

**Campbell, Jeremy M.:** *Conjuring Property. Speculation and Environmental Futures in the Brazilian Amazon.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015. 231 pp. ISBN 978-0-295-99529-8. Price: \$ 30.00

“Conjuring Property” is an in-depth analysis that investigates how colonizers in the Amazon forest region of Brazil, in the virtual absence of the state, try to secure their land rights through the manipulation and exploitation of falsified documents, histories, and people, in hopes that the state will one day legitimize these forgeries. Situated in the southwestern part of Pará state, in and around the municipality of Castelo de Sonhos located along the (in)famous BR-163 highway, which links Cuiabá to Santarém, this fascinating inquiry carries us through diverse environments: in the backroom of privately-run land offices, at the outdoor dining tables of small colonists and land workers, on the changing trails and fences delineating land boundaries between neighboring properties, and finally to community-level events captured by elite landowners. Put together, these pieces show us how development policies intended to colonize the Amazon are experienced by the ones who implement them, be they small- (*pequenos*) or large-scale (*grandes*) loggers, cattle-ranchers, or agriculturalists. This is one of far too few works in the literature on the Brazilian Amazon today explicitly focused on the fate and visions of colonizers, irrespectively of their size and importance, with the degree of attention necessary to describe such complex landscapes.

Campbell starts with the following assessment: a half-century after government-induced colonization started, the land tenure situation in most of the Amazon region is still highly unstable and subject to much speculation. The massive colonization of “a land without people for people without land” (as the motto at the time stated, which grossly overlooked the presence of indigenous people and other dwellers) was not done in an orderly manner and the struggle for land resulted in violent if not bloody outcomes in some areas. Because the state failed to provide authentic land titles, colonists and speculators in these areas have engaged in forging documentation (the so-called *grilagem*) to secure their landholdings. However, contrary to conventional wisdom attributing these practices only to “dominant” groups such as *grandes*, Campbell finds that today even *pequenos* rely on the same techniques to defend their land claims against appropriation by others (neighbors, local *grandes*, or land speculators). The book’s main argument is that far from occurring in a “stateless” region, these actions and speculative moves to secure land ownership belie everyone’s anticipation of what future tenure regularization will look like. The state is absent and present at the same time: everyone in this remote region dreams of finally being incorporated into “modern Brazil,” and thus acts and behaves as if the modern state is already there. However, land regularization is still a fiction as of today. By identifying with and trying to frame land claims according to changing state development narratives, colonizers hope to increase the likelihood that the state recognizes them. It is a grey area where illegal land claims are transformed into legal ones.

In the opening chapter, Campbell summarizes four main changes in development narratives and tenure policy as it relates to the colonization of the Brazilian Amazon. Encouraged by the military regime in the 1970s and 1980s, the colonization of the Amazon region has seen waves of colonizers coming to the region for a variety of purposes: rubber exploitation, gold mining, wood-collection, cattle-ranching, and lately, soybean farming. State policies fostered colonization through four main modalities, called “development archive” (31) by the author, each one attempting to address the failures of the previous model. *Corporate-led colonization* remedied the failure of *directed colonization* with government-sponsored agrarian reform settlements. This was in turn replaced by *spontaneous colonization*, in other words the deliberate invasion of public lands (*terras devolutas*) by small and large colonizers alike, where a claim of ownership would be recognized as long as the land was used productively. Finally, due to the increasing deforestation rates experienced by the Amazon forest in the late 1990s early 2000s (with a peak rate of 27,000 square kilometers deforested in 2004 alone), the state imagined a new “sustainable development” phase that aimed at reconciling agrarian colonization with the environment. Campbell’s major finding is that, far from contradicting past practices, colonizers adapt to each new development phase by framing their land claims as close as possible to each state narrative in order to maximize their chances of future regularization.

In the second chapter, Campbell delves into the variety of techniques used to appropriate public lands, such as *grilagem*, and shows how *grandes* sometimes use *pequenos* as nominees (*laranjas*) by giving them land documents but trapping them in mortgage deals that they will only be able to pay back by relinquishing their land to the *grandes*. Large landowners thus accumulate more land and make their land documents more credible, which appear more realistic because the land was acquired through third parties rather than by occupying public lands.

Chapter 3 describes the expectations of both small and large landowners with respect to land regularization driving speculative accumulation of land, as underlined by Campbell’s quote: “In Castelo, everyone is waiting” (101). People in and out of Castelo pursue speculative accumulation there. Forging documents appears both as legitimate (colonizers have paid for their land, after all, as one says) and as a way to “make” history by showing as many proofs as possible to back up their land claims. As Campbell puts it: “colonists accumulate methods for making property, strategies for doing so change hands, and seeming adversaries collude with one another” (114f.). Despite the existing exploitation and inequality between large and small landowners, even *pequenos* engage in the same strategies, which only members of the bourgeoisie would be supposed to according to classic Marxist interpretation.

Campbell then proceeds in the next chapter to illustrate how these mechanisms operate within the context of sustainable development policies in Brazil. Operating by “prolepsis,” colonizers identify what would be expected from them under environmental conservation policies, and

retroactively define themselves as the very embodiment of what these policies call upon. They contend that they were the first to inhabit these lands, that they know the forest better than anyone else, and thus that they should be granted official rights to these lands as they are best suited to protect them, despite a historical record showing otherwise. Colonizers divert the socio-environmental approach to community organizing of these development policies to serve their land titling goals, and both small and large landowners agree to unite for this purpose. The author argues in the fifth chapter that the state's strategy to regularize land holdings nation-wide, following a socio-ecological zoning policy implicitly based on the idea that private landowners are good environmental stewards, represent just another "technocratic fix" (184) making the regularization of past frauds possible.

The strength of this research is to be found in the richness of information provided by around 40 months of ethnographic fieldwork stretching over almost a decade, which provides a unique window into the fast developments and critical junctures of the Brazilian Amazon's development. Sometimes visiting the same colonists years apart, Campbell is able to identify both short- and long-term land strategies, clearing up possible mistaken interpretations of "one-time" studies. Thus, he shows unique evidence of colonizers simultaneously claiming land under sustainable development schemes while not giving up on other land claims based on past land regularization schemes. Colonizers will opportunistically frame their land claims along whatever development concepts have chances to get them official land rights. The book sheds light on how property is not a fixed category and comprises part of a political economy in formation: it is a "circulating cultural category" that brings "material transformation of landscapes" (5).

Although land tenure issues are still pervasive in most of Amazonia (even in older and consolidated frontiers) and such land strategies might be present in most regions to some degree, the book needs to be read carefully while remembering the story might unfold a bit differently in other areas of the Brazilian Amazon where land-uses, colonizer identity, and market presence are different. It remains to be seen how much of today's Brazilian Amazon fits the book description, and to what extent the study is unique to the specific human and ecological conditions of Castelo. Absent these minor caveats, Campbell's "Conjuring Property" is an authentic and beautifully written book that courageously covers an under-represented subject in academic studies, and thus forcefully challenges classic intellectual interpretations of the region. The book is extremely useful to academics and specifically to local and national policymakers as they try to make sense of the broader impacts of their actions on the way local dwellers interpret and live through regional development policies.

Martin Delaroché

**Cánepa Koch, Gisela, and Ingrid Kummels** (eds.): *Photography in Latin America. Images and Identities across Time and Space*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2016.

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Der zu besprechende Sammelband ist hervorgegangen aus einer Forschungs Kooperation von Gisela Cánepa Koch, Professorin für Visuelle Anthropologie an der Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP) in Lima, die 2014/2015 als Stipendiatin der Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung in Deutschland forschte, und ihrer Kollegin Ingrid Kummels, Professorin für Altamerikanistik/Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie am Lateinamerika-Institut (LAI) der Freien Universität Berlin. Die meisten der (exklusive der Einleitung) sieben Beiträge stammen von Forscherinnen dieser beiden Institutionen; neben den Herausgeberinnen sind dies Mercedes Figueroa, Ximena Málaga Sabogal und María Eugenia Ulfe von der PUCP sowie Aura Lisette Reyes vom LAI. Weitere Beiträge steuerten Michael Kraus, seit letztem Jahr Kustos der Ethnologischen Sammlung der Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (zuvor an der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn und am Ethnologischen Museum in Berlin) und Mariana da Costa A. Petroni, Postdoc an der Universidade Estadual de Campinas in Brasilien bei. Alle Beiträger\_innen sind Anthropolog\_innen.

Das äußerst treffend gewählte Cover des Buches zielt eine Fotografie, die Sebastian Bolesch 2013 im Rahmen der Ausstellung "Touching Photography" des Humboldt Lab Dahlem/Ethnologisches Museum – SMB aufnahm. (Die Ausstellung wird auch im später ausführlich besprochenen Beitrag von Michael Kraus behandelt.) Die Fotografie auf dem Cover zeigt das Display eines der bei der Ausstellung verwendeten Tablets, das wiederum ein Foto von Guido Boggiani zeigt. Das Bild der tätowierten "India Caduveo (Mbayá)" vom Rio Nabiléque hatte der aus Omega im Piemont stammende Maler, Fotograf, Abenteuerer und (Laien-)Ethnologe Boggiani gemeinsam mit vielen weiteren Fotos zwischen 1896 und 1901 im Gran Chaco aufgenommen. In dieser damals von Weißen und Mestizen kaum und noch immer dünn besiedelten *frontier*-Region im Tiefland des nördlichen Argentinien, westlichen Paraguay, südöstlichen Bolivien und Teilen des brasilianischen Mato Grosso bekämpften, so die allgemeine Vorstellung, wilde, barbarische Indigene die Zivilisation und Siedler. Zwei Jahre nach Boggianis Tod – er wurde 1902 vermutlich von Indigenen im Chaco getötet – publizierte der aus Preußen stammende Leiter der Anthropologischen Sektion des Museo de La Plata in Buenos Aires, Robert Lehmann-Nitsche, der es wie kaum ein anderer verstand, "wissenschaftliche" Bilder auch außerhalb der Wissenschaft zu vermarkten, die Kollektion Boggiani mit 114 Bildpostkarten, die der bonaerensische Verleger Roberto Rosauer im Deutschen Reich drucken ließ. Bis auf ein Porträt von Boggiani selbst handelte es sich um nach Ethnien sortierte, nummerierte und mit kurzen Bildunterschriften versehene Reproduktionen von Fotografien Boggianis von Indigenen, Männern, Frauen und Kindern, vor allem aus dem Chaco. Darunter befand sich auch das auf dem Cover des Buches abgebildete Motiv der "India Caduveo (Mbayá), Rio Nabiléque". Der anthropologisch-ethnografische Atlas, den Boggiani noch selbst geplant habe, wie Lehmann-Nitsche in seiner Ankündigung in der