

Fábio Zuker

Anthropologist
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Research interests: Environmental Studies, Anthropology, Science and Technology Studies, Latin American Studies, Planetary Health, Amazon Forest, Food, Climate and Finance, Industrial Agriculture, Deforestation and Land Use, Infrastructures and Indigenous Politics

EDUCATION

2018-2022 Ph.D. in Social Anthropology, Universidade de São Paulo (Brazil)

2022 Visiting Researcher, Cornell University (USA)

2013-2015 Master's Degree in Sciences Sociales
Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (France)
Mention très bien

2008-2011 Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences, Universidade de São Paulo (Brazil)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Present: Researcher at the University of São Paulo - appointment with the Institute for Brazilian Studies and the Department of Anthropology, and Associate Researcher at José Luiz Setúbal Foundation

Main activities: teaching the course *Plantation and Counter-Plantations*; teaching the course *Anthropology of Science and the Environment*; writing, editing, and submitting papers on planetary health; writing a book based on my doctoral research under contract with the University of California Press; and cross-departmental teaching activities.

Affiliate Researcher, Fluid Futures Initiative (Princeton University), Anthropologie de la Vie (Collège de France-Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale), Maison du CNRS-USP (*Transitions environnementales à l'ère de l'Anthropocène* Project) and National Institute of Science and Technology IARA-Health (Brazil)

2024: Postdoctoral researcher at the Collège de France (Paris, France), with Perig Pitrou.

2023 - 2024: Postdoc at Princeton University - appointment with the High Meadows Environmental Institute and the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies

Main activities: teaching the course *Indigenous Worldings*, consolidation of my doctoral research with the writing and submission of two research articles to peer-reviewed journals; elaborating on and submitting my book proposal to different academic presses; researching within the project engaging Indigenous Ecologies of Knowledge in collaboration with ecologists and Indigenous experts; and beginning of a new research on the Bananal Island's river damming.

2017 - 2022: Environmental journalism

Journalistic coverage of environmental issues, human rights violations, and climate change mainly in the Amazon rainforest. Words at The Guardian, National Geographic, Wired, Reuters, among others.

PUBLICATIONS

A) Books

Zuker, Fábio. (under contract with University of California Press). The Other Bank of the Tapajós River: Planetary Health at the Frontiers of Amazonian Deforestation.

Zuker, Fábio. 2022. The Life and Death of a Minke Whale in the Amazon: Dispatches from the Brazilian Rainforest. Mineápolis: Milkweed Editions. **Selected Media:** [New York Times](#), [The Economist](#), [Los Angeles Review of Books](#)

Zuker, Fábio. 2020. Em Rota de Fuga: ensaios sobre escrita, medo e violência (Escape Route: Essays on Writing Fear and Violence). São Paulo: Hedra. [Available in Portuguese](#)

B) Peer-Reviewed Articles

Zuker, Fábio (Submitted). Toxic Traces: Uncertainties, Ethnography, and the Visibility of Harm in the Use of Pesticides. [Revista de Antropologia](#).

Zuker, Fábio. 2025. Expulsion by suffocation: soybean plantations, toxicity, and land grabbing in the Brazilian Amazon. [Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space](#).

Zuker, Fábio. 2024. Destroying the territory, weakening the body: an essay on food, illness, and *quebranto* among the Tupinambá of the Lower Tapajós. [Maná](#).

Levis, Carolina; Rezende, Justino Sarmento; Barreto, João Paulo Lima; Barreto, Silvio Sanches; Baniwa, Francy; Sateré-Mawé, Clarinda; **Zuker, Fábio**; Alencar, Ane; Mugge, Miqueias; Simon De Moraes, Rodrigo; Fuentes, Agustín; Hirota, Marina; Fausto, Carlos; Biehl, João. 2024. Indigenizing conservation science for a sustainable Amazon. [Science](#).

Zuker, Fábio. 2017. La forme entre la culture et la nature : Phasmides de Daniel Steegmann Mangrané. *Artologie*, v. 10, p. 864. [Available in French](#).

Zuker, Fábio. 2016. Apontamentos para uma antropologia política do tempo. *Cadernos de Campo* (USP), v. 25, p. 57. [Available in Portuguese](#).

C) Book Chapters

Zuker, Fábio. (Forthcoming). “Legalizing Deforestation: The Financial Architecture of Amazon Cattle Laundering.” In *The Palgrave Handbook of the International Relations of the Amazon*, edited by Christoffer Guldberg, Thomas Froehlich, Thaís Tartalha, and Ana Flávia Barros-Platiau. Forthcoming from Palgrave Macmillan.

Zuker, Fábio; Malmaceda, Ana; and Lucas Maciel. (Forthcoming). “Crop Wars in Brazil: Towards a Counter-Colonial Ecology.” Accepted for inclusion in an edited volume edited by Banu Subramaniam and Sushmita Chatterjee. Forthcoming from Bloomsbury.

Zuker, Fábio. 2022. “Can you imagine all of this becoming soy?”: Monocultures and infrastructure in the Lower Tapajós. In: Infraestrutura para produção de commodities e povos etnicamente diferenciados.. Mórula Editorial & Museu Nacional/UFRJ. [Available in Portuguese](#)

D) Selected Essays

“Expulsion by suffocation”: how soy expansion and herbicide use are displacing Amazonian communities. [The Conversation](#).

Carbofascism: Authoritarian regimes such as those of Bolsonaro, Putin, and Trump make the massive burning of carbon a pillar of their offensive against the liberal-democratic order. [Revista Serrote](#). [Available in Portuguese](#).

Brazil plans new Amazon routes linking the Pacific & China’s New Silk Road. 2025. [Mongabay](#)

Figures of Finance: Poisons, Viruses, and Infrastructures in the Amazon Forest. 2024. [Weird Economies](#)

Ashes to Ashes: On Combustion and Tyranny. 2023. [E-flux Journal#137](#)

Ecological warfare and authoritarianism. 2023. [O Joio e o Trigo](#). [Available in Portuguese](#)

The coveted legacy of the ‘Man of the Hole’ and his cultivated Amazon forest. 2023. [Mongabay](#)

A forest in flames. Piseagrama, Belo Horizonte, [seção Extra!](#), 2020. [An English version of this text can be found in my book The Life and Death of a Minke Whale in the Amazon](#)

Jair Bolsonaro: masas, virus y poder. 2020. [Revista de la Universidad Autonoma de Mexico](#).

E) Reviews

Zuker, Fábio & Jessica Ferreiro Cardoso (2025). Review of: Glyphosate & the Swirl: an Agroindustrial Chemical on the Move. [Revista de Antropologia](#).

Zuker, Fábio. Review of: *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. 2019 Cadernos De Campo, São Paulo, 28(1), 319-324, [Available in Portuguese](#).

Zuker, Fábio. Review of: *The Ends of the World*, by Débora Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. Artelogie [En ligne], 10 | 2017. [Available in French](#).

Zuker, Fábio. Review of: *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds*, by Marisol de la Cadena. Revista de Antropologia da Universidade de São Paulo. 60 (2), 642-646, 2017. [Available in Portuguese](#).

F) Selected Journalism

'In Bananal, God no longer decides whether there's water – farmers, and agribusiness do'. [The Guardian](#), with Avener Prado.

The coveted legacy of the 'Man of the Hole' and his cultivated Amazon forest. [Mongabay](#) + [Podcast at Rádio Novelo](#)

Analyses review that 59% of the rivers inhabited by Yanomami are impacted by illegal mining and encroachment. [Folha de São Paulo](#) e [InfoAmazonia](#), with Carol Dantas.

Global craze for collagen linked to Brazilian deforestation [The Guardian](#) + [The Bureau of Investigative Journalism](#), with Elisangela Mendonça and Andrew Wasley.

'This land belonged to us': Nestlé supply chain linked to disputed Indigenous territory [The Guardian](#) + [The Bureau of Investigative Journalism](#), with Elisangela Mendonça and Andrew Wasley.

A Pandemic Tragedy on Brazil's Lago Verde. [Wired](#)

Next pandemic? Amazon deforestation may spark new diseases. [Thomson Reuters Foundation](#)

GRANTS and AWARDS

Academic Grants

- 2026. Carlsberg Foundation (with Peter Krogh Andersen) - \$77,000.00
- 2024. Ibirapitanga Institute - \$8,000.00
- 2024. Bourse Terrée - Collège de France | Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale (Paris) - \$6,000.00
- 2023-2024. Princeton University Center for Health & Wellbeing Grant - \$10,000.00
- 2018-2022. Doctoral Fellowship from São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) - \$40,000.00

Journalism Grants

Between 2019 and 2023, I received four grants from the Pulitzer Center's Rainforest Journalism Fund, along with a grant from Agência Pública and the Josué de Castro Chair, to support fieldwork across the Brazilian Amazon. These funds enabled reporting on food insecurity, environmental degradation, climate change, the disappearance of fish, COVID-19 disinformation among Indigenous communities, and the impacts of soy expansion and agrochemicals. The resulting features, documentaries, and podcast were published in *The Guardian*, *Mongabay*, *Agência Pública*, and *Le Monde Diplomatique Brasil*.

Academic Award

- 2023. University of São Paulo Award for PhD dissertation in the humanities

Journalism Award

- 2024. [Covering Climate Now](#) Journalism Awards Winner, with Elisangela Mendonça and Andrew Wasley.
- 2023. [Short-listed Foreign Press Association Media Award](#)

Finalist for the [Covering Climate Now](#) Journalism Awards

TAUGHT COURSES

These are all courses that I independently designed and taught, with a clear focus on Latin America. I received formal evaluations only for the course I taught at Princeton, where my work was widely recognized, particularly for its participatory methodology and for addressing critical intersections between environmental issues, social inequalities, climate change, plantation systems, and toxicity, among other themes.

- 2025. Anthropology of Science: Environmental Conflicts and Climate Change. University of São Paulo

- 2024. [Understanding the new authoritarian movements](#). SESC-SP Research Center

Plantation and Counter-Plantation. University of São Paulo
Socio-environmental Narratives Workshop. Pulitzer Center/Federal University of Acre

2023. Indigenous Worldings. Princeton University
Political anthropology in the Amazon. SESC-SP Research Center

2022. Socio-environmental Narratives Workshop. Pulitzer Center/Federal University of Pará

2020. Nonfiction Writing Workshop. Publication Studio SP.

SELECTED LECTURES

Conferences and presentations

“Fieldwork and Socioenvironmental Conflicts in the Amazon.” International Colloquium Worlds in Transition: New Approaches to Fieldwork, Maison du CNRS-USP, São Paulo, Brazil, September 17–19, 2025.

The Political Ecology of the Far-Right in the Brazilian Amazon. Keynote speaker. Fiocruz - Rio de Janeiro. 06/26/2025

The Magic of the Numbers and Deforestation. IT University of Copenhagen. 05/16/2025

Financialization of the Amazon Forest. Centro de Estudos Sociais - Universidade de Coimbra. 02/11/2025

Expulsion by Suffocation. Presentation at Atelier des Millieux, Sciences Po. 12/12/2024.

Plantation Violence in the Amazon: Finance, monoculture, toxicity, and expulsion by suffocation. As part of the symposium Neoliberal Natures: Green Extractivism and Abolition Ecologies in the Anthropocene - High Meadows Environmental Institute - Princeton University. 12/08/2023.

An Ethnography of the Destruction of the Amazon: Soy plantations, and the use of pesticides. Princeton Postdoctoral Council Seminar. Princeton University, 11/07/2023.

Direita, volver. Minas Mundo forum at Princeton University, 11/04/2023.

Investigative journalism and narrative approaches. University of California Berkeley. 10/25/2023.

An Evidential Ethnography of the Destruction of the Amazon: Soy Plantations and the Use of Pesticides Conference at Brown University. 04/14/2023.

Plantations, Autoritarismo e Guerra Ecológica no Brasil. Conference at Brown University. 04/13/2023.

Indigenizing Power in Brazil Now. Princeton University, 04/07/2023. Together with Rodrigo Simon, Samra Pataxó, and Txai Suruí

“Imagine all of this turning into soy”: an ethnography of the use of pesticides as a political technology to destroy the Amazon

forest. Conference at IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark, 02/15/2023.

The Life and Death of a Minke Whale in the Amazon. University of Chicago Center for Latin American Studies, Chicago, Illinois. 05/11/2022, with Victoria Saramago.

Composing Toxic Landscapes: An Evidential Ethnography of the Destruction of the Amazon Forest and the Creation of Soy Monocultures. Cornell University. Latin American and Caribbean Studies. 04/21/2022

Participation in Academic Events

40th Annual International Conference on Narrative. Narrating Climate-Environmental Transformations in the Bananal Island (Brazil). 2025..

Arboviruses in the Anthropocene: Critical Global Health Approaches to Infectious Disease Resurgence (University College of London). Environmental damage, climate change, and arboviruses in the Brazilian Amazon-Cerrado transition zone. 2025..

“Agrinecrocapitalism”. American Anthropological Association annual meeting in Toronto - Transitions. It was presented in the context of the oral Presentation Panel titled “Expressing Socioecological Change: Embodied Narratives from Lowland South America”, organized by Lindsay Ofrias and Vinicius de Aguiar Furui. Discussant: Michael Cepek. Held between November 15 to 19, 2023.

“Cornered between climate change and socio-environmental conflicts: Indigenous communities and forced migration in Latin America”. It was presented during the workshop Peacebuilding, Climate Change, and Migration, organized by Rebecca Slayton and Karim-Aly Kassam. Reppy Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies da Cornell University held between March 22 and 24, 2022.

“Creating empty spaces: notes for an anthropology of pesticides” in the Thematic Seminar “Agricultures, ecologies and the ruins of capitalism” (debater: Guilherme Moura Fagundes), during the Research Meeting “Agriculture, knowledge and alternatives: limits and possibilities of intertwined worlds” (Agrisal), held between October 14 and 16, 2020 with the promotion of the Postgraduate Program in Social Anthropology (PPGAS) of the Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas da Universidade Estadual de Campinas.

Organization of academic events

Organizer and Speaker — Seminar “Big Data and the Ecological Transition: Who and what Counts?” *University of São Paulo, December 2.* Co-organized with Fabrice Bardet, Ruy Braga, Lena Lavinas, and Cibele Rizek. The event brought together leading scholars, policymakers, data specialists, and Indigenous representatives to discuss the political uses of quantitative metrics in environmental governance.

Symposium coordinator “Los conflictos ambientales en las lógicas de la alteridad”. Organized with Lucas Maciel and Diana Paola Gomes), in the context of the VI Congreso de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Antropología “Desafíos emergentes: antropologías desde América Latina y el Caribe (VI Congress of the Latin American Association of Anthropology “Emerging Challenges: Anthropologies from Latin America and the Caribbean”). 2022.

LANGUAGES

English (Excellent Reading and Speaking, Advanced Writing)

Spanish (Excellent Reading and Speaking, Advanced Writing)

French (Excellent Reading and Speaking, Intermediate Writing)

Italian (Intermediate Reading and Speaking, Elementary Writing)