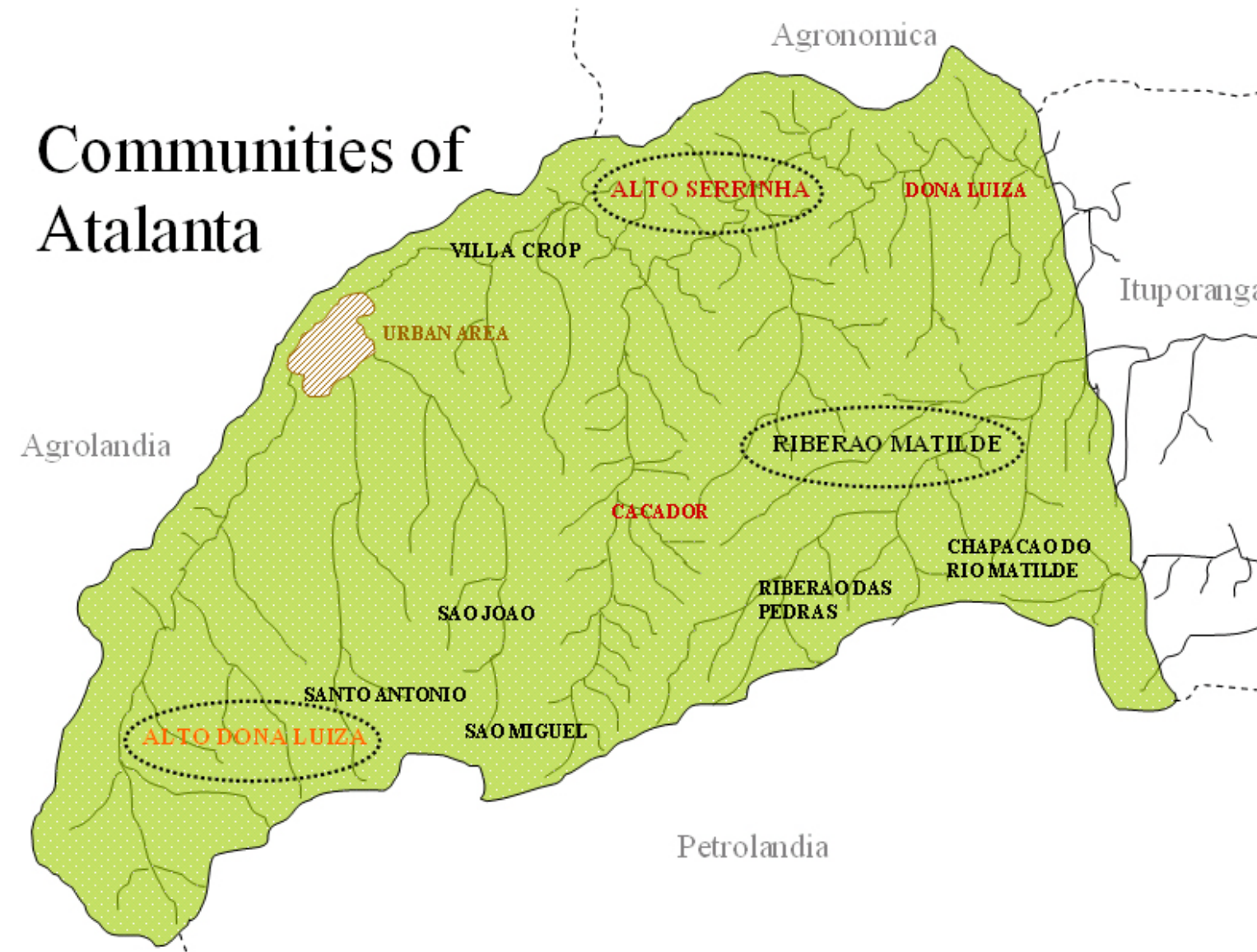
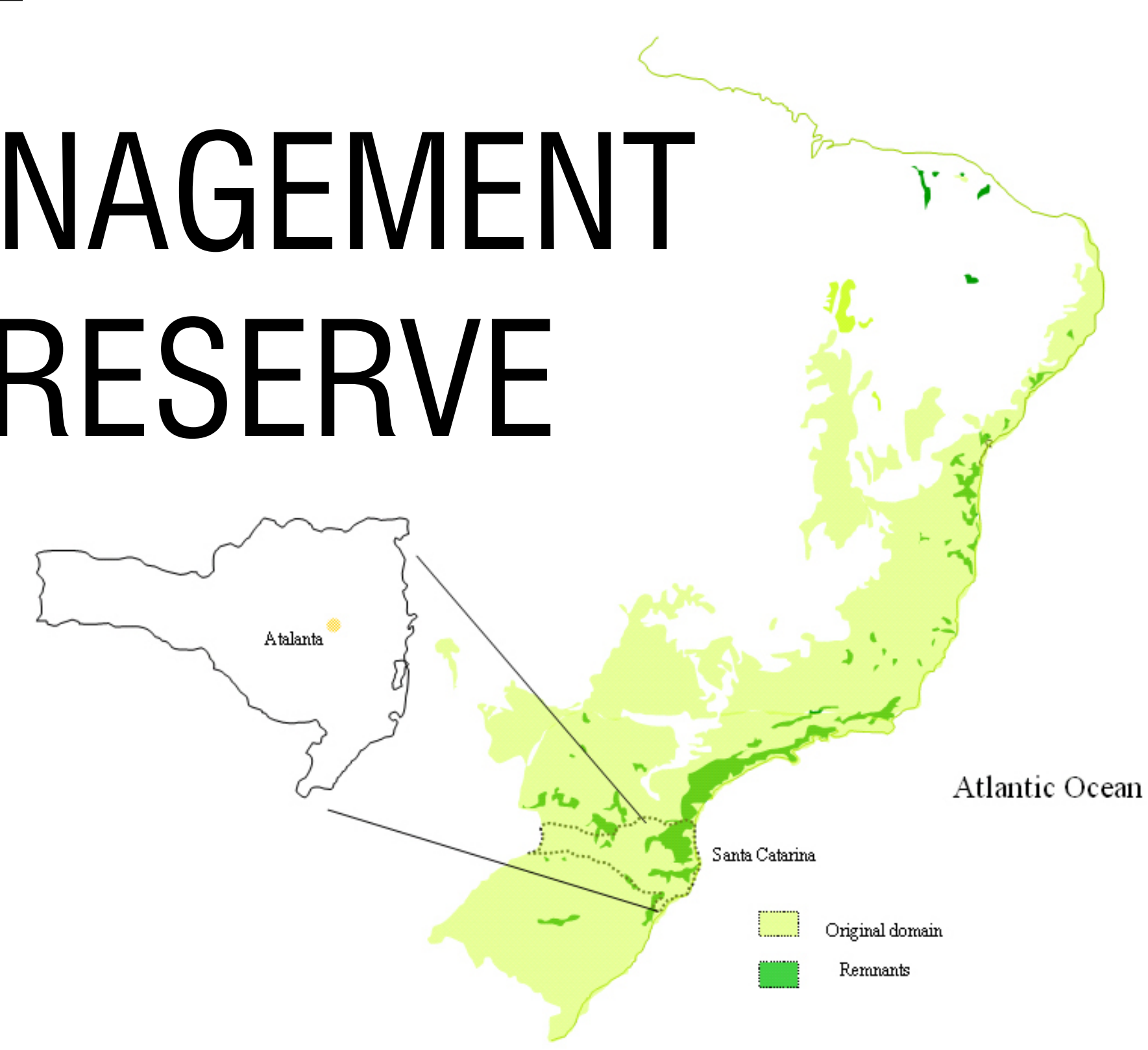


PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH & LAND-USE-MANAGEMENT IN THE ATLANTIC RAINFOREST BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The case of tobacco farmers in Atalanta-Santa Catarina-Brazil



Orange: Community of Alto Dona Luiza, where APREMAVI is located
 Brown: Urban Area of the municipality
 Red: Communities with most impoverished families
 Framed: Researched area and performance of reforestation activities

GENERAL PROBLEMS:

- ⇒ Land degradation: deforestation, soil erosion and water contamination due to monocultural tobacco farming
- ⇒ Impoverishment and health problems
- ⇒ Poor communication between local conservationists (APREMAVI) and farmers
- ▶ Farmers' needs can not be identified
- ▶ Poor information transfer about development objectives from APREMAVI to the farmers

OBJECTIVES & QUESTIONS:

- ⇒ Reforestation of degraded farmlands with native tree species
- ⇒ Introduction of fruit trees to diversify tobacco monoculture and to supply farmers with an alternative income possibility
- ⇒ In-depth study of the cultural and socio-economic 'reality' of tobacco farmers in order to understand reasons for land degradation and to find practical solutions
- ⇒ What are farmers' perceptions and expectations regarding the project?
- ⇒ How can they benefit from research activities and find new perspectives for local development?



METHODOLOGY:

- ⇒ Land-use management is a transdisciplinary, participatory and iterative process
- ⇒ Intensive dialogue between all participants (researcher, farmers and members of APREMAVI) to exchange knowledge and inspiration
- ⇒ Development of theoretical understanding from systematically gathered and analyzed **qualitative data** (Grounded Theory)
- ⇒ Data collection through informal dialogue, observations and semi-structured interviews

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS:

- ⇒ Farmers are trapped in a vicious circle of debt dependence because of contractual obligations to tobacco companies ("integrated production system") and have little chance to improve their situation economically & socially
- ⇒ Farmers are aware of environmental changes but forced to exploit forest for survival and have no financial means to restore it
- ⇒ Farmers' perception that their fates are beyond their control leads to frustration and helplessness
- ⇒ Poor information exchange leads to misunderstandings about the local conservation objectives of APREMAVI which in turn causes distrust and enlarges communication gap
- ⇒ Different cultural backgrounds and status differentiation hinders members of APREMAVI to listen & learn from farmers

SOLUTIONS FOR BEST MANAGEMENT:

- ⇒ Land-use change through progressive social transformation is a long-term process and relies on:
 - ▶ Facilitation and inspiration from 'outsiders'
 - ▶ Empowerment and capacity building of local people (NGOs should invest in educating young rural people)
- ⇒ Grass-roots development and conservation activities need to be fully adjusted to the working routine of farmers
- ⇒ Communication skills and information exchange should be improved
- ⇒ Further empirical research on the socio-economic situations in rural communities of Atlantic Rainforest is needed

PROMISING RESULTS:

- ⇒ Strong motivation and a process of reciprocal trust, respect and learning initiated farmers' self-criticism and re-establishment of their approach to nature protection
- ⇒ Farmers got inspired and hopeful towards improved life-quality that created incentives for individual action and immediate conversion of ideas into practice
- ⇒ Through joint efforts of farmers, the researcher and the members of APREMAVI, the project introduced approx. 7.000 native seedlings on 15 degraded tobacco farms
- ⇒ Some farmers showed interest in experimenting with organic agriculture and expressed desire to gradually reduce the area used for tobacco cultivation