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*Ítala Nepomuceno Rodrigues, Hugo Gravina Affonso, James Angus Fraser & Mauricio Gonsalves Torres*

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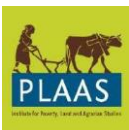


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# Emancipatory rural politics against the green grab: Forest peoples' resistance and negotiation with industrial resource extraction in the Saracá-Taquera National Forest, Brazilian Amazonia

Ítala Nepomuceno Rodrigues<sup>12\*</sup>, Hugo Gravina Affonso<sup>12</sup>, James Angus Fraser<sup>23</sup> & Mauricio Gonsalves Torres<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Federal University of Western Pará, Brazil

<sup>2</sup> Grupo de Estudos de Ecologia Histórica e Política nas Bacias do Trombetas, Tapajós e Xingu (GEEHeP)

<sup>3</sup> Lancaster University, UK

\* italatrn@gmail.com

## Abstract

*Green grabbing, the appropriation of land and resources for ostensibly environmentally sustainable purposes, tends to be understood as being facilitated mainly by 'neoliberal' governments. Yet our case study from the Saracá-Taquera National Forest, Brazilian Amazonia, demonstrates how green grabbing can also be facilitated by 'authoritarian populist' governments, here the Workers Party (PT) under Lula and Dilma 2003-2016. We focus on the Public Forests Management Law (LGFP) of 2006 which enables Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification for 'sustainable forestry' concessions within National Forests (FLONAS). FLONAS are a kind of conservation unit (UC), which in Brazil is in the 'sustainable use' category of protected area, permitting industrial exploitation of natural resources, mostly timber and minerals. FLONAS are frequently located in territories occupied by indigenous, quilombola (Afro-descendent) or traditional (riberinho) communities. We argue that the implementation of FSC sustainable forestry concessions in FLONAS and other UCs is a form of green grabbing, in this case occurring through and legitimated by authoritarian populism, justified by way of compensation in the form of 'development' projects that provide basic social rights to which communities are constitutionally entitled anyway. In the face of both such 'development' projects and the expansion of mining and logging ventures, ribeirinho and quilombola communities of FLONA Saracá-Taquera have mobilized and resisted politically, in part by articulating collective identities in defence of their territories. This novel modality of political organization is a seeming break from Rural Workers Unions and Ecclesial Grassroots Communities of the '70s and '80s, which, especially since the 1998 constitution, have been superseded by new movements based on ethnic and territorial criteria. These new forms of emancipatory rural politics are likely to be critical in resisting ongoing attempts by the current Temer government to roll back Amazonian peoples' territorial rights in order to facilitate intensified expropriation of their lands and resources.*

## 1. Introduction

Sixty-four-year-old Raimundo Ramos recalls the 1980s, when a lumber company began clandestinely logging in Boa Nova (on Lake Sapucuá, in the municipality of Oriximiná) community territory. He and his neighbours built a barrier from vines, and blocked the Igarape Araticum, the river along which logs were being extracted. "*We got them to stop and made the loggers leave go ... We did not want [them], did not want [them], and look, thank God, we managed to [make them] stop*", he said proudly.

Forty years later, Boa Nova again finds itself faced with a logging company invading its traditionally occupied territory, but one which comes licensed with the social and environmental certification stamp of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Its arrival is also heralded by discourses full of expressions such as "development", "job generation", "sustainability", "social responsibility", "income generation", "compensation", among others.

Unlike the confrontation in the 1980s, the community now stands within the limits of a conservation unit, the Saracá-Taquera National Forest (FLONA), and its actions are caught between resistance and the negotiating table. What the logging company offers as favours or as bargaining tool, however, are the actualization of rights to which the community is already constitutionally entitled. This is a practice already successfully implemented by *Mineração Rio do Norte*, which runs a large bauxite mine that also overlaps with the territory of the community.

This shift in both power and resistance can be understood in Foucauldian terms as the sovereign power (and resistance to it) of the 1980s, being joined by disciplinary and biopower in the contemporary period, and correspondingly new forms of resistance (c.f. Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014), as communities are forced to engage in the governmental processes of the FLONA, with compensation in an emerging 'green economy of repair', and are confronted with attempts to impose hegemonic definitions of 'rationality' and 'sustainability' as a way of rendering their rationalities and local knowledges invalid and ineffective.

This paper explores some aspects of an emergent "emancipatory rural politics" in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Brazilian Amazon, through an examination of the dialectics of resistance and negotiation among Amazonian forest peoples of the Saracá-Taquera National Forest, as they experience what we characterize as an ongoing green grab, which until very recently has been going on under the auspices of the authoritarian populist Lula and Dilma governments (2003-2016). The legislation that these governments wrote and enacted, is the Public Forests Management Law (LGFP) of 2006 which enables Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification for 'sustainable forestry' concessions within National Forests (FLONAS). FLONAS are a kind of conservation unit (UC), which in Brazil is in the 'sustainable use' category of protected area, permitting industrial exploitation of natural resources, mostly timber and minerals.

The current FSC-certified logging activity - which we call a green grab - is justified through hegemonic discourses that the problem, the needs and the unequivocal "underdevelopment" of Amazonian communities will only be solved through a pact with industrial resource extraction. It is legitimized by a legal apparatus that, under the principle of benefiting even the local communities, makes it possible, in the case we present of Boa Nova, the expropriation of its territories. This system was built and implemented by the authoritarian populist Lula government, under the auspices of the Public Forest Management Law (Law No. 11284/2006), through which it would combine "environmental sustainability" with improvements in the well-being of local communities. These characteristics resonate with the notion of "green grabbing" which captures the current spate of attempts at the appropriation of land and resources being justified with discourses emphasizing environmental sustainability (Fairhead et al 2012).

Yet this case presents something which is underexplored in the green grabbing literature, the ways in which policies of market environmentalism, as well as ecological modernization, and related attempts to interpellate subaltern peoples as "green subjects" and the forms of green governmentality or

environmentality through which this is made manifest, can be elaborated within the framework of state authoritarian populism, in addition to ‘neoliberal’ governments.

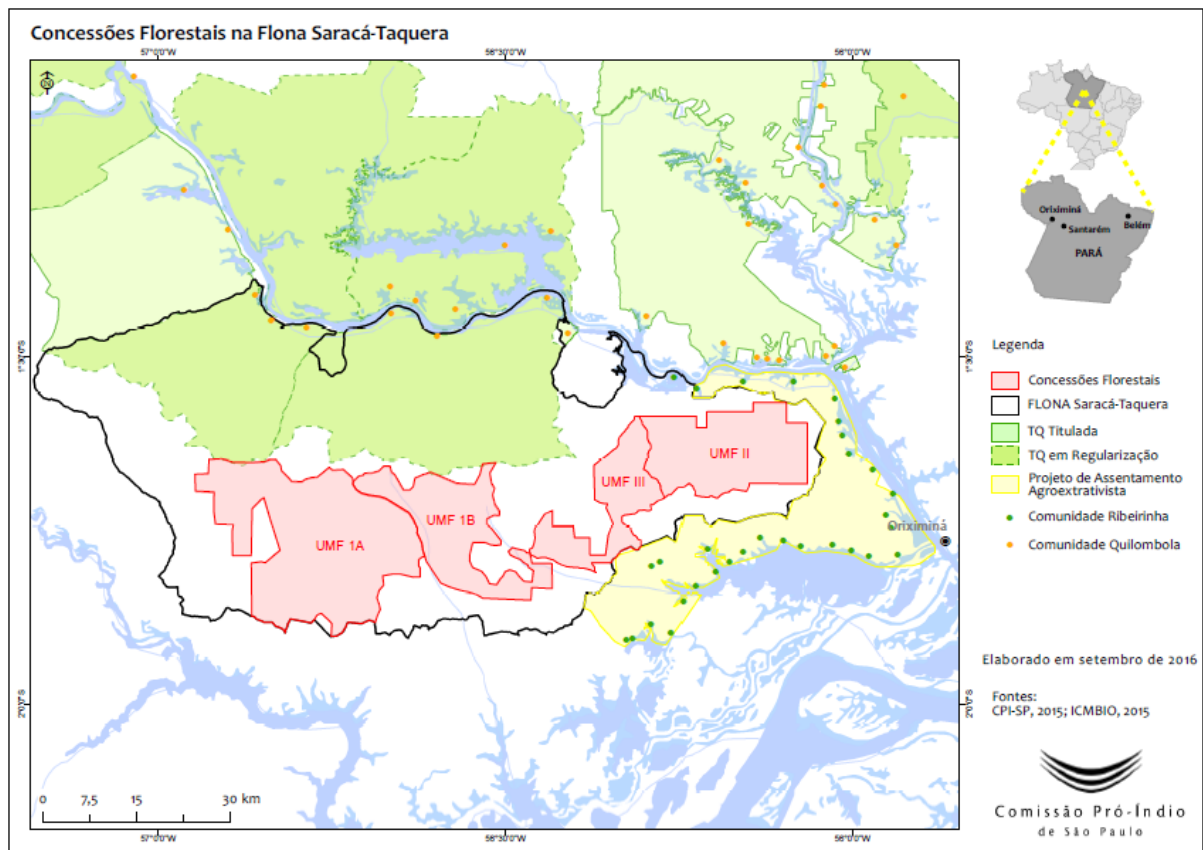
Contrary to the example at the beginning of the paper, where the community defended its territory through direct confrontation, the transformation of the dispute into supposedly technical terms of ‘rationality’ and ‘environmental sustainability’ which are used to discipline local people seems to undermine community resistance. However, alongside new forms of expropriation, new resistances are added, especially, based on ethnic self-recognition. Such new forms of resistance were made possible by Brazil’s 1998 constitution and subsequent laws, which recognise the territorial rights of Amazonian forest peoples (Fraser, in press).

In this article, we first present the Saracá-Taquera National Forest, where the conflict in question unfolds, discussing the peculiarities of this model of conservation unit and of this FLONA in particular. More than four dozen traditional communities live in situations very similar to Boa Nova, we will also draw on the experiences of Saraca community, which is beside Boa Nova, and of Acari community, to the North on the river Trombetas. Next, we examine forestry concessions and, more briefly, the mining carried out in the FLONA with impact on the territories traditionally occupied by the three communities in focus and several others. We will analyze the discourse in which the installation of these economic enterprises was operated in contrast to the understandings of the local communities. Finally, we examine the changing forms of resistance by the three communities and address the question of why *quilombola* communities struggle for recognition has been more successful in keeping FSC forest concessions out of their territories.

The ongoing ethnographic research that informs this article began in 2013 and draws on the participant observation and analysis of secondary documentation. This paper also presents the work of scholar-activism, Nepomuceno’s master’s thesis (2017) resulted in the suspension of FSC certification in the Saracá-Taquera National Forest. And Gravina’s ongoing critical cartography work revealing in detail how FSC forest concessions overlap with areas of historic use by communities, and the location of streams they use which have been polluted by *Mineração Rio do Norte*.

## **2. The Saracá-Taquera National Forest**

The Saracá-Taquera National Forest, a sustainable use reserve created in 1989 in the northwest of the state of Pará in Brazilian Amazonia, has been the scene of intense territorial disputes right from the beginning. In its northern part, *quilombola* (Afro-descendant) communities are distributed throughout centennial territories in the Trombetas river valley, constituted since their arrival in the 19th century (Acevedo Marin and Castro, 1998). They are involved in a long running attempt to gain recognition as *quilombola* territories. In its northeast and south portions, there are *riberinho* communities - descendants of indigenous people, *quilombolas* and northeastern peasants who migrated to the region during the rubber boom 1860-1920 (Azevedo, 2011).



**Figure 1:** Saracá-Taquera National Forest (FLONA) in the municipality of Oriximiná, Pará. This map shows the limits of the FLONA (black line), locations of *quilombola* and *riberinho* communities, location of FSC certified forest concessions (red). The contested *quilombola* territories are green with dashed line - note how they have been more successful in keeping the concessions away from their territories than the *riberinhos*, who are not located in a PAE, an agroextractivist settlement project, with much of their historic territories now within forest concessions.

The central portion of the reserve, which holds rich ore deposits, meanwhile, is the domain of *Mineração Rio Norte* (MRN), the largest bauxite mining company in Brazil and the third largest in the world, which been involved in socio-environmental conflicts with the above-mentioned communities since the late 1960s (Wanderer, 2008). As of 2010, the conflicts in this protected area took on a new dimension with implementation of FSC certified forest concessions in its interior, and also involving timber companies (Nepomuceno, 2017).

The creation of Saracá-Taquera National Forest, in December 1989, during the last days of the José Sarney government, occurred in the broader context of the implementation of the “Our Nature” Program, established by Decree No. 96.944, of October 12, 1988, and resulted, in its first two years, in the creation of 21 FLONAS in the Amazon (IORIS, 2014: 191). In Ioris's reading, a key reason for the moment creation of FLONAS was to safeguard the interests of the mining industry, an activity that became authorized in such protected areas by Law No. 7,805 / 1989, while at the same time the decree of these units would serve as a means of neutralizing the many demands of indigenous and *quilombolas*, with the right to the recognition of their lands contained in the then recently enacted Federal Constitution (1988) (Ioris, 2014).

Indeed, the creation of the Saracá-Taquera National Forest, while guaranteeing the exploitation of the subsoil to MRN, subtracted the constitutional right of communities - now self-identified as *quilombolas* - to their historic territories (Article 68 of Brazil's 1988 constitution) that were superimposed on the deposits and economic interests (millionaires) of MRN, as well as ignoring the existence of *riberinho* communities. These Neo-Amazonian peasantries, forming the majority of



traditional peoples of the region on the other hand, of Indigenous, European, and African heritage, have been recognised more for their livelihoods as agroextractivsts (with the associated territorial modalities of the Extractive Reserve (RESEX) and Agroextractivist Settlement Project (PAE). They do not have strong 'ethnic' recognition and supposedly inalienable territorial rights as indigenous, and quilombolas have, they were only legally recognised as the quasi-ethnic group '*Povos tradicionais*' in 2007 (Decree 6.040).

Strictly speaking, the creation of this conservation unit in 1989 placed the presence of these communities within its limits in an unclear situation. Since their inception in the Forest Code of 1965 until Decree No. 1,298 of October 27, 1994, FLONAS did not permit "human occupation " (IBAMA, 2004). So, if on the one hand, the constitution guaranteed territorial rights to *quilombolas*, environmental legislation obliged them to leave their territories. It is impressive that, for decades, minor legislation has surpassed the Constitution. In fact, even today, attempts by *quilombola* communities to actualize their territorial rights have yet to be formally legally recognised by the Brazilian state, despite their constitutional right to these territories.

Local communities are, however, based on asserting their identities as *quilombolas and ribeirinhos* mobilized politically by legal and formal recognition of their territories. Currently, the Alto Trombetas 1 and Alto Trombetas 2 *quilombo* territories are subject to a conflicting titling process, to which the Ministry of the Environment (MMA) presents an obstacle due to the overlapping of these areas with the Saracá-Taquera National Forest, and the Biological Reserve (Rebio) of the river Trombetas.

The obstacle to titling by the State, however, parallels the consent of its environmental agencies to the advance of the activities of the third largest mining company in the world within the Saracá-Taquera National Forest (Pro-Indian Commission, 2017), in areas that are overlap those of historic use and occupation by *quilombola*. The *ribeirinhos*, in turn, are struggling for the actualization of their right to delimit their areas of use and occupation within the FLONA, in which they are supported by the environmental legislation that governs the management of FLONAS, precisely Law 9.985 / 2000, which established the National System of Conservation Units (Brazil, 2000).

In the current legislation, FLONAS "admit" that *ribeirinho povos tradicionais* occupy them, while they are "destined" to use by mining and logging companies. The apparent contradiction between this situation and the ideal of a conservation unit is unequivocally answered by claiming that industrial resource exploitation is conducted under rigorous technological and scientific parameters. Conversely, traditional communities are denied the (essentially human) condition of being knowledge producers and, based on this alleged "lack of knowledge" in the management of the environment, their livelihood activities of fishing, hunting small-scale extraction of timber and non timber forest products and shifting cultivation are criminalized. So here, green grabbing is justified by the depiction of one form of knowledge - industrial resource extraction (timber and mining) as rational, scientific and environmentally sustainable, against that of *ribeirinhos* local knowledge - denigrated as backward, irrational, and unsustainable.

This underwritten with the concept of a 'vocation' for the Saracá-Taquera National Forest. The Management Plan expresses unreservedly what it understands to be the "vocation" of the portion in which the *quilombola* territories and traditional communities overlap with the conservation unit

**The Mining Zone ... was defined by areas with mineral potential by natural vocation of the physical environment, guaranteed by Decrees / Decrees issued by the National Department of Mineral Production - DNPM. Its objective is the exploitation of bauxite, and, depending on the national and international market, tends to be exploited to exhaustion.** The company that holds the Decrees is Rio do Norte Mining, which is licensed to IBAMA with an Operating License. (IBAMA, 2002: 472, our emphases)

The criterion for defining the mining zone with a view to the "management" of natural resources of the FLONA therefore is associated with the notion of "vocation." According Zhouri (2006), this notion

has been enacted by hegemonic discourses in the environmental field, it is, she contends, "*a sense of the divine call, that is, a natural or essential condition beyond its own territorial politics, a process which is in turn culturally oriented to the attribution of meanings and values to the territories,*" even under the seal of the State (Zhouri, 2006: 156).

Consistent with the valuation of the forest as a resource bank predestined to the market, Saracá-Taquera National Forest, has been characterized by the management of the conservation unit as a having notable potential for the exploitation of wood on an industrial scale, as it has a stock of the "resource" with a high market value (IBAMA, 2002: 23). Although the Management plan of the conservation unit anticipated timber extraction beginning in 2002, only in 2010 did forest concessions begin to be exploited by timber companies (Brazilian Forestry Service, 2010).

The delimitation of areas for forest concession within Saracá-Taquera National Forest, today represent almost a third of its area. A total of 135,009.44 hectares of forest concession are being exploited by three logging companies, representing approximately 31% of the FLONA (NEPOMUCENO, 2017). As has been the case with mining operations, this has occurred at the expense of the violation of the rights of *riberhino* communities, including those provided for in art. 6 of Law No. 11.284 / 2006, or Public Forest Management Law (LGFP), which states that "*public forests occupied or used by local communities shall be identified for destination [as quilombola or traditional communities territories] by the relevant institutional bodies*" (Ministry Of The Federal Public, 2009).

With the concession of these areas, forms of administrative control stipulated by contracts signed between the State and companies significantly restrict *riberinho* communities from extracting wood for domestic use, hunting in areas under concession, or opening agricultural plots, as well as guaranteeing companies exclusivity over the exploitation of resources (Nepomuceno, 2017). The *riberinho* communities have undertaken a struggle to redefine the limits of the areas where loggers operate, demanding that the management plan, under review, contemplate in a new zoning the forests that they have traditionally occupied and used.

Industrial timber extraction, following the parameters of "scientific forest management", is encouraged in the FLONAS, and in fact can be considered the *raison d'être* of this model of conservation unit since its inception (IORIS, 2008). This activity is associated with what the Management Plan of the Saracá-Taquera National Forest, calls "rational forest management", defined as "*the way to obtain the maximum number of products without environmental degradation*" (IBAMA, 2002: 651).

In this approach to conservation, the forest is conceived of as a "living system" in constant reproduction of renewable resources, whose timber is supposedly "underutilized" by the communities that occupy it, and instead utility that the forest will have in the future to the industrial society, consuming tropical wood from the cities, should be maximised.

*Riberinho* communities, strongly question the extraction of wood on an industrial scale in the FLONA, pointing to significant impacts on their material and symbolic modalities of territorial inhabitation. This resistance by communities evidences the confrontation between two different understandings of what "conservation" of natural resources means on the part of the conservation unit management council and the communities, respectively (Nepomuceno, 2017).

The zoning of the FLONA can be seen as an instrument that serves to "(re) distribute power over the resources" of a given territory, and as "inciter" of the production of space (Pereira, 2010), and we observe that the zones proposed lead to ecological distribution conflicts, understood as those related to serious "social inequalities in access to and use of natural resources" (Zhouri and Laschefski, 2010: 18).

Another aspect related to the elaboration of the management plan and zoning contained therein is the question of the "participation" of the different occupants of the conservation unit in the process of



producing these policy instruments. This participation occurs through the establishment of an "Consultative Council" for the FLONA, a multi-stakeholder platforms administrating protected areas, a body legally established for the "participation" of various segments of civil society and public authorities in discussions relevant to the management of the unit. The conflicts currently observed the FLONA, with demands for formal juridical recognition of the territories of *quilombola* and *riberinho* communities over areas defined as zoning as a zone for business exploitation of resources - and the persistent resistance of environmental agencies to revising these zones - shows that communities have not had the strength to influence the definition of zoning.

This is a perception strongly shared by FLONA residents, as one of them remarked in 2016: "*the advisory council is where the riberinho says amen,*" suggesting that communities are *not* considered in the council space as "*active subjects in the process of decisions on the meanings, destinations and uses of natural resources* ", as Zhouri *et al* (2005: 2) observed in other types of decision-making bodies related to environmental issues.

When analysing the diagnosis of the Management plan's "anthropic factor", which aims to "*register human presence and its interrelationship with the National Forest of Saracá-Taquera*" (IBAMA, 2002: 241), it is possible to identify particular representations of *riberinho* communities, *quilombolas* and the industrial resource extraction (timber and mining) enterprises installed in this conservation unit. In general, these representations refer to the relations that these different actors establish with the natural resources and their capacity to contribute to the objectives of the conservation unit, distinguishing between them.

Local people are conceived as one of the most significant problems to the management of the FLONA, a situation that, according to the Management Plan, supposedly would only be solved if the communities incorporated the concept of "sustainability" prescribed by IBAMA into their everyday lives and practices. According to the viewpoint expressed in the document, "sustainability" would be incompatible with the current practices and 'habits' of these groups:

An important yet irresolute challenge arising from the implementation of the Conservation Units System is to reach an optimal point of harmonious coexistence with surrounding communities and residents. **The dilemma that is established is to incorporate concepts of sustainability in the exploitation of natural resources to the practices and habits historically acquired by the local communities.** Regardless of whether local populations recognize the importance of conservation, the first impact of living with the reality of the National Forest is the **restriction and modification of habits.** (IBAMA, 2002, p.263, emphasis added)

The mining in operation in the conservation unit, however, is seen as more important than the communities, when evaluated in relation to the achievement of conservation objectives. Although the document recognizes that mining has an impact, it repeatedly highlights the "*environmental activities implemented by MRN*", highlighting the wide range of studies developed by the company regarding the recovery of degraded areas and the execution of environmental control and monitoring programs (cf. IBAMA, 2002: 375). The weighting of the impacts caused by the mining activity itself is also sometimes a matter of concern, as when they are classified as "limited when compared to the [impacts] of agriculture" (IBAMA, 2002: 370) or when they associate mining companies to the creation of protected areas, as in the case of the implementation of MRN in the Trombetas river:

On the other hand, large-scale mining projects can help protect nature. The mining areas are generally located in protected areas, with mining being restricted to relatively small portions, and the rest of the area may be inspected by the companies and better managed by the responsible agencies, which can greatly reduce the pressure from hunting and degradation of environments, of the fauna. (Sudam / Undp, 1994 quoted in Ibama, 2002, p.227)

The relationship between MRN and the natural resources of the FNST is, from the perspective of the PM, "rational", characterized by the application of technical-scientific knowledge both in its productive processes and by the use of the so-called "environmental technologies" for mitigation of impacts, a trait that yields to the miner a positive valuation on the part of the organ. This assessment, which converges with the assumption of "ecological modernization" that environmental problems can be overcome through technological innovation (Milanez, 2009), is associated with a classification of the environmental practices of the occupying social groups of the PA in two categories.

On the one hand, mining and logging companies – are seen as “rational” and, in opposition to it, those of the *ribeirinhos* and *quilombolas*. In various parts of the document, as in the following excerpt, the habits of communities, as regards the exploitation of natural resources and basic activities for their socio-cultural reproduction, are considered to be devoid of "rationality":

*“The resident population in Flona established, in their testimonies, the difference between the time before and after the "IBAMA law". Prior to IBAMA, there was the use of wood, fish, fur and game meat, the clearing of the forest for the establishment of clearings without concern for compliance with parameters and standards of sustainability and rational use of such resources. The changes in the habits of the local populations faced mainly the necessity of insertion of principles of sustainability and rationality of the exploitation of the natural resources. The resulting natural difficulty was accentuated when compared to the conditions in which the previous generations lived, in an environment of greater access and abundance of resources. (IBAMA, 2002, p.306, emphasis added)”*

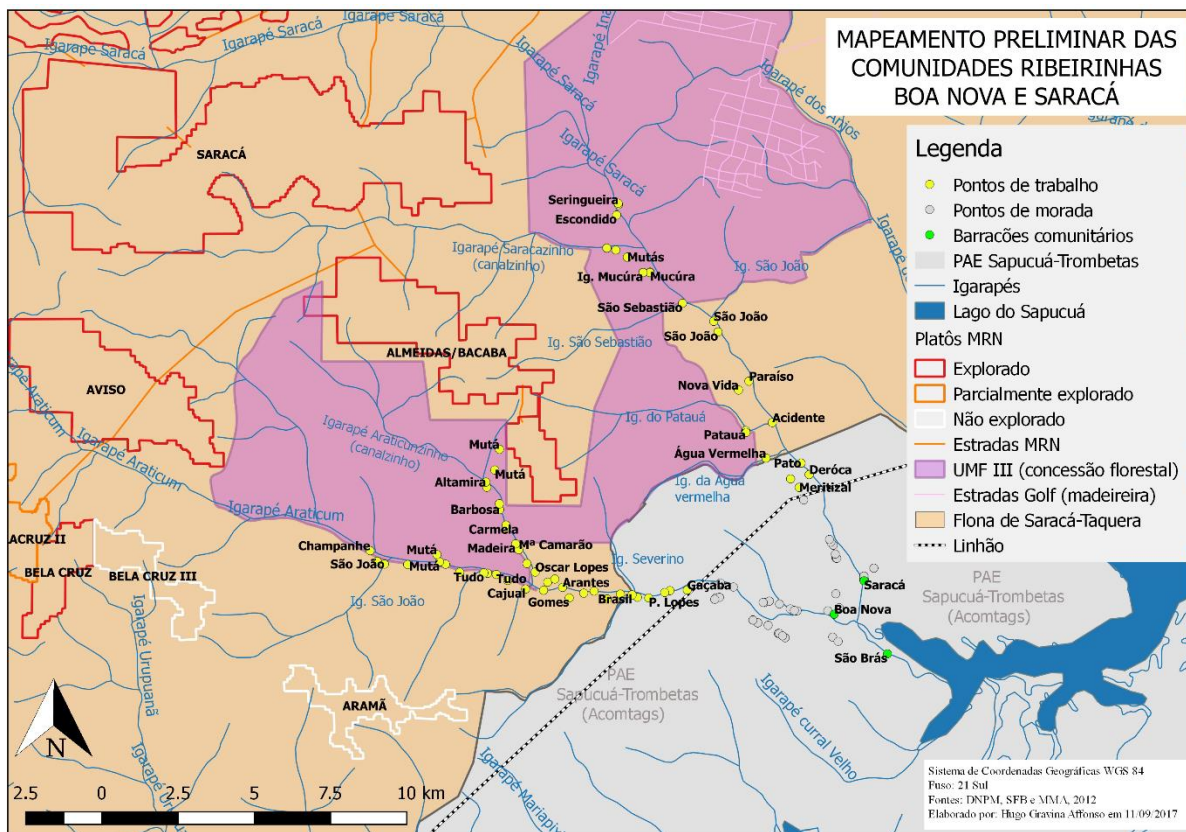


Figure 2: A critical cartographic map showing how the Saracá-Taquera National Forest (pale brown/tan) and FSC Forest Concessions (purple) within it, each overlap with areas of historic use (yellow dots) by Boa Nova and Saracá community residents

The notions of "sustainability" and "rationality" in the use of resources are associated in the management plan: the latter being would be a precondition for achieving the former, and communities are considered incompatible with both. This unequal treatment of communities and undertakings by the managing body of the protected area seems to be based on the notion of "rational management" of resources present in the design of the FLONAS since its origin in Europe- FLONAS are based on German principles of forest plantation management (Ioris, 2014). The modelling of a National Forest and its management plan in postcolonial Amazonia, and conversely the rationality, knowledge and notions of sustainability of locals are ignored, denigrated is a clear example of the coloniality of being (Quijano 2007)

The knowledge of *riberinhos* and *quilombolas* is devalued by the state bureaucracy. This depreciation is contrary to what the literature records about the inventiveness and sophisticated knowledge produced by the *quilombola* communities in the secular deal with the particularities of the Trombetas river ecosystem (Acevedo And Castro, 1998), and on the knowledge and control of the access and use of resources by the riverside communities of the region, associated with community resource management practices (Azevedo, 2011; Nepomuceno, 2017).

The colonial way that *riberinho* and *quilombolas* and their knowledge are represented in the Saracá-Taquera National Forest Management plan, in contrast to how the MRN is represented, is, in our view, an expression of hegemonic thinking in the environmental field that defends "Western scientific knowledge which transforms societies and cultures into "populations" and the land into "forests" to be "managed" whilst reproduce the commonplace image of the non-Western poor, who damage the forest "(Zhou, 2006: 163). T

While the knowledge of the communities is invalidated, that of the mining company is transferred directly to the management plan - when the topic is "sustainability" and "rational resource management" the management plan seeks to learn from the MRN, which has carried out "environmental education" programs since before the creation of the conservation unit

Another major challenge for the company at the time [prior to the creation of the conservation unit] was the **environmental concientization of the population**, since there was no mention of protection and there were no books, manuals, films or other materials that could serve as guidance. Thus, the **concientization** work [promoted by MRN] aimed at reaching both adults and children, directly. For adults, we showed the consequences of deforestation, the impacts of the company's industrial activities, the need for recovery of the areas, while for children we presented arguments for the importance of human-environment integration and the consequence of overfelling trees. (IBAMA, 2002, p.29, our emphases)

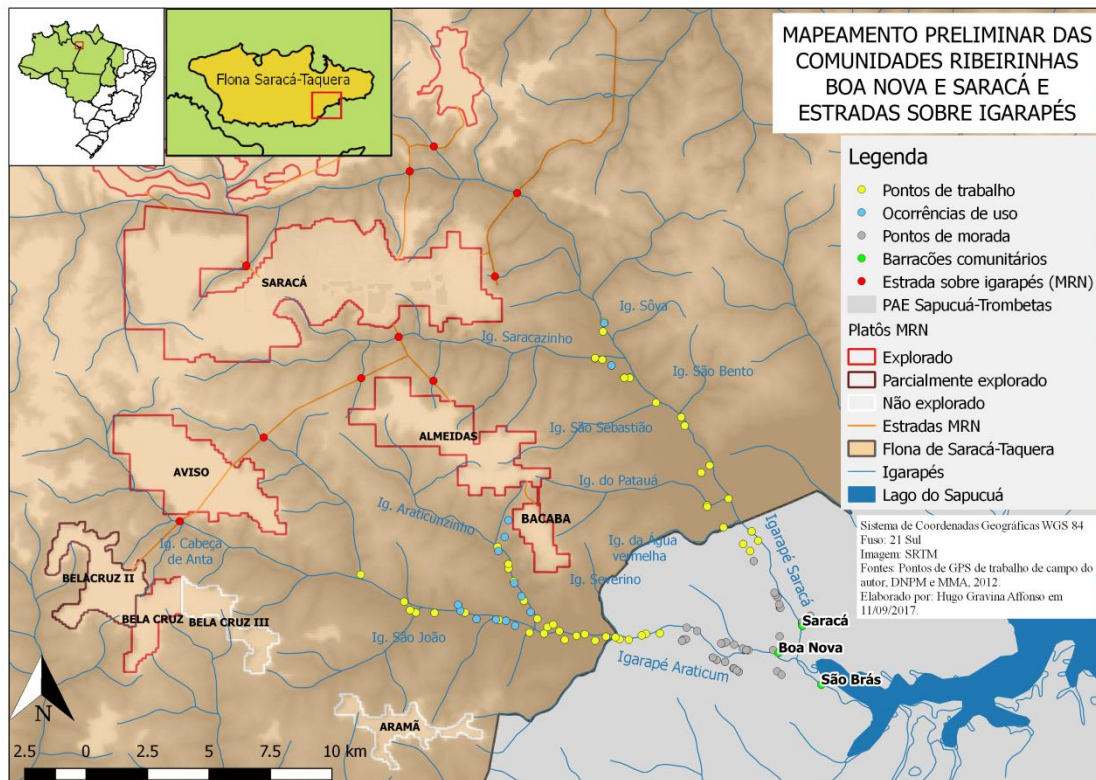
IBAMAs perception that *riberinho* and *quilombola* communities in general do not incorporate concepts of "sustainability" or "rationality" into their practices and relationship with the "environment", along with the depreciation of their knowledge and management practices of the environmental resources of their territories, generates a view by the state bureaucracy that they do not serve conservation unit objectives. They are qualified as a problem to the management of the UC, unlike the MRN and logging enterprises, identified as partners of the agency. They are then subject to sovereign power (e.g. hunting and shifting cultivation prohibitions), and disciplinary and biopower (e.g. environmental education) by the state. We now turn to the question of resistance to these forms of power.

### **3. Local resistance, negotiation and the disciplining of green subjects**

It is with the abovementioned management plan in force that large portions of the Saracá-Taquera National Forest are granted to the timber and mining companies. In the previous section we saw how discourse of the lack of "rationality" among traditional communities, clears the way for loggers to exploit their territories. And, of course, the "sustainable management" of logging would add to the already beneficial "rationality" of industrial mining.



The mining has had a brutal impact on communities like Boa Nova. With the mining of the Almeidas plateau, located in the interior of FLONA, the *riberinho* families of the community were deprived of one of their main sources of income: Brazil nut extractivism. According to the document "Additional information to the Environmental Impact Study - Almeidas Plateau", published by MRN in 2002, about 30 community members collected up to 200 hectoliters (500 boxes) of Brazil-nut per year in this 344ha locale. Without the Brazil nut harvest of the plateau, the Boa Nova community stood to lose around R \$ 6,000.00 per year (MRN, 2002). This value makes a very substantive difference in poor communities. Moreover, many of the streams in the communities ancestral territory have been polluted by mining, causing illnesses among locals who drank from them (Figure 2)



**Figure 3:** Mapa dos platôs de bauxita e as estradas construídas sobre os igarapés.

Among the compensatory measures proposed by the company due to the exploitation of the abovementioned plateau, are: acquisition of seeds of native species in the community of Boa Nova; development of feasibility studies for planting Brazil-nut near the community; implementation of Environmental Education Program for the use of Brazil nuts (which is ironic, to say the least); support from the Municipality of Oriximiná Program for the Development of Agriculture for the community; establishment of an agreement with the Municipality of Oriximiná and construction of micro water supply systems for the communities of Lago Sapucaá, among others (MRN, 2002).

Here we see the “economy of repair” which is another aspect of green grabs (Fairhead et al 2012). These measures can be seen as strategies of “governmentality” and disciplinary power in practice. In order to make communities accept the advance of industrial resource extraction, the company presents compensatory measures that also attempt to transform *riberinhos* into “green subjects” who take an active role in softening the impacts of the company upon them and their environment.

The negotiations between traditional communities and communities, over adequate compensation, remain unresolved. The most emblematic case may be the “acquisition of seeds of native species in the community of Boa Nova” (MRN, 2002). This acquisition is made through the purchase of seeds from the community, which the mining company lists, identifying the species and quantities of each desired.

This would be one of the proposed "*compensation measures for environmental and socioeconomic compensation for loss of access to the 344-hectare Brazil nut plot*" (MRN, 2002).

Should this measure be seen as a negotiation between the company and the community, or a subjugation of the community by company? The Brazilnut grove, where the *riberinhos* worked autonomously, was replaced by a relation of dependence on the mining company. The *riberinhos* had no choice but to accept the program, considering that the mining interests in the interior of FLONA have already been protected by the federal government since its creation decree.

The fact that community members "repair" the environmental damages caused by the company, itself is part of the disciplinary strategies intended to transforming them into "green" subjects, yet such environmental recovery practices are accepted (even with severe criticism) by communities.

But even the possibility of selling seeds to MRN is threatened and impaired by the implementation of the forest concessions, because the seed matrices from which the seeds can be collected begin to be cut. From a brief comparison, there were seven species exploited by the logging company and whose seeds are collected by the community, namely, *cumaru*, *itaúba*, *angelim*, *pequiá*, *carapanaúba*, *louro-preto* and *fava-bolacha*. So, the compensatory measure of the mining company (acquisition of seeds) are undermined by the industrial exploitation of the forest concession.

*Boa Nova's* response to the threat is distinct from that of the 1980s. Unlike the physical and direct confrontation of that decade, which opened the paper, and which can be seen as resistance to sovereign power the *riberinhos* now present a strategy of resistance "*without hitting the front*", as they put it, which can be read as their understanding of their inability to overthrow the sovereign power of the FLONA with sovereign resistance (e.g. direct action, violence) and that their resistances now tend to be a 'critical counter-conduct' against the disciplinary and biopower that they experience in the denigration of their knowledges and 'environmental education.' The action carried out by Boa Nova community against the timber companies incursion forty years ago, via direct confrontation no longer possible against the forest concessions, which is implemented through sovereign violence by the authoritarian populist state in collusion with capital.

As timber companies are now legitimized by the Public Forest Management Law, the *riberinho* communities are the target of the disciplinary mechanism that seeks to "normalize" certain behaviours. These included prohibitions on use of the FLONA Saracá-Taquera forest, including on shifting cultivation on bitter manioc which underwrites their food security. As a result, the strategies of resistance on the part of *riberinho* communities was also different. One of the biggest obstacles faced by communities is the political invisibility of the conflicts they face. Central to this is the axiomatic acceptance of the FLONA Saracá-Taquera by almost all the environmental organizations. Loggers who exploit the territory of communities are understood not as the cause of a conflict, but rather as the vehicle for "development."

This blindness is such that forest concessions in communities historic territory received the FSC® (Forest Stewardship Council) certification, which have supposedly exacting social standards. This became a target of resistance of by *riberinho* communities. Faced with the territorial conflicts with companies logging FSC concessions, the *riberinho* Acari community, in 2014, represented itself before the Federal Public Ministry (MPF), reaffirmed its status as a traditional community and claiming the fulfilment of its territorial rights foreseen in international and supra-constitutional legislation. As a result, the Federal Court suspended FSC certification of timber in March 2017 (Nepomuceno, 2017).

Currently, in order to restore the FSC seal, loggers are intensifying their policy of delivering constitutional rights as favours, ranging from the installation of electric power grids to paying for funerals, the provisioning of medical care, transport, fuel, etc. Compliance with legally established territorial rights of traditional communities seems to be out of the question, however, rather, what appears to be occurring is the process described by Acselrad and Bezerra, who describe the:

creation in numerous Latin American countries of projects focused on the dissemination of technologies to solve environmental conflicts. In many cases, such initiatives, originating from institutions based in central countries, aimed at training entities and communities in peripheral countries, intending to put into action models of analysis that presuppose that "lack of institutions" is the source of environmental conflicts and that peace and harmony should come from a process of depoliticization of litigation through direct negotiation tactics capable of providing, according to its terminology, "mutual gains" (Acselrad, Bezerra, 2010: 35)

It is worth noting that, at the beginning of the process, the planned forestry concessions also advanced on the disputed *quilombola* territories overlapping Flona. However, this group has achieved what the *riberinhos* have not achieved until now: the area destined for the concession remain 23 kilometers away from the *quilombola* communities (Figure 1; Nepomuceno, 2017).

This allows us to address the question of what the growth of identity and ethno-territorial political movements in response to the 1988 constitution in Brazil means in the context of emancipatory rural politics: on the one hand, the *quilombolas*' ongoing struggle for territorial recognition have kept the logging concessions away, but on the other, it is plainly unjust that *riberinhos* territories are less recognised simply because they have less 'ethnic' recognition. So the problem is one subaltern group is favoured over who has similar socio-cultural and economic histories yet a less unified or essential ethnic marker. This can create resentment and division, and also opens the door to divide and rule type populism linked to constructed socio-ethnic differences.

Therefore, for emancipatory rural politics to be adequately realised it is important to get Brazilian law to change to recognise "*riberinho* territories" (see Brum 2018) similar to those that indigenous and *quilombolas* have. The current situation of the right to remain in other kinds of conservation unit, but with their freedom curtailed by a combination of sovereign and disciplinary power, as the *riberinho* communities of the FLONA have experienced, is unjust and must be resisted.

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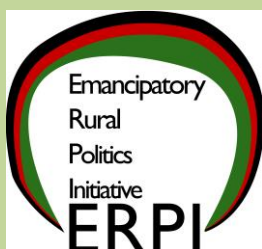


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## About the Author(s)

**Ítala Tuanny Rodrigues Nepomuceno** holds a degree in Civil Engineering from the Lutheran University of Santarém (2012). She subsequently worked as a technical school teacher and in 2015 she joined the Postgraduate Program of Amazonian Natural Resources (PPGRNA) at the Federal University of Pará (UFOPA), where she obtained a master's degree in Environmental Sciences (2017), which involved a year's research on the political ecology of social-environmental conflicts between riverside communities and logging companies in the Saracá-Taquera National Forest, located in the municipality of Oriximiná. Currently, she has started a new degree in Social Sciences and is preparing a doctoral project in the same thematic area as her masters research.

**Hugo Gravina Affonso** was a scientific initiation fellow in the Social Movements and Territorialities study lab (LEMTO), coordinated by Professor Carlos Walter Porto-Gonçalves, located in the Department of Geography / UFF, from 2013 to 2015. He joined the Postgraduate Program of Amazonian Natural Resources (PPGRNA) at the Federal University of Pará (UFOPA), where he is studying for a master's degree in Environmental Sciences (2017).

**James Angus Fraser** is a Lecturer at Lancaster University. His research is focused on social and environmental dimensions of smallholder natural resource management in the humid tropics of Latin America and Africa. He focuses on two themes in particular; i) local agro-ecological knowledge, and ii) social and environmental justice issues. He investigates these with theory and methods from a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, geography and development studies.

**Maurício Gonsalves Torres** is a contributing professor in the Postgraduate Program in Amazonian Natural Resources of the Amazon Region (PPGRNA) at the Federal University of Western Brazil (UFOPA). He works on traditional peoples and communities in the Amazon in situations of conflict. An ad hoc expert advisor for the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office since 2006, he is responsible for more than a dozen expert reports focusing on environmental crimes and threats to indigenous peoples, ribeirinhos and peasants. He is author and editor of five books and various scientific and popular articles, in national and international fora, on deforestation in the Amazon, rural violence, slave labour, socio-environmental public policies, social movements, forest peoples' struggles for land, and the impact of large energy and infrastructure projects in the Amazon.

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