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## Saving the Amazon? Sustainable soy and the new extractivism

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**Abstract.** Most ‘progressive’ Latin American governments, which have come to power over the past decade or so, continue to rely on agriculture and resource extraction as the primary generators of wealth. Scholars argue that this ‘neoextractivism’ is made politically possible by directing some profits toward the funding of progressive social programs. The Brazilian Amazon’s vast wealth of extractive resources and its large economically depressed population make it the emblematic site for neoextractivism. Its biodiversity and inhabited landscapes, however, mean that the neoextractive program encounters concerted resistance from the global environmental community as well as from traditional, indigenous, and migrant smallholders. In response, neoextractivism must deploy another form of progressivism—environmentalism. The author uses the case of agroindustrial soy production in the Brazilian Amazonian state of Pará to demonstrate how the emergence of environmental governance there facilitates neoextractivism by ‘greening’ it. Through an analysis of the mechanisms and effects of two programs, implemented through partnerships between nongovernmental organizations and corporations, to manage soy expansion into the Amazon, it is demonstrated that these programs have questionable environmental benefits at best and at worst work to reenforce the hegemony of international environmental organizations, to green the image of agri-business multinationals, and to destabilize strategies of resistance.

**Keywords:** governance, neoextractivism, Amazon, Brazil, soy, BR-163, conservation

### 1 Introduction

On 14 July 2010 hundreds of people gathered outside of Santarém’s Yacht Club for a public audience regarding the port that Cargill, the multinational agricultural corporation, built on the Amazon River there in 2000. The meeting, a mandatory part of the federal environmental compliance process, was to solicit public feedback on the port environmental impact assessment which Cargill had just completed. Protocol dictates that such assessments be completed *prior* to licensing major construction, although in this case the assessment was being considered ten years *after* ground was broken for port construction and six years into its operation. In 2000 the federal court in Santarém mandated that Cargill comply with Brazilian federal law and complete the environmental compliance process. However, Cargill built the port without doing so. In 2006, on appeal, the Superior Tribunal de Justiça—Brazil’s second-highest court—upheld this decision. Despite the federal mandate, Cargill avoided completing the assessment through a series of provisional agreements with the notoriously corrupt and industry-friendly State Environmental Secretariat (Secretaria de Estado de Meio Ambiente, SEMA) which, regardless of concerns regarding the port capacity and corruption expressed at the public audience, remains the regulatory agency responsible for final approval of Cargill’s license.

Outside the Yacht Club, people from the Amazon Defense Front (Frente em Defesa da Amazônia—FDA), the Pastoral Land Commission (Comissão Pastoral da Terra—CPT), and the general public protested, arguing that the ‘public’ audience made a farce of ‘participation’.

Protesters preferred to make their statement *outside* of the audience, arguing that their presence *inside* such events gave the appearance of their participation in a decision-making process where their views had no possibility of fundamentally affecting the project. Participation in this event, they argued, would be the social version of ‘green washing’—making private development decisions appear democratic. In other words, by ‘participating’ in the public audience, they would be sanctioning their own elimination from the democratic process.

The rapid expansion of agroindustry in Brazil over the past decade is part of a larger Latin American phenomenon of ‘neextractivism’ (Acosta, 2011; Gudynas, 2009). That is, most Latin American ‘progressive’ governments that have come to power over the past decade or so through the mobilization of social movements against neoliberalism have coupled intensification of commodity-based resource extraction as a primary strategy for economic growth with distributive social programs.<sup>(1)</sup> In Brazil specifically, the Luis Inácio ‘Lula’ da Silva (2003–10) and Dilma Rousseff (2000–present) administrations have linked neoliberal macroeconomic policies and an intensified export-oriented extractive development model with a progressive social agenda based on poverty reduction and the inclusion of social movements into institutional politics in their pursuit of ‘change with stability’ (Mantenga in Bate, 2003; Morais and Saad-Filho, 2011). While analyses differ widely as to whether this ‘neodevelopmentalist’ program constitutes a ‘new social contract’ lifting people out of poverty (Guimarães, 2004) or ‘the functionalization of poverty’ to a continued neoliberal program (Oliveira, 2006), it is clear that leftist rhetoric combined with real reduction in poverty levels has justified and built support for an economic model rooted in intensified exploitation of natural and agricultural resources (Morais and Saad-Filho, 2011; Ricci, 2010; Singer, 2009).

Amazonian neoextractivism arguably began with *Avança Brasil* (Forward Brazil), the multiyear national development plan that would, among other things, invest US \$43 billion to support neoextractive development (including infrastructure like roads and dams) in Amazonia (Cardoso, 1998).<sup>(2)</sup> Concerned with *Avança Brasil*’s likely environmental impacts, ecologists modeled regional ‘future scenarios’, predicting massive environmental destruction if the program proceeded as planned, igniting heated debate in academic journals, national press, and the international environmental community (Jacquacu, 2001; Laurance et al, 2001).<sup>(3)</sup> At the time, these debates coalesced around industrial soy expansion and its ‘dragging effects’ (Fearnside, 2002)—namely, impacts associated with paving the Santarém–Cuiabá highway (BR-163) and Cargill’s port.

In response, conservation-oriented policy advisors (including some who had modeled the ‘future scenarios’) posed the region’s “emerging governance” as the “most promising” solution to the problem of Amazonian soy expansion, arguing that environmental governance

<sup>(1)</sup> Across the heterogeneous field of progressivism in Latin America, Kristina Kirchner in Argentina, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Fernando Lugo in Paraguay, José Mujica in Uruguay, Evo Morales in Bolivia, and Hugo Chavez have all pursued neoextractivism in various forms (Escobar, 2010; Gudynas, 2009; Reyes, 2012).

<sup>(2)</sup> *Avança Brasil* is one of several policy approaches that would define the progressive governments but was initiated under the prior, neoliberal administration. Bolsa Família, which combined and augmented existing antipoverty measures, is another case in point (Druck and Filgueiras, 2007).

<sup>(3)</sup> Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia (Institute for Amazonian Environmental Research) projected that *Avança Brasil*’s road paving would cause deforestation of 4.2% of the Amazon within twenty to thirty years. Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazônia (National Institute for Amazonian Research) predicted that all of *Avança Brasil*’s Amazonian projects would cause severe damage or destruction of between 28% (‘optimistic’ scenario) and 42% (‘nonoptimistic’ scenario) of the region (Laurance et al, 2001; Nepstad et al, 2002). Negative press over these highly controversial and disputed numbers forced government action. The Ministries of the Environment and of Planning mandated environmental impact assessments for regional infrastructure planning (Fearnside, 2007).

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would “insure the conservation of most of the forests ... while also fostering sustainable development.” The formalization of relationships among “government agencies, private enterprise, and civil society” were, for them, “evidence of an expanding political will in Brazil to manage Amazonia’s abundant natural resources.” These relationships, if adequately supported, would “defend public interests in the region’s natural resources” (Nepstad et al, 2002, page 631) and, by default, eliminate the violence and injustice in a region characterized as “outside the rule of law” (Fearnside, 2007, page 601).

Interested actors from government, international environmental nongovernmental organizations (ENGOS: namely Conservation International—CI, The Nature Conservancy—TNC, and the World Wildlife Fund—WWF), and industry rallied around this call for ‘environmental governance’, but defined it only vaguely as a process that ought either to enhance or to substitute for the state’s role in creating environmental sustainability by involving nonstate actors. That is, whether framing governance as facilitating the ability “to implement legislation and respect existing laws” (GTS, 2006, page 4) or of “the people of the forest [eg, marginalized actors] to participate in management” (PSA, 2007, page 1), the premise is that achieving ‘sustainable economic and social development’ (eg, governance’s normative goal) requires management participation by a new constellation of ‘stakeholders’ across civil society, industry, and (sometimes, but not always) government (see also CPEA, 2010; GTS, 2007; TNC, 2006).

In practice this meant that regionally—and specifically in this case—multistakeholder participation became the norm. It is now a legal part of the environmental review process, and initiatives to incorporate grassroots positions into development projects by organizing localized forums for communities to express their opinions abound (Campbell, 2012; Hall, 1997; Perz et al, 2008). This form of environmental governance, which hinges on direct incorporation of previously marginalized actors into development planning, interacts with a second form: devolution of government functions to ENGOS—a practice which Brand (2009) calls the continuation of ‘neoliberal business-as-usual’ within the ‘postneoliberal’ (and neoextractivist) moment. This practical linking of participation and devolution (or participation *through* devolution) under the vague notion of ‘environmental governance’ is particularly important because it reinforces the historically unstable and highly contested notion that Amazonian conservation has a necessary link to social justice.

As a result, I argue in this paper that ‘environmental governance’ has become the condition of possibility for neoextractivism. That is, in addition to the links to antipoverty programs that make neoextractivism possible on a national level, in order to be implemented in the Amazon, it must also be ‘greened’ through environmental governance—a process originally oriented toward sustainable development that is increasingly leading to the proliferation of projects that constitute the ‘green economy’, or what the movements call ‘green capitalism’ (Brand, 2012; de Paula, 2012), as I demonstrate below. I use the case of Amazonian soy to analyze the emergence, functions, and effects of two related programs—Responsible Soy and the Soy Moratorium—implemented as ‘environmental governance’ to mitigate the effects of Amazonian soy expansion. I argue that such programs tend to function as mechanisms for stabilizing neoextractivism; and that they have questionable environmental benefits at best and at worst work to reenforce the hegemony of ENGOS, to legitimize agribusiness multinationals, and to destabilize strategies of resistance—reproducing the very dynamics of inequality and domination that governance initiatives commonly propose to eradicate.

My intention is not to debate the potential content of term ‘environmental governance’ [see Bridge and Perrault (2009) for an excellent review]. Rather, it is to examine how projects enacted as environmental governance constitute the ongoing restructuring of social and political relationships—particularly those associated with neoextractivism and the green economy. My premise is that the key lesson to be drawn from the substantial literature on

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environmental governance that largely points to its multifaceted and ambiguous nature, should not be simply that it is infinitely complex and contingent but, rather, that in order to create the possibility for accommodating complexity, ambiguity, and cooperation, this approach itself generates new relational structures which tend to reproduce existing power relations—albeit in a new form.

That is, whether governance is understood as complex, multiscalar political authority (Lemos and Agrawal, 2006), new policy networks (Bulkeley, 2005), increased influence of nontraditional actors in the operation of power (McCarthy, 2005), or as a broad combination of these things (Bridge and Perreault, 2009), it is valued for its potential to organize the possibility for compromise among actors with divergent interests and to provide this bundle of divergent interests and strategies with a certain coherence and legitimacy. In other words, a governance approach moves away from an analysis of historical and structural contradiction, and thus antagonistic political strategies, and toward a technomanagerial approach to problem resolution, a move that, in order to legitimize and organize for the latter tends to obviate the possibilities for the former, producing a neutralizing political effect.

I am particularly concerned with the tendency to view governance as somehow able to resolve the problem of unequal power, particularly when that resolution is dependent upon the willingness of marginalized actors either to participate in or to acquiesce to the proposed governance project or upon their elimination altogether as ‘stakeholders’. In the case of *environmental* governance around industrial extractivism, which is necessarily internal to a framework that takes economic growth, albeit ‘sustainable’, as the normative goal (Leff, 2004), this means that participants ought, minimally, to accept this premise. The consequences are that approaches to governance rooted in noncommodification or nongrowth are dismissed out of hand, and those who lack the capacity to contribute to that growth (eg, those who do not generate an economic surplus) are rendered irrelevant, as I demonstrate below. To be a stakeholder, in other words, implies agreement on a very particular set of stakes.

In the rest of this paper I briefly review the emergence of environmental governance and neoextractivism; examine the framing, functioning, and claims of the two soy-certification programs named above; and describe the effects of soy expansion in Santarém, focusing on those environmental, social, and political effects largely glossed over, excluded from, or rendered invisible through these programs’ frameworks.

This paper is based on eighteen months of research into the wide-ranging issue of Amazonian soy conducted in Brazil between 2007 and 2011. For this paper I interviewed a range of actors involved in or affected by soy development, gathered soy-production and deforestation data where available, charted debates about the soy, and analyzed proposed solutions. I conducted seventy-four semistructured interviews in and around the city of Santarém, and in Belém and Rio de Janeiro, with soy farmers, rural community residents, dispossessed small farmers, government agents from the National Agency for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária—INCRA), the Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Renováveis—IBAMA), the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária, EMBRAPA), representatives from several NGOs, social movement activists, social mediator organizations, and Cargill employees. Through the Rural Workers’ Union (Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Santarém—STTR), I interviewed residents in seven partially displaced communities and conducted two focus groups to map the new locations of the majority of displaced families from three of these communities. I located and interviewed fourteen of these families. The controversies over Amazonian soy were traced through participant observation in community and union meetings, conferences, public events, and direct actions against agribusiness, as

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well as analysis of newspaper articles, blogs, land documents, and government, NGO, and corporate reports. The information on the Responsible Soy program and the Soy Moratorium is based on interviews with Cargill and TNC personnel, seven soy farmer interviews (contacted through SIRSAN—the producers' union in Santarém), as well as analysis of internal documents from IBAMA, INCRA, and NGOs, and corporate pamphlets on the programs, press releases, public documents, and published meeting minutes.

## **2 Amazonian environmental governance**

It is often argued within scholarly and policy circles that Brazil's sophisticated, progressive laws around citizenship and environment often go unenforced because the state lacks the capacity to do so (Benatti, 1998; Hochstetler and Keck, 2007; TNC, 2006). However, legislators wrote many such laws into the 1988 Constitution as a compromise with social movements, aware that implementation would be impossible within the existing government structure (Holston, 2008). While the creation of unenforceable laws functioned as a legislative strategy to appease simultaneously both the political left and right during the transition to democracy, the explanation for such 'good but unenforceable laws' today in Amazonia has been reimagined as a 'failure' of a state weighed down by bureaucracy, and lack of resources and dynamism. The logical conclusion of this narrative is that these problems can only be solved through external assistance from private business and ENGOS (eg, constructing governance). Here I briefly review the emergence of the discourse and practice of this governance, highlighting how the 'sustainable development' model that became hegemonic in the 1990s incorporated critiques of modernization, established ENGOS as key regional actors, and made 'participation' central to conservation. With the subsequent rise of progressive government and its new development agenda, this set the stage for the governance paradigm that made neoextractivism possible.

### **2.1 From development critiques to sustainable development**

By the 1980s worldwide attention focused on Amazonia's high rates of deforestation and violent conflict between developers and smallholders—both direct results of the (1964–85) military government's regional modernization project. This project had sought to secure the nation's borders, develop resources, and solve the landless workers' problems in the south and the northeast by developing Amazonia through substantial state subsidies, development tax incentives, and colonization programs for the poor (Schmink and Wood, 1992). US-based ENGOS lobbied Congress to support international conservation projects to mitigate the devastation associated with USAID/World Bank and national development projects (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). The agencies themselves also responded to criticism by requiring protective environmental measures as conditions for development loans in Brazil, resulting in myriad new governmental environmental agencies, programs, and mandates (Porto-Gonçalves, 1989). This now global pressure for conservation, combined with shrinking neoliberal states, meant that the US and Brazilian governments outsourced conservation work to the very organizations producing that pressure through popular campaigns (northern ENGOS, namely: CI, TNC, and WWF), establishing them as key environmental actors in Amazonia—which, with its rich 'biodiversity' had been reimagined as a global resource—and in the developing world more broadly (Hochstetler and Keck, 2007).

Simultaneously, localized Amazonian people were mobilizing against developers appropriating their lands. Most famously, the Rubber Tappers' Movement garnered worldwide support for their cause, recasting a struggle over land to one for conservation in order to forge alliances with national and international conservationists. While some celebrate this alliance as one that produced new subjectivities organized around ecology *and* social justice

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(Hochstetler and Keck, 2007; Keck, 1995), this articulation of two different kinds of environmentalism was and continues to be an uneasy one, fraught with contradiction and conflict (de Paula and da Souza, 2008; Salisbury and Schmink, 2007). Rather than providing for Rubber Tapper self-determination, the formalization of their Extractive Reserve model into environmental law, which resulted from this alliance, established management of their territories by a council of government employees and NGOs, alongside the Rubber Tappers (Porto-Gonçalves, 2001; Vadjunec et al, 2011). Other lasting impacts of this alliance were the effective linking of the concepts of conservation and justice, legitimacy for international environmentalists working in Amazonia, and the mandate for ‘participation’ by ‘local people’ into conservation planning, setting the terms for future ‘participatory sustainable development’.

The UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 established sustainable development as the primary international conservation paradigm and launched the Pilot Program for Conservation of Brazilian Rainforests (PPG7), which would operationalize that concept in Amazonia. Through this program, G7 countries and the World Bank invested over US \$320 million in Brazilian conservation between 1992 and 2005, combining technical forest management with a larger project to restructure civil society. The impetus for this restructuring was largely the push to access funding: 70% of PPG7 funding went toward sustainable development projects that mandated participation by ‘local’ actors, growing the number of regional NGOs from a handful to over 600 organizations that implement sustainable development projects, with variable outcomes. Largely administered by the ENGOs, one of the PPG7’s lasting impacts, according to Hochstetler and Keck (2007, page 170), was to shift relationships among regional social movements and governments from ‘adversarial’ to ‘collaborative’.

The PPG7 also focused on creating protected areas, a sustainable development strategy that was ultimately limiting to the national development strategy as it often took land and resources out of the market. As Brazil’s economy recovered from crisis and macroeconomic forces began to drive demand for export-oriented extractive-based development again (Soares-Filho et al, 2006), keeping land-out markets “made less sense”,<sup>(4)</sup> and a new conservation and development strategy became necessary.

## 2.2 Neextractivism under the Workers’ Party

When Workers’ Party leader Luis Inácio ‘Lula’ da Silva was elected in 2002, with over 60% of the popular vote, many on the left hoped that his presidency would mark a break with the aggressive neoliberal agenda pursued by his predecessor (Guimarães, 2004; Morais and Saad-Filho, 2005). Lula, however, had capitulated to the neoliberal financial sector even before his election, and his centrist coalition government’s policies regarding national, extractive-based—primarily agroindustrial—development as a key strategy for securing Brazil’s place as a world economic power, proceeded along the same lines as those of his predecessors (Morais and Saad-Filho, 2011; Ricci, 2010).

During the 1990s the agroindustrial agricultural model, which had intensified alongside and in opposition to the smallholder struggle for land in the 1980s, consolidated ‘agribusiness’ into a political–economic block that included the agrarian, livestock, industrial, mercantile, mineral, and timber sectors, and worked through state partnerships with national and international financial interests (Fernandes, 2009). With the spike in soy and sugar prices in 2003, and the consequent rapid expansion of export-oriented industrial agricultural production (soy exportation alone grew by 35% that year, and agroindustrial agricultural expansion continued to grow at a rate of 22% per year for the next several years), Lula hailed agribusiness

<sup>(4)</sup> José Benatti, President of the Pará State Land Institute, quoted in an interview in September 2009 with the author. See also, David McGrath’s interview in *Veja* 12 November 2003.

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as Brazil's 'heroes' (*Folha de São Paulo* 20 March 2007). Lula's administration embraced the policies of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and World Bank, continuing tax-exempt status and providing tax incentives for export-oriented agribusinesses, legalizing transgenic soy, funneling 85% of available rural credit into industrial agriculture, opening national parks to logging, rezoning large territories for development, planning national infrastructure projects to support export industries, prioritizing land privatization over agrarian reform in the Amazon through 'legal land', and maintaining agribusiness control over 76% of arable land through his presidency (Fernandes, 2012; Hochstetler and Montero, 2012; Stedile, 2007).

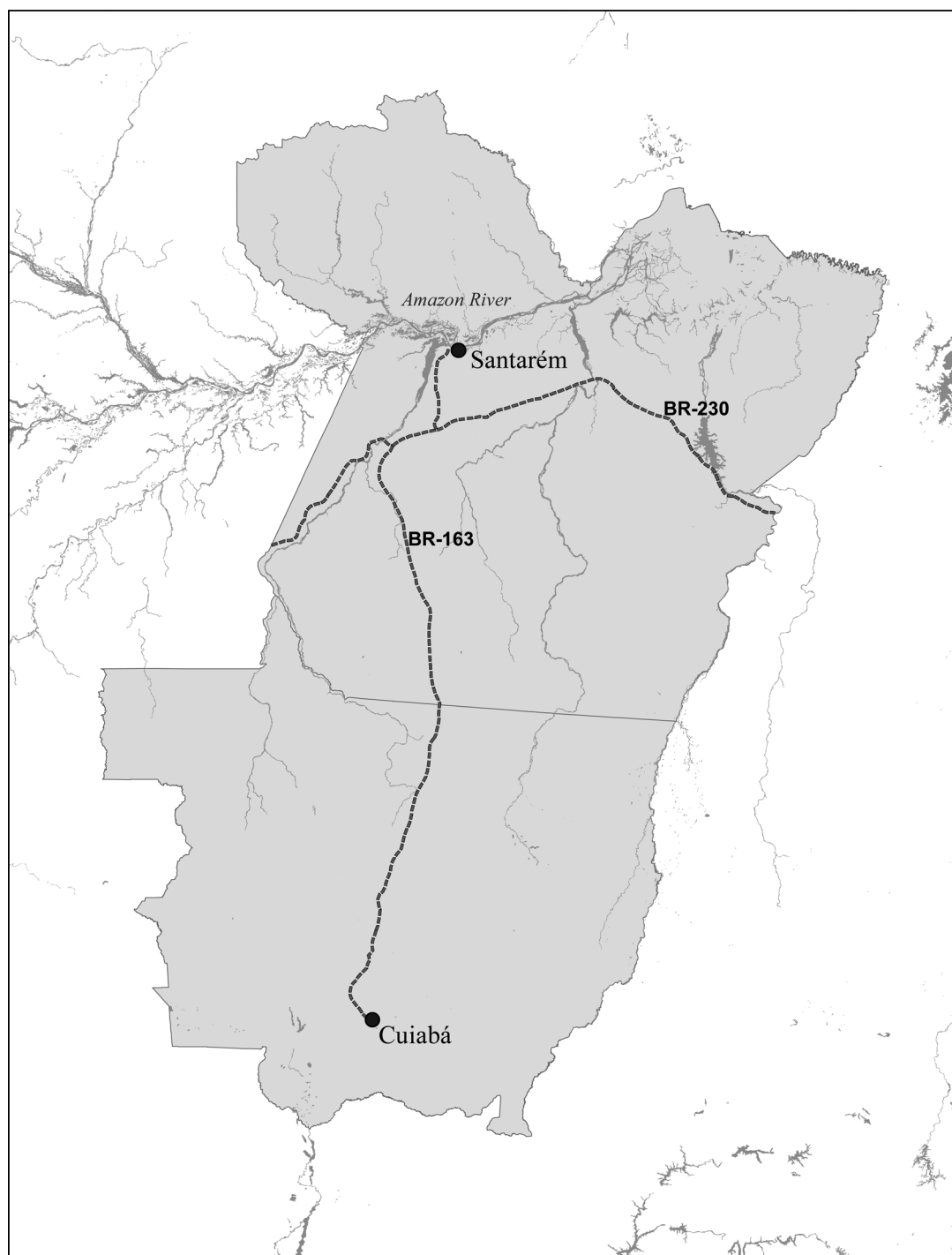
While across the heterogeneous field of Latin American politics neoextractivism takes many forms, broadly it integrates new finance strategies and social programs with some previous practices of extractive development, while continuing within the same fundamental structure of accumulation (Acosta, 2011; Gudynas, 2009). In Brazil neoextractivism is driven by an active state implementing reterritorialization (eg, zoning for extractive development, infrastructure projects, formalization of property rights), creating administrative and financial support through financial policies, tax breaks, and subsidized lending through BNDES (Banco Nacional do Desenvolvimento), and producing new 'global players' in the form of state and private transnational companies through new structures of funding.<sup>(5)</sup> This neodevelopmentalist state invests some development profits in progressive social programs, such as Bolsa Familia, that provide over eleven million poor families with a small monthly stipend, placing the mission of poverty alleviation at the center of the neoextractivist project [as in Dilma Rouseff's PAC (Accelerated Growth Program) against Poverty]. In effect, poverty alleviation programs legitimize and even buffer some of the effects of uneven economic expansion—despite the fact that they do not address the systemic production of poverty (Oliveira, 2006; Singer, 2009).

The Brazilian Amazon's vast wealth of extractive resources (timber, minerals, agricultural land, water energy) and its large economically depressed population make it an emblematic site for neoextractivism. However, its conservation potential and diverse traditional populations mean that the neoextractive program encounters concerted resistance from the global environmental community as well as from traditional, indigenous, and migrant smallholders. In response, I argue, neoextractivism must appropriate another form of progressivism: environmentalism. In other words, while funding social programs justifies neoextractivism on a national level, it must be 'greened' for implementation in Amazonia, where many extractive resources are located.

### **3 Greening agroindustry: Amazonian soy**

Poor transportation infrastructure in the north and center-west is a major obstacle to expansion of Brazil's agricultural commodity production there. Paving the BR-163, a 2000 km highway, constructed by the military government in 1971 but largely unpaved through Pará state, would provide a direct transport route from Cuiaba, Mato Grosso to Santarém, Pará, on the Amazon River, reducing transport costs by 40% for exporters such as Bunge and Cargill, who purchase millions of tons of soybeans annually from the region.

<sup>(5)</sup> BNDES, who financed these mergers, directs over 95% of its lending to Brazilian development projects and itself lent more money than the World Bank and Interamerican Bank combined in 2009–10 (Hochstetler and Montero, 2012; Morais and Saad-Filho, 2011). Brazilian neoextractive corporations are some of the biggest in the world. Vale do Rio Doce is the world's second-largest mining company, Petrobras is the fourth-largest oil producer and the fifth-largest corporation in terms of market value; JPS Firboi is the largest beef producer; Braskem is the eighth-largest petrochemical company; Brasil Foods is the largest exporter of processed meat; Votorantim is the fourth-largest cellulose producer (Zibechi, 2010).



**Figure 1.** Location map: Santarém, Pará.

Anticipating the paving of the BR-163 as part of *Avança Brasil*, Cargill began construction on its Santarém Port in 2000 (figure 1).<sup>(6)</sup>

In the late 1990s, also anticipating the road paving and port construction, Santarém's then-mayor (now federal deputy), Lira Maia, commissioned the federal agricultural agency to test regional soy-growing viability and map agroindustrial soil potential (EMBRAPA, 1999; 2008).

<sup>(6)</sup> *Avança Brasil* (US \$48 billion), as well as PAC I (US \$503 billion), and PAC II (US \$872 billion), all include funding earmarked for paving the BR-163 (MPOG, 1999; 2010).



Using this map, he launched a public relations campaign to attract Mato Grosso soy farmers to the region, touting its low transport costs and cheap land.<sup>(7)</sup> Farmers began arriving at the new ‘soy frontier’, purchasing tens of thousands of hectares (through legal and illegal mechanisms) in soy-viable areas near Santarém from the *colonos* who live along the dirt highways of the Amazon uplands.<sup>(8)</sup>

By the mid-2000s the rapid transformation of forests and smallholder farms to soy fields near Santarém, the controversy over *Avança Brasil* and the PACs, and a Greenpeace campaign—Eating up the Amazon—that targeted Cargill Santarém (Greenpeace, 2006), alongside skyrocketing global soy prices and Lula’s strong support for agribusiness had placed Cargill’s port, regional soy growers, and the ‘soy highway’ at the center of regional and international debates. As Dienhart (2006, page 25) put it: “Everyone from BBC to Al Jazeera has traveled to Santarém ... to report on the controversy.” Myriad environmental governance initiatives were proposed to deal with this problem, including region-wide programs and policies such as the Participatory Development Plan for the BR-163 (Campbell, 2013), launched with much fanfare but eventually shelved, and the Ecological Economic Zoning Plan for Western Pará (Baletti, 2012), which rezoned land use to create protected areas and areas for industrial extractive development *intensification* and *expansion*. These programs addressed the broad regional impacts of soy expansion. Voluntary production certification agreements were proposed to address soy’s direct effects.

### 3.1 Voluntary production certification: Responsible Soy and the Soy Moratorium

TNC, Cargill, and the major agribusiness corporations and ENGOs created two soy-certification programs—Responsible Soy and the Soy Moratorium, respectively—in which ENGOs monitored production processes to certify that farmers did not illegally deforest to produce soy. To understand how these certification programs became ‘solutions’ (TNC, 2006, page 8) to the Amazonian soy controversy, we must first understand how their creators framed the ‘problem’. Here I examine the discursive framing of soy as an issue of deforestation. I then explain certification-program logistics, highlighting tensions between program rhetoric—which poses limiting deforestation as an apolitical, universal public good, markets as naturally incentivizing conservation, and justice as a consequence of law enforcement—and program logistics, which tend to conflate private needs and the public good, manipulate markets, rewrite laws, and to limit ‘participation’ to those who agree with the terms of the programs.

The soy growers’ union explained the initiation of Responsible Soy:

“After the Greenpeace campaign, we had a very serious problem of public image; we needed to create credibility, environmentally. We went to Cargill for help and they introduced us to TNC” (interview, Jean Clovis, Lisboa, March 2009).

TNC, WWF, and CI (all signatories to the Soy Moratorium) all pursue conservation strategies based in compromise and negotiation with multinational corporations and

<sup>(7)</sup> The seven soy farmers interviewed had a copy of this map, often on the wall in their offices, which they used to explain the area’s potential hundreds of thousands of hectares of soy development.

<sup>(8)</sup> Lira Maia and Inca Superintendent José Roberto de Oliveira Faro (also now a federal deputy) advertised Santarém’s cheap land and low-cost production in Mato Grosso [according to soy farmer and Inca interviews in March and April 2009, also reported in EMBRAPA (2008)]. In a corruption scandal in 2006, called *Faroeste*, twenty-one people including Faro, the Federal Ministério Público, Inca employees, a Santarém city council member, and several lawyers and soy farmers were accused of land fraud (twelve later indicted and five convicted). Inca employees created fraudulent land titles for illegal Internet sales of tens of thousands of hectares of land inside of Agrarian Reform settlements to soy farmers in the highlands outside of Santarém (MPF Santarém process number 2003.39.02.001236-5; see also MPF, no date).

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finance capital.<sup>(9)</sup> Their premise is that is that corporate industrial growth is ‘inevitable’, and thus the ‘only option’ for effective conservation is to make it internal to the logic of that growth—“demonstrat[ing] the tangible business returns of incorporating sustainability and the value of nature into a company’s operations”,<sup>(10)</sup> which can be realized through incentivized agreements among “major stakeholders” (TNC, 2006). In other words, the problem is the management of conflict and the extraction of value, rather than the larger contradiction of expanded production and conservation.

Certification is a logical solution if we understand the issue as a technocratic one of deforestation, rather than as an ethicopolitical problem of competing visions for Amazonia. In TNC’s words:

“Amidst all the arguments over the Amazon there is one point of consensus: deforestation should be reduced. In theory, there are two ways that might happen. The first, given that most deforestation in the Amazon is illegal, is that Brazilian authorities enforce laws against deforestation. But the Amazon is very large, the presence of the authorities is patchy and enforcement in the absence of other measures is unlikely ever to be a success: both sticks and carrots are necessary. The second way to reduce deforestation is to work directly with those responsible and change their behavior. For this, the people to reach are not the traditional partners of environmental organizations in the Amazon, like indigenous people, rubber-tappers or subsistence farmers, who clear relatively little forest. The key people to reach are the big deforesters: ranchers and commercial farmers. Very soon biofuel producers will be joining the party, as Brazil reinforces its position as the world’s leading producer of sugar-cane ethanol. So the expansion of commercial agriculture into the Amazon ... is driven by very powerful market demands that will not disappear anytime soon ... . The Amazon cannot be insulated from the outside world” (2006, page 4).

Here, in one paragraph, TNC rendered expansion of Amazonian soy inevitable; made all competing arguments about Amazonia superfluous, reducing them to the technical issue of deforestation; argued that governmental failure means that effective regulation only comes from the stick (forced compliance that the government cannot do on its own) and the carrot (market incentives); justified an alliance with big business; and made smallholders irrelevant to the situation.

In 2006 TNC and Cargill developed the Responsible Soy program, joining several other ENGOs representing ‘civil society’ [WWF, IPAM (Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental de Amazônia), Conservation International, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, and Imaflo], Aboive (the Brazilian Association of Industrial Vegetable Oils, including the companies ADM, Bunge, Cargill, Amaggi, and others), ANEC (National Association of Cereal Exporters), and the STTR, representing local people, in the Soy Moratorium. The moratorium provides a similar framing, seeking to stop deforestation through environmental governance (GTS, 2007).

<sup>(9)</sup> TNC’s CEO is a former managing director at Goldman Sachs. TNC partners with multinational corporations such as Alcoa, Vale do Rio Doce, Cargill, CocaCola, and others, through its Corporate Leadership Circle or through direct project funding, and its programs are increasingly funded directly by these corporations (see website: <http://www.nature.org/about-us/working-with-companies/companies-we-work-with/index.htm>). TNC is by far the largest-grossing American environmental nonprofit, taking in US \$1.65 billion in 2012, with the next-closest environmental nonprofit, WWF, taking in only US \$185 million ([http://www.forbes.com/top-charities/list/#page:1\\_sort:0\\_direction:asc\\_search:\\_filter:environmentSLASHanimal](http://www.forbes.com/top-charities/list/#page:1_sort:0_direction:asc_search:_filter:environmentSLASHanimal)). For their Responsible Soy Program, in 2011 alone, Cargill paid \$3 million to TNC (see <http://www.cargill.com/news/releases/2011/NA3048015.jsp>).

<sup>(10)</sup> <http://www.nature.org/about-us/working-with-companies/what-we-do/index.htm>

For another example of this ‘lesser evil’ argument, see Garrett’s comments in the debate between Garrett and Baletti in *Nature* in 2011.

### 3.1.1 *'The carrot' in theory*

Production certification seeks to internalize existing externalities in the production process by setting standards, and verifying that they have been met (Guthman, 2007). In these agreements a third party (TNC/GTS—Grupo Trabalho da Soja) verifies whether Amazonian soy producers have deforested beyond the legally permitted area to produce soy on their property.<sup>(11)</sup> Participation and compliance with the agreements are voluntary. In Santarém, however, because Avis Pará, the only regional buyer besides Cargill, only purchases approximately 10% of regionally produced beans, soy growers cannot sell their crop without participating in Responsible Soy. After Greenpeace's campaign, banks stopped lending to farmers without land title as collateral. Given that at least 67% of land in the state of Pará is not titled (Oliveira, 2009), for most farmers Cargill is the only entity capable of extending the credit necessary for industrial production. To access this credit, farmers must participate in the program. In other words, the carrot is also the stick.

Verification by a trusted source is key to making believable claims, because there is no quality, such as taste or appearance, that would make it possible to differentiate 'responsible' soy from other soy. ENGOs who can transfer their consumer confidence to the producer are thus indispensable in the governing relation. Given that Amazonian soy has no exchange value on the international market (ie, cannot be sold) without this certification, these programs function as the gateway to the access and distribution of value and ENGOs as the gatekeepers.

### 3.1.2 *'The carrot' in practice*

Both programs set rules for producing soy: the Moratorium does this for the Amazon biome and Responsible Soy in the municipalities of Santarém and Belterra (hereafter the 'Santarém uplands'). Originally, the Moratorium stipulated that farmers: not deforest new land for soy; comply with the forest code; reforest areas illegally deforested; and hold land title within two years of entering the program. Purchasing companies signed the National Pact to Eradicate Slavery and the GTS (a multistakeholder civil society soy working group) was to develop a verification mechanism. The Moratorium has been renewed each year since then and currently extends through 2014, with the Environmental Ministry signing on and terms becoming progressively more vague and favorable to agroindustry. That is, since 2008 the terms of agreement state that: agribusiness will 'encourage' producers to comply with the Forest Code and Ecological Economic Zoning (ZEE); GTS will provide technical assistance; the federal government will prioritize environmental licensing and rural land registration in soy-producing areas, promote the implementation of the ZEE; and both GTS and the federal government will procure and defend market-based conservation-remuneration mechanisms in national and international forums—terms which generally support agribusiness's position (Terms of Agreement for all years are available at <http://www.abiove.org.br/>).

TNC's terms of agreement with Cargill change yearly and are not made public. According to program director Benito Guerrero, the 2009 agreement stipulated that farmers must have submitted an application to register their land in the rural registry. Farmers need not receive a response from SEMA because, following Guerrero, neither TNC nor the farmers could affect the fact that SEMA does not have the capacity (nor the political will) to respond. Farmers must also adhere to the forest code and comply with the ZEE. When TNC finds a farmer violating environmental laws, it reports them to Cargill—effectively enforcing the program terms of the agreement rather than specifically enforcing existing laws.

Because certification hinges on not deforesting, creating the means to monitor soy-related deforestation has been key to the programs. Until late 2009, however, no system was developed

<sup>(11)</sup> Since 1996 (Provisional Measure 1.511) Brazil's forest code mandated that Amazonian landowners maintain 80% of any given property as a reserve. The Ecological Economic Zoning Plan reduced this to 50% within the BR-163's impact area in areas previously deforested (Pará State Law 7.243/09)

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that could monitor deforestation at a scale smaller than 100 ha. Given that most farms in the Santarém area are between 200 and 1500 ha in size, it is likely that monitoring at this scale failed to detect deforestation on some soy farms. By late 2009 TNC had developed a system to monitor deforestation on a farm-by-farm basis for the Responsible Soy program area only. Guerrero stressed that there was no other entity with TNC's technological sophistication: no one else was monitoring any soy production at the necessary grain of analysis.

Both programs emphasize the Western Pará ZEE as key environmental legislation. The controversial ZEE rezoned land use in western Pará, designating most areas proximate to the BR-163 for 'intensification and consolidation' of agroindustry, despite the fact that much of this area is of disputed ownership, is claimed by indigenous and traditional people and Quilombolas, or contains Agrarian Reform settlements—where most ongoing conflicts are located (Baletti, 2012; Cohenca, 2009).<sup>(12)</sup> The ZEE also reduced the required legal reserve on properties in areas already deforested from 80% to 50%. This means, for example, that farms may be in full compliance with the ZEE, and thus both programs, but still may be located inside of Agrarian Reform settlements, on areas claimed by traditional and indigenous people which have not yet been protected, or on large amounts of land in western Pará that remain untenured, unprotected, and/or already inhabited by smallholders. In fact, these programs avoid the issue of land tenure—while acknowledging it as the central factor in deforestation (GTS, 2007). UFPA researchers working with TNC in 2009 concluded that a large percentage of its farmers did not have tenure (Barreto, 2009). When the negotiations of soy farmers for that tenure with INCRA failed, land tenure was eliminated as a requirement from the program.

TNC/Cargill submitted a Draft Terms of Agreement between soy growers, Cargill/TNC and the relevant state agencies (INCRA, IBAMA, SECTAM—later SEMA, and the Ministerio Público) to those agencies on 2 February 2006. In this draft they proposed that, rather than forcing grower compliance with existing laws, these agencies change a series of laws and policies to accommodate soy farmers. Considering the "relevance and social and economic impact of [soy] agriculture production in the national and regional level", they argued the agencies should facilitate soy development by regularizing the property rights of all soy farmers participating in the TNC program, reducing all of their existing fines to 10% of their economic value, accepting geographic and production data provided by TNC as 'official' data, and expediting authorizations for deforestation. They also proposed that farmers be permitted to relocate the legal reserve, 80% of a given piece of property at the time (prior to ZEE), off of the property and inside *already-existing* reserve areas. This relocation would theoretically allow soy farmers to be in compliance with the voluntary certification programs while deforesting up to 100% of their property. These proposed terms, which were ultimately rejected by the agencies, raise doubts as to whether the purpose of governance is to implement existing laws better or to change them.

### **3.2 The effects of soy governance**

#### *3.2.1 Environmental effects*

Six years into the Soy Moratorium and Responsible Soy programs, their effectiveness in stopping soy-related deforestation remains unclear. Claims of success tend to be exaggerated, based on partial data, misleading rhetoric, or assumed correlations. Although until late 2009 no monitoring system capable of detecting deforestation on the small and medium-sized soy farms common in Amazonia existed, program adherents claimed success. Greenpeace (2009a) announced, "thanks to the Soy Moratorium, soy is no longer the chief driver of

<sup>(12)</sup> For example, in the indigenous aldeia of Açaizal, they are actively struggling against soy incursion on their territory (interview, November 2011). The entire Faroeste corrupt land scheme was inside of Agrarian Reform settlements.

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Amazonian deforestation”, a problematic claim both because of this lack of data and because soy was *never* the primary driver of Amazonian deforestation. This distinction belongs to cattle production, driving near 80% of deforestation. Researchers produce different and contradictory assessments of soy-related deforestation (Coelho, 2008; Cohenca, 2005; Weinhold et al, 2010). Leading evidence-based analyses link any slowdown in soy-related deforestation during this period to falling global prices rather than to market-based conservation measures (Malhi et al, 2008; Nepstad et al, 2006). TNC does not make their data on Responsible Soy public, so we cannot evaluate it, but it also participates in the Moratorium.

The most recent analysis, by researchers from the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) and Aboive (an agroindustry consortium) (Rudorff et al, 2011), asserts that it is “likely” that the moratorium has had “an inhibitory effect” (page 185) on soy expansion. The basis for this assertion is unclear, given that their data show Amazonian areas deforested for soy *increasing* from 2008 to 2010 (with the highest increase in Pará). They attribute this increase to: changes in their methodology (eg, increased capacity to identify deforestation at smaller scales and thus more smaller areas monitored); more favorable global market conditions for soy export; and more time elapsed between deforestation and soy planting. Their overall conclusion was that it was ‘premature’ to link lowered deforestation rates with the Soy Moratorium (page 198).

Their third point—the lag time between deforestation and soy production—is important because it marks the broader limitations of the Soy Moratorium/Responsible Soy approach to capture the effects of Amazonian soy. This ‘lag time’ exists because farmers usually first plant rice for two years after deforesting to prepare the soil for soy. A methodology focusing exclusively on the forest-to-soy transformation artificially narrows the measureable effects, both because it tests only for specific moments in the cycle of production (eg, when soy is actually planted) and because it isolates soy from the broader processes of regional industrial extractivism.

Such limits were apparent, for example, in the Chavas community, where I interviewed three southern Brazilian families who initially bought and cleared land for soy farming, but instead produced rice and cattle. Other soy farmers there, failing to turn a profit, sold their land to Massafra, the neighboring cattle farmer, who cleared it for pasture. Similar cases abound across the region (Baletti, 2012; CPT, interview November 2010). Engaging in multiple and shifting economic strategies is common practice in Amazonia—even for larger producers. Addressing soy expansion narrowly as an issue of soy-to-forest land-cover change fails to capture the complex links among industries, regional development planning (PACs), environmental legislation (ZEE), and land-tenure policies (Terra Legal). As a result, even if such programs actually mitigated this transformation, broader and directly related environmental issues may continue or be exacerbated (what might have been soy becomes cattle, logging, mining, etc).

### 3.2.2 *Social effects*

When Lira Maia brought the soy-viability maps to Mato Grosso’s farmers, he neglected to inform them that they were not maps of an empty landscape—the proverbial *tabula rasa* (Hecht, 2011)—on which to inscribe a soy future. *Colonos*, the smallholder farmers who had migrated from Brazil’s northeast during the 1960s–80s, largely inhabit this land (Moran, 1981). Government withdrawal from the region in the 1980s left them feeling, as they described in interviews, “abandoned”, their communities “forgotten”, and the people “stuck”, waiting for the roads, credit, technical assistance, and energy that after forty years have still not arrived.

In the late 1990s, capitalized farmers, often managers from Mato Grosso's megafarms, began arriving in pursuit of the promised cheap land and low transport costs, buying up smallholder land to establish medium-sized (200–1000 ha) farms in pursuit of “a good, tranquil, rural life”, as one farmer put it, that nonetheless displaces existing communities. Land for one soy farm generally occupies the land of many smallholder families.<sup>(13)</sup> If soy was planted on all of the 500 000 hectares of soy-viable areas designated on EMBRAPA's (1999) map—the stated goal of SIRSAN and the soy farmers—nearly all smallholder agriculture there would be displaced.

Titled land has more value, but is rare and the soy farmers interviewed reported purchasing mainly land with documents of possession (*posse*) but not title (see also Barretto, 2009). Large cash payments provided incentives to sell: as one *colono* who sold his land for 48 000 Reais (approximately US \$16 000) explained, it was “much more money than I could make planting manioc.” As smallholders began to sell their land, incentives for neighbors to sell increased because, they reported, the social networks that they lived in were broken, schools closed, pesticide on neighboring soy fields drove pests and weeds into their fields, and water sources were polluted.<sup>(14)</sup> PSA (2007) estimates that twenty-six communities disappeared in the Santarém uplands between 1998 and 2007. In ‘disappearing communities’, remaining residents lamented the deterioration of infrastructure, the destruction of their communities, and the loss of their families. “Life” one interviewee explained, “is difficult but it was not always this way.” Another added, “[prior to the land sales] my whole family lived here, we had a school, a bus to Santarém, a road. Now it is only us.” The residents who remained had generally never received offers to buy.

Interview data revealed that those who left these communities tended to move short distances (2–50 km), closer to urban or transportation infrastructure, and often along the BR-163 highway. Land sale prices varied widely, from less than 100 Reais per hectare to upwards of 2000 (the Brazilian *Real* has fluctuated between US \$1.8 and \$3.6 since 1998), largely depending on the time of sale (earlier sales yielded lower prices) and the security of property rights (titled land demands higher prices than other forms of possession).<sup>(15)</sup> Families interviewed who sold land all purchased smaller lots than those they had previously inhabited, and usually much smaller (eg, sold 60 hectares and purchased 1 ha, or sold 40 ha and purchased an urban or periurban lot measuring 30 × 40 m). When purchasing new land, they paid between five and ten times as much per hectare as they had received, for land that always had less secure property rights. In summary, smallholders generally sold titled land or land with some type of legal possession for a much smaller and more expensive plot of land with no legal property rights. In all cases, the only document that people received for their new land was a purchase receipt from the seller. Sellers' youngest

<sup>(13)</sup> Smallholders generally farm a few hectares at a time and hold anywhere from approximately 10 ha to 100 ha. On smallholder agricultural practices in Santarém see Futemma and Brondizio (2003). The numbers of smallholder families replaced by soy farmers in six communities were as follows: in Prata 65 of the original 75 families sold their land to three soy farmers; in Paca, all 45 families sold land to one soy farmer; in Fé em Deus 15 of 30 families sold their land to one farmer; in Tracoá, 35 of 42 families sold their land to one farmer; and the approximately 20 families of Açaizerio do Prata and São Raiumundo sold their land to two farmers. See also Steward (2007) for similar numbers in different communities.

<sup>(14)</sup> Approximately two out of every three interviewees reported problems with pests after the arrival of soy farmers. Three families who had moved away from their communities also reported that their children had become ill when the soy fields were sprayed. The Rural Workers' Union, CPT, and PSA also report widespread pollution. Only one community still had a functioning (elementary) school and most reported degraded infrastructure.

<sup>(15)</sup> For example, a family from Tracoá, with titled land, reported selling 60 ha for 60 000 Reais in 2004. A family with *posse* in Tracoá sold 20 ha for 10 000 Reais that same year.

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children tended to move with them, while older children often went to Santarém or to other rural areas. Family income upon moving to urban areas always included at least one form of government subsidy, usually either a retirement pension (*aposentadoria*) or Bolsa Família. Those who moved to other rural areas continued to plant manioc (the region's staple crop), while those who moved to urban/periurban areas no longer engaged in subsistence agriculture beyond small home gardens.

Many development practitioners in Amazonia, including Responsible Soy's program director, argue that subsistence agriculture is 'unproductive', that it threatens Amazonian conservation, and that it would be better replaced by the more 'productive' (ie, producing surplus) agroindustry (see also World Bank, 2008). The assumption is that nonagricultural life is an improvement, that profit-oriented production is better and/or more secure than subsistence, and that urban employment even exists—which in Santarém is not the case. Short-term out and return migration and relocation for waged employment or access to better land is common in these communities (Winklerprins, 2002). The disappearance of the communities that have consistently formed a rural safety net when food prices increase, or when other types of employment become scarce, however, is uncommon. Such increased precarity and marginalization increasing with soy expansion parallels effects that Gutberlet (1999) observed in Mato Grosso with the arrival of agroindustry there, albeit on a greater scale.

### 3.2.3 *Political effects*

In some cases, soy farmers/smallholder antagonism manifested in the direct conflict typical of recent regional history, where soy farmers forced *colonos* off their land, burned their houses, or took land by creating false titles (Greenpeace, 2006, Steward, 2007). More commonly, however, the displacement and dispersal of rural communities occurred through land sales by smallholders to soy farmers, both voluntary and coerced. Smallholder reception of soy farmers ranged from quite receptive ("it was by the grace of God that the soy farmers appeared and bought our land") to resigned ("if I had the money to stay, I would not have sold, but I did not have the conditions to refuse the offer, so now we are here [in smaller plot]"). Most soy farmers were on fairly good terms with displaced families, providing services in their new locations to incentivize land sales, or occasional work and infrastructure maintenance for those left behind, reproducing the clientelist relations of dependence and control that have marked the region since the rubber boom.

Smallholders struggling against the larger negative effects of soy expansion sought out the STTR who, along with the Pastoral Land Commission, organized a campaign against selling land to soy farmers and ultimately became a signatory to the Soy Moratorium. Such alliances, STTR explained, were strategically necessary to access the type of resources adequate to dealing with a transnational adversary such as Cargill. As the STTR vice-president explained: "How can we fight against Cargill? We have no resources. We don't have access to the national and international media. Greenpeace and PSA (Projeto Saúde e Alegria, a regional NGO) are important partners because it is only with them that we have the resources to fight against Cargill."

These resources came in the form of the Soy Moratorium, and in an NGO-led participatory mapping project, where Greenpeace and PSA partnered with STTR, training some residents from impacted communities to use GPS to map regional soy impacts. At the Greenpeace map-release events in Santarém and at the 2009 World Social Forum, ENGOS, STTR, and academics hailed this participatory map as *the* key tool to battling Cargill, soy farmers, and agribusiness in the Amazon, "join[ing] traditional knowledge and modern mapping techniques" so that local people are empowered to "struggle for their rights and participate in the management of their own territories" (Greenpeace, 2009b).

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Recent literature on participatory mapping has complicated such celebratory tropes of the liberatory potential of participatory mapping (Wainwright and Bryan, 2009). Indeed, issues arising around map production and use indicate a more ambivalent, and even negative, outcome. For example, responding to my questions about the process of map-making, one participant explained that “many people” dropped out of the project because they “were afraid of conflict. They didn’t want to walk onto their neighbors’ soy fields with a GPS.” The map’s potential to generate unresolvable conflict was a theme that recurred in other interviews. Another respondent echoed: “No, I did not learn this business with the GPS, for what? To invite conflict to [the community]?” As a result, “there were many things that were not mapped” (interviews, Fé em Deus, March 2009).

PSA/Greenpeace distributed the map to some local NGOs and posted it in STTR. However, it was not used to make any legal claims or for any management purposes by grassroots organizations. On the contrary, only Cargill has utilized this map for any official purposes: incorporating the map into their port environmental impact assessment to argue that soy’s positive impacts for economic growth would outweigh its *minimal* negative social impacts. That is, Cargill used the map *against* the communities’ interests, ‘including’ their own data in the RIMA (environmental impact assessment) to make an argument directly opposed to that made by the communities themselves (see Ambientare—Soluções em Meio Ambiente, 2012, page 20).

In short, the existent power relations limited the utility of participatory mapping as a tool for marginalized actors to ‘participate’ at all, let alone for that participation to provide a meaningful role in environmental governance, especially as there is no guarantee that participation has any relation to their desired outcomes. While serving Cargill’s interest was certainly an unintended, contrary effect of the mapping project, it raises the larger issue of how the social impacts of soy articulated with the political project of soy governance.

The map was a key element in representing, and seeking to address, soy expansion as a social issue which figured prominently in the Moratorium campaign, at least in part because it was key to articulating with localized social movement organizations, such as STTR and the FDA (Amazon Defense Front), who were actively campaigning against soy in Santarém. In fact, legitimacy of the Soy Moratorium as a multistakeholder agreement, like most contemporary conservation initiatives, hinged on this inclusion of localized actors. In the actual multistakeholder negotiations, however, localized actors reported that their positions remained marginalized. The FDA withdrew from the Moratorium after participating in three meetings, explaining that “they [agribusiness] laughed at our proposal for ‘soy zero’ (no Amazonian soy production).” Another FDA interviewee elaborated: “there was never any intention of considering our position.” Although the other civil society organizations, such as Greenpeace, were sympathetic to FDA’s proposals to expand the Moratorium to include other extractive development, to lengthen the time frame, to eliminate transgenics, and to make the Moratorium enforceable by law, the proposals were not included because they were perceived as too antagonistic to the delicate negotiations. The FDA, who also found it too deeply contradictory to negotiate with Cargill regarding the Moratorium while Cargill continued to operate its illegal port, withdrew, calling the Moratorium a ‘farce’ (interviews March 2009; also FDA’s Open Letter on the Moratorium, April 2007). Ultimately locally relevant social issues were also eliminated and the Moratorium, like Responsible Soy, is focused narrowly on the issue of deforestation.

The ‘civil society’ representatives participating in the Moratorium are the ENGOS and the STTR. The CPT, the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (Landless Workers’ Movement), Via Campesina, and Fase (a human rights NGO) all opted out of the Moratorium, stating in a (2009) letter that it would “only serve to legalize soy in the region.” That STTR continued in the Moratorium generated a rupture within local antisoy organizing.



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STTR and Greenpeace, echoing TNC's arguments discussed above, explained that, although the Moratorium is not their dream solution, governance cannot be constructed overnight, and negotiation (including concessions) is the only option for stopping transnational corporations from destroying the Amazon and thus a first step in a process that all actors must support, while FDA argued that the choosing 'the lesser evil' was the first step in sanctioning that destruction (interviews STTR, FDA, 2009; and public debate observed at World Social Forum, 2009).

Although their mechanisms are somewhat different, the political effects of the Soy Moratorium and Responsible Soy in Santarém cannot be analytically separated. They both emerge from the same controversy and framing, and embody a similar philosophic approach enacted by some of the same actors. As Cook and Kothari (2001) demonstrate with respect to participation more broadly, it is an old trope to attribute justice to participation. What I have shown in addition is that this trope is deployed in multiple ways and evokes particular assumptions about the meaning and practices of political action and has significant political effects. While, on the one hand, including smallholders as 'stakeholders' in the need to mitigate effects of soy was key to generating demand for governance, in the Responsible Soy program, grassroots actors were literally eliminated as stakeholders, and in the Moratorium they were effectively eliminated. In both cases, by locating the effective site of politics at the transnational scale, the possibility of a 'solution' emerging from below was also effectively eliminated, rendering grassroots actors marginal or even irrelevant to the process, giving them the option to opt in or out of the now green neoextractive project, with the broader effect of neutralizing antagonism and dividing resistance.

#### **4 Conclusion**

The emergence of environmental governance in Amazonia over the past two decades has substantively shifted Amazonian politics, creating spaces in which to negotiate and reconcile issues of environment and development. The 'sustainable' and 'participatory' frameworks that defined the 'governance' approach and which emerged, at least in part, from within networks of localized social movements and international environmentalists, however, ultimately failed to meet the needs of neoextractive development (by, for instance, keeping land out of markets). Manifest in the Soy Moratorium, the Responsible Soy and other similar programs, we see what I argue is a second shift in the organization of contemporary Amazonian environmental governance structures and discourses. This emerging paradigm reworks the terrain of environmental politics by framing the problems at hand and the proposed solutions to those problems in a way that renders irrelevant the localized social movements and communities who were previously central actors in these politics. This move limits the potential for the views and politics 'from below' to intervene in governance, even while marginally including them, thus setting the conditions of possibility for the greening of neoextractivism or 'green capitalism'.

This new platform is supported by a civil society apparatus produced through networks that move from green corporate initiatives through the World Bank, the Brazilian National Development Bank, to 'big conservation', and disperse through a broad complex of local civil society organizations. The coupling of representative organizations in 'partnerships' with Cargill, Aboive, and others, mediated by organizations such as TNC, has gone a long way toward positing green development as the only alternative and delegitimizing oppositional or alternative forms of politics—such as those that literally remained outside at the public audience for Cargill's port—and thus facilitating the continued expansion of neoextractive projects. Much like the neoliberal agenda as a whole, the field of politics in the Amazon has largely been reduced to issues of governance, sustainability, and participation. At this historical moment, when neoextractivism is rapidly becoming the norm across Amazonia

and Latin American more broadly, often in the form of ‘green development’ initiatives, in this paper I have sought to unpack the way in which a very particular normative solution is enacted, with the intention of opening a conversation about the limitations of that approach and to make the ongoing ‘other’ forms of politics visible.

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