

# TCD Field Research Grant Report

Carolina De Oliveira Jordão

Effectiveness and effectivity of non-governmental organizations' initiatives to control and prevent deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon.

The exploratory fieldwork was conducted between May and July of 2017 in Brazil, as part of my dissertation project about the effectiveness of initiatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to control and prevent deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon. It included visits to Alta Floresta and Cuiabá in Mato Grosso state, Brasília and Belém in Pará state.

The main objective was to get in touch with socioenvironmental NGOs and funding agencies to have a better sense of the history and mission of the institutions, identify the strategies and actions used by them, investigate their perception of success and understand if and how they do evaluation of their interventions.

To do so I used qualitative research methods, with ethnographic and participatory observations and semi-structured interviews with technicians and managers from socioenvironmental NGOs and representatives from funding agencies.

The fieldwork had three main moments, connected to the places that I went. First, I went to Mato Grosso to reconnect with the Instituto Centro de Vida (ICV), that I worked previously before starting the PhD, and have an ethnographic experience of accompanying their work for three weeks, to get more in-depth information about what is going on with this institution. This was a great opportunity, where I got to experience the daily dynamic of ICV's two offices, do two interviews and travel to two municipalities (Nova Bandeirantes e Cotriguaçu) with one of the staff member to accompany her work of collecting some data about the status of the local environmental governance and family farming production.

I've also participated as an observer in a two-day meeting (Figure 1) that was part of their process of creating a new strategic plan and start reorganizing the institutional internal structure towards a more sociocratical model.

The second part was in Brasilia and it involved the Seminar "Socioenvironmental governance in the Amazon: Current practices and aspiration" (Figure 2 and 3), that was organized by the University of Florida (UF), the Recam network (Rede de Capacitação da Amazônia) and WWF Brasil. I was part of the facilitation team with Dr. Robert Buschbacker and Dr. Denyse Mello and I was responsible to systematize the event in a report that was made available for the participants.

The objectives of the seminar were to analyze and reflect on the current state of socioenvironmental governance in the Amazon; exchange knowledge among initiatives that seek to improve socioenvironmental governance in different contexts and scales; identify challenges and ways to improve socio-environmental governance in the Amazon; and think about how the Recam and partners can articulate themselves to act in a more collective and qualified way.

The seminar had 46 participants from different social groups, such as NGOs (some part of Recam and some not), universities, consulting, funding agencies, government and public prosecutor office. And it was a successful event in bringing highly qualified practitioners and thinkers together, especially considering the critical moment that Brazil is facing, with the whole political and economic crises that is affecting significantly the socioenvironmental field. There was a general sense of urgency to fight back and need of more collaborative work to be able to better respond to the pressures.

The seminar was an opportunity for me to make contact to people from different institutions and help me to schedule in person interviews in Brasília and Belém. In Brasília, I was able to interview two people from Instituto Socioambiental (ISA), one from Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia (Ipam), one from Instituto de Conservação e Desenvolvimento Sustentável da Amazônia (Idesam), one from Funda Vale and one from the German development agency (GIZ).

The third part, I went to Belém to interview some other NGOs and was able to talk to two people from Instituto do Homem e Meio Ambiente da Amazônia (Imazon), two from Instituto Floresta Tropical, one from Instituto Internacional de Educação do Brasil (IEB) and one from Instituto Peabiru. And complementary to those, the time in Belém was a fantastic opportunity for me to experience the culture and environment of another kind of Amazon, that is quite different to what I was used to in Mato Grosso.

In summary, it was a productive and satisfying fieldwork for me, even though I did not get to interview all the institutions that I wanted, since people that work in the socioenvironmental field seems to always be busy or traveling and some institutions were located in different cities (such as Manaus and Rio de Janeiro) that I did not have enough resources to visit this time. But I got a better understanding of the process of current moment that NGOs are facing, with significant cuts of funding and the trajectory and strategies of the ones that I got to interview.

I'm thankful for the Tropical Conservation and Development Program (TCD) for giving me this unique opportunity that will be key for the next steps in my PhD, including the development of my proposal.



Figure 1 – ICV strategic planning meeting.



Figure 2 – Helping with the facilitation of the Seminar.



Figure 3 - One of the panel from the Seminar.