

Que terra sem homens?

The Brazilian Government's Failed Policies in Amazonia

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The Roosevelt-Rondon Scientific Expedition
Photo Credit: Answers.com

Thesis Statement

The positivist, developmentist, and nationalist top-down policies implemented by the Brazilian Government during the Old Republic, Estado Novo, and military regime periods failed to incorporate Amazonia into the rest of Brazil. This caused significant harm to both the peoples and ecosystems of the vast territory.



Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil
Photo Credit: Claudia Vincenti

The Rondon Era

- ◆ Candido Mariano da Silva Rondon (1865-1958) was given charge of integrating Amazonia into the rest of Brazil and assimilating the indigenous tribes in the area into modern Brazilian culture.
- ◆ Because of his Positivist ideology, Rondon believed that he could protect indigenous rights while convincing the traditional people to embrace the Brazilian state and meet the development demands of the Brazilian Government.
- ◆ Rondon failed to both protect indigenous rights and develop Amazonia in the way the Brazilian elite thought was necessary. After his death, his Indian Protection Service was charged with committing atrocities against the indigenous population..



Homes in Rio Negro Region, Amazonas, Brazil
Photo Credit: Abel S. Delgado

The Developmentist Era

- ◆ Convinced of a national security threat and eager to join the “developed world,” the military regime (1964-1985) was determined to rapidly develop Amazonia's economy..
- ◆ The regime and its foreign donors funded an expansive highway system and encouraged the migration of millions of Brazilians to Amazonia's “land without people.”
- ◆ The massive migration, road construction, land speculation, and cattle ranching that resulted from government policies gravely deforested much of Amazonia without improving the standards of living for the region's original inhabitants.

Findings

The interventions by the federal government into Amazonia throughout most of the 20th Century did not improve the lives of the region's original inhabitants. The government wanted to assimilate an unwilling people and was unable to do so. When that failed, they flooded Amazonia with migrants, only making matters worse. With the democratization and democratic consolidation of Brazil, there is hope that the concerns of Amazonia's people will finally be addressed.



Manaus Skyline, Amazonas, Brazil
Photo Credit: Claudia Vincenti



Caboclo Man in Rio Negro Region, Amazonas, Brazil
Photo Credit: Abel S. Delgado

The Idea of Latin America

- ◆ Like much of Latin America, Brazil is incredibly diverse and not a single cultural entity.
- ◆ Like its neighbors, the Brazilian Government attempted to assimilate traditional peoples and establish a unified nation.
- ◆ Instead of assimilation, traditional people should be incorporated into the national identity.



Highway through Amazonas, Brazil
Photo Credit: Abel S. Delgado

Personal Connection

- ◆ Studied abroad at the Federal University of Amazonas in Manaus, AM, Brazil
- ◆ Functionally trilingual and tri-literate
- ◆ Pursuing graduate studies in comparative law and the democratization and democratic consolidation of Latin America
- ◆ Interested in working for international NGOs in Brazil