

**EXPANSION STRATEGIES AND CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT
ON THE FRONTIER OF PARÁ: an analysis of the 1966 “Operation
Amazon”**

**ESTRATÉGIAS DE EXPANSÃO E DESENVOLVIMENTO CAPITALISTA NA
FRONTEIRA DO PARÁ: uma análise da “Operação Amazônia” de 1966**

**EXPANSIÓN Y ESTRATEGIAS DE DESARROLLO CAPITALISTA EN LA
FRONTERA DE PARÁ: un análisis de la “Operación Amazonia” de 1966**

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Recebido para avaliação em 15/06/2020; Aceito para publicação em 21/09/2020.

ABSTRACT

Between 1966 and 1979, in an atmosphere of conflict, the frontier in the state of Pará was opened, through major agricultural and developmental projects that were benefited by the institutionalization of “Operation Amazon”. The central objective of the article is to investigate the dynamics of the penetration, occupation and advance of capital in and around the territory of the frontiers in Pará, the basis of which, as from the 1960s, was “Operation Amazon”. This choice of theme was made possible in that there was an apparent need to demonstrate the dynamics of expanding the frontier on capitalist bases. From a methodological viewpoint, the research was developed using a deductive approach, since it seeks to understand the historical foundations of the dynamics that established and expanded the frontier in Pará on capitalist bases; and, also, the inductive method, because it was considered essential to understand the particular, yet predominant, role of “Operation Amazon” within the context of capital development. In addition, the present work will make use of exploratory analysis and seek as much information as possible using the qualitative research technique. “Operation Amazon” demonstrated that the frontier is also a social relation of production, precisely because the structure of this society under construction - in a social, cultural and, particularly, economic perspective - across the territory in which it is expanding, despite suffering some resistance, is dominated by the logic of capital accumulation, as seen in the contemporary Brazilian Amazon.

Keywords: Frontier; The State of Pará; “Operation Amazon”; Capital.

RESUMO

No Estado do Pará, a abertura da fronteira ocorreu de forma conflituosa, entre as décadas de 1966-1979, através dos grandes projetos agropecuários e desenvolvimentistas beneficiados pela institucionalização da “Operação Amazônia”. O objetivo fundamental do artigo é investigar a dinâmica de penetração, ocupação e avanço do capital no território de fronteira do Pará, tendo como base para isso a “Operação Amazônia” a partir da década de 60. A escolha do tema tornou-se possível na medida em que ficou explícita a necessidade de demonstrar a dinâmica de expansão da

fronteira em bases capitalistas. Do ponto de vista metodológico, o método utilizado para o desenvolvimento desta pesquisa envolve o método dedutivo, pois procura compreender os fundamentos históricos da dinâmica de consolidação e expansão da fronteira em bases capitalistas no Pará; e, também, o método indutivo porque considera imprescindível entender o papel particular, porém preponderante da “Operação Amazônia” no contexto de desenvolvimento do capital. Ademais, o presente trabalho fará uso de análise do tipo exploratória e buscará o maior número possível de informações utilizando a técnica de pesquisa do tipo qualitativa. A “Operação Amazônia” demonstrou que a fronteira é também uma relação social de produção, justamente porque a estrutura desta sociedade em construção – no âmbito social, cultural e, principalmente, econômico – no território em que a mesma está se expandido, mesmo sofrendo alguma resistência, é dominada pela lógica de acumulação do capital, como se vê contemporaneidade da Amazônia brasileira.

Palavras-chave: Fronteira; Estado do Pará; “Operação Amazônia”; Capital.

RESUMEN

En el estado de Pará, la apertura de la frontera se produjo de manera conflictiva, entre las décadas de 1966-1979, a través de los grandes proyectos agrícolas y de desarrollo beneficiados por la institucionalización de la “Operación Amazonia”. El objetivo fundamental del artículo es investigar la dinámica de penetración, ocupación y avance del capital en el territorio fronterizo de Pará, teniendo como base para esto la “Operación Amazonia” de la década de 1960. La elección del tema se hizo posible en el en la medida en que se hizo explícita la necesidad de demostrar la dinámica de expandir la frontera en las bases capitalistas. Desde el punto de vista metodológico, el método utilizado para el desarrollo de esta investigación implica el método deductivo, ya que busca comprender los fundamentos históricos de la dinámica de consolidación y expansión de la frontera en las bases capitalistas en Pará; y, también, el método inductivo porque considera esencial comprender el papel particular, pero predominante, de la “Operación Amazonia” en el contexto del desarrollo del capital. Además, el presente trabajo utilizará análisis exploratorios y buscará la mayor cantidad de información posible utilizando la técnica de investigación cualitativa. La “Operación Amazonas” demostró que la frontera es también una relación social de producción, precisamente porque la estructura de esta sociedad en construcción – en el ámbito social, cultural y, principalmente, económico – en el territorio en el que se expande, incluso sufre algunos resistencia, está dominada por la lógica de la acumulación de capital, como se ve en la Amazonia brasileña contemporánea.

Palabras clave: Frontera; Estado de Pará; “Operación Amazonia”; Capital.

INTRODUCTION

At the outset, through a perspective of historiographical understanding, the understanding of “frontier”, or “frontiers”, in Brazil, is commonly extensive, diversified and, above all, complex, since in its essence, it presents innumerable significances, definitions, categories, senses and even new historical and theoretical interpretations or resignifications.

Within the imagery of some, the frontier should be understood as the furthest extent of a country or region on the side that confines it from another, in physical or geographic terms. On the other hand, the word frontier may represent the end points of a geometric figure; or, even, a limit line that divides a certain structure from its exterior; or

also a set of extreme points that operate as contours within representative scaled maps of the territory of a country and its administrative (sub-)units.

In regional terms, as Carvalho et al. (2012) recalled, the socio-spatial formation of the state of Pará began with the fluvial territory occupation in the seventeenth century, in the model traditionally known as “river-floodplain-forest”.¹ The foundation of the Forte do Presépio - which gave rise to the city of Belém in 1616, located at the confluence of the rivers Pará and Guamá tributaries of the Amazon river - served as a sign of possession and, military defense of the Amazon immensity conquered by the expanding frontier, without taking into account the limits defined by the Treaty of Tordesillas.

At this stage of history, to a certain extent, the economic, social and political relations were marked by the movement of demographic and economic expansion over unoccupied or, even, partly occupied lands, i.e., frontier lands. Against this background, in today's world, it may be stated that both the Amazon and Antarctica represent the last two frontier regions of the world, due, above all, to the high economic potential of natural resources to be exploited in the scope of the capitalist production method.

This movement of capital, however, is not something new. For many, the Brazilian Amazon is considered to be an unlimited source of natural resources, which are regularly available to exogenous groups in the region. Within these conditions, since the 1960s, the Amazon has been subjected to intense transformations, which have particularly permeated issues related to infrastructure implanted across the region that, through the integration forged with the rest of Brazil in the context of a civil-military dictatorship, inaugurated a new logic of occupation and exploitation of land, labor and workers.

Such transformations restructured and reordered the dynamics of the advancing frontier(s) in this part of Brazil, although these transformations did not take place by chance. In practice, they were intended to support the performance of so-called major developmentalist projects, promoted notably by big capital in partnership with the federal government under the military regime.

Turner (1961) – a pioneer in studies on the United States frontier – observed that a country's economic frontier must be seen as the outer limit of the territory already occupied by social, economic and political institutions, i.e., an empty geographical space – in terms of demographic density, although in the process of occupation and that, above all, is a meeting point between barbarism and civilization, precisely because it is forming and constructing an identity.

¹ The term “floodplain” is due to the fact that the occupation in the Amazon region literally occurred across areas of floodplains, which regularly become flooded during seasonal periods of heavy rain.

In this respect, Carvalho (2012, 2017) maintained that the vision of the frontier on Brazilian territory is rooted in the manner by which the federal government’s institutional and regulatory actions upon it were interpreted and conducted in the past, and which has marked its geopolitical configuration, and even its administration and public planning until the present day.

During the 1960s, the institutional federalization process in the Brazilian Amazon, with the advent of “Operation Amazon”, definitively opened up the frontier of the state of Pará to big capital². Under these circumstances, the study object of the present article is the state of Pará, which has an area of 1,247,954.666 Km², i.e., equivalent to 24.5% of the territory of the Legal Amazon, with, according to IBGE (2019), an estimated population of 8,602.865.

The method used to develop this article involved the deductive approach, since, according to Mezzaroba and Monteiro (2006), it begins with a general argument and then moves on towards another specific argument. In other words, it involves a discussion on the historical foundations in order to understand the dynamics of establishing and expanding the frontier on capitalist bases in Pará. The inductive method is also involved since it considers the specific, whereby “the objective of inductive arguments is to lead to conclusions, the content of which is much broader than that of the premises on which they were based”, as maintained by Lakatos and Markoni (2007, p. 86).³

Thus, it is crucial to understand the predominant role of “Operation Amazon” in the context of capital development in the state of Pará. Since the fundamental aim of this research is to investigate the dynamics of the penetration, occupation and advance of capital in the frontier territory of Pará, based on “Operation Amazon”, from the 1960s onwards, this analysis may be defined as exploratory. For Gil (1991 apud SILVA et al., 2005, p. 83):

(A) Exploratory Research aims to provide greater familiarity with the problem in order to make it explicit or to build hypotheses. It involves bibliographic survey; (...) and an analysis of examples that encourage its understanding. In general terms, it takes the forms of bibliographic research and case studies.

In addition, this research project will seek as much information as possible on the topic using the qualitative research technique which, according to Silva et al. (2005, p. 20):

² It should be noted that the legislative apparatus contained at the time of the institutionalization of the so-called “Operation Amazon”, gave rise to the Legal Amazon.

³ This and all other non-English citations hereafter have been translated by the author.

(...) considers that there is a dynamic relationship between the real world and the subject, i.e., an inseparable link between the objective world and the subjectivity of the subject that cannot be translated into numbers. The interpretation of the phenomena and the attribution of meanings are basic in the qualitative research process. (...) The process and its meaning are the main focus of approach.

Therefore, it is imperative to draw an analysis not only of the expansion of the capitalist frontier in the region, which often uses the past methods of primitive capital accumulation, but also of the institutions and organizations that provided the adequate mechanisms for the disorderly capitalist expansion across the region.

That being said, the present article has been structured into five sections, in addition to this introduction and the fifth with the final considerations. Section two discusses the strategies of expansion and capitalist development on the frontier of Pará, starting from “Operation Amazon”, from 1960-1970. The third section deals with the occupation models used on the frontier by the Brazilian State during the institutionalization of “Operation Amazon”, together with property rights on the frontier. The fourth section examines the historical trajectories of development in the Amazon.

EXPANSION AND CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES ON THE PARÁ FRONTIER AFTER “OPERATION AMAZON”: an analysis of the decade from 1960 to 1970

There exists a vast historiographic collection regarding the occupation process of the Brazilian Amazon, especially in relation to the forms of human occupation and its corresponding extractive economic base. However, there is still a relative lack of research that is able to formulate the problems and the hypotheses they have proffered, and to explain the reasons for not having constituted, within the Amazon, the necessary capitalist conditions, such as, for example, the creation of an extensive and sufficient labor market, through developing the productive forces allocated there, so as to trigger a true regional industrialization process, as in the case of the city of São Paulo.

Strictly speaking, conducting a prospective study on a given economic formation is not recommended, without first placing it in the retrospective context of its history. In the case of the Amazon, Carvalho maintained that (2006, p. 485):

In addition to its secular historical heritage, the internal (national) and external (international) factors that have shaped and continue to shape the history of this regional economic formation can only be apprehended in the context of the international and national capitalist system.

Within this context, as from the 1960s, a significant avidity was awakened by the Brazilian Amazon, especially due to the interests of international and national capitalism, which were to have an important ally in the military dictatorship. From then on, the Amazon pioneer front began, although with distinct characteristics from any other pioneer front in Brazil, and in which the political aspect was extremely significant.

It was not a front that had been triggered by the people, by organized civil society that, as a basic premise, sought to move towards other lands in order to settle and produce, but, rather, it was directed by the State, which had the function of materializing one of the occupation strategies supported by the ideology of national security (one of the main ideologies disseminated by the military regime) as well as that of national sovereignty.

In other words, it was necessary to ensure the presence of Brazil (of the government, of the Brazilian State in general) across all regions, especially those along the frontiers, in order to prevent these areas from being conquered by other countries that were (and are) strongly interested in it.

In Pará, the frontier was opened amidst conflict, between 1966 and 1979, through the large agricultural and developmental projects benefited by the fiscal and financial incentives of the Superintendency for the Development of the Amazon (SUDAM); financial capital through the recently created Banco da Amazônia S/A (BASA); and, also, for the agricultural colonization projects conducted, later, by the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA). This is to say, the advance of the capitalist frontier in the region had been demanded by institutionalizing “Operation Amazon” within the context of a civil-military dictatorship.

In reality, the ideology of national security was fundamental to boost the economy of the Brazilian Amazon, including Pará, particularly for this economic model that had been conceived. It was also marked by incentives from big capital, as well as several other incentives, to settle in the region and achieve its objectives, since it was necessary to transfer the population through the many processes of official colonization. As an example, the goals of the National Development Plans I and II (PNDs I and II), respectively, were to create the means for expanding the economic frontier, thereby encouraging large migratory flows, serving as an escape valve for many land conflicts.

The INCRA report (1972), represented by Map 1, presents the main migratory flows to the Legal Amazon, which occurred from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, and were listed as follows: 1- São Paulo-Cuiabá and Cuiabá-Porto Velho; 2- Northeast of Brazil to Campo Grande; 3- Belém-Brasília; 4- Maranhão Highway (Trans-Amazonian); 5- Sea routes.

Map 1 – Migratory flows to Legal Amazon



Source: INCRA (1972 apud FIALHO, 2019).

This history of growth in the Brazilian Amazon went *pari passu* with population growth in the North, which may be observed in Table 1. Cardoso and Müller (2008, p. 32) observed that “The relative urban/rural growth presented strong differentials, demonstrating the continuation of flows from the countryside to the city”.

Table 1 – Percentual growth of the northern region: total population, rural and urban: 1950-1960-1970

Northern Region	1950-1960	1960-1970
Total Population	41%	39%
Rural e Semi-Rural Population	28%	22%
Urban Population	77%	74%

Source: 1950, 1960 and 1970 Census apud Cardoso and Müller (2008).

Wood and Wilson (1984) estimated the total volume of net migration to the states of the Amazon, during the period from 1970 to 1980, at approximately 17.5%, as demonstrated in Table 2. This was justified by the need to intensify (cheap) labor for cutting down the forest, with a view to forming pastures for the projects since, according to Carvalho (2012, 2017), the projects (were) encouraged by SUDAM, BASA and the Banco do Brasil.

Table 2 – Net Migration to the Amazon: 1970-1980

States	Immigrants (persons)	% of Variation
Acre, Amapá, Roraima e Rondônia	355,890	203,5
Amazonas	32,351	34
Pará	378,194	17,5
Amazon	766,435	21,3

Source: Wood and Wilson (1984).

It was therefore within this context that, through PND I, two plans of paramount importance for the Amazon were created. The first was the National Integration Plan (PIN), which opened many new highways across the region, including the Trans-Amazonian highway, and guaranteed the effective implementation of the Cuiabá-Santarém Highway, plans for the North perimeter (Calha Norte), and the Manaus-Boa Vista and Manaus-Porto Velho highways, i.e., a set of logistics was created to ensure that the occupation could be effectively accomplished.

From 1975 to 1979, the PND II began, which consolidated this type of occupation model in the Brazilian Amazon, i.e., the subgrade firm road occupation model. The great objective of the military state was to attract large companies and large investments to the region, initiating the productive occupation of the Amazon under the aegis of capital.

At this moment, a process of internationalization of the Amazon was underway, in which the government also began to attract multinationals, thereby creating a number of projects, such as: ALCAN (Canadian Aluminum project, which decided to settle in the Amazon); the mining company Mineração Rio do Norte S.A. (MRN) and, of course, the Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (CVRD), which sought to implement a series of mining-metallurgical projects.

For some, the Amazon in the phase of major projects, represented a region that was undergoing industrialization, and that had wide access to a range of goods and services, since it was increasingly interconnected with the world. However, in parallel and exerting much greater pressure, they were also creating large projects that caused socioeconomic and environmental impacts on the region, as well as numerous conflicts along the frontier areas of these locations.

These were triggered by the arrival of new actors/social subjects who eventually would confront the social actors that already existed in the region, such as: the indigenous, the Brazil nut collectors, rubber tappers, the quilombolas, in short, the peoples of the forest. This is to say that, during this period, there was a territorial conflict in the Amazon. This demonstrated the extent to which this pioneer front - from the viewpoint of capital - disregarded the economic, social and environmental impacts that this command and control mechanism in financial terms would produce, transforming it into a taint that would be perpetuated, historically, in future times.

Public policy and regional development strategies for the Northern region of Brazil

In order to understand how the Brazilian Amazon, especially the state of Pará, became part of the world economy in the midst of a process that shaped capitalist expansion along the region's frontier, it is necessary to recall the manner in which this process took place within the sphere of economic production. Petit (2018, p. 96), by way of example, (sub-)divides the economic history of Pará, from the middle of the nineteenth century, into four major periods, as follows:

The economic history of the state of Pará from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day may be subdivided into four periods: 1) the rubber cycle, 1850-1912; 2) a phase of economic decline and demographic stagnation, 1913-1940; 3) moderate economic growth, from the 1940s to the end of the 1960s; 4) early 1970s to the present day, expansion of mining, agricultural, livestock activities, timber extraction, construction of hydroelectric plants and destruction of the native forest. All of these phases were greatly influenced by a greater or lesser international demand for raw materials from the region, either from the wealth of the forest or from the subsoil in the mineral deposits discovered and exploited in Pará. The last phase also presents the growing integration of the regional economy with the national market.

The first policies directed towards regional development date back to the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, particularly during a period of intense migratory flow of North-easterners - who migrated to São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro on the back of trucks known as “parrot perches” as the main means of transport - and Northerners - who migrated to São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro on ships known as “*itas*⁴ of the North” - to the Southeast region in search of jobs.

From an economic viewpoint, the so-called industrialization and urbanization processes acted as factors to attract migrants to the propagandized “Wonderful South”. However, at the other end of the country, the severe droughts in the northeast and the economic stagnation in the north, which followed the natural rubber economy crisis in the Amazon, served as factors to eject workers from these regions towards the south-east.

Under these circumstances, according to Cano (1983, 1997), Oliveira (1993) and Goularti Filho (2006), the economic and social problems of these two peripheral regions of Brazil entered the federal government’s agenda under the title of “regional issues”. Thereafter, a set of measures of an institutional nature – such as the creation of the Superintendency for the Development of the Northeast (SUDENE) and the Superintendency for the Economic Valorization Plan of the Amazon (SPVEA) –, and of regional development policies for these two regions, became part of the federal public budget.

⁴ The names of all the ships that transported cargo and immigrants between North and South Brazil were given Tupi-Guarani indigenous names, all of which began with *Ita*.

In the Amazon, the construction of Brasília as the new capital of Brazil (replacing Rio de Janeiro) and the Belém-Brasília highway (BR-316) - which established a connection between the Midwest (and, by extension, the Southeast) and the North of Brazil through Belém - were two important milestones for the physical and economic integration of Pará with the rest of the country.

In the Northern region, the main regional development policy of the SPVEA was to provide public investments for economic infrastructure (energy, roads and basic sanitation) and for social infrastructure (health and education) with the aim of promoting the valorization of the Amazon by attracting productive investments from the private sector.

With the failure of the SPVEA, partly as a consequence of withdrawing the 3% funding from the State budget and from those of the Northern States, the cycle of public investment ended, which had been aimed at putting an end to the cycle of economic stagnation and the absence of the government in the problems of the Amazon states.

With the end of the prosperity cycle between 1956 and 1960, corresponding to the “Plan of Goals” by the Juscelino Kubitschek government, the Brazilian economy entered a cycle, which was both recessive and extremely problematic, in political terms – beginning with the Jânio da Silva Quadros government and ending with the João Belchior Marques Goulart government – the outcome of which was the civil-military coup in 1964.

From this point, a new approach was adopted to address regional problems and regional development policies for the Northeast and the Amazon. In the case of the latter, the focus of the approach began by taking into account these two regions as part of a national development project, which aimed to transform Brazil into a world economic power during the civil-military dictatorship.

For this, the guidelines for development policies in the Amazon were included in the National Development Plans – known in Brazil as PNDs⁵. Of these, the most important was, without doubt, PND II, since one of the incorporated goals was a national policy of occupation and (economic) development of the Brazilian Amazon: “Operation Amazon”.

On an institutional-organizational level it provided for the creation of federal agencies that would primarily be responsible for coordinating and planning, and funding and supporting the actions of the Brazilian military state - SUDAM, BASA and, later, INCRA, respectively.

⁵ It is not the aim of this article to include an extensive analysis of the PNDs during this period.

The occupation and development strategies of the Legal Amazon were constantly adapted to changes in the economic situation and to preserving the military power, representative of a determined alliance between a central industrial and financial bourgeoisie and an oligarchy from the regional periphery representing local market capitals.

In reality, with the materialization of the newly created institutional structure, SUDAM's first planning and coordination task, through its technical team and local collaborators, was to create the First Five-Year Amazon Development Plan, for the period 1967- 1971. This plan, approved by Decree-Law No. 60,296 on March 3, 1967, sought to reconcile its objectives with those signed by the basic law of “Operation Amazon”.

In general, the economic strategy conceived by the Plan was a replica of the import substitution model from the national plans and its main purpose was to promote the industry of non-durable consumer goods as an economic policy capable of definitively freeing the Amazon from its century-old extractivism. For Lira (2005, p. 96):

This plan basically focused on implementing the economic model of import substitution from the Amazon region *pari passu* to the geopolitical imperatives of human occupation. In order to achieve these objectives, public and private investments needed be allocated to specific economic sectors, which would allow the regional economy to free itself from extractive agriculture and trade.

Table 3 demonstrates that the total resources of the budget program of SUDAM's First Five-Year Plan was 3.819 billion Cruzeiros, which at today's prices, would correspond to 24.805 billion, equivalent to 14.091 billion US dollars. Of this total, the budget for the plan allocated 59.34% of total resources for investments in economic infrastructure (of which 46.93% was destined to the construction of new highways) and 27.36% for investments in social infrastructure, of which 27.36% was for colonization and security.

Furthermore, the resources set aside for productive and support activities represented only 13.30% of the total budgeted resources. Although the First Five-Year Plan for the Legal Amazon was technically well drawn up by the SUDAM team, its financial weakness was marked by the extent to which a significant portion of the resources depended on the financial cooperation of other federal agencies that were outside its administrative control.

Table 3 – Allocation of Resources for the First Five-Year Plan: 1976-1971

Areas	In CR\$ 1000.00	In R\$ 1000.00	In US\$ 1000.00	In %
Productive and support activities	508,164	3,300,067	1,874,718	13.30
Extractivism	1,500	9,741	5,534	0.04
Livestock farming	65,720	426,792	242,454	1.72
Industry	308,334	2,002,351	1,137,506	8.07
Supplies	20,000	129,882	73,784	0.52
Trade and services	16,340	106,114	60,282	0.43
Government and administration	96,270	625,187	355,159	2.52
Economic infrastructure	2,266,431	14,718,425	8,361,317	59.34
Transport	1,792,431	11,640,223	6,612,636	46.93
Energy	415,000	2,695,051	1,531,018	10.86
Communications	59,000	383,152	217,663	1.54
Social infrastructure	1,045,077	6,786,833	3,855,498	27.36
Housing	3,000	19,482	11,068	0.08
Health and sanitation	97,120	630,707	358,295	2.54
Education	80,072	519,995	295,402	2.10
Colonization and security	619,500	4,023,094	2,285,459	16.22
Social research	97,283	631,765	358,896	2.55
Research into natural resources	148,102	961,789	546,378	3.88
Total	3,819,672	24,805,325	14,091,533	100.00

Source: * Produced by the author using the First Five-Year Plan: 1967-1971, SUDAM (1967).

This is interpreted by Carvalho (1987, p. 79-80) thus:

The fact is that SUDAM, having only 12% of the total funding sources of the resources foreseen in the budget program for the First Five-Year Plan, ultimately failed in its first and only attempt to plan and coordinate the economic development of the Amazon.

He (1987, p. 81-82) continued:

Despite the problems faced by SUDAM, in executing the programs and projects of the First Five-Year Plan, the plan was a milestone in the planning of the Amazon, not only due to the technical effort of its planning team, but also because there was an awareness for the need and importance of regional planning as a technical-political instrument for developing the Amazonian economy.

It should be remembered that the “innovative” proposal of the plan for national integration was not limited to mere sectoral integration, but also to explicitly incorporating the spatial dimension of economic development on a macro-regional scale through the “development poles and corridors”. This was to enable the occupation and development of the Amazon on other bases, and without destroying its natural resources, since priority was given to developing urban industry and to food agriculture. For Pandolfo (1994, p. 55):

(...) Sudam, in the new institutional framework, created from Operation Amazon, although benefiting from certain advantages, also, at the same time, lost administrative hierarchy within the federal government system, officially joining a third level.

The political-ideological model of the government of Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco, who was one of the main instigators of the civil-military coup, despite being based on the doctrine of “Security and Development”, originating from the War College (ESG), was configured in a major national development project. The objective of this implied immediate economic and social reforms and modernizing policies.

In reality, the political conduct of those in the immediate group surrounding Marshal Castelo Branco ultimately generated discontent amongst other groups in the armed forces. The exclusive positioning of the Castelo Branco group regarding decision-making was complemented by refusing a “consensual” legitimation that could have been attempted by using powerful propagandist symbols in order to form public opinion.

Despite this, even though the economy had already shown some signs of relative improvement through the reduction of inflation rates and, above all, the institutional reforms carried out during the Castelo Branco government, economic growth did not register a good performance. Perhaps, for this reason, mass propaganda was contained during that period.

The sudden death of President Castelo Branco changed the country's political course. With the indirect election of President Arthur Costa e Silva in 1967, the members of the group in power during the Castelo Branco era were practically excluded from the main presidential decisions, as seen in Klein (1968) and Magalhães (1971). However, due to illness, General Costa e Silva's presidential mandate was short-lived.

In 1969, with the election of General Emílio Garrastazu Médici, the political model of authoritarian characteristics, under strong technocratic control, was finally established. The model was based on the dynamics of capital accumulation and economic growth that privileged the associated interests of the bourgeoisie, nationally and internationally, of the mature and emerging middle classes and, particularly, the military and civilian segments of the state bureaucracy. Once General Médici took office, all staff linked to General Albuquerque Lima, Minister of the Interior, and to Colonel João Walter de Andrade, the then Superintendent of SUDAM, were dismissed and General Bandeira Coelho took office at SUDAM. It was under the management of General Bandeira Coelho that Regional Development Plan I (PDA I) was produced as a by-product of the National Development Plan I (PND I), which outlined new guidelines for the occupation and development process in the Amazon.

Between 1969-1973, the period of the “economic miracle”,⁶ a policy was implemented for the occupation of the Amazon, now transformed into the Legal Amazon since it started to include, in addition to the States and Territories of the Classical Amazon (North region), part of the State of Mato Grosso and Maranhão. This legal invention for the Amazon allowed the federal government to act above the interests of the states in the Amazon.

This demonstrated, therefore, that historically the policy of occupation and development of the Amazon had two basic supports: the colonization policy and the construction of major penetrating roads towards the hinterland. In addition, with the creation of the fiscal incentives policy, the Amazon Investment Fund (FINAM), SUDAM (coordination and planning body) and BASA (its funding agent), began to emphasize the approval of agricultural projects with a view to promoting regional development in the Amazon, supported by financial investments in energy, transport and telecommunications, and tax incentives as the main instrument for attracting private investments.

OCCUPATION MODELS USED ON THE FRONTIER BY THE BRAZILIAN STATE FOR IMPLEMENTING “OPERATION AMAZON”

At this point, it is essential to introduce the discussion on the significance of pioneer fronts and expansion fronts. In the State of Pará, the economic occupation on the frontier reproduced a series of confrontations due to the conflict between two occupation fronts: the expansion front and the pioneer front.

In the work of Martins (1979), it may be observed that the economy of the expansion front represents an economy of surpluses, which is produced by families, who are part of that front, mainly for their own subsistence and, in a second moment, for the exchange of their surplus products depending on their needs that they desire to obtain through trade/market.

In contrast, the pioneer front is characterized by an economic movement, the immediate result of which is the incorporation of new land from the frontier regions into the market economy under the aegis of capital. Thus, the pioneer front is presented as an economic frontier, and is therefore a precursor from the viewpoint of capital, since it is a capitalist front of territorial occupation represented by the big farmers, agricultural companies, large banks, houses of commerce and all the legislative and institutional

⁶ The ideology of the “economic miracle”, created by the military dictatorship, only served to propagate the slogan: “Brazil – A Potential”. But alongside the propaganda of the civil-military dictatorship, thousands of Brazilian citizens were tortured and killed.

apparatus of the State, which is strongly committed to mitigating this hostility. In agreement with Martins (1980, p. 71):

It is on this front that appears, what today in Brazil is undeservedly called, a pioneer front. These are in fact the pioneers of the social and economic forms of exploitation and domination, linked to the ruling classes and the State. This pioneer front is essentially expropriative because it is socially organized based on a fundamental, though not exclusive, relationship, that of buyers and sellers of the workforce.

In the perspective of Martins (1980, p. 61-62 apud CARVALHO, 2012, p. 33): “When the expansion fronts confront the pioneer fronts, this confrontation expresses a struggle for land, a struggle against capitalist ownership of land, more than that, it is a struggle between working land and business land”. With regard to this meeting, Martins (1997, p. 151) is categorical: “The mismatch at the frontier is the mismatch of historical temporalities, as each of these groups is situated differently in the time of history”.

Rabello (2013, p. 225) also states that: “More than cultural differences, the notion of distinct historical temporality indicates a pattern of social and human relations and of man and the environment, also, distinct”. With this, a new dynamic in capitalist terms begins to bubble up on the frontier of the Amazon, as Carvalho emphasized (2012, p. 04):

After the coup d'état, on March 31, 1964, by the military, with the support of the great bourgeoisie, the oligarchy, the church, part of the middle class and American imperialism led by multinationals and the organs of security of the US government, a military dictatorship was installed at the service of monopoly capital. From then on, both the State apparatus, and the entire economic, social, political and cultural life of Brazil were largely directed by government policy towards supporting capital accumulation.

Petit (2018, p. 96) recalls that:

After the coup d'état of 1937, which established the New State, the government, presided over by Getúlio Vargas, encouraged discourse and several projects, especially agricultural and road, aimed at occupying the Brazilian hinterland, especially the Central Plain, through a program called the March to the West.

Vargas (1943, p. 284-285), in fact, strongly believed in the importance of occupying, dynamizing economically, and giving a new meaning to the frontier:

Everyone speaks the same language; everyone has the same historical tradition and everyone should be able to sacrifice themselves in order to defend their territory. Considering it an indivisible unit, no Brazilian would ever admit to the possibility of giving away even a hand's breadth of this land, which is his very flesh and blood. However, if politically, Brazil is a unit, economically, it is not. In this respect it resembles an archipelago formed by several islands,

interspersed, by empty spaces. The islands have already reached a high degree of economic and industrial development and their political frontiers coincide with economic frontiers. However, the vast depopulated spaces remain, which have not achieved the necessary atmosphere of renewal, due to the lack of an entire series of elementary measures, the execution of which is included in the government's program and in the administration's aims, with emphasis on sanitation, education and transportation. When all these elements are available, empty spaces will then become populated. We will have demographic density and industrial development. Thus, the “March to the West” program is the resumption of the campaign by the builders of rationality, the *Bandeirantes*⁷ and the hinterlanders, with the integration of modern cultural processes.

It is clear that Getúlio Vargas believed in the role of the economic frontier as an instrument of paramount importance to carry forward the formation of a true market for the country. For this reason, Vargas (1943, p. 285-286) insisted on his developmental discourse, with the State as the main actor in terms of economic policies:

We need to promote this impulse, in all aspects and with all methods, in order to suppress the demographic vacuums in our territory and make the economic frontiers coincide with the political frontiers. This is our imperialism. We do not aspire to span territory that is not ours, but we do have expansionism, which is to grow within our own borders.

Turner (1920, 1961) justified that the frontier should not be understood as a hermetic space, as it presents a dynamic characterized by what he called the frontier advance. Turner saw the frontier as a kind of society in the process of being formed, much more than an area with territorial limits.

In Brazil, unlike the United States and the frontiers of other countries, the process of institutional federalization of the Brazilian Amazon, beginning in the 1960s, opened the region's frontiers to large foreign capital. It is in this context that Carvalho (2017, p. 144) considered that the frontier of Pará should also be viewed as an institutional product from the creation of the State:

In the specific case of the economic frontier of the Brazilian Amazon, the expansion of agricultural activity was supported by regional institutions and organizations created by the military government, with emphasis on the legislative apparatus contained in the so-called “Operation Amazon”, which gave rise to the Legal Amazon, the Superintendency for the Development of the Amazon (SUDAM), Banco da Amazônia SA (BASA) and also, the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA).

Becker (1991, p. 16-17 apud MARGARIT, 2013, p. 12) makes an important contribution by enumerating the main elements contained in the occupation strategy of the

⁷ The *Bandeirantes*, literally “flag-carriers”, were explorers, adventurers, slavers and fortune hunters in early Colonial Brazil.

Amazon between 1966 and 1970, with an emphasis on those that began during the period of analysis in this research. See Table 4:

Table 4 – A synthesis of the main elements in the occupation strategy in the Amazon: 1966-1970

Year	Programs, projects and executing bodies	Objectives
1966	Sudam – Superintendency for the Development of the Amazon/Ministry of the Interior	Coordinate and supervise regional programs and plans; take decisions on the redistribution of tax incentives
1967	Suframa – Superintendency for the Tax Free Zone of Manaus/Ministry of the Interior	Integrate and supervise regional programs and plans; take decisions on the redistribution of tax incentives
1968	Organizing Committee for Energy Studies in the Amazon/Ministry of Mining and Energy	Integrate the western portion of the Amazon, through the creation of an industrial and livestock/agricultural center and tax exemption
1968	Fiscal Incentives/Sudam	Supervise studies with a view to taking advantage of energy potentials
1970	Incra – National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform/Ministry of the Interior	Execute the strategy for the controlled distribution of land

Source: Becker (1991, p. 16-17 apud MARGARIT, 2013, p. 12).

It should be noted that obtaining land on the Brazilian frontier has always been bureaucratically difficult for Brazilians from the lower social classes, particularly those involved in the social movements of the expansion front. Perhaps, the starting point for this is found in the history of the legal system and the establishment of the “rules of the game” on this subject. Martins (1979, p. 59 apud CARVALHO, 2017, p. 131) testifies that:

In 1850, the Land Law instituted a new property regime in Brazil, and which is still in effect today, although social and historical conditions have changed a lot since then. Contrary to what took place in American pioneer zones, the Land Law in Brazil instituted captivity of the Land - here the lands were not and are not free, but captive in the sense of Law 601 which established in absolute terms that the land would not be obtained by any means other than purchase. The man who wanted to become a proprietor would have to buy the land from the owner - the big landowner. As a poor immigrant, as is the case of most of the “residents” on large farms, he would have to work in advance to pay the large farmer.

This sense of legal “insecurity” in relation to the Land Law, even with the advent of “Operation Amazon”, remained unchanged. Velho (1972, p. 135) stated that:

On January 5, 1966, Law No. 3,641 came into force, which was constituted in the Land Law of the State of Pará. This Law was regulated by Decree No. 5,780, of November 27, 1967. Later, during the recess of the State Legislative Assembly, as a result of Institutional Act N° 5, Decree-Law n° 57, of August 22, 1969 was brought in, which provided for the public lands of the state and gives other measures, which, once regulated, replaced that provided for in Law No. 3,641. (...) Provisional deeds were no longer distributed, and the definitive deed required notary public certificates, demarcations, surveys, plans, proof of identity and military service, requirements, etc. In addition, everything would

now depend on Belém. The concrete consequence of this was that none of the farmers got their deeds.

What existed, in fact, was a fine line between what appeared in the legal-institutional system, often proposed by technocrats who are unaware of reality, and what occurred when the law was put into practice, in loco on the frontier. The result of this combination was that it became a dead letter in the face of the socioeconomic reality of the time, which in fact, persists even until today, with rare exceptions.

It was plainly the consolidation of a new dynamic of a capitalist nature in the region. Authors like Hébette and Acevedo (1979, p. 152) recalled that:

The specifically economic approach does not exhaust the topic; colonization has links with the superstructure, on a political and ideological level, and this knowledge is essential in order to understand it. Colonization, therefore, has constituted, in independent Brazil, particularly since 1850, a recurrent theme of political discourse, of journalistic polemic, of parliamentary debates, revealing the game of interest of the social groups involved in it and the attempts to circumvent the conflicts related to dominion over land. It has been, cyclically, the subject of legislation, in the most diverse forms, from the constitution to the laws, decrees and regulations, including the concept itself, mutating with alliances of interest.

The struggle for land to work on and the penetration of capital in the lands of Amazonian cities, appears, if we appropriate the relational problem between private property and capital, which Harvey (2013) exhibits without the necessary rules for the creation of private property that generates absolute income from the land and the necessary imposition of past times from feudalism to capitalism. For Harvey (2013, p. 360):

The flow of capital on to and through the land as both condition and means of production is modified in important respects by landed property and the appropriation of rent. While much is made of the ‘barrier’ that landed capital poses to capital flow and of the negative impacts of rental appropriations on accumulation, it turns out that landed property also has a role to play in forcing the *proper* allocation of capital to land. (...) In the case of both monopoly and absolute rent, landed property poses barriers that are hard to justify in relation to the basic requirements of capitalism. The appropriation of these forms of rent must therefore be regarded as a totally negative influence over the proper allocation of capital to the land and, hence, to the formation of valid market prices and the sustenance of accumulation.

Capitalist urban production became apparent in major infrastructure works, guided by key urbanization plans, as a vehicle for “draining” the capitalist surplus, such as took place on the frontier regions of the Amazon. These were typical situations that confirmed the character of a society in formation along the frontier, as recalled by Hébette and Acevedo (1979, p. 152): “The frontier is part of a social totality that transcends it; it is the

fringe of an expanding system and, therefore, cannot, under any circumstances, be understood if dissociated from it”.

In a peripheral regional economy, from the viewpoint of capital, fiscal and financial incentives, as well as other forms of credit loans, acted as political-economic instruments that enabled the military state to attract internal and external potential investors to the Amazon. In these terms, “Operation Amazon” served as a “faithful guarantor” of this pro-development policy, duly explained in the discourse of SUDAM (1968, p. 74 apud BATISTA, 2016, p. 104):

The modus operandi of Operation Amazon was explained by General Mário de Barros Cavalcanti, superintendent of SUDAM, in a speech given at the opening session of the 1st Incentive Meeting for the Development of the Amazon, on December 5, 1966, in Manaus: “We have concentrated government action on planning tasks, research into natural resources, implementing economic and social infrastructure, reserving industrial, agricultural, livestock, commercial and basic profitable services for private initiative”.

With regard to the fiscal incentives for “Operation Amazon”, Pandolfo (1994, p. 58) stated that:

The policy of fiscal incentives instituted by Operation Amazon inaugurated a new developmental modality, with the creation of an original system to boost the economy of the region, through the government/private sector binomial. In sharing the obligations to be carried out by this binomial, the government was responsible for massive investments in economic infrastructure, mainly in the areas of transport, communications and energy, with the private sector being responsible for implementing profitable sectorial enterprises, which were of interest to regional development.

She (1994, p. 56) continued:

Thus, private initiative began to participate directly in the process, and for this, relied on a broad mechanism of fiscal and financial resources, originating from income tax, which would serve as a catalyst for extra regional savings in projects in the Amazon, inducing the arrival of resources from all over the country, to supply the region's chronic lack of capital, technology and business management.

What was observed, however, was the somewhat subservient role of many - businessmen, bureaucrats, politicians and the State itself – in the face of pampering private initiative, i.e., big capital. It is evident that the movements of capitalist accumulation shaped the forms and certain specificities of the social infrastructure, revealing with it the historical character of a region, as defended by Harvey (2005).

It is impossible to refute the weight, both then and even now, of the fiscal and financial incentives policy for the economy of the Northern region. But, to what extent has this been harmful to the frontier? Pandolfo (1994, p. 61) explained that:

“(…), along with well-intentioned businessmen, others came along instilled only with the drive of land speculation and economic opportunism, which, acquiring vast plots of unused land, simulated investments, but, in fact, diverted them to other purposes, (...).

In the next section, we discuss property rights in a frontier environment in Pará.

Property rights on the frontier of Pará: a necessary reflection

One common element observed in the historiography of the frontier is the presence of those dispossessed of the means of production, in search of opportunities of land, labor and property. For Grossi (2006, p. 38): “(...) the history of belonging and of the legal relationships of things is necessarily marked by a profound discontinuity; necessarily, since property is above all mentality”. He (2005, p. 06) continued:

(...) “property” should only be a verbal artifice in order to indicate the historical solution that a norm gives to the problem of the most intense legal relationship between the subject and a good, or, in other words, the answer to the central question on the minimum consistency of the legal “mine”; solutions and responses that are doubly multiple, according to the various historical climates and according to the various contents that the same historical climate gives to that open, obtainable envelopment that we conventionally identify as property.

From the perspective of authors such as Santos (2012, p. 282 apud NUNES, 2017, p. 132), property rights represent: “(...) the socially recognized rights of a person to carry out actions with a resource, to extract income from it and to authorize or prohibit its use to third parties (...)”. However, Congost (2007, p. 15 apud NUNES, 2017, p. 132) understands them as relationships that result in one: “(...) a set of elements related to the daily ways of accessing resources, with the daily practices of social distribution of income (...)”. According to Nunes (2017, p. 132-133):

This implies understanding property not only as a result of consensus, culture and institutional constraints, but also of power relations and disputes over the legitimacy of appropriations, including the possibilities of reconfiguring the property relations established in practices by the State. On the other hand, the distribution of property rights is a fundamental parameter for the social stratification of people and groups and for defining social identities. Particularly, in rural societies, property rights that affect the land.

In the Brazilian Amazon, particularly in Pará, there are several forms of land appropriation, such as private family property belonging to small farmers; capitalist private property; communal indigenous property; and possession by squatters. Despite this apparent diversity of property regimes, capitalist private property is the dominant form of the capitalist mode of production.

Carvalho (2017, p. 132) stated that: “When capital appropriates land as a means of production, it becomes business land, i.e., land destined for the exploitation of other people's work. At the moment when a capitalist appropriates the land, he does so with the aim of obtaining profit or income from it. With Guerra (2013 apud CASTRO et al., 2017, p. 89) it may be seen that: “Land ownership in Brazil is an historically constituted right, despite the common sense discourse attributing it to legal precariousness because it is not necessarily registered in a notary public or guaranteed by formalized devices”.

In Pará, private capitalist property is typical of the pioneer fronts. It so happens that, by presupposition, the frontier is the place of non-compliance with the laws within the context of a society under construction, i.e., it is the place where the normative and coercive apparatus of the State is absent, or when it exists it is subservient to capital. Grossi (2006, p. 07-08) draws attention to one aspect that best represents property on the frontier:

Amongst a thousand and one different forms of collective property, there is a constant: the fact that property is a guarantee of survival for members of the multi-family community, of having an essentially nutritional value and function.

In Brazil, the movement for territorial occupation of the Brazilian frontier did not occur (and does not occur) exclusively through groups of families of small farmers - as units of family production. Instead, it occurred through a mixture that involves several social segments: small producers of family base, entrepreneurs, farmers and “landless” men, all searching for land/properties to occupy, produce or speculate. In the words of Velho (2009, p. 182):

Except as a myth and in the short period of the rubber boom, Brazil and the world lived almost as if the Amazon did not exist. Thus, the historical movement of national integration of the continental Brazilian nation occurred, and still occurs, through the advance of the frontier.

From this, as previously presented, it may be observed that the frontier also became an institutional product created by the State, from the moment that the military regime launched “Operation Amazon” - by creating the Legal Amazon and all the legal-

institutional apparatus - which contributed to transforming the region into a true frontier.

Rocha and Gonçalves (2017, p. 07) noted that:

“(…), some institutional and administrative measures of national and regional scope were adopted [during this period], with repercussions on the control of territory and natural resources, amongst which is DEL N° 1,164/1971. Through this decree, lands belonging to the states of the Legal Amazon were federalized”.

For the authors (2017, p. 02), federalizing the territory of the Brazilian Amazon:

(…) became a strategy and a vital instrument to facilitate territorial planning and regional development, in view of the need to stimulate the productive occupation of land, the intensive use of natural resources and the expansion of regional settlement, in addition to adopting policy measures aimed at national integration in its various aspects and moments. (…).

This took place because most of the social segments that migrated to the frontier of Pará, including those encouraged by the State, did so in search of land, work and property to call their own. Nevertheless, other social segments made up of entrepreneurs, farmers, banks and speculators had land as an invaluable asset, also because it is not a reproducible commodity for man. In the perception of Herrera et al. (2016, p. 217):

The transformation of land based on relations within and through capital is, without doubt, one of the most perverse ills of capitalism, because at the moment that land ceases to have its social value and begins to have a commodity value, a marked social destructuring occurs, resulting in the expropriation of countless families. Land that was once a social good becomes the main means for capital to "flay" the worker, due to the workforce surplus, ensuring a low cost for the desired added value.

Delgado (1985) and Reydon (1992) sought to discuss the importance of rural land, as an alternative asset, by applying the valorization of big capital, since it enables foundation and speculative gains, particularly in agricultural frontier areas where the occupation process of these territories takes place through methods of bourgeois appropriation of land ownership. The authors refer to this process as the “territorialization of capital”.

Thus, as Alvarenga assessed (2019, p. 23), perceiving “proprietary pluralization” is synonymous, as seen in Grossi (2006, p. 05-06), with historicization: when we recover the becoming of things, in a kind of “libertarian relativizing instance”, we manage to extract other property rights, since a refined ideology projected the singular - the “property” – on to the “highest pinnacle of a sacred temple”. Therefore, it was extremely important to

recover the historicity of the frontier to realize that it indeed expresses a social relationship of production, not least because this structure was molded under the aegis of capital.

HISTORICAL TRAJECTORIES OF DEVELOPMENT FOR THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON

During the long five-hundred-year historical trajectory of inserting Brazil into world capitalism, since its discovery until the present time, the Brazilian Amazon, as part of the national territory, has presented a certain historical peculiarity. As Carvalho (2006, p. 486) has indicated: “It still maintains its own structure as an extractivist economy, which supplies raw materials with low added value to the industrial-based productive economies inside and outside the country”.

Thus, it is appropriate to state that the occupation and development of the Amazon of today, should be explained as resulting from the world expansion of the dominant social mode of capitalist production. In fact, the commercial dynamics of the famous extractive cycles in the Amazon have always been intrinsically linked to the discovery of certain regional extractive products, such as: livestock, forest, mineral products, as well as rubber, the local use value of which immediately assumes the social form of exchange value for national and international markets.

In the case of the rubber extractive economy, it appeared and expanded within an international economy dominated by industrial capital, given the fragile commercial link with the rest of the national economy. With the end of the economic cycle of rubber exploitation, however, there was a considerable reduction in the regional population due to the migration of northeastern families back to their states of origin.

In the 1960s, with the institutionalization of “Operation Amazon”, which created SUDAM, BASA, and then INCRA, a form of government action was initiated for the occupation of the Amazon, seen as an agricultural frontier, this time based on the economy of beef cattle, commonly called occupation by the “claws of the bull”. The livestock projects that were encouraged, as well as being labor-saving, did not promote a verticalization of production that could promote a regional agroindustry capable of adding value throughout the productive chain or of generating employment and income.

When SUDAM was created, it adopted the regional development model, the same as that of the Superintendency for the Development of the Northeast (SUDENE): the import substitution model. However, despite the strategic importance of the Northeast Regional Development Plan (PRDN), a certain strategic idealization may be identified in

the instrumentalization perspective of this in Celso Furtado, when he proposed a regional industrialization policy, inspired by the model for the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), aiming to create an autonomous regional industrialization process in the Northeast region. For Petit (2018, p. 99):

It should also be stated that the studies and proposals of CEPAL not only guided the developmental policies of some Latin American countries, but also stimulated discussion on interregional socioeconomic inequalities within some of them, especially Brazil, and on the validity using CEPAL concepts, such as those of the center and the periphery, in order to propose alternatives to change this situation

Cano (2002) initially addressed the meaning of industrialization, characterized by being the result of a process of capital accumulation through which the economy begins to rely on capitalist production bases. When this transpires, it is said that it is this industry that has led the capital accumulation process, and that directing autonomous investment is the determining factor of employment and of income. In reality, at this point, the industrialization of the Brazilian economy, conducted through the Plan of Goals in the 1950s, was already in its most advanced phase, that of heavy industrialization.

Thus, Cano (1985) stated that, despite the regional fiscal incentives, there was no further practical sense in providing “plans” for autonomous industrialization in any region of the country. In effect, at first, the regional occupation and development policy based on extensive beef cattle ranching did not demonstrate the socioeconomic success expected. On the contrary, the indisputable destruction of the Amazon rainforest and the natural resources it protects, in addition to the river pollution by chemical agents (mercury) through the processing of gold, resulted in strong pressure from ecological movements in defense of the Amazon environment, which ultimately favored the revision and extinction of the fiscal and financial incentives policy for livestock.

In the mid-1960s, the crisis in the pattern of industrialization and development became more noticeable, and led to the name of import substitution. This was reflected in facts such as, for example, the modernization of agriculture; marginalization and rising unemployment; the high concentration of income and wealth; the persistent tendency to trade deficit; and the consequent and relevant increase in external debt. There was also an increasingly active presence of foreign capital in industrial production for the local market, which controlled sectors with the most dynamic demand and the most advanced technology. Social and political tensions were also aggravated during this period.

In general, there is little information - in terms of statistical data – regarding the total number of foreign-owned companies with land located in the Amazon for the

purpose of economic exploitation. Garrido Filha (1976), however, indicated some of the companies that were directly benefited by the policy of fiscal and financial incentives at the time, including for the purchase of land.

Although it is very difficult to find a statistical series, with periodicity from the 1960s onwards, which involves all foreign capital companies that “own” land in the Amazon for the purposes of agricultural exploitation, Table 4 demonstrates the designation of some that were directly benefited by the fiscal and financial incentive policies for the acquisition and purchase of land after “Operation Amazon”.

Table 4 – A list of foreign companies and land purchased with the SUDAM fiscal and financial incentives: 1966-1974

Company	Controlling shareholder	Country	Area (ha)	State	Year Approved
Cia. Vale do Rio Cristalino	Volkswagen	Germany	140,000	PA	1969
Agropecuária Água Azul	Davis Family	USA	98,000	PA	1974
Liquifarm Agrop. Suiá-Missu	Liquipharm	Italy	670,000	MT	1976
Amazônia Mad. e Laminados	Georgia Pacific	USA	400,000	PA	1960
Bruynzeel Madeiras S.A.	Bruynzeel	Holland	-	AP	1966
Fazenda Nova Viena	Bethlehem Steel	USA	200,000	PA	1974
BCN Agropastoril	Barclays Bank	UK	250,000	MT	1972
Superfine Madeiras S.A.	Toyo Menka	Japan	300,000	PA	1972
Agrop. Duas Âncoras	Henblein Inc.	USA	200,000	MT	1972
Cia. Agrop. do Pará	King Ranch + Swift-Armour	USA	450,000	PA	1972
Cia. Agrop. do Rio Inajá	Sifco Industries Inc.	Canada	163,000	PA	1976
	Hobin Holie M	USA	30,260	PA	1968
Agrop. Mirassol	P Dow Chemical	USA	300,000	MT	1969
Drury's Fiel S.A. Agrop.	Drury's Distrib/Henblein	USA	220,000	MT	1973
Mitsui Agrop. Ltda	Marubeni Co. & Mitsui Co.	Japan	150,000	PA	1970
Cia. Nova Fronteira	Agrop. Toshio Toyota	Japan	220,000	MT	1973
Cia. Ás de Ouro	Mitsubishi-Yakult of Brazil	Japan	120,000	MT	1973
Agrop. Barra dos Garças	Participation of Singer Manufact. Co. of Brazil	EUA	120,000	MT	1972
Jari Florestal e Agrop.	Daniel Ludwig	EUA	3,500,000	PA/AP	1970

Source: Garrido Filha (1976, p. 05 apud CARVALHO, 2012, p. 124).

For this reason, as advocated by Mazzucchelli (2004, p. 59): “Capital, therefore, is never excessive in relation to social needs. Its excess is only relative to its own valorization, so that it signifies, once and for all, that capital is excessive at a given rate of profit”.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Brazil is a country of continental dimensions, where there is still a relative abundance of arable land in regions far from the large urban and industrial centers concentrated in the southeastern region of the country. Despite the historic concentration of land owned by an agrarian oligarchy in the occupied areas, there is still an immense frontier area to be conquered.

In recent years, the agricultural/livestock sector - comprising the set of economic activities linked to the exploration of the soil to obtain food and raw materials of vegetable and animal origin - has undergone major structural transformations resulting from the conservative modernization process that followed heavy industrialization during the 1960s and 70s.

The progressive incorporation of lands in this region of the national territory, previously inaccessible and sparsely populated, has taken place through a process of private appropriation of land and natural resources existing in the soil, the sub-soil and in the waters of the Amazon basin. It is within this context that the expansion of the agricultural frontier that has occurred over the last five decades is inserted, with the frontier of Pará as the main stage of conflicts.

In general terms, to a large extent, capital accumulation was favored by the expansion of the market on the Pará frontier. The privileges of the proprietary sectors of that period contrast with the precarious living conditions of the dispossessed and dispossessed groups – typical characteristics of a frontier region – thereby demonstrating a tendency for the high concentration of income and unemployment, including the exodus and abandonment of several companies in the region.

The rapid development of capitalism on the economic frontier of Pará has resulted in a process of land monopolization. The vacant lands or those already occupied by squatters and former residents have been the object of greed and expulsion or subordination by squatters and indigenous groups.

Currently, large capitalist landowners use spurious mechanisms to increase the size of their cattle farms. These include: either buying land from squatters; or using violence and coercion to expel rural workers from their occupied lands. They even use fraudulent methods, in collusion with the bureaucracy of federal and state agencies responsible for land regularization and titling in the Amazon to take over vacant or occupied lands.

The expansion of the pioneer agricultural/livestock front in the region, when juxtaposed with the advance of the peasant-based expansion front, ultimately creates a zone of conflicts and social violence that leads to the primitive accumulation of capital.

Therefore, the economic frontier in the State of Pará plays a role important as an “escape valve” for reducing tensions and agrarian conflicts.

However, even on this frontier, there has been a tendency to increase the concentration of land into the hands of large landowners, which makes the development of the economic frontier of Pará extremely complex. For this reason, in the conception of Graziano Da Silva (1981, p. 114): “it is a frontier from the viewpoint of capital”, i.e., as Carvalho (2017, p. 145) stated: “(...) as a capitalist social relation of production”, in other words, “the economic frontier is a social relation of production because the structure of society being constructed on the frontier territory is dominated by capital”.

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Como citar este artigo:

ABNT

CARVALHO, A. C. Expansion strategies and capitalist development on the frontier of Pará: an analysis of the 1966 “Operation Amazon”. **InterEspaço: Revista de Geografia e Interdisciplinaridade**, v. 6, e2020000, 2020. Disponível em: <<http://dx.doi.org/10.18764/2446-6549.e2020000>>. Acesso em: 25 jan. 2020.

APA:

Carvalho, A. C. (2020). Expansion strategies and capitalist development on the frontier of Pará: an analysis of the 1966 “Operation Amazon”. *InterEspaço: Revista de Geografia e Interdisciplinaridade*, v. 6, e2020000. Recuperado em 25 janeiro, 2020, de <http://dx.doi.org/10.18764/2446-6549.e2020000>



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