

Flare 2018 Annual Meeting Abstracts

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Title: *The foretold collapse of a sustainable development project in the Brazilian Amazon*



The dignity of family farmers and the integrity of a 30.000-hectare forest in Brazil are under serious threat in the Anapu Sustainable Development Project (PDS), a legacy of Dorothy Stang's work. In the late 1990s, PDS was created as a land tenure modality with forests' collective use by peasant farmers. Since its inception, the PDS has countered local and regional elites involved in illegal logging and land speculation, resulting in the murder of Dorothy Stang in 2005. Faced with global reaction, Brazilian government promoted an apparent rescue of legality that, however, was short-lived. Settled on lands with massive forest cover, but coveted by speculators and loggers for their potential value, PDS families engaged in initiatives to maintain their forests relatively conserved until recently. An agreement with a logging company between 2008 and 2012 was halted by federal regulations preventing direct management of forestry companies in land reform areas. In 2014, families sought support to reestablish forest management through their own organizations, in a trajectory marked by difficulties in licensing and forest exploitation. The collapse of the PDS culminated last November with a well-articulated invasion and immediate clearing of the forest. Invaders' also blocked the transportation of logs harvested by the Association, therefore undermining the entire initiative. Drawing on long-term action research, in this paper we employ the socio-ecological systems' framework to discuss antecedents and drivers of environmental and social conflicts observed in Anapu's PDS. In previous work we have pointed out to perverse outcomes resulting from the lack of institutional articulation among state agencies, and state support to those who benefit from illegality. The strategy observed in Anapu repeats Amazon's countless situations, where actions of local elites antagonize sectors of the peasantry and distort the focus of social conflicts. However, lately we registered the increasing meltdown of institutions, including those of the peasantry. Institutional corrosion, from the smallest social units to the State, jeopardizes forests and livelihoods. Our discussion thus contributes to research and policies seeking restoration not only of rights but also of commitments and the consolidation of livelihoods of those engaged in keeping standing forests.