

# Convergent Agrarian Frontiers in the Settlement of Mato Grosso, Brazil

Lisa Rausch

*University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies*

**Abstract:** The heterogeneity of development in the contemporary southern Amazon may be linked to different settlement experiences on the frontier. Three main types of productive settlement have been identified, including official colonization, private colonization, and spontaneous settlement, based on the differentiated motivations and resources of participants in these settlements. Not only did these different types of frontiers advance concurrently in the Amazon, but these frontiers sometimes converged in one location. The interaction of settlers from different groups sometimes created conflict, but also advanced the process of territorialization of the Amazon. This position is illustrated via a case study of one municipality at which three groups of settlers converged. Ultimately, though local popular history privileges the role of one of the three groups in bringing about the founding of the municipality and the development of a successful local economy, these achievements were only possible due to the different resources that each group brought to the settlement.

## Introduction

The heterogeneity of the Brazilian Amazon frontier experience is just beginning to be understood. Early researchers set out structuralist expectations of accelerating resource exploitation, capital accumulation by a relative few as land holdings were systematically consolidated, and the enlistment of the peasantry into wage labor as the agricultural frontier advanced into the Amazon.<sup>1</sup> A linear progression toward the homogenization of Amazonian places has not occurred, however, even as highly capitalized industrial agriculture has continued to advance in the region.<sup>2</sup> Today, the Amazon is a tapestry of highly globalized and globalizing cities, relic frontier towns, marginal extractive landscapes, and panoramas of modern, industrial-scale agricultural production with a range of landholding sizes. Efforts to make sense of these highly differentiated frontier outcomes must include reexamination of frontier settlement, which was a considerably diverse process.

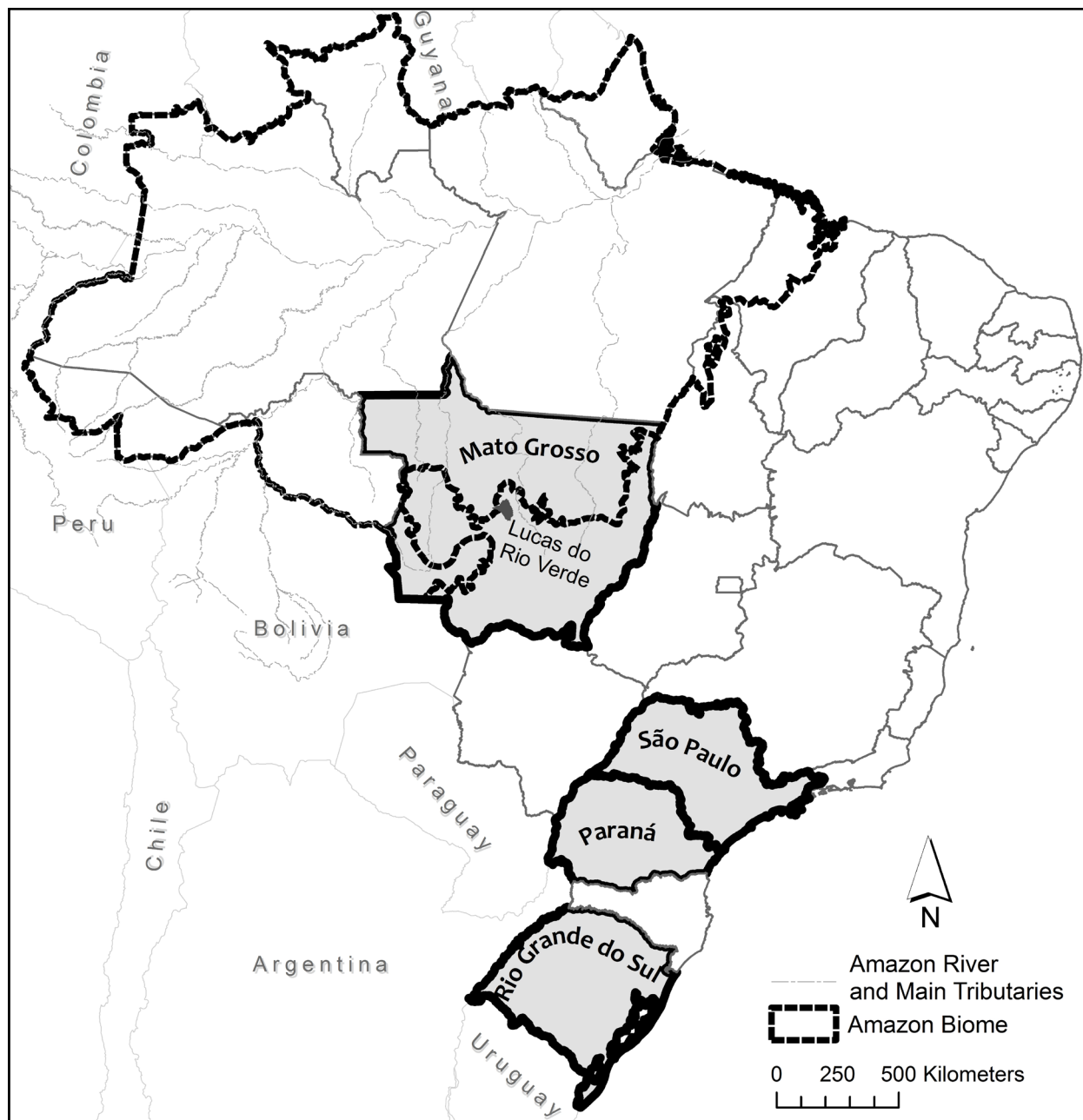
The Amazon region has supported various production systems and millions of people for thousands of years and has periodically generated boom economies related to agriculture and mining activities.<sup>3</sup> Most recently, beginning in the 1970s, Brazilians took a renewed interest in the Amazon as a site for development via the expansion of industrial agriculture. Today, less than forty years after this most recent campaign to populate and develop the Amazon and integrate it into the national project, the region is one of the most important sites of agricultural production in Brazil, particularly in terms of soybean and cattle production. The massive environmental transformations that have taken place in the Amazon as the result of this influx of people and the subsequent agricultural and ranching booms have rightly received considerable attention from scholars and other observers.<sup>3</sup> The site of the most drastic of these transformations, the southern

Amazonian state of Mato Grosso, produces a third of the country's soybeans and is a leader in other types of agricultural production as well.<sup>4</sup> Many scholars have linked this agricultural production to deforestation and land concentration, and, likewise, have framed these negative environmental and social outcomes as consequences of state policies promoting export-oriented production and, more recently, corporate investments.<sup>5</sup> Others have pointed to the importance of small farmers in engendering the initial frontier clearings.<sup>6</sup> While the outcomes of settlement in Mato Grosso are becoming ever clearer and continually evolving, the complex socio-historical processes that catalyzed these transformations across the state remain poorly understood.

With regard to the use of geographical terminology employed here, in Brazil, the term "the Amazon" can refer to various spatial extents from the northern and western parts of the country. These include an administrative region created in the 1970s—the Legal Amazon, in which Mato Grosso is fully located—and a federally defined tropical forest biome. Mato Grosso is located partially in the far-southern portion of the Amazon forest biome; the remainder of the state extends outside of this biome into the Cerrado, a tropical savannah (Figure 1). This amounts to most of the state occupying a transitional zone, or ecotone, between the two biomes, but being subject to most administrative policies pertaining to the Legal Amazon. Present-day residents of this region may or may not consider themselves to be residents of "the Amazon," but for settlers arriving during the 1970s, the region was clearly seen as the Amazon, a distant and difficult place to settle. At this time, the human population of this region was very low and most natural vegetation (which, depending on the location, could be open grassland, scrubland, sparsely wooded areas, or dense forest) was still intact. Recent indigenous presence in the specific site that would become Lucas do Rio Verde, in central Mato Grosso, is unknown. The settlement activities discussed in this paper are responsible for the much of the initial removal of this native vegetation, a process that continues today.<sup>7</sup>

Scholars of the Amazon have identified various settlement frontiers, or types of settlement, in the agrarian Amazon, including state-sponsored official settlement, private colonization, and spontaneous settlement, but relatively little attention has been paid to the variety of lived experiences within these frontiers. This paper is an effort to fill this gap in the literature and a continuation of the efforts of the handful of researchers who have so far worked to weave these experiences into the larger narratives of frontier change.<sup>8</sup> These three main types of settlement in the Amazon did not act in isolation from one another, however; instead, different types of settlers competed for spaces on the frontier over time as they were made accessible and desirable for settlement. The outcome of decades of shifting policies for the Amazon emanating from the federal level, and of a progressively worsening economic situation for the Brazilian population had, by the 1980s, created not an orderly and advancing frontier planned and executed by the authoritarian government, but instead, a landscape "latticed with migrant trails," some of which could be traced directly back to Brasília and some of which could not.<sup>9</sup>

This paper examines the intersection of three major agrarian frontiers in one site, Lucas do Rio Verde, Mato Grosso (referred to from here on simply as Lucas). Merely thirty years after its initial settlement, the municipality is widely recognized as a model of success in terms of its economic development, competent management, and approach to environmental conservation.<sup>10</sup> These successes are popularly attributed to the pioneering spirit of one particular group of settlers, but concurrent claims to land and pushes for land tenure resolution, contributions to the development of local social institutions, and advances in local agricultural production made by all the settler groups were important. The Lucas case demonstrates how contested and simultaneous claims to the same location on the frontier, though they often resulted in violence, could also have the effect of hastening the development of institutions and material improvements as competing groups strove to influence the nature of territorialization and the consolidation of



**Figure 1.** Brazil with Pertinent States Highlighted.

state reach in the locale.<sup>11</sup> Evidence presented in this paper also demonstrates that colonists of all three frontiers were motivated by a multiplicity of factors, including economic, political, and cultural motivations, which continued to evolve during the process of arriving and settling on the frontier.

The primary sources of information drawn on for this paper were found in the Municipal Archive of Lucas do Rio Verde, where I was able to consult collections of oral histories, newspapers, narratives, and analyses written by local historians; primary documents related to the early administration of the municipality; and collections of secondary sources written by Brazilian

scholars about the settlement history of the region, but that English-language scholars have yet to use. In addition, I conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty farmers on a variety of topics, including settlement history, and informal but ongoing interviews with select key informants with particular knowledge about the settlement and development of the municipality. Finally, data about settlement histories in each of Mato Grosso's 141 municipalities were collated from various published sources to allow for visualization of settlement processes across the state.

These primary and secondary resources were invaluable for the detailed and unique information they supplied about the experiences of different people during the colonization project. It should be noted, though, that the contentious nature of the colonization and early development of Lucas means that many voices, particularly those who participated in colonization but moved on or back in the face of the considerable early difficulties, are considerably diminished in local narratives. The first colonizers of Lucas are still alive and the scars of the early conflicts on the local, collective psyche are still apparent and sensitive. Indeed, there is a palpable discomfort among many of the municipality's remaining "pioneers" in discussing their early past, even as they recount its glories. The fact is, many people were bullied, intimidated, and sabotaged into leaving the settlement, in spite of the "populist frontier" narrative and identity that prevails among many agricultural actors and other residents of Lucas today.<sup>12</sup> It was, though, in many cases, the organization and institutions of the unsuccessful settlers that supported the successful settlement and transformation of Lucas into a leading city. Fortunately, Brazilian scholars of the frontier have sought out the stories of the people who ultimately did not stay in Lucas, which helps fill in gaps in the local record.

This paper builds on previous efforts by American and Brazilian scholars to expand our understanding of the historical geography of frontier settlement and territorialization in Mato Grosso. The paper begins by reviewing the three main types of frontiers from a political-economic viewpoint, which is the conventional framework for explaining the advancing of the agricultural frontier in Brazil. Instead of viewing these frontiers as discrete entities, however, this paper challenges efforts to draw strong distinctions among these types of settlement. Newly spatialized data on settlement histories across the state allow for the most complete visualizations yet of settlement patterns in Mato Grosso during the period generally considered to be the initial contemporary frontier advancement (1960s - 1980s), and show how these frontiers overlapped across the state. The second section draws on a combination of archival data, interview data, and secondary sources to present the settlement history of Lucas as a case study for the ways in which these frontiers intersected. The third section explores the outcomes of these encounters on the establishment of the municipality, as well as some of the legacies of the intersection of frontiers in Lucas.

### **The Geography of Frontier Settlement in Brazil**

The profound modern transformation of the Brazilian Amazonian landscape has frequently been attributed to the efforts of the military dictatorship (1964 - 1985) to fulfill its project of national integration and modernization. And indeed, the legacy, but also the incompleteness of this national project are undeniable: trunk roads that brought settlers to the Amazon in the 1960s and 1970s are important transportation corridors for the growing populations of the Amazon, though in many places they remain unpaved, and mechanized agriculture encouraged by favorable fiscal and economic policy drives the rapidly growing economy in parts of the Amazon, while other areas sit as degraded pastures and fields producing unimpressive annual yields. Conventionally, the Amazon has been characterized as a site of state intervention into a resource-rich, unterritorialized (uncontrolled) environment via the imposition of controls and conditions to facilitate the expansion of capitalist relations and extraction, with the predicted outcome

Soybean production (in tons)	Mato Grosso (MT)	Brazil	MT % of national production
1980 <sup>a</sup>	88,852	12,757,962	0.7
2011 <sup>b</sup>	20,800,544	74,815,447	27.8

<sup>a</sup>IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), Agricultural Census, 2006

<sup>b</sup>IBGE, Municipal Agricultural Production, 2011

**Table 1.** Soybean production in Mato Grosso, 1980 and 2011.

ultimately being a homogenized landscape with wealth and resources securely concentrated in the hands of a few and a population of laborers to do the bidding of capitalist landowners.<sup>13</sup> The present reality, though, is one of considerable variability.<sup>14</sup> Scholars must now look for ways to best explain the heterogeneity of the agrarian frontier in the Amazon, including the failures of the state to execute its projects in a timely and coordinated way, and the role of actors not associated with the state in frontier settlement and transformation.<sup>15</sup> Finally, though the influence of the military government's projects on the Amazon is undeniable, the conventional political economic perspective does not account for the motivations and characteristics of the settlers that have acted out these transformations.<sup>16</sup>

Scholars have identified three main types of settlement on the agrarian frontier in the Brazilian Amazon—colonization projects, private settlement projects, and spontaneous settlement—which have generally been treated as separate frontiers acting in isolation from one another. The case presented here though, calls for a reassessment of this assumption by documenting the ways in which these three frontiers overlapped in Mato Grosso and arrived simultaneously in Lucas, resulting in outcomes unexpected for any of the singular frontier experiences. Furthermore, the rapid rise in importance of Mato Grosso as a producer of agricultural commodities makes it an important site of inquiry regarding frontier settlement. For example, at the time Lucas was first being settled, the importance of Mato Grosso as a site of soybean production was negligible, contributing just 0.7 percent of national production in 1980; by 2011 the state produced 27.8 percent of the country's soybeans (Table 1). The agents and geography of this remarkable transformation deserve closer inspection.

### State-organized settlement in Mato Grosso

The obvious influence of federal policies on the Amazon frontier has understandably focused the attention of many scholars on assessing the outcomes of various types of state-led, or directed colonization projects implemented by INCRA (National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform) in the Amazon.<sup>17</sup> In 1964, Brazil entered into a period of dictatorship (led by a series of generals) for whom dampening social unrest, securing the land borders of the country, and capitalizing on the country's vast natural resources were key goals. Achieving many of these goals centered on more effectively incorporating the Amazon, which was the least populated and explored part of Brazil and includes many of the country's inland borders, into the national economy. This was to be achieved by building infrastructure in the region and by incentivizing

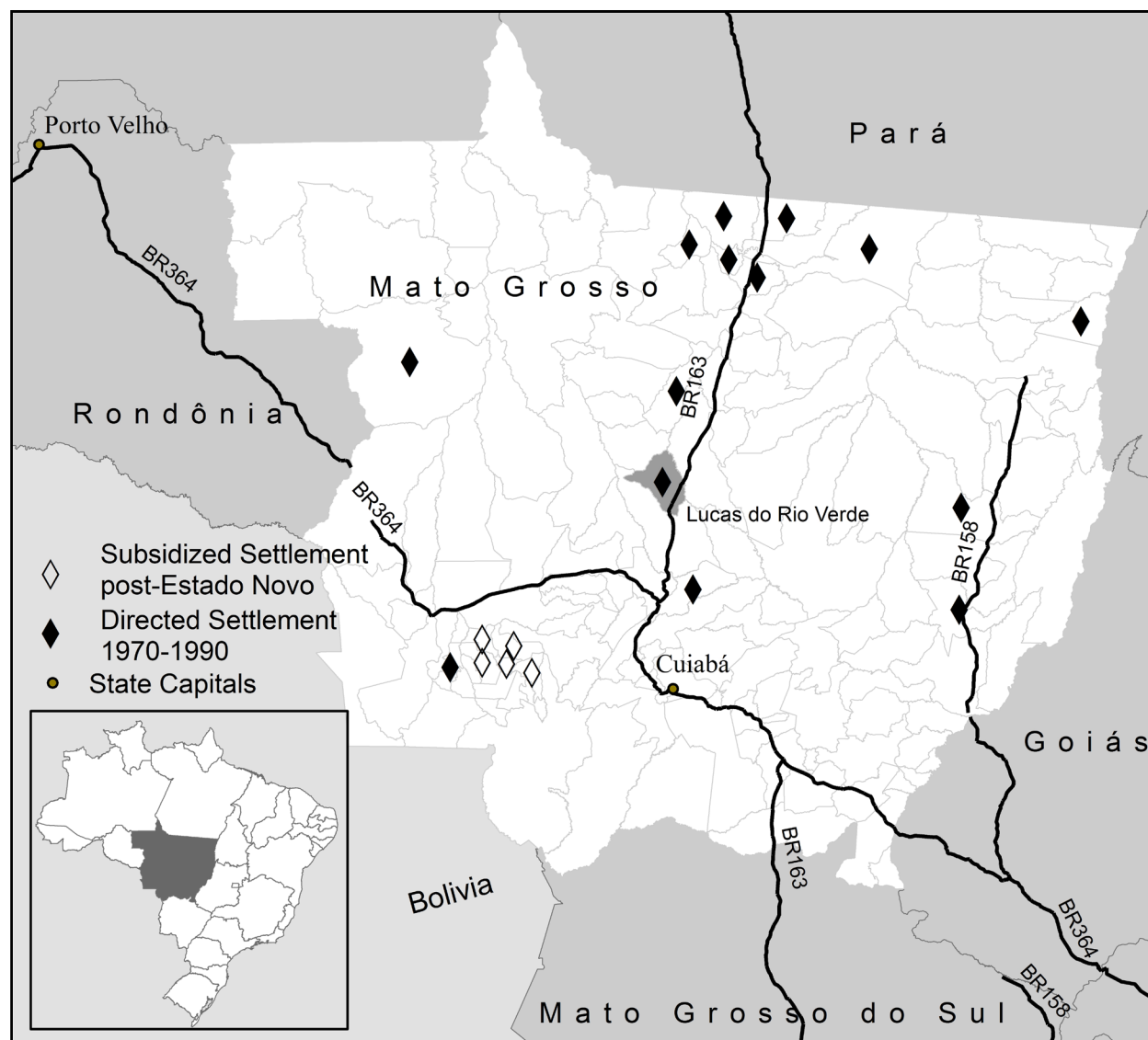
resource-poor families from other parts of the country to settle there.<sup>18</sup> A host of federal agencies and programs, including INCRA, were created in the 1960s and the 1970s in the service of achieving these goals, and a series of settlement projects through which INCRA would work to recruit settlers and execute their installation in the Amazon were launched. During the time period from 1964 to 1994, INCRA settled an impressive 16,219 families in Mato Grosso, though this was not even the state where INCRA was most active during this time period (for example, Mato Grosso's neighbor to the north, Pará, received over 43,000 families via INCRA settlements and, to the west of Mato Grosso in Rondônia, over 42,000 families were settled).<sup>19</sup> While certainly transformative in certain locations, it quickly became clear that these directed settlements alone would be insufficient to handle the massive land distribution issues facing the country.<sup>20</sup> Official settlements have continued and have increased in importance in Mato Grosso since the 1990s: from 1995 to 2002, 68,491 families were officially settled in Mato Grosso and 49,623 families were settled from 2003 to 2013, though administrative changes within INCRA and changes in the socio-political climate of Brazil after the end of the dictatorship in 1984 set these more recent settlements apart from those of the earlier period that is the focus of this paper.<sup>21</sup>

The spatial distribution of state-led colonization also speaks to the incompleteness of this project. Almost without exception, these projects accompanied the construction of important trunk roads in the region, as evidenced by the early federal colonization projects along some of the first roads being built in the Amazon in Pará (along the Trans-Amazonian highway) and in Rondônia (along the Cuiabá-Porto Velho highway) in the 1970s, and by the later arrival of official colonization to Mato Grosso, with the construction of the Cuiabá-Santarém highway in the 1980s.<sup>22</sup> The late arrival of federal highways to the central and northern parts of Mato Grosso meant that the first period of directed colonization in the state was truncated, lasting only from 1980 to 1981, though it lasted for up to ten years in some of the other Amazonian states.<sup>23</sup> Seldom discussed is a previous period of semi-directed settlement in Mato Grosso. These earlier settlements were underwritten by the state government of Mato Grosso in the 1940s and 1950s during a period of weakened federal control, following the end of the dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas (known as the *Estado Novo*, or New State, 1937-1945), though most of these lands ended up contributing to *latifundismo* (a prevalence of large landholdings) instead of smallholder settlement.<sup>24</sup> Overall, a litany of government programs and projects directly attempted to implant settlers in Mato Grosso throughout the twentieth century, but many of these attempts at directed settlement ended in complete failure with all settlers abandoning their plots.<sup>25</sup> In total, only nineteen of the 141 present day municipalities in Mato Grosso were affected by some form of successful directed settlement by state or federal agencies (Figure 2).

### Private settlement in Mato Grosso

Where directed colonization was either less prevalent or late to arrive in Mato Grosso, private colonization thrived, sometimes via non-profit settlement cooperatives and sometimes via for-profit companies that sold land parcels and offered a relatively straightforward path to legal land ownership. This process has been well explored by both Ozorio de Almeida in her book *The Colonization of the Amazon* and by Wendy Jepson in her work on the private colonization project in Canarana.<sup>26</sup> According to figures calculated by Jepson, between 1970 and 1990, 3,946,889 ha of land in 22,150 lots were distributed in Mato Grosso via private colonization projects, while only 3,100 lots totaling 549,982 ha (5.5 percent of the total area) were distributed in state-led or directed colonization projects.<sup>27</sup> Private projects would distribute many lots at a time, averaging between one hundred and three hundred lots per project.<sup>28</sup>

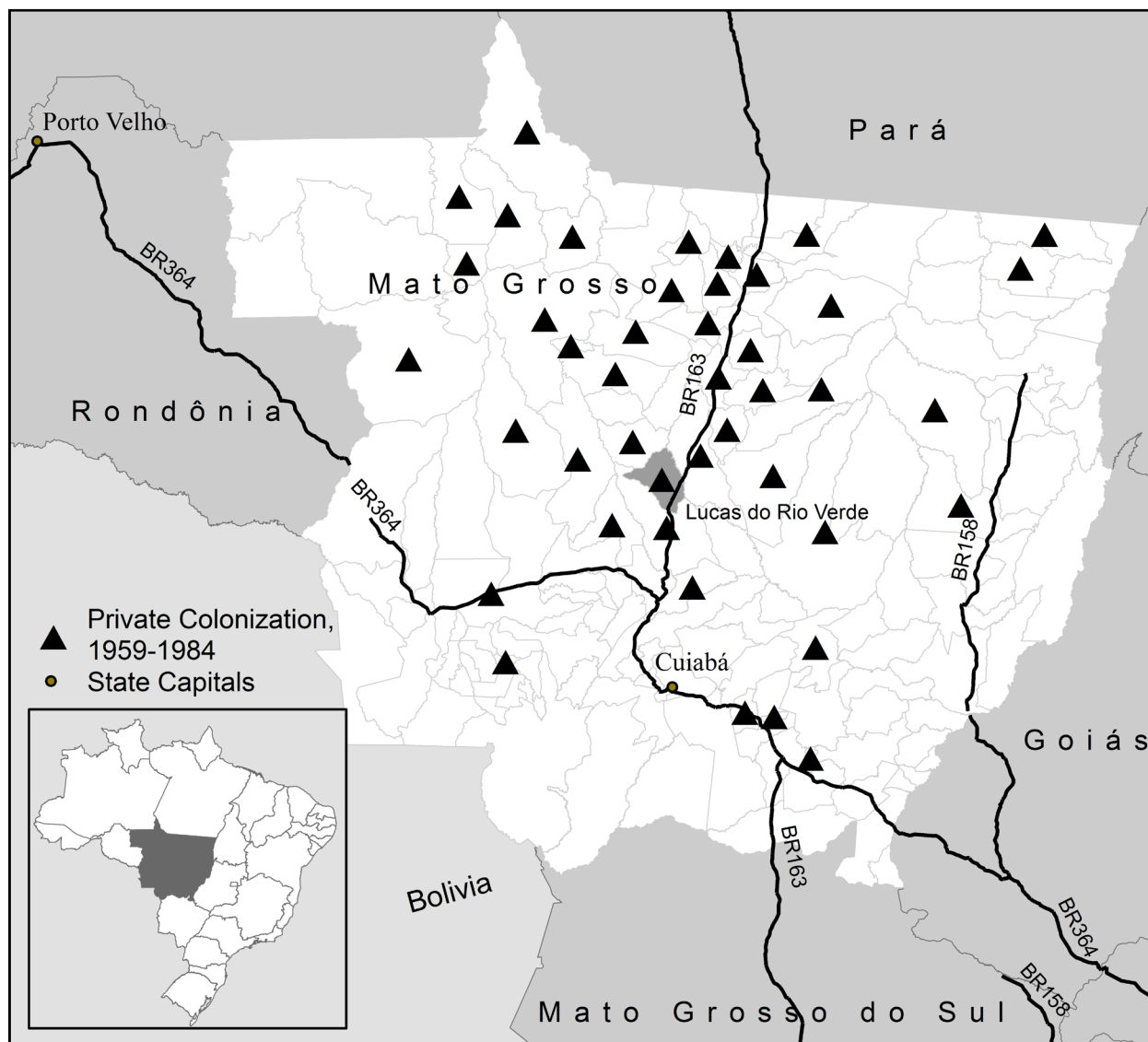
Private colonization was either absent or had a less significant impact in all other Amazonian states except Pará. Ozorio de Almeida shows that twenty-eight out of forty major



**Figure 2.** Official Settlement Projects in Mato Grosso (Adapted by author from Arcemy, 2007; IBGE, Municipalities).

sites of private colonization projects in the Amazon were located in Mato Grosso.<sup>29</sup> However, data from IBGE and from brief municipal settlement histories suggest that private colonization projects may have been even more widespread in Mato Grosso than this. Forty-two out of 141 present day municipalities can be identified as having been settled in part or in full by private colonization firms, which in some cases were carrying out projects at the behest of INCRA and in other cases were simply organizing land for distribution among cooperative members or endeavoring to make a profit off of the sale of the land.<sup>30</sup> These data correspond with other research that has identified similarly high numbers of private colonization projects in Mato Grosso (Figure 3).<sup>31</sup>

Private colonization was prevalent in Mato Grosso because of high demand for land that exceeded the ability of INCRA to attend to it, the slowness and uncertainty of getting access to land and title via public programs, and the interest of relatively more economically secure individuals in settling in Mato Grosso. Public settlement projects were notoriously risky for



**Figure 3.** Private Colonization Projects in Mato Grosso (Adapted by author from Arcemy, 2007; IBGE, Municipalities).

participants because admittance into a public settlement project usually required total or near-destitution, and there were high and frequently shifting barriers (discussed below) to gain access to the security and rights of a fully legal landowner via these projects. Though presumably out of reach for the poorest of potential settlers, for a relatively small premium above the already low prices of land in Mato Grosso, private settlement projects reduced transaction costs associated with gaining land access, and, therefore, often organized and executed more stable settlements in Mato Grosso during the 1970s to the 1990s than did the state programs.<sup>32</sup>

Private colonization in the Amazon did not exist in spite of public directed colonization, but because of it. INCRA was a powerful agency and had authority over all settlement projects in the Amazon in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>33</sup> The agency asserted its authority, for example, by placing conditions on member-generated cooperative plans for frontier settlement such as requiring that the cooperative also provide services to members of official colonization projects and other



settlers; by limiting the allotment of land permitted for each member to be equal to that of the official colonists; or by simply designing resettlement projects for landless families agitating for land reform under the name of a colonization cooperative, as in the case of Terranova and later settlement waves in Canarana settlements.<sup>34</sup>

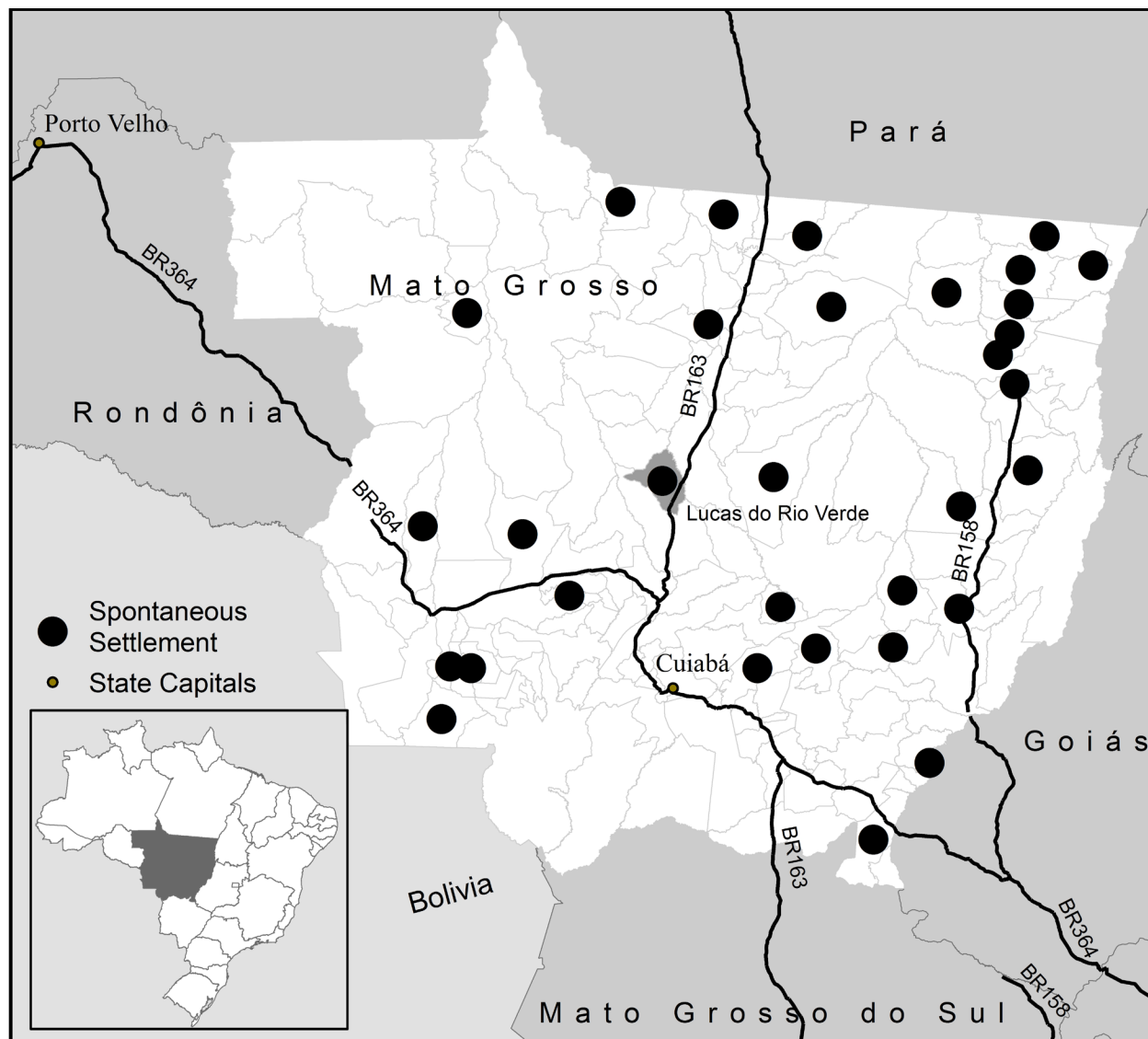
### Spontaneous settlement in Mato Grosso

In spite of the importance of these types of organized settlement, the vast majority of colonization in the Amazon has been what is considered to be spontaneous settlement.<sup>35</sup> Though technically extra-legal in terms of their actions, spontaneous settlers also played an important role in the extension of the state's territorial control to the Amazon frontier via the provision of services and infrastructure such as transportation networks, education and health services, and titling in parts of the frontier that the state and private colonization projects did not reach, as well as in some places where they did. Spontaneous settlement has been undertaken by various types of settlers, from poorly capitalized smallholders squatting without documentation on the margins of the frontier to large-scale landowners and *grileiros* (speculators) with (frequently fraudulent, at least initially) land titles.<sup>36</sup>

Due to its inherently off-the-books nature, the magnitude of spontaneous colonization is difficult to calculate and seems to have led researchers to assume that Mato Grosso was a less significant recipient of spontaneous migration relative to the other states on the agrarian frontier of the Amazon. Based on the selection of sites for the studies of Amazonian settlements as documented by Ozorio de Almeida, each of the main frontier states of the Amazon *except for Mato Grosso* had roughly as many case studies done on spontaneous settlements as on directed or private colonization projects, indicating that spontaneous settlements were at least as important as public and private organized settlements combined throughout the Amazon.<sup>37</sup> No studies on settlements of any type in Mato Grosso were documented at the time of Almeida de Ozorio's writing in 1992, which may seem to suggest that there were few spontaneous settlements there beckoning researchers' attentions. The vast amount of territory (45 percent) of the state accounted for by private and public settlement projects could indicate a paucity of other desirable locations left for spontaneous settlement.<sup>38</sup> The falling number of rural households in Mato Grosso, documented by IBGE census data (from 161,276 in 1970 to 109,216 in 1991) during the major period of settlement could also suggest there were few numbers of unaccounted-for spontaneous settlers in Mato Grosso during this time period.<sup>39</sup> Also, scholars have claimed that many of the spontaneous migrants to the Amazon came from the Northeast and so would be most likely to have settled somewhere in the eastern or the northern Amazon, instead of the southern Amazon where Mato Grosso is located.<sup>40</sup>

The way in which spontaneous settlement occurred makes it difficult to quantify. While nearly the entire state of Mato Grosso would have been considered rural in the 1970s, especially the central and northern parts, both official and private colonization projects aimed to create towns, or *vilas*, around which rural activities were organized. Spontaneous settlement, of course, rarely had such organization from the beginning, meaning that many instances of spontaneous settlement have likely gone uncounted.

Other evidence suggests, however, that the discounting of the history of widespread small- and medium-holder spontaneous settlement may be a serious omission in inquiries into the transformation of Mato Grosso's agrarian frontier. For example, the most influential group of pioneer farmers in Lucas today came neither from the INCRA-directed settlement project nor from the private cooperative colonization project, but instead, were self-funded, small-holder farmers who arrived before or just after these other projects. Consistent with the story of Lucas,



**Figure 4.** Spontaneous Settlement of Small- and Medium-holders in Mato Grosso (Adapted by author from Arcemy, 2007; IBGE, Municipalities).

research by Mato Grossense geographer M. Arcemy suggests that spontaneous settlers engaged in productive agriculture that influenced at least thirty-two municipalities' settlement histories (Figure 4).<sup>41</sup> More research is needed to better understand this type of settlement in Mato Grosso.

While by no means guaranteed, in some cases spontaneous settlers were able to eventually achieve registration and title for their land. Brazilian law has long allowed for legal acquisition of land via squatting on unclaimed public lands, which comprised the vast majority of Mato Grosso in the 1970s, with the right to register one hundred ha after one year and one day, and full title to up to 3,000 ha after five years of occupation and use of the land.<sup>42</sup> There are similar allowances for squatting on private but unused lands, though the amount one can claim via this process on lands already owned by someone else is smaller than on public lands.

### Convergent frontiers in Lucas do Rio Verde

Northern Mato Grosso, where Lucas is located, is presently the site of some of the most rapidly globalizing places in the world. These places feature local economies based on the production of large quantities of soybeans, corn, chicken, and pork for national and international markets. The region is a modern study of quick and effective transformation of uncapitalized natural resources (land) into highly capitalized production. By presenting Lucas' settlement history, I aim to highlight the way that the three main types of agrarian settlement overlapped in Mato Grosso. Together these three groups hastened the extension of private control over the region's natural resources via a process of accelerated territorialization, which was driven by competition among the different groups for space and state resources and which laid the foundation for development processes that are ongoing in Lucas and northern Mato Grosso today.

In 1981 and 1982, Lucas was simultaneously an official colonization project, the site of a private colonization project, and also claimed by spontaneous settlers, some of whom had been farming there for five years or more. In the end, most of the settlers who remained on the land and continue to farm it today are members or decedents of the spontaneous settler group. The colonists had the force of the military government behind them, and the members of the private colonization cooperative benefitted from a number of organizational and transaction-cost-reducing benefits, but the spontaneous settlers were the group that most successfully capitalized on the resources brought by these two other groups. Now, thirty years later, these surviving settlers are economically secure, having long-since established secure land title and, in most cases, expanded their landholdings to double or more of the property for which they first received title. The important role of the less successful groups of settlers in prompting the commencement of the land-titling process in the area, promoting closer linkages with this frontier area to government and social services, and advancing economic opportunities for local products has been diminished in dominant popular narratives, though the legacies of these innovations form the foundation of the municipality's present-day economic successes.<sup>43</sup>

#### *Spontaneous settlement in Lucas do Rio Verde*

Families from the state of Paraná first began to buy up land in the area known today as Lucas (in lots of 1000 to 5000 hectares in size) in the mid-1970s, from individuals or organizations that had supposedly obtained registration rights from the state as early as the 1940s.<sup>44</sup> Land titling in Brazil, particularly in frontier areas, has a long and well-documented history of fraud, deceit, and contradictory legal treatment.<sup>45</sup> In this way, the early settlement of Lucas was a classic case: grileiros had purchased cheaply from the state, been given, or even simply forged documents for land that was otherwise unclaimed and untitled (known in Brazil as *terras devolutas*, or public lands), and had then turned around and sold the land, with or without some kind of legal contract of sale.<sup>46</sup> As this was all common practice, the families of spontaneous settlers (known as *posseiros*, or claimants) that bought land in Lucas at this time knew that although the legality of their initial land purchase was questionable, staying on the land and making it "productive" for one year and one day would be extremely favorable for their eventual attempts to regularize, or make legal, their land claims in the future.<sup>47</sup>

The *posseiros* began to arrive in Lucas, then known as *gleba Rio Verde* (or the Rio Verde plot) essentially concurrently with the 9<sup>o</sup>BEC (9<sup>o</sup> *Batalhão de Engenharia e Construção do Exército*, or 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion of Engineering and Construction of the Army) and the construction of federal highway BR-163, a trunk road running from the state capital of Cuiabá north into the state of Pará in the mid-1970s. Thus, the *posseiros* who first settled in present-day Lucas corresponded to neither stereotype of spontaneous settlement in the Amazon; these were not disenfranchised and impoverished peasants, nor were they highly capitalized corporate land speculators--these

were mostly families who had voluntarily sold some or all of their land holdings in Paraná and had come to Mato Grosso with the goal of buying larger tracts of land to achieve social mobility in Mato Grosso more easily than they could have in Paraná.<sup>48</sup>

From approximately 1976 until 1981, the posseiros' claims were uncontested in Lucas, and they were able to focus their full attention on the practical problems at hand, not the least of which was learning to farm in a tropical climate on land with sandy, acidic soils. Though the legality of their land purchases was murky and they had few other resources, the local bank—a branch of the national Banco do Brasil—accepted their claims to the land and provided financing for agricultural activities based on them.<sup>49</sup> Opening the frontier was exciting, but challenging.<sup>50</sup> For example, even once highway BR-163 had been completed, the quality of the road was terrible, prone to wash-outs, and combined with the long distances (it was 200 km to the nearest town, the municipal seat of Diamantino), traveling was a significant undertaking and represented a serious hardship for anyone settling in Lucas.<sup>51</sup>

In 1981, the posseiros were informed that the area around the Rio Verde had been appropriated for an urgent land reform settlement and that their lands would be confiscated without compensation to allow for the settlement of landless families from the state of Rio Grande do Sul (RS). Though they were at first assured by INCRA that the lands they were using would be spared from any official settlement, the plans for the project ultimately included the lands that were already claimed by the posseiros, thereby setting the stage for conflict and struggle engendered by the government's contradictory agendas regarding titling, populating, and developing the area once the new settlers arrived.<sup>52</sup> At this point, some of the posseiros returned to Paraná or moved on, but others (approximately eighty-five families in total) decided to organize and work with INCRA for continued access to the land alongside the official settlement project.<sup>53</sup> Ultimately, most posseiros would receive 200 ha from INCRA, the same amount as the official settlers, though some of the families had been claiming much more land prior to the project, up to 2,000 ha. This was not a wholly bureaucratic undertaking; some posseiros threatened violence against the "landless vagabonds" that were being brought up from RS as part of the project.<sup>54</sup> To understand the way these struggles unfolded and their resolution, we must first examine the roots of the land problems in Brazil's southern-most state, RS, from where the settlers in the official INCRA project in Lucas came.

### *Official colonization project PEA-Lucas do Rio Verde*

The families that eventually joined the INCRA settlement in Lucas did not wish to move to the Amazon; their arrival there represented an option of last resort after they had attempted both creating spontaneous settlements and demanding land reform in their home state of RS. By the mid-1970s, land concentration was rapidly taking place in RS due to new financial incentives offered by the federal government to develop mechanized agriculture. Moreover, the growth of families had, over the decades, led to a near exhaustion of places on which to put new farmlands in RS. These concurrent developments were the source of growing unrest, caused by both rapid urbanization and rapid growth in rural landless populations in a state, that for generations had an economy based largely on family agriculture.

Land concentration in RS in the 1970s was marked; for example, between 1976 and 1978 alone, RS lost 61,000 small properties.<sup>55</sup> Another driver of unrest related to land access in RS was the improving legitimacy of indigenous lands and rights. Non-indigenous families had been both encroaching on and settling as rent-paying tenants on the lands of one group, the Kaingang, since their reserves were established in the early twentieth century.<sup>56</sup> In 1978 the Kaingang, forcibly and with the support of the state agency FUNAI (*Fundação Nacional do Índio*/National Indian Foundation), expelled some one thousand non-native families who had been collectively

squatting on up to a full 65 percent of their reserve (9,634 ha).<sup>57</sup> Some of these ejected families would eventually make their way to Lucas via the INCRA PEA (*Projeto Especial de Assentamento*, or Special Settlement Project).

The families expelled from the Kaingang reserves insisted that they be granted land in RS, but the governor of RS claimed that there was no available land and they would have to accept offers of employment or settlement in the Amazon. By settling the colonists in the Amazon, the government hoped to both resolve the landless problem brewing in the South, and at the same time advance its interests of promoting productive settlement in the Amazon.<sup>58</sup> Some of the colonists eventually accepted placement in colonization projects in other states, including two projects in Mato Grosso--Canarana and Terranova, both administered by the cooperative Coopercol.<sup>59</sup> A certain subset of the families eventually formed a camp at a crossing near Ronda Alta-RS called Encruzilhada Natalino, and were joined by other families also facing problems of land shortage, including four families who had found the official settlement at Terranova to be untenable and returned, as well as four other families who had returned from Canarana.<sup>60</sup>

Calls for comprehensive agrarian reform intensified from within the camp. Calling the situation at the camp a national security issue, the government dispatched a military brigade to guard the camp. Under the watch of one Major Curió, well known at the time for his abusive psychological tactics for the suppression of local uprisings, the camp was transformed into a full-on militarized zone, complete with barriers, apparatuses of surveillance, and visible police presence at all times. The military promoted INCRA settlement projects in Mato Grosso (as well as in Bahia, Acre, and Romaira, though these were later abandoned in favor of only settling people in Lucas) to the settler, who were unenthusiastic about the idea of moving far from their home state, with slideshows and videos. Meanwhile, conditions in the camps continued to worsen. There were food and water shortages, leading to illnesses and deaths.<sup>61</sup> Dwellings were made of cardboard and plastic, and provided virtually no protection against the elements. On top of all of this, state and local police threatened violence against the settlers, and local landowners hired gunmen to infiltrate the camps and threaten and beat the settlers. Desperate to bring an end to the rapidly deteriorating situation, Curió eventually resorted to paying certain colonists to talk favorably about the Lucas project. In the end, he was able to convince 203 of the 506 families in the camp to go to Lucas.

The PEA-Rio Verde was to have more than 270,000 hectares available for settlement. These 270,000 hectares would be divided into lots of 200 hectares each, with 100 hectares of each plot to be reserved as forest and the other 100 hectares available for productive use, with the remaining land to be parcelled out to later groups of settlers.<sup>62</sup> Economic activities predicted for the area were rice, corn, and soybeans. INCRA promised the colonists the following amenities in PEA-Rio Verde: basic infrastructure including 96 km of local roads, three schools, two health centers, administrative buildings, and an *armazém* (grain storage facility), as well as access to credit to work the land for planting, including deforestation, root removal, cleaning, grading, technical assistance, and fertilizer. Credit was to be conditional, based on accepting technical assistance and complying with a requirement to plant basic food crops for at least two years, a requirement that which was to be reduced by 50 percent during the rest of the finance period. The cost of the lot was to be based on the land value at the time--Cr\$370 (US\$3.98) per hectare in the Municipality of Diamantino--to be paid back over twenty years.<sup>63</sup>

### *Arrival and settlement at Rio Verde*

The settlers who arrived in Lucas from RS became known as *parceiros* because of the small parcels of land they received from the settlement project. They arrived in three rounds in 1981 and 1982. The failure of this group to settle long term in Lucas (less than 10 percent of them

would last more than two years) is attributed in local, popular history to their ill-suitability to the difficult work of farming on Brazil's agricultural frontier. This reasoning is mistaken, though; at least half of the *parceiros* were experienced farmers who, like the *posseiros*, were determined to continue to make their livelihoods from the land.<sup>64</sup> The failure of the official settlement in Lucas, instead, is a story of a group of people who were used by their own government as instruments for the extension of the reach of land tenure institutions over a previously unterritorialized locale, thereby facilitating the success of competing groups of settlers who easily moved in in their wake.<sup>65</sup>

The *parceiros* had been promised several basic benefits in exchange for their willingness to move to Mato Grosso with essentially no personal assets. For example, they were told that they would be provided with houses, but only upon their arrival did they find out that, instead, they would have to build their own houses, with wood provided to them by INCRA.<sup>66</sup> Additionally, out of the 200 hectares they had each been promised for farming, they learned that they would have to leave 50 percent of it forested in order to comply to the federal Forest Code as written at the time and that only 2 hectares of the land would be cleared for them. Due to the terms of their contracts with the Banco do Brasil, the bank that administered financial aspects of the settlement, the *parceiros* were completely dependent on the services of third-party vendors for everything from clearing and plowing to planting and harvesting.<sup>67</sup> These prices of payment for the services would be negotiated exclusively between the bank and the vendors, who frequently failed to perform services or failed to perform them adequately or with the appropriate timing. The *parceiros* never received the money they were being loaned; it went directly to the vendors, stripping the *parceiros* of their power to bargain for better services or prices. The nearest Banco do Brasil office was more than 200 km away in the city of Diamantino, a week's journey round trip on foot; complaints that did make it to the bank were often lost in a bureaucratic triangle among the employees of the Bank, INCRA, and the vendors. With no machinery and no access to independent financing, it was up to the *parceiros* to figure out what to do about clearing the other 98 hectares of dense vegetation that they were allowed to clear from their plots.

Low crop yields during the first year and changes made to the terms of the loan by the Bank furthered the troubles of the *parceiros*. Poorly performing crops meant that the *parceiros* were unable to bring in income via the sale of their crops to pay their loans, and a forced refinancing by the Bank meant that the *parceiros* had to start making payments during the second year of their loan instead of the fifth year, as had been the original agreement. Because their crops were not producing well, some *parceiros* worked as day laborers on the farms of the *posseiros* in order to earn money to buy food at the Cobal (government dry-goods store) store in town and to make their loan payments. Others relied on hunting and fishing to feed themselves.<sup>68</sup> INCRA declined to reevaluate the terms of the contracts between the *parceiros* and the bank during the second year of the settlement based on the actual conditions of the settlement rather than the predicted ones, which had been used as the basis for the original contracts. The *parceiros'* inability to make payments was viewed by the Bank as noncompliance with the terms of the loan, and the Bank refused to issue any more funds for the settlement in 1982, meaning that many of the settlers were unable to plant anything the second year. Under the terms of the settlement, INCRA maintained possession of the land titles for five years, so the *parceiros* had nothing with which to bargain. However, illegal purchases of plots from *parceiros* looking to leave the settlement, by *posseiros* but also by INCRA staff planning to resell the land for personal gain, were widespread.<sup>69</sup> On top of all of this, the INCRA executor in Lucas, José Ferreira Soares, was notoriously physically and psychologically abusive to the *parceiros*.<sup>70</sup> These factors illustrate the extent to which the objectives of the agency were not truly the successful implantation of impoverished families on the frontier.

### *Cooperlucas*

Meanwhile, a third group of settlers had also set its sights on the gleba Rio Verde. The members of a cooperative known as Holambra 3, based in São Paulo, had begun working in cooperation with INCRA for assistance in starting their project in the 1970s. They decided they would call their settlement project Lucas do Rio Verde, after a rubber tapper who had occupied the area at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the name of the cooperative itself was changed to Cooperlucas.<sup>71</sup> Because the area was frontier territory, cooperative members understood that they would be responsible for the provision of education, social and cultural resources, and the technical assistance and infrastructure necessary for producing, buying, and selling agricultural projects. Just before heading to Lucas, they were informed that a PEA would also be installed in the same location.

Upon arrival in Lucas in 1981, the *associados* (cooperative members) were surprised to find that there were also *posseiros* there making claims to area lands, which INCRA was partially granting. At first, it was unclear if the cooperative project would continue. In an attempt to preserve what they could of their plans for the settlement of the region, cooperative members proposed a *projeto integrado* (integrated project), which would include support for the *posseiros* who had negotiated with INCRA to retain a small amount of their claimed lands, and operate alongside the official settlement project. INCRA accepted the continuation of Cooperlucas in the Rio Verde area, but with some conditions. The cooperative would be allowed to settle up to 150 families at the site (though only fifty families ended up participating), but it had to be fully responsible for “creating and implanting the commercial, agroindustrial, and social infrastructure and to make it available for members and for the entire local community.”<sup>72</sup> This deal produced hard feelings between the *associados* and the *posseiros*, who were still struggling to resolve situation of their land with INCRA; each group thought the other was getting preferential treatment. The cooperative, which planned to provide schools and other social services to everyone at the settlement, should have been a unifying force, but instead it was viewed suspiciously by the *posseiros*. INCRA employees, for their part, actively made it difficult for the cooperative to execute planned projects such as educational programs, contributing to growing suspicions that INCRA was not truly interested in the successful settlement of families in Lucas at all. Cooperative leaders, like the *parceiros*, reported receiving death threats from Ferreira, though at least one author has accused some of the *associados* of issuing threats of violence to further their cause as well.<sup>73</sup>

### **From Settlement to Municipality**

On August 5, 1982, Lucas was declared an *agrovila* (agricultural settlement) within the municipality of Diamantino, its first step toward autonomy and a sign of official recognition that the settlement process had been effective.<sup>74</sup> However, as a result of the physical hardships, isolation, violence, and lack of economic opportunities, many *parceiros* had already abandoned their plots or were in the process of doing so by the end of 1982. In fact, more than 90 percent of the *parceiros* would leave Lucas do Rio Verde by the end of 1983, almost without exception selling their plots to *posseiros*, INCRA employees, or land brokers for nothing more than the cost of a bus ticket home or to the next settlement.<sup>75</sup> These “sales” of land were technically illegal, since the *parceiros* had never truly owned their lands. The terms of their contracts with INCRA and the Banco do Brasil had deferred transfer of titles to the colonists until five years after settlement, but the sales went uncontested by the government, suggesting that the primary goal of the project in Lucas was the delimitation and registering of lands, not the support of any particular group on the land. And, indeed, in spite of the exodus of *parceiros*, the population of Lucas continued to grow.

In 1983, Cooperlucas was invited to participate in PRODECER (*Programa de Desenvolvimento do Cerrado/Program for Development of the Cerrado*), a bilateral Brazil-Japan project for the production of grains in the Cerrado for export to Japan. The project operated by providing special financing to cooperatives for agro-industrial infrastructure projects in specific, strategic locales. North-central Mato Grosso had, by this point, become a target for the development of industrial-scale agricultural production on the part of the federal and state governments.<sup>76</sup> Thus, the selection of Cooperlucas as a participant in the project was clearly strategic for the government, as the smallness and newness of the cooperative did not otherwise make it a strong candidate for such a high-value project. Through this project, the cooperative was able to install the settlement's first grain drier; until then, locals had been dependent on grain middle-men to store and process their grains, at considerable cost. The drier was important in this history of Lucas because universal access to it improved relations between the cooperative and the remaining *parceiros*, as well as the *posseiros*, all of whom benefitted from it.<sup>77</sup>

The settlement was granted the status of District in 1985. In the same year, INCRA settled ten more families from São Gabriel do Oeste, Mato Grosso do Sul in Lucas. These families also received 200 hectare lots, but from this point on, settlement and development in Lucas became essentially a private endeavor, facilitated by the government only in terms of promoting favorable conditions for the growth of the agro-industrial sector. From the point of view of the land tenure and regularization priorities of the government, the settlement was successful even though the majority of the *parceiro* settler left. The cumbersome, contentious, and legally ambiguous process of converting the lands in Lucas from *terras devolutas* to parcels that could be privately owned and farmed had been completed within less than 10 years. Lucas was legally elevated to the status of municipality on July 4, 1988 (State Law no. 5.318), counting 5,500 inhabitants at the time.

### **The convergence of agrarian frontiers in Mato Grosso**

The case of Lucas' settlement clearly shows how multiple types of settlement acted in concert as well as in competition with one another to carry out the settlement of the agrarian frontier. The eighty-five families of *posseiros* who continue to make up a large portion of the successful agricultural land-owner class in Lucas today were spontaneous migrants to the area, mainly from the state of Paraná. They had either purchased their lands from brokers or simply claimed them by setting about the business of farming them. The *posseiros* relied heavily on the land titling process initiated by the other local settlement efforts to gain free and clear titles to their lands and extend their landholdings, either by colluding with INCRA agents to push the *parceiros* off of their demarcated and registered lands, or simply by stepping in and buying lands that other settlers were leaving.<sup>78</sup> The developing profitability of local production came to depend heavily on the infrastructure established by the cooperative, and the children of *posseiros* attended schools begun by the cooperative in fulfillment of their agreement with INCRA.

Constructing a successful settlement on the Mato Grosso frontier in the late 1970s and early 1980s was not an easy task. In fact, the *posseiros* had been farming locally for five years when the other two groups of settlers converged on the locale, but they had not, during that time, begun the construction of any infrastructure related to a town. Of the 203 families of *parceiros* that originally participated in the project, less than twenty remained in Lucas after two years. Today, only a couple of these families continue to farm there. While there were conflicts among the *posseiros* and the *parceiros*, more of the difficulties stemmed from the treatment of the *parceiros* by INCRA. In fact, the outcome for the *parceiros* might have been even worse if there had not been a mutual recognition among the *parceiros* and the *posseiros* that they had common roots in the country's south.<sup>79</sup> The fifty families of cooperative members arrived in Lucas



with the most financial support and options of any of the groups; not all of them continue to farm in Lucas today, but their additional influence in the municipality is evident in the presence of the first local grain drier and the first local schools.

The government's goals for extending its control over the Amazon frontier in Mato Grosso were articulated via hybrid state and private initiatives, including regularization of lands claimed through *posse* (settlement first and applying for the title later) and the collaboration with cooperative settlements in the Amazon, in addition to official organized settlements. Many of the producers responsible for frontier development arrived in Mato Grosso from the southern states of RS and Paraná where other processes of reterritorialization were taking place. These smallholders were compelled to move to the frontier for various reasons, including pressure from agricultural modernization efforts, competition with indigenous groups over land, and the expanding number of rural households in the region due to generational expansion.<sup>80</sup> Their convergence in certain locales may help explain the spatial heterogeneity of successful development of agricultural economies on the frontier. Competition and cooperation among rival groups ultimately facilitated the establishment of institutions and infrastructure necessary to make a settlement successful and sustainable in the places with the most favorable conditions.

The PRODECER project is one specific example of the way the confluence of frontiers characterized the settlement of the Mato Grosso, and of Lucas more specifically. PRODECER was an official project with the aim of developing the Amazon for national benefits, but the government relied heavily on the activities of non-state actors to carry out the project. The settlement history of Lucas is a clear example of this rather complex interweaving of state and private settlement in the advancement of the frontier and the capitalization of the country's natural resources. In the end, individuals who were able to meet requirements set explicitly or implicitly by the state to turn the country's so-called empty spaces into globalized production spaces effectively extended the reach of the state to regions and resources that were previously uncontrolled by it.

## Conclusion

The Amazon has been transformed by multiple types of settlement frontiers, which sometimes overlapped. This helps explain the diversity of outcomes of settlement in the region. In 1981, three distinct groups of settlers, known locally as *posseiros*, *parceiros*, and *associados*, converged on the banks of the Rio Verde and together undertook the physical and institutional transformations that would, over the next three decades, form the foundation of the emergence of one of the most productive sites of industrial-scale agriculture production in the world. Here, I show that all three groups received state assistance and furthered the state project of divvying up and opening land in the Amazon for industrial agriculture expansion, but also, that all three groups ultimately had rather ambiguous relationships with the state. In the end, the personal relationships and private investments made by the settlers were also highly influential to the outcome of the settlement project in Lucas. The *posseiros* group ended up benefitting the most from the municipality's contentious beginnings, and this outcome continues to mark the social, economic, and political situation of the municipality today. Closer inspection of settlement histories from the various frontiers of agrarian settlement in the Amazon shows how different groups of settlers that overlapped on the frontier worked sometimes in competition, but sometimes in collaboration with one another to influence the allocation of public resources, to set and enforce boundaries, and to influence discourses that ultimately legitimated or invalidated particular settlement outcomes.<sup>81</sup> Future research should compare outcomes among municipalities with different types of settlement histories.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of Dario Munhak of the Municipal Archive of Lucas do Rio Verde for his insights on this topic, which were fundamental to the formulation of this paper, and Dr. J. Christopher Brown, for comments on previous versions of this paper. This manuscript was greatly improved by the thoughtful comments of one anonymous reviewer. Funding for this research was provided by an IIE Fulbright Student Grant. Any remaining errors are the author's alone.

## NOTES

- 1 Joe Foweraker, *The Struggle for Land: A Political Economy of the Pioneer Frontier in Brazil from 1930 to the Present Day*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981); Marianne Schmink and Charles H. Wood, "Land Conflicts in Amazonia," *American Ethnologist* 9, no. 2 (1982): 341-357; Donald Sawyer, "Frontier Expansion and Retraction in Brazil," in Marianne Schmink and Charles H. Wood, eds., *Frontier Expansion in Amazônia* (Gainesville: U of Florida P, 1984), 180-203.
- 2 David Cleary, "After the Frontier: Problems with Political Economy in the Modern Brazilian Amazon," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 25 (1993): 331-349.
- 3 For examples, see Marcia N. Macedo, Ruth S. DeFries, Douglas C. Morton, Claudia M. Sitckler, Gillian L. Galford, and Yosio E. Shimabukuro, "Decoupling of Deforestation and Soy Production in the Southern Amazon during the Late 2000s," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 109 (2012): 1341-1346; Eugenio Y. Arima, Peter Richards, Robert Walker, and Marcellus M. Caldas, "Statistical Confirmation of Indirect Land Use Change in the Brazilian Amazon," *Environmental Research Letters* 6 (2011): 024010; Christian Brannstrom, "South America's Neoliberal Agricultural Frontiers: Places of Environmental Sacrifice or Conservation Opportunity?" *Ambio* 38 (2009): 141-149; Phillip M. Fearnside, "Brazil's Cuiabá-Santarém (BR-163) Highway: The Environmental Cost of Paving a Soybean Corridor Through the Amazon," *Environmental Management* 39 (2007): 601-614.
- 4 Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], *Estabelecimentos Agropecuários, Censo Agropecuário 1920/2006*, Rio de Janeiro, 2007.
- 5 On deforestation and land concentration as consequences of agricultural production, see Britaldo Soares-Filho, Ane Alencar, Daniel Nepstad, Gustavi Cerqueira, Maria del Carmen Vera-Diaz, Sérgio Rivero, Luis Solórzano, and Eliane Voll, "Simulating the Response of Land-Cover Changes to Road Paving and Governance along a Major Amazon Highway: the Santarém-Cuiabá Corridor," *Global Change Biology* 10 (2004): 745-764. For an examination of the state's role in attracting corporate investment, see John O. Browder and Brian J. Godfrey, *Rainforest Cities: Urbanization, Development, and Globalization of the Brazilian Amazon* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997).
- 6 David Carr, "Population and Deforestation: Why Rural Migration Matters," *Progress in Human Geography* 33 (2009): 355-378.
- 7 Thomas K. Rudel, Ruth Defries, Gregory P. Asner, and William F. Laurance, "Changing Drivers of Deforestation and New Opportunities for Conservation," *Conservation Biology* 23, no. 6 (2009): 1396-1405.
- 8 For examples see Susanna B. Hecht and Alexander Cockburn, *The Fate of the Forest: Developers, Destroyers and Defenders of the Amazon* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1989); Ana Luiza Ozorio de Almeida, *The Colonization of the Amazon*, (Austin: U of Texas P, 1992); Laudemir Luiz Zart, *Desencanto na Nova Terra. Assentamento no Município de Lucas do Rio Verde-MT na Década de 80*, PhD diss., Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Centro de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, Programa de Pós-graduação em Sociologia Política (1998).

- 9 Hecht and Cockburn, *The Fate of the Forest: Developers, Destroyers and Defenders of the Amazon*.
- 10 Christian Brannstrom, Lisa Rausch, J. Christopher Brown, Renata Marson Texiera de Andrade, and Andrew Miccolis, "Compliance and Market Exclusion in Brazilian Agriculture: Analysis and Implications for 'Soft' Governance," *Land Use Policy* 29, no. 2 (2012): 357-366; Marcio Batista Caparroz, "Ambiente, Urbanização e Agroindústria: a Especificidade de Lucas do Rio Verde - MT," *XVII Encontro Nacional de Estudos Populacionais* (Caxambu - MG - Brazil, 2010): 20; José Forero, "In One Brazilian Farm Town, Reviving the Forest," *NPR*, 15 December 2009; Pat Joseph, "Soy in the Amazon," *Virginia Quarterly Review* (2009): 107-129; Angela Pimenta, *Crescimento Chinês e Ambientalismo Nórdico, Exame*, 26 March 2008.
- 11 C. S. Simmons, R. T. Walker, E. Y. Arima, S. P. Aldrich, M. M. Caldas, *The Amazon Land War in the South of Pará*, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 97(2007) 567-592; M. Schmink, C. H. Wood, *Contested Frontiers in Amazonia*, New York, 1992.
- 12 Browder and Godfrey, *Rainforest Cities: Urbanization, Development, and Globalization of the Brazilian Amazon*; Ana Luiza Ozorio de Almeida and João S. Campari, *Sustainable Settlement in the Brazilian Amazon* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995).
- 13 Cleary, "After the Frontier: Problems with Political Economy in the Modern Brazilian Amazon"; Marianne Schmink and Charles H. Wood, "The 'Political Ecology' of Amazonia," in Peter D. Little and Michael M. Horowitz, eds., *Lands at Risk in the Third World: Local-Level Perspectives* (Boulder: Westview, 1987), 38-57.
- 14 Ana Paula Dutra Aguiar, Gilberto Câmara, and Maria Isabel Sobral Escada, "Spatial Statistical Analysis of Land-Use Determinants in the Brazilian Amazonia: Exploring Intra-Regional Heterogeneity," *Ecological Modelling* 209 (2007): 169-188; Brian J. Godfrey and Jeffery O. Browder, "Disarticulated Urbanization in the Brazilian Amazon," *Geographical Review* 86 (1996): 441-445.
- 15 Ozorio de Almeida, *The Colonization of the Amazon*; Lee J. Alston, Gary D. Libecap, and Brian Mueller, "Titles, Conflict, and Land Use: the Development of Property Rights and Land Reform on the Brazilian Amazon Frontier," (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1999).
- 16 Wendy Jepson, "Private Agricultural Colonization on a Brazilian Frontier, 1970-1980," *Journal of Historical Geography* 32 (2006): 839-863.
- 17 Phillip M. Fearnside, "Brazil's Amazon Settlement Schemes: Conflicting Objectives and Human Carrying Capacity," *Habitat International* 8 (1984): 45-61; Ozorio de Almeida, *The Colonization of the Amazon*.
- 18 Lee J. Alston, Gary D. Libecap, Brian D. Mueller, "Land Reform Policies, the Sources of Violent Conflict, and Implications for Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon," *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management* 39 (2000): 162-188.
- 19 Pablo Pacheco, "Agrarian Reform in the Brazilian Amazon: Its Implications for Land Distribution and Deforestation," *World Development* 37, no. 8 (2009): 1337-1347.
- 20 Charles H. Wood and John Wilson, "The Magnitude of Migration to the Brazilian Frontier," in Marianne Schmink and Charles H. Wood, eds., *Frontier Expansion in Amazonia*, (Gainsville, U of Florida P, 1981): 142-152.
- 21 Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agraria [INCRA], *Assentamentos de trabalhadores(as) Rurais*, Brasília (2013).
- 22 Jepson, "Private Agricultural Colonization on a Brazilian Frontier, 1970-1980: Ozorio de Almeida, *The Colonization of the Amazon*.
- 23 Jepson, "Private Agricultural Colonization on a Brazilian Frontier, 1970-1980."
- 24 Gilberto Torres Alves Jr., "O Planejamento Governamental e seus Reflexos na Estrutura Fundiária de Mato Grosso," *Caminhos de Geografia* 4 (2003): 17-30.

- 25 Vitale Joanoni Neto, *Fronteiras da Crença: Ocupação do Norte de Mato Grosso após 1970*, (Cuiabá, MT: UFMT, 2007).
- 26 Ozorio de Almeida, *The Colonization of the Amazon*; Jepson, "Private Agricultural Colonization on a Brazilian Frontier, 1970-1980"; Wendy Jepson, "Producing a Modern Agricultural Frontier: Firms and Cooperatives in Eastern Mato Grosso, Brazil," *Economic Geography* 82 (2006): 289-316.
- 27 Jepson, "Private Agricultural Colonization on a Brazilian Frontier, 1970-1980."
- 28 Jepson, "Private Agricultural Colonization on a Brazilian Frontier, 1970-1980."
- 29 Ozorio de Almeida, *The Colonization of the Amazon*.
- 30 M. Arcemy, *Geografia de Mato Grosso*, (Rondonópolis, MT: UFMT, 2007); Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], *Cities*, (n.d.).
- 31 Joanoni Neto, *Fronteiras da Crença: Ocupação do Norte de Mato Grosso após 1970*.
- 32 Jepson, "Private Agricultural Colonization on a Brazilian Frontier, 1970-1980."
- 33 Ozorio de Almeida, *The Colonization of the Amazon*.
- 34 Anton Huber, *Tempestade no Cerrado*, (Cuiabá, MT: Carlini & Caniato, 2010); Telmo Marcon, *Acampamento Natalino: História da Luta pela Reforma Agrária*, (Passo Fundo, RS: UPF, 1997).
- 35 Ozorio de Almeida, *The Colonization of the Amazon*.
- 36 Fearnside, "Brazil's Amazon Settlement Schemes: Conflicting Objectives and Human Carrying Capacity."
- 37 Ozorio de Almeida, *The Colonization of the Amazon*.
- 38 Jepson, "Private Agricultural Colonization on a Brazilian Frontier, 1970-1980."
- 39 Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], *Population Count*, 1996.
- 40 Alston, Libecap, Meuller, "Titles, Conflict, and Land use: The Development of Property Rights and Land Reform on the Brazilian Amazon Frontier."
- 41 Arcemy, *Geografia de Mato Grosso*.
- 42 Alston, Libecap, and Meuller, "Land Reform Policies, the Sources of Violent Conflict, and Implications for Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon"; Pacheco, "Agrarian Reform in the Brazilian Amazon: Its Implications for Land Distribution and Deforestation."
- 43 A typical retelling of the settlement history in Lucas was found in a 1988 issue of the local newspaper (translation and italics mine): "Everything began with the establishment, in 1982, of the Special Settlement Project of Lucas do Rio Verde, which was meant to settle 282 [sic] landless families from Ronda Alta, RS. Really, the initial settlement began well before this, in 1979, when 26 posseiro families, *adventuring with luck and life*, occupied the region. It was after the arrival of the *parceiros*, though, that development came more quickly. *Not because of them*, but because after them other farmers and merchants began to come...", *Na História de um Povo a Marca do Trabalho, Folha Verde*, 30 November 1988.
- 44 Interviews with early settlers, September - November, 2011. José Dário Munhak and L. Dziúba Junior, "Lucas do Rio Verde: Um Resgate Sócio-Histórico-Econômico," *Ensino Fundamental* (Lucas do Rio Verde, 2001).
- 45 For examples, see Angus L. Wright and Wendy Wolford, *To Inherit the Earth: The Landless Movement and the Struggle for a New Brazil* (Oakland: Food First Books, 2003); Jepson, "Producing a Modern Agricultural Frontier: Firms and Cooperatives in Eastern Mato Grosso, Brazil"; Cynthia S. Simmons, Stephen G. Perz, Marcos A. Pedlowski, and Luiz Guilherme Teixeira Silva, "The Changing Dynamics of Land Conflict in the Brazilian Amazon: The Rural-Urban Complex and its Environmental Implications," *Urban Ecosystems* (2002): 99-121.
- 46 Author interview with posseiro TU, 2011
- 47 Federal Law 4504, November 30, 1964/Land Statute.

- 48 Interviews with early settlers, September – November, 2011. Fernanda Celina Nicoli da Silva, “A História do Cotidiano de Lucas do Rio Verde do Início de sua Colonização à sua Emancipação,” *História* (2011): 60.
- 49 da Silva, “A História do Cotidiano de Lucas do Rio Verde do Início de sua Colonização à sua Emancipação”; Munhak and Dziúba Junior, “Lucas do Rio Verde: Um Resgate Sócio-Histórico-Econômico.”
- 50 da Silva, A História do Cotidiano de Lucas do Rio Verde do Início de sua Colonização à sua Emancipação.
- 51 Zart, *Desencanto na Nova Terra. Assentamento no Município de Lucas do Rio Verde-MT na Década de 80*: 205
- 52 Prefeitura Municipal de Lucas do Rio Verde, Plano Diretor do Município de Lucas do Rio Verde - MT: Reavaliação e Atualização, 2007, 301.
- 53 Munhak, Dziúba Junior, “Lucas do Rio Verde: Um Resgate Sócio-Histórico-Econômico.”
- 54 Marcon, *Acampamento Natalino: História da Luta pela Reforma Agrária*.
- 55 Joaoni Neto, *Fronteiras da Crença: Ocupação do Norte de Mato Grosso após 1970*.
- 56 José Vicente Taveres dos Santos, “Programa de Colonização Terranova,” in João Carlos Barrozo, ed., *Mato Grosso do Sonho à Utopia da Terra*, (Cuiabá, MT: UFMT, 2008), 97-140.
- 57 dos Santos, Programa de Colonização Terranova; Wright and Wolford, *To Inherit the Earth: The Landless Movement and the Struggle for a New Brazil*.
- 58 Wright and Wolford, *To Inherit the Earth: The Landless Movement and the Struggle for a New Brazil*.
- 59 Marcon, *Acampamento Natalino: História da Luta pela Reforma Agrária*.
- 60 Marcon, *Acampamento Natalino: História da Luta pela Reforma Agrária*.
- 61 Zart, *Desencanto na Nova Terra. Assentamento no Município de Lucas do Rio Verde-MT na Década de 80*.
- 62 S. P. Castro, J. C. Barrozo, M. Covezzi, O. Preti, *A Colonização Oficial em Mato Grosso : “A Nata e a Borra da Sociedade”*, Cuiabá, Mato Grosso, Brazil, 1994.; “Lucas do Rio Verde: um pouco de história,” *Journal Folha Verde*, 4 July 1988.
- 63 Castro, Barrozo, Covezzi, and Preti, *A Colonização Oficial em Mato Grosso: “A Nata e a Borra da Sociedade.”*
- 64 Prior to arriving at the camp, 48.92 percent of them had either been renting lands, sharecropping, or working on family lands, 15.53 percent had been working as hired hands on farms, 14.04 percent had been caretakers for others’ lands (possibly farming but possibly not), and 10.44 percent had been engaged in some other sort of, possibly non-agricultural work, with the remaining 11.07 percent coming from other backgrounds. Marcon, *Acampamento Natalino: História da Luta pela Reforma Agrária*.
- 65 News stories at the time alleged that the resources INCRA provided to the *parceiros* in terms of transport from RS to Lucas and the preparation of the land were generous and that they included a stipend of Cr\$8,000 (approximately US\$127) per month. Lucas do Rio Verde, Três Anos de Emancipação, *Folha Verde*, 2 August 1991. According to my conversations with a local historian in Lucas, these funds would have perhaps been the approximate value of a monthly food basket for the family, which, like the land clearing and soil preparation, was provided to the settlers through third-party organizations and not outright, which further added to the perception among the *parceiros* that they were considered irresponsible second-class citizens by INCRA, personal communication, 2011.
- 66 Zart, *Desencanto na Nova Terra. Assentamento no Município de Lucas do Rio Verde-MT na Década de 80*.

- 
- 67 Zart, *Desencanto na Nova Terra. Assentamento no Município de Lucas do Rio Verde-MT na Década de 80*; Laudemir Luiz Zart, "Lucas do Rio Verde: As Vozes dos Parceleiros no Processo de Construção de um Novo Espaço Social," in João C. Barrozo, ed., *Mato Grosso do Sonho à Utopia da Terra*, (Cuiabá, MT: UFMT, 2008), 261-296.
- 68 Munhak and Dziúba Junior, "Lucas do Rio Verde: Um Resgate Sócio-Histórico-Econômico."
- 69 Zart, *Desencanto na Nova Terra. Assentamento no Município de Lucas do Rio Verde-MT na Década de 80*.
- 70 Huber, *Tempestade no Cerrado*; Joanoni Neto, *Fronteiras da Crença: Ocupação do Norte de Mato Grosso após 1970*.
- 71 Huber, *Tempestade no Cerrado*.
- 72 From the "Agreement on Joint Action" between the Cooperative and INCRA, cited in Huber, *Tempestade no Cerrado*.
- 73 Castro, Barrozo, Covezzi, and Preti, *A Colinização Oficial em Mato Grosso: "A Nata e a Borra da Sociedade."*
- 74 Ata de Fundação da Cidade, 1982.
- 75 Interviews with early settlers, September - November, 2011; Joanoni Neto, *Fronteiras da Crença: Ocupação do Norte de Mato Grosso após 1970*; Cristiano Desconsi, *A Marcha Dos Pequenos Proprietários Rurais: Trajetórias de Migrantes do Sul do Brasil para o Mato Grosso*, (Rio de Janeiro: Editoria E-papers, 2011).
- 76 Huber, *Tempestade no Cerrado*.
- 77 Zart, *Desencanto na Nova Terra. Assentamento no Município de Lucas do Rio Verde-MT na Década de 80*.
- 78 Interviews with early settlers, September - November, 2011.
- 79 "Dificuldades Vividas," *Folha Verde*, 2 August 1991.
- 80 Carr, "Population and Deforestation: Why Rural Migration Matters."
- 81 Ozorio de Almeida, *The Colonization of the Amazon*.