

# Alcoa in Juruti, Brazil: a case of environmental injustice and colonialism?

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines the visions of development of Alcoa, an American bauxite mining company, and the traditional *ribeirinho* communities in the area of Juruti Velho, Brazil. These two objectives are pursued in order to determine if Alcoa's actions in the area constitute environmental injustice and colonialism. An explication of environmental injustice and colonialism is undertaken, and is followed later by a discussion of social invisibility and how circumstances are created that allow for the exploitation of traditional communities. The work and demands of ACORJUVE, a community association that is in opposition to Alcoa, are also discussed. A review of the interviews conducted with community members, as well as a summary of an interview conducted with an Alcoa representative in Juruti, is provided. Finally, a discussion of development ideologies, colonialism, and environmental injustice is undertaken to determine if Alcoa's actions – based on these responses – are unwanted by the communities, and environmentally destructive and unjust. The author concludes that Alcoa's presence in Juruti is forcing a capitalist mode of development on the native inhabitants of the area, and that their actions serve as a modern form of colonialism; additionally, the adverse environmental effects of the mining activities constitute an instance of environmental injustice.

## **Resumo**

Este artigo examina as visões do desenvolvimento da Alcoa, uma empresa americana de bauxita, e as visões do desenvolvimento das comunidades ribeirinhas na área de Juruti, Brasil. O objetivo deste artigo é para saber se as ações da Alcoa na área são exemplos de injustiça ambiental e, também, do colonialismo. Ele busca analisar os elementos que contribuem para a injustiça ambiental e o colonialismo, e acompanhar por uma discussão das coisas que fazem a exploração das comunidades tradicionais possível. As exigências da ACORJUVE, uma associação comunitária que é contra a Alcoa, são discutidas também. Este artigo vai discutir, também, sobre duas coisas importantes: uma crítica das entrevistas que aconteceram com os povos das comunidades, e um sumário de uma entrevista com um empregado da Alcoa em Juruti. Finalmente, uma discussão sobre as ideologias de desenvolvimento, o colonialismo, e a injustiça ambiental nessa ordem para determinar se as ações da Alcoa são não aceitas pelas comunidades locais e são ruins para o meio ambiente e os povos. O escritor conclui que Alcoa está forçando uma visão capitalista de desenvolvimento nos povos da região, e que as ações dela é uma forma de colonialismo moderno; além disso, os efeitos ambientais das atividades da mina são exemplos de injustiça ambiental.

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## Introduction

“Alcoa does what they want, not what we want.” These are the words spoken by Emerson<sup>1</sup>, a community member in the Juruti Velho area of Western Pará State, Brazil. This region, containing rich deposits of bauxite, has become the site for construction of a mine, a port and a railroad by Alcoa (a United States based mining company). It is but one of many examples of the development of Amazônia; and it brings to question several things, including the queries of what is development, and who does it benefit? According to Mauricio Macedo, of Alcoa’s Juruti operation, “*Estamos fazendo um projeto de desenvolvimento e não exclusivamente de mineração*” (“We are doing a development project and not exclusively a mineral project”) (Alcoa 2008a), however, many people (including Emerson) disagree with this statement. The aforementioned quotes demonstrate that there are competing understandings of development; which begs the question – what is development exactly? Is it improving the life of the people who call the area home – on their terms? Or is it strictly only a pursuit of economic gain and the imposition of a free market economy, no matter the social and environmental costs? Emilio Moran writes in *Through Amazonian Eyes*, how the deforestation of Amazonia has not resulted in improving the quality of life for the people living in Amazonia. He writes of the problems facing Amazonia, and the human populations who live there, stating: “These problems cannot be resolved without a sharpened moral conscience that explicitly addresses issues of social justice and the need to give priority to people rather than to aggregate measures of ‘development’ such as gross national product and per capita income” (Moran 1993: 160). I agree with his statement; and over the course of two weeks in the Spring of 2008, I researched the following related question: Is Alcoa’s presence in Juruti an act of environmental injustice and colonialism? In order to answer this query, I pursued two objectives: 1) What is the model of development followed by Alcoa? and 2) What are the models of development followed by the surrounding communities?<sup>2</sup> As a result of my inquiries, I have come to the following conclusion: Alcoa’s presence in Juruti is forcing a capitalist mode of development on the native inhabitants of the area, and their actions serve as a modern form of colonialism; additionally, the adverse environmental effects of the mining activities constitute an instance of environmental injustice.

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<sup>1</sup> All names in this paper have been changed so as to preserve anonymity

<sup>2</sup> Defined as the communities of Juruti Velho (or Vila Muirapinima), Prudente, PomPom, Pau D’Arco, Galilea, Jauri, Surval, Maravilha, Santa Madalena and Juruti Novo (or Juruti)

## Background – the region

Located in Pará State, on the edge of the border with Amazonas State, the Municipality of Juruti region includes three distinct areas: the urban center of Juruti Novo, the *ribeirinho* communities in the Lake Juruti Velho area, (who are part of a Plano de Utilização do Projeto Agro-Extrativista Juruti Velho, or PAE), and the communities located in the plateau area, (which are part of a Projecto de Assentamento do Incra) (Alcoa 2007a: 29-36 and Comunidades do PAE Juruti Velho 2007).<sup>3</sup>

It is estimated that in this area there exist reserves of bauxite amounting to around 700 million tons. In 1999 Alcoa purchased Reynolds Metals Company (RMC), a company that had already carried out research for exploitation of the mineral in the area. When Alcoa purchased RMC, they also obtained the mineral rights to the bauxite (Alcoa 2008b). The project consists of three components: a mine, a 50km long railroad and a port. In the summer of 2005, the Executive Department of Science, Technology and Environment of the State of Pará (SECTAM) granted the first of two licenses needed to commence activity – the Prior License (LP) and the Installation License (LI). The final license required is the Operating License (LO), which is still pending (Alcoa 2008b).

The Juruti Velho area is comprised of 48 *ribeirinho* communities, with a population of approximately 10,000 people settled in 1818 by descendants of an indigenous group. For over a century they have fished from the lake there, hunted in the forests, and gathered Brazil nuts from the trees. Their economy – as is that of all traditional *ribeirinho* (literally, people who dwell near the forest) – is based on subsistence fishing and agro-forestry (Nugent 1993: 201). As noted above, this area is part of the PAE Juruti Velho, which was established in 2005 and consists of 551 hectares of land. The people will soon be receiving title to the PAE (which has 18 sections within in). However, it is important to note that in Brazil, land rights are complicated; and in this region, many people lack title to their land. In the Juruti Velho area, for example, while there are 48 communities that are a part of the PAE, there are others that are not, and who are waiting for land title from INCRA; until this happens, they will not be able to receive any compensation from Alcoa.

As a result of the presence of Alcoa, in 2004, community members founded ACORJUVE (Associação das Comunidades da Região de Juruti Velho), now comprised of over 2000 families.<sup>4</sup> ACORJUVE is fighting for four main points: 1) 1.5% of the profits of

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<sup>3</sup> INCRA stands for Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária and is the Agrarian Reform agency of the Brazilian government.

<sup>4</sup> Number according to ACORJUVE leadership

the mine; 2) reimbursement for the land that will be destroyed; 3) recognition as the traditional inhabitants of the land; 4) a tax for the water that will be taken from their lake. Additionally, Alcoa has tried to push INCRA to give individual instead of collective title to the communities of the PAE; this is something that is not wanted by the communities, as individual title makes them more vulnerable to exploitation. At the time of this writing, ACORJUVE is in the process of working with INCRA to negotiate an agreement with Alcoa.

### **Background – terminology and the issues of environmental injustice, colonialism and development**

Before continuing, I wish to provide an explanation of terminology used within this paper, as well as background information concerning development. To begin with, I will undertake a discussion of environmental injustice, followed by a discussion on environmental colonialism, and conclude with a discussion will follow on the different meanings and visions of development.

In 1991 in Washington, D.C., Delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit created 17 principles of Environmental Justice; in their preamble they state that the purpose of their gathering and provide a definition of the environmental justice movement, which is “...to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities, do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to insure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and, to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression...” (First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit 1991). As the previous quote demonstrates, environmental justice is, at its core, about including people who have historically been marginalized from discussions relating to the environment, and who have faced degradation of or displacement from their environments, as a result of their race and/or ethnicity (DiChiro 1998: 131).

This raises the point that it is impossible to undergo a discussion or definition of environmental injustice without also undergoing a discussion of environmental racism. At the Third World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in South Africa in 2001, an NGO Forum Declaration was created that

included language on environmental injustice and racism. Within this document, under Article 117, a definition of environmental racism is provided: “ Environmental racism is a human rights violation and *is a form of discrimination caused by government and private sector policy, practice, action or inaction which intentionally or unintentionally, disproportionately targets and harms the environment, health, biodiversity, local economy, quality of life and security of communities, workers, groups, and individuals based on race, class, color, gender, caste, ethnicity and/or national origin*” (emphasis mine) (WCAR NGO Forum 2001: 19).

Procuring a concise definition of environmental colonialism is difficult; However, Aaron Sachs' assertion that the “colonialist-cycle” is continued by “...industrial countries seeking to exploit the people and natural resources of developing countries...” (Sachs 2003: 111-112) strives to say what I define to be environmental colonialism: multinational corporations – working in the interest of “Northern” countries (i.e. Europe and the United States) – to exploit natural resources from an area (where they have not been asked to come) and bring “development” – another word that requires explication. According to Bruce Rich, the word ‘development’ did not see its nascence until after World War II, but it has been occurring since the seventeenth century; and in the pursuit of greater technology, scientific advances, and more monetary gain, has served as a means of power to control human beings and nature (Rich 1994: 200 and 281).

I argue that the development ideology that predominates in our world today – that of governments, development agencies such as the World Bank, and corporations – is one based on a global free-market economic model. This model pursues economic development, and offers little consideration to other factors –including people displaced by mines or dams, or the environmental destruction that will ensue with the destruction of forests (Rich 1994: 47). On the other hand, there are the people – indigenous and traditional communities throughout the world – who hold very different views of development. Connection to place, relationships to the land and each other, and the preservation of culture does matter; and if development destroys those things, then for them, it is not a positive development (Rich 1994: 47). Therefore, “development” becomes an instrument through which environmental injustice and colonialism may be perpetuated: a mechanism that marginalizes communities through environmental exploitation that serves to degrade the environment, dismiss community objections to it and ultimately produce no commensurate benefit to the community.

## Methods

Due to restraints of time and resources, it did not prove feasible to conduct research in all of the areas that are affected by the mine, railroad and port. As such, the focus of my study took place in the rural communities of Juruti Velho; in addition to the modes of development expressed by individuals within this area, I also conducted research on Alcoa – in person (at their Juruti office) and through print and web resources. Using semi-structured interviews, in the Portuguese language, I interviewed 22 people in eight communities<sup>5</sup>, as outlined in Appendix A. While originally it had been my aim to interview an even amount of women and men – 50% each, in the end, this did not prove possible. In the end, four of my interviewees were women, while 18 were men. This is a reflection of the social structure of communities in the area, which tends to be patriarchal; as such, most women seemed to be reluctant to be interviewed. With more time in the area, I would have worked to build relationship and trust – and also simply have more time to talk to more people– to balance this presently unequal sex ratio of my interviews. All interviewees were over the age of 18.

While every person received the same set of 10 questions, I asked additional different clarifying and follow-up questions of interviewees. Preceding each interview I explained the nature of my work, that I am a student from the United States, and that while the information told will be used within an academic paper, and perhaps see future publication, the identity of all involved will be preserved (see Appendices A and B). However, in order to facilitate writing and reading ease of this paper, at times, when direct quotes from individuals are used, pseudonyms are employed.

The majority of the interviews were individual; however, three of them took place in groups of two or three people; two interviews also involved me and two other students, interviewing one interviewee.<sup>6</sup> During the course of my time in the communities,<sup>7</sup> I attended several community meetings, church services, and informal gatherings; thoughts and reflections are also included from these occurrences. Finally, in the course of researching Alcoa, I spoke to an employee in their Juruti office; interview questions are listed in Appendix B.

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<sup>5</sup> Juruti Velho (or Vila Muirapinima), Prudente, PomPom, Pau D’Arco, Galilea, Jauri, Surval, and Juruti Novo

<sup>6</sup> This is because I conducted my research in the area with two other students, David Mittelman and Ellen Rogers, who had related projects; as a result of the fact that we shared contacts and it was known by the communities that we were working together, at times circumstances made it necessary to jointly interview people.

<sup>7</sup> Which are: Juruti Velho, Prudente, PomPom, Pau D’Arco, Galilea, Jauri, Surval, Maravilha and Santa Madalena

In order to organize my data, I utilized the technique of “Coding Interview Data,” as described by Rubin and Irene Herbert, which, “...is the process of grouping interviewees’ responses into categories that bring together the similar ideas, concepts, or themes you have discovered, or steps or stages in a process” (Rubin and Rubin 1995). For the purposes of my work, I “coded” specific ideas and sentiments that recurred throughout the course of the interviews. If people expressed multiple sentiments over a question, their response is included in multiple categories; for this reason, in some instances, the total tally of responses does not equal 22.

### **Results – perspectives from the communities of Jurti Velho**

In response to the interview questions of, “*O que é que você gostaria de ver na sua comunidade em 50 anos a partir de agora?*” (What is it that you would like to see in your community 50 years in the future?) and “*Quais são as mudanças você gostaria de ver?*” (What are the changes that you would like to see?), all 22 interviewees expressed in some manner that they want to see better schools and health posts in their communities. Additionally, 10 respondents explicitly mentioned that they want their communities to change in such a way that enables their children and grandchildren to stay within their own communities, for educational programs to educate youth about traditional ways of life and agriculture, and that they wish to see that *everyone* benefits from development. The idea of collectivity over individuality was a recurring theme.

When asked the question of, “*Você quer Alcoa aqui?*” (Do you want Alcoa here?), only nine people answered that they are not completely opposed to Alcoa, but that they are either opposed to the way Alcoa is currently acting, or want them to do more to benefit the communities. Out of 11 respondents who do not agree with Alcoa’s presence, seven expressed sentiments that nonetheless, Alcoa is in the area to stay, and as such, they would like them to at least concede certain demands, which includes better schools, health posts, electricity and monetary compensation for losses. Only two people wanted Alcoa there, and expressed no complaints about their presence. When asked, “*Agora, eles ficam aqui. O que é você quer Alcoa faça?*” (Alcoa is here now; what would you like them to do?), 15 individuals stated that they would like Alcoa to help construct better schools and hospitals; 11 people also said that they want Alcoa to meet ACORJUVE’s demands (which are outlined previously). Finally, three respondents affirmed that they do not wish for Alcoa to do anything, but simply to leave.

One person exclaimed to the question, “*Por que foi que a Alcoa chegou em Juruti e quais são os objetivos da Alcoa aqui?*” (Why do you think Alcoa came to Juruti and what are their objectives here?), “To explore, extract [bauxite], get rich.” This echoes the sentiment of almost all of the interviewees – 20 of the 22 respondents believe that Alcoa came to the area with the sole objective to extract bauxite and make money (this sentiment is shared alike by those who wish Alcoa to leave and those who are accepting of their presence); only two people stated that they did not know why Alcoa came to Juruti.

In response to the question, “*Qual é a importância (ou significa) da palavra ‘desenvolvimento’ para você?*” (What is the meaning of the word development to you?), 12 people declared that it meant collective gain for all members in the community; 16 also believe that it means better schools, hospitals and/or other infrastructural advances (including electricity and access to internet); three people mentioned better jobs, and three said that for them, development is about their children being able to stay in their communities and continue their way of life. When asked, “*Qual é a opinião da Alcoa sobre desenvolvimento?*” (What is Alcoa’s opinion on development?), 16 people replied that Alcoa’s idea of development is solely for bauxite; three people thought that they also wanted to help communities; one person said they did not know how to respond to this question. Eleven people stated that they believe Alcoa’s vision of development to be in opposition to their own views. As one woman, Renata, proclaimed, “For Alcoa? Development ? [it is for] Money.” For her, development means, “to be good to people – don’t have to be very rich, but work for everyone, preserve nature and harmony between man and nature. Use but not destroy.”

Emerson, the man whose quote opened this paper, when I asked him what he thought is Alcoa’s vision of development, he said that the only thing that Alcoa is concerned with is being able to extract bauxite, “...because capitalism and Alcoa want money – nothing else. They have a different vision of development – one of money.” To Emerson, development means that everyone – every family – in the region benefits, and is able to eat and send their children to school. This sentiment is similarly echoed by Graciana, who also lives in a small community near Juruti Velho: “Alcoa wants money and bauxite...they did not ask people what they wanted.” She would also like to see a new school in her village, as well as to see her grandchildren stay and continue to grow manioc and harvest açai and Brazil nuts from the forest.

The question, “*Quais são os impactos das atividades da Alcoa nas comunidades na área? E sua vida?*” (What are Alcoa’s impacts on the communities in the area? And on your life?) elicited 18 people to state that there would be negative impacts to the water, the forest,

the air and traditional ways of land and water use (even among people who approved of Alcoa's presence noted negative environmental effects). Five people believe that depending on the actions taken by Alcoa (i.e. if Alcoa works with communities for a fair compensation), some positive effects – in the form of improved living conditions, and better access to schools and hospitals – are possible.

Many people expressed significant concern about the impact of Alcoa's activities on the water, and a few people noted their concern that the rinsing of bauxite is going to pour sediments into the lake that will change the system from black water to white water, thus killing aquatic life. As one man, Marcio, who holds this view explained, Alcoa is not from this region, and does not understand that it rains here a lot – and that erosion will happen; he mentioned that Alcoa has not looked at what the impacts of this will be. Another concern that people expressed is that the water level will be lowered; Alcoa will be pumping out 5,000 liters/hour of water from the lake; for this reason, one of ACORJUVE's demands is that Alcoa pay a tax on water usage.

In response to the question, “*Como você usa seu meio ambiente, a natureza, a mata?*” (How do you use your environment, nature, the forest?) 12 people expressed some variation of stating that they always treat nature with respect; 14 also noted the importance of the environment and forest in every day life; 12 people expressed sentiments that they treat nature differently than Alcoa, who lacks respect for it. As one person explained, they [the people] treat nature without greed and respect nature – they do not “attack” nature as Alcoa has. My final question, related to use of the environment – “*Quais são os direitos que você tem para usar seu meio ambiente? Qual leis existem para proteger seus direitos?*” (What rights do you have for using your environment? What laws exist to protect these rights?) – proved difficult to procure answers. In all, eight people either said that they did not understand the question; and in a few cases – based on how the interview had gone – I omitted this question, and as such I did not receive an answer. However, nine people stated that they do not have rights, and that is what ACORJUVE is fighting for; two people stated that there are laws in place of INCRA and IBAMA that provide people with rights to use land. Finally, three people replied that they rights to the land as a mere consequence of the reality that they use it and rely on the land for everyday life.

In addition to the responses listed above, several other recurring themes arose. For example, many people said that they feel Alcoa has treated them with disrespect (14 people mentioned a lack of respect in some respect by Alcoa). As one man, who I will refer to as Lindomar, stated:

In my opinion, I'd like them to leave. Because my whole family and I have lived here for 94 years and many things – fish, forests – are going to be directly affected...there is not a compensation [that can be given] for those things. Alcoa needs to respect the customs, lives and culture of the people – they say they do this. But people need the fish and the forest and they will take that – that is the life and customs of people. We do not have more.

He continued to say that he would like Alcoa to respond to that question of why they are not respecting people; this is not a development project for the people, from what he can see. Additionally, according to several community members, Alcoa took pictures of children bathing in the river without permission, and used them in publications promoting their work; they took other photographs of people as well. For example, Alcoa used the picture and name of one man, Odailson, in one of their publications promoting a project in his community; he stated that he was not happy about this and completely surprised to see his photo in the publication – he had not given his consent for this. Additionally – as the opening of this paper alludes to – people expressed sentiments that Alcoa acts only in their own interest, does not listen to people in the communities, and has a different vision of development than they (16 people had sentiments of this). As one man said, “Development here does not help people here at all. [Alcoa is] Not worried with development for people here at all. They are worried about collecting minerals and then leaving.” People said that Alcoa came into their communities, uninvited and unwelcome, and did not ask people what they wanted, but simply initiated projects they wanted. Other people said that Alcoa did participate in some dialogue with the community, but that little or nothing have been realized from those discussions. In one community, people had been promised a new school (among other things), and have yet to see that manifest, and said that Alcoa does not frequent their community anymore, and that when they did, they did not show respect to the people.

## **Results – perspectives from Alcoa**

After spending time in the communities of Juruti Velho, I had the opportunity to interview an Alcoa employee at the Juruti office; this proved to augment and confirm sentiments and programs that are spoken about in Alcoa's publications. What follows is a summary of the pertinent parts of the interview.<sup>8</sup> The individual with whom I spoke shall be referred to as João.

- 1) *Why did Alcoa choose Juruti for a mine and what are your objectives here?*

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<sup>8</sup> Appendix B continues a list of all of the interview questions; as this interview was conducted jointly between me and another student, I have only included the parts of that interview which are directly relevant to my study.

João stated that Alcoa chose the area because it is where the bauxite exists; their objectives are to mine bauxite because they have an industry to produce aluminum, which requires bauxite. He said that the Juruti area is rich in high quality bauxite. As such, their objectives are to extract this mineral and ship it to São Luis.<sup>9</sup> But, he also stated that they cannot do this without contributing to local development, because Juruti cannot just be a mining city but has to have other things too – like agriculture and tourism. He also said, “We are inspired by sustainability,” and that Alcoa is trying to find ways that are more coherent with the principles of sustainability.

2) *What are the environmental and social impacts of your activities here?*

According to João, there are many impacts, which are both positive and negative. He outlined the negative as follows: “We are controlled by state in terms of license for mining; so we have to mitigate our activities through restoration and regenerative projects. For example, two main resources are water (all types of systems) and forests (wood and agro-extractive). There are also social impacts that reduce that are for production [of agro-industry, fishing] and individual and collective presence of people. Where we are using the land, communities cannot use the land. So we are developing environmental control programs – including water, noise and air control.” For the positive effects, he said that Alcoa is trying to improve civil society, which means more employment in the city, as well as improving the capacity of the city to develop. Additionally, he noted that a positive environmental impact is improving conservation policies such as ecological corridors, lake monitors and conservation units. He discussed how, “everyday we have to deal with impacts and focus on how to mitigate once a problem occurs.” Moreover, he noted that presently, because they are in the construction phase of the project, there is more disruption, and that there will be less during the actual extraction phase because things will be more stable.

3) *What is Alcoa’s view on sustainable development and what is Alcoa doing to meet those views?*

“Sustainable development is part of the values of this operation – it is a part of the value of business,” affirmed João. He added, though, that they cannot do something that is 100% sustainable. However, Alcoa does create principles for better operations, better communities and they try to operate under these principles. He said that they have to respect cultural and social interests, as well as have community involvement and participation; this has to be a part of business. In addition to the legal obligations they have (such as the PCAs), João said

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<sup>9</sup> The port city on the North Atlantic Coast of Brazil, where Alcoa operates an aluminum smelter

that Alcoa has initiated voluntary program as well, including the Governance Councils – a place of collaboration between stake holders, rural and urban; the Development Fund to improve economic and social and environmental agenda of Juruti; and a system for monitoring development and how we can mitigate negative impacts.<sup>10</sup>

*4) How is Alcoa developing the region?*

To this question, João explained that they are firstly trying to improve local conditions in terms of health and education. Alcoa has created the Positive Agenda, which has a mainly urban focus (Juruti Novo) on community development in terms of health, education and the judicial system.<sup>11</sup> He added again that they also have the Governance Council and the Development Fund. These are public mechanisms for which Alcoa will give the initial push and seed money. According to him, it is a new kind of sustainability for mining companies; an innovative way for mining projects to improve local development and sustainability based on the principle that this city will not just be a mining city because mining will have an eventual end to exploitation in 70-100 years. “...[the] city has to be more than a big hole in the center of the city.”

*5) What are Alcoa’s values for environmental and social responsibility and do you think that these are important?*

João offered a quick reply to this question: “Social responsibility is informed by [environmental] sustainability issues. You cannot be responsible if you do not think of sustainability. Otherwise it would just look at consequences and not causes.”

*6) What would Alcoa like to see here in 50 years?*

He discussed that they would like to improve the capacity of the city to develop bauxite and possibly produce aluminum there and hopefully improve capacity of population.<sup>12</sup> “We hope that we will be in a place with local channels of production – to have more local suppliers, more capable to participate. Today local suppliers are on the lower base of the

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<sup>10</sup> PCAs (Planos de Controle Ambiental or Environmental control Plans) are social and environmental programs for the Juruti Velho area communities. Some examples include: Quelônios da Amazônia (turtle farms); Programa de Valorização do Patrimônio Cultural da Alcoa (a program for traditional artisanal works); and O Projecto de Hortas Comunitárias (community gardens) (Alcoa 2008a). As part of the legal licensing process, Alcoa is required to allocate money (around R\$30 million) for monitoring and programs of the physical, biological and social environments (Alcoa 2008c). The Governance Council (or Conselho Juruti Sustentável) is a forum comprised of Alcoa, government agencies and officials, NGOs, and community members that will serve as a consultative forum for sustainable development in the region (Alcoa 2008d). Finally, the Development Fund, which João referred to, is still in the beginning stages and there does not exist any information as to what this will entail exactly.

<sup>11</sup> The Positive Agenda (or Agenda Positiva) serves to bring improvements to the city of Juruti in Education, Health, Security, Infrastructure and Social Assistance (Alcoa 2008e).

<sup>12</sup> And, as is listed under “Q&A Juruti Mine,” Alcoa has stated that they would like to see development of a smelter in the area, and that it is in the interest of Pará State to pursue this objective (Alcoa 2008f).

triangle of production. [But] For example, in São Luis we have almost 100% of Brazilian suppliers – but this was not the case 30 years ago.”

7) *Can you speak about your rural environmental and social programs?*

João stated that the Positive Agenda is more urban, and that the rural area has another matrix; after a follow up question about the difference between the plateau and lake region, he stated that they are indeed two different regions, and are presently working on programs for the lake region and then begin to explain of rights to operation for mining is just for sub soil. Alcoa had to negotiate with the state for the land rights, who then tell them who are the community beneficiaries for compensation of land, for which in turn they develop some type of collective compensation matrix. This is a legal obligation. He also discussed how land tenure in Amazonia – who is the owner of the land – is very challenging. “This is a very confusing issue in Amazon Region. Multiple people have title here and state agencies contradict each other. INCRA is trying to negotiate a deal now. In Juruti Velho it will probably be same process [as for the plateau communities]. We are discussing a matrix for collective compensation with INCRA right now.” He continued the discussion by explaining how the main community organization in the area – ACORJUVE – is against the project. Presently, Alcoa has asked for a judicial solution while Alcoa wants an administrative solution. He explained that for the former, there is more time and cost involved, while the administrative level would just be Alcoa, ACORJUVE and INCRA; he said that this way is better, because that way no one loses. According to João, “ One reason why ACORJUVE wants judicial is because the leaders are against all big projects – mining, energy, forest management. They are against capitalist corporations like us. Partly it is also for social and environmental reasons.” He then discussed how Alcoa has followed all of the legal procedures – including the licensing – as well as conducted a poll, through the Institute of Public Opinion, that gave them the social license to operate there. Despite this, he said there are differences of opinion from the Juruti Velho area. However, he said that Alcoa wants to negotiate with ACORJUVE and would like them to be a part of the Governance Council, which they have presently declined to join because they think that Alcoa dominates the council. While ACORJUVE has this impression, João says this is wrong: “Alcoa is probably one of the most empowered actors but we are not the center of it. So ACORJUVE declined to join – but they are still invited. We would like them to be included and discuss in a more realistic way. Because right now they are creating a prisoner dilemma situation because they are not a part of the dialogue. The information they have about our interests are false. They do not know what we want, what we are planning. But we also do not know what they want.”

8) *What compensation and projects have promised and is their a timeline for these?*

A collective compensation model, like the one developed for the plateau region, will probably be developed, according to João. However, he said that this will depend on the communities and what they want: “Because they could ask for something we cannot give. It has to be fair for both sides.” He continued to explain how, for example, if they demand much more money than what has historically been given for compensation in Amazonia – say 50% or even 15% of profits – they will not be able to give that. “It cannot be much above historical compensation...there is a level, a rational level [of compensation].” Based on a follow up question asking how much money Alcoa will likely give for compensation, he said that probably they could give one to two percent, that he really does not know how that works.

9) *Is everything working out how you would like it?*

In response to this question, João replied that in general, yes, they are doing well. He stated that they are doing less than they could, however, because they do not have the participation of ACORJUVE. People are in opposition and saying they are not capitalist and do not want to train people for markets. “This is a real obstacle,” he said. Additionally, there are problems and difficulties because, he explained, this is all new for communities. “There ways of producing are different – [so] organization and management are challenging. PCAs are difficult in terms of trade and commerce – it is like a new culture. It is a new culture for traditional communities. We are training people.”

During the end of the interview, I asked a follow up question that inquired into the possibility that the washing of bauxite and deposition of sediments into the lake would change the system from black water to white water (because this was a sentiment expressed many times by people in the communities, and there is no literature on this in Alcoa’s publications). His response was that they have a plan to control this – it is part of the environmental license – and what to do in case of emergency in order to stop the problem. Unfortunately, he could not provide me with any further details, and said that in the future Alcoa will have something on the website.

### **Discussion – the issue of development: how and for whom?**

Asseem Shrivastava, in his article, “Development Through Industrialization? Or Environmental Colonialism Leading to Catastrophe?” provides an interesting discussion about environmental colonialism and development. While he is specifically interested in India, I think that this article is nonetheless useful because it addresses issues of bauxite

exploitation and displacement of people. He says that the bauxite mining and steel mills in Orissa, India have not brought development for the people of Orissa. Instead, in developing the natural resources of Orissa, a form of environmental colonialism has transpired that serves to give rich countries inexpensive steel and aluminum, while keeping any environmental infractions away from the “environmentally sanitized shores” of the West. Shrivastava fustigates that this happens because the government is “happy to sell off both their people and nature to outsiders” (Shrivastava 2007). Is not this a similar scenario to what is happening in Brazil, and the relationship between the Brazilian government, Alcoa, and the *ribeirinho* communities of Jurutí? One man, José, in explaining ACORJUVE’s four main demands (as listed previously) stated, “If someone should get rich from this [the mine], it should be us.” It should be the people who live on the land, whose ancestors have lived there, who call the place home, that get to decide what the fate of the area will be; but it is not. That is why one of ACORJUVE’s demands is that they be recognized as the traditional communities of the area, that they be granted that dignity. He continued to explain how they do not want the wealth from the mine; they want dignity and, yes, they want better houses, better schools. He echoed the sentiments that Renata and others shared with me, that they want their kids to learn about their own culture, in their own homes and to be able to stay there; José also explained how the people cannot stop Alcoa; they did not receive the opportunity to do that.

So how does a situation like this begin? What are the underlying causes that create this willingness to “sell” people and nature develops? Or, as former Brazilian secretary of the environment, José Lutzenberger, asks, “Why can’t we leave Amazonia to the Amazonians?” (Rich, 1994: 122). To answer this, I look to two people: Stephen Nugent and Vandana Shiva.

The title of Stephen Nugent’s book, *Amazonian Caboclo Society, An Essay on Invisibility and Peasant Economy* hints at one reason why the actions of Alcoa are possible: invisibility. He writes of *caboclo* societies: “Generally speaking, such societies as have emerged in the interstices of colonial apparatus have never been granted full status as integral social forms. They are treated as contingent, incomplete, haphazard meldings of the detritus of aboriginal social formations and the remnants of European commercial experiments. They are defined in terms of what they are not (aboriginal, national) rather than in positive terms” (Nugent 1993: xxi). This point serves to explain my contention that what is happening in Alcoa is a form of environmental racism and injustice— the people have been made something “other” and less than human, which serves to justify colonialism. The reality that people in the communities suffer from a lack of respect – and have not been granted the right to decide

if Alcoa will have a presence there or not – supports this contention. The situation in Juruti Velho today is one where there are competing modes of development – and João, the man from Alcoa mentioned this when he stated (multiple times) that the opposition to Alcoa from ACORJUVE is because they are opposed to capitalism. However, it is not that people there do not have notions of development; but their notions of development are different and not based on individualistic, capitalistic notions – and consequently they are seen as being in the way of “progress” and being forced to change.

Nugent discusses how Amazonia has many resources – bauxite, iron, gold, timber, manganese – and that the rhetoric of using the land in the name of “progress” connotes the idea that the societies who presently live there are somehow backwards (Nugent 1993: 6) – again, pointing to a historical attitude of racism, that continues today. Nugent’s focus is on researching how it is that *caboclo* societies have been overlooked in the majority of research done on the Amazon region (Nugent 1993: 21). He notes how the majority of work that does exist serves to perpetuate negative and dehumanizing stereotypes of *caboclo* communities (Nugent 1993: 21-28). This is succinctly summarized in the following: “In one sense, *caboclos* are invisible to the forces behind so-called development in late-modern Amazonia – and suffer as a result – because the creation of modern Amazonia involved the eradication of Amazonian societies and the emergence of Amazonia as primarily a natural space” (Nugent 1993: 32). I contend that this invisibility is continued today in the belief that the resources of Amazonia – be it to exploit them through the mining of bauxite or to preserve biodiversity – are for the world’s use, and not for the people who live there. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, Nugent states, “...*caboclos* become invisible because their priorities are not those of the developmentalists for whom Amazonia is foremost an extractive resource domain. That is, perhaps, a formal invisibility. No one denies the actual existence of *caboclos*, rather, what is implied is the irrelevance of *caboclos* in terms of various experts’ assessments of what is desirable in Amazonia” (Nugent 1993: 33).

This raises the question of development for whom? Just as is the case in Orissa, the development that is occurring is not by or for the *ribeirinho* communities that live on the land, but rather for outside, colonial interests. “Amazonia is now important, it seems, not because Amazonians have a basic right to exist, but because without Amazonia, the globe is at risk...most Amazonians were eradicated as a result of the ‘discovery’ of the New World; most deforestation has taken place as a result of development schemes enthusiastically pursued by the putative savior interests,” writes Nugent (Nugent 1993: 238). This attitude is demonstrated in João’s (see question 9 above) assertion that implementing projects presents

difficulties because they have to train people for a new culture; Alcoa is training people to accept Alcoa's developmentalist priorities. Indeed, as one member of ACORJUVE, José, explained, there is presently no corruption or disharmony within their organization; there is also no money or salaries involved and people trust them. However, he said that this will be changing soon, and they will be receiving money; he worries that this will change things, and that power struggles will ensue. I find this interesting, and to connect to the issue of Alcoa forcing a vision of development on people: in order to continue fighting against Alcoa's, they are effectively being required to adapt at least a small amount of the economic system that they are fighting.

Essentially, Brazil is a "client-state" of the US and pursues policies that are not just in the interest of Brazil but of the global economy. As Nugent writes, "...the major beneficiaries of Amazonian development are those for whom the investment climate can best be exploited, absentee and multinational capital by and large. The provision of raw materials (and policies concerned with ensuring such provision) has been, in both vulgar and sophisticated analyses, the focus of studies of colonialism and imperialism (and their neo-variants) since such studies began" (Nugent 1993: 77). Brazil is dependent on relationships with multinational US corporations (Nugent 1993: 79). And one of the main goods that the United States is dependent upon for importation is bauxite; Brazil provides a lot of these raw resources that the United States needs (Nugent 1993: 83). Alcoa fits this profile; from the voices of the traditional communities in Juruti Velho, Alcoa has one motive – profit – and possesses a view of the world that is different from the one they possess: it's an American corporation that has come to the Amazon because that is where bauxite can be extracted and where profit can be gained. While arguably it is not just Alcoa and the US that is benefiting from this extraction – because the aluminum mined goes for different uses in different countries, and increases Brazil's GDP (Alcoa 2008b) – if the people in the communities of Juruti Velho are to be listened to, it is not the people who live on the land where the bauxite exists that are seeing any benefits from its extraction.

In discussing the economy and merchant system of *caboclo* communities, Nugent discusses how their economic system differs from a capitalist one, and discusses how *caboclo* economic systems are marginalized: "Capitalism competes not directly with peasant production, but indirectly through dominating in the extraction of resources which in themselves are not sought by peasant producers, but which as parts of a repertoire of resources are necessary for local social reproduction to take place (Nugent 1993: 201). This is what is happening in the communities in the Juruti Velho area, where people will no longer

be able to maintain their subsistence based economy of fishing, hunting, and practicing agro-forestry. However, this also brings to question an additional point that I would like to briefly discuss: not everyone with whom I spoke relies on subsistence based lifestyles (though for most people in most communities, this is certainly the case). Additionally, almost everyone included in their list of hopes for the future the prospect of schools and health posts. A point that needs to be made, however, is that “development” – in whatever form it takes, be it maintaining a “traditional” subsistence based lifestyle, or adopting some aspects of those things (schools, hospitals, electricity, market-based jobs) that most people think of when they hear the word “development” – needs to happen on the peoples’ terms; and if the sentiments of the people with whom I spoke are to be listened to, this is not currently the case.

The theme of collectivity, and the notion that development must be something that helps everything resonated again and again in all of my interactions with people. I found it quite telling when João said that the compensation given to communities must be “fair for both sides” – and while he did not know what this would entail exactly, he did state that a 50% or even 15% share of profits to the communities would be completely unrealistic. To him, the idea of splitting the profits of the mine evenly between Alcoa and the communities affected by them would be unfair to Alcoa; the idea of sharing resources evenly is foreign to the development visions that a company such as Alcoa holds.<sup>13</sup> The forest and lake which was a communal space for people, now is going to be used solely for the extraction of bauxite by one company – so should not those people displaced from their land receive compensation? Vandana Shiva writes about the concept of “taking” land from the public – or communal – domain into private property, which is what is happening in Juruti: This idea comes from Richard Epstein and his book *Takings: Private Property and the Power of the eminent Domain* and is based on the concept that if governments take land from people (or if people’s property is affected by acts of legislation, for example, in the United States through the Clean Water Act or Endangered Species Act) the owners must be compensated. However, according to Shiva, one of the falsifications of this ideology is “... the erasure of the history of colonization as a taking, and the denial of the experience of occupied inhabitants and their prior rights and prior claims” (Shiva 2005: 46). The “takings” of land by colonizers and corporations is not considered to be takings. I think that this relates to Nugent’s point of capitalist competition with *caboclo* economies, as well as to the reality of invisibility that these communities face. Because the *ribeirinho* communities currently living

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<sup>13</sup> Of course, ACORJUVE does not want 50% or even 15% of the mine’s profits; they only want 1.5%.

on the land do not possess the same ideologies of possession and land use, there is justification to take their land; and because they are socially “invisible” Alcoa is able to fight the demands that ACORJUVE has for compensation (as listed at the beginning of the paper).

Additionally, Shiva discusses the ideology of what she refers to as “corporate globalization.” She writes, “corporate globalization is based on new enclosures of the commons; enclosures which imply exclusions and are based on violence...In fact, globalization’s transformation of all beings and resources into commodities robs diverse species and people of their rightful share of ecological, cultural, economic, and political space. The “ownership” of the rich is based on the “dispossession of the poor – it is the common, public resources of the poor which are privatized, and the poor who are disowned economically, politically, and culturally” (Shiva 2005: 2-3). She continues to discuss how colonialism has furthered human and environmental exploitation as it, “...denied the existence and prior rights of original inhabitants and it obscured the regenerative capacity and processes of the earth. It therefore allowed the emergence of private property from enclosures, and allowed non-sustainable use of resources to be considered ‘development’ and ‘progress.’ For the privateer and the colonizer, enclosure was improvement” (Shiva 2005: 22-23). In other words, that which is different – perceived to be wild or not modern – is valueless. I think that this relates to Jurutí, where the people are going to face displacement from their land, which has now been deemed to have monetary worth by an outside, colonial figure – Alcoa. Alcoa’s actions serve as a modern manifestation of the enclosure of the commons, (the land shared and used jointly by all members of a community, as opposed to private ownership of land). Indeed, Shiva’s analysis provides one with an understanding of how the enclosure of the commons is not something that only occurred in one location, but that has worked as a form of colonialism, of creating private property and displacing native peoples, be it they reside in Africa, the Americas , or Asia (Shiva 2005: 25).

This process of turning land from the commons to commodity (Shiva 2005: 29) in turn leads to globalization – which is simply the enclosure of the commons on a grander scale: it is the enclosure of not just the land and resources, but of our cultures (Shiva 2005: 30). When everything is commodified, nothing has intrinsic worth because its worth is put in terms of monetary value; when nothing has intrinsic worth, it is acceptable to destroy it in the quest for achieving something that can provide instant pecuniary worth. The global capitalist economy, which operates as the treadmill of production, is to blame for this destruction because it operates under the assumption that everything must be done to increase monetary wealth – everything must be commodified. Therefore, anything that appears to stand in the

way of making money becomes expendable (Shiva 2005: 14-15). Because we base our actions on what immediate profit can be gained, we exploit the environment or push the people who live there off of the land. It is deemed acceptable to do this because “they” aren’t like us – they’re the other, incompetent savage. Again, I argue that this is what is happening right now with Alcoa and Juruti: the people do not have express title or “ownership” over the land, and Alcoa, the multinational corporation, comes in, obtains operational licenses from the government – ownership of sorts – and can then exploit the land for its resources.

### **Discussion– Alcoa, the environment and the people**

While the focus of my research is in Juruti, and examining whether Alcoa’s actions there are instances of environmental injustice and colonialism, I think that it is instructive to look at Alcoa’s presence elsewhere, including within the United States, to gain a broader perspective on what is occurring in Juruti. In an article discussing Former United States Secretary of the Treasury Paul O’Neil’s ties to Alcoa, Terje Langeland writes, “As the world’s leading aluminum producer, critics point to Alcoa as a classic example of a highly resource-intensive industry that has benefited from taxpayer subsidies while causing environmental destruction around the globe. From New York to Suriname to Brazil to Australia, indigenous and tribal peoples have complained of paying the price for Alcoa’s success” (Laneland 2001). I find it interesting that since 1987 more than 47 Alcoa facilities in the United States have been fined for environmental violations; in 1991 they paid \$3.75 million for discharging pollutants into the St. Lawrence River, which at the time was the largest penalty for hazardous waste dumping that had been issued; and in 2000 Alcoa made an almost \$9 million dollar settlement with the United States Environmental Protection Agency for dumping wastewater in the Ohio River. The St. Lawrence River has been so badly contaminated that the Mohawks (an indigenous nation that have lived in the area for centuries) are no longer able to retain their way of life, as they have been advised to avoid consuming fish from the river – their primary form of sustenance. Along with losing their diet, they also lost the ability to make their living from commercial fishing (Langeland 2001). Going back to 1963, a subsidiary of Alcoa built a dam to power a smelter for aluminum in Suriname. The dam flooded around 600 meters<sup>2</sup> of forest and displaced at least 6,000 people. Each person only received \$3 dollars in compensation. Over 20,000 people were displaced as a result of the dam’s construction, many of whom never received compensation (Langeland 2001). This suggests that Alcoa has a less than laudable track record of practicing environmental justice.

Arguably, the above examples show a precedence of Alcoa's violations of environmental rights; I argue that they are perpetrations of environmental injustice, as indigenous communities have faced degradation and displacement from their homes. Moreover, looking to their actions outside of the United States – including the above examples in Suriname and Brazil – points to cases of environmental colonialism.

In order to better understand the situation, in addition to my interview with João, I examined various online sources of information that Alcoa provides. It is my contention that the words found on their website offer support to the idea that they are acting in a colonial – and even racist and paternalistic – manner. For example, under the heading of “Companies help preserve the Amazon” Alcoa claims that, “In addition to reforesting the mined area the company is teaching the local population how to manage the forest and how to use its natural resources in a sustainable way for increasing the family income” (Alcoa 2008f ). The implication, in my view, is that the local population needs to be taught how to manage their forests and that Alcoa, the outsider, knows better than they how the land should be managed.

In Alcoa's Latin America Sustainability Report 2006/2007 they state, on page three that, “Alcoa believes that promoting respect for the environment in those communities in which it operates is also a form of preserving it” (Alcoa 2007b). At first glance, this perhaps appears as a laudable goal. However, I cannot help but to read deeper into it, and what I find is this: Alcoa is asserting that they are able to encourage environmentalism, which in turn will preserve the environment. But this seems to ignore the fact that in most cases, before Alcoa arrived, the communities did just fine preserving their communities without Alcoa's help. Certainly, the sentiments expressed about the environment that my interviewees told me that the people possess a deep sense of respect for the environment. Indeed, even during a Sunday morning church service, it was spoken of how Jesus is in the water, the forest and the land. The people there do not need to be taught to respect the environment. Under a page with the heading, “Human Rights Policy” one of the bullets is “Relationships with Indigenous People.” Alcoa maintains that, “Within the framework of our Values, we respect the cultures, customs and values of the people in communities where we operate and take into account their needs, concerns and aspirations.” (Alcoa 2008g). I think that it is important to remember Aaron Sachs definition of colonialism: when multinational corporations come into an area, they have not been invited there, and the resources they are extracting are not being used by the communities who live there. As such, it is my contention that what is happening in Jurutí is a form of colonialism.

## **Conclusion – what needs to happen**

During the course of my two weeks in the Juruti Velho area, I interviewed Antonio, an elderly man who had a lot to tell me; our conversation had started when I asked him my first primary question – “What is it that you would like to see here 50 years in the future?” Instead of answering this directly, though, he just started talking – about the history of the region, about what it is that he and other people there want for their futures. After a while, he paused and said, “So you asked me about my vision for the future? It’s difficult to answer – I am sad for us. Everything is finished. The forests, the water, the air, the animals – it’s going to be gone.” Then he pulled out a report<sup>14</sup> that the community had commissioned for a micro hydroelectric dam. At that point, a couple other people had already mentioned that there existed a plan for a micro hydroelectric plant; they had (with the help of INCRA) conducted a report for this project, and this project is a feasible and low environmental impact thing to do. It would generate power for the communities of the PAE in a truly sustainable way – a way that the people living there want. This is what “development” in Juruti needs to be. I walked away from that interview with the sound of his voice echoing, “*Tudo é acabar.*” Everything is finished. Yet, it need not be.

I claim that the actions of Alcoa do represent environmental injustice and environmental colonialism; it is my contention that the vision of development desired by Alcoa is quite different from the visions desired by the people – and I think that the words of community members and the words and print of Alcoa affirm this claim. Most everyone recognizes that Alcoa has arrived in Juruti, and that they are going to proceed with their project; but there is still time to try to make the outcome of this fairer, less unjust and less colonialist. One of the principles of environmental justice is, “the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples” (First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. 1991). This is what ACORJUVE is fighting for: for recognition of their political and cultural identity, for compensation for environmental destruction and economic changes. The people were not granted the chance to decide if Alcoa would invade their land or not; but they are standing up against injustice now. Alcoa needs to listen to them, and to concede their demands, which I will list again here: 1) 1.5% of the profits of the mine; 2) reimbursement for the land that will be destroyed; 3) recognition as the traditional inhabitants of the land; 4) a tax for the water

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<sup>14</sup> CAF – Consultoria Ambiental e Florestal Relatório Ambiental Simplificado – RAS Micro Central Hidrelétrica Juruti Velho. Janeiro 2008.

that will be taken from their lake. Unless these things are given, then Alcoa is simply continuing on a path of environmental injustice and colonialism.

Appendix A, Introduction and questions asked of interviewees<sup>15</sup>

*Olá...meu nome é Caiti Schroering, e eu sou uma estudante dos estados unidos. Agora, eu estou aqui no Brasil para 15 semanas, e eu estou estudando Amazonica e o meio ambiente. Um mes atrás, eu e os outros estudantes no meu programa, visitamos Juruti Velho, Pau D'Arco e Juruti Novo Também. Eu aprendei sobre Alcoa e eu e dois outros estudantes descidimos que nós queremos voltar aqui. Nós estamos trabalhando nos projectos final para escola, e queremos fazer pesquisa sobre suas comunidades e Alcoa. Especificamente, eu vou pesquisar as visões do desenvolvimento na área. O seja, o que é os povos aqui na região querem, e o que é Alcoa quer.*

*Além disso, no futuro, eu espero que eu possa publicar minha pesquisa. Porém, eu não vou usar ou publicar seu nome – ou os nomes das outras pessoas com quem eu falei. Durante a entrevista se você não se sentir a vontade nós podemos parar. Tá bom?*

*E uma coisa mais: eu falo Português, mas não muito bem. Se você não endenda, por favor, diga me. E fala mais devagar por favor. Tá? Obrigada.*

*(Hello...my name is Caiti Schroering, and I am a student from the United States. I am in Brazil for 15 weeks, and I am studying Amazonia and the environment. One month ago, other students on my program and I visited Juruti Velho, Pau D'Arco and Juruti Novo. I learned about Alcoa, and two other students and I decided that we wanted to return here. We are working on our final projects for school, and want to do research about your communities and Alcoa. Specifically, I am going to research the visions of development in the area. In other words, what it is that the people here want, and what it is that Alcoa wants.*

*Additionally, in the future, I hope to possibly publish my research. However, I am not going to use or publish your name – or the names of the other people with whom I speak. During the interview if you are not comfortable we are able to stop. Sound good?*

*And one more thing: I speak Portuguese, but not very well. If you do not understand me, please, tell me. And please speak slowly. Okay? Thanks.)*

- 1) *O que é que você gostaria de ver na sua comunidade em 50 anos a partir de agora? (What is it that you would like to see in your community 50 years in the future?)*
- 2) *Quais são as mudanças você gostaria de ver? (What are the changes that you would like to see?)*
- 3) *Você quer Alcoa aqui? (Do you want Alcoa here?)*
- 4) *Agora, eles ficam aqui. O que é você quer Alcoa faça? (Alcoa is here now; what would you like them to do?)*
- 5) *Por que foi que a Alcoa chegou em Juruti e quais são os objectivos da Alcoa aqui? (Why do you think Alcoa came to Juruti and what are their objectives here?)*
- 6) *Qual é a importância (ou significa) da palavra 'desenvolvimento' para você? (What is the meaning of the word development to you?)*
- 7) *Qual é a opinião da Alcoa sobre desenvolvimento? (What is Alcoa's opinion on development?)*

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<sup>15</sup> Due to the open-ended structure of the interviews, and fluctuating conditions under which interviews were conducted, this is a rough script; while the same general points were covered in each interview, the exact phrasing had variation, for both Appendices A and B.

- 8) *Quais são os impactos das atividades da Alcoa nas comunidades na área? E sua vida? (What are Alcoa's impacts on the communities in the area? And on your life?)*
- 9) *Como você usa seu meio ambiente, a natureza, a mata? (How do you use your environment, nature, the forest?)*
- 10) *Quais são os direitos que você tem para usar seu meio ambiente? Qual leis existam para proteger seus direitos? (What rights do you have for using your environment? What laws exist to protect these rights?)*

## Appendix B, Questions asked of Alcoa and responses given<sup>16</sup>

(We introduced ourselves, stated names, countries of origins, universities); We are studying here in Brazil for three and a half months, and our program has a focus on environmental studies and the Amazon; as part of this program, about a month ago our entire class visited the Juruti area, at which point we learned of Alcoa and your activities here. We decided to return, for our final project and look at the communities and Alcoa. My project is specifically focused on visions of development and (Ellie explained her research, which is over the social and environmental programs of Alcoa). Also, while this work is specifically for our papers for school, in the future we hope to possibly publish our work; however, your name will not be used. If during the interview you decide you do not want to talk or are not comfortable, we can stop. Okay?

My questions:

- 10) Why did Alcoa choose Juruti for a mine and what are your objectives here?*
- 11) What are the environmental and social impacts of your activities here?*
- 12) What is Alcoa's view on sustainable development and what is Alcoa doing to meet those views?*
- 13) How is Alcoa developing the region?*
- 14) What are Alcoa's values for environmental and social responsibility and do you think that these are important?*
- 15) What would Alcoa like to see here in 50 years?*

Ms. Rogers' questions:

- 16) Can you speak about your rural environmental and social programs?*
- 17) What compensation and projects have promised and is there a timeline for these?*
- 18) Is everything working out how you would like it?*
- 19) How did you choose these specific projects?*
- 20) What was the motivation for these projects?*
- 21) Where there projects that you could not follow through with?*
- 22) Can you talk a little about your interaction with communities?*
- 23) How do you think communities feel about these projects?*
- 24) Are the projects beneficial?*
- 25) Sustainability is our nature is your motto – can you talk a little about this?*

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<sup>16</sup> This interview was conducted jointly by me and my colleague, Ellen Rogers; the questions that follow are those that the both of us asked, as well as the introduction that we provided to explain our activities.

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## Comments

Ultimately, I think the most important thing is to pick a subject that you are passionate about. I had originally planned to do my ISP on a different issue, but then, during the “Boat Trip” we visited Juruti Velho, Pau D’Arco and Juruti Novo, where I learned about Alcoa’s presence and the struggles facing the people there – and I knew that I had to do something, and a good place to start would be with my ISP. There are a lot of interesting, complex, frustrating and exciting issues in this area of the world – so pick something that piques your curiosity and that you are motivated to work on.

Everyone says this, but it is true: start early! And try to find an advisor that you work well with and who has time for you. I did this project as part of a joint effort (though we all produced separate ISPs) with two other students, and the three of us had Gustavo as our advisor; we fortunately received help and direction, and got to leave for our ISPs on time – though even we felt completely unprepared to go, and slightly petrified at the lack of details that were in place. Other people in our group, however, were not so fortunate, and ended up not being able to undertake their original ISP plans, despite having planned well in advance. I think that Gustavo’s job entails too much for one person, and he was not able to give everyone the help in planning that they needed. I am not really sure how helpful this is, except to serve as a warning: things often are frustrating, and it is more difficult, I think, to get in touch with advisors or get useful help than it is at our home universities. But just fight for it if you find you are not getting what you need; and it really will be fine. Go with the flow, and just take everything in. Trust me, everyone will end up with a project, and will get their papers done on time (well, at least I think this is true!).

Finally, a quick note on Portuguese: just speak. If you make an effort to communicate, people will reciprocate, and suddenly you realize that you can understand a whole lot more than you could a week before, or even a day before. The language barrier was perhaps one of the most frustrating aspects of the project for me, but also one of the most rewarding.