

**DEVELOPMENTALIST, NEOLIBERAL AND KEYNESIAN PERSPECTIVES
RELATED TO THE INCREASE IN ORGANIZED CRIME IN THE BRAZILIAN
AMAZON** <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2025.001-029>**Luiz Henrique Paiva Pires¹, Henrique Ewerton Pires² and Rodrigo Vicente Martins
Fernandes³.****ABSTRACT**

This article aims to analyze the consequences and relationships of the increase in environmental crimes because of organized crime in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest. All this analysis will be made from the theoretical perception of the neoliberal and Keynesian schools. The respective work emphasizes the interiorization of the factions in the northern region of Brazil and the arrival of this context in the territories of traditional communities. It is correct to state that a developmental current will be used in the present study to understand the entire recent context of the public problem explained. It is important to remember that issues related to the theoretical framework on institutions, democracy, development and economic perspectives also endorse the discussion.

Keywords: Development. Democracy. Organized crime. Neoliberalism. Keynesianism.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent centuries, we have heard much about development and its various nuances, thus being called, on the one hand, capitalist, market and imperialist development and, on the other, alternative, sustainable and humane development. For the latter, social and environmental problems are effects of developmentalist discourses, while for the former, development is natural in human life and refers growth and improvement to people. Therefore, the term development is multiconceptual and conflicting, but it is already an intrinsic part of the way of life of so-called modern societies.

The theme of development is directly linked to the emergence of the market and the role that States play in improving the lives of civil society in the context of the center-periphery. In this sense, the study of the impacts of globalization on the environment and the various aspects related to development are of paramount importance for understanding the relations between the global north-south.

Frank (1968) states that underdevelopment is not due to the survival of archaic institutions and the lack of capital in regions that have remained isolated from the general stream of history. On the contrary, underdevelopment was and is generated by the same historical process that generates economic development: the development of capitalism itself. Most historians study only the development of developed metropolitan countries and pay little attention to colonized and underdeveloped countries.

It is necessary to cite Marini (1973) when recalling that Latin America was forged in the heat of the commercial expansion promoted in the century by nascent capitalism and that it develops in close consonance with the dynamics of international capitalism. Many Latin American countries were colonies producing precious metals and exotic foodstuffs, and these nations contributed at first to the increase in the flow of goods and the expansion of the means of payment, which, while allowing the development of Europe's commercial and banking capital, sustained the European manufacturing system and paved the way for the creation of large-scale industry.

In view of all this context, this article will analyze the consequences and relationships of the increase in environmental crimes as a result of organized crime in the Brazilian Amazon forest. All this analysis will be made from the theoretical perception of the Neoliberal and Keynesian schools. Aiala Colares, researcher and professor at the Federal University of Pará, developed a survey from 2019 to 2021 in partnership with the Brazilian Forum on Public Security and some data from the aforementioned study will be part of the analysis of the essay. That said, the present work highlights the internalization of the factions in the North region and the arrival in territories of traditional communities.



Therefore, the respective academic work will discuss the data of this research through a developmental analysis in the Amazon Rainforest region⁴.

DISCUSSION

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Pieterse (2010), globalization and regionalization have changed the understanding of development sought exclusively by the nation. International institutions and market forces are taking over many roles that were previously assigned to the state, the conventional agent of development. The modernization present in advanced countries is not an obvious conception of development in the current context, since it brings environmental problems. Another example that can be cited is the technological changes in developed countries being passed on to developing countries, since they can generate unemployment and other problems for these nations that are considered peripheral within the capitalist context.

Thus, Pieterse (2010) believes that development policy is increasingly a matter of decision-making dispersed over a wide terrain of actors, institutions and frameworks. Contemporary development policy is incoherent because the different levels of development action (local, micro-regional, international, global) are not adequately articulated. Thus, a comprehensive and holistic approach to development is not only multidimensional, but also multiscalar, so that development efforts at different levels are cumulative and interconnected.

In this sense, the development policy aimed at the Amazon should include an exchange between the states of the northern region together with some other countries such as Colombia, for example. The implementation of public policies needs to take into account the social reality of each territory to be effective. In this sense, it is extremely valid to analyze what were the measures adopted for environmental preservation in the Amazon in the period 2019-2022 and also to interpret the data related to crime in the region.

Thus, the study cited in the introduction to the essay was released in June as part of the yearbook of the Brazilian Forum on Public Security and released at COP 27 (UN Conference on Climate Change held in Egypt in November). In 2021, the North region showed an increase in the homicide rate of 9%, reaching a rate of 33 cases per 100 thousand inhabitants, against 22.3 in the country as a whole. The average rate of lethal violence is 40.8% higher than that found in other Brazilian municipalities. According to

⁴ FONTES, Cristiane. Environmental Crime and Organized Crime go hand in hand in the Amazon, says researcher. Folha de São Paulo. Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ambiente/2023/01/crime-ambiental-e-crime-organizado-andam-juntos-na-amazonia-diz-pesquisador.shtml>. Accessed on: 11-17-.2023



Colares, this problem is a mark of cities with a high rate of deforestation and with intensification of land conflicts. Therefore, it is possible to see that the state governments of the northern region and the Federal Government have failed in public policies related to public security and this has caused considerable deforestation in the Amazon forest.

This scenario of deforestation, organized crime, high crime and disrespect for indigenous peoples is certainly linked to the history of some European expansionist nations. Boianovisky (2010) cites Hume who says that poverty in France in the 18th century is justified by the richness of its soils, since agriculture is an easy art that requires little effort, capital and technique. The author also recalls that David Hume said that the tropical climate requires less need for laws to resolve economic disputes. It is curious to realize that several relevant thinkers of past centuries involve the idea of the climate of a developing nation. This type of analysis brings a prejudiced bias that no longer fits in the academic world.

It is important to cite Williamson (1990) who says that corruption is responsible for low development in Latin American nations. Another specific question that arises in the Latin American context is whether an attempt should be made to include interest income on assets held abroad (runaway capital) in the tax base. Therefore, achieving effective taxation of income from capital flight necessarily involves considerable time, but it would be interesting to know if any country has already embarked on this effort. In this vein, it is perceived that capital flight is a complementary factor to understand north-south relations within the capitalist system and that they also help to understand the current scenario of the Brazilian Amazon.

Williamson, who is a neoliberal economist and critic of the Washington consensus, asserts (1990) that a competitive real exchange rate is the first essential element of an outward-oriented economy. The Washington consensus itself sees the growth of non-traditional exports as a means to Latin America's recovery. In other words, there is a need to rearrange the trade balance so that effective economic and social development in Latin America can occur.

The situation in the region that encompasses the Amazon is so serious today that Minister José Roberto Barroso even said in an interview with Reuteirs that Brazil runs the risk of losing the sovereignty of the Amazon to organized crime. Colares adds that to fight crime, it is necessary to involve all the countries that encompass the Amazon. He also points out that the fight against criminal activities, the strengthening of environmental measures and the inspection and defense of forest peoples are a strategy to preserve nature and ensure the planet's climate security. Today in Pará, in the Amazon and in other



states, the presence of the Red Command, the First Command of the Capital and other factions in the Southeast region of the country is already a sad reality.

It is important to understand the transnationalization of these various types of crimes and how foreign agents have influence on this type of crime. It is necessary to place the environmental issue within the public security agenda. It is not possible to dissociate the crime of drug trafficking from the crime of illegal logging, all these criminal practices are linked to the same criminal organizations.

Many European countries are aware of the importance of tropical forests and collaborate with the Amazon fund. This fund serves to finance public policies of the Brazilian government that aim to reduce deforestation in the famous forest. It is worth noting that Germany and Norway have said they will restart their donations, which were frozen during the government of President Jair Bolsonaro. France, as well as the European Union, are studying a form of bilateral contribution with the Amazon fund and the United States of America is expected to contribute the figures of 50 million dollars in 2023⁵.

Created in 2008 by Norway and Brazil, the Amazon Fund is the main cooperation instrument used by Europe to invest in projects in the Brazilian portion of the Amazon rainforest. Currently, 93.8% of the funding comes from Norway, another 5.7% has been donated by Germany and 0.5% comes from Petrobras⁶. It is clear that the financial volume of this fund is not capable of solving all the problems that Brazil has been facing, but it is certainly a favorable sign of international cooperation between nations with the important theme of environmental protection.

Hayek (1998) recalls that in every modern period of European history, the general tendency of social development was to free the individual from the restrictions that kept him subject to standards determined by custom or authority with regard to his ordinary activities. The author also argues that the elaboration of a coherent thesis in defense of economic freedom resulted from the free development of economic activities that had been an unforeseen and unplanned by-product of political freedom. Therefore, the following question arises: Is the economic liberalism defended by Hayek, which today derives from neoliberal ideals, a current of thought that would help solve the problems presented by the Amazon?

⁵ FIGUEIREDO, Patrícia. Why are the countries of Europe increasingly supporting the Amazon Fund? Euronews. Available in: <https://pt.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/03/03/why-the-countries-of-Europe-support-more-and-more-the-Amazon-fund>. Accessed on: 11-17-2023.

⁶ Ditto.



Hayek (1998) thinks that economic liberalism is against the replacement of competition by less effective methods of coordinating individual efforts. He goes on to say that competition is the best method that exists because our activities can adjust to each other without the coercive or arbitrary intervention of an authority. Competition dispenses with the need for conscious social control and such a concept is closely linked to economic liberalism.

To understand economic liberalism, it is necessary to go through the European history of the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. According to Hobsbawn (2007), the 18th century is marked by urbanization and division of labor. The industrial revolution made the logic of the economic man highly valued and some European nations obtained their considerable economic development in such a period. Hobsbawn (2007) also recalls that in this period there was the consolidation of companies, since they came to be seen as a new organization of work and not as a risky enterprise.

Thus, a significant change in social control can be perceived, as there is a decentralization of the logic of government and here we have a new source of concentration of power to pass this new logic to other places. Hobsbawn (2007) adds that the 18th century was not a century of agricultural stagnation. It was a period of demographic expansion, increasing urbanization, manufacturing, and trade. The second half of that century saw the beginning of the astonishing and uninterrupted increase in population that is so characteristic of the modern world. Between 1755 and 1784, for example, the rural population of Brabant (Belgium) increased by 44%.

Continuing with the theme, this individualism of Hayek, an author cited elsewhere, leads us to believe that he is a defender of institutions. Now, this historical context of economic liberalism and European economic development in previous centuries helps to understand the current relationship of European funds for the preservation of the Brazilian Amazon. There is no doubt that international cooperation between the countries of the global north and south is of crucial importance for environmental preservation.

However, Brazilian national and territorial sovereignty must be respected by these nations that have a more elaborate history of economic and social development. That said, can we consider a direct responsibility of the central European states nowadays for the preservation of the Amazon rainforest due to the entire context of development of past centuries?



NEOLIBERALISM, LATIN AMERICA AND INSTITUTIONS

Andrade (2018) studies the Marxist structural approach, according to which Neoliberalism is defined as a political strategy that aims to reinforce a class hegemony and expand it globally, marking the new stage of capitalism that emerged in the wake of the structural crisis of the 1970s. Neoliberalism is summarized by a social order in which a new rule is imposed on work and new managerial criteria are established, using instruments such as free trade and capital mobility.

It is a fact that the State is considered a dynamic element and an economic actor within the context of Latin American peripheral industrial capitalism. One should not present value judgments for all state actions within the context of Latin America, since state intervention is part of Latin American capitalism. In this regard, the characteristics of the State's patrimonialism, vices inherent to the bourgeois stratum, immobility (from the perspective of a non-entrepreneurial bias) are variables that must be criticized based on the checks and balances of institutional pressures (OLIVEIRA, 2018).

According to Oliveira (2018), the central role played by the State in the Latin American region makes it occupy an even more strategic role and with several responsibilities, since it is the great inducer of innovations in the productive sector and the great responsible for public innovations in a context of distributive character. Therefore, the neoliberal policies present in the twenty-first century are not beneficial for the economic, social and political development of a nation inserted in the Latin American context. That said, the State should be seen as a strong institutional agent so that the country can develop and have a more favorable trade balance.

North (2018) states that institutions dictate the rules of the game within a society and even regulate human interactions. The author also explains that it is from institutions that we understand the way society develops over time. North (2018) also argues that institutions can be formal and informal and are everything that controls so-called human interactions, they are created, practiced and modified by humans based on individual choices in an evolutionary process. Therefore, within the current context of an aggressive and financialized capitalism that is imposed on Latin American nations, it becomes increasingly important to strengthen democratic institutions.

It is evident that neoliberal policies are not the best path for Latin American peripheral countries. Andrade (2018) understands that neoliberalism is characterized by the management of oneself via economic calculation in the different spheres of life, reinforcing the self-responsibility of individuals. Andrade (2018) also adds that not all the population and not all areas are subject to the free form of the market, neoliberal



strategies need to make calculated choices of intervention and risk. Government technologies migrate through vectors of the global market and interact with local elements and circumstances.

Organized crime in the northern Brazilian states will only decrease with the strengthening of institutions and through international cooperation. It is worth mentioning that countries such as Colombia, which is plagued by guerrilla groups, also influence which policies should be put in place for environmental preservation. It is believed that the strengthening of institutions should also be accompanied by an increase in the penalties provided for in the law on environmental crimes (law 9605 of 1998).

KEYNESIANISM, CAPITALISM, AND FINANCIAL EQUILIBRIUM

The imbalance in the national accounts means that the Federal Government is unable to pass on to the States what is necessary to face some public problems and the environmental issue is no exception to this paradigm. On this point, Keynes (1982) points out that classical economics is wrong when it analyzes the trade balance. It is necessary to analyze the consequences of the imbalance of the national accounts in economic development to make capitalism possible. The crisis of capitalism in 1929 brought enormous poverty and unemployment and what should be sought are ways to generate employment.

It is worth noting that Keynes (1982) does not question the capitalist system, but proposes ideas aimed at reducing unemployment. Neoliberalism is based on the minimum participation of the State and Keynes defends precisely the participation of the State so as not to generate economic retraction. Here we have precisely the counterpoint of classical neoliberal policies, since liberalism has classical and neoclassical economics as its theoretical basis. Thus, it is perceived that the State is an extremely important agent to generate the Social Welfare State. In this context, the following question is worthwhile: How did the Latin American economy digest liberalism, taking into account that Keynesianism brings relevant principles to the development of capitalism in peripheral countries?

At all times, Keynes (1982) thinks of mechanisms to increase investments and public spending so that the Latin American economy can try to take advantage of the Social Welfare State, a concept that gained even more relevance in the Brazilian reality with the implementation of the citizen's constitution in 1988. Keynesianism makes it precisely the bargaining power of the worker to be increased within a context of the Democratic Rule of Law implemented in the Federal Constitution of 1988.



Oliveira (2015) complements the analysis based on the study of derived demand proposed by Henry Wallich. The author understands that the State, in peripheral countries, has the duty to enable the innovations that were developed in developed countries. The State must play the role of the classic Shumpeterian innovative entrepreneur, as was done in the model of capitalist expansion of the central countries. Translating, the State has the important mission of being an articulator with the private sector, valuing the distribution of income and even encouraging a macroeconomic policy linked to reality. It can be said that an innovative State with its effective policies generates a visible economic expansion.

Oliveira (2015) recalls that the dynamics of capitalism are not the same between central and peripheral countries. The movement of capitalist expansion in Brazil is directly influenced by cycles of expansion and retraction. These cycles are closely linked to the actions and public policies carried out by the State. Thus, the expansion of the Brazilian economy follows the pace of policies aimed at innovations in the public sector, implemented by the State and of an exclusively Wallichian character.

For the analysis of what the business cycle would be, Keynes (1982) states that it is necessary to take into account the fluctuations in the propensity to consume, the preference for liquidity, the marginal efficiency of capital and the economic crises themselves (which are already part of the cycles of capitalism). For two hundred years, economic theorists have known that a favorable balance of trade is better economically than an unfavorable balance of trade, even though they know that such situations are part of the cycles of capitalism. Unemployment is a consequence of the individualistic capitalism of our times, and contemporary authoritarian regimes seem to solve the problem of unemployment at the expense of efficiency and freedom.

Keynes (1982) assures that the main defects of the economic society in which we live are its inability to provide full employment and its arbitrary and unequal distribution of wealth and income. A society as unequal as Brazil's and with considerable unemployment means that criminal organizations gain a lot of power and often replace the State in their functions, as is the case in several capitals in the Southwest region. These criminal organizations are already present in the Amazon region precisely in smuggling, deforestation and several other environmental crimes.

The maintenance of capitalism, a favorable trade balance and the concern about unemployment affect the effectiveness of the implementation of environmental policies. The State must be active in peripheral countries to avoid economic retraction and such Keynesian precepts help to strengthen institutions and the Democratic Rule of Law.



CONCLUSION

Since the 90s, there has been a search for the construction of a Democratic State of Law. Constitutional precepts must be materialized in public policies and the constitutional framework is made to avoid incursions that undermine democracy. The instrumentation of public policies must be supported by technicality and for the instrumentation of public action the State is understood not as homogeneous and monolithic. It is worth mentioning that Article 3 of our Citizen Constitution itself understands that the objectives that guide our society are development, social justice, equality and equity (DAROIT; CROSS; BASTOS; LARANJA, 2018).

One must think about strategies for development from the inside out, since the Amazon encompasses countries such as Colombia, Peru and Guyana. Agribusiness and mining should not expand in indigenous or quilombola territories and the thought of development considering biodiversity is something that must be latent. In this regard, an effective environmental protection policy that involves Ibama, Funais, IcmBio, the Federal Police and other agencies need to act jointly, with integrated mechanisms.

The strengthening of institutions together with Keynesian ideals are of paramount importance for the protection of the Amazon in Brazil. Neoliberal policies weaken the environmental cause in the country and an increase in organized crime was noticed in the period 2019-2022 from the data presented in this essay. It is evident that the corresponding penalties for environmental crimes present in Law 9605 of 1998 must be reviewed to avoid criminal recidivism.

It was perceived that the Amazon fund works as an incentive for environmental preservation and not as a solving factor for the current problems existing in the states covered by the Amazon forest. Perhaps this fund only has the function of alleviating the blame for deforestation in central countries, which also occurs in European territory, rather than something that helps in the implementation of effective public policies.



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