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Decolonizing Cartographies

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Deforestation in the Amazon and (European) ecological intervention

A rupture with the division of the world?

1 CONTEXT



- Significant rise on deforestation (2019-2022)
- Loss on biodiversity
- Impact on global climate (GHG)
- Violation of human rights
- An encouragement of the environmental destruction by the Brazilian State
- A reaction of European leaders to the 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.)

Transconstitutionalism (Neves, Fraga 2021):

- Global control of sovereignty (duties, more than autonomy)

Postcolonial approach (Simpson 2004; Pahuja 2011):

- International system grounded on unequal Sovereign States
(Great Powers vs. Third World)
- International principle of State Sovereignty is colonially-rooted
- Unequal sovereignties are reinforced by the PSNR (US and European powers vs. Third World)

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: The Ecological Intervention Debate

	Interventionists (Bachelet 1995; Fraga 2021)	Critics (Rossi 2000; Souza 2016)
Type	A right as means for enforcement of ecological respect of the planet (against notably unlawful States)	Wide intervening relations
Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal use of force to an humanitarian intervention (of ecological type) • Global environmental authority replicating European institutions functioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West environmental approach • Occidental rationale • New forms such as development aid by international organisations
Arguments	<p>Transnational impacts of environmental destruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Threat to the 'international community' → Threat to the right to exist <p>New right to intervene to assure a fundamental human right to a healthy environment</p> <p>(Trans)constitutionalism :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → International community controls State obligations on human rights → Sovereignty is shared at multi-levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eurocentrism • Domination against the tropical world • Legitimation of a control of their State sovereignty • Colonial dynamics: West civiliser of peoples • Threat of rich States disguised of protection of the environment (historical economic interest in L.A.) • Threat to the former colony development through the control of their "natural resources" stock and "rich" biodiversity

3 METHODS

- Inductive approach
- Document research
- Corpus: authorities statements – primary and secondary sources [press articles])
- Post-structuralist analysis of discourse (Hansen, 2006)

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

Discursive encounter 1

"Our home burns. The Amazon, our planet's lungs which produces 20% of our oxygen, is under fire. It is an international crisis. Members of the G7, let's meet within two days to talk about this urgency" (Emmanuel Macron, August 2019)

"Considering Brazil's attitude those last weeks, the president of the [French] Republic can only note that the president Bolsonaro lied to him in the Summit of Osaka (...)

The decisions and statements of Brazil those last weeks show that the president Bolsonaro has decided not to respect his climate commitments neither to commit in terms of biodiversity

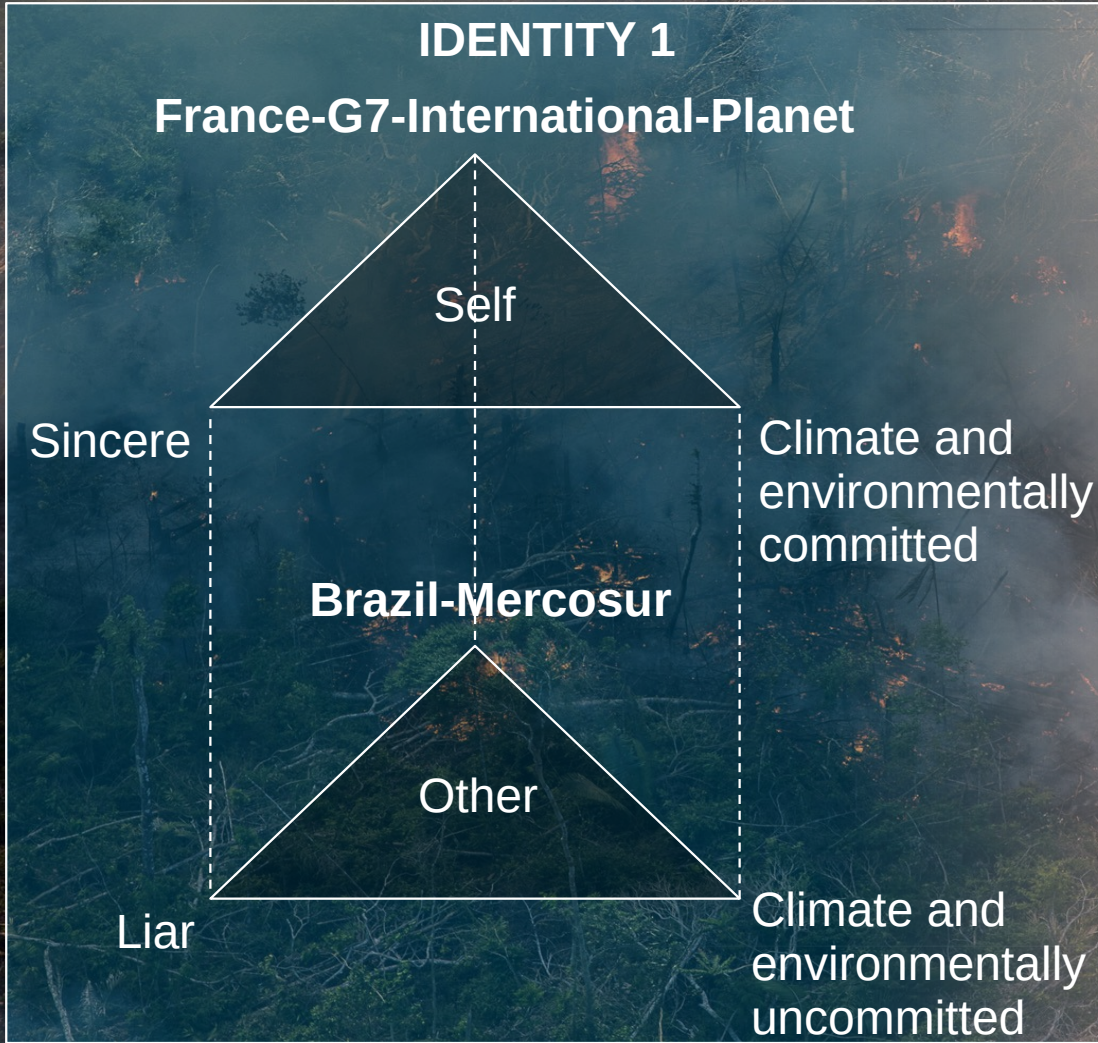
Faced with these conditions, France is opposed to the Agreement with Mercosur as it stands" (Emmanuel Macron, August 2019)

"We cannot accept that a president, Macron, attacks inappropriately and freely the Amazon, neither that he disguises his intentions behind an 'alliance' of the countries of G7 to 'save' the Amazon, as if we were a colony or no man's land" (Jair Bolsonaro, August 2019)

"In a conversation with the President Ivan Duque, from Colombia, we talked about the necessity of a set plan, where the most part of the countries which integrate the Amazon, in the guarantee of our sovereignty and natural wealth (...)" (Jair Bolsonaro, August 2019)

4 ANALYSIS

————— Identification - - - - - Differentiation

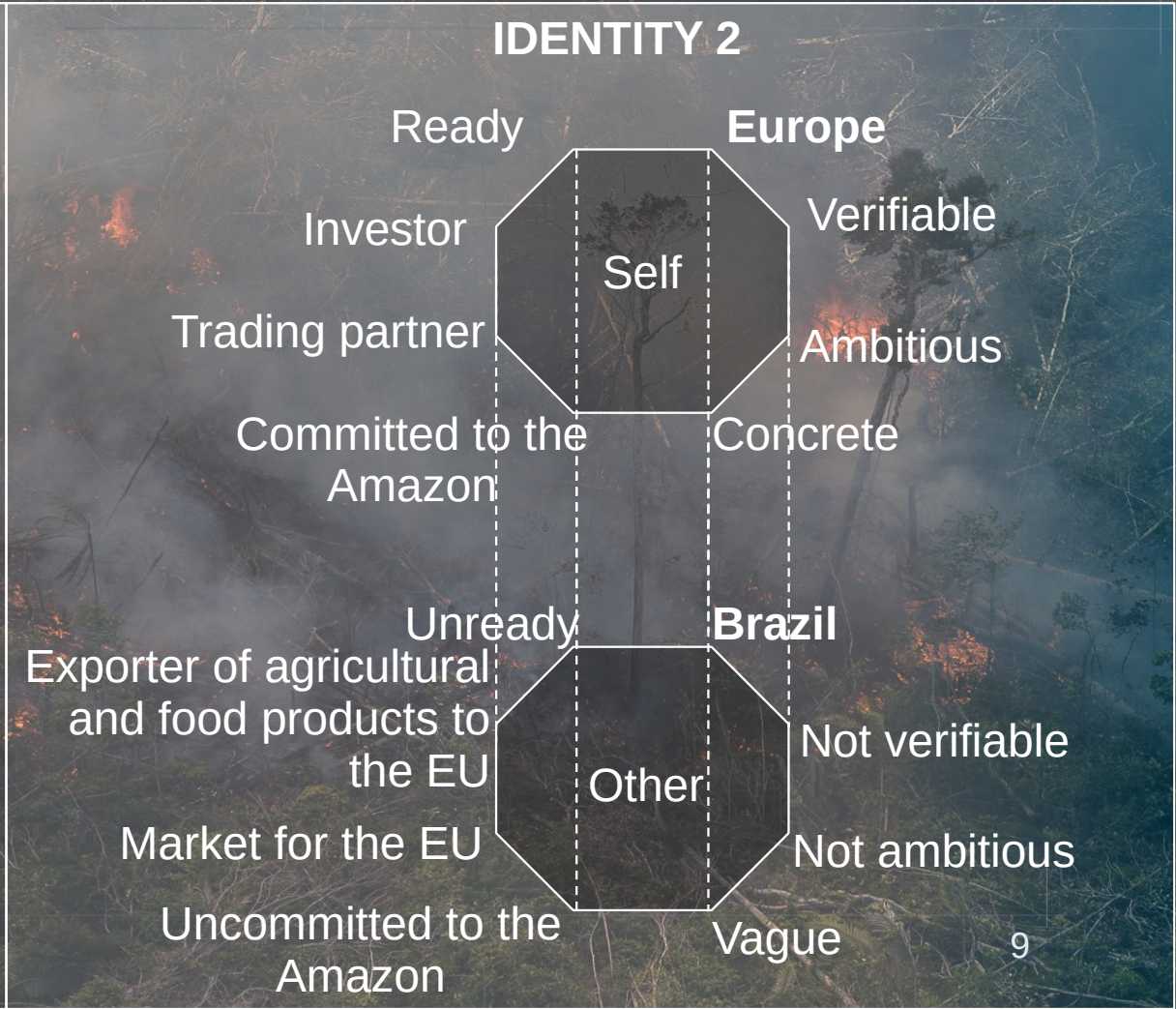


4 European leaders and the ‘internationality’ of the Amazon

	Discursive encounter 2	
(to be potentially completed with interviews)	“The European Union is our second most important commercial partner and Brazil is the second furnisher of agricultural products in the European market. And the European Union is still the biggest foreign investor in the country” (Carlos França, November 2021)	“I reiterate that contrary to what is said by many Brazil is not isolated. We are in everyone in our international relations, in a performance very frank, very open and very intense” (Carlos França, November 2021)
“I had a conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the 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 to this work and ready for new commitments.” (Valdis Dombrovskis, February 2021)	“We are Brazil’s second largest trading partner. Brazil is actually the single biggest exporter of agricultural and food products to the European Union. We are the biggest investor in Brazil. And Brazil is the largest and most important market for the European Union in Latin America” (Josep Borrell, November 2021)	“As the country hosting most of the world green lungs, the Amazon, we count on your commitment. The world needs your action and we are ready to continue supporting concrete, ambitious and verifiable actions. The world cannot live up to this climate ambition without the European Union and without Brazil (...) deforestation remains a challenge as the largest source of emissions in Brazil, and the EU firmly hopes that Brazil will show the maximum level of ambition in this area” (Josep Borrell, November 2021)

4 ANALYSIS

————— Identification - - - - - Differentiation



4 European leaders and the 'internationality' of the Amazon

- The discursive appropriation of the Amazon as 'world' by Europe produces ecological intervention
- The identity produced by EU powers as committed to the Amazon in reaction to the uncommitted Other (Brazil) indicates a relation of superiority-inferiority
- The environmental policy proposed by the European Self consists of its expansion towards the inferior Other (Brazilian State) by augmenting the space in which to apply its policy → E.I. works as a technology of legitimation of itself
- (Re)production of the postcolonial state as a space for application of the former empire's policy (check means and the expansion of its norms) → wider European control
- Contribution: filling a gap in the debate between defenders and critics of ecological intervention which is the risk of environmental protection being instrumentalised to produce hegemony over major ecosystems
- Hegemony is produced by EU on the environmental encounter with Brazil under Bolsonaro's presidency (legitimacy)
- The European identity production hides its own responsibility into the environmental destruction
- Environmental discourse (check means) legitimates the expansion of trade (condition to ratify free-trade agreement)
- Reinforcement of Rossi and Souza's arguments on a occidental approach and hegemony
- Ecological intervention → postcolonial state = space for former empire's control and expansion of norms

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 hegemony and 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 controlling former colony State sovereignty
- Prevalence of a colonial dimension of international system (emphasis on foreign responsibility, obscurity on its own)
- 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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Ecole Normale Supérieure – PSL Research University
Photos: Brazilian Amazon Rainforest, 2020 (Bruno Kelly/Amazônia Real)