

Foreword to Volume 2

When my esteemed Dutch colleague Jan Kleinpenning asked me in the summer of 2021 if I wanted to follow up his volume *The Brazilian Amazonia in change I. Opening up and colonisation in the 1970s*, I was very happy to agree to write about the further developments in the Amazon region until today, which I have studied for five decades. After completing a volume with topics on the economic and social geography of Brazil, I started work on this project at the beginning of 2022.

This has now resulted in the volume *The Brazilian Amazonia in change II. Five decades of exploitation, deforestation and attempts at sustainable development* presented here as Volume 2 in the joint publication Kleinpenning/Kohlhepp *The Brazilian Amazonia in change*. I would like to thank Jan Kleinpenning for his interest and cooperation.

This volume analyses regional development in the Brazilian Amazon region from the beginning of the extensive economic activities of the public and private sectors in the mid-1970s until the renewed assumption of office by President Lula da Silva in 2023.

The following may give a brief insight into the initial impulses and the development process of the author's research on Brazil and Amazonia.

In the 1950s and 1960s, geographical research on Brazil in Germany was strongly concentrated at the University of Heidelberg. The conditions for this were favourable. Gottfried Pfeifer, holder of the Chair of Geography, had benefited greatly from his former professor Leo Waibel's stay in Brazil (1946–1950) as scientific advisor of the Conselho Nacional de Geografia in Rio de Janeiro and his own shorter stay in Brazil in 1950. However, when Pfeifer invited Brazilian colleagues to Heidelberg as visiting professors, the subject of Brazil research became much more vivid and fascinating for the students there.

The author was inspired by Hilgard O'Reilly Sternberg's (Chair of Geography, University of Brazil/UFRJ, Rio de Janeiro) stay in Heidelberg in the summer term of 1961 to conduct field research in Brazil in 1962/63 and write his dissertation on the industrial geography of the state of Santa Catarina. This first research project of the author in Brazil (1962–1967) was followed by economic and social geographic research on agricultural colonisation in northern Paraná (1970–1972), which led to the habilitation thesis.

The visiting professorship of Orlando Valverde (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia, IBGE, Rio de Janeiro) at the University of Heidelberg in 1967 had already given the author a first impetus for future research on Amazonia. Plans for a Brazilian-German research project in human geography to be carried out with a small research boat in Amazonia had been developed by the research group led by Orlando Valverde and researchers around Gottfried Pfeifer in Heidelberg. In view of the Brazilian govern-

ment's planned regional development strategies in Amazonia, the timing for the research project seemed favourable.

However, this project could not be realised in the planned form in the early 1970s due to the political restrictions of the Military Government as well as administrative problems at the Brazilian partner organisation. Orlando had tried everything to carry out the joint programme of geographical research in Amazonia and to participate more actively in the discussion on spatial planning and regional development. However, he had underestimated the limitations and complications that existed at the time.

After long negotiations, however, the project topic "Amazonia" was included in the German-Brazilian agreement on scientific and technical cooperation in 1973. Under this umbrella, official permission for research by German scientists in Amazonia was guaranteed and there were further possibilities for spatial access to the Amazon region.

Since 1973, the author had the opportunity to conduct extensive fieldwork in the Amazon region. It initially focused on problems of state regional planning and economic projects, on small-scale agricultural settlement along the Transamazônica and in Rondônia, and on large-scale cattle grazing in south-eastern Pará and Mato Grosso.

In Germany, the author's Amazonian research led to close contact with the working group of Harald Sioli (Max Planck Institute for Limnology, Plön), an expert in tropical ecology highly regarded in Brazil who had lived and researched in Amazonia from 1940 to 1956. In Harald Sioli's succession, Wolfgang J. Junk's working group intensively continued research on tropical ecology in Amazonia.

In the 1980s, conflicts of interest in the Amazonian pioneer zones, migration flows as well as mega-projects, especially the Programa Grande Carajás and the problems of large-scale hydropower plants, were further project topics. In the 1990s, a multidisciplinary research project on the socio-economic structure and dynamics of environmental impacts in the Upper Paraguay River Basin, Mato Grosso, was carried out in close cooperation with the Federal University of Mato Grosso (UFMT) in Cuiabá with numerous colleagues and collaborators as part of the bilateral SHIFT programme.

Participation in the International Advisory Group (IAG) of the International Pilot Programme to conserve the Brazilian tropical rain forests (PPG7) provided in-depth insights into governmental planning and projects that could be greatly expanded through international funding in terms of sustainable development. The collaboration with the IAG group of Brazilian and foreign researchers was an enriching experience that existed many years before and afterwards, especially with Bertha K. Becker (Rio de Janeiro) – including the geography student exchange between Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and the author's Department of Geography at the University of Tübingen.

In the following years, it was possible to work on various environmental policy problems concerning the protection of the tropical rain forests in Amazonia and the regional impacts of large-scale projects on the habitat of the Indigenous population.

The author gratefully remembers the enriching cooperation with numerous Brazilian colleagues who were always ready for discussion and unselfishly helpful. Thanks are also due to the institutions and authorities at federal, state and municipal level, to private companies and enterprises. Many of their staff as well as members of NGOs contributed to the success of the research with information, discussions, documents and maps.

A very important role was played by numerous private individuals from all walks of life in Amazonia who were willing to share their knowledge, contacts, experiences and observations with the author. My thanks go to all of them. Special thanks to Prof. Antônio Vizeu da Costa Lima in Belém, whose organisational help made valuable contacts possible.

This also applies to the dedicated German and Brazilian staff, doctoral candidates and student assistants at the Departments of Geography of the universities where the author has been working. Some of them now teach and research as professors in Germany, Austria, Canada and Brazil and continue research on Brazil and Amazonia there.

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Gerd Kohlhepp

Appreciations of German and Brazilian geographers mentioned in the preface, in publications by Gerd Kohlhepp:

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- 2015. "Pioneiros brasileiros nas pesquisas geográficas de desenvolvimento regional: Orlando Valverde e Hilgard O'Reilly Sternberg." *Revista Brasileira de Desenvolvimento Regional* 3, no. 1: 27–54.
- 2017. "Nas trilhas de Leo Waibel: Pesquisas alemãs de Geografia Humana do Brasil – de Heidelberg à Tübingen (1950–2005)." *Revista Brasileira de Geografia* 62, no. 2: 7–24.
- 2019. "A contribuição de Leo Waibel para o conhecimento da colonização agrária no Brasil do séc. XX." *Fronteiras. Journal of Social, Technological and Environmental Science* 8, no. 3: 69–87.

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