organizations' failures to act collectively over time it is better to draw on ethnographic studies on organizations in squatter settlements where these mechanisms often are empirically described and analyzed. As mentioned, several such studies have been made in Latin America. There is also historical research which attempt to understand how successful collective identity and action are created, such as E.P. Thompson's (2013) classical study of how distinct groups of English workers, performing different forms of tasks, were able to forge a specific collective identity and consciousness, a so called 'class-for-itself', 1780–1820. Another very interesting research which can help us to analyze the distinction between successful and unsuccessful collective action was the study by the sociologist Howard Kimeldorf (1988). He explored why two organizations of longshoremen on the East and West Coast of the US during the first half of the twentieth century developed so differently, where one union was able to create successful collective action, while the other was undemocratic, ridden with tensions and unstable. On the West Coast the longshoremen were able to create an economically strong and politically radical union through cooperation, while on the East Coast the longshoremen were unable to achieve strong collective action. There were several reasons for this difference, but a major distinction between the two groups was that the West Coast workers were more ethnically homogenous, identified less with their home districts than their workplace and were represented by a more militant union.

The common denominator of both Thompson's and Kimeldorf's texts is that groups of workers form relationships that enable them to achieve collective action on a long-term basis that do not disintegrate after specific projects, such as strikes for example, have been finalized. The workers' long-term relationships are developed through ongoing interactions and negotiation over time, bound together by relatively horizontal social networks. The long-term character of these relationships, the existence of a common adversary that unites them and constant joint projects are aspects that are shared both by the workers in Thompson's and Kimeldorf's texts and the inhabitants of São Manoel.

In this paper we will argue that it is the gradual development of interpersonal networks over decades, in combination with common projects, a common adversary and an inability to move away when conflicts, both external and internal, emerge, which are the major factors that enable organizations of settlers in the Brazilian Amazon to pursue successful collective action over time. Thus to analyze both the reasons for maintenance and disintegration of organizations and collective action there is a need to conduct ethnographic studies of forms of networks and interactions to capture the social and temporal aspects of successful collective action.

In the case of the PDS VJ settlement the settlers were unable to form strong social bonds and trust that could withstand both external and internal pressures, in stark contrast to the second case presented in this paper, the smallholder community of São Manoel, located in the Mearim valley of the state of Maranhão. The second case is presented in less detail than the former, since the main focus of the paper is the disintegration of collective action in the PDS VJ settlement, but it is intended to highlight the reasons behind the demise of the latter. São Manoel is also located within the formal area of the Amazon, *Amazonia Legal*. The main difference between the two cases is that in the PDS VJ the formal organizations that are supposed to represent the settlers are riven by tensions, and many of the settlers do not believe that these organizations represent them. In the community of São Manoel, however, the tensions within the organizations are less sharp and settled through negotiation, and the community organizations are perceived as representative by the majority of the settlers.

## **Methods**

This paper is based on participant observation and interviews, conducted in the settlement itself and in the nearby towns of Altamira and Anapu 2012–2018. The second author made altogether 40 fieldtrips to the area, lasting from 2 weeks to a couple of days. The first author made two fieldtrips to the area every year. The second author has conducted fieldwork in the community São Manuel on and off for more than 30 years. He has written his PhD thesis and half a dozen papers on the community, while the first author has conducted research in the area 2015–2018. The third author conducted two fieldwork periods in Anapu and São Manuel in 2016 and 2018, totaling just over one month.

This paper starts by describing how the settlement of the PDS VJ was settled and how the initial social trust and collective action was created. Then it shows how the tensions gradually evolved and factions emerged, which made the settlement vulnerable to external pressure and invasions. The demise of the settlement's social trust and collective action is then contrasted with the community São Manoel, where social organization, trust and collective action has been able to withstand internal tensions and external pressures.

### **The formative years of the settlement PDS Virolá Jatobá**

In the first half of the 1970s the military government started to colonize the Brazilian Amazon through large-scale development project, attempting to construct roads that would open up the rainforest, extract natural resources and encouraging farmers to settle along these roads and pursue cattle grazing (Randell and Klein, 2021). Large state investments in projects and tax credits were made so as to promote cattle ranching and timber extraction; two activities which tended to clash with the aspirations of the small-scale peasantry (Hecht, 2013).

Smallholders brought agricultural practices from their home regions of Northeastern Brazil, which seldom were optimal for the Amazon biome. This was primarily slash-and-burn, clearing patches of forests and cultivating for a couple of years before the soil fertility was exhausted. They would then clear a new patch of forest. The progressive expansion of both smallholders and large landowners over Amazonian territory, primarily in the state of Pará (el Saifi, 2015), created competition for land that escalated into violent conflicts between large landowners and indigenous people as well as small-scale peasants. The deforestation of the Amazon followed the roads, constantly moving the frontier westwards and north. In the end of the 1970s the military regime abandoned the recently established smallholder settlements and instead decided to further sponsor the establishment of large cattle ranching in the Amazon, in order to boost the export of meat (Hecht, 2013).

In the 1990s a new wave of migrants started arriving, in the recently created municipality of Anapu, consisting of smallholders, illegal loggers, merchants, shop owners, etc. Anapu, in Pará state, is a municipality of around 20,000 inhabitants and is located strategically along the Transamazon highway, being established in the mid-1990s by the river of the same name. The smallholders were mostly dispossessed peasants who had lost their land in other parts of Pará state, as well as from the neighboring states of Maranhão and Tocantins. The logging frontier reached Anapu in that decade. By 2012, the municipality was categorized as one of the regions which had the highest rate of deforestation. Cattle ranching initially dominated land use in Anapu and vast areas of forests were cleared to make way for pasture. An increasing number of smallholders also migrated to the area, searching for land to settle on (Porro et al., 2015).

In Anapu around year 2000, sister Dorothy Stang, who represented the Catholic Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), proposed that two land reform settlements

should be established which, ideally, would be able to kill two birds with one stone. The two birds in this case were on the one hand to provide land enough for a poor household to survive on the land they were given usufruct rights to, and on the other to make the small farmers guardians rather than threats to the rainforest. Bratman (2011, p. 447) argues that the main objective of Dorothy Stang was to reframe peasant farmers' struggle for land in a way reminiscent of forest extractivist groups, such as the *riberinhos* and the *seringueiros* (rubber-tappers), both economically and culturally tied to rainforest conservation.

Dorothy Stang and her supporters within CPT argued that the PDS would constitute a barrier between the loggers and the rainforest. The intention was to transform the PDS territory into a collective land-tenure system, based on usufruct rights and state ownership. Thus, the large landowners' appropriation of land would be halted (de Sartre et al., 2012, p. 11). The latter objective enraged many of the large landowners and illegal loggers of the region and Dorothy Stang received numerous death threats.

In 2004, the national land settlement and land reform agency, Incra, formally opened the two PDS settlement. The settlements were named 'Esperança and Virolá Jatobá' respectively. Esperança was allocated 23,000 ha and 230 families were settled within its premises, while Virolá-Jatobá (VJ) at present comprises around 41,000 ha. The intention was that up to 352 households would be settled in VJ. However there have never been more than 160 households formally settled at the same time in this settlement (Ferreira dos Santos Júnior et al., 2017).<sup>1</sup>

### **The endemic land-based conflicts of the area**

The state of Pará accounts for the vast majority of political assassinations in Brazil, according to CPT (CPT, 2018). The violence and assassinations in the area around Anapu and the neighboring town of Altamira is primarily conducted by illegal loggers and local elites interested in the land market. In 2005, one year after the PDS settlements had been formally registered, its founder, the 73-year old Dorothy Stang, was killed in Esperança. Two hired assassins shot her, allegedly contracted by local large landowners.

Assassinations and land-based violence around Anapu continues. Even though the forest frontier is steadily moving north and southward, further away from the Transamazon highway, infrastructure and transport facilities are improved and the land value increases. Local authorities in the entire Amazon region are notorious for being closely linked to illegal loggers, miners and ranchers.

---

<sup>1</sup> According to Incra guidelines, the area of the PDS-VJ allows the settlement of 352 families. Local topography, soil quality and infrastructure resulted in the actual settlement of 220 families. However, while 160 plots were established under PDS regulations, some 60 families independently occupied a portion of the land and contested the PDS modality, requesting the partition of near 3000 ha from PDS land, what actually took place in 2018. In this article, we refer to the families settled in those 160 plots as the PDS-VJ residents.

### The first wave of settlers of the PDS VJ

The first group of 20 smallholders who settled in the PDS VJ were selected by Sister Dorothy and Incra. They became known as the pioneer settlers (*os pioneiros*) within the settlement. They came from various parts of the eastern Amazon, including the Northeastern states of Maranhão and Bahia. During the first years of settlement they would create a common narrative of struggle against aggressive land invaders and a pioneer identity. They also had a charismatic spokesperson in Sister Dorothy, whose fierce political support of the PDS VJ helped create a sense of pride in the settlement among the smallholders.

Jandiara is a woman in her late 40s, who settled in the area before it was formally registered as a PDS. She and her husband Mauricio lived further west along the Transamazon highway when they heard rumors about the possibilities for land hungry people.<sup>2</sup> ‘People said that Sister Dorothy distributed land to the landless. We initially received land in 2004, near the border of the present settlement. My husband’s brother was already living there.’

Jandiara and her husband Mauricio are known as pioneers today. Mauricio has often played a leading role in the organizations formed within the settlement. He learned how to fight back in the struggles with the landowners who coveted their land, and he is known in the settlement as a tough guy that one should not try to bully.

Their neighbor, Jorge, shares a similar history of mobility. Like many of the settlers he has previously worked as a farmer, with odd jobs in towns and as a gold prospector. He has been president of both the association and the cooperative for several years. Jorge is one of eight siblings, but he has no relatives in the settlement. ‘My closest family are my neighbors’, he states.

We have become very close, because we were forced, on the one hand, to defend ourselves against the threats and actions of the large landowners, and, on the other, to collectively fight for our interests at the land reform agency, the police, etc.

However, in reality, if these pioneer settlers are like a family, it is a family ridden by strong tensions. Mauricio and Jandiara would often complain to us about Jorge’s erratic leadership of the cooperative. Yet Jandiara, Mauricio and the other veteran settlers would time and again elect him to important posts in the association and cooperative. During most of the time from the founding of the PDS VJ, and until the social turmoil that would shake the settlement thoroughly in 2017 and onwards, the pioneers occupied the leading posts of the association and the cooperative. During our fieldwork period tensions and quarrels would constantly erupt among the pioneers, both between individuals and factions. However, when they faced common foes, such as invasions by illegal loggers, they would unite against the external threat. But this

---

<sup>2</sup> She uses the term ‘*garimpo*’, which literally means to work as a gold prospector in Portuguese. It means land and opportunities open for economic exploitation.



unity would fail to materialize when the large external invasion of the rainforest of the settlement occurred in November 2017.

One such example of challenge to the pioneers' control of the settlement, which also shows the vulnerable character of the alliance, occurred at the end of 2013. Allegations about the corrupt leadership of the association caused a tight-knit group of young smallholders in the PDS to launch an alternative list of potential candidates for the board of the association, to be presented at the forthcoming settlement assembly. Even though the pioneers had cooperated with some of the youngsters before, they believed that their power over the collective organization of the PDS was threatened by the young idealists and they struck back. The leader of the youthful group was threatened and quietly packed up during the night and left, without giving any information about his new whereabouts. The other idealists became discouraged by the fierce resistance they faced.

Practically all farmers we met in the PDS VJ were migrants from Northeastern Brazil, even though they had often stayed in other sites in the Amazon, mainly in Pará, before moving to Anapu. Migration is part of smallholders' everyday life, even those who were born in the Amazon region often were the descendants of smallholders who had left the Northeastern region in search of land.

Adriana was elected the president of the association, which most legal settlers belonged to; its explicit intention, apart from representing its members' interests was to protect the specific modality of the settlement. In 2016, however, a rival settlement association mostly of newly arrived settlers was founded, aiming at transforming the state-owned PDS into private land plots.

Many of the settlers either lacked or had few relatives in the settlement. The dominant kin network consisted of nuclear families, siblings and sometimes parents. The lack of extended kin networks limited the reciprocal labor exchange and economic support that often was common in the rural areas of their states of origin. But some the PDS VJ settlers stayed for less than a year while others would remain several years. This search of land and livelihood opportunities would often lead to tenure insecurity and a mobile lifestyle, transmitted from one generation to another, exacerbated by a lack of support from the government.

Another aspect which has affected how the settlers relate to each other and organize themselves is that the PDS VJ has been gradually colonized by poor people, who aspired to be farmers, mainly with individual goals of prosperity through private landownership. The only group of settlers who had ever regarded the PDS VJ as the outcome of a joint collective action were the pioneers who had personally interacted with Sister Dorothy.

### **The devise and demise of a collective forest management project**

Slavoj Žižek (2017) has launched the term 'spandrel' to designate features, conditions and reflections which are unintended outcomes of processes. Such a spandrel of social

identity, trust and collective action was created in the settlement through the implementation of a CBFM project. In 2006, with the greater visibility given to Anapu in the aftermath of the murder of Dorothy Stang, state agencies suggested that the settlement should initiate a CBFM project. The CBFM permitted the logging of at least 500 hectares per year. But it was a complex and expensive project and an abundance of capital and a number of external actors were needed to implement it.

The CBFM modality required that the association of the PDS VJ sign a contract with a timber company, which would do the timber logging, transportation and processing. The settlers also received financial support from the German technical cooperation agency (GIZ), enabling them to hire a young forest engineer. The intention of the project was that the settlers should gradually learn how to implement the CBFM, to be able to successfully run the project in future.

The project created numerous positive social and economic effects. In this paper we focus on the social aspects, which affected social cohesion, trust and collective action. The incomes from the project in the years that it ran, 2008–2013, created substantial wealth for the households of the settlement. When we visited the settlement in 2012, we found a great sense of pride and engagement in the CBFM by the settlers. A tight-knit group of settlers had crystallized who were engaged in both the forest inventory and control of the project. Several of the young settlers were involved and enthusiastically explained the project to us.

But dangers were already visible on the horizon. The logging company had gone bankrupt and the contract was transferred to another company, which did not have the same standards of transparency. Settlers could not control the actual status of the transportation of the logs, since only the company, the forest engineer and the president of the association possessed the password to the electronic control system. The settlement was full of rumors and the forest engineer and the president were suspected of having received bribes from the logging company, to allow the company to remove logs without registration. They could then allegedly sell the registered documents to companies engaged in illegal logging.

The members of the association did not make collective demands on the timber company or press them to present the transportation file registrations. The internal tension and lack of coordination within the association board was obvious, since even board members accused the president of the association of corruption. A major problem for the social trust within the association and the settlement was that many of the negotiations that the settlers conducted with the external actors of the CBFM, by both the actors directly involved in the operations and the brokers, were conducted on an individual patron-client manner, instead of collectively. The tensions regarding how the CBFM was handled by the association and the cooperative would also be the spark that made the young idealistic settlers challenge the pioneers' domination of the settlement.

The specific moment of eruption came when the CBFM project was assessed and stopped by a team in November 2013, acting on behalf of the environmental state

protection agency and the Public Prosecutor's office. The timber company in charge of the management had violated several of the legal forest codes. The group of young idealists accused the association and cooperative of either being passive or even cooperating clandestinely with the timber company. In 2010 the federal land reform agency Incra took the decision that logging companies were not allowed to operate forest management project in land reform settlements after December 2012. The settlement could thus not expect any support from Incra, and the community-company agreement was put on hold.

### **Strengthened cohesion through a revision of the strategy**

The most devastating setback of the stop of the CBFM was not the economic losses for the settlers, but the loss of a collective project, which, as an unintended outcome or a 'spandrel' (Zizek, 2017), for a time succeeded in bringing settlers together again. It created a common project that helped the legal settlers perceive themselves as what Sartre (2004, pp. 343–404) labels a 'group-in-fusion' (cf. Bartholdson and Porro, 2019). Through an initiative of renewed boards of the association and cooperative, the land reform agency and the state environmental secretary Semas reconsidered the CBFM. In 2015 Incra approved a proposal for the revitalization of the CBFM project, but this time without the direct participation of a timber company (Porro et al., 2018).

The implementation of forest inventories and other forest management activities required close interaction. The 30-member team who were involved in the CBFM lived in a camp, set up in the forest, more than 20 kilometers from the area in the settlement where they lived. A majority of the members of the forest management team were either pioneers, children of pioneers, or people who had arrived shortly after the first group of settlers. The team did the necessary paperwork in the evening and slept in the camp, further forging a sense of social bonding and trust.

The forest inventory went well and the external experts, together with the association, drew up and submitted an annual operational plan of sustainable forest management to Semas. It took six months for Semas to grant the permit to harvest the timber.

When the logging was finally able to start in June 2016, the logging and the involvement of the settlers started off well. All the members of the forest management team were paid for their efforts and the collective activities once again forged group membership of the team members and their families together, enhancing social cohesion in the logging, transportation and, eventually, selling of the timber.

### **The abandonment by the state**

At the same time as the new inventories were being undertaken other processes contributed to weakening the social cohesion and trust of the settlement at large. Ever since the foundation of the PDS VJ, settlers who would move out of their plots had often received

payment from the incoming settlers for the investments they had made. Such payments were in a legal grey zone, as it was forbidden for settlers who were moving out to be paid for the land they had lived and cultivated on, since the state owned the land. There was no rule against being paid for the labor investment in the land. However, in order to not let the payment levels increase beyond control and stop settlers who moved from selling the land, Incra needed to keep a careful watch over the area.

After Sister Dorothy Stang was assassinated in 2005 the state attempted to increase its presence. One of its measures was to give Incra's office in the municipality the same status and autonomy as a state level office (Porro et al., 2018). The heads of the local office were also very dedicated to their job; they carefully selected the settlers who could obtain land in the settlement and saw to it that the PDS regulation was upheld. During the first phase of our fieldwork, 2012–2014, Ronaldo was the head of Incra at the Anapu municipality. To actively block illegal logging in the Amazon is often very dangerous, but Ronaldo was ready to take risks to accomplish his job and protect both the PDS and its forest reserve. It did not make him a popular person among those ranchers and illegal loggers who coveted the settlement's forest reserve.<sup>3</sup> Two crucial factors, however, occurred almost simultaneously. After years of pressure, Ronaldo chose to leave Incra altogether and work on his family's farm, in the South of Brazil. His successors were far less interested in protecting the modality of the PDS VJ and the rights of smallholders who had been settled by Incra.

In 2015 the Anapu office of Incra had been stripped of its autonomy and became merely a branch under the Incra headquarter in the largest town in the region, Altamira. These changes allowed local powerholders, already engaged in illegal logging, land invasion and large-scale cattle grazing, to openly strike at those opposed to their land expansion. A series of actions including false allegations, attacks and torching of vehicles were made against institutions and people who tried to protect the environment and state-owned land areas. NGOs, rural popular organizations, smallholders and researchers stated that they saw these events as signs that forest and land predators now were able to act with impunity.

Already in 2016 Incra started to lose control of the settlement plots, whose smallholders chose to leave for other ventures. Settlers who were not handpicked by Incra started to clandestinely buy plots from the smallholders who moved out; the turnover rate of settlers that already was high, rapidly increased. More than 600 families had lived on the settlement's 160 plots up to 2017 (Porro et al., 2018). Most of the new settlers did not feel any loyalty at all toward the PDS modality. On the contrary, they founded a rival settlement association in 2016, explicitly demanding to be able to obtain ownership of the land they had settled on.

---

3 The heads of local Incra posts are often drawn into and influenced by local powerholders. In reality, powerholders with good connection with Incra often try to persuade the agency to move a troublesome local head to an office in another part of Brazil (based on informal conversations with Incra representatives).

**The arrival of a new type of settlers**

The demise of the state protection and control of the PDS VJ made it very important that the CBFM could quickly deliver revenues to make the legally settled smallholders of the PDS support the project. The intention of the project was that this group would run and administer the forthcoming annual production, using the capital obtained through the first harvest. Instead of receiving support and ‘fast track’ treatment from the state institutions involved, the project ran into a bureaucratic nightmare.

A combination of weather factors and bureaucratic obstacles further delayed the timber harvest. The smallholder families had counted on the income from the CBFM supplementing their low earnings (Porro et al., 2018). Many families did not know how long they would stay in the settlement, and remained open for other opportunities. The demise of the previous CBFM initiative had eroded their enthusiasm for the CBFM project, and when even some of the families directly engaged in the management process became increasingly pessimistic over the delay of the sale of the timber, other settlers had already given up on the project, searching for new windows of opportunity.

This pessimism over the future of the CBFM coincided with the increasing number of new settlers, most of whom had not been settled by Incra, but bought their plots illegally. In the beginning of 2018 these new settlers constituted the majority of the smallholders in the area and they wanted to receive revenue from the CBFM. When they discovered that this would not be allowed, they took a very negative stance towards the CBFM. The ever present ideal of actually owning your land, and not merely having usufruct rights, started to take hold among many legal settlers as well.

There had always existed discontent and tensions among the settlers. Now, some of the newcomers managed to create a coherent discourse out of the discontent and organize many of the disgruntled settlers, so that the discontent could be the starting point for collective action.

Theoretically the legal settlers had usufruct rights to 100 hectares, but in the PDS VJ this area was even larger, comprising a 20-hectare plot and a share of some 210 hectares in the forest reserve, which they were the custodians of collectively. Manoel, who had both founded the rival settlement association and was its president, stated that he wanted the settlers to be able to cultivate and log the forest area as well. He hoped that the state would reconsider. Many of the legal settlers shared this view.

The forest harvest was successfully accomplished in August 2017, and the forest management team believed that the sale of the timber was imminent. But once again bureaucracy would dash their hopes. First of all, it turned out to be very hard to find a sawmill that was willing to buy their timber. Sawmill owners were reluctant to engage in entirely legal transactions, since this risked bringing them into a bureaucratic maze, requiring numerous registrations and permits.

Finally, team members were able to negotiate a contract with a timber company in the state capital. This contract, however, required that trucks should transport the

timber around 40 kilometers to the Anapu river, where the timber would be loaded on a barge and then transported all the way up to the city of Belem, located at the estuary of the Amazon river.

### **The external invasion**

In mid-November 2017 we were visiting one of the pioneer settlers, seu Ernesto, in a remote part of the PDS, together with two officers of Incra. He told us that ‘several hundred armed men have entered the PDS VJ from various directions’. One day later, driving to the camp for the CBFM operations, we discovered that poles had been raised every 500 meters in the area surrounding the camp. The invaders had started to divide the land into 500 meter × 2000 meter plots.

According to our information<sup>4</sup> this invasion followed a general pattern. Land grabbers, loggers and ranchers, provided money, information and inspiration to poor rural migrants, sharing the gold prospector, *garimpeiro*, mentality, so that the latter invaded the land, logged, cleared it and put fire to it to plant pasture. Then the large cattle grazers would buy the land from the invaders. This means that the former would obtain the land cheaply, without taking any risk.

No sooner had the invaders occupied forest patches before they demanded to receive part of the revenue from the sale of the timber, harvested within the CBFM project. When the settlers refused to consider this request, the invaders threatened the management team and stated that they would not let any trucks with timber pass on their way to the dock, where the barge would be anchored, waiting to transport the timber to Belem. The only measure the settlers could take against the heavily armed invaders was to try to get Incra and the police to evict the invaders. Incra in Anapu were afraid to act and probably also lacked the authority to do so, after they had been downgraded to a branch under the jurisdiction of the nearby town of Altamira. Nine months later the invaders were evicted for the first time by the police following order from a federal judge. A few days later they returned and burnt down the timber camp, as a retaliation, as well as over 1,000 hectares they had partly deforested in the first year of the invasion. Only at the end of May 2019, 18 months after the initial invasion, a second operation ordered by the judge, followed by three months of presence of the military police, was able to evict the invaders again.

### **The São Manoel case in Maranhão**

In order to analyze the reason for the demise of the social organization and collective action of the PDS VJ settlement, we will draw on ethnographic fieldwork from a rural community in the neighboring state of Maranhão, São Manoel, as a comparative

---

<sup>4</sup> Based on interviews with PDS settlers, invaders and state authorities.

case. São Manoel is located in the Mearim valley, where the majority of the rural population are smallholders who combine traditional agriculture with the extraction of nuts from the babassu palm (Porro, 2002). Most of the migrant smallholders who live in rural areas of the state of Pará have either migrated from Maranhão themselves or else their parents did so. We will argue that many of the rural communities in Maranhão display more functional social organization and forms of collective agency than those found in the settlements along the Transamazon highway in Pará. Why are the migrants who move to the Amazon unable to form the type of social organization and reciprocal network of labor and information exchange that they mostly had been part of in their former home state? It cannot be because they were economically better off when they lived in Maranhão, since this state has the highest level of extreme poverty in Brazil (52.4 per cent), the lowest average income of work and the second largest income inequality (IBGE, 2020). It is also a state with the largest rural population, 38 per cent in 2010. The São Manoel community is located within a predominantly rural municipality called Lago do Junco. The municipality has been characterized by an economic and social fault-line between a majority of small landholdings and a minority of large ranches. The majority of the smallholders we have studied in São Manoel have either migrated from the neighboring state Ceará, which is located east of Maranhão, or their parents. The reason they migrated to Maranhão is the same as the reason why the smallholders in Pará have migrated from Maranhão, in search of land and to avoid oppression by authoritarian ranchers.

The farmer Cesar described the sensation when he arrived in São Manoel in the following words:

When we got here in 1945 there was no such thing as [private] land. Everything was in common. People would say ‘this thing is mine’, but just for the sake of saying it. That wasn’t to mean that I owned the land, so people who cropped there would pay rent. That did not exist. In the early times everybody lived well. Everybody was poor, but lived well. There was a lot of abundance. Today people say that they live well, but everyone is struggling. (Interview by Roberto Porro (2002))

In the 1980s, however, the dream of living without having to face violent encroachment by ranchers was shattered. In 1986 a wealthy landowner tried to drive the smallholders off their land (Porro, 2002). The landowners wanted to replace rice fields and fallows with pastures. Perhaps even more threatening to the smallholders were the ranchers’ attempts to stop the smallholders from collecting babassu nuts on lands the former either believed were theirs or wanted to appropriate. The attempt to stop the large landowner from appropriating their land grew rapidly from a fight for survival to a conscious act of collective resistance, creating a class consciousness among the smallholders, with a clear identity as smallholders. They were helped to organize by a number of German Franciscan friars, who served in the area. They emphasized the importance of the traditional reciprocal labor exchange form, *mutirão*, not only for the work tasks per se, but also to form a collective identity and agency. They

helped the smallholders to organize themselves against the landowner's attacks and played a major role both for the smallholders' ability to resist the landowner's aggression and for the subsequent organization.

The landowner was never able to evict the smallholders from their land, and the 31 families obtained formal rights to settle on the contested land area, amounting to 470 hectares, where they have maintained common land tenure.

The dominant rural product of the Lago do Junco municipality are babassu nuts, and São Manoel is no exception. The babassu economy has had a number of important social impacts. It has created a social labor division of gender. The gathering and processing of babassu kernels is performed almost exclusively by women. It makes them important income providers to the households, and, since the gathering of the kernels is often done collectively by women, it also creates a specific collective women consciousness (cf. Miyasaka-Porro, 2002).

Another important activity, which also contributed to increase the community's social interaction and trust, were the collective work days. During the first decades after the land struggle, each family agreed upon contributing with 24 workdays. The existence and use of common land strengthened smallholders' perception of themselves as a collective with joint interests, and the collective work days further increased their interaction as a smallholder group-for-itself. This is also an example of how collective work and common land may contribute to strengthen social interaction and belonging.

So, let us compare the status of social cohesion, trust and potential of collective action in the settlement of PDS VJ with the social organization and stability in the community of São Manoel. Formally, the latter area is part of the so called *Legal Amazon* region, but the rainforest was cut down more than 70 years ago. Despite inhabiting an area, where the natural resources are less abundant than in the PDS VJ and the rainfall is much lower, this community of smallholders has fared much better. Many of the settlers of São Manoel are connected through kinship back to the settlement of the area in the 1950s. The local association has been strong and functional since the 1980s and contributed to the creation and reproduction of livelihood opportunities in São Manoel. The social cohesion, trust and long-term cooperation found in the community of São Manoel, is, to a great extent, the outcome of the community's particular mode of production, focused on the extraction of babassu kernels, collective resistance against an aggressive large landowner and marriages within the community (Porro, 2002). The association of the settlement was formed around a few interlinked extended kin groups, and the interaction and ability were strengthened by aggression of the large landowner in the 1980s.<sup>5</sup> The smallholders' collective resistance contributed to forging trust and cohesion that could effectively be used to

---

5 There has been a decrease in extraction of babassu nuts and kernels since the 1990s; ranchers have planted an increasing area with pasture and deliberately cut down palm trees, to avoid babassu gatherers on their land (Porro and Porro, 2015).



create and maintain collectively owned fields and cattle, to forge an association and cooperative and negotiate social tensions within the community.

The smallholders of São Manoel have been able to organize themselves in order to defend the territory of their community and form a strong cooperative, which contributes greatly to the households' economy. There might occur social tensions within the community, but they have been solved amiably, without leading to major threats and violence. This is a huge contrast to the PDS VJ where threats and resorts to violence occur frequently. It is important to note that the settlers of São Manoel founded the community themselves; the community was not created through a top-down political decision, as was the case of the PDS VJ, and the settlers maintained a large communal land where they kept cattle, while a commons for joint production or cattle grazing does not exist in the PDS VJ, where only recently settlers established the forest management initiative in the common reserve.

Since the residents of São Manoel do not move to other areas, because of lack of available land in the region where they live, in contrast to the migratory pattern of several smallholders of the PDS VJ, they are forced to gain much of their livelihood from the specific landscape they have gradually adapted to; combining production of rice, cassava and beans, with pasture, interspersed with babassu palms, and cattle. There is very little rainforest left, but many babassu palm trees per hectare. The low level of outmigration and long-term dependence on production of the land makes the small community of São Manoel preserve ecosystem services and practice sustainable rotation of the land. If the social organization and collective action of the community was weak and haphazard, their mode of production would be threatened.

### **Discussion of the settlements' social organization and collective agency**

International agreements require a radical reduction of tropical deforestation to mitigate global warming (Goodman and Herold, 2014). The Amazon basin, covering some 7,500,000 km<sup>2</sup>, has a crucial place in such strategies (Moutinho et al., 2016). In the 2006–2016 period, the deforestation rate in the Brazilian Amazon decreased by 70 per cent, but after that the deforestation rate started to increase again. Statistics of deforestation from Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE) show that the deforestation rate in 2019 was more than one third higher than the previous year (INPE/PRODES, 2021). The increase was widely believed to be caused by President Bolsonaro's disinterest in halting the expansion of economic exploitation of rainforest areas (Butler, 2019). This development both shows the importance of a controlling and intervening state, as well as the importance of those groups that inhabit forest reserves being able to resist land predators on their own. One of the forest protection modalities that also aims at safeguarding smallholders' food security are the so called sustainable development reserves (PDS). As Ferreira dos Santos et al. (2017) have shown, the PDS had been remarkably successful in Anapu. Fifteen years after the PDS VJ had been founded, over 90 per cent of its area was still covered by rainforest. As we

have argued in this article, however, the PDS VJ was unable to maintain the protection of the rainforest and the provision of ecosystem services after the land reform agency Incra stopped upholding the rules of the settlement modality.

Scholars agree that protection of forest areas and ecosystem services' management generally needs functional collective management (Fischer and Qaim, 2012; Glasbergen, 2010). How long-term collective action is to be achieved and what forms of social organizations that are needed to provide the basis for such action are, however, still poorly explored. This paper focuses on why social organization and collective action disintegrate, or more precisely, why an overarching project, that creates a 'fused group' (cf. Sartre, 2004, pp. 343–404) breaks down into several projects, at the same time dissolving the joint sense of belonging and a common identity. Our research in the PDS VJ, which has been following the social development of the settlement for several years, shows how the social organization and collective agency of the settlement, constructed to both safeguard the forests and interconnected ES, as well as to secure the livelihood of destitute smallholders, slowly disintegrated, and either turned the households into social monads that planned and acted on their own, or made the smallholders seek other forms of collective action, in direct confrontation with the rules of the settlement.

There are several reasons for this disintegration. During the first years of the settlement's foundation, a number of settlers lived in the proximity of each other, developed common projects and shared the common interest of defending their territory against people who had an interest in encroaching on or occupying their land. The settlement, however, was riven by inherent tensions and antagonisms from the beginning. In contrast to São Manoel in Maranhão, they did not settle in the PDS VJ area as a collective project, but were selected by the federal land reform agency Incra. The only exception from this was the first wave of settlers, the so-called pioneers, who became the backbone of the settlement and would dominate the boards of the association and the cooperative from its foundation until the external invasion of land grabbers.

In the PDS VJ collective action was, at least largely, an outcome of the households' motivations. If the interests of the households coincide with the common interest of the other settlers, expressed through their association and cooperative, they might act collectively to pursue this joint interest. The PDS VJ, however, was founded and socially reproduced by migrating smallholders, who, facing the absence of state support, usually stay for only a limited period of time on each land area before they move on. These smallholders have grown up in a region, which can be characterized as a frontier, where people seek to survive on the activity that is most opportune at the moment, be it agriculture, gold prospecting, small businesses or labor on a farm or hydroelectric dam, etc. This lifestyle, or frontier habitus (cf. Bourdieu, 1987; Rodriguez Larreta, 2002), depends on people being mobile, ready to move on as soon as the chances of a better livelihood opportunity is available elsewhere.

Without the intervention of external actors, particularly state authorities, the settlement would probably not have lasted as long as it has done. Research has shown the

importance of external expertise, capital and, not least, brokers, to run and administrate the CBFMs, which contributed both economically and socially to the PDS VJ (Bartholdson and Porro, 2019). The state demarcated the settlement, including the forest reserve, selected settlers allowed to stay there (at least until 2015), and supposedly provided the regulation, economic support and extension services. In short it provided the stability needed for smallholders to invest economically and socially in the settlement, though with many exceptions. When the state failed the settlement started to crumble and the joint projects that had united at least part of the settlers broke up in numerous projects. The state did not so much discipline the conduct of the settlers (cf. Foucault, 1979), as provide a relative security for economic and social reproduction. Without state protection and regulation, the PDS VJ proved to be an easy prey to all groups who strove to appropriate land and timber.

The relatively fragile form of social cohesion, trust and collective action displayed by the PDS VJ settlement can be contrasted with the strong social identity, trust and long-term sustainable collective action of the community São Manoel. Repression by and fight against a common adversary, in the form an exploitative employer, long-term interaction within a relatively socially egalitarian work environment and social organization, enabled the workers studied by Thompson (2013) and Kimeldorf (1988) to create a common working class consciousness, to forge a social cohesion, trust and ability to act on a long-term basis, based on their notions of common interests. There are striking parallels between Thompson's and Kimeldorf's studies and our answers as to if and how the smallholders in the Amazon would be able to forge a social identity and sense of social community. This is needed if they are to use this sense of community to collectively pursue their own common interests on a long-term basis, and not fall back into a state of individually pursued projects, similar to Sartre's description of 'series' (2004, pp. 256–342).

In the mid-1980s the settlers in São Manoel became engaged in an extended struggle with an aggressive large landowner who wanted to evict them from the land they toiled. The successful struggle brought the settlers even closer to each other; they had to rely on each other, only through collective struggle were they able to remain on their land. The collective resistance contributed to forging trust and cohesion that could effectively be used to create and maintain collectively owned fields and cattle, create an association and a cooperative, and to negotiate social tensions within the community. The cooperative created low, but long-term economic benefits, and also fostered leaders, who acted on behalf of the collective good. The main reason for their social cohesion, trust and ability to act collectively, however, seems to be the core of interlinked extended kin network. Many families have become connected through marriage over the years and the association was formed around a couple of interlinked extended kin groups.<sup>6</sup> This was also an effect of the fact that since São Manoel residents do not move to other locations, due to

---

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the role extended kinship plays so as to unite households see Stone (2014).

the lack of available land in the region, they are forced to gain much of their livelihood from the land. They have gradually adapted to the specific landscape where they live.

São Manoel is not dependent on state protection and intervention to the same extent as the PDS VJ. The São Manoel smallholders' experience of collective resistance to land invasion, their functional organizations and their dependency on the land they cultivate will make it hard for land predators to encroach on the community's land.

### **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to thank Professor Gudrun Dahl, Associate Professors Kjell Hansen and Kristina Marquardt, PhD. Noemi Porro, as well as the editors of FDS and the anonymous reviewers for their generous comments and advice.

### **Funding**

This work was supported by 'the Swedish Research Council' Vetenskapsrådet (VR) under Grant 2014-39580-111284-48. The research for this paper was part of larger research project named 'Thinking beyond REDD: analyzing smallholders' motivation and actions for ecosystem service management, funded by the Swedish Research Council' Vetenskapsrådet (VR), with co-funding and support provided by the Department of Urban and Rural Development at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

### **Notes on contributors**

**Örjan Bartholdson** is a senior lecturer at the Department of Urban and Rural Development at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SLU, Sweden. His current research is focused on attempts to mitigate deforestation and safeguard the well-being of the rural local population in the Brazilian and Peruvian Amazon, as well as in rural Nepal. He holds a PhD in social anthropology at Stockholm University.

**Roberto Porro** is a researcher at the federal Agricultural Research Corporation EMBRAPA in Belem, Brazil. Between 2003 and 2011 he worked as Latin American regional coordinator of the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), based in Belém. He holds PhD in anthropology at the University of Florida, USA. Roberto has conducted research on the economic and social conditions of smallholders in Eastern Amazon since 2012.

**Adam Pain** is a Visiting Professor at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Uppsala, and was previously a lecturer in Natural Resources in Development Studies, UK. He has conducted research on rural development in Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Brazil and Peru. He has written several books on various aspects of rural development and also worked in program management, as a program evaluator and as policy advisor.

### **ORCID**

Örjan Bartholdson  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2253-0008>

## References

- Bartholdson, Örfjan and Roberto Porro, 2019, 'Brokers – A weapon of the weak: The impact of bureaucracy and brokers on a community based forest management project in the Brazilian Amazon', *Forum for Development Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 1, pp. 1–22.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, 1987, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bratman, Eve Z., 2011, 'Villains, victims, and conservationists? Representational frameworks and sustainable development on the Transamazon highway', *Human Ecology*, Vol. 39, No. 4, pp. 441–453.
- Butler, Rhett, 2019, 'Pro-Deforestation Policies Could Be Ruinous for Farmers (Commentary)', *MONGABAY*. <https://news.mongabay.com/2019/09/pro-deforestation-policies-could-be-ruinous-for-farmers-commentary/>.
- Caldeira, Teresa P. R., 2001, *The City of Walls. Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- CPT, 2018, 'Assassinatos no campo batem novo recorde e atingem maior número desde 2003', *Massacres no Campo. Comissão Pastoral do Campo*. <https://www.cptnacional.org.br/publicacoes-2/destaque/4319-assassinatos-no-campo-batem-novo-recorde-e-atingem-maior-numero-desde-2003>.
- De Sartre, Xavier A., Vincent Berdoulay and Raquel da Sulva Lopes, 2012, 'Eco-frontier and place-making: The unexpected transformation of a sustainable settlement project in the Amazon', *Geopolitics*, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 578–606.
- El Saifi, Samira, 2015, 'Atores e conflitos de interesses na região da terra do meio, estado do Pará', Tese de Doutorado, Campinas, Unicamp: Universidade Estadual de Campinas Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas.
- Ferreira dos Santos Júnior, Cezário, Tatiana Deane de Abreu Sá, Noemi Sakiara Miyasaka Porro and Roberto Porro, 2017, 'Segurança alimentar em assentamentos com ênfase ambiental: um estudo de caso do PDS Virola Jatobá, Transamazônica, Pará, Brasil', *Sustentabilidade em Debate*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 54–66.
- Fischer, Elisabeth and Martin Qaim, 2012, 'Gender, agricultural commercialization, and collective action in Kenya', *Food Security*, Vol. 4, pp. 441–453.
- Foucault, Michel, 1979, 'On governmentality', *Ideology and Consciousness*, Vol. 6, pp. 5–22.
- Glasbergen, Pieter, 2010, 'Global action networks: Agents for collective action', *Global Environmental Change*, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 130–141.
- Goodman, Rosa C and Martin Herold, 2014, 'Why Maintaining Tropical Forests Is Essential and Urgent for a Stable Climate', Center for Global Development, Working Paper 385, pp. 1–51.
- Hecht, Susanna B, 2013, *The Scramble for the Amazon and the Lost Paradise of Euclides da Cunha*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- IBGE, 2020, 'Instituto Brasileira de Geografia e Estatística', *Maranhão 21*. <https://www.ibge.gov.br/cidades-e-estados/ma.html>.
- INPE/PRODES, 2021, *Monitoramento da floresta Amazônica brasileira por satélite – projeto PRODES*, São Paulo, Brasil: Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais (INPE), <http://www.obt.inpe.br/OBT/assuntos/programas/amazonia/prodes>.
- Kimeldorf, Howard, 1988, *Reds or Rackets? The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kleinschmit, Daniela, Raffaella Ferraz Ziegert and Laura Walther, 2021, 'Framing illegal logging and its governance responses in Brazil – A structured review of diagnosis and

- Prognosis', *Frontiers in Forests and Global Change*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/ffgc.2021.624072>.
- Miyasaka-Porro, Noemi, 2002, 'Rupture and Resistance: Gender Relations and Life Trajectories in the Babaçu Palm Forests of Brazil', PhD Dissertation, University of Florida.
- Moutinho, Paulo, Raissa Guerra and Claudia Azevedo-Ramos, 2016, 'Achieving zero deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon: What is missing?', *Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene*, Vol. 4, pp. 1–11.
- Narvaes, Igor da Silva, Roberto Porro, Tassio Franco Cordeiro, Federyco Augusto Pereira Elleres, Sandra Maria Neiva Sampaio and Orlando dos Santos Watrin, 2021, 'Efetividade de uma iniciativa de manejo para contenção da exploração florestal ilegal em um Projeto de Desenvolvimento Sustentável em Anapu, Pará', *Boletim do Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi. Ciências Naturais*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 97–114.
- Pack, Shalynn M., Mariana Napolitano Ferreira, Roopa Krithivasan, Jennifer Murrow, Enrico Bernard and Michael B Mascia, 2016, 'Protected area downgrading, downsizing, and degazettement (PADDD) in the Amazon', *Biological Conservation*, Vol. 197, pp. 32–39.
- Perlman, Janice E, 1976, *The Myth of Marginality. Urban Politics and Poverty in Rio de Janeiro*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Porro, Roberto, 2002, 'Palms, Pastures and Swidden Fields: Political Ecological Trajectories and Socio-Natural Transformations in Peasant Communities in Maranhão, Brazil', PhD Dissertation, University of Florida.
- Porro, Roberto and Noemi Miyasaka-Porro, 2015, 'Identidade social, conhecimento local e manejo adaptativo de comunidades tradicionais em babaçuais no Maranhão', *Ambiente & Sociedade*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, pp. 1–18.
- Porro, Roberto, Noemi Sakiara Miyasaka Porro, Orlando dos Santos Watrin, Helder do Nascimento Assunção and Cezário Ferreira dos Santos Junior, 2018, 'Implicações Sociais, Econômicas e Ambientais de Uma Iniciativa de Manejo Florestal Comunitário em Assentamento na Amazônia Oriental', *Revista de Economia e Sociologia Rural*, Vol. 56, No. 4. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1234-56781806-94790560405>.
- Porro, Roberto, Noemi M. Porro, Marion C. Menezes and Örjan Bartholdson, 2015, 'Collective action and forest management: Institutional challenges for the environmental agrarian reform in Anapu, Brazilian Amazon', *International Forestry Review*, Vol. 17, No. S1, pp. 20–37.
- Randell, Heather and Peter Klein, 2021, 'Hydropower development, collective action, and environmental justice in the Brazilian Amazon', *Society & Natural Resources*, Vol. 34, No. 9, pp. 1232–1249.
- Rodriguez Larreta, Enrique, 2002, "*Gold is Illusion*". *The Garimpeiros of Tapajos Valley in the Brazilian Amazonia*, Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology 50, Södertälje: Almqvist & Wiksell International.
- Rydin, Yvonne, and Mark Pennington, 2000, 'Public participation and local environmental planning: the collective action problem and the potential of social capital', *Local Environment*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 153–169.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul, 2004, *Critique of Dialectical Reason. Volume One*, London: Verso.
- Skar, Sarah L, 1994, *Lives Together—Worlds Apart: Quechua Colonization in Jungle and City*, Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.
- Stone, Linda, 2014, *Kinship and Gender. An Introduction*, Washington: Westview Press.
- Thompson, Edward P, 2013, *The Making of the English Working Class*, London: Penguin Classics.
- Zizek, Slavoj, 2017, *Incontinence of the Void. Economico-Philosophical Spandrels*, Cambridge: The MIT Press.