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**NEO-LIBERAL RECIPES, ENVIRONMENTAL
COOKS: THE TRANSFORMATION OF
AMAZONIAN AGENCY**

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The metaphor of the 'shrinking of the world' captures some of the profound tendencies unfolding within the world system. The development of the transportation, communication, and information industries, the planetarization of financial markets, and the diffusion of segments of productive processes to different areas of the world have provided for an unprecedented increase in the circulation of capital, information, and people. This is an era of flexible accumulation, of post-fordist capitalism (Harvey 1989), in which the logic of capitalism undergoes profound transformations with diverse influences on the agency of different economic and political actors. The relative weakening of the nation-state vis-à-vis the unleashing of transnational forces and actors is one example of these transformations. The emergence of global, fragmented space produces new relationships between different localities and between these localities and the world system.¹ New communication media, such as Internet, make possible, under the aegis of computer-and-electronic capitalism, the existence of a virtual-imagined transnational community (Ribeiro 1995).

Global governability becomes a matter of explicit concern when environmental problems, financial 'earthquakes,' world trade, terrorism, drug trafficking, and international migration are measured against an increasingly integrated world. In this context, transnational corporations flourish and promote visions of a world without frontiers; multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, and others, have their regulatory power increased; new supranational entities (e.g. the European Union, the North American Free Trade Agreement, Mercosur) reshape economic and political relationships in different areas. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in the midst of a crisis of traditional political and economic actors, appear to be representative of a new civil society or a different kind of political subject.

The growth of neo-liberalism as an ideology of the world elite needs to be understood in the context of the unification of world markets, the transnationalization of the capitalist political economy, and the end of the bi-polar, Cold War world, fostering a triumphant view of capitalism as the sole option for humankind. Neo-liberal discourse pontificates upon the need for a major restructuring of national economies in order to adapt to the new international division of labor. By the early 1990s the neo-liberal 'recipe' came to be known as the Washington Consensus, a series of policies that called for monetary

1. In a context of globalizing forces, the physical distance between localities radically decreases and the mediation of the nation-states where they are found becomes less important.

stabilization (i.e. the end of rampant inflation) and structural adjustments (i.e. the end of a strong, interventionist state). The realm of the free market, albeit implemented through states vigilant of their neo-liberal missions, has so far meant the privatization of public companies and services, the 'junking' of the welfare state, and the opening of formerly protected national markets to transnational capitalism which needs stability and predictability to operate on a global scale. The control of inflation has been achieved, at least by Latin American standards, again, through the actions of strong state policies.

However, the policies rooted in the Washington Consensus do not have the same implications for all countries in Latin America. They encounter political, economic, and social systems that are a result of previous developmental cycles and insertions within the world system and which maintain differentiated relationships among each other. Within Brazil, neo-liberal perspectives and pressures have been felt since the eighties, experienced a strong surge during Fernando Collor de Mello's administration in the early nineties, and have continued to exert a strong influence through this decade. Although neo-liberal policies are increasingly hegemonic, the tensions within Brazilian political and economic elite between neo-liberal positions and defenders of Brazil's national market cannot be overlooked. These tensions were expressed in the national elections of 1989 and 1994 when the opposition Workers Party received an impressive quantity of votes (almost winning the 1989 election). They can also be perceived in the relatively slow pace of the Brazilian privatization program and, during Fernando Henrique Cardoso's first year of presidency, in the somewhat contradictory opening to the global economy in which powerful industrial lobbies, such as the automobile sector, have managed to interfere with the speed and intensity of import flows.²

In this paper, we explore the complexity of globalization and neo-liberalism as processes and ideologies by focusing on the Brazilian environmental sector. In doing so, we are able to show that powerful forces of homogeneity, such as neo-liberal formulae, do not propagate in constraint-free environments nor do they have uniform effects and outcomes. Brazil's environmental sector, for example, presents an apparent anomaly in a context of overall neo-liberal pressures: state responsibilities, expenditures, and administrative structures have expanded amidst stringent structural adjustment policies in other sectors. A power struggle within a major Brazilian federal environmental program will illustrate the complexity of this political field. At the same time, the interfaces between global and local forces generate new social actors that change power relationships. The importance of Amazonia within the environmentalist discourse provided for new types of agency,³ particularly among local populations, that are used to empower in differing

2. Other factors that further complicate the Brazilian case vis-à-vis other Latin American nations are the weight of Brazil in the global economy, the size of its national market, a high institutionalization of the public sphere, a National Congress that, though dominated by conservative parties and coalitions, also contains significant forces of opposition, a high level of unionization of industrial workers and public servants, and the growing visibility and influence of movements such as the landless rural workers who struggle for agrarian reform.

3. In his discussion on agency and power, Anthony Giddens (1984: 14) states that, "to be an agent is to be able to deploy (chronically, in the flow of daily life) a range of causal powers, including that of influencing those deployed by others. Action depends upon the capability of the individual to 'make a difference' to a pre-existing state of affairs of course of events. An agent ceases to be such if he or she loses the capability to 'make a difference,' that is, to exercise some sort of power."

degrees political subjects within the environmental sector. Power struggles over the environmental destiny of the Amazonian region of Brazil illustrate our arguments.

A word must be said on methodology. When coping with globalization and transnational phenomena such as environmentalism, anthropologists must consider different textual and analytic strategies. This endeavor, on one hand, tends to further blur the frontiers between anthropology and other disciplines such as sociology, political science, and geography. But, on the other, it reinstates the richness of anthropological approaches which can present the variety of voices that -- spanning from local, regional, national, international, and transnational levels -- are always involved in certain dramas. In the end, plurality and sensitivity to the perspectives of 'others' different from those representative of the hegemonic, expansive Western powers, will remain, we hope, as anthropology's mark of distinction.

Contemporary Environmentalism in Global Context

The international ascension of the environmental movement during the eighties is an important feature of the changing nature of the contemporary political economy. The destructive power of industrial development with its local and global impacts placed environmental issues on the agenda of peoples throughout the world. The lack of correspondence between the boundaries of ecological and political systems, exemplified by such problems as acid rain, global warming, nuclear fallout, the depletion of the ozone layer, and the destruction of biodiversity, call for political and economic arrangements that are not contained by the existing nation-state structure. In an era of transnational flexible capitalism marked by the growth of 'cleaner' industries and the service sector (e.g. electronics, computers, communications, entertainment, tourism), the diffusion of a new meta-narrative on nature and society gained added impetus.⁴

The crisis of alternative ideologies and utopias rooted in the 19th century, clearly portrayed by the decline of Marxism, Leninism, and 'really existing socialism,' opened up a space of uncertainty that powerfully rearranged the meta-narratives about humankind's destiny. The focus on human/nature relationships, the main axis of environmentalism's master discourse, acted as an efficient substitute for the previously dominant emphasis on human/human relationships, typical of other alternative formulations, and favored the emergence of wider alliances. In consequence, the political spectrum of the international environmental movement shows a variability of positions and labels that includes eco-feminists, eco-socialists, eco-anarchists, and eco-fascists, among others.

The environmental movement established diverse relationships with government and multilateral agency officials, politicians, the media, scientists, and the academic community that led to its entrance into the mainstream of developmental policy and planning. This process gained momentum with the notion of "sustainable development," a notion popularized amongst public policy makers by the United Nations-sponsored

4. Categories such as progress, freedom, and democracy can be seen as meta-narratives, anchored in the Enlightenment, that are foundational to the Western imaginary and that guide the political and ideological visions and goals of citizens.

Brundtland Commission report of 1987. The Rio-92 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development represented the climax of this trend when more than 100 heads of state pledged their commitment to a style of development that would not endanger the needs of future generations (Little 1995). The Earth Summit, a mega global rite of passage through which the world transnational elite anticipated and celebrated the coming of a new age (Ribeiro 1994a), was properly held in Brazil, a country that had been for many years in the center of hotly debated global environmental problems such as the burning of tropical rainforests and the loss of biodiversity.

The Brazilian Environmental Sector

Brazil's environmental sector can be characterized as a political and economic field composed of at least five segments of differentiated actors (Ribeiro 1994b) that maintain unequal and contradictory relationships over time. These segments are the state, multilateral and bilateral financing agencies, national and international non-governmental organizations, local populations, and market-oriented actors. These are categories that overlap in reality and that are presented separately here for the sake of analysis.

The history of Brazil's environmental federal institutions can be seen as formally starting with the creation, in the early seventies, of the Environment Secretariat, established under the influence of the 1972 U.N. Stockholm conference on the environment. This was a small agency that would play regulatory roles with minor incidence in the state administrative structure and in the developmentalist and expansionist policies of that decade. The growing influence of environmentalism in the eighties within Brazil, together with the heightening of worldwide criticism of the burning of the Amazon jungle channeled through foreign governments, multilateral agencies, and international NGOs, prompted the federal government to launch an ambitious program in 1989. The "Our Nature Program" restructured environmental state apparatuses and policies, a Ministry of the Environment was constituted, and a new federal agency, the Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Resources (IBAMA), was established from the fusion of four previously existing entities. Environmentalism was becoming an important political force capable of forming heterodox, transnational alliances with powerful economic and political ramifications.

A second major segment of Brazil's environmental sector is composed of multilateral and bilateral financing agencies and other international organizations. These institutions are largely responsible for the diffusion of environmental models and variables in development planning at the global level. While recognizing the importance of the United Nations, the Inter-American Development Bank, official foreign aid agencies, the European Union, and semi-formalized political and economic groupings such as the Group of Seven (G-7),⁵ we will concentrate here on the key role of the World Bank due to its financial and economic power as a development agency in Latin America and the world.

Since the World Bank has a wide range of goals, from education to infrastructure

5. The G-7 is a political body that serves to voice the concerns of the 'North' and is formed by Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and the United States.

projects and energy development, it is the single most important foreign agency to exert direct influence on Brazilian environmental issues. The introduction of environmental conditionalities in project appraisals fuels contradictions between credit-hungry countries and world centers of political and economic power. While, on the one hand, the Bank is a notorious instrument of the Washington Consensus, on the other, it allows for local population and NGO participation in the development process.

The relationship between multilateral lending agencies like the Bank and NGOs is characterized by the mutual use of one another for their own specific goals. International lending agencies often seek to channel funds through NGOs because they feel that these offer greater guarantees that the monies lent will be spent on direct programming and not be lost in government bureaucracies. In this arrangement, NGOs not only provide for a mechanism to bypass government bureaucracy, but also serve (often unwittingly) to promote neo-liberal policies designed to weaken the power of the state by finding viable substitutes to it. For their part, NGOs gain both economic clout and political bargaining power by entering into a direct relationship with multilateral lending agencies and can use these to gain concessions from the state.

The increased importance of civil society within the international arena is a direct result of the worldwide strengthening of local organizations and social movements rather than the ceding of political space by dominant social actors.⁶ Non-governmental organizations, our third segment of the environmental sector, represent a key vehicle for articulating civil society interests. Brazilian NGOs comprise a field of political actors that is highly structured through interactions and partnerships with international political forces, such as multilateral agencies, international NGOs, foundations, and other organizations. In the 1980s they experienced a rapid growth in number and importance as advocates of different social and political issues. While some of the largest NGOs started out performing advisory and technical assistance roles to social movements, others began by directly addressing environmental issues. Brazilian NGOs, characteristically staffed by highly educated members of the middle class, now strive for increased professionalism in their work in order to survive in an unstable milieu and have gained varied degrees of autonomy.

By the mid-1990s, the new dynamics of the world system rearranged the relative powers and conceptions of the major players within the international cooperation field (Durão 1995). Brazilian NGOs, highly dependent on international funding, began facing harsh budgetary cut-backs, provoking a maturation crisis in which competition for resources often meant the fusion or the disappearance of many NGOs. National policies of structural adjustment worsened the situation. The 1994 *Plano Real* installed a new currency in Brazil, overvalued vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar, and stopped runaway inflation. NGOs started to suffer with the loss of surplus profits generated by the maintenance of foreign currency accounts and the ability to manipulate exchange rates. In spite of these adjustments, NGOs nonetheless experienced a growth in their relative political power and entered into a relationship of tension with the Brazilian government over issues of public policy and political representation.

6. Our use of the term 'civil society' refers to politically active organizations not directly a part of the state apparatus such as churches, labor unions, charities, NGOs, and social movements. Though these last two entities share a similar political space, social movements are led by grassroots leaders and unofficially represent local populations in wider political arenas.

Local populations, our fourth major segment, includes many diverse groups. One set of local groups refers to urban populations that are subject to forced resettlement or that are struggling for housing, basic sanitation, health care, and pollution control. Yet rural groups are most often associated with the environmental sector in Brazil. Indigenous peoples, rubber tappers, fishing communities, and maroon societies (former runaway slave communities) have their own political dynamics based in cultural norms that seldom match those of central governments.⁷ Each of these populations has particular relationships to territories and ecosystems that place them directly within the environmental sector due to both the rights they claim over natural resources and the cultural knowledge systems they possess.

These groups often find themselves in subordinated positions in their encounter with multiple outside forces, a situation that has fostered the appearance of numerous resistance movements and grassroots leaders. The rubber tappers' movement that emerged in the Amazonian state of Acre illustrates this process. Throughout the 1970s local rubber tappers organized 'stand-offs' (*empates*) in which they prevented the felling of native forest by large ranching interests as part of the defense of their homelands. Chico Mendes emerged out of this struggle as a dynamic leader who was instrumental in organizing the rubber tappers into the National Rubber Tappers Council (CNS), founded in 1985. The CNS established the rubber tappers as a political force that pressured the government into creating Extractive Reserves, a new environmental policy instrument that formalized the territorial rights of extractivist populations.

Our fifth and last segment is composed of market-oriented actors that range from large, capital-intensive industries that are adopting cleaner and less destructive technologies to small-scale sustainable agricultural cooperatives trying to create a niche within the burgeoning national and international 'green' market. Aracruz Celulose, one of the largest paper companies in the world, is an example of a major Brazilian corporation that is being 'modernized' by the discourse of sustainable development through the introduction of new techniques of forestry management and pollution control. On the other hand, the growing market for Amazonian forest products such as Brazil nuts, vegetal oils, fruits, and natural rubber have generated a large number of commercial initiatives (sometimes subsidized by NGOs, the state, and multilateral agencies) that exploit their 'environmental-friendliness' to increase sales. Rainforest crunch ice cream, body oils derived from nuts hand-picked by Indians, and Amazonian nut bars and cereals are but a few of the examples of this new trend that seeks to fulfill the fantasies of consumers in shopping malls and supermarkets throughout the world. This segment also includes private capital and entrepreneurs that are required by law to commission environmental impact assessments prior to the implementation of development projects. These assessments created an entire new field of consulting and engineering firms that often benefit from environmentally-earmarked credits.

Actors within the five segments of the environmental sector must function in a larger economic and political power field. However, they have their own political agenda which they promote through a complex web of political relationships marked by temporary alliances and conflicts. While this chapter focuses on these relationships, readers should not

7. Within the Brazilian environmental sector, these peoples have come to be known as 'traditional peoples' whose adaptive system does not depend upon extensive deforestation.

lose sight of the fact that *within* each segment of social actors there are internal struggles over representation, control of financing, and political status that directly influence the way external relationships are conducted.

A Power Struggle within the Brazilian Environmental Sector

In the years leading up to the Earth Summit, the Group of 77⁸ formed a common negotiating strategy based upon the realization that "the North's stated environmental concerns might be used to extract economic concessions" (McCoy and McCully 1993: 81) as part of the much broader category of 'development aid.' This strategy was supported by international NGOs and generated a political negotiating climate favorable to the financing of new environmental programs and policies within the development aid network. The industrialized donor countries preferred to channel their funds through the World Bank, an agency over which they hold majority control. In 1991, for instance, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) was established by the World Bank with a clear eye towards becoming the funding body for new financing to come out of the Earth Summit. In spite of sustained objection of most NGOs and the Group of 77 at the Earth Summit, GEF was selected as the mechanism through which sustainable development aid would be administered, thus making it one of the "de facto 'winners' in the debates held during the Rio Conference" (Little 1995: 271).

The World Bank was also the principal lending agency for the "Brazilian National Program for the Environment" (PNMA) set up in August of 1990 as "the first large-scale environmental program in Brazil to be co-financed by an international lending agency" (Ros Filho 1994: 89). The relationships between multinational financing agencies and the Brazilian government have been plagued with problems rooted in the incompatibility between two different bureaucratic and financial systems that tends to spawn even more bureaucracy and financial inefficiency. The problems encountered during the first three years of the PNMA program, for example, included chronic failures to meet deadlines, depreciation of monies lent due to inflation, internal transfer problems within the federal and state levels of government, lack of an adequate administrative structure capable of dealing with the program in an integrated way, and a shortage of trained personnel needed for the effective implementation of the program. While the multilateral lending agencies and the Brazilian government often blamed each other for these problems, the end result was that after three years -- the projected period for total implementation -- most of the money had not been spent.

In 1993, when the failure of the PNMA program to spend its allotted money was evident, a three-year extension was granted and the PED (Projects of Decentralized Execution) program was created as a mechanism for breaking the bureaucratic impasse that had prevented the government from financing local projects. In this new federal program, Brazilian municipalities,⁹ NGOs, social movements, and local organizations were to

8. The G-77 is a political body made up of the world's poorest nations that serves to voice the concerns of the 'South' and functions as an informal negotiating group within the United Nations.

9. Brazil is a federation based upon three distinct levels of government: federal, state, and municipal. Brazilian

directly participate in the elaboration and implementation of environmental projects. During 1994, statewide meetings throughout the country were sponsored by the national PED office in Brasilia to explain to local groups the program's new decentralized guidelines and procedures. Pre-project proposals submitted by local groups were screened at a state and national level and predominantly came from NGOs and grassroots organizations.

In May of 1995, while these groups were in the process of elaborating their definitive projects to be submitted to Brasilia for final approval and financing, the national director of the PED program announced that only municipal governments would be eligible for funding, thereby effectively eliminating the civil society from the entire process of decentralization. The argument used was that since under Brazilian law private organizations could not receive government funds to buy permanent equipment or build infrastructure, NGOs and grassroots organizations were not legally qualified to implement these projects.

The law, however, does not prohibit private organizations from receiving and using public monies and the director's restricted interpretation went against the grain of the partnerships made over the previous year between local organizations and municipalities that were allowed to buy equipment and build infrastructure with public funds. Yet since PED was a new program without clearly established norms, it became open for the play of power concerning whose interpretation would prevail. An organized response was next to impossible, since local groups were scattered throughout the country and time was running out for the presentation of the final projects. Thus one federal government official was able to use his position of power to preempt previously negotiated agreements and impose an interpretation that maintained total government control over a program ostensibly designed to involve civil society precisely due to widespread governmental ineptness.

The Environmentalist Appropriation of Amazonia

Within the worldwide environmental movement, Amazonia came to occupy a privileged space during the 1980s and 1990s. The specific ways in which world environmentalism has discursively and practically appropriated Amazonia are important for understanding the projects, programs, and policies that have been implemented in its name. First, environmental groups, particularly those of Western Europe and the United States, see Amazonia as the world's largest remaining tropical rainforest which must be 'saved' for posterity from predatory forces. A second dimension of this appropriation is Amazonia as home to numerous traditional peoples who are considered allies in the struggle to stop deforestation. A third dimension involves a discourse that highlights the region's world-record levels of biodiversity.

The environmentalist appropriation, though certainly founded upon empirical facts, hides from view and even distorts other realities of Amazonia. In writing about the economic importance of Amazonia to the world, Pinto (1994: 114) affirms that "in spite of

municipalities roughly correspond to the combined functions of county and city governments within the U.S. governmental structure.

all the discussion about sustainable development and a biological diversity bank, in concrete terms today (...) Amazonia is a mining, metallurgy, and siderurgy area." Another neglected fact is that over 60% of the Brazilian Amazonian population is urban and lives in such cities as Belém, Manaus, Santarém, Macapá, and Porto Velho. The residents have a host of concerns centered around improved housing, expanded sanitation services, employment, better schools, and paved streets, issues which are not directly related to the issue of deforestation. In fact, the world environmental movement has few specific proposals to deal with gold miners, agricultural colonists, ranchers, loggers, businessmen, and the host of other peoples that make up the majority of the over ten million people who currently live in the region. These people are spurred by powerful market forces which provide incentives for invasions of new areas for farming, ranching, and the extraction of economically-valuable resources such as gold and mahogany.

A Power Struggle over Amazonia

A 'mini-boom' of initiatives for Amazonia occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s, particularly in Brazil which contains over 60% of the total area of this biome. They were designed to reduce deforestation rates, establish new conservation areas, protect existing biodiversity, and promote indigenous peoples' rights to land. The "Pilot Program for the Protection of the Brazilian Tropical Forest" is the largest new Amazonian environmental undertaking and grew out of discussions held at the annual G-7 meeting in Houston of July, 1990. Upon the initiative of the German Chancellor, the G-7 leaders formally agreed to actively support the process of stopping the destruction of tropical forests and provide for their sustained management (Fatheuer 1994). After a series of negotiations lasting nearly two years, the G-7 countries agreed to allocate U.S.\$ 250 million for the Pilot Program to be dispersed over a three-year period among four separate subprograms, while using the World Bank as the main financial administrative agency.

In June, 1992, simultaneous with the Earth Summit, the Pilot Program was officially created within Brazil and a Coordinating Committee was established to oversee the program consisting of representatives from six federal ministries, two executive secretariats and three NGO representatives. In addition, an International Advisory Group comprised of twelve eminent scientists and environmental leaders was established to provide technical oversight of the program. Another key actor that emerged during this period was the "Amazonian Working Group" (GTA), a network comprised of environmental NGOs, indigenist groups, anthropological institutions, and grassroots organizations. The GTA grew rapidly in size through the incorporation of over 300 different groups and organizations and became the major representative of the civil society in the Pilot Program.

A power struggle developed within a German-funded project of the Pilot Program over the demarcation of a number of Indian lands. This is a highly polemical issue within Brazil that pits powerful mining, logging, and ranching interests eager to gain access to resources located in indigenous territories against indigenous peoples and their allies, who see the formal demarcation of Indian lands by the government as a crucial step towards guaranteeing indigenous rights and protecting the Amazon rainforest.

In 1994, a unilateral decision by the Minister of Justice (who in Brazil has authority over FUNAI, the government-run National Indian Foundation) excluded this project from the Pilot Program, claiming that it was not a current priority and that the Federal Government was capable of financing the demarcation of indigenous lands without the aid of foreign governments.¹⁰ By refusing to accept this secure funding source, the Minister was virtually suspending the demarcation effort. His decision provoked the immediate outcry of indigenous organizations, indigenist and environmental NGOs, and FUNAI within the very Ministry of Justice. In seeking to reverse this situation, these groups appealed to and gained the support of distinct segments of the environmental sector.

The International Advisory Group, set up to provide expert counsel to the Pilot Program, was meeting in Brasilia at the time and expressed its adamant opposition, claiming that the project was essential to the adequate fulfillment of the program's overall goals. Meanwhile, the German government also opposed the decision and, as a major funder of the G-7-sponsored Pilot Program, wielded considerable clout within its overall decision-making structure. After several tense negotiating meetings, the Minister of Justice reversed his decision and the project began to be implemented.

Local Agency and Global Forces in Amazonia

Environmentalism, more than any other movement, has stressed in its programs the value of the local/global relationship for political action. 'Think locally, act globally' is a slogan that synthesizes the mind frame necessary to allow actors to intervene in the scenario of relationships typical of a globalized world. At the same time, this slogan alludes to many levels of contradictions that can hardly be understood by all social actors. The transit from local to global levels requires a major investment of energy and resources not always available to local social movements or institutions. This is one of the reasons why political networks capable of articulating different levels of action, something highly valued by NGOs, are becoming increasingly effective.

The relationships between local populations and outsiders are mediated by brokers. Brokerage operates within a field of its own -- stimulated by external agents with variable degrees of membership in the community such as churches, political parties, unions, and NGOs -- which can become highly institutionalized. An idiom of 'participation' develops to regulate the power imbalances common to local/outsider encounters. Though participation has now become a mandatory demand of social movements, local leadership, and development agencies, its control by institutions external to the communities almost always leads to clientelism or a distorted form of development pedagogy. Furthermore, the risk of co-optation of grassroots leaders is ever-present.

Another issue of contention are the variegated meanings that 'local' may have for social actors since, in many senses, life always unfolds in given local scenarios. Social actors, thus, always have a sense of what is 'local.' The main issue is how different actors

10. In making this decision, he was tacitly enlisting the support of the nationalist element within the Brazilian armed forces that is critical of the creation of indigenous territories as a potential threat to national sovereignty and that views foreign financing of indigenous organizations as a tacit violation of this sovereignty.

within each segment of the environmental sector conceptualize the 'local,' place it within a hierarchy of values, and use it as a means to cope with the multitude of other interlocutors. Some examples will illustrate how the meaning and weight of the 'local' varies according to different circumstances.

Returning briefly to the PNMA and Pilot Program cases, we can see the ways social actors used their strategic positions and power to manage conflicts and form coalitions in order to promote their ends and gain control of financial resources that, in the last instance, were destined for local populations. In the first case, the timely imposition of a unilateral decision by a government official over who was to represent the 'local' (NGOs, social movements, or municipalities) was upheld within a field of poorly-defined policy guidelines and fragmented partnerships and reinforce state power. In the second case, the ad hoc alliance of diverse international and national actors standing in for indigenous peoples' interests was able to reverse a decision made by a Minister and forced the immediate implementation of the project. In both cases, the local social actors who were the supposed beneficiaries of these programs were underrepresented and in effect tokens in the hands of institutional actors and brokers in wider struggles over resources.

The forging of the Forest People's Alliance presents a different situation. Powerful environmental NGOs at a global level needed a unified front of Amazonian populations, particularly indigenous groups and rubber tappers, the privileged actors of the environmentalist appropriation of Amazonia, to provide the local foundation for the launching of international campaigns. Though the Forest Peoples' Alliance was created in 1989 at the behest of environmental groups, it has never truly functioned as a dynamic entity capable of representing the common interests of indigenous peoples and rubber tappers. Historical tensions accruing from conflict over lands between these groups made their joint collaboration problematic. Here we see how a local population was homogenized for global purposes, only to have its underlying heterogeneity reemerge in the course of further events.

Still other examples show how active participation by local populations in environmental struggles can be effective in promoting their interests. A historic meeting held in the Amazonian town of Altamira in 1989 gathered international and Brazilian NGOs, members of the world press, federal government officials, high-level management of a state-owned electric company, and Kayapó Indians to discuss the construction of the Kararaô Hydroelectric Dam that would flood extensive areas of the rainforest in Kayapó territory. A dramatic confrontation between the Indians and government officials unfolded in front of world cameras at the meeting. In a well-orchestrated local/global action, simultaneous protests against the building of the dam were held in European and U.S. cities. These initiatives culminated with the halting of the hydroelectric project.

The case of the rubber tappers exemplifies how local groups appropriated the environmental ideology for their own needs and goals. The rubber tappers movement, which grew out of a tradition of labor organizing, only entered into a strong working relationship with environmentalists during the 1980s under the leadership of Chico Mendes. The 'environmentalization' of a long-standing agrarian problem gave rise to extractive reserves, an environmental and territorial policy that consolidated rubber tappers' interests. On the other hand, after Mendes' tragic assassination in December of 1988, rifts emerged between the labor and environmental sides of this coalition over, among other issues, who should receive and administer new environmentally-earmarked

funds.

The idealized appropriation of Indians by environmental and indigenist groups has often discursively transformed them into a type of "hyperreal Indian," a category useful to the goals of outside groups but that rarely takes into account the day-to-day needs and conflicts of indigenous peoples (Ramos 1995). The Yanomami Indians have suffered from appropriations that characterize them as a 'fierce people' and the last and largest surviving 'primitive tribe' in Amazonia. New leaders, though, such as Davi Kopenawa have managed to appropriate the environmental discourse, fuse it with Yanomami cosmology in a criticism of the destruction of their habitat by gold miners, and in the process open up new alliances and channels that strengthened their claims within Brazilian national society and international forums (Albert 1995).

The agency of local Amazonian groups has been transformed by the environmentalization of social conflicts and Amazonian peoples. The cases just mentioned exemplify how the environmental discourse is a two-way street that cannot be viewed as simply an external imposition since it may foster internal reappropriations that differentially empower local groups. The presence of grassroots leaders capable of understanding global forces, translating them into forms comprehensible to their peoples, and channeling collective action based in new vision represents the foundation upon which local actors become agents in their own right. This new agency modifies local groups' specific relationships with the environmental sector and provides them with discursive and political weapons useful to their struggles. It is clear, thus, that local populations must be considered as subjects and not rhetorical partners in order to create a just and equitable power dynamic within the environmental sector that is coherent with its programmatic principles.

Conclusions

To the degree that the environmentalist ideology gains force, allows for the expansion of state apparatuses, and is enriched by the active participation of local groups, it counterbalances the harsh structural adjustment policies being implemented throughout Latin America that are almost exclusively designed to promote capital investments, deregulation, and economic growth. The consolidation of a new environmental sector in Brazil is tied to the broader process of globalization and has produced an entire new realm of interactions at multiple levels between the five major segments analyzed here. In the process several contradictions with neo-liberalism have become apparent.

As this chapter has shown, certain state sectors in fact expand in the midst of major fiscal and governmental cutbacks. Within the Brazilian government, a secretariat, a new Cabinet ministry, and regulatory agencies were created, and then enlarged, in order to accommodate new financing and programs dealing with the environment in general, and the Amazon rainforest in particular. This growth is contradictory in another manner since it strengthens coalitions that oppose hegemonic forces of the state linked to traditional developmentalist initiatives. This entire process was fueled by financing which originated in large part from outside Brazil. While international NGOs provided some of these new funds, the bulk of them came from foreign governments or from multilateral lending

agencies. In this way the expansion of the environmental sector is part and parcel of the globalization process that has grown in strength and scope during the past two decades. The analysis of Brazil's environmental sector underlines the need to place all worldwide processes -- in this case neo-liberalism and globalization -- within specific, historical and ethnographic contexts.

Non-governmental organizations also thrived during this time and were integrated into the institutional structures of the new environmental programs as representatives of the civil society and depositories of technical skills and knowledge. Nonetheless, their brokerage functions based in networking placed them in ambiguous positions whereby they can simultaneously represent local populations, challenge state policies, perform quasi-governmental activities, and receive direct financing and administrative powers from multilateral agencies to implement their programs.

In the case of Brazilian Amazonia, the local/global dynamic founded in two-way appropriations of environmentalist ideologies has given new visibility to local populations, promoting their interests in national and international forums. The transformation of local agency that resulted from these processes has recast the political forces of this region and created new opportunities for defending their interests against dominant economic interests promoted by the sectors of the state and its allies. The strategic use of these situations offers hope that Amazonian peoples, along with others throughout Latin America, will not simply be subjected to crude economic calculations of the 'bottom line,' but will be able to emerge as a powerful set of social actors capable of shaping a more promising destiny within the constraints of a shrinking world.

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