

Peasantry and capitalism: social reproduction strategies and identities after the expansion of oil palm cultivation in Pará, Brazil

Campesinato e capitalismo: estratégias de reprodução social e identidades após a expansão da dendeicultura no Pará, Brasil

Éberson da Costa Moreira¹ , Heribert Schmitz² 

¹Programa de Pós-graduação em Sociologia (PPGS), Universidade Federal de São Carlos (UFSCar), São Carlos (SP), Brasil. E-mail: costaeberton12@gmail.com

²Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas (IFCH), Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA), Belém (PA), Brasil. E-mail: heri@zedat.fu-berlin.de

How to cite: Moreira, E. C., & Schmitz, H. (2025). Peasantry and capitalism: social reproduction strategies and identities after the expansion of oil palm cultivation in Pará, Brazil. *Revista de Economia e Sociologia Rural*, 63, e291838. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1806-9479.2025.291838en>

Abstract: The article analyzes the changes in social reproduction strategies and their relationship with the social identities of peasants who have sold their farms due to the expansion of oil palm cultivation in the Brazilian state of Pará. We conducted 21 interviews – eight with those who sold the establishments in Acará, Concórdia do Pará, and Bujaru – and we were analyzed qualitatively. After selling their farms, the peasants migrated to towns (three) or to smaller farms (five). Migration has caused changes in reproduction strategies: agriculture is no more practiced by two families and its centrality has been reduced by the others, in which there has been an increase in non-agricultural occupations (salaried works, small shops) and also an increase in the importance of pensions. We can observe, therefore, the use of pluriactivity as a strategy for social reproduction. The interviewees seek to maintain their peasant status through different activities, whether internal or external to their establishments.

Keywords: peasant social reproduction, pluriactivity, identity, oil palm cultivation, Eastern Amazon.

Resumo: O artigo analisa as transformações nas estratégias de reprodução social e suas relações com as identidades sociais de camponeses que venderam os estabelecimentos em razão da expansão da dendeicultura no Pará. Entre janeiro e dezembro de 2021, realizamos 21 entrevistas – oito com aqueles que venderam os estabelecimentos em Acará, Concórdia do Pará e Bujaru – que foram analisadas qualitativamente. Após a venda dos estabelecimentos, os camponeses e suas famílias migraram para a cidade (três) ou para estabelecimentos menores (cinco). A migração acarretou transformações nas estratégias de reprodução: a agricultura já não é praticada por duas famílias e teve sua centralidade reduzida pelas demais, nas quais, houve o crescimento de ocupações não agrícolas (trabalhos assalariados, pequenos comércios) e ainda o aumento da importância das aposentadorias. Observa-se, o recurso à pluriatividade como estratégia de reprodução social em seis famílias. É a partir das distintas atividades, internas ou externas aos estabelecimentos, que os seis interlocutores que mantiveram seus vínculos com a terra buscam a manutenção de sua condição camponesa.

Palavras-chave: reprodução social camponesa, pluriatividade, identidade, dendeicultura, Amazônia Oriental.

1 Introduction

The expansion of oil palm monocultures and of other flex crops¹ in the early XXI century was influenced by the strategies adopted by countries in the Global North to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels as from the introduction of fuels deriving from renewable matrices²

¹ Monocultures such as soybean, oil palm and sugarcane, which apply to multiple purposes, such as food production, fodder, fuels and cosmetics.

² This occurred due to three major crises: increase in food prices, economic crisis and energy/environmental crisis, which jointly contributed to the land rush directed to monoculture, aiming to meet the demand for renewable energies, which was also a way of absorbing investments.



(Oliveira Neto, 2022; Wilkinson, 2009). The movement was considered a way of externalizing the costs of high energy consumption patterns from the North to the South, with availability of lands propitious for monocultures, such as corn, soybean, oil palm, among others (Borras Junior et al., 2010). As a counterpart, governments of Southeastern Asian, Latin American and African countries sought to attract investments for producing agrofuels (Vermeulen & Cotula, 2010). The *global land grabbing* phenomenon thus emerged and the global land market was established (Sassen, 2016), by which corporations, investment funds and governments acquire vast tracts of land by purchasing and other control mechanisms (such as land tenancy and contract farming), involving national or international capital (Borras Junior et al., 2012; Sassen, 2016; Oliveira et al., 2021).

In 2021, 20 million hectares were estimated to be directed to oil palm crops in the world (Richie & Roser, 2021), and the world production reached 76 million tons of palm oil, with 88% of the production concentrated in the three major producing countries, located in Southeast Asia: Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, respectively (United States Department of Agriculture, 2021). Still among the ten presenting expressive production are: Colombia, Nigeria, Guatemala, Honduras, Papua New Guinea, Brazil and Ecuador. Widely observed in the palm expansion in the major producing countries was land grabbing – accounting for microevictions (Sassen, 2016) of peasants and native indigenous people, forcing them to migrate to the periphery of towns and to compulsory settlements –, the increase in deforestation, pollution of water resources and food insecurity for the rural populations (Bennett et al., 2018; Gellert, 2015; Junquera, 2020).

The Brazilian government introduced public policies that levered the expansion of oil palm cultivation in the Northeast Region of the State of Pará. The National Program for Biodiesel Production and Use (PNPB), established in 2004, and the National Program for Sustainable Palm Oil Production (PPSOP), created in 2010, aiming to productively include family agriculture into regional development and to the reforestation of degraded areas by planting oil palm for agrofuel production (Mota et al., 2019; Brandão & Schoneveld, 2015; Tavares & Mota, 2023). Guided by a discourse on environmental sustainability (Brandão et al., 2021) and coupled to a time of transformations in the global economy, which repositioned the Southern economy as *commodities* producers (Svampa, 2013; Oliveira Neto, 2022), the palm oil agribusiness expanded supported by the government and by national and foreign corporations.

In the core of the discussions on oil palm cultivation and its impacts on the Northeastern Pará peasantry, researches have demonstrated that the expansion of the crops caused the grabbing of peasants' lands in the region by the land market (Backhouse & Lehmann, 2020; Sousa, 2019; Silva et al., 2016).

In this context, scholars have discussed the continuation or not of the peasantry. If, on the one hand, there is the perspective that the region is undergoing a “depeasantrization” process and the formation of a land without peasants (Nahum & Bastos, 2014); on the other hand, researchers argue that the peasants have developed new strategies to remain in rural areas (Sousa & Macedo, 2019). Participating in the debate, we understand that the capitalist expansion in the rural area, by the expansion of oil palm cultivation, may cause transformations in the peasants' social reproduction strategies as from the land appropriation (therefore, of their livelihood) or the subsumption to the capitalist logic, be it by contract farming, be it by selling the work force as rural wage-earners (Chambati et al., 2018; Pais, 2008; Ojeda, 2022).

The social reproduction strategies are the complex social relationships among individuals, structures, institutions and the resources available for reproducing the conditions of their existence, at the micro or macro levels (Bourdieu, 2020; Ojeda, 2022). There is a close relationship between the social reproduction strategies and the social identities of individuals; therefore,

when the necessary conditions for the reproduction of a group are transformed, there may occur transformations in their identities (Bourdieu, 2020). Almeida (1986, p. 2) states that the peasants' social reproduction is the way in which the "family unit is reproduced in the annual cycle, combining work, natural resources and traditional knowledge to meet the family consumption and to replace the necessary inputs to resume the process". We thus analyze the transformations in the social reproduction strategies and their relationships with the social identities of the peasants that sold their lands due to the expansion of oil palm cultivation in Pará.

2 Theoretical Foundation

Primitive accumulation, that is, the starting point of capitalist accumulation, is the division "between laborers and the ownership of the conditions for conducting the work", that is, "the historical process of the separation of producers from their means of production" (Marx, 2013, p. 961). At the foundation of this historical process lies the expropriation of peasantry lands. Once deprived from their land (their means of production), this populational contingent tends to become a mass of labor available to the capital. For the British case, Marx described how the peasantry expropriation and annihilation processes provided the base for the accumulation derived from the capital (Silva, 1986).

The current primitive accumulation occurs as from the technical and legal complexities that allow controlling the resources as well as the finances of entire countries. One of the dynamics of these current forms of primitive accumulation is the global land market, ongoing since 2006, by which governments and corporations acquire lands, usually in Global South countries, viewing their own food security along with agrofuel production. Land acquisition, in this global market, culminates in microevictions of small farmers and settlements, who are thus forced to migrate to the periphery of larger towns. Moreover, by replacing the rural populations of small farmers by large plantations, subsistence economies, soils and water resources are destroyed, as well as the fauna and the flora (Sassen, 2016).

Pará is the major palm oil producer in Brazil. In 2020, there were an estimated 232 thousand hectares of planted area and 200 thousand of harvested area, of which 40 thousand ha were family agriculture areas under the productive integration contract regime³ (Pará, 2020). The capitalist expansion by the oil palm monoculture in Northeastern Pará (NEP) was enabled by acquiring lands of old farms, ranches and, in a minor scale, from peasants. Ninety-one percent of the lands on which monoculture has expanded are estimated to be of former grazing lands (Benami et al., 2018). However, researches demonstrate that the local peasantry was affected and many small farmers sold their lands, and the alternative they were left with was migrating to the periphery of the towns in the region and to roadside villages (Backhouse, 2013; Sousa, 2019; Silva et al., 2016; Macedo & Sousa, 2015; Schmitz et al., 2020).

Peasantry may be understood as a non-capitalist economic system whose determinants derive from the "requirement of meeting the needs of each production unit, which concurrently is a consumption unit" (Chayanov, 1981, p. 136). Woortmann (1990, p. 12) states that there is a peasant ethics in which the land is not an object of work, but rather the "expression of a morality". Peasantry can still be seen as a form of production organized around the family, that

³ The productive integration of family farmers to the agribusiness by means of contracts consists in a relationship that ensures the acquisition of a certain production by the corporation, which generally provides inputs and technical assistance, besides establishing a technical itinerary to conform to the required technical standard. In this voluntary exchange, the corporation receives the feedstock without having to invest, and the integrated farmer has a guaranteed market. This is a form of vertical integration that divides scholars between those that consider that relationship as subordination and those that see it as a limitation to the farmer's autonomy.

is, the work is organized among the members to produce and to provide for the family needs, yet, besides being a production mode, it is “a way of life and a culture” (Wanderley, 2014, p. 27).

We understand peasantry as a diversity of ways of relating to nature and to the market, these relationships being mediated by values, centered on the family. The relationships with nature and work start from the need of keeping the family, which will also be the main labor of their establishments. This does not mean, however, that groups of peasants are self-sufficient and that they do not have relationships with the capitalist markets. These are mediated by values that provide centrality to the family upkeep.

We analyzed the peasants’ social reproduction strategies from Bourdieu’s perspective. The social reproduction strategies aim to “safekeep or improve the [family’s] social standing in the social space” and “are re-translated into transformations that, indissolubly, affect the *volume* of the different class-fractions and their *ownership structure*” (Bourdieu, 2007, p. 128, emphasis added by the author). The system of reproduction strategies is formed by classes of great strategies that operate independently: i) biological investment strategies, among which fertility and prophylaxis stand out, that is, birth control and health care; ii) succession strategies aimed at transfer of assets; iii) educational strategies aimed at enabling agents to inherit the family assets; iv) economic investment strategies, which consist in keeping the assets, of the social capital and of the symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 2020). In this research, we consider the economic investment strategies – way of acquiring the establishments, family work and sources of income – and the symbolic investment strategies – children education and succession. These are, therefore, short and long-cycle strategies (Almeida, 1986), respectively. To account for the diversity of economic activities performed in the annual cycle, so as to guarantee the family reproduction, we adopted the idea of pluriactivity, which corresponds to the distinct occupations and sources of income of a family, within or outside of their establishment (Quirós, 2022), to ensure their peasant condition (Severo & Sacco dos Anjos, 2022).

For depending on *habitus*⁴, the social reproduction strategies tend to perpetuate identities, thus contributing to the reproduction of the entire society (Bourdieu, 2020, p. 26). In this sense, the relationship between the social reproduction strategies and the peasants’ social identities is clear. Identity is a social construct and, therefore, is always subject to changes. It can thus be presented in different ways, such as the professional identity (Dubar, 2005), the ethnic identity (Cardoso de Oliveira, 2003) and the peasant identity. Identity “Identity is shaped by social processes. Once crystalized, it is kept, modified, or even remodeled by the social relationships. The social processes involved in the formation and in the maintenance of identity are determined by the social structure” (Berger & Luckmann, 2004, p. 228). Dubar (2005, p. 173) demonstrates that the social identity is constructed in the socialization process as from the duality between identity for oneself and identity for the others, which may thus be understood as “[...] products of a tension or a contradiction internal to the social world itself”. Hence, social identities are “the result at once stable and provisional, individual and collective, subjective and objective, biographical and structural, of the various processes of socialization that, together, build individuals and define institutions” (Dubar, 2005, p. 136).

3 Methodology

⁴ “*Habitus* are the “mental or cognitive structures” by means of which people deal with the social world. People are endowed with a series of internalized schemas by means of which they perceive, understand, appreciate and assess the social world” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 530, apud Ritzer, 2011, p. 18). All the translations of foreign languages in this article were made by the authors.

This is a qualitative research. Field work was conducted between January and December 2021 in three municipalities of the Tomé-Açu microregion, in Northeastern Pará: Acará, Bujaru and Concórdia do Pará (Figure 1). To enter the field in Acará, we counted on the support of interlocutors that connected us to the peasants that had sold their establishments. We firstly interviewed union leaderships and public officers of the Enterprise of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension of the State of Pará (EMATER-PA). We conducted 21 semi-structured interviews, of which eight with peasants that had sold their establishments and the others with public officers and union leaderships.

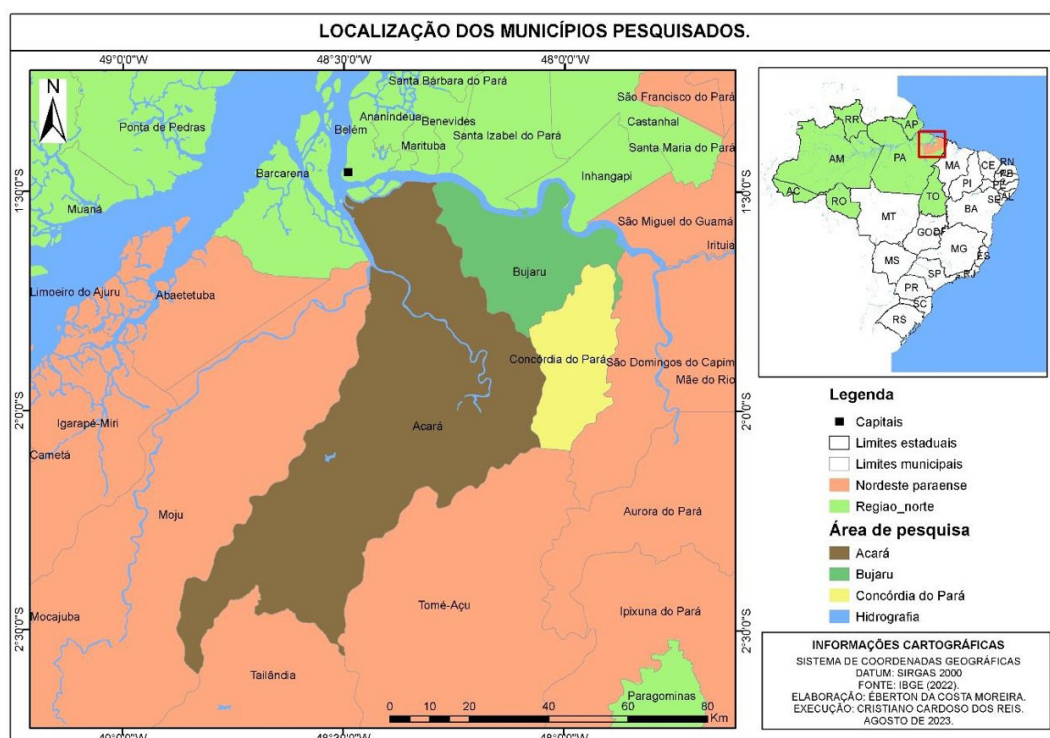


Figure 1. Location of the municipalities researched.

Source: The authors' elaboration. Executed by C. C. Reis, in 2023.

With the peasants, the interviews approached themes related to the social reproduction before and after selling, the sale processes, life at the moment the research was conducted and their social identities⁵. The data collected were systemized following the transcription of the interviews and of the records of the field journal that, jointly, constituted a textual database. The set of textual data was thematically analyzed after the separate reading of the interviews, and later of their set, composing what Michelat (1987) called vertical and horizontal readings. The readings allowed identifying a set of common themes, as well as the disparities among the narratives, which enabled us to elaborate a *corpus*, analyzed in relation to the research framework and compose the article. For keeping the anonymity of the peasant interviewees, the cases they reported are represented by codes from "I01" to "I08".

Based on Bourdieu's definitions (2020), under what he called the system of social reproduction strategies, we identified and described two sets of strategies. The first set regards economic

⁵ In the case of social identities, deepening was only possible in four interviews, which we considered symptomatic cases. According to Michelat (1987), symptomatic cases are those by which it is possible to learn about a group's culture.

investment strategies, in which we analyze the conditions of access to land, family work and sources of income. The second set accounts for symbolic investment, educational and succession strategies, that is, we investigate the political organization, children education and succession. These two sets of strategies can be classified as short-cycle and long-cycle ones (Almeida, 1986), since some refer to the immediate needs, in the annual and daily family cycle, whereas others refer to the provisions necessary for social reproduction in the long term. Lastly, we seek to establish the relationships between the transformations in the social reproduction strategies and in the actors' social identities.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Economic investment strategies: land, work and sources of income

Land is the major means of the peasantry reproduction and, at different moments in the Brazilian history, this rural segment has been subordinated to the large establishments (Wanderley, 2014). The peasant's establishment is that space where the physical and social reproduction occurs by means of the family work and of using the resources available (Heredia, 1979). Despite the self-exploration of the family work being central to their subsistence, through production and consumption (Chayanov, 1981), the peasants groups may both temporarily hire external labor, and do temporary work outside their lands (Severo & Sacco dos Anjos, 2022). The work developed in their lands is also symbolic and from mastering the resources available, the work that keeps the family is done (Woortmann & Woortmann, 1997). For Brandenburg (2010, p. 419), "the peasants occupy the space of the family unit in a way that allows meeting the different objectives: physical and social reproduction and preservation of their natural asset". Selling the land may thus mean a rupture with the peasants' roots.

The expansion of the palm oil agribusiness in NEP was made possible by the acquisition of establishments such as old farms and ranches, including peasants' establishments. The land market formed in anticipation of the launching of the PNPB and of the PPSOP affected the peasants that sold their lands and migrated to the periphery of towns or to roadside villages and back roads in the region. Politicians, large land owners, religious leaders, among others, acted as intermediaries to acquire establishments that were then sold to agribusiness. Regarding the interviewees in this research, their establishments were acquired by intermediaries that added these estates to larger ones and the sum of lands was sold to a palm oil producing corporation. Of our eight interviewees' families, five migrated to the roadsides of the Concórdia do Pará and Acará municipalities, and three others, to the urban periphery of the latter municipality.

Land acquisition for producing an agricultural *commodity* aiming to meet the demands of the global capitalism is here understood as a primitive accumulation process (Marx, 2013), which currently occurs by technical complexities which allow purchasing lands by diverse mechanisms (Sassen, 2016). In the case of oil palm expansion in NEP, this phenomenon occurred in a context in which lands were sought for producing crops to be the base for agrofuel production for meeting an increasing market for renewable fuel sources, especially in the Global North countries. In a macro level, this is the primitive accumulation by globalized land markets (Sassen, 2016) which caused the microevictions of peasants and of rural populations. Since the mid-2000s, scholars have characterized this phenomenon as *land grabbing* (Borras Junior et al., 2012; Sassen, 2016; Oliveira et al., 2021).

In NEP, this was possible due to the local specificities, such as the power asymmetry between land grabbers and peasants, the actuation of the local elites and due to the precariousness situation which the local peasantry lived in, with difficulties for accessing markets and basic services, such as education and health. In the social relationships level, the pressure on the peasants was exerted

by threats of losing their lands due to the insecurity concerning non-registered establishments (Backhouse, 2016) and to the promises of improved living conditions (Schmitz et al., 2020). In the paragraphs as follows, we discuss the transformations in the social reproduction strategies of the peasants, considering that these are bonded to the changes caused by selling their major means of production, as a result from the expansion of capital in the rural lands.

4.1.1 Land tenure and size of the establishments

Among the interviewees, seven reported to have always lived in the establishments sold and one had bought it as an adult. The peasants initially acquired their establishments in three ways: purchase (I07, I08), union mobilization for land tenure formalization by the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform – INCRA (I01, I02, I03); moreover, two families lived as lodgers (I04, I05)⁶. The size of the establishments sold varies between 12.5 and 450 ha⁷. Three cases reported in Bucaia, in the municipality of Acará, stand out. The land – which was later sold – had been acquired through the union mobilization due to the conflicts with three major landowners in the region. In between three large establishments, there was a “leftover” in which the peasants families settled. This was questioned by one of the landowners, which caused conflicts with gunmen and death threats, the case being taken to court. The case was reported to be solved when a union leader presented documents that proved that those happened to be public vacant lands, which led INCRA to distribute 25-hectare lots to the peasants. Also in Bucaia, two other families lived as lodgers in the lands of a lady that, upon selling the estate, paid them a small amount, considering they had lived there for many years. These cases (Chart 1) corroborate the historical roots of the Brazilian peasantry, which emerges and remains in the “interstices” of large farmlands (Wanderley, 2014).

Chart 1. Size and municipality of the establishments sold and current ones (2021).

Interviewee	Area sold (ha)	Municipality where it was sold	Area in 2021 (ha)	Municipality in 2021
I01	25	Acará	25	Acará
I02	25	Acará	0.6	Acará
I03	12,5	Acará	25	Acará
I04	Not informed	Acará	0.3	Acará
I05	Not informed	Acará	6	Acará
I06	25	Concórdia	12.5	Concórdia
I07	450	Concórdia	37.5	Concórdia
I08	75	Bujaru	Not informed	Concórdia

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2024).

A dramatic reduction in the area of the establishments can be observed if we compare the ones sold and the current ones. Considering that the families of interviewees I01 and I02 resided in the urban periphery of the municipality of Acará, only the former keeps agriculture as his major economic activity, whereas the second keeps a small establishment, without conducting agricultural activities. The conditions of the families of interviewees I04 and I05, in Acará, and of interviewee I06, in Concórdia, draw attention. In the first case (I04), the family no

⁶ In one of the cases (I06), the interviewee did not make clear whether the establishment had been acquired or inherited.

⁷ This case stands out due to the size of the establishment. However, the work was organized and executed by the family, especially by the wife and by the elder son. The father, of poor health, took care of a small store at home and sold the production in the nearby municipalities. Two months a year, they hired daily hands to harvest pepper.

longer has agricultural land, cultivating only perennial fruit trees around the house⁸. The other two families, in turn, still perform agricultural activities in smaller scale (I05 and I06), and the establishments are shared with two and three families, respectively. In the second case (I05), after selling, the father moved to his son's establishment, where it is currently necessary to perform an annual rotation of those who will plant. In the third case (I06), as the children got married, the father made room for them and their families.

There is, therefore, a "*minilandownerization*", similar to that observed by Mauricio (2020) in a peasant community in Piauí, whereby the marriage of the children led the father to give an area of his land for them to build their households, reducing the size of the establishments. The fragmentation of the establishments may represent a threat to keeping the families in the rural space and lead to migration. For Heredia (1979), the land is the main element for the peasants' subsistence and different strategies will be employed both for acquiring and for keeping the establishment. In the cases studied, for example, one of the strategies adopted for the families reproduction in interviewee I05's establishment is the rotation of the annual planted areas, which demonstrates that, even though agriculture is not enough to meet the needs of the families, the rotations allow them to keep their links with farming.

4.1.2 Work and sources of income before and after the establishments were sold

The migration to urban areas, the reduction of the establishments and other factors, such as retirement, caused transformations in the work and in the sources of income. Before selling, agricultural work predominated. It was usual for the parents to be in charge of the work and for their elder children to help. When they got married, the children started to work for themselves and for their new families, even though they remained in the parents' establishments. When the family only had small children, only the fathers worked in agriculture. For example, interviewee I04 was the head of the family and sole responsible for the household keeping, working as a day laborer or as contractor⁹, and his wife took care of the children and of the areas planted for self-consumption: "because it was practically only me to work, at that time this bunch [of children] were not yet, they were a small half, so I worked more as contractor for others, day laborers [...]" (Interview on November 23, 2021, Acará). The case of interviewee I07 also calls attention, as he was the owner of the largest tract of land, and the work in the areas planted with pepper, at the harvesting period, was in charge of the sons and of day laborers, while he tended a small business: he purchased cassava flour to sell in the towns.

Another work modality was helping neighbors in exchange for days. On some days, they worked on someone's establishment; this someone had to return the days spent in helping him working on the others' establishments. In Concórdia, Santana (2010) identified the help among neighbors by means of joint efforts, when a team gathers and, on each day, works in the planted areas of one of the members. Help characterizes the social investment strategies (Bourdieu, 2020), which aim at keeping the social relationships so that they may be mobilized in a short or long-term. Such relationships may be converted into obligations, and, in this case, when receiving help, retribution is expected. Non-fulfilment may jeopardize the social investment strategies.

Women's work, as well as domestic work, is fundamental for the peasants' social reproduction (Calado & Silva, 2020; Heredia, 1979; Ojeda, 2022); however, we found only one family in which

⁸ The interviewee's family initially migrated to the urban periphery of the municipality of Acará and some years later, to a small establishment, on the side of a back road, where we located them.

⁹ As a day labor, the worker was hired for one or more working days. In turn, as a contractor, he was hired to perform a certain task from the beginning to the end, for example, hoe two plantation hectares.

the wife took care of the children while the husband worked as a day laborer. Nevertheless, there are two cases in which the women accounted for the work that supported the family. In the case of interviewee I06's family, he could not work and his wife was in charge, whereas in the case of interviewee I03, she was and still is in charge of the establishment. Interviewee I06's report demonstrates the importance of the wife's and of the children's work for keeping the establishment:

[...] when I sold, it was already them [the sons] that did the work and her here [wife]. Because I, with some times, when my son was some seven years the eldest, I caught a problem, I became disabled and then they took charge, these small jobs they could do, right? No, it would not kill them, no. Then, soon after I invented a pork breeding, that helped lots at the time, a thing easier for them to keep, right? (Interview in December 14, 2021, Concórdia).

After selling, there were significant changes for all the interviewees' families. In 2021, two families no longer performed agricultural activities. Interviewee I02 and his family resided in the periphery of the municipality of Acará; his parents were retired and he worked as a street market vendor. In turn, interviewee I04's family did not have room enough for agriculture and their sources of income consist of the wife's retirement and the federal income transfer program, Bolsa Família (Family Aid), while the husband is waiting for his retirement pension. The families of the six other interviewees keep working in the planted areas, even though the importance is reduced due to factors such as the size of the establishments, retirement and salaried work, except for interviewee I03's (she) family. In the case of the families of interviewees I05 and I06, the size of the establishments limits the area for planting and their frequency. In the former case (I05), there is a rotation and, each year, one family plants, the agricultural activity being secondary, since the parents are retired and the sons that are heads of families are salaried workers for palm oil producing corporations. Interviewee I06's family shares the establishment with the families of their four children; therefore, the planted areas are reduced and the income comes from the couple's retirement and from a small snack bar at the front of the house. Chart 2 synthesizes the sources of income of the interviewees' families.

Chart 2. Major sources of income before selling and in 2021.

Interviewee	Before selling	2021
I01	Agriculture	Agriculture, retirement and shopkeeping
I02	Agriculture	Retirement and work as a street market vendor
I03	Agriculture	Agriculture
I04	Day labor and agriculture	Retirement, Bolsa Família Program
I05	Agriculture	Agriculture, retirement and other non-specified activities out of the establishment
I06	Agriculture and retirement	Agriculture, retirement, shopkeeping and salaried work in oil palm cultivation
I07	Agriculture and shopkeeping	Retirement and agriculture
I08	Agriculture	Agriculture and salaried work as a driver

Source: The authors' elaboration (2024).

Although agriculture is still engaged in, other activities and retirement were observed to start to stand out. Notable are the cases of interviewees I03 and I08. In the former, the family, led by the mother, has an integration contract with oil palm cultivation and the palm cultivation job is the major occupation for all the family members. Nevertheless, the family still cultivates

cassava and has other perennial cultivations, such as cupuaçu, açaí, coconut and other plants in the backyard. In the second case, the interviewee works as the driver of a school bus he owns, but agriculture keeps important for the family income.

These cases illustrate that the peasants' families may resort to pluriactivity to ensure their social reproduction (Schneider, 2003)¹⁰. Pluriactivity refers to the combination of distinct occupations and sources of income, either or not agrarian, within or without the establishments and under different relationships with the markets (Quirós, 2022). For Quirós, the pluriactivity strategies may be understood as creative responses of the rural populations to conditions of precariousness, yet, besides that, as way of ensuring the families sovereignty to avoid subjections and precarious conditions. In her study on the rural area of Córdoba, in Argentina, the author identified that the peasants combine agricultural activities with selling their workforce to "earn a living", that is, guarantee forms of existence bonded to the rural environment (Quirós, 2022). Fletes Ocón & Hernández Méndez (2023) observed that, in a rural region of Mexico, agriculture is no longer enough to meet the needs of the peasants, who found in pluriactivity the strategies for their reproduction. There, besides the agricultural activities, the peasants perform seasonal jobs, act as drivers and own small stores.

In our case, we observed that, even before selling their establishments, some families already combined different activities (I04, I06, I07), indicating a pluriactivity trend. In that context, despite owning the land, the families already faced precariousness conditions due to the distance to markets, to schools and to other services. One of the interviewees reported that he had to walk for hours at daybreak to manage to reach the road and get on a bus to sell his products in the town and to purchase goods. A leadership interviewed reported on the difficulties faced by the peasants and indicated that this may have influenced their decision for selling their land.

Pluriactivity can also be considered a strategy for keeping the peasant condition, by seeking work out of the establishment, as demonstrated by Severo & Sacco dos Anjos (2022), in a research on temporary workers harvesting peach in Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul. Our interviewees (I05 and I06), as already seen, adopt different measures for keeping their agricultural activities faced with the constrained space, be it by rotation or by the reduction of the planted areas, even though these are not the main sources of income and the production is meant for self-consumption.

Evidently, the transformations in the jobs led to transformations in food production in the region. Among the interviewees, a reduction was observed in the cultivations when comparing the current production with the one before they sold their land. Cassava was the major cultivation and was present in all the establishments, both for selling and for their own consumption. Besides cassava, the black pepper and maize cultivation and trade were also important for the three families. Rice, bean, cupuaçu, açaí and pupunha were important for self-consumption. When our field work was conducted, only six families still cultivated cassava and the other cultures were found in only one establishment.

The reduction in the agricultural production of the peasants interviewed is an indication of the transformations in the local economy. Before oil palm cultivation, selling cassava flour was the major source of income for the peasants in the region (Santos, 2015; Silva, 2016) and the production was directed to the markets both of smaller municipalities and of the capital, Belém. The peasants sold their production in the towns, supplying the local commerce and there they purchased the food they did not produce. The relationship with the markets is mediated by the family needs and views their social reproduction (Schneider, 2003). However,

¹⁰In Brazil, the debate on pluriactivity can be traced back to the 1990s, when scholars assessed the transformations in agriculture and in the jobs in the rural space; see Sacco dos Anjos (1995, 2003) and Carneiro (1998). In the same decade, the existence of a non-agricultural rural area (Graziano da Silva, 1999) was also discussed, which contributed to the perception of the multiple facets of the Brazilian rural living.

we should also consider that peasantry reproduction does not occur in isolation and is subject to the dominant mode of production, that is, to capitalism (Pais, 2008). In the context under analysis, the transformations result from the expansion of capital over the peasants' lands, which led the peasants to adopt new strategies in function of the dismantlement of the traditional economies (Sassen, 2016).

4.2 Symbolic investment, educational and succession strategies: political organization, children education and succession

The symbolic investment strategies aim at keeping the social relationships established by the family groups (Bourdieu, 2020) which may, opportunely, be converted into benefits which the family may enjoy for its own social reproduction. We opted for observing both the organization and participation in unions, associations and other forms of political engagement and sociability. The peasants' sociability, besides the work and of the political engagement, also involve religiousness, the relationships with the neighbors, the leisure activities, cultural manifestations, among other activities that characterize the social life in the traditional rural way (Brandenburg, 2010; Oliveira, 2015).

4.2.1 Strategies of symbolic and educational investment

The participation in union organizations, associations and other forms of mobilization was taken as an indication of involvement and of political engagement. Of the eight interviewees, seven participated in unions at some moment in life, without clarifying whether they were affiliated or not when they sold their establishments. Currently, only one interviewee is still affiliated. As regards small farmers associations, before selling, no one was associated, but currently, three are. Of the seven affiliated with the unions at that time, five are now retired. However, all the retired ones broke the bond with the union for the same reason: they affiliated with the union aiming at future support to obtain their retirement, but even with the help of the union, they did not manage to retire and had to go to court. Still among the unionists before selling, one left the organization 15 years ago but did not explain why. Only one interviewee (I03/she), interviewed in Acará, keeps affiliated to the Union of the Rural Workers, Small Farmers and Family Farmers of the municipality of Acará (STRAAFA). She is also a member of an association of small farmers with palm oil production contracts in the Bucaia region. Two other interviewees (I06 and I08) are members of the Association of Rural Producers of Nova Esperança (ASPRUNE), in Concórdia.

The possibility of access to retirement was the main motivation for participating in the unions and the lack of support to this purpose led most of the interviewees too quit. This aspect was also identified by Santos (2020), in Concórdia do Pará, and by Moraes (2022), in Tomé-Açu, in Pará. The participation in political organizations is a symbolic investment strategy, if we consider that, in those spaces, relationships of social recognition and the "sociodicity strategies"¹¹ are established, and regard keeping the domination (Bourdieu, 2020, p. 26). Moreover, it is presented as an economic investment strategy in the long term, considering that the main motivation for affiliating is the retirement, and social investment, since relationships are built in these organizations and may or not serve immediate purposes. In another way, Hébert (2002)

¹¹This is "a particular case of symbolic investment, aim to legitimate domination and its foundation (that is, the type of capital on which it is laid), naturalizing them" (Bourdieu, 2020, p. 26).

demonstrated that mobilization and political organization were important for the peasantry reproduction in the “border”, in the Transamazonian region in Pará.

Another important aspect of social reproduction is children’s education. The children – and grandchildren – of seven interviewees attended schools before the sale. Only one family’s children were not enrolled in the school due to the distance from the place they lived in. The schools were three kilometers away from the houses, on average. When there was a school in the area, it only offered the first grades of basic education, and it was later necessary to move to larger schools. In the Bucaia region, they had to travel up to Vila São Lourenço. An interviewee’s children in Concórdia had to go to the municipality headquarters to pursue their education.

Currently, an interviewee’s children from Acará live in that town and attend secondary schools. The children of two families that live in the rural area in the same municipality attend nearby schools and have access to regular transportation. A fourth interviewee only has grandchildren that regularly attend basic education, and also have access to school buses. A large portion of the families’ children is observed not to need to go to school on foot and this aspect is pointed out to be fundamental for the improvement of the families’ lives. Among the interviewees in Concórdia, two have grandchildren at school age and, as in Acará, they regularly have access to school buses. In our trips along the PA-140 and on back roads, school buses were usually found conveying students to schools in larger villages and to the urban area. At that moment, the municipality schools were resuming their activities in person, seeing that they had been suspended as a result from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Only two interviewees reported that their children attended higher education, both in Concórdia. However, none of them lives in that municipality. This aspect is related to another important factor, discussed herein, succession of the establishments. When asked about the importance of children education, the interviewees’ responses have a common meaning: it is important for them to “learn something” and “have a better future than farming”, although, as described before, a large portion of the interviewees performs activities connected to agriculture. Only one interviewee that lives in the town informed that, if he could, besides formal education, he would teach his children something about planting.

Paraphrasing Bourdieu (2020), educational strategies purpose to form agents capable of keeping their heritage. Yet, as observed, a large portion of the parents expect their children not to pursue agriculture. The interest for carrying on or not in agriculture is directly related to the succession of the rural establishments and to migration. In the case under analysis, access to education appears as a possibility for not carrying on. This aspect is different from what was verified by Monteiro & Mujica (2021). Those authors identified that access to education is fundamental for the young to remain in the establishments, added to the infrastructures and other assets. This aspect may be connected to the objective conditions of life in each region, seeing that their study was conducted in Bento Gonçalves (RS), a municipality with a high Human Development Index (HDI) in the South of Brazil, which, as indicated by the authors, could contribute to this reality. It is worth stressing that there are scarce studies on that theme in the Amazonian context.

4.2.2 Succession strategies

According to Bourdieu (2020), succession strategies – here employed as a synonym of succession – purpose to pass on the family asset. As from a combination of family, establishment and work, the peasants tend to ensure long-term social reproduction “[...] expecting all the investment in material and work resources spent in the production unit by the current generation may

come to be passed on to the next generations, ensuring them the conditions for their survival" (Wanderley, 1996, p. 4).

As regards succession, only one interviewee (I04) thought of bequeathing the establishment sold to his children; yet his family lived as squatters in a third party establishment, thus preventing succession. Another interviewee (I06) did not make clear whether he intended or not to bequeath the establishments sold as inheritance to his children, but informed that it would be passed on "from one to the other", as usual, that is, from generation to generation. Two others did not respond and four were emphatic when denying. The main reason for that is the difficulties faced in the establishments sold. In turn, seven interviewees said that they currently intend to leave their new establishments to their children. Among them, the owner of the smallest area (I04) thinks of acquiring a larger plot to leave to his children; and another states that it will keep as before, being passed on to the heirs.

When asking about succession, we came across another interlinked aspect: what they expect for their children's future. In one of the cases, an interesting contradiction emerged for the sociological analysis. Despite the interviewee (I03) stating that she intends to leave the current establishment for her children, she does not want their future to be connected to agriculture. She expects them to study and to follow a different path, as she understands that their reasoning differs from hers, they are more directed to studies and to other possibilities beyond the work in the establishment. Two others expect their children to study and manage to find good jobs. Five of the interviewees expect their children and grandchildren to have a good future, but all of them stressed that this decision is something that depends on their children, since they are all adults and have their own families.

According to Bourdieu (2020), succession strategies view the continuity of the group's asset and of legacy in the long term. In the reality, under analysis, they are related to the continuity of the peasantry itself. In the cases analyzed, they present a direct relationship with the educational strategies, seeing that the parents do not expect their children to keep working on small farms. As verified, before selling, only one intended to leave the establishment to his children. This demonstrates that, even before the palm oil companies arrived, at least in the cases analyzed, there already were indications that the succession of the establishments, and thus the continuity of the peasantry, was marked by the hard conditions of social reproduction, which might lead to migration. Pontes (2017) identified that, in the community of Conceição do Guajará, even before the occurrence of the oil palm, flows of rural exodus already happened, due to the daily difficulties faced by the peasants.

4.3 Social identities after the oil palm cultivation was established

In the former topic, we demonstrated that the selling of the establishments unleashed changes in land ownership, in work, and especially in the sources of income. After the selling, migration was the alternative for seven out of eight families and the changes deriving from the new situations faced are reflected in the way they identify themselves. In this sense, we analyzed the transformations in social identities. We consistently grounded ourselves on the theoretical framework according to which the transformations in the social reproduction strategies cause changes in the actors' identities (Bourdieu, 2020), that is, depending on the environment and on the social relationships which surround individuals, their identities may be transformed (Berger & Luckmann, 2004). In the former topics, we demonstrated that after the selling, pluriactivity became central to ensure the social reproduction of the families.

If we think according to Quirós (2022, p. 141), pluriactivity concerns the forms of “earning a living”, as a “means to provide the material conditions of existence and a condition of possibility to reproduce a subjective and collective way of life, bonded to the rural environment”. This perspective allows inferring that the multiple activities performed by the peasants and the contexts in which they are inserted allow building objective and subjective resources. Working out of the establishment can thus both purpose to ensure ownership (Heredia, 1979) and its symbolisms (Woortmann & Woortmann, 1997), and to ensure social and physical reproduction (Brandenburg, 2010). Therefore, resorting to pluriactivity aims to guarantee the material living conditions and keeping the peasant condition, by the search of work outside the establishment (Severo & Sacco dos Anjos, 2022). We here seek to understand the peasant condition from the social identities of the interviewees of the research.

Their participation in union organizations and associations corresponds to symbolic investment strategies and such spaces contribute to forming or asserting their identity and their bond to the land. For example, one of the strategies adopted by the unions in Acará and in Concórdia to raise the peasants’ awareness¹² towards not selling their establishments was reinforcing the importance of their bond to the land, where they could work and cultivate their own food. As stated by Seyferth, “[...] identity has an indisputable social, cultural and territorial dimension and, in the peasantry case, it follows the bond with the land and to ‘family agriculture’ [...]” (Seyferth, 2011, p. 402, quotation marks by that author). We therefore have two aspects constituting the peasant identity that suffered transformations: participation in unions and the reduction or inexistence of establishments. Before selling, seven interviewees kept their bonds with unions yet, currently only one does. As regards the associations of small farmers, three currently keep bonded to them.

Four “symptomatic” cases (Michelat, 1987) are taken for reflection, since they contain key information that call attention on the ongoing transformations in the region researched¹³. Two interviewees (I01 and I02) live with their families in the periphery of the municipality of Acará. One works as a street market vendor, whereas the other has agriculture as an important source of work and income, even though he and his wife are retired. Let us start by the street market vendor (I02) (profession). He no longer keeps his bond with the union and the major source of income derives from working in the street market. From this work, the bonds with the rural space are maintained, since the major product of his business is cassava flour. He goes to the “ranch” and buys the flour that he later sells in the street market; moreover, he buys from the buses that bring other small farmers’ production to the town. He reports that if he knew that there would currently be roads and electric power where he used to live, he would not have sold the establishment. Two other aspects stand out: the first is that he keeps a small area of land in which he intends to do some planting, close to the town; and the second can be observed in the speech that follows:

In my idea, that's the thing: if I had a child that is really studying [...]. I have a son at school, right? I would like to make him study up to a time, and if I could make him learn to do something about agriculture, I would make him do it, because [...] it is not because one studies that he gets a job easily, sometimes yes, sometimes no, there are times when it is difficult to find a job to get, so it is very good to go and study (I02, interview on November 11 2021, Acará).

¹²During the study, we used the concept of “peasant” as a technical-methodological resource to interpret the transformations in the social reproduction strategies of the group studied. In this topic, other terms, such as small farmer, family farmer, family agriculture, among others are used, as they appear in the interviewees’ speeches, referring to the same group, under the concept of peasant.

¹³The choice for the cases derives from the context in which the field research was performed. In the late 2021, when the pandemic decreased, we travelled hundreds of kilometers taken by moto-taxi drivers, in search of the interviewees that currently live far away from each other. Locating them required considerable efforts and, in the midst of the pandemic context, it was not always possible to further the interviews, due to the fear or mistrust of the interviewees. The research theme was uncomfortable to some interviewees. The symptomatic cases analyzed are those that allowed obtaining greater depth in the questionings and in the responses.

This speech was the answer to the question on the importance of children education. Standing out was the fact that, even living with his children in the town, this father would still like to teach them about agricultural work. On the one hand, this reveals a certain nostalgia regarding agricultural work, recollecting the way in which he had been brought up and, on the other hand, this demonstrates that agriculture is still considered as an alternative of work and income. These aspects illustrate that there are relationships of affection with the land, with working on agriculture, and demonstrate that the subjective aspects of his social trajectory and of his knowledge about the world constitute part of his identity and inform about it (Dubar, 2005). However, at the time of his interview, the interviewee worked as a street market vendor and identified himself as such, demonstrating that he is no longer a peasant, despite his nostalgia as regards this condition.

In the second case (I01), the interviewee and his family reside in the periphery of the municipality of Acará, are retired and keep working in agriculture, producing mainly cassava flour to sell. Before selling his land, this interviewee considered himself a small farmer, which currently persists. This shows that, even having moved to the town and undergone the deriving transformations in the sociability forms, the way in which he identifies himself keeps bonded to agricultural activities and to their importance for the family reproduction. Therefore, even in an unusual environment, the peasant condition persists. His identity is primordially bonded to the work on the land and to its ownership, although the retirement and trade are an important part of his social reproduction strategies.

The third special case especial is that of a small farmer (I08) that keeps agriculture as his major source of income, and this the way he identifies himself: "I still identify myself as a small farmer. I have my plot, I have my *açaí*, black pepper and cassava crops, until now I have this car here, I carry out this function, but my work is there with what I plant, agricultural work" (Interview on December 15, 2021, Concórdia do Pará). When he granted the interview, the interviewee was in a garage, waiting for the time to take the students to the rural areas of the municipality of Concórdia. He called his work as a school bus driver a job, and his speech shows that, even temporarily performing this activity, his identity is related to agricultural work. He is not affiliated with a union, but is a member of the Nova Esperança Rural Producers Association (ASPRUNE).

In the two cases (I01 and I08), the material living conditions (Quirós, 2022) are observed to be assured by resorting to pluriactivity. Nevertheless, despite the retirements and the non-agricultural jobs, they still identify themselves with agricultural work, evidencing the importance of their peasant condition (Severo & Sacco dos Anjos, 2022). This is even more conspicuous in the case of interviewee I01's family, who live in the urban periphery of the municipality of Acará.

Lastly, there is an emblematic case (I03). The interviewee (she) keeps an active bond with the Union of the Rural Workers, Small Farmers and Family Farmers of the municipality of Acará (STRAAFA), in Acará, and with an association of planters with production contracts with the palm oil agribusiness. She sold a smaller establishment, of about 12.5 hectares, and she currently resides in a 25-hectare one. In it, she grows oil palm through contractual integration. When asked about how she identified herself before and after selling, she answered that she considered herself a farmer. At the beginning of the interview, we asked since when she had lived in that place and the answer was: "Since I was small, really [...] I grew up here, worked, but *now* I work with family agriculture and so far, thank God, there have been no problem with me, it has been a good thing and that's that". Even though we knew she referred to the fact that she now works with oil palm, we asked her if she was referring to that. After a positive answer, she went on:

I cultivate oil palm; I started to plant in 2010. [...] 2010, no, 2012 and so far the only agriculture I have is oil palm, but above that I have a planted yard, I have there other things, a plot of each thing there, we deal a little, but what I really deal with is oil palm and this has been very good (Interview on November 23, 2021, Acará).

Although she was brought up there and, throughout her life she has worked on agriculture, only after the productive integration and the beginning of the activities with oil palm did she start to consider herself as a family farmer. Moreover, as she reported in the interview, she has a cultivated area and, even before the integration, her main income came from that work. Nonetheless, she did not consider herself a family farmer because, as she states, this cultivated area was not agriculture. Later in the interview, I returned to this issue and asked her if she considered herself a family farmer at the time she sold her land. The answer was: “No, just of the planted yard”. This reveals two facts about how she perceived herself and how she perceives herself now. The first is that, for her, the notion of family farming is conditioned to the project of integration to the agribusiness. The second is that there is an evident effort to differentiate the types of agriculture and how these types define who she is.

The public policies guiding contractual integration (PNPB and PRONAF) and the integrating companies are designated as family agriculture projects. Schmitz et al. (2013) analyzed how a public policy influences the process of constituting collective identities. In the study, the authors understand “collective identity as the coherent and lasting awareness of identification and of belonging to a social group” (Schmitz et al., 2013, p. 120), stressing, however, that durability does not mean that it is immutable. In this sense, they state that “the individual identity is intertwined with the collective identity by the interaction with others” (Schmitz et al., 2013, p. 120). For the case under analysis, besides an individual identity, the family farmer is bonded to the group that cultivates oil palm, since, in another part of the interview, she (I03) referred to the same group in that way, stating that, besides her, there were others, the members of the association. Actually, the establishment of associations to intermediate the relationships was stimulated by one of the corporations (Balieiro, 2019; Oliveira, 2020) and, as aforementioned, these spaces contribute to forming identities.

Still regarding the latter case, we can thus think it may be an attributed identity (Dubar, 2005), also considering, besides the attributions by the organizations, by the public policies etc. – the socialization processes in the political spaces where the actor is inserted – association, unions. Yet there is an internalization process which is subjective to her. In this process, there is a differentiation effort, by which she seeks to distinguish herself both from herself in the past and from the other small farmers that do not have an integration contract. This process is concurrently the construction of an identity for herself (biographic process) and for the others (relational, systemic and communicative processes), as proposed by Dubar (2005). This is because there is a subjective adaptation of what is and what is not to be a family farmer. In the internalization process of “identity for the others”, she eventually created an “identity for herself” that differs her from the other family farmers around her, who have no integration contracts.

5 Conclusions

The process of oil palm expansion in Northeastern Pará was only made possible because of the public policies that attracted investments of regional, national and international corporations to the region. After the investments were announced, the search for lands suitable for oil palm monoculture boosted, preferentially, in the former pasture lands and those of secondary

vegetation. However, in the midst of the acquisitions, the local peasantry was affected and led to sell their establishments, which were added to the large farm areas and resold to the corporations. Aiming to contribute to the discussion on the peasant permanence in the aforementioned context of capitalist expansion in the rural lands, we purposed to analyze the transformations in the social reproduction strategies and their relationships with the social identities of the peasants that sold their establishments due to the expansion of oil palm cultivation in Pará. For this, we conducted 21 interviews – eight com peasants that sold their establishments –, in three municipalities: Acará, Bujaru and Concórdia do Pará.

The social reproduction strategies were transformed due to the changes after the establishments were sold. Of the eight families, seven migrated after selling. Among those that migrated, in 2021, five lived on the roadsides and in back roads in Concórdia do Pará and in Acará, whereas two lived in the urban periphery of the latter municipality. The size of the new establishments, regarding those sold, with a single exception, are of smaller size, and the availability of land is reduced. Therefore, the families developed strategies adapted to the current size of the planted areas and, consequently, other sources of income stand out in most cases. Peasants were observed to resort to pluriactivity as a social reproduction strategy, since besides retirement, there are other work sources and spare income, such as small stores and salaried work. In 2021, five of the eight interviewees considered that the current living conditions are better concerning the ones they lived in when they sold their establishments. For example, there were significant improvements in the access to schools and in the families' children and grandchildren education, with access to school transport and to closer schools.

When the field work was conducted, the conditions required for peasant reproduction were less conditioned to land tenure, and seven interviewees intended to bequeath their establishments to their children. Although no details were given as to how they intended to bequeath their establishments to their heirs, their intention was made clear. Considering the possibilities of each case, a significant improvement is observed for succession, even though some families prefer that their children are educated and follow paths other than those connected to small agriculture. We attribute this more optimistic perspective to better living conditions, as reported by five of the eight interviewees.

A pluriactive peasantry and undergoing transformations is thus observed. Yet this does not mean that the restrictions faced by each establishment should not be considered, especially as regards the areas available for agriculture. Their permanence is consistently related to pluriactivity, since a large portion of the families no longer has agriculture as their major strategy for social reproduction. We thus corroborate the perspective that pluriactivity may be a resource for keeping the peasant condition.

Considering the peasant condition from the way the interviewees identify themselves, we concluded that the changes in the social reproduction strategies contributed to transforming the identities. The analysis of the four symptomatic cases demonstrates that, in one of the cases, although there is nostalgia regarding the peasant condition, the interviewee cannot be considered a peasant, once he works and identifies himself as a street market vendor. The three other cases demonstrate that the peasants have pluriactivity as the foundation for their social reproduction and identify themselves as small farmers. Therefore, the peasant identity remains. Despite taking on new meanings for the actors, such as family farmers or just farmers, the identity remains stable. Inserted and affected in distinct ways by the capitalist expansion by means of the expansion of oil palm cultivation, the interviewees maintained and updated their identities, relating them to their activities, either or not agricultural, that is, their objective conditions of existence, which influenced their subjectivities.

Our study contributes to understanding the relationship between the peasants' social reproduction strategies and their identities in transformation contexts, evidencing pluriactivity as a strategy and resource to maintain their peasant condition. It is worth stressing, however, that our research presents limitations on account of the sample size and that, based on its findings, other studies should endeavor to understand the effects of capitalist expansion on rural areas and on the peasants, considering the objective and subjective aspects of their existence and reproduction.

Authors' contributions:

ECM: Conception/design of the study, Data collection, Analysis and interpretation, Writing of the manuscript. HS: Writing of the manuscript, Critical review.

Financial support:

Éberton da Costa Moreira, Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES); Heribert Schmitz, National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq).

Conflicts of interest:

Nothing to declare.

Ethics approval:

Not applicable.

Data availability:

Research data is not available.

Acknowledgements

To the Graduate Program in Amazonian Agriculture (PPGAA) at the Federal University of Pará (PPGAA-UFPA); to the Brazilian Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) for funding; and the reviewers and editors of the RESR.

*** Corresponding author:**

Éberton da Costa Moreira. costaeberton12@gmail.com

6 References

Almeida, M. W. B. (1986). Redescobrimo a família rural. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, 1(1), 66-83.

- Backhouse, M. (2013). *A despropriação sustentável da Amazônia: o caso dos investimentos em dendê no Pará* (Working Paper, No. 6). Berlin: Fair Fuels?
- Backhouse, M. (2016). The discursive dimension of green grabbing: palm oil plantations as climate protection strategy in Brazil. *Pléyade*, 18, 131-157.
- Backhouse, M., & Lehmann, R. (2020). New 'renewable' frontiers: contested palm oil plantations and wind energy projects in Brazil and Mexico. *Journal of Land Use Science*, 15(2-3), 373-388. <http://doi.org/10.1080/1747423X.2019.1648577>
- Balieiro, M. L. (2019). *Ação coletiva sob influência da dendeicultura: um estudo da Central das Organizações Sociais entre os rios Guamá e Capim (CONSERGC)* (Dissertação de mestrado). Universidade Federal do Pará, Belém.
- Benami, E., Curran, L. M., Cochrane, M., Venturieri, A., Franco, R., Kneipp, J., & Swartos, A. (2018). Oil palm land conversion in Pará, Brazil, from 2006–2014: evaluating the 2010 Brazilian sustainable palm oil production program. *Environmental Research Letters*, 13(3), 034037. <http://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/aaa270>
- Bennett, A., Ravikumar, A., & Paltán, H. (2018). The Political Ecology of Oil Palm Company-Community partnerships in the Peruvian Amazon: deforestation consequences of the privatization of rural development. *World Development*, 109, 29-41. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.04.001>
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (2004). *A construção social da realidade: tratado de sociologia do conhecimento*. Rio de Janeiro: Vozes.
- Borras Junior, S. M., McMichael, P., & Scoones, I. (2010). The politics of biofuels, land and agrarian change: editors' introduction. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37(4), 575-592. <http://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2010.512448>
- Borras Junior, S. M., Franco, J. C., Gómez, S., Kay, C., & Spoor, M. (2012). Land grabbing in Latin America and the Caribbean. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 39(3-4), 845-872. <http://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2012.679931>
- Bourdieu, P. (1989). Social space and symbolic power. *Sociological Theory*, 7(1), 14-25. <http://doi.org/10.2307/202060>
- Bourdieu, P. (2007). *A distinção: por uma crítica social do julgamento*. São Paulo: EdUSP.
- Bourdieu, P. (2020). Estratégias de reprodução e modos de dominação. *Revista Pós Ciências Sociais*, 17(33), 21-36.
- Brandão, F., & Schoneveld, G. (2015). *The state of oil palm development in the Brazilian Amazon*. Bogor: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). <http://doi.org/10.17528/cifor/005861>.
- Brandão, F., Schoneveld, G., Pacheco, P., Vieira, I., Piraux, M., & Mota, D. (2021). The challenge of reconciling conservation and development in the tropics: lessons from Brazil's oil palm governance model. *World Development*, 139, 105268. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105268>
- Brandenburg, A. (2010). Do rural tradicional ao rural socioambiental. *Ambiente & Sociedade*, 13(2), 417-428. <http://doi.org/10.1590/S1414-753X2010000200013>
- Calado, C., & Silva, V. (2020). Agricultura, gênero e reprodução social: Modos de vida das mulheres rurais em contextos de expansão do agronegócio. *Revista Eco-Pós*, 23(2), 79-107. <http://doi.org/10.29146/eco-pos.v23i2.27532>

- Cardoso de Oliveira, R. (2003). Identidade étnica, identificação e manipulação. *Sociedade e Cultura*, 6(2), 117-131.
- Carneiro, M. J. (1998). *Camponeses, agricultores e pluriatividade*. Rio de Janeiro: Contracapa.
- Chambati, W., Mazwi, F., & Mberi, S. (2018). Agrarian accumulation and peasant resistance in Africa. In V. Gumede (Ed.), *Inclusive development in Africa: transformations of global relations* (pp. 104-132).
- Chayanov, A. V. (1981). Sobre a teoria dos sistemas econômicos não capitalistas. In J. Graziano da Silva & V. Stolke (Eds.), *A questão agrária* (pp. 133-163). São Paulo: Brasiliense.
- Dubar, C. (2005). *A socialização: construção das identidades sociais e profissionais*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.
- Fletes Ocón, H. B., & Hernández Méndez, C. C. (2023). Pluriactividad y reproducción social en localidades rurales de Ocosingo, Chiapas. *Horizontes Territoriales*, 3(6), 1-20. <http://doi.org/10.31644/HT.03.06.2023.A31>
- Gellert, P. K. (2015). Palm oil expansion in Indonesia: Land grabbing as accumulation by dispossession. In J. Shefner (Ed.), *States and citizens: accommodation, facilitation and resistance to globalization* (pp. 65-99). Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing. <http://doi.org/10.1108/S0278-120420150000034004>.
- Graziano da Silva, J. (1999). *O novo rural brasileiro*. Campinas: Editora do Instituto de Economia da Unicamp.
- Hébette, J. (2002). Reprodução social e participação política na fronteira agrícola paraense: o caso da Transamazônica. In J. Hébette, S. B. Magalhães & M. C. Maneschy (Eds.), *No mar, nos rios e na fronteira: faces do campesinato no Pará*. Belém: EDUFPA.
- Heredia, B. M. A. (1979). *A morada da vida: trabalho familiar de pequenos produtores do Nordeste do Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra.
- Junquera, M. J. (2020). Expansión de cultivos industriales en el sudeste asiático: el caso de la palma aceitera en Indonesia y Malasia. *Revista Huellas*, 24(1), 53-77. <http://doi.org/10.19137/huellas-2020-2404>
- Macedo, C. O., & Sousa, R. B. (2015). Novos projetos, velhas práticas: os impasses entre agricultura camponesa e agronegócio do dendê em terras amazônicas. *Tempos Históricos*, 19(1), 302-331.
- Marx, K. (2013). *O capital: crítica da economia política. Livro I: o processo de produção do capital*. São Paulo: Boitempo Editorial.
- Mauricio, F. R. C. (2020). Micropolítica do terreno: família, espaço e reprodução social no Litoral do Piauí. *ACENO-Revista de Antropologia do Centro-Oeste*, 7(15), 59-74. <http://doi.org/10.48074/aceno.v7i15.11217>
- Michelat, G. (1987). Sobre a utilização de entrevista não diretiva em sociologia. In M. Thiollent (Ed.), *Crítica metodológica, investigação social e enquete operária*. São Paulo: Polis.
- Monteiro, R., & Mujica, F. P. (2021). A identidade sociocultural do jovem agricultor na vitivinicultura familiar e sua relação com a sucessão rural. *Revista de Economia e Sociologia Rural*, 60, e235637.
- Moraes, L. G. S. (2022). *O movimento sindical dos trabalhadores e trabalhadoras rurais no nordeste paraense: as motivações dos participantes em Tomé-Açu* (Dissertação de mestrado). Universidade Federal do Pará, Belém.
- Mota, D. M., Mourão Junior, M., & Schmitz, H. (2019). Oil palm cultivation in the Brazilian Amazon: state actions, interest groups, and conflict. In A. Bonanno & J. S. B. Cavalcanti

- (Eds.), *State capitalism under neoliberalism: the case of agriculture and food in Brazil* (pp. 93-113). Lexington Books.
- Nahum, J. S., & Bastos, C. S. (2014). Dendeicultura e descampesinização na Amazônia paraense. *Campo-Território: Revista de Geografia Agrária*, 9(1), 469-485. <http://doi.org/10.14393/RCT91723628>
- Ojeda, D. (2022). Reproducción social, despojo y el funcionamiento generizado del extractivismo agrario en Colombia. In B. McKay, A. Alonso-Fradejas & A. Ezquerro-Cañete (Eds.), *Extrativismo agrario en America Latina*. Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires: CLACSO; University of Calgary; Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. <http://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv3142tqn.8>.
- Oliveira Neto, A. C. (2022). Dispossession and agricultural commodities: the case of oil palm farming in the Brazilian Amazon. In A. Ioris & B. Fernandes (Eds.), *Agriculture, environment and development: international perspectives on water, land and politics* (pp. 265-280). Springer International Publishing.
- Oliveira, A. M. (2015). Formas de sujeição e sociabilidade camponesa no semiárido. *Boletim Goiano de Geografia*, 35(2), 273-288.
- Oliveira, K. E. H. (2020). *A ação coletiva de agricultores familiares integrados à agroindústria de dendê: um estudo de caso na Associação dos Moradores e Agricultores Familiares da Região de Igarapé-Açu de Baixo, em Irituia-Pará* (Dissertação de mestrado). Universidade Federal do Pará, Belém.
- Oliveira, G. L. T., McKay, B. M., & Liu, J. (2021). Beyond land grabs: new insights on land struggles and global agrarian change. *Globalizations*, 18(3), 321-338. <http://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2020.1843842>
- Pais, A. (2008). Arrancados del suelo: el desarrollo del capitalismo agrario y sus consecuencias en las estrategias de reproducción de campesinos criollos e indígenas en territorio salteño. *Revista Interdisciplinaria de Estudios Agrarios*, 29, 99-121.
- Pará. Secretaria de Estado de Desenvolvimento Agropecuário e de Pesca do Pará – SEDAP-PA. (2020). *Panorama agrícola do Pará 2015/2019: dendê*. Belém. Recuperado em 7 de junho de 2024, de http://www.sedap.pa.gov.br/sites/default/files/arquivos_dados_agropecuarios/ANORAMA%20AGR%C3%8DOLA%20DO%20PAR%C3%81%20%20Den%C3%AA%20%28cacho%20de%20coco%29%20-%202019.pdf
- Pontes, D. L. R. (2017). *Resistência camponesa à agroindústria do dendê na comunidade Conceição do Guajará em Bujaru/PA* (Dissertação de mestrado). Universidade Federal do Pará, Belém.
- Quirós, J. (2022). Ganarse la vida rural. Pluriactividad y producción de valor en campo cordobés, Argentina. Problemas y propuestas para la agenda pública. *Revista del Museo de Antropología*, 15(2), 127-144. <http://doi.org/10.31048/1852.4826.v15.n2.36713>
- Richie, H., & Roser, M. (2021). Palm Oil. Word in Data. Recuperado em 7 de junho de 2024, de <https://ourworldindata.org/palm-oil>
- Ritzer, G. (2011). *Sociological theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Sacco dos Anjos, F. (1995). *A agricultura familiar em transformação: o caso dos colonos-operários de Massaranduba (SC)*. Pelotas: Editora Universitária – UFPel.
- Sacco dos Anjos, F. (2003). *Agricultura familiar, pluriatividade e desenvolvimento rural no Sul do Brasil*. Pelotas: Editora e Gráfica da Universidade Federal de Pelotas.
- Santana, R. M. (2010). *Os caminhos da regularização fundiária no município de Concórdia do Pará/PA* (Dissertação de mestrado). Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo.

- Santos, C. B. (2015). *Dendeicultura e comunidades camponesas na Amazônia: uma análise do município de Moju* (Dissertação de mestrado). Universidade Federal do Pará, Belém.
- Santos, R. S. (2020). *Motivação para o engajamento sindical: estudo de uma organização de agricultores familiares no Nordeste Paraense* (Dissertação de mestrado). Universidade Federal do Pará, Belém.
- Sassen, S. (2016). *Expulsões: brutalidade e complexidade na economia global*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra.
- Schmitz, H., Mota, D. M., & Pereira, J. A. G. (2013). Pescadores artesanais e seguro defeso: reflexões sobre processos de constituição de identidades numa comunidade ribeirinha da Amazônia. *Amazônica*, 5(1), 116-139. <http://doi.org/10.18542/amazonica.v5i1.1305>
- Schmitz, H., Ribeiro, L. C., & da Mota, D. M. (2020). Resistência cotidiana à agroindústria do dendê em uma comunidade quilombola rural na Amazônia Oriental. *Amazônica*, 12(2), 659-692. <http://doi.org/10.18542/amazonica.v12i2.7415>
- Schneider, S. (2003). Teoria social, agricultura familiar e pluriatividade. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, 18, 81.
- Severo, P. S., & Sacco dos Anjos, F. (2022). Clandestinos, invisibles e esenciales: zafreros rurales em el Brasil meridional. *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 84(3), 539-566.
- Seyferth, G. (2011). Campesinato e o Estado no Brasil. *Mana*, 17(2), 395-417. <http://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-93132011000200006>
- Silva, O. H. (1986). Alguns comentários sobre o destino do campesinato em Marx. *Revista de Economia e Sociologia Rural*, 24(1), 101-116.
- Silva, E. M. (2016). *Expansão da dendeicultura e transformações nos sistemas de produção familiares na Amazônia Oriental* (Dissertação de mestrado). Universidade Federal do Pará, Belém.
- Silva, E. P., Magalhães, S. B., & Farias, A. D. (2016). Monocultivos de dendezeiro, capital transnacional e concentração de terras na Amazônia paraense. *Revista Campo-Território: Revista de Geografia Agrária*, 23(11), 165-195. <http://doi.org/10.14393/RCT112306>
- Sousa, R. B. (2019). Campesinização e resistências ao agronegócio do dendê no nordeste paraense. *Revista NERA*, 22(49).
- Sousa, R. B., & Macedo, C. O. (2019). Agronegócio do dendê e campesinato no Pará. *Geosul*, 34(71), 525-549. <http://doi.org/10.5007/1982-5153.2019v34n71p525>
- Svampa, M. (2013). "Consenso de los Commodities" y lenguajes de valoración en América Latina. *Revista Nueva Sociedad*, 22(49), 244-270.
- Tavares, P. I. E., & Mota, D. M. (2023). Dendê é reflorestamento? Percepção de agricultores integrados à agroindústria do dendê na Amazônia Oriental. *InterEspaço: Revista de Geografia e Interdisciplinaridade*, 9(12), e202316. <http://doi.org/10.18764/2446-6549.e202316>
- United States Department of Agriculture – USDA. (2021). *Palm oil explorer*. Washington, D.C. Recuperado em 7 de junho de 2024, de <https://ipad.fas.usda.gov/cropeexplorer/cropview/commodityView.aspx?cropid=4243000>
- Vermeulen, S., & Cotula, L. (2010). Over the heads of local people: consultation, consent, and recompense in large-scale land deals for biofuels projects in Africa. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37(4), 899-916. <http://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2010.512463>
- Wanderley, M. D. N. B. (1996). Raízes históricas do campesinato brasileiro. In *Anais do 20º Encontro Anual da Anpocs* (pp. 1-19), Caxambu, Brasil. Anpocs.

- Wanderley, M. D. N. B. (2014). O campesinato brasileiro: uma história de resistência. *Revista de Economia e Sociologia Rural*, 52(Supl 1), 25-44. <http://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-20032014000600002>
- Wilkinson, J. (2009). The emerging global biofuels market. *Review - Fernand Braudel Center*, 32(1), 91-111.
- Woortmann, E. F., & Woortmann, K. (1997). *O trabalho de terra: a lógica e a simbólica da lavoura camponesa*. Brasília: UnB.
- Woortmann, K. (1990). "Com parente não se negueia": o campesinato como ordem moral. *Anuário Antropológico*, 12(1), 11-73.

Received: November 12, 2024;

Accepted: June 07, 2025

JEL Classification: Z1

Associate Editor: Catia Grisa