

8. The Necropolitics of Development: Socio-environmental conflicts and the cartography of violence among indigenous peoples of the triple Amazonian border Brazil, Colombia and Peru⁶⁷

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1. Introduction

Political mobilizations for the recognition of identity and for the collective use of territories among Pan-Amazonian rural societies reflect a delicate process marked by disputes in the social and political fields over the collective rights inherent to an ancestral way of life of their original peoples. These peoples have historically been confronted with large economic enterprises that, in a particular way, demarcate specificities in terms of mercantile appropriation in the Amazon as a value reserve. Today, these problems are characterized by various constraints and the judicialization of the processes of territorial inspection and demarcation of areas historically occupied and considered by customary law, from the traditional ways of life of indigenous peoples and traditional communities.

In face of these processes, we witness in the Brazilian Amazon several scenarios that correspond to an explicit process of violation and disrespect of the traditional way of life and the forms of appropriation of nature attributed to its complex systems of political, territorial and socio-

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environmental organization. Due to this scenario of insecurity, tensions and different types of violence and conflicts are evidenced, which ultimately reflect, on one hand, the interest of the economic development policies adopted for the Amazon region by current governments, and, on the other hand, their fallibility expressed by the state's administrative inability to be present in territories historically considered as *geographically isolated*, such as the geopolitical demarcated frontiers of national states.

Places where the *absent-presence* of the State transfigures into conflicts that, when compared to a macronational scenario, reveal the ineffectiveness of criminal justice and, ultimately, the irresponsibility of the Brazilian State, reflected in a reality marked by impunity for murders resulting from conflicts directly associated with environmental issues involving the use of land, water and forests.

In the Pan-Amazonian scenario, these conflicts antagonize each other with various agents involved: the state, landowners, territorial expropriated groups, settlers, artisanal fishermen, farmers, *quilombolas*⁶⁹ and indigenous peoples. The occurrence of conflicts motivated by the transformations of the way of life and the permanence and survival of rural societies in the Amazon, became latent and expressed in the advance of the productive systems of agribusiness and mega enterprises marked by the regional dynamics of capitalism in the Amazon.

These processes are made invisible in different aspects, especially silencing the existence of socio-environmental conflicts present and historically caused by the institutionalized violence of the *Acts of state* (Bourdieu, 2014) in face of the exercise of power monopoly and the violation of their rights in the complex dynamic of social appropriation of nature established by capital in the Amazon.

Such situations result in the social and environmental impacts attributed to economic development programs that, in practice, are objectively embodied in fronts of agricultural expansion, which, in the

⁶⁹ Quilombolas, Marron communities with legally recognized rights of collective land property, and understood by law as “the ethnic-racial groups, according to criteria of self-attribution, with their own historical background, endowed with specific territorial relations, with presumption of black ancestry related to resistance to the historical oppression suffered” in the second article of the National Decree, nº 4.887/2003. (Translator’s note).

second half of the twentieth century, were driven by discourses on demographic void and the supposed need for occupation and integration of *Amazonian geopolitical frontiers* (Ianni, 1979; B. Becker, 2004; Picoli, 2006; Rapozo, 2013).

This fictional representation of the Brazilian Amazon, conceived as the *last territory* to be occupied given the frontiers of colonial agricultural expansion, reveals a multidimensional understanding of its current reality. This process is explained in terms of how, after its geopolitical process of occupation and subalternization from other local social agents, the demarcation of ethnic boundaries, the physical and symbolic violence were established, configuring territories and territorialities expressed in the daily life of socio-environmental conflicts.

This study presents an understanding of the process of institutionalization of violence against indigenous peoples in the state of Amazonas (Brazil) on the border strip⁷⁰ with Colombia and Peru. Their socio-environmental conflicts, understood as *borderlands*, are a reflection of the processes of territorialization and deterritorialization marked by countless violations of human rights caused by the *absent-presence* of the State and its development policies expressed by the idea of *necropolitics* (Mbembe, 2018), the subjugation of life to the power of death and violence in contemporaneity.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1. *The violent national integration of the Amazon to the models of economic development*

From the sociological point of view, we can understand how the process of modernization of the Brazilian state has resulted in some aspects or elements of organization of its legal-administrative structures on the one hand and, on the other, in a political-economic design associated with

⁷⁰ The expression *border strip* used corresponds with the provisions of § 2 of art. 20 of the Federal Constitution, with the zone being up to one hundred and fifty kilometers wide, along the land borders, considered fundamental for the defense of Brazilian national territory.

theoretical models of development unrelated to the socially diverse reality of the country.

The experiences of the economic transition from an agro-exporting economy to an industrial economy at an accelerated pace shaped the dominant discourse from the beginning of the 20th century prioritizing economic factors as a response to social problems. In this sense, modernization can be thought of as a reflex of the processes of rationalization of the State in the attempt to seek efficiency in the productive system and in public administration through its political institutions.

The phenomenon of social change in face of the country's socioeconomic situation was initially marked by an increasing intervention of the State in the economy, mainly in the field of strategic conditions of economic development and the consolidation of the national ideals. In this way, planning and modernization theories gave support to development policies that sought national economic growth.

As a result, urbanization and industrialization were forged, above all, from the 1930s onwards, which were characterized by phenomena of political and economic transformation, representing a structural rupture in the society through which the crisis of transition in Brazilian society was passing (Ianni, 2004).

The dependent economic formation, which would characterize the peripheral economies in countries considered underdeveloped such as Brazil, according to the approach of Mauro Marini (2000), would remain around the world market and subordinated to the centers of capitalism. Consequently, these economies would have no way of consolidating their domestic markets, thus perpetuating a colonial model of dependent development.

These transformations, still according to the author, indicate important elements for understanding the phenomena of political-institutional dynamics and rearrangements, especially if we consider some aspects. First, a rationalization of the processes of modernization of society does not occur in an equal way. Second, the elements that define the organizational and legal structure of the State have not been absorbed by

the instituted political order. Finally, this process would lead to the development of an industrial economy, based on a technocratic core solidified within the state.

To the extent that it absorbs and does not absorb the elements belonging to the rationality pattern of the national developmental state model adopted, Brazilian modernization is marked by technical-bureaucratic administrative dimensions of its political and economic structure. Thus, in the political field, this structure is consolidated, providing a model of undeniable economic development, autonomizing the bureaucratic structure that would lead to the social contradictions evidenced in the following decades.

In this context, the bureaucratic-rational-legal structure of the Brazilian state would not become autonomous as it has undergone an insulating process, allowing state identities to execute actions based on the formalization of legal procedures.

Planning, as a way to rationalize the government's actions in the long term, has become the guide of economic policies, generating in the country a paradoxical modernization or a modernization of the surface of the State structure (Brito, 2001). This means that, as a project to rationalize political institutions, solutions were believed to be possible through development measures from the economic perspective; however, a deeper level of the Brazilian reality related to the social contradictions expressed in his discourse would not be reached.

These impulses have unbalanced, in an unrestrained manner, a developmentalist tendency to the modernization process of the Brazilian State. Contextually, environmental issues in regions impacted by this process - such as the Brazilian Amazon - have occurred to the extent that socio-political and cultural elements are drawn into the economic development plans of late and consolidated peripheral capitalism.

Particularly in the states of the Brazilian Amazon, this policy of valorization began in the 1950s, demarcating a process of homogenization of national economic spaces as a consequence of integration, by means of development policies in regions poorly integrated to the national and global economic space, which of course occurred at the cost of a

dissolution or an injury to regionally homogeneous structures (Brito, 2001), especially with regard to socio-cultural aspects that demarcate the boundaries of the organization of local societies.

This mode of insertion into the Amazon region is marked by the failure of successive attempts to consolidate government policies under the strategic interest of enhancing the use of natural resources and the limited scope of industrialization processes in the Amazonian capitals.

Government policies, as much as they were based on the consolidation of an economic valorization of development in the region, resulted in great social transformations, which in fact manifested themselves in negative impacts on local populations, especially on rural communities of indigenous and non-indigenous inhabitants, who until then had little contact with the surrounding society. Over the next few decades, this process would become increasingly worse, producing conflicting relations for access to resources and natural consumption goods, reconfiguring the forms of appropriation of environments and spaces of common use.

From the standpoint of the consequences of a modernizing project that excluded local Amazonian society, most of the problems resulting from the development models adopted reflected social-environmental conflicts, usually marked by access to appropriation, maintenance and exploitation of available natural resources as a source of subsistence to local residents' lives, and as a source of raw material for the productive forces of the capital in the region.

These aspects, more than ever, would only make possible the debate between State, development and economy from a socio-environmental perspective late in the 80s and 90s with the institutionalization of the regime of representative democracy and the end of the military dictatorship, since, in global terms, the environmental issue had been under discussion for some time and it did not have a consolidated political and institutionalized space in this period in the country.

2.2. *The frontier as a conflict: Expressions on violence and the contemporary political scene of the Brazilian Amazon*

The frontier is not only a spatial expression with sociological consequences, but also a sociological expression that is formed spatially. In this concept Simmel (2010) points to an understanding that social interactions allow us to configure and reconfigure our forms of appropriation of territory, spaces and places by attributing intelligible meanings and perspectives to the agents involved.

Complementing this reflection, we also highlight the idea that the frontier can be expressed as a historical construction and symbolic production through *Becoming* (Deleuze, 1992), as an expression of the dialectic transformation of the world and its processes engendered by humanity under certain conditions. However, we are interested in understanding the notion of frontier from the idea of *confronting and degrading the other*, as different and conflicting spatialities, highlighted by Martins (1997), since it denotes multiple dimensions when aimed at understanding social-environmental conflicts and their particularities about social relations and power relations.

In this way, the reflection on the notion of border from socio-environmental conflicts is understood beyond its physical interpretation and its normative geopolitical content to the formation of national states, but rather as a relationship of opposing and interchangeable worlds, which stand out as *ethnic borders* (Barth, 1969), and socio-environmental borders through *contacts and conflicts*.

The violence against indigenous peoples and traditional communities in Brazil is often the result of a process that simultaneously suffocates and reveals the struggles and political mobilizations in the Amazon, involving countless subjections of the agents affected (riverside communities, indigenous peoples), in which they are expropriated from the conditions of effective maintenance of their ways of life and social reproducibility (Almeida, 1996).

The violence inflicted by the traditionally dominant classes⁷¹ at (inter)national and local levels on indigenous, riverine and quilombola peoples is, from a decolonial perspective, a secular and structural expression. However, since the 1988 Constitution it has experienced a relative slowdown and a reversal marked by the process of redemocratization of the Brazilian state. This process took place in greater or lesser extent, at the federal, state and municipal levels, according to the political configurations of the democratic regime.

However, the latest political events reveal again the process of weakening democracy in the Brazilian state, marked by the institutional coup for impeachment of President Dilma Roussef and the subsequent Michel Temer government in 2016.

In this context, we witnessed in 2018 the arrival at the government of Jair Bolsonaro, thanks to the combined manipulation between the propagation of fake news by the media and other communication vehicles, of conservative and retrograde leaders of neopentecostal churches and, in particular, of the judiciary led by the then Judge Sérgio Moro (currently former ex-minister of justice of the Bolsonaro government) and Prosecutor Deltan Dallagnol, among others from the Attorney General's Office. Thus were created the political conditions for the strong re-emergence of strategic economic interests linked to the capitalist rural business, that consequently has led to the recrudescence of deforestation⁷² and violence by landowners, land grabbers and miners, instigated by the current government and represented by the caucus of interest of agribusiness.

⁷¹ The concepts of class and stratification will be used from a sociological perspective to understand the idea of human groups with similar social status defined by their material and symbolic conditions of normative reproducibility of the lived world.

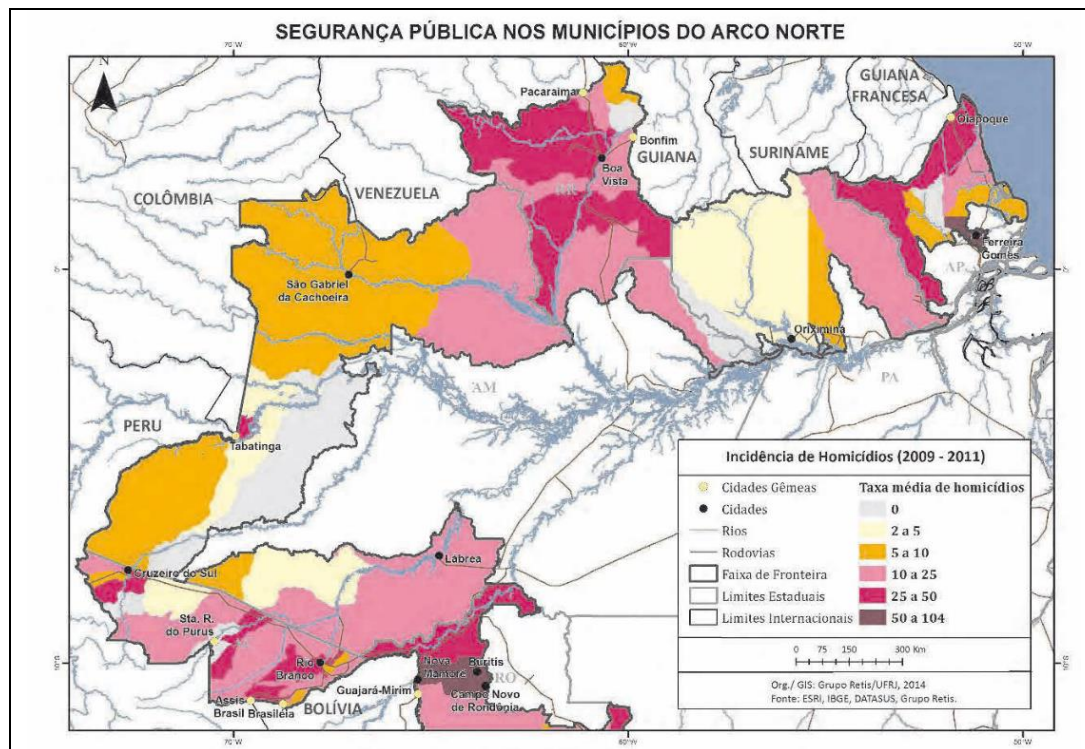
⁷² The information published by the National Institute of Space Research (INPE) and the Andean Amazon Monitoring Project (MAAP) showed an increase in deforestation and fire rates. According to a report presented by the MAAP, around 125,000 hectares (about 172,000 soccer fields) were deforested since the beginning of 2019 and then burned to the peak of the fires in August. Most of the occurrences were identified in the state of Amazonas, with 39,100 hectares being deforested and then burned. The Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI) states that in the case of the indigenous territories of the Amazon, the fires increased 88% compared to 2018. For more information see the report available at: <https://maaproject.org/2019/amazon-fires-deforestation/>

According to the Atlas of Violence of 2019, produced by the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA) and the Brazilian Public Security Forum, Brazil is one of the countries with the highest rates of violence when compared to the international data set monitored. Taking the 2017 data, there were 65,602 murders with an average of 31.6 per 100,000 inhabitants with higher rates in Northern and Northeastern States, namely Acre with 63.9, Rio Grande do Norte with 62.8 and Ceará with 59.1 per 100,000 inhabitants. Of the 65,602 murders 72% were perpetrated with fire weapons (76% men and 53.9% women as victims) and of that total 75.5% of the victims were black, which shows violence also of a markedly racial nature and increasing (between 2007 and 2017, while non-black victims would have grown 3.3%, those of the black population increased 33.1%).

Among the total number of murders, 35,783 were young people between 15 and 29 years (69.9% per 100,000 inhabitants), having also grown 37.5% between 2007 and 2017. Regarding the number of 4,936 women murdered (13 victims per day, mainly in residences), 66% were black, with higher rates in states of the North and Northeast region. Finally, from the point of view of formal education, most of the victims were illiterate or had a low level of education: 74.6% of the men and 66.8% of the murdered women had less than 7 years of study.

The World Health Organization (WHO) considers the incidence of 0 to 5 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants acceptable. In the case of the borderland regions of the northern arc of Brazil, the rates occur at frequencies above the 5 homicides registered. In some cases, such as in the municipality of Tabatinga, on the triple border between Brazil, Colombia and Peru, this incidence is between 25 and 50 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants.

Figure 1. Incidence of homicides in the border strip of Northern Arc of Brazil.



Source: Public security at the borders, socio-economic and demographic diagnosis: National Strategy for Public Security at the Borders (ENAFRON), 2016.

In view of the volume and increasing levels of violence in Brazilian society, not only in urban centres, but also in rural areas, particularly in the northeast and north regions, how is this phenomenon understood and explained? What are the mechanisms and factors that provoke, reproduce and fuel it?

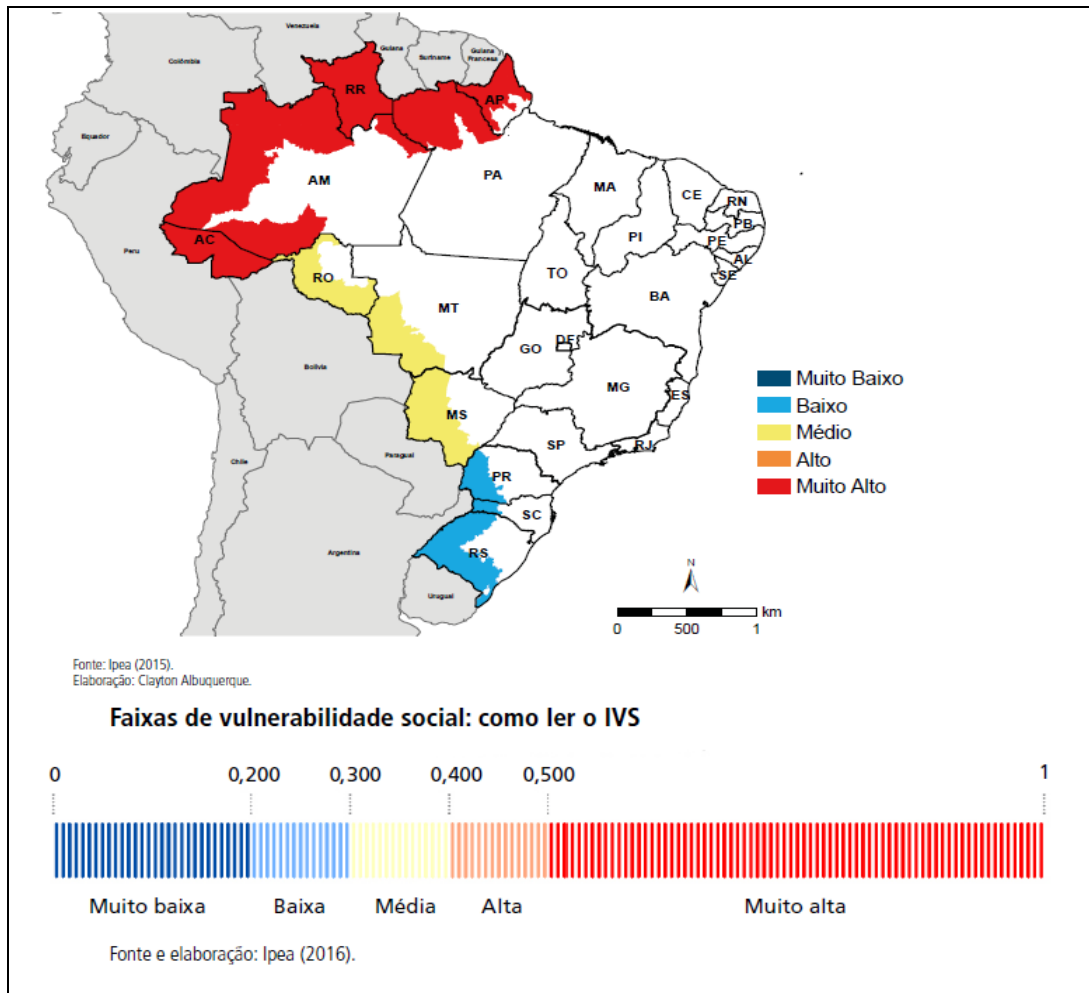
One of the elucidative paths corresponds to the statistical evidence presented in the social vulnerability indexes (IVS)⁷³ of territories such as borderlands, since they also allow us to have a fundamental reflection; the

⁷³ The Social Vulnerability Index (IVS), constructed from indicators from the Human Development Atlas (ADH) in Brazil, seeks to highlight different situations indicative of exclusion and social vulnerability in the Brazilian territory, in a perspective that goes beyond the identification of poverty understood only as insufficient monetary resources.

notion that these geopolitical interstices are generally marked by the absence or fragility of access to public services in education, health and human rights, contrasting with the inefficient condition of monitoring public security and the high incidence of homicides translated into multiple forms of violence, among them socio-environmental conflicts. In the analysis scenario presented, the IVS varies between the following levels of vulnerability: Navy Blue (very low), Blue (low), Yellow (medium), Orange (high) and Red (very high).

The region corresponding to the northern arc of Brazil, in general, is marked by high levels of vulnerability (red strip). These aspects represent the inefficiency of government policies in the measure that they also reveal the socioeconomic problems present in the regions of the international border (figure 2). This reflection suggests that socioeconomic vulnerability is also shaped by the multiple forms of violence inflicted by the ruling classes, often supported by authorities at the federal, state or municipal level.

Figure 2. The Social Vulnerability Index in borderlands in Brazil.



Source: Institute of Applied Economics - IPEA (2015).

2.3. Socio-environmental conflicts and inequality: The multiple expressions of violence against indigenous peoples and traditional communities

In the field of studies on Brazilian socio-environmental conflicts recently Fleury, Barbosa and Sant'Ana Júnior (2017) state that the unfolding of reflections produced from environmental sociology have made possible four major approaches that have been configured as research areas in the social sciences in Brazil: a) those that are open to dialogue with

international environmental sociology and its theoretical perspectives, including those under debate and also those consolidated in recent decades; b) those who discuss social and environmental conflicts from the symbolic relations of power and domination, c) those who discuss the nature of socio-environmental conflicts based on a reflection on how relations are established between traditional peoples and major national development projects, and finally d) those having a conflict approach with an emphasis on understanding the broadening of the conceptions of politics and environment under dispute, and the clashes of different worlds.

In fact, socio-environmental conflicts, particularly in the Amazon, are marked by inequalities, giving rise to recurrent disputes in terms of economic and political power, which extend and reproduce in the legislative, executive and judicial fields, as for example in the policies of territorial demarcation or in judicial slowness, these facts being results, burdens and reflections of the historical traditionalism of national oligarchic and patrimonialist political systems (Weber, 1978; Faoro, 1984).

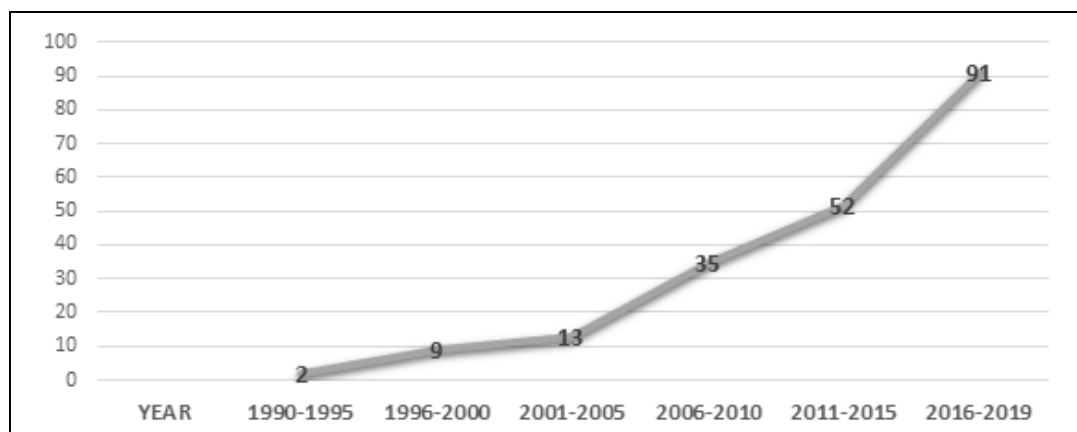
In reference to this phenomenon we have witnessed, throughout the process of redemocratization of the Brazilian state, the strategic organization of attacks against the territories and the rights that would ensure the permanence and reproducibility of the way of life of traditional peoples and communities in Brazil

The evolution of this picture (figure 3) reveals a process of political articulation of the chamber of deputies and the national federal congress in groups of interest that are mostly representatives of either the traditional patrimonialist oligarchy or the new fronts of commercial expansion of the Brazilian business community. The historical organization of these groups in caucus ⁷⁴ reveals a more complex process

⁷⁴ Currently, the federal chamber, responsible for presenting and voting proposals in national legislation, has a configuration expressed in 11 groups linked to various sectors of interest, standing out those of the national economy, the following caucus: i) Contractual and construction companies; ii) Evangelicals; iii) Agriculture (ruralists); iv) Armaments sectors (*bullet caucus*); v) Union representations; vi) Human rights; vii) Mining; viii) Commercial business; ix) Sports; x) Health and xi) Political relatives (group of *relatives*).

that, during the first decades of the 21st century, intensified and began to play a leading role and to guide the voting of bills at the national level.

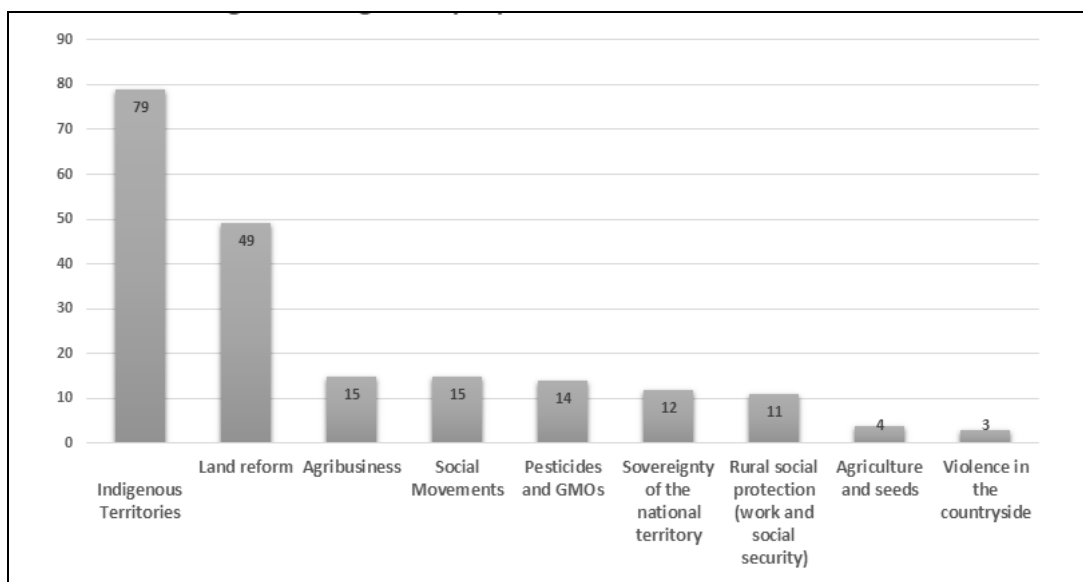
Figure 3. Evolution of bills in the federal chamber that harm the rights of indigenous peoples and traditional communities.



Source: Produced using data from the Pastoral Land Commission, CPT (2020).

Although they can be understood as a traditional political mechanism in the system of a national representative democratic organization, the caucus have become more expressive in the 21st century with their articulation at levels of economic and ideological interests (figure 4). In this way they reveal, for example, the stratified interests of commercial sectors in Brazilian society that consequently impact the political and socio-environmental life of traditional peoples and communities in Brazil.

Figure 4. Types of projects in discussion in the federal chamber against the rights of indigenous peoples and traditional communities.



Source: Produced using data from the Pastoral Land Commission, CPT (2020).

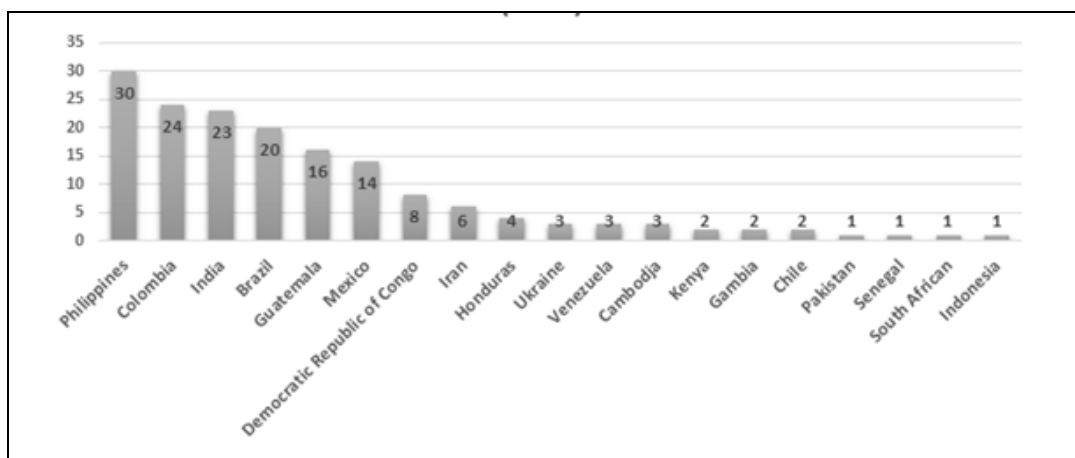
In the historical context of the relations between landowners and patrimonialist classes, socio-environmental conflicts assume particularities expressed in a specific modality, namely that which occurs around the relationship between man and nature, given the dilemmas of appropriation of natural resources, being these the socio-environmental conflicts (Theodoro, 2005; Little, 2003; Rapozo and Silva, 2013).

This contradiction would, however, be unintelligible if we do not take into account the struggle waged on the basis of class and ethnic representativeness and, above all, the structuring and decisive role of the State in the various and successive social configurations, particularly the most recent ones, which leads us to reflect briefly on the theories of stratification and inequalities between social classes. As we exposed the situation, we emphasized the need to link the factors of violence as reflections of social stratification, inequality and socioeconomic vulnerabilities expressed in the reality of indigenous peoples and traditional communities in the Brazilian Amazon.

Data from the latest report presented by Global Witness (2019) on the murder of environmental leaders and activists in the world has identified Brazil as one of the first countries where environmental conflicts kill the most (figure 5). It is worth highlighting that in the two previous years Brazil headed this ranking of murders⁷⁵, which mostly came from Agribusiness, property speculation and mineral extraction ventures.

Overall, studies still point out that about 80% of these murders in the country occurred in the Amazon region, indicating again that reality is marked by uncertainties regarding physical integrity protection, combined with the incipient surveillance and the fragile public security policy for sectors in the Brazilian rural world. These elements are also manifested in the high statistical indexes of vulnerability and violence against rural societies.

Figure 5. Quantitative representation of deaths from socio-environmental conflicts in the world (2019).



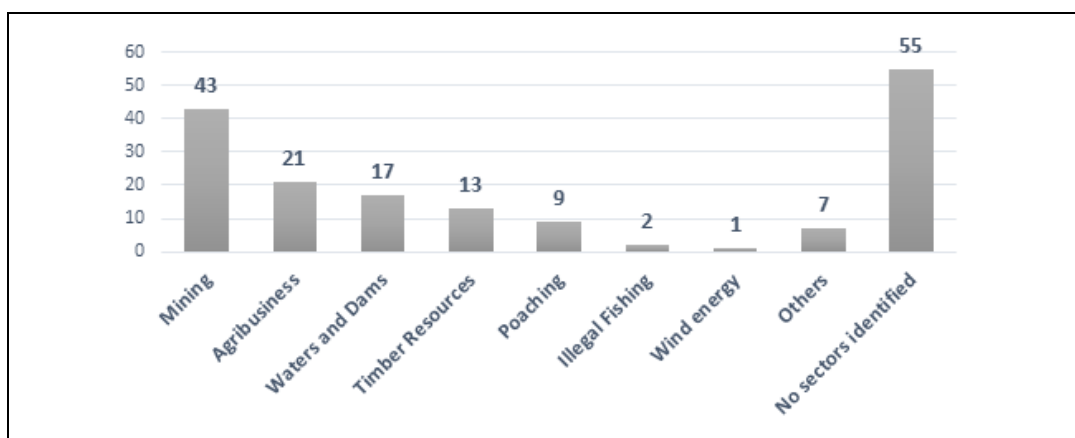
Source: Adapted from Global Witness, 2019.

⁷⁵ For further details on the previously mentioned data we suggest to consult the report: *At what price? Irresponsible business and the murder of land and environmental defenders (A que preço? Negócios irresponsáveis e o assassinato de defensores da terra e do meio ambiente)* (Global Witness, 2018).

In the Brazilian case, some numbers corroborate the current data; according to the Dom Tomás Balduino Documentation Center, of the Pastoral Land Commission – CPT (2020), the highest number of murders of indigenous leaders in the last 11 years has been recorded. Out of 9 indigenous people murdered in conflicts in the countryside in 2019, 7 were leaders.

These aspects can also be understood in a general way attempting to the diverse interests of the models of social appropriation of nature, especially those marked by the relationship between violence, capital and the commodification of nature. In figure 6, the greatest highlights are among the unidentified types of activities in the official data in each country and, in second and third place those directly linked to mining and agribusiness activities.

Figure 6. Types of commercial activities related to the murder of environmental activists in the world.



Source: Adapted from Global Witness, 2019.

Violence, being a recurrent phenomenon in various types of society, is often considered a characteristic of non-democratic societies, from the historical slave and feudal periods, through others of despotic character, to the most contemporary dictatorial socio-political formations. If the nature and degree of violence is greater or lesser in various types of societies of the past, today we can also contextualize the phenomena of

violence and question the extent to which democratic societies are equally permeated by these elements. This leads us not only to the various forms of social violence, but first of all to question to what extent the State itself and the legal, police and judicial apparatus should also be subjects of investigation for their part in producing injustice and violence.

Beyond the theoretical polysemy in face of the concepts of violence, when we pretend to understand it materialized in its different forms, we are dealing with the concrete expression of conflicts that affect, subjugate and subalternize social groups. The stigma of physical violence in the rural world of the Brazilian Amazon, and in particular the situation of the state of Amazonas from the point of view of official data, not only results in legal insecurity but also reveals an invisible face of government policies that are in conjunction with extreme situations of socioeconomic vulnerability and social inequality.

2.4. *Territories and socio-environmental conflicts: threats to the right of (re)existence of indigenous peoples in the triple border Brazil, Colombia and Peru.* The different forms of land use, together with the issues of political and identity mobilization of indigenous peoples and other traditional communities, express the various forms of appropriation of territory⁷⁶; these processes become the territorialization⁷⁷, marked by the dispute over the transformation of *space* in *place*. The processes of territorialization include elements that are absent from the legal and juridical instances when it comes to spaces of common use, and that become a latent force in any group, whose explicit manifestation depends on historical contingencies (Little, 2002; Rapozo, 2019).

The report on violence in the Brazilian rural world produced by the Pastoral Land Commission⁷⁸ shows that in 2019 violence in the

⁷⁶ Given its polysemy, the conception of territory, according to Haesbaert (2012), suggests three great perspectives for understanding: the naturalist, the economic based and of legal-political tradition; the idealist and the integrating perspective.

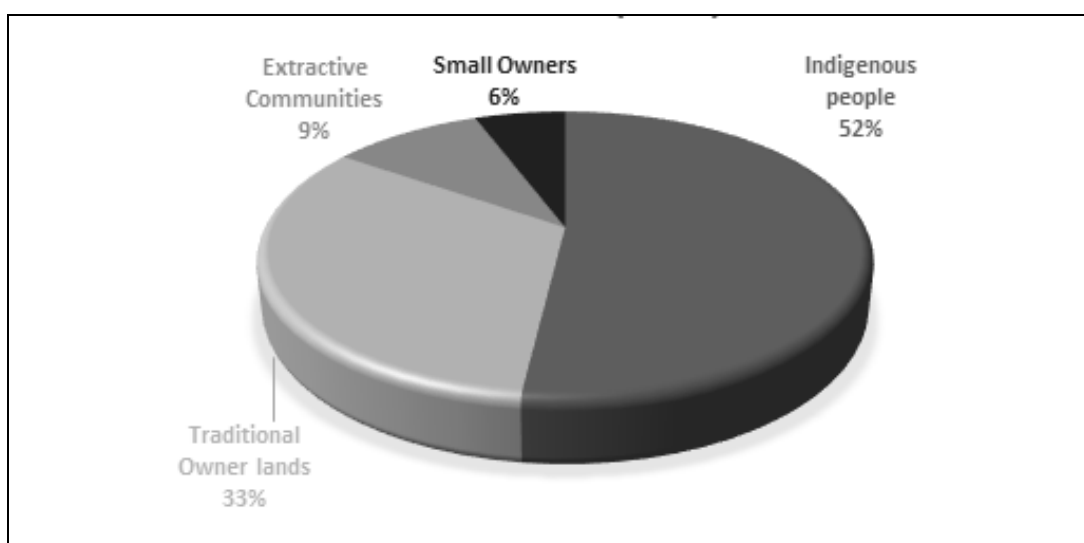
⁷⁷ The territorialization proposed by Saquet (2017) expresses the appropriation of the territory in its spatial reproducibility, reflected in social, economic, political and cultural relations.

⁷⁸ Conflicts in the countryside Brazil – 2019 (Pastoral Land Commission - CPT, 2020).

countryside increased compared to 2018. The general information accounts for a 14% increase in the number of murders, from 28 to 32, 7% in assassination attempts - 28 to 30 and 22% in death threats, from 165 to 201.

In the state of Amazonas, 54 conflicts were officially notified for violence against persons, with 46,472 people involved, resulting in 6 murders, 3 assassination attempts and 22 death threats.

Figure 7. Types of agents involved in conflicts over the land use and possession in Amazonas (2019).



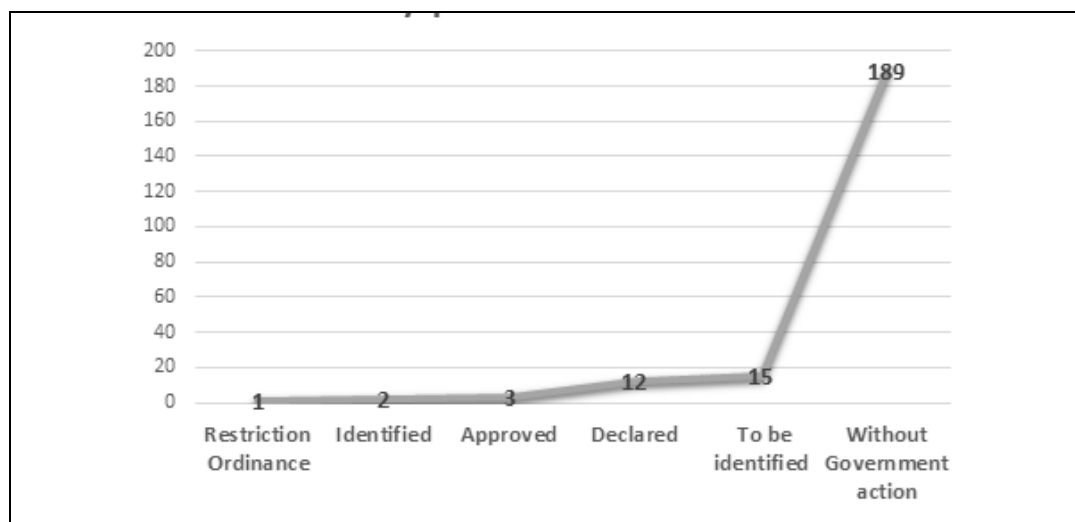
Source: Prepared from data from the Pastoral Land Commission, CPT (2020).

The explicit manifestation of these conflicts, in many cases, is associated with the conditions of use of the territory. In the case of indigenous peoples in the state of Amazonas, representing more than half of the conflicts recorded for the use and possession of land according to the latest data presented (figure 7), the insecurity of access to and recognition of their territories comes up against multiple forms of violence, among them those caused by the slow judicial regularization of the land ownership and the recognition of traditionally occupied territories⁷⁹; as

⁷⁹ The category traditionally occupied lands is presented beyond its normative legal perspective (Viegas, 2017), as an indispensable territory for the maintenance of activities that allow the material and symbolic reproduction of collective life.

also highlighted in studies released by the report Violence against indigenous peoples in Brazil, published by the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI) in the year 2018 (figure 8).

Figure 8. Situation of indigenous territories on demarcatory processes (2018).



Source: Prepared from data of the Indigenous Missionary Council, CIMI (2018).

In the state of Amazonas, the territories required by the indigenous peoples, in their most different ways in terms of procedural progress, reveal the need for faster solutions given the problem that, for most of them, there is a lack of measures to ensure the free exercise of their use, as well as the rights and benefits arising from formal recognition through homologation by the competent institutions.

The National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), which belongs to the Ministry of Justice, is responsible for proceeding with the formal recognition of indigenous territories. This process is carried out in several phases of procedures according to Decree 1.775, of January 8, 1996, which establishes the administrative procedure for the demarcation of indigenous lands.

Among the processes, the following procedures are adopted: a) the conduction of anthropological, historical, land, cartographic and environmental studies, which substantiate the identification and

delimitation of indigenous land; b) the delimitation of territories that had the studies approved by the Presidency of FUNAI, with its conclusion published in the Official Gazette of the Union and of the specific State, and that are in the phase of administrative contradiction or under analysis by the Ministry of Justice, for decision on the expedition of a Declaratory Ordinance of traditional indigenous possession; c) the process of declaration of the lands that obtained the promulgation of the Declaratory Ordinance by the Minister of Justice and are authorized to be physically demarcated, with the materialization of the landmarks and georeferencing; d) the homologation of the territories that have their material and georeferenced limits, whose administrative demarcation was homologated by Presidential decree; and e) the regularization of the lands that, after the homologation decree, were registered at the Notary's Office in the name of the Union and at the Secretariat of the Union Patrimony.

The government's political reconfiguration has prevented the conduction of these processes, that were initiated between Michel Temer's presidency and the current federal administration. In this context, FUNAI began to be administrated by representative sectors linked to agribusiness, and defenders of the policies of expansion of agricultural borders, represented in the federal chamber by the ruralist and mining caucus, who have ultimately hindered this process supported by the presidency of the republic.⁸⁰

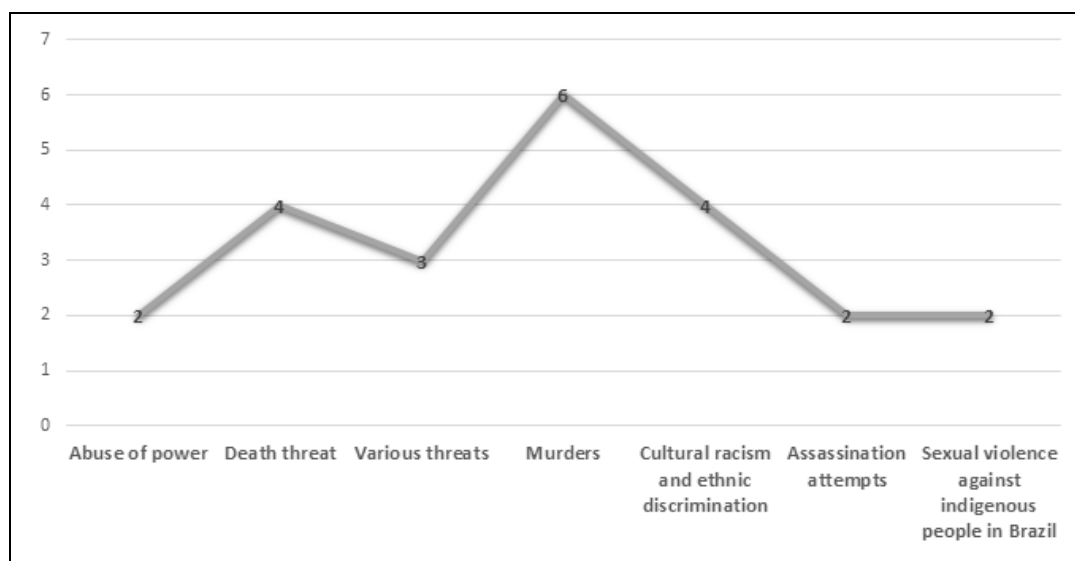
In this way, FUNAI ended up being weakened with the reduction of fundamental funds for monitoring, inspection and other social actions carried out by the regional coordinators. This blatant dismantling has led the government to hold legally responsible the officials who oppose the policies and the current position of the institution, aligned with external interests; as well as it has provoked the expressive decrease of the governmental action of these functionaries in situations of precarious work with the indigenous peoples.

⁸⁰ In his 2018 presidential campaign, current President Jair Bolsonaro publicly stated that when elected he would not demarcate an inch of land for indigenous peoples in his government. (See: <https://epoca.globo.com/expresso/nao-demarcarei-um-centimetro-quadrado-mais-de-terra-indigena-diz-bolsonaro-23300890>).

The slowness of these processes has consequently caused various problems that extend to the numerous realities and particularities of each ethnic group given the form of use and relationship with their territories. We consider that the phenomenon of judicial slowness expresses numerous types of violence, especially the direct attack on the physical integrity of indigenous peoples marked by socio-environmental conflicts.

Death threats, racism, assassination attempts, and murders reveal a political model of land administration committed to the patrimonialist oligarchies and expressed in specific class interests. The data presented by Indigenous Missionary Council - CIMI (2018) indicate that this violence is the result of the transition of government (Michel Temer - Jair Bolsonaro) at a time of political reconfiguration that favored the rise of conservative movements in defense of private property and agriculture under a landowner regime, directly attacking indigenous peoples.

Figure 9. Types of violence against indigenous peoples in the state of Amazonas (2019).



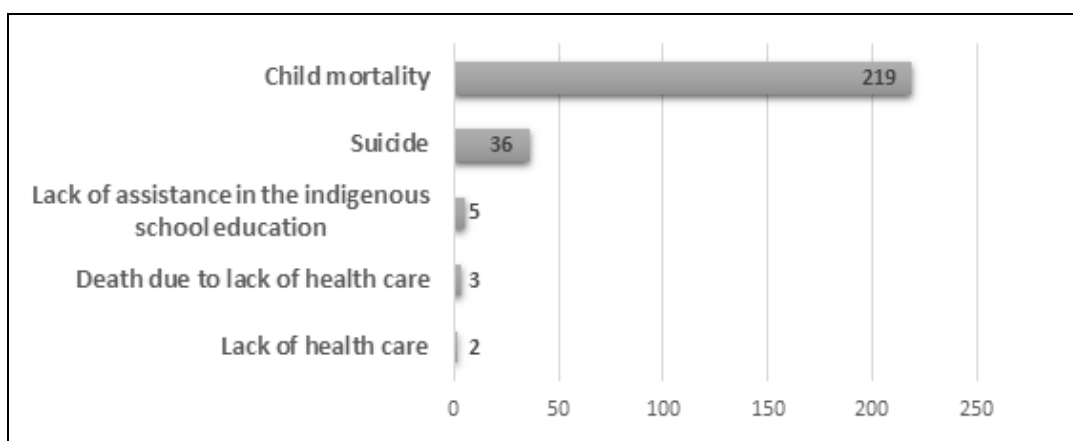
Source: Prepared from data of the Indigenous Missionary Council, CIMI (2018).

The inefficiency of state policies also reveals another face of violence that impacts indigenous peoples. The lack of commitment to provide essential public services in the territories in situations of socioeconomic

vulnerability expresses an institutional violence that is not just a matter of socio-environmental conflicts, but of the omission of public power.

The growing rates of infant mortality and suicide (figure 10) in the state of Amazonas point to a serious failure in the extent of public health care. In general, the data are explained by the fragility of institutional support to the functionaries of the responsible federal agencies which, in situations of precariousness and committed to the complex logistics of displacement to most indigenous territories, find it impossible to act more effectively and in a more suitable way for the regional reality.

Figure 10. Violence due to omission of public power in the state of Amazonas (2019).



Source: Prepared from data of the Indigenous Missionary Council, CIMI (2018).

In the midst of this situation, the threats and socio-environmental conflicts experienced by indigenous peoples are shaped by the market dimensions of exploitation of their territories. In the border strip of the Alto Solimões micro-region, the tensions for the use of the territory highlight the different forms of appropriation of natural assets as potentially commercial resources.

The border strip of the Alto Solimões region in the State of Amazonas comprises the triple border between Brazil, Colombia and Peru. In this territory are 7 municipalities (Amaturá, Atalaia do Norte, Benjamin Constant, Santo Antônio do Içá, São Paulo de Olivença, Tabatinga and Tonantins) with a population of approximately 260 thousand inhabitants

(Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística - IBGE, 2010). A significant part of this population comprises the indigenous peoples of the border strip, characterized in 13 ethnic groups, amounting to a population of approximately 73,758 indigenous people inhabiting 35 demarcated lands and at different stages of the demarcation procedure (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística - IBGE, 2010).

Together with numerous non-demarcated territories, they represent about 35,187.81 km², or 16% of the Alto Solimões border strip, about 2.19% of the territorial area of the state of Amazonas. Another particularity of these territories is that they comprise the second largest indigenous land in the country, the only place in the world where about 14 ethnic groups live in voluntary isolation, are monitored and have never maintained contact with national society.

These indigenous peoples are organized in communities from agroecosystemic family units, marked by intense economic activities of seasonal rural production directly in contact with the urban centers of their municipalities and neighboring Colombian and Peruvian cities, characterized by intense flux and circulation of goods, accessing basic services and consuming industrialized goods. In general, these municipalities are marked by high indices of social vulnerability, with very low Human Development Indexes (0.499) and very high inequality (above 0.55), being characterized by the fragile presence of public institutions that should promote the resolution of problems common to the population.

The exploitation of timber, the illegal hunting and fishing on indigenous lands, as well as mining through *garimpos* reveals a complex dynamic between the economic agents concerned and the impact on local indigenous communities. A region marked by explicit violence coming from the illicit economy driven by drug trafficking, expressed in a network of arrangements, illegalities and vulnerabilities to which indigenous peoples are subjected. In the particular case of the condition of territories impacted by mining we can observe two constant movements.

On the one hand, the actions caused by the illegal mining activity carried out through *mining dredgers* (figure 11) which, in general, are

conducted with the intervention of the non-indigenous local population for the operation of the suction machines of the river beds and streams located in the territories of the indigenous communities. This activity aims at the mining of gold found in these places with the use of chemical resources (such as Mercury) highly dangerous to the health of local residents who end up consuming the resources there, such as water and fish. In addition to mining activity, the impact caused is associated with other elements, such as fishing and illegal hunting, already pointed out, and death threats and assassination attempts already evidenced in previous studies (Rapozo, 2019).

It should be noted that, in general, these activities are carried out without the prior consent of the local residents and, in some cases already reported, with the government connivance of the municipalities and the current legislation. In addition to becoming an irreversible impact from an environmental point of view, it joins the rates of violence in a region without responsible monitoring by the competent public agencies.

Figure 11. Exploitation of mineral resources in indigenous territories of the Brazil, Colombia and Peru border strip.



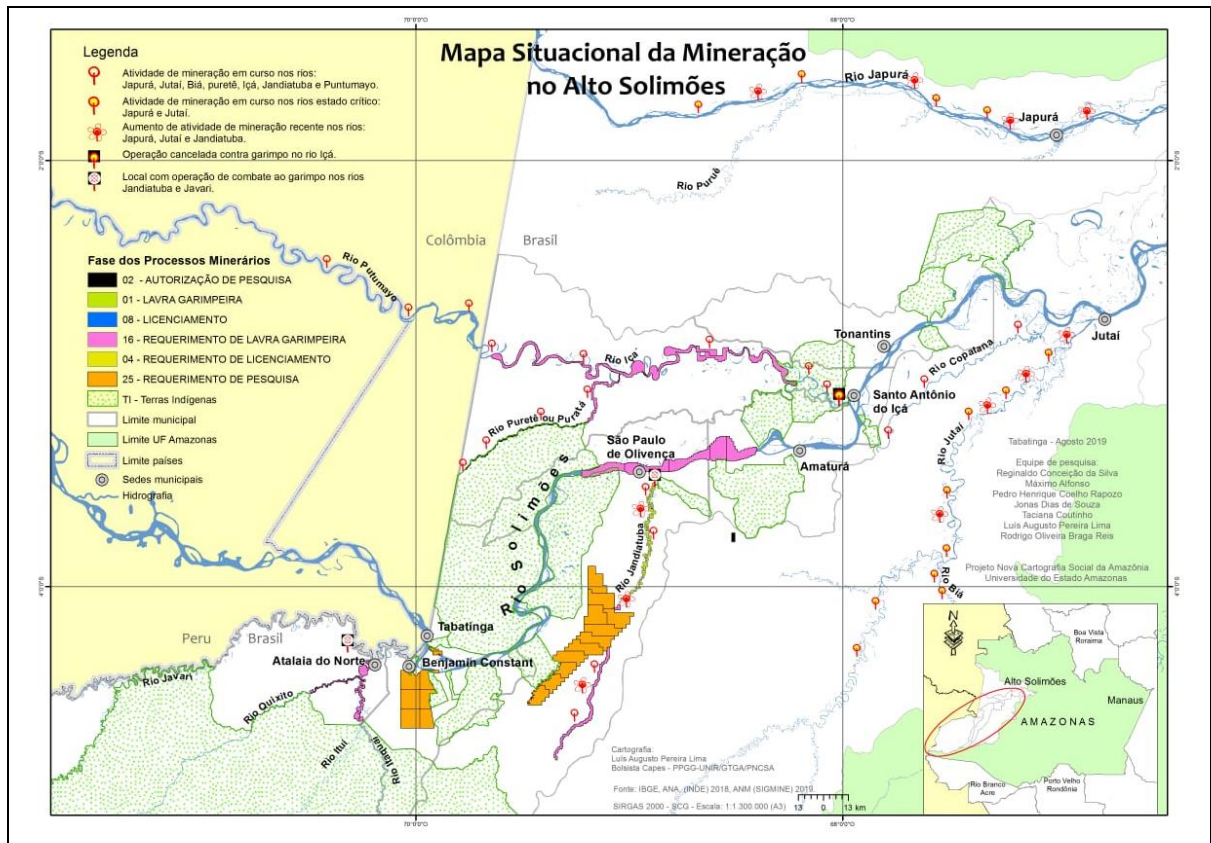
Source: Personal field research files (2019).

On the other hand, there is a need to highlight the existence of government interests for the exploitation of mining activities in the border strip. With the current political reconfiguration, those agendas of interest on mineral exploration in the region are renewed. The Federal Chamber is currently examining Bill 191-2020, which proposes, in accordance with Paragraph 1 of Article 176 and Paragraph 3 of Article 231 of the Brazilian Constitution, the establishment of specific conditions for research and ploughing of mineral and hydrocarbon resources for the use of water resources to generate electricity on indigenous lands, and institutes compensation for the restriction on the use of indigenous lands. PL191-2020 awaits the creation of a temporary committee in the federal chamber.

One of the biggest deadlocks is precisely the federal government's disrespectful failure to carry out the prior consultation established by the International Labour Organization in its Convention¹⁶⁹ that establishes consult with traditional peoples and communities. Besides the project under analysis, we observe how the planning of large mining enterprises in the border strip is structured.

The work carried out by the Project *New Social Cartography of the Amazon* and the Nucleus of Socio-Environmental Studies of the Amazon (NESAM) of the State University of Amazonas (UEA) and the Federal University of Amazonas (UFAM), has recently presented the evident situation on mining activities in this triple frontier strip Brazil, Colombia and Peru (figure 12).

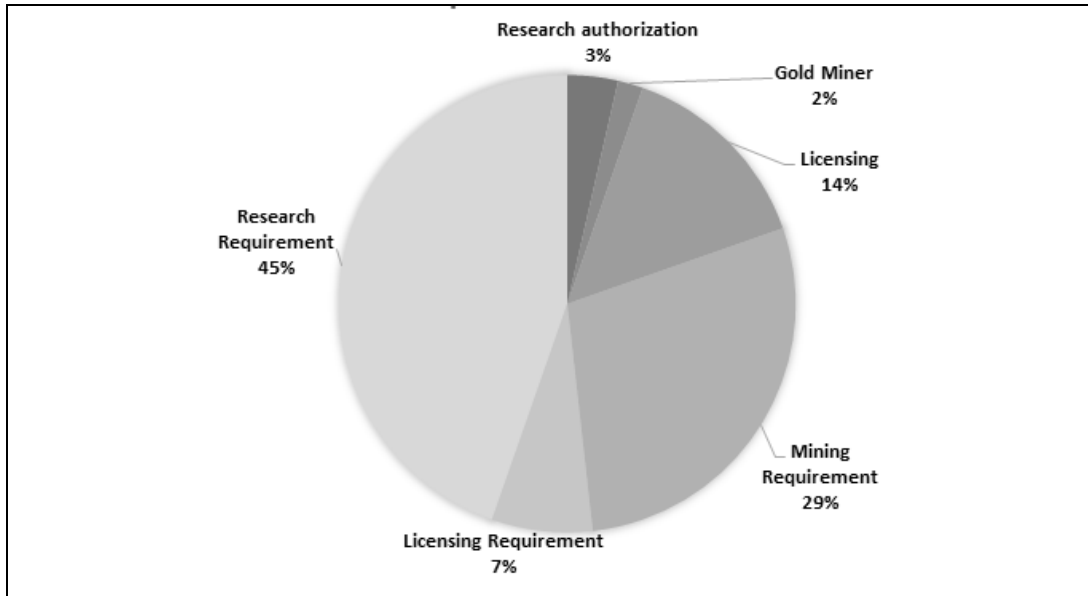
Figure 12. Situational mapping of mining activities in the border strip of the state of Amazonas.



Source: Development of information using data from the NESAM (Nucleus of Socio-Environmental Studies of the Amazon) and the Project New Social Cartography of the Amazon (2019).

Mining in the border strip can be observed in different situations ranging from illegal activities mapped to legal procedures in progress (figure 13). In general, we are witnessing an incessant movement of attack on the traditional territories of indigenous peoples and traditional communities that, at the present time, is resuming with the impetus of the political interests of exploitation of natural resources headed by strategic interests of a national political class.

Figure 13. Situational mapping of mining activities in the border strip of the state of Amazonas.



Source: Prepared based on research information from the Nucleus of Socio-Environmental Studies of the Amazon (NESAM) and the Project New Social Cartography of the Amazon (2019).

The numerous requests and authorizations for studies, research, licensing and mining indicate a territory already mapped by companies and institutions waiting for the approval of legislation in progress that will bring greater impacts and violence to indigenous peoples. However, this does not mean that in the current reality mining exploration activities are not illegally following their course and causing impacts in the region.

Socio-environmental conflicts in this context arise from one of the forms of violence instituted by Acts of state as well as from the institutional fragility of the institutions that monitor cases of violation of traditionally occupied territories. Furthermore, we could affirm its *invisibility* as ratified by the *present-absence* of the national state, which, even though is geopolitically protecting borderland territories for the sake of national sovereignty, is exceedingly absent when we are faced with the data demonstrating its administrative incapacity expressed in the fallibility of government policies that abandon and deny the right of existence of

indigenous peoples in such a complex region from a socio-environmental point of view.

3. Conclusions

Socio-environmental conflicts through the institutionalization of violence in its multiple forms of existence are the frontier of denial of the right to exist, of the limits and risks that the indigenous peoples and other traditional communities in the Brazilian Amazon go through daily.

These phenomena are materially evident and currently latent given Brazil's political configuration in the 21st century, and present themselves as an expression of the violation of human rights materialized in an unequal dispute for economic, political and social capital ensured by Acts of state. Attacks on the rights of traditional peoples and communities are based, among other preconditions and factors, on interests and forms of exploitation of natural resources, often resulting in violence, the types and forms of which have been portrayed.

The strategies and economic interests for the Brazilian Amazon in the second decade of this century reveal a correlation of adjusted forces with the rise of Brazilian conservatism represented by the organization of groups that are in part subscribed to the patrimonialist oligarchies that historically occupy a place of prestige in the national economy and politics, revealing a latent social stratification of classes expressed in inequalities and socioeconomic vulnerability.

The expansion of economic activities in the Amazon region has been historically expressed in conflicts caused by divergent forms of appropriation of nature among opposing worlds, among boundaries of representation, life and feeling differences, given the particularities of the agents involved and the interests at stake. Over and above the types of the forms of conflict materialized in violence, these processes also affect the fragility and even impotence of local institutions, especially since these are extensive territories where the figure of the State is present-absent, both in its failed assistance and in its government policies.

Beyond the marginalization expressed in the statistics of local violence, they show that the attacks suffered by social groups in face of the withdrawal of the rights to produce and live in their territories with their forms of use of available natural resources, in addition to trying to make the local communities invisible and de-legitimize them, aim to counteract the legitimate aspirations of the indigenous and riverine peoples and demobilize them in their struggles.

The maintenance of a picture, little modified in recent decades, on the situation of violence in the Amazonian rural world presents worrying rates of violence by the disputes of access to land use, with particular emphasis in the last two years, a historical period of transition from the institutional coup d'état devised by the Michel Temer to the neo-fascist and conservative rise representative of an ultraliberal economy of current Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro.

As we emphasize, the production of asymmetries established in the relationship between these different agents in the same territory reveals the place they occupy from the point of view of the economic, social and political spheres. Furthermore, they also have an impact on the production and reproduction of the exclusion, isolation and segregation experienced in the different forms of violence demonstrated here. The impossibility of resolving conflicts reflects the legal uncertainty and consequent lack of guarantee of the territorial rights available to these social groups.

The political violence of Acts of state, the illegality of cross-border economic activities based on the political and economic contradictions of the development model planned for this region reveal the marginalization of indigenous peoples and other rural communities in the Alto Solimões micro-region as they statistically reproduce themselves in a condition of vulnerability and exclusion; and territorial, social and political segregation.

However, we believe that the certainty of these issues, allows a potential discussion for the development of scenarios for conflict resolution expressed in the materialization of responsible environmental public policies to mitigate the issues presented here. To this end, it is important to affirm the importance of the role of public universities and of

mutual dialogue with social movements, since these potentialities presuppose the organization and systematization of information which, when addressed collectively, can be translated into concrete measures and current fronts of resistance for traditional peoples and communities across their territories from an emancipatory political project against violence.

