

IRSA - CONGRESSO MUNDIAL DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL (01/10/2025 A 20/01/2026) - IRSA 20 - CAPITALIST FORESTRY, RURAL LABOR, AND LAND INJUSTICES: TOWARDS A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF FORESTS AND TREE PLANTATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY LAND QUESTIONS, AGRARIAN QUESTIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

THE EXPANSION OF THE AGROFORESTRY FRONTIER OF EUCALYPTUS AND THE EXPROPRIATION OF WORKERS FROM BABAÇU PALM GROVES IN THE AMAZON REGION OF MARANHÃO.

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The growth of eucalyptus plantations in the Brazilian Amazon and the concomitant expansion of the Suzano agro-industrial company in the territories of Maranhão promoted substantial changes in the ways in which nature is appropriated, labor is expropriated, and territories are controlled by traditional populations. In the Brazilian context, this process takes unique forms stemming from the expansion of capitalist forestry in the rural world, which redefines the uses and governance of territories, restructures labor relations, and intensifies socio-environmental conflicts. This work takes as its empirical unit the expansion of the agroforestry frontier in the Amazon region of Maranhão, with an emphasis on eucalyptus monoculture along the Estrada do Arroz (Rice Road), located in

the municipality of Imperatriz, a border area with the states of Pará and Tocantins. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze how industrial forestry, has deepened processes of expropriation in peasant territories, directly affecting forms of common land use and the ways of life of traditional peoples and communities, especially the self-identified babaçu coconut breakers. In Imperatriz, the expansion of eucalyptus plantations has been discursively presented as a driver of development and job creation, cloaked in business strategies forged in the rhetoric of environmental sustainability, but in practice, it has exacerbated processes of land concentration, precarious rural work, and confrontation with peasant and traditional territorialities. The aim of this contribution is to problematize the distinction between forests and forest plantations, taking as a reference the dispute between the struggles for the preservation of babaçu palm groves, highlighting how the classification of eucalyptus monocultures as "forests" operates as a business strategy that masks the socio-environmental conflicts associated with their expansion. In this sense, the analysis proposes a reflection on the role of "forest plantations" in contemporary disputes over land rights, land issues, and rural development.

Palavras-chave: forestry; amazônia-maranhão; labor peasant territories; socio-environmental conflicts; rural development.