



Volume 40
Número 3
Ano 2025
Id e58573

Dossiê: A Religião como categoria sociológica: olhares desde o Sul Global

DOI: 10.1590/s0102-6992-20254003e58573

Liberationist Christianity and Political Ecology in Latin America

Luis Martínez Andrade

Université Catholique de Louvain, Centre de recherches
interdisciplinaires, Démocratie, Institutions, Subjectivité
(CriDIS), Louvain, Belgique.

email: luisma_andrade@hotmail.com
orcid: 0000-0002-5000-9033

Este é um artigo em acesso aberto distribuído nos termos da Licença Creative Commons Atribuição que permite o uso irrestrito, a distribuição e reprodução em qualquer meio desde que o artigo original seja devidamente citado.

Recebido em: 11/06/2025
Aprovado em: 07/10/2025



Editoria: Eduardo Dimitrov

Liberationist Christianity and Political Ecology in Latin America

Luis Martínez Andrade

Resumo: Para o sociólogo Michael Löwy, a teologia da libertação é a expressão espiritual de um cristianismo de libertação, que foi o protagonista dos movimentos populares do final da década de 1950, principalmente no Brasil. Por meio das Comunidades Eclesiais de Base (CEBs) e das pastorais populares, a teologia da libertação criou as condições para o surgimento de uma nova cultura política em toda a América Latina. Consequentemente, as mudanças socioculturais da segunda metade do século XX na América Latina não podem ser explicadas sem mencionar o desenvolvimento da teologia da libertação. Nosso objetivo neste artigo é duplo: por um lado, examinaremos a dimensão ecológica na teologia da libertação e, por outro lado, analisaremos o papel dos movimentos sociais/populares dentro do cristianismo da libertação que propõem outra relação com a natureza.

Palavras-chave: teologia da libertação; Antropoceno; ecologia política; América Latina.

Abstract: For sociologist Michael Löwy, liberation theology is the spiritual expression of a Christianity of liberation, which was the protagonist of the popular movements of the late 1950s, mainly in Brazil. Through the ecclesiastic base communities (CEBs) and the popular pastoral, liberation theology created the conditions for the emergence of a new political culture throughout Latin America. Consequently, the socio-cultural changes of the second half of the 20th century in Latin America cannot be explained without mentioning the development of liberation theology. Our objective in this article is twofold: on the one hand, we will observe the ecological dimension in liberation theology and, on the other hand, we will analyze the role of social/popular movements inscribed in liberation Christianity that propose another relationship with nature.

Keywords: liberation theology; Anthropocene; political ecology; Latin America.

Introduction

There is no doubt that liberation theology represents an important turning point in the intellectual history of Latin American critical thought (Martínez Andrade, 2015). At the beginning of the seventies, the first writings of its main exponents appeared, namely: Gustavo Gutiérrez, Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, Enrique Dussel, Hugo Assmann, Jon Sobrino, Frei Betto, Pablo Richard, Rubén Dri, Jorge Pixley, Juan Luis Segundo, Porfirio Miranda, mainly (Dussel, 1974). In *War of Gods: Religion and Politics in Latin America*, Michael Löwy (1996) again uses the concept of elective affinities to understand not only the correspondences between Christianity and socialism, but also to explain the new religious culture that expresses the specific conditions of Latin America: dependent capitalism, massive poverty, institutionalized violence, popular religiosity that conditioned the emergence of liberation theology. Among Michael Löwy's objectives are both to contribute to a renewal of the Marxist critique of religion and to provide a general analytical introduction to the study of the processes in the political-religious force field of the second half of the 20th century in Latin America insofar as they have constituted important factors in social change.

For Michael Löwy, it was between 1958 and 1959 when two fundamental phenomena arose for what would later be the development of liberationist Christianity. On the one hand, we have the election of John XXIII who was responsible for the organization of Vatican II (1962-1965) and, on the other, the Cuban Revolution which, with an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist program, sowed the foundations of what would later be known as Guevarism. Moreover, Löwy mentions that it is through the impact of a

specifically French tradition of progressive Christian anti-capitalism (above all Catholic, but also ecumenical), that the first manifestation of progressive Christianity, known as the “Brazilian Christian Left”, will emerge in Brazil during the 1960s and, years later, spread throughout Latin America. This is due to the privileged relationship between the French Catholic Church and the Brazilian Catholic Church: a clear example of this is the Christian University Youth. On the other hand, it should be noted that liberation Christianity was not exclusive to the Catholic world, as sectors of the Protestant churches were also involved (Carvalhoes e Py, 2017).

Regarding the elective affinities between Christianity and socialism, Michael Löwy (1996) identifies the following: (a) the critique of individualistic worldviews (liberal-rationalist, empiricist, hedonist) and faith in transindividual values; (b) both regard the poor as victims of injustice; (c) both share universalism, internationalism or Catholicism (in its etymological sense), that is, they conceive of humanity as a totality whose substantial union is above races, ethnic groups or countries; (d) the value of community and communitarian life; (e) the critique of capitalism and the doctrines of liberalism; and (f) both share the hope of a future kingdom of justice and freedom, of peace and fraternity among all humanity.

What is Liberationist Christianity?

For sociologist Michael Löwy, liberation theology is the spiritual and intellectual expression of an even deeper movement which he has called liberation Christianity. The latter represents an ethos, in the Weberian sense of the term, that opposes the dynamics of capitalist modernity. Christianity of liberation emerged at the end of the 1950s and was spearheaded by movements such as the Christian University Youth or Young Christian Workers (Löwy, 1996, p. 32). If liberation theology is a reflection subsequent to a social praxis, then liberationist Christianity is precisely the social or popular movement that serves, and has served as the basis for anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist theological proposals.

For his part, Enrique Dussel (1974) highlights three fundamental aspects of liberation theology: the centrality of the economic, political and religious conditioning of theology; the critical attitude towards the totality; and the commitment to liberating praxis. With regard to the first, liberation theology defines itself as a contextual theology and, in this sense, no theological or intellectual production is neutral. As for the second, “the preferential option for the poor” expresses its prophetic meaning, for starting with the victims, liberation theologians reveal both structures of symbolic domination and structures of material oppression. On the latter point, the role of the ecclesiastic base communities is fundamental both in the process of consciousness-raising and in the socio-political organization of the oppressed.

It is true that there is a “transnational link” (Chaouch, 2007) between liberation theologians and their European counterparts, since some of them carried out their studies in Europe during the post-war period. This is precisely the case of Gustavo Gutiérrez (Belgium and France), Enrique Dussel (Spain and France), João Batista Libanio (Italy), Clodovis Boff and Camilo Torres (Belgium), Hugo Assmann and Leonardo Boff (Germany). However, this link does not account for the variety of profiles and portraits of these thinkers that emerged within contemporary Catholicism. It should be noted that liberation theology is also composed not only of thinkers from Latin America (Franz Hinkelammert, Ignacio Ellacuría, Jon Sobrino, Pedro Casaldáliga, Juan José Tamayo Acosta, José Comblin) but also of women theologians (Ivone Gebara, Elsa Tamez, Marcella Althaus-Reid, Maria José Rosado Nunes, Nancy Cardoso). Most of these theologians are part of the same constellation: beyond their social origin or nationality, they are bearers of a particular worldview: a utopian worldview.

Currently, a new generation of liberation theologians is developing very interesting perspectives. Without being exhaustive, we will mention some of them:

The border theology proposed by Brazilian theologian Motta Cunha (2017) combines the Tillichian approach, based on the notion of border, with the decolonial option developed by Mignolo (2002). For Motta Cunha, the coloniality of power/knowledge reproduces the mechanisms of socio-religious domination. Hence the need to rethink theological training in the light of the religious and cultural diversity of populations. The perspective of subalterns is therefore decisive in activating the prophetic dimension of churches.

As for ecofeminism, Methodist theologian Nancy Cardoso (2022) is developing, in the tradition of Marcella Althaus-Reid's queer liberation theology, a critique of the model of industrial agriculture promoted by capitalist modernity to the detriment not only of social bonds, but also of the environment. Drawing on the agroecological experiences of the family production model, this theologian observes the role of the concept of seed cultivation in forms of socialization that oppose the dynamics of agro-industry. In this sense, agroecology is seen as an erotic process between peasants and the Earth. Bolivian theologians Titizano (2017) and Chipana Quispe (2023), for their part, present an intercultural, ecofeminist and indigenous theology based on the imagination and spirituality of the peoples of the Andes. According to these theologians, Andean cosmogony inspires another way for the subject to relate to nature: the case of the figure of *Pachamama* (Mother Earth).

From an autochthonous perspective, Yenny Delgado-Qullaw (2024) recovers ancestral thought to propose a very interesting critical theology. For Delgado-Qullaw, we must conceive of Abya Yala as our Motherland. "In this way, Abya Yala is understood as a motherland that has been the victim of a hegemonic, patriarchal, and colonialist historical process that violated and divided it into pieces, separating its children, giving it to strangers, and breaking the relationship between the land and communities that previously lived there" (Delgado-Qullaw, 2024, p. 303).

The long tradition of anti-colonial struggle of the Afro-Brazilian populations is a source of inspiration for the *Teoquilombismo* developed by (Caldeira e das Chagas de Albuquerque, 2022). The lived experience of black communities must be understood as a privileged theological site. Thus, *Teoquilombismo* focuses on processes of subjectivity in order to reflect on the possibility of redemption in a context of neo-colonial oppression. It goes without saying that liberation cannot be thought of outside the suffering corporality of the victim. In addition, Caldeira (2024) rescues the subversive memory of the anti-colonial struggles of the black populations.

Marques (2014) addresses the ontic sense (the death of the Man-God), the logical and epistemological sense (evanescence of language), the ethical sense (dissolution of all values founded on belief) and the ontological sense (acceptance that the human is irretrievably lost). Needless to say, the author establishes the distinction between the death of God for believers and the death of God for philosophers. Thus, Lúcio Álvaro Marques ponders the pertinence of scepticism in the development of critical thought. His work offers us a critical and suggestive look at atheism. In dialogue with the theological and philosophical thought of both classical and contemporary thinkers, this work invites us to reflect on the fragility of human existence and on the imperious need to build a messianic time, but, above all, it puts us on the track that "the mysticism that is born of scepticism rejects any idolatry" (Marques, 2014, p. 102). In addition, Lúcio Álvaro Marques highlights the contributions of Latin American philosophical thought, emphasizing the ideas of Leonardo Boff, in the construction of a counter-hegemonic ecological project (Marques e Martínez Andrade, 2025).

From a Marxist perspective, Allan Coelho (2025) studies the mythical structure of capitalism as religion. Coelho's works on the thought of Walter Benjamin, Franz Hinkelammert and Paulo Freire are fundamental for the development of critical thinking (Martínez

Andrade e Coelho, 2023). Allan Coelho (2025) argues that although the assertion that capitalism as a religion is radical, what is truly significant is to show that this system is a religion of the fetish, that is, a religion with a sacrificial aspect. To this end, Coelho takes up certain approaches from the *Departamento Ecuménico de Investigaciones* (analysis of the logic of sacrifice through the myth of Iphigenia, the link between sacrifice and the utopian ideal, idolatry of the market, critique of the Law that justifies domination, theology of debt, the transformation of Christian orthodoxy) to offer us his own theological-political exegesis of great depth.

Nicolás Panotto (2019) and Graham McGeoch (2023) belong to a new generation of theologians who, through ecumenical dialogue, are recovering the prophetic meaning of liberation theology. While Nicolás Panotto (2024) is developing a post/colonial theology in the key of liberation, Graham McGeoch (2024) addresses the link between *mística*¹ and popular anti-capitalist movements. Their work on the origins and challenges of theology in the 21st century is gaining recognition in Latin American theological circles.

Latin American Political Ecology

Joan Martínez Alier (2002) published *The Environmentalism of the Poor*, an interesting study on the relationship between the various systems of evaluation and economic projects that profoundly disrupt nature and the environment. The concept of environmentalism of the poor puts the value of use and ecological rationality back on the table and, at the same time, confronts them with the hegemonic economic logic, that of the market. Through the resistance of local populations to the predatory logic of extractivism, the environmentalism of the poor expresses the existence of an alternative social ethos to the model of accumulation based on the over-exploitation of resources, most of which are non-renewable. One of the questions posed by Martínez Alier is the following: What do the very different movements led by indigenous peoples in Latin America, peasants in India or militant environmentalists in the First World have in common? In other words, how can we understand the diversity of ecological struggles that have arisen in the four corners of the planet, their languages (religious or secular) and their imaginaries (myths, beliefs or legends)? To answer this, Martínez Alier uses the ideal-type (to use Weber's term that refers to the configuration of a model that seeks to be studied for its intrinsic qualities) of the incommensurability of values, that is, the plurality of values linked to the perennial conflicts of the ultimate convictions in modern society. Generally speaking, the image of incommensurability of values tends to place on the table the impossibility of reconciling antagonistic elements. For example, Karl Marx (1998) demonstrated the intrinsic conflict between use value and exchange value: a key element in the valorization process is conceived as abstract labor. It is not fortuitous that capital is described as a vampire. We must admit the importance of Marx's contribution in *Capital* since it analyzes the fetishized dynamics of the commodity and of the destructive logic of capitalism (ecocide) that accompanies the rupture of the market. The formation of surplus-value, accumulation as the sole purpose, the desire for profit, the thirst for wealth, the obsession for progress represent the values strongly defended by capitalism. For their part, communities and populations propose counter-hegemonic alternatives such as solidarity and mutual aid in order to defend life. It is important to note that Martínez Alier does not exclude social movements in the Global North from his concept of environmentalism of the poor, as some of these movements have an anti-capitalist dimension: for example, peasant movements such as La Via Campesina, movements in defense of common goods, etc.

1: The term *mística* has generated much confusion not only because of its difficulty of translation, for example into English, but also because of what it implies in a theological context. Following the approaches of some liberation theologians (Juan Luis Segundo, Leonardo Boff or Marcelo Barros), theologian (McGeoch, 2024) argues that *mística*, specifically that of the Landless Workers' Movement (MST), is not ideological or alienating because it is rooted in the experiences of struggle, resistance and redistribution of the earth. In this sense McGeoch recognizes that although liberation theology does not have a systematic reflection on the *mística* of the MST, it does offer general reflections on it.

Joan Martínez Alier proposes an interpretation of the meaning of the sacredness of nature in the political and ecological mobilizations of communities and peoples challenging capitalism. While the notions of economic growth or eco-efficiency are elements of the discourse of ecological modernization since they configure the link between the business sector and development, diametrically opposed are the terms environmental justice, popular epistemologies, ecological debt, which make up the discourse of popular ecologism, the movement for environmental justice and liberation ecology. The concern for the environment - as a source and condition for the reproduction of social metabolism - is always present in the reference to the sacredness of nature. Where the references of the language of capital valorization (exchange value, increase of the rate of surplus-value) become the essential ends of the capitalist system to the detriment of the environment, the language of valorization of the ecology of the poor rehabilitates the value of use, a harmonious relationship with nature and respect for the natural cycles of the earth in order to implement alternatives to bourgeois instrumental rationality. This clarification of the various languages of valorization raises the question of knowing what is the contribution of emancipatory religions to envision political, social and economic solutions to challenge neoliberal globalization. Martínez Alier observes that it is difficult to discover the degree of awareness that the poor have of their reproductive condition since they use their own religious language to invoke values intrinsic to their culture.

For Marcelo Barros (2011, p. 20), the popular religious dimension can be ambiguous (for example, millenarian and non-historical), but if revolutionary movements channel this force in a historical way, it could contribute to social transformations. In the same vein, Leonardo Boff and Frei Betto point out that: "to speak of mysticism does not mean to avoid the answer to the questions posed, nor to mystify reality, but to assume its most luminous side, that dimension that nourishes vital energies, beyond the principle of interest, failures and successes. Spirituality and mysticism are part of life in its integrity and sacredness. From there are born the dynamism of resistance and the permanent will of liberation" (Boff e Betto, 1999, p. 13).

For our part, in other works we have addressed the ecological dimension of liberation theology in order to show that as a theology of life (Martínez Andrade, 2024), liberation theology is opposed to the sacrificial logic of capitalist modernity (Martínez Andrade, 2019). Although we can identify elements of political ecology or environmentalism of the poor in some theologians, we maintain that it is the works of (Boff, 1997; Gebara, 2024) that have best addressed the theology-ecology binomial (Martínez Andrade, 2022).

In Latin America, the spirituality of liberation Christianity and indigenous communities have contributed profoundly to the ecological movement (Martínez Andrade, 2022). The figure of Chico Mendes expresses three characteristic features of the socio-political imaginary of Latin American social movements: 1) the ecological struggle of the poor where what is at stake is a question of life or death, 2) a Christianity of liberation and its intellectual manifestation: liberation theology and 3) a heterodox Latin American Marxism since the influence that Euclides Fernandes Távora, former lieutenant of Luís Carlos Prestes, had on this *seringueiro* cannot be overlooked. Originally from Ceará, from a well-to-do family in Fortaleza, Távora joined Prestes' movement to transform Brazil. This movement travelled almost twenty-five thousand kilometers in two years, creating states within the state and fighting nearly fifty-six battles against government forces (Löwy, 2011).

The struggle of Chico Mendes marks an important moment in the eco-socialist project in Latin America, since ecological concern was not separated from social justice. The ecological sensitivity is not a heritage of the societies of the North, but a vital issue for the societies of the periphery, plundered for five centuries by the destructive dynamics of the really existing modernity. The struggle initiated in the 1970s and 1980s by the trade unionist Francisco Mendes Alves Filho, better known as Chico Mendes, clearly shows the link between the defense of the Amazon rainforest and the rejection of predatory

agricultural capitalism. Founder of the rural unions of Brasília and Xapuri, in the state of Acre in Brazil, Chico Mendes is the protagonist of a non-violent struggle of the *seringueiros* against the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest. Together with their families, they formed human chains to block the landowners' bulldozers. Very quickly, the *seringueiros* found an ally in the indigenous communities of the Amazon. Together they founded the Rainforest Peoples Alliance in March 1989. Chico Mendes, who was assassinated in December 1988 by hired killers of the large landowners, explained the meaning of this alliance against the common enemy: the destructive capitalism that was invading their lands (Martínez Andrade, 2024).

The socio-environmental struggles waged by peasant and indigenous communities against illegal deforestation and the polluting activities of the extractive industry have shaped what Joan Martínez Alier has called the environmentalism of the poor. In Peru, one of the countries hardest hit by the mining industry, the struggle of Hugo Blanco, Trotskyist activist and director of the *Lucha Indígena* newspaper, represents this link between political ecology and Marxism. In Brazil, liberation theologians Frei Betto, Marcelo Barros and Leonardo Boff have also claimed to be eco-socialists (Martínez Andrade, 2019).

Analysing the link between liberation theology and some social movements in Latin America, Nathalia Hernández argues that the work of Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff has been important in criticizing the agricultural policies implemented by the green revolution in the region. In this regard, Nathalia Hernández argues that:

Drawing from the work of Leonardo Boff, many of these organizations saw emancipation not only as a human quest but also as a process that was based in relations of reciprocity between humans and more-than-humans. For Boff, the same political and ethical grounds that sustain in the dehumanization of the poor allow and enforce the destruction of the more-than-human and its plurality of relations. Although Boff's work is more contemporary than many of the movements and grassroots organizations embracing LTs and pedagogies in the late '60s, '70s, and '80, it is one of the most theologically driven developments showcasing the interconnections between the agrarian question, environmental justice, and human and more-than-human emancipation. The work of the IMCA (Instituto Mayor Campesino), the National Network of Free Seeds of Colombia, and other agrarian-based grassroots organizations on the continent, such as La Via Campesina, are also good examples of these interconnections (Hernández, 2024, p. 55).

The term Anthropocene appeared at the beginning of 2002 to name a new geological epoch due to the significant global impact that human activities have had on terrestrial ecosystems. Although there is no consensus on the date on which the Anthropocene epoch originated, the chemist Paul Crutzen suggests that it dates from the invention of the steam engine in 1784. This was the turning point in the expulsion of carbon dioxide on a planetary scale (Crutzen, 2002). Thus, one of the main causes is to be found in the period of the industrial revolution: the use of non-renewable fossil fuels. Although the notion of Anthropocene questions the excessive use of fossil fuels and the argument of industrial civilization, for thinkers such as (Moore, 2015; Rieger, 2022; Vega Cantor, 2019), this term is problematic because it holds all human beings responsible for environmental destruction. While, for some, the term erases European colonial history, for others, it obliterates the logic of value inherent to the capitalist system of production/reproduction. In this respect, the Methodist theologian Joerg Rieger writes:

Reevaluating increasing ecological destruction and spiraling climate change in this light puts a new focus on conversations about ecology, as the most fundamental challenges are not anthropocentrism, an overemphasis of transcendence, or even a lack of concern for the immanent; they are the structures of neoliberal capitalism (...) As Latin American liberation theologians pointed out decades ago, the immanence of dominant liberal middle-class theology that ruled much of the twentieth century and remains popular in the twenty-first is not the immanence of oppressed and exploited people struggling for their liberation (Rieger, 2022, pp. 65–66).

After the long ecclesial winter of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, the arrival of Pope Francis was a breath of fresh air inside the old structures of the Roman Catholic Church. True, not without contradictions, especially with regard to issues related to sexual rights and diversity, Francis' papacy rehabilitated some anti-capitalist elements of Christianity in the promotion of solidarity responsibility and ecological awareness. In the face of attacks and obstacles from the traditionalist group, Pope Francis tried to lay the foundations of another paradigm of Church. Without the intention of taking stock of his papacy, as it would exceed the space of this text, we are interested in addressing the socio-environmental implications of his encyclical *Laudato Si'. On the care of the common home*.

For the sociologist Michael Löwy (2019), it is no coincidence that the encyclical has been disqualified both by conservative groups within the Roman Catholic Church and by large multinational corporations, the latter representatives of capital and ideologues of market ecology. The reason: the anti-systemic character of which it is the bearer. Although the word capitalism does not appear in the encyclical, Löwy maintains, the criticism of the current model of production and consumption is evident. The denunciation of the obsession with unlimited growth, consumption, the absolute domination of finance and the divinization of the market is present in the document and, in that sense, allows for an articulation with other anti-systemic projects. Furthermore, Michael Löwy tells us, although there are few references to social movements in the encyclical, the document outlines some ideas for the implementation of other forms of social organization.

In another vein, let us recall that on May 1, 2019 (symbolic Workers' Day), Pope Francis convened a world meeting in Assisi (Italy) with the aim of rethinking the economic development of the Planet, social inequality and global warming. The event brought together more than a thousand activists, young activists and environmentalists and was known as "Francis' Economy". For the Brazilian researcher (Souza, 2023), this event had a great echo in Brazil. Adopting the guidelines of the "Economy of Francis", a variety of social movements linked to agroecology, believers and some eco-socialist activists created the Brazilian Articulation for the Economy of Francis and Clare (ABEFC). Thus, ABEFC postulated ten guiding principles: (a) an economy at the service of life; (b) an economy that considers spirituality as a dimension that favors affection and solidarity; (c) a circular and integrated economy that eliminates non-renewable energy consumption habits and values sustainable forms of energy; (d) an economy based on healthy food and family farming that protects the Rights of Nature; (e) an economy that avoids the commodification of common goods such as education and health; (f) a less unequal global economy that rediscusses international debts with a more social and ecological taxation; (g) an economy against the minimal State, for a more social and ecological taxation; (h) an economy against the minimal State, for a State that is a structure that promotes the balance between equality and freedom; (i) an economy that values collectives, communities, politically minority and socially disadvantaged groups; (j) an economy of universal work that avoids the precariousness of workers. Through the work of ABEFC, the anti-capitalist lines of the encyclical began to have a socio-political translation in the Brazilian space.

For the Spanish theologian Juan José Tamayo (2024), we can find an air of family between *Laudato Si'*, the proposal of *Sumak Kawsay* (good living) and the *Earth Charter*, since all of them make a critique of the current system: they criticize modern anthropocentrism, reject the inadequate presentation of Christian anthropology and, of course, question the logic of capitalist modernity.

Conclusions

From the trenches of the world of ideas, some philosophers and theologians have decided to take the floor in order to devise hypotheses that account for the current ecological crisis. However, it seems to us that the submission to the ideological and categorical frameworks in force on the part of the intellectuals of the global North has led them to devise notions and categories (for example, *L'écobiographie* proposed by the French philosopher Jean-Philippe Pierron or that of *Dark Ecology* coined by the English philosopher Timothy Morton) of a discourse closer to the environmentalism of the rich than to that of the environmentalism of the poor (Martínez Andrade, 2025). Others, influenced by Bruno Latour and interested in the elaboration of neologisms for the markets (both academic and editorial), also act as promoters of the environmentalism of the rich and, therefore, prefer to avoid addressing the conflicts linked to the dynamics of capitalist exploitation.

For more than three decades, a line of research has been developing that combines the contributions of political ecology and liberation theology, and that emphasizes the ecological dimension in the struggles of the popular movements of the global South. Environmentalism of the poor (Martínez Alier, 2002) is one of the epithets used to name the process of anti-hegemonic struggle and resistance of peoples and communities to the onslaught of capitalist modernity (Martínez Andrade, 2024). Recently, researchers Raimundo Barreto, Graham McGeoch and Wanderley Pereira (2024) edited the book *World Christianity and Ecological Theologies*, which is one of the most successful works in the field of "religion and ecology". Composed of fifteen chapters, the volume approaches from different perspectives of the global South (Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean) the link between theology and ecology. Through the texts that compose this work we observe the elective affinities between a Liberationist Christianity and Political Ecology in accordance with our times.

References

- BARRETO, R.; MCGEOCH, G.; PEREIRA DA ROSA, W. (EDS.). **World Christianity and Ecological Theologies**. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2024.
- BARROS, M. **Para onde vai Nuestra América. Espiritualidade socialista para o século XXI**. São Paulo: Nhanduti Editora, 2011.
- BOFF, L. **Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor**. New York: Orbis Book, 1997.
- BOFF, L.; BETTO, F. **Mística y espiritualidad**. Madrid: Trotta, 1999.
- CALDEIRA, C. **Black Feminist Theology. Voices Resonating from Africa and Latin America**. Accra: JEM Publishers, 2024.
- CALDEIRA, C.; CHAGAS DE ALBUQUERQUE, F. DAS. Questões críticas nos estudos da teologia negra em perspectiva decolonial. **Theologica Xaveriana**, n. 72, 2022.
- CARDOSO, N. Land Lovers. From Agropornography to Agroecology. *Em*: MENDOZA, L.; ZACHARIAH, G. (Eds.). **Decolonizing Ecotheology. Indigenous and Subaltern Challenges**. Oregon: Pickwick, 2022.
- CARVALHAES, C.; PY, F. Teologia da libertação: história, temas e nomes. **Crosscurrents**, v. 67, n. 1, 2017.

- CHAOUCH, M. T. Vers une déconstruction sociologique de l'idéologie progressiste de la théologie de la libération en Amérique latine. **Cahiers des Amériques latines**, n. 51-52, 2007.
- CHIPANA QUISPE, S. The Weavings of Ancestral Spiritualities in India/Indigenous Theologies as Paths to Liberation. *Em*: PANOTTO, N.; MARTÍNEZ ANDRADE, L. (Eds.). **Decolonizing Liberation Theologies. Past, Present, and Future**. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.
- COELHO, A. **Capitalismo como religión. Walter Benjamin y los teólogos de la Liberación**. Bogotá: Laboratorio Educativo, 2025.
- CRUTZEN, P. Geology of mankind. **Nature**, v. 415, 2002.
- DELGADO-QULLAW, Y. Christianity in Abya Yala: Motherland, Sustainability, and Ecocide. *Em*: BARRETO, R.; MCGEOCH, G.; PEREIRA DA ROSA, W. (Eds.). **World Christianity and Ecological Theologies**. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2024.
- DUSSEL, E. **Histoire et théologie de la libération. Perspective latino-américaine**. Paris: Les éditions ouvrières, 1974.
- GEBARA, I. Interdependence, Christianity, and Environmental Crisis. *Em*: BARRETO, R.; MCGEOCH, G.; PEREIRA DA ROSA, W. (Eds.). **World Christianity and Ecological Theologies**. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2024.
- HERNÁNDEZ, N. Liberation Theologies and Grassroots Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Em*: RIEGER, J.; SCHWERIN, T. (Eds.). **Liberating People, Planet, and Religion**. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2024.
- LÖWY, M. **War of Gods: Religion and Politics in Latin America**. London: Verso, 1996.
- _____. **Ecosocialisme, L'Alternative radicale à la catastrophe écologique capitaliste**. Paris: Mille et une nuits, 2011.
- _____. **Cristianismo de liberación. Perspectivas marxistas y ecosocialistas**. Barcelona: El Viejo Topo, 2019.
- MARQUES, L. Á. **A Glória do ateísmo**. Porto Alegre: Fi, 2014.
- MARQUES, L. Á.; MARTÍNEZ ANDRADE, L. The Defense of an Ecological Ethic of Liberation: Leonardo Boff's Critique of the Exploitative Neoliberal Model. **Sententiae**, v. 44, n. 2, 2025.
- MARTÍNEZ ALIER, J. **The Environmentalism of the Poor: A Study of Ecological Conflicts and Valuation**. London: Edward Elgar, 2002.
- MARTÍNEZ ANDRADE, L. **Religion Without Redemption: Social Contradictions and Awakened Dreams in Latin America**. London: Pluto Press, 2015.
- _____. **Ecología y Teología de la liberación. Crítica de la modernidad/colonialidad**. Barcelona: Herder, 2019.
- _____. Elective Affinities between Liberation Theology and Ecology in Latin America. *Em*: GOLDSTEIN, W.; REED, J. P. (Eds.). **Religion in Rebellions, Revolutions, and Social Movements**. London: Routledge, 2022.
- _____. Embracing Life and Cultivating Hope: The Ecological Dimension of Liberation Theology. *Em*: BARRETO, R.; MCGEOCH, G.; PEREIRA DA ROSA, W. (Eds.). **World Christianity and Ecological Theologies**. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2024.
- _____. Cartographies de l'Écologie Politique en Amérique latine: généalogies, enjeux et utopies. *Em*: ANDRES, E.; URIOSTE, S. (Eds.). **Strangers no More: Regards croisés sur la justice sociale, raciale et environnementale dans les Amériques**. Paris: Michel Houdiard éditeur, 2025.

MARTÍNEZ ANDRADE, L.; COELHO, A. Liberation theology, Marxism and Education. *Em*: HALL, R.; SZADKOWSKI, K. (Eds.). **The Palgrave International Handbook of Marxism and Education**. London: Palgrave, 2023.

MARX, K. **Capital: A Critique of Political Economy**. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1998.

MCGEOCH, G. **Russian Émigré Theology and Latin American Liberation Theology**. Greece: Volos Academy, 2023.

MCGEOCH, G. Marxismo, Mística y el Movimiento de trabajadores rurales sin-tierra: ¿Cuál es el secreto del MST en la lucha para la reforma agraria en Brasil? *Em*: MCGEOCH, G.; MARTÍNEZ ANDRADE, L. (Eds.). **Indecentes e Indignadas. Teologías, Pedagogías y praxis de liberación en América Latina**. Bogotá: Laboratorio Educativo, 2024.

MIGNOLO, W. The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference. **The South Atlantic Quarterly**, v. 101, 2002.

MOORE, J. **Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital**. London: Verso, 2015.

MOTTA CUNHA, C. A. **Provocações Decoloniais à Teologia Cristã**. São Paulo: Terceira Via, 2017.

PANOTTO, N. **Descolonizar o saber teológico na América Latina**. São Paulo: Recriar, 2019.

____. Tesis para una teología política pos/de-colonial de la liberación. *Em*: MCGEOCH, G.; MARTINEZ ANDRADE, L. (Eds.). **Indecentes e Indignadas. Teologías, Pedagogías y praxis de liberación en América Latina**. Bogotá: Laboratorio Educativo, 2024.

RIEGER, J. **Theology in the Capitalocene. Ecology, Identity, Class, and Solidarity**. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2022.

SOUZA, A. R. Marcas na trajetória e no presente do católico cristianismo da libertação. **Estudos de Sociologia**, v. 28, 2023.

TAMAYO, J. J. **Teologías del Sur. El giro descolonizador**. Madrid: Trotta, 2024.

TITIZANO, C. Mama Pacha: Creator and Sustainer Spirit of God. **Horizontes Decoloniales**, n. 3, 2017.

VEGA CANTOR, R. **El capitaloceno: crisis civilizatoria, imperialismo ecológico y límites naturales**. Bogotá: Teoría & Praxis, 2019.

Data Availability Statement

All data generated or analysed during this study are included in this published article.