Review

Environmental Policy in Brazil after the 2016 Coup: An Analysis of Government Expenditure

Previdelli and Souza

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Environmental Policy in Brazil after the 2016 Coup: An Analysis of Government Expenditure

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Abstract

An emerging power since the last decade and a participant in BRICS—a bloc composed of Russia, China, India, and South Africa—Brazil would be the weakest link of an opposition to U.S. hegemony in the world order established since 1991 with the end of the Cold War. The 13-year advances of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva’s reformist and progressive government, continued by his successor Dilma Rousseff, appear to have reached a tolerance limit regarding the retrograde domestic forces and outside interests of the metropolitan center. The coup happened in 2016, following a two-year process of political and economic destabilization of the government. This paper seeks to show, through the exposition of an earlier history and the analyzed narrative of the events, besides the analysis of the federal public expenditures, that this movement of linkage and regression occurred in the ambit of issues related to the environment. The coup government launched in 2016 has abandoned any environmental policy, is interested in dissolving the institutional framework established after 20 years of insertion of Brazil in the global debate on the environment, and does not even supervise and protect the country’s natural resources, in an attitude characteristic of a state of exception.

Keywords: 2016 Brazilian coup; Brazil; Environment; Natural resources; Public spending.

1. INTRODUCTION

The second decade of the 21st century saw an unfortunate return: the cycle of coups in peripheral democracies. Taken together, the political crises that have permeated these countries since the beginning of 2010 show the following common points: (1) a significant performance of the International Labor Division’s center toward the political realignment of these countries, which until then had come to rehearse some autonomy; (2) an extraordinary uprising of reactionary forces marked by the most backward thinking present at this time, and (3) retrogression in all spheres that make up human life on the planet, ranging from economics, society, culture, politics, and mass psychology to the environment, the subject of this text.

The relation of society with the environment is given by the social relations of production. Under capitalism, they follow its logic. The environmental discourse, therefore, under capitalist hegemony, can be understood only as a fight from the periphery or as an ideological justification of the center for increases in the rate of profit, with correlated increases in the exploitation rate (or surplus rate) on the periphery. Government policy, both at the center and the periphery, follows this duality of interests, depending on the level of conjunctural autonomy of the periphery. When this has flashes of autonomy, there is some opposition, and the environmental discourse gains some practical materiality in government policies. When this is subject to metropolitan dictates, the discourse is not reflected in more policies of cost reduction, increase of the average rate of profit of capitalist productive activities, and consequent increase of the exploitation of capital over work, especially the employee, in the transformation of natural resources into commodities.
An emerging power since the last decade and a participant in BRICS (a bloc of countries that include Russia, China, India, and South Africa), Brazil would be the weakest link of an opposition to U.S. hegemony in the world order established since 1991 with the end of the Cold War. The 13-year advances of the reformist and progressive government—which could be characterized as developmentalism—by Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (2003-2010), and unconcluded by his successor Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), seemed to reach a tolerance limit for the domestic retrograde forces and external interests of the metropolitan center in 2016.

The coup d'état would happen in 2016, after a two-year process of political and economic destabilization of the government. From then on, there would be, for external interest, the reconnection with the neoliberal agenda imposed since 1990 on Latin America. For the domestic interest, a series of political, economic, and social setbacks would be put in place by the coup group that ascended to power.

This paper seeks to show, through the exposition of an earlier history and the contextualized narrative of the events, besides the analysis of the federal public expenditures, that this movement of linkage and regression occurred in the ambit of issues related to the environment. If the linkage goes back to the last decade of the last century, the setback shows an even more dramatic issue in Brazil's political history. This has occurred even more remotely, and its future consequences are still difficult to estimate.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. 1930-1988

As a matter of fact, Brazil began to formalize its environmental policy in the 1930s, with the main goal of organizing the use of its natural resources. However, only in the second half of the 20th century was there more effective action, mainly in response to pressure from international organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations.

One should not, however, assume the interference of international bodies in Brazilian environmental policy as something fortuitous, exempt, or even limited to the scope of the question itself. There were interests at stake, and they were relevant in the performance of those organizations with Brazil. For example, the pressure exerted by such organizations over Brazil on the Amazon question kowtowed much more to U.S. economic interests than to the purported purity of intentions (Bandeira, 1978).

Initially linked to development policies, environmental demands became independent, especially from the end of the 1960s onward, even acquiring a critical tone to the so-called developmentalism, proposing the cessation or deceleration of the process of industrialization and urbanization of the periphery, which resonated in his discourse both in the post-1968 environmental discourse and in the policy of containment of Latin America, established in U.S. foreign policy since the mid-1960s.

The first initiatives considered the environmental issue tangentially, focusing on the exploitation of natural resources, from the point of view of the efficiency of the use of these resources. The first legislation aimed at the administration of natural resources was the Water Code (Decree n.24.643/1934), under the control of the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME), due to the interest in hydroelectric power generation; the Forest Code (Decree n.23.793/1934), initially linked to the Ministry of Agriculture with a focus on soil protection for agricultural use and the Law on Protection of Fauna (Law No. 5197/67).

Throughout the period, despite the changes in the Brazilian political scene, the position of the governmental authorities presented a strange constant, marked by a solemn and respectful space given to manifestations of dissatisfaction with the Brazilian position, answered with an equally respectful silence. Meanwhile, granted or promulgated, the legal text was established.

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1 Part of the existing historiography, particularly rooted in the colonial and imperial period (1822-1889), attributes, anachronistically, the existence of favors from the Brazilian monarchy to causes that are now considered “progressive,” such as environmental issues. However, the lack of documents and the logical problem of assigning a progressive mentality to a political system based on slavery and subordinate to the international division of labor are not enough to prove such thesis. The mentioned historiography still tries to reproduce itself today by simple self-reference, which justifies our choice here to summarily discard it based on previous arguments. Hence, the beginning of the formalization of environmental policy in Brazil begins at the start of the Vargas Era (1930-1945), since the First Republic (1889-1930) followed the same political path of the empire in relation to such questions. (Carone, 1971, 1977, 1979, 1985).
The policy of establishing environmentally protected areas (PAs) began in 1937, with the creation of the Itatiaia National Park. From then on, several national parks were created, whose administration and inspection were submitted to the Federal Forest Service, an organization linked to the Ministry of Agriculture. In 1967 the Brazilian Forestry Development Institute (IBDF) was created, also linked to the Ministry of Agriculture. Subsequently, the management of PAs became subordinated to IBDF, which was also responsible for compliance with the Forest Code and all legislation related to renewable natural resources.

In the 1970s, the *Limits of Growth Report* was published by the Club of Rome and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which highlighted concerns about the depletion of natural resources (Moura, 2015a). In 1972 the Stockholm Conference was organized by the United Nations Conference on the Environment. Brazil participated in the conference with a position of defense of national sovereignty, as it was argued that the economic and population growth of developing countries should not be sacrificed and that developed countries should pay for efforts to avoid environmental pollution—a position advocated by the countries of the so-called third world.

In 1973, the first institution to deal with environmental issues at the federal level was created: the Special Secretariat for the Environment (SEMA) linked to the Ministry of the Interior. SEMA's agenda focused on the problem of controlling industrial and urban pollution, with action limited to verify complaints. The IBDF continued to function as a body to promote actions for forests and management of PAs (Conservation Units, UCs).

In the 1980s, the National Environmental Policy was created (Law No. 6,938/81), which created the National Environmental System (SISNAMA) and established the principles, guidelines, instruments, and attributions for the various public agencies that were active in national environmental policy. In general, federal environmental norms approved in the 1980s were mainly related to institutional organization, pollution control and environmental degradation, and strengthening social participation mechanisms in the environmental area (Moura, 2015a).

### 2.2. From the 1988 Constitution to Agenda 21: 1988-2002

One of the topics of the political agenda of Brazilian democratization in the mid-1980s was the issue of natural resource management (Moura, 2015a). When the new constitution was enacted in 1988, an Environmental Chapter (Art. 225) was established that defined the “ecologically balanced environment” (Art. 225, caput) as a citizen's right, specifying several activities to be developed by the public authority with a view to its guarantee. The Federal Constitution of 1988 also presented other references, such as property rights, urban management, and water resources management. However, for such guidelines to be put into practice, it would be necessary to create specific laws and regulations, some of which have never been fully developed.

Several new public institutions were created, such as: the Superintendency of Fisheries Development (SUDEPE), the Rubber Superintendence (SUDHEVEA), the Brazilian Forest Development Institute (IBDF), and the State Secretariat for the Environment (SEMA), all around the main federal body—namely, IBAMA, Brazilian Institute of Environment and Natural Resources (Law n.7.735, of February 22, 1989).

In 1990, the Secretariat of the Environment of the Presidency of the Republic (SEMAM/PR) was created, as the environmental issue gained international visibility and also with the prospect of organizing Rio-92 in Brazil. Brazil prepared for the conference through the Inter-Ministerial Commission on the Environment (CIMA), coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE), with representatives of 23 public agencies, which resulted in the elaboration of a report that explained the Brazilian position on environmental issues.

It is remarkable that, following the institutional pattern of the development model in peripheral countries, several agencies and even some key members of Brazilian development have at some point mentioned the environmental issue, from the Superintendency of Development Northeast (SUDENE), created in 1959 by and for Celso Furtado, to the governments of the military dictatorship (1964-1988). The broad political scope of the use of the term also shows its semantic emptying, especially with regard to the actions and policies of the state. It is possible to observe a certain continuity in this way such that the state receives reflection on the environmental issue in the postdictatorship period, and even after the promulgation of the so-called Citizen Constitution of 1988. But it is necessary to consider the external pressure on Brazil, which holds a large portion of the planet's natural resources. The external tactic at that moment would be to involve Brazil in a “global” discussion about the environment. Brazil, then, would be entrusted with the task of organizing Rio-92.

Rio-92 (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNCED) was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Important environmental agreements were signed at the conference that still reflect its influence today:
i) the Climate and Biodiversity Conventions
ii) Agenda 21
iii) the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
iv) the Declaration of Principles for Forests

It is important to note that this reflects much more an external demand from international agencies than from the part of their political backroom boxes at the United Nations, or even less in Brazil. On the other hand, domestic authorities seem to have maintained the consolidated response in previous decades: to assimilate the language, to agree with the guidelines, and to leave it to the remote future. In spite of incidents that have gained international recognition, such as the assassination of the political leader of the Amazonian rubber tappers Chico Mendes at the time, the institutional action of the government in the matter, would seldom leave the movement of offices until the end of the century.

The Ministry of the Environment (MMA) was created in 1992 with the extinction of SEMAM/PR. In that decade, the MMA operated with few human and financial resources, most of which was financed by the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Only six years later, in 1998, there would be a first practical result: the Law of Environmental Crimes (Law n.9.605/1998) was granted. With this, Brazil become one of the few countries to have an environmental criminal law.

The National Environment Program (PNMA) began operating in 1991, with a first large investment from the World Bank. The program is still in force and focuses on improving the performance of environmental agencies. Its first phase of action (1991-1999) aimed to build the administrative structure of IBAMA and the MMA, with the main goal of enforcing the management of federal UCs, aimed at the protection of ecosystems such as the Pantanal, Atlantic Forest, and Coastal Zone.

In 2000, the National System of Nature Conservation Unit (SNUC) was created (Law 9.985/2000), aiming to take care of the UCs. In the same year, the second phase of PNMA started, which was extended until 2006, and worked on two main lines: integrating environmental asset management and state institutional development. The focus was on environmental licensing, water quality monitoring, and coastal management.

From then on, the focus would be on the generation of economic instruments for environmental management, environmental monitoring, and environmental licensing. If on one hand this reflects a maturation of the character of environmental policies in the country, on the other hand it also generated a tax-based thinking on the part of the public managers involved in the subject (poses the possibility of generating revenue in an environment of pressure by the reduction of public expenses) and a true bureaucracy industry linked to environmental reporting, which in a country with a secular history of patrimonialism and corruption such as Brazil would led to obvious results in the sense of a certain demoralization of the institutions created for that purpose.

In 2002, the Rio + 10 Environmental Conference was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, with one of the main objectives being the evaluation of agreements ratified in Rio-92. At the meeting, the issues of coping with poverty dominated the debates. The main focus of the conference was climate change (Clean Development Mechanism, CDM, Kyoto Protocol) and renewable energy sources. The logical response of the agents to the general political movements was the expected one: evaluation of the commitments made in 1992, recognition of the shortcomings, ratification of the objectives to be achieved, and new commitments assumed in the same degree as the previous ones.

Also in 2000, the National Water Agency (ANA), linked to MMA, was created to implement the National Water Resources Policy (Law No. 9.433/97) with the objective of managing the river basins and monitoring rivers and the use of water.

The Brazilian Agenda 21, whose preparation began in 1997, was only launched in 2002 and did not fulfill its role of directing Brazilian environmental policy and guiding development policies for the country.

Between Rio-92, Agenda 21, and Rio + 10 there is an international and economic policy context that provides some insight into the effectiveness of institutional actions. Between 1992 and 2002, there were at least two major global financial crises (in 1994 and 1997), with very serious effects on the Brazilian economy (especially in 1998-1999, when the country suffered a severe currency crisis). In 1999, economic authorities such as Finance Minister Pedro Malan acknowledged that the country was fiscally paralyzed until 2002, the next electoral year (Lesbaupin and Pinheiro, 2002). The impact of the fiscal stranglehold resulting from the pressure of international usury and the government's recessive and surrender policies of the period—to a
greater or lesser extent of intensity—would greatly affect the effectiveness of actions on the environmental issue.

2.3. The Lula Era: 2003-2016
With the election of Luis Inacio Lula da Silva for the presidency in 2002, a unique period began in the history of Brazilian environmental policies. Despite the commitment at the first hour to the interests of financial capital, agribusiness, and the primary export industry, there was real political autonomy in the participation of Mercosur and BRICS in international politics.

The economic model—characterized by economists such as Bresser Pereira as neodevelopmentalist—guided an economic policy that could be basically characterized as a simple Keynesian model of economic growth, which would be complemented by income distribution policies (Paula, 2003; Sicsu, 2013; Souza, Previdelli, Silva Neto, 2010). This theoretical foundation of economic policies was based on a rather precarious political balance, for a progressive government; as proposed by the Lula (and Dilma) government, it was the so-called coalition presidentialism in which sectors related to archaic structures and reproduction of underdeveloped structures of the country (i.e., large state owners, lagging productive social relations, financial industry plundering, and judicial autocracy) would give the government “sustenance and governability,” as long as they did not threaten its condition.

This kind of balance usually does not last long and ends in quite dramatic ways, as one can see in the history of Latin American countries since their independence. On the other hand, it can be argued that both the Lula and Dilma governments (2003-2014) could hardly be viable without such a coalition, which can be based on the speed at which the second Dilma government (2015-2016) became unfeasible and was deposed, as the above-mentioned perpetrators of the archaism and underdevelopment found political exit from continuity, without the need to follow the concessions with the strategic project of Lula-PT. In this sense, it is possible to characterize this period as a brief progressive break, in which some practical measures can be observed along with some institutional development, which in the end suffers a setback, by way of a coup, and return to the position previously consolidated. The following movements reside in the scenario outlined.

In 2007, the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBio) was created, an entity linked to MMA that emerged from the dismemberment of IBAMA as a separation of functions between the two bodies. IBAMA focused its activities on licensing and inspection actions while ICMBio was responsible for managing the UCs, a total of 887 units of integral protection and sustainable use, about 754,854 square kilometers of Brazilian territory.

In 2012, the Rio+20 Conference (UN Conference on Sustainable Development, UNCSD) was held in Rio de Janeiro. The conference marked the 20th anniversary of Rio-92 and had the following objectives:

(i) ensure renewed political commitment to sustainable development,
(ii) assess progress in the implementation processes of key sustainable development decisions, and
(iii) identify new and emerging challenges.

Two objectives were also established: an economy for sustainable development and poverty eradication and an institutional framework for sustainable development.

Considered the largest event ever held by the United Nations, Rio+20 counted the participation of about 190 countries although it occurred in an unfavorable international context, as several countries were in an economically depressed environment: Europe in financial crisis and the United States in the process of presidential elections did not give priority to the conference in its agendas—the American president and the German chancellor were expected until the last day but did not attend, only sent representatives. Moreover, the United Nations system itself had been eroding its real power. Thus, Rio+20 was not successful. (Moura, 2015b).

The results of the conference were generally analyzed as insufficient and even disappointing. The final document approved at the conference, The Future We Want, did not make binding commitments and was

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considered as a declaration of intent, or the “least common denominator,” to be reached among the 188 signatory countries. Within the analysis made to date of environmental policies, this result follows the established standard. On the one hand, although there are effective glimpses in the policies adopted by the Lula and Dilma governments (2003-2016) regarding advances in the environmental issue, the long-term structural movement did not observe change, which, to some extent, favored the setback that would follow.

On the other hand, the effective interest of international pressure—coming from the central countries—for control of Brazilian natural resources was not contemplated during the period. The same small ears offered earlier were at the table, courtesy of the efficient Brazilian foreign policy in the period, headed by foreign minister Celso Amorim.

As of 2010, changes in the international context will have a reflection on the Brazilian political environment (Pereira, 2017; Souza et al., 2010). The Brazilian peripheral participation in international politics was seen as an inconvenience by the dominant center countries. At the same time, the cycle of commodity expansion, largely dominated by China, would be inflected, reflecting the international financial crisis of 2011, which marked a counter cyclical period in the expansionary phase of the Brazilian economy that started in 2005.

On the other hand, the development model in use by the Brazilian economy went through a deadlock that could be called “supply adjustment.” Considered as a simple Keynesian model, the first movement of demand expansion toward the level of effective demand, leading the economy toward full employment, should be accompanied by an adjustment of aggregate supply in favor of marginal capital efficiency and investment stock, to achieve economic growth at a higher level of income, with stability and without price fluctuation. In order to do so, it would be necessary to carry out progressive fiscal policy and restructure the ownership of productive assets, which would mean tax and agrarian reform beforehand, questions that would prevent the continuity of coalition presidentialism agreed by the reformist government elected in 2002. The popularity of the Lula/Dilma governments seemed to favor the reformist strategy within the democratic game. The reformist strategy, therefore, seems to have forgotten that the democratic order is bourgeois, and that the interests of capital subvert order when it does not suit it.

These two factors would lend the substratum to the rise of political forces contrary to the seemingly dominant developmental perspective since 2003. Dilma Rousseff’s victory in the 2014 presidential elections would not prevent a fierce rise of more reactionary and backward looking (in environmental terms too) political force in more than half a century of history. It is embedded in the political commitments made for reelection, with a parliament in agribusiness, evangelical Pentecostalism, and arms sales (the so-called BBB bench: ox, bible, and bullet). As a result, the first president elected in the last country to abandon slavery as a form of work would be blackmailed permanently by a judiciary force politically committed to the task of overthrowing the reformist government. It is even admirable that the president was able to remain in office until being deposed in 2016, in a process that later acknowledged that there was no factual evidence or proof against her—another blow that would be added to the historical dump of Latin America, with direct interference of U.S. diplomacy and participation of international organizations that defend imperialist interests.

The environmental issue, from the beginning of the second Dilma Government (2014-2016) was completely paralyzed. From the coup of 2016 onward, the silence on environmental issues is no more embarrassing than the work of the coup government until now (2018). Institutional advances in a number of areas ceased and retreated to the situation prior to 1930. Labor legislation, for example, was simply suppressed in collusion between government and congress. Scandals have become a daily issue, with disasters marked by impunity, such as the case of SAMARCO, an environmental disaster that destroyed the ecosystem of the Rio Doce Basin in Minas Gerais, to cite a closer example of the environmental issue. The following indicators show in quantitative terms, also in the environmental issue, the dramatic situation that the coup of 2016 brought to Brazil.

3. FEDERAL EXPENDITURES WITH ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The monitoring of public expenditures on the environment, or so-called environmental management, is a good measure to evaluate the relevance that the topic occupies in the agenda of the country, as it indicates the direction of state action, in environmental matters, as a whole on public policies, and the position that the subject occupies in the dispute between diverse topics of interest.
In the 1990s, research on environmental expenditures in Brazil resulted in the production of several studies. However, these have been done in an unsystematic way (limited periods) and with different methodologies, which do not allow a comparison between the studied periods and also do not allow the formation of historical series.

For the present paper, data from the official budget of the MMA and the Ministry of National Integration were used, as they are the main managers of environmental policies. In addition, data from the World Wide Foundation (WWF) document, prepared in conjunction with the Open National Accounts on the theme, and data of from the Transparency Portal of the federal government were used.

In concrete financial terms, Table 1 displays the expenditures in terms of the federal government budget for implementing environmental policies from 2009 to 2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reais (1)</th>
<th>%GDP (2)</th>
<th>Anual variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3,526,300,000.00</td>
<td>0.106%</td>
<td>nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3,872,000.00</td>
<td>0.100%</td>
<td>-99.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3,952,000.00</td>
<td>0.090%</td>
<td>2.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4,363,800.00</td>
<td>0.091%</td>
<td>10.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5,056,000.00</td>
<td>0.095%</td>
<td>15.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3,677,900.00</td>
<td>0.064%</td>
<td>-27.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>3,695,200.00</td>
<td>0.062%</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3,510,000.00</td>
<td>0.056%</td>
<td>-5.01%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Elaborated by the authors with data from IPEADATA, Transparency Brazil and MMA. (1) in millions of Reais, (2) percentage of gross domestic product at market prices.

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The first element reported by the data is the drop in the percentage of environmental management expenditures as a proportion of the gross domestic product (GDP) after 2010. From 2013 on, this decrease becomes more pronounced in relative terms, from 0.1% of GDP to 0.6%, showing the priorities of the coup staff in terms of economic policy and long-term development objectives. The fall, by what is observed in absolute terms, by annual variation, becomes more pronounced in 2016, stabilizing the new level of public spending with environmental management in 0.6% of GDP. The setback is clear.

Regarding 2018, the expenditures authorized for the MMA and its municipalities, such as IBAMA, ICMBio, ANA, and the Brazilian Forest Service, were R$ 3.7 billion. The amount is lower than that authorized by law by the National Congress for 2017 (R$ 3.953 billion) and even lower than the authorization of expenses granted in 2013 (R$ 5.056 billion), the best year of the decade in values adjusted for inflation.

According to the study released by the WWF-Brazil in partnership with open accounts, budget programs and actions that deal with PAs had a budget of R$ 236 million for 2018, against R$ 252 million in 2017. The budget for programs that support the creation, management, and implementation of PAs was hardest hit and lost resources in the Congress decision in relation to the government’s proposal. Thus, ICMBio, mainly in charge of PAs, had R$ 708 million in the 2018 budget, against R$ 1.256 billion in authorized expenditures in 2017, a 44% reduction. The value that ICMBio has this year is already lower than the total payments registered in 2017.

The deepest cut hit the Bolsa Verde, a program that pays R$ 300 (about US$ 80) every three months to extremely poor families living in PAs areas as an incentive to conservation. Bolsa Verde disbursed R$ 61.7 million in 2017, R$ 78 million in 2016, and R$ 106.1 million in 2015. This program has been losing resources in the last years, and it disappears in the 2018 budget, as proposed by the Executive, and accepted by Congress. The government said it would pass on the Bolsa Verde to the Amazon Fund, which also suffered significant cuts as a result of increased deforestation in the Amazon Area (http://bit.ly/orcamento-wwf).
ANA also lost resources in relation to the 2017 budget. The proposal for the implementation of the National Water Resources Policy falls from R$ 181.7 million to R$ 136 million in 2018.

The deforestation control program was also affected. Under the management of the Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation and Communications, monitoring of deforestation in the different areas had, in 2018, a budget of R$ 3.2 million for satellite monitoring, against R$ 4.3 million in 2017, lower than in 2015 and 2016. The National Institute of Space Research (INPE) is responsible for the data that guides the fight against deforestation in Brazil and works together with IBAMA (Brazilian Institute of Environment and Natural Resources).

In relation to the Brazilian Forest Service, the approved budget was R$ 8.1 million in 2018, against R$ 8.6 million in 2017. In 2015, the amount spent on this program alone reached R$ 68 million. This shows the loss of political will to fight deforestation.

An important source of funds to combat deforestation in the Amazon region, the Amazon Fund was targeted in 2017, and its impacts will appear in 2018. The government of Norway reduced to less than half the annual pass-through of funds to the Amazon Fund, managed by the National Bank of Economic and Social Development. In December 2017, the Norwegian government transferred US$ 41,791,000 to the fund, about 43% of the amount transferred in December 2016, from US$ 97,953,000 (Amazon Fund, 2018). In a note, the Norwegian government attributed the reduction of the pass-through to the increase in deforestation recorded in Brazil between August 2015 and July 2016. In October it reaffirmed: this year’s payment for reduced deforestation will be less than half the amount passed to Brazil, that contributions to the fund depend on the effective reduction of carbon emissions from deforestation (Norway Government, 2017).

Norway is the main donor to the Amazon Fund. By the end of 2016, it had contributed 97.4% of the R$ 2.8 billion deposited in the fund since the beginning of the operation, seven years before. The German government and Petrobras contributed the rest. Of the total deposited, R$ 1.4 billion was disbursed to finance projects to combat deforestation and sustainable forest use.

The other international environmental cooperation agreements totaled approximately US$ 400 million in the last decade, according to the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, linked to the MRE. The resources came mainly from the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the European Union, according to information obtained on the WWF Brazil website.

4. CONCLUSION

The 2016 coup affected not only Brazil’s international image and its economic and social development but also the morale of its most progressive political forces. The impact of the reaction and the regression on an even limited advance on the historical distributive conflict that motivated previous coups in the history of the country has been difficult to assimilate by those who wish to see the country occupy an autonomous position in the international order. The opportunity for the increase of control by the central countries over Brazil’s natural resources is becoming more feasible after the initial surprise that followed the success of the coup. The situation demands urgent reversal, even for the resumption of the course of the environmental policies before it, although relatively timid, but comparatively superior to its antecedents and impossible in comparison with the absence marked by the present ones.

The history of the Brazilian government’s relations with the environmental issue shows that, until 2003, the usual strategy was to use the debate to build a domestic institutional environment for the discussion of possible policies, at best. From 2003 to 2010, these policies materialized in public expenditures that reached 0.1% of the GDP, still insufficient to supply all environmental demands, but superior to their antecedents, where such cost was not even present. And such expenditure is more than double the one that can be found in the coup government that uses the fiscal austerity policy as an excuse to cut deep in the majority of projects in the environmental area. The loss of resources, widespread in strategic sectors as well, such as Education and Health, marks a clear strategy of the coup government in power since 2016. The mentioned strategy could be summarized as: favoring external agenda, disabling the institutions created between 2000 and 2007, and relaxing control over the misuse of natural resources by extinguishing the MMA through budgetary asphyxia. Such an agenda has clear interests and beneficiaries, which are being disseminated with increasing intensity.
As a final note, it is interesting that there are no international groups that declare themselves as supporters to the 2016 coup in Brazil. Not that there are no beneficiaries among them, such as the groups interested in exploring the natural resources of the country, resources that the coup government have already allowed the foreign companies to explore at ridiculous prices as one can see in the Pre Sal auction. But perhaps these agents bear the reminder that history is not condescending to those who promote delay, deliberately and out of pure self-interest. The coup will be reversed, at some point, with the possibility of consequences to the agreements made in a state of exception. Hence the silence, even discomfort, of the supporters of the 2016 coup in Brazil.

As a matter of fact, the former president Lula continues, even as a political prisoner, as the most strong and eligible candidate. There is even the possibility of social upheaval if his political prison is sustained for a long time. This last possibility becomes increasingly risky as time passes.

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