

Agroforestry systems among small farmers in the southern Brazilian Amazon region: Social resilience to the global ecological crisis¹

Abreu, S. de L.², Bellon, S.³

Few studies have analysed the role of Amazonian populations for ecological conservation of the biodiversity and for the reduction of local climatic changes. This study address an experience with Agroforestral Systems (AFSs) developed by Alternative Producers Association (APA) in Ouro Preto do Oeste, Rondônia State. The hypothesis is that the agrobiodiversity associated to agroforestry systems would contribute to the minimization of the global environmental crisis and at the same time provide goods utilized in these producers food and living. The paper investigates the possibility of conciliating the environmental conservation with the expansion of small farming in Amazon promoting agrobiodiversity along with the improvement of food sovereignty. The development of balanced agroforestry systems contribute to the reduction of deforestation, therefore we contest an old diagnostic that incriminates resource-poor farmers for the forest and soil destruction. Our study documented a number of forest preservation and agroecological practices and systems implemented. It shows that an institutional support is necessary to strengthen the social organization and local sustainable development projects; it is fundamental for the consolidation and amplification of the agroecological experiences in Amazon. In spite of instabilities which occurred between 2008 and 2010 in the APA's financial management, this social experience strongly contributed to the establishment of an ethical acquaintanceship with the nature and to the construction of local ecological identity, besides warranting food sovereignty of the small farmers. These successful initiative of agroforestry systems symbolically express a local response to contemporary global ecological crisis.

Key words: Agrobiodiversity, small farmers, agroecological innovation networks

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² Researcher at Embrapa Environment. Brazil.E-mail: lucimar.abreu@embrapa.br

³ Researcher at Inra. France. E-mail: bellon@avignon.inra.fr;