



**STRUGGLE FOR THE AMAZON:
CAPITALIST PROJECT**



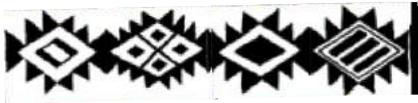
**WORKER AND LOCAL
COMMUNITIES' PROJECT**

MST - LANDLESS RURAL WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra - MST
Via Campesina Brasil - Região Amazônica



EXPEDIENT



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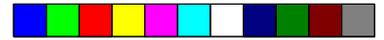


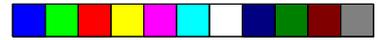
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PRESENTATION

We are presenting this first reader, which compiles texts from scholars and social militants, covering some of the issues about the Amazon, which we are interested in spreading, discuss and look at the facts in depth about this reality.

The texts present the interests, dispute and the consequences of the struggle between two large political and economic projects for the Amazon region. On one hand, the project of capital, which has been perpetuated since the Brazil - Colonial; and on the other, the historical project from traditional populations, who have their lives and routes in the Amazon.

In the last few decades, with the offensive of the so called neo-liberal globalization, there was a true avalanche of transnational corporations taking control of the natural resources in the region, literally promoting a theft of the wealth which belongs to the Brazilian people and humanity and humanity as whole. Seeking easy, quick and astronomical profits, transnational corporations promote an irrational environmental exploitation and aggravate even further the already shameful poverty existent in the region.

On the other hand, there is a project that does not seek profit at all cost, but rather the peaceful coexistence between human beings and nature, preserving our cultural riches and towards the construction of a sustainable society grounded on the principles of solidarity, social justice and equality. The greed of capital has been aggravated with neo-liberalism, but there was also resistance from indigenous, *quilombolas* [traditional afro-descendent communities], peasants and *ribeirinhos* [communities living along rivers], who engage in social struggles to face the spoliation of our natural resources.

With the studies presented here and from the understanding of the social, economic, political and environmental reality, we believe that we will be in a better position to understand the interests at stake. By doing so, we will be better equipped to understand the interests that are involved in the dispute. Therefore we have a clearer understanding to actively participate in the decisions that define the policies over this enormous heritage of the Brazilian people and of common interest to humanity as a whole.

The Amazon possesses reaches in terms of land, biodiversity, water, minerals, sources of energy, forests, agricultural production and the thousand year old knowledge from indigenous communities, blacks, *ribeirinhos* and peasants. This territory and its immense wealth cannot remain as a monopoly of transnational corporations.

We believe that the Amazon has the conditions and potential to signal to the world the need and feasibility of a new economic development model, allied to the environmental protection, in that way assuring better living conditions to the local population.

But this will only happen if the people are the protagonist of this history. If the exploitation of the region remains being dictated by the interests of transnational corporations, we are certainly approaching a socio-environmental disaster of unforeseen consequences. Those are the two projects which are in dispute in the region and we want to discuss them with society.

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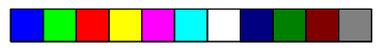
We see that the next few years will be crucial for the future of the Amazon, which might be a space for sustainable survival for the human species and bio-diversity or be destroyed by transnational corporations and the dynamics of capital.

Therefore, we hope that the reading of this book will provide enough subsidies for a better understanding of the reality in the Amazon, with all its problems and potentials, since another world is possible.

Yours sincerely,

MST – Movement of Landless Rural Workers
Belém, January 2009 - World Social Forum





PART 1
REALITY OF THE AMAZON



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AMAZON, SIGN OF OUR LOSS OR OF OUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE?

Jean Pierre Leroy

Educator and advisor of Fase, author of *Uma chama na Amazônia*

The Amazon represents a great natural and cultural patrimony that humanity is inheriting. In advance, it seems necessary to clearly distinguish this patrimony and inheritance from the sphere of private properties that are reaping fruit and susceptible to negotiations in the market. Distributed among several countries that control territory in the region, the Amazon differs from the Antarctic, the oceans and space. Space and oceans, with the exception of the continental shelves, are declared the "common patrimony of humanity"¹. Antarctica, in its turn, is governed by a 1961 treaty that was completed by the Protocol of Madrid (1991) to which more than 450 countries agreed, that "consecrates the continent to peace and to science, prohibiting any military activity... and the exploitation of its mineral resources"².

However, Amazonia, because of its biological and genetic diversity, for its importance in the maintenance of the world's climate, for the diversity and the cultural richness of its peoples, must be free of any privatization or intention for private appropriation because it is an essential part of the sustenance of life on the planet. As part of our house, our οἶκος³ we ought to have for Amazonia the same affection that we have for the things that are dear to us.

In the world in which human responsibility extends itself to the whole of the planet, ethics is extended, according to the German philosopher Karl-Otto Apel to the macro-sphere, to the dimensions of the world, the third dimension of world citizenship⁴. For this reason, Amazonia is part of my house, as well as yours. However, the caretakers of Amazonia are its "communities", which means that for us to care for Amazonia means to care for its inhabitants.

The persistent imaginary myth of untouched nature from now on cohabits with the consciousness that the Amazon forest and its multiple ecosystems are being threatened. I limit myself here to the example of the Brazilian Amazon. The process of appropriation, private or public, of the resources of the region for the enrichment of the metropolis (more England than Portugal, in the case of Brazil) has the same age as colonization: more than 500 years. It began with the "drugs of the sertao" and knew its apogee with rubber. Today, the enterprises of cattle,

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¹ About space: treaty of 01/27/1967, appendix to Resolution 2222(XXI) of the UN General Assembly 12/19/1967 and Resolution 34/68 of the General Assembly of 12/05/1979. About the sea: Convention of Geneva about the High Seas, of 04/29/1958 and the UN Convention on the right to the sea (1982), ratified on 11/16/1994. See S. Sucharitkul. Evolution continue d'une notion nouvelle: le patrimoine commun de l'humanité. In: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/s5280T/s5280t14.htm>

² KOPP, Dominique: Début de guerre froide sur la banquise. **Le Monde Diplomatique**. September 2007.

³ An oikos ([grego](#): οἶκος, plural: ἱβέϊέ) is the equivalent of "house", a unit of goods and people, in ancient Greece.

⁴ APEL, K.O. **Sur le problème d'une fondation rationnelle de l'éthique à l'âge de la science**. Presses Universitaires de Lille, Lille, 1987.

logging, planting of grains, soy in particular, and now sugarcane, exploration for oil and hydroelectric plants, mining and metalurgy, building of roads—all present different characteristics. They are the tools by which the region is inserted into a specific model of national development, although the region still may be considered essentially as a provider of raw materials.

The cycles of exploitation of the resources of Amazonia until the 1960s demanded the preservation of the forest. Today, nearly in its totality, the enterprises demand or are accompanied by the destruction of the forest. The Brazilian Amazon extends for 5,217,423 Km²; between 3,500,000 and 4,092,000 Km² of forest according to the writers; between 847,000 and 1,500.000 Km² of *cerrado*⁵ and 90,000 Km² of water⁶.

Figure 1. www.bcdam.gov.br



COMPARAÇÃO DA ÁREA DA AMAZÔNIA COM A ÁREA DA EUROPA - NÃO SER TRADUZIDO??

Amazônia Brasileira:

80% da Amazônia Sul-Americana

Amazônia Legal:

58,8% do território brasileiro
67% das florestas tropicais do mundo

Dados da Biodiversidade*:

- Insetos: 10 a 15 milhões
- Plantas: 22% das espécies conhecidas
- Água: 20% da água doce do planeta
- Mamíferos: 524 espécies
- Anfíbios: 517 espécies
- Pássaros: 1.622 espécies
- Répteis: 468 espécies
- Peixes: 3.000

* Os dados são estimados

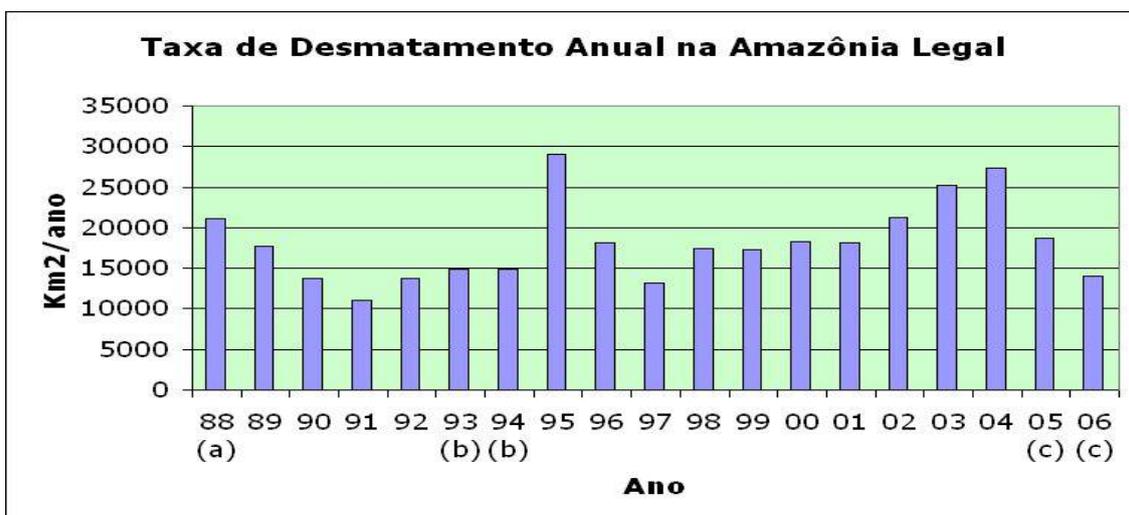
E ESSE?

⁵Brazilian ecosystem similar to a savanna, present in some parts of the Amazon and to the south of the forest.

⁶PASQUIS, Richard et alii: *As Amazônias. Uma visão dos atores. Primeiros resultados*. Brasília, Centro de Desenvolvimento sustentável - UNB, Mimeo, 2002.



The following table shows the dramatic evolution of deforestation, which destroyed more than 400,000 Km² of forest. It has remained above an average of 15,000 kilometers per year since 1988, with peaks of 29,059 in 1995 and 25,282 in 2003. It is worth noting the reduction to 14,039 in 2006, thanks in part to a reduction in price of commodities (soybeans and meat) in the world market and partly to the repressive actions of the federal government. Still it is a lot. Furthermore, the projects of investments in the Program for Acceleration of Growth launched in 2007 by the federal government⁷ and the boom in agro-fuels can reverse this picture. National Institute of Space Studies http://www.obt.inpe.br/prodes/prodes_1988_2006.htm



The consequences for Brazil and for the world are serious. 22% of all known plants come from the region. Its not strange, therefore, to consider that saving the biodiversity of Amazonia is important for food and health security in the future. Despite this, the subject of biodiversity did not sensitize world opinion as happened with the climate crisis, which is much more visible and in fact on this question, the Amazon biomass has an uneven importance. According to Antônio Nobre, of the National Institute of Space Studies, the Amazon forest functions as a regulator of the climate.

“The climate system of South America depends umbilically on Amazonia. By destroying the forest for agriculture, for example, we are shooting ourselves in the foot because the farms of the future are oing to be lacking water.”⁸ American north of Amazonia would also be affected. Even though there is controversy, the capture of carbon by the Amazon forest is mentioned. According to Paulo Moutinho and Marcio Santilli, recent studies show that “the forest is still growing”. It is capable of absorbing 6 billion tons (of greenhouse gas per year), the equivalent of 10% of the photosynthesis of the lands of the world”⁹.

⁷ www.fazenda.gov.br/portugues/releases/2007/r220107-PAC.pdf

⁸ Environment in Focus. 15 Abril, 2007 - 07:24h ROCHA, Délcio: <http://www.ambienteemfoco.com.br/?p=3594>

⁹ MOUTINHO, Paulo and SANTILLI, Marcio. International submission to UNFCCC/SBSTA. **Redução de emissões de GEE oriundas do desmatamento nos países em desenvolvimento**. Instituto de Pesquisas Ambientais da Amazônia – Ipam. P.3 http://unfccc.int/essential_background/library/items/3599.php?rec=j&preref=500003411



However this capacity is wiped out by deforestation and by fire, by the production of CO and methane because of cattle raising and the construction of dams. According to Moutinho and Santilli, "it is estimated that between 10% and 35% of global emissions [of gases that produce the greenhouse effect, in particular CO] are caused by tropical deforestation" ¹⁰. In Brazil "the emissions from deforestation correspond to 70% of the total carbon emissions, 30% coming from the burning of fossil fuels"¹¹, which puts Brazil on the front line of world-wide polluters.

Tragedy? Not so much, according to the ruling economic sectors. According to the logic of the world economy, the natural resources of our countries must serve the goals of capital and our resources must be transferred to the consumers of the global north. "North" of the world. What prevails is an economy of exports (farm products, minerals, etc.) and packaged in these, our natural resources: soils, water, biodiversity which are rapidly disappearing. Common goods do not enter, if not marginally, into the vocabulary of the market, but are precisely what we "export" on exporting commodities and "improve" the trade balance.

Potentially, all Brazilian territory is susceptible to private appropriation and to economic exploitation and those who are in the front ranks of this centuries-long movement in the direction of the countrys borders and beyond, installing themselves in particular in Paraguay and in Bolivia, do not consider Amazonia to be an exception. Its worth noting that the progress in agronomy has caused lands which were formerly considered incapable of producing, to be today incorporated into agriculture. When rural and forest communities leave the place where they live and produce, by persuasion or by force, they become strangled, symbolically fenced in and materially confined.

The image of encircling is interesting. The English laws that between 1760 and 1840 imposed enclosure on rural lands and ended their use in common, promoted in the same movement the re-concentration of property. To be a property owner was to have fenced-in lands. More than 30 years ago, the person visiting rural communities in the interior of the Northeast state of Maranhão, could see that it wasnt the latifundios that were fenced in but the small plots of mandioca, rice, and beans of the small producers, who protected themselves with crude fences from the extensive cattle raising. Now the cattle ranchers raise cattle intensively, with a focus on export, and they fence in their pastures. On the other hand, the producers of grains, sugar cane, eucalyptus, or cotton dont need fences, as in the era of the fencing of common lands in England in the 18th century. Today it appears that even space belongs to them.

Lets take the example of the plateau that is located in the municipalities of Santarém and Belterra, in the region of the River Tapajós, west of the State of Pará. Migrants from the Northeast, for the most part those left behind after the cycle of rubber, grouped in small towns, developed a diversified subsistence agriculture that furnished the local market. Around their properties there was still woods or second-growth land that allowed them to hunt, provided a little bit of wood for domestic use, and water in the waterways.

When the soy producers arrived in the region in the 1990s, attracted by the close proximity to the consumer markets, in a few years the family farmers and the landscape built by them had been swept away. Among others, the ten or so families of the Community of Tracua, in Belterra, who practiced traditional and diversified farming, tried to resist. Constant applications of agrotoxins poisoned their air, their waters, their bees, their fruit trees and their fields of crops, affecting their health and their income. Some left. The soy surrounded them. The school closed. Transportation became more scarce. The last family ended up leaving in 2006 for the outskirts of

¹⁰ Id. P.3

¹¹ Id. P.5

Santarém. A complex landscape transformed itself into low-growing uniformity. The “green desert” was born, the name give to the regions where eucalyptus is grown.

Lets transport ourselves from “solid ground” to the Amazonia of waters and fertile valleys. Rivers, waterways, small streams and lagoons, throughout time, were the object of predatory fishing and more recently, attracted the envy of the so-called industrial or fishing business. Progressively since the decade of the 1980s, riverside communities began to write and pass laws that regulate access to areas of fishing and to fishing itself: the seasons for fishing, the areas that are prohibited, the size and type of fish caught, the quantity for feeding the family or for sale, and access for foreigners. Today, these rules, which were born in the communities, were taken over partially by public power. The rarity of certain species such as the pirarucu¹² and the need to increase family incomes led to more technical management.

Traditionally for the populations who live alongside the rivers, even more so for the population in the Northeast, the activities of family reproduction are organized around the river or the lake or the riverbank, where they have their individual plots and common access to the forest, but almost as controlled as access to the waters. If the growing of grains and of sugarcane have just started, logging and cattle-raising that have been going on for a long time result in cutting down the forest and making it hard for small producers and farmers to access the forest. The agribusiness complex (the industry of farming and the businesses that flow from farming) today have a “totalitarian” aspect. Agribusiness does not tolerate living with other forms of life and production.

Paul Nicholson, of La Via Campesina, used this epithet when speaking of genetically-modified soybeans. The use of mechanical harvesters, of silos, and of transport systems means that there can be no guarantee that there will not be contamination. GMO corn will be worse because of the way its pollinated. We saw here that this “totalitarianism” has more facets. It cannot live together with other forms of rural and forest life. If the cattle farms keep the fences to protect their precious cattle, logging and farming is done without fences, since all the space belongs to them. It is the populations of small producers and people who make a living from forest products and the indigenous people who remain fenced in, with no way to flee. Without these communities, there is no one to protect the common goods for all of us.

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¹² The pirarucu (*Arapaima gigas*) is a fish of the Amazon Basin, specifically in the areas of the fertile valleys, where the waters are calmer. It lives in lakes and clear-water rivers that are lightly alkaline with temperatures that vary from 24 a 37C, and is not found in zones with strong currents and waters rich in sediments. It is one of the largest sweet water fish in the world. Its name come from an indigenous term “pira”, which means “fish” and “urucum”, red, owing to the color of its tail. Before its predatory fishing, it was called “the bacalhau of the poor”. **E-mail: a.ioris@abdn.ac.uk; web site: www.aces.ac.uk**



AMAZON, WATER AND LIFE

Antônio A. R. Ioris

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The characteristics and the dimensions of the Amazon Basin were always an unequalled source of life and of history. In 1542, Francisco de Orellana, the first European explorer who ventured into the source of the waters, baptized the main river with the mythology of the women warriors: the Great River of the Amazons. Since then, the more we learn about the waters, the more we are dazzled by them. With more than a thousand tributaries bursting from the two hemispheres, the great river releases 15.5% of all the outflow of the planet towards the sea.

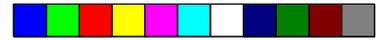
The annual average reaches 209,000 m³/s, with 64% of this outflow originating from inside the Brazilian borders. The tributaries descend from the mountain ranges and plateaus to invade an immense plain with altitudes no higher than 200 meters above sea level. The lower latitudes all guarantee a constant flow of solar energy throughout the year, which feeds a powerful hydrologic cycle. High rates of energy and humidity offer incomparable conditions for the development of an exuberant ecosystem. The main plant formation, called “dense forest ombrophila”, generally covers soils that are poor in minerals, making use of the recycling of nutrients and the abundance of water for its survival.

The interaction between the hydrologic system and the biological communities is so close that throughout time, the very development of the forest began to influence the climate. It is estimated that the average precipitation may be 2400mm/year, but of this total 1382mm/year returns to the atmosphere in the form of evapo-transpiration.¹³ The forest, however, is not only a result of the climate but the climatic conditions depend, to a great extent, on the forest cover. This means that despite the great quantity, there is no surplus water in Amazonia since the maintenance of the ecosystem depends on the available water. In the same way, the evolution of nature in Amazonia also counted on the action of social groups which, creatively and gradually, modified the composition of the forests, fields, and fertile valleys, in the same way that they modified the surface sources such as streams, waterways, lakes, in addition to the rivers themselves. Water is a vital and integral element in the universe that is a result of this permanent “metabolism” between society and nature. The socio-natural landscape of Amazonia is not external to social activity but it was lived intensely by our ancestors and left to current generations as the incarnation of its temporal experience, as a true monument to the continuity of life.

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¹³ Salati, E. 1985. The Climatology and Hydrology of Amazon. In: Amazonia. Key Environments. Pergamon Press: New York. pp. 18-48. More recent studies indicate that the recycling of rain appears to be lower (between 20 – 30%), which even so, is significant percent that influences the climate of a large part of South America.



Despite being the “Father of Waters” (according to the accurate name given by the poet Thiago de Melo), the pressures of economic development have increasingly compromised the ecological and social base of Amazonia. The problems of use and conservation of the waters are part of a destruction that serves political and economic short-term interests. The basic characteristic of the “development” model imposed on Amazonia is the demolition of the forest to give way to agriculture, to hydroelectric plants and mining (discussed in a following section). The removal of the forest invariably leads to the degradation of the waterways, at the same time as the construction of dams on the rivers has negative impacts on local nature and populations.

The onslaught against Amazonia is only the advanced stage of a anti-environmental, anti-human and, finally, anti-ecological economic regime, which, in the rest of the country, consolidated deep social inequalities, demonstrated in the increasing misery of the urban slums and in the chronic poverty of the rural areas. The difference between the destruction of Amazonia and what happens in the other regions is, on one hand, the speed with which the ecosystems are converted into transitory profits and, on the other hand, the socio-natural enormity of wounds left by “progress”.

Economic growth and degradation of the waters

If we understand the exploitation of the Americas as five centuries of a great experiment in human history, we can state that Amazonia, in the last five decades, represented the main “test laboratory” of Brazilian technocracy. The technocratic aberrations began even in the first years of the military dictatorship, when a region that makes up 54.4% of Brazilian territory and encloses 78% of the reserve of national sweet water was judged guilty by its geography and condemned to go through a process of domestication called “development”. Instead of preserving the ecosystems and natural resources, which are the fundamental basis for regional wealth, “development” was promoted as a frontal attack on natural stability and on the local populations. Acting through centralized planning and systemic corruption, the military freed up forces that quickly got out of control..and “Amazonia began its apocalypse”.¹⁴

The incorporation of the region into the dominant economic model was a deeply ideological process, formulated by the Brazilian government and encouraged by international financial organizations. Among the various activities that began to receive direct or indirect government incentives, history shows that short-term predatory agriculture (so-called “modern agriculture”) has the greatest power of devastation. The opening of farms in Amazonia was encouraged not only by fiscal benefits but also by legislation that unequivocally considers the removal of vegetation as “improvement” of the property.

Motivated by inconsequential government policies and by immediate economic gains, agricultural expansion in Amazonia produced one of the greatest processes of land privatization in the history of humanity, which is not only a social tragedy for the loss of resources of common use and the proletarianization of the local populations, but is also an ecological tragedy of planetary proportions. New farms began to be open starting in 1966, especially along the Belém-Brasília highway, the doomed Transamazôn Highway, the BR-364 highway (Cuiabá–Porto Velho, where more than 160,000 farmers were lured every year during the decade of the 1980s) and the BR-163 highway (Cuiabá–Santarém, in process of being paved, which threatens to speed up agricultural occupation even more).

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¹⁴ Hecht, S. and Cockburn, A. 1989. *The Fate of the Forest. Developers, Destroyers and Defenders of the Amazon.* Verso: London and New York. p. 122.



From the 1990s, relying on new farm technology, farmers began to depend less on direct incentives from the government to expand even more the production of grains and meat in Amazonia.¹⁵ A better transportation infrastructure, which included river transport, especially through the port of Santarém, also began to make possible the exploitation of even more remote areas.

Since the goal is to earn profits as quickly as possible, agriculture is expanded through chopping down the forest, following the use of fire to “clean” the soils. Trees that were hundreds of years old, which served as habitat for a countless number of plants, insects, birds and other animals, are disregarded and are burnt as if they were matchsticks. With the removal of the forest, in few years the ground loses the natural fertility and is exposed to significant processes of erosion. In the same way, deforestation produces significant alterations in the hydrologic cycle since the forest serves as a protection from the sun during the rainy season and a reserve for water during the dry season.

Without the forest, the outflows increase during the rainy period and are reduced during the dry period. Throughout the years, with fewer concentrations of vapor in the atmosphere, there is a tendency for the annual precipitation to progressively decrease.¹⁶ Its important to recognize that the calculation of the hydric balance of Amazonia is not a trivial exercise for the hydrologic models that are available today, since it is particularly difficult to show the correlation between deforestation, variations in the precipitation and in the outflow of the rivers.¹⁷ Despite such technical difficulties, there are clear indications of alterations in the cycle of the waters in severely deforested hydrographic basins in the southern part of Amazonia. New studies should confirm and deepen the understanding of the relation between deforestation and hydrologic variability.

The biggest part of deforestation is concentrated in the states of Pará, Mato Grosso and Rondônia, where large and medium-sized farms are responsible for 70% of the forest that has been removed. The rest of the deforestation is caused by small producers who generally arrive in Amazonia after being expelled from the northeast wilderness or from the large states of the central-south. The perversity of the Brazilian macroeconomic model brings about a close relationship between acceleration of the economy and deforestation in Amazonia. Between 1989 and 1994 there was a decline in the rate of deforestation because of the post-Cruzado Plan crisis.

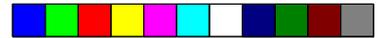
With the monetary stability offered by the Real Plan, the year of 1995 reached the highest peak of deforestation in the history of Amazonia. In August 2007, the Ministry of the Environment announced a drop in the rate of deforestation of 25% between 2005 and 2006, which unfortunately indicates that the aggression continues; only the rates are circumstantially less. The meat producers have taken advantage of the growth of the internal market and growing demand for animal protein in the countries that are beginning to be incorporated into the globalized market to expand cattle production in Amazonia (the per-capita consumption of meat in Brazil is between 38-40 kilograms per year, but it is a sector with a high elasticity of profit; this means that if there were an annual 2% increase of PIB, consumption would go up by 1kg per person per year).

¹⁵ Until 1991 the Brazilian government offered various forms of incentives and direct subsidies for those interested in “producing” in Amazonia. Since then, the incentives have been transformed into indirect support. Probably the greatest form of incentive today is the States tolerance of deforestation and illegal environmental destruction, expressed in the inability of the inspection agencies to halt these practices.

¹⁶ The relation between deforestation and decreasing precipitation, called dessication, was first described by Teofrasto around 300 AC (cf. Grove, R.H. 1995. Green Imperialism. Cambridge University Press).

¹⁷ The Amazon Basin has a particularly complex hydrology because of an extensive, very flat plain and its mosaic of plant cover. The calculation of the hydrologic variation needs to take into account not only the extent but also the spacial distribution of the deforested areas.





Strangely enough, the cattle ranchers, responsible for the majority of the deforestation, are incorporating elements of the environmentalists discourse as a justification for cattle-ranching activity in Amazonia. The role of the so-called “green ox”—that is, the production of cattle in extensive pastures with minimal zootechnical management, mineral supplementation and sanitary control, is more and more emphasized. In truth, such practices constitute the technological model currently adopted on the majority of farms.

They are only adding the term “green ox” or “organic meat” to differentiate Brazilian cattle production, basically in pastures, from the intensive production practiced in other countries (theoretically, but subject to illnesses caused by intensive and confined production, such as mad cow disease). Despite the apparent conversion by the cattle ranchers to the environmental cause, cattle production causes serious impacts on the soil, the flora and fauna and mainly on water resources.¹⁸ The fallacy of the “green ox” shows that with only an increase in efficiency and productive modernization there is no way to resolve the problems of water management, once the political and social issues that lead to environmental degradation are ignored.

The second process of appropriation and degradation of the waters of the Amazon in the service of “development” is the construction of dams for the creation of hydroelectric energy. Taking into account the regions particularities, especially the extensive plains, to build dams would be a highly reckless initiative. But when an authoritative political process is added to this, it is a perfect recipe for disaster. This has been the experience of the creation of hydroelectric energy in Amazonia. The first projects were Coaracy Nunes, in Amapá, and Curuá-Una, in Pará, but the worst example of incompetence was Balbina, a plant that furnishes Manaus with very low efficiency of creation in relation to the flooded area (.11 MW/km² in 4,438 km² flooded). The biggest impacts occurred in Tucuruí, where 2,430 km² of forest were flooded and more than 33,000 people (besides the indigenous population) had to be resettled.¹⁹ The Tucuruí dam inundated part of three indigenous areas (Parakanã, Pucuruí and Montanha), the effect of which was added to the impact of the transmission lines and the change of the route of the Trans-Amazon Highway to follow the western margin of the reservoir. As in so many other cases in Brazilian history, the indigenous groups lost their ancestral lands and began to feel in their skin the arrogance and the indifference of “development” policies.

The artificial lake Tucuruí led to the extinction of various biological species and to the proliferation of water-borne illnesses. In the early years, the lake presented very poor quality water because of the anaerobic decomposition of the vegetation and the criminal use of herbicides, added to the thermal and chemical stratification of the water. Many of these problems remain unsolved.

Despite the mistakes of the past, the threat of hydroelectric exploitation of Amazonia has never been as much on the agenda as now, since the region allegedly contains around 50% of the national electric potential. Eletrobrás Plan 2010 lists 297 sites suitable for the installation of new plants in the country, of which 79 are located in Amazonia. The main areas for expansion

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¹⁸ Even being designated as “organic meat”, the modern production of cattle consumes a volume of water that is greater by an order of magnitude in comparison with traditional ways of cultivation. Besides deforestation, which changes the hydrologic cycle and pollution of the bodies of water, cattle production requires large volumes of water: in average terms, between 50,000 and 100,000 liters of water are required to produce one kilo of meat (i.e., water consumed by the animal, and mainly for the pasture). This means that when meat is exported, what is traded is also what the economists call “virtual water”. (It is important to note that by needing large quantities of water, the farm merchandise “virtually” drains the very survival of Amazonia).

¹⁹ The construction of Tucuruí II will increase the flooded area by 3,014 km².





are located in the Madeira River and waters flowing into the Tapajós River, and in the Xingu and Tocantins rivers. In the Madeira Basin, after a lengthy political dispute, the Jirau and Santo Antônio plants were licensed in July 2007, allowing the overflow of up to 529 km² (see below). In the Xingu Basin, the controversy about the Monte Belo dam continues, although it was approved by the National Congress in 2005. Since 1989, the people of Altamira and the indigenous people keep up a resistance that is organized and quite influenced by the traumatic experience with Tucuruí.

As a result of the protest, the initial design was changed and the area to be flooded decreased from 6,000 km² to 400 km². Nevertheless, there is great distrust that the project would involve other dams upstream from Belo Monte. There is suspicion that this meglomaniacal project, the third largest on the planet, would have the goal of not only generating electric energy but also facilitating the attraction of more farmers for Eastern Amazonia. Other activities would be planned in function of Belo Monte, such as an agreement with Chinese investors to install an aluminum factory in the region of Barcarena (Pará). Its once again obvious how exploiting the waters of Amazonia becomes more and more integrated with the inequalities and distortions of economic globalization.

Besides agriculture and hydroelectric plants, mining and prospecting for gold are interventions that also cause considerable impacts to the waters of Amazonia. The biggest mining project, Carajás, consumed US\$ 62 billion to allow the extraction of iron, gold, nickel, copper, manganese, and bauxite, but the environmental repercussions of Carajás extend for more than 10% of the national territory. In the same way, mining of bauxite in the Trombetas River has been responsible for the deterioration of the water because of toxic runoff.

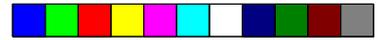
There are also accusations that oil drilling in Urucu and Juruá have been sending out oily residues into the rivers and causing pollution through the breaking of tubings. Prospecting for gold has existed in Amazonia since the 17th century, but increased exponentially through the promotion of developmentalist policies in the 1970s. Prospecting in the depth of rivers as well as prospecting on the banks of waterways both cause intensive sedimentation and as a result, increase the turbidity of the water and impacts on the aquatic communities. Besides sediments, between 100 and 130 tons of metallic mercury are used annually for the artesanal extraction of gold and afterwards released into the air and rivers of Amazonia. Contamination caused by prospecting is added to the mercury in the soil released by logging. In the environment, metallic mercury becomes methylmercury, an extremely toxic substance that it is accumulated in the food chain. As the consumption of fish is the main protein source for the regional population, there are worrisome indications of human contamination by mercury, especially for the consumption of carnivorous species, such as piranha and tucunaré.

Another problem that is increasingly acute is the growing urbanization of the Amazon region without the least conditions for water supply and sewers. In comparative terms, the region has a relatively low demographic density (5 inhabitants/km²) but this does not lessen the environmental impact caused by the urban groupings. (The total population of Amazonia reached 22.5 million in 2004, with about 73% concentrated in urban centers). According to the official data, water supply serves 63% of the inhabitants and, more seriously, sewer service is available to only 9%. This means that almost all the sewage is released without treatment directly into the environment.

The most serious case is Manaus, a city that grew 15 times larger in a few years and today has 1.5 million inhabitants, many because of the subsidies that put the Free Zone into motion. The unbraked rhythm of growth, added to the lack of urban planning, has led to a growing occupation on the banks of rivers. The people living there have no alternative except to release their sewage into the waters near their homes, that become more and more contaminated by metals and fecal coliforms. On the other hand, there are numerous neighborhoods in the city of

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Manaus that do not have water piped in or where the very bad quality water reaches the houses very sporadically. There can be no more forceful test of the pathology of economic growth than to have a lack of water in the heart of Amazonia. To the precarious quality of public service, political and financial interests are added that that threw the city into the adventure of privatization in 2000. The findings of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry set up in the Council Chamber in 2005 show how privatization denied the essential rights of the low-income inhabitants at the same time that the private group (Suez) raised the tariffs in an absurd way and did not fulfill any of the goals of the concession contract.²⁰

As if the negative impacts of agriculture, navigation, dams, mining, prospecting and urban explosion were not enough, there exists a still larger and devastating threat against the waters of Amazonia: global climate change. Today there are almost no doubts that the planet has been warming because of the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The main source of these gases is the prodigal economy of the industrialized countries, to which is added deforestation, forest fires, and the hydroelectric reservoirs. Scientists foresee that the climate changes will produce less precipitation and reduce the outflow of the rivers of Amazonia. The planetary warming should also intensify the effect of the El Niño phenomenon that is periodically responsible for droughts in the region.

The year 2005 served as a prediction of this uncertain and risky future, when a serious drought affected 914 communities and produced grotesque scenes of cattle dying of thirst and boats run aground in the riverbed. The most serious thing is that, with the increasing warming of the earth, the forest starts to release more and to accumulate less carbon. This makes the greenhouse effect possible and speeds up warming even more. If the process continues in its current rhythm, in the middle of the 21st century the forest will be irremediably lost and will be substituted by a vegetation similar to the open pasture. Another consequence will be rain reduction in other parts of South America, in particular in the Brazilian Southeast, which obviously will lead to the substantial reduction of all national agricultural and hydroelectric potential. There is, therefore, a complex and frightful interconnection between environmental degradation of Amazonia and the production of serious impacts on the life and the economy of the whole continent.

The limits of public policies

The advance of the Brazilian economy over the waters and other ecological resources of Amazonia depended on the authoritarian action of the State, needed for the subordination of populations and ecosystems for the speedy and easy accumulation of capital. According to official doctrine, the new “productive” activities need to be performed without any environmental or social barriers that can bring difficulties for the viability of businesses. Nevertheless, the project of “national integration” of the last decades did nothing more than move Amazonia from a peripheral condition to another one, equally dependent, taking into account that despite all the degradation caused by “development”, the regional economy corresponds to only 3.7% of Brazilian GNP (data from 2003).

The low percentage is explained by the sub-valuation and super-exploitation of nature promoted by the ruling economic model. The short-term gain and the destruction of nature are justified by the economists in function of discount rates and other artificial analyses. Nevertheless, naked and raw reality escapes the economic models and the planning offices. In truth, the regional economic growth reproduces systems of political control and social discrimination established in

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²⁰ Instituto Equit. 2006. A Privatização da Água na Cidade de Manaus e os Impactos sobre as Mulheres. Equit and Heinrich Böll Foundation: Rio de Janeiro.

the country even in the colonial period. The overwhelming process of destruction of Amazonia is explained only by the binomial of unsustainability and environmental injustice, since the same degradation that enriches a few people robs the rights of the majority of the population.

Its easy to perceive that the questions of access and use of Amazonias ecological resources has a relation to the land and water disputes in the other regions of the country that force mass immigration to the region. But instead of resolving poverty of those who arrive, the economy perversly feeds itself on the low wages and manipulation of the local populations. The final result of “development” is the inscription of the profound social inequalities into the socio-natural landscape of Amazonia.

When the huge size of the destruction and the future threats over the waters of Amazonia are stated, the question is asked about the official response and what measures have been adopted to resolve the problems and reduce the conflicts created by “development”. The sector of water resources in Brazil is acclaimed by many for having for more than a decade a law that is considered advanced – Law 9.433 of January 1997 – that established new management procedures for hydrographic basins. Because of the new law, there exists today an extensive administrative structure focused on the public policies for water resources, including the National Council for Water Resources (CHRH), the National Agency for Waters (ANA), and similar state agencies.

Among the new management tools are the issuing of licenses and charges for the use of water; however their implementation in the rivers of the Amazon Basin is practically null. The government itself recognizes that the official agencies have not performed well in Amazonia and that probably the region would need a specific institutional configuration to serve its hydrologic characteristics.²¹ Besides being a model that does not offer effective answers to degradation and to the conflicts over water resources in the region, the new regulatory system reproduces the traditional concentration of decision-making power in the South and Southeast regions.

Despite identifying serious problems of the region, the official system of mangement allows water to continue being a motive for division, profit, and uncertainty. The implementation of the new Law of Water Resources has produced little more than a mere change in style, since it substituted explicit coercion by the military with a “modern” and dissimulated authoritarianism. This is shown by the fact that that instances of representation created by the law (councils and committees) formally signify a space for democratic debate and the resolution of conflicts. In practice, despite the appearance of decentralization and ecological preoccupation, the structure continues being controlled by the same oligarchical sectors that always command “development” (state technocrats, big landowners, industrialists and traditional politicians). An example of the ideological continuity is the fact that the official system recently reaffirmed that universal access to water can only be achieved with an accelerated economic growth and one that does not spare the reserves of Amazonia.²²

In concrete terms, this means the perpetuation of the same logic of exploitation of natural resources and the accumulation of capital that has been producing severe social and economic impacts for decades. The same ideological position can be seen in the Plan for a Sustainable Amazonia (PAS), published in 2006 and which has the endorsement of the Ministry of the Environment. The plan correctly recognizes the errors committed by the government in the past, but limits itself to offering a long list of investments in hydroelectric plants, roads, and mineral

²¹ ANA. 2006. Mapa de Ações de Gestão por Bacias Hidrográficas. National Water Agency: Brasília.

²² MMA. 2006. Plano Nacional de Recursos Hídricos (volume II). Secretary of Water Resources, Ministry of the Environment: Brasília.





exploration. Through an discourse of sustainability, PAS shows itself to be only a warmed-over version of the old model of economic growth that excludes the poor. Another proof that the vices of the past are maintained is the implementation of 97 “projects of sustainable development” (PDS) starting in 2006, which theoretically would promote a rational use of the forest by small producers. Nevertheless, the settlement dwellers felt themselves without help from INCRA and rapidly sold their rights to log trees to the big corporations in that sector.

The most accurate test of the maintenance of economic rationality and of the disdain for the future of the Brazilian Amazon region was recently given by the pressure put on the environmental agencies to approve the two hydroelectric plants on the Madeira River (Jirau and Santo Antônio). The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) presented by the businesses involved (Furnas Central Electrics and Odebrecht) made a biased evaluation of the probable impacts, trying to cover up the environmental degradation caused by the project with the indirect economic benefits.

Its a case of the old argument that nature can be freely substituted by the creation of (some) jobs and the generation of (some) taxes. The analysis of IBAMA, signed by a team of 8 technicians, competently identified the environmental impacts that were minimized or ignored in the preparation of the EIR, especially problems of silting in the rivers, alteration of the dynamic of sediments and extinction of species of fish, flora, and fauna.²³ Despite seeming clearly to condemn the project, the pressure inside and outside the government to approve it revealed the most backward face of political and economic leaders. The disdain for the inspection agencies left the clear impression that the whole structure of environmental protection, including IBAMA, CNRH, and ANA have a decorative function most of the time when they are faced with the economic interests and patrimonialist policies of the government.²⁴

There is still a new and more disguised threat against nature and the people of Amazonia: the payment for environmental services, which includes actions with the maintenance of biodiversity, the robbery of carbon, and the preservation of the water cycle. The idea is to convert these services into monetary values, which would be paid by the beneficiaries or by corporations that want to compensate for their environmental impacts with the purchase of such services in Amazonia. Two bills were recently presented in the National Congress (PL 792/2007 and PLS 142/2007), seeking to incorporate environmental services into the text of Law 9.433.

The payment for environmental services is a fake solution, that attracts environmentalists and academics, but in truth signifies a conservative and deceitful alternative. In the first place, the implementation of payments for environmental services requires a complex certification structure, which evidently would not be up to most of the local populations. Besides this, there is the problem of pricing and carrying out commercial transactions involving living beings and ecological processes. To delegate to the market the answers to problems fundamentally produced by the actions of the market itself is to believe that a larger dose of poison can save the dying man. In the third place, it carries the risk of other environmental “services” that remain outside the system of payments becoming subject to an even greater degradation. The proposal of payments for environmental services simply ignores that the conservation of ecological resources involves regulatory issues and policy decisions outside of monetary quantification and purely economic reasoning.

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²³ Parecer Técnico No. 014/2007 – COHID/CGENE/DILIC/IBAMA, of 03/21/2007.

²⁴ The simple expectation of the construction of hydroelectric plants on the Madeira River caused logging in the forest to grow 600% on the border of Rondônia with Bolívia, growing from 42 km² of deforestation in 2006 to 295 km² in 2007, according to data from INPE, published by DETER/IBAMA.

The knowledge and contributions of the river populations

As a consequence of extensive environmental degradation and continued economic expansion, threats to the hydrologic systems in Amazonia grow daily, either in the form of new dams, roads, farms, prospectors, and woodcutters, or because of changes in the climate pattern. What makes the situation even more tragic is knowing that the degradation that Amazonia is going through is serious, but it is not exclusive. On the contrary, the occupation of the region in the last few decades reproduced the same mode of economic and political "development" that devastated, and continues to devastate, the seaside ecosystems, the Atlantic forest, the tropical savanna region and the dry regions in the Northeast. In truth, the recent history of Amazonia only reaffirms the old basics of the Brazilian crisis, which can be described as acute social inequality and degradation of the ecological base.

One of the most irrefutable proofs of this binomial "degradation-inequality" is the disdain and systematic abandon with which the populations who live on the margins of the river have been treated. These populations include a multiplicity of traditional communities formed by centuries of miscegenation between indigenous groups and different tides of immigrants. The transformations caused by incorporation of the region into the globalized economy have not only led to the abandonment of the traditional populations but the very destruction of its means of survival. For example, the conflict situations between commercial fishermen and the river communities over access to the stocks of fish are increasing. There are similar disputes around the ownership of land and of access to the forests resources. The result has been a reduction of traditional productive activities and forced migration to the urban areas.

Anthropological surveys carried out in the last few years have presented incontestable evidence that these populations have a vast fund of techniques and procedures that are adapted to different socio-ecological conditions in the region. Generations of living alongside the system of waters makes these traditional populations absorb and reinvent the knowledge of their indigenous ancestors, besides creatively incorporating new techniques brought by more recent immigrant groups. Its important to remember that since the first European explorers, there were repeated tales of the presence of large settlements and populations along the rivers of Amazonia, which proves that it is possible to keep significant numbers of people without destroying the waters and the regional biodiversity.

The knowledge of people living along the rivers is shown by their multiple strategies for economic production and utilization of ecological resources. The support of the families and domestic economy includes a succession of activities that have a direct relation to the natural cycles, such as fishing, hunting, farming, and small scale cattle raising. The system of collective property of ecological resources, combined with the family property near the residences, is also a fundamental factor for the survival of river communities. Instead of short-term exploitation, the traditional groups practice an agriculture that is adapted to the soils and integrated with the biodiversity of Amazonia.

This is shown by the fact that they live intelligently alongside the dynamic of the waters, making intensive use of the plains in the low-water period and moving to higher grounds when the rivers were full. (This form of dynamic cultivation of the soils was totally ignored in the colonization programs for Amazonia in the last few decades, since the fields were normally restricted to the higher grounds). In this way, when the rivers are full they bring sediments that fertilize the plains and ensure the coming harvests. At the same time, the interaction of the river maintains the aquatic biodiversity and the water quality.

Therefore, if there really were interest on the part of the public administrators to practice an effective and responsible management of the waters of Amazonia, one of the most urgent measures would be the recognition of the role and the contribution of the communities that live along the

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riverbanks. The traditional populations were capable of understanding the vital importance of seasonal hydrology for their survival and social organization. As inheritors of the knowledge accumulated by their ancestors, the populations dwelling along the banks of rivers possess a profound identity with the rivers, the soils, and the biodiversity of Amazonia.

Through an intense interaction between society and nature, the traditional populations learned to respect the natural cycles and preserve the ecology of the rivers. Nevertheless, despite being populations that historically lived sustainably with regional nature, for the technocrats of “development”, these are only marginalized sectors of society who can in an uncertain future have something to gain if the current mechanisms for exploiting Amazonia were increased even more. The centralized and arrogant posture of the official bureaucracy prevents them from seeing that with regard to public policies and water management in particular that they would have much to learn from the social and economic values of the populations that live on the banks of the rivers. While it will not be officially recognized, the misfortune of these populations facing the overwhelming process of economic growth will continue to be a symbolic test of the double environmental and social crisis of Amazonia.

Controversy in a hierarchy of steps

The complexity of water resource management in Amazonia, discussed briefly in these pages, shows that the search for solutions depends more than anything else on the reversal of the priorities of regional development. Instead of precise and fragmented responses, as seen in the current public policies for the waters of Amazonia, the management strategies should be related to new bases of economic production, technological patterns, and redistribution of social opportunities. The construction of a new agenda of water resources for Amazonia makes up part of a worldwide resistance against the revenue ideology imposed by the international agencies (which include, among other measures, the privatization of publicly owned businesses, the construction of large infrastructure projects, and the increase of market pressures on the environment.) At the same time that we need to consolidate political opposition on a national and international scale, sustainable management of the waters of the Amazon Basin should also rely on initiatives taken on the local level that include and value the groups who have been historically excluded.

The alternatives to the dominant model of socio-environmental exploitation should, however, be organized in a “hierarchy of steps”, where local action characterizes and justifies a more general political reaction. The opposition to the technocratic model of “development” is based on the clear understanding that political action goes through different geographic dimensions, through which the search for sustainability and justice is translated into concrete historical experience. In this sense, the populations that live along the rivers and other traditional groups still have a lot to teach the politicians, public managers, and other users of the waters. However, instead of romanticizing or idealizing the knowledge of the traditional communities, valuing them requires, first of all, that their basic survival needs are met and that their basic rights are respected. Finally the maintenance of the above-ground and underground stocks of water is part of the same struggle for dignity and better conditions of life in Amazonia and in the rest of the country.

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MINING AND HIDROELECTRIC POWER PLANTS ON INDIGENOUS LANDS

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To remain in power, in democratic regimes, is always a challenge. The logic of alternance underlying those regimes, demands novelties for each new government term, as a symbolic way to appease the eternal popular aspiration of better days. If the same mandatarly will stay in power, considering the natural lack of new political projects, he must come up with something in order to be re-introduced as different, innovator and capable to catapult society in the direction, so long craved for – however indefinite – progress.

The new presidential term, before the need to present a novelty to society, started off with a major marketing political action, launching, right in the first couple of months, a Program to Accelerate Growth, the so called PAG. Not being much more than new clothes to the forgotten Programme Advance Brazil from the *tucano* administration, PAG materializes in a long list of infra-structure projects – many which had been planned more than a decade ago, but never left the paper – and budged funds have been assured for their conclusion²⁵.

But why a programme aimed at economic growth? Ecological economics has long proven that economic development is not necessarily equivalent to development, quite the opposite, exacerbated consumption of natural resources may lead to, in the medium and long terms, to the collapse of the economic system. In spite of that, for the last two years at least, since before the presidential elections, the debate about the need for economic growth has taken over the agenda o the mass media and the analysis from economists and entrepreneurial organizations. During the elections, notably in the second round, that was the central theme of the debates and the political propaganda, both candidates tried to explain why the country is not growing as much as it should within the world bonanza scenario and how they would assure a sustained, long term growth for the next few years. PAG was a way for the new-old government to reply to the critics during the election campaign.

But what does Brazil want to be when it grows? In the absence of a better idea, a major commodities exporter. At least, that is the direction it has been taking for more than a decade, since it adopted liberalizing trade measures closing a long economic cycle characterized by replacement of imports, forcing it to return to an international specialization model based on the export of intensive products intensive in natural resources, such as it occurred in the first half of the 20th century.

²⁵ In spite of the supposed priority and assurance of the non- contingency, in November 2007, less than two months for the end of the fiscal year, the Federal Government had not managed to spend even 10% of the resources assured for those projects (approximately R\$ 15 billion) for the year.



This situation has led several economic analysts to pin point for a *disindustrialization* in the country, determined by the loss of relative participation of the industry in the Gross National Product (GNP) and in the exports agenda, giving room to primary crops (soya, cotton, mining, meat, etc) or the semi-processed (aluminum, pig iron, vegetable oil, etc)²⁶. A study from the Institute of Studies for Industrial Development (ISID) points out for a “relative disindustrialization” between 1991 and 2003, its worth saying that, even though the participation of the industry in the GIB of the country remains practically the same for the period, the more intensive industries in technology and labor lost space for those industries intensive in natural resources, with very little added value into the final product²⁷.

According to the current model, in order to pursue and maintain the target economic growth, we will increasingly need cheap and abundant natural resources. Where can we find them, since in the already industrialized and densely populated centre-south of the country those conditions can no longer be found? Well, in the vast national economic frontier, the Amazon.

Energetic frontier

When listening to economic reports from major newspapers one becomes aware of the serious threats of a “blackout” before 2010, in the same lines of the one which occurred during the drought of 2001. Nine in ten analysts point to the risk of electric energy shortage in the medium term horizon, as one of the main discouraging factors for economic growth, since it generates insecurity for new investments, and therefore, keeps away productive capital. There then a call for the increase in the production of energy.

Contrary to the large majority of developed or developing countries, Brazil can rely on rivers as its main source electric energy generation, since 88% of its electricity generated comes from hydroelectric power plants²⁸. For the recently approved National Plan for Hydro Resources (NPHR)²⁹ “the large Brazilian hydroelectric potential undoubtedly represents a comparative advantage, compared to the electric matrixes adopted in other countries”. It therefore confirms the expansion tendency in hydro generation and the prevalence of this means of energy generation over the others (hydro carburets and coal thermal, nuclear, aeolic, etc) which has only been reinforced by the problems of natural hydro carburets supply from Bolivia.

Where could this hydroelectric expansion occur? Brazil being a country that for more than 90 years has used its rivers in large scale for electric energy production, many basins have already had their potential practically drained, and there is little space for new power plants. The table bellow demonstrates quite well this situation quite well:

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²⁶ Apud NASSIF, André. *Are there evidences of disindustrialization in Brazil?* BNDES, Rio de Janeiro, 2006 – series “Texts for discussion”.

²⁷ Apud FEIJÓ, Carmen Aparecida et alii. *There was a disindustrialization in Brazil?* IEDI, November 2005 – series “Studies IEDI”. Available on http://www.iedi.org.br/admin_ori/pdf/20051129_desindustrializacao.pdf

²⁸ Apud. GOLDENBERG, José e LUCON, Oswaldo. *Energy and the environment in Brazil*. Paper presented during the International Conference: Companies and Social Responsibility, São Paulo, 2007.

²⁹ Sectorial Notebook on Hydro resources – generation of hydroelectric energy. Brasília, MMA/SRH, 2006

Table 1 –Hydroelectricity generation in Brazil, for hydrographic basin

Hydrographic Region	inventorial (MW)	estimated (MW)	used (2004)
Amazon	42,619	107,143	0.7%
Paraná	52,577	58,097	70%
Sao Francisco	24,221	26,285	44%
Tocantins	23,433	25,320	41%

Source: National Plan for Hydro Resources – sectorial notebook for electric energy generation

It is noticeable that the Amazon region (which does not include the Tocantins basin, and partially the Amazon) nowadays utilizes only 0.7% of its estimated potential, the Parana basin, which is closer to large consumer centers (Southeast and South of the country) has already used more than 70%, while the other two regions have already used half of their potential. Taking in consideration the fact that the best hydroelectric uses in those three regions have already been done and it is socially and economically impossible to exploit 100% of their hydroelectric potential, because it would imply in large populational displacements or the destruction of seriously threatened ecosystems, the conclusion is that there is very little space for the expansion of hydroelectricity outside the Amazon region.

Therefore, according to NPHR, the Amazon region will be the preferential stage for the expansion of hydroelectric generation in the next decades: “it is important to highlight the high value of the estimated potential for the Amazon hydrographic region, which exceeds a great deal the estimated potential, indicating a demand for new studies for the region. A large part of the hydroelectric potential (national) is in the Amazon region (41%) however, in terms of already installed potential in the country, this region only participates with 1% of the potential(...) a large part of the existing potential in the southeast of the country (...) has already been explored”³⁰.

When looking at the demand for energy in the next few years, we notice how strategic it is for the electric sector to use the Amazon hydroelectric potential. According to the Decennial Plan for the expansion of the Sector 2005-2015, in the next decade the country will need an extra 31.144 MW to supply the demand of a market in steady growth, or an extra 35.844 MW in the case of a rapid economic growth - awaited by everyone – of the national economy. In this plan the intent to maintain the predominance in the use of hydroelectricity is explicit, for being a relatively cheap source of energy, and assumed by all, as clean.

This perspective is shared by the Electric Energy Company – EEC, an organization linked to the Ministry of the Environment ME, which has the mission to plan the expansion of the national generating complex, and according to authorities in the subject, both in the academic and entrepreneurial world. Exemplary of this thought is the position of Goldenberg, former Minister of the Environment and nationally respected as an authority in the energy area: “the vocation of the country is in the hydroelectric power plants and there is great potential yet to be explored. That is the case with Belo Monte plant complex (11.000 MW, R\$ 7, 5 billion), which has generated great conflict between the Ministry of Mines and Energy and certain sectors from society, mainly NGOs”³¹

³⁰ Op cit, pg.59/60.

³¹ Op. cit., pg.28





The reasons for the conflict are the potential social-environmental impacts that the setting up of a hydroelectric plant may cause in the Madeira River. Recently the environmental licensing of the hydroelectric plants in Madeira River (Jirau and Santo Antonio) brought to the surface this debate, opposing the “developmentists”, who defended the need for the expansion in energy generation without much concern with the associated environmental costs, and the “environmentalists” who believed such plants to be environmentally unfeasible and that the expansion of the electric sector should respect the integrity of the Amazon ecosystem.

For society in general, however, the only position submitted was the first one, and the mainstream media joined in unison for the need to end the “extremists views” from the environmental movement. Symptomatic, the editorial of the largest paper in circulation in the country, immediately after the announcement of the concession of environmental licenses for the enterprise:

“The concession of the license from IBAMA [Brazilian Institute of the Environment] for the implementation of two hydroelectric plants in Madeira River can be considered a landmark. The country has given the first step towards dissolving what seemed to be moving towards an impasse: the counter-position of the largest hydroelectric potential in the Amazon to an imperative for avoiding the degradation of this natural heritage.”

Certainly the outcome of this episode has upset the large majority of the environmental movement. Among those unhappy there is a fraction that dogmatically, does not even conceive the possibility of installing plants in the region. There's nothing to debate with those(...)

The Amazon effort to supply electricity to a country that the economy has gained scale and it is growing, does not stop there. Even if the other plant in the region - the first Belo Monte stage, in Xingu River – in concluded according to the chronogram, the three initiatives, at a minimum cost of R\$ 25 billion, at the end of a decade will have meant and increase by 11% to the current capacity”(our emphasis)³²

Therefore, for the media, the national society, including the entrepreneurial sector and the planning bodies from the electric sector, there is an evident need to explore the Amazon hydroelectric potential, which according to the general call, must happen with the least amount of environmental impacts. But very few discuss in depth those impacts and evaluate the consequences that a broad and unrestricted hydroelectric use of the Amazon Rivers could bring to this region. And there are serious reasons to believe that the impacts of that kind of for the rivers, even if eventually “minimized”, can drastically alter the mechanism of the ecological, social and the local economy processes. According to TUNDISI:

“The scientific knowledge of the ecological, biodiversity and the interaction of aquatic systems/land systems has considerably broadened in the last ten years (...)Junk (1997,2005) described the ecology of the pulse system in the large internal deltas of the Central Amazon. According to this author, the flood pulse system is the main power function in the large Amazon flood and wet low land valley systems. These power functions promote diverse environmental conditions, periodic alterations in plant and animal communities and multiple and intensive alterations between the aquatic and land phases with biotic processes in the production of the organic matter and decomposition of sediments having a high diversity of species. This pulse process, which occurs in other wet low land ecosystems, in all continents, reaches its highest scale precisely in the Amazon region. The connectivity between the flooded areas, natural canals, lakes, rivers and marshes presents a gradient of direct and indirect interactions of great ecological and economic importance, having reflexes in the hydro social cycle.

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³² Folha de São Paulo, 11/07/2007, pg.A2, Editoriais

These large internal deltas and their natural aquatic variability to aquatic biodiversity and the answers to the flood and drought pulses due to their space-time dynamics and the genic flux of terrestrial and aquatic organisms, are, according to Margalef (1997), “active centers of evolution” promoting connectivity, altering biotic interactions and also dynamically promoting animal and plant biodiversity. The bio-geophysics of the systems and their large size scales are also replicated in the hydro-social cycle and in the exploration of wet low lands in the Amazon Paddock et al., 1999; Sternberg, 1998; Roosevelt, 1999).

Hydro-social and hydro-economic cycles in those large scale low land areas, of differentiated mosaics are of great importance in the human exploration of the low wet lands. The different types of low wet lands and the social-ecological gradient in the Amazon propel, according to Junk, et al. (2000), four main economic activities in the wet low lands fishery, forestry extraction, water-culture and cattle ranching. According to Petreire (1992) e Barthen (1999), traditional fishing in the Amazon employ seventy thousand people, maintain 250 thousand people and produces among one hundred and two hundred million dollars a year”³³

Therefore, there is the risk that the transformation of the Amazon rivers in large lakes, as it has occurred in the south of the country, may cause impacts that will go beyond the displacement of people or the flood of portions of the forest. It may compromise the actual support of the regional ecosystem, causing grave impacts not only environmental, but also economic.

The case of Madeira River is, in that sense, exemplary. A main affluent of the Amazon River, and responsible for practically half of the sediment load continuously being poured out into the Atlantic, and of great importance for the reproduction of many species of fish for economic use in all the length of the basin; it was sold to society as a mere river where a barrier would be built to generate electricity for the industrial centers. In spite of the Environmental Impact Study – Environmental Impact Report – (EIS/EIR) obviously have stated the opposite.

Independent studies submitted during the licensing process pointed to the risk of an interruption in the ecological cycle of some large migratory fish species, if in fact that occurs, it can cause serious impacts for the populations that survive from fishing in practically the whole of the basin. A recent study estimated in R\$ 1,9 billion/year the current liquid value of the fishing activity relying on the Madeira River³⁴, which evidently was not included in the estimates of the (EIS/EIR). Simply put, there is not a plan to offer economic alternatives– if they exist at all – to the population that currently relies on fishing for their survival and who will be affected by the plants.

But among all the social groups that could be affected by the hydroelectric expansion in the Amazon, there is one that is especially vulnerable: the indigenous peoples. They undoubtedly will be the first ones to be affected by the radical transformation which will occur in the rivers and ecosystems of the region if all projects for dams come out of the paper , but not only because they depend on fishing for their subsistence. Fishery is the main source of protein for a large portion of the Amazon indigenous peoples, and the central element of many cultural practices - thus even if indirectly, they would suffer the impacts arisen from the dams, but mainly because the basins with greater hydroelectric potential are also a territory of various dozens of indigenous peoples, which means to say that they would also be affected directly with the flooding of their lands.

³³ TUNDISI, José G. “Exploration of the hydroelectric potential of the Amazon “, in IEA/USP, Magazine *Studies Advanced* 21 (59), 2007, pp. 109/117.

³⁴ BARNES, Erin. *MARKET VALUES OF THE COMMERCIAL FISHERY ON THE MADEIRA RIVER: Calculating the Costs of the Santo Antônio and Jirau Dams to Fishermen in Rondônia, Brazil and Pando-Beni, Bolivia – preliminary findings*. Relatório apresentado em junho de 2007 à Yale University.



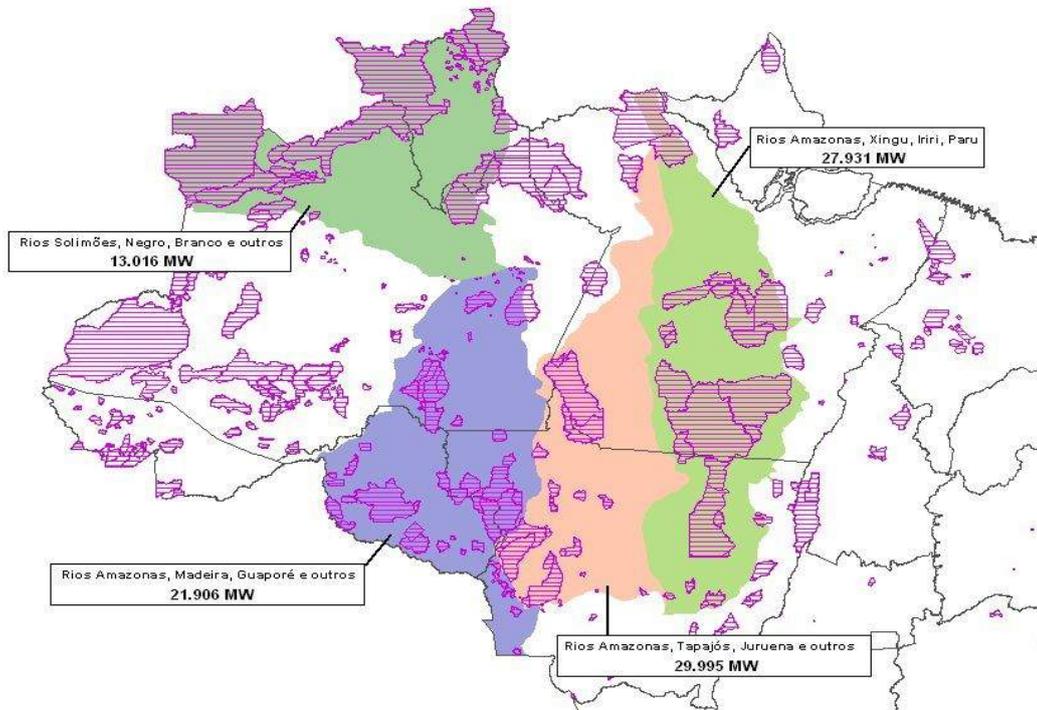
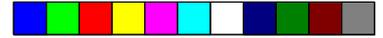


Figure 1: Indigenous lands in the four hydrographic Amazon regions with greater hydroelectric potential (Laboratório de Geoprocessamento do ISA. Fonte: PNRH)

The discussions around dams in the Xingu river are an example of what is probably going to happen in other basins in the near future. The study of the inventory held in the 80s pointed to the possibility of building five major dams along the course of the river and one in its main tributary (Iriri river), flooding approximately 20 thousand km² – the equivalent to almost half of the areas flooded by reservoirs in the whole country – affecting fifteen indigenous lands (ILs) presently demarcated,³⁵ directly or indirectly. Due to the grave impacts that those projects would generate, there was an indigenous mobilization at the end of 80s to denounce and resist the official plan and it ended up by temporarily “burying” the already approved inventory study.

After more than ten years now, in the year 2000, Eletronorte submitted a new project to the country for the UHE Belo Monte – the one with greater generation potential from the series of dams projected – supposedly the one with least impact, and it started selling it as the energetic salvation for the country, as it recently happened with the Madeira plants. Other plants are no longer mentioned, including the inventory study already revised, and although it has not being officially approved, there are rumors in the public bodies that they would abdicate the other axels in order to center efforts on a single use, “having the best results between installed potency X flooded area in the history of hydroelectricity in the country”³⁶.

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³⁵ Apud SEVA, Oswaldo (org.) *Tenotã-Mõ: Alerts on the consequences of hydroelectric projects for the Xingu river*. São Paulo, IRN, 2005.

³⁶ Refer to <http://noticias.eln.gov.br/ultimas/belo+monte+ser%E1+a+%FAnica+op%E7%E3o+hidrel%E9trica+no+rio+xingu.htm>, acessado em 20/11/2007



But in order to build a hydroelectric power plant which affects indigenous lands it is necessary, according to the Federal Constitution (art.231, §3º e art.176, §1º) an authorization from the National Congress, a prior consultation to the affected indigenous peoples and a specific bill regulating the matter, characterizing the national interest in the use and the specific conditions which must be followed in those cases. Even without the bill, Bello Monte implementation project was approved by the national Congress in 2005 without previous consultation, without studies measuring the social-environmental impact and without a valid study of inventory. In short, the parliament approved something in the dark, without knowing what it was deliberating and even worst, without knowing what the population that would be affected in their everyday life thought about it. Questioned in the Judiciary, first in the Federal Supreme Court and later in the Federal Court of Altamira, the measure surprisingly had its validity confirmed in first instance, pending its final court judgment³⁷.

What Belo Monte case indicates to the country, and mainly to indigenous peoples, is a matter for concern. The National Congress, which was lifted by the constituted legislator as a guardian of indigenous interests and arbitrator on eventual confrontations between those and the national interest, gave up its role for merely political reasons – the project is considered priority by the hard nucleus of the Federal Executive Power and it exceedingly pleases the local elite – it literally ran over all established rules in the Constitution and in the Convention 149 from OIT, without any immediate reaction from the Judiciary, the only controlling body. In this tune, probably the other cases pending authorization – there are at least three in the Chamber of Deputies and one in the Federal senate – will also be approved without having the slightest idea on the possible outcomes for the affected indigenous peoples, and even worse, without knowing what are the rights in the case of the effective construction, since there is no rule to regulating the subject.

Aware of the existence of a grave juridical lacuna, the Presidency of the Republic over a year ago requested for its ministries to draft a project for a bill regulating the hydroelectric use in indigenous lands. Commanded by the Ministry of Mining and Energy, the work group, so far, has not finalized a proposal, but the preliminary versions are taking a direction that causes concern, since instead of regulating the exceptional conditions in which the use could occur, it trivializes the matter and allows almost indistinctly, the construction of hydroelectric power plants inside and in the vicinity of indigenous lands.

Therefore in the medium term, there is a serious risk for the physical and cultural survival, not only of the indigenous peoples, but also many other traditional populations in the Amazon, since the integral use (use of the maximum potential) of the main Amazon basins for hydroelectric purposes, as it occurred in other Brazilian basins (Paraná, São Francisco, Paraíba), can lead to changes which are not trivial in the works of the whole regional ecosystem. As TUNDISI highlights, “damns built in the Amazon region present problems of another demeanor and spatial and timely scale, very different from the hydro systems of the South and Southeast”³⁸. These changes, will inevitably affect first hand those populations, since they are not only extremely adapted and dependent on the normal functioning of the ecosystems in order to obtain the basic resources for their survival, but they also have low or no ability whatsoever to adapt to the new conditions, since they do not have capital or suitable knowledge to rebuild their lives in other places or transform the way they use and appropriate natural resources.

³⁷ See more about the subject on http://www.socioambiental.org/nsa/direto/direto_html?codigo=2007-04-25-165847

³⁸ op.cit., pg.111





Mineral frontier

But not only from electric energy will the Amazon live from in the future. It also is, on the eyes of technocracy and companies from the mineral sector, a large gold mine. And copper, iron, tin, silver, niobium, potassium, among others,

The relatively long period of world economic bonanza, but in special the vertical Chinese growth, which has demanded, notably from countries of the third world, large quantities of minerals to be used in their industries, made it possible for mineral commodities to reach in this decade the highest value in the history of the international market. Gold, silver, aluminium, zinc, nickel, plumb and tin reached between 2005 and 2007 their highest values in the last 20 or 25 years, and some reached record levels,

The rise of minerals has been pulling up national production, forcing for a rearrangement in the companies of the sector and propelling Brazil to a position of eminence in the world scenario of the mineral production such as Niobium (1^o), Iron (2^o), Bauxite (2^o), Manganese (3^o)³⁹. As it happens with electricity, the large “non-explored” mining potential is precisely in the Amazon, qualified by the Ministry of Mining and Energy as a “largest mineral province in the world”.

Today the Amazon – with large concentration in Para – responds to almost 28% of dividends from the Brazilian mineral sector and even with an incomplete geological survey, it holds the largest mines, such as bauxite, cassiterite, gold and copper. After in depth studies about the geology of the region, and with the rapid exhaustion of the centre south mines in the country, the tendency is for the region to take the lead in the exploration of other minerals as well.

But, for this designation to be reached, here again, one must get rid of indigenous peoples. Put it in other words, there must be a regulation for mining in indigenous lands, which today occupy approximately 22% of the Amazon territory and inside of those is not possible to establish mining enterprises before there is a specific regulation, as determined by art. 231 of the constitution.

Even without the necessary regulation, there are already 4, 627 applications for incident research in indigenous lands and 218 authorizations have been granted⁴⁰. All waiting for the bill to be approved. There is no way to know how many of those applications reflect a real interest in mining, since, due to the obsolete system that grants mining rights in Brazil, many companies submit hundreds of applications only to “reserve its market share” and speculate with the priority right granted, selling it later to entrepreneurs who actually have an interest in the exploration of that site.

But the fact is that there are 367 individuals or companies who have submit applications to explore minerals in indigenous lands, to the federal body that manages mineral resources, which, if authorized, would reach 123 officially recognized areas, or rather, 23% of the IL [Indigenous Lands] in the Amazon. What would be the consequences for those peoples?

Each type of mining presents specific conditions for exploration, reason being that the consequent impacts also vary, but it is certain that all of them bring broad environmental and social changes. Therefore, mining is legally considered an activity of significant environmental impact. We reproduce bellow a table that points to the more frequent impacts of the oil activity – one of the categories of mineral exploration – in the indigenous territories of Colombia⁴¹:

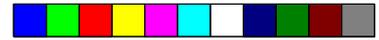
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³⁹ Fonte: PINHEIRO, João Cesar F (Diretor-Geral adjunto do DNPM). *Government Policy for Mining in the Amazon*. Presentation held on 15/03/2007 in the Commission of Mining and Energy of the Chamber of Deputies.

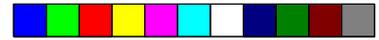
⁴⁰ Apud RICARDO, Fany et al. *Mining in Indigenous lands in the Brazilian Amazon*. São Paulo, Instituto Socioambiental, 2005. Available to download on http://www.socioambiental.org/inst/pub/detalhe_down_html?codigo=10147

⁴¹ Adapted from ROLDÁN, Roque et alii. “Oil, natural gas and carbon exploration in the indigenous territories of Colombia”, in ROLDÁN, R. et alii. *Mining in indigenous territories in Colombia, Peru and Venezuela: oil, carbon, bauxite, gold, diamonds*. Bogotá, ONIC/CECOIN, 1999.



Component and activities	Possible impacts
1. Research 1.1. opening of tracks and roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - environmental (fragmentation and alterations of ecosystems) - desecrating sacred sites - incentive to immigration and colonization - health problems for the recently contacted or isolated population
1.2. explosions for seismic studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - noise chase away the fauna – impact on hunting - fear in the indigenous population - desecrating sacred sites - damages to the structure of soil and subsoil
1.3. perforations for tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contamination for residues, mire and slides - conflicting relations between the indigenous population and workers
2. Exploration 2.1. building access routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - erosion of the soil - fragmentation of the ecosystems - alteration in the draining structure - impact on habitats of animals - access routes allow for the process of colonization
2.2. installation of drilling platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contamination with residues, mire and slides - contamination of the waters by drilling fluids - atmospheric contamination from burning gas - erosion of the soil - catastrophic events
2.3. installation of service infra-structure (heliports, runways, camps, electric generators, water tanks, etc) and traffic of vehicles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - alteration of soils - contamination of soil and water with domestic and sanitary residues - sound and atmospheric - pollution resulting from operating vehicles and equipments
3. Fuel transport 3.1. construction of oil ducts and gas ducts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contamination from oil spill - fragmentation of ecosystems - fires and explosions - alteration of sacred places - instability of soils and barrier slide





4. Additional processes

- 4.1. generation of economic activities:
- a) direct
 - b) complementary or indirectly linked to the oil activity and extractivist

Immigration of non indigenous population:

- cultural chock
 - pressure on the natural resources of indigenous territories
 - colonization
- Changes in the social relations and in the regional power structure:
- processes of social disorganization
- Alteration and abandonment traditional productive systems:
- monetarization of traditional economy
 - loss of the community systems for food security
 - economic dependence

- 4.2. Adjustment to the regional political-administrative structure to the demands of the oil activity and extractivist

- processes of social disorganization (cooptation of traditional indigenous leaders – *caciques*, generation of internal divisions and devaluation of the traditional power)
- administrative corruption (*royalties* are object of corruption by local authorities and end up affecting public services which should be offered along with those resources)

Considering that today indigenous lands are officially acknowledged as protected areas, that must have a limited use of its natural resources, and that indigenous peoples, for their own and inherent cultural characteristics, are extremely vulnerable to alterations in their natural environment, one reaches the conclusion that the use of mines in their territories should be done as a *last resort*, when it has being corroborated as necessary to the national interest, otherwise as it is stated in the constitutional text.

It is not in that way, however, that the subject is treated in the projects on course in the National Congress. There are at least 12 that touch partially or fully the theme. None of them prescribes the need of previous studies which would objectively justify the need and the national interest in exploring a mine in a specific IL. Quite the opposite, indigenous territories are looked at simply as a new frontier to be opened.

Recently, a special commission was constituted in the Chamber of Deputies to analyze one of these projects, the PL 1610/96, from the authorship of Romero Juca Senator. It prescribed that indigenous peoples would receive 2% of the results of the mining, independently of the losses they might suffer. It also states that those who are interested in mining in ILs must run for a public tender – but it exempts from this process the 1,839 applications for research submitted before 1988 – and it does not prescribe any measure to assure the environmental integrity of the affected areas, or any kind of safeguard to stop the concession of mining when grave losses to the indigenous

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peoples can be foreseen. The right to previous consultation with the indigenous communities, assured both by the constitution and by the Convention 169 from OIT, is treated as a mere formality at the end of the administrative process. The work of the commission must extend to mid 2008, when the project will be voted.

The need for a strategic evaluation

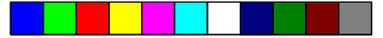
Everything indicates, therefore, that a new cycle is opening for indigenous peoples in the Amazon. After having their formal rights incorporated in the Federal Constitution, in 1988, the advance of the official recognition of their territories in the last two decades, now they are to facing global capitalism wanting to take their resources, just as it happened at the end of the 19th century with the rubber cycle. The difference is that now those who enter an indigenous territory are no longer migrants from the Northeast after their daily bread, but rather, white collar workers from multinational corporations. And they will do so following rules, formally established, assured in national and international diplomas, which makes the confrontation much more subtle and uneven for indigenous peoples.

The Convention 169 from OIT, as above mentioned, states the right for these peoples to be previously consulted to the approval of any legislative measure or enterprise that might affect them directly (art.6°). That has not been occurring, however. There was not a single moment where the inventory studies drafted for the main Amazon basins went through some kind of consultation with the indigenous peoples. The same is happening with the PL in mining. How can they be able to interfere in those political processes which affect them so closely, but are so far from their reality? Even further: how can we, as a nation, take a responsible decision grounded on the need for the use of the existing natural resources in those territories, in order not to disfigure them?

It has become increasingly more evident the importance that Amazon indigenous lands have in the offer of fundamental ecosystemic services for the maintenance of the way of life of millions of people living in the centre south of the country. Those services, such as the production of rain which (decreasing) depend directly on the environmental integrity of those territories. How can they be used in the most cautions possible way, respecting the rights and interests of its inhabitants and assuring (rewarding) the production of such services ?

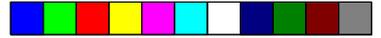
It is urgent the need to hold a Strategic Environmental Evaluation – EEE that considers the impact of the expansion of energetic and mineral frontier over indigenous Amazon territories and to incorporate the opinion and the wishes of the indigenous peoples as a central element. Without it any decision will be made in the dark and we might be, in the near future, burring or drowning our hen that lays golden eggs.





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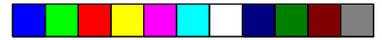


PART 2 PROPOSALS



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DISPUTED AGENDAS IN AMAZON

Jorge Eduardo S. Durão

Executive director of FASE (Federation of Organizations for Social and Education Assistance)

In this article, we seek to consider some political questions regarding the conflict among various projects affecting future of Amazonia. We begin with the acknowledgement that there is a re-entrenchment of the dispute over the destiny of this region, which is strategic for the future of Brazil. Without Amazonia, Brazil would be reduced to about 40% of its territory and would lost a large part of its importance to the world.

We begin characterizing this conflict as it is described in the text: FASEs Commitment to a Democratic and Sustainable Amazon. This text says that, in 2007, “the signs are multiplying that that national question around Amazonia is ever more present in daily discussions, like all the signs of the dispute between powerful interests and local, national and international political subjects, with all of the necessary elements for transforming itself into an unparalleled political and ideological struggle”

“This statement is not surprising, if we consider that the destiny of Amazônia is the focus of one of the most important battles between rich countries and countries of the South, in a war that will decide the burden that will fall upon each country, and the inevitable allocation of the costs of the environmental crisis and the catastrophic changes in world climate”

“The most powerful States, that have unsustainable models of production and consumption, and that have at their disposal enormous financial, technological, and military resources, will not easily give up their intention of controlling Amazonia, trying to reproduce, at the expense of our countries, the current unsustainable models of existence and the practices of five hundred years of expropriation of riches and energy resources from the countries of South America. In this scenario full of challenges and threats, Brazil must confront the dilemmas that are responded to differently by at least four political fields, in this historic crossroads for Amazonia:

- 1) the group committed to a liberal strategy that will entirely reject a national project for Brazil and the defense of the Brazilian Amazon as the patrimony of Brazil;
- 2) The developmentalist political group that recognizes the importance of an active and forward-thinking State in the region, but that doesnt hesitate to reproduce the unsustainable models of production and consumption of the countries of the North and that sees the Amazonian people as a passive object of their expansionist projects of occupation of the agricultural and mining frontiers;
- 3) A heterogeneous group of economic and political interests that, under the guise of nationalism, seeks to guarantee their particular interests (this camp brings together groups of the extreme right, politicians and legislators of the north in conflict over the control of public resources, economic groups interested in maintaining and augmenting areas of exploitation, etc.
- 4) A counter-hegemonic political group, that, in the context of a world in crisis, envisions a Brazil that is sustainable and in solidarity, committed to the responsible and solidary exercise of a

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national sovereignty and to the defense of the socio-biologically diverse patrimony that Amazonia represents for Brazil, in harmony with the larger challenge of survival of Humanity and of the threatened planet.”

Clearly the political projects that are in dispute in Amazônia do not present themselves simply in daily life, and for this reason, in moments when disputes are heating up, an ideological fog encompasses the discourse and the practices of some of the present subjects. This is how we can explain the strange nationalism of representatives, of the political institutions, and of the means of communication, of economic groups traditionally associated with large international corporations and with the process of productive and financial globalization, that appears to be suddenly frightened with the “foreign invasion” and the threat of NGOs “controlled by foreigners”.

On the other hand, we are already accustomed to hearing the barking of the spokespersons for the timber industry, of the cattle ranchers, of agribusiness and of other economic groups that devote themselves to the predatory exploitation of the region, for whom social movements, NGOs and all the other sectors committed to searching for sustainable and democratic alternatives for the region are just ‘enemies of Amazonian development”.

The discussion that we wish to take up in this article refers to the shortcomings and the amorphous character of the projects that are in dispute-with the probable exception of the project, dominant for centuries, of the colonial and savage exploitation of the regions recourses.

We also wish to discuss the incipient configuration of the political subjects that are bearing these different projects, that honestly or in pretense, constitute alternatives for Amazonia. It is certain that, even in the case of today's dominant project, these subjects lack hegemonic capacity strictly speaking, which is compensated for, in this case, by the frequent recourse to force and by the absolute asymmetry in the relations of power between the agents of this predatory exploitation of the region and those that resist, including the rural and forest populations: indigenous peoples, quilombola/maroon communities and other traditional populations (rubber tappers, brazil nut harvesters, river dwellers), homesteaders and other small rural producers.

The neoliberal camp

The group committed to a liberal strategy, that abandons a national project for Brazil and the defense of the Brazilian Amazon as the patrimony of Brazil, could appear too circumstantially weak and dismantled to confront this arduous dispute to have their developmentalist project prevail. This is especially so when we consider that this liberal political camp, identified with a subordinate insertion of the country into the world economy – and adept at adopting economic policies of the “peripheral liberals”⁴² – is dressing the country up in political clothing that actually reveals its true nature. As if the resistance of the right wing party to this liberal representation weren't enough, Brazilian liberalism also prefers to present itself as social-democratic. Fernando Henrique Cardoso himself proposed an end to the Vargas era, which he saw as an obstacle to the insertion of Brazil into global capitalism, and insisted that he never was a neoliberal.

Even though this camp that is most explicitly identified with liberalism seems today to be politically weakened, in the face of the political force of its current version that is mitigated and diluted with shades of neo-developmentalism (and here I am obviously referring to the alternative politics of the Lula Government) its force as a political camp in the dispute for the future of Amazonia cannot be underestimated. We cant lose sight of the fact that this is a struggle that is

⁴² According to the definition of economists Luiz Filgueiras and Reinaldo Gonçalves.



carried out in national and international political arenas. In the latter, the liberals (and/or neoliberals) count on the resources and power inherent to their international articulations, such as economic power and political incentives of the transnationals, and the actions of some international NGOs that pretend to speak in the name of “global civil society”, conjuring up connections with concrete interests that are linked to civil societies of the respective countries, etc. Finally, the liberal camp counts on the disarticulation and the contradictions of the other political blocks in the national sphere and of the Brazilian State itself.

In regards to the performance of the corporate sector, as Jean Pierre Leroy⁴³ wrote when explaining its refusal to participate in the so-called the Forum for a Sustainable Amazônia, “gradually, the idea seems to impose itself on the public opinion that the companies (and many of them exactly the same ones who negatively impact the environment) are the ones that are going to save the environment.

Directly or through their Foundations, they become omnipresent”. It can be asked if it is pertinent to enter in the discussion over the performance of the large companies as a point of entry to the analysis of the field committed to the liberal strategy, particularly because many of the large companies present in the Amazon region have been there since the period of the military dictatorship, with large projects that devastated the region in the name of development and national integration.

However, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the neoliberal strategy of Brazil's subordinate insertion into the globalized capitalist economy opened the way for the unfettered exploration of the resources of the region, for the reduction of the regulating and planning role of the State. On the other hand, submitting the country to the dictates of financial capital caused it to regress to a neocolonial situation of commodity exportation, with a particular importance for Amazônia in regards to mining, the expansion of monocultures and the pillaging of biodiversity resources.

In regards to the NGOs, the deepening of our comprehension around the different civil society actors of Brazil and of other Northern and Southern countries, particularly the NGOs, requires a detailed analysis of the political role of these actors, that is not defined *a priori*. We cannot lose sight of the asymmetry of power between the NGOs of the North and South, the relations of dependency of the latter in relation to the NGOs of the North, and of their greater or lesser political will and capacity to concretize, in practical terms, their commitments to a national project and to popular subjects in the territories affected by the development process.

We cannot forget that “the presumed members of global civil society feed their cosmopolitan values based on their national cultural realities, and they finance their activities with the support of public and private donors of their countries, and these donors define the parameters of their action.”⁴⁴ We cannot fall into a simplification of positions that would reduce the role of NGOs to instruments of diffusion of neoliberal agendas in the third world or that places upon them the role of defending the economic and political interests of the rich countries, without even considering the political and ideological contradictions of the Northern countries.

We also cannot advance in the identification of who is who within the NGOs, in this struggle between different projects for Amazonia, without a concerted effort in analyzing positions, alliances, and political links for each one of these organizations. Therefore, we need to be careful in relation to the traps of “cosmopolitan methodologies”, referred to by Bernardo Sorj in his text

⁴³ Jean Pierre Leroy is an advisor to FASE, and currently coordinates the Sustainable and Democratic Brazil Project.

⁴⁴ Bernard Sorj, “Civil Society and North-South Relations: NGOs and Dependency,” Working Paper 1, November 2005, Edelstein Centre for Social Research.

that undertakes a critical analysis of the interests and cultural realities of those who are linked in their origins and of their insertion into the national context of Brazil, in order to explain the eventual disagreements between their agendas and the interests of Brazil as a whole and of the peoples of Amazonia.

The conversion of the Brazilian economy to an export orientation, in a position subordinate to the interests of the central capitalist countries, is supported by the articulations of businesses with Northern NGOs that submit themselves in a passive manner to the dominant tendencies of public opinion or to the government policies of their respective countries. In general these NGOs remain compromised, at least in theory, with their concerns over socio-environmental impacts in Amazonia and in the country as a whole, from the productive activities from which their countries derive benefit. However, they don't incorporate into their perception of reality a critical vision about the international division of labour and of social relations in Brazil that are based in a development model that is socially unjust and environmentally unsustainable.

The developmentalist camp

The "developmentalist" political camp presents itself today perhaps as the most complex and the most difficult to interpret, within this limited exercise of political analysis. Here, the risk we face is that of projecting the characteristics of an ideal-type developmentalist state, or of a national-developmental political block, over our social and political reality when more than sufficient evidence exists that neither of these is present on the national scene with the sufficient requirements of carrying out a national-developmental project for Brazil and for Amazonia. What is more, in the current configuration of Brazilian life, it is the actual historical viability of this project that still needs to be demonstrated.

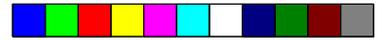
A reading of the chapter on the Amazon from the work of Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães, "Brazilian Challenges in the Era of the Giants"⁴⁵ is particularly useful for the discussion of this point, given that the author combines a passionate defense of a national development project for Brazil – from which our country would be inserted into the world—with a rigorous critique of the prerequisites for the realization of such a project, which seem to be for the most part non-existent. Guimarães analyzes the international environment for Amazonia starting from the recognition that the Brazilian Amazon is part of a larger reality and that the future of our region also depends on the political, social, economic and military situation of the six countries bordering the Brazilian Amazon.

This South-American political context becomes even more relevant in the face of the international pressure to *control* Amazonia, which, according to Guimarães, "is being exercised today through international agencies, NGOs and the diversionist strategy of foreign States that have unsustainable patterns of consumption and production and hold large financial and technological resources". He also emphasizes the decisive influence in the region of the "American military presence in the region, the militarization of the war on drugs and the possible internationalization of existing or latent internal conflicts in Brazil's neighboring States".

Guimarães also analyses the consequences of years of economic liberalism inspired by the *Washington Consensus* and of formal democracy in neighboring countries and in Brazil itself. Clearly, in this book published in 2005, he did not have at his disposal all of the elements that we have today to evaluate the political context of the region after the election of Evo Morales in Bolivia, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, and of the recent evolution in the policies of Hugo Chavez in

⁴⁵ Guimarães, Samuel Pinheiro – *Brazilian Challenges in the Era of the Giants* – Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto, 2005. Ambassador Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães has been the secretary-general of the Ministry of Foreign Relations since 2003.





Venezuela. In any case, we have no reason to suppose that the rise of these progressive governments in the region and the eventual sharpening of political conflicts in neighboring countries will make any less complex the political challenges that are placed in the road towards a realization of a sustainable and democratic project for Amazonia. None of the recent events invalidates Guimarães's assertion about the "persistence of structural situations that are at the root of conflicts that erupt with increasing frequency everywhere".

To the extent that it is possible to deepen the discussion in this article, we would like to suggest at least the necessity to situate the dispute over Amazonia within the context of political and social instability that characterizes the Andean countries, not to mention the political fragility and economic underdevelopment of Guyana and Suriname (and not to forget the colonial status of French Guiana). In a historic moment in which there seems to be a consensus over the lack of viability of autarchic national projects and the need for South-American regional integration, to imagine a development project for Amazonia requires that we also think about the articulation of political projects put forward by the principal countries of the region. In this context, the growing polemic around the democratic character of the Chavez government in Venezuela, depending on the evolution of the political situation in that country, could begin to complicate this process.⁴⁶

For the rest, the process of regional integration as a whole will be subject to the vicissitudes of political and electoral processes in the countries of the region, beginning with Brazil, with the scenario of political uncertainty that we can project for 2010.

At the end of the first year of president Lula's second term, we must recognize the important changes in the national scenario and the new perspectives that are opening up for the struggle between projects at play in the Amazon. The launching of the Plan for Accelerating Growth (PAC) represented a defeat for the neoliberal project in terms of its rejection of the role of the State in the economy. With the PAC, the "invisible hand of the market" was substituted by the "visible hand of the market", in which once again the State proposes to play a decisive role in planning, in the definition of priorities and in an articulation between the public and private sectors.

However, none of that is sufficient basis for the conclusion that, with the current government, the state will be reassuming the capacity to direct and carry out a national-developmental project for Brazil. In our view, the capacity of the Brazilian state to carry out a development project is not evident, and neither is the nature of the development project compatible with the Lula governments base of political and social support.

In an article in which he defends the role of Petrobrás as a "strategic company for Brazil's future"⁴⁷, the economist Carlos Lessa shows the precarious nature of the Brazilian macro-economy, as it is accompanied by a "spectre" emerging from the threatened continuation of "widespread blackouts": the blackout of electric energy, the loss of infrastructure (airports, highways etc), the loss of public social policies.

For Lessa, "these many blackouts are derived from the absolute priority given to interest rates on the public debt and the high rates determined by the Central Bank and multiplied throughout the existing national banking system. Its important to remember that in an economy with mediocre growth and inclined to stagnation, the growing profits in the banks and their 'satellite-

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⁴⁶ The debate in the National Congress over approval of Venezuelas entrance into Mercosur was quite illustrative of this complexity. Beyond the polemic over the democratic character of the Chávez government, the discussion was reopened over Venezuelan re-armament and to what extent this might constitute a threat for Brazilian national security. Unfortunately, the congress members did not take advantage of the opportunity to discuss the risks inherent to the current decomposition of the Brazilian Armed forces.

⁴⁷ Carlos Lessa, "Bom senso estratégico", Valor Econômico, 22/11/2007.

capital markets is dynamic.” We are citing, of course, an economist that is one of the icons of national developmentalism, and that has passionately defended some of the more polemic projects of the Lula government that have dealt with the expansion of infrastructure, as in the case of the Madeira River Complex. We understand that many other “developmentalist” economists continue believing that the current macroeconomic policy is condemning the country to stagnation and that eventual signals of returning to economic growth within the framework of this policy will tend to subject the country to new “blackouts” and to once again expose the country to the external vulnerability inherent to this policy.

However, we cant reach a clear conclusion over the role of the State in the construction of a national project for Brazil without reviewing the role of the state during the period of the national developmentalist pact in Brazil, and what this project signified in terms of being a simultaneous motor of construction of Brazils current economy and of one of the most brutally unequal and unjust societies in the contemporary world.

In an article that was just published in *Le Monde Diplomatique Brasil*, significantly titled “The inequality machine” Tânia Bacelar brilliantly synthesizes the genesis of the Brazilian absurd social reality: “Concentration of the means of production, an economy oriented to exports and luxury consumption, oligopolistic behavior by the state, the landlord mentality of the upper classes: these four factors are at the root of the social and regional abysses.

For the argumentation that we are trying to develop here, Tânia Bacelar adds with precision a crucial distinction for the understanding of the question. After reminding us that the Brazilian state was developmentalist in the same period in which social welfare States were being implemented on other areas of the world, she says: “Brazil never had a State that was essentially a provider of education, heath, basic sanitation, etc. But it had a State that constructed roads, built up communication systems, nationalized industries to modernize them and to offer basic inputs at prices many times lower than the cost of production, and so on”. (...) “The Brazilian state was the great leader of what the Marxists would call ‘development of the productive forces’. It was this principal task that the State took up for itself, principally in the passage from an agro-exporting country to an urban industrial Brazil, in the XX century.”

From the point of view of the interests of the great majority of the Brazilian population, excluded from the benefits of this model of development produced by the “inequality machine” (comparable to the “satanic mills” referred to by Karl Polanyi), its not possible to escape looking for a clear and defining position regarding the disjunctures brought about by a return to a more active role of the State.

In the first place, its necessary to verify if the conditions are right for the Brazilian State to overcome its historical option for the role of motor, first for primitive accumulation (in a certain sense permanent) and then for capitalist accumulation with extraordinary profit margins and with a lowered remuneration for the workforce. Its difficult to imagine the rise of a welfare State in Brazil in a direction opposite to the current tendencies of global capitalism, but we could still question if there is a chance for society to establish control over the savage character of Brazilian capitalism.

When we reflect on this question beginning with the reality of the government projects for the Amazon and of the concrete interests that are privileged by these projects, its difficult to imagine that the concern with the well-being of the population of the territories will be placed in the near future as the principal focus of state action. Regarding the Lula government, we cant discount the contradictions, given that the same government that receives enthusiastic support from the most retrograde sectors of agribusiness (for example, the sugar and alcohol refineries that maintain their workers in conditions of semi-slavery) has been responsible for a certain expansion in labour incomes. Its true, however, that the so-called reduction in inequality is due to the redistribution of the cake between those that live on the basis of work, and not the transfer of income from capital and the capitalist class (that continue being the largest beneficiaries of the economic policies).

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In spite of the existing chasm between the so-called elites and the people, the ideologues of the national–developmentalist project still count on the possibility of a recomposition of this pact. To cite one of the most eminent, Bresser-Pereira argues that “the developmentalist model was in great part victorious, principally between 1930-1960, because an important popular-national political pact brought the people closer to the bourgeois elites and the techno-bureaucrats, and caused them to become engaged in the development of the country”.⁴⁸

Its important to consider that Bresser-Pereira himself recognizes that “the crisis in this model (...) under the impact of a neoliberal and globalist ideological wave, led the Brazilian elites, already distanced from the people by twenty years of authoritarian regime, to alienate themselves and lose the concept of the nation.”

As such, and to return to the conjunctural questions: how can we hope that a program of accelerating growth, promoted by a government under the hegemony of financial capital and agribusiness (both profoundly internationalized) can represent a return to a national Project of growth with social equity? The initiation of contract solicitations for large infrastructure projects included in the PAC - like, for example, the recent calls for federal highways and now for the large hydroelectric dams on the Madeira River complex – already serve to show what will come, with the strong entrance of Spanish capital which is already managing a wide section of this “national development”.

Although the author of this article does not pretend to carry out a class analysis of Brazilian society (an exercise that for many would seem an aspiration only of the true dinosaurs), we cannot omit our perception that the inconsistency of the national developmentalist project is not rooted in any peculiarities or essential characteristic of the Brazilian State, but rather in the fragmentation of interests of a society that has, among its dominant sectors, a hegemonic rentist section, supported by an upper middle class that is strongly polarized by the patterns of consumption in rich countries and that is imbued with cosmopolitan values.

Such an assertion brings forward a fundamental question for the social groups that constitute the focus of our concerns and of alternative development proposals; those that resist the predatory exploitation of Amazonia and of its subaltern insertion into the Brazilian capitalist economy. This fundamental question is to figure out which allies can be counted on, in Brazilian society and in other countries, for the construction of a sustainable and democratic development project in Amazonia.

The counter-hegemonic political camp

The third camp, whose difficulties in political constitution need to be examined, is the potentially counter-hegemonic political camp that, in the context of a world in crisis, imagines a Brazil that is sustainable and solidary, committed to the responsible and solidary exercise of national sovereignty and to the defense of the social and biologically diverse patrimony that Amazonia contains for Brazil, in coherence with the larger challenge of survival of humanity and of the threatened planet. This camp needs to be considered around two points: 1) its constitution at the national level—overcoming the social and political isolation of popular social movements in Amazonia and 2) the challenges of constructing alliances at a global level.

As described in the document “FASEs Commitment to a Sustainable and Democratic Amazonia”, “the struggle for a sustainable, democratic and solidary Amazonia is now supported

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⁴⁸ Luiz Carlos Bresser Pereira, “Development Proposal for Brazil,” in *New Developmentalism: a national Project for growth with social equity*, 2005, Manole/ Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

by the forces of a wide grouping of social movements, associations and cooperatives, and civil society organizations.⁴⁹ One significant advance that can be pointed out is the establishment of a common development platform by the East Amazonia Forum (FAOR)⁵⁰, from the perspective and the experiences of NGOs and social movements of the region.

This platform consecrates, among other advances, a focus on the defense of rights, the consolidation of a wide-ranging concept of family production, the incorporation of the urban question from a regional and national perspective, a vision of gender equality and the defense of womens rights, the defense of necessary political reform to strengthen participatory democracy and the incorporation of all of these values in a new form of planning for regional development.

However, it is imperative to recognize that civil society in Amazonia is far from achieving leadership over wider society, with a strong intellectual direction and a project with the power to attract wide segments of society in the region and in the country as a whole. It is necessary to recognize that this same universe of organizations lacks basic consensus over questions of great importance, in relation to a development direction for Amazonia and the strategies to concretize such a project.

A good example of this can be found in the article “Hydroelectric Dams on the Madeira River”, by Guilherme Carvalho, published in this same issue of *Propuesta*. In the article, the author discusses the case in Rondônia in which stalemate over the construction of the Santo Antonio and Jirau dams detonated a complex process of re-composition of social forces, where old political-ideological adversaries now present themselves as allies in defense of the Rio Madeira Complex (CRM)⁵¹. This also put in opposite camps segments from within academia and from local social movements, and within political parties who oppose the undertakings, in particular with the Workers Party – PT – which is at the head of the mayors office in Porto Velho and in the federal government, there are some uncontested supporters of the CRM”.

Perhaps this difficult construction of unity will be part of the explanation for another assertion of the FASE document, that we cite here: “In the race for public opinion to favor the interests of those that contest the socio-environmental concerns of these social movements and NGOs, some media sectors systematically ignore the existence of this organizational web of Amazonian civil society, especially the democratic and popular camp of this society, seeking to confuse the camp of those opposed to deforestation and the predatory economic exploitation of Amazon with the work of other, less capable, institutions, among them NGOs serving foreign economic groups and

⁴⁹ The text mentions, in addition to FASE itself, the following organizations: The Brazilian Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (ABONG-Amazonia), the National Rubber-Tappers Council (CNS), the Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB), the Federation of Agricultural Workers (FETAGs), the Federation of Family Agriculture Workers (FETRAFs), the National Fishers Movement (MONAPE), the urban popular movements, womens movements, quilombos, NGOs, Church social organizations, the Via Campesina, etc. These organizations and social movements are articulated in networks and forums including the National Articulation for Agro-ecology (ANA-Amazonia), the Forum for Eastern Amazonia (FAOR), the Forum for Western Amazonia (FAOC), the Mato Grosso Forum for Environment and Development (FORMAD), the Womens Forum of the Amazon in Para (FMAP), the National Forum of Urban Reform (FNRU), the state Economic Solidarity forums (organized in all the states and affiliated with the Brazilian Economic Solidarity Forum) and the Amazonian Working Group (GTA).

⁵⁰ *Development Platform for Amazônia*, elaborated in the Sustainable and Democratic Amazônia Seminar: the challenges of development with a human-rights guarantee (26-28 June 2006, in Belém do Pará).

⁵¹ The Bolivians, when referring to the Madeira River Complex, also include the two dams planned to be built in that country (notes Guilherme Carvalho).



with actions that are contrary to our national interests. For those sectors interested in establishing political and ideological confusion, the existence of a set of Brazilian organizations, committed to Brazilian sovereignty over Amazonia, rooted in regional society, with widespread and deeply embedded links at the local level, and gifted with a profound socio-environmental consciousness, can only represent an obstacle to be overcome" (ibid).

In regards to the NGOs, it is important to return to the ideas that we developed earlier in relation to the fact that their political role in this context of disputed projects in Amazonia is not defined *a priori*, and that a careful and permanent effort to analyze positions, alliances, and political links of each one of these organizations is necessary. In this sense, we consider relevant the concerns expressed by Jean Pierre Leroy, regarding some initiatives of important NGOs working in Amazonia, like the Agreement on Acknowledging the Value of the Forest and Ending Deforestation in Amazonia – and concerning its relation (or lack of relation) with the popular and union organizations of the Brazilian Amazon. Concerned with the strengthening of these Amazonian organizations, Leroy shows the risks of a scenario in which only the large NGOs working in the Amazon, because they have money and thus qualified human resources, appear in the center of the Amazonian debate, relegating the Amazonians as only sideline helpers in their strategies. He concludes: My worry is that within this process of ascension of the private sector to the condition of central artisan of a Sustainable Amazon (and, at the world scale, of saviors of the planet), the organizations of the population and of the peoples of the region disappear, reduced to the condition of secondary actors. Environmental organizations can commemorate some victories in this dialogue, but the local populations and those that that closely accompany them probably would make a mitigated evaluation."

To say that the contra-hegemonic camp in the dispute over the future of Amazonia needs to be consolidated around the angle of its constitution at the national level – overcoming the social and political isolation of Amazonian popular social movements —, we are also saying that it only makes sense to think about a sustainable and democratic project for Amazonia that is also a sustainable and democratic project for Brazil. We need to derive practical consequences from the discourse of our closest interlocutors and also from our political adversaries. From the former, we have heard that civil society is fragmented and that, before questions of general interests, like, for example, the risk of widespread electrical blackouts, it is the role of the State to take on responsibility and make decisions.

The discourse of the enemies always seeks to present the social movements and civil society organizations of our camp as pure and simple enemies of development, at the service of international interests that want to maintain the country relegated to a position of underdevelopment. In our view, the challenge that is before us, therefore, is to bring together all that has been accumulated in terms of formulating alternatives for the region with the formulation of alternatives for Brazilian society as a whole, which is extremely complex. This effort implies, for example, the need to relate the urban question in Amazonia with the wider urban problematic in Brazil, or to relate the question of illegal logging in the region, that is destined more for internal consumption in Brazil than for export—to the unsustainable patterns of consumption and lack of environmental responsibility of rich consumers and of the upper middle class in other regions of the country.

The construction of alliances at the global level is also a complex and equally contradictory process. We can't ever lose sight of the traps that this process carries with it. The insidious discourse about the common goods of humanity and the recurring declarations of international personalities about the internationalization of Amazonia should keep us constantly alert about this issue. The background of this difficulty is the contradiction between the permanence of States as decisive actors in global capitalism and the relative fragility and ambiguity of the Brazilian state within this scenario. From the point of view of the aspirations of wide segments of Brazilian society to see

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short term accelerated economic growth, it is difficult to imagine that the Brazilian state will pull back from the intense participation of transnationals in this process.

On the other hand, the Lula government has sold the world the idea that Brazil will be a determining factor in the solution to the world energy crisis, through the production of energy based on biomass. Rich countries share this expectation and many of our traditional supporters (cooperation agencies that finance Brazilian social movements and NGOs) have to deal with the expectations of their governments and the public in their respective countries. On the other hand, the people that participate in the World Social Forum taking place in Belém, Pará in January of 2009, a great opportunity to bring together these alliances, dont share the same visions and strategies in relation to the question of Amazonia, and also do not share a common reference in articulating a perspective of "another world" with a analysis of the role of States and of international capital. This analysis needs to be refined in relation to the position of governments and Amazonian peoples that oppose external mediation of the pan-Amazonian problematic.



CAPITALS OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE AMAZON AND OUR NATURAL RICHES

Via Campesina Brazil

Foreign capital and capital in general have launched an international offensive against the Amazon. Everyone knows the potential of this strategic treasure. They are already exploiting minerals and lumber. But we still have the energy potential of hydroelectric plants to be used to make aluminum ore for export, the potential of sweet water, etc. The enormous potential of biodiversity as raw material for pharmaceutical products, transgenic and nano-technologies.

Facing this strategic necessity of reproducing and broadening the domination of capital over this fantastic natural wealth, capital uses all its tentacles within the Lula government, state governments, in the legislative and judicial branches. They use the monopoly coverage of their media.

Various legislative-judicial initiatives are under way at this time to expedite the complete domination of the Amazon region and its riches.

Just look at whats happening:

1. In March 2008, President Lula signed Provisional Measure 422, which is the same as a law that passes Congress only through homologation.

The measure legalizes all the illegally-grabbed public lands up to 1500 hectares in Amazonia. Until now, INCRA could only give legal deeds to the property owners who had legal ownership up to 100 hectares. With this measure, all the large land-owners and farmers who do not have legal deeds are going to be legalized. And this also breaks the principle of ownership that living on the land is required. Evidently many of the owners of these properties of up to 1500 live in the city, etc. (This measure only speeded up the process that the right-wingers have been pushing for with the Project 2287/7, by Asdrúbal Bentes(PMDB-PA). So the President speeded up the implementation of what the right-wingers wanted and which would have been slowed down in the legislature.

2. Revoked an INCRA decree that had the powers to regulate and thus legalize all the quilombolas (afro-descendant areas).

It worked like this: the communities that were considered quilombolas would present a petition to INCRA, which assigned experts or anthropologists who would analyze the situation and if the case was proven, the collective ownership of the quilombolas would be immediately legalized. And under the constitution, the quilombolas, like the indigenous areas, have precedence over any other title to the land. That is, even if there were an officially registered deed, the first right of the community would prevail.

This decree is suspended. For more than six months there has been no legalization. This was the result of an ongoing insidious national campaign by the Globo media conglomerate against the afro-descendant communities. And now the government is considering passing this task to the Attorney Generals office, which means consigning it to the bureaucracy and will prevent the communities from having their rights recognized.

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This change is because in Para, 50% of all the areas are quilombolas. And on the other hand, there are many areas where the large corporations such as Aracruz, Vale, etc. have seized lands illegally from the afro-descendant communities. Now the legalization of the afro-descendant lands can only be done through a process coordinated by the Attorney Generals office. This is tied to the Presidents office and more bureaucratic and difficult to access.

3. The bill proposed by Senator Zambiasi(PTB-RS) is moving through Congress and is said to have the support of all the parties and of the Presidents office.

Currently the Brazilian Constitution prohibits the purchase of land by foreign corporations or individuals if it is within an area less than 150 km from the countrys borders. This measure is aimed at protecting the country from foreign interests and is thus related to national security. Practically all other countries have similar laws. The bill, authored by a Senator who is a member of the governing party, reduces the area from 150 km to only 50 km, allowing foreign corporations to buy all the lands that they want in this area. A Senator from Rio Grande do Sul told the press that in truth, the bill was influenced by a Swedish-Finnish corporation which, in violation of the law, bought around 86 thousand hectares of land for monoculture of eucalyptus on the southern border of Rio Grande do Sul with Uruguay and Argentina. So the corporation is lobbying to change the law. There is also is a property of 100 thousand hectares belonging to the Moon sect from South Korea that was illegally acquired, with a Brazilian group as a "front".

4. Bill 6424/05 of Senator Fleixo Ribeiro (PSDB-Pará) proposes the reduction of the required legal reserve in Amazonia (specified by Provisional Measure 2166/96 of the Cardoso government) from the current 80% of the area required to be preserved as native forest, to only 50% and still allows that area of the reserve to be transformed into homogeneous plantations with exotic trees such as eucalyptus, dende palm.

And planting these trees would qualify as forest preservation. So the big corporations operating in Amazonia could log the trees and then come back to plant eucalyptus for vegetable coal or African palm for vegetable oil and all this would be within the conditions for maintaining the forest, as if these trees were native.

This bill already passed the Senate, passed the Agriculture Commission, and is in the Commission on the Environment where the right-wingers also have the majority. And so its possible that it may get approved in the Chamber, without going to the Plenary and would return to the Senate for ratification and signature of the President.

5. These measures are combined with the offensive of the farmers who are allied with the transnational corporations to get President Lula to sign a provisionary measure that exempts the farmers from signing the ID card of every rural worker who is contracted for a period less than three months of work. This would make it legal to not pay workers rights to temporary workers.

Pressure by the farmers also stopped in the Chamber of Deputies more than two years ago, a bill that was already approved in the Senate that requires the expropriation of all the farms where slave labor is found.

The farmers do not accept this law. They said that slave work is a fantasy. But every year the Federal Police find around 30 farms, especially in the Amazon region, with slave workers — migrant workers who receive only food and have no ability to leave the farm. In general these are young men, brought by the farm owners from distant regions with false promises of benefits. They are used on the farm for the most difficult work, that of cutting down trees and planting grass to feed cattle. After the cattle are established, they get rid of the workers, threatening them and not paying them. There are also many cases of killings of workers who demand their rights.

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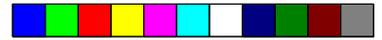
6. Some months ago, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mangabeira Unger, presented a proposal to replace INCRA and the land institutes that handle the legalization process for land in Amazonia.

In his opinion, these groups are not serving the growing demand for development in the region and the corporations that want to go to Amazonia need legal security for their new properties. For this reason, he proposes the creation of a federal public institute specializing only in the legalization of lands in Amazonia. The proposal was widely publicized in the press. The land institutes of the state government and INCRA reacted by denouncing what amounted to a maneuver to speed up the handover of land and lumber to the big corporations. The Presidents Office was silent. And it appears that the proposal did not survive.

7. Given this situation, La Via Campesina Brazil, the social movements, the environmental movements, Greenpeace, and other organizations of Brazilian society are building a national movement to put pressure to:

- Save Amazonia and its wealth from the fury of foreign capital and agribusiness.
- Revoke Provisional Measure 422 that legalizes land-grabbing in Amazonia.
- Return the responsibility for legalizing the afro-descendant areas to INCRA.
- Immediate approval by the Chamber of Deputies of the law that requires expropriation of farms using slave labor.
- Get rid of the proposed bill that would reduce the requirement for native forest reserve from 80% to 50%.
- Prohibit the export of wood and any genetic good created from biodiversity in Amazonia.
- Prevent foreign corporations from being able to administer areas of the national forest that are being auctioned off to take out the wood in a controlled way.
- Revise the projects that are under way to build hydroelectric plants, which only serve the need for exporting energy through the transformation of aluminum and iron.
- Struggle to maintain the actual plant cover in all of Amazonia. In other words – zero deforestation! The area has already been deforested enough for the economic development of the region.

	Aplicação da Reserva Legal		
	Até 1996	Após 1996	
Área	RESERVA LEGAL	RESERVA LEGAL	Disponível para plantio
Floresta	50%	80%	20%
Cerrado	20%	35%	65%



LETTER FROM VIA CAMPESINA

Via Campesina Para

Via Campesina is a network and a space for the mobilization of peasant movements and support organizations in the struggle of workers living in the countryside. It is an international, Latin-American, and regional network space and the diversity of local realities from the member movements. In Para in the Amazon Via Campesina congregates the following movements: MST (Landless Rural Workers Movement), MPA (Movement of those Affected by Dams), MMC (Movement of peasant Women) PJR (pastoral of Rural Youth), Indigenous and Community Associations, *quilombolas* [afro-descendent communities], fishing folks and *ribeirinhos* [those living along rivers]; CPT (Pastoral Commission for Land), Cáritas, CRB (Conference of religious People from Brazil), CPP (Pastoral Council of Fisher Folks) e CIMI (Missionary Indigenist Council).

In the context of the construction of Via Campesina some action guidelines were adopted in the various peasant realities: the respect to the bio-diversity of our planet, which includes material goods, ecosystems, cultures and traditional knowledge of the people; the democratization of the access and use of land, in the construction for a true agrarian reform; food sovereignty as a right for peoples and countries to define their agricultural policies; the right of peasants to produce their own seeds in the best way to preserve biodiversity; effective promotion of gender equality, fighting all forms of cultural and sexual prejudice, promoting justice and human rights in all contexts.

Amazon

The strategy for the occupation of the Amazon throughout decades has been only characterized by the logic of capital accumulation, strengthened by incentive of fiscal policies and public subsidies offered by the federal and state governments.

We are witnessing in the Amazon a consolidation process of harbors, roads and energy production infra infra-structure, aimed at creating and consolidating this "new" phase of capital occupation. This process has been followed by a government tactic, mainly in Para, of zoning and ordination of land allowing for the mapping of areas of capitalist expansion, centered on commodity products.

Since the 90s in the 20th century, and the hegemony of neo-liberal governments in Brazil and the Amazon n and a broad process of globalization, the region gains more prominence, in the international arena, due to its agro-exporter potential, predominantly primary goods for the large capitalist economies. In order to consolidate this process the Brazilian government privatized the public companies which acted in the exploration of natural resources, transferring to capital, the responsibility for its development. Such paradigm generated exclusion, poverty, misery, expropriation and the degradation of the environment. The re-activation of the land market in the region, propelled by the national development model, centered in the ideology of the agri-business, allowed for territories which belonged to traditional communities, that is to say, indigenous lands, *quilombolas*, *ribeirinhos*, traditional fisher folk, and extractivists became the target of the greed and pillage of organized groups to illegally appropriated land I the Amazon, using the invasion model of *grilagem*. Similar to what had occurred since the 70s in the 20th century, where large extensions of land were occupied under the connivance of the state for the undue appropriation

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of public resources via SUDAM (Superintendence of the Amazon) and today the land government bodies in the Amazon, such as INCRA (National Instituto for Colonization and Agrarian Reform) and ITERPA (Land Institute in the state of Para) continue illegally giving title of land and water resources from traditional communities in name of the so called development which so far have simply dilapidated the environment and traditional communitarian sociabilities..

The territory Para

In the last twelve years the state government, under the leadership of PSDB (Social Democratic Brazilian Party) left serious problems for Brazilian society in Para. Figures from the actual government indicate that poverty and extreme poverty have become more intense in the countryside. "The State has a population of 6.2 million people and 2.7 million live in extreme poverty. Rural poverty is more profound than in urban areas. Urban poverty represents 38% and in rural areas it represents 58%. "Those urban-rural disparities in education and jobs reveal exacerbated differences". The government in the last few decades left an imprint of complete disregard for the economy and ways of living of the traditional communities and family farmers. We had twelve years of a centralized (capital) and authoritarian government which did not dialog with the peasant social movement. The public security system was trained and conceived to violently repress any social and legitimate protests from the peasantry from Para.

Governments only work to consolidate the productive chain of extensive cattle grazing, as the only project for agriculture, placing Para as the second Brazilian state in cattle farming. It also articulated and implemented grain agribusiness in three micro-regions of the state (south, north-east and west). It implemented a project to legalize thousands of hectares of illegally invaded areas- *grilagem* - benefiting the conservative and violent *latifundio* [large land holding] in the state. It implemented a project to legalise and map the areas for productive expansion of the agribusiness and the mineral chain. It created incentives which benefited logging extrativist companies in reservations and areas preserved by traditional communities. In sythesys the development model implemented by governments in recent years, has been centered in the agri-busniess, the expansion of cattle farming, logging and the consolidation of the road, harbor and energetic infra-structure too allow the production of commodity goods has aggravated further poverty, the exclusion and violence in the countryside.

Proposals from Via Campesina Para

As we have already highlighted, in the last twelve years the implementation of a predatorial development model has been deepened, causing the destruction of the environment, peasant exclusion and on the other hand, it prioritized the assurance of profit, at all cost, for loggers, large land owners, mining companies, soy farmers, etc.

Social movements from Via Campesina defend: breaking away from this submission mode to international which is predatorial to nature, potencialising investments in agriculture with an ecological basis, in agro-extrativist economics which values forestry resources and several productive activities, developed by the family structure

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Democratization of the State

The State has served simply to make it feasible the interests of the sectors linked to the agri-business and large capital. Public investments have been directed to those sectors, marginalizing social segments, mainly, the forces linked to peasantry. The administration of the State has also been centralized on capital, disregarding the geographical dimension and the different realities of our micro regions.

Social movements from Via Campesina defend? The democratization and decentralization of the State, with the participation of social movements in the definition of public policies and the re-ordering of the State.

Human Rights and Public Security

The various State government administrations have always treated the agrarian reform issue as a police matter. Only in 2006 more than 4 thousand families were evicted by the Military Police and more than 50 peasants were arrested, on a criminalization process headed by the Agrarian Conflicts Police Station – DECA, from the Military police of the state.

Social movements from Via Campesina defend: the immediate suspension of the eviction headed by the military police. The redefinition of the role of DECA, granting them attributions to investigate threats against those defending human rights, to arrest gun men and those who order killings with prison sentences issued by justice for the murder of workers and assure the protection to those on death threat.

Agrarian reform and the role of the State Instito for land

The State never supported and never had an agrarian reform policy. It always refused to invest in settlements in partnership with the federal government. ITRPA was pillaged and never had an effective policy to fight illegal invasion of land – *grilagem* and recovering state land from the hands of *grileiros*.

Social movements from Via campesina defend: the implementation of a state policy for the agrarian reform, prioritizing the efetive combat on *grilagem*, the distribution of land titles from state lands only up to 500 hectares, per farmer, the legalization of lands from *quilombola* and *ribeirinho* communities and to fight against the invasion of indigenous lands.

Large projects from capital and the agression against the environment

Major projects projected for the State of Para, obey the interests of the Agribusiness, transnational corporations and large capital, its implementation has provoked environmental impacts and countless losses for the *ribeirinha* populations, indigenous peoples and *quilombola* communities.

Social Movements from Via Campesina are against: the construction of Belo Monte hydroelectric power plant and other hydroelectric power plants projected for the State of Para and the continuity of the construction of the hydroway Araguaia-Tocantins, as well as, predatorial fishing and the exploration of fishing resources, mainly in reproductive areas.

Mining and the production of charcoal

The activity of Vale do Rio Doce Company (VALE) and ALCOA (Canadian aluminium) in the State of Para, has been determined by a violent exploitation of our mineral riches strictly aiming at profit and causing serious problems for traditional populations and contributing for the increase of poverty in our State. In its expansionist project Vale has financed the steel hub in the counties of Maraba and Barcarena, causing forest devastation for the production of charcoal aggravating even further the slave labor conditions in charcoal mills.

Social movements from Via Campesina defend the: end of public financing for the implementation of eucalyptus monoculture in the region, the suspension of the environmental license for the iron and steel industries involved in slave labor, and to fight the illegal production of charcoal from primary forests and the return of Vale to the public sector.

Education

There is a lack of public policies aimed at educating workers in the countryside. There is a high incidence of illiteracy and or a low level of schooling due among other things to the mainstream education (3rd to 8th degrees and secondary school), inexistence of appropriate infrastructure and educational materials on the reality of the countryside, as well as educators effectively prepared to work in such complex reality as it is the countryside. This and other issues are factors which influence in the family deconstruction, and the intense rural exodus of the youth to the cities, seeking schooling and job opportunities.

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Highlighting the existence of countless educational initiatives developed by communities and social organizations from the countryside aiming at consolidating education aimed for the subjects in the countryside. Actions that never had effective support from the State of Para.

In that sense, Via Campesina PA, defend: greater participation of the State in fighting illiteracy in the countryside, as well as potentialising schooling initiatives and incentives for school permanence. To expand and equip the State University of Para to establish partnerships and courses which are of interest to peasants and peasant organizations for the schooling in all three educational levels - elementary, secondary and higher education.

Sharing resources: energy

Hydroelectric power plants in the region and the distribution of the energy produced in the region only aim at attending local interests and needs of capital. Thousands of families are still living in the dark, although the largest Brazilian hydroelectric plant has been installed in our state: Tucuruí.

The decisions of the state company Eletronorte which controls and manages the energy generated are centralized in Brasilia-DF according to the interests for the companies and it does not facilitate the direct participation of the social movements affected and even less the local population.

Via Campesina proposes for the State to pressure the federal instances for decentralization of the decisions of Eletronorte, the re-discussion of the application of Royalties, the guarantee of the expansion of Light for all families and the implementation of a social tariff for all low income families as determined by the law.

Indigenous territories

Indigenous territories in our region are sacred territories of the people who preceeded us and whom we also were a part of. We condemn the constant violations of their rights, such as invasion of their areas. Logging and extracting their mineral richness. We condemn the construction of hydroelectric power plants which affect their territories and only aim to meet the greed of capital. We defend the constitutional right of urgent mediation for all indigenous areas and their right to their own culture and the improvement of their living conditions.

Belem, January 6th, 2007.

MST (Landless Rural Workers Movement); MPA (Movement of Small Farmers); MAB (Movement of Those Affected by Dams); MMC (Peasant Women Movement); PJR (Pastoral of Rural Youth); Associations and indigenous communities, quilombolas and ribeirinhos; CPT (Pastoral Comission for Land); Conference of the Religious in Brazil – CRB; Brazilian Cáritas North 2; CPP (Fisher folk Pastoral Council); CIMI (Indigenous missionary Council).

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MANIFESTO OS PEASANTS IN THE REGION OF MARABA

*Parauapebas-Para Movements**

We are in the Brazilian Amazon, surrounded by the largest mineral province in the world, undoubtedly the area with the greatest concentration of natural capital (forest, water, mining and biodiversity) and traditional populations, which for the large capital is nothing other than a frontier in expansion.

On one hand the official "progress" organized by the State from the action of organizations and international capital allied to the interest of local entrepreneurs. A social economic development model based on the *latifundio* and extensive cattle grazing farming, in deforestation for the production of charcoal, eucalyptus and soya monoculture, mining and iron and steel industry.

On the other hand, -in spite of the natural wealth of the region -, an extreme poor population unprotected from conditions which will offer a dignified life and public services which should be offered by the State. Data from IPEA – Institute of Applied Economic Research – demonstrate the unsustainability of this model providing a bad distribution of wealth and income: 295 thousand people control 11% of all the wealth while 11 million people, in other words, half of the population of the Amazon control 16 % of the income per capita.

Alienated from its political condition, the society in Para suffers from common ailments: lack of social infra-structure, housing, security, jobs and agrarian reform. They demonstrate that this model of development make it unfeasible a society of social economic rise and at the same time negates the control mechanisms and management on its natural resources.

Considering all that, the social organizations from the countryside and the city (landless peasants, miners, tenants associations, students), mobilised in the Struggle for the agrarian reform and in defense of natural resources of the Brazilian people present to the Federal, State and County government and Vale do Rio Doce Company a political economic agenda to be met immediately, since it represents the interests of society which cannot wait any longer.

1. **Reestatization of Vale do Rio Doce Company** as a means to return to the national State and the Brazilian people a strategic company for the economy and national sovereignty.
2. **The administration from the State of Para** (Governor Ana Julia Carepa) to assume another attitude with regards to Vale do Rio Doce Company.

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* MST- CPT – MAB –MPA –VIA CAMPESINA PARÁ – UJCC – Trade Union of the Miners from Serra Pelada – Network of Rural and urban Women– ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENTS FROM PARAUAPEBAS –UNIAO PALMARES GROUP -



- Articulate a front of mining States where CVRD acts in order to be built a new tax on mining and at the same time to establish a campaign for the end of Kandir bill which benefits only exporting companies.
- To defend the National department of Mineral Policies (DNPM) as a responsible body for the release of mineral concessions and not to have this role passed on to private companies.
- For the mining counties to network in the struggle of the Royat's, (*CFEM- Financial Contribution for the Exploration of Minerals*) around 4% today, and well below the profits of the Company. It should reach 10% of all the wealth produced.
- For SECTAM (secretariat of the environment of the state of Para) to periodically revise the environmental impacts in the areas of influence of the major project Carajas.
- 3. For the Vale do Rio Doce Company** to cut the transfer of iron to (Companies of Dog iron) based in Para and Maranhao which do not meet their social and environmental responsibilities.
- 4. For the Federal government through its institutions**, State Government, CVRD, and County Governments, to be made responsible for an emergency social programme in the areas:
 - Building popular housing.
 - Building health centers, the constructions of regional hospitals in Parauapebas and Tucuruí, strengthening the regional hospital in Marabá and Redenção with trained professionals to meet the needs of society.
 - Implementation of a broad programme for education: to eliminate from illiteracy to limitations in the access to public universities.
 - Installation of productive unities to assure the generation of more jobs and the diversification of the economy.
 - Social security;
- 5. For the Forestry District of Carajás** to be brought up in the agenda by Federal and State governments in order to implement in the region (based in the eucalyptus plantation for the production of charcoal and the use of natural forest) to be replaced by the Sustainable Agro-Forestry District 9 (which means to reforest with native trees from the region and to assure biodiversity)
- 6. For the Federal and State** governments to decide the historical problem of the miners in Serra Pelada:
 - Approving in the national congress the miners statute a)
 - For the Brazilian State to return to miners (those) resources deposited in the form of gold in caixa econômica federal over 20 years ago.
 - For miners to have autonomy over Serra Pelada territory, and to end the intrusion of CVRD co-opting and repressing miners organizations.
- 7. For Federal and State** governments to build in the short run the Federal Agrotecnic School in maraba and the Advanced campus of UFPA (federal University of Para) and (State University of Pará.) in Parauapebas.
- 8. For the legal law suits where Vale do Rio Doce** company is mentioned to be immediately processed by the court, and also paid the labour rights of workers. And also to revise by the labour courts the salary practiced by Vale do Rio Doce Company and its outsourced companies which are today the most outdated salaries in the country.
- 9. To create a Deliberative Council** with representatives of the State, VALE and civil society in order to discuss and deliberate on mining projects and the use of environmental resources in

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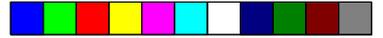


the region. To follow up and decide the programme of investments of the resources destined by VALE to the counties, as a presentation of projects according to local interests.

10. **Implementation of an industrial pole** in the region of Carajás in order to verticalise production (to add industrial value to natural resources extracted from the region) in the transformation of manufactured goods in the interest of society, with the production of appliances, industrial parts to meet local demand.
11. **To implement a broad programme of agrarian reform** in the region, considering the regional biome and the characteristics of Amazon agriculture. To create immediate settlements in all farms occupied by landless families. To be expropriated all farms which have caused deforestation using extensive cattle grazing farming, To change the settlement criteria, assuring the implementation of agro-villages, with the necessary conditions for sociability such as schools, health centres and electricity.
12. **For the technical assistance programmes** and rural development to take in consideration the agricultural vocation of the Amazon biome, and to respect forests and to adopt agro-ecological agricultural techniques, in harmony with nature, and using already deforested areas.
13. **For Vale do Rio Doce company** to systematically pass on the resources according to established agreements with affected indigenous communities by the major project in Carajás. For immediate demarcation of indigenous land.
14. **For the Federal government through ELETRONORTE** to establish a social tariff for energy and a broad project of "Electricity for All" for peasants in the region. The largest hydroelectric power plant in Brazil is established here (Tucuruí hydroelectric plant) and society pays the highest electricity tariff in the country. To lift electricity subsidies for large projects causing disadvantages in the interests of society.
15. **For the Federal government, in the State of Pará** and the counties in the region, to establish a set of measures aiming to equip and resignify the activity of EMBRAPA (Brazilian Company of Agriculture and Cattle ranching) and to direct its action to strengthen the production of rural communities agrarian reform settlements.
16. **For Vale do Rio Doce company** to establish together with other social movements an agenda for discussion of all mineral projects already implemented in the region.

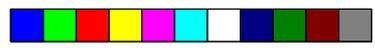
*Palmares settlement
Parauapebas-Pará
15 de outubro de 2007*





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PART 3 ATTACHMENT



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THE IS NO AGRARIAN POLICY IN THE AMAZON

João Pedro Stedile

Settlements in the Amazon do not represent an agrarian reform, states a member of the national directorship of the MST, João Pedro Stedile. "Governments, state and federal, are applying the simple and mediocre formula of only distributing public land for colonization projects. There is no effective policy or planning", he says.

The agrarian reform projects implemented in the Amazon, according to him, do not allow for those settled remaining for a long time in the place. "The colonists of those projects sometimes sell the wood from trees for ridiculous prices/ and other times, in exchange for lumber to build their houses or simply for the logger to open a road which will allow him to go to his field. Poor colonists are used as a mass for maneuver to tame the land, and behind them come loggers, cattle rangers or soya large land owners, who pressure to buy their lands", he states.

About the law which allows land owners to deforest 20% of their areas in the Amazon, Stedile defends "zero deforestation" According to him; the areas which have already been deforested are enough for the production of food and the development of the region. "The access to land by the families of poor rural workers living in the region must be assured with the expropriation of large cattle ranches which have already been deforested", he defends.

Read the following interview with the member of directorship of the MST.

Members of the MST are camping in the headquarters of INCRA Belem, demanding a change in the politics of the agrarian reform in the Amazon. What is the MST proposal for this change?

There is not a policy for the agrarian and land development in the Amazon. State and federal governments, are applying the simple and mediocre formula of only distributing public land for colonization projects. There is no effective policy or planning. Federal and state governments have opted out for the distribution of public lands because they do not have to confront the *latifundio* and the agro-business. In that way they do not incur in economic losses or political losses to implement the Agrarian Reform and having to confront the lobby of the ruralists. On the other hand, their results become positive statistics for government propaganda. Which means that they are opportunistic initiatives from the government? An example of that? Only the superintendence of Incra in Santarem supposedly has 'settled' for propaganda purposes more than 50 thousand families. This number is higher than the six years of settlements the administration Lula has implemented in all states of the south and southeastern regions together.

It is easier to guess that in the region of Santarem there are not 50 thousand families. And even if they have distributed the land, it is the distribution of public lands, where anyone can register at Incra and end up receiving a land title. There is no project or policy for the development of the Amazon region. The areas where the illegal settlers are do not have roads, electricity, schools or hospitals. Some of the poorer families, without public support and means to generate income, are forced to deforest the 20 % of the area to obtain wood for fire or to produce charcoal to assure their survival. Doing that, they end up at the mercy of loggers, who take advantage of illegal plots of land and log the existing trees without any control

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The colonists in these projects, sometimes, sell logs for ridiculous prices/ and other times in exchange for lumber to build their houses or simply for the logger to open a road which will allow him to access his field. Poor colonists are used as mass of maneuver to tame the land. Behind them come the loggers, cattle ranchers or soya large land owners who pressure to buy their land. By doing that, land is again concentrated, in a vicious cycle. It is all wrong.

The MST states that it for a settlement model which respects the environment and at the same time does not destroy the forest. How does that model work?

First of all, the government must end with colonization projects. We are against Incra and State institutes distributing public land for anyone. We defend along with social movements in the Amazon the policy of Deforestation Zero, also supported by Greenpeace and other civil society organizations. The current area that has been deforested is enough for the production of food and the development of the region. Therefore, we must have a national agreement to assure that there will be no deforestation of any area in the Amazon from now on.

Secondly, the access to land for the families of poor rural workers living in the region must be assured with the expropriation of large ranches which have already been deforested. An example of that is the case of Opportunity bank: one bank concentrates 600 thousand hectares of land in the South of Para. That would be enough to settle 10 thousand families in the area! In other words, we need to use the previously degraded and deforested areas to develop settlement projects, which are different from colonization projects on public areas.

Settlement projects need planning for the production of food, according to the agricultural vocation of the region, but also for the production of milk and fruits and breeding small animals. We need to combine the implementation of settlements with the setting up of small and medium size coop agro-industries to generate income for the people living in settlements. Doing so, it will be possible to add value, industrialize and preserve food, which will then, be able to be transported to urban regions such as Santarém, Belém, Manaus, Porto Velho, Marabá, where the consumer markets are concentrated in the region.

Besides that, in each project it is necessary to build an agro-village, improving the living conditions of those living in settlements, with electricity, schools, hospitals, leisure and safe roads. That would be the end of the Brazilian state stupidity, in placing families of colonists in the middle of the bush, as if they were animals, which makes their social and economic development totally unfeasible; and after cutting part of the forest and without the means to generate income and assure their survival, they are forced to move to the city and leave the land tamed for the large land owner. We need to end this vicious cycle in the region with an effective state policy.

Does MST give any sort of guidance to people in settlements to avoid deforestation?

Of course. We struggle for another model of land usage and production and (as I explained above) we are against any deforestation. However, unfortunately, in many regions rural workers receive those lands in totally adverse conditions, in areas away from consumer markets and without public support, and we understand that, to avoid starving to death, they end up deforesting.

Why is the MST against the creation of a new government department for the legalization of land in the Amazon, as proposed by the Minister Mangabeira Unger?

The challenge for the Amazon was presented by the actual minister: it has to do with having a development policy and a clear land re-ordination, allowing for everyone to hold land titles.

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But to do so, we do not need to spend time and money with a new government department, but rather, have the political determination, to coordinate and articulate the actions of Incra with the state institutes of land and Ibama. We suspect that the creation of a new department, as it happened in the past with GETAT, could be only a centralizing policy to facilitate the quick concession of large land holdings to large economic groups, as it is the wish of large companies and groups.

The problem is not a public department, but the lack of a project for the region from the conception of a future for our country. Unfortunately, so far, even in the administration Lula, predominates in the Amazon region only a model of domination for the large national capital allied with transnational corporations, which see in the Amazon only a large opportunity for capital accumulation. Therefore, national and international corporations such as Vale company and large banks are investing billions in hydroelectric power plants, steel and iron industries and in the exploration of minerals and the extraction of wood. Altogether to enrich the international capital, while the people in the region will continue suffering from all kinds of necessities.

One can easily see that in villages 60 km from Tucuruí hydroelectric power plant, the second largest power plant in the world, there is no electricity. That happens because the objective of the plant is to produce aluminium for export, and not to improve the living conditions of the people.

There is a very strong complaint from the agriculture and cattle ranching sector on the insistence of maintaining 80% of protected forest in rural estates in the Amazon. Do you agree with this percentage?

That is the minimum necessary. Large Brazilian and international capitalist groups would like to deforest everything, but unfortunately, large farmers and companies active in the Amazon, behave as gigolos of nature. They want maximum exploration, and the future generations and the Brazilian Constitution, which deliberates on natural resources that belong to the people, do not matter. That is why, to stop this advance of the forest, we defend Zero Deforestation.

Settlements in the north of Mato Grosso complain of having very small plots of land. In such region what would be a suitable size for plots of land in order to assure the subsistence of a family and to maintain the legal forest reserve area? What kind of activity those living in settlements should develop there?

The problem is not the size of the plot. if you give 50 hectares they will ask for 100, if you give 100 they will ask for 200 and large land owners think that 5 thousand or 10 thousand heaters is not enough. The problem – as I explained before – it is that we need development policies, for poor rural workers and those living in settlements to be able to improve their lives and increase their income through work. That does not exclusively depend on the size of the plot. Whoever wants more and more land is dreaming to log and see if there is mining in the area.... A family can live quite well with 15 hectares if it is receiving public support to develop activities that generate income, such as the combination of settlement and the agro-industry.

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In the ranking of the most significant environmental apprehensions organized by Ibama since 2006, which was published by the Ministry of the Environment, Incra is on the top of the list. Ibama defends itself saying that it is not “reasonable” to compare those living in settlements and those engaging in large deforestation. What is the position of the MST with regards to the list published by the Ministry of the Environment?

The “conviction” Incra received was shameful manipulation by malicious technicians from Ibama, who handed the list to the Minister without any criteria whatsoever. Later, the press

manipulated even further trying to blame deforestation on those living in settlements. Many large mainstream media newspapers, that do not understand anything about the Amazon, such as O Globo from Rio Janeiro, used in their headlines that the MST is the champion of deforestation, even though none of those projects were part of our movement and we had clarified that previously to the press. None of the areas of the list are part of agrarian reform, but rather colonization projects. In other words, within the policies that benefit large land owners, loggers and large corporations, not an agrarian reform policy.

The press coverage in this case demonstrates the manipulation of the large media monopoly that use their power to struggle against the Agrarian reform. Nobody puts the headline of the deforestation 600 thousand hectares caused by the Opportunity Bank, from Daniel Dantas. Nobody puts in the headlines the deforestation caused by Vale and its aggression against the environment to remove miners, sending to China and later depositing the profits abroad in the account of their share holders. Brazilian people and mainly the people of the Amazon will be left with the destruction and deforestation. Nobody talks about that. Unfortunately, the minister of the Environment also accepted that kind of manipulation.

Do you agree with the idea that the agrarian reform, in the spectrum of deforestation in the escape goat for the land issue in the areas of the South/Southeast in the country?

The agrarian reform in the region, is in fact feasible?

The administration Lula has repeated the same politicizes from FHC administration and uses colonization projects, the distribution of public land in the Amazon to create statistics and “prove” that it is implementing the agrarian reform. The Agrarian Reform is the de-concentration of land, with the division of large estates and its distribution to the poor. We are witnessing the greatest concentration of land estates in history, since last century. In other words, it is on course a real policy of agrarian counter-reform. This is happening in all agricultural regions of the country, in special in the centre west and the Amazon.

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EIGHT QUESTIONS ABOUT VALE

Sector of Communication MST

1. Why it does not enforce the environmental law and pay the fines it received from Ibama?

Vale is a mining company with record number of fines received from Ibama (Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources). Since its privatization, it has received 56 on the spot fines, amounting to 37 million reais. In 2006, there were 14 fines, amounting to 2.9 million reais. Only 217 thousand reais have been paid. The accusations are: charcoal consumption originated from native forests, fires in environmental protection areas, destruction of permanent forests, dumping of dejects which should have been confined to artificial lakes.

In Maranhao, for instance, the activity of 71 furnaces from the metal and iron industry FGC (Pig Iron Carajás), from the mining company Vale, causes health problems to those living in settlements caused by the smoke. The 200 families from California Settlement, in Açailandia (MA), which is beside the steel and iron company, suffer from respiratory problems, strong headaches, eye congestion, physical tiredness and sinusitis.

2. Why does Vale lobby not to pay taxes?

The mining company does not pay all taxes due according to the law and through economic pressure succeeds in receiving fiscal exemption. The States where the mining company is active lose resources for social investments with Kandir bill, which exempts from ICMS [tax on commodities and services] payment on export primary goods. In Para, Vale has received tax exemption until 2015 for operations related to extraction, circulation, trade and transport of bauxite, aluminium, iron, manganese. Pará, practically lives solely from mining exports, and it loses R\$ 850 million a year with the bill, R\$ 595 million (70%) out of those would come from Vale. Today, the total budget in Para is R\$ 7,8 bilhões. Vale has revenues which amount to R\$ 4.2 billion, only in Para, but pays less than 7% of that on taxes. Its profit in 2007 was approximately R\$ 20 billion, a large part of that came from Para soil.

3. Why Vale, that in its TV adds state "social responsibility", does not meet the demands from mayors in the mining counties?

A group of mayors from the mining counties and civil society organizations defend for the fiscal benefits granted to mining companies to be revoked, in order for the exploration of natural resources to assure better living conditions for the local communities. There is also a demand for the increase of the Financial Compensation for Mineral Exploration (CFEM), the so called royalties. Vale owes R\$ 2.2 billion to the city house in Parauapebas for royalties which have not been properly collected between 1991 and 2004.

4. Why Vale does not comply with labor law?

Vale was fined in R\$ 109 million for moral damages to workers from more than 100 outsourced companies in Para, granted by the Federal Justice in Parauapebas. In Rio de Janeiro, the labor Public Attorney has tried to stop the construction of Companhia Siderúrgica do Atlântico (CSA), part of Vale group, in Baía de Sepetiba, for irregularities and lack of security in the conditions of

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work. Workers holding temporary work contracts regularly suffer accidents; more than 60 workers have already died.

5. Why Vale does not compensate the families who were evicted from their sites?

In Minas Gerais, Aimorés damn, built by Vale and Cemig, displaced 1,000 families, which have not yet received compensation and have not been re-settled. The damn also makes it unfeasible for a sewage system in the region. More than 500 families from the Community Pedra Corrida will be displaced by Baguari Damn, which is being constructed by the mining company in Governador Valadares.

6. Why Vale coerces rural workers and illegally buys plots of land?

Vale invaded a settlement of the Union in the Southeast of Para in order to develop a billionaire project for the production of nickel. Without the mediation of INCRA [National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform], the mining company coerced farmers to accept compensations, according to statements, given by some of them to news reporters from Folha de S. Paulo.

The mining company Onça Puma, from Vale, between 2003 and 2007, paid directly for 53 people living in settlements to leave their land, according to a document from Incra. The mining company could only operate in the area with the authorization from Incra. The "purchase" of lots occurred during a 5 five year period. In the meantime, at the end of 2005, vale bought the Canadian Canico, which main project in the country was Onça Puma, inflated by the Brazilian mining company.

7. Why Vale does not open the dialogue with miners in Para?

Miners from MWM (Movement of Workers and Miners in Mining) in its great majority over 50, accuse Vale of having illegally taken a part of an area in Serra Pelada. They have already organized protests against Vale, including the occupation of tracks, in defense of recovering the area, for the Statute of Miners and a special retirement for the category. However, the mining company did not open negotiation with MWM.

8. Finally, why Vale seeks in court to stop society from becoming aware of its fraudulent privatization process?

A strategic state company for the development of the country, such as Vale do Rio Doce, was sold to private capital for R\$ 3,3 billion, with assets estimated by the market at the time between R\$ 10 billion and R\$ 50 billion, during an auction held in 1997 by FHC administration. The privatization process was loaded with irregularities, which we consider a crime that affects the nation and a betrayal to the Brazilian people. That is why we defend reversing of its privatization from the existing court cases. Besides that, article 176 of the Constitution determines that mines, being used or not, and other mineral resources and the hydroelectric energetic potential constitute a distinct property from the soil, for the purpose of exploration or use, and belong to the Union and must follow the principle of national sovereignty.

Instead of making accusations against rural workers from the MST, Mr. Roger Agnelli should answer those questions and comply with the Brazilian law. Interviews with the company directors in the media and TV commercials on prime time do not mention any of the cases we have mentioned. We hope that those clarifications will come to light.



MAPS AND DATA

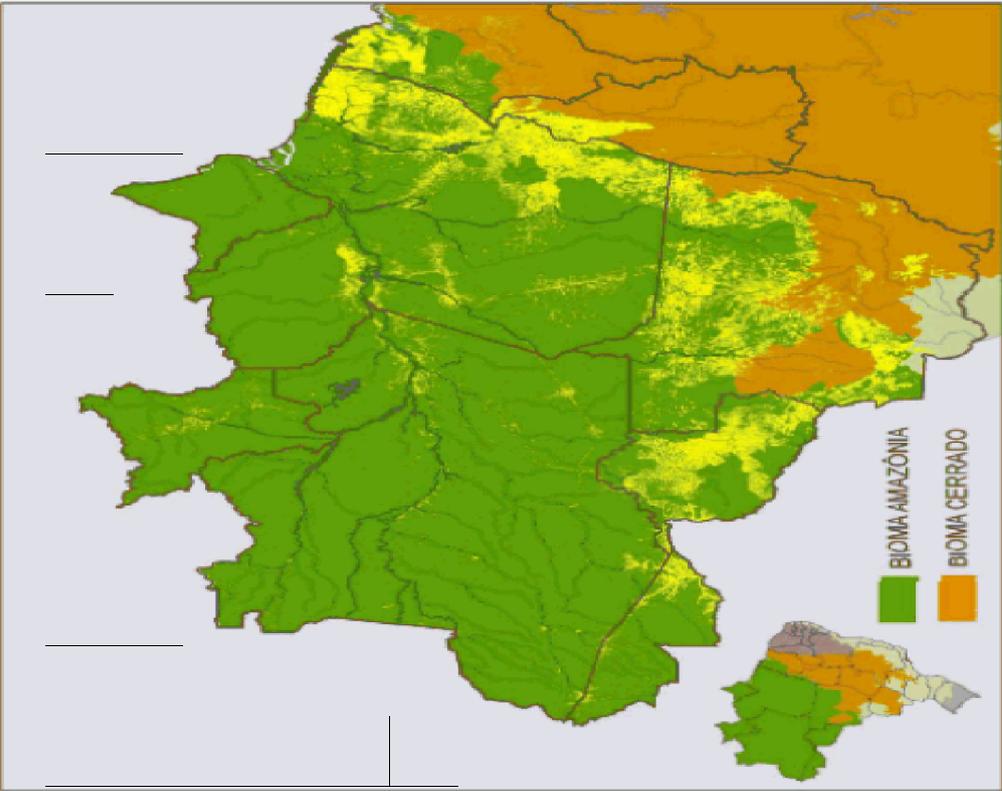
BIOMAS BRASILEIROS



64

Bioma Amazônia:
um conceito ambiental

- Área: 420 milhões de hectares
- 49% do território brasileiro
- A área do Bioma Amazônia equivale a 101 vezes a área da Holanda
- População: 20 milhões de habitantes



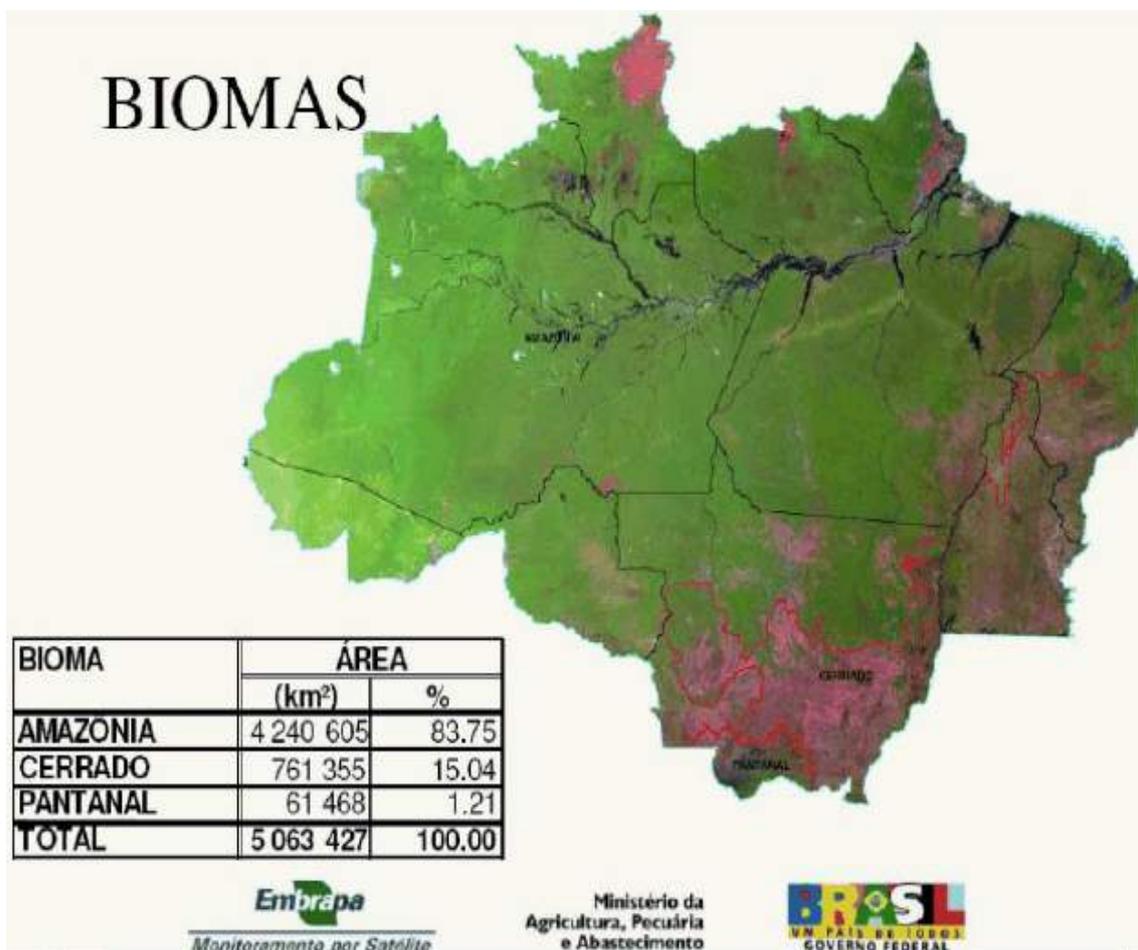
A Rain Forest com uma área de 367 milhões de hectares está contida no Bioma Amazônia

Amazônia Legal:
um conceito administrativo

- Área: 510 milhões de hectares
- Território: 9 estados
- 61% do território brasileiro
- 8 biomas diferentes
- População: 23 milhões habitantes



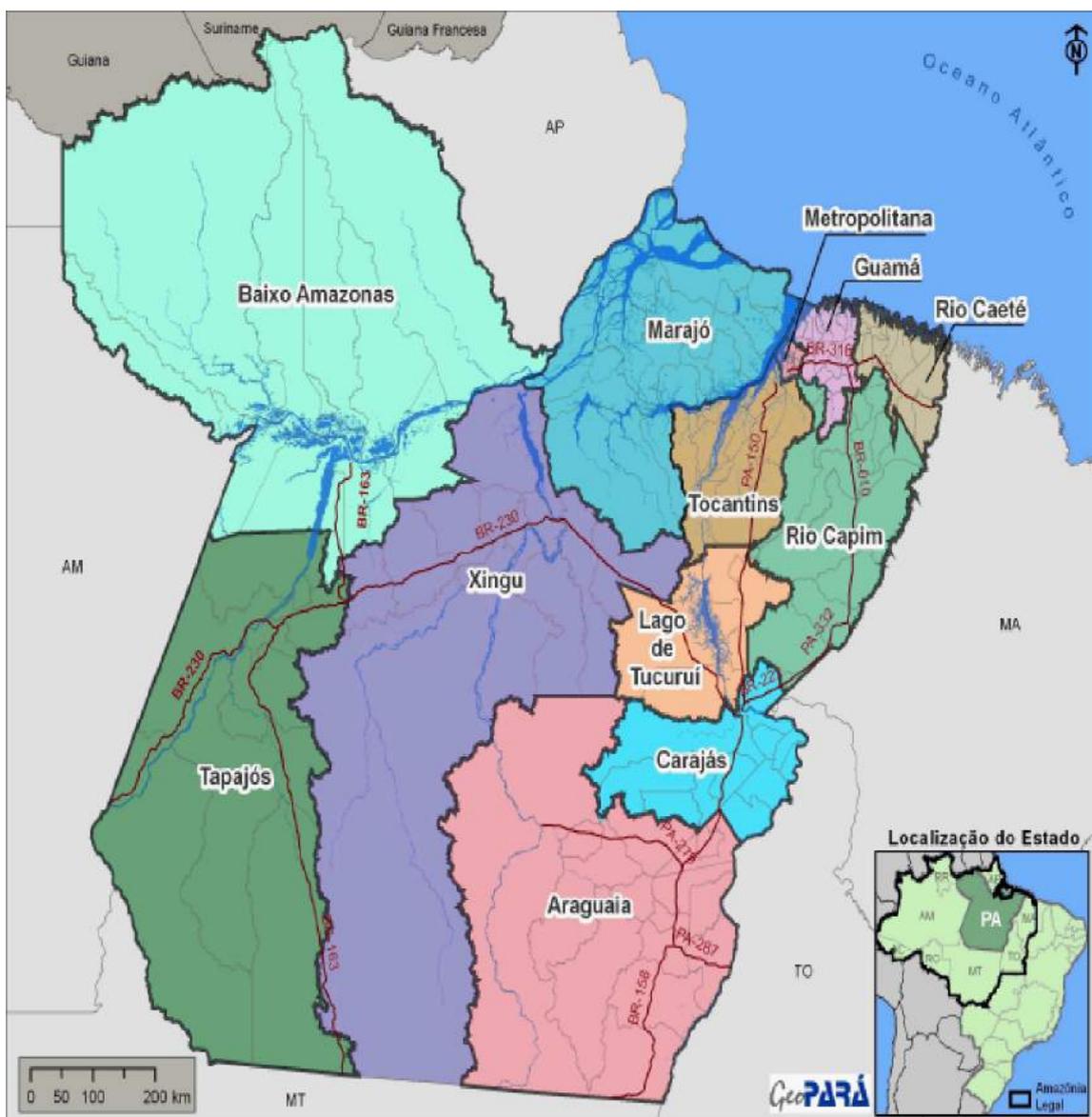
AMAZONAS LEGAL



66



ESTADO DO PARÁ: DIVISÃO DAS GRANDES REGIÕES



67

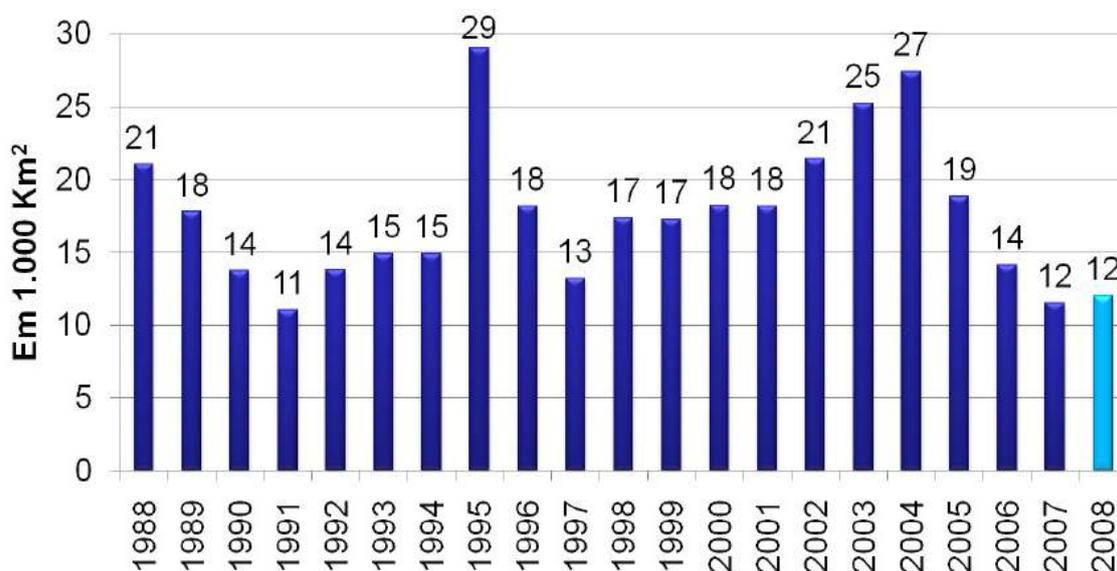


DISTRIBUIÇÃO DAS TERRAS*

BRASIL		HA	AMAZÔNIA		HA
Superfície territorial	850.201.546		Superfície territorial	508.866.844	
Área Cadastrada no INCRA	436.596.394		Área Cadastrada no INCRA	180.745.229	
Áreas Indígenas	128.465.775		Áreas Indígenas	127.109.356	
Unidades de Conservação	102.059.583		Unidades de Conservação	80.091.105	
Terras Arrecadadas pelo INCRA	105.803.350		Terras Arrecadadas pelo INCRA	105.803.350	
Demais Terras Públicas	4.197.888		Demais Terras Públicas	3.541.237	
Terras Devolutas	172.946.484		Terras Devolutas	96.043.781	

* As transformações na agricultura: o agronegócio e a reforma agrária no Brasil - Prof. Ariovaldo Umbelino/ professor titular de Geografia Agrária/ FFLCH - USP

AMAZÔNIA LEGAL - ÁREA DESFLORESTADA

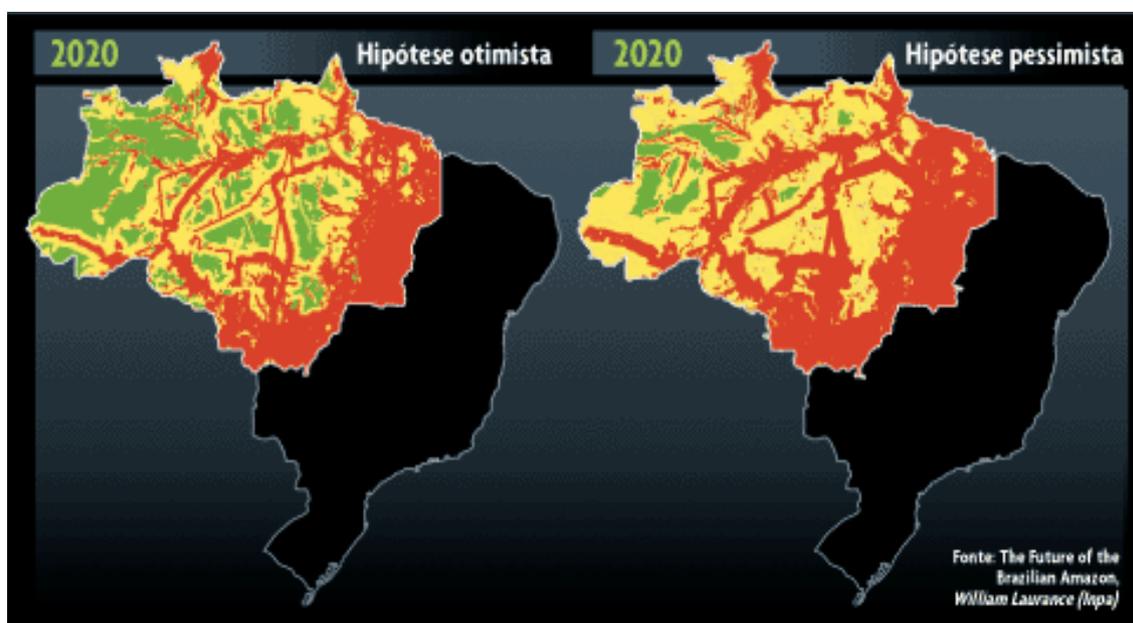


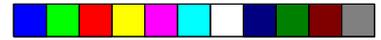
2008 deverá registrar estabilidade no desmatamento da Amazônia em relação a 2007

Fonte: INPE-PRODES

Obs: (1) referente ao período de 12 meses findo em 31 de julho do ano referido







In the last few decades, with the offensive of the so called neo-liberal globalization, there was a true avalanche of transnational corporations taking control of the natural resources in the region, literally promoting a theft of the wealth which belongs to the Brazilian people and humanity and humanity as whole. Seeking easy, quick and astronomical profits, transnational corporations promote an irrational environmental exploitation and aggravate even further the already shameful poverty existent in the region.

On the other hand, there is a project that does not seek profit at all cost, but rather the peaceful coexistence between human beings and nature, preserving our cultural riches and towards the construction of a sustainable society grounded on the principles of solidarity, social justice and equality. The greed of capital has been aggravated with neo-liberalism, but there was also resistance from indigenous, quilombolas [traditional afro-descendent communities], peasants and ribeirinhos [communities living along rivers], who engage in social struggles to face the spoliation of our natural resources.

With the studies presented here and from the understanding of the social, economic, political and environmental reality, we believe that we will be in a better position to understand the interests at stake. By doing so, we will be better equipped to understand the interests that are involved in the dispute. Therefore we have a clearer understanding to actively participate in the decisions that define the policies over this enormous heritage of the Brazilian people and of common interest to humanity as a whole.

