



THE CONSTRUCTION AND DECONSTRUCTION OF STATE CAPACITIES TO CONTROL DEFORESTATION IN THE AMAZON RAINFOREST: FROM PPCDAM TO BOLSONARO

LA CONSTRUCCIÓN Y DESTRUCCIÓN DE CAPACIDADES ESTATALES PARA EL CONTROL DE LA DEFORESTACIÓN EN LA AMAZONIA: DEL PPCDAM A BOLSONARO

A CONSTRUÇÃO E DESCONSTRUÇÃO DE CAPACIDADES ESTATAIS DE CONTROLE DO DESMATAMENTO DA AMAZÔNIA: DO PPCDAM A BOLSONARO



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ABSTRACT: The article assessed the construction and deconstruction of federal State capacities to control deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon through the approach of Strategic Fields of Action (SAFs). Between 2004 and 2014, deforestation in the Amazon had a substantial drop due to the implementation of the Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation (PPCDAm). After a decade, however, this successful public policy began to be gradually weakened. With the election of Bolsonaro, this weakening intensified, becoming a dismantling. Based on data collected from multiple sources, we analyze the political-cultural dynamics entailed in this process. The analysis demonstrates how the literature on State capabilities can benefit from dialogue with the CAE approach. It also involves a unique version of historical processes, favoring the recognition of the importance of the PPCDAm and of the destruction generated by the Bolsonaro Government.

KEYWORDS: Amazon rainforest. Deforestation. Strategic Action Fields. State capacities. PPCDAm.

RESUMO: O artigo analisa a construção e a desconstrução de capacidades estatais federais de controle do desmatamento da Amazônia brasileira por meio da abordagem dos Campos de Ação Estratégicos (CAE). Entre 2004 e 2014, o desmatamento da Amazônia teve uma queda substancial decorrente da implementação do Plano de Prevenção e Controle do Desmatamento (PPCDAm). Após uma década dessa implantação, entretanto, essa política pública exitosa passou a ser gradualmente fragilizada. Com a eleição de Bolsonaro, essa fragilização se intensificou, tornando-se um desmonte. Com base no levantamento de dados de múltiplas fontes, analisamos a dinâmica político-cultural envolvida nesse processo. A análise demonstra como a literatura sobre capacidades Estatais pode se beneficiar com o diálogo com a abordagem dos CAE. Ela também envolve uma versão única de processos históricos, favorecendo o reconhecimento da importância do PPCDAm e da destruição gerada pelo Governo Bolsonaro.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Amazônia. Desmatamento. Campos de ação estratégica. Capacidades Estatais. PPCDAm.

RESUMEN: El artículo analiza la construcción y desconstrucción de capacidades del Estado federales para controlar la deforestación en la Amazonía brasileña a través del enfoque de Campos Estratégicos de Acción (CAE). Entre 2004 y 2014, la deforestación en la Amazonía tuvo una caída sustancial debido a la implementación del Plan de Prevención y Control de la Deforestación (PPCDAm). Sin embargo, después de una década de implementación, de esta exitosa política pública comenzó a debilitarse gradualmente. Con la elección de Bolsonaro, ese debilitamiento se intensificó, convirtiéndose en un desmantelamiento. Con base en la recopilación de datos de múltiples fuentes, analizamos las dinámicas político-culturales involucradas en este proceso. El análisis demuestra cómo la literatura sobre las capacidades del Estado puede beneficiarse del diálogo con el enfoque CAE. También implica una versión única de los procesos históricos, favoreciendo el reconocimiento de la importancia del PPCDAm y de la destrucción generada por el Gobierno de Bolsonaro.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Amazonia. Deforestación. Campos de acción estratégica. Capacidades del Estado. PPCDAm.

Introduction

Over the last few decades, Brazil has gradually and cumulatively established a relatively sophisticated environmental policy. The process functioned as a kind of “scientific revolution” (KUHN, 2011), in which the adoption of a paradigm formed a solid basis for gradual improvement. Influenced by international dynamics, domestic environmental movements boosted the formation of federal environmental policies.

In 2003, a structured public policy to conserve the Amazon was established with the institution of the Amazon Deforestation Prevention and Control Plan (PPCDAm - Portuguese initials), at the beginning of President Lula's first term (2003-2006) (CAPOBIANCO, 2022). The implementation of this plan was decisive for an 81.95% reduction in deforestation to be seen between 2004 and 2014 (INPE, 2023). Gradually, however, it began to suffer increasing challenges. This opposition began to strengthen during Lula's second term (2007-2010) and reached its peak during President Bolsonaro's government (2019-2022). As a result of this process, between 2014 and 2020, deforestation grew by 116.5%.

This article analyzes the construction and deconstruction of federal state capacities to control deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon. Conceptually, we demonstrate that the understanding of the state as a set of interconnected Strategic Fields of Action (SFAs) proposed by Fligstein and McAdam (2012) can contribute to the literature on state capacities. This perspective suggests that the construction and deconstruction of capacities are situated in fields with specific positions in the power structures of the state and society. The emphasis of this approach on the interconnection of fields, social skills and units of governance makes it possible to advance the dynamic understanding of the construction and deconstruction of autonomy on which capacities depend as a result of power relations and strategic actions. The capacities emphasized in our case are located in the environmental field, a relatively new space with a subordinate position in the Brazilian state, which faces powerful opponents in the fight against deforestation, such as agribusiness, the infrastructure sector and the military.

The article also makes empirical contributions. The analysis articulates a narrative built on the reflexive use of relational theoretical tools that draws on a significant volume of secondary data from other studies, government documents, media publications and interviews with environmental officials. It results in a unique and significantly more detailed view than other published studies of public policies to control deforestation in the Amazon.

The construction and deconstruction of state capacities from the perspective of the Fields of Strategic Action

The idea of state capacities stems from a Weberian conception of the state, which involves the formation of bureaucratic structures to pursue objectives without being influenced by powerful social groups (SKOCPOL *et al.*, 1985). Since their emergence, different views of them have developed (ENRIQUEZ; CENTENO, 2012), opening up possibilities to emphasize the power relations in their constitution (LINDVALL; TEORELL, 2016). Here, capacities would not be considered a fixed attribute of the state, but contingent on the political struggle (LOUREIRO; CALABREZ, 2021). Based on Bourdieu's (2014) view of the state as a meta-field, authors consider that the accumulation of forms of power is what authorizes the solution of public problems and the very "construction of representations about the nature of problems" (MORETTI; BANDEIRA DE MELO, 2017, p. 50, our translation). This process involves not only material resources, but also symbolic ones, associated with "legitimacy, the ability to mobilize and generate consensus" (MORETTI; BANDEIRA DE MELO, 2017, p. 42, our translation).

These formulations are in line with the SFA approach proposed by Fligstein and McAdam (2012). SFAs are circumscribed social arenas in which individual or collective actors endowed with different resources act vis-à-vis each other and seek to shape the social meanings that order their actions according to their visions and for their benefit (FLIGSTEIN; MCADAM, 2012). The structure and composition of SFAs reflect three socially constructed aspects: i) the sense of belonging, based more on subjective aspects than on objective criteria; ii) the boundaries of the field, which can change according to the issues in dispute; iii) the shared understandings that provide the basis for the operation of the field, such as an understanding of what is at stake, who the incumbents and challengers are and what the rules governing legitimate actions are.

SFAs can be in three ideal configurations: emerging, stable and in crisis. Emerging fields are loosely ordered spaces in which meanings, identities and forms of organization are in dispute. In a state of stability, a cultural order is established and taken as given by the actors, which does not mean that it is static and that the challengers agree with the established logic. In SFAs in crisis, destabilizations, usually caused by exogenous shocks, can lead to ruptures with the prevailing order (FLIGSTEIN; MCADAM, 2012).

An important difference between this approach and Bourdieu's (2014) is the emphasis on collective action. It is based on incorporating concepts from social movement theory and

adopting the interactionist idea of social skills. These are defined as the ability of actors to produce shared identities and meanings that drive cooperation (FLIGSTEIN; MCADAM, 2012). Socially skilled actors can be in both incumbent and challenger groups and act as mobilizers to either reproduce or transform the SFA order.

Another specificity of the approach is its emphasis on the interconnection between fields. The authors consider that SFAs are like "Russian dolls", and can be contained within each other, or maintain external relationships. Relationships can also involve more or less asymmetry of power and be cooperative or conflictual. The relationship between SFA actors and outsiders tends to be mediated by internal governance units (IGUs), which are organized when the field stabilizes. The incumbents of the space tend to dominate these units and represent the space.

States are seen as a set of bureaucratized SFAs that have a monopoly on physical and symbolic violence. State fields are particularly powerful and capable of influencing other spheres of social life with which they are connected. Powerful or skilled actors from these spheres also have ways of interfering in the dynamics of the state, which sometimes occurs through the mediation of IGUs (FLIGSTEIN; MCADAM, 2012). Like other bureaucratized organizations, state fields have formalized structures and power relations, which increases their capacity for control. However, the dynamics of the field cannot be reduced to these formal relations, but are decisively influenced by informal relations and interactions.

The configuration of the PPCDAm and the capacity to control deforestation

The state's capacity to control deforestation in the Amazon is built on the configuration of the environmental field at the federal level, which has occurred gradually since the 1970s, influenced by international and national processes (HOCHSTETLER; KECK, 2007). During the period of the military dictatorship (1964-1985), 19 laws and 20 environmental decrees influenced by preservationism and with a technocratic bias were issued (FORESTA, 1991). During this period, the Forest Code (Law n. 4.771/65) was enacted, establishing precepts for timber management and a Legal Reserve of 50% of native vegetation on private properties in the Amazon. During the political opening, the National Environmental Policy (Law 6.938/1981) was approved, establishing forms of governance and basic environmental instruments for the SFA.

At the executive level, the military created the Secretariat for the Environment in 1973. The biologist, lawyer and university professor Paulo Nogueira Neto, respected for his academic and professional credentials and for his political lineage, was the highest authority in the area during the dictatorship. Acting with "environmental guerrilla" tactics in an authoritarian and developmentalist state, the environmental achievements of this period took advantage of political opportunities (HOCHSTETLER; KECK, 2007).

With re-democratization, environmentalists mobilized to influence the Constitution. Fábio Feldmann led the movement that succeeded in incorporating the constitutional foundations of environmentalism in the Brazilian state into a chapter of the Constitution. The constitution also consolidated the role of the Public Prosecutor's Office in promoting environmental rights and access to justice, introduced in the Public Civil Action Law of 1985 (LOUREIRO; PACHECO, 1995).

The 1980s and 1990s were marked by slow progress in the executive branch, associated with a fiscal crisis. Pressured by the international repercussions of deforestation in the Amazon, President Sarney (1985-1990) created the Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA) in 1989 and Collor (1990-1992) exploited diplomatic opportunities linked to the environment, appointing José Lutzenberger as Secretary for the Environment. In the year of Eco 92, the government created the Ministry of the Environment and Science and Technology, which changed its name and scope several times in the following years.

In the legislative sphere, other advances were made in the second half of the 1990s. In 1998, the Environmental Crimes Law (9.605/1998) was passed, increasing penalties and making it easier to punish environmental infractions. In 2000, the National System of Conservation Units (SNUC - Law 9.985/2000) was enacted. Later, in 2009, the National Policy on Climate Change (Law 12.187/09) was issued in a context of strengthening the SFA.

The issue of deforestation in the Amazon was peripheral until the mid-1980s. Before then, the region was dealt with predominantly from a military perspective. During re-democratization, the military maintained control over the agenda, developing projects such as *Calha Norte* and *Sivam* that served as an outlet for their dissatisfaction (HOCHSTETLER; KECK, 2007). Gradually, the issue gained strength in the environmental arena. The mobilization of populations impacted by the military's colonization policies, especially the rubber tappers of Acre (ALLEGRETTI, 2008), and its international repercussions were key to this process.

In the 1980s, Polonoroeste, financed by the World Bank, made it possible to pave the BR-364 highway, intensifying conflicts between cattle ranchers and rubber tappers in Acre (CANDIDO, 2010). With the support of anthropologist Mary Allegretti and political scientist Tony Gross, Chico Mendes, leader of the rubber tappers, went to the United States to denounce the impacts of the project. International pressure led to the Rondônia Agricultural and Forestry Plan (Planafloro)⁵ and favored the establishment of Extractive Reserves in 1987, the year Mendes won the UNEP Global 500 award. In 1988, the Sarney government began monitoring deforestation in the Amazon and Mendes was murdered. The crime and the high rates of deforestation detected led to the end of the military's hijacking of the Amazon agenda and its rise in the environmental SFA.

The fiscal difficulties and lack of autonomy of the environmental SFA made it difficult to combat deforestation in the 1990s. The actions taken reacted to peaks in the rate of deforestation. One important measure was the change in the legal reserve area in the Amazon from 50% to 80% in the Forest Code implemented by the Fernando Henrique Cardoso government (FHC 1995-2002) (TAGLIALEGNA, 2011).

The year 1999 marked the beginning of a more structured policy to combat deforestation. With the appointment of Mary Allegretti as Amazon Coordination Secretary, there was a plan to create an Environmental Licensing System for rural properties in order to effectively apply the forestry code. However, this did not happen due to the limited budget and the lack of commitment from the states in the region, on which the Ministry of the Environment (MMA – Portuguese initials) had placed its bets (CAPOBIANCO, 2021).

The election of Lula and the arrival of Marina Silva at the MMA in 2003 took place under the strong impact of the increase in deforestation. With the gradual improvement of fiscal conditions, it was possible to expand environmental autonomy and the fight against deforestation, and to develop state capacities. The government created two main policies for the Amazon. The Sustainable Amazon Plan (PAS – Portuguese initials) proposed making federal investments in the Multiannual Plan conditional on a change in the region's occupation logic. The PPCDAm focused on preventing and combating deforestation. We believe that only the PPCDAm constituted state capacities. The PAS ended up being co-opted by the infrastructure field and was not effectively implemented. The effectiveness of the PPCDAm was the result of a set of strategic actions that ensured consistent political support from the

⁵ More on the subject: <https://acervo.socioambiental.org/acervo/documentos/plano-agropecuario-e-florestal-de-rondonia-planaflo-ro>

Presidency of the Republic and the establishment of a governance unit and devices to induce the cooperation of actors in dominant positions in state fields, including potential opponents.

Aware of the fragility of the environmental field in the Brazilian state, Marina Silva and her team acted in a socially skillful manner, insisting that the PPCDAm should not be a plan for the MMA, but for the entire government. The proposal, which faced resistance from other ministries and environmental movements (CAPOBIANCO, 2021), ended up prevailing and translated into a governance format that temporarily co-opted actors from arenas potentially opposed to the fight against deforestation. The plan was coordinated by the Presidency of the Republic, the highest level of executive power, with support from the MMA. An Interministerial Working Group (GTI – Portuguese initials) was also set up, made up of officials from the top echelons (Ministers, Vices or Executive Secretaries). The composition of the GTI mainly involved bodies that Bourdieu (2014) would classify as the "right hand" of the state, including those associated with fields linked to deforestation and degradation of the Amazon, such as agribusiness, infrastructure and the military. It included: the Civil House, the Ministry of the Environment (MMA), the Ministry of Finance (MF), the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management (MPOG), the Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade (MDIC), the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA), the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA), the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME), the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Science and Technology (MCT), the Ministry of Justice (MJ - Including Federal Policy and Federal Highway Police), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense.

The group operated as an IGU and was responsible for drawing up, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a work plan. Capobianco (2021) reports conflicts over the composition of the decree on the functioning of the group. For the MMA, the decree should be as detailed as possible, while for the other ministries it should be generic. The MMA's view ended up prevailing and, in a relatively short space of time, a plan was drawn up with 149 activities containing those responsible and periods of execution, as well as indicators and devices for monitoring implementation.

Another strategic action was to link the plan's budget to the ministries' Multiannual Plans, eliminating the need for complex negotiations to obtain additional funds from the Union, overcoming the MMA's lack of resources and enabling activities to begin immediately (CAPOBIANCO, 2021). The budget grew over the course of its phases. In Phase 1, developed between 2004 and 2008, the budget was R\$394 million. In the second phase, from 2009 to 2011,

which covered President Lula's second term (2007-2010) and the first year of Dilma Rousseff's government (2011), the budget was R\$1.224 billion. In phase 3, developed between 2012 and 2015, the budget was R\$1,428 billion (WEST; FEARNSSIDE, 2021). From 2008, the budget began to include resources from the Amazon Fund, which raises donations in exchange for carbon emission reduction certificates. Initially, Norway, Germany and Petrobrás made contributions to the Fund.

The PPCDAm was established relatively autonomously from the state governments, with its narrative emphasizing that it was a federal government plan. The policy sought to encourage the Amazon states to build their own plans to combat deforestation. In 2008, the structuring of state plans became a condition for state governments to participate in the Amazon Fund's Guidance Committee (COFA – Portuguese initials).

The scope of the plan involved three axes: i) Land and territorial planning; ii) Monitoring and Control; iii) Fostering sustainable production activities. An additional axis of Economic Incentives for Conservation was proposed, but never consolidated. A cross-cutting measure was the creation of an annual list of the municipalities that have deforested the most, establishing priority areas for intervention.

The land-use planning axis captured around 56% of the budget (R\$254 million) in phase 1, 27% of the budget (R\$338 million) in phase 2 and 15% of the budget (R\$213 million) in phase 3 (WEST; FEARNSSIDE, 2021). It consisted of two sets of actions: the creation of protected areas and land regularization. The creation of Conservation Units (CUs) was initially emphasized, with significant expansion, as well as indigenous lands with resources from the Amazon Protected Areas program (VERÍSSIMO *et al.*, 2011). These efforts gradually lost steam, while land regularization efforts gained ground. These began with support for the Mato Grosso Legal Program, which influenced the creation of the *Terra Legal* Program in 2009.

Monitoring and Control was central to the PPCDAm, significantly expanding state capacity in the region. It captured around 21% of the budget (R\$83 million) in phase 1, 37% of the budget (R\$454 million) in phase 2 and 30% of the budget (R\$425 million) in phase 3 (WEST; FEARNSSIDE, 2021). Was emphasized the integration of the environmental agencies Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA) and the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBio)⁶ with the Federal Police and the Army, which supported enforcement. The intensive use of INPE's remote sensing devices was also key. In addition to the Project for Monitoring Deforestation in the Legal Amazon by

⁶ More information at: <https://www.gov.br/icmbio/pt-br>

Satellite (PRODES), which has been used since 1988 to calculate the annual rate of deforestation, other systems were launched, such as the General Coordination of Earth Observation (DETER)⁷, which allowed deforestation to be detected in real time, guiding enforcement actions, and TerraClass to monitor land use after deforestation. In PPCDAm III, investments were made to improve DETER (DETER-B) and PRODES. In phase IV, the development of the DEGRAD system made it possible to monitor degraded areas.

The third axis, encouraging productive activities, gradually gained importance, responding to criticism of the emphasis on command and control without promoting economic alternatives to degrading activities. It captured around 17% of the budget (R\$67 million) in phase 1, 38% (R\$459 million) in phase 2 and 55% (R\$790 million) in phase 3 (WEST; FEARNSSIDE, 2021). It involved two sets of actions. The first promoted interventions in markets associated with deforestation, betting on the expansion of the concession of forest areas facilitated by the enactment of the Public Forest Management law. Private sector pacts to combat deforestation, such as the soybean and cattle moratoriums (CANDIDO, 2023; GIBBS *et al.*, 2016) and the Pact for Legal Wood of the Association of Wood Exporting Industries of the State of Pará, were supported. The government also restricted rural credit for illegal activities (Central Bank Resolution 3546/2008) and sought to expand it to more sustainable activities.

Other actions were aimed at supporting family farmers and producers from traditional communities. These initiatives gained momentum in Phase II and were maintained and expanded in subsequent phases. The *Arco Verde* Program, launched in 2009, provided support to small producers in priority municipalities who had been fined for environmental violations. In phase 3, the *Assentamentos Verdes* Program was launched in conjunction with the Bolsa Verde Program. The Community and Family Management Support Program, launched in 2009, promoted timber and non-timber extraction by forest communities. Resources for research and technical assistance were also increased.

The establishment of these SFAs boosted the state's capacity to reduce deforestation in the Amazon significantly between 2004 and 2014. Gradually, however, opposition to the plan gained strength.

⁷ More information at: <http://www.obt.inpe.br/OBT/assuntos/programas/amazonia/deter/deter>

Opposition to the PPCDAm until Michel Temer's government

The PPCDAm's governance structure was built on strategic actions by the MMA to induce cooperation from the Presidency of the Republic and dominant players from other SFAs in the state. Gradually, however, some of the convergences built up became weaker.

The presidency, which acts as an arbiter of conflicts between the state's various SFAs, gradually became less willing to support the PPCDAm from the Lula to Temer governments. This transformation is associated with the political strengthening of bodies opposed to deforestation control, which has increased the Presidency's efforts to "buy the fight" against environmentalist challengers. The transfer of coordination of the PPCDAm from the Presidency of the Republic to the MMA in 2013, during Rousseff's first term, is a reflection of this process, as well as being associated with the president's own views.

The most important SFAs in opposing the implementation of the PPCDAm are those associated with sectors that generate deforestation. Some of these have predominantly informal and illegal dynamics or are regulated and organized from the state level, with indirect links to the federal level, and had little capacity to oppose the PPCDAm until President Temer's administration (2016-2018). Small-scale precious metal mining and illegal logging fit into these cases.

Other fields, however, had this capacity. We would highlight the roles of two sets of areas: agribusiness, linked to both the dynamics of the land market and agricultural production; and infrastructure, especially the construction of roads and hydroelectric dams. The former is linked to MAPA and the latter to MME and the Ministry of Transport.

An important transformation that took place in the Brazilian economy during the Lula administration was the so-called "commodities boom". Of particular note is the growth in the production and export of soybeans, corn and beef, production chains that are strongly associated with deforestation in the Amazon (NEPSTAD *et al.*, 2014). The dynamics of these sectors are interconnected (ARIMA *et al.*, 2011) and linked to the land market (HECHT, 1985). The growth of these sectors has worried environmentalists in the government and outside of it, reaffirming the urgency of the PPCDAm and driving protests that led to the establishment of the soy and cattle moratoriums (CANDIDO, 2023; GIBBS *et al.*, 2016).

Pompeia (2021) shows that, in the 2000s, agribusiness was politically fragmented, with conflicts prevailing between sectors, between national and international companies and between rural and industrial producers. The more exclusive representations of rural producers, such as the Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock (CNA), were also weakened. The

growth of exports and their importance to the country's balance of payments increased the political power of the sector, which gradually became more unified. This process of inducing cooperation between the various players took place gradually and based on the all-encompassing notion of "agribusiness". A milestone was the creation of the *Pensar Agropecuária* Institute in 2011, based on the initiative of cotton and soybean producers in the state of Mato Grosso (POMPEIA, 2021). This governance unit was key to being able to organize the interests of the SFA, acting to change the Forest Code and opposing the PPCDAm.

The second set of SFAs that gradually opposed the PPCDAm are associated with infrastructure, linked to the MME and the Ministry of Transport. Lula's first term in office was characterized by a continuation of monetarist macroeconomic policies, marked by an emphasis on controlling inflation and high interest rates. According to Cano and Silva (2010), this also saw the end of the ideological veto on greater state intervention in the economy, and the planning of a new economic policy matrix and institutional reforms began. The plans drawn up were more significantly implemented during Lula's second term and Dilma Rousseff's governments, when the improved economic situation had expanded the state's investment capacity.

The launch of the Growth Acceleration Program (PAC – Portuguese initials) in Lula's second term marked the expansion of the forces of the infrastructure SFAs and their opposition to the PPCDAm and PAS, which ended up not stabilizing. Investments in works in the Amazon reproduced the colonizing vision of the region and the promotion of selective, concentrated and unequal development (MADEIRA, 2014). Large hydroelectric dams aimed to supply demand from the center-south of the country and were the target of intense conflict with environmentalists (FEARNSIDE, 2015). Investments in highways sought to reduce logistical costs for agricultural production that had moved inland to the Midwest and was advancing towards the North. Key to strengthening the so-called "northern arc" was the paving of the BR-163 highway, linking Cuiabá to Santarém, which was the object of MMA's attention, with the development of the Sustainable BR-163 Plan. Works in the Amazon were also important in the plans to integrate South American infrastructure (COSTA; GONZALEZ, 2014).

The weakening of the PPCDAm began at the end of Lula's second term and resulted in the setbacks listed by Capobianco (2021), which can be associated with the strengthening of opponents. Three main setbacks can be related to the strengthening and political organization of agribusiness. The first, which affected enforcement actions, refers to the successive postponements of the regulation of the Environmental Crimes Law (9.605/1998), through

decrees issued annually by the presidency from December 2008 until the approval of the New Forest Code. A second setback had to do with the creation of the Terra Legal Program in June 2009 (Law 11.952), which countered the creation of CUs. In 2016, Temer increased the limit on the size of properties eligible for regularization from 1,500 to 2,500 hectares and authorized the titling of areas occupied until 2008 (instead of until 2004), further encouraging land grabbing. Finally, the most important setback was the change to the Forest Code during the Dilma government, which had the support of the Presidency.

The pressures generated by the infrastructure SFAs are publicly associated with Marina Silva's departure from the helm of the MMA in May 2008, due to disagreements with the Civil House over the PAS and the licensing of hydroelectric dams in the Amazon. The infrastructure projects led to the disqualification of CUs by provisional measures under the Dilma and Temer governments (CAPOBIANCO, 2021).

While the transformation of the profiles of presidents from Lula to Temer and the rise of opponents contributed to weakening the PPCDAm, deforestation data indicates that the plan still had important effects. Bolsonaro's election began to undermine it and deconstruct state capacities.

The Bolsonaro government and the dismantling of capacities

Opposition to the PPCDAm has reached its peak in Bolsonaro's government. The extremist ideological orientation of this president and his government is referred to by Lynch and Cassimiro (2021) as "reactionary populism". Its populist face is associated with a "style of doing politics typical of democratic or mass environments, practiced by a charismatic leadership" (LYNCH; CASSIMIRO, 2021, p. 224). In Bolsonaro's case, this style is "oriented by the imperative of preserving order by resorting to authority" (LYNCH; CASSIMIRO, 2021, p. 225, our translation), locating him on the right of the political spectrum. The "people" here are seen as "a group of businessmen and families threatened in their traditional [Judeo-Christian] morals by a minority of subversives who attack private property and violate good morals" (LYNCH; CASSIMIRO, 2021, p. 225, our translation). The "reactionary" face of this government is also associated with the intensity of its actions, which challenge the rule of law in the name of a democracy related to the figure of the charismatic leader. It acts as if the rule of law were a farce through which a supposed establishment would violate democracy in order to perpetuate an unjust system (LYNCH; CASSIMIRO, 2021, p. 226, our translation).

In this view, the decadence of Brazilian civilization has accelerated since the 1960s and, above all, with the process of redemocratization, which is associated with an ideal of restoring the authoritarian state of the second half of the 20th century (LYNCH; CASSIMIRO, 2021). One of the features of this decline was precisely the rise of environmentalism, which is why the government sought to destroy the environmental SFA and its actions to combat deforestation.

In this government, the opposition to the PPCDAm had three important peculiarities. Firstly, the structures of the environmental field were attacked "from within", through the deployment of oppositionists in their control. Under Bolsonaro's command, these actors used and abused their power to revoke and make infralegal environmental rules more flexible, altering decrees, resolutions of collegiate bodies, normative instructions and orders (ARAÚJO, 2023). Of course, they did not always have the power to deconstruct environmental policy on their own, which meant that they also had to take strategic action to advance their objectives, often being blocked by the legislative and judicial spheres. The second peculiarity was the space that the government gave to sectors linked to illegal deforestation, which previously had no power to oppose federal environmental policy - such as logging and illegal mining - and came to be seen as oppressed by the state. Lastly, the military has interfered in the environmental field, especially in the Amazon.

The government's actions to dismantle the fight against deforestation can be divided into two phases. From the beginning of the mandate (2019) until the fall of Ricardo Salles (2021), they were more blatant. In the second period, which began in mid-2021 and was the result of strong national and international pressure against the first, the interference became more discreet and was led by the military.

After his election in 2018, Bolsonaro considered abolishing the MMA and transferring its structure to MAPA. After negative national and international repercussions, in December 2018, the president appointed Ricardo Salles to head the portfolio, who would later become known for defending at a ministerial meeting that the government should take advantage of the pandemic to "pass the buck" in the environmental area. He was removed from office in 2021 due to investigations into his role in stopping the largest ever seizure of illegal timber in the Amazon. A lawyer, Salles had been Geraldo Alckmin's Environment Secretary in the São Paulo government and director of the Brazilian Rural Society (SRB, 2018). Bolsonaro has slimmed down the structure of the MMA and transferred duties to opponents. The Forest Service and the Rural Environmental Registry, for example, were transferred to MAPA. The Secretariat for

Climate Change and Forests, which housed the Department of Policies to Combat Deforestation, which played a key role in the PPCDAm, was abolished.

Another important strategy was the massive appointment of military and police officers to positions in the MMA. Following Bolsonaro's orders, Salles appointed 12 officers from the armed forces and military police to key positions in the MMA, including the presidency of IBAMA and ICMBio. The states agencies' superintendencies were also predominantly under the command of people with this profile. At the same time, the President and the Minister adopted measures to disqualify civil servants. In April 2019, for example, in an attempt to curb criticism, the Minister prevented them from giving interviews to journalists.

In his first year in office, the government formally discontinued the PPCDAm without much fanfare. Salles also sought to intervene in deforestation control efforts and instruments. One of his first attacks was on the Amazon Fund. Seeking to fulfill Bolsonaro's promise to end government funding for environmental NGOs, the Minister suspended and raised suspicions about the Fund's contracts. A few months later, he sought to change its governance and review the purposes and ways in which its resources were used. The COFA, made up of representatives from the federal and state governments and civil society, and the Technical Committee, made up of professionals from the MMA, were abolished, paralyzing the fund. In reaction, the governments of Norway and Germany suspended their donations.

In February 2020, faced with national and international criticism over the increase in deforestation, the government decided to recreate a governance structure to combat deforestation, replacing the GTI. The Legal Amazon Council (CNAL), created in 1993 and which had never functioned effectively, was resurrected. Its command was taken over by the Vice-President (2019-2022) and General of the Brazilian Army Reserve, Hamilton Mourão.

With the actions in the Amazon under Mourão's command, the government's actions have become a little more discreet. In the first half of 2021, the government launched the Amazon Plan 2021-2022, which aimed to bring deforestation down to the 2016/2020 levels. It turned out that the average deforestation in this period was remarkably high, being 35% higher than in the previous 10 years, and the plan foresaw an increase in deforestation (ESCOBAR, 2021).

The government's actions throughout the administration affected the various axes of the PPCDAm. False controversies about land use drawn up by researchers from Embrapa Territorial, under the leadership of Evaristo de Miranda (RAJÃO *et al.*, 2022), were used to delegitimize the CUs and paralyze their institution once and for all. In May 2019, Salles

announced plans to review all of the country's CUs, claiming that they had not been established on the basis of technical criteria. The government also changed the governance structures of the Amazon Protected Areas (ARPA) program, reducing transparency and social participation, and created the Adopt a Park Program, establishing a channel for corporate donations to CUs. The delegitimization of protected areas, coupled with the strong demobilization of inspection, has led to a significant increase in deforestation in these areas (OVIEDO; PEREIRA, 2022).

Land regularization has been made easier, favoring land grabbing. The government deepened the measures implemented by Temer, making it possible to legalize land occupied until 2018, which advanced with the implementation of the *Titula Brasil* Program, a replacement for *Terra Legal*. With the publication of the so-called "land grabbing" Provisional Measure at the end of 2019, areas of up to 1,650 hectares could be regularized without a survey. Due to a lack of agreement among parliamentarians, the provisional measure that introduced these changes ended up losing its validity the following year.

The government also severely attacked monitoring and control actions, the most effective part of the PPCDAm. Even before taking office, Bolsonaro and Salles promised to intervene in the agency. In June 2019, when signs were mounting that deforestation in the Amazon was increasing, Salles declared that the government intended to hire a private company to carry out the monitoring in place of INPE, which ended up not happening. In July, when figures indicating an increase in deforestation were announced, Bolsonaro said that the data "was set against Brazil" and that Ricardo Galvão, director of the institute, acted as if he were at the service of an international NGO. Galvão responded to Bolsonaro's criticism and was fired. Air Force officer Darcton Policarpo Damião took interim command of the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) with the mission of restructuring the organization. He worked for almost a year but was unable to make any changes that would significantly reduce the agency's autonomy.

In addition to reducing the budget for inspection, the government has acted to delegitimize the work of IBAMA and ICMBio. One of the actions with the greatest repercussions was the public disallowing of the burning of seized equipment and action by the agencies to restrict it. The government also issued a decree to make it easier to cancel fines, as well as allowing discounts of up to 60% on the amount and conversion into environmental services. These initiatives have resulted in a reduction in the number of fines imposed, publicly celebrated by Bolsonaro, and an increasingly violent attitude from deforesters towards inspectors.

The most important intervention took place in the second half of 2019, in reaction to the "day of fire" in municipalities along the BR-163 highway in Pará. The climate of impunity generated by the government led deforesters to carry out a series of coordinated burnings that made the cover of newspapers around the world. In reaction, the government issued a decree to Guarantee Law and Order (GLO), establishing military intervention in public security in the region. This was followed by the announcement of Operation Green Brazil, which unfolded into Green Brazil II and Operation Samaúma. These operations transferred the leading role in environmental inspection in the region from IBAMA and ICMBio to the military, reversing the historical role of the agencies. The result was a decline in the quality of enforcement, which became less effective in order to avoid conflicts and adapt to the precepts of reactionary populism.

In its almost three years, contributions of around R\$530 million, originating from the Lava Jato Fund, were made to these operations (DOLCE, 2021). The result, however, was a 47% increase in the rate of deforestation in the period. In addition to problems with the quality of inspection, an analysis of the expenses recorded by the National Treasury for the GLO indicates that the funds were used for purposes other than controlling deforestation, in a fraudulent manner (SALOMON, 2020). Significant funds were allocated to renovating army barracks located outside the Amazon. For example, more than R\$600,000 was spent on renovating roofs at the Coxim-MS Battalion and more than R\$1.2 million was spent on renovating roofs, electrical installations and new paint at the 44th Motorized Infantry Battalion in Cuiabá-MT. The Brazilian Aeronautics Commission in Europe was the champion in spending with a R\$42.5 million contract for logistical support for the aircraft fleet. These actions by the government, therefore, managed the paradox of meeting public opinion on reducing deforestation rates, without displeasing the government's ruralist support base.

Finally, we analyzed how Bolsonaro's policies have impacted sustainable production activities. Bolsonaro transferred the Brazilian Forest Service to MAPA, which did not have major consequences in itself, but the weakening of inspection boosted the illegal timber market. The regulation of the sale of carbon credits by concessionaires was justified in order to deal with this issue. In terms of the private governance of deforestation, there was a split in agribusiness between supporters of the zero deforestation agreements and actors who sought to undermine them by taking advantage of the government's support. For example, the end of the Soy Moratorium was debated due to the support of more "modern" sectors of agribusiness, which are more subject to pressure from European buyers. Pressure from the international

financial field, increasingly oriented towards sustainability issues (ERTÜRK; CANDIDO, 2023), was also key to maintaining restrictions on granting rural credit to producers involved in illegal deforestation.

Incentives for family producers and traditional communities have been severely affected. The government's emphasis on supporting large-scale farming, reflected in the abolition of the MDA and the incorporation of INCRA into MAPA, has ended actions and resources aimed at expropriations and sustainability projects in settlements and family farming. Actions to strengthen socio-biodiversity product chains were undermined in two main ways. The expansion of agribusiness and mining in these traditional communities was encouraged. In Indigenous Lands, the most noteworthy experiments are soybean cultivation in Mato Grosso, promoted and celebrated by the government (FUNAI, 2021), and the search to legalize the exploitation of minerals, gases and electricity generation (Bill 191/2020).

A second action that began to take shape were the plans to invest in the "bioeconomy" (MOURÃO, 2020). Of particular note here is the creation of Bioeconomy Brazil - Sociobiodiversity, implemented by MAPA, in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank, which launched the Fund for Sustainable Development and Bioeconomy in the Amazon, involving other South American countries. Few details of what would actually be done were announced and nothing came of it during the government, even though the interests of agribusiness seemed to mark the initiative. Considering the speeches of actors such as Marcelo Brito, from the Brazilian Agribusiness Association (ABAG) and deputy Paulo Ganime, from the New Party in Rio de Janeiro, it is expected that these proposals, which are still in vogue, involve the complementary economic use of forest resources from legal farm reserves, leaving aside the fight against inequalities.

Final considerations

Our analysis of the emergence and crisis of federal policies to control deforestation in the Amazon demonstrates how the SFA approach can contribute to the literature that emphasizes the importance of power relations in the constitution of state capacities. This approach's emphasis on the interconnection of fields, social skills and IGUs makes it possible to approach the construction and deconstruction of capacities in a dynamic way.

In line with views that propose that capacities are not a fixed attribute of the state, but contingent on political struggles, the use of the SFA approach suggests that they develop within

the fields that make up the state. The institution of effective policies is dependent on the emergence of the field in which it is inserted and its position in power relations with other state spaces and society. More established and powerful fields tend to find it easier to build and maintain capacities, while newer and less powerful fields tend to face more difficulties in implementing policies effectively and sustainably. The creation of the PPCDAm was made possible by the gradual emergence of the environmental field since the 1960s. It is a field on the "left hand" of the state, with a challenging position in the Brazilian federal bureaucracy, which implied difficulties in building capacities.

Our analysis makes clear the importance of social skills and the construction of governance units in the effective construction of the PPCDAm. Complementing Bourdieu's approach, which emphasizes individual actions and relations of power and conflict, the SFA approach emphasizes the role of cooperation and collective strategic action in social dynamics through the idea of social skills. As the approach proposes, in our case strategic collective actions were important for challenging groups to be able to form coalitions in order to overcome unfavorable correlations of forces. These actions were led by Marina Silva, who articulated the support of the Presidency to make the PPCDAm a government-wide plan, creating a broad governance unit and a set of devices that made it difficult for opponents to act for a while, enabling capacity building. The centralization of the initiative at federal level was also important, reducing influences that had made previous proposals unviable.

The case also demonstrates how established capacities are dynamic and do not imply that there are no disputes with other fields of the state. This becomes clear in our analysis of the more conjunctural oppositions suffered by the PPCDAm axes after their consolidation, between Lula's second term and the Temer government. Although conflicts have weakened capacities, a degree of autonomy has been maintained. The case also illustrates how this opposition depends not only on the relative power of the fields, but on the ability of the opponents to control the internal conflicts of their own fields in order to counter the governance structures and established capacities, which again indicates the importance of social skills. This importance becomes clear, above all, in the analysis of agribusiness opposition to the PPCDAm.

The dismantling of established capacities implies the establishment of a crisis in the field in which they are located. Capacities in challenging fields can be dismantled more easily than those in powerful fields. In any case, this dismantling is not a simple operation, requiring time, power and strategies to attack the regulatory and normative bases, the resources, the forms of governance and the devices that underpin the implementation of public routines. With the

support of agribusiness, other sectors linked to illegal deforestation and the military, the Bolsonaro government has acted decisively to dismantle the PPCDAm. Despite facing resistance from the legislature, the judiciary, federal civil servants, civil society and international actors, the government's powerful coalition has made significant progress on its project. Social skills would be important if the dismantling was to go any further and, luckily, they were in short supply in the government. Luckily too, Brazilian voters decided to stop the dismantling before it took hold.

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