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Historical Possibilities and Limits for the Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in Regional Development in Mato Grosso, Brazil

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Abstract
This essay aims to discuss the historical possibilities and limitations surrounding the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the development processes of the state of Mato Grosso, located within the Brazilian Legal Amazon. To that end, the paper undertakes a historical digression, revisiting the colonial period, during which Eurocentrism systematically denied the identities and ways of life of these peoples. Many Indigenous groups were subjected to violence, enslavement, or even extermination for resisting domination. In contemporary times, global neoliberal capitalism imposes market values and homogenized standards of consumption and development, thereby perpetuating violence against Indigenous peoples—not only physical and psychological violence but also through legal and institutional mechanisms that threaten their rights and very existence. The effective inclusion of Indigenous populations in policy debates and the formulation of strategies for the development of Mato Grosso requires a break with colonial and economistic paradigms that continue to inform much of the state's actions and those of dominant sectors of society, often disregarding the historical demands of Indigenous Peoples.

Keywords: Regional Development; Indigenous Peoples; Mato Grosso.

Possibilidades e Limites Históricos Para a Inserção Dos Povos Indígenas no Desenvolvimento Regional em Mato Grosso - Brasil

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Resumo

Este ensaio objetiva discutir as possibilidades e os limites para inserir povos indígenas nos processos de desenvolvimento do estado de Mato Grosso, inserido na Amazônia Legal brasileira. Para tanto, há uma digressão histórica, revisitando o período colonial, quando o eurocentrismo negou as identidades e modos de vida desses povos. Muitos foram combatidos, escravizados ou mesmo exterminados por resistirem à opressão. Na contemporaneidade, o capitalismo neoliberal globalizante impõe valores do mercado e padrões homogêneos de consumo e desenvolvimento, perpetuando a violência contra os povos indígenas, não apenas física e psicológica, mas também mediante dispositivos legais e institucionais que ameaçam os direitos e a existência desses povos. À inclusão dos indígenas no debate e na formulação de políticas ao crescimento de Mato Grosso exige romper com paradigmas coloniais e economicistas que ainda permeiam grande parte das ações do Estado e dos setores dominantes da sociedade, desconsiderando as reivindicações históricas dos povos indígenas.

Palavras-chave: Amazônia Legal brasileira. Desenvolvimento Regional. Povos Indígenas. Mato Grosso.

Posibilidades y límites históricos para la inclusión de los pueblos indígenas en el desarrollo regional en el estado de Mato Grosso, Brasil

Resumen

Este ensayo tiene por objetivo discutir las posibilidades y los límites de incorporar a los pueblos indígenas en los procesos de desarrollo del estado de Mato Grosso, inserto en la Amazonía Legal brasileña. Para ello, se realiza una digresión histórica que revisita el período colonial, cuando el eurocentrismo negó las identidades y los modos de vida de dichos pueblos. Muchos fueron combatidos, esclavizados o incluso exterminados por resistirse a la opresión. En la contemporaneidad, el capitalismo neoliberal globalizado impone valores de mercado y patrones homogéneos de consumo y de desarrollo, perpetuando la violencia contra los pueblos indígenas no solo en sus dimensiones física y psicológica, sino también mediante dispositivos legales e institucionales que amenazan sus derechos y su propia existencia. La inclusión de los indígenas en el debate y en la formulación de políticas para el crecimiento de Mato Grosso exige romper con paradigmas coloniales y economicistas que aún permean gran parte de las acciones del Estado y de los sectores dominantes de la sociedad, los cuales desconsideran las reivindicaciones históricas de los pueblos indígenas.

Palabras clave: Amazonía Legal brasileña; Desarrollo regional; Pueblos indígenas; Mato Grosso.

1 Introduction

Identifying and understanding the historical possibilities and limits of regional development processes in the state of Mato Grosso—situated within Brazil's Legal Amazon—first requires acknowledging the cultural diversity that exists across this territory. That acknowledgement is a fundamental condition for building inclusive public policies that take all inhabitants into account, with particular attention to Indigenous peoples.

Even where the historical possibility of building a plural, differentiated space is evident, it is essential to consider the constraints imposed by long-term historical processes. First, one can identify elements forged in the context of the colonization of the Americas, which relegated Indigenous nations to subordinate roles: at times as an enslaved labor force, at times as enemies to be fought, and at others as obstacles to so-called "progress." Second, original peoples were historically treated as inferior, within an evolutionist logic that prescribed their forced assimilation into the dominant culture (Quijano, 2000).

At the same time, throughout Brazil's political history, the hegemonic idea persisted that Indigenous people should be integrated into national society, which in practice implied the disappearance of their autonomous forms of existence. Finally, Brazil has been—and remains—embedded in transnational economic and financial dynamics that condition public policies and development strategies to the interests of external actors, reinforcing a subordinate position.

Against this backdrop, Indigenous peoples have historically had no real alternatives within the project steered by elites—military, religious, cultural, and economic—other than resistance. Both the colonial project and the national project systematically excluded them. This raises a fundamental question: *is it possible to conceive and implement another development model that encompasses all inhabitants without distinction, while respecting sociocultural and identity differences as well as environmental limits—elements that are essential to a more inclusive and sustainable civilizational process?*

In Mato Grosso today, there is the predominance of a regional development project oriented by hegemonic neoliberal premises. This model privileges the interests of international markets—particularly in the export of agricultural commodities and mineral extraction—often at the expense of the destruction of shared natural goods and the forced homogenization of local populations.

Any proposal to build an alternative model of regional development must therefore begin by recognizing that Indigenous peoples have inhabited Mato Grosso since time immemorial, long before its establishment as the Captaincy of Mato Grosso in 1748. Valuing this ancestry is an indispensable condition for imagining fairer, more sustainable, and genuinely democratic pathways.

Although Mato Grosso enjoys national and international recognition as one of Brazil's foremost commodity exporters—especially soy—this reality coexists with a series of historical, social, and territorial contradictions. In parallel with this economic development model, it is necessary to understand how the actions of federal and state governments have acted—and continue to act— in formulating and implementing

public policies that have affected—and continue to affect—the Indigenous peoples who inhabit Mato Grosso.

It is therefore necessary to ask how these peoples identify themselves and what their main demands are. Equally essential is to ask how the State and non-Indigenous society perceive and treat them. Pursuing pathways to understand the regional development processes and projects in Mato Grosso requires making explicit the historical, social, cultural, and economic elements forged amid tension, violence, and exclusion. Historically, before being recognized as legitimate subjects with rights to territory and self-determination, Indigenous peoples were treated—with the State's endorsement and direct action—as obstacles to development, to be removed to peripheral areas. This logic put the very survival of numerous peoples—such as the Ikpeng, Tapirapé, Tapayuna, and Xavante, among others—at risk.

This essay therefore reflects on the historical limits and possibilities of promoting a regional development project in Mato Grosso that equitably encompasses all its inhabitants—especially Indigenous peoples. In that regard, what challenges are posed by the hegemonic model of territorial occupation and economic exploitation?

To answer this question, the text first offers a synthesis of the historical process that shaped Mato Grosso's space. It then analyses how public authorities, through the legal framework and public policies, have structured their relationships with Indigenous peoples.

The subsequent section gives visibility to the subjects generically identified as "Indians" of Mato Grosso—more than four dozen distinct peoples whose forms of existence and territorialities are continually strained by the advance of capitalist economic frontiers. This encompasses the expansion of agribusiness and mining, electricity generation, the construction of highways and railways, and urbanization—territorial demands that encroach upon traditional environments and undermine biodiversity.

Finally, the essay seeks to contribute to the debate on regional development from an ethical-epistemic perspective centered on the socio-territorial rights of Indigenous peoples. The goal is to go beyond merely institutional or economistic approaches and to argue that, to date, no model of regional development can truly be considered inclusive in Mato Grosso.

2 The Formation of Mato Grosso

Even before being elevated to the status of a Captaincy in 1748—and still under Spanish domain—the region that corresponds to today's state of Mato Grosso had already been the target of expeditions by bandeirantes from São Paulo. They penetrated the territory to capture and enslave Indigenous populations and to search for minerals and so-called "backlands goods."

Covering 1,477,041 km²—an area that historically included what are now the states of Rondônia and Mato Grosso do Sul—Mato Grosso was definitively incorporated into the Portuguese Crown with the signing of the Treaty of Madrid in 1750. Occupation

and use of this territory unfolded along three main axes: strengthening frontier defense in the face of Spanish designs; exploiting Indigenous labor—formally prohibited after the Treaty yet persisting in Brazil; and extracting mineral wealth, especially gold and diamonds.

This historical process not only disorganized and fragmented many Indigenous peoples but also led to their annihilation, while imposing a new pattern of settlement based on European models and on state and private territorial appropriation. Regarded as inhospitable and unsafe, though potentially rich in minerals and Indigenous labor, the region consolidated itself as a dangerous frontier zone. Even so, it was seen as a viable alternative for the "poor white men of the realm," as Siqueira, Costa, and Carvalho (1990) point out.

Despite Brazil's Independence in 1822, the Golden Law of 1888, and the Proclamation of the Republic in 1889, Indigenous populations in Mato Grosso continued to be treated either as enemies to be eliminated or as inferior subjects to be subjected to "civilizing" processes. They were also perceived as obstacles to progress and were often removed from their territories through ongoing processes of deterritorialization. Although there are records of more forceful Indigenous resistance up to the mid-twentieth century, such movements did not prevent the extermination of a large share of the original peoples who inhabited the region during Portuguese conquest and colonization (Mendes, 2012).

The appropriation of Indigenous territories and shared natural goods can be understood through Harvey's (2004) concept of dispossession. Both as a province and later as a state, Mato Grosso was structured upon a subalternized Indigenous population and a small landowning elite, supported by large-landed estates, slavery, and the exploitation of local labor (Siqueira, 1997).

In 1910, Brazil instituted the Indian Protection and Settlement of National Workers Service (SPILTN), delegating to the states responsibility for demarcating land and protecting Indigenous populations. In Mato Grosso, however—marked by the dominance of coronelismo tied to land exploitation and labor under conditions analogous to slavery—this process was rife with violations. According to Siqueira (1997), the state witnessed systematic exterminations, the usurpation of Indigenous territories, and later the sale of those lands to private parties.

In the 1930s, with the Estado Novo (1937) and the consequent weakening of regional oligarchies, Mato Grosso was inserted into President Getúlio Vargas's national integration project. The state was conceived as strategic for supplying food to Brazil's South and Southeast and as a destination for migrant farmers, given the vastness of lands not yet incorporated into the capitalist productive logic. Agrarian modernization and colonization processes were crucial to this plan.

This project—called the Marcha para o Oeste (March to the West)—was justified based on the need to "occupy a 'great demographic void' and unite the national territory on a political and economic basis"[1] (Castrillón Fernández, 2007, p. 146). As Otávio

[1] Translated by the authors. Source text: ocupar o 'grande vazio demográfico' e unificar política e economicamente o território nacional.

Guilherme Velho (2009, p. 138) notes in *Capitalismo autoritário e campesinato* [Authoritarian Capitalism and the Peasantry], Vargas's rhetoric made explicit the ideological foundations of this policy, linking territorial development, national security, and the social control of rural populations.

> To clarify the idea, I must tell you that Brazil, politically, is a unity. Everyone speaks the same language, everyone shares the same historical tradition, and all would be capable of sacrificing themselves in defense of their territory. Considering it an indivisible unity, no Brazilian would ever admit the possibility of yielding even an inch of this land, which is the very blood and flesh of their body. But while politically Brazil is a unity, economically it is not. From this perspective, it resembles an archipelago made up of a few islands interspersed with empty spaces. The islands have already reached a high level of economic and industrial development, and their political borders coincide with their economic frontiers. However, vast unpopulated spaces remain, which have not attained the necessary climate for renewal, due to the lack of a whole series of "elementary measures" [...] On the day that all these elements are made available, the empty spaces will be populated. We will then have demographic density and industrial development. In this way, the "March to the West" program is the continuation of the campaign of the builders of nationality, the bandeirantes and the backwoodsmen, now integrated with modern cultural processes[2] (Vargas, 1940, p. 31).

Once again, the region's Indigenous peoples—around fifty groups—were disregarded as legitimate rights-holders (Castrillón Fernández, 2007). During the Estado Novo and its integrationist policy, the Roncador-Xingu Expedition and the creation of the Brazil Central Foundation—both led by the Villas Bôas brothers—stood out. Although these initiatives primarily sought to install infrastructure and urban nuclei in the region, they also entailed direct contact with Indigenous peoples, the clearing of traditional territories, and the forced relocation of populations, paving the way for agrarian frontier expansion.

After World War II, the world was consolidated into two antagonistic political-military blocs: the United States and the Soviet Union. Brazil, aligned with the U.S. since the war, adopted—subordinately—the development model proposed by the Americans. This model categorized countries as developed (industrialized), developing

[2] Translated by the authors. Source text: Para bem esclarecer a ideia, devo dizer-vos que o Brasil, politicamente, é uma unidade. Todos falam a mesma língua, todos têm a mesma tradição histórica e todos seriam capazes de se sacrificar pela defesa do seu território. Considerando-a uma unidade indivisível, nenhum brasileiro admitiria a hipótese de ser cedido um palmo desta terra, que é o sangue e a carne do seu corpo. Mas se politicamente o Brasil é uma unidade, não o é economicamente. Sob este aspecto assemelha-se a um arquipélago formado por algumas ilhas, entremeadas de espaços vazios. As ilhas já atingiram alto grau de desenvolvimento econômico e industrial e as suas fronteiras políticas coincidem com as fronteiras econômicas. Continuam, entretanto, os vastos espaços despovoados, que não atingiram o necessário clima renovador, pela falta de toda uma série de 'medidas elementares' [...] No dia em que dispuserem todos esses elementos, os espaços vazios se povoarão. Teremos densidade demográfica e desenvolvimento industrial. Deste modo, o programa de "Rumo ao Oeste" é o reatamento da campanha dos construtores da nacionalidade, dos bandeirantes e dos sertanistas, com a integração dos modernos processos de cultura.

(producers and exporters of raw materials), and underdeveloped. In this geopolitical framework, Brazil was positioned as a strategic supplier of food and minerals.

It was in this context that Law No. 1,806 of January 6, 1953, created the Legal Amazon region. This new territorial demarcation encompassed the states of Pará and Amazonas; the then federal territories of Acre, Amapá, Guaporé, and Rio Branco; as well as parts of Mato Grosso north of the 16th parallel; Goiás north of the 13th parallel; and Maranhão west of the 44th meridian. The law's central objectives included:

> Art.7. a) to promote the development of agricultural production [...]; h) to establish a demographic policy that encompasses the physical and social regeneration of the region's populations through food supply, health care, sanitation, education, and instruction; the immigration of population groups most aligned with the interests of the region and of the country; and the settlement of human elements from the region or from other states in selected areas, where they may establish permanent rural nuclei and develop economic production; l) to encourage private capital to engage in initiatives aimed at developing regional wealth, including in mixed-capital enterprises or in partnership with public agencies committed to carrying out projects under the Amazon Economic Valorization Plan [3] (BRAZIL, 1953, Law No. 1,806 of 01/06/1953).

Although not all initial goals were implemented, the law opened space for regional occupation without regard for original populations. At the same time, Brazil's regionalization consolidated as a strategic instrument of territorial planning.

Between 1956 and 1961, under President Juscelino Kubitschek, state planning took concrete form via the Targets Plan, which set development guidelines for energy, transportation, food, basic industry, and education. Its flagship project was the construction of Brasília, which—according to Lafer (1975)—symbolized the interiorization of the country's modernization.

Mato Grosso was unilaterally incorporated into this national project and institutionalized as a recipient territory for colonization initiatives. Between the 1940s and 1960s, roughly thirty colonization nuclei were created in the region, twenty-three of them in what is now Mato Grosso (Moreno, 2005). This period established the legal and institutional conditions for private land appropriation, enabling their acquisition often in large tracts reserved for future negotiations: "the legal and institutional conditions

[3] Translated by the authors. Source text: Art. 7º. a) promover o desenvolvimento da produção agrícola [...]; h) estabelecer uma política demográfica que compreenda a regeneração física e social das populações da região pela alimentação a assistência à saúde o saneamento a educação e o ensino; a imigração de correntes de população que mais convenham aos interesses da região e do País, e o agrupamento dos elementos humanos da região ou de outros Estados em áreas escolhidas, onde possam constituir núcleos rurais permanentes e desenvolver a produção econômica; l) incentivar o capital privado ao sentido de interessar iniciativas destinadas ao desenvolvimento de riquezas regionais inclusive em empresas de capital misto ou em consorciação com os órgãos públicos empenhados na realização de empreendimentos constantes do Plano de Valorização Econômica da Amazônia.

necessary for private land appropriation, which had been acquired in large tracts throughout the years and reserved for future negotiations[4]" (Moreno, 2005, p. 193).

With the 1964 civil-military dictatorship, Brazil officially embraced the principle that socioeconomic development depended on growth based on the intensive exploitation of natural resources—land, forests, and minerals. This growth model aligned with the doctrine of national security and an expansionist agricultural policy for frontier regions, reaffirming a centralizing development vision rooted in the Vargas era but intensified under the regime.

In this perspective, the Legal Amazon was framed as strategic, both for settlement and for economic exploitation by corporate and financial groups—domestic and foreign—that benefited from abundant state subsidies and incentives. This dynamic aligns with what Moore and Patel (2018) call access to "cheap nature" and "cheap labor."

In Mato Grosso specifically, during the 1970s and 1980s under the business-military regime, "[…] more than 60% of the vacant public lands within its jurisdiction were federalized as a condition for the federal government's projects in its territory[5]" (Moreno, 2005, p. 39).

Land issues became central to Brazil's territorial conflicts, culminating in the forced removal or extermination of Indigenous peoples to make way for vast estates superimposed upon original territories—as in the cases of the Xavante (Bampi et al., 2017) and Tapayuna (Balan Taborda & Bampi, 2025). Between these extremes—expulsion and extermination—many Indigenous peoples faced marginalization, deterritorialization, and attempted proletarianization, being absorbed as labor into the dominant production model.

Government agencies and private colonization firms orchestrated Amazonian occupation to the detriment of original peoples by demarcating extensive estates that facilitated acquisition by companies linked to extractivism, livestock, agribusiness, and basic industry. Mato Grosso played a strategic role in this process, becoming a key piece in expanding national agricultural and mineral production—often at odds with environmental demands and the human rights of traditional peoples.

With the end of the dictatorship and the worsening crisis of global capitalism, a new geopolitical arrangement—the Washington Consensus—took shape in the late 1980s. It weakened the State's role and expanded global markets, repositioning Brazil as a strategic commodity supplier. Agribusiness advanced over the Cerrado and the Amazon, modernizing, intensifying, and widening the agro-urban-industrial frontier.

At the same time, the National Congress, in a context of redemocratization, enacted the 1988 Federal Constitution. While it expanded civil rights and recognized Indigenous peoples' right to self-representation—ending the regime of state tutelage—

[4] Translated by the authors. Source text: as condições jurídicas e institucionais necessárias à apropriação privada da terra, que foi sendo adquirida em grandes extensões ao longo desses anos e reservada para futuras negociações.

[5] Translated by the authors. Source text: mais de 60% das terras devolutas situadas sob sua jurisdição foram federalizadas como condição para a implementação dos empreendimentos idealizados para o seu território pelo Governo Federal.

it also reinforced the interests of agrarian elite, especially the landowning oligarchies historically responsible for the usurpation of indigenous territories, by reasserting private property (Brazil, 1988).

From this constitutional milestone onward, Indigenous political protagonism and mobilization grew—especially around the demarcation of traditionally occupied territories. Yet this movement took place amid the intensification of agribusiness in Mato Grosso, generating tensions between the ideology of "white culture"—tied to economic development and progress—and Indigenous nations, often stigmatized as "backward" and as holding "too much land" that could be exploited for capital.

For Krenak (2019), in *Ideas to Postpone the End of the World*, the notion of progress is intrinsically bound up with the destruction of life and the normalization of inequality and inferiority. In the Mato Grosso case, this historical logic consolidated a relation of estrangement toward Indigenous peoples, who were variously portrayed as naïve, hostile, servile, or obstacles to development. Such symbolic constructions reflect their structural exclusion within a dynamic that neither contemplates them nor recognizes the legitimacy of their life-ways and territorial relations.

3 The Indigenous Question and the Brazilian Legal Framework

When the objective is to build a regional development project that includes all individuals, while respecting their identities, cultures, and histories, it is essential to recognize, first of all, that the formation of Brazil occurred—and still occurs—on the basis of exclusionary social structures. A minority holds financial, economic, land, and political power, while, in contrast, there is a broad majority composed mainly of the inhabitants of the cities, countryside, forests, and waters, inserted within the logic of precarious and proletarianized labor, placed at the margins of bourgeois representative politics.

When addressing Indigenous peoples specifically, it is necessary to highlight that, since the colonial period (beginning in 1500), remaining alive and free has been, for these peoples, a constant challenge of social resistance. As Suchanek (2012) points out, this is a secular and arduous struggle, marked by more than 500 years of efforts toward regaining freedom.

Although they are currently recognized as subjects of rights by the 1988 Federal Constitution, this condition entails not only battles for their very existence, but also the ongoing struggle for recognition of their own identities and cultures. Indigenous peoples still face the perception that they are beings at an inferior stage of evolution, moving toward integration into the "world of the whites" through cultural assimilation. This erasure of identity finds historical support in the Brazilian legal framework, from the first contacts with colonizers, and remains present in various contemporary public policies.

During the colonial period, in a context without its own legal framework, Brazil was governed by Portuguese laws. As evidenced by Tomé de Sousa's Regiment of 1548, there was a directive to persuade Indigenous communities to accept colonization. It was proposed that, by allying themselves with the Portuguese, Indigenous peoples would be protected from plunder and enslavement. The regiment also provided for Christianization through the systematic establishment of mission villages (George, 1982). However, those who resisted colonization or allied themselves with enemies—especially the French—were subjected to subjugation, which, in practice, meant enslavement or elimination under the justification of so-called "just war" (George, 1982).

Indigenous peoples were depicted in an ambiguous and functional way, depending on convenience: sometimes as savages or barbarians, sometimes as the "noble savage," innocent and in harmony with nature; sometimes as gentiles to be converted to the Christian faith; sometimes as labor to be exploited, or as obstacles to the civilizing project and to the idea of progress. Nevertheless, during the administration of the Marquis of Pombal (1759–1777), the formal prohibition of Indigenous enslavement was decreed, and religious tutelage over them was abolished. The villages were transformed into towns, which provoked profound cultural clashes and the physical elimination of many Indigenous people, whether by disease or violent encounters with non-Indigenous people. It should be emphasized that the institution of just war was maintained, and slavery was not universally abolished (Melo; Lima, 2022).

In the imperial period, the policy of acculturation of Indigenous peoples persisted, associated with attempts to make them allies of the State with the goal of

expanding territories through colonizer settlement. This strategy, however, directly entailed the dispossession of Indigenous lands. There was no concern for the recognition of original identities and cultures. On the contrary, all were treated as a "generic Indian," as though they shared the same history and customs, reflecting a Eurocentric and homogenizing perspective.

For "white society," a distinction was made between "civilized Indians" and "uncivilized Indians" (Melo; Lima, 2022). These notions found legal backing, especially in the Missions Regulation (1845) and the Land Law (1850), which revived the policy of village (resettlement in mission villages) and the responsibility of religious authorities for the "pacification" of Indigenous peoples, under the direct oversight of the Empire.

The Land Law of 1850, which replaced the Missions Regulation, established that the only legitimate form of land ownership was by purchase, with the Empire holding title to vacant lands, which could be used for the demarcation of Indigenous lands. Thus, lands came to "[…] serve the interests of the State and the control of Public Authority with regard to the process of colonization and civilization of the autochthonous peoples[6]" (Melo; Lima, 2022, p. 13).

Between 1889 and 1934, the dominant ideology of constructing a national identity disqualified cultures that were not those of European descendants. Regarding Indigenous peoples, there was total omission concerning their rights, including land tenure, which contributed to the expropriation of territories originally occupied by these peoples.

It is worth noting, however, the creation in 1910 of the Indian Protection and Settlement of National Workers Service (SPILTN), which in 1918 was transformed into the Indian Protection Service (SPI). This institution was intended to protect Indigenous peoples from attacks, disease, and labor exploitation, while at the same time displaying the contradictory goal of integrating them, whenever possible, into civilization and progress (Melo; Lima, 2022).

In conducting its protective role, the SPI carried out some demarcations of Indigenous lands. Still under the SPI, Decree No. 5,484 of June 27, 1928 was issued, which classified Indigenous peoples, according to their degree of integration, into the following categories: (1) nomadic Indians; (2) those camped or resettled; (3) those belonging to Indigenous villages; and (4) those belonging to agricultural centers or living "promiscuously" with civilized people (Brazil, Decree No. 5,484/1928). Article 6 of the decree established that Indians of any category who were not fully adapted "[…] shall remain under the tutelage of the State, which shall exercise it according to each one's degree of adaptation, through the inspectors of the Indian Protection and Settlement of National Workers Service[7] […]" (Brazil, Decree No. 5,484/1928).

[6] Translated by the authors. Source text: atender aos interesses do Estado e ao controle do Poder Público frente ao processo de colonização e civilização dos povos autóctones

[7] Translated by the authors. The language of the source text is presented in its original format as set forth in the document under analysis. Source text: ficam sob a tutela do Estado, que a exercerá segundo o gráo de adaptação de cada um, por intermédio dos inspectores do Serviço de Proteção aos Índios e Localização de Trabalhadores Nacionaes.

Article 42 of the decree considered as incorporated into civilized society "[...] and therefore capable of being held accountable for their acts, those Indians who, as attested by the competent inspector, are equivalent to those belonging to agricultural centers[8]" (Brazil, Decree No. 5,484/1928).

The 1934 Constitution, which was in effect for a short time, established in Article 5, item XIX, sub-item "m," the exclusive competence of the Union for the "incorporation of the forest dwellers into the national communion[9]" (Brazil, CF/1934). Article 129 guaranteed that "the possession of lands by forest dwellers permanently located there shall be respected, although they are prohibited from selling them[10]" (Brazil, CF/1934). With the promulgation of the Estado Novo Constitution in 1937, only the Union's competence to guarantee respect for possession of the lands already occupied by Indigenous peoples was maintained (Brazil, CF/1937).

The 1946 Federal Constitution repeated the wording of the 1934 Constitution, reaffirming the State's integrationist stance. Thus, respect for the social organization, customs, languages, beliefs, and traditions of Indigenous peoples, as well as their occupation of territories, was not expressly protected in this text, even though it was considered democratic for its time (Brazil, CF/1946).

A significant milestone in the trajectory of the Brazilian legal framework regarding Indigenous peoples was the creation of the Xingu National Park in 1961 (today the Xingu Indigenous Park), an initiative in which the Villas Bôas brothers played a decisive role, motivated by the gravity of conflicts arising from the expansion of the capitalist frontier. As a result of the migratory currents encouraged by the Brazilian State, conflicts and episodes of violence against Indigenous peoples became increasingly frequent, threatening the extinction of several ethnic groups. In this context, political debate arose regarding the situation of the different Indigenous peoples.

Thus, while seeking to ensure "unblocked" areas for colonization and business enterprises, there was also an attempt to provide a minimum level of protection for Indigenous peoples, preserving spaces in which their culture and identity could be safeguarded. With an area of 2,642,003 hectares and initially sheltering fourteen Indigenous peoples, in 1973 the area was officially transformed into the Xingu Indigenous Park (Decree No. 50,455 of April 14, 1961) (Menezes, 2008). Later, other groups were removed from their lands and relocated to the Park.

Due to the military coup of 1964 and the classification of the Legal Amazon as strategic for the regime's development project, Mato Grosso consolidated the stigma of a demographic void. The national State strongly encouraged the immigration of settlers and the establishment of agribusiness ventures, pressuring Indigenous peoples to integrate into this project. Large infrastructure projects—such as hydroelectric plants,

[8] Translated by the authors. Source text: e, portanto, em condições de responder pelos seus actos, os índios que, conforme attestação do inspetor competente, sejam equiparáveis aos pertencentes aos centros agrícolas.

[9] Translated by the authors. Source text: incorporação dos silvícolas à communhão nacional.

[10] Translated by the authors. Source text: será respeitada a posse de terras de silvícolas que nellas se acharem permanentemente localizados, sendo-lhes, no entanto, vedado alienal-as

mining projects, livestock expansion, and the construction of road corridors—as well as colonization initiatives, endangered the survival of Indigenous populations who resisted the advance of so-called progress and capitalist modernization.

Upon international pressure and the violence of this process, the military regime created, in 1967, the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), replacing the old SPI. The Xingu Indigenous Park became an object of intense propaganda, and in 1973 the Indian Statute was enacted. Despite such policies, the regime's goal was to develop the country economically as a regional power by exploiting the resources of the Legal Amazon, promoting its occupation, infrastructure, and the creation of urban centers. At this time, the prevailing view was that Indigenous peoples should be integrated into national society.

With the end of the military regime (1985) and the democratic opening, the Constituent Assembly was convened, culminating in the promulgation of the 1988 Federal Constitution. Despite the consolidation of conservative forces with respect to property rights and the ideology of development based on economic growth, the Constitution represented progress, recognizing Indigenous peoples more broadly, although still using the generic term "Indians." Thus, in Chapter VIII, Articles 231 and 232 emphasize that:

> **Art. 231.** Indians shall have recognized their social organization, customs, languages, beliefs, and traditions, as well as their original rights over the lands they traditionally occupy, and it is the responsibility of the Union to demarcate them, protect them, and ensure respect for all their property.
> **Art. 232.** Indians, their communities, and organizations are legitimate parties to bring actions in court in defense of their rights and interests, with the Public Prosecutor's Office intervening in all acts of the proceedings[11] (Brazil, Federal Constitution, 1988).

Thus, cultural diversity and the original right to their lands are recognized, recording for the first time in official Brazilian texts the existence of cultural and historical diversity among Indigenous peoples, in addition to affirming that there is no need for state tutelage over their destinies, considering them citizens.

From the 1988 Federal Constitution onward, Indigenous peoples began to develop new forms of struggle and to broaden their political participation in national and international organizations, as well as to create associations and movements aimed at the autonomy of different peoples, the preservation of their cultures, and the pursuit of guarantees for their physical existence, through territorial recognition, the right to health, education, and other rights granted to all Brazilians.

Nevertheless, Brazil remains a socially unequal and unjust country, subordinated to external interests that link development to the expansion of production. Through its

[11] Translated by the authors. Source text: Art. 231 São reconhecidos aos índios sua organização social, costumes, línguas, crenças e tradições, e os direitos originários sobre as terras que tradicionalmente ocupam, competindo à União demarcá-las, proteger e fazer respeitar todos os seus bens. Art. 232 Os índios, suas comunidades e organizações são partes legítimas para ingressar em juízo em defesa de seus direitos e interesses, intervindo o Ministério Público em todos os atos do processo

political and economic elites, there is constant pressure for the advance of agribusiness and mineral extraction, in addition to the implementation of large infrastructure projects, such as hydroelectric plants, highways, railways, and waterways. This situation directly or indirectly affects Indigenous peoples, placing at risk the advances achieved within the legal framework. These developments have mobilized conservative forces that seek to impose their own pace on projects and works in the Amazon, especially in the state of Mato Grosso.

4 Regional Development and Indigenous Participation

Historically, since the arrival of the Portuguese in Brazil, the territory that is now the state of Mato Grosso was already inhabited by diverse Indigenous peoples. In the contact between these cultures, the colonial logic made it explicit that those who did not adhere to the process of exploitation and obedience to a distant sovereign should be persuaded to do so through practices of seduction, or otherwise confronted, which would result in enslavement or physical elimination.

There was also another source of tension in this cultural contact. According to European colonial logic, the original inhabitant was regarded as a "gentile, Indian, inferior person, savage, pagan, yet naïve," which disqualified their condition as subjects with legitimate historical, social, and cultural purposes. In addition, they were seen as a reserve of labor.

Nevertheless, there were reactions and resistance, which divided the Indigenous peoples into two categories: those who would submit to the colonizing project, which implied conversion to the Christian faith, labor exploitation, and reorganization into villages idealized by the "white man," usually military or religious; and those who, by resisting, were to be confronted in the so-called just war, resulting in enslavement and death.

However, this categorical separation was tenuous, as it did not prevent many converts from frequently living under conditions of servitude, nor did it spare them from death, since intercultural contact often decimated entire peoples through diseases to which they had no immunity.

In this process, Indigenous peoples were considered beings at an inferior stage of humanity, a stage that could be overcome through integration and transformation into civilized persons. The ideology of evolution as progress, with the European as the model to be reached, became state policy. As for the territory inhabited by these peoples, it was simultaneously regarded as inhospitable and savage—both in relation to nature and to its inhabitants—or as a demographic void suitable for occupation according to the colonizing model and bearer of modernity.

Following the logic that there was much land for too few people, colonial policy permitted the maximum exploitation of both nature and the labor of local inhabitants. The conviction that Indigenous peoples should be integrated into this process, thereby paving the way for civilization, was present throughout the colonial, imperial, and republican periods, lasting until nearly the end of the twentieth century. This conviction

was embedded both in Brazilian legal frameworks and in the political and economic discourses and actions of national elites. It also spread into popular sectors, which absorbed the official discourse, a situation facilitated by the ethnocentric character of those who held European culture.

With the so-called Citizen Constitution of 1988, this discourse was removed from the legal framework, allowing for advances for Indigenous peoples, who began to find spaces for self-organization and collective demands in favor of the recognition of their identities, the demarcation of their territories, and the protection of their lives and cultures. Yet history has left deep scars in this process. Moreover, globalized capitalism, by imposing itself universally and contributing to the social, cultural, and economic complexity of the world, seeks to subject both nature and all people to the same logic of profit maximization.

In this context, Indigenous peoples are pressured by two historical fronts: to resist the transformative and disaggregating advance promoted by capital, or to preserve their cultures despite the real influence of the capitalist (market) world, which places them in direct confrontation with the so-called modern world.

In the state of Mato Grosso, this tension is exacerbated, since the advance of the maximum occupation of the territory in favor of the export market, whether through agribusiness or mineral exploitation, proceeds rapidly. In this sense, conceptions of development—a concept highly valued in the post–World War II Western world—come into dispute.

The pressing question is: in the face of the advance of globalizing capitalism in all spaces, is it possible to speak of regional development that contemplates Indigenous peoples residing in the state of Mato Grosso in a socially just and equitable manner?

Initially, it is important to emphasize, as Silveira (2020) points out, that the concept of regional development is disputed between those who defend the primacy of economic growth as the driver of social well-being and those who consider it necessary to link to this process elements such as territoriality and endogenous processes, taking into account human conditions such as culture, personal satisfaction, access to public goods, and respect for environmental preservation, among other aspects often not quantifiable.

In this regard, it is possible to affirm that regional development is a concept under construction (Silveira, 2020). Nevertheless, despite differing understandings, it is argued that regional development consists of a process of structural change located within a given territory and

> [...] such a process of change must be understood as the systematic transformation of the regional territory into a collective subject; the strengthening of civil society and the attainment of a sense of regional belonging; and the removal of every type of barrier that prevents the people who inhabit the region from achieving their full realization as human beings and from exercising their full rights as citizens[12] (Silveira, 2020, p. 41).

[12] Translated by the authors. Source text: tal processo de mudança deve se entender como a transformação sistemática do território regional em um sujeito coletivo; o fortalecimento da sociedade

It is further emphasized that such requirements must be grounded "[...] in the culture, in nature, and in the ethical-ideological values of the regional territory[13]" (Silveira, 2020, p. 41). For Krenak (2019), there is a need for a new paradigm of development centered on *buen vivir* (good living), reciprocity, and the plurality of possible worlds, that is, one that encompasses sociocultural diversity.

Thus, in seeking perspectives for the construction of regional development processes in Mato Grosso, situated in the Legal Amazon—which gives it unique environmental, social, cultural, and economic characteristics—it is necessary to make explicit some particularities of this space. Since the colonial period in Brazil, the territory that is now the state of Mato Grosso has been relegated, by the central government, to a functional role in projects involving territorial demarcation policies (border areas), economic projects (labor reserves and mineral resources), and population strategies (areas to be occupied by migrants, mostly poor, and especially peasants).

From the military governments (1964–1985) onward, the state's territory, while still maintaining its functional role, now on an international scale, came to be considered strategic for the national project of integrating the country into the globalized circuit of capital. Land exploitation became the condition for this process (Arantes, 2012). A territorial rearrangement was established, driven by the State, which facilitated the entry of national and international capital through public policies, organized migratory processes induced by colonization projects, and promoted the construction of basic infrastructure to support both occupation and capitalist exploitation.

Old Indigenous inhabitants, riverine populations, extractivists, and other traditional peoples of the forest and waters came to be regarded as obstacles to the national developmentalist project. As an alternative, they were offered the option of integration into the new model proposed. Despite resistance, the process of removal was carried out, provoking mass deterritorialization, leaving only a few enclaves in this vast territory.

With the advent of re-democratization, beginning in the late 1980s, popular forces organized themselves and sought to secure space in the political, social, and economic spheres of the country. Urban and rural workers, men and women, forest, rural, and riverine peoples mobilized, exerting pressure for the establishment of social and political rights.

In this context, traditional forest peoples, particularly Indigenous populations, were able to garner national and international support for their struggles: the right to the land they originally occupied, the recognition of their cultures and identities, and the achievement of citizenship status, with all rights, without tutelage and without the obligation to integrate into "white culture." They were also able to give voice and body to an agenda of demands, although the State's response time remains slow and,

civil e a obtenção de uma percepção de pertença regional e a remoção de toda a classe de barreiras que impeçam as pessoas que habitam a região de alcançar sua plena realização como pessoa humana e poder exercer seus direitos plenos de cidadão

[13] Translated by the authors. Source text: na cultura, na natureza e nos valores ético-ideológicos do território regional.

depending on governmental direction, often neglectful in the face of numerous situations of socio-environmental and socio-territorial injustice.

Nevertheless, within this process, global capitalism intensified, more sharply defining a functional international division between wealthy countries, with robust industrial and service hubs, and peripheral countries, producers primarily of commodities linked to agribusiness and mineral extraction. The state of Mato Grosso was decisively incorporated into this model, with the adherence of the national political and economic elite (Arantes, 2012).

Within this dynamic, two political fronts advanced and became conflictive: the achievement of Indigenous peoples' rights and the advance of the capitalist frontier, especially driven by agribusiness. Both lay claim to their territorialization, but in divergent ways.

With a territorial area of 903,208.36 km²—the third largest Brazilian state—and a population of 3,658,649 inhabitants distributed across 142 municipalities, Mato Grosso encompasses the Pantanal, Cerrado, and Amazon biomes. Of the total population, 87% reside in urban areas and 13% in rural areas (IBGE, 2025). Of this total, 58,231 people identify as belonging to Indigenous peoples. According to the 2022 Census, 82.66% of these individuals live in rural areas and 17.34% in urban areas. The same Census further indicates that 73% live in Indigenous Lands (IBGE, 2025).

According to data from the National Foundation of Indigenous Peoples (FUNAI), there are 81 registered Indigenous lands in the state of Mato Grosso, at different stages—surveyed, under study, declared, ratified, and regularized—totaling an approximate area of 202,500 km², equivalent to 22.42% of the state's territory (FUNAI, 2025). However, it is important to highlight that FUNAI's recognition of the territorial rights of Indigenous peoples has not translated into effective and consolidated guarantees. Actions in the National Congress and in the Brazilian judiciary, on the part of conservative economic and political forces—linked to the far right of the country's agribusiness elite—have challenged Indigenous peoples' right to the lands they traditionally occupy.

The failure to ensure or the contestation of Indigenous peoples' rights to land—a condition essential to the construction of their territorialities, a vital process for the preservation of their lives, cultures, histories, and identities—has historically constituted an obstacle to Indigenous survival itself and to their sociocultural reproduction.

The importance of such recognition is justified insofar as territory "[...] is a condition for the life of Indigenous peoples, not only in the sense of a material good or factor of production, but as the environment in which all forms of life are developed[14]" (Luciano, 2006, p. 101). Thus, it is from the territory—which represents the cultural totality of a people—that "[...] the possibility and meaning of individual and collective life are built and guaranteed. Land is also a fundamental factor of resistance for

[14] Translated by the authors. Source text: é condição para a vida dos povos indígenas, não somente no sentido de um bem material ou fator de produção, mas como o ambiente em que se desenvolvem todas as formas de vida.

Indigenous peoples[15]" (Luciano, 2006, p. 101). Territory also constitutes the reference for unification, articulation, and mobilization of all. Therefore, denying land to Indigenous peoples amounts to denying them their very existence.

Regarding land (or territory), there is a set of constitutive elements such as fauna, flora, soil, waters, relief, and climate, through which they conceive the world, space, time, and their forms of development according to their cosmovisions, which, in particular, consider nature as a subject of rights, as well as common natural goods, as Krenak (2019) affirms.

It is also important to highlight that, in the processes of recognizing Indigenous territoriality, it must be considered that in Mato Grosso multiple Indigenous nations coexist, as shown in Table 1. This implies the need to take into account, in regional planning, cultural diversity, under the risk of promoting an improper generalization, since each people carries its own epistemologies, ontologies, and sociocultural practices, in addition to inhabiting distinct biomes and biogeographic realities.

Table 1: Indigenous Peoples of Mato Grosso

	Ethnicity	**Linguistic Family**
01	Apiaká	Tupi-Guarani
02	Apurinã	Aruak-maipure
03	Arara do Rio Branco	Arara
04	Aweti	Aweti
05	Bakairi	Karib
06	Balatiponé (Umutina)	Bororo
07	Boe (Bororo)	Bororo
08	Chiquitano	Chiquito
09	Cinta Larga	Mondé
10	Enawenê-nawê	Aruak
11	Guató	Guató
12	Ikpeng	Karib
13	Iny Karajá	Karajá
14	Irantxe Manoki	Irantxe
15	Kalapalo	Karib
16	Kamaiurá	Tupi-Guarani
17	Kanela do Araguaia	Timbira
18	Kawaiwete (Kaiabi)	Tupi-Guarani
19	Khisêtiê	Jê
20	Krenak	Krenak
21	Kuikuro	Karib
22	Matipu	Karib
23	Mebengokre (Kayapó)	Jê
24	Mehinako	Aruak
25	Menky Manoki	Irantxe
26	Nahukuá	Karib

[15] Translated by the authors. Source text: a possibilidade e o sentido da vida individual e coletiva. A terra é também um fator fundamental de resistência dos povos indígenas.

27	Nambikwara	Nambikwara
28	Naruvotu	Karib
29	Panará	Jê
30	Paresi	Aruak
31	Piripkura	Tupi-Guarani
32	Rikbaktsa	Rikbaktsa
33	Surui Paiter	Mondé
34	Tapayuna	Jê
35	Tapirapé	Tupi-Guarani
36	Terena	Aruak
37	Trumai	Trumai
38	Wauja	Aruak
39	Xavante	Jê
40	Yawalapiti	Aruak
41	Yudia	Juruna
42	Zoró	Mondé

Source: ISA, 2018. Organized by the authors, 2025.

The list presented in Table 1 may not be precise, as it is recognized that there are isolated peoples with whom it has not yet been possible to establish contact. It should also be emphasized that the listed peoples belong to distinct ethnicities and linguistic families, which implies their own cosmovisions, histories, cultures, and beliefs.

Since the 1988 Constitution, these peoples have begun to demand, in an organized manner, a common agenda, demonstrating that, despite their differences, it is possible to share convergent perspectives. However, the projects labeled as *developmentalist*, stemming from both military and civilian governments, which prioritize the region's economic growth through the intensive exploitation of nature and the implementation of large infrastructure works (such as roads and hydroelectric plants), have exerted pressure on these peoples, both in regard to their right to land and in the attempt to integrate them into the productive and consumerist circuit of capitalist society.

This pressure for integration into the world of consumption manifests itself in various ways: the leasing of land for farming and cattle ranching; invasions of Indigenous territories aimed at the illegal extraction of minerals, timber, and fish; and pressure in the National Congress both to prevent land demarcation and to open these areas to exploitation with Indigenous participation. Furthermore, contact with the urban world has led, especially among Indigenous youth, to their insertion into the consumerist universe.

The advance of capitalism in rural areas, on the one hand, provides economic dynamism to the state, but on the other hand, exerts pressure on the Indigenous world in multiple ways. In 2024, Mato Grosso registered a herd of 31.52 million head of cattle (Lennon, 2025), indicating that some Indigenous peoples already lease their lands to non-Indigenous ranchers. It should be noted that, in many cases, this situation arises from the fact that several Indigenous peoples reconquered their territories only to find them

degraded, due to prior deforestation and the extensive insertion of pastures resulting from illegal appropriation, land grabbing, agriculture, or mining.

Soy cultivation, the predominant activity in agribusiness in Mato Grosso, has an estimated area planted for the 2024/25 harvest of 12.66 million hectares and a production of 50.34 million tons, destined primarily for the international market (Imea, 2025). These figures impact and contribute to the fact that public authorities, allied with large-scale agriculture, link regional development projects to the expansion of these indices, which results in greater territorial pressure and substantial alterations to the cultures of these peoples. Records already exist of Indigenous people leasing their lands for soybean cultivation.

The state government, on the other hand, responsible for directing public policies in Mato Grosso and in alignment with the federal government, while expressing commitments to social development and environmental sustainability, also declares its objective of "being among the three states with the greatest market potential[16]" (Mato Grosso, 2024).

These commitments, materialized in political and economic actions, have triggered warnings and mobilized Indigenous peoples, since tensions and conflicts manifest themselves in daily life. At an event called the *Acampamento Terra Livre de Mato Grosso* (Free Land Camp of Mato Grosso), held in April 2023 with the representation of 24 Indigenous ethnic groups, whose theme was "The lack of public policies aimed at the interests of the Indigenous Peoples of Mato Grosso," the agenda highlighted issues related to "[...] educational policies, health, land demarcation, the right to free, prior, and informed consultation, territorial security, mining, environmental issues, zoning, and hydroelectric enterprises[17]" (Acampamento Terra Livre de MT, 2023, p. 1).

It was emphasized that Indigenous peoples wish to participate, with protagonism, in decisions that affect their lives; they do not place themselves apart from Mato Grosso society and want to contribute, especially in issues related to the environment, while making explicit their firm determination

> [...] to continue fighting, in memory of our ancestors and for the *buen vivir* of present and future generations of our peoples, for the guarantee and protection of our fundamental rights, of our identity and our territories, and of everything that sustains the conditions for our physical, cultural, and spiritual existence. If necessary, we will give our lives to defend what we have conquered and preserved to this day, after many losses and much blood shed by those who preceded us in these struggles[18] (Acampamento Terra Livre de Mato Grosso, 2023, p. 5).

[16] Translated by the authors. Source text: estar entre os três estados com o melhor potencial de mercado.
[17] Translated by the authors. Source text: políticas educacionais, saúde, demarcação de terras, direito à consulta livre, prévia e informada, segurança territorial, mineração, questões ambientais, zoneamento e empreendimentos hidrelétricos.
[18] Translated by the authors. Source text: de continuar lutando, em memória de nossos ancestrais e pelo bem viver das atuais e futuras gerações dos nossos povos, pela garantia e proteção de nossos direitos fundamentais, da nossa identidade e dos nossos territórios e tudo que sustenta as condições para a nossa existência física, cultural e espiritual. Se preciso for, daremos a nossa vida para defender o que conquistamos e preservamos até hoje, após muitas perdas e muito sangue dos que nos antecederam nestas lutas

It is observed, therefore, that a regional development project for Mato Grosso requires a firm and coherent stance from the public authorities, one that is not limited to economic rationality but also incorporates an environmental rationality and an ecology of peoples, as proposed by Leff (1994), oriented toward the common good of all inhabitants of the state in its multiple dimensions.

However, global capitalism exerts strong appeal, particularly over holders of political and economic power, which jeopardizes any consensual project that respects the position of Indigenous peoples. Mato Grosso has a vast territory, and even environmental projects linked to the market face difficulties in being implemented in the face of the intensive advance of land exploitation in the state.

In this context, it is incumbent upon Indigenous peoples to resist and claim spaces in public policies, joining with many other excluded groups in a regional development project that recognizes them as protagonists. For this, the State must recognize them as legitimate and original inhabitants of Mato Grosso, and consequently as holders of the rights to land, to their cultures, to their spiritual forms, and to the right to live as peoples with their own identity, who necessarily need their territories in sustainable ecological conditions.

Final Considerations

In questioning regional development projects for the state of Mato Grosso, situated within Brazil's Legal Amazon, that take into account resident Indigenous peoples, while understanding their possibilities and limits, it becomes clear that it is necessary to recognize that, historically, for more than 500 years, there has been a violent process that decimated, disqualified, and distorted these peoples. Therefore, there is a historical debt in the regional context.

The attempt to integrate them into the way of life of the "civilized white man," inserting them into an evolutionist scale as inferior ethnicities, contributed to the fact that a considerable portion of society perceives them to this today either as backward beings or as holders of many privileges, particularly the notion of "too much land for too few people," a situation exacerbated today by the far-right political agenda, which seeks to gain popularity through dishonest discourse.

At the same time, the economic model guiding Mato Grosso, based on export-oriented agribusiness, exerts predatory pressure on nature and, consequently, challenges the right to territory and self-determination of the more than 40 ethnic groups that inhabit the state. For these peoples, the environment—comprising land, climate, forests, fauna, flora, water bodies, and ichthyofauna—in its original ecosystemic condition is indispensable, requiring a self-sustaining balance.

Nevertheless, global movements of resistance to the hegemonic model of unsustainable production have contributed to amplifying the voices of Indigenous peoples and traditional communities, who propose a way of life distinct from the economic and financial circuit of global capitalism. This position derives precisely from

their significant ecological contributions to overcoming the environmental crisis and the climate emergency evident in our time.

It is recognized, however, that the consumerist and monetized model of life has seduced many Indigenous individuals, which represents a risk to their ancestral cultures and to the values that sustain the collective life and common well-being of their communities.

Thus, envisioning paths for the construction and promotion of regional development in Mato Grosso, aimed at the full human and social realization of the groups that inhabit the region, requires political will to establish a new foundation for the relationship between non-Indigenous society and Indigenous peoples in their diversity. Such an undertaking must seek the full exercise of citizenship, the right to life, food sovereignty, a balanced environment, security, health, education, and housing. Furthermore, it must guarantee the full right to exercise self-determination as peoples and uphold the cultural, ethical, social, and spiritual values of each of them.

It is also necessary to consider that these peoples have ways of life that integrate, without subdivisions, coexistence and cooperation with nature, the material world, and the spiritual world. Therefore, the recognition and respect for Indigenous rights are *sine qua non* conditions for the possibility of building a regional development project that includes them. In this sense, it is imperative that the State, without exercising tutelage, ensures the civil rights of these peoples, as it is obligated to do with any other social groups or citizens. To this end, the promotion of public policies that recognize, value, and promote the well-being of all, without distinction, is essential, necessary, and possible.

Moreover, it is up to the public authorities to confront predatory practices that destabilize social life, Indigenous territories, and their surroundings, such as the pressure of agribusiness and large infrastructure projects, as well as to combat the violent social and political practices that demean them.

It is recognized, however, that in the Mato Grosso context there is a political and economic commitment by public authorities to a development model asymmetrically based on economic growth associated with global capital, toward which the State directs its attention. Historically, there is evidence that the favoring of a few to the detriment of the majority reduces the possibility of a development that includes Indigenous faces and voices and gives them effective recognition. Thus, proposing and promoting regional development projects that consider the Indigenous nations of Mato Grosso requires a new agenda—citizen, ethical, political, economic, epistemic-educational, ontological-environmental, and cultural. This agenda must rely fundamentally on Indigenous protagonism, but also on the collaboration and substantial support of that portion of Brazilian and global society committed to inclusion, socio-environmental justice, and the sustainability of these peoples' eco-socio-economy.

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