Indigenous Peoples and Territorialities in Latin America: Where Are We Going?

Critical Perspectives on Rights, Climate Change, Extractivism, and the Amazon

The territorial rights of indigenous peoples in Latin America constitute a central issue in the contemporary scenario, where the interaction between economic development, environmental conservation, and cultural diversity poses significant challenges (Eichler & Navarro, 2023; Teresinha Milani, 2023; Velasco-Ortiz, 2022). This multidimensional analysis is framed within a context where the voices of diverse indigenous, Afro-descendant, and rural communities rise to address urgent issues affecting their territories and ways of life (Espejo, 2023; Vadi, 2020).

From a critical geography perspective, the interrelationships between territorial rights, climate change, extractivism, and socio-environmental conflicts in the Amazon are examined (Domingues & Sauer, 2023; Fuchs, 2023). Understanding these dynamics requires a comprehensive approach that values traditional knowledge and promotes sustainable and just alternatives (Aldrich, 2023).

In this context, we highlight the importance of the principle of prior consultation and free, prior, and informed consent as an essential aspect in any process affecting indigenous territories (Montambeault & Papillon, 2023). This principle recognizes the voice and autonomy of indigenous communities in decision-making processes that impact their lives and environments.

Extractivism in Latin America emerges as a complex phenomenon that demands a critical evaluation of its socio-environmental and economic impacts (Milanez & Garcia, 2023). The concentration of economic power in the hands of political and economic elites has generated conflicts and human rights violations, underscoring the need for alternatives that prioritize environmental sustainability and social justice (Streule, 2023).

On the other hand, climate change intensifies the vulnerabilities of marginalized communities, exacerbating competition for natural resources and accentuating socio-economic inequalities (Ruiz, 2022). Adaptation to climate change requires recognition and valorization of the traditional knowledge of local communities, as well as policies that promote community participation in decision-making.

In the Amazon, biodiversity conservation intertwines with the defense of territorial rights of indigenous communities and resistance against development projects that threaten the ecosystem (Hein et al., 2020; Orta-Martínez & Finer, 2010). Promoting socio-environmental alternatives involves creating participatory and decentralized spaces that recognize and respect local knowledge about environmental management.

In this framework, we explore diverse voices converging in the search for solutions that promote environmental and social justice in Latin America. An interdisciplinary dialogue and collective action are imperative, recognizing the complexity of these challenges and seeking inclusive and equitable responses.

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