

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

As financial conditions are generally improved globally, a larger number of people get to change their consumption behavior and start including meat in their daily meals. USDA (United States Department of Agriculture, 2021) has stated that Brazil has been a vital supporter of worldwide increasing meat production, and this pattern is set to proceed in 2022. Meat market in Brazil is predicted to profit by improved financial movement inside the homegrown market, in a long term comparison, along the big demand from China. Furthermore, Brazilian grain feeding capacities are improving and, keeping in mind that feedlots as of now just correspond for a small portion of Brazil's total capacity, this amount is probably going to grow two folding throughout the following five years.

I added this paragraph to explain the situation of the Amazon Rainforest before it started being exploited for cattle ranching activities. Cattle ranching was first seen in the Amazon Rainforest of Brazil in the 16th century, when the Portuguese establish colonization in the country and at that time the cattle was not widely used for trading (Veiga, J. B., Tourrand, J. F., Pocard-Chapuis, R., & Piketty, M. G., 2003). Nevertheless, during the past thirty years, the deforestation has been much accelerated: 4.200 square kilometers cleared in 1978; 30.000 km² in 1988; and 53.300 km² in 1998. In the year 2003, it was calculated that 67.764 square kilometers of rainforest—an area larger than the state of West Virginia—had been cleared (NASA, n.d.). In 2020, 7.143,5 km² of forest was swept away (Silva, C., Pessoa, A., & Aragao, E., 2021). Even though this latter number seems better than the data of 2003, it is important to notice that back in 2012 Brazil reached a much lower number, with 4.571 km² of cleared Amazonian soil and that the target for 2020 was to deforest less than 3.925 km², 83% less than the actual deforested extension. (Silva, C., Pessoa, A., & Aragao, E., 2021).

The demand for beef, just like how the demand for any product works, causes increase to the supply number in order to meet the ever-changing market's need. Even though this might sound like a good deal for the national economy, enlarging the cattle size does not happen without impacts to the environment considering that humans, animals and all elements of nature possess an interdependent relationship. How directly one's purchase choice affects the existence of life on Earth as a whole and that consuming is a political act are aspects that a vast majority of the society still remains uninformed. Complying with what has been established as the norm within humankind through indoctrination has the ability to threaten a whole ecosystem, which includes human lives as well.

As it is natural to occur within all civilizations, the more populations grow the bigger the interest to expand at the cost of the environment and mainly of the forests and original vegetation. In Brazil, the widespread unawareness and the national economic needs find fertile soil into cattle ranching. With huge ranch land accessibility, adequate feedstuffs supply, a very large national customer market, and decreased and weakened trading obstacles, big companies succeeded in reaching economic levels that have made the nation a significant, developing wellspring of meat production. These features help to make beef one of the most exported products of Brazil, being responsible for a big chunk of Brazilian GDP and placing the country as the top exporter in a global scale.

Such economical role characteristic prevent from cattle rising in Brazil is undoubtedly a source of a great dilemma to the Brazilian government. As beef exportation continues to provide a rising profit to the state, its economy becomes more dependent on the product's trading. Brazil, thus, faces the tough situation where it has to decide between exploiting its natural resources in order to boost this developing country's advancement or choosing to preserve its rainforest that has a vital role, not only to Brazil, but to the entire globe.

In 1970, Brazil was place to nearly 78.6 million bovine animals, bred on 124.4 heap hectares of natural pasture for animals and 29.7 million hectares of cultured field for animals, with a percentage of 0.51 cows/hectare of total field. In 2006, the Brazilian bovine herd raised to nearly 171.6 heap animals, accompanying

less usage of natural field for animals to 57.3 heap hectares and raised cultivated pasture slot to 101.4 hectares and a ratio of 1.08 cow/hectare of total field. Therefore, from 1970 to 2006, the Brazilian cattle increased at a rate of 2.04% per year, total field for animals at 0.07% per year, cultured pasture at 3.5% per year, and the relation between animals/hectares of total field for animals at 1.97% per year, inasmuch as the area for natural pasture decreased at a rate of 2.26% per year (Marques et al., 2011).

Brazil has been and is predicted to maintain its position as the largest exporter of cow meat in the world and the reason why the country insists in this market in order to enlarge its profit can be explained by some contemporary ideas such as the green theory and speciesism, which are presented along this paper. Moreover, it is substantial to acknowledge the consequences of this business to the forest and to human and nonhuman animals.

B. Research question

What are the consequences caused by the increasing demand for beef toward the Amazon Rainforest supported by the Brazilian government's subsidies and policies that favor the beef industry?

C. Theoretical framework

The theory used to analyze this issue in this paper is the green theory in international relations. Dyer (2017, p. 86) has defined green theory as a theory that "more radically challenges existing political, social and economic structures. In particular, it challenges mainstream liberal political and economic assumptions, including those extending beyond the boundaries of existing political communities". Dyer (2017, p. 84) has also stated that "green theory belongs to the critical theory tradition, in the sense that environmental issues evoke questions about relations between and among us and others in the context of community and collective decision-making."

According to Barry (2014, p. 1) "on the one hand, [green theory] focuses on issues that are extremely old in politics and philosophical inquiry – such as the relationship between the human and nonhuman worlds, the moral status of animals, what is the 'good life', and the ethical and political regulation of technological

innovation. Yet on the other hand, it is also characterized as specifically dealing with some of the contemporary issues such as the economic and political implications of climate change, peak oil, overconsumption, resource competition and conflicts, and rising levels of global and national inequalities.” and the same author also explains that “green political theory can be seen as an attempt to bring humanity and the study of human society down to earth” (Barry, 2014, p. 2).

In addition, Ari & Gokpinar (2019, p. 163) have inferred that this theory “has an ecocentric world view that does not precede the human and perceive it as just a part of the ecological system.” The green theory criticizes economic and technological advances that harm the environment. Therefore, the green theorists or greens, in particular, claim that the development of technology poses a threat to the survival of humans and all other species. The point that differentiates green theory from Marxism or from other theories that criticize the frames of exploratory capitalism is that the green theory attempts to bring together the awareness that goes beyond limits of species. It introduces the idea that human and nonhuman species interact and rely on each other.

Eckersley (2013), the most important writer on green politics, have stated that the green political theorists have casted into doubt the ongoing human chauvinism, which is defined by her as the belief that human beings are the culminating point in evolution, the most primary in terms of value and significance in the world, and the only species that own moral worth. With the objective of complementing this theory, emphasis will be given to the concept of speciesism, so that greater support is provided to the argument of the ongoing human supremacy made by Eckersley.

Speciesism was first coined by the British psychologist Richard Ryder in 1970 and was written on a pamphlet divulgated by the Oxford Group to spread awareness regarding the cruelty involved in animal testing (Ryder, 2010). Later on, the term was made more well-known by the writer Peter Singer in his book *Animal Liberation*, in 1975. Singer defined speciesism as the discrimination or inequality through which one species – human animals – is given preference or better treatment over a different species – nonhuman animals (Singer, 1975).

The connection between speciesism and the deforestation can be seen from the moment it is observed that the society only continues to demand more meat – as well as all other products that derives from animals or animals` work – despite of the catastrophic damages the production causes. It all happens due to the belief that animals are inferior to humans because of the differences in how their bodies work and how they behave. Historical normalization of having lifeless bodies on one`s the plate every day is the main cause for the predicted escalations in meat consumption in the following years. The higher numbers of purchase of beef, specifically, is unable to be separated from the devastation of the amazon rainforest.

The green theory speaks of the idea of environmental injustices, which happen when “social agents ‘externalize’ the environmental costs of their decisions and practices to innocent third parties in circumstances when the affected parties (or their representatives) have no knowledge of, or input in, the ecological risk-generating decisions and practices” (Eckersley, 2006). In this case, the Brazilian government contributes to an environmental injustice by only aiming at the profits without directly warning the population about the negative consequences that result from the national beef production. While the countries that buy beef from Brazil have their part on financing a market that destroys a biome that is substantial to the entire world.

In short, the green political theory presents two main points:

1. Criticism toward neoliberal and capitalist principles: those are seen by green theorists as the source of the sustainability`s problems in the world. Green theory points out the current system as adversary to any reforms that favor nature and living beings and argues that the increasing greed for development is neglecting the environment.
2. The acknowledgement of the human supremacy or chauvinism in the societies: the green theory shows the awareness that humans are arbitrarily considered the apex species among all living beings in the world. In this study, this finding is extended to the concept of speciesism.

D. Hypothesis

Based on the background and theoretical framework on Green Theory and speciesism above, this research hypothesizes that the current global developmental model alongside speciesism support the ever-increasing worldwide demand for beef, then, the deforested area of the Amazon rainforest is expanded because Brazil sees cattle ranching as one of its most profitable activities, resulting in an unsustainable development.

E. Research methodology

Within this research field, all the needed substantial information cannot be found in one single source to sufficiently analyze how the issue of cattle being bred in the Amazonian region, to meet the global demand for red meat, becomes a catalyzer for the Amazon rainforest's devastation. The given condition makes the exploratory qualitative research approach the most suitable method to be conducted, so that there will be an appropriate examination of this issue.

Secondary data such as writings from books and writing from experts, governmental and non-governmental organizations' documents, and journal articles will be instruments of observation. This study will also make use of documentaries and videos that show the genuine situation found inside the rainforest, what activities are performed in there and the way they happen. For the purpose of conveying an optimal result, interview videos available at the internet with experts in the field and measurable secondary data will be taken into account as well. The sources will be filtered by the year their presented data were collected and by the level of reliability of the publisher. An inspection on the perspectives of the researcher of the primary data will be done to guarantee that the facts are valid and are not disrupted by disinformation.

In analyzing the research, a qualitative approach will be used to identify and expose patterns in the proportional relation existent between the growing beef consumption within the population and the expansion in deforested areas. Therefore, an explanation of the way worldwide consumers' preferences and behavior are closely connected to the environmental problem of the Amazon rainforest, due to the high exportation of beef done by Brazil, will be delivered. Green theory of International Relations and the concept of speciesism will be used to understand the

issue and its causes. Although there is a deficiency in trustworthy findings available at this moment, the present research will be able to indicate relations between the society in a global scale and environmental problems utilizing means that have not been enough explored in the International Relations field.

F. Purpose of research

The main aim of this study is to analyze the factors that lead Brazil to continue growing its beef production despite of the alarming consequences this activity causes. Thus, the result of this research can be used for further analysis on the downside of the beef market in Brazil.

G. Scope of research

Brazil took a very significant step on its beef production in the year 2001, as the production increased by more than 51% compared to the amount of 2000. The deforestation was also on rise during that period as part of the attempt to develop the country economically. Due to an environmental program from the government, from 2005 the deforestation rate started to shrink.

During the first decade of the millennium it is possible to see that there was a moment that the production of red meat production decreased and, as soon as the phenomenon happened, the deforestation increased in the following year. Making it possible to infer that, as beef production was reduced, a necessity to clear more land for pasture was noticed by the government and farmers. Therefore, the period between 2000 and 2020 is analyzed in order to demonstrate the impacts of the demand for bovine meat on deforestation in Brazil in the long-term process.

The year 2000 was chosen because that is the moment which it can be observed that Brazil most rapidly increased its beef production, when comparing one year to the previous one, throughout the last decade. For the purpose of this study, 2020 is the last year analyzed to allow readers to observe the fluctuations of the deforestation rate in comparison to the beef production amount changes and to understand what happened when president Bolsonaro began his term in 2019. This period of ups and downs of deforestation was selected to be researched in order to demonstrate how a high amount of beef within the Brazilian market is directly linked to a high rate of deforestation. Also, that even when red meat supply falls off,

deforestation extent is very likely to rise in the following year, so that the loss of profit for the production of the last year is compensated. Furthermore, it will demonstrate that when deforestation rates decrease, the smaller numbers cannot be kept for too long since policies support the growth in cattle ranching.

H. Writing system

Chapter I consists of Background, Research Question, Theoretical Framework, Hypothesis, Research Methodology, Purpose of Research, Scope of Research, and Writing System.

Chapter II tells the importance of the Amazon Rainforest, the consequences of the deforestation to the biome, the people and animals of the region, and how the cattle ranching is linked to the destruction of the forest.

Chapter III is the conclusion of the entire paper.