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# GreeningBrazil

*Environmental*

*Activism*

*in State*

*and*

*Society*

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We dedicate this book to the next generation—  
Melissa and Laura—

and the next wave of  
Brazilian environmentalism

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## Amazônia

When we speak of “the Amazon” or Amazônia, we are using a shorthand for an immensely diverse region whose geophysical, hydrological, ecological, and socio-historical characteristics have long interacted in complex ways. It became Amazônia through a political process of spatial organization. Drawing upon the work of Bertha Becker, we can say that this space was most visibly organized by exogenous forces—by the state, which built networks first of telegraph lines and then of roads to link the region to national and global markets and security apparatuses, replacing long-standing river networks. Less obviously, however, the region retained pockets of self-organization, with population groups that maintained a certain autonomy from the broader disciplining process. The area that the military regime designated “Legal Amazônia” (*Amazônia Legal*) now comprises nine states. From the outside, we see mainly what they share: forest, boom-bust cycles of resource exploitation, roads, and waves of migration. From the inside, highly differentiated social and political processes, ecological characteristics, and timing have produced different outcomes. Looking more closely at demographic patterns, we discover that almost 60 percent of the population of Legal Amazônia lives in cities, a fact that inverts most peoples’ perceptions of the region (Browder and Godfrey 1997, 2). Beyond its ecological effects, urbanization has an undeniable bearing on the nature of local political organization.

Political struggle in the Amazon, for much of the last century, has been about realizing the economic value of the region’s resources and taking advantage of and populating its vast spaces. The national policies that promoted these ends ignored the people who lived in the region when the Portuguese arrived, and over the last fifty years they have even ignored the existence of previous waves of migrants, who rather than settle in cities

continued to depend on the extraction of forest products. As successive majorities rolled over the ones left behind in the last invasion, and a kind of social Darwinism held sway among those in power, protection of the forest became associated with protecting the region’s minorities—people who pursue livelihoods which depend on the forest’s continuing health: rubber tappers, indigenous peoples, brazil nut gatherers, artisan fishers, and the like.

By working with these groups, different sets of public authorities—the national environmental ministry and public interest groups—seek to claim space for a competing vision of regional development, with alternative networks of public and private, national, local, and international relations. The politics of protecting traditional populations has been an important point of entry into the region for external public authorities, but the cost of ignoring majorities is high in a democracy. For ordinary people working in agriculture, the lumber industry, commerce, mining, and the like, it can be difficult to understand why federal programs and foreign donors focus on small communities in the forest, thus opening themselves to the demagogic rhetoric of politicians opposing the donors’ aid policies. Genuine protection of forest resources requires local support from public and private actors whose support carries weight with others. For all that the region’s problems have been treated as socioeconomic, they are essentially political, requiring a struggle among competing visions of the region’s future. More specifically, solving problems depends on state building, the creation of legitimate public authority strong enough to confront the lawless and predatory practices of those whose only interest is to grab as much wealth as possible in the shortest time. This is a tall order on such a territorial scale, particularly at a historical moment when state building is no longer in fashion. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that extra-regional support should have been critical for struggles to protect forests in the Amazon, or that the definition of strategies should have been difficult. Even more striking is the role of contingent events, like the two murders that we recounted at the beginning of this book, in disrupting patterns just enough that determined activists can transform a momentary breach into a window of opportunity.

Understanding political interactions in the region requires understanding the institutional context of Amazonian politics—in which crucial actors are not merely environmentalists and policy makers in the abstract but munic-

pal, state, and national governments—and the interactions among the actors as well as the other influences upon them. During the late 1980s and 1990s the developmental model was in manifest crisis, and the vacuum created by the politics of state absence was filled by privatized violence committed by local bosses or growing criminal networks. Nonetheless, this was also a period when those resisting the dominant model developed alliances, information networks, and linkages to other parts of Brazil and the world. By accelerating the flow of information and resources through these networks, activists hoped gradually to enlarge the space available for endogenously generated development alternatives. More recently the Cardoso and Lula governments made efforts to resume a centrally defined policy process for the Amazon, even as parts of their own governments did what they could to either prevent this process or mitigate its effects. Although they are still much weaker than the forces they challenge, the resisters have taken their struggle inside the state itself, and challenge it from within as well as without.

#### Geography and Geopolitics of the Amazon

Amazônia is immense—in size, mineral wealth, biodiversity, and freshwater, and in its hold on the imagination. It occupies one twentieth of the earth's surface, two-fifths of South America, and three-fifths of Brazil, and has one-fifth of the earth's supply of freshwater. It includes parts of the territories of seven countries, but Brazil's 63.4 percent is by far the largest share (Becker 1990, 9). The colossal and diverse visions of the Amazon that still hold sway in national politics profoundly affect the region's politics: for all the exploration and settlement, for all the exactness of satellite imaging, the Amazon remains a vast repository for the grandiose dreams of individuals, private firms and other economic actors, and the nation-state itself. It has aroused the imaginations of enough illustrious foreigners to make Brazilian suspicions of foreign designs on the region understandable, if not always accurate. Nationally, it has served as a potent symbol of Brazil's potential power. If Brazil was *o país do futuro*, the Amazon basin was its *paisagem*, its ticket to being the country of the future. It was an imaginary landscape of wealth there for the taking—a “land without people for people without land,” as the Brazilian military said, whose indigenous peoples and other local populations were quite simply painted out of the picture.

Just as Amazônia's economies have known boom and bust cycles, periods of geopolitical significance have alternated with periods of relative neglect. In colonial times the region was explored by travelers seeking medicines and other products for the European market. During the nineteenth century soldiers and missionaries moved into the region, relocating indigenous populations and proposing to “civilize” them through evangelization (Procópio 1992, 155–235). From the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth there was a boom in the extraction of latex from rubber trees to feed the industrializing economies of the United States and Europe (Weinstein 1983; Dean 1987). The boom ended when the British, who had taken rubber seedlings from the Brazilian Amazon to Kew Gardens, successfully produced latex on plantations in their Southeast Asian colonies. This British perfidy made an early contribution to a continuing narrative about foreign designs on the region's wealth (*a cobiça internacional*) that fixed Amazônia's place in the discursive construction of Brazilian nationalism (Reis 1982). At the beginning of the twentieth century the region was linked to the rest of Brazil by the telegraph, and many of its territories were demarcated by the mission led by Marechal Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon, just as the rubber boom was ending. In the 1920s and 1930s Amazônia became an agricultural frontier and area for mineral prospecting.

The United States funded a brief resurgence in the rubber economy, to supply Allied needs for rubber when the Japanese occupied Britain's Southeast Asian colonies, but it ended its funding in 1947. In 1953 the developmentalist government of Getúlio Vargas set up the Agency for the Valorization of the Amazon (SPVEA), with a special fund designated in the Constitution of 1946 to finance development projects there. Under Kubitschek the Belém-Brasília highway, connecting the Amazon's main port city with the newly built national capital, became the first major ground link between the mouth of the Amazon River and southern Brazil. Gradually, over the next decade, migrants began to try farming in the region, and many went to seek their fortunes by prospecting for gold and other minerals (Foweraker 1981; Schmink and Wood 1992, 49–53).

The generals who took power in 1964 saw the region in geopolitical terms, laid out lucidly in General Golbery do Couto e Silva's *Geopolítica do Brasil* (1967). In a global battle between barbarism and civilization, national integration was a paramount condition for the defense of the civilized West.

The enemy was as likely to come from within as from without, and the role of the armed forces was thus to establish not only secure borders but also a secure and developed society guided by a national security state. The Amazon basin—sparsely populated and of difficult access but a potential repository of unimaginable riches—could only become impregnable to subversion if settled and developed economically. The geopolitical vision drove public policy from the 1960s to the late 1980s, with little consideration for the Amazonian ecosystems and their varied occupants. The generals were determined to develop, populate, and extend their institutional control over the largely unmapped and unincorporated Amazon.

In 1966 they established an Agency for Amazonian Development (SUDAM) to implement a web of fiscal incentives, subsidized credit, and colonization packages which brought both small settlers and large businesses to the Amazon region (Bunker 1985; Mahar 1989; Binswanger 1991; Almeida 1992; Redwood 1993). On SUDAM's eighth anniversary the agency published a document which approvingly cited former president Getulio Vargas's vision of the Amazon: "To see Amazonia is the heart's desire of the youth of the country. . . . To conquer the land, and tame the waters, subjugate the jungle, these have been our tasks. And in this centuries-old battle we have won victory upon victory. The Amazon, under the fertile impulse of your will and your labour, will not be merely another chapter in the history of the earth, but, like other great rivers, will become a chapter in the history of civilization" (SUDAM n.d.).

To open the region for mineral extraction and industrial development (exemplified in the Grande Carajás program), the military government began an extensive program of road construction (Becker 1982; Becker 2001).<sup>1</sup> The idea was to integrate Amazônia into the national territory, make its vast resources accessible for economic development, and secure political control over territory, sealing it off from developments in neighboring countries, to prevent the establishment of revolutionary *focos* in the region. Roads would bring in more settlers and make possible large investments in infrastructure like the Tucuruí Dam. The roads brought changes to the region, valorizing manufacturing, especially in Manaus but also in Belém and Santarém, and mining in Rondônia, Amapá, and especially Carajás. Carajás is an area in the south of Pará of around ten thousand square kilometers, surrounded by mountains four to six hundred meters tall. In 1955 Bethlehem Steel had

begun to export large quantities of manganese from the region, joined in 1966 by Codim. Then in 1967 U.S. Steel opened up an extraordinarily rich vein of iron ore. At the end of the 1960s the military government pushed U.S. Steel into an uneasy association with the Brazilian parastatal Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (CVRD), which had been formed in the 1940s to mine iron ore in Minas Gerais. The association lasted until 1977, when U.S. Steel pulled out, receiving a large indemnity for doing so (Hall 1991; Roberts and Thanos 2003, 150–51).

The Carajás story, and especially the relationship between CVRD and U.S. Steel, illustrate the ambiguities in the continuing contest over the nationalist mantle as played out in the Amazon. Since the military government saw iron ore as a critical resource from a national security standpoint, it did not want to leave it entirely in the hands of a U.S. company, and it forced U.S. Steel to accept state participation in the form of the CVRD. Nonetheless, because its national security doctrine was deeply anticommunist and thus—in geostrategic terms—pro-American, the military government welcomed multinational investment, and contributed to the creation of an enclave in Carajás (Becker 1982).

The project's opponents also appealed to nationalism, condemning the alienation of strategic resources, and the export of unprocessed ore at low prices for the use of foreign companies which would compete with Brazilian industries (Pinto 1982; Valverde 1989). The conservation organization CNDDA (discussed in chapter 2), whose founders included military officers purged from the armed forces for their political views after the coup of 1964, was a leading proponent of this left-nationalist position.<sup>2</sup> The CNDDA was founded in 1965, in reaction to a set of reports associated with the Hudson Institute proposing an extensive system of "great lakes" and hydroelectric dams in the Amazon to satisfy the energy needs of the hemisphere. These proposals were interpreted at the time as expressing U.S. government policy, and many Brazilians still believe them to have been so, although we have never been able to find real evidence to that effect (Keck 2002, 47).

Over the next decade the composition of the agricultural frontier also changed. Between 1965 and 1974 subsistence farmers along the Belém-Brasília highway were expelled to make way for enormous cattle ranches, whose pastures required the burning of huge swaths of forest. Many of the early small-farmer settlements organized by the federal Colonization and

Land Reform Institute (INCRA) in Pará state failed quickly, causing their settlers to join others in pushing back the frontier, only to be expelled by force from their new lands by the hired guns of land grabbers from Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Paraná, and Goiás (Bunker 1985).

Starting in 1974 the Geisel government embraced an agribusiness model of large ranches and other agricultural enterprises that soon made Amazônia a major beef exporter. Not only individuals but also industrial and service firms from the South took up ranching during this period—Volkswagen, Varig, and others. Workers, lured to the region with extravagant promises of future wealth, cleared forest to make pasture and were let go to make their own way. They built new towns and found temporary work, and many got caught up in the gold rush of the 1980s. Land struggles in the 1970s and early 1980s grew increasingly violent, especially in the south of Pará, the west of Maranhão, and the north of Tocantins (Arnt and Schwartzman 1992, 104).

The transition to democracy did not improve matters; if anything they worsened, as military control gave way to a power vacuum that unscrupulous actors were eager to exploit. Bertha Becker counts 1985—when civilian government was restored in Brazil—as a pivotal year for the Amazon in two respects: it marked the exhaustion of the national-developmental model propelled by state intervention in the region's economy and territory, and the formation of the National Rubber Tappers' Council, along with the beginning of an endogenous push to develop an alternative model based on local needs (Becker 2001, 141). We discuss the endogenous process later in this chapter; here we are considering the collapse of the exogenous one.

During the 1980s the Amazon, especially Rondônia, served as an escape valve for displaced farmers and opportunity seekers from other regions. The process by which the state provided incentives for appropriating and valorizing space was not strong enough to ensure its formal ordering. As migrants, entrepreneurs, opportunists, and scoundrels flooded the region, the absence of institutional authority and especially of a regulated system of land tenure rewarded the strong and subjected or silenced the weak. Cattle ranching expanded, taking advantage of a stipulation in land law that equated land clearing with effective occupation, an aberration not remedied until the 1990s (Mahar 1989). The cycle of predatory practices, exemplified in the annual "burning season" in which vast swaths of forest were cleared for

pasture or farmland by burning, proved hard to control. Although this was partly due to a lack of appropriate personnel, information, and equipment, the bigger problem was political. State and local governments in the region had no desire to stop the practices that were causing such consternation elsewhere, and Brazil's constitutional structure gave them ample political resources with which to resist.

### Institutional Context

When foreigners decry the continuing destruction of the Amazon forest, they generally end with an exhortation that Brazil must *do* something about it. The exhortation stems from three false assumptions, along with an implicit belief that the system of state planning and investment in regional infrastructure and development incentives that characterized the military period remains in force and can be redirected toward constructive ends, when in fact the model has already collapsed. The first false assumption is that there is a unitary public authority, in contravention of the constitutional division of power and revenues among federal, state, and municipal governments. Second is the assumption that there is a single policy, or at the very least a keystone policy, regulating or at least capable of regulating the seemingly relentless process of deforestation. And finally, there is an assumption that the state (at some level) is effectively present and capable of determining the public interest and exercising authority in furtherance of it.

Reacting to an authoritarian government by means of which the military had drastically centralized power and resources, the writers of Brazil's Constitution of 1988 strengthened its federalist components, mandating redistribution of a large portion of tax revenues from the federal government to states and municipalities. Ever since, budget deficits have alternated with periods of fiscal austerity, producing complicated bargaining between federal and state governments (Samuels 2003). Besides exercising power in their own jurisdictions, state governors generally have a lot of influence with, if not control of, their states' congressional delegations. The overrepresentation of the northern and northeastern states in the Brazilian National Congress gives them added influence when negotiating votes for or against federal government programs (Selcher 1998).

Presidentialism in a multiparty democracy confronts Brazilian presidents

with a perennial problem of constructing a majority coalition to pass their programs. This is a costly process, its price generally paid in control over federal jobs and constituency goods, and often paid over and over again. The model of a "politicized state" proposed by Douglas Chalmers in 1977 remains strikingly relevant today in describing Brazilian national politics. Because of the overrepresentation of smaller states, their deputies are courted especially diligently, and often the state governor is an important broker for their votes. The Brazilian Constitution sets the minimum number of deputies for a state at eight and the maximum at seventy. Vast differences in population between the smallest state (Roraima) and the largest (São Paulo) skew the vote quotient considerably, such that Roraima has one deputy for every 40,549 people and São Paulo has one for every 529,034. In 2002 the seven states of Legal Amazônia had twenty-five more seats in the Chamber of Deputies than they would have had were representation strictly proportional; the southeast had thirty-nine fewer, and São Paulo in particular had forty-two fewer (Soares and Lourenço 2004, 118). This arrangement gives states in the Amazon a great deal more political weight per person than other states in Brazil have.

In bureaucratic terms, federal organs often operate in the region through *convênios*, or subcontracts, with state government organs; for example, there are subcontracts between IBAMA and state environmental agencies, and between INCRA and state colonization or land agencies. States can draw up zoning plans, but municipal authorities must accept and enforce them. Most enforcement falls under the auspices of military police (controlled by state governments) or the municipal civil police, both of which are badly trained, badly paid, notoriously corrupt, and often engaged in illegal activities themselves. Indeed, with few exceptions the Brazilian judiciary plays a key part in supporting the powerful over the powerless. The Ministério Público discussed in chapter 1 as a new enforcer of environmental laws is much weaker in the Amazon than in the South. The state Ministério Público has been nearly absent in Pará, for example, leaving most fights to be waged at the federal level (McAllister 2004).

Besides federalism, policies and actions affecting deforestation are also spread among a wide array of ministries and agencies, as well as private actors. Planning and regional development ministries and state secretariats

give out incentives for investments resulting in the kinds of changes that environmental ministries and secretariats try to regulate and limit. Policies designed to improve the balance of payments by expanding export agriculture stimulate further deforestation. The maintenance of a high primary surplus to meet IMF requirements results in the nonrelease of budgetary funds needed to monitor conservation areas. Interministerial environmental planning groups include the people from each ministry most interested in the environment, rather than those with the power to make decisions.

Very few public officials in any sector, or at any level of government, want to be posted outside the state or national capital: the Amazon seems more manageable from a distance. They are not alone in this—NGOs fall prey to the temptation as well. When the WWF came up with a proposal to preserve 10 percent of the Amazon, its representatives visited the Ministry of Environment and Legal Amazon with a map of the areas they believed to have the greatest ecological value, and were adamant that the parks to be included in the 10 percent should have no people in them, as if there were no one there (Allegretti 2005; interview with Lourenço 2002).

The problem is rarely the laws, or at least not their intent. Use of natural forests is regulated with environmental impact assessments; burning and clearing permits; cutting restrictions specific to the property; cutting restrictions specific to the locale; forest management requirements; and restrictions on export of forest products (Lele, Viana, Verissimo, Vosti, Perkins, and Husain 2000, 20–21). The Forest Code of 1965 was highly protective of forests, requiring in the Amazon region that between 50 and 80 percent of any property be maintained uncut, in addition to which there had to be vegetative protection of riverbanks, slopes, and other fragile areas. In 1988, with the implementation of the *Nossa Natureza* (Our Nature) program under Sarney, fiscal incentives for ranching investment in the Amazon were suspended and monitoring of forest burning was stepped up, though it remained much weaker than the situation warranted. Withdrawal of fiscal incentives was no match for the growing profitability in the 1990s of the ranching sector, and medium- and large-scale cattle ranching remains the leading cause of deforestation in the region (Margulies 2003), although soybean cultivation is advancing as a major cause of land-use change (Hecht 2005). Provisional measures and decrees in 1996 toughened the requirement



for maintaining forest cover from 50–80 percent of total land to 80 percent of the forested part of the property; where approved zoning plans existed, smallholders were not subject to this restriction.

The issue of timber is more complicated. Over the last twenty years, as the exhaustion of the Atlantic Forest put increasing pressure on the market for timber products, logging in the Amazon became more profitable and expanded. The regulations, as noted above, are restrictive more than regulative; there is no strong incentive either for firms themselves or for local enforcement officials to comply. Short time horizons cause local politicians to ally with loggers, and in some areas loggers have been elected to local posts (Lele, Viana, Verissimo, Vosti, Perkins, and Husain 2000, 23). Many local politicians protested when a decree in 1996 put a two-year ban on new management plans for high-value timber while IBAMA investigated existing concessions (22). Enforcement agencies are grotesquely understaffed, and in a number of cases enforcement officials have been found to be cooperating with illegal logging; in a joint operation against illegal logging in July 2005 conducted by the Ministério Público, the Federal Police, and IBAMA, IBAMA's chief official in Cuiabá was arrested along with forty IBAMA employees in Mato Grosso and Rondônia (*Folha Online*, 19 August 2005). With short-term licensing and lax enforcement (or active connivance), loggers have no incentive to change their practices.

In 1977 SUDAM proposed to establish a network of national forests managed for timber concessions; although interest among investors was apparently quite low (Garcia 1987), the measure was one of several against which environmental movement organizations organized the "Risk Contracts" campaign (discussed below). The term was a misnomer, taken over from a controversial measure allowing foreign companies to prospect for oil in Brazilian territory; timber concessions are not risk contracts, as the timber is obviously either there or not. SUDAM proposed to grant long-term forest management contracts to private (including foreign) investors, who would be required to follow guidelines set by the government. The length of contracts, one of the elements to which opponents would object, was a recognition that without a long-term contract the incentives for reforestation and for careful forest management disappeared; the firm would only be interested in rapid extraction of the most valuable timber.<sup>3</sup>

At the time, environmentalists were more worried about trying to block

the increasing private and especially foreign exploitation of forest areas than they were about creating a legal framework to regulate eventual logging activity. Logging became a pressing matter only in the late 1990s. The new forest code now under consideration in the Brazilian Congress represents a substantial improvement, granting concessions long enough (forty years) to provide an incentive for stewardship, and making it much more feasible to distinguish between legal and illegal logging operations. The law would also create a forest service, removing the actual monitoring function from IBAMA, which has not been able to handle the job. Nonetheless, the agency would retain responsibility for having granted the concession, and bears the blame, along with the private logging firm, for abuses should they occur (ISA 2005).

### The Politics of State Absence

The problem of law enforcement in the Amazon goes well beyond the issues of environmental crimes and the weak institutional capacity of the environmental agencies charged with enforcement. At its core, the problem is one of political will—in some cases the lack of desire to expend the necessary political capital and resources to enforce the law, and in others the active desire to prevent its enforcement. In the words of a prominent journalist from the region, "You get the idea here [in Pará] that *poder público* [government] is just a front for groups set up to loot the public purse and use state power as a tool for exploiting Amazonia's natural resources. These days, most of the Amazonian elite is a byproduct of organized crime. There is a vast power structure. The groups which grew out of land grabbing and clandestine exploitation of natural resources have much more power than the state does. That's why there is this shocking kind of violence. Criminality has turned Amazonia into an enormous green Sicily." Lúcio Flávio Pinto (interviewed in *Jornal do Brasil*, 21 February 2005).

Pinto himself can attest to the criminality of the region. A journalist from Belém who for the last seventeen years has published his *Journal Pessoal* on the region (modeled on *I. F. Stone's Weekly*), he has been beaten up, received death threats, and been sued for libel close to a dozen times for exposing the actions of corrupt officials and businesses in Amazônia. A recent libel suit demonstrates the impediments that he must constantly overcome. The suit

claimed that the following sentence from an article he had written drew undue conclusions instead of stating facts. Referring to land grabbing in the region, Pinto wrote about the plaintiff, "Cecílio do Rego Almeida is only the most audacious, clever, and well connected of these land pirates." He was not the first to note it. In a white paper on land grabbing in 2002, the federal Ministry of Agricultural Development referred to Almeida as the perpetrator of the most serious attempt to usurp public lands in the country. However, in an irregular proceeding during which the regular judge was replaced by another exclusively for the one case, Pinto was found guilty and made to pay 8,000 Brazilian reais in punitive damages, with interest and monetary correction dating from when the suit was filed in 2000.

The period of the democratic transition coincided with a speeding up of the process of occupation of Amazônia that the Médici government had initiated a decade earlier, with the influx of ranchers, land speculators, small farmers, miners, construction workers, and lumber companies. Some came to make a quick buck and leave; others came to stay, the last stop on a long chain of migrations. Some say that when the military regime was in power, the pervasive militarization of the Amazon appears to have kept vigilantism under control, and to have prevented other groups from developing their own "violence machines" able to act with impunity in the region.

At the same time, the "war on drugs" conducted with Washington's sponsorship in Colombia and Peru was moving cocaine trafficking elsewhere, especially to the Brazilian Amazon. Cocaine entered Brazil through a variety of means: trade across the river with Bolivian drug groups by gold miners near Guajará Mirim in Rondônia, and clandestine airstrips built all over the region that linked large landowners to drug sources in Colombia and arms dealers in Suriname. The spread of small-scale trafficking through migrant networks contributed to the rapid development of the national market for cocaine in Brazil. To buy cocaine, systems were established to generate desired trade goods—car theft rings, for example, as well as a variety of smuggling and money-laundering operations (Geffray 2002b).

The situation varied from one part of the region to another, but in all cases migration to the region was met by notable failure of the state to perform crucial services like registering landholdings, resolving conflicts, providing extension services, and building adequate infrastructure. Rural violence was endemic, as big landowners expelled smaller ones from their

holdings under threat of violent death (carried out sufficiently often as to be credible), hundreds of rural lawyers and union organizers were assassinated, and a class of professional enforcers became a familiar part of the landscape. In some regions, especially southern Pará, levels of violence rose very quickly from other causes as well—mines closing down, leaving mine-workers stranded; gold miners struggling to defend their claims or scabbling in open-pit excavations like Serra Pelada; and criminals engaging in myriad clandestine activities, particularly drug trafficking and the illegal extraction and smuggling of mahogany and other timber.

There was a great deal of money to be made in the region (especially if you were not overly concerned with the legality of how you made it), both for entrepreneurs and for politicians who provided cover for them. Under the circumstances, the likelihood of prosecution for any of these activities was extremely low. The impunity with which people could operate outside the law made possible an expanding power structure of which criminality was an integral part. In some cases members of criminal networks coopted politicians and organs of the state or ran for office themselves, and in some cases politicians and state employees, seeing opportunities, took over criminal networks. In his studies of drug trafficking and the state in the region, Christian Geffray identified the key move: officials (or the state as a whole) would "renounce the exercise of their duties in the struggle against drug traffickers while retaining their position—since their resignation would serve no purpose. These officials' act of *renunciation*, coupled with their *failure to relinquish their office*, is at the very core of the corruptive transaction" (Geffray 2002a; emphasis in original).

Thus "institutional weakness" and "absence of the rule of law" often cited by studies of the "failure" to enforce environmental standards or pursue miscreants is not an accident of recent settlement but rather a strategy deliberately pursued by powerful operators in the region for which a more robust state geared to maintaining law and order would be highly inconvenient. As Anna Tsing brilliantly demonstrates for Kalimantan, Indonesia, the frontier is a project: "The frontier is made in the shifting terrain between legality and illegality, public and private ownership, brutal rape and passionate charisma, ethnic collaboration and hostility, violence and law, restoration and extermination" (Tsing 2005, 33). Frontier making can get out of control, however, and become crisis. Violence ceases to be a distraction from the

story of profit and accumulation, and becomes the center of the landscape: “Everyday processes of frontier-making become crises when, in contingent concert with regime disintegration and international ‘loss of confidence,’ frontier violence and destruction take on a new magnitude . . . Chaos: a frontier spun out of control, its proliferations no longer productive for the authorities” (Tsing 2005, 42–43).

Even when state and local governments in the region have not been overtly criminal, they have been almost by definition boosters of colonization and development within their jurisdictions, with few (and recent) exceptions. There is a considerable difference between the Amazonian states of recent colonization and those with older population centers like Amazonas and Pará, whose capitals, Manaus and Belém, house distinguished scientific research institutes, strong universities, and important intellectual communities. Nonetheless, just as the sources of oppositional social capital are stronger in these locales, the governing elites are correspondingly stronger as well. Thus the main arenas for raising demands have been the press, universities, at times the Catholic church, the federal government, and both intergovernmental and nongovernmental forums in the international arena.

### Resistance

There have been three periods of resistance in this prevailing story of Amazonian politics. Although Brazil now boasts many strong supporters of environmental stewardship, when they began, Mary Allegretti claims, there was almost no one on their side (Allegretti 2005). Confronting the problems of the region has always required allies; environmentalism in the Amazon has always involved linking actors who viewed the region from different scales, from different perspectives, and from both inside and outside its territory.

Three sets of domestic actors tried early on to stem the tide of destruction in *Amazônia*; they set the stage for the moment when the region could claim the world’s attention. Brazilian scientists worked with international counterparts in the 1970s to map the astonishing complexity of the Amazon’s ecosystems, turning to advocacy politics toward the end of the decade as they grew increasingly concerned about the impact of the military government’s policies for the region. Some joined a second moment of re-

sistance in the 1970s. A national environmental and antimilitary campaign against the government’s plans for forest development in 1978–79 temporarily mobilized many Brazilians across this gigantic country. During roughly the same period, the rubber tappers’ leader Chico Mendes and other regional visionaries were creating strong organizations in the western Amazon, in the state of Acre; while their struggles did not define themselves as environmentalist, they proved to be the crucial domestic link that made subsequent transnational campaigns powerful—where they existed. This marked the first time that people native to the forest itself became the chief advocates in the struggle for its conservation.

International actors played an important role in this process. Transnational linkages were built between international environmentalists on the one hand and rubber tappers, indigenous groups, and their allies on the other, who brought external resources to bear on an internal problem: the need to ensure their rights to land. They persuaded powerful actors, including members of the U.S. Congress and the Treasury Department to put pressure on the World Bank, which in turn would put pressure on the Brazilian government. Thus these activists precipitated what Keck and Sikkink called a “boomerang” pattern of influence: they blocked or stalled funding for several development projects in the Amazon until demands for environmental protection and indigenous rights were addressed (Keck and Sikkink 1998a).

That version is correct, but is akin to a view of the forest from above the canopy. Here we delve deeper into the complex moves in this struggle, as the Brazilians and their advocates sought favorable venues among multiple levels of governance, and developed new channels of information and influence. Well before intergovernmental channels and multilateral lending agencies became involved, allies included the Catholic Church, the rural labor movement, the Workers’ Party, international environmental, development and human rights organizations, and a variety of others.

In the aftermath of the transnational moment, Mendes’s murder had the effect of a centrifugal force, catapulting onto a national stage, and into political spaces that had been suddenly opened up, many of the people who had been associated with him in the struggles of rubber tappers in Acre. We consider the trajectories of some of the domestic actors set in motion in Acre: Tony Gross (profiled in chapter 3); Mary Allegretti, anthropologist

from Paraná; Marina Silva, rubber tapper, university professor, senator, and minister of the environment; and Jorge Vianna, who helped to develop an extractive reserves proposal and became governor of Acre. International influence and actors continued to be present in the 1990s and after, but they took on a new set of roles. Most notably, as Becker (2001) points out, the changes of the 1990s enabled the construction of a new kind of network in the Amazon, one providing a counterweight to the network of roads and physical infrastructure that unleashed so much destruction: a network of information exchange, electronic communication, and alliances stretching to the far reaches of Brazil and the world.

### **Early Brazilian Resistance to Destruction of the Amazon: Science, Scientists, and Research**

Amazônia is a complex place comprising multiple ecosystems (Borelli et al. 2005). There is no cookie-cutter conservation plan that would ever be appropriate for the entire region. Although research is constantly yielding new information, a great deal is still unknown about the larger impact of small changes—deforestation of a small area might have a large impact on the reproduction of particular species, whereas deforestation of a larger area might have a smaller impact. There are areas of soil that would support agriculture and many areas that would not. Human beings have always caused changes in the forest, but only in the last half-century have they had the technology and resources to affect it so profoundly. The arrival of large-scale entrepreneurship—in the form of multinational mining consortia, and big ranching and logging companies—changed the landscape, producing a patchwork of devastation. The long-term impact of this devastation is still unknown, but it might extend to climate and precipitation patterns far beyond Brazil's territorial boundaries. These are just a few of the puzzles which have made the Amazon such a compelling and fruitful location for scientific research.<sup>4</sup>

Amazônia has first-class research centers of long standing. The Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi in Belém was established in 1866 to do scientific research on the region. The Institute for Research on the Amazon (INPA) in Manaus, with field stations throughout the region, was set up by the Vargas government in 1952 as part of a nationalist reaction to a UNESCO project,

proposed by a Brazilian chemical engineer, to establish an international scientific research institute in the Amazon, the International Institute of Hiléia Amazônica (IHA).<sup>5</sup> In fact the INPA proposal mirrored aspects of the IHA proposal, and several of the same people were involved (Maio 2005, 123–26). Brazilian scientists had plenty of international allies from the outset, in that the scientists who lived and worked in the region included many expatriates, and other foreign researchers spent as much time as possible there. At the same time Brazilian scientists and conservationists were integrated into an international community of their peers.

In the 1970s scientists began to engage in advocacy, concerned (justifiably, as it turned out) that the Médici government's drive to settle the region would produce a rash of ill-conceived and ill-supported colonization schemes, destroying important swaths of forest and species habitats in the process (Keck and Sikkink 1998a, chapter 4). Scientists made common cause with anthropologists, who were concerned above all with the devastation that mineral exploration was wreaking on indigenous lands, which were opened up for mineral exploration by Decree no. 88,985/83.

During this time the Amazon was still very far away for most of the environmentalists in the south of Brazil, who were mainly concerned with the pollution they experienced every day. Similarly, "movement environmentalism" of the kind that developed in the South during the 1970s and 1980s was present mainly in large cities like Belém and Manaus, and although urban environmentalists spoke of protecting the Amazon, they did not know a great deal about it. Bridges were provided by scientists like the geographer Aziz Ab'Saber, a renowned paleoecologist and paleoclimatologist of the Amazon at the University of São Paulo, who was also active in the São Paulo environmental movement and in the Commission to defend the Community Heritage (CDPC), discussed in chapter 2.

### **The "Risk Contracts" Campaign**

After the political liberalization initiated in 1974 produced a freer press and elections in that year increased the number of opposition MDB deputies in Congress, members of the opposition tried hard to penetrate the secrecy with which the military still surrounded policy making related to the Amazon. Throughout the period of political opening, Amazônia remained high

on the military's national security agenda. One of the protests against the secrecy of regional development policies was a national campaign in 1978–79 against a proposed new timber concession policy. This campaign was generated from outside the region, involving newly mobilized environmentalists and other opponents of the military regime. They called this a campaign against “risk contracts,” associating them in the public eye with the oil exploration “risk contracts” granted by President Geisel in 1975 which had aroused public indignation. SUDAM called the project Regional Yield Forests (Florestas Regionais de Rendimento). At the end of 1978 reports of new government plans for timber harvests in the Amazon leaked to the press, newly freed from military censorship. The plan provided for the sale of concessions for huge tracts of the forest to investors, who would then systematically develop the Amazon's forest products potential (Garcia 1987). Even without a full restoration of political and civil rights, the plan created an agitational niche (Keck and Sikkink 1998b, 223).

Proponents focused on the claim that proceeds of the sales would equal half the national debt, clearly a desirable goal. They were therefore caught off guard by the size and vehemence of the opposition. A youth sector of the opposition MDB party in Amazonas state organized the first protests at the end of 1978. Its Movement in Defense of the Amazon eventually had local committees in eighteen states and the federal district. Around fifteen hundred people reportedly attended public debates on the Amazon in São Paulo. The CDPC, based in São Paulo and by that time an eighty-member coalition of environmentalist and related groups, joined in. Some CDPC members tried to form a group to work exclusively on the Amazon, but this effort proved unsustainable (interview with Ab'Saber 29 April 1991). Lutzenberger was one of the movement's leaders, and he was frequently cited in the extensive newspaper coverage of the mobilizations. Using protest tactics and institutional channels, participants held numerous demonstrations, letter-writing campaigns, and conferences to educate themselves and local populations, and they lobbied the congressional inquiry committee that was eventually created. The CDPC also planned (but never brought) a lawsuit and gathered signatures in a petition drive.

The participants in the Movements in Defense of the Amazon exchanged documents nationally and coordinated their mobilizations. They organized the First (and only) National Congress in Defense of the Amazon in Brasília

in October 1980. Statements from the São Paulo and Acre branches made three arguments: the government's plan encouraged the growth of enormous foreign and domestic monopolies, contributing to “internationalizing” the region; its implementation would further impoverish the region's already poor human inhabitants by threatening traditional livelihoods; and the “risk contracts” posed a threat to the ecological balance of the region (Movimento em Defesa da Amazônia—São Paulo 1979; Movimento de Defesa do Meio Ambiente do Acre 1979). Ironically, subsequent accusations of “internationalizing” the Amazon would be directed against environmentalists themselves (Hurrell 1992).

The “risk contracts” campaign was not only, or even primarily, an environmental mobilization. It protested the military's expansionist and predatory development model for the region, as well as the closed system of decision making that had produced it—by implication, the authoritarian regime. Anticipating what would become the predominant discourse a decade later, the São Paulo document argued that an appropriate policy for using the region's resources “could grow out of the experiences of local populations, who show that it is possible to occupy the region without damaging its ecosystem. Yet, such a policy process requires two things incompatible with this dictatorship. Those are free development of research and scientific debate . . . and broad, open, democratic participation by all the people, who should have the final say in how best to take advantage of Amazônia's potential” (Movimento de Defesa da Amazonia, São Paulo 1979, 3). In summary, the Movement in Defense of the Amazon was part and parcel of the contemporaneous movement for political and economic transformation. To the best of our knowledge, it was the only time an anti-military movement took on the environmental mantle in South America, although such articulations were common in the former Soviet bloc (Berg 2000; Darst 1997).

The campaign drew sustenance from multiple discourses, joining nationalism and the demand for democracy to environmental policy reform. Thus it attracted other opposition figures who saw environmental mobilization as a relatively safe way to contest the military government.<sup>6</sup> These included elite organizations of lawyers, journalists, and scientists as well as groups of labor unions, housewives, students, writers, and others. While strikes by São Paulo's metalworkers were met with troop deployments, the

regime could discount environmentalist concerns as romantic and harmless. Nonetheless, the military government did crack down harder on this mobilization than it had on earlier ones, jailing five demonstrators at a protest march in Manaus in January 1979 and canceling the Fifth International Symposium of the Association of Tropical Biology, scheduled for Manaus in February. Subsequently the government moved discussion of its new plan for timber harvests into a long series of closed Inter-Ministerial committees and debates, demobilizing the protesters. Some individuals continued their environmental activism (interview with Cunha 1991), but the larger movement faded. Opposition political leaders shifted their focus to other concerns, leaving their former environmentalist allies feeling abandoned.

This hybridity of the campaign was simultaneously its strength and its weakness. Although the Movement in Defense of the Amazon served to publicize the issue, winning media coverage and a variety of allies among opposition organizations, it neither expanded opportunities for citizens' participation in policy making on the Amazon nor consolidated a national base for the environmental movement. Nor, in fact, did it generate anything like a serious debate among environmentalists on what, under different circumstances, might be the best way to regulate economic activities in the Amazon region. Instead, in the intensely politicized atmosphere of the time the question was framed as one of nationalism, privatization, and democracy, all of which helped to build bridges between environmentalism and other parts of the opposition to the military regime. Left out of the campaign was the problem on the ground of what to do about logging.

#### **Building Local Networks: Rubber Tappers and Their Allies**

The story of the Acre rubber tappers' and their struggle to prevent encroaching cattle ranchers and land speculators from wiping out their traditional extractive activities has been told many times (Keck 1995; Keck 1998; Keck and Sikkink 1998a; Mendes 1989). Resistance by rubber tappers in the state of Acre during the mid-1970s quickly built a network of domestic allies, both in Acre itself (with opposition politicians, the Catholic Church, and other social movements) and nationally (with the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers, or CONTAG; the Central Workers' Union, or CUT; and

the Workers' Party, or PT). Acre had become a state in 1962, giving it a longer institutional history and more robust social networks than existed in neighboring areas like Rondônia, which had been a sparsely populated federal territory until 1981 (Keck 1998).

Despite the enormous difficulties and power asymmetries that the rubber tappers confronted, it was nonetheless a good time to be organizing.<sup>8</sup> In an associational sense, Brazilian civil society was awakening from a long sleep, and a variety of social movements organized in Acre in close proximity to the Catholic Church. In 1975 CONTAG sent an organizer to Acre, who worked closely with the rubber tappers and brought lawsuits on their behalf. They participated in the resurgence of the opposition MDB in the legislative elections of 1978 in Acre, and in organizing the Workers' Party and the CUT. The hardships for organizers of the rubber tappers were daunting, not the least of which was that for much of the year the only way to get from one part of the state to another was by water. Nonetheless, organize they did. Using the courts at the same time as they engaged in direct action to stop the tree cutters, they mounted an effective resistance to further encroachment into the forest, and began to plan for locally sustainable alternatives. In so doing they both reduced the speed of deforestation in the state and attracted the attention of sympathetic outsiders. They already had the attention of landowners. In 1981 the murder of Wilson Pinheiros, president of the rural workers union of Brasileia, Acre, brought leaders of the new PT (including its president, Lula, elected national president in 2003) and of the CONTAG to Acre for a protest rally. The core group of rubber tapper organizers and their supporters in Acre was also the group that was in the process of organizing the PT there. After the rally, five people—both national and local leaders—were indicted under the National Security Law for inciting to riot, guaranteeing their continued association (Keck 1995).

The rubber tappers' situation also attracted the attention of scholars (Brazilian and foreign), and at least two of those who began Ph.D. research in the region ended up actively engaged in the political process. One of them was Tony Gross, whom we met in chapter 3 as a coordinator of the Brazilian NGO Forum preparing for the UN Conference on Environment and Development of 1992. Having arrived in the region as a young political scientist from Oxford doing fieldwork, he gradually began to build international support for the rubber tappers, working with the British NGO Oxfam. Su-

sanna Hecht, a professor of geography at the School of Architecture and Planning at UCLA, who had been following the incursions of the cattle frontier, became a fierce advocate, as did many of her students, who subsequently went to the region. Like Gross, Mary Allegratti, an anthropologist from Paraná, abandoned her dissertation and began to collaborate with Mendes and the others; she was soon working with them to devise practical solutions to problems ranging from educational and health services to new forms of land tenure.

This collaboration developed the idea of extractive reserves—conservation units in which traditional extractive populations had the right to remain on the land and continue to engage in extractive activities such as rubber tapping and nut gathering, and where measures would be taken to safeguard these activities and make them economically viable (Hall 1997). The extractive reserve embodies a classic enabling strategy in that both state and societal actors need to collaborate continually to achieve the reserves' ends. State actors are needed to formally establish both the overarching legal framework for collectively held property and specific territorial reserves. In the Amazon they also need to help protect and maintain those land grants.<sup>9</sup> And everyday activities by resident populations are critical for providing the intended conservation and livelihood outcomes of the reserves. Although the economic viability proposal was always rather tenuous—without subsidies for environmental services it remains hard to imagine that traditional extraction will ever produce enough revenue for economic security—it was nonetheless attractive to many outsiders. As a proposal originating from the region itself, it offered hope that something might actually be done to stem the destruction.

#### Transnational Influence on Preserving the Amazon

An explosion of environmentalist attention to the Amazon at the end of the 1980s responded to international as well as domestic political opportunities. A coalition of mostly North American environmentalists and Brazilian forest dwellers broke through the seemingly intractable refusal of governmental and private actors in the region to deal with the implications of deforestation. Oddly enough, the usual roster of active Brazilian environmentalists was not a significant presence. Instead, at the center of the struggle were

groups with which only a few Brazilian environmental organizations had established contact to that point: rubber tappers and indigenous peoples on the western frontier. The avenues through which these struggles became known were unexpected as well: the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), both in Washington, and the U.S. Congress.

The advent of civilian rule in 1985 did not win greater influence for environmentalists in federal policy for the Amazon region. The military retained control over key aspects of Amazon policy, still defined in national security and economic terms (Zirker and Henberg 1994). It remained at the center of the highly secretive Calha Norte project, intended to increase security in the border regions, and the development of SIVAM, a satellite imaging system intended to serve simultaneously the needs of air traffic control, military defense, interdiction of drug and timber smuggling, and environmental monitoring (Costa 2001). In his study of geopolitics in the region, Foresta even suggests that the Amazon was used as a safety valve for containing military dissatisfaction with the negotiated transition to civilian rule: “The remoteness of the northern Amazon frontier from the national ecumene, and its relative unimportance to national welfare, made it an ideal place to give vent to geopolitical thinking, acting as a sink for military energies that might otherwise go into political misadventures” (Foresta 1992, 139). When the centralized federal bureaucracy yielded political control over the region to elected state governors and legislators, local politicians depended on (dwindling) federal transfers and development projects for patronage resources with which to guarantee their political futures. This made them unreceptive, to say the least, to environmentalist efforts to curtail those very projects.

Members of the national environmental network paid little attention to the Amazon in the mid-1980s as well. Although they fought successfully for constitutional language designating the Amazon as a national patrimony and requiring that its environment be preserved, for most it was only one ecosystem among others on a list, like the Pantanal and the Atlantic Forest (Hochstetler 1997). Very few environmentalists from southern Brazil, the heart of the movement, had ever been to the Amazon. Environmentalists thus missed the boat on the more substantive legislative debate over the reintroduction of the Forest Plan of 1978, now modified to include economic and ecological zoning of the region. The revised plan was introduced in

Congress as one of the military government's last pieces of legislation in February 1985. The Amazonian states did as much to block this legislation as environmentalists had done earlier, objecting to federal meddling in what they saw as a state domain. The next moment of mobilization over the Brazilian Amazon largely bypassed both sets of actors.

The Washington connection was brokered by Gross and Allegretti, who became ambassadors for the rubber tappers' struggle. They were responsible for bringing it to the attention of the NGO activists in Washington, who were in the early stages of a campaign to challenge the environmental impact of multilateral development bank loans; British ecological activists associated with the magazine the *Ecologist*; and others. As for the multilateral bank campaign, it became an important source of leverage over Brazilian government policy in the region. The Washington campaigners were already protesting the impact of the World Bank's Polonoroeste project in Rondônia, next door to Acre, which combined a road-paving program with efforts to rationalize the chaotic settlement process in the state and protect ecological and indigenous reserves; instead, the project merely facilitated movement further into the forest. In 1985 the campaigners succeeded in getting disbursements temporarily suspended because the government was ignoring the environmental and indigenous components of the loan agreement.

Sensitized to the impact of road building in Amazônia, the Washington campaigners had begun to look at an IDB road project in Acre, about which they knew very little. Contact with the rubber tappers and their network of allies gave the campaigners access not only to information but also to vastly increased legitimacy for their efforts. They brought Mendes to Washington and Miami, where he won support for the extractive reserves proposal from both the World Bank and the IDB (Bramble and Porter 1992; Keck 1995). In addition, the campaign persuaded the U.S. Congress to pressure the World Bank to make reforms both internally and in implementing the Polonoroeste project. Later the bank made local participation a more central part of its Planaflo project in Rondônia, but the state's history was quite different from Acre's: local organizations were much weaker, and the state's politicians were able to ignore external pressure for much longer (Keck 1998).

It is worth remembering that by the time Chico Mendes and Mary

Allegretti persuaded the First National Congress of Rubber Tappers in 1985 to frame their struggle for land rights in the language of preventing deforestation, the Acre group had more than a decade of fierce struggle under its belt. At that same meeting it formed the National Council of Rubber Tappers (CNS) to support the proposal for extractive reserves (Grzybowski 1989, 15; Schwartzman 1989). The proposal also won support from the Brazilian special secretary of the environment, Paulo Nogueira Neto. On 30 July 1987, in Portaria 627, the Ministry of Agrarian Reform and Development created a legal instrument for establishing extractive reserves (Schwartzman 1989, 152). That same month Chico Mendes received the Global 500 award from the UN Environment Program, presented to grassroots activists, environmental organizations, and leading public figures for their contribution to environmental protection. The cattle ranchers, undeterred, remained determined to push further into Acre's forests, and since Chico Mendes was the central organizer of the resistance to their advance, they had long been trying to kill him. Finally, they succeeded.

Despite all this recognition among a specialized public, Mendes's killers had every reason to expect impunity when they shot him in his home on 22 December 1988. The international outcry over Mendes's murder stunned Brazilian authorities and Brazilians generally, most of whom had never heard of him. The scale of the international response included a front page story in the *New York Times* (24 December 1988). Domestically, it led to one of the first successful prosecutions of landowners in the region. More broadly, Mendes's death activated the diverse communities and individuals whose paths had crossed his over the previous decade and promoted the discourse of socio-environmentalism in both new and old organizations in Brazil and abroad.

#### After the Boomerang

In the decade following Mendes's murder his collaborators—both domestic and international—transformed environmental policy for the Amazon. They did this not by changing the laws, stopping the advance of the agricultural frontier, or prevailing on those who controlled more centrally located political institutions to think green, but through consistent and dedicated actions that relied on partnerships where they could find them and drew



upon social capital from a variety of networks. They also built networks of their own, and with them expanded the reach of environmental information and campaigns.

The period prior to Mendes's death saw a mustering of alliances among civil society organizations in an attempt to pressure the state to stop predatory expansion; both in Acre and in Rondônia (see Keck 1998) they used what local channels were available and whatever external leverage transnational alliances afforded them. Although there was always some degree of collaboration on the part of individuals in the state (in the form of leaked information, rides from one part of the state to another, use of equipment, and the like), this was an essentially adversarial period. The boomerang itself is an adversarial strategy, which governments may resent for the international pressure and loss of sovereign control that it brings (Hochstetler 2003). The second half of the 1990s opened up many new opportunities to influence policy in the Amazon. While adversarial politics did not disappear, its predominance gave way to a much greater degree of collaboration, especially at the federal level. Both state and societal organizations grew stronger and more interdependent during these years. At the same time, relations between the World Bank and Amazonian NGOs, though still mistrustful, lost much of their combative edge. So did the relations between the Brazilian national state and foreign governments (Kolk 1998).

Specifically, the impact of new information on high rates of deforestation, intensified by the shock of Mendes's murder and the international reaction to it, set off a chain of events that brought about unforeseen levels of collaboration between the Brazilian state, local activists in the Amazon and their national and international allies, multilateral development banks, and foreign governments. The presence of new funding for environmental protection was a crucial part of this process, especially for the Brazilian government (Kolk 1998; see also Hochstetler 2002a). While increased conservation dollars tracked many American donors' interests in global environmental concerns such as biodiversity (Lewis 2003), more socially oriented groups like the rubber tappers also maintained significant international support for their livelihood concerns (Pizzi 1995), often from European sources. The Pilot Plan for the Amazon, funded by the G-7 and discussed further below, funded both kinds of activities, exemplified by its support for extractive reserves.

The publicity associated with the death of Chico Mendes strengthened the political resolve of local activists by validating the importance of their struggle. Between 1989 and 1992 forest peoples held a long string of meetings—building alliances and other fleeting organizational forms—among groups traditionally at odds, such as rubber tappers and indigenous populations, and even small farmers and the landless movement. These were not always frictionless, and sometimes they broke down altogether or led nowhere. Nonetheless, these served as sites for sharing experiences, recognizing presence, attracting publicity, and eventually attracting funding as well. Although under ideal circumstances it might have made sense to proceed more slowly, by the beginning of the 1990s there was a rush to establish new conservation units to safeguard traditional populations where possible, given that a new opportunity might not present itself so soon. Unlike environmentalists more generally, Mary Allegretti and rubber tapper leaders maintained good relations with the environmental secretary, Lutzenberger. A Center for Support to Traditional Peoples was set up in IBAMA in 1990 to work with forest dwellers in establishing extractive reserves. This gave the followers of Chico Mendes their first real foothold in the federal government structure, and they used it to further build the capacity of social movement organizations in the region.

At this time the extractive reserves proposal evolved from an experimental undertaking to a recognized form of conservation unit, soon included at the urging of environmentalists in such undertakings as the Rondônia Natural Resources Management Project, funded by the World Bank; in this project it was little more than window dressing for a state government more interested in extracting resources than managing them, despite NGO pressures (Keck 1998; Rodrigues 2004). All these efforts required support and political protection from the outside. This assistance appeared to be forthcoming, as the rubber tappers and indigenous peoples of the Amazon (along with other iconic groups in India, Indonesia, and elsewhere) fired up an international conversation about the link between conservation and sustainable livelihoods that had in principle been part of the “sustainable development” mantra from the beginning.

Support inside Brazil was also crucial. Mary Allegretti, who had collaborated with Chico Mendes in creating the Rubber Tappers Project (Projeto Seringueiro) in Acre, forerunner of the extractive reserves proposal, promoted the idea of extractive reserves tirelessly both inside and outside Brazil. At the same time, nongovernmental organizations created projects and undertook study after study designed to imagine ways that extractive reserves could be economically viable. The problem was the definition of economic viability, and study results were contradictory. Bee keeping, processing Brazil nuts, manufacture of sandals with natural latex, and a variety of agro-forestry plans were floated, and many tried. This was the period when Ben and Jerry's came up with Rainforest Crunch and the Body Shop gave out folders about extractivism as they sold natural cosmetics.

Allegretti, a native of the far southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, arrived in the Acre rubber region in 1978 to do fieldwork for her degree at the University of Brasília. She first met Mendes in 1981, when he was leader of the rural workers union of Xapuri. She worked with him on Project Seringueiro, with support from CED1, on education and health programs and to reinforce the rubber tappers' organization against the advance of the ranching frontier, and on the organization of the first national rubber tappers' meeting in 1985. She lobbied hard to transform the extractive reserves project into a national policy, watching it be incorporated in 1987 into the National Agrarian Reform Policy and two years later into the National Environmental Policy. She was a consultant to the Indigenous Peoples' Division of the IDB in 1994 and secretary of planning of Amapá from 1995 to 1996, where she helped institute the first state-level sustainable development plan. She began a run for vice-president on the Green Party slate led by Alfredo Sirkis for president in 2001, but dropped off the slate because of differences over how the campaign was being managed.

The experience in Amapá led to Allegretti's appointment as secretary for Amazônia in the Ministry of the Environment when it was headed by José Sarney Filho (Sarneyzinho) in 1999, during the second government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso. The son of a powerful senator (and former president), José Sarney, the new minister was sensitive to environmental concerns and had been a member of the Green Front during the Constituent Assembly. After leaving the ministry he joined the Green Party. In office he gave Allegretti considerable support in seeking solutions for the continuing

deforestation in the Amazon region. She was an activist secretary, not only in the area of demarcating extractive reserves but also in creating new instruments for implementing existing legislation, such as the Integrated System for Monitoring, Licensing, and Control of Deforestation. This was an important move, as it enabled the licensing agency to distinguish between legal and illegal deforestation. According to the Forest Code, landowners in the Amazon were required to leave 80 percent of their landholding untouched, a stipulation that landowners opposed and routinely violated. The new system required that a baseline satellite image of the property be provided along with each application for a license, making it possible to use future imaging to detect violations.

In addition to efforts to enforce existing laws, Allegretti began a difficult process of negotiating with state governors over programs and projects that could benefit the environment but that the governors believed would benefit them politically as well. The governor of Pará had obstructed Allegretti's congressional confirmation, making her path more difficult than that of any of her colleagues (*Folha do Meio Ambiente*, July 1999, 18). Negotiating with the governors meant giving priority to activities like ecotourism development and other projects which might not have had the greatest impact in terms of preserving the forest but had the potential to build more trust between the state governments and the ministry. This initiative was especially positive because it was the first direct acknowledgment of the obvious fact that although the federal government had a great deal of responsibility for what went on in the Amazon region, it had almost no control over it.

There was progress. Along with new licensing and monitoring procedures came a decision to release satellite pictures of the Amazon before the burning season began, in order to determine where to concentrate the greatest efforts. New conservation units of various kinds were created, including extractive reserves, national forests, and areas of indirect use (to be used only for science and research). Table 4.1 shows that 1998–2005 was Brazil's most intense period of creating Amazonian conservation units ever. After negotiation, the WWF proposal for a program to place 10 percent of the Amazon Forest under a strict protection regime was transformed by 2002 into a program that applied resources to both strict protection and sustainable use areas. As other parts of the Cardoso and Lula administrations pushed hard to get new road projects approved for the region, the

**Table 4.1 Federal Conservation Units in Amazônia**

DATE OF CREATION	NUMBER OF CONSERVATION UNITS CREATED	NUMBER OF HECTARES PLACED IN CONSERVATION REGIME
1959-1984	26	12,267,635
1985-1989	22	12,665,535
1990-1993	18	6,720,472
1994-1997	1	250,190
1998-2002	34	13,823,654
2003-2005	19	8,682,722
2006 (to April 15)	7	6,301,486
Total	127	60,711,694

Source: Ministério do Meio Ambiente, Secretaria de Biodiversidade e Florestas.

secretariat for Amazônia tried to increase the number of conservation units along the edges of the highways. However the secretariat for Amazônia was greatly weakened during the Lula government, after Marina Silva (senator from Acre, discussed below) became minister of the environment; this weakening eventually led Allegretti to resign from her position, after which its size was substantially reduced.

#### **New Collaborative Environmental Networking**

Besides greater space for translating concerns with the Amazon into state policy, there were advances in the size and sophistication of Brazilian NGO networks working in the region. This simultaneous reinforcement of both state and civil society actors on the environment was an important element in the move from adversarial (blocking) to collaborative (enabling) relations. For example, the Brazilian Network on Multilateral Development Institutions (Rede Brasil), represented a deliberate transfer of a political technology from actors in the multilateral bank campaign to Brazilian NGOs. Steve Schwartzman, an anthropologist working at the Environmental Defense Fund (now Environmental Defense) who had become involved with the

Amazon through his dissertation research among the Parará Indians in the Xingú National Park, had been the main point person on Brazil in Washington for the multilateral bank campaign. He was one of the people whom Allegretti and Gross went to see in 1985 and one of those through whom the foreign campaigners established a relationship with the Acre rubber tappers. His continuous collaboration with Brazilian colleagues made Schwartzman better aware than most of the inherent tensions in a relationship that had Brazilians providing information for campaigns and activists in Washington mediating relations with the bank, their activities ranging from the collection of documents and the maintenance of archives to direct conversation and sometimes confrontation with bank officials.

Schwartzman therefore resolved to teach a group of Brazilian activists what he and others had learned about how the multilateral development institutions worked, and the strategies that the campaigners had employed. Schwartzman secured funding from the MacArthur Foundation to hold a meeting in Brasília, out of which was formed a network to monitor the activities and plans of the World Bank and other multilateral development banks in their country. In one of its first major actions, the Rede Brasil persuaded allies in the Brazilian Congress to mandate that the planning ministry pass on to them a copy of the bank's confidential Country Assistance Strategy, thus transforming the document into one for public discussion (Vianna 1998). The Rede Brasil leader Aurélio Vianna remarked in an interview in 1998 that Schwartzman had shown remarkable grace in knowing when it was time to walk away and leave the Brazilian network to set its own path (interview with Vianna 1998).

A much larger network of organizations in the Amazon Working Group (Grupo de Trabalho Amazônico), also begun with some external support, was a powerful stimulus to reconfiguring NGOs in the Amazon region. It began in 1992 when a small group of Amazonian NGOs met in Porto Velho to discuss the opportunities being opened up by a very large project then being designed as a result of a decision by the G-7 summit in 1990. Begun in 1992, the Pilot Program for Conservation of the Brazilian Rainforest (PPG-7) is administered by the World Bank but run out of the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment. Major donors are the G-7 countries, the Netherlands, and the European Union. Conceived from the beginning as including local communities, the program has advanced the most with regard to extractive reserves

and in the area of demonstration projects, the great majority of which were proposed and carried out by community and nongovernmental organizations. The PPG-7 is exceptional among multilateral projects in that it has specifically financed capacity building among NGOs and community organizations in a separate component of the project.

Today the Amazon Working Group network claims 602 organizations as members and is structured in all nine states of Amazônia. True to the socio-environmentalist vision, it includes NGOs and social movements representing environmentalists, rubber tappers, babaçu coco palm workers, Brazil nut pickers, river dwellers and fishermen, family farmers, young people, women, human rights groups, technical assistance groups, and others.<sup>10</sup> Activities related to the pilot program helped to promote collaboration between government agencies and community organizations in the 1990s. They also contributed to a pattern of growth by project prospecting among Amazonian NGOs.

In part because of the impetus of this sort of external support, many new environmental organizations were also founded in the 1990s. Only a few long-established groups had existed in the Amazon before the 1990s, and the number remains small. In 2002 the IBGE counted 101 organizations dedicated to “environment and protection of animals” in the North of Brazil, employing 604 people (almost all in Rondônia, Amazonas, and Pará). This represents just 6.35 percent of the organizations in the country, although the figure is surprisingly high given the North’s 2.54 percent of nonprofit organizations overall (IBGE 2004, tables 17, 19). Without a doubt, some of these new organizations are what fellow activists would call “opportunists.” Nonetheless, many have serious conservation and socio-environmental aims.

#### **New Environmental Organizing: The Fundação Vitória Amazônica**

One example of the new kind of organization formed after Mendes’s murder is the Fundação Vitória Amazônica (FVA), created in 1990. Conscious of the growing national and international attention to the region, the professionals in Amazonas state who founded the group wanted to create a strong regional presence among environmental organizations. The group had close relations with regional research institutes—its founder Muriel Saragoussi had worked

at the Institute for Amazon Studies (INPA) for eleven years, and the foundation’s council included university professors and INPA researchers. The foundation began with an initial patrimony from a series of paintings by the painter Sepp Baendereck<sup>11</sup> and other local donations; it quickly developed close ties to Conservation International and the World Wildlife Fund. One of its early directors, Carlos Miller, had worked for WWF and CI in Washington before going to work for Vitória Amazônica (interview with Miller 1991).

The group decided to focus on making conservation viable in the Parque Nacional de Jaú, a national park in the Rio Negro basin that had been created ten years earlier but remained a park on paper only. They did a census of the thousand people living in the park and developed a co-management contract with IBAMA, leading to an agreement on technical and scientific cooperation. Between 1991 and 1996 the group worked with communities in the park to produce a management plan.<sup>12</sup> Working with the park’s inhabitants was a commitment of the group from the beginning, as they were convinced that they could not protect the park without the collaboration of those who used its resources. They understood that asking people to use the resources less required that they be compensated, or that alternative livelihood activities be developed. Most adults living in the park were illiterate and lacked civil documents like birth certificates. The FVA helped to secure documents, promote literacy and health care, bring electricity to homes through solar energy (collaborating with the University of Amazonas, Eletrobrás, and Centrais Elétricas de Amazonas), and promoted artisan activity using forest products. It also worked in towns directly outside, training teachers with methods devised earlier in Acre and developing a citizen education program. This work was somewhat risky. According to Saragoussi, the foundation’s work in Novo Airão had a political impact, producing a renovation of the rural workers’ union and the formation of several associations through which citizens began to oppose domination by local elites.

FVA’s networking experiences in the early 1990s showed some of the continuing difficulties in bridging the many regional and political divides in Brazil at the time. Because of the political impact of its activities, FVA had almost no partnership relations with the state government in Amazonas. Rather, its actions involved collaboration at the local, national, and international levels. FVA worked with a few other local organizations in initial meetings with representatives of the G-7 countries as the PPG-7 was being

developed. Thousands of miles south of their meetings, social movements and NGOs meeting in the Brazilian NGO Forum for UNCED (see chapter 3) criticized their efforts, saying they had never heard of these upstart conservation groups and suspecting them of having been formed to illegitimately garner foreign funds (*Gazeta Mercantil*, 16 July 1991). The Society for the Preservation of the Natural and Cultural Resources of the Amazon (SOPREM), which had conducted environmental education in the Amazon since 1968 and was part of the meetings, shot back with a letter withdrawing from the forum, which it accused of behavior smacking of internal colonialism (SOPREM letter 1991). Forum members really should have known the work of SOPREM, but Miller admitted that the Fundação had an unusual profile at the time, being extremely well known internationally but less so nationally and locally (interview with Miller 1991).

With time, and in large part through the regular meetings of the Brazilian NGO Forum, these intra-Brazil differences were bridged. Saragoussi was even elected to represent the forum at some international meetings. Eventually FVA was part of the SOS Forests Campaign, which lobbied Congress to oppose the landowners' proposed forest code, was part of the Amazon Working Group, represented the group in the federal commission to manage the Central Corridor of Amazônia, and represented the forum in the national Biodiversity Foundation (while also serving as the alternate in another). Its members collaborated in writing the draft law and enabling decrees for the National System of Conservation Units, and a draft law on access to genetic resources that regulates part of the Biodiversity Convention. The group was also a member of the municipal environmental council in Manaus, debated socio-environmentalism in meetings of the PPG-7, and spoke for Amazonian NGOs in a number of other meetings (Lena 2002). Saragoussi replaced Mary Allegretti as secretary for the Amazon when she left the environment ministry in 2004.

### **The Continuing Confrontation of Environmentalism and Developmentalism**

At the same time as there were more committed personnel prepared to work hard and more potential collaboration between government organs and societal organizations, other, stronger forces were undermining many

of these initiatives. The economic crises of the 1990s led Brazil to accept harsh conditions for IMF bridge loans, complicating efforts to develop rational spending plans. In practice, this meant that until the government was certain of the availability of money required for the mandatory primary surplus, budgetary funds were not released for the purposes to which they were committed.<sup>13</sup> Project money was not disbursed, and although personnel were usually paid, new personnel could not be hired. Then late in the year, after the surplus had been secured, the remaining money was often released all at once, with the requirement that it be spent before the fiscal year was over. These financial boom and bust cycles wrought administrative havoc not only in the environmental organs of the state but overall.

Similarly, a commitment to run budgetary and balance-of-payments surpluses meant that exports were essential. The most dynamic area of export expansion in Brazil was the agricultural frontier, and soybean production spilled over from the savannah regions where it had initially spread and began to encroach onto the forest. At the same time, timber extraction, both legal and illegal, joined cattle ranching as an important motor of deforestation, while cattle ranching grew more profitable. In the face of an insistence on development at any cost, Greenpeace came to the region to fight back hard. The equivalent in the 1990s of the dramatic actions in Acre in the 1970s, when rubber tappers confronted plantation hands who were wielding chainsaws, was the picture of Greenpeace activists creeping up on illegal logging operations and splashing luminous paint on logs, which they would then identify in ports. These kinds of activities demonstrated a renewed opposition between environment and development in the region, against the hopes that the two concerns could be joined in socio-environmentalism.

### **Environmental Resistance: Greenpeace in the Amazon**

Greenpeace established branches in several Latin American countries only in the early 1990s, when Tani Adams, a binational of the United States and Guatemala and a board member of Greenpeace-U.S., accepted a request from Greenpeace International that she become a regional organizer. Over the next few years she held meetings with environmentalists all over Latin America. In Brazil she put together a group of long-time activists who

shared a socio-environmental outlook and were willing to try a different form of environmental activism—highly professional, well paid and well funded, and on a world scale. In fact, Adams's insistence that the new Greenpeace activists come from the socio-environmentalist camp eventually put her at odds with the British and German branches most influential in the international organization, and (together with other sources of conflict) caused her to resign from her organizing role. Even after Chico Mendes, not all foreign environmentalists were ready to accept socio-environmentalism's claim that the livelihood concerns of local inhabitants were critical for environmental protection, and some preferred a return to the "fortress conservation" that kept humans out of conservation areas.<sup>14</sup>

Even before Greenpeace had been formally launched in Brazil, it had greater name recognition than any other environmental organization. Moreover, it was bankrolled by Greenpeace International during its first years of operation, giving it an enormous advantage over other groups, who had to rely on their own fundraising. In the Amazon, Greenpeace resolved to confront the illegal harvesting of tropical timber, taking advantage of its multiple national platforms to coordinate campaigns among buyers and sellers and collect information on trans-boundary activity. The Amazon campaign's first coordinator, José Augusto Pádua, was an ecological campaigner from Rio de Janeiro who had become active in the movement in the 1970s and was highly respected in Brazilian environmental circles. In one successful campaign of the 1990s, Greenpeace joined with Friends of the Earth to have mahogany listed in annex II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).<sup>15</sup>

By 1999 Greenpeace Brazil had persuaded Greenpeace International to make the Amazon campaign an international priority, and the executive director of Greenpeace International, Thilo Bode, kicked off the Campaign in Rio de Janeiro on 31 May 1999. By 2000–2001 Greenpeace had become singularly effective in tracing illegal mahogany. In July 2000, for example, the campaign chief, Paulo Adário, led a four-month trip up the Xingú River looking for evidence of illegal harvesting. Finding a stack of illegally harvested mahogany logs alongside the river on Kayapó lands, the group dabbed ultraviolet paint on them and was able to track them to the sawmills for which they were destined. In October 2001 Greenpeace released a report called "Partners in Mahogany Crime," which named much of Pará's mahogany

mafia. In the wake of the report Brazil announced a mahogany moratorium, but it was extremely difficult to enforce. In the meantime Greenpeace headquarters became almost like a bunker surrounded by bodyguards, and campaigners like Adário slept in a different place every night (Symmes 2002). The campaign continued to be energetic with respect to logging, and it successfully supported the creation of two new extractive reserves in southern Pará in late 2004. In September 2005 Greenpeace launched its "Friendly City" program, a campaign enjoining cities to agree not to allow illegal lumber to be used in their construction projects. Ten days after the campaign began, it had already signed up Manaus, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Vitória, and a host of smaller cities.

### The Nationalist Backlash

The presence of Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, and WWF in Brazil increased the profile of some environmental campaigners, but also gave more energy to the continuing nationalist backlash, which identified conservationists with a foreign invasion. The widely publicized tours of the Greenpeace boats *Amazon Guardian* in 2000 and *Arctic Sunrise* in 2001 have been cited by some as a provocation that encouraged the creation of a parliamentary inquiry commission on NGOs in 2001; in any case, Amazonian politicians then heightened their rhetoric about the perils of "internationalization." Any search on the Internet for material on the Amazon is fairly certain to uncover articles claiming that Brazilians are not allowed to enter certain parts of the Amazon, so great is the foreign grip on the region. Internationalized campaigns—for certification of forest products, for example—have little meaning to workers or extractors in the region, who need a viable form of livelihood. Although their feelings on the subject are fueled by the claims of powerful logging interests, many in southern Pará, for example, mistrust the intentions of outsiders—whether foreign or from the Brazilian government—even more. This is the region which has been a champion in violence against organizers, where Sister Dorothy Stang told a journalist in 2002 that she had received her most recent death threat three days before, "after helping disarm three pistoleiros trying to evict farmers from land claimed by a wealthy rancher." " 'If I get a stray bullet,' the sister said cheerily, 'we know exactly who did it' " (Symmes 2002). Pará offers one of the most

graphic illustrations of the absence of government and the ceaseless constestation of the claims of socio-environmentalism—and disregard for its proponents.

### The Return of State-Led Development

During the late 1990s the macroeconomic imperative of increased export earnings provided a hospitable environment for further encroachment into the forest. Logging firms, including some of those that had already decimated the forests of Borneo, came in to extract high-value timber, destroying much of what surrounded the tall mahogany trees in the process. Soybean production occupied ever more land. New road-building programs, undertaken in the second half of the 1990s, made ranching, agriculture, and logging viable in parts of central Amazônia that had previously been spared (Fearnside 2001; Margulis 2003; Greenpeace 1997; Soares Filho, Silveira, Nepstad, Curran, et al. 2005).

Many Brazilian socio-environmentalists hoped that the presidential administration of the long-time PT leader Luis Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula) could resolve many of these related problems after 2003—rural violence over land claims, predatory deforestation, Brazil's economic stagnation, and its persistent social and economic inequalities. The Amazon seemed like a good site to begin this struggle, especially when Lula made the "Acre Connection" central in his environmental administration (not surprisingly, given his own early connection with the Acre group). Mary Allegretti was the only secretary in the ministry who carried over from Cardoso's government to Lula's. With the appointment as environment minister of Marina Silva, the charismatic senator from Acre, Lula left most environmentalists overjoyed, convinced that her presence would boost the priority of the environment and particularly the Amazon on the government's agenda. Her retention of Allegretti meant that two of Chico Mendes's closest associates were now in the ministry in Brasília; another, Jorge Vianna, was governor of Acre. Still, some worried. Lúcio Flávio Pinto, the journalist from Pará discussed above, worried that the new minister's understanding of the Amazon was too narrowly grounded in Acre, and that she might be unprepared to deal with the complexities of the larger region. Others worried that she would not have the power to create transversal linkages among ministries with influ-

ence in the Amazon—something that others had tried to do before, and failed. Three years into the administration the doubters are winning, notwithstanding some achievements by the new minister and high personal regard for her and her story.

Marina Silva met Chico Mendes in 1978, when she was twenty. She grew up in a rubber-tapping area seventy kilometers from the capital of Acre, a long trip by river from anywhere. There were no roads, no schools, no clinics. At five she went with her family when it tried its luck in Belém but had to return, unable to make a living. Only in her teens did Silva gain access to the education she sought, when she moved to Rio Branco in search of medical treatment for hepatitis. Active in the ecclesial base communities of the Catholic Church in the 1970s, she considered becoming a nun, but found her vocation in activism, joining the student movement and neighborhood association. After receiving help from Dom Moacir Grecchi to go to São Paulo for medical treatment, she returned to Acre and entered the university. There she discovered Marxism and joined a semi-clandestine organization, the PRC. She earned a degree in history at the University of Acre in 1985 and began to teach there.

With Mendes, Silva founded the Acre branch of the CUT, and for the next two years she was vice-coordinator to his coordinator. In 1986 she ran for federal deputy on the PT ticket, and although she was one of the five candidates who received the most votes, the PT did not meet the threshold to win a seat. In 1988 she won the most votes of any candidate in the municipal council elections in Rio Branco, becoming the only councilor on the left. In a tumultuous move, she publicly returned various *per diems*, housing assistance, and other political perquisites, revealing on television and in the newspapers just how much municipal council members were earning. In 1990, as a candidate for state deputy, she was again the most-voted candidate. Two other state deputies were elected from the PT, and the party's gubernatorial candidate, Jorge Vianna, made it to the runoff election. However, after an activist start as a deputy, Silva saw her health fail again. This time more complete tests in São Paulo confirmed what she had long suspected: she was the victim of heavy-metal contamination, probably contracted while still living on the *seringal*, or rubber plantation. In 1994, under an extremely restrictive health regime, Silva was elected senator for Acre, and she quickly became a national and international figure as well as a

regional one. Reelected in 2002, she instead took up the position of minister of the environment in Lula's government.

Despite their initial hopes, environmentalists quickly became disillusioned with Lula's administration because of its evident lack of a program of action on the environment. In March 2003, after discovery of areas of soy plantation that had been contaminated by genetically modified (GM) soybeans, Lula agreed to their legalization without opening the issue for broad discussion. The administration took an unexpectedly firm and positive stand on GM crops, reversing the position the PT had taken while in the opposition and infuriating environmentalists (Hochstetler forthcoming). Personal interventions by Lula's powerful chief of staff, José Dirceu, blocked an international agreement on labeling standards and ensured passage of a national law allowing GM crops despite Marina Silva's mustering of opposition to GM among social movements (interview with Lisboa 2005).

The administration also put road-building programs into its development plan, continuing on the potentially disastrous course set by the Cardoso administration's ambitious *Avança Brasil* (Brazil Advances) program for the region and promising to increase the accessibility—and thus probable deforestation—of some of the most remote areas (Laurance, Cochrane, Bergen, Fearnside, Delamônica, Barber, D'Angelo, and Fernandes 2001). One of the most problematic proposed roads is BR-163, which would go through the so-called Terra do Meio (Middle Land) in southern Para, at the heart of contestation over illegal logging, land grabbing, indigenous areas, rubber-tapping areas, and cattle ranches (Soares-Filho, Silveira, Nepstad, Curran, et al. 2005). The debate over BR-163 prompted an inter-ministerial working group to propose remedies, its actions closely monitored by Roberto Smeraldi of Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, and other environmentalists. However, despite proposals to implant conservation areas and demarcate existing indigenous reserves in the areas around the new roads, the government was reluctant to confront the concerted opposition to the proposals from powerful governors.

In October 2003, not even one year into his administration, more than five hundred NGOs and social movements sent Lula a letter criticizing his environmental policies in the strongest possible terms. Two of the topics that they singled out for special emphasis were the administration's support for GM crops and its endorsement of large infrastructure projects in the

Amazon. The letter made these social movements the first ones to publicly break with the administration over its policies, many of which had surprised and dismayed the PT's historic backers (Hochstetler 2004).

Well into Lula's first term in office, the state of the forests seemed to be getting worse, not better. Between August 2003 and August 2004, an area of 26,130 square kilometers was deforested, more than the year before, which had been the second-worst year since records began to be kept (Secretaria de Biodiversidade e Florestas 2004). Illegal logging and forest burning were still out of control. Nearly half the deforestation during the year was in the state of Mato Grosso, where soybeans for export—soon, possibly, to be genetically modified soybeans—were pushing back the agricultural frontier into the Amazon. Frustrated with stonewalling from other ministries, the primacy of partisan (PT) considerations over competence in the appointment of new officials in the ministry, and the weakening of the secretariat, Mary Allegratti quit in 2004, to be replaced by Muriel Saragoussi of Vitória Amazônica.

The deforestation rates gained international attention, but it was the murder of Dorothy Stang that transformed the possibilities for action overnight. Once again it was the combination of external scrutiny with outrage at internal lawlessness that provided the combustible mix. That Stang was a nun would have mobilized a portion of the Catholic Church; that she was an American nun, despite having taken Brazilian nationality long ago, made international headlines. The resulting pressure allowed the immediate demarcation of protected areas proposed for the region, as well as the elimination of some of the dubious instruments traditionally used by land grabbers to sustain their land claims. Even after her death, however, the national newspaper *Jornal do Brasil* noted the "bloody struggle" between environment and development that continued within the administration (*Jornal do Brasil*, 27 February 2005), and that still seems ineradicable in the Amazon region.

The challenge for the next period of the region's development is already, ironically, visible: it arises from the slow recovery of Brazil's economy, and from the determination of recent national presidents, from Fernando Henrique Cardoso to Lula da Silva, to take up regional planning again. As new programs appear ready to repeat the experience of the last phase of national developmentalism in the region, will new, giant projects simply steamroll



the small-scale alternatives that have been carefully nurtured over the last decade? It seems more likely than not, and in their article in *Science*, leading Amazonian researchers pointed to growing signs of crisis in the forest, including the severity of its most recent drought (Laurence et al. 2005). However, this time around the developmentalists are more likely than in the past to meet with resistance in the region, and from those who have taken the region's struggles inside the state itself.

The Amazon is full of paradoxes. Communication networks and networks of roads demarcated the territory according to state plans for the region, connecting it to national and world markets and making it susceptible to control by security forces. New communication networks, linked to the Internet, facilitate both the further linkage to international commodity exchanges and the rapid mobilization of national and international resistance to predatory activities. The roads that brought floods of migrants to the region are, according to research by Brown and his colleagues (2005), the routes by which environmental ideas and progressive politics also make their way slowly into new areas. Increasing urbanization of the region favors less intensive forms of land use like cattle ranching, resulting in more deforestation "since the agents of deforestation shift from small farmers to larger urban-based entrepreneurs with enough capital to deforest large areas and to keep the forest from returning" (Moran and McCracken 2004, 35). At the same time, urban areas concentrate resources that facilitate organization. The highly secretive, military-run SIVAM program for satellite surveillance of the region, intended to protect borders and detect illegal activities, is also a monitor of environmental destruction and may provide an early warning system for new fronts of deforestation.

Just as it did externally, the story of Chico Mendes had an impact in the Brazilian politics of the Amazon that was much greater than one might have expected. However, the reasons for its persistence in domestic and in international politics were different. For foreign publics, the story seemed to make explicit a set of relationships involving poor people, extractive activities, ranchers, the police, and other state organs; it also suggested remedies: for example, that helping traditional extractors stay in the forest was a good way of helping the forest itself. The story was powerful because it

was also hopeful—if Ben and Jerry's sold enough rainforest crunch, if the Body Shop sold enough creams and shampoos, and if conservation organizations could help rubber tappers, indigenous peoples, artisan fishermen and women, and other benign residents of the region to stay there, then perhaps there was hope for saving the rainforest in spite of the powerful forces that were arrayed against it.

Domestically, people knew that there was more to the story, that Acre was far from typical of the region, and that the reasons for the rubber tappers' success there, such as it was, had only partly to do with international support. Rubber tappers had built a web of elite allies in the state that their counterparts had done nowhere else largely because the organizing of rubber tappers in Acre had been a highly *politicized* process. Some of the organizers, reportedly including Mendes himself, belonged to clandestine political parties of the left during the dictatorship. At the same time, the rubber tappers had worked closely with the Catholic Archdiocese, with Catholic activists in other social movements in Rio Branco, with the student movement at the University of Acre, and with opposition leaders in the state in building the electoral force of the legal opposition MDB in the 1978 elections. Rubber tappers in Rondônia were weakly organized and highly dependent on clientelistic politicians and a paternalistic Catholic hierarchy. Impetus for organization in the state had to come from elsewhere, and was much more difficult. The configuration of actors in Pará and Amazonas has still other characteristics. It was because the struggle in Acre was already connected to the political and social networks of Acre state that it provided such a propitious starting point for government programs.

There were almost no regions in the Amazon rainforest where such a web of relations had already existed at the time the environment ministry began seeking out ways to find human support for forest preservation there. For government to *do* something, it must establish its authority over the territory; when attempting to do so, it is helpful to have allies. Untypical as it was, Acre became a pilot case for socio-environmental policies—policies attempting at the same time to preserve and improve livelihoods and maintain the forest standing. This process reinforced the pro-forest alliances within the state at the same time as they provided experimental programs for testing the economic viability of extractive reserves, and also reinforced

the rule of law. Governor Jorge Vianna is in his second term as head of what in Acre is called the “forest government.”

It has been extremely difficult to find similar synergies in other parts of the Amazon, especially in Pará, the current (and long-standing) focus of conflict. International human rights organizations have mounted campaigns against widespread torture in the region, the continuing practice of slavery in remote areas, and the steady stream of violence against human rights workers. There are significant risks in supporting the establishment of governmental authority in the face of what amounts to warlordism. Until the Brazilian state is able—and willing—to bring enough coercive force to bear on the region to eliminate the worst of the purveyors of violence and establish the rule of law, it is hard to expect that new licensing procedures or forest principles will “stick.” Economic incentives for reaping gains from long-term stewardship cannot compete with the economic incentives for rapacity, as long as impunity reigns. Nonetheless, the web of relations has been growing, responding to incentives provided by demonstration projects, new local organizing, new programs, and extraordinarily dedicated people who continue to risk their lives to change things.

The focus of people like Mary Allegretti when she was in charge of the Secretariat for the Amazon, as well as a part of the NGOs campaigning on forest issues, has always been on the peoples of the forest, in the belief that efforts to conserve forests without their collaboration would inevitably fail. Many foreign (and some domestic) conservationists have been frustrated with this approach, arguing that total protection was more reliable, and that if conservation had to depend on the peoples of the region, the forest would be gone before there was time to convince anyone that it was worth saving. In this view, what matters is results, and not whether the process through which the results were reached was democratic or participatory. As new, large “integral” conservation areas were demarcated in the Terra do Meio of southern Pará after the murder of Dorothy Strang, these questions will be asked again. But if multilevel governance is to slow the course of forest destruction, there must be local support—and for that to emerge, someone must guarantee that those on the side of the law are not simply setting themselves up for a bullet. In other words, environmental protection in this part of the world at this time—as in all of the last thirty years—really seems

to require building a credible and responsive state capable of mediating among diverse needs and interests, enforcing laws, and protecting the lives of those who contest the continued predation of the region’s forests and its people alike. Nothing less will serve. That such a scenario remains a utopian imagining for much of the region helps to explain why deforestation continues apace.