

Multi-partner strategies for community-based timber co-managed forests in Brazilian Amazon

Preliminary Field Research Report



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1. Activities

My doctoral dissertation research is about strategies seeking forest conservation and rural development in the tropics. My overall goal is to understand multi-partner strategies used to promote community-based timber management projects in which governments and traditional communities jointly manage the forests and to determine the main factors that influence the effectiveness of those strategies.

The preliminary field research work gave me the opportunity to develop my main ideas and to visit cases that I will include in my doctoral research. During the Summer 2017, I went to the Brazilian Amazon to:

- Determine and refine the key factors for community forestry strategies most critical to developing my larger dissertation research.
- Develop relationships with community-members and external agents.
- First-time visit to logging community in Extractive Reserve Chico Mendes.

Considering all the community-based timber management projects approved after 2011 in Brazilian federal sustainable forests (Table 1), I visited four of them, two in Extractive Reserve Chico Mendes (ERCM) and two in Extractive Reserve Verde para Sempre (ERVS).

Table 2: Federal sustainable forest with community-timber management projects approved under the Normative Instruction N°16/2011.

Federal sustainable forest	State	Number of timber projects	Number of community members directly involved in logging
Extractive Reserve Chico Mendes	Acre	2	58
Extractive Reserve Ituxi	Amazonas	1	15
Extractive Reserve Verde para Sempre	Pará	6	171
Purus National Forest	Amazonas	1	20
Total		10	264

In both states, Acre and Pará, I had the opportunity to develop relationships with community-members from the federal sustainable forests and the external agents that works and support communities-based initiatives.

1.1 Acre state

- Period: 05/16 – 06/30, 2017.
- Municipalities I visited: Rio Branco, Xapuri, Brasília, Epitaciolândia.

My focus site was ERCM (Annex 1), which is a federal sustainable forest managed by a governmental agency, Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation - ICMBio, and local communities represented by producers and inhabitant's association.

In Rio Branco, I met and interviewed people from ICMBio, Secretary of State for Environmental (SEMA) and Federal University of Acre (UFAC). I also met and had informal talks with people from State Attorney's Office (MPAC) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The meeting with ICMBio representatives was crucial to get logical information and permission to visit ERCM. With ICMBio support, I visited five locations called “Seringal” which is an agglomerated of “colocação”. “Colocação” are the space where local people from ERCM reproduce their livelihood based on natural resources extraction and agricultural production.

I visited the following “Seringais”:

- Rio Branco, in Xapuri
- Dois Irmão, in Xapuri
- Porvir, in Epitaciolândia / Brasília
- Filipinas, in Epitaciolândia / Brasília
- Porongaba, in Epitaciolândia / Brasília

I formally interviewed 18 community-members from those “Seringais” and had informal talks with more than 20 people. I also presented my research in formal meetings (Figure 1) to gather consent from community-members to develop it next year.

Figure 1: Community meetings during my visit to Extractive Reserve Chico Mendes.



During my visit to ERCM, I also invited community leaders to a workshop organized by a group involving TCD, University of Florida (UF) and Brazilian Agricultural Research Enterprise.

I coordinate this workshop with a colleague from UF and with the support of TCD/Schmink Award. The event put together managers, researchers and technicians from different government institutions and civil society to discuss the benefits, challenges, and lessons learned from community-based timber management projects in protected areas of the Amazon. The exchange of experiences and reflections on the theme was based on reports from community leaders of the Extractive Reserves Chico Mendes, Verde Para Sempre, Mapuá and Ituxi (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Community leaders participating in the workshop.



The workshop served to my research to gather more information about the ongoing community-based timber management experiences.

1.2 Pará state

- Period: 07/25 – 08/04, 2017.
- Municipalities I visited: Porto de Moz.

My focus site was ERVP (Annex 1), also a federal sustainable forest managed by ICMBio and local communities represented by producers and inhabitant's association. In Porto de Moz, I interviewed people from ICMBio, Sustainable Development Committee (CDS) – a local organization that support communities – and community-leaders. I also have the opportunity to visit harvesting areas and interact with community-members involved with logging activities.

The participant observation as a data collection technique was essential to my research and allowed me to gather information that people usually do not say during formal interviews. I also have the opportunity to observe harvesting activities (Figure 3) and interact with community-members during their recreation time.

Figure 3: Harvesting activities in Extractive Reserve Verde para Sempre.



2. Results

Community-based timber management is an economic complementary activity. In Acre, the main product that provides income to families is Brazil nuts while in Pará, is agriculture (manioc). However, timber management is considered as a way to provide infrastructure, mainly roads in Acre. On the other hand, in Pará, where roads are not necessary, timber management can avoid deforestation and forest degradation once local people protect the area from external economic agents, as timber companies.

In ERCM, community-members do not have the traditionally to harvest timber, they depend on external agents to planning and execute the activity. The Secretary of State for Environmental of Acre support community-based timber management to provide wood to local industries generating local jobs and providing an economic based on natural resources use. In ERCM, community-members do not have the local governance necessary to improve development, they still depend on external agents.

Differently, in Pará, people from ERVP have the traditionally to work with timber. It is an economic activity since past generations. They do not have the same support from Pará government as in Acre. Instead of it, they organized themselves enhance local governance. Six communities with CDS gathered partners. Together, communities and partners, they are accessing funds and executing harvesting activities.

In Pará, communities had to work together, enhance their local institutions and promote a social organization to access benefits from partners and funds. With all efforts to organize themselves and work together to manage the timber, now they are expanding their activities to work with others value chains as vegetal oils, latex, seeds and Brazil nuts. Those activities are involving more woman and youth.

The field research work also allowed me to do connections with different agents: government, non-governmental organizations, universities, communities, etc. I had the opportunity to introduce myself, to present my main ideas as a research and, most important, to ask their permission, critiques and suggestions to improve my proposal.

They want I return to their areas to do my research and they suggested to include more about gender and commercialization processes. They were interested to know the experiences from others communities working with timber. They suggested me to bring more information about it.

I also offered my support writing proposal to access funds for them and reviewing their sustainable plans to manage the timber and non-timber forest products.

For my dissertation project, I am planning to develop an action research which I can bring from different experiences to discuss the main factors that enable communities develop their economies, conserve their natural resources and promote equality in gender.

3. Difficulties

I had previous experience working with communities in Brazilian Amazon. This experience allowed me to contact people before arrive in Acre and Pará. Additionally, I knew that it was necessary to be open to changes in my chronogram. Even with that, I had some difficulties listed below:

- Transport and safety

In ERCM, I had to use motorcycles to visit families house. It was always someone who had the vehicle guiding me. S/he did not have an extra helmet. Sometimes, I needed to change my schedule because there were not people to guide me.

Possible solution: get funds to pay a local assistant to guide me full time and buy a helmet.

- Activities in groups

I planned to do communities meetings to gather information in groups. However, I did not mobilized families before the meetings. Mobilization is an important process because families are not living in villages, they live distant from each other.

Possible solution: call to leaders asking them to mobilize families during religious meetings – they have every week or during community meeting – every month or each two months.

4. Acknowledges

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ANNEX 1: Location of research sites.



ANNEX 2: Photos from the field.





