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# The European Union and the Amazon under fire

An ecological intervention?

# 1 CONTEXT



- Significant rise on deforestation (2019-2022)
- Loss on biodiversity
- Impact on global climate (GHG)
- Violation of human rights
- Reaction of European leaders to Brazilian management of the Amazon

# 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Does ecological intervention constitute a rupture with the international system fundamentals?

## Traditional Law:

- Equal State Sovereignty
  - “The Organization is based on the principle of sovereign equality of all its Members”, Charter of the United Nations, art. 2)
- No-intervention
  - “Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction state” (Ibid.)

## Postcolonial approach:

- International system grounded on equal Sovereign States (Great Powers vs. Third World)

## Environmentalism

- Philosophical tradition “centred on a normative core, (...) the belief that the natural environment should be protected” (Falkner 2021)
- Colonial legacy
- Transnational problems

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: The Ecological Intervention Debate

	<b>Interventionists</b> (Bachelet 1995; Fraga 2021)	<b>Critics</b> (Rossi 2000; Souza 2016)
<b>Type</b>	A right as means for enforcement of ecological respect of the planet (against notably unlawful States)	Wide intervening relations
<b>Form</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Legal use of force to an humanitarian intervention (of ecological type)</li><li>• Global environmental authority replicating European institutions functioning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• West environmental approach</li><li>• Occidental rationale</li><li>• New forms such as development aid by international organisations</li></ul>
<b>Arguments</b>	Transnational impacts of environmental destruction: → Threat to the 'international community' → Threat to the right to exist New right to intervene to assure a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eurocentrism</li><li>• Domination against the tropical world</li><li>• Legitimation of a control of their State sovereignty</li><li>• Colonial dynamics: West civiliser of peoples</li></ul>

# 3 METHODS

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- Inductive approach
- Document research
- Corpus
- Analysis of discourse

## 4 ANALYSIS: European leaders and the 'internationality' of the Amazon

Declaration	Action	Effect
<p><i>"The president Bolsonaro has decided to not to respect his climate commitments neither to commit in terms of biodiversity. Faced with these conditions, France is opposed to the Agreement with Mercosur"</i> (Emmanuel Macron, August 2019)</p>	<p>Discursive penetration of French (Head of) State on Brazilian management of environment.</p> <p>Competence remains national → Discursive ecological intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discursive rupture with non-intervention principle</li><li>• European pressure on a former colony national competence</li><li>• Apparently reinforces post-modern State sovereignty understanding (Fraga 2021)</li></ul>
<p><i>"Let's imagine within some years, within some months, there's a government which tell us 'I will reforest the Amazon, I will apply extremely severe inspections in my countries', (...) then the dialogue will be different"</i> (Amélie de Montchalin, August 2019)"</p>	<p>Pressure for determining a certain management of the environment</p> <p>→</p> <p>Discursive ecological intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• But reminds colonial legacy (Empire decides how it should be)</li><li>• Reminds struggle over PSNR on how nature should be exploited for enrichment</li></ul>

# 4 European leaders and the ‘internationality’ of the Amazon

Declaration	Action	Effect
<p><i>“We have requirements, notably on the issue of deforestation. This agreement cannot rise the imported deforestation in Europe” (Franck Riester, March 2021)</i></p> <p><i>“It [the Paris Agreement] must be respected by the countries of Mercosur. (...) We need check means. (...) What we are building here will not only apply to Mercosur countries but also to future trading partners” (Ibid.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An international organisation non-foundational of the international system transforms a Third State competence of a field of its (European) sphere through an exportation of norms → Legal ecological intervention</li><li>• Invisibilization of European responsibility (companies) on the environmental destruction</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strengthening of the dynamics on PSNR struggle dynamics → continuity of Third World Sovereignty subjection to the “international”</li><li>• Construction of a (false) hierarchy on environmental governance (the European being the Master of civilization, the Southern the uncivilized)</li></ul>
<p><i>“The Amazon concerns the whole world” (Stefan Steibert, August 2020)</i></p>	<p>Junction Amazon-world. The European leader redefines international</p>	

# 4 European leaders and the ‘internationality’ of the Amazon

Declaration	Action	Effect
<p><i>“We should be sure of not being arms crossed faced with what happens in the Amazon Rainforest now. (...) Our producers are always concerned when we talk about imports of meat products in particular, but I always see trade agreements as an opportunity for our producers. The products that Ireland exports, especially in terms of meat, are ‘premium’ products, really high quality, they are not ordinary meat sold very cheaply (...) trade agreements are an opportunity to increase markets for Irish meat (...) But we cannot be in a situation where environmental concerns that are fundamental to our planet can simply be sidelined and forgotten. We need strong assurances in order to conclude this trade deal (Thomas Byrne, April 2021)”.</i></p>	<p>Call to Europe for an action – discursive and legal ecological intervention</p> <p>Meddling ecological intervention with economic expansion</p>	<p>Mutual reinforcement of European nations’ position</p> <p>By reminding a pressure of “public opinion” more than a governmental motivation, it reminds colonial legacy</p> <p>Contributes to answer Souza and Fraga’s concerns on motivations behind ecological intervention: expansion of economy</p>



# 4 European leaders and the ‘internationality’ of the Amazon

Declaration	Action	Effect
<p><i>“I had a conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and vice-president of Brazil, responsible for the Amazonian Council (...) There are negotiations ongoing and I would say reactions from Mercosur countries are positive, they are ready to commit into this work and ready to new commitments” (Vedis Dombrovskis, April 2021)”</i></p>	<p>Ecological intervention takes a diplomatic dimension in the targeted territory</p>	<p>The idea of “readiness” from the South pronounced by the European authority reinforces Rossi’s argument on an European domination on civilisation levels its teaches the South</p>
<p><i>“Within some years or decades, we shall be faced with a new pandemic due to the deforestation in the Amazon, because the contact between wild species and cattle leads to human contamination with the virus, as we have seen several times in the past (...). So trade agreements that do not anticipate environmental and social costs constitute a collective suicide and a political suicide” (Francisco Guerreiro, February 2021)</i></p>	<p>Call for a more constraining ecological intervention</p> <p>Reinforcement of legal ecological intervention</p>	<p>Rossi’s arguments reinforced: the tropical world becomes a source of global threat whose control relies on European trade rules.</p>

# 5 PRELIMINARY RESULTS



- Need to redefine ecological intervention faced with a more complex understanding scenario involving nature and human
- Complex panoply of actions of interfering on the national competence of environmental management of a State with the discursive aim of protecting environment

# 5 PRELIMINARY RESULTS: (re)definition

- Instruments of pressure on the environmental management of a Third (world?) State
- Types: discursive, diplomatic, legal
- (re)Definition → position to answer on its impact

# 5 PRELIMINARY RESULTS: Regional impacts

- The three types of ecological intervention interact
- Europe self-attributes the position of Master environmental governor in a mission to discipline the uncivilised South, placing it in the position of “bad” governor, reinforcing Rossi’s criticism
- Ecological intervention legitimates the idea the South should be governed by Europe(an rules)

# 5 PRELIMINARY RESULTS: Systemic Impacts?

## Rupture

- The Amazon under the sovereignty of Brazil concerns a constitutionally defined space as a national domain. Rupture or violation (still in the discursive field) of non-intervention and equal State sovereignty principles of the international system.

## Continuity

- Critical approach: Equal State Sovereignty is fictitious since it was constructed based on unequal State Sovereignities
- Unequal State power on determining Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources. Inquiry on relational process (what type of structure is reducing what type of State sovereignty. Case suggests continuity: former empire reducing former colony State sovereignty)
- Environmental obligations underpins Fraga's argument in favour of ecological interventions (recall), but postcolonial analysis being a blindspot is needed
- Prevalence of a colonial dimension of international system (emphasis on foreign responsibility, obscurity on its own)
- Prevalence of a colonial approach of nature (Pahuja)
- Souza and Fraga's doubts on intentions behind ecological intervention find here an instrumentalization of environmental protection aimed at legitimizing the expansion of trade. Prevalence of expansion of economy and trade over nature (Pahuja's perspective → E.I. reinforces imperial character)



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**Photos: Brazilian Amazon Rainforest, 2020 (Bruno Kelly/Amazônia Real)**