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The Enforcement of Public Security and Fundamental Rights in Rural Communities of the Pará Amazon: Challenges Facing the Military Police amid Territorial Vulnerabilities and Drug Trafficking

A Efetivação da Segurança Pública e dos Direitos Fundamentais nas Comunidades Rurais da Amazônia Paraense: Desafios da Atuação da Polícia Militar diante das Vulnerabilidades Territoriais e do Narcotráfico

La Efectivización de la Seguridad Pública y de los Derechos Fundamentales en las Comunidades Rurales de la Amazonía Paraense: Desafíos de la Actuación de la Policía Militar ante las Vulnerabilidades Territoriales y el Narcotráfico

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Abstract:
This research analyzes the challenges faced by the Military Police in rural communities in the Pará Amazon, considering the territorial, social, and institutional vulnerabilities that undermine the effectiveness of public security and the protection of fundamental rights in the region. The study starts from the understanding that the geographical specificities of the Amazon, marked by large territorial extensions, difficult access, and limited State presence, foster the expansion of social conflicts, illicit economies, and criminal organizations. In this context, the growth of riverine drug trafficking, illegal exploitation of natural resources, land grabbing, and other illegal practices stand out, intensifying the vulnerability of traditional populations and hindering the work of public security institutions. The research adopts a qualitative approach, both bibliographical and documentary, using a deductive method to analyze the Federal Constitution, infra-constitutional legislation, legal doctrine, and scientific works related to public security, socio-environmental justice, and the Amazonian reality. The study demonstrates that the Military Police plays a fundamental role not only in combating crime but also in mediating conflicts, strengthening state presence, and protecting vulnerable communities. It concludes that effective public security in the Amazon requires integrated public policies that link territorial protection, social inclusion, environmental preservation, and institutional strengthening, while respecting the sociocultural specificities of Amazonian communities.

Keywords:
Public security; Amazon; Military Police; rural communities; Riverine drug trafficking; Fundamental rights.

Resumo:
A presente pesquisa analisa os desafios da atuação da Polícia Militar nas comunidades rurais da Amazônia paraense, considerando as vulnerabilidades territoriais, sociais e institucionais que comprometem a efetivação da proteção pública e dos direitos fundamentais na região. O estudo parte da compreensão de que as especificidades geográficas amazônicas, marcadas por grandes extensões, dificuldades de acesso e presença limitada do Estado, favorecem a expansão de conflitos sociais, de mercados ilegais e de redes criminosas. Nesse cenário, destacam-se o crescimento do narcotráfico fluvial, a exploração irregular de recursos naturais, a grilagem de terras e outras práticas ilícitas que intensificam a exposição das populações tradicionais e dificultam a atuação das instituições responsáveis pela ordem pública. A pesquisa adota abordagem qualitativa, de natureza bibliográfica e documental, utilizando o método dedutivo, a partir da análise da Constituição Federal, da legislação infraconstitucional, da doutrina jurídica e de produções científicas relacionadas à segurança, à justiça socioambiental e à realidade amazônica. O estudo demonstra que a Polícia Militar desempenha um papel relevante

não apenas na repressão à criminalidade, mas também na mediação de conflitos, no fortalecimento da presença institucional e na proteção de comunidades vulneráveis. Conclui-se que a efetivação da segurança na Amazônia exige ações integradas, capazes de articular a proteção territorial, a inclusão social, a preservação ambiental e o fortalecimento institucional, respeitando as especificidades socioculturais locais.

Palavras-chave:
Segurança pública; Amazônia; Polícia Militar; Comunidades rurais; Narcotráfico fluvial; Direitos fundamentais.

Resumen:
La presente investigación analiza los desafíos de la actuación de la Policía Militar en las comunidades rurales de la Amazonía paraense, considerando las vulnerabilidades territoriales, sociales e institucionales que comprometen la efectividad de la seguridad pública y de los derechos fundamentales en la región. El estudio parte de la comprensión de que las particularidades geográficas amazónicas, caracterizadas por grandes extensiones, dificultades de acceso y una presencia limitada del Estado, favorecen la expansión de los conflictos sociales, los mercados ilegales y las redes delictivas. En este contexto, destacan el crecimiento del narcotráfico fluvial, la explotación irregular de los recursos naturales, el acaparamiento de tierras y otras prácticas ilícitas que aumentan la exposición de las poblaciones tradicionales y dificultan la actuación de las instituciones responsables del orden público. La investigación adopta un enfoque cualitativo, de naturaleza bibliográfica y documental, y utiliza el método deductivo a partir del análisis de la Constitución Federal, la legislación infraconstitucional, la doctrina jurídica y la producción científica relacionada con la seguridad, la justicia socioambiental y la realidad amazónica. El estudio demuestra que la Policía Militar desempeña un papel relevante no solo en la represión de la delincuencia, sino también en la mediación de conflictos, el fortalecimiento de la presencia institucional y la protección de las comunidades vulnerables. Se concluye que la efectividad de la seguridad en la Amazonía exige acciones integradas capaces de articular la protección territorial, la inclusión social, la preservación ambiental y el fortalecimiento institucional, respetando las particularidades socioculturales locales.

Palabras clave:
Seguridad pública; Amazonía; Policía Militar; Comunidades rurales; Narcotráfico fluvial; Derechos fundamentales.

1 Introduction

The Brazilian Amazon has territorial, social and environmental characteristics that impose specific challenges to the formulation and implementation of public security policies. In the State of Pará, the territorial extension, population dispersion, the existence of rural and traditional communities, as well as the difficulties of terrestrial and river displacement, condition the capacity of continuous presence of public institutions, especially in locations far from urban centers.

These territorial characteristics are associated with historically constructed vulnerabilities. The unequal process of occupation of the Amazon, the precariousness of certain

public services, land conflicts and the irregular exploitation of natural resources contributed to the formation of territories marked by social disputes and low institutional density. In recent decades, this picture has become even more complex in the face of the expansion of illicit economies and the internalization of criminal organizations that use rivers, roads and areas of difficult supervision as corridors for the circulation of drugs, weapons and other illicit products.

In this context, public security in Amazonian rural communities cannot be analyzed exclusively on the basis of conventional policing models developed for urban spaces. The great distances, the logistical difficulties and the sociocultural particularities of the local populations require strategies adapted to the territory. In the Amazon, this issue assumes special relevance due to the capillarity of the Military Police and its presence in localities where other public services can act in a limited or discontinuous way. At the same time, the expansion of drug trafficking by river routes and its connection with other illicit economies increase the complexity of the demands directed at security institutions.

The issue must also be examined from the perspective of fundamental rights. The Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil of 1988 establishes public security as the duty of the State, right and responsibility of all and assigns to the Military Police the ostensible police and the preservation of public order. The realization of this right, however, depends on the institutional capacity to reach territories in which the formally recognized guarantees face material obstacles, such as geographical distance, infrastructure limitations and the presence of social, territorial and economic conflicts.

Given this problem, the following research question is formulated: how the territorial, logistical and institutional limitations associated with the expansion of illicit economies influence the performance of the Military Police in the effectiveness of public security and fundamental rights in rural communities of the Amazon? It starts from the hypothesis that such limitations condition the capacity of state action and that its confrontation requires territorially adapted strategies, based on the integration between police intelligence, territorial planning, technology, community policing and interinstitutional cooperation.

The general objective is to analyze how territorial, logistical and institutional limitations influence the performance of the Military Police in the realization of public security and fundamental rights in rural communities of the Amazon. Specifically, we seek to understand the historical formation of the territorial vulnerabilities of the region; examine the relationship between public security and fundamental rights; analyze the institutional strategies of police action in rural areas; discuss the impacts of the expansion of riverine drug trafficking and other

illicit economies; and identify the possibilities and limitations of strategies based on intelligence, technology, community approximation and institutional cooperation.

The research adopts a qualitative approach, of a bibliographical and documentary nature, using the deductive method. The Federal Constitution of 1988, the infra-constitutional legislation, the state rules related to the organization and competences of the Military Police of Pará, as well as institutional documents and scientific productions related to public security, fundamental rights, territorial conflicts, organized crime and the Amazonian reality are examined.

The relevance of the study lies in the need to expand academic production on public security in Amazonian rural territories. Its contribution is to maintain that the territorial characteristics of the Amazon are not only logistical obstacles to police activity, but also structuring variables of public security planning. From this perspective, it is argued that the protection of rural communities and the realization of fundamental rights depend on strategies capable of articulating territorial knowledge, intelligence, technology, community proximity and interinstitutional cooperation.

2 Historical Formation of Territorial Vulnerabilities and Public Security in the Amazon

The territorial vulnerabilities that currently condition public security in the Amazon do not constitute recent phenomena and are not exclusively related to the contemporary growth of organized crime. They result from a historical process of occupation characterized by the economic exploitation of natural resources, the unequal expansion of state structures and the formation of territories marked by land conflicts, social inequalities and limitations in access to public services.

As Madaleno (2011) points out, the occupation of the Brazilian Amazon occurred through successive economic cycles linked to the exploitation of natural resources, among which stand out the drugs of the backcountry, rubber and, later, the projects of agricultural colonization, mining and the expansion of agriculture. These processes contributed to the economic integration of the region to the rest of the country, but also promoted profound social, territorial and environmental transformations.

From the second half of the 20th century, the construction of major road axes, such as Belém-Brasília, Transamazonian and Cuiabá-Santarém, intensified population and economic flows and boosted the expansion of the agricultural frontier. This process, however, was not uniformly monitored by the consolidation of the administrative structures and public services

necessary for the management of the new territories. As a consequence, different rural areas were incorporated into the national economic dynamics without the equivalent expansion of the institutional capacity of territorial planning, environmental inspection, land regularization and conflict prevention (MADALENO, 2011).

In this sense, territorial vulnerability stems not only from geographical distance or physical isolation, but also from the unequal distribution of infrastructure, public services and institutional capacities of supervision, mediation and protection. The Amazonian geography imposes objective challenges of displacement and communication, but its effects are aggravated by historical processes of occupation that deepened the asymmetries between the different territories of the region.

These conditions have acquired new dimensions with the expansion of illicit economies. Areas marked by low surveillance capacity, land conflicts and intensive exploitation of natural resources began to integrate networks related to illegal mining, illegal logging, irregular appropriation of public land and drug trafficking. The overlapping of these activities demonstrates that the contemporary problems of Amazonian public security involve both organized crime and disputes over the control of territory and natural resources.

The movement of illegal goods, the irregular appropriation of land and the illegal exploitation of resources depend on logistical and economic networks operating at local, regional, national and transnational scales. In recent decades, the expansion of drug trafficking by the routes of the Legal Amazon has added greater complexity to this situation, using rivers, roads and forest areas as logistics corridors and bringing the networks of trafficking closer to other illicit markets existing in the region.

The increasing complexity of these phenomena has driven the creation of specialized institutional structures. At the federal level, the institution of the Specialized Police Stations of Environment and Historical Heritage of the Federal Police, through Ordinance No. 1,300, of September 4, 2003, and, subsequently, the creation of the Directorate of the Amazon and Environment of the Federal Police (DAMAZ/PF), by Decree No. 11,348/2023, demonstrate the recognition of the need for specific mechanisms for the confrontation of illicit activities in the region.

According to Barros (2025), DAMAZ/PF began to perform strategic functions related to the fight against environmental crimes, the protection of indigenous peoples, the preservation of historical and cultural heritage and the coordination of integrated public security actions between federal entities and the countries of Pan-Amazonia. The structure integrates a

governance model oriented to the confrontation of criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking, illegal mining, illegal logging and irregular occupation of public land.

However, the complexity of Amazonian public security does not allow to concentrate the responses exclusively on federal supervisory and investigative bodies. The territorial dimension of the conflicts requires articulated action between the different levels of the Federation and the continuous presence of the state institutions responsible for the preservation of public order.

In this context, the Military Police of Pará assumes relevance because of its territorial capillarity. In rural areas and in localities far from the major centers, its performance integrates the state capacity for prevention, response to occurrences and protection to local communities. However, the same vulnerabilities historically generated by the process of territorial occupation – large distances, limited infrastructure, land conflicts and the presence of illicit markets – also condition their operational capacity.

The historical analysis allows, therefore, to understand that the contemporary challenges of public security result from the interaction between the geographical characteristics of the region, the historical processes of occupation, the unequal distribution of the state presence and the expansion of illicit economies. If these vulnerabilities have a territorial and historical dimension, the institutional responses also need to consider the specificities of the spaces in which they are implemented.

From this perspective, the analysis advances to the legal-constitutional dimension of the problem. Understanding public security as a fundamental right requires examining how the guarantees formally recognized by the Constitution can be realized in territories where historical, geographical and institutional conditions hinder the continuous access of the population to state protection.

3 Public Security and Fundamental Rights in the Amazon Context

The Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil of 1988 inserted security among the constitutionally guaranteed rights and established, in its article 144, that public security constitutes the duty of the State, right and responsibility of all, being exercised for the preservation of public order and the incolumity of people and heritage. This forecast shows that public security integrates the set of institutional conditions necessary for the protection of the person and the exercise of citizenship (BRAZIL, 1988).

The understanding of public security from the perspective of fundamental rights requires considering the distance that can exist between the legal recognition of these rights and their social realization. Bobbio (2004) notes that the fundamental problem of human rights lies not only in justifying or recognizing them, but in establishing mechanisms capable of protecting them effectively. In a complementary sense, Sarlet (2018) highlights that the effectiveness of fundamental rights depends on legal and material conditions that enable their concrete realization. Thus, the existence of constitutional guarantees, although indispensable, does not in itself ensure equivalent conditions for the exercise of these guarantees in all territories.

This issue assumes special relevance in the Amazon of Pará, where large distances, difficulties of terrestrial and river displacement, and the unequal distribution of public services can create concrete obstacles to the access of rural and traditional populations to state protection mechanisms. In these locations, territorial, logistical and institutional factors can increase the distance between the normative provision of rights and their effective protection.

Public security must therefore be understood as a relevant dimension of the protection of citizenship and the conditions necessary for the exercise of fundamental rights. This does not mean giving police institutions responsibility for overcoming social, economic and territorial vulnerabilities, but rather recognizing that the preservation of public order and the protection of people are indispensable elements for life in society.

In this perspective, Luiz Eduardo Soares (2006, p. 97-99) maintains that public security cannot be reduced to the repressive control of crime, because the confrontation of violence requires articulation between prevention, social policies, institutional qualification and strengthening of democratic mechanisms. This understanding is especially relevant to the Amazonian reality, in which the dynamics of violence often relate to territorial conflicts, social vulnerabilities, irregular exploitation of natural resources and expansion of illicit markets.

The multidimensionality of these phenomena requires equally articulated institutional responses. Qualified repression of criminal organizations is a necessary dimension of security policy, but, isolated, it is insufficient in the face of problems related to land disputes, environmental degradation, shortage of public services and socioeconomic vulnerability. The protection of Amazonian populations thus requires integration between security policies, environmental protection, social development and territorial planning.

In the Brazilian constitutional system, article 144, § 5, assigns to the Military Police the functions of ostensible police and preservation of public order (BRAZIL, 1988). In the Amazonian context, the exercise of these competences faces specific challenges related to the territorial extension, the conditions of access and the dispersion of rural communities. In certain

locations, the Military Police is one of the public institutions with a more continuous presence, a circumstance that expands the relevance of its preventive and ostensible action, without removing the limits of its constitutional and legal competences.

The environmental and territorial dimension also integrates the protection of fundamental rights in the Amazon. Article 225 of the Federal Constitution guarantees the right to an ecologically balanced environment, while Article 231 recognizes to indigenous peoples the original rights on the lands they traditionally occupy (BRAZIL, 1988). Due to the relationship between territory, natural resources and ways of life, activities such as illegal mining, illegal logging, land grabbing and drug trafficking can produce simultaneous impacts on people's safety, environmental balance and traditional forms of territorial occupation.

At the state level, Supplementary Law No. 053, of February 7, 2006, establishes the organizational structure and competences of the Military Police of Pará. In addition to the activities related to ostensible policing and the preservation of public order, the standard includes specialized modalities of action and incorporates, among the institutional bases of the corporation, the promotion, guarantee and respect for the dignity of the human person and human rights (PARÁ, 2006). This normative orientation shows that the exercise of police functions must observe the constitutional and democratic parameters that regulate the performance of the State.

When analyzing the performance of the Military Police in the face of social conflicts in the Paraense field, Monteiro (2008) highlights the need to understand the police activity beyond exclusively coercive responses. In territories marked by agrarian conflicts and complex social disputes, institutional action requires capacity for prevention, dialogue and mediation, especially when interventions involve groups in vulnerable situations and territorial disputes.

This perspective contributes to a more adequate understanding of police action in the Amazonian rural areas. The Military Police does not replace land regularization, social assistance, health, education, environmental protection or economic development policies. However, within the scope of its constitutional and legal competences, its performance contributes to the protection of people, the prevention of violence and the preservation of public order.

The effectiveness of public security in Amazonian rural communities depends, therefore, on the combination between constitutionally oriented police action, structuring public policies and cooperation between different institutions. Established this legal-constitutional basis, it is necessary to examine how the Military Police of Pará structures its performance in rural communities and which institutional mechanisms are used to face the limitations imposed

by the territorial extension, the logistical difficulties and the transformation of criminal dynamics in the Amazon.

4 The Performance of the Military Police in the Rural Communities of the Amazon of Pará

The performance of the Military Police in the rural communities of the Amazon is conditioned by the territorial, social and institutional characteristics of the region. The geographical extent of the State, the dispersion of communities, the difficulties of displacement and the unequal distribution of public services pose specific challenges to ostensible policing and the preservation of public order.

In many rural locations in Pará, the Military Police is one of the most constant public institutions. In addition to the response to occurrences and ostensible policing, its performance covers preventive actions and community approximation. As Monteiro points out (2008, p. 17), the territorial capillarity of the Military Police expands its relevance in regions characterized by infrastructure limitations and the reduced presence of other public bodies.

This capillarity, however, does not imply a homogeneous territorial coverage. The distance between police units and communities served, land-based conditions, dependence on river displacements and communication difficulties can increase response time and limit the regularity of patrolling in certain locations.

The performance of the Military Police of Pará is based on the organizational structure and the competencies provided for in the state legislation. Supplementary Law No. 053/2006 establishes that the Intermediate Operational Commands exercise functions of direction, control and planning of activities of ostensible police and preservation of public order in their respective circumscriptions. The same standard assigns to the General Operations Department the coordination of the activity-end of the corporation, covering preventive, repressive and specialized policing actions (PARÁ, 2006).

The territorial organization of police activities is of particular importance in the face of the differences between the regions of Pará. Areas of predominantly river circulation, regions marked by land conflicts and territories crossed by road and logistic corridors present distinct demands, which requires a planning compatible with their geographical, economic and social configurations.

In this context, police intelligence is a relevant instrument to reduce the asymmetries between territorial extension and institutional resources available. Information-driven planning

allows identifying criminal patterns, areas of greater vulnerability, routes used for illicit activities and changes in local dynamics of violence, contributing to the definition of operational priorities.

The Intelligence Center of the Military Police of Pará (CINT), based on article 18-A of Supplementary Law No. 053/2006, acts in the production and protection of knowledge aimed at subsidizing decision-making at the different levels of the corporation (PARÁ, 2006). According to institutional documentation, its structure has nuclei in Castanhal, Abaetetuba, Santarém and Marabá, intended to expand the regionalized production of strategic knowledge (PMPA, 2021, p. 163).

The decentralization of intelligence activity is relevant in a territory marked by different criminal dynamics. The phenomena observed in agricultural frontier areas, in river circulation regions and in municipalities crossed by logistic corridors are not homogeneous, which is why regionalized production of knowledge can contribute to strategies more appropriate to territorial particularities.

The Military Police Intelligence System (SIPOM), regulated by Decree No. 1.997/2021, coordinates and integrates intelligence activities at the strategic, tactical and operational levels, providing subsidies to decision-making related to the prevention and preservation of public order (PMPA, 2021, p. 163-164). The incorporation of intelligence into planning allows, therefore, to guide the institutional action not only by the reaction to occurrences, but also by the identification of risks and by the definition of priority areas.

This capacity becomes especially important in the face of the transformation of criminal dynamics in the interior of Pará. Kings Netto et al. (2025, p. 18) highlight the strategic position of the territory of Pará in the international routes of circulation of narcotics, with functions of storage, distribution and transshipment of drugs. According to Pereira, Pucci and Soares (2024, p. 6), the fragmentation of the trafficking logistics chain can also involve local transport, storage, protection and support activities, bringing certain groups closer to illicit economies and generating new situations of vulnerability.

Police intelligence, however, does not constitute an isolated response to the challenges of rural public security. Its effectiveness depends on the institutional capacity to transform knowledge into operational planning and to associate it with policing modalities compatible with the characteristics of the territories served.

In this sense, the adoption of specialized rural policing strategies represents a form of institutional adaptation to the characteristics of the Amazon interior. The performance of the Rural Police Battalions and the use of georeferencing tools aim to expand the knowledge of the

territory, organize patrol routes and strengthen the rapprochement between the police teams and the communities served.

Systematized knowledge about properties, communities, roads, rivers, access routes and areas of higher incidence of occurrences can contribute to a more rational distribution of available resources and to the reduction of response time. However, the performance in rural communities also requires understanding of local social dynamics, especially in regions marked by agrarian conflicts and territorial disputes.

Monteiro (2008, p. 22) maintains that the Military Police must develop capacities aimed at mediating social conflicts, acting as an instrument for the protection of human rights, and not exclusively as a force for the containment of violence. This understanding reinforces the importance of strategies that articulate prevention, community dialogue and constitutionally oriented action.

Community rapprochement can also contribute to the institutional knowledge of the territory. In large rural areas, residents have information about routes, conflicts and risk situations that are hardly identified only through episodic patrolling. The construction of institutional communication channels can favor more appropriate diagnoses and preventive strategies, without transferring to communities the responsibility for public security.

The particularities of the Amazon of Pará require, therefore, models of action capable of combining ostensible presence, intelligence, territorial planning and community approximation. In this context, the Rural Police Battalions and the Georeferenced Rural Patrol are relevant experiences for the analysis of the possibilities and limits of a territorially oriented policing model, as examined in the following subsection.

4.1 The Rural Police Battalion and the Georeferenced Rural Patrol

The experience of the 1st Battalion of Rural Police (1st BPR), based in Marabá and created in August 2022, evidences the attempt to adapt the police action to the peculiarities of the Amazonian countryside. More than expanding the ostensible presence, the unit seeks to establish a model of permanent interaction with the residents of rural areas, recognizing that community trust and local knowledge are essential components for conflict prevention and the protection of communities exposed to geographic isolation (Pará, 2024).

The Georeferenced Rural Patrol represents, in this sense, a relevant innovation, because it shifts the policing of a merely reactive logic to an action guided by territorial information. The registration of properties and the use of geolocation technologies allow to reduce response

time, plan patrol routes and identify areas with greater exposure to property crimes, land conflicts or the movement of criminal groups. It is, therefore, a strategy that articulates technology, prevention and institutional presence in territories of difficult state coverage (PARÁ, 2024).

The institutional data released by the Military Police of Pará, according to which the 1st BPR registered more than 2,250 properties in the South and Southeast regions of the State and recorded an approximate reduction of 31% of the rates of rural violence in the 34 municipalities covered, reinforce the central argument of this study: the state presence, when guided by territorial planning and community approximation, can contribute to the reduction of vulnerabilities historically associated with rural isolation (PARÁ, 2024).

It should be noted, however, that such information comes from the institutional source of the corporation itself and is used in this work as indicators of the results reported by the Military Police of Pará, without prejudice to the need for independent and continuous evaluations about the effectiveness of these initiatives. Still, the data suggest that the combination of community proximity, georeferenced planning and preventive action can expand the response capacity of the Military Police in historically under-assisted areas (PARÁ, 2024).

The relevance of this experience lies in demonstrating that public security in rural Amazonian areas depends on the ability to convert territorial information into prevention policy. In this sense, the geolocation tool should not only be understood as a technical resource, but also as a mechanism of approximation between the State and the community, capable of reducing the institutional invisibility of properties, families and localities located outside urban centers. This perspective is supported in Monteiro (2008, p. 8), for whom the rapprochement between the Military Police and the community is a fundamental element for the strengthening of institutional legitimacy and the consolidation of a culture of conflict mediation.

Thus, the experience of the Rural Battalions shows that the challenges of public security in the Amazon cannot be faced only through the expansion of the staff or the intensification of repressive actions. The state response demands the articulation between territorial intelligence, community policing, criminal prevention and interinstitutional cooperation. In this perspective, the Georeferenced Rural Patrol contributes to reduce part of the obstacles imposed by distance, population dispersion and infrastructure limitations, bringing police action closer to the socio-territorial specificities of the Amazonian field.

In addition, police action in rural areas should be guided not only by formal compliance with norms, but also by the protection of citizenship and the guarantee of fundamental rights.

As Monteiro points out (2008, p. 24), it is up to security agents to overcome a strictly legalistic action, seeking to ensure the effective protection of the rights of the population served. From this perspective, the performance of the Military Police in the Amazonian rural communities assumes a relevant role in promoting public security, strengthening the state presence and protecting the most vulnerable populations.

Although these initiatives represent relevant responses to the vulnerabilities of the Amazonian field, the expansion of illicit networks by river routes expands the challenges faced by police action, requiring a specific analysis of drug trafficking and its impacts on public security in the region.

5 River Drug Trafficking and Expansion of Illicit Economies

The expansion of riverine drug trafficking in the Amazon represents one of the main contemporary challenges to the protection of public order and traditional communities. The vast hydrographic mesh, associated with the difficulty of supervision and limited institutional presence in remote areas, has transformed the region into a strategic space for networks linked to international drug trafficking.

The region no longer occupies a peripheral position on illicit routes and began to play a central role in the dynamics of international drug trafficking. The territory of Pará, due to its geographical location and its extensive network of navigable rivers, has consolidated itself as a logistics corridor for the storage, transport and distribution of narcotics destined for the national and international markets.

A survey conducted by the Instituto Mãe Crioula, in partnership with the Brazilian Forum of Public Security, indicates that the state of Pará has several locations under the influence of criminal factions, highlighting the internalization of these groups and the advancement of illicit networks over rural areas and traditional Amazonian communities. The predominance of the Red Command (CV) in regions such as Baixo Tocantins, Marajó, the Northeast of Pará and the Metropolitan Region of Belém highlights the process of territorialization of organized crime in the state (MACHADO, 2025).

Similarly, the First Capital Command (PCC) expanded its operations to strategic municipalities in the South and Southeast regions of Pará, intensifying the disputes for the control of land and river routes used by international drug trafficking. Municipalities such as Marabá, Altamira, Redenção and Parauapebas began to register conflicts between criminal networks, with direct impacts on the rates of violence and the vulnerability of local populations.

The use of waterways as logistical corridors of drug trafficking highlights the structural difficulties faced by security institutions in the region. Rivers, bolts, streams and hard-to-reach forest areas hinder continuous patrolling and favor the clandestine circulation of drugs, weapons and illicit goods. At this juncture, riverside communities, quilombolas and indigenous people become particularly exposed to the action of criminal groups.

Amazon violence is also related to overlapping between illegal markets and territorial disputes. There is also a change in the relative contribution of each risk factor over time. In the early years of the 2000s, the illegal exploitation of timber accounted for a relevant portion of the excess of homicides, gradually losing importance in the following years (PEREIRA; PUCCI; SOARES, 2024, p. 11).

From the second half of the 2000s, the risks associated with land grabbing and, later, illegal gold mining, whose contribution grows consistently throughout the years 2010 (PEREIRA; PUCCI; SOARES, 2024, p. 11).

In the most recent period, the performance of factions linked to drug trafficking became a central component in the explanation of excessive violence. By 2017, 29% of deaths associated with risk factors were related to the presence of these groups; between 2018 and 2023, this percentage rose to 56%. It is observed that, from 2005, with the displacement of traffic routes to the Amazonian waterways, there was a gradual increase in homicides in municipalities later occupied by networks linked to the drug trade (PEREIRA; PUCCI; SOARES, 2024, p. 11).

The recent data of the Secretariat of Public Security and Social Defense of Pará (SEGUP) empirically corroborate the thesis that the internalization of illicit networks imposes challenges that go beyond episodic repression. The seizure of more than 13 tons of narcotics in 2024, the conduct of more than 70 integrated operations and the arrest of approximately 1,400 members of factions reveal that organized crime operates on a broad territorial scale and requires coordinated, permanent and guided responses by a regional diagnosis. Operations in the Baixo Tocantins, with a seizure of more than 3 tons of drugs and weapons of restricted use, demonstrate that the logistical corridors of the interior of Pará are strategic spaces of criminal dispute, which confirms the need for river policing, integrated intelligence and interinstitutional cooperation.

The strengthening of public security in the Amazon should be understood as a policy of territorial and social protection. State action cannot be restricted to the timely repression of criminal networks; it must incorporate prevention, police intelligence, federal cooperation and

social programs capable of reducing the exposure of traditional populations to the pressures of illegal markets.

In this process, the Military Police occupies a strategic position for its territorial capillarity and presence in localities where other institutions operate in a limited or discontinuous way. River policing, community action, police intelligence and cooperation with environmental bodies, justice institutions and federal forces must be understood as complementary dimensions of a strategy aimed at confronting illegal markets and the protection of local populations.

In summary, the advance of riverine drug trafficking in the Amazon should be interpreted as a phenomenon that articulates public security, territorial dispute, socio-environmental justice and human rights. The complexity of regional conflicts requires structuring policies that integrate qualified repression, prevention, environmental protection and community strengthening, preventing the absence or fragility of the state from being replaced by the control exercised by criminal networks.

Given this complexity, the discussion on riverine drug trafficking highlights the need to examine the institutional challenges and perspectives of integrated policies capable of responding to organized crime, without disregarding fundamental rights and socio-environmental justice.

6 Institutional Challenges and Perspectives

The institutional challenges of public security in the Amazon are related both to the perception of increased violence in the interior and to the structural limitations that hinder the state response in extensive territories and difficult to access. The degradation of quality of life, youth vulnerability and the presence of illegal markets reinforce the need for strategies capable of articulating prevention, qualified repression, social inclusion and community strengthening.

Among the factors that contribute to this scenario are the precariousness of public services, the absence of economic opportunities, the rural exodus, the disorderly expansion of urban peripheries and the weakening of family and community bonds. Drug trafficking takes advantage of these vulnerabilities, expanding its capacity for recruitment, circulation and territorial control. Although not a recent concern, the subject has gained greater relevance in recent decades due to the increase in violence and the internalization of criminal organizations (PROCÓPIO, 2000; OSÓRIO et al., 2010).

In response to this framework, the Amazon Plan was established: Security and Sovereignty (AMAS Plan), through Decree No. 11,614/2023, structured in three fundamental axes: governance, structure and operationality (BRAZIL, 2023). The first axis refers to institutional governance and establishes integrated mechanisms of articulation between federal, state and environmental institutions. The Plan has State Steering Committees and Strategic Committees composed of the Federal Police, the National Secretariat of Public Security (SENASP), the Federal Highway Police (PRF), the Ministries of Justice, the Environment and Defense, in addition to the Secretariats of Public Security of the nine states of the Legal Amazon (BARROS, 2025, p. 13).

The second axis focuses on the structural and normative modernization of environmental security policies, providing for investments in infrastructure, intelligence, equipment and technology, as well as the operational strengthening of the security forces. The use of resources from the Amazon Fund to expand the operational capacity of the Federal Police, acquire aircraft and armored speedboats and implement new integrated bases demonstrates that the state response to illicit economies needs to incorporate means compatible with Amazonian geography. Thus, logistics modernization is not only an administrative measure, but also a necessary condition to make territorial protection effective in areas marked by large distances, river circulation and low institutional density (BARROS, 2025, p. 13).

The third axis is operational and seeks to strengthen the integration between the security forces in the fight against organized crime. In this model, the Integrated Forces to Combat Organized Crime (FICCOs) began to play a strategic role in complex investigations related to the illicit markets of the Amazon, acting in an articulated way with state and federal agencies (BARROS, 2025, p. 13).

The AMAS Plan also promoted the creation of the Center for International Police Cooperation of the Amazon (CCPI Amazônia), based in Manaus, focused on intelligence sharing, operational planning and cooperation between the countries of the Pan-Amazon. The creation of this center reinforces the understanding that the challenges of the region cannot be treated only as local or state problems, since the river routes of drug trafficking and illicit environmental economies articulate national and transnational territories. The center brings together representatives from Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, Ecuador and French Guiana, as well as international bodies such as Interpol and Europol (BARROS, 2025, p. 14).

The modernization of security policies in the Amazon also depends on the incorporation of technological tools capable of qualifying the production and analysis of criminal data. In this

sense, the Military Police of Pará began to use intelligence and statistical analysis platforms, such as Power BI, which allow to integrate information, identify delictive trends and subsidize the decision-making process with greater precision (PMPA, 2021, p. 171-172). At the same time, the Military Police Intelligence System (SIPOM) strengthens the production of strategic knowledge focused on the tactical, operational and strategic levels of the corporation, contributing to the planning of policing actions and the preservation of public order (PMPA, 2021, p. 163-164). Such initiatives show that the effectiveness of security policies increasingly depends on the institutional capacity to transform data into strategic knowledge.

According to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (2025), the implementation of integrated policies has expanded operations, strengthened river policing and intensified intelligence actions in the Legal Amazon. These results dialogue directly with the hypothesis of this research, because they demonstrate that the overcoming of territorial limitations does not depend exclusively on the expansion of the police, but also on the integration of information and logistic resources, as well as the coordinated action between different institutions. Organized crime in the region operates in a transnational, intermunicipal and environmentally predatory way, which is why isolated responses tend to be insufficient in the face of the complexity of regional conflicts.

The Ecological-Economic Zoning (EEZ) is an important state planning instrument focused on the Amazonian territorial planning, allowing to articulate economic development, environmental protection and social conflict management (BECKER, 2015 apud LEOLPODO, 2023). In Bertha Becker's understanding, the State occupies a central position in the production of the Amazonian territory through planning, management and control mechanisms. The territorial planning, in this sense, is not limited to the economic occupation of the region, but also involves the anticipation of risks, the mitigation of conflicts and the creation of conditions favorable to sustainable development.

Finally, the confrontation of the institutional challenges of public security in the Amazon requires the balance between repressive and preventive actions, combined with the promotion of human rights and social inclusion (CANO, 2006). As Boba (2001) argues, the active participation of the community is an indispensable element to the effectiveness of security policies, expanding the perception of protection beyond state control. Thus, evidence-based initiatives are essential to respond to contemporary crime dynamics in the region, especially when they articulate territorial diagnosis, social participation, police intelligence and continuous evaluation of results (SANTOS et al., 2025).

7 Methodology

This research has a qualitative nature, developed through literature and documentary review, with a deductive approach. The investigation is based on the analysis of the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil of 1988, the infra-constitutional legislation, the state norms that discipline the organization of the Military Police of the State of Pará, institutional documents and scientific productions related to public security, territorial conflicts, fundamental rights, socio-environmental justice and the Amazonian reality.

The option for the deductive method is justified by general legal categories, such as the protection of fundamental rights, state action and the preservation of public order, to understand its implementation in the context of rural communities in the Amazon, especially in the face of the challenges arising from the expansion of organized crime, land conflicts and socio-environmental vulnerabilities.

According to Boccato (2006), the bibliographical research seeks the survey and critical analysis of the documents published on the subject to be researched, in order to update and develop knowledge and contribute to the realization of the research. With the theme defined and delimited, the researcher will have to walk paths to develop it.

The selection of the bibliographical reference privileged authors who critically analyze public security, the Amazonian territorial occupation, the effectiveness of fundamental rights and socio-environmental conflicts. In this sense, stand out Norberto Bobbio, Ingo Wolfgang Sarlet and Joana Pereira, Rafael Pucci and Rodrigo Soares, whose contributions support the understanding of the role of the State in the guarantee of fundamental rights; Henri Acselrad, who provides the theoretical contribution on environmental justice and social construction of risk; Alisson Gomes Monteiro, whose research examines the performance of the Military Police in social conflicts in the Paraense field; Luiz Eduardo Soares, who analyzes the evolution of the policies, on the occupation and territorial organization of the Amazon; in addition to recent studies on organized crime and regional violence developed by Ailton Luiz dos Santos et al., Roberto Magno Reis Netto et al. and official documents produced by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the Military Police of Pará.

The documentary research complements the literature review through the analysis of normative acts and institutional documents, such as State Supplementary Law No. 053/2006, Federal Decrees No. 11,348/2023 and No. 11,614/2023, the Public Security Dossier in the Legal Amazon and other official documents, allowing to confront the normative discipline with the institutional reality of public security in the Amazon.

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8 Results and Discussions

The bibliographical and documentary analysis showed that the realization of public security in the rural communities of the Amazon is directly conditioned by the territorial characteristics of the region and by the institutional capacity to adapt their strategies to local specificities. The territorial extension, population dispersion, difficulties of terrestrial and river displacement and the unequal presence of public services limit the capacity of prevention and response of the State, especially in localities far from urban centers.

The first result identified is the relationship between territorial vulnerability and the operational capacity of security institutions. The difficulties of rural policing do not stem exclusively from the availability of staff, but also from the inadequacy of conventional policing models to the geographical particularities of the Amazon. In territories marked by large distances and low institutional density, the expansion of the ostensible presence is limited when unaccompanied by appropriate territorial planning, intelligence and logistics.

The second result refers to the impact of the expansion of illicit economies on the dynamics of public security in the interior of the Amazon. The analysis indicates the overlap between drug trafficking, the illegal exploitation of natural resources and territorial conflicts, phenomena that expand the complexity of the demands directed to security institutions. The internalization of criminal organizations and the use of waterways as logistical corridors demonstrate that regional crime operates through local, interstate and transnational connections, which requires answers that go beyond isolated interventions.

The third result relates to the institutional adaptation of policing strategies to the territory. The analysis of the structure of the Military Police of Pará evidences the incorporation of intelligence mechanisms, regionalized production of knowledge and specialized rural policing. In this context, the Georeferenced Rural Patrol has relevance for articulating territorial information, the organization of patrol routes and community approximation, constituting an experience of operational adaptation to the characteristics of rural areas.

However, institutional data on the results of these initiatives should be analyzed with caution. Although the indicators released by the Military Police of Pará indicate positive results in the areas served, the absence of external and independent evaluations limits the establishment of causal relations between the implementation of strategies and the variation of criminal indices. The data are therefore relevant indicators, but require empirical research capable of evaluating its effectiveness in the medium and long term.

The fourth result demonstrates that the isolated performance of an institution is insufficient in the face of the complexity of public security problems in the Amazon. The overlap between drug trafficking, environmental crimes and territorial conflicts requires articulation between state and federal institutions, environmental bodies, justice system and international cooperation mechanisms. The initiatives examined highlight advances in the integration of intelligence, technology and operational capacity, although challenges related to the continuity of policies, institutional articulation and the need to face the social and territorial vulnerabilities that favor the expansion of illicit economies persist.

The results confirm the hypothesis formulated, according to which the territorial, logistical and institutional limitations associated with the expansion of illicit economies condition the state action in the rural communities of the Amazon. At the same time, they demonstrate that strategies based on intelligence, territorial planning, georeferencing, community approximation and interinstitutional cooperation have the potential to mitigate some of these limitations.

The main analytical contribution of the study is to demonstrate that the territory is not a peripheral element of public security planning, but rather a structuring variable of institutional action in the Amazon. The effectiveness of public security in rural communities depends, therefore, on territorially adapted models, capable of combining operational capacity, intelligence, prevention, institutional legitimacy and articulation with other public policies.

9 Final Considerations

This research aimed to analyze how structural, territorial and institutional limitations influence the performance of the Military Police in the effectiveness of public security and fundamental rights in rural communities of the Amazon. It was assumed that the territorial extension of the region, the logistical difficulties, the insufficiency of the state presence and the expansion of illicit economies are factors that directly impact the capacity of the institutions responsible for the preservation of public order.

The analysis developed allowed to verify that the challenges faced by public security in the Amazon have historical roots associated with the process of territorial occupation of the region. The formation of areas marked by social vulnerabilities, land conflicts, irregular exploitation of natural resources and reduced state presence created conditions that favored the emergence and expansion of different modalities of crime, especially those linked to drug trafficking, illegal mining, land grabbing and environmental crimes.

It was found that public security, understood as a fundamental right guaranteed by the Federal Constitution of 1988, is not limited to the confrontation of crime, but is also directly related to the promotion of citizenship and the dignity of the human person, as well as the realization of other fundamental rights. In this context, the performance of the Military Police of Pará assumes singular relevance, especially in rural localities and traditional communities where, often, the corporation represents one of the main manifestations of the institutional presence of the State.

The research also demonstrated that the Military Police of Pará has been seeking to adapt its performance to the specificities of the Amazonian territory through the strengthening of police intelligence, the use of technological tools, the implementation of the Military Police Intelligence System (SIPOM), the expansion of specialized policing and the creation of the Rural Police Battalions. In this scenario, the Georeferenced Rural Patrol stands out, whose proposal highlights the importance of territorial knowledge, community approximation and the use of technologies to expand the capacity of state response in areas of difficult access.

On the other hand, it was found that the expansion of criminal networks associated with riverine drug trafficking and environmental illicit economies continues to pose one of the biggest challenges to public security in the Amazon. The use of rivers as logistical corridors for the circulation of drugs, weapons and illicit goods expands the complexity of police action and requires answers that go beyond simple criminal repression, requiring integration between intelligence, interinstitutional cooperation, environmental protection and social development.

It was also observed that recent initiatives, such as the Amazon Plan: Security and Sovereignty (AMAS Plan), the creation of the Directorate of the Amazon and Environment of the Federal Police (DAMAZ/PF), the strengthening of the Integrated Forces to Combat Organized Crime (FICCOs) and the expansion of international cooperation mechanisms, demonstrate the recognition, on the part of the Brazilian State, of the need for articulated responses to face problems of local, national and transnational dimensions.

Given the results obtained, it is concluded that the initially proposed hypothesis was confirmed. The territorial, logistical and institutional limitations significantly influence the performance of the Military Police in the rural communities of the Amazon, imposing obstacles to the full realization of public security and fundamental rights. However, it was also found that strategies based on police intelligence, community policing, georeferencing, institutional cooperation and strengthening the state presence have the potential to reduce vulnerabilities and expand the protection of local populations.

Finally, it is understood that the construction of a public security policy appropriate to the Amazonian reality requires a multidimensional approach, capable of articulating territorial protection, socio-environmental justice, sustainable development, community participation and the guarantee of fundamental rights. More than facing crime, it is about strengthening the legitimate presence of the state in territories historically marked by inequalities and vulnerabilities, contributing to the consolidation of citizenship and democratic order in the Amazon.

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