Interactions between social networks, well-being, and conservation behavior: a comparative study among different land users in eastern Amazonia

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Abstract

Proposed session: Understanding challenges and opportunities facing a transition to more sustainable land-use systems in the Eastern Amazon

Abstract: Many different land users, possessing a wide range of backgrounds, networks, and objectives, occupy the Amazon. The land management decisions of these individuals can have profound consequences for the social and environmental sustainability of farming when scaled up to the regional level. Previous studies have shown that land management decisions are strongly influenced by a household’s access to information and resources, but little is known about how local institutions and supply chains influence access among different land users. It is also poorly understood how the management decisions of these agents influence their own economic well-being or the well-being of individuals in local and distant communities through impacts on the local economy and environment. In the first part of this study, we use detailed household data collected by the Sustainable Amazon Network from two case study regions in the Brazilian Amazon to examine how supply chain and learning networks differ among farmers, ranchers, and smallholders and how these networks interact with local institutions, household demographics, and education to influence management decisions, well being, and household resilience to shocks (e.g. due to price fluctuations or drought). In the second part, we examine how the collective management practices of all land users in each region influence local economic development and environmental health, and ultimately the social-ecological resilience of farming communities to adapt to changing circumstances and capitalize on new development trajectories. To conduct this study we rely on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, including comparisons within and between regions.

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