

## The expansion of agribusiness in the Amazon: spatial anticipation, processes of dispossession in the attempt creation of AMACRO and expansion of the agricultural frontier

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### Abstract

In 2019, EMBRAPA organized the first meeting to define the creation proposal for AMACRO (an acronym for Amazonas, Acre and Rondônia), a regional model for attracting development focused on Brazilian agribusiness production. The article aims to understand how the discourse and the attempt to create AMACRO, in a context legitimized by the then Brazilian government of Jair Bolsonaro, triggered processes of destruction in the Amazon rainforest, unleashing conflicts with local populations, as well as understanding how agribusiness acts strategically in creating regions favorable to its enterprises and its ideologies in agricultural frontier areas. The article is divided into four parts: first, an analysis to understand how the structuring of regions occurs in the process of expanding agricultural frontiers, through the actions of the Brazilian state and the justifications used for the creation of AMACRO; secondly, the process of the agricultural frontier towards the Amazon; third, the current situation of AMACRO, with regard to the growth of conflicts, the advance of deforestation, the intensification of cattle ranching and the arrival of soya; and for the last part, we will reflect on the impacts caused, specially in the environmental sphere, by the expansion of the frontier, which is not only agricultural, but is also characterized as a toxic frontier.

**Keywords:** Amazonia; agricultural frontier; agribusiness; accumulation by dispossession; conflict.

### Avanço do agronegócio na Amazônia: antecipação espacial, processos de espoliação na tentativa de criação da AMACRO e expansão da fronteira agrícola

### Resumo

Em 2019 a EMBRAPA realizou a primeira reunião para definir a proposta de criação da AMACRO (acrônimo de Amazonas, Acre e Rondônia), um modelo regional de atração de desenvolvimento voltado para as produções do agronegócio brasileiro. Dessa forma, o artigo tem como objetivo compreender como o discurso e a tentativa de criação da AMACRO, em um contexto legitimado pelo então governo brasileiro de Jair Bolsonaro, acionaram processos de destruição na floresta Amazônica, desencadeando conflitos com as populações locais, assim como compreender como o agronegócio age estrategicamente na criação de regiões favoráveis aos seus empreendimentos e às suas ideologias nas áreas de



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fronteira agrícola. O artigo divide-se em quatro partes: na primeira, uma análise para compreender como ocorre a estruturação de regiões no processo de expansão das fronteiras agrícolas, através da ação do Estado brasileiro e as justificativas utilizadas para a criação da AMACRO; na segunda, o processo da fronteira agrícola em direção à Amazônia; na terceira, a situação atual da AMACRO, no que diz respeito ao crescimento dos conflitos, ao avanço do desmatamento, à intensificação da pecuária e à chegada da soja; e na quarta refletiremos os impactos causados, principalmente no âmbito ambiental com a expansão da fronteira que não é somente agrícola, mas também caracteriza-se como uma fronteira tóxica.

**Palavras-chave:** Amazônia; fronteira agrícola; agronegócio; acumulação por espoliação; conflito.

## **El avance del agronegocio en la Amazonia: anticipación espacial, procesos de desposesión en el intento de creación de AMACRO y expansión de la frontera agrícola**

### **Resumen**

En 2019, la EMBRAPA celebró su primera reunión para definir la propuesta de creación de AMACRO (acrónimo de Amazonas, Acre y Rondônia), un modelo regional de atracción del desarrollo orientado a la producción del agronegocio brasileño. De esta forma, el artículo pretende comprender cómo el discurso y el intento de creación de AMACRO, en un contexto legitimado por el entonces gobierno brasileño de Jair Bolsonaro, desencadenó procesos de destrucción en la selva amazónica, desatando conflictos con las poblaciones locales, así como entender cómo el agronegocio actúa estratégicamente en la creación de regiones favorables a sus empresas y sus ideologías en las zonas de frontera agrícola. El artículo se divide en cuatro partes: en la primera, un análisis para entender cómo ocurre la estructuración de las regiones en el proceso de expansión de las fronteras agrícolas, a través de las acciones del Estado brasileño y de las justificaciones utilizadas para la creación de AMACRO; en la segunda, el proceso de la frontera agrícola hacia la Amazonia; en la tercera, la situación actual del AMACRO, en lo que se refiere al crecimiento de los conflictos, el avance de la deforestación, la intensificación de la ganadería y la llegada de la soja; y en la cuarta, reflexionaremos sobre los impactos causados, especialmente en el ámbito ambiental, por la expansión de la frontera, que no es solamente agrícola, sino que también se caracteriza por ser una frontera tóxica.

**Palabras-clave:** Amazonia; frontera agrícola; agronegocio; acumulación por expoliación; conflicto.

### **Introduction**

The new phase of Brazilian agribusiness seen since 2000 has counted on increased prices for the exports of its principal products, making soybean and soybean products the flagship Brazilian agriculture. It is worth pointing out that this dynamic has prompted a search for new land for the production of this crop, causing a marked expansion of the agricultural frontier into new areas. As agribusiness has grown, new land has been appropriated, transformed, and used for the production of crops of interest to large-scale Brazilian and international capitalist groups. "In the recent expansion of the technified agricultural frontiers

in the legal Amazon region, capital and the state have played a key role in the production of the places where capitalist activity will be undertaken for the production of grains, especially soybean” (Bernardes, 2022, p.1).

The arrival of the Jair Bolsonaro administration gave new impetus to the expansion of agribusiness, spawning heightened socioenvironmental conflicts in all the biomes of Brazil, especially the Amazon. The backing the sector could count on with “the arrival of a new government keen to develop agribusiness as an alternative economic solution for the region,” according to Veronez<sup>1</sup>, could have encouraged its players in the Amazonian states of Acre, Amazonas, and Rondônia to envisage the possibility of growth on the back of new projects (Wenzel; Sá, 2020, n.p.).

The attempt to create AMACRO<sup>2</sup>, by presidential executive order, as a region for the development of agriculture and livestock actually preceded the growth of soybean production in the region. However, the effort to attract investments amidst claims that the location was logistically favorable for exports began to infiltrate the discourse of the business sector, paving the way for this new possibility. According to Correa (1995), it is in frontier areas that the practice of spatial anticipation is frequently used, “assuring for the near future control of a given spatial organization and thereby assuring the potential, by expanding the space of action, for the reproduction of its production conditions” (p. 39).

This article aims to understand how the attempt to create AMACRO and the accompanying discourse galvanized processes that have resulted in the destruction of the Amazon Forest and spawned conflicts with local populations. Additionally, it seeks to comprehend how agribusiness operates strategically to create regions that are propitious for its ventures and ideologies in agricultural frontier zones.

Conceptually, this analysis draws on the theoretical debate on “spatial anticipation” (Correa, 1995), “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey 2005), and “frontier” (Bernardes, 2021). As far as the methodology used for the study, this encompassed research of information and data on the following sources: the conflicts, in CPT reports (from 2021 and 2020); the land coverage of forests and pasture, from Mapbiomas (2018 and 2020); and the area covered by soybean crops, from PAM/IBGE (2018 and 2021).

The article is divided into four sections. The first is an analysis of how regions are structured in the expansion of agricultural frontiers by Brazilian state action and the justifications given for the creation of AMACRO. The second section analyzes the movement of the agricultural frontier towards the Amazon. In the third section an analysis is presented of the current state of AMACRO in terms of escalating conflicts, deforestation, increased use

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<sup>1</sup> President of the Acre Association of Agriculture.

<sup>2</sup> Stands for Amazonas, Acre, and Rondônia. Note that it does not cover the entire area of the states.

of land for livestock, and the arrival of soybean. Finally, the fourth section contains a reflection on the impacts, mainly of an environmental nature, caused by the expansion of the frontier, which brings not just agriculture, but also toxic chemicals.

### **Spatial anticipation in the creation of regions for agribusiness: Amazonas, Acre, and Rondônia in the wake of dispossession**

The most recent agricultural frontier in the Brazilian cerrado – the region known as MATOPIBA (standing for Maranhão, Tocantins, Piauí, and Bahia) – was enabled by presidential executive order in 2015,<sup>3</sup> in which it is envisaged as a large region for monoculture within the modern industrial productive order. The state was fundamental in structuring the region and expanding this frontier. After this executive order and a land planning study conducted by EMBRAPA (a company geared towards developing knowledge and technology for Brazilian agriculture), public and private sector investments were made in the region (Jesus, 2018).

News of this new frontier spread far and wide both nationally and internationally not just for the magnitude of the production of soybean, corn, and cotton, but also for the serious consequences witnessed there to this day. The social and environmental damage sparked conflicts with the populations that occupied the land. Traditional populations, such as those who employ age-old forms of agriculture, including the sharing of common land, saw these communal areas come under threat by speculative expropriation in the region. Conflicts over land and water broke out, especially in the west of the state of Bahia, where the use of groundwaters for these activities quickly had an impact on the local population.

Notwithstanding these problems, the investment attraction model devised for MATOPIBA became an inspiration for another. In 2019, EMBRAPA held the first planning meeting for the creation of AMACRO<sup>4</sup>. The chairman of the Acre Association of Agriculture, Assuero Doca Veronez, considered the idealizer of the region's creation, took the development of MATOPIBA as a blueprint.

The proposal, besides enabling the expansion of agribusiness, also seeks to take advantage of its geographical location with a view to the export of the production. It is important to note that logistics has become important for “the achievement of the whole production process, making it an important consideration for the representatives of the production sector and the state” (Lima, 2015 cited in Lima, Pereira & Almeida, 2021).

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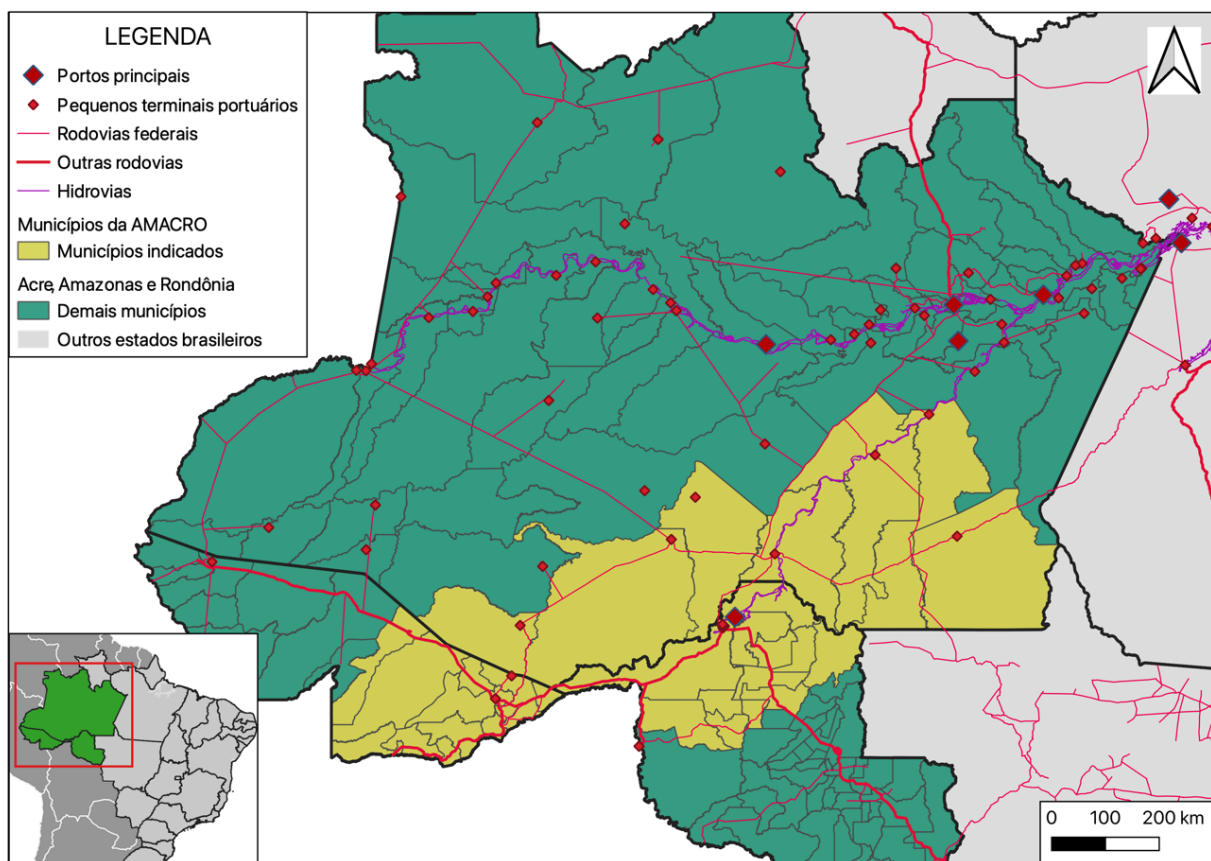
<sup>3</sup> Presidential executive order (*decreto*) #8,447 of May 6, 2015. MATOPIBA is composed of 337 municipalities. In each one, the seasonal patterns of the agribusiness practices are different.

<sup>4</sup> As well as inspiring AMACRO, MATOPIBA also served as a model for the regionalization of the SEALBA project (standing for the states of Sergipe, Alagoas, and Bahia), created by EMBRAPA for the expansion of soybean production in the coastal tablelands of northeastern Brazil.

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One of the reasons given by the business sector for the creation of the executive order that set forth the plans for the region's agricultural development was its location. Of particular relevance was the reconstruction of the BR-319 highway between Porto Velho and Manaus; the building of a bridge over the Madeira River in the district of Abunã, which was opened in 2021, connecting Acre and Rondônia; the location of the Madeira River terminal, which is already used for shipping grain; and the supposed highway leading to the Pacific Ocean. As such, the attempt to create this new region can be seen as an example of spatial anticipation, "defined by the location of an activity in a given place before favorable conditions have been satisfied" (Corra, 1995, p.39). Map 1 shows the location of AMACRO and the main transportation routes existing to date.

**Map 1: Municipalities selected to constitute the AMACRO region.**



Source: the authors (2022), based on IBGE and SUDAM.

The main aim of the project is to "attract attention to the region." The executive order signed by the President of the Republic attracted new gazes to this part of the Amazon. By opening up this new area of capitalist expansion, the state had once again played a key role in the dispossession of these territories (Harvey, 2005). It is worth adding that the "process of

transition from non-capitalist to capitalist spaces and the forms of accumulation by dispossession depend on the state. The state maintains the rationales of territory and capitalism to fulfil its developmentalist role” (Monteiro, 2022).

Ideas of development have always been present in the history of Brazil and the “global South” as a whole, as has the continuous and exceptional involvement of the state in ensuring the desired form of development by hegemonic agents in these regions. The quest for economic development coupled with progress is an integral part of different political moments and shapes the actions of hegemonic actors throughout Brazil.

From the above, it becomes clear that there is a powerful relationship between agribusiness and the state, making it a key element for us to understand the hegemony of the sector and the strategies devised by these players. The state “legitimizes, finances, and perpetuates the ideas of agribusiness rooted in a development- and production-oriented economic discourse” (Monteiro, p.117, 2017).

### **The incursion of the agricultural frontier into the Amazon**

In image 1 below, we can see a diagram that summarizes the agribusiness expansion process. The Brazilian agricultural frontier begins with conflict over land with local populations living in the areas that will be affected by the production of commodity crops. They first “clear” the land, putting the populations at imminent risk, killing their leaders, and/or threatening their way of life.

Parallel to this, timber is extracted; the more valuable wood is sold on the illegal market for these products; the wood with no commercial value is burnt. This is the process by which forested areas are razed, impacting not only the flora, but also the fauna that lives there and the indigenous and traditional populations who coexist with the timber extraction from a range of activities. All biodiversity, traditional ways of life, and natural habitats are destroyed.

Once the forest has been removed, the planting of pasture begins, and livestock is introduced. The cattle brought in is not necessarily appropriate for sale on the biggest meat markets; generally, its purpose is normally to stake a claim to a property and enable speculative activities in the area, which more often than not is acquired by underhand means. This stage also has the purpose of “domesticating” the land. The ultimate goal is not actually cattle, but the production of grains.

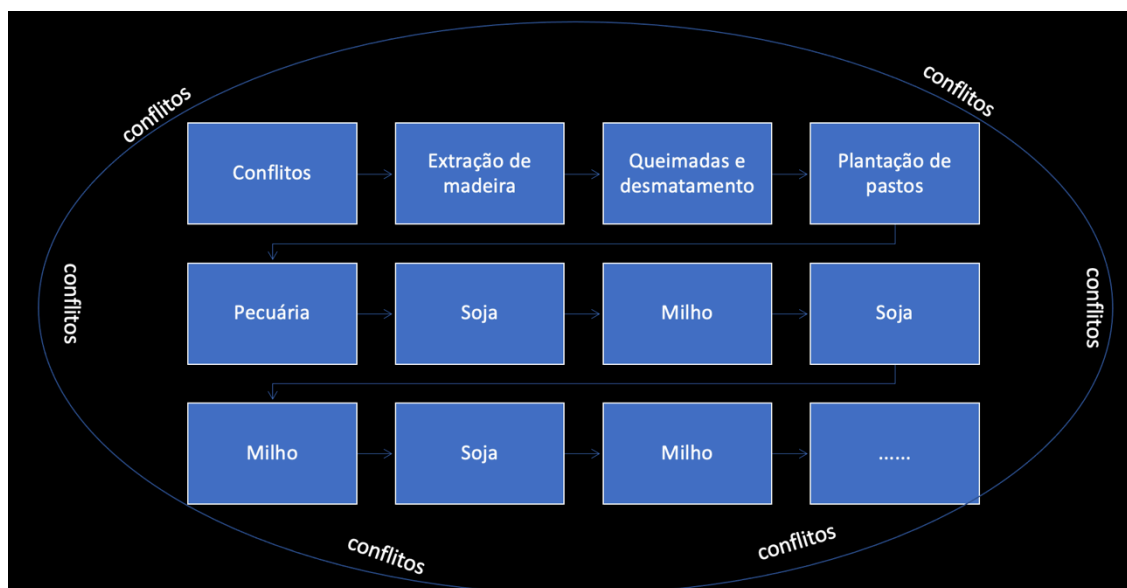
The final step is the introduction of soybean, which is normally rotated with corn. When soybean is introduced to spaces like these, its production rarely ceases, making this a system that is essentially irreversible, at least to date in Brazilian history. The reason

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soybean is retained in the space and a whole logistics system is set up to transport it is because it is so very profitable. As soybean production advances, logistical developments accompany it. The grain is introduced to areas that have been prepared beforehand so that it can be transported for export (most soybean grown in Brazil is for export). Nonetheless, some of the soybean and corn produced is used domestically, whether in the meat production chain (poultry and pork), as a source of protein in animal feed, a source of oil, or even, more recently, in the new corn ethanol production facilities.

There is no expansion of Brazilian agricultural frontiers that does not entail social and environmental conflicts, even when a space has become consolidated as specialized for agriculture. It is therefore a fallacy to say that wherever agribusiness is consolidated, peace and progress prevail. This is because the sector is becoming increasingly authoritarian towards any forms of existence that differ from its own<sup>5</sup>.

**Image 1: Expansion of the Brazilian agricultural frontier.**



Source: the authors (2022).

<sup>5</sup> In an interview with Nilfo Wandscheer, resident of the municipality of Lucas do Rio Verde, an area already considered a consolidated soybean production area, falling within the influence of the BR-163 highway in the state of Mato Grosso, Nilfo, who has become a leader amongst the region's smallholders, speaks of battles in the countryside, death threats, and other conflicts (Monteiro & Arruzo, 2021).

## The spatialization of discourse: conflicts, deforestation, cattle, and soybean in AMACRO

While the official proposal for the creation of AMACRO has not yet materialized, develops in the region already bear all the hallmarks of an agribusiness agricultural frontier. Data from reports on conflict in the countryside published by Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT) revealed that the conflicts in 2020 and 2021 in the three states were mostly in AMACRO municipalities (Table 1).

According to reference document 2021-27 issued by the federal government's Amazon Development Department (Superintendência de Desenvolvimento da Amazônia, SUDAM), entitled "Sustainable Development Zone in the States of Amazonas, Acre, and Rondônia, 32 municipalities are identified as belonging to this supposed project: 13 from Acre (Acrelândia, Assis Brasil, Brasiléia, Bujari, Capixaba, Epitaciolândia, Manoel Urbano, Plácido de Castro, Porto Acre, Rio Branco, Senador Guimard, Sena Madureira, and Xapuri); seven from Amazonas (Apuí, Boca do Acre, Canutama, Humaitá, Lábrea, Manicoré, and Novo Aripuanã); and 12 from Rondônia (Alto Paraíso, Ariquemes, Buritis, Campo Novo de Rondônia, Candeias do Jamari, Cujubim, Itapuã do Oeste, Machadinho D'Oeste, Monte Negro, Nova Mamoré, Porto Velho, and Rio Crespo).

**Table 1: Location of conflicts in the municipalities of AMACRO.**

	2020			2021		
	AMACRO	Total in the state	%	AMACRO	Total in the state	%
<b>Acre</b>	45	59	76%	51	60	85%
<b>Amazonas</b>	33	66	50%	36	59	61%
<b>Rondônia</b>	55	125	44%	38	63	60%
<b>Total</b>	133	250	53,2%	125	182	68,6%

Source: the authors (2022), based on Centro de Documentação Dom Tomás Balduino – CPT

The conflicts in the region involve indigenous peoples, landless people, squatters, settlers, rubber tappers, and others who depend on extractivist activities. According to the information in the CPT report, there are also conflicts over water in the state of Rondônia, particularly in Porto Velho, the state capital, as well as records of rural slave labor, as was seen in Amazonas, where 11 in Lábrea were released from timber extraction in 2020, and 12 in Novo Aripuanã were released from handling activities in 2021.



Another feature of the agricultural frontier is deforestation. Although this rose only 2% between 2018<sup>6</sup> and 2021, this value represents 856,517 hectares, according to Mapbiomas. In this same period, there was a 15% rise in the area given over to pasture, summing 864,942 hectares – an area of land similar to the area deforested (Table 2).

An analysis of the municipalities covered by AMACRO from each state shows that most of the deforested area is in Amazonas, which, between 2018 and 2021, lost 414,851 hectares of forest, followed by Rondônia, which lost 289,754 hectares, and Acre, which lost 151,912 hectares. There is a notable similarity between the size of land deforested and the size of land turned over to pasture. The same four-year period, the AMACRO municipalities from Amazonas gained 446,416 hectares of pasture, while those from Rondônia gained 289,522 hectares, and those from Acre gained 149,148 hectares. These numbers suggest that the forested areas in AMACRO are, at this initial point at least, being turned into pasture, which is characteristic of what happens in the movement of agricultural frontiers.

**Table 2: Area of forest and pasture in AMACRO municipalities (hectares).**

	2018	2021	%	Variation in absolute numbers (ha)
<b>Forest</b>	38,199,070	37,342,553	-2%	diminished by 856,517
<b>Pasture</b>	5,618,806	6,483,748	15%	increased by 864,942

Source: the authors (2022), based on Mapbiomas (2022)

Pasture indicates deforestation as well as the likely arrival of agriculture geared towards grain crops. Livestock production in Brazil, depending on where it occurs, does not have the ultimate goal of producing beef. In several regions, mainly in the Brazilian Amazon, cattle are introduced to enable land speculation, while also serving as an “embryonic substrate,” paving the way for soybean. Soybean cannot be grown immediately after deforestation; the land has to go through a period of “domestication” first. According to Bernardes,

cattle production often marks the beginning of a new frontier: first, timber is extracted; then comes deforestation and sometimes burning; after this, the pastures are turned over for crops. The environmental liability of this expansion process is very high and is expressed in the deterioration of the physical and biotic environment because of the high level of deforestation and the ethnic and cultural breakdown resulting in the loss of identity on the part of native populations who have long lived in harmony with the prevailing ecosystems (Bernardes, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> The idea of AMACRO came about in 2019. We therefore chose 2018 as a reference year for the analysis of forested land, as it preceded the discourse about the creation of a new region of monoculture for export.

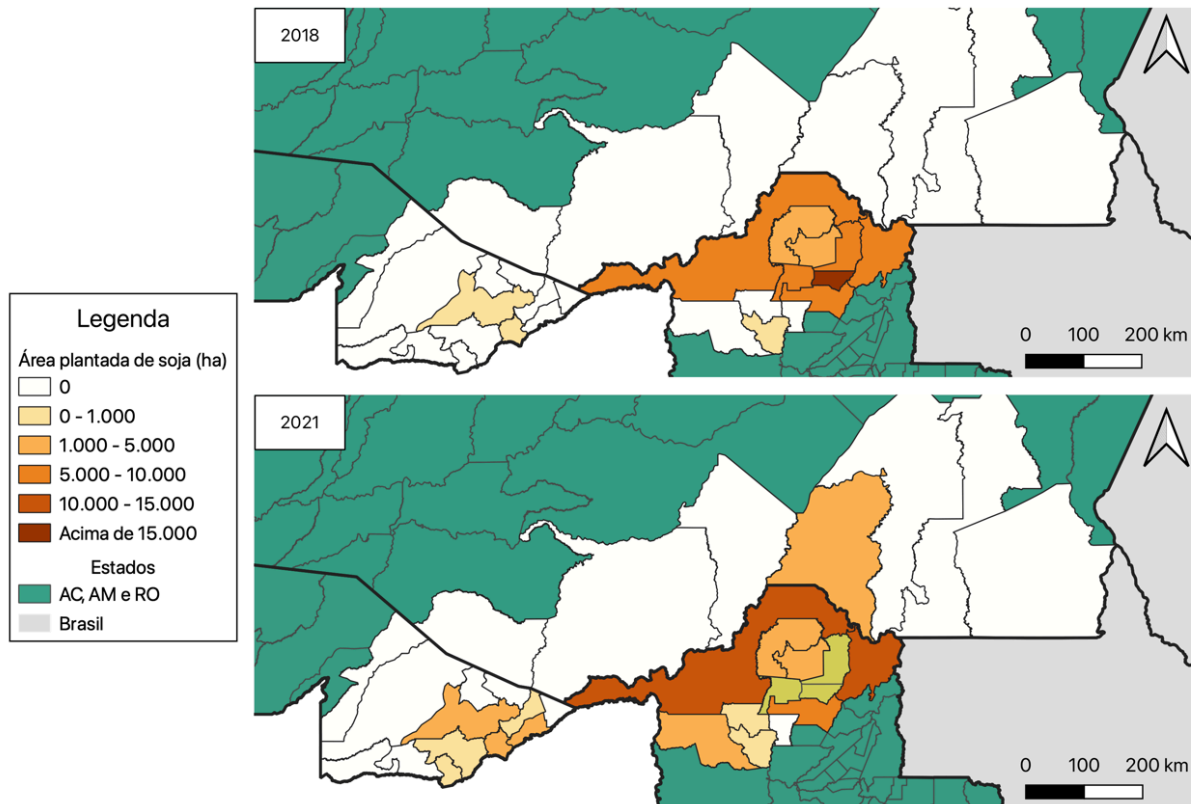
If the ultimate goal of AMACRO is to establish a new agricultural region through an executive order setting forth an Agricultural Development Plan, as was seen in MATOPIBA, it is worth analyzing how soybean was introduced there. According to the data from the municipal agricultural survey (Pesquisa Agrícola Municipal) conducted by the official geography and statistics institute (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, IBGE), the area in which soybean was grown in the municipalities from AMACRO increased by 82% between 2018 and 2021 (Table 3; Map 2).

Soybean production has intensified in the region in recent years. Its emergence in the state of Amazonas shows that the first forays are already being made in this frontier zone. The production of grains is most advanced in Rondônia, where strong action on the part of agribusiness sectors can be seen in many parts of the state, bringing about significant changes in its land structure, as well as the arrival of agribusinesses attracted by the upsurge in local production.

**Table 3: Area with soybean production in municipalities from AMACRO (hectares).**

<b>Municipalities in AMACRO</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Variação</b>
<b>13 municipalities in Acre</b>	480	6,185	1,189%
<b>7 municipalities in Amazonas</b>	-	3,000	-
<b>12 municipalities in Rondônia</b>	63,973	107,892	69%
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,453</b>	<b>117,077</b>	<b>82%</b>

Source: the authors (2022), based on Pesquisa Agrícola Municipal (IBGE)

**Map 2: Area with soybean production in municipalities from AMACRO in 2018 and 2021.**

Source: the authors (2022), based on IBGE and SUDAM.

As soybean is a temporary crop, it is generally rotated with corn. The two crops are complementary, because corn can be planted between soybean harvests. This means the land is never left fallow, producing merchandise and at the same time replacing some nutrients needed for the composition of the soil, while also preventing the proliferation of unwanted plants and insects. It is interesting to note that corn is already being grown in the AMACRO area, mostly in Rondônia, heralding a new grain-producing area in this region of the country.

Another point worth noting is that the soybean and corn is produced with the intensive use of highly toxic chemicals to ensure the highest possible yields. For the purposes of comparison, it is worth noting that when soybean was introduced to the tropical area of the Brazilian cerrado, the use of pesticides increased considerably. As such, the agricultural frontier goes hand in hand with a toxic chemical frontier moving inexorably towards the Amazon.

## Toxic frontier, loss of biodiversity, and Amazonas populations at risk

The toxic aspect of the agricultural frontier is worth investigating in greater detail. As grain monoculture is introduced, highly toxic chemicals are used that interfere in the soil biota and contaminate the rivers, affluents, subsoil, air, vegetation, and plantations in the vicinity. These chemicals are also an effective way of pushing out traditional people or smallholders who worked the land before the arrival of big agriculture. Larissa Bombardi (2011) states that chemical pesticides are “a silent weapon against human rights” (p.1).

In the current phase of technological development, with its increasing dependence on artificial inputs, the discourses of objects and actions correspond to a strategic demand for hegemony. The use of pesticides is a fine example of the hegemony of a putatively efficient and competitive production model. The requirement for rapid production alongside competition from abroad mean producers focus their efforts on efficiency. The discourse of the object (pesticide) reproduces the application of this product to the soil and/or the plants, because the legitimacy of this technique is a hegemonic demand in agricultural production.

In other words, the ideology of “formal efficiency” is designed to maximize profits, as it has “competitiveness as a central value” (Hinkelammert, 2005, p. 193). Within this rationale “efficiency becomes a dispute and the market system becomes compulsive in the destruction of sources of wealth to beat the competition” (Bernardes; Santos; Nascimento, 2021, p. 269). This is the hegemonic discourse of agribusiness, which in its materialization structures the territory according to its own values. We might therefore say, together with Santos (1996), that “technical objects are capable of influencing behaviors and therefore command a certain type of relationship, beginning with the relationships with capital and labor” (p.181). These transformations of space in the current phase of capitalism, of the “technical, scientific, informational environment” (Santos, 1996), also correspond to the “manifestation of cultural processes and social targets” (Ribeiro, 1991, p. 48).

Santos (1996) tells us that “the hegemonic actors, with the right information, make use of all the networks and all the territories. They prefer reticular space, but their influence also reaches more hidden, banal spaces” (p.194). Santos (1998) understands a “banal space” to be the space of us all. It is fair to say that agribusiness, along with all its hegemonic apparatus, has the power to infiltrate the “banal spaces” of AMACRO.

These “banal spaces” are affected by biodiversity loss and their populations are directly impacted not only by the use of chemical pesticides, but also the deforestation and burning of the forests. These populations traditionally live off the extraction of products from the forest, which they consume themselves and sell in lesser circles of the local economy. The sudden arrival of agribusiness, with its discourse of economic prosperity, clashes with the other forms of existence already occupying that space.

The destruction of the natural environment and the disruption of populations by the incursion of agribusiness reveal the contradictions inherent to the “progress” envisaged by agents who believe in a single model of development. Harvey adds that:

the turn to a liberal form of imperialism (and one that had attached to it an ideology of progress and of a civilizing mission) resulted not from absolute economic imperatives but from the political unwillingness of the bourgeoisie to give up any of its class privileges, thus blocking the possibility of absorbing overaccumulation through social reform at home (Harvey, 2014, p. 107).

The plans to expand agribusiness and the accompanying discourses, legitimized during the Jair Bolsonaro presidency, are embedded in several parts of Brazilian society that collude with this *modus operandi*, making the gulfs in Brazilian society ever wider. Bolsonaro may have been defeated at the ballot box, but the plans of his supporters continue to prevail amongst decisionmakers in this area of study. At the same time, the rights of the most vulnerable in society continue to be jeopardized.

Under Bolsonaro, agribusiness was boosted by the possibility of expanding its interests beyond the barriers imposed by environmental legislation, which was gradually dismantled on the back of anti-environmental discourse and enabled by a general inertia at the heart of the federal government.

## Concluding remarks

According to Bittencourt, Romano, and Castilho (2022), discourse “can be emblematic and revealing of some of these strategies used in the quest for the formation and consolidation of a hegemony” (p. 200). Based on the analysis presented here, we can state that agribusiness uses certain strategies to appropriate spaces that have not yet been fully converted to its rationale. The expansionary movement reveals that the advance of the agricultural frontier and the offensive against the Amazon Forest are designed to transform spaces so that capitalist and agribusiness actors can exert power and obtain profit, violently altering local dynamics and organizations.

To this end, new areas of land are “sacrificed” to gain increased profit in the name of development: “it is a ‘particular mode of accumulation’ (Terán, 2016) or production model rooted in the mass extraction and overexploitation of unprocessed natural resources (Gudynas, 2009)” (Haesbaert, 2021, p. 60). The imposition of development models based on grain exports is part of an expansionary rationale.

Local businessmen who own land, some of whom raise livestock, have envisaged the opportunity to spearhead the creation of a new commodity-producing region with state endorsement. At the same time, although the proposed institutionalization of the region has

not been achieved officially, the discourse and debate over the proposals are driving actions that are already modifying the territory.

It is important to note that AMACRO serves as an example for us to understand how the frontier moves. It is first produced by discourse and ideologies, then, with a perverse *modus operandi*, it clashes with the ways of life of indigenous peoples, traditional populations, smallholders, landless people, and other political subjects in the Amazonian space who are fighting, for their very survival, to keep the forest intact and stop the progress of deforestation, livestock rearing, and soybean production.

Finally, even though AMACRO may not have been implemented and signed off in executive order, it is of the utmost important that we continue to monitor all actions and proposals for the region and observe the new elements engaging in the local economy under the present administration of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva. During his election campaign, the proposals under debate had to do with the preservation of the Amazon and other biomes, efficient inspection and oversight to fight deforestation, and policies designed to protect the rights of Brazilian indigenous peoples.

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