

ARTIGO

**SOCIETY, ENVIRONMENT AND FRONTIER IN THE
AMAZON: SOME HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL TOPICS**

Abstract

This work is the result of thematic discussions on topics covered during the First International Seminar on Society and Frontiers, sponsored by PPGSOF/UFRR, on December 2012 in Boa Vista. Here we try to establish some relationships between the categories society, environment and frontier in the Amazon, especially from the perspective of political and administrative developments, from colonial times to recent times. The Amazon frontier is characterized here as nothing more than a historical supplier of natural resources as well as more than a space delimited by the National State. Its traditional inhabitants are seen as builders of their own space, and are also incorporated into projects of the National State in order to meet existing demands elsewhere, either at the beginning of the conquest or at present. In short, it is how the economics and politics overcome peoples and environment and shaped life in the area known today as the Brazilian Amazon.

Keywords: Amazon Frontier; Geopolitics; History of Brazil.

Resumo

O presente trabalho é resultado de temas tratados em discussões temáticas durante o 1º Seminário Internacional sobre Sociedade e Fronteiras promovido pelo PPG-SOF/UFRR, em dezembro de 2012 em Boa Vista. Nele tratamos de estabelecer algumas relações entre as categorias sociedade, ambiente e fronteira na Amazônia, principalmente sob a ótica da evolução político-administrativa, desde a colonial até os tempos mais recentes. A fronteira amazônica é caracterizada aqui como algo mais do que uma histórica fornecedora de recursos naturais e também como mais que um espaço delimitado pelo Estado Nacional. Seus habitantes tradicionais são entendidos como construtores do seu espaço, além de serem também incorporados em projetos do Estado Nacional no atendimento de demandas existentes alhures, seja no início da conquista seja em tempos mais presentes. Em resumo, como a economia e a política se sobrepuseram a povos e ao ambiente e moldaram a vida no espaço conhecido hoje como Amazônia Brasileira.

Palavras-Chave: *Fronteira Amazônica; Geopolítica; História do Brasil.*

* Graduated in History from the University Center of União da Vitória City (1972), Masters in History from the Federal University of Santa Catarina (1993) and doctorate in Sustainable Development of the Humid Tropics at the Federal University of Para (2004). He is currently associate professor at the Federal University of Roraima.

Environment and society: an imperative relation

Society, environment and politics criss-cross in any organized group in which rules and hierarchies are established for the use of the resources its existence depends on. An emblematic case is the biblical dispute between Abraham's and Lot's people (Genesis, 13). The land "could not support them" and one of them, with political authority over one of the groups, had to leave with his people and look for a new place. Migration is a part of life: vegetables migrate, animals migrate, and the history of human beings shows us that climatic changes, wars, epidemics, depletion of resources, increase in population force migrations, either permanent or temporary. An example: in the area that currently constitutes Brazil, as anthropologists, historicists and any linguistic map say, there are traces of the presence of a large indigenous Tupi group in several regions. On the other hand, there are remains that show that Amazon has already been, more than once, a cold region because of the glaciations, and in former times dry and with spread forests.

We inherited from Darwin the statement of the fact that every society needs nutrition, security and conditions for reproduction to survive. In practice, besides health norms, nutrition must be accessed from environment by a somehow organized work and even hierarchic. Security depends also on political organization, in order to defend from competitors. The conditions for reproduction, in turn, depend on an awareness about preservation, and processes and strategies, because those who do not reproduce are simply extinguished. The human strategy is, as Marx tells us in *Capital*:

[...] Antes de tudo, o trabalho é um processo de que participam o homem e a natureza, processo em que o ser humano com sua própria ação impulsiona, regula e controla seu intercâmbio material com a natureza. Defronta-se com a natureza como uma de suas forças. Põe em movimento as forças naturais de seu corpo, braços e pernas, cabeça e mãos, a fim de apropriar-se dos recursos da natureza, imprimindo-lhes forma útil à vida humana. Atuando assim sobre a natureza externa e modificando-a, ao mesmo tempo modifica sua própria natureza. Desenvolve as potencialidades nela adormecidas e submete ao seu domínio o jogo das forças naturais. (Karl Marx. *O Capital*. Vol. 1, Part III, Cap. VII, Seção 1)¹.

¹ "Labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material re-actions between himself and Nature. He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway." T/n.: This text is not a translation. It is a transcription of Marx's original book, *Capital*, available at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch07.htm>.

The same source tells us further:

[...] Animais e plantas que costumamos considerar produtos da natureza são possivelmente não só produtos do trabalho do ano anterior, mas, e m sua forma atual, produtos de uma transformação continuada, através de muitas gerações, realizada sob controle do homem e pelo seu trabalho. No tocante aos meios de trabalho, a observação mais superficial descobre, na grande maioria deles, os vestígios do trabalho de épocas passadas².

Agriculture, whose traces in the Amazon are undeniable, fits perfectly in what the philosopher affirms. Moreover, travelers' literature since XVII century and images from satellites nowadays show us two elementary facts for the comprehension of interaction between human and nature in the Amazon. The first is that the region has already harbored large and diverse populations, mostly on the edge of the rivers - great suppliers of animal protein, differently from the forests, where demography has always tended to be less dense. On the other hand, outside the Amazon, in the Northeast, South and Center-West of Brazil, there are nowadays, as chronicle writers stated, some religious people and *bandeirantes*³, signs from the old ways through which groups like the old *Tupis* have passed.

An example is the pathway of Peabiru, which connected the Brazilian southern coast to Peru. In the Center-South, it is known that the troopers from XVIII and XIX centuries have covered pathways that had been used for a long while. Some of these pathways are mistaken nowadays as highways, for geography set their shapes. More than that, it is known that some of those paths that linked the coast to the plateau were millenary trails made by animals that have migrated seasonally that were afterwards used by humans. However, in the Amazon, the most common way was along water, which made easier not only the movement of pre-Cabralian groups, but conquerors also. These then dominated those who had already worked hard on adapting themselves to the environment. In short, the European conquest has found well-known places and the domination of techniques to harness natural resources without which white men would not have lived.

² “Animals and plants, which we are accustomed to consider as products of Nature, are in their present form, not only products of, say last year’s labour, but the result of a gradual transformation, continued through many generations, under man’s superintendence, and by means of his labour. But in the great majority of cases, instruments of labour show even to the most superficial observer, traces of the labour of past ages.”

³ T/n.: The *Bandeirantes* were paulistas, raiders of indigenous population and invaders of spanish lands, also called “followers of the banner”, that served the Portuguese Crown during part of the colonial period.

The conquest and maintenance of the place: political borders and resource borders

Through European mercantilism, a new order that would change the cultural, social and political landscape of American peoples comes up. In the Amazon, as well as in all America, arising out of what was called the exploitation of the drugs of the backlands, *drogas do sertão*, the original inhabitants of the land ceased to live for themselves because diverse populations from other regions occupied and dominated their places, as well as their lives. Diseases have wiped out most of the former populations; they have been made slaves and brought to different lands; some had to work hard to acquire the right to go to heaven or not to die by the hands of their victors. Furthermore, areas have been delimited under the authority of National States, striking down any kind of ties and political structures former to the conquest.

Authors like Farage (1991) refer to the existence of a political unity formed by several indigenous villages: the *cacicado*⁴. It was an alliance headed by old chief warriors, but could neither stop the force of the conquerors, nor effectively stand against the new coercive structures that were created specifically to administrate indigenous life. This set of coercive norms have evolved since the *Capitães de Aldeia*, the Village Captains (1616-1686), the Missions Regiment (1686-1755) and the most famous instrument of political and economic domination over Indians in Brazil: the Indian Directory (1755), made by the Portuguese minister Marquês de Pombal, an instrument that has lingered up to the end of XVIII century.

In the half of this century, there was a definition about political borders between Portugal and Spain, with the Treaty of Madrid (1750). From that point on, in general, Brazil's future borders were defined. Because of the suspicions there were between these two European States, some fortresses were built in the Amazon, along with many other things, with the necessary participation of indigenous people, who have been compelled. Those have already been taken off their tribes and increasingly integrated to a social and economic life different from their environment and traditions. The exception is the use of a new indigenous language called Nheengatu, derived from the domination that became majorly used in the region until the end of XIX century.

In the first half of XIX century, the Amazon was stage to two bloody facts that would be its milestones forever: the integration of Brazil to the Empire (1823) and the Cabanagem Uprising (1835-1840). This last one, which wiped out the Amazon's

⁴ T/n.: A leadership institution from old times, commanded by the Indian old chiefs.

populations, counted on a great participation from the indigenous. Nevertheless, XIX century would bring more with it: the Industrial Revolution, at full swing in the Western Europe and in the United States demanded more and more raw materials and rubber exploitation, so far a natural product well known by the Amazon's inhabitants, and changes its portrait entirely. Thus, after 1850, Indians were once more utilized, now as rubber tappers, until the number of Northeastern workers surpassed theirs (SANTOS, 1979).

The cities of Belém and Manaus become urbanized, and a commerce and a social class that follows European standards showed up. Brazilian borders expand onto Bolivia, by virtue of the conquest of Acre. In these two capitals, the poor were expelled to the suburbs and in Manaus people tried to erase indigenous identity (FREIRE, 1993). In the second decade of XX century, the immense resource border ceased to be a capital border, falling into crisis by virtue of the foreign competition. Then, Portuguese had already become the major language and the general overview of the region had been completely changed.

The XIX century was also the age of expansion of imperialism and the government of D. Pedro II was compelled to open up the Amazonas River to international navigation in 1853. In the Republican Brazil, after 1889, European forces would pressure the government concerning new border definitions in the North. A strong advocate in favor of Brazilian interests was the Baron of Rio Branco, who made use of the North-American military umbrella to face the European forces. Danger was real: it is enough to think that Venezuela in 1897 had to give away to England a dispute area, located nowadays in the Republic of Guyana and thenceforth reclaimed. Moreover, European countries attacked Venezuela in 1903 stating that debts were overdue.

A political border

In the first decade of XX century, Brazil had gone over its border issues with all neighbor countries. In this process, there was only one loss: the issue of Pirara, with England, in the frontier with the current Republic of Guyana, solved by arbitration in 1904. In the years that came by, as rubber economy was running down, the Amazon's population flowed again, while many people dedicated their lives to activities like mining in the valley of the White River, now Roraima. In 1909, the Benedictine priests arrive there, and realize that the Indians were migrating, due to mistreatments by farmers and balata exploiters, from Brazil to Guyana (EGGERA-

TH, 1924). They also spread the news about the construction of an English railway that would connect Georgetown to the Brazilian frontier. This railway has never existed and the worry was, as it seems, the loss of indigenous workforce, what was still strong in vast areas of the Amazon.

Meanwhile, the world had been going through World War I (1914-1918) and the Great Depression in the decade of 1930, and, also, ideological and nationalist extremisms for which Amazon was the spotlight. It was in this period between wars that intellectuals, geographers and Brazilian military exposed ideas about geopolitics in defense of the national territory and mainly of the rich Amazonian region. The possibility of a new World War and an advance from powerful nations upon the South-American continent looking for natural resources frightened governments and leaderships. An example: in Venezuela, president Lopes Contreras planned a more effective occupation of the frontiers alongside the Orinoco, and in the South, on the Brazilian frontier. By means of a presidential decree, a broad geological research was demanded; it said that there were almost unknown regions in their country, like Gran Sabana, in the frontier with the Brazilian Amazon.

Since 1933, the year in which the United States, to go over the Great Depression, inaugurate the New Deal and leave aside the intervention policies in the Caribbean and the South-American continent, known as “Roosevelt Corollary”, Brazil has been more free to have open and independent external policies. The Brazilian government was looking for ways to develop the country and supported projects like the one by Henry Ford in the Tapajós that had existed since 1927 - which counted mostly on large plantations of rubber trees. Japanese promoted culture of pepper and jute in Pará and Amazonas. In addition to this, in search for capital and technology to develop Brazil, the first government Vargas (1930-1945) permitted and helped a German exploratory expedition in Pará, on the border with the French Guyana.

So far, war was just a possibility, but the American government has kept aware of events, keeping an eye on the competitors’ developments over strategic products in South America. It was urgent, then, to support governments in the search for internal improvements, including collaborating with capital and technology. There were technical collaboration and material resources to research expeditions that broadened knowledge about regions like the Amazon. The Institute for Inter-American Affairs, which was commanded by Nelson Rockefeller, was the instrument to this policy. Nevertheless, at the time the U.S. Department of State sponsored scientists’ expeditions, aware of the necessity of control, the Brazilian and Venezuelan gover-

governments took regulation measures concerning the access to their territories. If there was a need to spur changes in the economic portrait (MORALES, 2009, p. 20), as the major crisis has not only decreased exportation, but has also broken up the importation market, the governments did not want, most of all, to lose sovereignty. Thus, when war reached the continent, there was collaboration, chiefly in Brazil.

Security of the frontier and the role of the Amazon in conflicts

It dates back to the beginning of 1940s the first great Brazilian governmental intervention in the Amazon, and it was clear that the Amazonian forests should have their borders secured, at the same time it should participate by supplying with resources the war efforts. This was not an only fact, because Air and Sea bases were given to the North-Americans. In exchange, the Brazilian Federal Government would be supported by the United States to promote national development, as well as support on protective measures. Evidently, rubber was a spotlight and its exploitation has been expanded with the migration of thousands of “rubber soldiers” from Northeast to the region. According to Bahiana (1991, p. 16-17) a Public Health Service, a service for Mobilization of Workers to the Amazon and the Bank of Rubber Credit have been created. In addition to this, five Federal territories have been created, including Rondônia, Roraima and Amapá, by the Amazonian borders.

The year in which World War II ended, 1945, marks also the end of Vargas's dictatorship, but the ideology of a necessity for security at the frontiers came up again in 1964, a period in which the Military Regime, and the world was under the ghost of the Cold War. The Amazon, a strategic region, has had a special place in the minds of Brazilian military since decades ago. Several geopoliticians were defending the old idea of its integration to economy and to national life also, chiefly after the decade of 1920. Thus, even with attentions turned to the solution for immediate matters like the organization of the new order, a deployment of measures that sought dynamism for the economic life of the region took place. Examples are the transformation, in 1966, of the inoperative Superintendency for the Economic Valorization of Amazonia (SPVEA) into the Superintendency of Development for the Amazon (SUDAM) and the creation of Manaus's Free-Trade Zone (1967). There was also (BECKER, 1998), the delimitation of a new extra-regional area - the Legal Amazon, which had existed by the law since 1953.

The measures taken in favor of the region were part, at that time, of what was called “Operação Amazônia” or Operation Amazon (1965-1967), which had as goal

to put in practice the old ideas of occupation, development and integration that have been made since Getúlio Vargas's first government, but improved only in the subsequent decades. This has been done by means of research institutes and official plans like the Institute for Economic and Social Research (IPES) (MAHAR, 1978). According to this thought of geopolitical inspiration (BAHIANA, 1991, p.19; MAHAR, 1978, p. 3-4), it was necessary for the State's presence to become stronger in a region of wide territorial expansion, lands that were almost empty concerning population.

Some people consider military intervention in the Amazon after 1964 as to have been started with the construction of the Trans-Amazonian highway, in 1970, after president Médici's visit to Northeast to check on the effects of the severe drought. In the first half of this same year, according to Velho (1976, p. 209), several other highway projects were announced, as Cuiabá-Santarém, the paving of Belém-Brasília and the support to the Amazonian state highway that connected Manaus to Brasília-Acre.

There was an idea about always subordinating Brazilian regional economy to a greater plan, of geopolitical nature, as highlights Santos (1996). This plan had as its best-known mentor the General Golbery do Couto e Silva (1911-1987), from Castello Branco's group and the High School of War - Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG). However, it was a member from this institution, General Carlos de Meira Mattos (1913-2007), the main idealizer of Brazilian National State's action in the Amazon in the decade of 1970, when the Brazilian authoritarian State had been already established and the country presented continuous positive rates of development.

Meira Mattos's thought, which was exposed in his works (MATTOS, 1975, 1977, 1980), was based, as well as Golbery's and other military's from his time, on geopolitical premises that were being worked on since the decades of 1920s and 1930s, chiefly by Everardo Beckheuser, Mário Travassos and Cassiano Ricard. To Lewis Tambs (1978, pp. 45-46), an author of works in geopolitics about Latin America, Mário Travassos was one of the postulants of the presence of two considerable strategic hubs in Latin America: the Bolivian massif of Charcas and the "closed Caribbean sea"⁵. Both concepts would become real paradigms of Latin-American geopolitics, majorly from Golbery's works, incorporator and promoter to the first of these propositions. According to Schilling (1978), Bolivia, Paraguai, Rondônia and Mato Grosso constituted the union of geopolitical sectors in Latin America, a conception that started to be taken into account and generated protests from many authorities and intellectuals from neighbor countries.

⁵ According to Tambs (1978, p. 45), these two geopolitical hubs were identified also by the Bolivian Jaime Mendoza.

Vesentini (1987, p. 69) highlights that the national geopolitical thought inherited ideas from the intellectual elite of the Empire, re-elaborating them and going over the worry about State's security. Thus, to justify the domination, the most rooted historical myths in a society were used; those were seen as foundations or milestones in national history. But geopolitics, as it was thought at ESG, sought, most of all, the future (MATTOS, 1978), giving specific roles into this "mission" to sectors of the society and to the territory. The territory, conforming with Mattos (1975, 1978), who quote ideas from the English thinker and historian Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975), must be dominated, overcome, and not offer any ease to men, under penalty of a weak people to be formed in its domains, a society that tends to become weaker, and even to disappear.

It is implied in this thought that the State, the Nation State of the geopoliticians (SILVA, 1981), is the agent that guides society on this walk towards domination of nature and search for a place in the sun, among developed countries. The necessity to organize actions in order to go over obstacles that needed to be overcome - like the antagonisms between many orders, including politics - is also implicit (MATTOS, 1978, 1980). In short, the authoritarianism was being defended, and that was not something new in Brazil's intellectual history.

Meira Mattos's political line of thought has been marked by a political and economic composition and by men's necessity for domination over the environment. In the book *Brasil, geopolítica e destino* (1975, pp. 8-12)⁶, he draws a trajectory to change the country until 2000 in a developed nation, a goal of the II National Development Plan (II Plano Nacional de Desenvolvimento, PND). In the same work (1975, p. 8) he affirms that "[...] a façanha humana no planeta é marcada pela luta"⁷. Differently from Golbery, who thinks that the region of Rio da Prata would be more important to the Brazilian geopolitical strategy, Mattos (1980) stood for progress, the "conquest" of the Amazon to consolidate the Brazilian Nation State by means of a ground operation, most of all.

Under that perspective, the problem of the highway connections notably shows up in Mattos's discourse (1980, 147-148):

Durante 200 anos tentamos a conquista do nosso interior e particularmente da imensa Bacia Amazônica apoiados em estratégia essencialmente fluvial. Fracassamos porque a navegação fluvial é caprichosa; não nos leva onde queremos; a navegação dos rios amazônicos sofre a influência das estações de águas altas e águas baixas; há inúmeras quedas e cachoeiras que interrompem a navegação da maioria dos cursos d'água. Mudamos de

⁶ T/n.: "Brazil, geopolitics and destiny".

⁷ "Human accomplishments on Earth are marked by fight".

estratégia nos anos 50 e começamos a implantá-la nos anos 60. A nova tentativa seria a conquista do Planalto Central, onde se encontra o divortium aquarium entre as três maiores bacias brasileiras – do Prata, do Amazonas e do São Francisco; montados nesse divisor (instalação de Brasília), tentamos baixar à planície amazônica pelos grandes espigões que separam as águas dos afluentes da margem sul do ‘grande rio’. E assim o fizemos, descemos pelo divisor que separa o Tocantins do Araguaia para alcançar Belém na foz do Amazonas. Baixamos pelo espigão que separa o Xingu do Tapajós, até Santarém, no baixo Amazonas. Baixamos pelo espigão separador das bacias do Madeira e do Tapajós para chegar a Manaus, no médio Amazonas. Aí está a ossatura da nossa estratégia de conquista da Amazônia. O êxito desse empreendimento animou-nos. Depois veio a grande transversal, cortando espigões de leste a oeste, e ligando entre si as artérias longitudinais que seguiram esses divisores – a Transamazônica”⁸.

Referring to another connection highway, the Perimetral Norte (Northern Perimeter Highway), BR 210, Mattos (1980, p. 148) argues that this is a succession to the same strategy, to look for the ridge between Jari and Trombeta Rivers to arrive at Tiriós, in the frontier with Suriname and then go to Roraima and to the frontiers with Venezuela and Republic of Guyana and, possibly in a near future, the Colombian frontier. To Mattos, these highways would interest also for the Spanish-speaking neighbor countries, but for Shilling (1978), this progress was part of measures that represented what many people considered as an advance of the “Brazilian expansionism”.

The role of dominance in Latin-America, either sought or not by Brazil, was summarized by researchers like Becker & Egler (1994, p. 154-168), who affirm that up to 1947 Brazil based its external policy on a bilateral alliance with the USA, including in what concerns its relations with the neighbors. Everyone would benefit from the integration that would come from the signature of the document on July 1978 between Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Suriname and Guyana. The deal would represent:

⁸ “During 200 years, we have tried to conquer our countryside and particularly the immense Amazon Basin supported by strategies essentially based on waterways. We have failed because waterway navigation is fickle; it does not bring us where we want to go; navigation in the Amazonian rivers is influenced by seasons of high and low tide; there are innumerable falls, high and low, that impair navigation in most of the water courses. We have changed our strategy in the 50s and started to deploy it in the 60s. The new attempt would then be the conquest of the Central Plateau, where the divortium aquarium is located, between the three largest Brazilian Basins – Prata, Amazonas and São Francisco. When settled in this watershed (in Brasília), we tried to go to the Amazonian hill through the wide ridges that divide the waters of the rivers along the south margins of the “great river”. We did so; we have gone down the watershed that separates Tocantins from Araguaia to reach Belém in the Amazonas River’s mouth. We went down the ridge that separates Xingu from Tapajós, until Santarém, at the lower Amazonas. We went down the watershed that separates the basins of Madeira and Tapajós to arrive at Manaus, in middle Amazonas. There was the spine of our strategy to conquer the Amazon. The success of this enterprise has brought us joy. Then came the great transversal Trans-Amazonian, passing through ridges from east to west and connecting the longitudinal “arteries” that go along these watersheds.

[...] um esforço no sentido de conscientizar os países condôminos da região sobre a necessidade de criarem um organismo de cooperação regional, para juntos moverem as alavancas capazes de despertar a Pan-Amazônia de seu sono secular”. E, uma lembrança: “Não será possível, nesse esforço hercúleo, abrir mão do capital e da tecnologia dos países mais adiantados do mundo, dos organismos internacionais de suporte financeiro e tecnológico. O que não desejam os países amazônicos é perder a soberania sobre essa região cobiçada sob o pretexto de sua incapacidade para explorá-la. Para isso terão que atuar juntos – mostrar inteligência, colocar de lado suas desconfianças recíprocas e revelar uma verdadeira vontade realizadora. (MATTOS, 1980, p. 136)⁹.

The “reciprocal suspicions” came from worries that the government, intellectuals, representatives from academic sectors, or even interest groups, had about Brazil’s expansion over the region, as it is observed in Madi (1998), in Martinez (1980), Naoza (1997) and Schilling (1978). The danger of “losing the sovereignty” and the necessity of external financial and technological resources show us the moment in which the Brazilian government stopped accepting the “automatic alignment” with the USA, after the first half of the decade of 1970. However, there were no resources to go further.

The end of the decade of 1970 was the time of a great realization to the Brazilian government, coming before the “debt crisis” that came upon the Third World in 1979, and another in 1981-1982, which would begin the end of the military regime. In the decade of 1980, projects like Calha Norte (1985) would be attempts to reedit the organization of the Amazonian area and protect the frontiers. In 1985 the Brazilian military regime went to an end, then a convocation to a Constituent Assembly, in which, by means of the Federal Constitution of 1988, the rights of the traditional populations, as well as indigenous’, and a more strict and integrated environmental legislation were, most of them, given attention to.

In the decade of 1990, with the “New World Order” and the “Washington Consensus” (ALTVATER, 1995, HUNTINGTON, 1997), that were imposed after the Cold War, Brazil, as well as the Amazon and even geopolitics would undergo some changes in the course of its political life. Despite that, as affirm Becker & Egler (1994, p. 273), there is a current structuring heritage from the former geopolitics,

⁹ “[...] an effort regarding raise awareness on the neighbor countries from the region about the necessity of creating a regional cooperation organism, to move together towards awakening the Pan-Amazon from its secular sleep”. [And a remembrance:] “It will not be possible, with this Herculean effort, to give up on the capital and technology from the most developed countries in the world, from the international organisms for financial and technological support. The Amazonian countries do not wish to lose their sovereignty over this desirable region under the pretense of an inability to explore it. In order to do this, they will have to work together – to demonstrate intelligence, to leave reciprocal suspicions aside and reveal a true will to make things real. (MATTOS, 1980, p. 136)”.

along with new roles for this knowledge area in times of multi-polarization and politicization of nature.

Final considerations

The Amazonian area, especially Brazil, is still being built, but its original inhabitants participate very little in this action. Since thousands of years ago, climatic changes have promoted adaptations to environment and migration of populations that made up their space by means of work, either it was hunting, fishing or agriculture. These first two activities provided the amount of proteins that was necessary to their nutrition - recent researches point out. In addition, it was in the floodplains that the greatest part of its population, which was very large at this time, was gathered.

This world has changed with the conquest; at first by State mercantilist agents and then to attend to the need of raw material, necessary due to the extensive demand caused by Industrial Revolution. Because it has not ceased to be a resource border, the Amazonian area has become an immense region that needed, as it is believed, protection and security. That would be offered by the Brazilian national State, but only by means of projects that excluded its former inhabitants.

The political borders have been marked by these geopolitical actions. The environment was also seen as an obstacle to development, because everything was under the aegis of security, not the Darwinian one, but that of political regime and development. The populations were pushed back to clusters along the borders, connected by strategic highways, speeding things concerning the relationship between space and time. The conflicts with the indigenous populations have intensified and new highways made the deforestation easier. Some of the major projects have formed enclaves, while the urban populations have spread and some Amazonian cities nowadays present the same problems of other regions. While man transforms the environment/resource borders, the intra-regional migration is already notable on the intense human movement over the political frontiers. The Amazon continues to be a place to worry about and to pay attention to.

References

ALTVATER, Elmar. **O preço da riqueza**. São Paulo: UNESP, 1995.

BAHIANA, Luís Cavalcanti. O Norte na organização regional do Brasil. In: **Geografia do Brasil**. Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística., v. 3, 1991. p. 15-23.

BECKER, Bertha K. **Amazônia**. 6. ed. São Paulo: Ática, 1998.

_____. **A geopolítica na virada do milênio**: logística e desenvolvimento sustentável. In: CASTRO, Iná Elias de; GOMES, Paulo César da C.; CORRÊA, Roberto L. (Org.). *Geografia: conceitos e temas*. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 1995. p. 271-307.

_____.; EGLER, Cláudio A. G. **Brasil**: uma nova potência regional na economia-mundo. 2. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 1994. (Coleção Geografia).

EGGERATH, Pedro. **O vale e os índios do Rio Branco**. Rio de Janeiro: Tipografia Universal, 1924.

FARAGE, Nádia. **As Muralhas dos sertões**: os povos indígenas no Rio Branco e a colonização. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra; ANPOCS, 1991.

FREIRE, José Ribamar Bessa. **Barés, Manáos e Tarumãs**. *Amazônia em Cadernos*, Manaus: Museu Amazônico/Universidade Federal do Amazonas, v. 2, n. 2/3, p. 159-178, dez. 1993/1994.

HUNTINGTON, Samuel P. **O choque de civilizações**: e a recomposição da ordem mundial. Tradução de M. H. C. Côrtes, Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva, 1997.

MADI, Issam. **Conspiración al sur Del Orinoco**. Caracas: Edição do Autor, 1998.

MAHAR, Dennis. **Desenvolvimento econômico da Amazônia**: uma análise das políticas governamentais. Rio de Janeiro: IPEA, 1978. (Relatório de Pesquisa, 39).

MARTINEZ, Pedro Fernando Castro. **Fronteras Abiertas**: expansionismo y geopolítica en el Brasil contemporáneo. México: Siglo Veintiuno, 1980.

MARX, Karl. (Karl Marx. **O Capital**. Vol. 1, Part III, Cap. VII, Seção 1). Disponível em <http://www.marxists.org/portugues/marx/1867/ocapital-v1/vol1cap07.htm>. Acesso em 27.01.2013.

MATTOS, Carlos de Meira. **Brasil, geopolítica e destino**. Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca do Exército, 1975.

_____. **A geopolítica e as projeções do poder**. Rio de Janeiro: José Olímpio, 1977.

_____. **Uma geopolítica pan-amazônica**. Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca do Exército, 1980.

_____. **Amazônia**: o grande desafio geopolítico. *Revista da Escola Superior de Guerra*. v.1, n.41. p. 313-321, 2002

MORALES, Otoniel. **América Latina Y El Caribe em la agenda de la política exterior estadounidense entre 1920-2004: diversificación, coincidencia y conflicto.** Caracas: Centro Nacional de História, 2009.

NAZOA, Aida Santana. **La cuestión científica y tecnológica en el Amazonas venezolano: evaluación y perspectivas.** Caracas: Universidade Central de Venezuela, 1991.

REIS, Arthur Cezar Ferreira. **História do Amazonas.** 2. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Itatiaia, 1989.

SANTOS, Milton. **O espaço do cidadão.** 3. ed. São Paulo: Nobel, 1996. (Coleção Espaços).

SANTOS, Roberto. **História econômica da Amazônia (1800-1920).** Campinas-São Paulo: Editora Biblioteca Básica de Ciências Sociais, 1979

SCHILLING, Paulo R. **El expansionismo brasileño.** Cidade do México: El Cid, 1978.

SILVA, Golbery do Couto e. **Conjuntura política Nacional: o Poder Executivo e geopolítica do Brasil.** 3. ed. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1981. (Coleção Documentos Brasileiros,190).

TAMBS, Lewis A. **Fatores geopolíticos na América Latina.** A Defesa Nacional, Rio de Janeiro. Ano 65, n. 679, set./out.1978.

VELHO, Otávio Guilherme. **Capitalismo autoritário e campesinato.** São Paulo: DIFEL, 1976.

VESENTINI, José William. **A capital da geopolítica.** 2. ed. São Paulo: Ática, 1987. (Coleção Ensaios, 124).

WILLIAMSON, John; KUCZYNSKI, Pedro-Pablo. (Org.) **Depois do consenso de Washington: retomando o crescimento e a reforma na América Latina.** São Paulo: Saraiva, 2004.