

ARTIGO

DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN THE  
“PERIPHERAL CAPITALS” OF THE AMAZON

**Abstract**

The present article has as main objective to argue the process of demographic growth in the “peripheral capitals” of the Amazonia and its relation with some social indicators. Through the presentation of some indicators on these cities, we intend to demonstrate their socio-economic situation and the necessity of governmental intervention in the combat to the problems reflected in the indicators. Using basically the data presented for Pochmann and Amorim (2004), we search to namely present the social situation of the cities that for the moment we call peripheral capitals of the Amazon: Boa Vista, Macapá, Rio Branco and Porto Velho.

**Keywords:** peripheral capitals; social exclusion; Amazon.

**Resumo**

*O presente artigo tem como objetivo geral discutir o processo de crescimento demográfico nas “capitais periféricas” da Amazônia e sua relação com alguns indicadores sociais. Através da apresentação de alguns indicadores destas cidades pretendemos demonstrar a situação sócio-econômica das mesmas e a necessidade da intervenção governamental no combate aos problemas refletidos nos indicadores. Utilizando-se fundamentalmente dos dados apresentados por Pochmann e Amorim (2004) busca-se apresentar a situação social dos municípios que por hora chamamos de capitais periféricas da Amazônia, a saber: Boa Vista, Macapá, Rio Branco e Porto Velho.*

**Palavras-Chave:** *Capitais periféricas; exclusão social; Amazônia.*

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## *Introduction*

Currently the debate on Amazon issues has concentrated mainly on forestry issues, especially in problems involving deforestation, biopiracy and expansion of agribusiness (especially grains), recurrent themes in the media and in scientific production – national and international.

In the Legal Amazon in urban areas of the region live, according to data from the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics (IBGE)<sup>1</sup>, about 16 million people. When you think of cities in the Amazon, it lies almost always on regional metropolises (Belém and Manaus), which, by joining their respective metropolitan areas, reach a population of about 3.5 million.

However, in recent decades, several other Amazonian cities have experienced an ongoing process of population growth, resulting in a growing demand for public services, some of them even did not exist in these regions<sup>2</sup>, leading to a new institutional arrangement and new forms of organization on the part of organized civil society<sup>3</sup> as well as a reconfiguration of urban space occupied by these new elements.

Among the various Amazonian municipalities to suffer these interventions in its urban space, outlining new socio-economic and cultural paths are the capitals of the peripheral states of Amazon<sup>4</sup>. Even though they cannot be called metropolises, they represent a significant share of GDP of their respective states and also concentrate the largest number of inhabitants. This occurs even more intensely in the last two states to be configured as such, after their extinction as Federal Territories, namely, Amapá and Roraima.

### *Amazonian periphery: a brief conceptual approach*

The literature on economy has been using concepts and typologies to determine and define socio-economic relations in many different orders and magnitudes, in both macro and micro power relations spheres in communities/societies.

<sup>1</sup> IBGE, 2007. We will not deal with the debate that there is concerning the nature of this data (urban x rural x rural-urban). For a better enhancement in the knowledge about the debate, consult Graziano da Silva and Campanhola.

<sup>2</sup> It is Worth mentioning that this development has happened mainly in the agriculture border region, expanded by livestock, and later by soy cultivation.

<sup>3</sup> In Boa Vista – RR, we can point out the organization of migrants (indigenous and non-indigenous) into formal associations on fights for civil rights.

<sup>4</sup> We call peripheral States those who have the least participation in regional (and also national) GDP, besides being a minority concerning population. They are: Acre, Amapá, Rondônia, Roraima. We have excluded Tocantins from this set of peripheral states.

One approach, which has a substantially economic character (though sociological, luckily), refers to, or qualifies, the relationship between the different nations of the contemporary world in order to describe the way those are (and were) determined and the elements responsible for a permanence of this relationship, and end up keeping the socio-economic distance in the country, between center and periphery. This methodological effort of assessment on international relations under this paradigm center-periphery is widely used (obviously not exclusively, nor homogeneously either) by economic and social sciences. Utilizing this paradigm, commonly we say that rich countries are part of the central system, while the other (peripheral) “float” around developed industrialized economies. Thus, Brazil is in this second group of countries<sup>5</sup>. It should be noticed, however, that the approach center-periphery uses the historical method of assessing these dependencies; that is to say that these dependencies and differences are the result of a historical process of unilateral domination.

Similarly, this approach, when detailed can help interpret the socio-economic relations (and why not political and cultural) existing between states of a federation, where some federal entities are in the center of the system, while the vast majority of them are situated in the peripheral field<sup>6</sup>, which have, as peripheral countries, the worst rates of infant mortality, illiteracy, poverty, etc. In other words, the peripheral states, as well as countries alike, have the worst social indicators. The economy of these states is industrial<sup>7</sup>; their economy is strongly attached to a public sector and its organizations.

In regional terms, this detailed analysis can also launch important reflections on the peripheral situation on some states in a regionalized context, such as the Legal Amazon. This region (defined by law, in order to serve as a regional planning tool) comprises all the states of the northern region, as well as a share of Mato Grosso and shares of Maranhão and Goiás. According to data from the Sustainable Amazon Plan (PAS) in 2006, only four states correspond to more than 80% of the regional GDP. They are Pará, Mato Grosso, Amazonas and Maranhão (although it does not have most of its area in the Legal Amazon, its incorporation is relevant because it plays important role in state and regional economy). On the contrary, the territorial (and economic) portion of Goiás is irrelevant, it is not included as part of the Legal

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<sup>5</sup> It is not for us to discuss deeply the paradigm center-periphery.

<sup>6</sup> For obvious reasons, we have excluded the Federal District from this analysis.

<sup>7</sup> It is never enough to remember that the 5 wealthiest states in the country (SP, RJ, MG, RS, PR) comprise 80% of the country's wealth, i.e. the national GDP. Further, they are close (concerning the regions as defined by IBGE: Southeast and South).

Amazon in most works about it. The dynamic of these four states is quite visible and concentrated. Both Pará and Maranhão (in a smaller scale, but equally important) have their economy strongly attached to mining activity, focused on large-scale production carried out by large conglomerates industry (e.g. Vale, former CVRD). Amazonian economy is widely sustained by industry (processing, electronics, motorcycles, and others) because of the existence of the industrial pole of the Amazon (known as Manaus Free Trade Zone), while the state of Mato Grosso has its economic dynamism linked to the recent development of agribusiness (basically grains, especially soybeans and their related activities, and livestock). This time we can say that the economic growth of the Legal Amazon in recent years lies on the dynamism of the sectors and sub-sectors aforementioned.

The other states of the Legal Amazon, perhaps with the exception of Rondônia, where agribusiness and logging correspond for significant portions of the state wealth, depend on public sector economy, in its various spheres. However, they are considered to be peripheral, using the center-periphery analysis. Certainly the economy of Amapá is widely attached to Pará's, and Roraima's is connected to Amazonas's. In other words, these (peripheral) economies gravitate towards the central economies. The most economically dynamic states (Amazonas e Pará) are benefited from institutional arrangements, which help us understand the reason why they concentrate great part of productivity. Even though, for example, the incentives given by SUFRAMA apply to the western Amazon, the Amazon accounts for about 98% of industrial production in this part of Amazonia, at the expense of states like Roraima. Here it is important to define more precisely the so-called peripheral states of the Legal Amazon, which are: Acre, Amapá, Rondônia and Roraima.

These four states account for less than 1.1% of total national GDP. With the exception of the state of Acre – state since 1962 – the others are very recent as federated states of the nation. Rondônia, Roraima and Amapá left the condition of federal territories in the 1980s (Rondônia in 1982, Roraima and Amapá in 1988, with the new Federal Constitution). With these conditions these new member states of the federation started experiencing a significant demographic growth process, especially in their respective capitals. Boa Vista, for example, in the early 1970s, had only 30,000 inhabitants, currently has a population of approximately 250 thousand inhabitants. Rondônia, in turn, observed a significant population increase in the 1970s, as a result of already being presented as a new agricultural frontier of the country, serving as recipient of major expansion fronts, both in agricultural production, and, above all, livestock and logging. Currently these states still have an extremely low

population density, but in absolute terms this population must not be ignored. The most populous of these is Rondônia (approximately 1.6 million inhabitants) while the least populous is Roraima, with a population of 412,000. The latter also has the lowest population density (1.8 per km<sup>2</sup>), besides concentrating almost 250,000 inhabitants in the capital. The second most populous city in the state does not have more than 25,000 population.

The states of Amapá and Roraima have experienced the greatest population growth rates since the 1980s, as well as their respective capitals - Macapá and Boa Vista (excluding Tocantins and Palmas). These two capitals appear heading the ranking of social exclusion in the country, according to Pochman and Amorim (2004) data. This vertiginous population growth was (and should be) due primarily to the intense migratory flow observed in these states and municipalities.

### *What are the capitals of peripheral legal amazon like? Some answers*

The capitals of these states – analyzed in this article – have an important population group, distributed as follows: Porto Velho - RO, 380,000 inhabitants; Rio Branco - AC, 315,000 inhabitants; Macapa - AP, 370,000 inhabitants; Boa Vista - RR 250,000 inhabitants. Table 1 below shows more precisely this data:

**Table 1:** Population of the peripheral capitals of the Amazon – 2007

City	Population
Porto Velho-RO	380.974
Macapá-AP	368.367
Rio Branco-AC	314.127
Boa Vista- RR	249.889

**Source:** Almanaque Abril 2007. Made by the author.

The table above allows us to visualize that the peripheral capitals of the Amazon have a total population of approximately 1.32 million of citizens. All these capitals experienced a heavy positive migration flow, from the 1970s, in response to governmental policy, which launched by military governments in order to “fill the demographic emptiness” in the region, ending up as an expansion border process into Amazon<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> For an appreciation of border movement in the Amazon, we recommend Otávio Velho (1977).

The data reported in the same source (*Almanaque Abri*) also provides important information, such as the participation from the population of the capital in the totality of inhabitants on the respective states, demonstrating the population density in these municipalities. In fact, more detailed analysis on the increasing of demands for public services in these capitals must take into account the growth of other cities (mainly the countryside cities in these states), they end up demanding services (mainly health-related) in the first ones. This is a key point in a more precise analysis.

However, our intention is to show some socio-economic indicators that may give some dimension of the social situation found in the so-called peripheral capitals of the Amazon. These indicators attest to one serious situation of social exclusion<sup>9</sup> in these municipalities. As it has been already pointed out, here we intend to present the data to generate greater awareness of these cities' realities, little known by the majority of Brazilian population.

Notwithstanding the use of other data sources to support our arguments, our spinal cord source is the "Atlas of Social Exclusion" of Pochmann and Amorim (2004). As noted, we do not discuss here the category "social exclusion", so consider the cited work as our main source of data and that serves for us as the reference for the analysis. Some indicators are not exactly worked out by the authors and thus do not comprise the calculation of sub-indexes nor the final index of social exclusion. However, we refer to them only as complement to our analysis, because we believe that can help demonstrate the social situation found in the capitals analyzed in this brief test.

### *Some thoughts on socioeconomic indicators*

Indicators are important tools in the socioeconomic analysis of the municipalities (as well as states, regions and countries) and serve to reflect a situation, a picture of a region – municipality, in this case – and are mainly used to support the creation of public policy turned to the problems they showed up. Through this instrument, the public policy makers have subsidies to decide what should be done to mitigate/ resolve certain problem(s).

There are several indicators used to characterize economic and social development situation of a predetermined geographical area. For a long time the main indicator used in determining the well-being of a population was GDP per capita,

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<sup>9</sup> We do not intend to debate the category "social exclusion". We basically utilized data from Pochmann (2004). However, we have a clear perception that this discussion is to be considered when talking about this issue.

considered to be the key indicator of a population's life quality. The logic lays in the belief that the economic man maximizes their well-being through purchasing goods and services and therefore, the higher your income, the greater ability to acquire these products, leading to a maximization of their welfare. However, this indicator began to be questioned since the 1970s and is widely discredited from the 1990s with the adoption of Human Development Index (HDI) and other indicators which are more appropriate to describe the social situation in certain populations. A major problem with the GDP per capita is its inability to demonstrate the concentration of existing income in the regions that had been calculated.

The HDI has had its calculation expanded, covering other sub-indexes not included in its original composition<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, this is just one of several existing indexes. We can say that it is a summary index, there are many other specific indexes, related to different economic themes, and above all, social. We can mention some of them: inhabitants per hospital bed, doctors per capita, residences served by basic sanitation, electricity, garbage collection, child mortality, etc.

These indexes, if they do not show all the economic and social elements inherent to the growth/development process of cities, serve as a diagnostic of the situation they are in. Obviously, the indexes are static elements of analysis, however, a time series of them can point the evolution (or devolution) of certain movements, used as subsidies for the development of public intervention instruments in order to reverse or contribute cyclically to their continuity.

Currently, the social indicators are routinely mentioned in media and in political debates and became part of the definition of priorities in social policies and the allocation of public resources. This higher dissemination of indicators is vital to the understanding of civil society, about its socioeconomic status and monitoring of agents about the allocation of public resources, that is, gives greater democratization of information about the destination given to public funds. However, some indicators are quite complicated to be understood, for example, poverty indicators. There are several concepts of poverty, and this is a key point to define the public policies for the eradication of it. In order to fight it, we must know what it is. Nevertheless, here we do not enter into the details of these conceptual differences<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Originally, the HDI is made of a sub-index for education, one for income and another for life expectancy when born.

<sup>11</sup> For a better understanding, consult Sônia Rocha's book called "*Pobreza no Brasil. Afinal, do que se trata?*", published in 2006 (3.ed) by FGV.

There are several forms of classifying social indicators, one is known as thematic classification, divided among the different themes to be addressed through research. In this classification, the indicators are related to the following topics: demography, education, health, labor market, quality of life, housing, urban infrastructure, security and justice, income and poverty, environment. Within these different themes, there are several specific indicators, which can serve as a parameter for the most different ways to focus on the indicator. The same indicator can say various things, depending on what you want to observe (JANUZZI, p. 20). Other important classification corresponds to the division of indicators between objective or subjective (or between quantitative and qualitative indicators). There is also the distinction between descriptive indicators and normative indicators. Descriptive “apenas descrevem características e aspectos da realidade empírica (...), os normativos, ao contrário, refletem explicitamente juízos de valor ou critérios normativos com respeito à dimensão social estudada” (JANUZZI, p. 21). As to properties that indicators should have, Januzzi (p. 28) lists as: social relevance, validity, reliability, coverage, sensitivity, specificity, intelligibility of its construction, communicability, feasibility to obtain, periodicity in the update, the capacity to disaggregate, and historicity. Indicators must be representative of the empirical analysis of reality, for that they are used statistical instruments in determining the size of the sample being studied/analyzed.

Regarding the use of indicators for the analysis and formulation of social policies, Januzzi makes an important classification concerning the nature of the aforementioned: whether a resource (indicator-input), empirical reality (indicator-product) or a process (indicator-process).<sup>12</sup>

These are important considerations for us to bear in mind the necessity for greater attention to the treatment of information. When using them, it is fundamental to understand, with a greater precision, what they mean, and, thus use them as a decision-making tool.

### *Socioeconomic indicators in the peripheral capitals*

An important source of information regarding the situation of social indicators in Brazil is the “Atlas of Social Exclusion in Brazil”, organized by Marcio Pochman and Ricardo Amorim, which demonstrates the social situation of the Brazilian municipalities. From this book it is concluded that about 42% of the municipalities, which is equivalent to 21% of the population live in places that are considered as

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<sup>12</sup> For deeper details, see Januzzi (op. cit), p. 23.



socially excluded, while only Brazilian residents in 200 municipalities (3.6% of the total), representing approximately 26% of the population, live in locations considered to have a decent standard for living. Another important factor is the large concentration of these 200 municipalities in the South and Southeast.

To build the social exclusion index, pointed previously, the researchers used themes related to (i) decent standard of living; (ii) knowledge and; (iii) juvenile risk<sup>13</sup>. This index was calculated up to the total of 5,507 Brazilian municipalities in 2000.

It should be noted that in the states of Acre, Roraima, Amazonas and the entire Northeast, almost all municipalities have shown high levels of social exclusion. Tocantins and Minas Gerais (especially the regions Vale do Jequitinhonha and Mucuri) have also had a significant share of municipalities with high levels of social exclusion (according to the typology used by the authors). Pará and Amapá, in a lesser extent than the first group, have also shown high levels of exclusion in good part of their municipalities. Only the southern states and the Southeast (except Espírito Santo), including tiny portions (especially in capital and cities' "economically dynamic") in Mato Grosso do Sul, Goiás, Tocantins and the Distrito Federal, were given lower exclusion social rates. This is just one of the figures presented in the study.

It is not for us here to extensive and critically present the calculation methodology and appreciation of the indexes. For our purposes it is enough to consider the following factors: the education index is between 0.0 and 1.0 (the higher the index, the better the social situation); the literacy rate is between 0.0 and 1.0 (the higher the index, the better the social situation); the poverty rate is between 0.0 and 1.0 (the higher the index, the better the social situation); index of social inequality is between 0.0 and 1.0 (the higher the index, the better the social situation); The index of employment is between 0.0 and 1.0 (the higher the index, the better the social situation); Young concentration index ranges between 0.0 and 1.0 (the higher the index, the better the social situation); rate of violence varies between 0.0 and 1.0 (the higher the index, the better the social situation).

From the considerations above, we can now see the social situation of the peripheral Amazonian capitals. Let us remember again that the social exclusion index is calculated from the determination of the other mentioned indexes (education, literacy, poverty, social inequality, formal employment, concentration of juveniles and violence), given their respective weightings.

Initially it is important to highlight that in these states to which the capitals belong, for the most part, the situation of other municipalities is worse than those ob-

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<sup>13</sup> For more details, see Porchmann & Amorim (2004, p.18).

served in these cities. The capitals are “islands of excellence” if compared to other cities. Another key point is that the index covers all the city, it does not address, thus, the differences within them, does not consider the inequalities among the districts “rich” and “poor” in the city. The municipality is a homogeneous geographical unit reference.

From the calculation of social exclusion indicators, authors mapped the municipalities and classified them in a ranking in which the best social situation is considered the first in this classification (in this case, São Caetano do Sul, in the state of São Paulo). The ranking classifies 5,507 municipalities that there were in Brazil in 2000.

The capital of Roraima, Boa Vista, is in position 1452 in the ranking, with 0,505 index. 1,451 municipalities are better talking about their social situation, while about 4.050 have a worse social situation than Boa Vista. Macapa, capital of Amapá is in 1.683a position in the ranking, revealing an index of 0.493. However, Porto Velho, capital of Rondônia, is located at number 873, with the index at around 0.536. In the capital of Acre, Rio Branco, the social exclusion index is at 0.519, putting this municipality at number 1,178. Only Porto Velho is in a better situation than other capital of the non-peripheral regions of the Amazon. The capital of Rondonia, is positioned better than Maceió (AL), Teresina (PI) and Manaus (AM), respectively 1040th, 1136th and 1.112th positions. On the other hand, the other capitals, except for their intra-links, are worse positioned than all the other capitals of the country. Macapá is therefore positioned in the worst place in the ranking of social exclusion. The table below shows the amounts related to the indexes and the position of these capitals in the ranking of social exclusion.

**Table 2:** Index of social exclusion and general ranking – 2000

Municipality	Index of social exclusion	Position in ranking
Boa Vista-RR	0,505	1.452"
Macapá-AP	0,493	1.683"
Maceió-AL	0,526	1.040"
Manaus-AM	0,522	1.112"
Palmas-TO	0,608	163"
Porto Velho-RO	0,536	873"
Rio Branco-AC	0,519	1.178"
Teresina-PI	0,521	1.136"

**Source:** Atlas of Social Exclusion (POCHMANN & AMORIN, 2004).  
Created by the author.

The table above shows the situation of peripheral capitals of the Amazon and some capitals in a worse situation than others (like Porto Velho) from these peripheral capitals. As previously stated, only Porto Velho is better positioned than another capital out of the list of peripheral regions of the Amazon. Boa Vista and Rio Branco are only better than the others that are located within the same peripheral group, and Macapá is placed at last on the ranking of the capitals<sup>14</sup>.

These data show a situation of social vulnerability of these capitals, not only for their positions in this ranking, but as well as in all municipalities of the country. Again, except for Porto Velho, all other peripheral capitals are in positions above the 1000th, which is socially disturbing. Theoretically, because of they are midsize capitals, and largely dependent on the public sector power, it would be expected a more comfortable situation. However, as we have seen, this is not what occurs in these municipalities. Even Porto Velho can be considered an excluded city (or of excluded people), as researchers use index of 0.6 as the lower limit for included. In other way, the minimum value of the index for a city to be considered included is 0.6, which is not the case in Porto Velho (with 0.536 index). Thus, all the peripheral capital cities of the Amazon are “socially excluded”.

Looking closer onto some of “partial” indexes in the general social exclusion index, for example the index of inequality, again a peripheral capital of the Amazon occupies the worst position in the ranking among the Brazilian capitals. In this index the worst situation is Rio Branco’s, with 0.155, followed by Teresina (0.171) and Manaus (0.178). Boa Vista is found as the 5th worst capital (0.201), Macapá is the seventh worst (0.213) and Porto Velho, the eighth worst (0.219). Therefore, from the eight worst capitals with the greatest social inequality, the four peripheral capitals are included, also heading this negative ranking. This index shows the imbalance between the leaders of family groups located in the income distribution extremes. It shows therefore concentration of wealth in these municipalities. Of all capitals in Brazil, the best placed - with less inequality – are Florianópolis (0.748) and Porto Alegre (0.618). Regarding the poverty rate to worst placed between the peripheral is Rio Branco (0.619), the tenth worst rate between all capitals. The best placed among them is Boa Vista (0.703), 11th best in the ranking. Over all Brazilian cities, the best placed is Florianópolis (0.870), Curitiba (0.845) and Porto Alegre (0.829). The index of poverty indicates the participation of households with incomes below poverty line. Regarding the formal employment index, values found were also low, with the worst situation observed in the country in Boa Vista, 0.150, whereas Porto Velho is

<sup>14</sup> The chart does not show all capitals, but Macapá is on the last place among them. See Pochmann & Amorim (2004).

the best placed between the peripheral, with a value of 0.299. This index measures the share of employed in formal jobs in the total working-age population. The chart below shows the inequality index in the peripheral capitals and other state capitals, as well as their respective placements in the ranking of indexes. The ranking shows the classification only among the eight worst cities in the country in this item, in descending order, which means this ranking shows the worst placed between the capitals. The first position is equivalent to the worst placed in second position it is the second worst placed, and so on.

**Table 3:** Index of inequality and ranking of the worst capitals – 2000

Municipality	Index of inequality	Position in ranking (the worst)
Rio Branco - AC	0,155	1"
Teresina- PI	0,171	2'
Manaus-AM	0,178	3"
São Luis-MA	0,183	4'
Boa Vista - RR	0,201	5'
Maceió-AL	0,205	6"
Macapá-AP	0,213	7'
Porto Velho - RO	0,219	8"

**Source:** Atlas of Social Exclusion in Brazil (POCHMANN & AMORIN, 2004).  
Created by the author.

The table above shows the previously presented situation, concerning the social inequality index. Rio Branco is the worst Brazilian capital regarding this criterion, and Boa Vista the fifth worst, which shows that two peripheral are among the five worst and that, from the eight worst, the four peripheral are part of this list of municipalities. Ultimately, we can appreciate that the Amazon peripheral capitals have a high concentration of wealth, a strong imbalance between the leaders of family groups, located in the extremes when talking about income distribution.

As mentioned earlier, the index of employment, which measures the participation of employees in formal occupations, the total population on working age, has been presented as low in the analyzed capitals, giving to the capital of Roraima, the worst position in the national ranking. The table below shows this index for the capital and its peripheral respective positions in the national ranking. This index, Vitória presented the highest value (0.603), placing it on top of the ranking, with the highest rate of formal employment in the country.

**Table 4:** Index of formal employment and position in general ranking – 2000

Municipality	Index of formal employment	Position in general ranking
Porto Velho - RO	0,299	16"
Rio Branco - AC	0,278	19"
Macapá-AP	0,199	26"
Boa Vista - RR	0,150	27"

**Source:** Atlas of Social Exclusion in Brazil (POCHMANN & AMORIN, 2004).  
Created by the author.

Therefore, the two worst capitals classified in the ranking of formal employment were Boa Vista and Macapá, both peripheral capitals of the Amazon. Although they are cities with high participation of the public service in their local economies, they showed high levels of informality. These figures show lower dynamism on these economies. Except for the public servers, formal employment has had a very low index in these capitals, representing a high rate of informal employment. This affects negatively on the collection of taxes by the government, resulting in a reduced ability to offer public services to local societies. Important to address attention to the possible existing connection between this high rate of informality with the strong flow of immigrants observed in these cities. As stated earlier, Boa Vista and Macapá have experienced high population growth rates since the early 1980 resulting from the intense immigration of people from different regions of the country, particularly the Northeast.

The table below shows the population growth that happened in the four capitals considered, between 1991 and 2004. Highlights include the high rate of population increase in all of them, particularly Macapá and Boa Vista, which, in the period of 1991-2000, showed a quite expressive rate, especially the capital of Amapá.

**Table 5:** Resident population, media rate of development (1991-2004)

Munic.	Resident population 1991	Resident population 2000	Annual average rate of development 91-2000	Resident population 2004	Annual media rate of development 00-04
8. Vista	134.155	200.568	4,61%	236.319	4,28%
Macapá	168.225	283.608	6,02%	326.466	3,69%
P. Velho	272.006	334.661	2,35%	380.884	3,36%
R.Branco	183.280	253.059	3,68%	284.555	3,04%

**Source:** IBGE. Made by the author

These two capitals are also strongly characterized by intense migration of indigenous peoples seeking an improvement of their social conditions and end up undergoing sub-employment in informal activities, as street vendors and non-registered domestic workers. At the capital of Roraima this indigenous population has support services from the municipality, non-governmental organizations and of the Indigenous Council of Roraima. However, specific actions do not represent structural changes in the social conditions of the population. In Boa Vista, the movement of indigenous women, as well as other movements, is organized into cooperative economic activities, giving a character of solidarity to these productive activities. Thus, these agents are seeking a higher production efficiency that could result in social benefits – in the form of employment and income – for members of their respective communities. This one movement presents itself as a resistance from these communities to the problem of formal unemployment observed in this layer of the population. Groups of women gathered around a common goal doing different activities, such as crafts, manufacture of underwear, soap production and preparation of stuffed animals. These groups emerged among women (indigenous and non-indigenous) living on the suburbs of Boa Vista, the most precarious neighborhoods from a social and urban infrastructure point of view. This capital has a population of about 32,000 Indians, coming from the countryside and other Amazonian states, especially from Amazonas. This represents approximately 13% of the total population of the municipality.

Another important aspect refers to the housing deficit found on Brazilian cities in 2000, calculated by IBGE altogether with the Ministry of Cities. In absolute terms, depending on the size of a peripheral capital, these figures are relatively low. However, dividing the value of the deficit by the number of inhabitants, the situation

of these capitals become more fragile, being Macapá at worst position, figuring at the 4th worst position among the 27 considered capitals (including Brasília, beyond state capitals). Keeping this criterion, Porto Velho is in the 9th worst position, Boa Vista in the 12th and Rio Branco in the 17th. Rio Branco, therefore, is located at a good position, while Boa Vista and Porto Velho are in intermediate positions. However, the values found between the 5th and 12th place – Natal and Boa Vista respectively – are quite similar, differing only from the third decimal place, which in practice is an equality among the eight cities (Natal, João Pessoa, Recife, Maceio, Porto Velho, Brasília, Fortaleza and Boa Vista). Under this criterion, the two worst situations are those of Belém and São Luis. Moreover, Florianópolis and Curitiba present the best situations, when using this criterion (housing shortage/resident population in the city). The table below shows the housing deficit in the peripheral capitals of the Amazon in 2000.

**Table 6** :Housing shortage in the peripheral capitals (2000)

Municipality	Housing shortage
Boa Vista - RR	6047
Rio Branco - AC	6782
Porto Velho - RO	10378
Macapá -AP	10486

**Source:** IBGE. Made by the author

When it comes to data on the housing issue, the same source provides the number of households lacking basic sanitation, which reflects the quality of homes available to the resident population in the municipalities we considered here. The values found in 2000 were: Boa Vista (1979); Porto Velho (3726); Macapa (3115) and; Rio Branco (5768). At the table below, we visualize this information better.

**Table 7:** Residence without basic sanitation in peripheral capitals (2000)

Municipality	Residence without sanitation
Boa Vista - RR	1979
Macapá-AP	3115
Porto Velho - RO	3726
Rio Branco - AC	5678

**Source:** IBGE. Made by the author

The table 7 clearly shows the prevalence of Rio Branco over the other capitals, with regard to the sanitary deficit in homes in the set of peripheral capital. The capital of Acre corresponds to approximately 39.16% of all households without sanitary in the group of 4 capitals. Second is the capital of Rondonia with 25.7% of total; Macapá totals 21.48% and Boa Vista appears in last place with 13.65%.

Another interesting data concerning the labor market refers the number of unemployed in relation to the population in active age (PIA) highlighting once again the supremacy of Amapá capital, in Macapá, its ratio is at around 10.18%. The table below shows this correlation.

**Table 8:** N° unemployed ( A ) , municipal PIA ( B ) and ratio ( A ) J ( B ) 2000

Municipality	N° of unemployed (A)	PIA(B)	(A)/(B)
Boa Vista	13.983	150.215	9,3%
Rio Branco	15.855	193.088	8,21%
Macapá	21.493	210.983	10,18%
Porto Velho	24.716	258.174	9,57%

**Source:** IBGE. Made by the author

The capitals of Roraima and Rondonia have similar situations in this respect, as we have already highlighted, Macapá is in the worst situation relating to the peripheral capitals (10.18%). Macapá also presents a worrying situation regarding the informal labor market. This capital is the second worst place in the ranking prepared by Pochmann and Amorim in the category ‘informality’, as we highlighted above (the worst in this regard is Boa Vista). Among all the capitals, Macapá stands as the 10th worst in relation to unemployed/PIA.

### *Final considerations*

This paper aims to demonstrate succinctly a brief analysis on the social situation in the so-called peripheral capitals of the Amazon, which are: Boa Vista, Macapá, Porto Velho and Rio Branco. Using fundamentally the data presented by Pochman and Amorim in “Atlas of Social Exclusion in Brazil”, we sought to analyze them and relate them to the demographic expansion in these municipalities.

We sought also to present the data contained in the Atlas (and others) with the purpose of “taking a picture” of these municipalities and from it, to understand the social situation in them. We have seen the worst in the country in capitals regarding



to social exclusion identified in the Atlas are Macapá and Boa Vista, both considered as “peripheral capital” of the Amazon. In many sub-indexes that make up the overall index, these capitals also stayed, most of the time, between the latest ranking positions, as in the case of informal index, for example. We also show that these two capitals experienced the highest rates of population growth among peripherals capitals and that, as in other, accounted for such growth the heavy flow of immigrants intra and interstate observed there. This factor helps to explain the high informality and index observed in these capitals.

Our main goal, therefore, was to present the data from these capitals in order to raise a further observation over these municipalities and on the relationship between these data and the population growth that has been experienced. Macapá and Boa Vista, the two worst placed in the social exclusion index of the Atlas by Pochmann and Amorim are precisely the ones that have experienced the highest rates of population growth, arising from major migration flows that have occurred mainly from the 1980s.

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