

Editorial: Climate change as a territorial question

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This editorial is written amid a heatwave characterized by high temperatures and low humidity, under a springtime blue sky, streaked with the gray of wildfires in the far west of the state of São Paulo. It is yet another in a series of heatwaves that have contributed to successive temperature records in recent years — the hottest ever recorded in history. The so-called climate change — a term broader than the commonly propagated “global warming” — stands at the center of contemporary debates across multiple scales and dimensions. However, its manifestations across different territories are unequal, reproducing and deepening environmental (Acseirad, Mello, & Bezerra, 2009), climatic, and territorial injustices (Pereira, 2025). Furthermore, politics of climate change (Franco & Borrás Jr., 2019), often guided by narratives focused on the urgency of achieving the global Net Zero target through market-based solutions — as if the complexity of the climate crisis could be reduced to a single quantitative parameter — and formulated under a colonial, corporate, and deterritorializing logic, also act as catalysts for these injustices.



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This scenario becomes even more complex as the response to the climate crisis is translated into carbon emission reduction metrics, which in turn transform living territories into mere substrates subject to appropriation for the installation of so-called “green” projects — whether in energy, infrastructure, agribusiness, or even the so-called green mining. These reduction metrics and climate finance mechanisms are continually negotiated in international diplomatic arenas, such as the United Nations Climate Change Conference, known as the Conference of the Parties (COP), whose 30th edition will be held in November 2025 in Belém (Pará), in the heart of the Brazilian Amazon. The mega-event — conceived as such, including in terms of real estate speculation and impacts on the population of Belém — assumes an ambiguous role: on one hand, it exposes the contradictions inherent in the institutionalization of the environmental question (Porto-Gonçalves, 2006); on the other, it promotes a sustainability narrative often rooted in greenwashing (Pereira, 2025).

At the same time, much of the current innovation aimed at the countryside within the context of so-called “Agriculture 4.0” or “digital agriculture” carries a strong climate-environmental appeal. Technologies such as drones, sensors, smart tractors, and even Artificial Intelligence are presented as capable of creating a more efficient agriculture with lower climate impact, or what is termed “climate-smart agriculture” (Taylor, 2018). What often goes unnoticed in these discussions and proposals is that digital agriculture has been driven by capitalist corporations as a solution to problems caused by capitalist agriculture itself (ETC Group, 2022), and that these technologies rarely engage with the territorial diversity of agroecology.

In light of this contradictory situation, Revista NERA, of the Nucleus of Studies, Research, and Agrarian Reform Projects, linked to the Department of Geography and the Graduate Program in Geography at the Faculty of Science and Technology, São Paulo State University (FCT/UNESP), which has published manuscripts on the agrarian question, land struggles, agrarian reform, socio-territorial movements, and diverse rural development models since 1998, recognized the need and urgency to foster a debate connecting the agrarian question and climate change. For this purpose, a call for papers was launched for a thematic section on the topic, whose central aim is to reflect on the intersections between the climate and agrarian questions, considering their impacts, conflicts, and possibilities for resistance, based on the understanding that both are fundamentally territorial issues. In this issue 3 (vol. 28, July–September 2025), we present the first set of manuscripts submitted to this thematic section, comprising four articles and one interview.

In the first manuscript, titled “*Governance for food system sustainability*”, Rozane Marcia Triches and Miguel Angelo Perondi introduce the debate on food system governance at multiple scales, providing consistent theoretical and practical reflections on the topic.

Based on a comprehensive literature review, the authors conclude that the debate on food systems has materialized in a multiscalar way, particularly through experiences aimed at equity, justice, ethics, and sustainability, driven by social movements mobilizing historically excluded actors. At the same time, they warn that such systems still face challenges in expanding beyond local and regional scales, as well as in gaining recognition, credit, and legitimacy as sustainable food systems with the potential to generate broader impacts and challenge the dominant model.

In the article *“Gentes and Forests: clues for imagining other agri-cultures”*, Caroline Zalamena, Lúcio André de Oliveira Fernandes, and Marielen Priscila Kaufmann map micropolitical movements intensifying in the relationships between people and forests in four agroecosystems located in the Southern Rio Grande Crystalline Shield, in southern Rio Grande do Sul. The authors highlight how agroforests and their communities transform landscapes and create other worlds and ways of relating to the land, even in a context marked by the intense expansion of agribusiness. Zalamena, Fernandes, and Kaufmann (2025) place agroecology, agroforestry systems, buen vivir, and the relevance of popular and ancestral knowledge and practices at the center of the discussion, not only as expressions of resistance but also of imagination and the construction of alternative agri-cultures.

Next, the manuscript *“Green grabbing strategies in the context of energy transition: a study based on the complete appropriation of territory in Latin America”* presents the analysis of Lia Pinheiro Barbosa and Luciana Nogueira Nóbrega regarding contemporary forms of dispossession and expropriation, focused on the category of territory, resulting from the energy transition, especially those linked to free trade corridors and green grabbing in Latin America. Barbosa and Nóbrega (2025) mobilize the concept of green grabbing, previously discussed by Fairhead, Leach, and Scoones (2012), to characterize land appropriations justified for environmental purposes, constituting a contemporary form of integral territorial appropriation in regions of strategic interest to capital. The authors conclude that the so-called energy transition operates as a strategy to ensure the reproduction of the capitalist production system, particularly in times of crisis, when portfolio diversification becomes necessary (Traldi & Rodrigues, 2022; Pereira, Vital & Fonseca, 2024; Cavalcante, Sousa & Assis, 2025), and when accumulation requires internalizing the externalities generated by the capitalist system itself (Cornetta, 2025).

The fourth article, titled *“Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), extractivism, and territorial conflicts in Córdoba, Argentina (2015-2025)”*, by Gabriel Horacio Galván, analyzes state policies aimed at territorial development in the Argentine province of Córdoba during the period 2015–2025. Galván (2025) notes that the results indicate that the adoption of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda as structuring axes of state policies represents an opportunity

for the restructuring of the capitalist production system and for the business modernization of extractivist class fractions, in pursuit of social licenses enabling them to appropriate territory through the institutionalization of the so-called sustainable development. Like Barbosa and Nóbrega (2025), Galván (2025) places the territorial question at the center of reflections on the challenges and contents of the agrarian question in the 21st century.

Finally, the interview *“Was the ‘original’ Extractive Reserve ‘erased’ by the SNUC? Reflections with Osmarino Amâncio Rodrigues, historical leader of the rubber tapper movement”*, conducted by Anselmo Gonçalves da Silva and Lailton dos Santos Costa, presents geographical and profound reflections based on the testimony of Osmarino Amâncio Rodrigues. Structured in eleven thematic blocks, the interview highlights the distance between the current institutional model and the original conception of Extractive Reserves (RESEX), incorporated into the National System of Nature Conservation Units (SNUC), established by Law No. 9,985/2000, pointing to impacts on the sustainability of the model and the territorial resistance of communities facing growing social and climatic challenges.

The manuscripts composing this first part of the thematic section “Agrarian Question and Climate Change” reveal the multiple connections between the climate crisis and historically central topics in Agrarian Geography, such as food questions, peasantry, traditional peoples and communities, agribusiness, territorial conflicts, and resistance, placing agroecology at the core of confronting this crisis. These works show how the climate crisis, as a fundamental component of the structural crisis of the capitalist production system, has been appropriated as a legitimizing narrative for the continuity of capital accumulation across space and time.

New territorialities, narratives, forms of control and appropriation, as well as new financial mechanisms and agrarian policies (Paprocki & McCarthy, 2024; Cornetta, 2025), emerge and shape renewed dynamics for debate and understanding of the agrarian question. Market-oriented solutions and offset mechanisms — such as the purchase of the “right to pollute” — reveal the creation of new markets that operate essentially as instruments for privatizing territories in their multiple dimensions, including life itself, reproducing continuous deterritorializations.

The climate question, like the agrarian question, is fundamentally a territorial issue. In a climate change scenario, the land assumes a central role: sometimes in mitigating the crisis through territorialities that support ecological and solidarity-based practices — such as agroecology —, and sometimes in intensifying the climate collapse, resulting from the conversion of traditional and forested territories into areas dominated by agribusiness, mining, and megaprojects of infrastructure.

In this context, it becomes essential to reflect on the intersections between the agrarian question and climate change, considering their impacts, conflicts, and possibilities for resistance. This issue constitutes a first step in that direction.

Presidente Prudente, São Paulo, Brazil, Spring 2025.

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