

## **Robert B. Davenport, Ph.D.**

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Environmental Anthropologist | Agrarian Change | Political Ecology |  
Amazonian Land-Use Transitions | Latin America

### **RESEARCH PROFILE**

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Interdisciplinary environmental anthropologist specializing in agrarian transformations, land-use change, and socio-environmental governance in Amazonia and Latin America. My research integrates political ecology, environmental anthropology, and mixed-methods approaches to examine rural livelihoods, agroforestry transitions, territorial governance, and differentiated socioecological trajectories across frontier regions.

My work focuses on transitions from extensive cattle systems to perennial agroforestry (especially cacao), analyzing how these shifts reshape land use, labor, livelihoods, and ecological knowledge under uneven conditions of access, infrastructure, and institutional support. I engage critically with sociobioeconomy and sustainability frameworks, emphasizing grounded empirical research across diverse communities.

Field-based research across Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, and broader Latin America, with additional experience in international development, human rights research, and policy-oriented institutional work.

### **RESEARCH AREAS / ÁREAS DE PESQUISA**

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- Agrarian change and land-use transitions in tropical frontier regions
- Amazonian rural livelihoods and multifunctional landscapes
- Agroforestry transitions (cattle-to-cacao systems)
- Political ecology of sustainability and bioeconomy agendas
- Territorial governance, land rights, and environmental policy
- Indigenous and peasant ecological knowledge systems
- Tropical soils, land management, and ethnopedology
- Agroecology, food systems, and peri-urban transformation
- Mixed-methods research (ethnography, surveys, GIS, institutional analysis)

### **ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS**

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#### **Postdoctoral Research Associate**

Michigan State University – Center for Global Change and Earth Observations | 2025–2026

- Research on Amazonian land-use transitions, sociobioeconomy policy, and territorial governance
- Interdisciplinary analysis of rural development, sustainability policy, and community-level dynamics

#### **Affiliate Research Scholar**

William & Mary – Department of Anthropology | 2024–2025

- Research on Xikrin-Kayapó ethnodelopment, Indigenous economies, and sociobiodiversity initiatives

### **Visiting Researcher (Voluntary)**

Federal University of Pará, Altamira, Brazil | 2023–2024

- Led research on agroforestry transitions, cacao landscapes, and rural livelihoods
- Integrated ethnographic fieldwork, geospatial analysis, and policy research

### **Visiting Scholar**

Federal University of Minas Gerais – Center for Remote Sensing, Brazil | 2016

### **Researcher**

CATIE – Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center, Costa Rica | 2011–2013

- Research on REDD+ governance, forest policy, and watershed systems

## **EDUCATION**

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Ph.D., Anthropology

University of California, Santa Cruz | 2021

M.Sc., Conservation and Management of Tropical Forests and Biodiversity (with honors)

CATIE, Costa Rica | 2013

M.A., Latin American Studies (with honors)

University of Texas at Austin | 2008

B.A., Anthropology (with honors)

Reed College / University of Mississippi | 1993

## **PUBLICATIONS**

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### **Manuscripts Under Review**

Davenport, R.B., Carrero, G.C., Hecht, S.B., Calvi, M.F., Braga, D.P.P., Martenexen, L.F.M.

“Separating the Cows from the Cacao in the Brazilian Amazon: Identifying Smallholder Landscape Transformation.” (under review)

Davenport, R.B., Santos Junior, J.B.

“After the Plantation: Revisiting Soil Politics and Chácara Experience off the Transamazon Highway.” (under review)

### **Book Project**

*Amazons of Ruin and Resurgence: Labor, Ecology and Land System Transformations in Brazil’s Global Hinterland.*

### **Peer-Reviewed Articles**

Crandall, S.G., Ohayon, J.L., de Wit, L.A., Hammond, J.E., Melanson, K.L., Davenport, R.B. (2018).

“Best Practices: Social Research Methods to Inform Biological Conservation.”

*Australasian Journal of Environmental Management* 25(1): 6–23.

Davenport, R.B., Vivan, J.L., May, P.H., Nunes, P.C., de Vargas, L.N., Costa, W.L.S., Oliveira, A.R., Rajão, R.L. (2017).

“Adaptive Forest Governance in Northwestern Mato Grosso, Brazil: Pilot Project Outcomes Across Agrarian Reform Landscapes.”

*Environmental Policy and Governance* 27(5): 453–471.

Davenport, R.B., May, P.H., Nogueira, P., Nunes, P.C. (2017).

“A Policy Mix to Prevent a Non-Commons Tragedy for Collective Forest Reserves in Agrarian Settlements in Northwest Mato Grosso.”

*Revista de Economia Contemporânea* 20(2): 405–429.

### **Book Chapters**

Davenport, R.B., May, P.H., Nunes, P.C. (2018). “Extratativismo e Manejo da Castanheira: Experiência no Noroeste de Mato Grosso.” In *Economia do Meio Ambiente: Teoria e Prática*. Elsevier.

May, P.H., Davenport, R.B., Nogueira, P., Nunes, P.C. (2017). “Collective Forest Reserves in Agrarian Reform Settlements.” In *Brazil in the Anthropocene: Conflicts between predatory development and environmental policies*. Routledge.

### **Essays / Digital Scholarship**

Davenport, R.B. (2021). “Between Emptied Frontiers and Fungal Agroforests in the Brazilian Amazon.” *Society of Cultural Anthropology* (Hot Spot series).

### **Reports**

Davenport, R.B. (2007). “Obstacles to the Realization of the Rights of Afro-Colombians: A Report on the Development of Ley 70 of 1993.” Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

### **Book Reviews**

Bouley, P. et al., including Davenport, R.B. (2015).

“Large-Scale Forest Restoration.” *Restoration Ecology*.

### **GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS**

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National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (2018)

Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship (2016)

Research and Innovation Fellowship for Agriculture, University of California, Davis (2017)

Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, U.S. Department of Education

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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**Instructor of Record** University of California, Santa Cruz | 2021–2022

Brazilian Amazon Cultures and Environments

- Designed interdisciplinary course on agrarian change, ecological systems, and environmental justice
- Integrated lectures, documentary media, group analysis, and interactive exercises

**Teaching Assistant (Selected Courses)** University of California, Santa Cruz | 2013–2021

- Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture
- Cultures of Sustainability and Social Justice
- Latin American Ethnographies
- Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
- Biological Anthropology
- Introduction to Archaeology
- Central America
- Introduction to Latin American and Latino Studies

**Guest Lecturer (Graduate Level)**

National University of Colombia, Palmira (2025)

Federal University of Pará (2025)

## **FIELD RESEARCH & REGIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Brazil – Pará (Transamazon Highway Region)**

- Agroforestry transitions and cacao expansion
- Rural livelihoods and land-use differentiation
- Indigenous trade systems and ethnodevelopment initiatives
- Soil management and agroecological knowledge

**Brazil – Mato Grosso**

- Forest governance and agrarian reform settlements
- Environmental policy and frontier institutions

**Colombia – Valle del Cauca**

- Agroecology networks and peri-urban food systems
- Community-based development initiatives

**Additional Experience**

- Costa Rica (forest governance, REDD+)
- Afghanistan and Guatemala (development and communications work)

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

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- Long-term ethnographic fieldwork
- Semi-structured interviews and surveys
- Participatory research methods
- GIS and remote sensing (ArcGIS, ENVI)
- Statistical analysis (R, SPSS)
- Qualitative analysis (MAXQDA)
- Institutional and policy analysis

## **APPLIED RESEARCH, POLICY & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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### **Consultant** (Proposal Development)

Conexsus, Brazil | 2020

- Developed proposals for international funding supporting Amazon cooperatives and sociobiodiversity value chains

### **Researcher**

Robert F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights | Washington, DC | 2007

- Produced policy analysis on Afro-Colombian territorial rights (Ley 70)

### **Communications and Media Production**

Search for Common Ground | Washington, DC | Postproduction Supervisor 2008-10

Creative Associates International | Washington, DC | Documentaries for USAID Missions to Afghanistan and Guatemala | 2003–2005

New York Times Television | New York, NY | *Science Times* National Geographic Channel | 2001–2002

## **FILM & DOCUMENTARY WORK**

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Raiz das Coisas (The Root of Things), CounterCamera Films (2017)

Jorge e Juruena, CounterCamera Films (2014)

Beating Chevron to the Punch, Rainforest Action Network (2010)

Colombia: Free and Fair Elections?, Global Exchange / Link TV (2010)

Testimonios Después de la Pandilla, AECID (2008)

En Busca de una Vida Digna, University of Texas (2007)

Afghanistan Primary Education Program, Creative Associates (2004)

## **SELECTED PRESENTATIONS & POLICY ENGAGEMENT**

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“A Sociobioeconomia dentro do Prosaf Xingu e as Possibilidades de Inovação ou Adaptação”  
UNFCCC COP30 Climate Conference, Belém, Brazil (2025)

“Alternatives to a Tropical Plantationocene or Perennial Commodity Frontier?”

American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting (2024)

“Cacao vs the Cow: Institutional and Production Dynamics of Perennial Crops”  
International Society for Ecological Economics (2023)

“Terras Mistas: Soil Lifeworlds and Peasant Resurgence”  
Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America (2023)

Additional presentations at American Anthropological Association and international conferences

## **LANGUAGES**

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English (Native)  
Spanish (Fluent)  
Portuguese (Fluent)

## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

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### **Peer Reviewer:**

*Ecological Economics*  
*AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment*

### **Professional Memberships:**

International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE)  
American Association of Geographers (AAG)  
American Anthropological Association (AAA)  
Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America (SALSA)  
Sociedad Científica Latinoamericana de Agroecología (SOCLA)

## **REFERENCES**

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Available upon request.