

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY TIMBER MANAGEMENT: A COMPARATIVE
ANALYSIS OF ACTORS' ROLES AND PERCEPTIONS, POWER DYNAMICS, AND
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON

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In the past three decades, governments have transferred certain forest rights (from among a 'bundle of rights') to communities who depend on local forests for their livelihoods. This rights devolution has been particularly significant in the Brazilian Amazon, whereby over one million hectares of sustainable use protected areas have been established since the 1990s. Here, the state and resident populations are expected to collaboratively manage (co-manage) forest resources, including timber. This dissertation examined timber co-management processes, meaning how multiple actors defined and shared rights, responsibilities, and benefits, under ICMBio Normative Instruction No 16/2011. Specifically, I compared seven community timber co-management projects within three Brazilian Amazonian extractive reserves to investigate: (1) variations in timber co-management that have emerged in these areas, (2) the role of co-management actors, particularly the government and local communities in shaping these variations, (3) power dynamics in decision-making processes among these co-management actors, (4) co-management actors' perceptions of what worked (and did not work) when managing timber collaboratively,

and (5) women's roles and empowerment in these timber co-management systems. Based on mixed research methods to triangulate data collection and examine cases from multiple sources of evidence, I collected data from May 2018 and September 2019. I used qualitative techniques such as both individual and group interviews, and participatory methods to encourage joint analysis and critical reflection among community participants. General findings revealed that greater participation of community members in decision-making and timber management activities resulted in more community benefits, more equitable benefit-sharing and greater integration of both technical and local bodies of knowledge into the co-management system. Moreover, when communities had thoughtful and sustained support of multiple external partners, they were able to overcome power asymmetries. Finally, this research demonstrated that power through, an often temporary means of agency, led to more permanent levels of women's empowerment in timber co-management. This research contributed insights into the universal complex co-management challenges surrounding protected areas that seek both to improve local livelihoods and to conserve nature. Furthermore, it brings guidance for participatory methods that can be adapted and used by researchers, practitioners, and communities among a range of investigation techniques.