



The New Soya Frontier
Labour Process of the Self-Made Man in Global Value
Chains

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“ ...You've got to jump off the cliff all the time and build your wings on the way down”

Ray Bradbury

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|---------|---------------------------------------------|
| Embrapa | Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuaria |
| GCC | Global Commodity Chains |
| GVC | Global Value Chains |
| GPN | Global Production Networks |
| ISS | Institute of Social Studies |
| LG | Local Government |
| LED | Local Economic Development |
| LP | Labour Process |
| MG | Mato Grosso |
| PCL | Pastoral Commission of Land |
| TNC | Transnational Companies |

Abstract

The reconfiguration of global production and the impacts where this process take place has been focus of different studies. Value chain analysis looks at the different elements (governance and upgrading etc.) that shape the process of production, transformation and distribution of a good or service in different parts of the globe. Recently, attempts have been made in order to integrate what occurs inside the chains and its evolution (vertical elements) with the impacts of these chains/networks in the world where people live and make their lives (horizontal elements). This paper is an additional contribution to understand the different outcomes of value chains in the horizontal realm by analyzing the soy chain in Amapá, the new frontier for expansion of this grain in Brazil. I will contribute to the debate by bringing up three contributions: a different actor –medium-size producers-, ideas from Labour Process (LP) Theory to understand their positionality, and an uncertain place (workplace) where producers and soy chain are embedded. Within this framework this paper focuses on how seeking new agricultural frontiers transformed medium size producers positionality in value chains.

This paper is an invitation to first: think about production processes beyond economics and consider politics and ideology elements. Second, break assumptions by opening the black box of a commonly demonized and rarely studied actor –medium size producers- who is trying to upgrade their position not only in the soy chain, but also in their lives. Finally acknowledge the presence of tensions/ambiguities in the process of production, which put pressures to the process of upgrading of producers and create tensions affecting peoples' lives in the place where this chain is embedded.

Relevance to Development Studies

This research is an additional attempt to understand how the evolution of value chains has an impact in the horizontal realm where people live. This study contributes by marrying GPN analysis with ideas from Labour Process Theory in order to understand the positionality of a 'in between actor' who is commonly demonized and rarely studied. By doing this, the paper analyses in the light of ideas of Labour Process Theory the upgrading process of medium size soy producers in Amapá, Brazil. By using LP and key element from Politics of Production my research brings up political and ideological elements to the process of production. In addition reveals the uncertainties producers face in producing in a new agricultural frontiers, and how upgrading is not just a matter of economics but feelings and personal motivations to grow. However, as is well known soy chain is one of the most polemics due to its socio-economic impacts. In this regard Politics of Production is helpful in order to dig in the tensions that result with the arrival of soy to the new frontier. Finally this research illustrates how social hierarchies and powers determine the outcomes of global forces on peoples' lives. Persistence defines soy producers in this setting, and resilience and precariousness define small farmers in their struggles day by day. Their struggles are not comparable but both have something in common: uncertainty about the present and the future.

Keywords

Global production, value chains, governance, upgrading, labour process, politics of production, migration, new frontier, self-made man

Chapter 1 Setting the stage

Today, we live in an even more interconnected world due to global forces-economic, political and technological- that have permeated all spheres of peoples' lives (Held 1999). The global economy is an expression of this transformation where production takes place in different parts of the globe "(and) are brought together by flows of labour, capital, information, and commodities" (Blum et al. 2000). Therefore, the reconfiguration of global production has been the focus of different studies in order to understand production processes dispersed across the world, their outcomes and their governance systems (Bair 2009).

Global Value Chains (GVC) and Global Commodity Chains (GCC) emerged as analytical tools to grasp inter and intra-firm relations in the process of producing, transforming and distributing a good or service, which occurs in different geographical places (Gereffi 2013). In this context, issues of governance and upgrading, and the ability and possibility of actors to upgrade take importance in GVC analysis (Gereffi 2013, Nadvi 2009). More recently the question has been how globalization as expressed through global production is having an impact on the local; the world and the conditions where people live and work and the impact of 'local history, social relations and environmental factors' in this global process (Nadvi 2009, Bolwig et al. 2010).

Therefore different empirical studies (Coe et al 2008, Nadvi 2009, Bolwig et al. 2010, Pegler 2011) have filled the gap by, on the one hand, integrating in the analysis the logic of value chains, and on the other, what outcomes there are in the place these chains are located in, to have a sense of what works and what doesn't in improving peoples' livelihoods. In this scenario Global Production Networks (GPN) appears as an alternative tool that includes non-firm actors and recognizes 'its embeddedness in broader social structures and institutions with asymmetric relations of power between actors' (Coe et al 2008, Barrientos et al 2011)

This paper adds an empirical study to this understanding of the different outcomes of value chains (and ongoing processes of upgrading and governance configurations within them) in the horizontal realm, the space where people make their lives day by day. By analyzing the soy chain in Amapá (Brazil) I will go a step further in the debate bringing up three contributions: a different actor—medium-size producers-, ideas from Labour Process (LP) Theory to understand their positionality, and an uncertain place (workplace) where producers are embedded.

Through the politics of production, I will analyze how the production process of goods and/or services is the sum three dimensions: the economics (how things are produced), politics (the production of social relations at the workplace) and ideology (how we experience those social relations) (Burawoy 1985). By marrying value chain analysis and Burawoy's key ideas I will open the black box of a subjective 'in between actor' in an uncertain place who is squeezing and being squeezed, commonly demonized, rarely studied, who is trying to upgrade his position in one of the most polemic chains due to its social and environmental impacts. The next sections I will explain the questions, methodology and structure of this paper.

1.1. Questions

R.Q: How seeking new agricultural frontiers transformed medium size producers' positionality in value chains?

Sub Questions:

Why producers decide to move to new agricultural frontiers?

How was the process of inclusion in the chain?

How producers relate to the other actors in the chain?

What were the side effects of the arrival of a new wave of producers to the region?

1.2. Methodology

In order to make my topic researchable my methodology has the following elements. First I relied on a case study analysis. My interest in understanding the subjective experiences at the workplace of medium-size producers in the soy chain in Amapá influenced the way I approached my topic. Thus, on the one hand, my methodology stresses the narratives of different actors in the soy chain (producers, government, private entities and civil society organizations), to understand producers' positionality in the chain, and on the other, the perceptions of the actors regarding agribusiness and its socio-economic impacts in the region.

Through the use of narratives I dug around people's perception and their experiences in order to comprehend their world. Key for this research method is to acknowledge the importance of these narratives as representations of a series of events that are meaningful, which are produced in a specific social context (Elliot 2005). This temporality of narratives has been identified as a central factor to understand individual lives and social contexts (Ibid). In this sense, the narrative through its events should show how everything started, the relevant events in its history and an ending point, which defines the meaning of the events presented (Ibid). Trying to find these relevant events, events that represent a change in situations and in people's lives will be the focus of my research using narratives "as a form of communication in which and individual can externalize his and her feelings and indicate which experiences are more significant" (Ibid: 4). For example the use of '*saudade*'¹ helped me to enter in producers' lives, to find relevant events, turning points in producers' histories that differentiate the past, the present, the coming future and how they are experiencing it.

¹Saudade is unique in the Portuguese language. During navigations Portuguese people use a Latin word to refer to the emptiness that the other person left. It refers to a deep state of nostalgia about something or someone that might never come back. Saudade is the reunion of events, feelings that once brought happiness. In other words is a mix between happiness for the moments lived in the past and sadness because their absence.

Second, this paper rests epistemologically on the perspective of situated knowledge. Rose (1997) explains how power and knowledge are correlated and the necessity of situating any/the knowledge produced. Being sympathetic with producers was not easy all the time, considering I heard rumors (that then became true) about displacement, and that I subsequently had access to a video where a woman was being removed from her house. However in the process of doing the interviews I realized they (producers) pursue the same objectives as my father does who cares about me by giving me the best. One of my informants could not have explained it better: “everyone will try to pay the price to improve their lives, not to worsen (...) you are studying also to try to improve life, aren’t you?” (Carlos 2015, personal interview). What at the beginning was difficult turned into understanding them as people feeling humanely, in Burawoy’s et al words “winners in globalized societies show that even the winners are not safe from the fluctuations of the economy without borders” (2000).

In this setting, to operationalize my research I conducted narrative and semi-structured interviews, participatory observation and note taking to dig into producers’ lives and also to grasp perceptions of other actors regarding the local agribusiness and its socio-economic impacts in the region. I interviewed four producers and held informal conversations with another five². The criteria to select them were the character of ‘migrants’ and the categorization according to the planted area (small or medium) of the informants. Embrapa³ (Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuaria) was determinant as an entry point; it helped me to access them faster than doing it by myself as a Colombian, doing a master in The Netherlands and researching about a polemic chain located in a remote place. Additionally it is important to remark that all my interviewees were men⁴, which confirms that soy business is a male dominated activity⁵.

Following a participatory observation approach, I took advantage of all spaces and situations I was involved in during my fieldwork. My fieldwork coincided with a *Dia de Campo* (Farm day) organized by Embrapa that allowed me to understand general impressions in Amapá regarding soy. To document the information gathered three journals were my company during three weeks. I captured important facts of the interviews, secondary data that can be useful for the analysis and my own perceptions about what I was observing, hearing and experiencing.

As a reflection, I would like to show some of the challenges I faced doing research. Language was one of my ‘barriers’. All the interviews were done in Portuguese (my first language is Spanish). I personally did the translation to English aware of how this process can change the sense of some words or expressions that don’t have a translation in any language and having into account

²My sample represents 26% of the producers in Amapá. Thus, this paper offers the analysis of a specific phenomenon through the subjective experiences of the informants. It is not my attempt to generalize about producers’ lives and experiences in soy chain in Brazil and beyond.

³Embrapa is a public-private research institute focus on agriculture and livestock. It is an important actor in the soy chain in Brazil <<https://www.embrapa.br/>>

⁴ I was expecting to talk with the only female manager in one of the farms. This was not possible given the busy schedule of the interviewee given that I arrived in the middle of the harvesting season.

⁵Soares (2009) highlight some general features around the inclusion of women in the soybean chain in Brazil. According to her employment in the soy context can be defined as “male, formal, temporal and precarious”. For this reason hereafter I will refer to *them* and *his* along this paper.

the context of the interviews. Being careful about topics such as land titling and land grabbing during the interviews was other of my concerns. All the people I met asked for my interest in soy and in Amapá, in an attempt to know if I was an environmental activist or an NGO member. I was really aware that a misunderstanding with this sensitive topic could close the doors with my informants. Lastly, my arrival coincided with the harvesting season, which affected the available time of producers for the interviews. Nonetheless, contrary to other experiences in landowner's research⁶ I had easy access to them and they were kind in offering me information⁷.

1.3. Structure

The remainder of this paper addresses my research questions, starting from a review of related debates in the literature that allows me to analyze value chains and LP upgrading in uncertain places. Within that framework, I offer a glimpse of the soy value chain worldwide paying specific attention to Brazil (chapter 3), open the black box of subjective soy producers in their workplace taking account of their attempts to upgrade, their uncertainties and expectations (chapter 4), and identify the tensions created at the local level with the arrive of soy to Amapá (chapter 5). The last chapter brings concluding remarks.

⁶ See Shore 2004

⁷ My question until today is if the fact of being a young female master student helped me to access them. Maybe it did, there was always surprise when they asked me if I spoke Spanish, English and Portuguese.

Chapter 2 Marrying concepts: Value Chain Analysis and Labour Process Theory

In this section I present the analytical tools I am using to explain how global forces impact producers' lives, understanding why and how they do what they do at work, and the outcomes of their inclusion in the local sphere. By marrying two areas –GPN analysis and Politics of Production by Burawoy-, I will descend to the micro-how these people live, why they do what they do and how-, and rise to the macro- how the soy business is constituted in Amapá and the evolution of this chain.

I will begin with a brief review of Value Chains literature, paying special attention to the concepts of governance and upgrading. Then I will introduce the GPN framework as an alternative to study local outcomes of value chains. The last section will provide a glimpse to the Politics of Production by Burawoy (1985) in order to uncover the underbelly of value chain development introducing some concepts - self-made men and agricultural frontiers as an adaptation to explain the world of producers in Amapá.

2.1. Understanding global production: value chains, governance and upgrading

Increasing global interconnectedness has permeated all spheres of our social lives (Held 1999); global trade is one of its expressions. Transnational Companies (TNCs) looking for new opportunities of low cost production and 'capable suppliers' (Gereffi 2013) and greater geographical dispersion of production throughout the globe have driven changes in patterns of production, international division of labour, and development (Gibbon et al 2008). In order to explain this reconfiguration in global economic governance different theoretical frameworks have appeared since early 2000s (Gibbon et al 2008, Gereffi 2013).

Global Value Chains (GVC), Global Commodity Chains (GCC) and Global Production Networks (GPN) emerged 'to analyze international expansion and geographical fragmentation of contemporary supply chains (Gereffi 2013:10). When we talk about GVC we refer to "a commodity chain viewed as a network of labor and production processes whose end result is a finish commodity" (Gibbon et al 2008). These processes however, are not spontaneous; they are boosted by the different actors that participate (in different degrees) in decision-making processes, which result in a series of rules 'used by non-state actors to manage activities in GVCs' (Gereffi, cited by Mayer and Gereffi 2010). Subsequently, governance in GVC analysis is useful to understand who gets what in terms of 'profits and risks', and who and how decisions are made regarding the processes by which a good or service is produced, transformed and distributed to the final consumer (Gereffi 2013, Gibbon et al 2008).

The concept of governance has different meanings depending on which analytical lenses are used. According to Gereffi et al. the variations depend on the 'complexity of transactions, the degree of codification and the capabilities

of suppliers' (2006:87). The importance of this notion relies on the possibility of conceiving diverse forms of governance across value chains. It varies from "low coordination and power asymmetries between actors to high levels of coordination and power asymmetries (Gereffi et al, 2006:88; Gereffi 2013). For this case study is important to make some clarifications. First, soybean producers will be the unit of analysis of this chain without ignoring the role of other actors in shaping its evolution. In fact, what is relevant in this case study is the location 'in between' these producers in the chain, which means they are being squeezed but that they are also squeezing others. Second, as I will explain further, high transaction costs and risk characterize new agricultural frontiers (Jepson 2009). Thus, what producers negotiate with other actors in order to upgrade their position within the chain and how they or others reduce transaction costs will be relevant in the understanding of how this uncertain place-the new frontier- is developed, and the outcomes of this development for the region.

This leads us to another relevant issue for understanding global production from the perspective of GVCs: upgrading. This process implies the use of 'strategies by countries, regions and other economic stakeholders to maintain or improve their position in the global economy (Gereffi 2013:13). Therefore upgrading occurs at the intra-firm level due to changes inside the firm (re-distribution of activities, development of new products, improvements in technology, knowledge and skills) (Kaplinsky et al 2002; Barrientos et al 2011). Functional upgrading is one of the ways to move up in the chain*via vertical integration (new capabilities to do something) or vertical specialization (move up in the network by doing a higher value activity) (Barrientos et al 2011). Nonetheless one of the most challenging is taking into account the role of buyers in 'furthering, neglecting or obstructing functional upgrading by their suppliers' (Knorringa and Pegler 2006: 472).

The question is how economic upgrading and specifically functional upgrading relates with the 'in between' soy producers in Amapá. In this case upgrading is linked with the possibility of these 'small'⁹ soy producers who migrate to a new agricultural frontier looking for better opportunities to expand their business and move up in the chain. Instead of analyzing this process inside the farm (they are focused mainly in the production of soybeans as raw material. Improvements are done in the name of productivity), I will look at it in relation to producer vis a vis Local Government (LG), meaning inter-producer instead of the intra-producer level.

As I will develop further, soy production in Amapá is seen as an instrument for the creation of new jobs, and economic development (Embrapa 2014), in a context of difficulty in Brazil. In this regard the Association of Soy Producers (Aprosoja) based on the potential of the region projects a rent for the LG of R\$ 1.200 billion approximately and the creation of 32.000 new jobs. However it is uncertain how this would become true due to the constraints producers are facing in terms of logistics, infrastructure, access to the markets

⁸For further explanation about types of upgrading see Barrientos et al 2002; Kaplinsky et al 2002; Knorringa and Pegler 2006.

⁹Producers in Brazil are categorized according to the number of fiscal modules (módulos fiscais) they have. The unity used is Hectares and its size varies depending on each State. In Amapá a small producer has up to 200 He (four fiscal modules) and a medium-sized between 200 He and 3000 He. Landholdings are not taken into account still.

and titling on the one hand, and if more employment equates to quality employment. Here economic upgrading is linked with social upgrading (or downgrading). The paradox is that while globalization is taking firms along the road of competitiveness and upgrading, and in principle this is translated in more and better employment, which is used in the discourse of local development “it seems clear that at least widespread and sustainable improvements in labour conditions will not arise as a by-product from firm upgrading in GVCs” (Barrientos et al 2011: 325).

In sum, economic upgrading and governance are fundamental pieces to understand global production and the evolution of value chains in terms of the processes needed to produce a good or service that will end up in the hands of consumers (Bolwig et al. 2010, Coe et al 2008). As I explained, the intentioned movements and decisions made within the chains have an impact on peoples’ lives in the form of better employment conditions. Nevertheless, the impact goes beyond more and better employment, transforming how people live and work; transforming social relations (Nadvi 2009, Bolwig et al. 2010).

GVC analysis acknowledges this intersection between the logic of value chains and the horizontal realm where these networks are embedded. Empirical studies (Coe et al 2008; Nadvi 2009, Bolwig et al. 2010, Pegler 2011) have filled the gap by integrating in the analysis the verticality of value chains and the outcomes in the place these chains are located (horizontal relations) and have established what works and what don’t in improving peoples’ livelihoods. In this scenario Global Production Networks (GPN) appears as an alternative tool that includes non-firm actors and recognizes ‘its embeddedness in broader social structures and institutions with asymmetric relations of power between actors’ (Coe et al 2008; Barrientos et al 2011).

The empirical case I am presenting is another example of analysis integrating these two variables. In this regard my research follows the line of analysis of the GPN approach by not only tackling the evolution of the chain, its governance structures and upgrading processes, but also the horizontal realm where this chain is embedded accounting the existence of additional variables beyond the economics. In the next sections I will highlight the limitations I find more relevant in doing GPN analysis, then I will explore a different tool of analysis –LP Theory- to tackle the uncertain setting of Amapá as new agricultural frontier, and finally I will present some concepts in order to adapt this tool to my analysis.

2.2. Still some work to do...

Coe et al (2008) identify some of the challenges of GNP analysis in further research. On the one side, actors are seen as black boxes. Translating this to the soy producers’ context it would mean that their feelings about their activity and the reasons behind their actions are taken for granted. Each of them has personal motivations, expectations and uncertainties to deal with. This is relevant also in agrarian studies. The fact they have different histories and identities can be determinant at the moment of self-identification under a specific class, which has an effect at the moment of resisting the terms of their inclusion in value chains (McKay and Colque 2015).

On the other, it is important to acknowledge these networks as spaces of conflict and cooperation and both of them coexist in a non-linear relation (Coe et al 2008). In other words, relations are not just simply based in cooperation or conflict. Rather, tensions are the commonality. If I had to describe in one word what I found in Amapá this would be tensions. The relation producer-LG is just an example of this. Both the producer and the LG with their agendas and interests; both pushing in order to achieve their objectives and conscious about the dependency relationship between each other to accomplish those objectives.

2.3. Politics of production: more than economics

How to explain those tensions and these particular actors? Some key aspects of Burawoy's Politics of Production will be my tools for uncovering the underbelly of the horizontal elements I found in Amapá. It is important to clarify I will not make emphasis on the struggle between capital and labour in a strict sense. Instead I am borrowing some generalities to look through the politics of production at the workplace how the act of working is influenced by political and ideological factors besides the economic ones.

In Burawoy's view LP is just one part of the production process, where people or the ones who work are not passive victims and are able to shape their own work experience. In this sense, as work is done by humans and all of them are completely different universes, the responses to similar work situations or settings will be different. In other words my attempt is to open the black box.

In this context, Burawoy's contribution is adding an economic and political dimension to the production process, in other words "what people did in their work has an economic and political dimension – subjective responses to work situations" (Pegler 2011: 13). These subjective responses "cannot be reduced to some inexorable laws of capitalism. We participated in and strategized our own subordination. We are active accomplices in our own exploitation" (Burawoy1985: 10). Therefore, people adapt constantly to their work and by doing this they build relations of cooperation and domination but also consent of their activities (Ibid).

According to Burawoy, labour and the act of working are embedded in the capitalist mode of production, which has as objective "obscuring and securing of surplus value" (1985: 32), or in other words accumulation of capital. However this cannot be understood without the ideological and political elements. As he argues, capitalism is not only about the reproduction of useful goods or services, but also about reproduction of ideas and subjectivities while people experience work; a cultural process where 'practices, identities, and fundamental beliefs' are part of the transformation and consolidation of class relations (London 1997). "Only when these processes (political and ideological) are understood can we proceed to examine (different) forms of the capitalist labour process" (Burawoy195: 35).

What's the ideology then? It is the structure where our ideas and interests are organized and organize the daily life of workers (Burawoy 1985); "is the lived experience of those social relations" (Ibid: 36). What defines what people do and why, according to him, goes beyond the economic aspects and doesn't

constitute them as a ‘class for itself’, people have different origins, personal experiences and interests that constitute how they perceive themselves and self-identify. The Bolivian case help us to illustrate this; ‘small farmers’ in CuatroCañadas and San Julián self-identify neither as proletariat nor petty bourgeoisie because while they still are formal owners of their land and perceive an income coming from renting it, they are being excluded of exploiting it in the absence of physical capital at the same time. Therefore, they are ‘in between’, where income is one of the factors but “intersects with their individual histories and identities” (McKey and Colque 2015: 23).

Moreover, ideology and ‘different cultural repertoire (...) that guide practices and discourses of farmers led to different responses in similar settings’ (Schneider and Niederle 2010), meaning changes in the way farmers do their work. Resources available in terms of ‘changes in LP, capital investment, production processes and even social relations’ will determine farmers’ responses and the degree of dependency or autonomy from the system they are reproducing (Ibíd: 388)

This led us to the political dimension, which is the one that produces social relations of the LP through the regulation of the struggles at the work place (Burawoy 1983). State cannot be understood as impenetrable by external forces “state politics do not hang from the clouds; they rise from the ground and when the ground trembles, so do they” (Burawoy 1983: 596). What Burawoy is showing us is the presence of class relations that shape the intervention of the state. In Amapá’s case the role of LG in cooperating (or not) in boosting the frontier (therefore upgrading producers’ position), the migration of soy producers process that started 10 years ago, and the different identities of these producers also shape their attitudes and actions.

Summarizing, production process is the sum of the economics (how things are produced), politics (the production of social relations at the workplace) and ideology (how we experience those social relations) (Burawoy 1985). How can I translate this into the Brazilian context? The last section of this chapter advances in a simple way the analytical framework I constructed for examining value chains and LP upgrading in uncertain places.

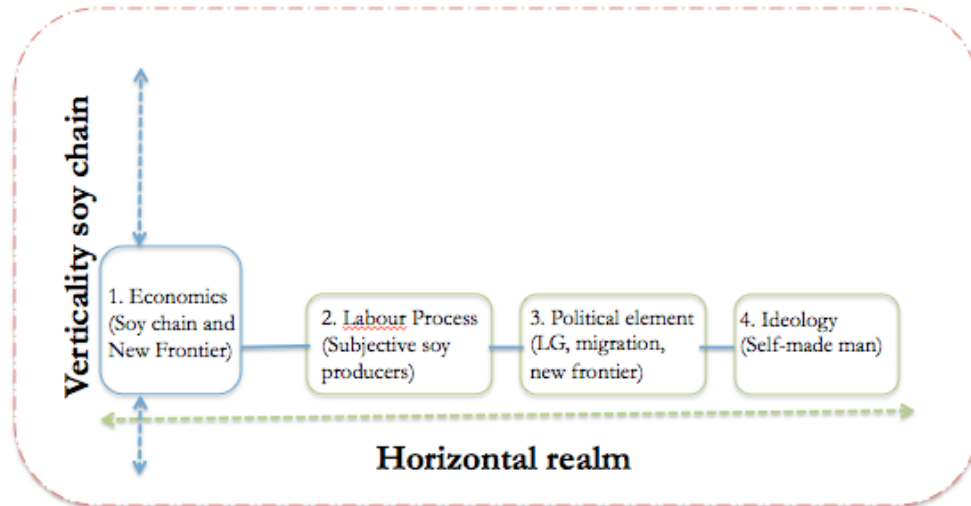
2.4. Analytical framework

Drawing in the theoretical framework presented before, I will illustrate the analytical framework for analyzing value chains and LP upgrading in uncertain places. First, it is important to make some brief considerations regarding the study case. Soy producers started a migration process (still ongoing) 10 years ago to Amapá, considered today the last frontier for expansion of soy in Brazil. They migrated pursuing the capitalist dream of accumulating more and more. Are they accumulating? The answer is yes, they do. Has this been easy? The answer is no. There are tensions everywhere; logistics and infrastructure are poor in Amapá which makes more expensive production; there are difficulties regarding the titling on land and serious questionings on how they are acquiring it; their salvation, a new port is still under construction; and the LG is expecting soy would be solution for the creation of more and better jobs. As bad as this scenario can be, these ‘survivors’ (as they call themselves) full of motivations, hopes and expectations justify, in their view, what they do, how they do it, how they self-identify within this chain, and why and how they are respond-

ing to these uncertain workplace called Amapá.

Figure 1 presents the production process in Amapá based on the consideration presented above, including in the analysis the verticality of the chains, and its horizontal elements and relations.

Figure 1: Production Process in Amapá



Source: prepared by the author

Based on these previous considerations the production process of soy in Amapá can be thought of with four elements. The first element acknowledges the evolution of the soy chain in Amapá and new frontiers as constituting factors of the economic dimension. The second brings the social relations of the subjective producers in cultivating soy. The third looks at the political elements that influence the production process, in this case the LG, the new frontier as scenario and the process of migration of producers. The last one brings up a new element-self made man- as the ideology shaping the actions of producers.

This framework will help me to go from the macro-the vertical soy chain and its evolution-, to the micro-the producer behind this chain and explore the tensions that emerge in the encounter of the soy chain with an uncertain place and a particular actor trying to move up in the business. Thus, in the next section I will introduce the concepts of self-men and new frontier to clarify my setting.

2.5. Self-made men as an ideology

Taking Burawoy as a basis, the 'self-made men' will be my ideological dimension in order to analyze the politics of production in Amapá. The self-made man as an ideology has its beginnings in the XIX Century when Frederick Douglass defined United States as a nation of self-made men (Armengol 2006). But what does self-made man mean? This concept is used to describe a specific human behavior. Being manly means accumulation of wealth, economic success and social status; much like to what today we know as an entrepreneur (Mulholland 1996). Then, self-made man is independent, individualistic

and autonomous, controlling his life and body, defining himself by excluding others; his triumphs are the result of courage, strength and self-determination (Armengol 2006).

But the history of this man is not as happy as it seems. Success achieved by the 'self-made man' is rewarded with 'loneliness, emptiness and failure' (Armengol 2006). In this regard the 'self-made man' is a mix of both happiness and sadness as a consequence of late capitalism in the working class; exploitation is the result putting at risk the idea of the American dream of endless economic prosperity and success (Ibid). Is there salvation for this man? "Love and affection can combat these feelings of alienation, frustration and economic deprivation" (Ibid:65).

In spite of the image, the self-made man has become the entrepreneur we know today, its deterministic explanation of human behavior with no influence of race, class and gender and other external forces in shaping identity is questionable (Catano 1990). Cammett (2005) evidenced how identity, in this case the 'self-made man' is socially constructed by external forces. A pro-private initiative discourse made possible the collusion of society with the idea of confident business boys; the role of media and leaders spreading and legitimizing the role of entrepreneurs as risk takers. All this together created an image with which these 'business men' self-identified with common interests and goals which help them self-organize as a collective group.

In the Brazilian context, entrepreneur or pioneer are synonym of self-made man. Similar to the characteristics presented above, a pioneer or entrepreneur has the sufficient interior strength to overcome any obstacle (Marcovitch 2007). The pioneer as the self-made man differentiates himself from the others in the sense he has vision, doesn't contemplate obstacles or frontiers and feels a strong desire to work. Marcovitch (2007) is an example of the importance given to pioneers in the civilizing process of Brazil who exalts in three volumes the histories of self-made men in this country.

Some aspects to take into account for further analysis are some inherent characteristics and goals given to these self-made men. First, it is assumed that nothing will be the same after pioneers' arrival; he is a synonym for transformation. Second, individual (or private) initiative is rewarded and is seen as necessary to fill the gap led by the public power. Finally, they are wealth promoters who are not conscious they are being part of human change. In this context the *Gaúchos*¹⁰ are the most visible expression of the romantic idea around pioneers and entrepreneurs, exalting the role of European migrants especially in agriculture settings. Thus farmers are adventures; hard working people always looking for better opportunities, "the entrepreneurial individualist can come into his own, proving his courage and self-reliance in the wild west of flexible capitalism". (Burawoy et al 2000: 76)

The message behind this, and bringing back Burawoy is the presence of external forces feeding into each other and a call to not ignore the different feelings of people while they work, how they feel about it and how they adapt to it. Class is then not only about economics but "adding cognitive constructs that map the terrain of lived experience to abstract the notion of a class as a

¹⁰Gaúcho is the person coming from the south of Brazil(Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná and Santa Catarina).

category in a structure of production” (Cammett 2005: 383). Thus, ideology and its dissemination shape the production process.

2.6. Agricultural frontiers¹¹: expansion of capitalism

In order to complete the equation of the Amapá setting I bring into light the concept of agricultural frontier as economic and political dimensions shaping the production process in that region. This consideration is important taking into account that Amapá is considered today the last frontier for expansion of soy in Brazil, which adds complex elements that producers also have to deal with.

In the words of Rivero and Cooney, a frontier “is the border that divides the known or organized space from another space that is unknown or slated to be conquered”(2010: 57). As they mention frontier is not just about geography, but implies “change, transformation and conquest” (Ibid). In this sense the agricultural frontier in Amapá can be understood as the unknown space producers are exploring to expand agricultural production, specifically soybeans.

In a context of global trade that brings new opportunities to global suppliers in terms of more and faster production for global buyers, open up new frontiers seems to be the answer. However, while that covers this need, they face new challenges in an unfamiliar area in terms of incipient production processes and difficulties in accessing the market.

In economic terms a frontier is defined by high transaction costs (precarious markets, poor infrastructure, and land insecurity) and risk” (Jepson 2009:289). According to Jepson frontiers are the spaces where transformations in terms of production processes and technology are happening using even more inputs and capital to the process replacing subsistence production systems (2009). In this context Jepson’s case study in the frontier of Mato Grosso (MG) is useful in order to describe the factors that transformed this state in the most important producer in the country.

As she pointed out, land, infrastructure and state intervention were important but not sufficient to explain the new position of MG as a new agricultural frontier. The role of firms, specifically cooperatives in this case, play an important role as intermediaries between farmers and government entities and functionaries in one side, and in reducing costs in property rights, infrastructure, technology and access to the market and credit loans on the other (Jepson 2009).

First, the intermediation with government bureaucracies facilitated access to land titles, which meant also access to agricultural credit and was the channel through which government investment in infrastructure became real. Second, cooperatives were determinant in open up new market channels for producers by investing in infrastructure (storage centers) and by selling their production. Third, technology translated into research, and dissemination of good agricultural practices served to counter land degradation due to the mon-

¹¹For the purpose of this essay I will focus my analysis in agricultural frontiers.

oculture of rice. Investment in soil studies, research on new varieties to crop for diversifying production, farm days, and the incursion of the organization in new markets (fertilizers and agrochemicals) allowed an important reduction in costs of production. All these factors together boosted MG as a modern agricultural frontier (Jepson 2009).

In sum, Jepson's analysis is an invitation to understand these unexplored spaces as embedded in social and political dimensions where different agents shape the development of new frontiers by intermediating, investing and/or researching. In this sense, one cannot ignore people who live in those frontiers and whose lives are being affected. Land degradation due to monoculture is one example. The opening of new expansion zones doesn't take into account the socio environmental impacts left and the people who still make their lives in those 'old frontiers' (Amanor 1994). If this is translated to value chains language, we would be facing the encounter of the vertical elements of value chains and the outcomes it has in the way people live and subsist.

To sum up, this chapter has explored key concepts in value chain analysis: notions of governance and upgrading and its embeddedness in broader social relations and institutional settings. Ideas from Politics of Production are extracted to analyze from a different perspective the outcomes of production networks in people's lives beyond the economics and considering also politics and ideology elements. With this context, the following sections examine the evolution of soy chain at the global, national and local level and explore its outcomes in people's way of working from a LP perspective.

Chapter 3 The invasion of soybeans!

In the light of the analytical framework illustrated above, I will address in this chapter the evolution of soy chain worldwide, in Brazil and finally in Amapá. In other words I will bring into light the verticality of soy value chain. The first section includes a brief review on the evolution of the soy chain worldwide looking at key numbers and actors. Then, Brazil comes into the scene by highlighting its role in the global market and mentioning briefly why this crop is one of the most contested nowadays. The last section brings up Amapá as new agricultural frontier for expansion of soy.

3.1. Soy in the world

Nowadays soy is the main oilseed crop cultivated worldwide (Hirakuri and Lazarotto 2014). This grain has become in one of the most important crops worldwide in terms of planted area, yield productivity, and international trade (Oliveira and Schneider 2014). Soy production has increased 2.8 times in 25 years, and the planted area four times in the last 60 years (Hirakuri and Lazarotto 2014; Oliveira and Schneider 2014). Given its multiple uses (feed, food and biodiesel) (Borras et al 2012), the increasing demand from animal feed sector, and several improvements in technology have been the main reasons of soy expansion (Hirakuri and Lazarotto 2014).

The United States (US), Brazil, Argentina, China and India are the top five soybean producers¹² nowadays. The three American countries account for more than 70% of the total planted area and produce 81% of world production. In terms of consumption China, US, Brazil, Argentina and the European Union (EU) are the leading actors (Hirakuri and Lazarotto 2014). In this context, China imports 65% of the total mostly from US and Brazil. From the side of exports, Brazil and US are key players; their exports represent 80% of the total in the international market (Ibid).

What's the destination of soy? The 6% of the total production goes for human consumption in the form of whole beans, tofu or other soy foods (Oliveira and Schneider 2014). The rest of the production is crushed to obtain meal (79%) and oil (19%). Then, 98% of soy meal is used in the animal feed industry and the 2% left is used as protein in the food processing industries. Meanwhile soy oil is processed for human consumption and industrial products such biodiesel (Oliveira and Schneider 2014). In this context, having into account soy meal is the main soy derivative livestock feed becomes a driver of this chain (Hirakuri and Lazarotto 2014).

Within this context, the increasing global demand from livestock feed and China as top importer of soybeans, have transformed the patterns of global production. This has led TNCs¹³ (responsible of 60% of crushing worldwide)

¹² I will emphasize on soybeans trade, meaning the grain as raw material. Given the focus of this paper are soybean producers and not other sectors of the chain such crush companies.

¹³ Some of the most relevant are Bunge, Cargill, ADM and Louis Dreyfus.

expand their horizons looking at other global suppliers (Hirakuri and Lazarotto 2014). Therefore, due to the availability of productive land Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay increased their participation in the global market and produce 57% of the total exports (Oliveira and Schneider 2014).

In this scenario of increasing demand expansion of production to new zones has been inevitable but with high social and environmental costs. Issues such displacement of small scale production and its impact on farmers' livelihoods in terms of substitution of traditional systems of production and subsistence crops (Hall et al. 2009, Sauer and Almeida 2011, Hospes et al. 2012), land grabbing (Borras et al 2012), deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions, water and soil contamination and loss of biodiversity and poor labor practices ('Sustainable insight', 2013) has been in the spotlight. Brazil is not apart of this situation given the impacts of expansion in the Amazon on peoples' livelihoods, and the questionable methods in accessing to the land (Sauer and Almeida 2011).

3.2. Soy boom in Brazil

"We are living difficult economic times (...) while soy agribusiness¹⁴ is growing other sectors are just going down. Productivity is an issue for other industries, not for soy" (Afonso 2015, personal interview). Soy agribusiness is one of the key drivers of the Brazilian economy. In this context, the Brazilian government sees soy as the path for economic and social development (Hirakuri and Lazarotto 2014). Thus the government has set a favorable scenario based on the promising international scenario with China's increasing demand. Investments in infrastructure (mainly logistics and transportation systems), the creation of Embrapa, the adoption of modern technologies to increase productivity, and the implementation of land policies¹⁵ were determinant factors to facilitate the expansion of soy in new regions¹⁶ (Alvino 2011; Hall et al., 2009; Hirakuri and Lazarotto 2014).

The numbers speak for themselves. Brazil is the second global producer of soybean with 95 billion tons per year in a planted area of 31 million He (Hirakuri and Lazarotto 2014) being MG, Parana, Rio Grande do Sul e Goias the main producers of the grain ("Soy good agricultural practices' 2012). Its soy exports represent 41% of the share of total global trade and 22% of its Gross National Product-GNP (Oliveira and Scheneider, 2014). This has been determinant to maintain trade surplus in the balance of trade even when other sectors have negative numbers (Hirakuri and Lazarotto 2014)¹⁷. Then the measures adopted have positioned Brazil in a strategic position in the soybean exports market.

What are the challenges? Today Brazil is well positioned as exporter of soy as raw material (with no transformation or value added) even though there

¹⁴Agribusiness includes "inputs (fertilizers, pesticides) and the aggregate value of agricultural products within the supply chain from processing, packaging and transportation" (McKay and Nehring 2014:9)

¹⁵Government is making available land considered unproductive such Cerrado in the Amazonia. Thus government is facilitating tiling on land in states recently constituted were land is still considered public. See Wagner (2011) for further research.

¹⁶The expansion to new regions started in the 80s. It started in the south of the country, then it spread to the center west and finally to the Amazon (Gayoso 2011)

¹⁷ This section is based on earlier unpublished course work material at Institute of Social Studies (ISS)

is an increasing internal and external demand of soy derivatives, which could be an opportunity to verticalize the chain. However there are factors inhibiting the upgrading process. First, the Law Kandir of 1996 favor exports of raw material exports by exempting them from taxes. Second, there are insufficient fiscal incentives to boost the crushing industry, and they do not have enough financial resources to stock raw materials (Hirakuri and Lazarotto 2014). Finally, China as main importer outsources grain production to Brazil and US, which is determinant for the Brazilian country. Based on that, one could say the setting is given for promoting exports and specifically of raw materials.

In terms of logistics one of the most important challenges is to find out new routes to distribute production. Currently almost all the production is distributed through the Ports in the south and southeast (mainly Santos and Paranaguá). Due to the huge congestions to distribute soy to the ports private sector has started to invest in infrastructure projects in the north.

3.3. Amapá: the last frontier of soy

In the context of looking for new routes to distribute soy production Amapá appears in the scene. Cianport announced the construction of a new port in this state located in the north part of Brazil in 2012. Due to the strategic geographical location with the Amazon River and the Atlantic Ocean to the east Amapá is considered today the last frontier for expansion of soy and with the potential of becoming a major logistics hub and development pole (Monteiro 2015).

Map 1: Map of the study area: Amapá, Brazil.



Source: (Google maps 2015)

The construction of the new port will signify a diminution in the cost of production to the half per ton; therefore Amapá will be more competitive in terms of cost of production and export prices (Monteiro 2015). Besides the

construction of the new port, Amapá's Cerrado¹⁸ has remarkable competitive advantages such weather and devalued lands. These three factors fostered a migration process of soy producers (there are 35 today) from the south, south-east and central west of Brazil. They came looking for better opportunities to expand their business. Today they are a fundamental piece in the development of this chain not just because their financial capacity but their experience and knowledge are being used as a model in the region (Embrapa, 2014). As a representative of the LG pointed out "people from the south and center east come prepared, they now what they want" (LG 2015, personal interview).

In this regard, soy producers also remark their role in agriculture "we know the entire process of taming the land. There is no one better than Brazilian farmer to establish a decent and economically viable production system in Amapá" (Felipe 2015, personal interview). In this context, production of grains, and specifically soy is seen as the "best chance" for this state to grow and be competitive (Embrapa 2014); "Amapá is other Brazil, this is because it is a region that has not developed economically, have no economy here ... Cities are precarious, do not have a bank agency there" (Daniel 2015, personal interview).

According to Aprosoja Amapá's planted area was around 11.000 He in 2014 and is expected an increase of 82% for 2016 (20.000 He). When planted area reaches 400.000 He 32.000 new jobs will be created promoting the migration from urban to rural areas. In addition this movement will generate R\$1.200 Billion representing an increase of its GNP in 20% (Aprosoja 2015). Production in Amapá was distributed mainly to the domestic market before 2013. This picture changed in 2014 when producers exported their production through Bungui's port located in Pará (Felipe 2015, personal interview).

In spite of the promising scenario for soybean agribusiness lack of infrastructure, logistics, access to the market and titling on land are the main constraints soy producers are facing. Currently producers do not count with storage and standardization infrastructure and the distribution of production is still precarious, which results in high costs of transportation and difficult access to the market (Felipe 2015, personal interview). In this context the new port is the hope of these producers to consolidate soy production in Amapá.

In this setting I met Luís¹⁹, Felipe, Romulo and Bernardo. Luís is 30 and plant soy, maracujá, manioc and corn in an area of 800 He. I met him twice in his farm. Felipe is in his early thirties and besides being a producer (his planted area is 500 He) works for Aprosoja. I only met him once. My visit coincided with the harvest season and he was busy preparing the Farm Day. With Romulo and Bernardo circumstances helped me. I met them in this event. I had the chance to talk with them briefly about my research and set two appointments. Romulo is his mid-forties; he is gaucho from Rio Grande. He produces soy in a planted area of 2.800 He and owns an agricultural inputs company in Para where he lives. My last informant was Bernardo; he is one of the most prominent soy producers in Amapá with 870 He. I went to his farm twice and had

¹⁸ "The central savannah in Brazil (*cerrado*) is one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world and is disappearing due to the rapid expansion of soybean production and livestock grazing" (McKay and Nehring 2014:45)

¹⁹The names of the respondents used in the research are fictive. They are an adaptation from the Brazilian soap opera 'Além do Tempo'.

the opportunity to see the harvest process and know a small piece of his farm. Besides these formal semi-structured interviews I had informal conversations with other five producers during the event about production in Amapá, its competitive advantages and the production process itself.

The other people I met provide me an additional understanding of soy in Amapa. I talked with representatives of Embrapa, the Pastoral Commission of Land (PCL) and the LG. Based on this, the upcoming chapter presents and analyses on the one hand events and turning points for Luís, Felipe, Romulo and Bernardo Jacob and Roman regarding their process of upgrading in Amapá from a LP perspective.



Bernardo's Farm. Source: Fieldwork 2015



Bernardo's machinery. Source: Fieldwork 2015.

Chapter 4 The Self-made man: stories of struggle and hope in Amapá

*We found in saudade pieces of us we left behind.
And we find in saudade, a strange thing: we want to find in the future what we have experienced as joy in the past.
We can only love what we already have had".
Rubem Alves*

In this chapter I want to bring out the stories I gathered during my field-work. These are the stories of medium sized producers in Amapá. Through the lenses of these producers and their narratives, I will explore their experiences of working in this new agricultural frontier by looking at their adaptation process to a new place in terms of production, market conditions and way of living. The stories presented were collected through interviews and informal conversations. My attempt is to open the black box of these ‘in between’ producers who are trying to upgrade their position not only in the soy chain, but also in their lives.

In the previous chapters, I have tried to show the big picture of soy production today - how this profitable business works, how this grain is important to Brazil and why today Amapá is the focus of attention of the soy producers. In this setting, the soy producers migrated looking for better opportunities. However, due to logistical and infrastructure constraints and the absence of land titling, soy production has turned more difficult in this region.

4.1. Looking for better opportunities

“I know Amapá since the last 10 years. I saw its potential in terms of its location and its infrastructure. The weather is an important factor too (...) and soil topography (...) and I decided to come” (Romulo 2015, personal interview). Romulo is in his early forties. Location and favorable weather conditions are the most common reasons given by the producers, the Federal and LG, Aprosoja and the media to support the migration of about the 35 producers who work in this region today.

Felipe, attracted by these factors, was also looking for an opportunity to expand his production. Weather factors, location and the construction of the new port attracted even more people, especially those with no chance to grow soy because of land concentration and high land prices in areas where the business was already developed such MG. As Felipe said, “it turned land of giants there”. Luís also came here looking to expand. He is 30 and has been involved in agriculture almost all his life in Minas. He used to work in a Japanese company over 10 years ago before coming here. The company bought some areas in Amapá and offered Luís to go and plant there. He didn’t hesitate “I was not leaving anything behind; my parents maybe but no one who depends on me” (Luís 2015, personal interview).

Land prices²⁰ are also attractive for these producers. “One hectare here costs a tenth of what it would elsewhere, that’s what attract farmers, the possibility of buying areas at prices not found in other places and with an incredible potential of appreciation” (Felipe 2015, personal interview).

Bernardo is also aware of this incredible potential. He recovered the initial investment made five years ago only with the appreciation of land. He is 37 and knew Amapá thanks to his father-in-law who bought 1700 hectares there and asked Bernardo to manage them. Bernardo used to live in Maracaju where he produced soy in a leased farm and worked as an employee for the company Cargill for two years. Access to the market was not an issue in Macaju “commercialization there is easy. There are cooperatives (...) when the dollar appreciated companies called us (the producers) to buy; I received six or seven calls during the day”. In spite of this favorable situation, two consecutive dry seasons and the dependency on inputs companies to sell the production were sufficient reasons to not hesitate to go to Amapá “I had to pay them and I only produced 28 sacks due to the dry season, how would I pay the rest? (Bernardo 2015, personal interview).

Behind this desire of expansion there are also personal motivations. “I’ve always worked as a producer, as an employee (...) I wanted to make money, I wanted to jump up in my life”(Bernardo 2015, personal interview). Even though migrating to new areas is not an easy process, the thought of family and a better future act as a motivation. “I have *saudade*, but I now have my daughters, I want them to study in the US; I didn’t have that chance (...) some people talk about leaving their parents but come on! My parents already raised me, now I’m doing my life!” (Bernardo 2015, personal interview).

Despite this desire for economic well-being, producers experience migration in different ways about missing their past or feeling *saudade*. For instance Luís doesn’t feel *saudade* at all; “There is cold, here the body breathes (...) now I have a family and people is warm; I’m part of them (...) I don’t have courage to go back” (Luís 2015, personal interview)”. Felipe is other history; he feels *saudade* all the time about MG. He always referred to his hometown as role model in comparison with Amapá the ‘other Brazil’. For him migration wasn’t easy, he left his girlfriend behind and that was so hard that couple of months later he went back and got married. For others migration is part of their lives; Rómulo has lived in Rio Grande, MG, and now between Pará and Amapá. Migration definitely has marked a stage in their lives, and its outcomes depend on how they experience this process and their past experiences in building a new chapter in a new place.

4.2. Accumulation and more accumulation: not so easy!

By the time I met Luís, he was already living for 10 years in Amapá. He was one of the first to come; as he used to call himself a ‘pioneer’. Now after ten years, he bought 800 hectares of land and the machines to the Japanese

²⁰Amapá is other example of late land titling in the Amazon mentioned in Chapter 3.

Company, got married with a *quilombola*²¹ and has a five years old boy. But this road was not easy for him or the others. Even though some complain more than others, everyone expressed the difficulty of living in a new place, with new people in a new culture.



Luís house. Source: Fieldwork 2015

“It was difficult; I passed anger but... I didn’t come here to cry” (Bernardo 2015, personal interview). They have to adapt to the new workplace. “Adaptation is not easy, you pay a price to have a better life” (Romulo 2015, personal interview). In the minds of producers quitting is not an option at least for now. Bernardo thought once of quitting but his father in law told him to persist. Work is installed in the producers’ mind as the means to both accumulate capital and to offer a better future to their families. Work is the reason to persist.

Persistence is the word that could best define the producers I met. But behind this romantic idea there is a reproduction of a discourse, especially in agriculture spreading the image of these entrepreneurs. One example is the award ‘*Personagem da Soja*’ which is awarded to the most prominent soy producers in Brazil. Bernardo’s father-in-law was a nominee in 2014. An eight-minute²² video summarizes the idea of how soy producers should look like. Courage, investment and the desire to explore new territories are the main characteristics of these businessmen. This discourse is already in the mindset of these producers who exalt their close relationship with land, their love for agriculture and investment as the only way to achieve productivity and therefore success.

This persistence is linked to the ideology of entrepreneurs as survivors; “producers here go straight to heaven,” Romulo said. Thus, not only economics influences their decisions and attitudes towards work, but the desire of being someone and to persist as others have told them. Then, adaptation to these conditions is the way to shape their experience in Amapá. This is reflected in the one side, on the way they produce soy (production system). In the other, the measures they are taking in terms of logistics, infrastructure and access to

²¹It is a person who belongs to a Quilombo, a rural community with a strong past on slavery. Their economy is based on subsistence agriculture.

²²See the complete video in <http://www.canalrural.com.br/videos/soja-brasil/personagem-soja-brasil-ake-van-der-vinne-52091?_ga=1.113186119.2118531204.1444595129>

the market.

In terms of production the adaptation process has been easier. They already learned and invested; but it took time and money to achieve it. “When I arrived no one knew anything about soy. I observed and tested for one year” (Luís 2015, personal interview). Like Luís, the rest of producers had to re-learn all the processes; “You have to acknowledge you are in the Cerrado, if not you will go wrong” (Romulo 2015, personal interview).

Soy production process in Amapá is different from other regions. First, the soy varieties are different. Given the different climatic conditions (more rains, fewer dry seasons, more humidity) the life cycle of the plant is different. Embrapa is key in the stage of research. According to Afonso “All the triumphs of agribusiness in Brazil pass through Embrapa”. Actually, this entity has a lab in Amapá to test varieties and new technics to improve productivity and deal with agricultural diseases. Then, cooperation between this entity and producers is the common denominator.

Preparation of the soil is the next stage. Soil in Cerrado is more acidic, which leads the farmers to use the double or triple of fertilizers compared to other regions (Bernardo 2015, personal interview). In this sense they ‘make the soil’ through the use of chemicals to transform its initial conditions. This in terms of costs represents more investment to produce. Inputs (mostly imported) represent an important variable in determining costs of production and profits.

The next step is planting. Producer could either plant only soy or intercalate with other cultures such as corn or introduce cattle ranching, which will add organic material to the soil. The former is known as monoculture and according to Romulo it leads to deterioration of soil. Therefore, the majority of producers in Amapá use crop rotation. Embrapa and the producers have been important in transferring this practice in order to avoid land degradation. Farm days, transference of good practices for cropping and sharing relevant information about previous experiences among themselves have been determinant. Finally mapping the soil is another measure to be adopted. By mapping, producer knows what areas are in better conditions to plant, and therefore more productive (Bernardo 2015, personal interview). In sum all these processes pursue the same objective: more productivity, therefore profits; or in Burawoys’s words surplus value.



Soy plantations before and after harvest. Source: Fieldwork 2015.



Farm Day (demonstration of soy varieties). Source: Fieldwork 2015

In this context, high investment is needed. But, access to agricultural credit is not as easy as one would expect according to the producers. In order to access credit, the producers needed their land titles and they usually did not have them. In such a scenario, the only option is either using their savings or accessing personal credits. Luís was in debt to produce soy last year, but situation became complicated when *soujalouca* (a disease) affected 40% of his production. He explains he could pay the bills thanks to other crops (maracuja, corn, manioc and other vegetables) otherwise “I would be fishing now”.

Within this context, titling on land is one of the claims producers make daily to the government. Apparently the last gubernator was not interested in soy agribusiness and the processes regarding titles and environmental licenses had numerous delays. The picture is slowly changing and the LG is mediating to accelerate these processes. While titling happens, illegal intermediaries and moneys are filling this gap “it seems they buy all the congress”. However, as I explained before, even when legal issues are a problem the profit they are getting from land appreciation is very important. As Felipe explained, soy production will increase even in the absence of the titles “it will happen more slowly because it will be with own resources” (Felipe 2015, personal interview).

Nevertheless, even if investment in the way of credits is solved, if problems with logistics, infrastructure and access to the market are not tackled, soy production will develop even slower affecting directly the cost of production and profits. “We have neither storing nor standardization of infrastructure (...) we do not know how to distribute production, or just barely: production goes by truck and then cross the river by ferry to Belem, there it is distributed to the domestic and international markets”. (Felipe 2015, personal interview). Distribution is one of the items affecting producers’ costs. Basically, the farther away from the port the farmer is the more expensive the freight becomes. Given the precarious conditions in Amapá, these costs increase the cost of production of the grain in this region. The new port is seen as the solution to almost all the problems. Costs will be the half compared to other regions and the price for exports will be one of the most competitive in Brazil.

What’s left? Commercialize the product. “We are worse than before!” (Romulo 2015, personal interview). By the time I was there, most of the producers didn’t have a buyer for their production and they were trying ‘to make volume’ to sell to a company and then export. If there is no option to export, internal market is the destination as in the past years. This option is not attractive for them because prices are not competitive, they pay taxes, incur high

costs of distribution and payments can be delayed even 60 or 90 days while bills are waiting for them at home “Commercialization is bullsh*t... everything goes to the internal market, pay less and taxes are high” (Romulo 2015, personal interview).

What they are doing? Bernardo became the ‘visible hand’ of the market making the contacts with companies in other states to sell the production. Luís recognizes Bernardo’s leadership when he states in 2014 “thanks to Bernardo they could sell their production to a company that distributed it to the rest of Brazil.” Felipe is also bringing his contacts from MG to facilitate chemical exchanges between companies and producers. In this regard, they talked about creating an inputs buyer group in order to diminish costs. However, the lack of financial resources has complicated this arrangement. It seems cooperation among producers is the key to solving the commercial situation. Luís remarks about this relationship “large producers can help us with commercial contacts and we (the small producers) can contribute with new agricultural technics (...) you have to work in association in the grain sector” (Luís 2015, personal interview).

One could say cooperation between each other to upgrade their position plus the identity constructed as a group would lead to a conformation of a solid group to boost the frontier. Nevertheless, I have doubts about this happening. Bernardo had mentioned about a cooperative in Amapá but this did not seem to work and had disappeared. Then he claims that he prefers to work alone and does not wish to depend on the others to buy chemicals and other inputs. “You have to plan your harvest, if chemicals arrive later I have to plant later and probably my productivity would be affected”. Then, the question is if those at the top with more decision-making and financial power are willing to collaborate risking their upgrading even if things go wrong. It seems easier to collaborate in terms of production process and sharing agricultural techniques in order to be more productive. If they produce more, costs will decrease. Other could be the history in terms of commercialization when producers are competing to ‘obscure and secure surplus value’ (Burawoy 1985). For the moment what prevails now are informal rules built by them, with one visible head at the top. Those rules are based on friendships, contacts and interests that don’t force them to collaborate.

Moreover, being in a new region where business is starting has placed a lot of challenges to these self-made men not only in terms of economics, but also in terms of emotion. They are feeling stressed thinking about the restricted possibilities to sell the production “ I know I invested this year R\$2 Million²³, half is mine the rest is for paying the bills and I don’t have a buyer right now”. Time allocated for family during harvesting season is very less and wives are starting to complain. Nevertheless, not everything has been bad. Bernardo is really grateful to Amapá not only because of his upgrading in personal and financial terms, but also in terms of status “ I was one of the bunch there, I am Bernardo here (...) what I got in MG in ten years I got it her in five” (Bernardo 2015, personal interview). Felipe and Romulo feel it in a different way, they miss their hometowns and the favorable economic conditions there; they go back to the past waiting for the future to be better. Saudade, uncertainty and hope de-

²³ Brazilian Real is the currency of Brazil.

scribe these self-made men.

In sum, one can say that learning by doing, courage and investment are producers' *mottos* as a reflection of life experiences, family traditions, and discourses from different institutions shaping producers' identity. In other words, it is a reflection of producers' ideology in Amapá. This ideology cannot be separated from the process of adaptation in the new frontier. Producers' persistence to upgrade has led them to build social relations among them and with other actors who are key in 'obscuring and securing surplus value' (Burawoy 1985). Hierarchies, power and visible heads in shaping processes such commercialization in Amapá, are determinant to build those relations. Finally, I highlighted the different emotions this adaptation has led, emotions present in producers' experiences of work.

4.3. The coming future: hope

In a context of uncertainty what do producers expect about their future in Amapá? Luís is optimistic. He is much better now than before, which doesn't mean he dismisses the obstacles for soy production today. Based on his experience he is more in the side of diversification than expansion. He still has some unproductive areas, so expansion for him is not a goal in the short term. He prefers to improve the quality of soil in order to be more productive. For him becoming large producer is synonymous to more efforts and problems related to management (machines and labour).

Bernardo shares Luis' optimism. He plans to expand his farm from 870 hectares to 1550 hectares. He has confidence that the situation will change, but is more cautious with respect to the new port. Even if it is ready it is not sure if they will buy part of the production. Regarding expansion, he is not interested in becoming large as well, "I don't want to choose between my family and soy".

Romulo is the least optimistic person. He is thinking of stopping soy production next year. High exchange rates have increased prices of inputs and will make it really expensive to produce. He prefers to stop and to not risk the savings of his entire life "it is very easy to stop and see how things go. I will not do more crazy things" (Romulo 2015, personal interview). To add more things to his pessimism, he will close his agricultural inputs company due to the economic crisis in Brazil. In spite of this negative picture he exalt his and others' persistence in the business "We are heroes, we are artists (...) we must seek creativity". Now he is thinking about new businesses such as fruit cultivation.

Even though some are more optimistic than the others, producers share one vision regarding soy agribusiness in Amapá. They believe soy chain will develop naturally and Amapá will become the new MG in 30 years. All of them think soy is the survival of the state "state does not have anything, has public servants and that's a disgrace. There is no transformation of wealth. Nothing better than agribusiness (...) Soy transforms land energy, and then you have the grain. Soy means wealth, proteins, meat, fish, chicken (...) Soy will develop the

economy of Amapá, it is its only option” (Romulo 2015, personal interview). The LG also shares this position. Soy is gaining space and family agriculture has a secondary role in Amapá’s economy “family agriculture²⁴ is incipient here (...) some beans, açai, manioc (...) but it doesn’t respond to the local development of the region” (Afonso 2015, personal interview).

Producers based on soy trajectory in Brazil over the last forty years take for granted the development of Amapá as a prosperous city. However, considering the fact that Amapá’s economy is based on subsistence activities such fishing, hunting and family agriculture, would not soy be an immediate solution, leading local population aside? Are producers committed with the development of Amapá? Felipe’s statement helped me clarified “Now I will plant soybeans because it will develop Amapá. No! I came to establish a business, to try to make money eventually other services will be developed, trade will be better, input companies will come... all together will generate economic development ... At least is better than the current situation in Amapá” (Felipe 2015, personal interview).

To conclude, in this chapter I opened the black box of soy producers through the use of narratives in their road to upgrading. I made three movements. First, I highlighted migration as a process that shaped producers’ experiences in Amapá. Second, I showed persistence as part of farmers’ ideology and its influence in producers’ experiences and in the practices they adopt to work in the new frontier. In this upgrading process they are creating informal rules, making consents with relevant actors who are impeding accumulation. Finally, and going back to Burawoy, the act of working implies a wide range of emotions. *Saudade*, uncertainty and hope are the commonality in the histories presented.

²⁴ According to The Law 11.326 of 2006 a family farmer possesses up to four fiscal modules, should employ mainly family labour and the activity should be his most important source of income <<http://www12.senado.gov.br/codigoflorestal/infograficos/pequena-propriedade-e-agricultura-familiar>>

Chapter 5 Tensions: more than economics

The intent of this chapter is to bring up Burawoy's Politics of Production to uncover the horizontal realm where the soy chain in Amapá is embedded. By doing this I will dig on the three ambiguities/tensions I found relevant during my fieldwork. I will show the conflicting visions and strategies of both the producers and the LG towards the verticalization of soy chain in Amapá. Then, I will give a glimpse into the politics of land grabbing in the region. Finally, I will explore the clash of the discourse of sustainable soy production and the reality of family farmers whose subsistence livelihoods are being affected. This chapter suggests that the convergence of economic, politic and ideological factors in the politics of production of soy in Amapá leads to conflicting interests that put pressures to the process of upgrading of producers and create tensions affecting peoples' lives in the new frontier.

5.1. Towards verticalization?

One of the arguments in the promotion of soy production is its positive correlation with human and economic development. In this regard, soy is seen as an instrument of development in Amapá. The verticalization of the chain will be the next stage according to the LG and Aprosoja. Based on the projections by Aprosoja with 400.000 hectares planted with soy and the new port commencing operations, the production will increase impacting positively Amapá's rent, employment²⁵ and promoting other economic sectors.

Nonetheless, behind this apparent common goals are hidden conflicting interests and agendas of both LG and producers towards verticalization. The State has played an ambiguous role in different fronts - the promotion of exports vs. the transformation of soybeans to generate local economic development, the protection of the environment vs. the opening of new areas in the name of productivity, and the particular interests of politicians and local elites regarding soy production and the acquisition of land. The producers use the discourse of regional development through soy production to legitimize their actions, but at the end their main goal is accumulation of capital either in the domestic market or through exports. Therefore different conflicts, interests and strategies converge.

The contradictory visions from both producers and LG lead me to question if verticalization would occur. First, there is no a clear strategy or policy from the government to promote it, at least that was I felt during the interview with LG. Both parties rely on the 'natural' logic of the business, discounting the necessity of real actions from both to attract private investment. Second, in spite of the fiscal incentives the state is giving in terms of tax exemption for imports given Amapá's status of free trade zone, they are not sufficient to achieve the objective. Lastly, from the federal government the logic is to position Brazil as a leading exporter of soy. The Law Kandir of 1996 is an example

²⁵See page 17.

of promoting exports of raw materials discouraging transformation of the product. In this context, it seems that verticalization is not as evident as both actors argue.

Moreover the priority for producers is to accumulate capital. In this sense domestic market is not the most effective way to achieve it. Prices are not competitive and the new port is the solution to reach out to the international market. In this regard the main objective of the port is to take advantage of Amapá's geographical location to export the production from the center west (specifically MG) and Amapá. Felipe confirms this: "Amapá is not even 1% of our national production and here the production potential is also limited (...) but it has a strategic geographical position, it is the Amazon River gateway (...) Soy here will be inevitable for exports, half goes to China and the rest to Europe" (Felipe 2015, personal interview).

This scenario suggests maintaining the status of Brazil as an export oriented country, and Amapá enforcing it. The restriction of land available for production in the region could signify a negative incentive for other companies to come given production at some point will not increase significantly. Besides animal feed industry requires other inputs for production, which would imply an additional restriction taking into account the high transportation costs due the location of Amapá. Politicians and local elites also are key in this picture. It seems money coming from the soy sector is driving electoral campaigns. It is known that politicians have a particular interest in the business related to the acquisition of land.

The remaining question is if this verticalization happens, it would end up in 32.000 jobs as projected. And if so, more employment would mean better working conditions. My doubt is based on the contradiction between employing local labour and the underestimation of Amazonian population as 'lazy' and not willing to work. The question in this sense is if the new industries and soy producers would be willing to employ local population. Based on what producers expressed during the interviews, the better option is to bring workers from other regions (such the south for instance) who have the abilities and courage to work in agriculture.

5.2. Politics of land grabbing in Amapá

Topics regarding the process of acquisition were very sensitive during my fieldwork. In order to have a clearer scenario of soy production in Amapá, I met with a representative of the PCL, a catholic organization, which has been working since 1975 fighting for the rights of land for small farmers. According to the PCL, the conflict started ten years ago with the first group of large-scale rice producers that came to the region (today known as Agrocerrado the biggest soy producer with 4000 He planted). Dispossession of land and illegal production due to the absence of environmental licenses are the key problems today. These factors reflect the ambiguous role of the state that on the one hand promotes sustainable soy production in the Cerrado, but on the other facilitates access to new areas for expansion with politicians behind interests in land. This has led to inaction from the LG in attending to the demands of people who have been affected.

Regarding the environmental licenses, the PCL argues that the producers either don't have any license to produce or are irregular, avoiding studies of socio-environmental impacts. According to the allegations made by this entity, there are crops that don't correspond with the licenses. Producers are asking for licenses in certain time and place and then they plant in other area occupying, in some occasions, preserved areas (PCL 2015, personal interview). On the issue of land acquisition, there are 40 known cases of people who have been displaced from their land, 20 of them from Boa Vista where Agrocerrado is located. This picture contrasts with what others say about the land conflict in Amapá: there are few cases of dispossession because most of the planting is in uninhabited areas, and if this happens, is not violent. Nonetheless I had the opportunity to see pictures confirming the use of arms by private security bodies to intimidate people and one video showing how a woman was violently removed from her house. How to deal with the personal motivations of these producers, but at the same time with the nastiness of the business? As one producer I met told me "this is capitalism, if you have more land you have more power" and that is what is happening in Amapá today.

Political interests also mediate in this picture. According to the PCL, few families with local political power are involved indirectly in the business by owning the land, which is rented to producers or companies as in the case of Agrocerrado. Moreover, despite the claims of producers about LG's apathy towards the business, there is evidence of mediation of local power on the adjudication of land titles. Producers who never lived in Amapá are owners today (Romulo is an example; he currently lives in Pará). This is contrary to what law stipulates in the sense only the one who lives in the region has the right to be an owner. This situation and the role of intermediaries are facilitating irregular processes for accessing land titles.

The biggest concern is the inaction of the auditing bodies to supervise and provide help to small farmers, "government works for the interests of the agribusiness" (PCL 2015, personal interview). Recently the gubernator announced the titling of 150.000 hectares, however the PCL questions how this process is done (by titling properties of people who don't live in Amapá). This is also reflected in the resolution of legal claims from small farmers. Public defenders that are designated by the government don't show up in the audiences in occasions delaying the resolution of the case where small farmers and soy producers are involved. In this regard PCL has a fundamental role in representing the interest of small farmers and claim for justice. If persistence defines soy producers, resilience and precariousness define small farmers and PCL. They have a different battle, not for accumulating but for surviving and making a live in this difficult situation. However both producers and small farmers have something in common: uncertainty about the present and the future.

The situation presented above can be analyzed as a reflection of how the discourse of LG to develop Amapá contrasts with cases of dispossession and illegal production. Bringing back Burawoy to the analysis, the State is the regulator of struggles is not exempt of permeation by external forces. In the case of Amapá, interests from politicians, local elites and soy producers shape State action in solving these struggles. As Burawoy pointed out "state politics do not hang from the clouds (...)" (1983: xx). Conflicting interests shape the intervention of the State in Amapá from politicians, Aprosoja, and the LG with the discourse of soy as path for development, which promoted migration of soy

producers. They came and brought their ideology that has been enforced by the government and public and private agencies spreading the image of modernization and transformation accompanying these producers to ‘save’ Amapá.

5.3. Sustainable production of soy: between the discourse and reality

In this section I will illustrate the tension between sustainable production of soy and reality of family farmers whose subsistence livelihoods have been affected. Producers argued as demagogic the discourses that relate soy production with deforestation. The other side of the history is the family farmers whose subsistence is based on activities such fishing, hunting and traditional crops. This chapter suggests this tension is reinforced by the government who shares the vision of soy as path for development disregarding other alternatives. Family agriculture seems to lose space and does not equal to LED. However other options could be explored and family farming could be an option to involve people in the processes of economic and social development.

State and producers share a common vision about the Cerrado as unproductive lands that need to be open for production. “The Cerrado is just little trees” comments Luís. This discourse legitimizes the expansion of soy and reinforces the idea of sustainable production by no deforesting and preserving part of the ecosystems. In this context, producers argued not to contribute to deforestation. According to them as land is plain, the cleaning process with machines is not necessary, and if it were, would be really expensive. The use of fertilizers and pesticides is also supported. Based on the productivity reached with soy - given the poor conditions of soil, they argue in favor of using fertilizers and chemicals to improve soil conditions. In this sense producers perceive themselves as preservers of land.



Cerrado appearance. Source: Fieldwork 2015

Another way to support the discourse of sustainable soy production is the use of no-till farming²⁶ against the so-called monoculture. Instead of planting

²⁶It is based on the absence of tillage and permanent cover the land through crop rotation. See Embrapa (2000) “Tecnologias de Produção de Soja Região Central do Brasil 2004”. Access 15 June 2015 <<http://www.cnpsa.embrapa.br/producao soja/manejo.htm>>

soy year by year, producers use crop rotation with other grains such as rice, cowpea and maize or grasses such as pasture or millet, used as cover crops in the off-season. Hence, in order to preserve the ecosystems and promote environmentally friendly agriculture, cropping is and will be based in the insertion of conservation systems (no-till farming)(Spadoti and Rodríguez, 2014). Other alternative is to alternate cropping and cattle ranching to improve soil conditions by adding it organic material. In this setting, it seems producers are preserving soil and against monoculture because it represents less productivity “monoculture no! If I were Minister of Agriculture I would prohibit that practice” (Bernardo 2015, personal interview).

However, voices coming from other entities and locals alert about the negative impacts of soy production in Amapá. It is worth to mention Amapá's economy traditionally has been driven by subsistence activities such fishing, hunting and traditional cropping of manioc, açaí and beans. In this context, the big amount of fertilizers and chemicals are undermining living conditions of locals who are finding dead animals to hunt or fish. The argument against the use of fertilizers is people in Amapá have a different understanding of the environment and don't see it as a source of profits. Therefore, they use slash and burn technics to clear the soil for making it productive for two or three years. Then they move to another plot to do the same; they don't repeat the process over and over again. However soy producers see this practice as a danger. According to them, slash and burn destroys the soil “you will never see us using fire on land, we run from the fire, it's a crime!” (Romulo 2015, personal interview). In this context, producers are worried in transferring good practices to their workers in order to avoid the use of this practice and show the improvements in soil conditions through the use of fertilizers crop rotation systems.

Soy producers in Amapá are propagating the *motto* “learning by doing, courage and investment”. They differentiate themselves from local population and posse their practices such the right ones to follow. However, this discounts the traditions and practices by Amazon people making assumptions about its culture and customs “ it's primitive, they don't cultivate anything... they just damage the environment (...) people here are (...) Amazon people you know (...) they don't think in improve their lives (...) they have the same possibilities than others but you have to be willing to” (Romulo 2015, personal interview). Soy is gaining space and familiar agriculture is not included in this process. LG dismisses subsistence agriculture as path for development, which is supported by some representatives of Embrapa and PCL mentioning that all efforts are going in direction to soy promotion.

The state as regulator of struggles and in charge to preserve people livelihoods does not give importance to subsistence activities. The best chance to develop Amapá is soy, which dismisses other options that could involve even more local population. Policies are coming from outside without understanding the culture of people where these policies are implemented. “It is not a policy for the people” one person told me. According to LG family farming is being supported from the federal government by incentivizing the use of chemical inputs, machines, credit access and transportation facilities. However, as one representative of Embrapa explained to me, fertilizers are damaged in most of the occasions because people do not know or do not care about their use. In this scenario government is working for the interest of some leaving Amapá's population aside.

Taking into account soy chain is characterized by generating lower social returns given the few jobs created and redistribution of income, its promotion should be parallel with other alternatives that allow people get involve in the process of development. In the case of Amapá position, family farming with a stronger role could be an option in order to provide food security to local population given. Food consumed in Amapá comes from other regions despite having the Amazon River crossing the capital city. Farina as one of the main food in the basket comes from outside, while they could produce it. Then family farming could be an option for LED, enhancing collaboration between soy producers and locals.

Within this context I want to highlight Luís's experience with Amapá people. As I mentioned above in this paper he is the only one who feels already part of the community and has a positive perception about it. Even when he has the same modernizing vision and remarks the importance of transferring knowledge to local farmers, he has a different approach to work with. Based on his previous experience as employee he prefers to work with local farmers in association. He explains that it allows people to speak freely and gives opinions about improvements in some processes in the farm "They are free to express their ideas". He applies this figure not to soy cultivation but to manioc. He provides machineries for production and people provide their work and participate from the profits of selling the product in the local market. He highlights both the promotion of local products and the generation of more employment contrary to soy.

Family farming could be an option for LED if there are the conditions to promote it; LG is key here. To know the culture, understand people's customs (the different relation between people and nature and a non-profit oriented culture) is relevant for the implementation of policies towards LED. In this regard, changing the mindset of people is important. The reproduction of ideas related to peoples' perceptions and culture has been key in the underestimation of Amapá's population. Family farming as an option is also a political decision. Thus LG should find the balance between the interests of federal government, local elites and soy producers and the people who live in Amapá. However in this scenario, based on the hidden interests of politicians and local elites in land, and the strategy of soy, as path for development make difficult to boost family agriculture as a real option.

In sum, the attempt of this chapter was to show the tensions generated with the evolution of soy chain in Amapá. Firstly, I illustrated the prospects of verticalization of the soy chain in Amapá, suggesting a difficult scenario given the negative incentives for companies and the absence of clear actions to achieve it by the parties involved. Secondly, the politics of land grabbing showed the diverse interest and strategies surrounding land use and how the side effects (dispossession and illegal production) are being is being tackled. Finally, I brought the contradiction between the discourse of sustainable soy production and the reality of family farmers whose subsistence livelihoods have been affected. This section suggests family agriculture is dismissed as an alternative for LED. In the light of Burawoy's dimension this chapter brings up the importance of the state as regulator of struggles by influencing the horizontal realm where soy chain is embedded. Thus different interests and strategies shape state action from politicians, local elites, soy producers and LG. The

final chapter puts forward the implications of these debates on value chains analysis and LP theory.

Chapter 6 Conclusions

Along side this paper I built up and applied an analytical framework to examine how seeking new agricultural frontiers transformed medium size producers' positionality in value chains. I operationalize my research using the soy chain in Amapá, Brazil. This paper goes in line with analysis from a GPN perspective acknowledging that chains are embedded 'in broader social structures and institutions with asymmetric relations of power between actors' (Coe et al 2008; Barrientos et al 2011). In this sense this study introduce three original contributions into the analysis. First I married two theory areas –GPN analysis and ideas from LP theory-. Second I open the black box of a commonly demonized and rarely studied actor –medium size producers-. Finally I provide a new agricultural frontier as the setting for analysis.

How ideas from LP enriched my research? First, in academic terms is useful in discovering what's behind actors that are studied merely in economic terms. In the context of the soy chain, soybean producers are demonized due to the negative socio-economic impacts of soy production²⁷. This paper is not an apologia for producers, instead is their recognition as subjective actors. They influence the outcomes of the chain in Amapá, but are also influenced by other actors to make decisions and by feelings and motivations in the search of a better future for their families. Social status and well-being are meaning of upgrading for them.

In this context the empirical contribution of this paper relies on using narratives to explore how these actors experience their work in the region. Understanding through their eyes how the business work and the uncertainties surrounding it opened my eyes as a researcher. What at the beginning was a challenge then became a revelation to see things in other way and change my previous assumptions. These producers struggle, work and persist as my parents do daily to live. Understanding their experiences at work allowed to open the black box to see the different feelings and emotions involved in migrate un unknown place. They are inspired in the past to live the present, and persist in the present to survive in the future.

Then, soy producers migrating looking for better opportunities and upgrade their position in this chain under construction. LP ideas contribute in analyzing upgrading from a different perspective. GVC analysis stresses in the importance of this process in order 'to maintain or improve their position in the global economy' (Gereffi 2013:13). There are different strategies²⁸ to achieve it. The debate is open regarding the direct relation between economic and social upgrading²⁹and its impacts on peoples' lives. In this context LP besides opening the window to personal motivations in the search of upgrading, posses challenges to common roads to achieving upgrading such vertical integration. While GVCs analysis acknowledges this process also depends on the

²⁷ See page 15

²⁸ See page 6

²⁹ See page 6

governance of the actors involved in decision-making processes, less is the attention given to the state as regulator of struggles in the workplace (Burawoy 1985). In this sense the richness of analyzing this chain from the lenses of politics of production relies on the recognition of other factors shaping decisions of actors apart from the economic ones. When we talk about GVC we refer to “a commodity chain viewed as a network of labor and production processes whose end result is a finish commodity” (Gibbon et al 2008). However as Burawoy pointed out the capitalist mode of production is not only about reproduction of things but ideas and social relations and how we experience the those social relations. That is to say a political and ideological dimension (1985).

In a context of global production taking place in different parts of the globe bringing “together (...) flows of labour, capital, information, and commodities” (Blum et al. 2000) migration of labour (which means migration of people and their ideas) is relevant to understand outcomes of value chains in the horizontal realm. As I showed an ideology is fed by lived experiences (Burawoy 1985), and dominant discourses of entities shaping how things should look like (Cammett 2005). In a context of opening new agricultural frontiers in order to respond to the demands of the global economy this represent a challenge. How to equal the encounter between different ways of experiencing work and live? This is relevant in the light of the evidence shown about the displacement of family agriculture as alternative for development³⁰in Amapá. How to reconcile two ways of living and working? Preconceive ideas shape assumptions regarding people. The same assumptions I made before going to fieldwork. Break those assumptions is fundamental in order to include in the road of development local communities whose ways of living don't match with the one is considered 'right'. Further research on labour process of family farmers in Amapá could lead to understand how they experience their work and what are the motivations to do it, and if they share an identity that can be useful at the moment of resist the terms of their exclusion in soy chain in Amapá.

However, breaking these assumptions is also a political decision where state is a key element. In studying inclusion in value chains state cannot be excluded. What this study case is evidencing is the even less important role given to the state as regulator of struggles and the increasing importance in filling the gap of the public power (Cammett 2005). In terms of governance, it could be interesting to see the picture in Amapá in two or three years, when the LG projects soy production will be at the maximum. The new port represents a salvation for both producers and LG in the search of upgrading and economic development respectively. Would be the port a salvation? The state would be the facilitator producers expect to be? Or it would be as ambiguous as it is until now, defending producers and local elite interests but using and discourse of economic development and sustainable production? As Burawoy tell us state is permeated by external forces; doesn't hung from the clouds and when the ground trembles (...)(1983: 596).

As a last thought I would like to remark what this research led me. Besides breaking assumptions and constructed realities it gave me hope! We have to

³⁰ See page 31

persist, and we have to resist! Producers and family farmers experience the effects of global forces in different ways and the presence of social hierarchies make more difficult for ones to overcome uncertainty than for others. But they still persist and try, and resist claiming for justice. *Saudade*, uncertainty, persistence and resilience could also define me. My past defines part of what I am... but is the past... I am persisting in the present, doing, dreaming and hoping that future surprises me as my present has done it this last year and a half.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Characterization of interviewers

| <i>N^a</i> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Hometown</i> | <i>Region</i> | <i>Economic activity</i> | <i>Planted Area (Ha)</i> | <i>Year arrival</i> |
|----------------------|-------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Luis | Mina Gerais | South-east | Soy producer | 800 | 2005 |
| 2 | Bernardo | Mato Grosso do Sul | Central-west | Soy producer | 870 | 2010 |
| 3 | Romulo | Rio Grande do Sul | South | Soy Producer/Owner Agric. inputs Company | 2800 | 2005 |
| 4 | Felipe | Mato Grosso | Central-west | Soy producer/Pdt. Aprosoja | 500 | 2012 |