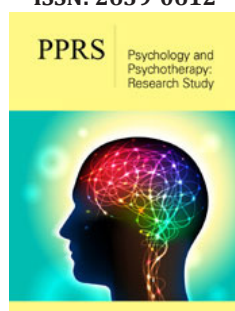


Can Brains Fall with the Forest? Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon and its Repercussions on the Cognition of Forest Peoples

ISSN: 2639-0612

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Opinion

The Amazon covers a total area of 7 million km² and is divided into the International Amazon and the Brazilian Legal Amazon. The International Amazon stretches across nine South American countries: Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, French Guiana and Suriname [1]. Brazil is home to 60% of the Amazon Rainforest. The Brazilian Legal Amazon was established in 1953 by the Brazilian government to plan and promote the social and economic development of the region. It covers an area of 5,217,423km², occupying 61% of Brazil's territory. It is made up of nine states, namely: Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, Mato Grosso and part of the territory of the states of Tocantins and Maranhão. The Legal Amazon is divided into the Western Amazon and the Eastern Amazon. The Western Amazon is made up of the states of Amazonas, Acre, Rondônia and Roraima. The Eastern Amazon is made up of the states of Tocantins, Pará, Amapá, and parts of the states of Mato Grosso and Maranhão in the Amazonian areas [2]. Despite its magnitude, there is still little research that seeks to understand cognitive phenomena, especially executive functions in the Amazonian context. The date of this opinion piece, November 8, 2023, marks the occurrence of numerous fires and, consequently, a deplorable state of air quality in the state of Amazonas, the largest in the northern region of Brazil and the owner of a significant portion of the Brazilian Amazon Forest. This is a direct consequence of the extreme drought in the north of the country.

The Amazon rainforest is still under threat. Not just the forest, but all the beings that inhabit this territory. As far as human beings are concerned, the devastation threatens knowledge about the impact of the forest on the cognition and behavior of the people who live there. The growing threat to the Amazon raises numerous interesting questions: Would the captains of vessels traveling along the Amazon River and its tributaries have a hippocampus as impressive as those of London taxi drivers, according to the studies by Maguire et al. [3]. No less relevant, what impact does Ayahuasca have on anxiety and depression? There are many studies evaluating the association between Ayahuasca and spiritual and cultural processes [4,5]. Research associating man and nature is emerging in the face of the many questions that remain unanswered. The former government of Jair Messias Bolsonaro took on or defended an environmental agenda that was criticized in Brazil and around the world. An agenda that defends the exploitation of environmental wealth, harming a protectionist proposal for the forest and other natural resources. It is worth highlighting the expansion of mining and the resulting environmental impacts [6]. The destruction of the Amazon must be avoided at all costs. The extinction of the forest not only poses a threat to a vibrant natural environment, but also a direct threat to research, given the urgent danger of hindering comprehension of

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Submission: 📅 November 10, 2023

Published: 📅 November 20, 2023

Volume 7 - Issue 4

How to cite this article: Pessoa RC* and Pessoa GFO*. Can Brains Fall with the Forest? Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon and its Repercussions on the Cognition of Forest Peoples. Psychol Psychother Res Stud. 7(4). PPRS. 000670. 2023.

DOI: [10.31031/PPRS.2023.07.000670](https://doi.org/10.31031/PPRS.2023.07.000670)

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the intricate connections between the forest and the human brain. Finally, it is correct to say that the preservation of the Amazon rainforest.

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