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## COLLECTIVE WORK AS RESISTANCE IN A COMMUNITY IN THE JAMBUAÇU QUILOMBO, MOJU, PARÁ

**ABSTRACT:** This article aims to analyze collective work for economic purposes as a form of resistance against a large enterprise in the Amazon region, in the São Manoel *quilombola* community. To this end, it asks the following question: How the management and implementation of agroforestry systems are evidenced as a collective action in São Manuel? The research approach was quantitative and qualitative, with primary and secondary sources. Results show the history of activities that have caused systems, with the community's strength being essential to generate income, giving new meaning to the territory and its occupation.

**KEYWORDS:** Amazon, Task Force, Quilombola.

## O TRABALHO COLETIVO COMO RESISTÊNCIA EM UMA COMUNIDADE NO QUILOMBO JAMBUAÇU, MOJU, PARÁ

**RESUMO:** Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar o trabalho coletivo para fins econômicos como uma forma de resistência frente a um grande empreendimento da região amazônica na comunidade *quilombola* São Manoel. Assim, questiona-se: como o manejo e a implantação de sistemas agroflorestais se evidenciam como ação coletiva em São Manuel? A abordagem de pesquisa foi quantitativa e qualitativa, com fontes primárias e secundárias. Os resultados mostram o histórico das atividades que causaram danos a comunidade e as formas de resistência frente aos avanços de uma grande empresa. A ação coletiva foi fundamental para o sucesso dos sistemas agroflorestais,

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sendo a força da comunidade essencial para gerar renda, ressignificando o território e sua ocupação.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Amazônia, Mutirão, *Quilombola*.

## TRABAJO COLECTIVO COMO RESISTENCIA EN UNA COMUNIDAD DE QUILOMBO JAMBUAÇU, MOJU, PARÁ

**RESUMEN:** Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar el trabajo colectivo con fines económicos como una forma de resistencia contra una gran empresa en la región amazónica de la comunidad *quilombola* São Manoel. Entonces, la pregunta es: ¿cómo se evidencia el manejo e implementación de sistemas agroforestales como acción colectiva en São Manuel? El enfoque de investigación fue cuantitativo y cualitativo, con fuentes primarias y secundarias. Los resultados muestran el historial de actividades que causaron daños a la comunidad y formas de resistencia frente a los avances de una gran empresa. La acción colectiva fue fundamental para el éxito de los sistemas agroforestales, siendo la fuerza de la comunidad fundamental para generar ingresos, dando un nuevo significado al territorio y su ocupación.

**PALABRAS CLAVES:** Amazon, Mutirão, *Quilombola*.

### INTRODUCTION

This article analyzes collective work for economic purposes as a form of resistance in the São Manoel community, Jambuaçu *Quilombola* Land, in the municipality of Moju, Northeast of Pará, Brazil.

Several studies have been conducted in the Jambuaçu *Quilombola* Land in recent years. Almeida and Marin (2007) and Marin (2010) have produced valuable

literature on the conflict that has taken place there through the New Social Cartography project, which is the main reference on the subject. The research work of these authors counted on a significant participation of *quilombola* people from different communities in its development phase and shows how the implementation of large projects causes clashes with traditional peoples and communities due to the loss of their territories, either for the

implementation of infrastructure works or for the implementation of agribusiness projects, such as oil palm monoculture and deforestation to expand livestock areas (ALMEIDA, 2010).

Traditional peoples and communities have been under pressure because of their lands. This is the case of the *quilombos*, previously called Black rural communities and which have an ethnic character that differentiates them from other traditional communities, but which, just as the latter, face coercion and difficulties that range from the recognition and official ownership of their areas to conflicts for the maintenance of those already recognized. This is the case of the Jambuaçu *Quilombola* Land, in the municipality of Moju, Northeast of Pará, where the São Manoel community is located.

The first record of tension and conflict dates from the early 1980s, against Reflorestadora da Amazônia S/A (REASA), a palm oil producing company (SACRAMENTO, 2019). In 2004, a new conflict occurred in the territory, with the responsible company being Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (CVDR) – currently Vale, now operated by Norsk Hydro –, a mining company that installed a power line and ore pipelines<sup>1</sup> that cross an extension of fifteen kilometers on the territory. During the installation works, there were several environmental impacts: the main ones were the silting of the Jambuaçu bayou, the clearing of forested lands and the loss of arable areas on the part of the *quilombola* people (MARIN, 2010).<sup>2</sup>

In 2006, after unsuccessful attempts at negotiations with the company, a power tower was brought down in the *Quilombola* Community of Santa Maria do Traquateua. That was an act of

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<sup>1</sup> Ore pipelines transport bauxite from the city of Paragominas to Barcarena, where alumina, the raw material for steel production, is produced.

<sup>2</sup> Such impacts were the object of several lawsuits with the support of the Federal and

State Public Ministry to the *quilombola* people, in order to repair the damage. The mining company, for its part, appealed to the law to annul the commitments related to the conditions of the Operation License for the transport activity by means of ore pipelines.

protest by the *quilombola* people for the disrespect of the company with their lands, due to the implementation of one of the sections of the Paragominas Bauxite Project [*Projeto Bauxita Paragominas*], which became news with national and international coverage (ALVES, 2014) and led the company to meet with them and negotiate their conditions. These actions required organizational strategies through collective efforts to claim *quilombola* agendas when facing the power of a large company and the State. This corroborates the idea that *quilombola* collective action is based on solidary incentives, historical loyalty and collective interests preserved and shared by those who have a common historical and ethnic origin (OLIVEIRA, 2009).

There are also other forms of resistance beyond open ones, which are everyday forms of resistance described by Scott (2002), in which direct representations do not occur, and these modes are defined by the author as follows:

Lower class resistance among peasants is any act(s) by member(s) of the class that is (are) intended either to mitigate or to deny claims (e.g., rents, taxes, deference) made on that class by superordinate classes (e.g., landlords, the state, owners of machinery, moneylenders) or to advance its own claims (e.g., to work, land, charity, respect) vis-à-vis these superordinate classes (SCOTT, 2002, p. 24).

Collective ownership is also something to be highlighted within this scenario. Concerning Article 15 of Convention 169, of the International Labor Organization (ILO), 1989, communities should be consulted about transformations in their territory and have the right to participate in the use, management and conservation of resources. Ostrom (1990) reports cases of successful management of common goods in which groups have created rules to use them. However, the author states that external factors can make this way of using collective resources difficult. This can be seen in the Jambuaçu land, where the company had a harmful influence on the collective management of the territory.

Within the scope of the negotiations, the company did not comply with all the conditions required

in the Operation License No. 4352/2010 of the State Department of Environment and Sustainability [*Secretaria de Estado de Meio Ambiente e Sustentabilidade*] (SEMAS/PA), referring to bauxite transport. Among the conditions partially met is the structure of the Sérgio Tonetto Rural Family House [*Casa Familiar Rural*] (CFR), built in the territory in 2008, which had been a demand of the *quilombola* people and had a training model based on the perspective of the Pedagogy of Alternation (MACHADO, 2014). This place became of great importance in the development of agricultural technicians for the territory. There was also an agreement between the CFR and the Tomé-Açu Mixed Agricultural Cooperative [*Cooperativa Agrícola Mista de Tomé-Açu*] (CAMTA), which enabled some students to have their first contact with Agroforestry Systems (AFSs), introducing them to a new perspective of production.

Other items of the conditions included the implementation of an Income Generation Project, which was developed by the Federal Rural

University of the Amazon [*Universidade Federal Rural da Amazônia*] (UFRA), but was not carried out. This was an instrument that would give new economic perspectives to the families affected by the enterprise, instead of the compensation currently offered.

In the project conducted in the CFR, *quilombola* students were taught the fundamentals of AFSs, using as a model the areas implemented in the municipality of Tomé-Açu, a reference in this system. In contrast to the technique learned in Tomé-Açu, which presented a technological gradient to its local reality, and due to a lack of inputs and mechanization, the group followed a logic that was different from the traditional “slash-and-burn” system or the total clearing of the forest. They implemented the AFSs under a 20-year-old *capoeira* (secondary vegetation composed of grasses and bushes that grow after the original vegetation is cut down), bringing more agroecological characteristics.

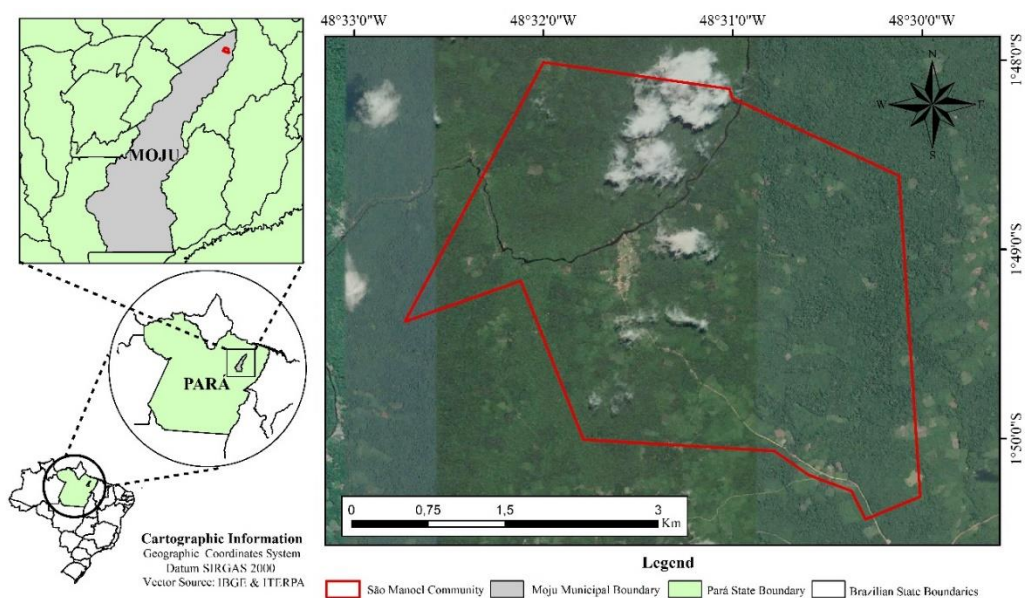
Considering the debate, the objective of this article is to analyze how a group of self-designated

*quilombola* farmers work collectively to implement AFSs and other economic activities in the São Manoel community, in the Jambuaçu Land. It is assumed that this type of collective work is aimed at resistance against external threats. For this purpose, in addition to this introductory section, the article presents the methodological procedures in section 2. In section 3, it relates the results of the study with the discussions linked to the topic; at the end, it brings the authors' conclusions.

The municipality of Moju is located in the mesoregion of the Northeast of Pará and in the microregion of Tomé-Açu, 126 km away from Belém, capital of the state. It has an area of 9,094,107 km<sup>2</sup> and is crossed by the Moju River. It has an estimated population of 82,094 inhabitants (IBGE, 2019), most of them living in rural areas. The Jambuaçu *quilombola* land, 15 km away from the municipal headquarters, is currently composed of 14 official communities, among which the São Manoel community stands out (Figure 1).

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Figure 1. Location map of the study area.



Source: prepared by the first author (2019).

São Manoel has 1,293.18 hectares of collective ownership purposely to prevent increasing pressure on the land by third parties, in addition to favoring a common way of managing natural resources that is already practiced by the community (BARBOSA; MARIN, 2010). Its perimeter is delimited by the Sarateua and Mirindeua bayous, and partly by the Jambuaçu bayou, which crosses it. Its members make a living from agriculture, animal and plant extractivism (various fruits, hunting and fishing) and the production of flour for consumption and selling.

The study employed qualitative and quantitative approaches; the field research was carried out in the São Manoel Community, from 2018 to 2019, through observations and semi-structured interviews with 15 farmers who implemented AFSs. Their names were not mentioned in order to ensure the confidentiality of the interviewees. The topics of the interviews were: characteristics of the actors involved

and local collective action. The observations took place on occasions of task forces (popularly known in Brazil as *mutirão*) and individual work in the AFSs, açai and pepper farms, as well as group meetings.<sup>3</sup>

Qualitative information was studied from the analysis of discourses in horizontal and vertical readings (MICHELAT, 1982), which allow the systematization and analysis of the responses of each interviewee and of the group. Quantitative data were systematized using electronic spreadsheets and analyzed using descriptive statistics, with the content being textualized and analyzed so that relationships between what was observed in the field and the relevant literature could be established.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### COLLECTIVE ACTION, TASK FORCES

Collective action can be understood as the effort of a group of people with a view to achieving a common goal

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<sup>3</sup> The participants signed the terms of authorization for the use of images and testimonies, which were later registered in the National System for Management of Genetic

Heritage and Associated Traditional Knowledge [*Sistema Nacional de Gestão do Patrimônio Genético e do Conhecimento Tradicional Associado*] (SisGen).

(SCHMITZ; MOTA; SOUSA, 2017) and can be differentiated based on its types and forms. The types of collective action can be described as spontaneous and specific actions, temporary actions and lasting actions. In its forms, we see simple, complex, informal and formal cooperation. Collective action depends on the ability to create and adapt common rules, the institutionalization of which within a group constitutes an incitement to cooperation and sharing (SABOURIN, 2010).

Collective work among traditional populations, such as the *quilombola* people, is very common, and one of their most typical activities is the *mutirão*. For Galvão (1945), a *mutirão* can be considered as:

[...] the practice of healthy and spontaneous cooperativism, born of the spirit of neighborhood and solidarity in the most pressing needs. Cooperativism that thrives naturally, without "technical assistance", unknown and unaided by propaganda and official protection. (GALVÃO, 1945, p. 723).

Cândido (1975), on a countryside community in São Paulo, reports the *mutirão*, or task force, as a meeting of

neighbors, called by one of them, to help carry out a certain work (clearing, mowing, planting, harvesting, etc.). In return, the person receiving the aid must provide food and a party at the end of the work. There is no direct remuneration, but a moral obligation to repay the help of those who helped you. This call is very common, as farmers are not able to perform tasks only with their domestic groups.

When it comes to the mesoregion of northeastern Pará, the establishment of AFSs in secondary forests can be a land use system that conserves these natural forests in an ecologically and economically sustainable way. This becomes especially important for properties in this region, where at least 80% of their areas must legally be covered by forests (BRASIL, 2012; SCHWARTZ; LOPES, 2017).

With the implementation of the AFSs, the *quilombola* people of São Manoel collectively direct their workforce to the improvement of techniques, believing in their productive practices and promoting their dissemination to other



communities in the territory, not just waiting for the company's financial compensation, in addition to reacting in the sense of giving a new meaning to their land. Almeida (2002) points out that, historically, the jurist Perdigão Malheiro makes use of the idea of the *quilombo* as a collective action of housing, work and struggle, resisting not only the repressive mechanisms of the labor force, but, mainly, the productive logic of the plantation. This shows that the collective matter is something transgenerational for the *quilombola* population.

Veiga and Albaladejo (2002) classify the types of exchanges between farmers differently. The first type are exchanges that establish a certain symmetry when work is exchanged for work, a practice evoked among farmers in an explicit manner. This arrangement among farmers is done by means of an "exchange of workdays": when it is done, the farmer who helped must be paid back, and the one who was helped must be notified in advance to return the workday. This type of exchange also occurs in work groups, in which an

individual invites other people to perform a task, and this form of help is called *adjunto*, or adjunct work, by some farmers. This type of work differs from the *mutirão* for not having a festive character and because the working days are explicitly accounted for. The payment method for workdays is the same explained for the exchange of workdays. The term adjunct is not used in the São Manoel community because, since then, collective tasks are designated as *mutirão*.

When addressing assistance practices among rural populations in the Amazon and its components, Caldeira (1956) reports mainly on the states of Amazonas and Pará. In the former, where it is called *ajuri*, the practice is defined as follows:

It is a meeting that takes place, at the request of the owner of the work, who needs help to carry out some work that needs to be done in the shortest possible time, such as cutting down weeds, renewing the walls of mud houses, etc. (...). It is good neighborliness, and those who respond to the invitation, in their turn, acquire the right to have, when necessary, the assistance they provide repaid, which, in the Lower Amazon, is called *putirum* (CALDEIRA, 1956, p. 97-98).

In addition to the economic demands and requirements of the groups, these meetings are related to the needs of their members to refresh coexistence and reaffirm feelings of solidarity.

As seen, the task force and the exchange of workdays can be considered as forms of simple cooperation (LACERDA; MALAGODI, 2007). This collective action is carried out mainly when a common goal for the group of individuals cannot be achieved through individual action (SCHMITZ; MOTA; SOUSA, 2017). The task force is done by the farmers precisely due to the impossibility of implementing their respective AFSs individually, since the initial management work is very physically exhausting.

#### AFSs AND COLLECTIVE ACTION IN SÃO MANUEL

The task force for the implementation of AFSs in São Manuel was carried out in 2015 by only four farmers. Everyone gathered to work on a plot of land carrying out all the tasks,

from opening the area to planting, then moving on to the next farmer's area. In the beginning, the work was heavier, as the farmers had not yet developed the implementation techniques and took longer to finish the areas. As they worked, they gained experience, which optimized the execution time of the tasks. From the beginning, they worked as a group to implement new areas (between the months of October and December), and the activities performed were basically the same as those described below, with the difference that, after the implementation, the planting tasks (from January onwards) and the selection of trees that would remain standing would be carried out by each farmer in their own AFS.

The AFS group had fifteen people divided into three groups of five. These groups split to prepare the area, and the task force, composed of ten people (two groups), works while the third group rests. The tasks are distributed by the technical leader (agricultural technician) and take a total of three full days to be carried out in an area of one

ha. The works are not done on consecutive days, but every five days. The working day starts at 7:30 and ends at noon, then comes the lunch break; activities resume at 13:00 and end at 15:00. For lunch, everyone brings their own food, which is then shared among all members of the group. The first activity, carried out by the entire team of ten people at the same time, is the mowing of the area, an operation in which weeds and small trees are cut and which takes a whole day's work. The subsequent activities are picketing and pitting, done jointly. Three people are needed for the picketing activity, which takes a whole day for the allocation of about 800 seedlings. The pitting activity, in its turn, is performed by seven people and takes an entire day. The work of the task force ends with these activities. The planting of seedlings and the cutting of trees to thin their crowns, as well as the subsequent chopping, are activities considered lighter and that do not require working together, meaning that the owner of each area can do it any time. The task

force group is made up entirely of men, while women and the family members of each farmer carry out subsequent activities that require more attention, such as planting seedlings.

The seedlings for the implementation of the AFSs are produced in a community nursery in São Manoel. Due to the growing adoption of AFSs, a task force was necessary to change the location of the nursery to a wider area. The task force is the main factor for the success in the implementation of the AFSs so far, because teamwork brings people together and, according to them, even when someone feels discouraged due to the intensity of the work, others motivate them and help them keep going. There is consensus that the initial work depends on the effort of the entire group, as they would have possibly given up on their own due to the difficulties of the activities.

For 60% of the respondents, the community organizes group work very easily. The *mutirão* force is an ancestral tradition in the community for 33% of

the respondents. Another important factor is the state of mind that this mobilization provokes, since the partnership among them and the spirit that stimulates them is a fundamental matter for 13%. For 20% of those interviewed, the association's meetings are important to mobilize farmers, and this relevance is due to the lack of support from the public power, for 7%, which makes the community have to mobilize to carry out their improvement actions. This mobilization is also considered important due to the scarcity of financial resources, and because it is the only form of help available, according to 13% of them, which reveals the importance of the task force and corroborates with the above statements.

About the importance of the task force, 60% of the farmers consider it the main form of help, because without it, their AFSs would possibly not have been implemented, due to the initial difficulty of the work. For 53.3% of the interviewees, the greatest importance of task forces is in the incentive they promote in the conduction of the work,

by lifting up the spirit of all those who perform their tasks. Another aspect pointed out by 27% of the interviewees was sociability, because, while engaged in the task force, they are interacting; they also reported how difficult it is to do the work alone, due to the lack of conversations during the activities. Another factor mentioned was the exchange of knowledge during the task force activity for 7%, as knowledge is often passed on in a practical way while the work is performed. Ianovali (2015), during research in a *quilombola* area, states that one of the main characteristics of social relations is reciprocity, which can be observed especially in a task force.

After the implementation of the AFSs, and seeing the success of the production that starts with the selling of pepper and short-cycle crops, there was a growing interest from new people in starting to implement AFSs in their areas. Where there was *capoeira* before, without enrichment and intended to be just burned, today there is the maintenance labor of several individuals, still with the prospect of

enrichment with other species of ecological importance to, in this way, recover the forest.

In their speeches, farmers express their desire to produce more through AFSs due to numerous causes. The main ones are financial, ecological, and because they see a horizon in which they can improve their quality of life. That is because, as soon as they have a quantity of fruits to be processed, they will be able to find new markets to insert them. Moreover, they can demand improvements in the conditions of roads and other infrastructures, as reported by one of the interviewees:

Because I realized that the way we had been working on the cassava farm was not bringing us the sustenance that our family needed. We were working a lot and producing less, we were earning less. We also realized that with the swidden we were destroying nature even more and leaving nothing of material goods for our children. Today, I don't have anything my mother could have left me with the swidden money. On the other hand, the AFS guarantees a better income, because açai, cocoa and cupuaçu have a market, and especially because it's farming without burning, because it's a new experience that doesn't harm nature. It's a job that at first is kind of sacrificing, but then it

starts to bring its advantages. After the plant is all grown, the weeds start to grow less, then production comes. The swidden, every year we have to be planting. Cupuaçu, cocoa, açai don't need to be planted every year, after you plant them, you'll harvest for a long time (verbal information).<sup>4</sup>

Another form of collective action is evident when the work is done. This is one of the most important manifestations of the group organization of the *quilombola* people, commonly referred to as *mutirão*, carried out since ancient times, as reported by one of the farmers:

The importance of the *mutirão* for the community is really great. Everything that we have built here in the community was through *mutirão*, it was through the union of the community working collectively that we built it. So I'll tell you again, if today we have AFSs, it's thanks to collective work, if today we're a reference in native açai in Jambuaçu and we're selling for school lunch, it's thanks to the *mutirão*, it's thanks to collective work. If today we have that community hall, it was the *mutirão*. Everything we have built in the community is *mutirão*, no one has ever paid anyone. For us, the *mutirão* is a very important thing that, for us, it's a culture, it's an identity of the São Manoel community that we make a point of remembering and highlighting the importance it has for each of us. People in São Manoel, I don't know how we'd live without the *mutirão*, because the community learned to work in *mutirão*, since our ancestors there was a

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<sup>4</sup> Report given by one of the farmers, Moju, May 2019.

community style in which everyone worked together and since the beginning of the community there has always been this *mutirão* work, which is vital for us (verbal information).<sup>5</sup>

The initial formation itself of São Manoel took place through a task force to clean the cemetery pathway, as reported in the historical interviews, which shows the importance of this form of work. In rural communities, where, sometimes, the State does not act in the promotion of basic services to the population, the latter tends to come together in favor of improvements. These basic services can range from the construction of sidewalks, community centers and cleaning of common areas, to deliberations for the improvement of life, as shown by the group's joint effort to implement the AFSs, aiming at a better future. This shows that, historically, the group develops activities that evidence these instances of micro-resistance.

Another matter addressed by one of the farmers refers to the importance of

the task force as a form of culture and identity for the people of the São Manoel community, as it is an inheritance from their ancestors; thus, a strong bond is maintained among the community members to this day. As for the forms of incentives, an example can be seen in a farmer's speech below:

The *mutirão* is very important, because group work helps one another. There are services that a person would spend fifteen days doing and sometimes it's a job that'd physically and psychologically wear you out, because our job is really heavy. This sometimes even discourages someone. When we're working in a group it's different, because one strengthens the other. We work, shout, motivate ourselves, when we see that someone is discouraged, we give them strength and there you go. So group work has this great importance. We feel encouraged by the other when we're in a group (verbal information).<sup>6</sup>

By engaging with the community members, one can observe the exercise of coexistence among people who have the same final goal. This aspect is observed in the speech of one of the farmers:

The *mutirão* brings a really big advantage, because it's a means that we found, in addition to the service produced on that day, it unites us more. So the *mutirão* helps a lot, because the service that was supposed to be done in

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<sup>5</sup> Report given by one of the farmers, Moju, May 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Report given by one of the farmers, Moju, May 2019.

ten days, in one day we do it with a number of people, with everyone excited, with so much energy, so it brings the two together (verbal information).<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the implementation of the AFS, I witnessed two activities carried out collectively: the maintenance of the collective pepper farm and the management of the native-açaí farm of one of the producers.

For the maintenance of the community pepper farm, a task force was organized by a group of farmers; each of the seven members had two rows of pepper planted collectively in an area with *Gliricidia* as live tutor, and six more rows that were common to all. The group gathered around seven in the morning to go to the pepper farm and, upon arriving there, they said a prayer asking for protection for the day's work that had started. Because it was the açaí harvesting season, and financial resources were more abundant, some farmers chose to hire day laborers to help them carry out the

weeding task, which shows the distribution of income at this time of the year. Sabourin (2006) reports changes in cases of mutual aid of reciprocity, as some farmers pay a day laborer instead of taking on their duty, but do not create a social debt for not physically participating in the task force. They proceeded with the management of *Gliricidia*, leaving three branches and weeding in between the lines, thus leaving the organic matter in the lines for decomposition. The group was divided into six people, who did the weeding, while two people with semi-mechanized brush cutters mowed the higher parts. It was very common during work to narrate cases that lifted the spirit of the workers during the activities. In the middle of the morning, there was a break to eat, and the meals were shared. The work was finished around noon and resumed on the Fridays of the following weeks until the harvest period arrived.

In another experience witnessed, there was a task force in the native-açaí

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<sup>7</sup> Report given by one of the farmers, Moju, May 2019.

area, in an igapó land belonging to the technical leader of São Manoel, in which eight farmers from the neighboring community of Jacundaí participated. They came to respond to the call due to the help that this leader provides in the technical orientations of their AFSs. The staff meeting began at seven in the morning, when each one sharpened their machete, and two farmers equipped themselves with semi-mechanized brush cutters, all of them to mow and take care of the area. The farmers worked on cleaning the vegetation, in addition to cutting some taller açai trees that would make room for new stalks, which makes the harvest faster due to their lower height. In the specific case of this task force, because the leader invited the community members of Jacundaí, he was responsible for providing all the food for the day (morning meal and lunch). This example can be characterized as an instantaneous reciprocity, in which there is the element of feeding the workers in the task force as a form of compensation, as seen in Willems (1947) apud Caldeira (1956).

## COLLECTIVE ACTION IN THE ASSOCIATION

Another of the main expressions of collective action in the community is the *Quilombola* Association of Farmers of the São Manoel Community [*Associação de Agricultores Quilombola da Comunidade São Manoel*]. Its activities encompass several sectors, such as security, subsistence, education, access to public policies, promotion of income generation, marketing incentives, among others. One of these aspects, related to the allocation of land, is of great importance in a rural community; said allocation is granted through a specific board of the association.

One of the association's fundamental roles is the political representation of the community by means of its leaders, in addition to playing the role of raising awareness among young people to form new leaders. Two of the most general characteristics of the leaders interviewed in São Manoel, considering time, purposes and opponents, is the great strength and motivation in their



struggles. It is the association that represents the residents in meetings with the Public Ministry regarding negotiations with Norsk Hydro, and that deals with access to public notices, as in the case of the National School Feeding Program [*Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar*] (PNAE).

Another important assignment of the association is to contact government agencies, such as the Institute of Forestry Development and Biodiversity of the State of Pará [*Instituto de Desenvolvimento Florestal e da Biodiversidade*] (IDEFLOR-BIO), the State Department of Agricultural and Fishing Development [*Secretaria de Estado de Desenvolvimento Agropecuário e da Pesca*] (SEDAP) and Rural Pará [*Pará Rural*], and with individuals, as is the case of the agreement with producer Michinori Konagano, from Tomé-Açu, who provided seeds and initial technical assistance for the implementation of the AFSs. The relationship with external agents generates a feedback, which stimulates the occurrence of collective action. These projects that have been

presented to the community by these agencies serve as a source of resources, such as inputs, for the group. However, in order to allow access to these resources, there needs to be a local group that works and presents itself as a representative, and not just a leader that distributes the resources, since the projects need a group that implements them, as noted by Veiga and Albaladejo (2002) in a different context.

In São Manoel, there is an organizational initiative for the selling of açai to the municipality of Moju through a school meal bid, as stated by twelve farmers (80% of respondents). The agroindustry located in São Manoel mobilized açai producers in the community to purchase their products, benefiting açai for selling, which added value to the product, later passed on in the purchase price to the farmers. Five farmers (33.3%) reported that, through the organization, they intend to take away the bargaining power of middlemen, who constantly pay a low price for local products.

## CONCLUSIONS

Amidst the various interferences that the community has suffered due to the presence of large enterprises, they used strategies to be able to resist such demands. Resistance took place through collective work, better known as *mutirão*, or task force. The latter is widely used both in maintenance activities within the community, due to the neglect of the public power, and for an improvement of an economic nature, with the implementation of the AFSs, management of native-açaí farms, and management of pepper farms. The productive alternatives for these people to stay on the land being carried out collectively show that this *mutirão* culture is a form of resistance they have in order to stand their ground in the face of large enterprises that seek to expand their areas in the Amazon region. In this way, everyday resistance contributes to the group keeping its ways of life in adverse and conflicting situations, and constitutes its forms of collective action and organization.

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