

**THE RESIDENTS PARTICIPATION IN THE CREATION OF  
EXTRACTIVE IRIRI RIVER RESERVE AND CURRENT  
PERCEPTION OF TERRITORIAL SECURITY**

**PARTICIPAÇÃO DOS MORADORES NA CRIAÇÃO DA RESERVA  
EXTRATIVISTA DO RIO IRIRI E ATUAL PERCEPÇÃO DE SEGURANÇA  
TERRITORIAL**

**PARTICIPACIÓN DE LOS RESIDENTES EN LA CREACIÓN DE LA  
RESERVA EXTRACTIVA DEL RÍO IRIRI Y LA ACTUAL PERCEPCIÓN DE  
SEGURIDAD TERRITORIAL**

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**Recebido para avaliação em 26/09/2017; Aprovado para publicação em 25/10/2017.**

**ABSTRACT**

The Extractive Reserve Iriri River (RESEX Iriri) is located in the Amazon biome, in the region known as Terra do Meio (TM), in the interfluvium of the Xingu and Iriri Rivers in the State of Pará, Brazil. This area is marked by a confrontational territorial occupation history, in which the local population had its permanence and its threatened traditional way of life, which allowed land ownership by loggers, land grabbers and farmers. Our research assessed the participation and awareness of the territorial security of bordering the Rio Iriri Extractive Reserve, with the creation of this Conservation Unit. The results showed us that had a significant decrease in threats. However, we emphasize that, to ensure the traditional way of extractive life, it is necessary to consolidate the territorial security measures and public policies.

**Keywords:** Qualitative Research; Conservations Unities; Eastern Amazonia.

**RESUMO**

A Reserva Extrativista do Rio Iriri (RESEX Iriri) está localizada, no bioma amazônico, na região conhecida como Terra do Meio (TM), no interflúvio dos rios Xingu e Iriri, no Estado do Pará, Brasil. Esta área é marcada por um histórico de ocupação territorial conflituoso, no qual a população ribeirinha teve sua permanência e seu modo de vida tradicional ameaçado, o que permitiu a apropriação fundiária por madeireiros, grileiros e fazendeiros. Nossa pesquisa avaliou a participação e a percepção da segurança territorial dos ribeirinhos da Reserva Extrativista Rio Iriri,

com a criação desta Unidade de Conservação. O resultado nos mostrou que teve uma diminuição significativa nas ameaças. Porém, ressaltamos que, para garantir o modo de vida tradicional extrativista, é preciso consolidar as medidas de segurança territorial como políticas públicas.

**Palavras-chave:** Pesquisa Qualitativa; Unidades De Conservação; Amazônia Oriental.

### RESUMEN

La reserva extractiva del río Irii (RESEX Irii) se encuentra en el bioma amazónico, en la región conocida como Terra do Meio (TM) en el interfluvio de los ríos Xingu e Irii en el Estado de Pará, Brasil. Esta zona está marcada por una historia de ocupación territorial conflictiva, en el que la población local vio su permanencia y su forma de vida tradicional amenazada, lo que permitió propiedad de la tierra por parte de madereros, ganaderos y usurpadores de tierras. Nuestra investigación evaluó la participación y el conocimiento de la seguridad territorial de la Reserva de Extracción bordeando el Río Irii, con la creación de este espacio protegido. Los resultados mostraron que había una disminución significativa de las amenazas. Sin embargo, hacemos hincapié en que para garantizar el modo de vida tradicional de extracción, es necesario consolidar las medidas de seguridad y políticas públicas territoriales.

**Palabras clave:** Investigación Cualitativa; Unidades de Conservación; Amazonia Oriental.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Extractive Reserves (RESEX) are territorial spaces for the conservation and sustainable use of renewable natural resources by extractive populations (BRAZIL, 2000). They represent a great achievement of forest dwellers. Originated in the claims of these populations face the occupation projects that required deforestation (ICMBio, 2010). The desire of the peoples continue to live in the power of forest lands, practicing traditional production systems, it began to manifest itself in the early 60's, especially among the rubber tappers in Acre, when the first large timber felled (ICMBio, 2010).

The legal protection is to protect the quality of the environment due to the quality of life. It can be said that there are two objects of protection in case: an immediate, which is the quality of the environment, and other mediate, which is the health, well-being and security of the population (BENNATTI, 1999).

It is clear that natural resources have been used since the beginning of civilization. The lack of planning in the exploitation of resources as well as the increase in population has brought serious consequences for the conservation of natural resources. Relationship between populations, territories and the management / conservation of natural resources is complex, as the power relations between different social groups or even internal to each group are complex and their relationships and access to natural resources are distinct (GUERRA; COELHO, 2009).

The Extractive Reserve Rio Irii (RESEX Irii) is located in the Amazon biome in

the region popularly known as Terra do Meio (TM) in the interfluvium of the Xingu and Irii rivers in the state of Pará, Brazil. This area is marked by conflicting territorial occupation history, in which the local population had its permanence and its traditional way of life threatened by the lack of territorial planning by the state, which allowed the land appropriation by loggers, land grabbers and farmers.

The main objective of this work was to evaluate the perception of the territorial security provided by the creation of the Reserve by the Rio Irii RESEX. As well as researching the main problems currently faced in the management of this UC, which can interfere in the guarantee of the way of life and the settlement of the riverside in the RESEX.

## STUDY AREA

The Extractive Reserve Irii River (RESEX Irii) is located between the left bank of the Irii River to the right bank of the New River at the confluence with the Rio Irii; municipality of Altamira, Pará (BRASIL, 2004), in an area popularly known as Terra do Meio (Figure 1).

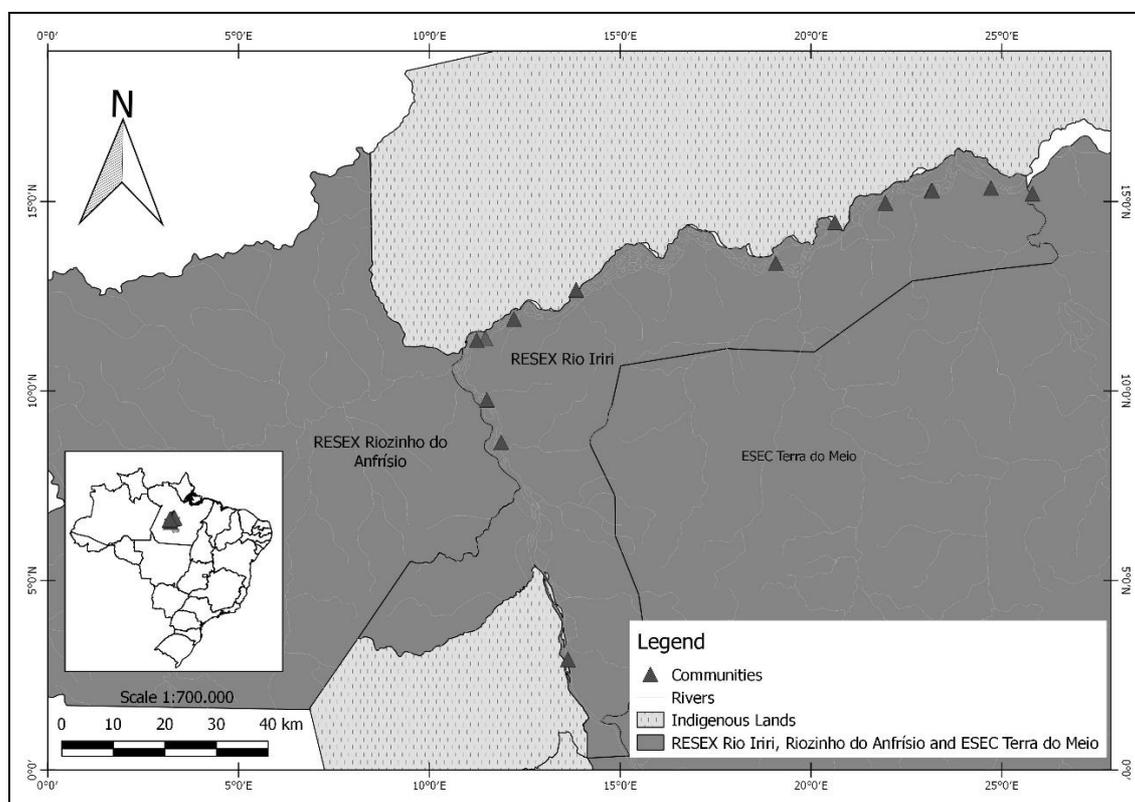


Figure 1 – Communities in the Irii River Extractive Reserve. Source: Based on information of the ICMBio (2012).

The RESEX Irii has an area of 398,938 hectares, being limited by the Irii River to the north and west, also to the west with the RESEX Riozinho the Anfrísio and Indigenous Xipaya with the Indigenous Land Cachoeira Seca do Irii River to the north, ESEC Terra do Meio east and south (ICMBio, 2011). This region accounts for about thirty protected areas among them Indigenous Lands, Federal Protected Areas and State Conservation Units, conceiving one of Brazil's largest conservation blocks, comprised in Irii - Xingu interfluvium (ICMBio, 2011).

It is a sparsely populated region, who served for nearly a century to the extraction and production of natural latex syringe, through the cycles of brown, gold and the removal of skin from wild animals for export in the 1970s. However, the exploitation of rubber, from the late nineteenth century, was the greatest of economic phenomena, reflecting the national production. Because of this historical process of formation, is currently inhabited by extractive populations, riverine, family farmers (mostly descended from Northeastern, migrants from the rubber boom period) and indigenous peoples of different ethnicities (ISA, 2008).

The communities along the Irii River are composed of riverine who practice both fishing and the cultivation of cassava both for subsistence and for the trade in small quantities. Another alternative for obtaining protein is the hunting of wild animals, such as birds and game mammals and reptiles (*Podocnemis unifilis*), this latter species the eggs are explored during the Amazonian summer period (ICMBio, 2011).

A Figure 2 shows the location of communities where families reside sampled in this study. RESEX Irii River were (Rio Novo, Boa Esperança, Ilha das Cobras, Cachoeirinha, São Francisco, Novo Sorriso, Novo Paraíso, Vai e Vem, Ilha do Papagaio, Furo do Fava, Santa Luzia, Califórnia, Jesus é Bem-Vindo, Lajeiro, São Lucas, São Raimundo, Ilha do Amor). Failure to complete coverage of the communities occurred due to the absence of families in their homes, is the reason they went to the city of Altamira, São Felix or Uruará solve particular situations, or are in the fishing activity.

## **SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH**

Questionnaires were applied to residents following a script of pre-established questions, facilitating the systematization of data collection. Before interviews each resident was asked if I would like to respond to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was applied clearly to facilitate understanding of the questions, which allowed a casual conversation,

leading to a possible relationship of trust with the locals. The questionnaires was carried out in a team consisting of 3 members, where each member went through training in order to synchronize the understanding of the work that would be developed and the knowledge of the tools necessary for this action. As well as to ensure a standard for how to conduct the questions.

Regarding the profile of respondents, followed the following criteria: 1. riparian residence time in the study area (try to interview older residents who participated in the process of creating the protected area). 2. Being family leader.

For security and confidentiality of the identity of respondents, we used the use of pseudonyms.

The sampling effort depended on the number of riverine present in each community willing to participate. However, care was taken to get a number of respondents representative of the total households in RESEX that last demographic survey 2009 had approximately 60 families (ICMBio, 2011), but there are already reports of migration since. Two trips were made to the area of study. In the first field trip were performed the initial contacts and preliminary conversations with the locals. In the second campaign the interviews were conducted to diagnose the perception bordering on arising territorial security of the creation of this unit. Being an area of enormous scope and difficult to access, field campaigns.

Descriptive statistics analysis and we seek to identify trends and patterns of responses of respondents. Additionally we apply the statistical test  $X^2$  to test the significance between the different responses. Analyses were performed in the Past program (HAMMER; HARPER, 2012).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

During this work were applied 33 interviews. Most of the respondents were male (97%), the average age of respondents is 47 years (min = 26, max = 74). All respondents residing in RESEX Rio Iri more than 20 years, both lived the changes in the period before, during and after the creation of RESEX.

### **Issues addressed**

*You were in favor of the creation of the Reserve?*

The positioning of the residents on the acceptance of the creation of RESEX Iri, 75.8% said they were in favor of creation (Figure 3). When asked about what led them to accept the creation of RESEX? Promises! That was the word answered and heard by the people, “most were actually purchased because of the things they promised to put and do for us. School Postinho, surveillance. Also they told that we would not lose our land” (Ariranha 1).

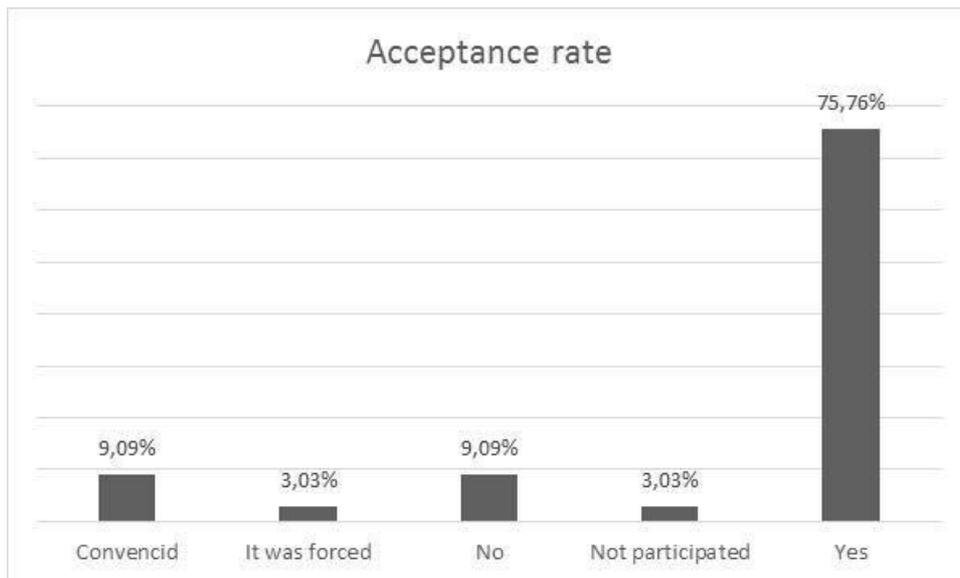


Figure 2 – Participation of residents of RESEX Iri in the creation of the Reserve. Based on interviews.

The land purchase threats of deportation or death were infrequent cases. North of RESEX near the communities (Rio Novo, San Francisco, Good Hope, Snake Island, New Paradise, Come and Go, Parrot Island) cases were over purchase of land due to the timber and farms installed in the vicinity of UC. Already cases of death threats and expulsion of bordering their land, concentrated mainly in the downstream limit of RESEX (Fava Hole, Santa Luzia, California, Jesus is Welcome, Lajeiro, St. Luke, St. Raymond, Island love), on behalf of the PA-279 connection to an illegal road named Trans-Iri giving access to the Terra do Meio, which facilitated the transition of people interested in having possession of the lands in any way.

*The creation of the reserve brought more security?*

As for security, (85%) of residents say that the creation of RESEX brought them security (Figure 4). One respondent reported that he was protected because “now they see us as human beings and make projects to our right”. *Another account of a resident was that “before the flying boats went here with 3, 4 men armed to the teeth. Today I’m cold-headed, quiet sleep”* (Ariranha 2), making account of the day-to-day river. A life full of fears both henchmen

farmers, as the fear of losing their property, even life.

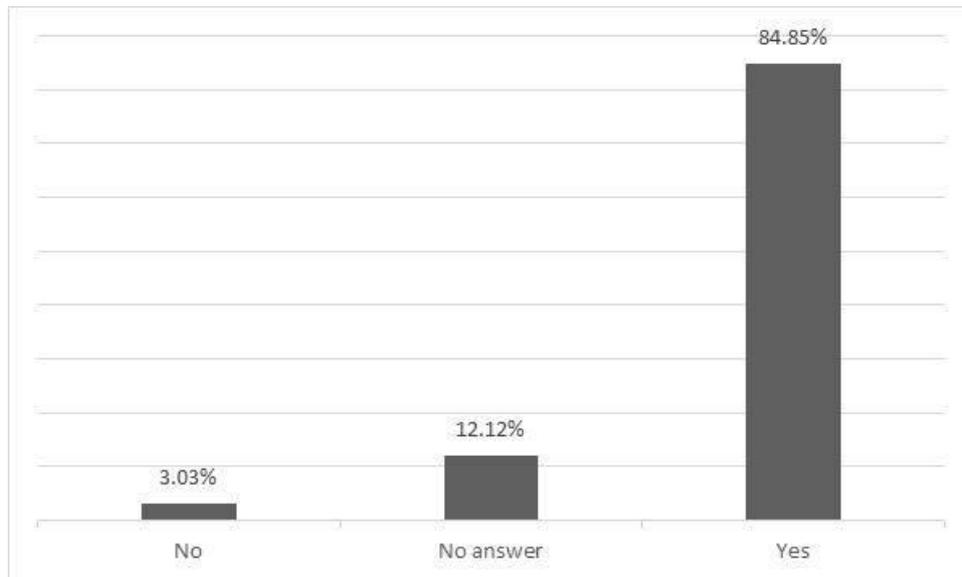


Figure 3 – Perception about safety after the creation of RRI. Based on interviews.

Despite advances as the territorial security, compared before the creation of this unit, there are still several problems to be solved, problems that cause fragility of this conservation unit and can lead to future invasions.

When asked about the weaknesses that surround them, an answer came to call my attention “*If the government wanted no problem, would not have called, I begged my parents to come to this earth*”. It was an outburst of a resident who sees and knows that second account of himself is considered a “*vigilante without pay, in a land that does not belong to*”.

*When it comes to security you have suffered threats or proposed to sell their land? How was it?*

When asked if they felt unsafe even after the creation of extractive reserves, 55% of respondents who did not (Figure 5). One of the respondents answered the question with the following sentence: “*If this question were made before RESEX, then you would have heard many people say yes*”. The riverine portrays this portion of the conversation, for security occurred shortly after the expulsion of squatters. The interaction with the farmers was cordiality because some riverine arrived to work on the farms located in irregularly region as speedboat drivers in juquirá. Besides being employed, employers exercising the state's role in the UC, in some situations. Especially in health emergencies, riparian had the farmer's figure of a person who helped you in the removal of patients to the city.

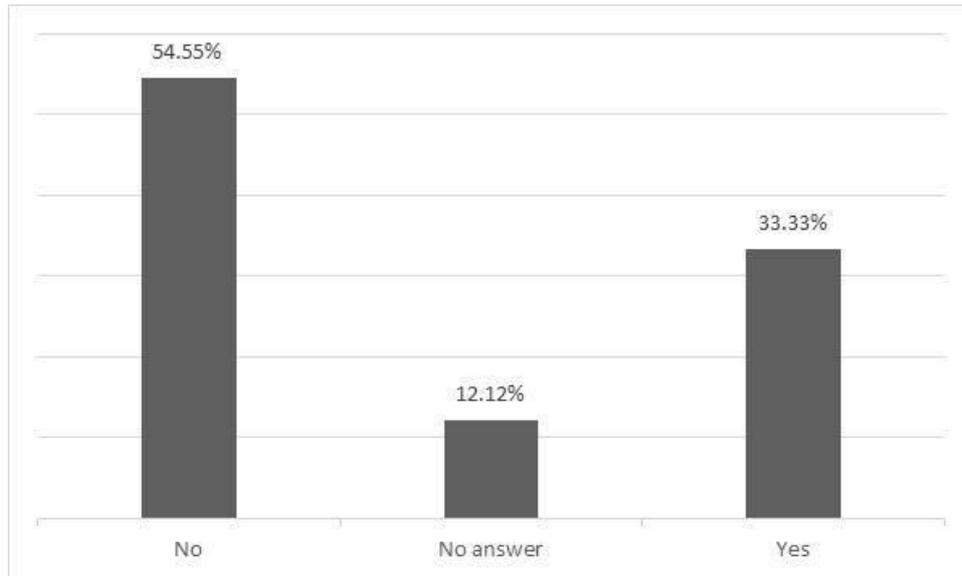


Figure 4 – Insecurity, proposal to buy and sell land. Based on interviews.

Some coastal had a closer relationship with some farmers, receiving different treatment in relation to other riparian. These still complain because of embargoes made on farms, because their bosses were more than employers in their view. *“Agent took 5, 10 liters of home milk. Mr. Farmer, was sent to kill ox meat to distribute to these people in time of drought, because the time is bad over fishing”* (Ariranha 3).

For a people who are in need of everything, the little they received was much in the view of some residents. This is realized when some of the respondents see the creation of RESEX negatively, because after its creation residents lost their jobs on farms.

*What the governing body can do to improve security within the reserve?*

Making a connection with security felt soon after you make a reservation, inquire about the position of the Governing Body, organ this, which is responsible not only for safety, but the dialogue bridge and link between Union and riverine, when it comes to social insertion (Figure 6). And they all said that there was a change for the better, but most also stressed that still need to improve a lot *“they helped a lot in security, but a long way. Lack more supervision. They have to come in the summer; there they will catch these people coming from Maribel, fishing, hunting and drinking on the beaches”*.

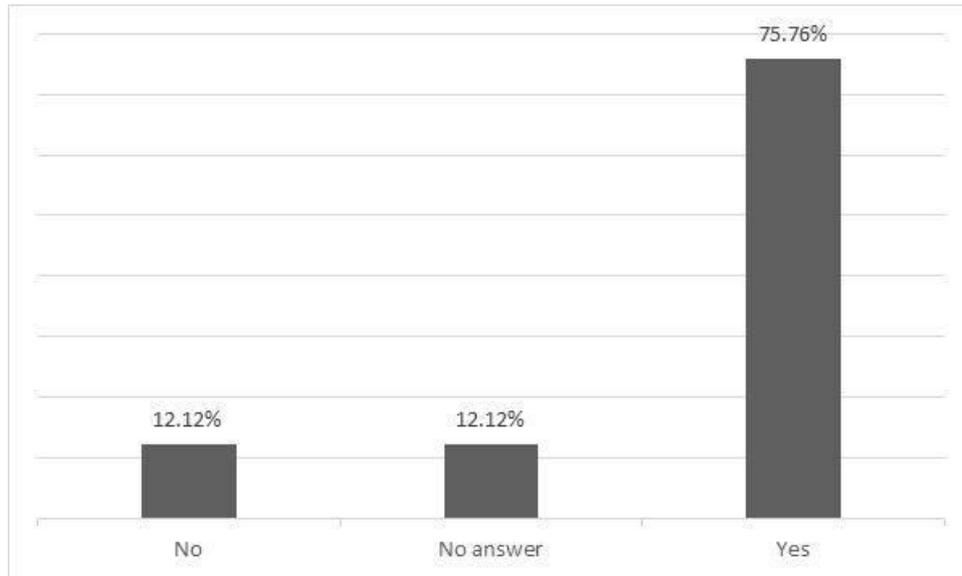


Figure 5 – Evaluation of the Management Organ on the view of the riverine. Based on interviews.

The biggest concern them today is about people who enter the RESEX through the road linking the city of Uruará the outer of Maribel. This road is located on the left side of the bank of the Rio Iriri on in an area belonging to the Indigenous Land Cachoeira Seca.

*“These people Uruará comes here, fills the river gillnets, we are afraid to speak or do something, because I try to do that and we were threatened”.*

In addition to these problems of invasions in this region there is a lack of public policies, and the problems of lack of alternative income, education and health the most cited by residents. With the creation of extractive reserves were created some schools, but they still suffer major infrastructure problems, as with most schools in rural areas of the Amazon. Especially when you think of a region with poor access, which is the case of Rio Iriri, where to get the last resident of RESEX during the dry season are needed 4-5 days of displacement, from the city of Altamira. Because of this difficulty of access, these residents are in often forgotten by the government.

Currently the residents find themselves with a problem of lack of income alternatives. As described above, alternative income were in the form of economic cycles that were ending a result of various factors. Today the locals have fishing as their main source of income, and secondarily seasonally and marketing of nuts. Because of the intensity of exploitation of fishing resources, residents have already perceived impacts on the resource, which has caused the concern of residents and the governing body. However, as perceived in the speech of residents and living with them, proposals for new alternative

sources of income is a complex issue that requires more detailed research and which they took place with a great dialogue with riparian.

The promises of improvements in both housing, as in not yet reached income as one of the reports “came to the Indians, as for us even a handful of meal gave us”. They feel disappointed that the long-awaited progress reach them, “*were signed so many papers, so many projects done and did not see the color of that money*”. The local population is seen in a situation that has no way out, when you look back and see a huge list mentioned by them of promises that have not yet left the fact paper. “*Before it was easier to make money, had mining and other things. The projects do not bring anything, and when they bring is little*”.

Fanaticism with capital employed in the natural environment, made the ambition for profit, made the head of the riverine people. Perhaps because of this the implementation of new alternative income projects, linked to the governing body and also the NGOs working in the region, has not taken effect, because we can see that in some situations some bordering complained that these small projects would bring low financial feedback.

The design of RESEX for some residents is linked with the creation of rules, which is seen as a negative point. As they used to live a life without limitations, they ended up bumping into rules that were inserted along with the creation of RESEX. Since the main conflict of rules in RESEX is in respect of access to fish resources, currently the main source of income and food to residents. Some residents have the perceived need for managing this resource, while others want to make enjoyment of this resource without major concerns about the possible impacts.

*You feel protected?*

When asked, after all they lived today, yet today you feel protected? 88% of respondents said yes (Figure 7). “*I think it is not worse. We have people today who buy our fight and go together with us, wanting our best*” (Ariranha 6).

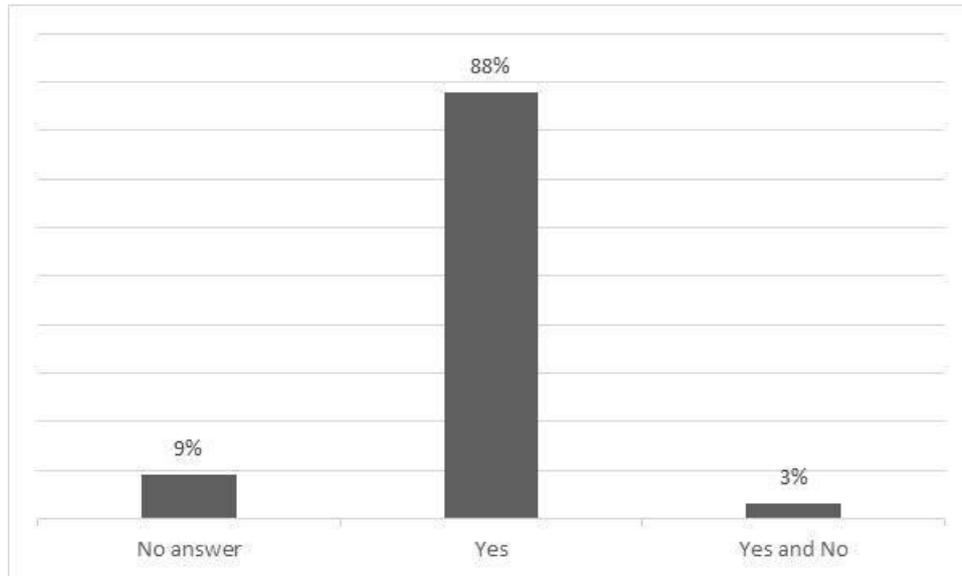


Figure 6 – Evaluation of the Management Body. Based on interviews.

Because of all these problems faced currently , in addition to accumulated in the historical process of fixing traditional local people , respondents report that many faced problems occur because of the lack of organization among the residents themselves.

## CONCLUSION

According to the perception of residents creating Extractive Reserve of Rio Iriri contributed to improving the territorial security, and to ensure their way of extractive life. Residents recognize that there are currently more access to education and health, but stress that there is still much to be improved. The implementation of public policies is the main challenge of RESEX the entire Amazon region, which have always been denied by a distant state of these regions. It is starting the actions of health and education, but is still far from ideal.

Although residents claim that RESEX are of great importance in some cases, however, they do not understand the direct importance and benefits of the conservation units, there is a misunderstanding of the residents own RESEX. So we suggest a greater integration between the governing body and the community in order to remove all doubts.

In summary, this study suggests that the State together with the governing body fulfill their roles, since they were sworn to such peculiarity. Therefore the management of ICMBio, the participation of the (governing body) needs to improve its intervention with communities and , in fact, taken in order to prevent the loss of local credibility , as well as ensure compliance with the objectives of this conservation unit they are protecting the

livelihoods and culture of these populations , and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources of the unit.

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